

In Defense of Marxism

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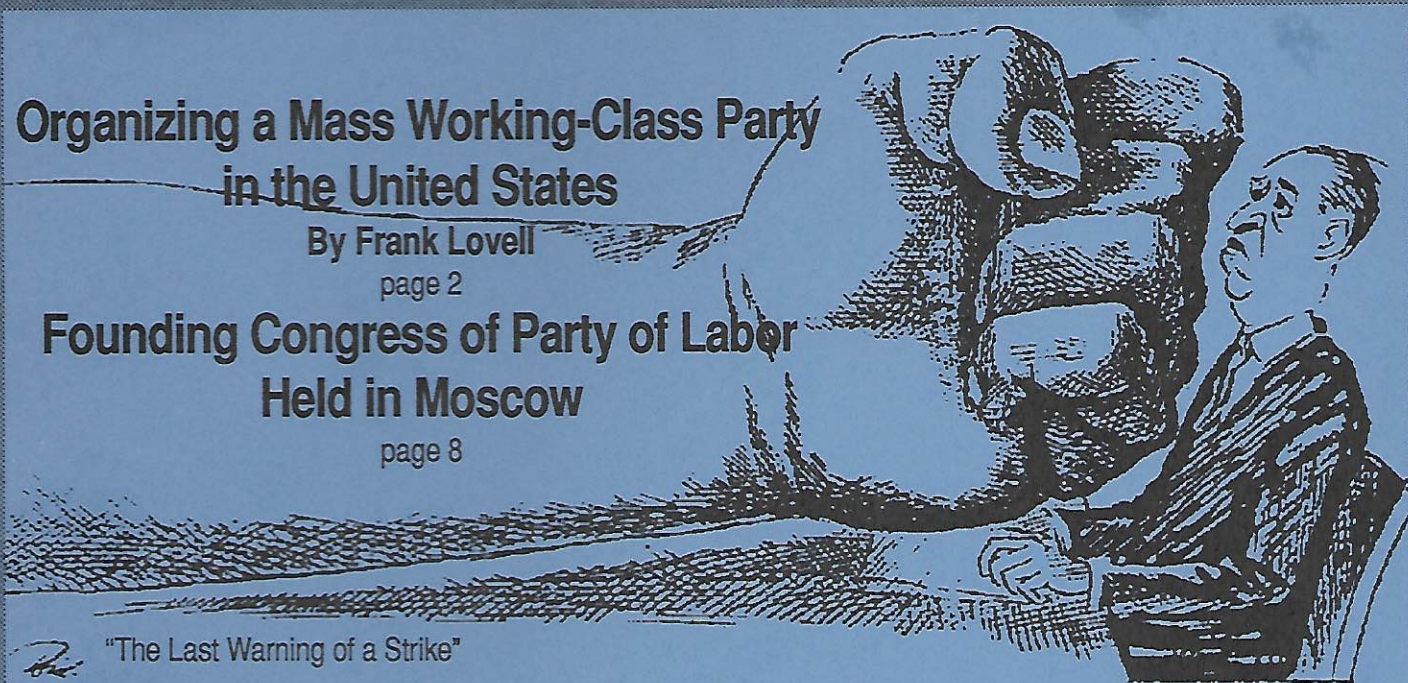
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Who We Are

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism is published by an independent collective of U.S. socialists who are in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International, a worldwide organization of revolutionary socialists.

Supporters of this magazine may be involved in different socialist groups and/or in a broad range of working class struggles and protest movements in the U.S. These include unions and other labor organizations, women's rights groups, antiracist organizations, coalitions opposed to U.S. military intervention, gay and lesbian rights campaigns, civil liberties and human rights efforts. We support similar activities in all countries and participate in the global struggle of working people and their allies. Many of our activities are advanced through collaboration with other supporters of the Fourth International in countries around the world.

What we have in common is our commitment to the Fourth International's critical-minded and revolutionary Marxism, which in the twentieth century is represented by such figures as V.I. Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Leon Trotsky. We also identify with the tradition of American Trotskyism represented by James P. Cannon and others. We favor the creation of a revolutionary working-class party, which can only emerge through the conscious efforts of many who are involved in the struggles of working people and the oppressed and who are dedicated to revolutionary socialist perspectives.

Through this magazine we seek to clarify the history, theory and program of the Fourth International and the American Trotskyist tradition, discussing their application to the class struggle 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, establishing a working people's democracy and socialist society based on human need instead of private greed, in which the free development of each person becomes possible.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism is independent of any political organization. Not all U.S. revolutionaries who identify with the Fourth International are in a common organization. Not all of them participate in the publication of this journal. Supporters of this magazine are committed to comradely discussion and debate as well as practical political cooperation which can facilitate eventual organizational unity of all Fourth Internationalists in the United States. At the same time, we want to help promote a broad recomposition of a class-conscious working class movement and, within this, a revolutionary socialist regroupment, in which perspectives of revolutionary Marxism, the Fourth International, and American Trotskyism will play a vital role.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism will publish materials generally consistent with these perspectives, although it will seek to offer *discussion articles* providing different points of view within the revolutionary socialist spectrum. Signed articles do not necessarily express the views of anyone other than the author.

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U.S. Troops in Somalia

Just a Relief Operation? (Or an East Africa Toehold for Washington's New World Order?)

by George Saunders

Filling the mass media with pictures of starving Somalis, the U.S. ruling class has its military machine on the march again. This time it is not going to "save the world for democracy," as in World War I, or fight for the "four freedoms," as in World War II, or "stop Communism," as in Korea, Vietnam, and other hotspots of the Cold War, or to stop a dictator "worse than Hitler" (Saddam Hussein) in the Persian Gulf. This time a major military operation is being mounted, with nearly 30,000 troops, for the alleged purposes of providing "humanitarian aid."

Most people are relieved at the thought that a lot of Somalis will be saved from death by starvation, since hundreds of thousands have already died. As one New York City tabloid headline put it, "Help Is On the Way." The cavalry is coming. One Pentagon chief, interviewed in the *Boston Herald*, said having the U.S. military there is like having a 911 number in the desert, so people can call the police for help.

However, there is a lot of uneasiness. After all, it was the U.S. role as "policeman of the world" that got us into Vietnam. Once the U.S. military machine has established itself in Somalia, will it leave again? (Pentagon officials have said the operation will take a lot longer than President Bush assures people it will take.) What else might the U.S. military do besides safeguard food deliveries? Will all the starving actually be fed, or will the Pentagon put a tight control on information, as they did in the Gulf War, so that selective feeding, to favor one faction over another, can go on?

Aren't there other motives than the claimed humanitarian ones in this business? One Black Marine who was being shipped out to Somalia expressed the wariness that is mixed with the relief people feel over this action: "I don't know why they're sending us over there to help starving people when we've got starving people right here that need help."

If Malcolm X were with us today, he would undoubtedly have strongly challenged this massive U.S. military presence appearing for the first time in Black Africa. I can imagine him saying something like: "You want me to believe that this system which gave hell to Africans in America for nearly 500 years, that

this system is suddenly going to turn around and bring blessings to Africans in Africa?"

As long ago as the 1920s the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky observed that American imperialism prefers to wrap itself in the toga of pacifism and benevolence. It is standard practice to proclaim the finest intentions as the military set out to do their dirty work for the profit system.

The U.S. intervention (disguised under United Nations auspices) is not really meant to help the starving Somalis — although it may do that temporarily, partially, and in passing. It may be intended just to win more acceptance for the general practice of U.S. intervention anywhere, as part of the "New

World Order." It may also have the aim of stabilizing the region, which has geopolitical importance to Big Oil and other financial interests. Somalia's location on the Horn of Africa, across the Red Sea from the oil-rich Arabian peninsula, makes it valuable real estate for financiers who think big about dividing up the world and keeping it safe for high profit margins. The U.S. government has been influential in this part of Africa since after World War II, when colonial rule by France, Britain, and Italy ended. Washington had a client regime in Somalia in the 1970s and '80s, under the dictatorial rule of General Mohammed Siad Barre, who after a flirtation with the USSR became a U.S. ally against the pro-Moscow regime in Ethiopia at that time.

But the Siad Barre regime was overthrown in January 1991, and a civil war that wracked the Somali capital, Mogadishu, for months has spread to other areas. The two largest warring factions are commanded, respectively, by Mohammed Farah Aidid, a former Somali army general and head of the "United Somalia Alliance," and Mohammed Ali Mahdi, who presents himself as the "interim president." In September, in the southern region around the town of Bardera, near the border with Kenya, Farah Aidid's troops fought with a third force, that of Siad Barre's son-in-law Mohammed Siad Herse Morgan.

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Editor's Note

One of the most significant events in the United States as 1992 came to a close was the release of Spike Lee's film on Malcolm X. Vera Wigglesworth's fine review essay explores the importance of the man, the ideas, and the movie for the African American community and for the working class. Not unrelated is a significant educational conference organized by Labor Party Advocates, on which Frank Lovell reports. Evelyn Sell's discussion of the independent dynamic of the women's liberation movement highlights another key to future struggles in the United States.

In this issue we are focusing special attention on what used to be the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Valuable elements of historical and theoretical background are offered in Lev Kamenev's classic discussion of Lenin's revolutionary writings, and David Mandel's comparison of Trotsky's concept of "political revolution" with the actualities of the recent bureaucratic collapse. Writing from Moscow, Renfrey Clarke reports on the founding of the Party of Labor, an important socialist formation whose draft program is also published here. Marilyn Vogt-Downey provides substantial information on what was once the Asian portion of the USSR, with Tajikistan as a case study.

It is now a commonplace that the future of the ex-USSR is not likely to resemble realities of "advanced capitalist" societies like the United States but instead the so-called "Third World." Lloyd D'Aguilar's account of Haiti (from the same forum as the presentation of Daniel Simidor published in our last issue), and David Trujillo's discussion of Peru throw into bold relief some of the harsh realities facing Latin America and the Caribbean. These realities also bear down on Cuba, although John Daniel's article stresses positive lessons provided by this gem of the Antilles. George Saunders's initial look at the U.S. intervention into famine-ridden Somalia touches on yet other complexities of where the "Third World" fits into the New World Order.

Paul Le Blanc's review of Robert J. Alexander's massive study *International Trotskyism* can be seen as part of our ongoing discussion of the world revolutionary socialist organization, the Fourth International. Related to this is the appeal for the defense of Polish Fourth Internationalist Jozef Pinior.

Organizing a Mass Working-Class Party

by Frank Lovell

A two-day educational conference, organized jointly by the Cleveland and Detroit chapters of Labor Party Advocates (LPA), met December 5 and 6 in Detroit. Its purpose was to survey the U.S. political scene in the wake of the 1992 general election and the Democratic Party victory, from the besieged bunker view of the working class and the union movement in this country.

Two hundred forty-five registered for the conference and participated in its deliberations. Most were members of LPA, a loosely knit group launched about a year ago by Tony Mazzocchi of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union (OCAW). The purpose of LPA initially was to explain the need for a labor party in the U.S. and win large numbers of LPA recruits, hoping in this way to gather the necessary forces to launch a labor party based on the union movement. LPA has a growing membership in several states, mainly California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas, and scattered individuals elsewhere. It publishes a newsletter which informs its members of LPA activities. The latest issue (Vol. 2, Nos. 2-3, Nov. 1992) says, "Last summer's successful direct mail recruitment drive reached thousands of trade unionists and activists all over the country," and reports on growing labor party sentiment in several areas. It says LPA recently won recruits in Austin and San Antonio, Texas, and quotes a writer in the San Antonio *La Voz de Esperanza* in praise of LPA, noting the growing labor party sentiment there.

The Detroit LPA educational conference advanced beyond anything previously undertaken by LPA. Local chapters in Cleveland, Detroit, and Minneapolis/St. Paul had sponsored or participated in public forums in those cities, but the decision in early fall by the Detroit and Cleveland chapters to try and organize a regional education conference following the general election was audacious. The successful result was unpredictable, but the initiators in both cities agreed that there would be an urgent need for such a conference. They sought endorsement and sponsorship from union officials and activists. Harold Mitchell, president of AFSCME Local 100 in Cleveland was an initiator of the conference and an active organizer and participant, as was Russ Leone, financial secretary of Ford UAW Local 600 in Detroit. Both are LPA members. They secured an impressive list of panelists, mostly union officials and political analysts.

On the first day of the conference, Baldemar Velasquez, president of the Farm

Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) was the first speaker, followed by Frank Valenta, president of the Cleveland AFL-CIO Central Labor Council and director of Steelworkers District 28. Both speakers introduced the central theme that ran through the conference, that organized labor is capable of much more than unions have yet accomplished and that the two-party system serves the interests of the employers. Valenta spoke from his own recent experience as an aspiring candidate in the Democratic primary earlier this year. He said the politicians whom he had known and campaigned for treated him as an interloper. He said they seemed to think union officials have no right to become public officials. Furthermore, he learned when he filed as a candidate that he had to resign his union posts, which according to Ohio election laws are a "conflict of interest" in public service. Harold Mitchell confirmed this antiunion bias of the two-party system based on the experience of AFSCME members who work for government. If they seek public office, they are often fired.

The last speaker on the first panel was Lynn Henderson, a railroad worker and editor of *Straight Track*, the widely read rail publication with 25,000 subscribers. He reported that a majority of workers in the rail transportation industry *hate* the Democratic Party because they think the politicians of that party double-crossed them when they were forced this year to continue working under conditions imposed by the Bush administration and ratified by a unanimous vote of Congress. As evidence of the deep resentment, Henderson told about the railway clerks union in Minneapolis that voted not to contribute any money to political campaigns this year, but instead used their political action funds to buy billboard advertisements denouncing the Democratic Farm-Labor party (DFL), the national Democratic Party in Minnesota), convinced that "Democrats Failed Labor" is the real meaning of DFL. Henderson said he believes the Democratic Party is now the greatest threat to the future existence of the union movement.

The discussion that followed this first panel of speakers, led mainly by union activists from several Midwest states, developed and elaborated on the Democratic Party danger and the illusion that the Clinton administration will improve conditions of work or the quality of life for working people.

In the afternoon session a second panel of speakers began to develop the theme that the labor movement, as more broadly conceived than the presently organized sector, is

capable of organizing politically and electing working class representatives to public office. Nancy Riche, president of the New Democratic Party (NDP), Canada's labor party, and executive vice-president of the Canadian Labor Congress was unable to attend, but her replacement explained the Canadian experience well. He told how the NDP developed from the needs of the unions and now enables unions in Canada to serve the needs of society. Consequently in Canada unions are not perceived as "special interest groups," each serving exclusively its own limited membership.

Ellen David Friedman, an organizer for the Vermont NEA and a top official of the independent party in Vermont that elected Bernie Sanders to Congress, urged LPA to hasten the day when labor will have its own party, free of Democratic and Republican party manipulators.

Norm Leavens, of CWA local 2040 in New Jersey, gave an interesting account of how unions in his area had decided not to participate in the Democratic Party primaries this year and to run their own candidates in the general election, but were persuaded to reverse that decision by false promises and slick maneuvers of the Democratic Party electoral machine in New Jersey. The union movement suffers as a result, he said.

The most convincing example of successful independent working class political action was submitted by James Gibbs, president of UMWA Local 2490. Gibbs is a working coal miner at the Pittston Co. and a leader in the long, hard-won strike of 1989-90 against that company. He explained that the striking miners were able to defeat one of the most antilabor members of the Virginia state legislature, a fixture there for 20 years, by organizing the community on an individual basis. Union organizers and their allies in the community campaigned from house to house, explaining how the Democratic Party machine worked to the exclusion of working people. They had to run a write-in campaign to elect Jackie Stump, district leader of the mine union, to the Virginia state legislature. And to win that campaign they had, in many instances, to teach eligible voters how to write the candidate's name clearly and properly to meet state election requirements. Such electioneering is possible only when the union has a dedicated membership, he said, and this both engenders and requires leadership.

General discussion and questions following these panel talks developed the idea of working class self-reliance, which had been

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A Movie That's a Political Experience

by Vera Wigglesworth

There's no doubt about it — in this long-awaited film *Malcolm X* comes alive, thanks to Denzel Washington's wonderful portrayal. He skillfully evolves from the fresh-faced naive Malcolm Little, to "Detroit Red," the hair-straightened, zoot-suited Harlem hustler, to Malcolm X the ex-prisoner, humbly grateful convert to the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, who rose to dynamic builder of the Nation of Islam, and finally El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, the independent leader searching for a broader path to liberation.

The setting for the jewel that is Washington's performance is all the rest of the movie, made possible by the dedication and determination of that vast team headed by director Spike Lee and his producers. We get to participate in Malcolm's life thanks to the loving attention to period detail, brilliant direction, and incredibly effective photography. From the costuming (Malcolm and his running partner of Roxbury days were zooted to the T!) and the music (the jazz club dance scene was more than rich entertainment — it was a celebration), we get from the 1940s and '50s phase of the movie a feel that this is *authentic*. (And for Black people born later it is another experience connecting us to the cultural life of our parents' and grandparents' era, affirming the continuity that has meant pride and defiance as well as roots and enjoyment.)

Our sense of participation continues through the scenes involving Malcolm's Nation of Islam days. We are caught up with him in the excitement of joining, then leading, a disciplined cadre of self-organized Black people who seemed to have answers to the victimization perpetrated by the white power structure. We are angered with Malcolm at the brutalization and unjustified arrest of a brother Muslim by the New York police and feel Malcolm's need to respond to the street charges that the Nation won't do anything — they only talk.

So with what glee we join Malcolm in facing down the cops in their own station, demanding to take into our care one of our

own! With Malcolm and the defense wing of the Nation (the Fruit of Islam) we lead a disciplined march to the hospital that gathers a crowd behind us. Vigorously underscored by composer Terence Blanchard's martial music, the thrill of pride and power we experience from this mass action is maintained right through to the end, where we disperse at our own pace and on signal from

But we don't get to see how the CIA and FBI viewed Malcolm's rising popularity in the context of the civil rights movement of the '50s and '60s. Government counterintelligence program (Cointelpro) documents released in the 1970s reveal an obsessive concern on the part of the FBI to prevent the rise in the 1960s of "a 'messiah' who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement." These documents point to the real forces behind Malcolm's assassination. The movie shows intelligence agents tailing Malcolm abroad and shows them bugging and taping Malcolm's conversations. However, had we been given a closer look in the film at the thinking behind Malcolm's last activities, the government's motive for eliminating him would have been more clear.

Malcolm's Last Year

Above all, Malcolm was a revolutionary, dedicated to the overthrow of the system fostering the racial oppression of African Americans. He defined this "system" differently over time as his views evolved, increasingly denouncing capitalism as the source of the problem.

The system in this country cannot produce freedom for an Afro-American. It is impossible for this system, this economic system, this political system, this social system, this system, period. [*Two Speeches by Malcolm X*, p. 25.]

Malcolm had been attracted to the Nation of Islam because it directly identified the racist structure and practices of this society as the cause of the condition of Black people. Formulating the problem as oppression by the white race as a whole, the NOI offered Black pride, self-organization, and defense as solutions. So from the earliest days of his political activity, Malcolm urged African Americans to stop looking to the twin parties of the capitalist rulers in this country to effect radical change, since,

The Democratic Party is responsible for the racism that exists in this country along with the Republican Party.... Any Negro who regi-



our own leader — not at the cops' demand.

We can't help saying, "If only Malcolm were with us today!" And why is he not? The movie begins to answer that ultimate, political question. It presents the outlines of Malcolm's break with the Nation of Islam (NOI), showing how, as Malcolm's effectiveness and popularity grew during the period in which he built NOI branches throughout the country, he incurred the envy and enmity of his fellow ministers.

sters as a Democrat or a Republican is a traitor to his own people. [*By Any Means Necessary*, p. 164 and 23.]

Malcolm never deviated from the path that this first step of independence from the capitalist class had set him on. He went on within the NOI, then outside of it, to forcefully advocate and build ways for Black people to organize for their own interests and defense. He called himself, and was, a true Black nationalist.

He was consistent about it. Determined to liberate Black people, he began to reach out to other forces in the world for help. He explained why:

...the point and thing that I would like to impress upon every Afro-American leader is that there is no kind of action in this country ever going to bear fruit unless that action is tied to the overall international struggle.

You waste your time when you talk to this man, just you and him. So when you talk to him, let him know your brother is behind you, and you've got some more brothers behind that brother. That's the only way to talk to him, that's the only language he knows. [*Malcolm X Speaks*, p. 153-154.]

From the Nation of Islam, Malcolm had learned pride in Africa as homeland, and brotherhood of peoples of color. After the break with the Nation, this led him during his travels abroad to engage in discussions with African revolutionaries as well as Muslim leaders. He came back from Mecca with not only a broader view of those who shared his religion (that included white people, as the movie showed), but a clearer view of the forces in the world fighting the same fight he was.

He stood in solidarity with the revolutions in Africa, Cuba, and Vietnam.

I think young people here can find a powerful example in the young *Simbas* in the Congo and the young fighters in South Vietnam. [*By Any Means Necessary*, p. 165.]

Rather than looking to Democrats or institutions in this society to achieve an end to oppression, he looked to an alliance with others of the oppressed around the world. He became a true internationalist.

His experiences abroad helped him to see the full scope of his battle. In the last year of his life Malcolm openly denounced capitalism and was considering an alternative.

It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck...now it has become more cowardly like the vulture and can only suck the blood of the helpless...It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely. [*Ibid.*, p. 165-166.]

Almost every one of the countries that has gotten independence has devised some kind of socialistic system, and this is no accident...you and I here in America should look over there and find out what are the people who have gotten their freedom adopting to provide themselves with better housing and better education and better food and bet-

ter clothing. None of them are adopting the capitalistic system because they realize they can't. You can't operate a capitalistic system unless you are vulturistic.... [*Malcolm X Speaks*, p. 120-121.]

The film never tries to suggest, as some others have, that Malcolm X renounced his nationalism, and that's right. He remained a Black nationalist to the end of his days — and his consistent nationalism led him to internationalism, anti-capitalism and pro-socialism. During his last months, Malcolm complained that his evolving views were being ignored, "my old so-called 'Black Muslim' image kept blocking me"; and "they won't let me turn the corner!" As one Malcolm scholar succinctly put it, he was:

a revolutionary internationalist on the way to becoming a liberator of his people. That is why the American ruling class, the press, and the Negro leadership did what they could to prevent him from "turning the corner." That is also probably why he was struck down. [George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X*, pp. 28, 39]

The Iconization of Malcolm X

Today, Malcolm X is a safe icon, "embraced by such disparate figures as [Supreme Court] Justice Clarence Thomas and self-proclaimed revolutionary [Amiri] Baraka," according to *Newsweek* (August 26, 1991, p. 53). The process by which this happened is an old story, perfectly described by Lenin in his 1917 work, *State and Revolution*:

During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes have visited relentless persecution on them and received their teaching with the most savage hostility, the most furious hatred, the most ruthless campaign of lies and slanders. After their death, attempts are made to turn them into harmless icons, canonise them and surround their names with a certain halo for the "consolidation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping them, while at the same time emasculating and vulgarising the *real essence* of their revolutionary theories and blunting their revolutionary edge.

How true this was for Malcolm X. While the press and other spokespersons for the rulers of this country may carry out this iconization deliberately, artists like Spike Lee can contribute unconsciously to the process. For example, in one of the final scripts Spike Lee wanted Nelson Mandela to do a cameo appearance at the end of the movie "quoting" Malcolm that "We declare our right on this earth to be a man, to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary."

As Spike tells it, "Mandela has his reservations, though. He didn't want to say the line 'by any means necessary' at the end of the film....When that point comes, we'll cut from Mandela and go back to Malcolm X, and we'll use actual footage. Mandela's try-

ing to accomplish what Malcolm is saying, peacefully. But after going there [South Africa], I believe the only way that s--- in South Africa is ever going to change is through something that simply ain't no tea-and-crumplets negotiations. [*The Trials and Tribulations of the Making of Malcolm X*, p. 105.]

That's the truth! No doubt, by putting Mandela at the end, the director wanted to point to the main Black liberation struggle of today. But what would Malcolm, a consistent advocate of armed Black self-defense, say about the "means" of the 1991 "peace accord" signed by Mandela's ANC that required the ANC to turn over names, addresses, and phone numbers of ANC leaders to the police and disarm Black revolutionaries but not the South African police and army?

Ironically, the "answer" is earlier in the film script:

REPORTER: "What about the guns, Malcolm?"

MALCOLM: "Has the white man changed since I went away? Have you put up your guns? The day you stop being violent against my people will be the day I tell folks to put away their guns." (*Ibid.*, p. 296)

It was this uncompromising clarity that made it necessary for the state to eliminate Malcolm.

Politics Impact a Political Film

The story behind the making of the film makes it understandable why Malcolm's last year and the political implications of his assassination are not given full treatment in it. The limitation of perspective that prevented the telling of the whole story has its roots in the lack of a mass independent Black movement today, not in any intention of the film's participants.

For example, there was no lack of dedication to telling Malcolm's story, which was based on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (and which, unfortunately, did not adequately reflect his later views). Interviews and a recently published book on the making of the movie reveals the sense of an almost sacred mission felt by the entire production team. From Spike Lee and Denzel Washington on down, their view was that this was the movie of their lifetimes because of what Malcolm meant to them and to Black people.

In *By Any Means Necessary: the Trials and Tribulations of the Making of Malcolm X*, Spike Lee recounts how from the beginning there was a continuous struggle to make a film that would do justice to Malcolm. A Warner Brothers project before Lee was aboard, the film had been budgeted at two-and-a-half hours for \$18 million, from which the company never budged. Telling Warner at the start that "this is a movie of three hours for around \$33 or \$34 million, minimum," Lee, in an unprecedented move, turned to Bill Cosby, Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jordan, and

others for donations, when the bond company refused to cover the "excess" and Warner laid off the editors. (These were donations, not loans or investments — Warner Brothers retained its full stake. Warner exploited the Black petty bourgeoisie to reap the profits from this picture.)

Lee compared the battle he had to wage for the length and budget of *Malcolm X* to the relative ease with which white filmmakers, even of controversial films like *JFK*, are granted their requirements. "Look at *Bonfire of the Vanities*. How much money did they spend on that screen gem? Over \$50 mil? What did it do? Bomb!" (p. 31)

On this campaign for the directorship: "...one reason why I felt it was imperative that an African American do this film...it required a lot of research...The research I'm talking about is talking to the people who knew Malcolm intimately, who knew his life....No way would most of these people open up to someone who was not Black...no way you were going to get any sort of cooperation from current and former members of the Nation of Islam with a white director." (pp. 32–33.)

Is Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* a Hollywood movie? In a certain sense, no. Not being fully supported by the Hollywood establishment, its character and mission was saved by independent financing. It became a movie of self-determination. But in the last analysis, yes, this is a Hollywood picture of today when a film corporation can seek to make profits from a Malcolm X story, when a talented Black director can, with a vigorous public campaign, win the right to make and have distributed a film of quality. A movie of today that can obtain last minute funds from the small Black middle class. The victory of the civil rights movement made this movie possible.

The fact that Black liberation is still of the future both made independent financing necessary and caused the ultimate message of Malcolm X to be muted. For it is unlikely that any of the picture's underwriters would have been as willing to finance out of their own pockets and openly anti-capitalist and pro-socialist portrayal of the last six months of Malcolm's political evolution. This is simply where we are in the class struggle. The movie exactly mirrors the best of the prevailing understanding of Malcolm. The contradictions of the movie are the contradictions of late capitalist America.

A Moment of Dramatic Weakness?

The showing we went to was sold out. The packed audience was totally absorbed in the story unfolding on the screen. Yet at the end, there was only scattered applause. We got to experience Malcolm's life, but we didn't get to experience all of it.

For example, in leaving out the political discussions in the OAAU (Organization for

Afro-American Unity, an organization Malcolm started in order to organize Blacks on a broader, non-religious basis), the movie missed an opportunity to show the potential of the new organization and the fear with which the government viewed it. There could have been conveyed the sense of urgency Malcolm had in shaping the OAAU, there could have been shown Malcolm struggling for clarity, trying to lead his followers but not moving too far ahead of them, not having enough time.

Ultimately, the movie failed to explain the political motive for Malcolm's assassination. This was as much a dramatic weakness as a political one — the sense of increasing dread and tension which the movie effectively built up toward the assassination scene would have been even more heightened by a script underscore, that emphasized the political evolution that occurred during Malcolm's final months. Thus the political weakness of the movie contributed to the dramatic weakness of the ending.

In 1991's *JFK*, Oliver Stone explained the Kennedy assassination with a purported intention by the president to pull out of Vietnam. While this reviewer does not agree with that particular thesis, Stone's attempt nonetheless points to the necessity for a subject like a political assassination to be explained politically.

With Malcolm there was no need to "invent" (or ignore) a reason for the assassination. He was a threat to the government on two counts: in his increasingly radical anti-capitalist and pro-socialist views and his move towards initiating a broad-based united-front organization for all African Americans (the OAAU) that would have internationalized the struggle. Washington's secret police organizations understand well the galvanizing impact on other sectors of society when one self-acting movement goes into motion. Certainly we've seen how the antiwar and women's movements took off after the civil rights movement.

What Does Malcolm X Mean Today?

Millions will have seen *Malcolm X* by the time it finishes its run, in search of answers to the questions: Who was Malcolm X? What does his story mean?

They will universally find a Malcolm that is a searcher for truth. They will find it in the music of Malcolm's theme, a slow, deliberate, haunting refrain that starts on a low note, rises, sinks but moves forward. Composer Blanchard: "When I think of Malcolm X I think of a solitary person in search of a truth all alone.... And he is honest in his search.... So I constantly hear singular instruments portraying that kind of emotion." (Lee, *The Making of Malcolm X*, p. 146.) The theme still seeks and struggles in the two jazz versions that reflect Malcolm's earlier days; it transforms itself like Malcolm into power

and purpose in its martial form during the march from the police station.

Some will see Malcolm as a role model for an "up-from-drugs-and-crime" example. Self-improvement certainly was an important part of his story. But that was only the beginning and basis of Malcolm's political evolution as an uncompromising fighter for liberation.

Others may yet conclude that he was a charismatic Black leader who fell victim to organizational infighting. But if his end were reduced to that, one wonders whether there would be the broadening interest in his story today. The assassination defined Malcolm X: a man cut down before fulfilling his mission, whatever that may have been. People sense there is more to be told; that's one reason why they come to see the film.

They are drawn by curiosity, but more to Malcolm's potential as fighter and independent leader. The film's excellent opening showing the American flag burning into an "X" and the video of the Rodney King beating makes a political point that is much more widely understood than it would have been in 1964. With disaffection for the Democratic and Republican parties grown deeper than ever before, Malcolm's influence would have been far greater today.

Had the movie ended with the following statement made by Malcolm made a month before his death, his message and relevance would be more clear:

I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those who do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice, and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation. I believe that there will be that kind of clash, but I don't think it will be based upon the color of the skin... [Jan. 19, 1965, TV interview, Pierre Berton show, Toronto, quoted in George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: Evolution of a Revolutionary*, 1967, p. 38.]

We can celebrate *Malcolm X* as a wonderful depiction of the greatest African American revolutionary in the twentieth century. So especially convincing is Denzel Washington's performance, that when the last scene with Denzel is followed by documentary footage of the real Malcolm, the transition is seamless — you can't tell the difference except the difference of Technicolor versus black-and-white. With determination and commitment to a story that deeply affected them, too, the makers of this film have enabled us to experience some of what Malcolm meant to history.

It remains for revolutionary fighters to take this new, broader opportunity to explain Malcolm's final course and how it speaks to the task of independent self-organization still before us. We can do so with the confidence that one day a new society will provide the resources to tell the whole story of Malcolm X as well as this movie has told the part. □

December 10, 1992

Appeal for International Solidarity

Cuba: Still a Thorn in the Side of U.S. Imperialism

by John Daniel

The great Cuban poet and revolutionary of the late 19th century, José Martí, explained while in the United States that he was in "the belly of the beast." Here in the belly of the beast steps are being taken to educate and mobilize around the defense of Cuba. The year 1992 has seen the rise of many national groups and efforts to gather support for ending the embargo. The year began with newspaper ads against U.S. policy towards Cuba. (This includes "Appeal for Solidarity with Cuba," first publicized in the U.S. in *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* #91, December 1991.) There were large mass meetings — a January 25 Rally for Peace with Cuba in New York and a later rally in San Francisco. A campaign for sending medical aid to Cuba was initiated, and local committees started popping up across the country. By the summer several tours were organized to Cuba, and there were also tours of visitors and speakers from Cuba, all initiated by various organizations. A nationwide caravan of material aid was planned for the autumn.

Beginning on November 6, the U.S.-Cuba Friendship began along eight different routes and visited 50 U.S. cities to collect material aid and to educate the U.S. public about Cuba and the illegal U.S. blockade. Holding press conferences, educational events, and fundraisers, the caravan proceeded to Texas, where all routes and 44 vehicles met to cross the border at Laredo with sixteen tons of material aid, later to be loaded on a Cuban freighter at Tampico.

The Friendship is a direct challenge to the U.S. embargo. Consequently, the activists were blocked at the border by an agent of the U.S. Treasury Department (which oversees the embargo), and there was a scuffle over possession of the goods. Later, however, the Treasury Department backed down, and the caravan crossed over into Mexico. Sponsored by Pastors for Peace, the Caravan will be returning in December. As of the time this article was written (December 4), the fifty activists are distributing the material in Cuba, and the U.S. government has not prosecuted anyone for violating the embargo. However, this effort directly challenges the embargo, and the government may yet prosecute, necessitating a vigorous defense case.

Friendship has been the most important effort so far to end the blockade by U.S. citizens, but more must be done. National demonstrations on both coasts this year are desperately needed if we are to bring suffi-

cient pressure on the U.S. government. We need to build a mass movement against the blockade of Cuba. We need to bring together all the local committees, the national organizations and initiative, all those who have worked on or attended events in support of Cuban self-determination, and let them march together. This will be a good first step in forging the new movement that will end the blockade.

U.S. Imperialism Versus the Cuban People

The ruling class of the United States has long had its eye on Cuba. Known as the gem of the Antilles and the key to the "New World," the island of Cuba was a colonial prize long before Jamestown was settled. As hub of Spain's imperial interests in Latin America, Cuba was for centuries the first and last port of call for ships entering and leaving Spanish holdings in the Americas. Indeed, the U.S. displacement of the last vestiges of Spanish imperialism in the Western Hemisphere, in the 1890s, began and ended in Cuba. U.S. domination over the whole of Latin America to this day has been of pivotal importance to U.S. ruling class interests through its continuing economic exploitation of the region. Latin America is still the largest trading partner of the United States, which obtains super-profits not only by selling "dear" and buying "cheap," but by increasingly establishing direct control over local markets.

In the current world economic crisis, the dominance of U.S. multinational corporations is reasserting itself through the effort — in competition against European and Japanese trading blocs — to create, with all due haste, a powerful trading bloc in the Americas, first of all through the North American Free Trade Agreement. It is seen as essential by U.S. corporations and government representatives that super-profits from Latin America (over \$420 billion in the 1980s alone) continue to flow northward, to buttress U.S. business interests in the face of stiff competition in the global market. The importance of dominating Latin Amer-

ica, its 400 million people and vast natural resources, is critical for the U.S. capitalist class to remain on top in the never-ending inter-imperialist rivalries.

In 1959, however, a popular revolution took place in Cuba, which pulled that island out of the U.S. economic orbit. Cuba's existence since the revolution has been U.S. imperialism's nightmare as far as Latin America is concerned. From 1960 to the present, it has been seen by U.S. policy-makers as a fly in the ointment — and as a dangerous example for the oppressed and discontented throughout Latin America.

The Cuban Challenge

Before the revolution, 98 percent of the Cuban economy was either owned outright or controlled by U.S. corporations. Prerevolutionary Cuba fit nicely into the scheme of things with its U.S.-sponsored military dictatorship, nice beaches, hotels, prostitutes, gambling, agro-export economy, low wages, and no taxes for U.S. corporations to worry about. All that changed with the revolution. The Rebel Army entered Havana, and its leadership — Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and others — quickly and correctly identified U.S. domination as an obstacle to securing true independence and a better life for the masses who suffered incredible poverty and neglect. Within just a couple of years the revolutionary government was able to break the power of U.S. domination by mobilizing the power of the Cuban population and also by obtaining economic and military assistance from the Soviet Union.

Over the next twenty years, the Cuban people — with a government that was free of

Organizations doing Cuba work include:

Pastors for Peace
331 17th Avenue, S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Tel. (612) 378-0134

Center for Cuban Studies
124 W. 23rd Street
New York, NY 10011
Tel. (212) 242-0559

National Network on Cuba
Tel. (212) 601-4751;
(313) 838-0134

Global Exchange
2141 Mission Street,
Room 202
San Francisco, CA 94110
Tel. (415) 255-7296

Venceremos Brigade
P.O. Box 7739
Oakland, CA 94601

U.S./Labor Exchange
P.O. Box 39188
Redford, MI 48239
Phone/Fax: (313) 836-3752

U.S. domination and willing to plan its own economy — were able to attain the highest standard of living in all of Latin America, with health care, educational, and social security systems that rivaled the imperialist powers themselves. This was an achievement unmatched anywhere else in Latin America. Cuba's example was what the U.S. feared the most. If Cuba could break away then all of Latin America might decide to follow. The main task of U.S. policy was first to roll back the revolution (a plan foiled by the defeat of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, then postponed through a compromise with the Soviet Union after the 1962 Missile Crisis), or at least to isolate the island economically and politically.

As soon as the U.S. government identified that Cuba was breaking out of its control, it slapped a devastating trade embargo around the island that lasts to this day. The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe provided aid and trade essential to Cuban survival, while also helping to promote undemocratic models of "socialism" among the Cuban leadership. Nonetheless, the relative political and cultural freedom on the island in the 1960s combined with the social and economic gains for the population, and the successful challenge to U.S. power, was a beacon for radical activists and revolutionaries throughout the Americas. Even some governments — in particular the bourgeois-nationalist regime in Mexico and, in the early 1970s, the short-lived reform government of Chile — were inclined to buck U.S. pressures by maintaining positive relations with Cuba. By the late 1970s and early '80s, it was clear that several Central American revolutions were attempting to follow Cuba's lead. Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala (some of Latin America's most exploited countries) fought hard to free themselves from the U.S. grip. Rolling back the revolutions in Central America quickly became the number-one priority of the U.S. government, which complained bitterly and threateningly about alleged Cuban influence and assistance in these revolutions.



"Damn blockade, here in Cuba we starve from it. But in the U.S. we'd starve from unemployment."

Cuba's Position Today

As the decade of the 1980s progressed, the United States was able to take advantage of a crisis in the Grenadian revolution to invade that island and re-establish a pro-U.S. regime. Massive assistance to counterrevolutionary forces in Guatemala and especially in El Salvador prevented revolutionary victories in those countries. The revolutionary Sandinistas of Nicaragua were able to hold power for more than ten years in the face of devastating "low intensity" military and high-intensity economic aggression by the U.S., but finally — in the second round of Nicaragua's democratic elections in 1990 (the first round was won by the revolutionaries in 1984) — the Sandinista government was dislodged.

Meanwhile, the internal contradictions of dictatorial rule in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe blended with U.S. Cold War pressures (drawing the Soviet leadership into the drain of an incredibly wasteful arms race) which tilted the international balance of power. As the decade progressed, Soviet support to Cuba, both material and political, was withdrawn in the face of the collapse of the Soviet bureaucratic system. U.S. force, both military and economic, became much more powerful in the region as a result. Soviet support — however limited, contradictory, and problematical — for indigenous revolutions dried up, and the task of freeing oneself from the U.S. became harder still. Liberation struggles continue, but unlike before there is much less international support for them. Over the past several years, the isolation of Cuba has deepened, and the old imperialist dream of rolling back the island's revolution has taken on new life.

Cuba is facing a grave crisis, perhaps the gravest in its history. The U.S. government has increased its attacks against Cuba. President-elect Bill Clinton follows in the Reagan-Bush footsteps on this, contributing to the heightened rhetoric against the Cuban leadership, but the U.S. government has by no means been satisfied with mere rhetoric. It

has carried out 45 illegal flights over Cuban air space, increased the Marine contingent at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo, and conducted military exercises at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, tailored for invasion. There is also Congressional legislation passed to tighten the blockade (the infamous Torricelli bill), \$40 million to Radio Martí for purposes of beaming anti-Castro propaganda into Cuba, increased pressure on the United Nations to tighten the blockade, increased support to anti-Castro terrorist organizations in the U.S., and a massive media

campaign aimed at preparing the U.S. people to accept U.S. intervention. The imperialist culture is circling what it believes to be wounded prey.

Thirty years ago Cuba was forced into an unnatural and highly unfavorable, if expedient, trade relationship with the former Soviet Union and the "East Bloc." Some have stressed that this contributed to political distortions (including Stalinist-type perspectives regarding a one-party state, restrictions on civil liberties, and a failure to institutionalize workers' democracy) — but the life-and-death reliance on Soviet and Eastern European economic ties resulted in economic distortions as well. These economic distortions stand in bold relief with the disintegration of central planning within those states and the collapse of any stable economic relationship with those states. Eighty percent of Cuba's foreign trade is with these countries, some 25,000 contracts being with the former Soviet Union alone. The remaining 20 percent of Cuban trade is split between Latin America and the rest of the world, each representing about 10 percent. In fact, the situation is even worse than this suggests.

At the heart of any modern society's ability to sustain itself is its ability to procure oil. Cuba is today totally dependent upon oil shipments from the former Soviet Union. Crucially necessary to the Cuban economy, there is the added problem that, increasingly over the past few years, Cuba has relied on the resale of Soviet oil on the world market in generating 80–90 percent of its hard currency reserves. This situation has caused Cuban central economic planning to fall from five-year plans to one-week plans. It has also initiated almost panic discussions of "zero option" — which is to say zero oil shipments from the East. Understandably most Cuban comrades admit that the "zero option" is not an option. No economy could recover from such a scenario, especially one as isolated from the world economy as Cuba. The Cuban leadership is pressing Latin American oil producers to make up the difference in the steadily declining oil shipments from the East. Recent diplomatic initiatives in this direction seem successful, but only to a degree and at best are extremely tenuous given the intensifying U.S. domination of the region.

In a September 5 speech, Cuban President Fidel Castro reviewed some of the realities:

We have lost so much of our import capacity in millions of dollars at current market prices, which is a loss in export prices — that is to say, the difference between the prices we received in agreements with the USSR and other countries, and what we call the garbage dump prices of the world market, because the surplus sugar ends up in that garbage dump. Through loss of prices with the USSR we have lost \$2,469 billion in sugar; with Eastern Europe, \$270.5 million; in nickel we have lost \$30 million; in other products \$14.4 million. Through the reduction in credits we used to receive — since we never received credit from the World Bank or other financial

Continued on page 40

Founding Congress of the Party of Labor Held in Moscow

by Renfrey Clarke

MOSCOW — Russia's major "new left" political formation, the Party of Labor, held its founding congress here on October 9 and 10.

The party was established in the form of an organizing committee at the end of August last year. With the adoption of a constitution and other founding documents, it can now apply for official registration, in order to run election candidates in its own name.

Even by the standards of Russian politics, with its swarm of small groupings, the Party of Labor is not a large organization. At the height of the congress the hall contained about seventy people, and the party's total membership is probably no more than 400. However, the party occupies a strategically important political space and is almost unique in having a leadership with a real grasp of international political and economic thought.

In a Programmatic Declaration adopted at the congress [see pages 8–10 in *this issue of BIDOM*], party members stressed their opposition to the government's neoliberal "reforms," which include plans for the privatization of state assets throughout most of the economy. Instead, the declaration called for a large state sector to be retained and modernized to serve as the "locomotive" required to haul the Russian economy out of depression.

This is a position which the Party of Labor shares with large sections of the main anti-Yeltsin bloc in Russian politics — the so-called "right-left opposition," based on an alliance of Russian nationalists with old-style Stalinists. However, the new party in fact has little in common with these forces.

As a central element in its plans to rebuild the shattered Russian economy, the Party of Labor urges the development of organs of workers' self-management. These concepts are quite incompatible with the "command-administer" system to which the neo-Communist parties want to return.

Also, the Party of Labor — unlike the great majority of Russian political groups — refuses to make cheap gains by adapting to Russian nationalism. One of the main challenges before the congress was to choose formulations which would make this position clear, while stressing the need for workers of

different nationalities to develop their economic and political collaboration. After lengthy discussion, a section of the party constitution endorsing the concept of a "new federalism" was adopted, with the proviso that debate on the issue would continue.

The Party of Labor thus rejects both the "barracks socialism" of the past and the capitalism of the neoliberal future, while condemning the nationalist thuggery that has been an ugly feature of Russian states for hundreds of years. These general positions are shared by scores of millions of Russians, so there can be no doubt that the territory which has opened up for the "civilized left" is exceptionally fertile.

However, the traumas of Russian history have left this political space thinly populated. Throughout most of the period since independent organizing became possible in the late 1980s, the democratic left has been represented by small and isolated political groups; by cells of worker militants within the heavily bureaucratized trade unions; by a largely stillborn movement of labor collectives; and by the still small environmental and women's movements.

If the democratic left is to become the massive force it ought logically to be, these groups need to develop the habit of collaboration. A key task which the Party of Labor has set itself is to provide a framework within which the political groups, at least, can combine their efforts. The list of currents which have joined the Party of Labor process is already considerable and reflects the talent of party leaders for intelligent compromise.

The new organization contains veterans of the Socialist Party, formed in 1990 by left-wing opponents of Communist Party rule, and of an anarcho-syndicalist current with roots in the student movement. Also present are people who worked within the Communist Party to recruit activists to the struggle for democratic socialism and workers' control. There is also a socialist-populist element, made up of people who look to the traditions of the Social Revolutionaries of the first decades of the century. Finally, there are individuals whose positions could be described as left social democratic.

Combining people from these backgrounds into an effective campaigning unit

will not be easy. However, the diverse origins of party members have meant that debates within the Party of Labor have been exceptionally rich. Party of Labor members tend to be much more familiar with the thinking of the international non-Stalinist left than Russian leftists whose main experience has been within the Communist Party, and they also have a far keener grasp than most Russian liberals of the realities of Western capitalism. As a result, the Party of Labor is well placed to join in the debates of educated Russians as these layers lose faith in the neoliberal utopia.

However, the party has no intention of remaining a discussion group for the intelligentsia. As speakers at the congress stressed, the party seeks to act as a bridge between progressive movements and political action. Much of the work of party activists consists of building contacts with the environmental, women's, and above all, labor movements, and of trying to defend the interests of these movements in the political sphere.

While useful contacts have been forged, the party's influence in broader progressive circles has so far been slight; Russian activist groups which have arisen outside established structures are almost always suspicious of political parties. Consequently, the Party of Labor has developed a strategy of building itself as a "party-movement." For a long time, leaders expect, the party's increasing strength will be reflected not so much in increased membership, as in the spread of collaborative relations with numerous movements and organizations.

Speakers at the congress were nevertheless able to report progress in recruiting members in a number of provincial industrial centers where the party did not have an implantation in the past. In all, delegates were present from eight cities.

If the congress could not be described as a great triumph, party economic strategist Andrei Kolganov observed, members had nevertheless gained a sense that despite their differences they could work together.

"There won't be rapid successes, and there are many years of struggle ahead," Kolganov concluded. "But we're not going to sit with our arms folded." □

Draft Programmatic Declaration of the Party of Labor

The following resolution was adopted by the founding congress of the Party of Labor, held in Moscow October 9–10, 1992.

Our country is now passing through one of the most dramatic periods of its history. In the course of the events of August 19–21, 1991, the people demonstrated their unwillingness to live in the old ways and their readiness to defend democratically elected organs of power. Nevertheless, the collapse of the old system of totalitarian rule has not led to the expected triumph of democracy. The people struggled against the old regime, rose up in demonstrations and built barricades, but they were not permitted to enjoy the fruits of their victory.

Despite the differences between them, the forces which came to power in Russia and in the other parts of the former Soviet Union are united in arguing that the crisis can only be overcome through the broadest possible privatization and through attracting massive quantities of foreign investment. These new ruling forces defend the rights of the entrepreneurs and of the new property owners, who in most cases have emerged from among the old *nomenklatura*. The bureaucratic oligarchy is being allowed to secure its privileges in a new form, to legalize them, and to redistribute power and property among the various groups within the ruling elite. The “property of all the people,” which never belonged to the people in more than name, is now being directly appropriated by the same circles which bear prime responsibility for the crisis in our society.

In their haste to build the “shining capitalist future” as quickly as possible, the ruling circles reject everything even vaguely connected with socialism. This indicates even such elementary social guarantees as the right to work, along with free education and health care. Social tensions are exacerbated by the threat of widespread bankruptcies and mass unemployment, by galloping inflation, by the collapse of living standards, and by the severing of the first shoots of workplace democracy that were permitted under earlier legislation.

The destruction of the system of social guarantees is leading to a new growth of discontent and to a political instability that is pregnant with dictatorship. Civil rights are being restricted; elected organs of power are being disbanded; opposition publishing houses are being shut down, and the powers of representative bodies are being curtailed in favor of a concentration of authority in the executive branch.

Those who suffer as a result of these policies are not only the workers. They also include the independent entrepreneurs, who cannot compete freely with the monopolistic organizations of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie — the new social layer which has emerged as a result of the privatization of state property, and which controls the structures of power. Instead of the ideologically neutral state which was promised, a new system of power has arisen. It has replaced communist slogans with anticommunist ones, but it has preserved its bureaucratic basis. The promised triumph of law over arbitrary exercise of power has not occurred either. The country risks repeating the darkest pages of its history.

The unanimity of the victors is especially dangerous, since

without opposition, without the representation of dissident views in the organs of power, democracy ceases to be democracy.

Decades of totalitarian rule by the Communist Party have discredited socialist values and the very concept of the liberation of labor. But these values and ideas did not arise out of drawing-room discussions; they represent real necessities of the defense of workers’ interests. The collapse of the Communist Party has finally made it possible to create a genuine democratic left movement that expresses these needs. This is why we now view it as essential to form a broad Party of Labor, a party-movement constructed on the basis of initiatives from below. We reject the idea of a vanguard party. The Party of Labor must become a party of political support to the trade unions and the workers’ movement. Without trying to bind the mass workers’ organizations to its leading role, the party must help them to acquire their own voice in the organs of power, and to become the decisive force in our social development. Only a party of this type can meet the real needs of working people in our country and become an organic part of the international left movement.

If the parties of today’s ruling layers see their aim as defending the interests of the entrepreneurs, we declare our intention of defending the interests of hired workers above all.

Our society needs a party that campaigns:

- for the right of all workers to a job;
- for reform of the system of social guarantees;
- for economic democracy, for the participation of workers in making economic decisions that affect their material position and conditions of work;
- for the independence of the trade union movement; for the guaranteed right of trade unions to exist and operate freely in all enterprises no matter what the form of property; for the ratification by our country of the Convention of the International Labor Organization;
- for the development of collective and municipal forms of property; for the transformation of the state sector of our economy into a modern, efficient, decentralized social sector capable of leading our country out of economic crisis;
- for an end to the uncontrolled bureaucratic privatization of the former “property of all the people”; against the turning of state monopolies into private ones;
- for the rights of consumers and of independent national entrepreneurs;
- for the democratic regulation of the economy as an indispensable condition for establishing civilized forms of the market;
- for integration into the world economy on a basis that ensures the development of national production and exchange, instead of serving the interests of transnational corporations;
- for self-management and a strong representative power as counterweights to the centralization of executive authority;
- for honest government, guaranteed by a strict demarcation of state from commercial activity and by a clear division between

the social and private sectors within the framework of the mixed economy;

- for genuine equality of women; for the effective right of women to participate fully in the life of society, without being forced to renounce family responsibilities;
- for the rights of national, cultural, and religious minorities.

Impasses and Alternatives

The crisis which afflicts our country is not only the result of the collapse of the old system of rule. Our productive technology has become obsolete, as has the whole structure of our economy. Our country, which not long ago was among the world leaders, is increasingly being transformed into an outdated and dependent periphery of world capitalism.

Our economy must now be rescued from chaos. Normal economic ties must be reestablished between the various regions and enterprises. The consumer market must be saturated with goods. The people must complete the work, left unfinished by the totalitarian regime, of creating the conditions for a modern industrial society — establishing an infrastructure, creating modern means of communication, and so forth. At the same time, our society must begin the transition from the old basis of industrial production to new, post-industrial structures.

The experience of Eastern Europe and of our own country during the 1980s provides convincing proof not only of the bankruptcy of the old administrative methods of rule, but also of the futility of seeking “pure” market solutions and of mechanically combining elements of bureaucratic-administrative planning with the free market.

In Western countries, developed market forms took several centuries to evolve, and after this a whole arsenal of regulatory mechanisms arose in a natural historical fashion. A mechanical transferring of these methods onto our soil is impossible, since our problems are qualitatively different from those which the Western economies have traditionally confronted.

Under conditions of an extreme deficit of goods and services, and of economic disorganization, attempts to unleash elemental economic processes will only intensify the crisis.

The impossibility of free competition is bound up with a historically determined structure of production in which practically all branches are dominated by one or a handful of huge monopolistic enterprises. In principle, antimonopoly legislation can yield nothing in such conditions. In order to subject enterprises to genuine competition, a complex program of economic restructuring must be implemented. This needs to include long-term investment programs, involving the creation of new enterprises and the reorganization of existing ones. Imports must be controlled, and certain controls must also be exercised over exports. All this in turn is impossible without strong and effective planning of economic processes.

This planning must ensure that the basic needs of the population are supplied, while not limiting the initiative of enterprises and not undermining the stimuli for their development. During the period when the crisis is being overcome, these ends may be achieved by using directive methods to set the minimum basic levels of output, and by setting favorable tax levels for production over and above state orders. Simultaneously, heavy fines must be imposed in cases where enterprises which have failed to fulfill state orders sell their produce through channels and at prices which are not foreseen in the state orders.

Property, Plan, and Market

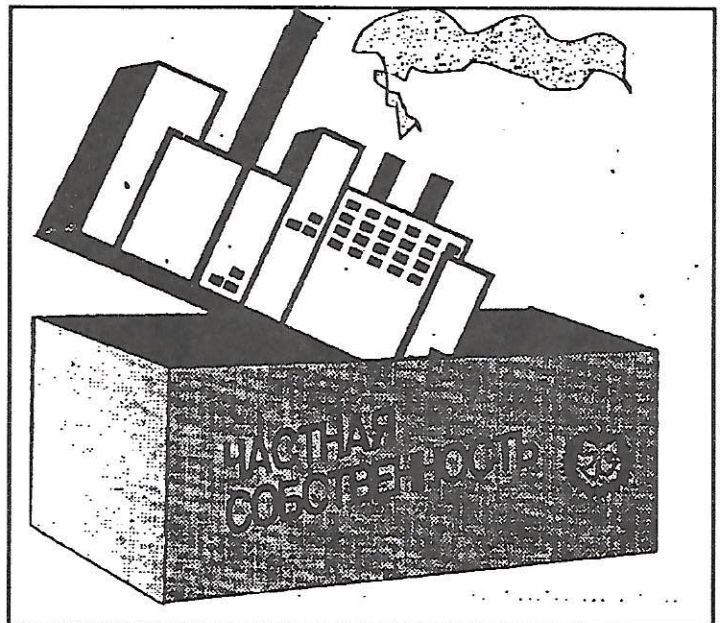
The development of a commodity market is an indispensable condition for the formation of an efficient economy. The official propaganda implicitly suggests that the market and private property are identical. We are convinced, however, that the universal introduction of private property can no more guarantee economic efficiency than total nationalization can guarantee social justice. In a country where Western traditions are absent and where there is no such thing as a civilized modern bourgeoisie — whose formation in Europe and America required centuries — a spontaneously arising market can take on only the most primitive and barbaric forms.

Without the conscious transformation of the existing structure of the economy any large-scale privatization leads automatically to replacing state monopoly with private, with the additional problem that private monopolies are even more difficult to control.

The development of entrepreneurship “from below,” the establishment of new firms, and the creation of new jobs and products must be encouraged in every way possible. Cooperatives and small private businesses must be given access to cheap credits, to premises, and to raw materials. The creation of private super-monopolies on the basis of the old centralized state property constitutes one of the most serious obstacles to achieving this.

The only force which can serve as a “locomotive” capable of dragging the country out of its crisis is a transformed and democratized social sector of the economy. The state enterprises which carry out economic tasks on various levels must be the property of the respective soviets. Democratic organs of power must be given control of their own investment funds, so that they can use these accumulated assets to create jobs, to modernize production and make it environmentally safe, and to retrain workers.

The representative organs of power cannot and should not be involved in direct economic management and must not be forced to rely on profits from economic activity. The only appropriate source of income for popular power bodies is officially imposed taxes. The tasks of the democratic soviets, in our opinion, must



The gift box is labeled “private property”

include defining the priorities of development and the basic directions in which the use of social funds should proceed.

We consider that the direct management of each enterprise should be carried out both by its work collective, which should elect or hire the managers, and by the enterprise administration, which should be independent in its actions while remaining responsible to the soviet for the use of the social funds invested in the enterprise. The workers should also be guaranteed the opportunity to participate in controlling production.

The plurality of forms of property and administration within the social sector (including property ownership by work collectives) makes it possible to create a flexible decentralized economic mechanism that combines democracy in production with democracy in civil life. This will ensure that the rights of workers are respected and that social guarantees are provided "on the spot," without the cumbersome and inefficient centralized bureaucracy which has proven disastrous under both communist and capitalist regimes.

Viable Democracy

We are firmly convinced that the soviets which now exist in our country, irrespective of who constitutes the majority in them, are incapable either of carrying out the tasks of economic development or even of ensuring that the normal process of decision-making goes ahead.

The collapse of the single "monolithic" bureaucratic pyramid has led to the rise of a multitude of local bureaucracies on all levels. These local bureaucracies are conducting a confused struggle among themselves for power and privilege, and over the division of the former "property of the whole people." Despite the formal proclamation of democratic freedoms — of multi-party pluralism, freedom of the press, and so forth — the country lacks the elementary conditions for the formation and development of civil society. The social groups which have arisen (with the exception of the bureaucracy) are still not fully conscious of their interests, and have not acquired the habits of self-organization. In essence, what is taking shape at the moment is not a democratic state but something closer to feudalism.

In such circumstances it is entirely natural that many "liberal" politicians both in the center and in the various regions should try to put an end to the anarchy in the country by installing an authoritarian regime, overturning the few democratic freedoms we possess, dissolving the political parties and soviets, and setting in place a system of personal power.

These policies are presenting an acute threat to the future of our country and of its peoples. The suppression of initiative from below and the repression which would inevitably follow the installation of a group or individual dictatorship threaten to undermine the possibility of any renewal of society.

The alternative to "liberal" authoritarianism, which is thrusting us back toward barbarism under the cover of beautiful phrases about "the free market" and "the return to civilization," can only be the struggle for the democratic reform of power. This must include the creation of new, viable soviets and of a new democratic majority within them, the development of culture, and improving workers' qualifications and raising the quality of their labor.

Both in the state and in the productive sphere, only a functioning and not merely declarative democracy can solve our problems. Only the creation of new, viable organs and structures at all levels can aid the formation in our country of a system of power which is responsible before society and before the law. Without the

effective, democratic reform of power at the local level there can be no resolution of the national question; Russia cannot be reconstructed, and there can be no reliable guarantees of independence for the peoples who are striving to create their own national states. We are convinced that the only way such a power can be created in our country is through the rise of the labor movement, through the acquisition by the mass of working people of an understanding of their interests, and through struggles by workers to defend their rights.

Only the solidarity of working people can provide an alternative to divisions between nationalities. Only forces which are not tied to the interests of bureaucratic oligarchies, which are not participants in the quarrels between regions and republics, can alter the course of events. Such forces, in our view, must place at the center of their activity the interests and demands of the people, their welfare and dignity.

Our Values

To make human beings the masters of their fates, independent in the highest degree of external forces not under their control, whether these are the power of the state or the power of capital; to overcome the alienation of the worker from the means of production and of the citizen from the taking of social or governmental decisions; to transform a society of hired workers and state subjects into a society of citizens with equal rights, who freely choose their destinies — these are the traditional aims of the socialist movement to which we strive to remain true.

Freedom is impossible unless there is civic accountability and unless people have equal rights. Modern civilized society features a juridical equality — in formal terms the law is the same for everyone, and the government proclaims that citizens have equal political rights. But full equality of political rights is unattainable under an economic system which divides people into owners of property on the one hand, and on the other, hired workers who are forced to sell their labor power. The road to human freedom lies through overcoming economic and social alienation, and through the liberation of labor.

It is impossible to overcome alienation either in society where state-bureaucratic forms of property predominate, or in one where market relations provide the setting for rule by big capital. Modern Western capitalism has achieved a very advanced form of development, and has shown clearly what is and what is not possible on this basis. But although capitalist society has brought about a very high level of prosperity in a few Western countries, it has proven incapable of fully solving the problems of poverty and alienation and has also given rise to new contradictions — the global environmental crisis and the division of the world into a dependent, ever more backward "periphery" and a highly developed industrial "center," whose prosperity is linked to an ever greater degree with maintaining the backwardness of the rest of the world. Thanks to the liberal reforms, Russia is more and more becoming a part of the dependent periphery. Along with the other republics of the former Soviet Union, our country is about to experience the injustice of this system in full measure.

The world is becoming more and more crowded; it is too small for us to allow these problems to remain unsolved. Humanity will move forward, and the current state of the world will not remain unchanged. Before us is the beginning of humanity's transition to a qualitatively new stage of its development; our country must take part in this transition together with all the other peoples, and not transform itself into a brake on history.

Socialism as we understand it is a society of economic democracy, a society which guarantees people and national groupings the maximum degree of freedom on the basis of equal rights. These include the right to take part on an equal basis in economic decision-making, and the right to participate equally in the administration of public property. This does not involve an attempt to make everyone identical, to force everyone into the same mold. On the contrary, socialism creates the possibility for everyone of showing their individual face, and of realizing their potential to the maximum degree.

Socialism for us is not some finished ideal, which must be realized once and for all, but a prolonged historical process involving the evolution of old social forms and the rise and development of new ones, based on the combining of economic and political democracy. In different countries the socialist perspective may take on quite distinct forms, depending on the concrete economic, political, and cultural conditions and the general level of development. The highly developed countries of the West stand on the threshold of the post-industrial era and are trying to overcome the environmental crisis and to find worthwhile uses for their huge technological potential. It is clear that the socialist perspective in these countries will assume very different forms from those it will take on in Eastern Europe, beset by crises on all sides and trying at any price to overcome its growing technological lag behind the West, or in the countries of the Third World, which suffer both from the most barbaric forms of traditional capitalist exploitation and from bureaucratic totalitarian dictatorships.

We reject utopias, but hold strongly to the values and ideals which we have embraced. Attempts at realizing the consumer utopia of the “perfect society,” based on equal distribution of

goods, lead in practice to the complete opposite of what was originally promised. Instead of a society without shortages or problems, there emerges a system which exacerbates to an extreme degree all the problems which need to be overcome. The totalitarian utopia not only reproduces the worst features of early capitalism — the lack of rights for working people, the alienation of the individual, social inequality — but also undermines people’s faith in the possibility of full liberation, and discredits the very idea of the new society. However, an unprincipled political approach oriented solely toward the needs of the present day would be just as devoid of prospects. In the final instance the crisis of utopian consciousness gives rise to just such a political position — of defending the power of rulers who no longer believe in their own utopia, who laugh at their promises and who pride themselves on their cynicism. This political consciousness, which prevailed in our society until recent times, has nothing in common with genuine political realism. It, too, is based on illusions and can have results that are totally unexpected.

Political cynicism and the lack of principles are the reverse side of the totalitarian utopia and bear witness to its crisis. Such attitudes cannot form the basis for genuine renewal. This is why we reject cynicism: so that our society can reestablish its values. It is essential for our society to regain a belief in itself, for people to have the opportunity to rely on their own strengths, to maintain a genuine cultural succession that includes a continuity with the revolutionary traditions of the past. People must have the opportunity finally to reject the totalitarian utopia. The essence of socialism lies in the movement of society toward more democratic forms of self-organization. This must be brought to fruition by society itself in the process of long and difficult labor. □

What Happened to the Political Revolution?

by David Mandel

The following is the edited text of a talk given by the author at the Rethinking Marxism Conference held at Amherst, Massachusetts, November 12–14, 1992.

I. Introduction: The Prediction

I want to take the title of this conference — Rethinking Marxism — seriously and examine the expectation held until recently by an important current in Marxism, myself included, that the democratic or antibureaucratic revolution in the Soviet Union, would return it to the path of socialist development; in other words, that the social goal of the antibureaucratic movement would be to socialize economic power, not privatize it. Although the final verdict is far from in, and although one must seriously question the democratic credentials of the regimes in power today, events so far have not favored this prediction. The question I want to explore here is “why?” This is fundamentally a question of the correlation of social forces, and more specifically of the relative

weakness of the working class, the class most directly interested in a socialist solution to the crisis of the bureaucratic system.

Trotsky’s name is the one most closely associated with the thesis of a political revolution that would restore a socialist regime. Like most revolutionaries, he spoke at times of the inevitability of revolutionary outcomes. But in fact in the section of *The Revolution Betrayed* entitled “The Inevitability of a New Revolution” he wrote that the fate of the October revolution was bound up with the fate of Europe and the whole world, that if there was no revolution in the developed capitalist world,

a bourgeois counterrevolution rather than an insurrection of the workers against the bureaucracy will be on the order of the day. [But if], in spite of the united sabotage of reformists and “Communist” leaders, the proletariat of Western Europe finds the road to power, a new chapter will open in the history of the Soviet Union. The first

victory of a revolution in Europe would pass like an electric shock through the Soviet masses, straighten them up, raise their spirit of independence, awaken the traditions of 1905 and 1917...*Only in that way can the first workers' state be saved for the socialist future* [emphasis added]

This was entirely consistent with the position of all Russian Marxists and of the workers' movement generally in 1917: the ultimate fate of the socialist revolution in Russia depended on the international correlation of class forces. Despite contemporary capitalism's crisis, that correlation today, as during the course of perestroika itself, still strongly favors the bourgeoisie. This international situation expressed itself in the USSR above all as tremendous ideological pressure in favor of a capitalist restoration, though it also took, and still takes, important specific economic and political forms.

One might ask, however, why anyone should have expected the Soviet working class to be any more revolutionary than the workers of the capitalist countries? But in the first place, despite the failure of the socialist revolution to materialize in the West, the Western working class has displayed, in various periods and different countries, the revolutionary potential that Marx attributed to it — although, of course, it is never easy to make the case for something that might have happened, but didn't. In addition, the role of the Soviet regime in undermining this potential is a factor not to be ignored: the failure of the Western working class to break the isolation of the Russian revolution reacted back powerfully upon it.

In any case the task of the revolution in a bureaucratic state seemed very different from that under capitalism, and in many respects simpler. True, the regime was totalitarian, but it was totalitarian precisely because its social base was so fragile, something the events of the past five years have shown very concretely. In contrast to the bourgeoisie's situation under capitalism, the dominant ideology in the Soviet Union placed the ruling bureaucracy in a position of criminal usurpers, while at the same time it tended to legitimate workers' struggles for political and economic democracy. In 1962, when the workers of Novochoerkassk struck against the authorities, they carried portraits of Lenin and sang revolutionary songs. They were acting largely on the basis of what they had been taught in school and seen in the movies.

In a centralized economic system with a single employer, the workers did not seem subject to the sectional divisions that plague the working class under capitalism. With no formal organization or leaders, the Novochoerkassk workers had little trouble organizing a strike that quickly embraced the entire city. In Poland in the early 1980s, in the course of a few months, virtually all the workers united in a single antibureaucratic organization.

The optimism about the coming political revolution thus had some basis in historical experience. In the '50s, '60s, '70s, and early '80s, in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and especially Poland, there had been powerful antibureaucratic movements in which the workers were, or eventually became, the leading force fighting for democracy and self-management under a socialist banner. These movements were all cut short, directly or indirectly, by the Soviet bureaucracy, whose position at home remained effectively unchallenged.

Finally, the depth of the systemic crisis, which Gorbachev's essentially bureaucratic reform only exacerbated, virtually imposed a fundamental choice on the workers — the system *itself* had to be replaced. Such a choice has rarely confronted workers in developed capitalist countries in so stark a form, and it does not

confront them at present, despite the depth of the crisis. If a systemic choice had to be made in the Soviet Union, any more or less dispassionate analysis made clear that a capitalist restoration would mean the loss of important social rights, the renunciation of the workers' claim to other official but unfulfilled rights, and a severe decline in their living standards for at least a generation.

So the prediction did have considerable basis in reality. And to repeat, the final verdict is far from in; very major social conflicts lie ahead, before any stable resolution of the crisis of the old system will emerge. It is therefore legitimate to pose the question, What are the obstacles preventing the prediction from being realized?

II. The Obstacles to the Political Revolution

It is in the area of ideology that the impact of the unfavorable international correlation of class forces is probably greatest. The most powerful ideological weapon in the procapitalist arsenal is that "the whole world has embraced the market." The left, on the other hand, cannot point to a single attractive noncapitalist or socialist country, or even to a significant labor movement, with the exception perhaps of the Brazilian PT, that is fighting for socialism as a real, concrete goal for the foreseeable future. The foreign labor organization most active in the CIS, the AFL-CIO, is promoting capitalist restoration.

On the other hand, the Soviet past has been identified in the popular mind with socialism. The past, which, after all, was not only a record of failure and crime but also of significant successes, has been thoroughly discredited. This is not so much the result of the liberal campaign of distortions and lies about the past as a spontaneous popular reaction against the Brezhnev era of stagnation and, *even more*, against the drastic economic decline that resulted from Gorbachev's failed reform attempts, under the banner of socialist renewal.

It was the depth of this crisis, which people correctly associated with Communist rule, that made the liberal ideological campaign so effective. This is in a way a belated popular reaction to a failed revolution. (I refer to 1917.) But at the start of perestroika, despite all the accumulated dissatisfaction over the preceding decade, the vast majority of workers still saw socialism in a positive light, as something desirable and feasible. The early stage of perestroika, officially presented as a return to original socialist ideals, evoked genuine enthusiasm among broad elements of the working class. But the enthusiasm quickly waned when people saw that the reformers did not intend to fundamentally change power relations and especially when the economy entered its tailspin.

The result is that people fighting today for a socialist solution to the systemic crisis are easily portrayed as harmful dreamers, and worse, as people who would return society to the old system, perhaps in a slightly refurbished form.

The procapitalist forces also had other ideological advantages. The workers entered perestroika without an ideology of their own, while the procapitalist forces could import theirs ready-made from the West. This was an almost complete reversal of the situation at the end of the 19th century, when the Russian labor movement was able to import Marxist ideology ready-made from the Western labor movements, while the Russian bourgeoisie, closely tied to the tsarist state, had no ideology of its own to offer the population. Before perestroika, there was no political space for the workers to develop their own ideology: no labor movement to speak of could exist; socialist dissidents were subject to the harshest repressions; and there was no socialist equivalent of the Voice of America.

Moreover, the real capitalist content of the liberals' program was only revealed to the workers very late in the game, really from 1990 on, when the economic crisis had already become very acute and the socialist idea largely discredited. As I already noted, the early stages of perestroika proceeded under the banner of socialist renewal, economic and political democracy, producers' self-management, making workers the real masters of the economy, pay according to work, etc. Even Gorbachev's so-called radical critics tried to couch their criticism within these goals. This helped to disarm the workers ideologically, inasmuch as, on the face of it, their interests weren't being directly threatened, though many workers, of course, did nurture doubts on that score.

The soviet elections of the spring of 1990 marked the high point of popular activism. The beneficiaries were the procapitalist opposition that got itself elected in many places on a vague anti-bureaucratic platform, whose social content was either absent or hidden behind vague concepts of freedom. Even so, there was still a lot of talk about work collectives, soviet power, and Yeltsin's famous promise that no one would suffer. When the liberals praised the market, they presented it as the antithesis of bureaucratic domination, hiding the antiworker aspects inherent to their conception of the market reform. Soviet workers, on the other hand, had no real experience with a market and no conception of what private property really means. All they knew for sure was that living standards in the West were relatively higher and the factories well organized, while in the Soviet Union shortages were making life unbearable and production was in chaos.

For all these reasons, until the liberals directly assumed positions of power and began to carry out their program, it was practically impossible for workers even to begin thinking in terms of an alternative.

On the ideological front today, there are some positive elements. The liberals have largely failed to destroy the strong attachment of workers to goals and values that are fundamental to socialism and can only be realized under it. Ten months into shock therapy, the vast majority have understood that what is happening is a "revolution from above" directed against their fundamental interests. Today, ordinary workers without hesitation describe the privatization policy as a rip-off of the people; the general economic policy as criminal; the breakup of the USSR itself as a plot carried out behind the people's back. (This view is obviously more prevalent among Russians.)

Despite this, workers don't support any of the socialist political movements. In fact, they don't support parties at all, and are in general today at their lowest point of activism since perestroika began. This expresses itself not only in the political passivity and indifference of a large majority of workers, but in their unwillingness to mobilize even in trade union organizations for more limited, defensive goals, such as wages, conditions, and jobs, a task rather easier than the struggle for state power to realize a global working class alternative.

So today the ideological factor as such plays a much more limited role in determining the unfavorable correlation of forces for the workers. To a degree, this has been compensated for by increased repression, both in the state and in the enterprises. Arbitrary actions by the managerial and state power are on the rise, after reaching a low point around 1990. But by far the most important factor is the economic crises — the drastic decline in real wages and the real threat of unemployment. These hit workers

just at the time when they finally understood the fiercely antipopular nature of the procapitalist regimes.

Along with a strong sense of insecurity that depresses the will to act collectively, there is a profound disillusionment with the possible fruits of such action. Economic actions do not seem promising when the very existence of jobs and the enterprise itself are in question. At the same time, workers see their political involvement as having led them to the present mess. Even labor activists say: We elected Yeltsin, didn't we? You can't hold new elections every year. No one will vote, etc.

In these circumstances, when workers have little faith in their own forces, many prefer to support their directors and the directors' lobby as their best hope for keeping their jobs and their factories open, rather than organize their own political force.

III. The Future

The picture at present is not a bright one, but it would be unjustified to simply project it into the future. The disorientation and disillusionment produced by the shock therapy are bound to wear off, probably sooner than later. The impact of economic depression, just as of economic expansion, on workers' readiness to act collectively depends on many factors that go to make up the overall conjuncture. For example, those who have been most active since the shock therapy began are the health and education workers, whose economic situation is the most desperate. Besides absolute impoverishment, a factor that has favored their mobilization is that the state is their direct, common boss; it pays their salaries.

Another factor is that they, for the most part, aren't directly threatened with unemployment (mobilization among preschool teachers was lower). But while the mass of industrial workers are threatened with unemployment, mass unemployment has not yet arrived — entire factories have not been closed. The reaction to that, if it happens, might be very different from the threat of unemployment, which allows workers to hope that the state or the administration will act on their behalf. Privatization and its practical consequences for workers also remain more of a threat than a reality, since it has not yet occurred on any large scale in industry.

The political state of affairs among the elite, especially the kind of deep, open split that has not really existed since Gorbachev's ouster, can also be determining for workers' readiness to mobilize. The drastic, absolute loss of legitimacy of the Yeltsin regime — according to polls, even more in Moscow than elsewhere, and Moscow was always the most strongly pro "democrat" — as well as the emergence of a directors' opposition [the Civic Union, headed by Arkady Volsky], which is challenging the neoliberal IMF-oriented program, could create a political opening more favorable to workers' mobilization.

In sum, although at present there are few grounds for optimism, I wouldn't consider the game over by any means. The former Soviet Union is going through a process that has no historical precedent or analogue: an attempt at transition to capitalism in an already industrialized society. Moreover, this is occurring in a period of deep crisis of the world capitalist system. And as weak as the working class was in the early stages of past historic crises — in the first part of World War I and during the rise of fascism — these crises eventually resulted in major revolutionary mobilizations. □

The Case of Tajikistan

World Impoverishment, the Decline in the ex-USSR, and the Spread of Armed Conflicts

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

It is useful to view the developments in the former Soviet Union against the background of worldwide impoverishment and the crisis of the world economy.

Recent figures show that 73 percent of the world's population — some 3.9 billion people — live in conditions of “human suffering,” according to the annual report of the Population Crisis Committee (*Washington Post*, May 17, 1993).

In the past five years, the report said, per capita income continued to fall in the poorer countries, with the gap between rich and poor increasing. This survey based its findings on such factors as life expectancy, access to childhood immunization, clean drinking water, and education, access to the media, political freedom, and civil rights, as well as daily caloric intake.

The four poorest nations were Mozambique, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Haiti — all victims of the crisis of world capitalism, imperialist exploitation, and military intrigues.

At the same time, under the weight of financial debts owed by the Third World to imperialist lending institutions, the poorest nations pay out to imperialism more than they receive. For example, the Third World countries received from all sources \$137.2 billion in 1990 and \$137.5 billion in 1991. Meanwhile, debt service payments by Third World countries on their nearly \$1.5 trillion debt cost them \$159.1 billion in 1990 and \$150.9 billion in 1991. (The reduction in debt payments was due to rescheduling arrangements with the major imperialist lenders in exchange for promises by the debtor governments to impose on their populations further austerity measures that will lead to even further impoverishment of the masses.)

In other words, the poor countries paid out nearly \$14 billion more than they received in 1991. (See the annual report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, whose results were reviewed in a Reuters release, September 13, 1992.)

With this background in mind, let us look at the developments in the former Soviet Union.

The historic reforms initiated by the Kremlin rulers under Mikhail Gorbachev in a vain effort to jump-start the stagnant economy have unleashed a new series of traumatic crises that are integrally related to the crisis of world capitalism. In their craven effort to

entice imperialist investment and financial assistance, the ruling bureaucrats offered concession after concession to imperialism. These concessions ended up destroying the economic relations that had allowed the Soviet economy to function at all, and they accomplished nothing.

The bureaucrats' political and economic prostration before imperialism was not rewarded. As the Kremlin rulers abandoned the centrally controlled economic plan to switch to a system based on the “anarchy” of market mechanisms and privatization of the means of production, the stagnant economy headed into a downward spiral, but no large-scale assistance came through from imperialism. On the contrary, in the wake of the economic collapse that became more pronounced throughout 1991, the initiative switched from the Kremlin reformers to the imperialist lenders from whom gigantic loans had been sought.

Witnessing the economic collapse of the Soviet Union, the imperialist lenders — the International Monetary Fund, Western capitalist governments, and the banks in the main capitalist countries — began to worry. Suddenly the collapse of the Soviet Union was not funny any more: it became a source of anxiety. The imperialist creditors began to

show concern that the Soviet economic crisis might affect the USSR's ability to repay its debts abroad. By November 1991 the imperialist creditors began calling the shots to insure repayment.

While the International Monetary Fund has promised some \$24 billion in loans and credits to the former Soviet Union, only \$1 billion has been advanced. Meanwhile, by September 1992 the former Soviet Union — now the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) — owed \$4 billion to foreign creditors, and this after a debt-rescheduling arrangement. Under this arrangement the imperialist lenders agreed to postpone repayments of principal and demanded only payments of interest on debts of some \$70 billion incurred by the USSR before January 1, 1991. Repayment of both principal and interest were still demanded on debts incurred after January 1, 1991. The amount owed as a result of this deal was expected to total nearly \$10 billion by the end of 1992.

However, with the economy of the CIS collapsing — industrial production fell 28–29 percent in September; oil production, the chief export product, declined about 13 percent; and the monthly inflation rate was at least 25 percent — its member states, principally the Russian Federation, were unable to



make such payments. With only roughly \$2 billion on hand, the Russian government was asking that payments on interest be deferred. To expect new loans under such circumstances is wishful thinking.

The economy continues to function chiefly because the government continues to print more money. In July, the Russian government printed 260 billion rubles, more in thirty days than the Soviet government printed in the last 30 years combined, according to the United Press Foreign Service (UPF) August 28, 1992. Still, workers in industries throughout Russia go for months without being paid.

As a result of the economic reforms, eight of every ten Russians have experienced a severe cut in their standard of living over the past year. Some indicators of the devastation the economic reforms have brought to the population are that the birth rate in Russia has dropped 12 percent so far in 1992 as compared with 1991, and that life expectancy has already dropped to 63.5 years (it was 66 years in 1964). The high cost of food has led to an increasing incidence of malnutrition. Lack of proper medical treatment, as a result of the dismantling of the system of free medical care, and the lack of immunization supplies — because of slashed government budgets and subsidies — have led to an increased incidence of diseases such as diphtheria, tuberculosis, and polio.

These deteriorating health conditions are worsened by contaminated drinking water — caused by shortages of chemicals and parts to maintain sewage systems, as well as by the dismantling of the system of economic planning. One-third of Russians are now drinking contaminated water, and hot water is rarely available in most regions. (Reuters, October 1, 1992; Washington Post, October 1 and 3, 1992.) Data like these indicate clearly that the market reforms are only exacerbating the economic and social problems that were the result of the “stagnation” of the Brezhnev years and more than six decades of Stalinist bureaucratic rule. In fact, the market reforms are rather quickly converting Russia from a major world power into a “Third World” country.

Meanwhile, “privatization” has done little more than legalize the theft of state property, with the chief beneficiaries being the ruling bureaucrats — the former “Communists” — and the criminal network they nourished over the years.

Numerous “privatization” schemes have been advanced since the economic perestroika was initiated. The latest was the plan to issue a voucher worth 10,000 rubles (about \$25) to 150 million Russians so that each could “buy a share” of the economy (which in reality was theirs to begin with!). The plan is widely scorned by the workers as another ploy by the rulers. Not only would 10,000 rubles not go very far, but also the vouchers cannot be used to buy shares in shops, defense industries, fuel production, raw materials, or transportation industries, among

others. In fact, the few industries whose shares may be “purchased” with these vouchers are the oldest, most outmoded enterprises on the verge of bankruptcy. The bureaucrats are saving the choicest industries for themselves, their friends, and imperialist investors.

The only substantial “privatization” in Russia is in small enterprises employing less than 200 workers. Approximately 11 percent of such enterprises—mostly shops and service centers—are now privately owned, two-thirds of them having been “auctioned off.” However, these 11 percent have a value of no more than *one million rubles* (Reuters, November 19, 1992, based on data from the International Finance Corporation, a World Bank investment company).

The Republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia

While living conditions have worsened considerably in Russia, they are incomparably worse in the non-Russian republics, now ostensibly independent states, where the economic calamities have been aggravated by civil wars that have cost thousands of lives and created hundreds of thousands of refugees, specifically in the Caucasus and in Central Asia.

While these republics are nominally independent, they have not been democratized. In the Central Asian republics — the most depressed and impoverished regions of the former USSR — the old totalitarian police regimes of the Stalinist apparatus remain in place, while the old party rulers, now under another banner, have gotten themselves “popularly elected.” Popular movements are still suppressed.

The patterns of investment of the imperialist predators in Russia and in Central Asia have followed their investment patterns in the Third World. That is, they are seeking to exploit oil and mineral resources.

For example, Exxon, the world’s largest oil company, and Mobil, the second largest U.S. oil company, announced in September that they intend to pursue oil exploration and production in Russia’s Western Siberian basin. They “hope to develop with Russian interests a major oil- and gas-producing region in an area that encompasses about *86 million acres*,” company executives announced (UPF, September 10, 1992; emphasis added.)

Exxon and Mobil are two of four U.S. companies in the Arabian- American company (Aramco) which produced the bulk of Saudi Arabia’s oil; it became a Saudi company in the 1980s. Aramco, whose other two U.S. partners are Chevron and Texaco, in September announced that it would “help” Azerbaijan increase its annual oil production by developing new fields in the Caspian Sea — some 130 miles east of Baku, the Azerbaijan capital. Azeri officials were expected to fly to Houston in September to seal a deal under which production would start in two and a half years, increasing Azerbaijan oil

output from 220,000 barrels per day to 280,000 barrels a day.

Legislation in Russia requires that 50 percent of oil revenues must go to the state coffers. Declining production over the past few years has thus cut into government revenues. Making matters worse, nearly one-third of the oil produced is exported illegally, thus avoiding government taxes. Russia’s legislation is one reason imperialist investors find the Central Asian regimes more attractive. The regime in Kazakhstan, by way of contrast, gives foreign producers a five-year “tax holiday.”

This is one reason Chevron, the fourth-largest U.S. oil company, directed by former President Reagan’s Secretary of State George Shultz, has signed a *40-year agreement* with the Kazakhstan government to develop the Tengiz and Korolev oil fields northeast of the Caspian Sea. The Tengiz oil field, the largest oil deposit discovered in the past decade, contains at least 25 billion barrels of oil and is the tenth largest oil field in the world! The Kazakhstan regime has also signed deals with France’s Elf Aquitaine, Italy’s Agip, and British Gas.

Although Russia has far greater oil and gas reserves, it is “bogged down in political and economic uncertainty, and foreign investors shudder at legal and tax uncertainties,” UPF reported.

The ruble is not yet a convertible currency, which means imperialists cannot export what profits they might make inside Russia or the former republics. But this is not such a problem if minerals or fuel are simply extracted and sold abroad for foreign currency, as will be the case with these investments.

However, as Kazakhstan’s chief energy minister Uzakhbai Karabalin put it, “political stability was the main factor in attracting big business.” Political stability has been a foremost goal of Kazakhstan’s president Nursultan Nazarbaev, a “reformed” CP chief, who openly states he seeks to build a Kazakhstan modeled after such inspiring examples as the Philippines or South Korea.

The Bechtel Group, whose president was George Shultz until he became Reagan’s secretary of state in 1981, has joined in on the expected bonanza, signing a contract to build an \$850 million-plus crude oil pipeline system to ship oil from Grozny in the Chechen Republic to Novorossysk on the Black Sea *for export* (UPF, October 23, 1992). The contract was awarded by the pipeline’s sponsor — the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, composed oddly enough of *the Sultanate of Oman* (!) as well as the republics of Kazakhstan, Russia, and Azerbaijan.

Competing with a dozen or so other firms, the company spokesman said it was able to win the contract because of “its expertise in project management, its technical capabilities and its ability to arrange financing for such deals.” The real reason is that Bechtel has good connections.

A partner of imperialist lenders, Bechtel made a killing in Saudi Arabia, building an

industrial metropolis in Jubail for \$55 million, which represented "the largest single construction project in history," according to the New York newspaper Downtown (December 12, 1990). Bechtel, the second largest U.S. construction company, is not — by the way — suffering from the crisis of world capitalism; quite the contrary. Its 1991 revenues were up 81 percent.

In addition to George Shultz, other former U.S. government officials who have been officials at Bechtel include Casper Weinberger — Nixon's secretary of health, education, and welfare, recently indicted for his role in the Iran-Contra arms for hostages deal while he was Reagan's secretary of defense — and the notorious CIA director and U.S. ambassador to Iran, Richard Helms. "Bechtel makes its profits by securing billion-dollar government contracts," Downtown reported. The company projects an accelerated production schedule to complete the pipeline in three years.

That these prominent imperialist firms are deciding to invest in this way indicates that they have a certain degree of "investor confidence," that is, that the workers in Russia and Central Asia will not mobilize to seriously jeopardize their profits.

Their confidence must certainly be enhanced by the fact that Turkey — a chief U.S. military client, whose army has been busy massacring its own Kurdish population to suppress the Kurdish popular movement for democratic and national demands — in September signed a security pact with the Kazakhstan government to control "smuggling, drug traffic, and terrorism. *The two governments will also cooperate in the training of security forces*" (Reuters, September 26, 1992; emphasis added).

In October 1992 there were confidential meetings between CIA director Robert Gates and the Russian government. Why were they so secretive? Undoubtedly because they were discussing sensitive subjects, such as building up "security" to control the masses.

In July, Turkey's giant Birlesmis Muhendisler Birligi [BMB] corporation announced a \$1.7 billion project in Kazakhstan to build a thermal power plant and to operate four and rehabilitate other oil fields there which had become victims of the economic dislocations caused by the Kremlin's "reforms."

In September, the Kyrgyzstan government announced it had also entered a joint venture with BMB to operate three gold fields in Jeroy, Makmar, and Kumtar — the latter one of the former USSR's largest reserves. BMB won out over seven U.S. companies because it offered to "take out coal as well," according to a Kyrgyzstan official quoted in a Reuters dispatch of September 1, 1992.

The week before, BMB had signed a deal with Turkmenia to operate gold fields in the Turakir and Balkan regions, also with very large reserves, according to Reuters.

These companies evidently expect to extract handsome profits by exporting the Central Asian people's riches.

What will such investments mean for working people — in Turkmenia, for example? The Turkmen population is very poor and underdeveloped, its economy based primarily on cotton production. According to Moscow News in 1990, all the children of Turkmenia suffer from malnutrition. Women suffer from serious oppression due to the intensive nature of the agricultural work; most of them have been working in the fields since early childhood. Because of the lack of birth control devices and the repressive culture, women are often forced to have two children a year.

Saparmurad Niyazov, former CP boss, was inaugurated president in June after having been "elected" with 99.5 percent of the vote. He has ruled Turkmenia since 1985. These elections were called for in the republic's new "democratic" constitution, adopted following its declaration of independence in late 1991. It permits no free speech or press and legalizes the suppression of civil liberties; it allows the president to dissolve the parliament if it votes "no confidence" in him; and it provides for the president to appoint and/or recall all judges and prosecutors and a "People's Council," which shares power with the elected parliament.

Such a system of government, according to *Moscow News* (No. 27, 1992, only exists where monarchies rule, such as Kuwait. In fact, Niyazov has "promised to make Turkmenia 'a second Kuwait'" (Reuters, June 22, 1992). In terms of its totalitarian political system, Turkmenia already closely resembles Kuwait. Niyazov obviously means he would like to emulate the Al-Sabah family, Kuwait's immensely wealthy ruling dynasty.

Only officially sanctioned "opposition" — that is, "opposition" which supports Niyazov — is allowed. On May 26, he called for the "use of all technological potential...to neutralize efforts to destabilize the situation,"

which was soon implemented against the proponents of any sort of democratic rights. These are the types of "stable" governments imperialism "assists."

One of the reasons these totalitarian Stalinist states can continue to claim any credibility as a preferable option is by presenting themselves as a bulwark against the menace of "Islamic fundamentalism." In its Saudi Arabian and Iranian variants, Islamic fundamentalist rule has proven so repugnant that the specter of it elicits immediate revulsion among democratic forces in Russia and elsewhere because of a criminal code that authorizes stoning to death women accused of adultery, cutting off the hands of thieves, etc.

However, from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan, it is evident that the overwhelming opposition is not from "Islamic fundamentalists" but from democratic forces, which even if they include Muslims, are secular in their goals — anti-Stalinist or antitotalitarian.

The Case of Tajikistan

A key manifestation of the real forces at work has been the popular struggle for democracy in Tajikistan over the past year or so.

On November 22, 1992, Rakhmon Nabiyev, the Stalinist head of Tajikistan, was forced from power. Nabiyev had been CP party chief from 1982 to 1985 when, with the onset of the Gorbachev political reforms, he was forced from power, but by 1991 he had made a comeback and again headed the party in Tajikistan.

The defeat of the August 1991 coup attempt in Moscow and Leningrad and the banning of the Communist Party, which intimidated many longtime party hacks in other areas of the USSR into quickly repudiating their party loyalty, had different consequences in Tajikistan.

In September 1991, Nabiyev, with the support of the CP-dominated parliament, tried to



take the offensive. He threatened to arrest opposition leaders and imposed martial law. This prompted mass protests in Dushanbe, capital of the Tajik republic. The protesters demanded democratic rights and investigation of the CP's links with the coup attempt. Such mass protests in 1990 had forced many CP apparatchiks to resign and the CP to retreat.

The fall 1991 protests forced Nabyev and the CP to retreat; they lifted martial law and promised presidential elections in November. Because the old apparatchik structure was still in place and the mass movements were not sufficiently organized, Nabyev was able to use corruption and intimidation and win these elections.

In January 1992, the emboldened CP-dominated regime arrested leaders and participants in the September 1991 protests and brought criminal charges against them. The mayor of Dushanbe, who had been an outspoken symbol of resistance to the bureaucrats, was arrested in the middle of a session of the Supreme Soviet, where the old CP still held some 93 percent of the seats.

Then, in March 1992, the interior minister who had defied the government's order to break up the September 1991 demonstrations was charged with corruption. This was widely interpreted by the opposition as punishment for his insubordination.

These events and the deteriorating economic situation prompted mass antigovernment demonstrations in the capital beginning in April 1992, demanding resignation of the government, economic reforms, jobs for the mass of the unemployed, and social justice. Many of the protesters were unemployed and impoverished youth and workers from the countryside — especially from the south and east — whom those in power contemptuously called "loafers" (Moscow News, Nos. 18 and 20, 1992).

The demonstrations continued for 47 days. The riot police and a large section of the national guard defected to the protesters, but Nabyev refused to resign. Angered by the government's refusal to respond to their demands, the protesters formed their own armed "People's Volunteer Corps" and took some 18 government officials hostage. Finally, after more and more protesters arrived in the capital, Nabyev agreed to dismiss the entire Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, including Sarafeli Kenjayev, the hated and corrupt president of the parliament.

However, the more conciliatory elements in the "opposition," who were holding secret meetings with the Nabyev forces, agreed to allow Nabyev to remain in power as long as they could be in his government. With promises of new elections to parliament and other reforms, these conciliatory figures — including Akbarsho Iskandarov, later to become head of parliament — called on everyone to go home and observe a moratorium on further demonstrations until parliamentary elections could be held.

Indignant protesters, dissatisfied with the results of their prolonged actions, called for a "holy war" against Nabyev and the "Tajik mafia," with which he is closely associated. What the protesters mean by this term is the network of entrenched privileged politicians, apparatchiks, and their cronies, who, nourished by decades of totalitarian rule, have enriched themselves through a variety of abuses and illegal transactions. They want to hold onto power by any means necessary, in order later to engage in the kind of deals with foreign capital described above and other ways of enrichment.

Protesters attacked the KGB headquarters, where they thought Nabyev might be holed up. They were repelled by government forces and six protesters were killed. The protests were dispersed. Having thus weathered the storm, Nabyev appointed the hated Kenjayev to be head of the National Security Committee, the KGB. Kenjayev, head of the parliament responsible for the CP offensive against the democratic opposition in the fall of 1991, had led Nabyev's "election campaign" at that time and had been complicit in the massive abuse that had led to Nabyev's "victory."

Tajikistan, with a population of approximately 5 million, is based on a predominantly Persian-speaking people. The region was part of Uzbekistan until it was singled out for republic status by Stalin in 1929.

One-third of its population is Uzbek, and there is a large Russian population, much of it sent in by the Kremlin to manage the Kremlin's projects; the Russians are concentrated in the northern region around the former Leninabad, now Kholzhent, the Stalinist apparatus's chief stronghold. Many Uzbeks also live in the north, where they are disproportionately represented among the unemployed, especially in the rural villages.

The republic is sharply divided between the more fertile and economically developed north and the much poorer mountain and valley regions of the south and east.

In the east, popular discontent was concentrated in Gorny Badakhshan, which earlier in 1992 had voted to be recognized as an independent republic. In the south, discontent was evidently particularly strong in the regions of Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube on the Afghanistan border, where the economy is centered around agriculture — particularly cotton — and some mineral resources. Kulyab is also considered a strong bastion of the Stalinist apparatus.

While the mass protests were taking place in April and May 1992 in the main square, a "progovernment" rally was organized in another square nearby, led by individuals who were to play a key role in the massacre of opposition forces that has taken place since. One was "Mullah Khaidar Sharipov," a parliamentary deputy whose mosque is in Kulyab, one of the impoverished southern regions referred to above. Another was Rustam Abdurakhimov, a Kulyab apparatchik.

And a third was Sangok Safarov, a racketeer who had spent more than 22 years in prison for criminal activity. The progovernment protesters unfurled a USSR flag and demanded that the hated Kenjayev be reinstated (Moscow News, No. 18, 1992).

After a coalition government was established in May and the protests ended, Nabyev unleashed a bloody war, led by the three men named above and with the support of the local KGB, using forces centered in Kulyab against opposition centers in Kulyab itself and especially against Kurgan-Tyube.

The conflict has been described in various ways in the major media. It is sometimes described as "clan warfare" and other times as a war between the pro-Nabyev forces centered in Kulyab and the anti-Nabyev forces centered in Kurgan-Tyube. There are always prominent references to the opposition as "Islamic fundamentalists"; there is no objective evidence that this is true.

What is clear is that heavily armed gangs are terrorizing the population. To date, at least 3,000 people have been killed and tens of thousands have been wounded. The regions of Gorny Badakhshan, Kulyab, and Kurgan-Tyube are now in the grip of famine; "people are dying from wounds and starvation," Moscow News reported, quoting a Tajik government official who expressed fears that the southern regions would become another Somalia (No.44, 1992).

The city of Kurgan-Tyube and the surrounding areas have been subject to heavy shelling and vast devastation. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have streamed into Dushanbe and other centers farther north.

One refugee from Kurgan-Tyube reported: "There are no houses left. We would have no place to live. Winter is approaching and with it cold and hunger." Another family that had been forced to flee north consisted of a man with 20 children. They had "only water and what bread they could find" (Reuters, November 8, 1992).

Who makes up these armed gangs of killers? Can impoverished people like the masses of "anti-Nabyev" forces in the south, afford submachine guns, unlimited supplies of ammunition, grenade launchers, and other war materiel to carry on months of warfare? While there may be some opposition forces that have been able to form armed detachments, they are surely a small minority.

The war in Tajikistan is mainly being waged by the retrograde Stalinist apparatus and the parasites it feeds, with the aim of preserving their power and privilege against threats from below. The victims are overwhelmingly unarmed civilians.

The pro-Nabyev forces in the southern region are heavily armed. Where are these arms coming from? One possible source is the 201st Motorized Infantry Division of the CIS forces, which is stationed in Tajikistan. Although the CIS forces have maintained "neutrality" in the face of the massacres, there have been reports on several occasions of "rebels" seizing their equipment. There is

also a hefty black market in arms and ammunition in the former Soviet Union as unpaid or demoralized soldiers try to fend for themselves.

However, even on the "black market" you must pay or barter for what you receive. Impoverished people, like the masses in the south, cannot do that. Could forces outside Tajikistan, in Afghanistan, for example, be funding and supplying arms to one side or the other in the conflict? Could some of the armed forces be mercenaries totally organized and funded from Afghanistan? Who would these outside forces represent?

There has been a thriving arms traffic from Afghanistan, where considerable arms are left over from the war. "Gun-running across the adjacent Afghan border is rampant" according to a September 4, 1992, report from Reuters, a situation frequently referred to in reports about the region.

One report claimed that arms were being supplied for the Tajikistan "war" by the Afghanistan rebel force headed by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Hekmatyar's forces, heavily armed and supplied by the U.S. Congress and the CIA in the war against the Soviet-backed Najibullah regime, had been shelling the Afghanistan capital Kabul since August. Their bombardment of the city has leveled whole blocks, destroyed the city, killed and wounded thousands of civilians, and created a mass exodus of the remaining civilians, causing worse devastation in Afghanistan than it had experienced during the entire 14-year war, according to the Washington Post, August 23, 1992.

The Post also reported that Hekmatyar has "retained large supplies of...weapons," which "could keep him well armed for another two years." One of Hekmatyar's field commanders has control of a northern region of Afghanistan adjacent to Tajikistan, reported the Russian paper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* on August 19, 1992. Neither Tajik nor Afghanistan officials would confirm or deny a similar report in Newsweek magazine that Hekmatyar's forces were supplying arms to forces in Tajikistan and had been doing so even before the USSR collapsed.

One thing is clear. The "pro-Nabiyev" forces in the south are led by the former racketeer Sangak Safarov, who by October 27 had moved north to the town of Nurek just thirty miles southeast of Dushanbe after having taken Kurgan-Tyube (Reuters, October 27, 1992). They had also taken over collective farms, telephone exchanges, state security headquarters, and other key economic and political centers.

The mayor of Kurgan-Tyube reported that "the most modern heavy military hardware was used" during the attacks on Kurgan-Tyube at the end of September by Safarov's forces.

According to reports in the U.S. and Russian press, the military campaigns in the south by the "progovernment" forces were similar to the "ethnic cleansing" being carried out by Milosevic's Serbian detach-

ments against Muslims and Croats in Bosnia, with the victims in Tajikistan being primarily Uzbeks, Turkmens, and Russians. By mid-October some 100,000 refugees from Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube had been added to Dushanbe's population of 500,000.

Why would a former racketeer who had been imprisoned for more than 22 years lead forces against the opposition on behalf of the old power structure? Moscow News reported that in the spring of 1992, Nabiyev had freed a number of criminals from prison. Some of them, like Safarov, along with another southern commander Langari Langarov, apparently were enlisted and armed by Nabiyev and the old apparatus as mercenaries to terrorize and destroy the opposition.

Could the CIA-backed forces of Hekmatyar be collaborating in this brutal offensive? This would be consistent with the direction of "the New World Order."

The CP-dominated coalition government, established in May 1992 following the spring mobilizations, was never viable or popular. The "opposition" representatives in the government seemed unable or unwilling to mobilize any movement to call off the Stalinist goons in the southern regions.

In fact, the government was barely functioning at all. By the end of August, armed opposition forces laid siege to the parliament building, demanding Nabiyev resign for his role in promoting the war against the south. Nabiyev went into hiding. When he tried to take a plane to escape to the Leninabad-Kholzhent region, he was surrounded at the airport by heavily armed forces who described as "young people of Dushanbe," and on September 7 he was forced to resign.

Russian television reported that "the militants who seized [Nabiyev] had earlier released a statement saying that [he] 'has done so much evil to the Tajik people and shed so much blood that he does not deserve to live'" (Washington Post, September 8, 1992). But they did not kill him. In fact, they appear to have been quite magnanimous.

It is significant that even with death staring him in the face, Nabiyev posed certain conditions for resigning. He asked to be allowed to keep his pension, special home, special car, and detachment of bodyguards in "retirement." His captors agreed!

The new government, established in early September after Nabiyev's resignation, hardly posed much of a threat to the apparatus. It was headed by Akbarsho Iskandarov, who we mentioned earlier. In 1990, he had been elected as a deputy to the parliament from the rebellious Badakhshan region in the east.

There appeared to be no government in the early days after Nabiyev's resignation. Iskandarov maintained that Nabiyev's resignation was not valid unless it was approved by the (CP-dominated) parliament. The parliament could not muster a quorum. Finally its leadership announced that Iskandarov would take over Nabiyev's functions, with

Abdulmalik Abdullajanov acting as prime minister.

Abdullajanov is described as a "businessman." He is widely suspected of large-scale financial machinations. He had also been involved in helping make sure that Nabiyev "won" the fall 1991 elections. Abdullajanov is known to be a spokesman for Nabiyev's "Leninabad/Kholzhent clan."

Even with these governmental posts occupied, the state was paralyzed. The CP deputies feared for their lives in Dushanbe, where they were vastly unpopular.

On October 24, Sarafeli Kenjayev, who had gone underground after being ousted from his post as head of the state security forces as a result of the opposition offensive in early September, led "irregular forces" — some sources say they included mercenaries recruited from Uzbekistan — to storm the capital. At first they encountered hardly any resistance and took control of the presidential palace and parliament, but the government managed to mobilize some forces and two days of fierce street battles ensued, with at least 20 people killed.

In the meantime, Rustan Abdurakhimov, the prominent apparatchik from the Kulyab region who had helped organize the pro-Nabiyev rallies in May, managed to go on television to introduce Kenjayev as "Parliamentary Chairman and President of the Republic of Tajikistan" in an obvious bid for power by a section of the old apparatus (Reuters, October 24, 1992). But Kenjayev's forces were unable to hold their positions and were forced to withdraw from the city by October 26.

Iskandarov declared he was fully in charge of the situation, but he was not. Within days the government abandoned Dushanbe for Kholzhent, apparently far outgunned by the encroaching Kenjayev-Safarov-Nabiyev forces.

By the end of October, the government was asking Moscow to send in Russian troops to shore up its power and protect the capital. However, the Russian government was not interested in defending the Tajik government, despite its conciliatory nature and desperate situation. Russian troops were only deployed to protect strategic transport, communication, and military facilities. Under military pressure from Kenjayev's forces to the west and Sangakov's approaching from the south, the government promised to convene parliament in Kholzhent, to which it had fled.

On November 10, with the number of refugees now pouring into the capital reaching more than 200,000, the economy at a halt, and the political system paralyzed, the Iskandarov government and the parliamentary leadership resigned. They issued a fainthearted call for a ceasefire and announced they would remain in place until a new government was elected.

On November 18, the deputy KGB chief Jurabek Aminov was assassinated in a bazooka attack on his car in the capital, the third government official to be assassinated

Is the Opposition "Islamic Fundamentalist"?

Throughout the events in Tajikistan the opposition has been consistently referred to as "pro-Islamic," "Muslim," or "fundamentalist."

However, it is clear that this is a calculated distortion. While there are Muslims in the opposition — in the National Salvation Front and the United Democratic Forces — the demands of the movements as a whole have been for an end to the corrupt rule of the CP apparatus and its "mafia," for basic democratic liberties, and for economic rights. The Iskandarov government, the spokespersons for the opposition coalition, including the heads of the various parties within it, and representatives of the opposition in the government itself, have persistently reiterated that the goal of the opposition was to establish a democratic and secular, not an Islamic, government. However, the "Islamic" label continued to be used to stigmatize the opposition.

To be sure, the opposition includes an Islamic Revival Party and individuals devoted to Islam on one level or another. But this does not mean that the movement favors a religious state any more than the popular struggles in Central America can be said to favor a Catholic state just because many peasants and workers in those movements are devout Catholics. No Islamic fundamentalist groups have hegemony over the opposition movement. To what degree such forces might become more politically attractive or gain more power depends on what other political options emerge to challenge the continued Stalinist rule — from within the working class in

Tajikistan, in other non-Russian republics, or in Russia itself for that matter.

After all, there are Muslims on both sides — for example, the pro-Nabiyev Mullah Khaidar Sharipov, mentioned above.

When Russian government officials and the former CP heads of republics, such as Karimov in Uzbekistan, express alarm at the victories of the opposition in Tajikistan, equating this with a supposed rise of Islamic fundamentalism, there is a great deal of hypocrisy involved.

A prominent imperialist force like Saudi Arabia, while setting up substantial investment banks and funds in the "Muslim republics," specifically Kazakhstan, Turkmenia, and Uzbekistan, amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars, is also openly funding projects and institutions to promote the spread of Islam. Yet these blatant and open gestures to strengthen the influence of Islam seem to arouse no concern.

In fact, there is a large section of the Central Asian population whose interests are directly threatened by the establishment of a fundamentalist Islamic state — the women.

The prevalent problem of unemployment in Central Asia is particularly serious among women. According to Moscow News, for example, 90 percent of the unemployed in northern Tajikistan are women, who live on a diet of tea and flat bread.

It is precisely this grim existence, and the heavily patriarchal, repressive, and reactionary social environment, that has led to the phenomenon of self-immolation of

women in neighboring Uzbekistan, where many hundreds of women have burned themselves to death, despairing of any other way out. This little publicized horror may well be occurring in Tajikistan too.

Further institutionalization and legalization of the oppression of women, which an Islamic state like that in Iran or Saudi Arabia would bring, has already caused protests among some women in Central Asia. Moscow News (No. 18, 1992) reported that women in the Tajik village of Shakhristan organized a protest against the registration of the Islamic Revival Party under the slogan "The veil again? Never!"

Such sentiment is surely widely shared. While the forces of repression may well be prepared — in collusion with the Saudis, for example — to try to influence and rein in the national-democratic movements by promoting their own "Islamic fundamentalist" forces, they may find that in so doing they unleash a powerful resistance from the vast majority of women.

At present, however, the threat of "Islamic fundamentalism" in Central Asia is not even on the horizon. While there may be legitimate interest in learning about Islam — long banned by the Stalinists — and Islam, like other religions, may gain some adherents, the demands being raised by the population are overwhelmingly secular.

As one Saudi religious leader, just returned from Samarkand, was quoted in Moscow News, No. 18: "It is only in Russia that your Asians appear to be Muslim fanatics. In fact, they are Soviet atheists."

in recent months. Aminov had been publicizing the role of Russian military officials in facilitating the contraband trade in arms across the Afghanistan border to aid the pro-Nabiyev forces (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, September 22, 1992).

Although the government had been unable to get a quorum for months, it finally convened on November 19 in Kholzhent under heavy guard and with hammer-and-sickle flags prominently decorating the parliament building.

After accepting Nabiyev's resignation, the parliament dismissed Iskandarov, promoted Abdullajanov, Iskandarov's acting prime minister, to be full prime minister, and elected Imamili Rakhmanov head of parliament. Not surprisingly, Rakhmanov is a prominent figure in the old apparatus whose base of power, like Abdullakhimov's, is in southern Kulyab.

If this government is to rule, it will be by brute force. The opposition had reportedly

organized a 3,000-member militia to defend Dushanbe, which was being blockaded by the pro-Nabiyev military detachments. With this blockade and food supplies sorely stretched by the hundreds of thousands of refugees, officials were warning on November 23 that the starvation now occurring in other regions of Tajikistan as a result of the apparatus' military offensive would soon engulf the capital.

Meanwhile fighting raged on in the south, which meant that the population was not so easily defeated.

What is on the horizon are continued struggles to overthrow the entrenched totalitarian Stalinist apparatuses which can only maintain their system of minority rule by violence, terror, and repression. Meanwhile, these retrograde rulers are eager to turn over the wealth of the republics to the highest imperialist bidders, who in turn are prepared to launch savage police and military campaigns against the masses to defend the

system of corporate profit — the system which, as we have seen, has reduced such countries as Mozambique, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Haiti to utmost impoverishment.

Fear of popular rule obviously haunts not only the imperialists, but those who claim to be in the opposition to Stalinism in Tajikistan, showing how far the popular movements have to go.

Takhir Abduzhabov, leader of the Rastokhez "popular movement" and a deputy in parliament, remarked in September during the early days after Nabiyev's resignation, when there appeared to be no government at all: "The most dreaded thing is a power vacuum. If politicians continue to keep mum, the crowd will start to speak. Yesterday, the crowd took over the presidential palace. Tomorrow it may sweep away the government."

That is precisely what needs to happen. □

November 29, 1992

Appeal of the Fourth International

Solidarity with Jozef Pinior!

by Cyril Smuga

Our Polish comrade Jozef Pinior, organizer of the Socialist Political Center (SOP) in Wroclaw, is once again having problems because of his political and trade-union activity.

Comrade Pinior is the best known of the Polish Trotskyist activists. In 1981, he was a member of the presiding committee and treasurer of Solidarnosc in the Lower Silesia region (Wroclaw). Two days before the introduction of martial law, he withdrew from the bank 80 million zlotys (in zlotys of the time), the activity funds of Solidarnosc, which made it possible to pay for the underground activity of rebuilding the trade union in 1982. (He returned what remained of this sum: US\$50,000 [475 million zlotys of the time] to Solidarnosc during its first regional congress after legalization, in March 1990.) Member of the Regional Strike Committee (RKS) of underground Solidarnosc from December 13, 1981, he became president in October 1982, replacing his comrades W. Frasyniuk and P. Bednarz, who had been arrested in the meantime.

Between 1982 and 1987, he was a member of the national leadership of Solidarnosc (the underground TKK and then the public TRS). In 1987, he was a founding member and one of the main leaders of the Polish Socialist Party (PSP). Since 1990, he has organized the SOP and also joined the Fourth International. He is a member of the East European Commission elected by the United Secretariat and continues to be active within the Polish trade-union movement.

He has several times been sentenced and imprisoned for his activity: first, on May 24, 1984, to four years' imprisonment for having led the regional strike committee of Solidarnosc; then after being amnestied, he was sentenced again on September 17, 1984, this time to two months in prison for having placed a wreath on the monument to the memory of the strike of August 1980; lastly, he was sentenced on October 3, 1988, to a one-year suspended sentence for having tried to organize a strike. Between 1985 and 1988 he was continuously harassed and held for renewable 48-hour periods, because the police wanted at all costs to find the trade union's money. In May 1988 he was once again arrested for attempting to organize a strike in the engineering industry in Wroclaw in solidarity with the occupation strike then under way in the Nowa Huta steelworks in

Krakow. Released on parole in July 1988, he was arrested when the strike wave started again at the end of the month and was finally sentenced on October 3, 1988.

All these sentences appear in his police record. They are still said by the authorities to be — ordinary crimes!

A lawyer by training, Jozef Pinior has not been able to find stable employment despite the change of regime in 1989. It is clear that his political opinions, which he does not hide, are a factor in this. But it is above all this criminal record which denies him access to employment for which his training is appropriate.

Like many other Solidarnosc leaders from the 1980–89 period, Pinior asked the Ministry of Justice for a revision of his trial, stating publicly that he did not want any monetary compensation for the years spent in prison. (Some Solidarnosc leaders have gotten millions of zlotys this way — and very bad political reputations.) Pinior simply wants moral satisfaction and the clearing of his record.

This demand has been refused in regard to the 1988 sentence (see translation of the letter from the Ministry of Justice appended). This has provoked widespread indignation in Poland, not only among trade unionists but also among certain political forces who support the present government. A broad democratic campaign has started in Poland. It must be echoed in other countries. The Polish comrades have also asked us to try to obtain material support: the legal costs for the four appeals which Jozef Pinior has to make will be about US\$5,000. It is impossible for a small group in Poland (where the average monthly wage is \$200) to raise this sum.

This could be a united front of the left. In fact, in Poland this campaign has not only been taken up by currents from Solidarnosc who have privileged relations with Western Social Democracy but also former Stalinist currents who have relations with Western CPs (see appended documents). This is particularly important, as it means that the Polish ex-Stalinists have been forced through this campaign to take their distance from the antiworker reality of their own regime in the past and defend the right to strike and the right of left-wing activists to find work today. This is a further reason — as well as the defense of one of our leading comrades — to make as broad a campaign as possible.

We ask all concerned to cover this case in their press, to collect money to help our Polish comrades, and to send letters of protest to the Polish Minister of Justice (with a copy to Pinior).

The letters/petitions should be sent to:
Zbigniew Dyka, Minister of Justice
Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwosci
Al. Ujazdowskie
00-950 Warszawa
Skr. poczt. 33
Poland

Copies to: Jozef Pinior
c/o Pracowniczy Fundusz Przemyslowy
Rekodzielnicza 16,
50-991 Wroclaw
Skr. Poczt. 1442
Poland
(or fax: (48 71) 51 20 07)

Send contributions (even symbolic ones) by bank transfer to:

Jozef Pinior
Bank Zachodni, Wroclaw, Poland
Account No. 389206-01020386-017879-152-1

Appended Documents

1. Letter from the Ministry of Justice to Jozef Pinior's lawyer, Ms. Aranka Kiszyna (dated Warsaw, August 28, 1992).

Republic of Poland
Ministry of Justice

I am writing to inform you that the Minister of Justice will not be issuing an exceptional revision in favor of Jozef Pinior overturning the ruling of the Court of Wroclaw-Fabryczna dated October 3, 1992 (act number II K 525/88).

The statements contained in the request for the issue of an exceptional revision have been looked at in relation to the records of the matter in question. This examination has not confirmed that the criticisms are well founded.

In light of the evidence brought together for the matter in question it is undeniable that the factual investigations made by the court were correct. They reflect the events that took place on May 5, 1988, on the grounds of the "Dolmel" enterprise for the construction of electrical machinery in Lower Silesia. It is unequivocally clear that the accused, J. Pinior, refused to leave the enterprise grounds where he was without the agreement of management and that he put up active resistance to the officers of the industrial guard and the ORMO when they intervened. Following the brawl and kicks from the accused, K. Woznica suffered swelling and bruising on his right hand, preventing him from working for a period of up to seven days. This behavior was justly described as a crime under articles 235 and 156/2 of the penal code.

An analysis of the records does not allow any doubt about the court's attitude as concerns the facts and the guilt of the accused.

The court's attitude was backed up in a detailed fashion, and its reasoning contains neither contradictions nor logical errors.

Furthermore, it is not possible to challenge the verdict accusing J. Pinior of having used insulting terms toward the persons who arrested him and took him to the premises of the internal affairs office. In this case also, the lower court has correctly justified its verdict, indicating the evidence on which it based its investigations and conviction.

This verdict by the court was reviewed by the court of appeal, which did not find mistakes either in the activity or in the reasoning of the court of first instance....

In these circumstances, there are no grounds to take into consideration the request and issue an exceptional revision of this affair.

[signed by] Head of Department
Przemyslaw Kalinowski
Judge of the Voivodship Court

2. Intervention of parliamentary deputy Marek Mazurkiewicz (SLD — Alliance of the Democratic Left, formed by the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland, originating in the former Stalinist party, the PUWP) to the Minister of Justice and Prosecutor-General of the Republic of Poland, Zbigniew Dyka.

On May 12, 1992, Ms. Aranka Kiszyna, the defense lawyer of Jozef Pinior, sentenced by verdicts of Wroclaw courts on May 24, 1984, September 17, 1984, and October 3, 1992, asked the Minister of Justice to issue an exceptional revision of the verdicts, in favor of the accused.

In her request, based on the records of the matters in question, she showed that Jozef Pinior, a leader of the democratic left-wing opposition in the framework of Solidarnosc and a member of its underground regional and national leaderships, was many times arrested, harassed, and imprisoned in the years 1982–88 because of his political activity within the then prohibited union movement and that the verdicts against him were violations of the law. In this case the criminal law was used to isolate in prison a representative of the left of the democratic opposition considered dangerous by the authorities of the time.

In particular, by a verdict of the Court of Wroclaw-Fabryczna (act no. II K 525/88, dated October 3, 1988) Pinior was sentenced to a year in prison with remission and a fine covered by his many months of preventive detention. The real reason for this verdict was that, on May 5, 1988, together with the provisional committee of Solidarnosc, and as a militant in the underground structures, he took part in an attempt to organize a strike in the Dolmel enterprise in Wroclaw. This was to be an action in support of the strike at the Nowa Huta steelworks aimed at winning the legalization of Solidarnosc.

To exclude Pinior from public life, an order

for his arrest was issued on May 5, 1988; it was only suspended in July 1988 with the personal guarantee of the bishop of Wroclaw, Msgr. Adam Dyczkowski and the well-known opposition militant Wladyslaw Sila-Nowicki. In August 1988, when Poland saw the wave of strikes in Silesia connected to the preparation of negotiations on the question of the legalization of opposition structures, Jozef Pinior was once more kept in prison, from which he was released after the verdict of October 1988.

In this context, the view expressed in the letter from the Ministry of Justice of August 28, 1992, is to say the least surprising. Here we read that the Minister of Justice will not issue an exceptional revision of the verdict of October 3, 1988, in Pinior's favor because "the accused Pinior refused to leave the enterprise grounds where he was without the agreement of the management and put up active resistance to the officers of the industrial guard and the ORMO who intervened" and that "an analysis of the records does not allow any doubt of the court's attitude as concerns the facts and the guilt of the accused."

Jozef Pinior is a lawyer and a militant of the democratic left linked to Solidarnosc. During the state of war he safeguarded an 80-million-zloty fund of the former regional leadership of Solidarnosc in Lower Silesia — which earned him imprisonment. This fund he returned in its entirety to the Solidarnosc regional leadership after its reactivation in 1989.

Jozef Pinior is an exemplary individual. He states publicly that he does not intend to present our country with a bill for the period in which he suffered repression nor ask for financial compensation. However, he cannot accept his "guilty" status, not only for moral reasons but also because these verdicts remain on the record, meaning that he cannot work in the law or in academic teaching. As a former leader of the underground democratic left opposition he is now suffering in the now democratic Republic of Poland a sort of *Berufsverbot* [banning from certain professions] in which the Minister of Justice does not seem to see anything wrong.

As a deputy for Wroclaw and a man attached to the values of the left and to democratic rights I am appealing to the Minister [of Justice] to:

1. Urgently reexamine this matter, cancel the mistaken decision of August 28, 1992, and return to a correct approach to this matter;
2. Speed up the examination of the other matters included in the request for an exceptional revision of the penal and civil implications of act no. IC-633/84 of the Court of the Voivodship of Wroclaw;
3. Obtain the full rehabilitation of Jozef Pinior and remove his name from the register of convicts;

4. Explain what actions he intends to take to ensure that such incidents do not recur in the future.

Marek Mazurkiewicz

3. Wladyslaw Frasylnuk, parliamentary deputy and vice-president of the Democratic Union, former national and regional leader of Solidarnosc, on the "Pinior affair" (position as reported by the Wroclaw daily *Gazeta Robotnicza*, no. 235, October 6, 1992).

When a few days ago we learned about the refusal to rehabilitate Pinior by the Ministry we were scandalized. Such a reply compromises our legal system and particularly the minister responsible. After learning of the reply that Pinior received from the Ministry of Justice we issued a strong protest to Minister Dyka signed by all the Wroclaw deputies of the Democratic Union. I can only add that the upholding of the charges of the courts of the time concerning the active resistance of Jozef Pinior to the officials is grotesque.

4. Extracts from an article which appeared in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (September 29, 1992) the daily run by Adam Michnik, headlined: "A court of the Republic of Poland legalizes the guilty verdict of a leader of underground Solidarnosc — Pinior still an outlaw."

The verdict of the trial court in 1988 was based on material provided by the SB [political police]. Pinior admitted to the court that he intended to organize a strike in support of the legalization of Solidarnosc; however, he challenged the claim that he had put up active resistance.

"I do not seek and have never sought any financial compensation," Jozef Pinior told *Gazeta Wyborcza*. "The only issue is rehabilitation and the removal of my name from the register. The refusal to overturn the verdict is preventing me from finding a job in line with my qualifications in law."

The decision of the Ministry of Justice aroused protests from twenty-eight enterprise committees of Solidarnosc in Wroclaw's biggest factories, from the Women's Committee of Solidarnosc in Lower Silesia, and from the Committee of Alternative Youth.

Pawel Kocieba-Zabski (Wroclaw)

5. Extracts from the article "Pinior guilty" in the satirical weekly *Nie* (Sept. 24). *Nie* has one of the largest circulations in Poland and is managed by Jerzy Urban, former spokesman for the martial-law government.

In the 1980s Jozef Pinior was one of the most active and best-known leaders of Solidarnosc. From 1982 to 1987 he was a member of its provisional national coordinating committee. During martial law and afterward, Solidarnosc in Lower Silesia functioned to a

large extent thanks to his taking over the money in the union's bank account. He was one of the most sought and tracked of the underground leaders....

In the republic "at last free" Pinior has not joined in the division of spoils and has not changed his opinions. He is on the left. He continues to address himself to the workers....He was without doubt the only front-rank Solidarnosc leader to present accounts for the sums at his disposal....

[There follows a presentation of the Justice Ministry's letter.]

Now, Mister President, we understand what was the crime and punishment of Pinior. He had not obtained the permission of the plant management to organize the strike. No doubt the Great Electrician, when he jumped over the wall of the naval shipyard at Gdansk in 1980 [an allusion to the now legendary entry of Lech Walesa into the Gdansk naval shipyard in 1980] had such permission. The

only difference is that Walesa has a job and the other strikers are equally well placed — the majority of them in the armchairs of dignitaries — while Pinior remains a worker militant of the left. The comrades of the new leading force therefore no longer consider him one of their own. Jozef Pinior must therefore remain a marked man condemned for activity that gives others the right to run the state. And he must hang around without a job.

Just a Relief Operation?

Continued from page 1

A revealing detail appeared at that time in the *New York Times* (September 6, 1992): "For political reasons, American officials said, this stricken rural center [Bardera] was not under consideration for the American airlift. One of the major warlords in the Somali conflict, General Mohammed Farah Aidid, keeps his headquarters here. 'We do not want to give him too much credibility,' an American official said." (Emphasis added.)

So in order not to aid Farah Aidid, the "humanitarian" U.S. government was prepared to let people starve in that area — an area where, relief workers said, people were much worse off than they had seen elsewhere. Will such incidents be repeated as U.S. forces assert their control over the whole country of Somalia?

The pro-U.S. Siad Barre regime was infamous for its corruption. Its officials, Siad Barre prominent among them, stole at least 40 percent of the foreign aid the country received in the '70s and '80s. So the theft of international aid — including rice shipments intended for starving people in the north — is nothing new. What is new is Washington's decision to send in the cavalry.

While many may be saved from starvation in the months immediately ahead, it is necessary also to look at the broader question of the reasons for the famine and how lasting solutions to the problem can be found. The mass starvation — 1.5 million Somalis are in immediate danger of starvation, with another 4.5 million in desperate need of food and other emergency aid — is the result not only of drought but of the spreading military conflicts afflicting the region: Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Chad, among others.

These and other human calamities plaguing Africa today are the direct and indirect result of more than a century of colonial and neocolonial rule. The Western powers arbitrarily divided up the land and resources of Africa, with Britain, France, Bel-

gium, Germany, Portugal, and the U.S. sharing in the rape of the continent. They have used overt and covert military campaigns to ensure that governments friendly to Western financial and corporate interests remain in power. For example, in recent times bloody wars have been organized by France against Chad, and by the U.S., South Africa, and Israel (in support of UNITA against the Angolan government and in support of Renamo against the Mozambique government).

The following passage from the book *U.S. Military Involvement in Southern Africa* (edited by an association of concerned Africa scholars, Boston, 1978) sheds light on what is probably going on behind the scenes today.

"Low-Level Covert Operations"

The CIA conducts on-going low-level covert operations affecting all aspects of the political life of the African states where it has stations. In 1965, the CIA set up the African-American Labor Center to encourage anti-communist labor leaders and unions. In the early '60s, the CIA helped the governments of Rwanda and Burundi to defeat pro-Chinese dissident movements. The CIA was especially interested in eliminating Burundi as the base for Congolese rebels in 1964–65. Stockwell [who later defected from the CIA and told all], who was chief of station in Burundi in 1970, argues that CIA activities there contributed to the ethnic hatred between the Watusi and Hutu, which led to the wholesale killing of the Hutu in 1971.

The CIA helped Muhammed Egal to become premier in Somalia in 1967. Egal's allies in the Somali Youth League Party received extensive covert CIA backing before the 1967 presidential elections. Egal concluded a border agreement with Ethiopia, then a close United States ally. Two years later, the army overthrew him, charging that he collaborated with the CIA.

These scattered examples illustrate the broad character of low-level CIA operations in Africa. These activities aim to maintain the existing web of dependent and manipulated relationships. When these relationships have been threatened locally and or regionally, the

CIA has initiated higher forms of intervention. These major interventions reflect the decision makers' world view, which remains similar to that which led to Vietnam.

The dispatching of 30,000 U.S. troops is just such a "higher form of intervention." This operation, sponsored by former CIA director George Bush, will do nothing to promote the growth and organization of popular forces, which alone can eliminate "warlords" and solve the problems of food production and distribution. The African people themselves, with aid and support from labor and popular organizations in the wealthy countries, are the only ones who can restore a functioning social and economic infrastructure.

Perhaps we could call this George Bush's attempt to look better in the history pages, as the president who saved the starving even after being voted out of office. Or is it his revenge for that act of rejection, to saddle the American people with a potential quagmire in East Africa? Bush's action came in the dying weeks of his presidency, on the eve of the holiday season, when most American households were preoccupied with stretching the family budget to meet the costs of the gift-giving season. In that sense the operation may have been timed to make it more difficult to effectively raise questions and pose alternatives. Of course the lame-duck Bush has the full support of President-elect Clinton and the majority Democratic Party in this latest venture into the New World Order.

Nevertheless, the military intervention in Somalia must be questioned. Teach-ins, forums or other educational actions, can be organized to examine and publicize what imperialism's role has been in Somalia and the rest of Africa and what changes in the world are needed to bring genuine and lasting relief to the people of Somalia and Africa in general. □

December 7, 1992

The Independent Character of the Women's Liberation Movement

by Evelyn Sell

The special problems facing women in our society have prompted the independent organization of women to fight for their liberation, have made women conscious of the need to be self-reliant in carrying out their struggles, and have produced an internal dynamic impelling women into battles even when other social protest movements were relatively more subdued.

These independent characteristics of the women's liberation movement have been — and remain — of crucial importance in preserving and advancing women's rights. The most significant gains resulted from the self-mobilization of women who forged their own agendas, organized themselves for action, and provided their own leadership. The worst losses came when women relied heavily on others to fulfill feminist demands. For example, when feminists depended on politicians' promises, they lost the fight to add the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and saw the Freedom of Choice Act languish in Congress.

Maintaining the independent character of the fight for women's liberation is now as important as before — perhaps even more important in light of the illusions created by the recent electoral victories for women and pro-choice male candidates. On the one hand, feminists can congratulate themselves for refuting conventional wisdom which asserted that women candidates could not attract sufficient votes to be elected, and activists can take credit for proving how well women's organizations could rally financial backing and voting strengths. At the same time, the highly-touted "Year of the Woman" cannot be considered an unqualified success in helping to achieve the goals of the women's liberation movement. Female officeholders and their supporters are trapped in the political machines of the major parties where trade-offs, pork-barrel deals, compromises, and demagogic maneuverings still prevail. Female candidates' electoral victories could act as a brake on the momentum of the struggle for women's rights — if feminist activists and women's rights organizations depend solely or primarily on legislative and/or presidential actions to achieve their goals.

Now is a good time to remember the lessons learned about independent initiatives during the birth and development of the women's liberation movement.

The major social protest movements of the 1960s had the effect of both hiding the inde-

pendent roots and dynamics of the feminist movement while, at the same time, helping to promote women's rights battles.

To many socialists, it seemed as if the appearance of feminist groups and activities in 1968–69 was the *product* of the ferment created by other struggles, and that the women's liberation movement was only one more sign of a deepening radicalization in the U.S. This view flowed from a mechanical application of Marxist concepts involving the primacy of the class struggle, the historic role of the working class, and the key importance of industrial workers in the process of fundamentally changing capitalist society and establishing the basis for the creation of socialism. This constricted approach to women's groups and struggles did not adequately understand that feminist consciousness was growing among women in the labor force, that the female workers consigned to the "pink collar ghetto" were a legitimate part of the working class, and that specifically feminist demands were having an impact in regard to a host of job-related issues (including, but not limited to affirmative action, pay equity fights, and unionization of the unorganized).

Not the "Real" Class Struggle

There was a tendency to regard many aspects of the early women's liberation movement as "middle class" and not part of the "real" class struggle. Consciousness-raising sessions, females-only organizations and conferences, and antirape activities were dismissed as unimportant or a distraction or injurious to the unity of the working class — instead of being understood as expressing the needs of victims of sexism and helping many of them to become part of the front ranks of the class struggle.

Others in the radical movement had a narrow and impressionistic approach based on personal experiences and current events. Many of the earliest feminists were women who were already active in the civil rights, student, and antiwar movements. In trying to explain the sudden eruption of women's liberation activities, various commentators gave credit to women's reaction to the role assigned to them by male activists: women made coffee, typed, and carried out menial organizational responsibilities — while the men acted as the theoretical leaders and makers of policies and strategies. Women activists rebelled against this sexist pattern

and demanded the opportunity to utilize their leadership abilities and the full range of their many skills and talents. The revolt of the female members of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), for example, was real, but the attention it received tended to make people believe that the birth of women's liberation groups resulted from this one development.

The feminist challenge to the status quo actually came from a broad range of women and was rooted in long-term trends and changes — such as the transforming effects of moving from a rural existence to urban situations, an increase in the formal education of women, the trend toward smaller families resulting in a reduction of the proportion of a woman's life spent in child-bearing and rearing responsibilities, and the economic pressures impelling greater numbers of women into the paid labor force. But these underlying realities and the first stirrings of feminist consciousness and activities were obscured by the existence and impact of the protest movements which began to shake U.S. society beginning in the mid-1950s and reaching new peaks in the 1960s.

In fact, while public attention was focusing on civil rights demonstrations, protests against the Vietnam War, and student actions, women's rights activities received little notice from the mass media during the early and mid-1960s. Prodded by club women and female unionists, President John Kennedy set up a President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1961. The commission's stated purpose was to investigate the "prejudice and outmoded customs [that] act as barriers to the full realization of women's basic rights" and to make recommendations concerning employment, labor laws, legal treatment of women, needed services such as child care, and other concerns. The commission's report, *American Women*, published in 1963, was the first comprehensive study ever made of the status of women in U.S. society.

More Focus on Women's Issues

This initial step prompted a rash of state commissions on the status of women. The first national conference on women's situation was a one-day gathering in 1964 but, in subsequent years, these conferences grew longer in length and larger in the number of participants. The specific problems of women gained increasing attention in the latter half of the 1960s — a sign of the growing pressures exerted by long-established women's organizations as well as new groups such as the National Committee on Household Employment, founded in 1965 with a membership of about 25 million, and the National Organization for Women (NOW), founded in 1966 by 300 women and men.

These independent expressions of the emerging women's rights movement were not completely separated from the growing

social ferment across the nation. There were strong interconnections between all of the social protest movements and the development of the women's liberation struggle. The example of Blacks and Chicanos searching for their roots encouraged women to intensify a re-examination of their own history. Feminist battles were helped enormously by the climate of protest legitimized by African American and Chicano activists, student rights fighters, and antiwar demonstrators. Women developed their skills and self-confidence in the course of participating in and organizing meetings, sit-ins, marches, rallies, teach-ins, conferences, and national mobilizations. Feminists gained mass action experience and were able to utilize many of the tactics and forms of protest which were part of the fight against Jim Crow laws in the South and racist practices around the country, campus battles for student rights, and opposition to the Vietnam War. Victories won by these movements aided the pioneer women's liberation fighters. In particular, civil rights gains provided crucial openings to fight institutionalized sexism in legislation, employment, education, and other areas.

Confronted with insurgent Black communities across the country, the "War on Poverty" announced by President Lyndon Johnson in the mid-1960s threw a blazing spotlight on the situation of women workers. The number of working mothers with children under 18 years climbed to new highs throughout the 1960s. By the fall of 1967, both husband and wife were working in the majority of families — for the first time in U.S. history. The number of married women with jobs outnumbered single female workers. In 1968, women made up 37 percent of the total paid labor force, and 38 percent of these female employees were mothers. Even before the women's liberation movement exploded into the nation's consciousness, these statistics reveal some of the profound changes which were demolishing women's traditional primary role as wives, mothers, and homemakers.

The Feminist Challenge Erupts

Cramped within the still rigid framework of ancient prejudices and sexist practices, many women began to rebel publicly. Women's liberation groups were founded across the U.S. — with 1969 marking the breakthrough year in terms of numbers and levels of activity. My own personal experiences in Texas during the years 1969–72 were good examples of both the independence of feminist activities and the interconnections between the women's liberation struggle and the movements involving oppressed minorities, students, and opponents of the Vietnam War.

When I moved from Detroit, Michigan, to Texas in 1969, I was a veteran organizer of civil rights and antiwar events and mobilizations as well as an experienced speaker and

writer on women's liberation questions. Immediately upon my arrival in Austin, I became active in the local antiwar movement and was soon involved in organizing feminist groups around the state as well as participating in the abortion rights struggle. The interactive and cooperative relationships between the antiwar and women's liberation movements were expressed in many ways. A number of groups had offices on the same floor above a block of stores across the street from the University of Texas; the abortion counseling office was down the hall from the local antiwar committee. After running off thousands of leaflets on the mimeograph machine in the antiwar office, I and other women walked down the hall to the meeting room where feminist consciousness-raising sessions were held. The women's liberation group organized contingents in antiwar marches and helped publicize antiwar events. In the summer of 1970, I was a speaker on women's liberation for a program organized and held in the Oleo Strut, one of the major GI coffeehouses involved in the antiwar movement. There was, obviously, a great deal of overlapping and linkage between the two movements.

Breaking the Taboos

At the same time, feminists were involved in many activities which were specifically focused on women's liberation issues — particularly the fight to legalize abortions. In 1970, I was co-organizer of the first women's liberation conference in Texas and a founder of the Texas Abortion Coalition (TAC). One of the statewide meetings of TAC was held in Dallas, where a male state legislator pledged his support to our efforts and told us, "Now, ladies, don't you worry. We'll take care of changing the state laws. You don't have to go around demonstrating and organizing all those other kinds of things some women are doing. You just act like ladies, and we'll make sure you win your rights." I was one of the women who told this man (who was, indeed, a sincere supporter of abortion rights), "Thank you — but no thank you! We'll demonstrate and organize, and do everything possible to win this fight. You just vote the right way, and we'll do what we have to do!"

We carried out our own independently organized events and actions: a petition drive to repeal the state's 114-year-old abortion laws; support for the *Roe v. Wade* lawsuit, which was wending its way through the court system; securing pro-choice witnesses and documentation for legislative hearings; organizing numerous press conferences to gain public support; and, when the abortion statutes were debated in the state Senate, packing the visitors' gallery with women wearing huge LEGALIZE ABORTION buttons. As TAC state secretary, I was co-organizer of the 1971 Citizens Hearings on Abortion, and I organized and led the first-ever Texas street demonstration for legal abortions — we

marched from the Citizens' Hearings to the state Capitol building and held a rally on the front lawn.

A group of state legislators had a standing invitation to all constituents to breakfast with them and talk to them about their concerns. I was part of a delegation of feminists involved in one breakfast meeting. We were greeted with many flattering remarks about how wonderful it was to start the day with such lovely ladies — but soon, as we started talking about legalizing abortion, the legislators turned green and threw us out for such "sickening" and "unladylike" behavior.

We didn't play by the rules set up by males or politicians. We decided our own tactics, used our own know-how, and depended on our own strengths. We were not alone in our approach. Numerous local actions and events were carried out on a continuous basis across the U.S. National conferences brought together activists from around the country — such as the one which founded the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition in 1971. Nationally organized mass marches were held — such as the 1971 mobilizations in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, and the 1972 marches in many cities as part of "Abortion Action Week." Our persistent activities combined with the mounting pressures that we created won significant gains — including the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

What Next?

Previous articles in *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* have described the continuing efforts to undermine the gains won by feminist activists and the serious damage already done. Abortion rights were a particular target hit by: legal measures such as the 1977 Hyde Amendment, which ended federal funding for low-income women seeking abortion services; various court decisions during the 1980s which restricted the availability of abortions (particularly for women of color, teenagers, and poor women); and, national administrative directives, such as the "gag rule" which denied abortion information in federally funded clinics. Extralegal and terrorist attacks on women's health clinics and against doctors performing abortions were carried out throughout the nation. The intensifying assaults on abortion rights galvanized feminist organizations and pro-choice activists. The independent character of the women's liberation movement was clearly demonstrated in the 1989 and 1992 mass mobilizations, in local and statewide abortion rights campaigns against restrictive legislation, and in well-organized clinic defense activities around the country.

Recent voting results refuted many politicians' claims that abortion would not be an important issue in the 1992 elections. Maryland voters overwhelmingly approved a referendum establishing a woman's right to an

abortion even if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*. Arizona voters, by a 2-to-1 ratio, rejected a measure which would have amended the state's constitution to ban abortions except to save a woman's life. Not all pro-choice candidates won office, but a significant number did, including: Miriam Shearing, who was elected to the Nevada Supreme Court, and all of the newly elected female members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

According to the *Los Angeles Times* of November 5, 1992, "In California, the Year of the Woman played mostly as the Year of the Pro-Abortion Rights Democratic Woman." California voters set a first-time-ever U.S. record by electing two women as U.S. senators. Dianne Feinstein won, in large part, because of a huge "gender gap" advantage over pro-abortion rights Republican John Seymour — but Barbara Boxer's victory was over anti-abortion Republican Bruce Hershensohn — a better-known and vehemently anti-choice figure. A Republican woman was quoted as saying, in the same *Los Angeles Times* article, that she went into the voting booth completely hostile toward Boxer, but "I just completely changed my mind because of the abortion issue....I just went ahead and voted for her." In one congressional race which pitted two women against each other, pro-choice Jane Harman won over anti-choice Joan Milkes Flores; both agreed that abortion was a major factor in the outcome, and Harman said the abortion question won her crossover votes in the Re-

publican-favored district. Fresno anti-abortion activist Barbara Keating-Edh lost a close State Assembly contest to abortion rights supporter Margaret Snyder. South Bay Assembly candidate Debra Bowen made abortion rights a major issue in her successful campaign against Brad Parton, who received financial support from large anti-abortion organizations and anti-choice Christian groups.

No "Honeymoon" for Clinton!

Across the country, many young women explained that it was the abortion issue which drove them to vote for the first time. For example, a Miami student said, "I'm not a single-issue voter, but [maintaining abortion rights] is something that's important." Now the Democratic Party has to live up to the expectations of these young women and the pro-choice majority who helped provide the winning edge to place both the White House and the Congress under Democratic Party control. As president, it will take Clinton only two strokes of his pen to fulfill his campaign promises to erase the "gag rule" and the ban on the RU-486 abortion pill. It will take only a concerted vote by the Democratic majority to enact the Freedom of Choice bill. These tests may be passed — but there is a proven method for making sure that pre-election pledges are honored: the independent actions of women's rights fighters.

Precious time and a strong momentum will be lost if feminists and their supporters give Clinton and the Democratic majority a "honeymoon" period. The demand must be

raised: Do it now! Do it right now! This must be expressed forcefully through visible public actions which turn up the heat under officeholders and keep public attention focused on women's rights issues. The U.S. Supreme Court, too, is affected by pro-abortion pressures. Although the justices continue to uphold restrictions, it is significant that they refused to hear arguments about Guam's strict law limiting abortions to cases where the mother's life is in danger. This means that a lower court ruling declaring Guam's law unconstitutional remains in effect.

Many of the independent strategies employed during the initial years of the organized women's liberation movement can be creatively applied today in order to wage the most effective struggle possible for the full feminist agenda. The independent character of the women's liberation struggle must be expressed in the political arena as well as in the streets. Disgust with the failures and betrayals of the two major parties prompted feminists to form the 21st Century Party, and some positive contacts were made with Labor Party Advocates and the independent presidential campaign of Ron Daniels. These political initiatives need to be pursued and strengthened. Clinic defense actions, rallies, and national mobilizations have demonstrated the determination and power of the feminist movement and have shown the majority's support for a woman's right to choose. These kinds of public events are still needed to achieve feminist goals. □

December 1, 1992

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The Political Situation in Peru and the Activity of Sendero Luminoso

David Trujillo, a leader of the left in Peru and a member of the PUM, was interviewed by Marty Goodman and wrote out his responses in Spanish in November 1992. They were translated by F. Mailman.

The April 6, 1992, military coup led by Peru's President Alberto K. Fujimori has achieved an elusive goal of the Peruvian ruling class — the capture and subsequent life prison term of Chairman Abimael Guzmán Reynoso of Sendero Luminoso (SL). Guzmán has been described by his followers as "The Red Sun," whose political theories constitute "The Fourth Sword of Marxism," that is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Gonzalo Thought. Never before has such a personal cult embraced a Stalinist political figure before seizure of power. What impact will his imprisonment have on SL's guerrilla war?

In the first place, it must be pointed out that the social and historical conditions in the Andean region, in which the city of Ayacucho is located, have made it possible for a mediocre leftist intellectual to become "the fourth sword of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism," "the red sun of world revolution," the arrogant "Chairman Gonzalo."

This cult of personality, which is *sui generis* [unique] even in the history of Stalinism and which in an early phase signified an acknowledgment of leadership based on a specific link between Sendero Luminoso and a sector of the Quechua nation, also became a factor in the decline of Guzman's leadership and his ultimate capture.

After Guzman's Capture

What happens with Sendero Luminoso after the capture of Gonzalo will no doubt be another story. Without the vertical and totalitarian authority of its leader and his chief lieutenants, the main directors, this organization will have to go on to a new process in which struggles for leadership will inevitably have very violent features. Centrifugal forces will assert themselves, going in different directions, including the utilization of SL's military resources for other ends.

At the same time, Peru, militarized by Fujimori's "auto-coup" on April 5, 1992, paradoxically is becoming more and more the model pictured in the fantasy of "Gonzalo thought": a Third World fascist regime, with or without Fujimori, backed exclusively by the army and, alternately, by different factions of the bourgeoisie, which will try to construct a "national unity" based on the defeat of the

Andean and Aymara societies and on the defeat of organized mass movements.

Can you describe the repression under the coup? How has Fujimori used martial law to repress not only SL but the entire left?

In Peru those who determine the strategy for the antisubversive struggle have for years been the armed forces. Only with Fujimori's coup d'etat, for the first time the military and repressive institutions are acting under a common leadership, although this has not yet succeeded in becoming a definitive leadership. Therefore, a sector of the repressive forces has acted autonomously, prioritizing the intelligence services. That and the support of the CIA permitted them to find Guzmán's hideout and to capture him. According to the magazine *Caretas* it was Bush, and not Fujimori, who first received the news of the capture of "Gonzalo."

In regard to the left, and the people in general, they are caught between two fires. This past year, to date, Sendero Luminoso has killed more than 150 left-wing leaders, among them many women. The most serious murder was that of Maria Elena Moyano, president of the Peruvian Women's Federation and a popular leader in the Villa El Salvador neighborhood. According to a recent report, Guzmán's capture has been followed by "the disappearance of more than 500 people."

What is SL's current strength in the rural areas? Also, what has been its success in the urban centers it has turned to in the last few years?

The highly publicized success of SL in the Peruvian countryside is in reality less than what has been made public. Its center of origin, Ayacucho, represents only 4 percent of the total population of Peru and contributes barely 0.8 percent to the gross national product. Additionally, it is interesting that, while this area is characterized by the Sendero Maoists as "semi-feudal," the Ayacucho peasants underscored in their 1969 rebellion not the struggle for the land, as happened more or less in other regions in that epoch, but for free education!

That is why other left groups — which have an even larger foothold than SL among the peasants — have not had the boom which

SL had, owing to the fact that then (at the end of the '60s), Guzmán's group was above all an exclusively student organization at the university and in the high schools of the city of Huamanga.

It was the brutal repression provoked by SL that resulted in the so-called self-defense "rounds" [government-organized anti-Sendero peasant units], confrontations between villages, and the subsequent depopulation of the countryside. The government was seen as being forced to take such measures, to prevent SL from getting a foothold in the countryside. The Guzman leadership then made the decision to move to Lima and initiate the stage which they describe as "strategic balance," in which they presumed themselves to be equal in military strength to the army and the aim of which was to seize power.

This decision to move to Lima was not unanimous. It is known that Guzmán's wife, Augusta La Torre, who died (she was executed or committed suicide), and the imprisoned Osman Morote formed the "Grupo Negro" (Black Group) opposed to this change of "line," denouncing those positions as "Hoxhist" (referring to Enver Hoxha, former president of Albania). They fought to maintain the Maoist strategy which prioritizes the struggle in the countryside. It must also be reiterated that other than the relative success of achieving a foothold in some neighborhoods, fundamentally SL has achieved no significant success in the labor movements and the grassroots organizations. That is why they have turned to the intimidation or killing of popular leaders, as was the case with labor leader and Trotskyist militant Roberto Chiara. They killed him in order to capture the shoemakers union, which they ended up destroying with their ultra-left and sectarian provocations.

Today, Peru is in a state of utter collapse. In Latin America, only Bolivia and Haiti are in worse condition. In order to pay the country's enormous debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Fujimori — reversing his campaign stand against IMF's "shock therapy" — slashed state support to public programs, fired workers, and lowered customs duties on imports, bringing Peruvian products in direct competition with foreign goods. As a result inflation reached an almost incomprehensible 7,650 percent in 1990 under Fujimori. More than half the people of Peru are now in a condition described as "critical poverty." In January 1991 an outbreak of cholera, a treatable disease long associated with poverty, quickly spread through the consumption of unsanitary water. Can you describe in your own words the condition of the worker and peasant masses?

Peru is a country in a state of bankruptcy, in which the recession is the main problem. In

this country the productive forces have not only stopped growing but those which survive simply have become incompetent, because of the mediocrity of the Peruvian bourgeoisie as well as its backwardness in light of the colossal development of contemporary technology.

The traditional raw materials for export have been devalued, either because of the decline of prices in the world market, or simply because of the disinterest, ineptitude, and perfidy of the governing classes, as is the case with cotton, formerly a very important source of income, whose quality, because of poor control and exposure to different pests, has been significantly reduced. Industry uses barely 30 percent of installed capacity, and there is an agonizing situation because of the [price] reduction and ancillary rates which favor importation of all sorts of better-quality and in some cases cheaper consumer articles rather than national products.

Agriculture is in the process of extinction. Years ago Peru was an eminently agricultural country and the population was made up primarily up peasants. Today the percentage of the population is reversed: almost 70 percent live in the cities and 30 percent of those live in the capital city of Lima, surviving as street vendors in the "informal market" (not integrated into the official economy) and undergoing an extended "lumpenization."

A \$25 Billion Foreign Debt

As for imperialism, if before it was seen as "the gringo who carried away our wealth," today it is the usurer who is charging us enormous interest rates on a foreign debt (more than \$25 billion) that is impossible to pay off. The payments on this debt dramatically increase the misery of the people when added to the poverty that already exists. Under Fujimori the level of critical poverty which, under Alan Garcia, had surpassed 50 percent of the population, has now reached almost 70 percent. At the same time, it is also said that Peru no longer has strategic wealth and that its only profitable business comes from drug-trafficking, in which an important part of the ruling classes and the armed forces are involved. Even if this is true, Peru is hardly more than a producer of a cheap raw material, the coca leaf, used for making cocaine, an alkaloid separated from the coca leaf by a German chemist in 1860. Following the traditional path of its history since it was conquered by Spain, Peru barely receives a few crumbs of this "illicit" business. Former president Alan Garcia, currently accused of illicit self-aggrandizement and a fugitive from Peruvian justice, mentions some figures which can illustrate this situation. In round numbers he said that the cocaine business produces an economic movement of \$100 billion; of this amount 5 percent reaches Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia (in that order). Ninety-five percent of the business is in the

hands of North Americans and people in other First World countries.

Some political observers saw the 1990 victory of Fujimori's fragile electoral coalition, "Cambio '90," not only as a blow to the far right candidacy of writer Mario Vargas Llosa, but also a repudiation of SL and perhaps even the entire left as well (votes for the left were very low in strongholds such as Cuzco, Puno, etc.). What do you think of this view?

That's true. The Peruvian people are tired of traditional political organizations as much of the right as of the left because in the last 12 years of representative democracy, after 11 years of military dictatorship, following 170 years of being an "independent republic" and 500 years under conquest, there is no light at the end of the tunnel. We continue to see a conquered people who have not been able to recover the standard of living and autonomy we had before the European invasion, a people dying of hunger, to whom even the right to their own culture has been denied and who are obligated to pay a foreign debt of \$25 billion while nobody knows how, why, or for what it was spent.

But what is different from the past is that now we are not so pessimistic, although it may seem so. In the course of the last ten years and in the struggle against misery and daily hunger, as well as illness, such as plague, which have come to dramatize our tragedy even more, innumerable popular organizations have been created, many of them independent of political parties but searching for the political means to put an end to this situation. A little less than six years ago a call for the formation of a Popular Assembly was enough to get delegations of representatives of workers, peasants, women, young people, etc., from all corners of the country together, and although unfortunately this organization did not prosper because at that time the left was more interested in its internal confrontation with a view toward the elections and the choosing of a candidate, nonetheless it was a demonstration of what could happen when some organization has the will to put out a call based on an authentic popular alternative.

SL's political guru Abimael Guzmán has had a rather remarkable political life since founding SL in the early 70's, while a philosophy professor at the University of Huamanga in the rural province of Ayacucho. Yet Guzmán's views remind one of the mind-numbing rhetoric of Maoist sects that are here today and gone tomorrow.

However, Sendero has not only survived but since initiating armed struggle in 1980 — curiously at a time when bourgeois democracy enjoyed a revival — it now controls much of the country. How do you explain Guzmán's and SL's success?

Although Guzmán, and with him the SL, describe themselves as Maoists, it must be pointed out that the relative foothold achieved by this organization in a sector of the masses of the Ayacuchan people is due less to its Maoism than to the fact that SL, at a given moment, represented the hope of the masses to rise above the factor which they considered above all else the cause of their misfortunes: *the lack of education.*

A Book Under His Arm

It is revealing that the idealized figure of Guzmán is that of an intellectual with a book under his arm, as opposed to the '60s in which the partisans of the guerrillas attacked the "coffeeshop revolutionaries," as the intellectuals of the left then tended to be. In any case, SL has not achieved the explicit support of some important sectors of the population and if it has had some success in its "armed strikes," it has been because "persuasion with dynamite" has been more than sufficient to neutralize the chaotic and minimal public transportation system. Still, if we consider the fact that the majority of those who use the public transportation system are independent workers in the street markets, we note that this only affects those who SL claims to represent.

SL, on the other hand, is no longer what it was at the beginning. Today it has become a bloodthirsty, provocative, antidemocratic, authoritarian organization and, just like the fascism which it says it struggles against, it also practices a special cult of death. In 1989, when it declared its intention of achieving "strategic balance," it began to speak of millions of dead and of the convenience of "genocide" in order to achieve that balance.

It has been said (in NACLA, Vol. XXIV, p. 34) that SL believes the current stage of the Peruvian revolution is "democratic" and hence refrains from socialist measures in rural areas. Does SL empower peasants in areas it controls?

SL and the so-called "Gonzalo thought" have nothing new: it is the same Stalinism as the "third period" in the early '30s [after Stalin announced that world capitalism had entered its third and final period,] when the Comintern launched the line of struggle of "class against class" and when the spokesman for this line in Peru was Eudocio Ravinez.

Ravinez headed a clandestine faction opposed to José Carlos Mariategui, founder of Peruvian Marxism and the Socialist Party. After Mariategui's death, Ravinez revised the ideas of the Socialist Party in its early period, forced its submission to the Stalinist-dominated Third International, changed the party's name to Communist Party, and changed its program, twisting Mariategui's analysis.

Mariategui's View

Mariategui's view was that despite the existence of different modes of production in Peru — primitive on the Amazon and semi-

feudal in the Andean sierra — capitalism still had hegemony. In a polemic against the APRA and the Comintern, Mariategui said, "The Latin American revolution can only be above all a part of the world revolution. It will be, simple and pure, the socialist revolution. To this word can be added, in some cases, all the adjectives you want: anti-imperialist, agrarian, revolutionary-nationalist. Socialism assumes them, precedes them, encompasses them."

This sentence can be subscribed to by any Trotskyist, since it contains the very essence of permanent revolution. This is not by accident. Mariategui did his apprenticeship as a Marxist studying the documents of the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky in Italy, as recorded by the historian Alberto Flores Galindo. Later he drew his own political conclusions from the experience of the first Chinese revolution, which reaffirmed to him the thesis that only the proletariat can meaningfully go the distance, and as the leader of all oppressed classes, must inevitably carry out a socialist revolution.

As we see, in spite of the fact that SL presents itself as a follower of Mariategui, in practice it follows Ravinez, who years later, became part, with all his baggage, of the most reactionary sector of the Peruvian bourgeoisie.

Much of the territory controlled by SL is inhabited by Indian peoples. Yet, paradoxically, SL's literature does not call for fighting the ruling mestizo culture's oppression of the Indian people. How do you explain this?

This can only be explained by the fundamentalism of so-called "Gonzalo thought." In order to achieve the necessary level of fanaticism in its followers, SL had to construct a world view which, like the Catholic catechism, leaves no room for doubt. Peruvian researcher Carlos Ivan Degregori noted precisely this fact in the doctoral thesis written by Guzmán, in which the history of Peru is concentrated in three chapters carrying us "from the darkness to the light." In the first chapter, according to Degregori, the coolness of the text toward the pre-Hispanic civilizations is quite noticeable. Within the classist vision (of Guzmán) ethnicity plays no role. What is important is the emergence of the state and of classes, during Tiwanaku and Wari. The conquest is a simple change of exploiters. Paradise is in the future."

The second chapter of the Senderist catechism, "On how the light emerged and iron was forged," is dedicated to Mariategui and to the young Peruvian proletariat, with phrases that are also religious: "A most pure light began to emerge, a resplendent light, that light we carry in our breasts, in our souls. That light was founded with the land and that clay became iron. From the light, clay, iron, emerged EL PARTIDO in 1929..."

The third chapter deals with the recent history of Peru and the history of Sendero Luminoso up to its supposed achievement of "strategic balance":

The people will become aroused, will arm themselves and, rising in rebellion, will bind imperialism and the reactionaries hand and foot, will grab their throats, will tear their flesh: and, necessarily, will strangle them, necessarily. The reactionary flesh will shred, will become tatters, and that black scum will disappear into the mud; what remains will be burned and the wind will disperse the ashes throughout the land in order that nothing remain but an unfortunate memory of what shall never happen again because it cannot and must not happen again.

Finally, Guzmán defines what communism is:

The society of "great harmony," a radical and definitive new society toward which 15 billion years of matter in motion, that part of eternal matter which we know, has been moving in a necessary and irresistible direction...

[The] only, the irreplaceable new society, without exploited or exploiters, without oppressed or oppressors, without classes, without the state, without parties, without democracy, without weapons, without wars [PCP, 1986].

A concept as elaborate as this cannot permit any doubt, especially if the "means of persuasion," or rather, sufficiently violent resources, are available to get all Senderist militants to think alike, unanimously.

Can you explain the success SL has achieved in attracting women to its banner?

The participation of women in politics is not new in Peru. It is in the Inca mythology, where in the founding of the empire Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo are equally recognized. During the resistance against the Spanish, the women had their outstanding role because during the great genocide, millions of men were decimated. It was the surviving women who in principle preferred to kill their children to prevent them from becoming slaves for the Spanish. Then, during Tupac Amaru's uprising, a woman was recognized in a leadership role, Micaela Basidas, and then there was the sacrifice of those women who continued the resistance. In the struggle for independence Maria Parado de Bellido is also remembered: she was shot by the Spanish. In the case of Sendero, women's access to certain levels of leadership is the result of the fact that in the actions of the early years, and above all the notable repression in 1983-84, many men died or were arrested, so the women took up the struggle at many levels of leadership.

We must remember once again that SL is above all the party of "Chairman Gonzalo," an absolutely patriarchal leader who refers to the women of the party as "my daughters," reproducing a hierarchic and protective tie. A

researcher, Rosa Mavila León, pointed out how the usefulness of the women to SL and more specifically to Guzmán was revealed in the course of violent actions, "Because in the action of war they believed their equality was concretized by the obligation to be as or more courageous than the men, and in this way obtain the men's respect," thus becoming "the most macha among the machos" ("Presente y Futuro de las Mujeres de la Guerra" [Present and Future of the Women of War], in the magazine *Que Hacer*, October 1992).

SL Women Cannot Be Mothers

In the same article an interview with a Senderist illustrates another point: "The Senderist women cannot be mothers, and couples are subject to absolute rules; marriage [is permitted], but according to rank, the officers with officers, the leaders with leaders." And still another point: "...the emotional issues linked with sexuality are not compatible with the concept of militancy."

In any case, the supposed high value that SL places on women is countered by the brutal killing, ordered by Guzmán himself — which he admitted at his trial — of Maria Elena Moyano, whose body was blown up with dynamite after she was killed. This is nothing more than part of the same exclusivity with which Sendero always acts. Just as there can be no revolution other than theirs, no other party but themselves, no alternative but theirs, neither can there be women revolutionaries outside their ranks. It was not only Moyano but other women leaders of the Vaso de Leche (Glass of Milk) program who had to pay with their lives for being courageous and revolutionary but opposed to Sendero Luminoso.

The SL is known for its "moralizing" campaigns. In peasant villages Popular Committees are set up by SL that regulate local production and civil disputes but also weddings, prohibitions on infidelity, drinking, prostitution, and homosexuality. An SL "founder," according to Peruvian journalist and political analyst José E. Gonzales, said of the town of La Morada, "The Campañeros behave well... They helped us get rid of the homosexuals, prostitutes, and criminals that used to gather around here. They told them to leave; those that didn't showed up dead in the road." What do you think of such campaigns?

This reflects various factors. First, the scarce presence of the Peruvian state in helping to resolve the problems of daily life. In the years 1958-64, years of the great struggle for land which the FIR and Hugo Blanco headed, and in which more than 700 peasant unions were created, one must remember that such organizations also fulfilled the function of resolving marital conflicts and even popular justice. (Incidentally they too harassed prostitutes and homosexuals, but did not kill them, as the SL later did.)

The performance of such functions led Blanco to say that the peasant unions became a "dual power." In the case of the Senderists, this action is very different, because the party replaces the action of the masses with paternalistic behavior.

The U.S. ruling class has spent millions combating the alleged link between SL in the Upper Huallaga Valley, where it is powerful, and the intense harvesting there of the coca leaf (used in producing cocaine). What is the truth?

First of all it must be pointed out that the U.S. ruling class acts hypocritically and in an imperialist manner in its supposed struggle against drug trafficking. First, it places all the responsibility on Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia, producer countries of one of the raw materials used for cocaine: the coca leaf. The coca leaf does not convert itself into cocaine; it needs chemical inputs, which are produced in the United States, and if their production

and sale were controlled, that would be the key to the struggle against the production of drugs and therefore for the control of drug trafficking.

But the ruling class in the United States prefers to combat the poor Peruvian peasants rather than confront the powerful industrialists who manufacture the chemicals used to make cocaine. Thus, ignoring the peasants' demands, it proceeds to combat the coca harvests with pesticides and bactericides, which are damaging the ecology of the region. The peasants have shown themselves willing to replace that crop. In some cases they have cultivated rice and then have seen their harvest rot, because the Peruvian government did not resolve the problem of transportation. At the same time, it appears that the brains of the North American government are more comfortable killing Indians. There is no other way to explain the prioritization of the military and repressive aspects

against thousands of people who have the right to earn their living by working.

That is the reason why the SL and MRTA, who are rivals for the control of the zone of Alto Huallaga, have had a relative success in defense of the producers of the coca leaf, procuring better prices for them from the drug traffickers who buy the leaf. They have also defended the area against joint U.S.-Peruvian government repression. People must be aware that the United States also has a military base in the Alto Huallaga and that the guerrillas have already shot down a military helicopter belonging to that invasion force.

Lastly there is a curious "strategic balance" in the Alto Huallaga among the North American-Peruvian forces and the MRTA and SL guerrillas. It is a fact that drug trafficking is so powerful in this zone that it permits the existence of this "balance." It is known that not only Peruvian army officials but also the U.S. army itself is involved in the resulting corruption. □

Organizing a Mass Working-Class Party

Continued from page 2

implicit in all of them. Several speakers at the floor microphones cited instances not only of the growing sentiment for a labor party but the realization that such a party is different from the two old parties, not a party that promises to do everything for everybody but a new party that must be built by workers to meet the needs of workers.

The remainder of the first day, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., was devoted to special interest workshops and area meetings. A program note listed Tony Mazzocchi as head of a workshop on LPA at this time, but as we shall discuss below, another important event delayed his appearance until the second day of the conference.

At the start of the second day the scheduled panel speakers were Dave Riehle, chairman of United Transportation Union Local 160 in St. Paul; Mike Merrill, professor of labor history at Rutgers University; and Elaine Bernard, executive director of the trade union program at Harvard University and former president of NDP in British Columbia, Canada. They addressed the topic, "Experience with Labor Parties in the United States and Elsewhere." Dave Riehle told the true story of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party, which was organized in 1920 and before the end of the decade had become the dominant party in the state, marginalizing both the Republican and Democratic Parties. It remained the dominant party throughout the 1930s and began losing influence among workers only when entrenched state officials who had been elected on the FLP ticket gradually watered down its program and muzzled the labor militants in its ranks. The party was finally destroyed when it merged with the moribund remnants of the Demo-

cratic Party to become part of the national Democratic Party vote-catching machine under the guidance of Hubert Humphrey, who later served as vice president in the Lyndon Johnson administration during the Vietnam war. Riehle's message was that the labor party, properly organized to defend the political and economic interests of the working class, will not long remain a "third party" but will quickly become the dominant party.

Professor Merrill argued for a progressive party formation that would include both workers and some liberal employers. This provoked debate, but the consensus reached was that such questions will be resolved in the building of the labor party. Everyone, including Merrill, conceded that the future is uncertain and the task at hand for LPA members and their allies is to strengthen their forces.

Elaine Bernard was the most entertaining and provocative speaker of all the panelists at the conference. It was fitting that she was the final speaker. She gave everyone present something new to think about, a new way of looking at the U.S. political structure through the eyes of a knowledgeable outsider. She said politically active people in all other industrial countries find U.S. politics in some ways incomprehensible. Their political experiences teach them to understand parties as aggregates of voters who have common economic and social needs, and who organize themselves on the basis of a political program that expresses those needs. This is how the party and its members have control over those it elects to represent them in government. No such party exists in the U.S., she said. Here the two-party system is a state institution. Voters are allowed to cast votes, but they have nothing to do with the organiza-

tion of these parties and exercise no control over those who are elected to govern society. This system is called democracy in the U.S., she said, but in other countries it is called totalitarianism.

Tony Mazzocchi arrived for questions and a brief discussion of LPA before the conference ended. He explained that he was unable to come on the first day as planned because of an environmental conference, mostly of Black victims who are forced to live in highly polluted areas in Louisiana, where he was invited to speak. The conference had been planned for a few hundred but more than 1,300 attended. He reported that LPA attracted favorable response and said that he expects LPA to gain support throughout the South.

Organizers of the LPA Detroit conference met briefly to evaluate their work and project future LPA actions. They agreed that the conference had exceeded their expectations, and attributed its success largely to the selection of able, well-informed speakers. The conference was genuinely educational. All who attended left with a sense of having learned something new, and with a renewed determination to build local LPA units. Mazzocchi said he agreed with many others that this conference marked a turning point for LPA and that similar educational conferences should be conducted as part of LPA's organizational and expansion drive. A videotape of the conference and a pamphlet of Dave Riehle's talk on the history of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party were recommended as useful aids to workers' education and organization. □

*Detroit
December 6, 1992*

Haiti's Struggle Continues

by Lloyd D'Aguilar

The following article is based on a talk at a meeting on Haiti in New York in August 1992. The author hosts the program Caribbean Forum on radio station WBAI in New York.

The social convulsion which grips Haiti is calling out for a radical, urgent solution. A massive bloodletting strategy is being pursued by the military dictatorship, throwing the mass movement on the defensive. The struggle must lead inexorably to the removal from power of the ruling class as the only way to stop the country from drifting into further chaos. This is the job of the workers and peasants, who are confronted by the enormous task of devising a strategy for taking power into their own hands.

The Haitian bourgeoisie is intransigently opposed to the establishment of any semblance of bourgeois democracy. The army, which plays a parasitic role in the economy, is deadly afraid of coming under civilian control. It fears losing its special privileges and power. The army has a long tradition of being the final arbiter of class conflict dating back to the 1791–1804 revolution. It was this revolution which defeated Napoleon's army and established the first Black Republic in the Western hemisphere.

The current military dictatorship will not budge to the pressure of its own people; not to an international (but ineffective) economic embargo; not to threats from the OAS. And certainly no serious pressure is being applied by the United States. The military gives every indication that they would not be opposed to an American invasion, which they confidently believe would continue to guarantee their special privileges and powers.

It therefore stands to reason that the "classic" prognosis for revolution will not apply in the near future to Haiti. No one can credibly argue for dividing the struggle into stages. In other words, today we struggle for bourgeois democracy so that the masses will get space to organize for tomorrow's revolution. It is clear that the Haitian rulers, and Washington, have already ruled out such a neat chronological forward march of the revolution. Theirs is a scorched-earth policy.

What we have in Haiti, on the contrary, are the conditions, born of necessity, for a permanent revolution. The workers and peasants will inevitably have to capture state power as the only way to end the carnage by the military. There will be no dividing line between "democratic" and socialist measures.

Under present conditions in Haiti, armed struggle as a strategic objective is an option that will increasingly receive more serious consideration. Such a strategy will have to be worked out according to the conditions at

hand. There are many experiences to study and learn from. The Cuban people recently celebrated another anniversary of the 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks, the source of the July 26 Movement which launched an invasion from Mexico some years later, culminating in the victory of the Cuban revolution.

The July 26 Movement was no "Bolshevik" party, but had the support of the people because all avenues for "peaceful" change had been closed by the Batista regime. So confident were they of their mission that they even announced beforehand that they were going to launch their invasion. This has to be seen as something quite different from what Che Guevara attempted some years later in Bolivia. The Castroite forces were in a position to reach out to the people from the beginning, whereas Guevara was isolated. I mention this because I don't want it to appear that I am advocating anything which resembles an organization substituting itself for the actions of the people.

Armed struggle as a strategy calls for open discussion among revolutionary forces because it should not be discounted that liberal bourgeois elements are at this very moment somewhere in Miami or Toronto hatching their own conspiracies. They are counting not only on the support of international public opinion, but hoping as well to win the support of radical forces. It would be a serious blow to the struggle were such elements to seize the initiative without the radical forces having formulated a position on the question.

In this regard, I would like to bring to your attention a piece written by Earl Caldwell of the *Daily News* on June 10, 1992. Caldwell, who is African American, is one of the few liberals writing for that paper. In an article entitled "Army of blacks can solve Haiti's woe" Caldwell calls for an armed intervention — though not one led by the US army:

In his desperate situation, where does Aristide look and what does he do if there is to be any chance of salvaging his presidency and, with it, democracy in Haiti?

For the answer, perhaps the time has come for Aristide to look at some history. Maybe he ought to look at what the American government did when it was determined to oust President Daniel Ortega and bring democracy to Nicaragua.... The Americans relied on force.... a way was found to fund and arm an anti-Sandinista force commonly known as Contras. Their supporters in the U.S. called them freedom fighters and the American government championed their cause.

To liberate his country, Aristide needs freedom fighters. He will not get those troops from President Bush. ...

But Aristide has another place to go. Many of his "brothers and sisters" in black America have been trained to fight by the best Army in the world. Many are now without jobs, and they support the Haitian cause. Aristide need only issue the call. It is not such a farfetched idea.

I agree it is not such a farfetched idea that freedom fighters might have to be mobilized to dispatch the Haitian army. That army is not regarded as the most formidable in the world. Their chances of prevailing against an armed uprising of the people are slim, they are politically isolated and lack credibility.

Caldwell describes the Haitian Army as a "motley crew." They have elsewhere been described as a "ragtag group of warlords with often conflicting interests." Other reports state that: The Haitian military is comprised of some 1,000 officers and 7,400 enlisted men, including the police, and is minuscule by Latin American and Caribbean standards. The army's most lethal weapon are four V-150 armored cars, not all of which work at any given time; the Navy consists of about a dozen 45-foot patrol boats, of which only a few are operational; and the air force has just a few propeller-driven Cessnas.

While no one disagrees that the Haitian army is not invincible, the contention that the liberation of Haiti needs to be done by anyone else but Haitians, must surely be opposed. It doesn't matter even if the combatants are to be Black American ex-GIs. Which is not to say that it is a principle that only Haitians should fight for their liberation. Cuba fought in Angola. And even if there were errors along the way, it was a principled move. Volunteers from around the world fought in Spain against the fascists.

The fact is that because of the climate of extreme repression which has existed in Haiti over the years, hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of Haitians are now living in places such as New York, Miami, Toronto, Québec, and elsewhere, including the neighboring Dominican Republic. A shortage of Haitian manpower is not a problem.

Under normal circumstances there would be no need to contemplate the introduction of any outside force, Haitian or otherwise. But one needs to recognize that repression in Haiti over the years has caused a hemorrhaging of some of its best people and contributed to the missing subjective factor of a visible, revolutionary leadership. This situation is not historically unique to Haiti. The leadership of the African National Congress existed outside of South Africa or in prison for more than thirty years in some instances. In Russia it was the same thing. Until 1917 many in the leadership of the Bolshevik party had not set foot in Russia for over a decade.

One does not have to be a genius to realize that it is these Haitian forces outside the country, not ex-GIs — even if they happen to

be Black — who have the responsibility to offer more direct assistance, ideological and material, to the forces struggling in Haiti. One must remember that revolution has its ebb and flow, and while the movement in Haiti is not defeated, it is bleeding. One cannot bleed and fight indefinitely.

Haitians need no convincing that the United States is more concerned with preserving the status quo than with bringing about real democracy. The historical record speaks for itself. The U.S. occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934 resulted in a serious setback for the progressive movement. It was the peasantry who suffered most from the occupation. They were on the verge of forcing concessions from the ruling class on the land question, but the Americans used their powers to blunt land reform and to thwart any radical political restructuring. The peasants consequently waged a heroic but losing guer-

rilla war against the occupying forces. There can be no doubt that one of the main objectives of any new American occupation would be to defeat the mass movement.

One of the key players to setting an agenda for public discussion is deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who is the de facto leader of the exile community. Aristide might be popular among the people, but we cannot overlook his political weaknesses. Undoubtedly he is an extraordinary figure in Haitian history. He is a brave and courageous man. He has always been on the front line in denouncing the military and encouraging the masses to defend themselves against the brutality of the various regimes. This was especially so while he was a practicing priest.

But for all his good points and good intentions Aristide cannot lead the Haitian people to that final solution because he is a man without an organization. His main obsession is to return as president, and the fact must be faced that the presidency has become a weakened institution. If Aristide were to return as president, he would serve at the pleasure of the military.

Aristide has also been under pressure from Washington not to radicalize the situation and to work out a compromise with the military.

To his credit he has so far refused to compromise with the military or to recognize Marc Bazin, the military-appointed prime minister. But things could change.

In a June 4, 1992, *New York Times* article, Aristide is quoted as saying that the situation in Haiti is like a "volcano," that it is very "explosive," and that the people are "running out of patience." He claimed that as a responsible head of government he had to urge nonviolence to head off an explosion like what happened in Los Angeles. Though it is not necessary to go into the analogy with Los Angeles, which is false, it is clear that Aristide is respecting Washington's wishes not to radicalize the situation. Such an approach cannot provide the spark needed in the exile community. Aristide's assumptions about what is needed to break the impasse need to be vigorously challenged.

Finally, there is throughout the world, an untapped groundswell of support for the Haitian struggle. This is more than just a Haitian concern. It is part of the worldwide struggle against imperialism. It is incumbent on all those who wish to see the forward march of Human Liberation to make sure that the second Haitian revolution will not be isolated and that it is triumphant. □

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The Literary Legacy of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

by L.B. Kamenev

Lev Kamenev (1883–1936) from the age of nineteen was prominently involved in the Russian revolutionary movement. For years he functioned as one of the most serious-minded and capable activists and publicists in the Bolshevik underground. From around 1909 onward, he was closely associated with Lenin. Despite some serious political differences, Lenin had much respect for him — including his abilities as a Marxist scholar. After Lenin's death he was the first editor of the Bolshevik leader's Collected Works.

Along with his close associate Gregory Zinoviev, Kamenev initially formed an alliance within the inner circles of the Soviet government and Russian Communist Party with Joseph Stalin in order to counteract Leon Trotsky's great influence. By 1925, however, it became clear that Stalin represented a bureaucratic conservative and tyrannical danger to the revolution. Kamenev and Zinoviev then went into opposition to Stalin, forming the United Left Opposition with Trotsky in 1926–27. After the opposition's defeat, unlike Trotsky, they capitulated to Stalin — but this did not save them from being scapegoated in the bloody purge trials of the 1930s.

This essay, first published in the magazine Communist International (issue number 1 in 1924), shortly after Lenin's death, stands as an insightful Marxist appreciation by someone who was intimately acquainted with the context and meaning of Lenin's work.

I. Contexts of Lenin's Writings

It is the year 1893. Alexander the Third rules over Russia. In the provincial depths of Samara, the banished student Vladimir Ilyich buries himself in local statistics, and in the study of the economic life of the peasantry seeks an answer to the problem of the fate of the Russian revolution. From the mass of dry figures of the local statisticians that answer stands out ever more clearly. The countryside is becoming stratified. That old support of the tsar's monarchy — the uniform poverty and destitution of the village — is failing. The factory is appearing on the scene and with it the proletariat, the gravediggers of tsarism and the bourgeoisie. Vladimir Ilyich sets forth his conclusions in an article entitled "New Economic Movements Among the Peasantry," which he sends to the Moscow journal *Yuridichesky Vestnik*. At the head of the *Yuridichesky Vestnik* are the recognized stars of Russian liberalism, the pillars of the Moscow University, professors Kablukov and Muromtsev. They, of course, are for the "people" and "freedom of the press." But they reject Lenin's article. After a few weeks the manuscript is "turned down" and disappears in the "archives" of the secret police. There it lies for exactly thirty years. After thirty years Lenin's first scientific work, written for the press and dedicated to the peasantry, becomes available to the reader.

1894. The voices of the heretic-Marxists are becoming more and more audible. Not a single article of theirs has yet been printed in Russia, but their views are gaining more and more partisans among the youth. The generals of literature, the honorable guardians of the liberal and popular traditions, hold complete sway over the newspapers, journals, and publications, but the voices of the underground Marxists grow ever more disturbing. Throughout the whole press a campaign is started against the obscure, nameless "Disciples of Marx," who have no press of their

own. The "Friends of the People" overwhelm their readers with books, brochures, journals, and newspaper articles, filled with lies and slander directed against the revolutionary Marxists. These attacks demand an answer. A full explanation is needed of the views of those who advocate the organization of a workers' party on the basis of scientific socialism, and a complete expose of the hypocritical "Friends of the People," who are obstructing the organization of a workers' party in Russia. Ilyich takes up his pen and writes his pamphlet *The Friends of the People—Who They Are and How They Make War on the Social Democrats*. Neither publisher nor printer can be found for the pamphlet. And so this booklet of 150 pages, the only exposition of the revolutionary views of the workers' party, is copied by hand, and 250 copies are hectographed. These copies fall into the hands of a few fortunate people here and there. The widely distributed literature of the liberals and populists — who, of course, are in favor of the freedom of the press — fails to mention the booklet. In the arrests that shortly afterwards take place practically all of the copies of the booklet are seized by the police. The booklet disappears. Only two of the three parts of the pamphlet are discovered, after twenty-eight years, in the Berlin archives and become available to the reader.

1895. The advance skirmishers of bourgeois ideology, the defenders of capitalism, the future banner-bearers of the Kadet Party, are clamoring loudly in all the journals, newspapers, books, and societies. The revolutionary teaching of Marx is being distorted and adapted to the needs of Russian capitalism. Ilyich throws himself into the struggle with an article which exposes the counterfeiters of Marxism. The tsar's censors burn the book which contains Ilyich's article. The counterfeiters continue to sell their wares. The press of the liberals and populists pretends that

nothing has happened. Only after twelve years does Ilyich's article see the light.

1907. The revolution of 1905 is crushed. Forever? How can the defeat be explained? What did the peasantry say of the revolution? Is the peasant problem solved? Safe from the Petersburg spies, Ilyich studies the peasant movement of the years 1905–06, in the little Finnish village of Kuokalla, two hours distant from Petersburg. He reads over the peasant decrees and the speeches of the peasant deputies, examines figures, compares data, searches for the answer to the fundamental question of the future of Russia. The answer is found. The peasants are not satisfied, they cannot be appeased. The peasants demand all of the land, and the revolution will go on until this demand is granted. Ilyich expounds the results of his studies in a dispassionate, legal manner in his book, *The Agrarian Question and the First Russian Revolution*. No publisher is found for the book. The huge manuscript, the fruits of long and persistent labor, the result of a work attempted by no one else, lies for ten years, until 1917, in the bottom of Ilyich's trunk. It travels with him from Finland to Geneva, from Paris to Krakow, and after ten years, is borne back to Petersburg on the waves of the victorious revolution, and so, at last, finds a printer.

1908. Under the protection of advancing reaction a campaign is opened against the very fundamentals of Marxism, and against its philosophical conception. Huge tomes and little booklets proving the bankruptcy of Marxism and materialism pour forth by the dozen. Yushkevich, Valentinov, and Bogdanov, and their like gain possession of the platforms and the legal press in order to preach the philosophy of reaction. Ilyich applies himself to Berkeley and Hume, Kant and Hegel, Mach and Avenarius. The result is his book *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Quite unexpectedly a publisher is found for the book. But not, to be sure, a publisher

whose plant is at the service of the “masters of the minds” of the counterrevolutionaries, who publish the obscenity of Artzibasheff, the servile prose of Miliukov, the “Lumières” of Isgoyev, and Berdiaeff’s “investigations” into the orthodoxy of Homiakoff. The publisher of the philosophical works of Ilyich becomes at once a candidate for prison. Within a few weeks after the printing of the book he is in jail. Of the 3,000 copies that are printed only three or four hundred find their way into the bookshops, and the remainder are left to rot in the warehouses of the arrested publisher. Not until twelve years after its writing does Ilyich’s book become available to those readers for whom it was intended.

1909. Reaction is developing. The liberals celebrate their victory over the revolution. The manifesto of counterrevolutionary liberalism, praising the work of Stolypin and throwing mud on that of the workers and peasants, is distributed in tens of thousands of copies (see the magazine, *Vekh*). The renegades of all colors, firmly established in the newspaper offices, journals, and publishing houses, keep on a constant snarling at the revolution, corrupting the consciousness of the masses with lies and calumnies, pouring out the poison of their contempt on the fighters of 1905. At their disposal are the million sheets of the daily papers, supported at the expense of the big capitalists. At their service are the publishing companies, with a turnover of hundreds of thousands of rubles. Ilyich, abroad, defends the interests of the workers and peasants. At his disposal are the four small pages of a worker’s paper, appearing once a month. And sometimes there is not enough money even for that, and then the paper comes out only once in two months. The doors to legal literature are closed. There is no one to print the articles and books of this irreconcilable “sectarian” who summons the people to prepare for a new revolution, and who excludes himself from the “decent” society of counterrevolution by his “indecent” attacks on all the stars of Russian public life, beginning with Miliukov and ending with Martov.

1917. The June days. *Pravda* is destroyed by Kerensky’s officers and closed down by order of the republican government. They are hunting for Ilyich in order to kill him. But in Ilyich’s traveling bag lies a manuscript of research which is soon to become world famous, which will be translated into all foreign tongues, and without reference to which no historian of socialism nor theoretician of the nature of the state will be able to get along — *State and Revolution*. Fleeing from his republican murderers, Lenin writes me:

Entre nous, Comrade Kamenev, should they do away with me, I beg of you to publish my little pamphlet *Marxism on the State* (it got stuck in Stockholm). It is bound and has got a dark blue cover. It contains all the quotations from Marx and Engels and also from Kautsky against Pannekoek. It also con-

tains a number of notes and remarks. All this should be formulated. I think that it should not take longer than a week to get the material ready for publication. I think it of the greatest importance, as it is not only Plekhanov and Kautsky who have made blunders. This, of course, must remain entirely entre nous. (The latter refers to the “July events” in 1917. The pamphlet in question is V. Lenin’s work published subsequently under the title *State and Revolution*.)

II. Writing for a Purpose

Here are some random facts which depict the conditions of the political and literary work of Ilyich. It must be remembered that right up to the October revolution, this born leader, organizer, and educator of millions had at his disposal only one means of action — the pen and the word of a free-lance publicist. His pen was backed up by nothing but inner conviction. Behind him was no bourgeois machine ready to distribute in millions of copies any vulgarities that might fall from the lips of a Bismarck, a Stolypin, or a Lloyd George, nor had he the official seat of a deputy, or the chair of a professor from which to attract the attention of the bourgeois crowd. On the contrary, all the forces of the world were ranged against his utterances. Against him were both the conscious interests of the ruling groups, trying either by money or brute force to break every thread stretched between the proletarian publicist and the proletarian masses, and also the elemental hatred of those people who instinctively tried to close the mouth of this indefatigable and fearless man, who dared at each turn of history to have “his own opinion,” which fact, in itself, was to the complacent bourgeoisie like a red rag to a bull. Thus was formed the “conspiracy of silence” against the greatest man of our time. Right up to 1917, with the exception of a few months in 1905 and 1906, Lenin exists neither for the world press nor for the Russian press. Faced with the “historical” figures of Rodzianko, Guchkov, Count Bobrinsky, and Prince Trubetskoy, how could the editors of *Rech* and *Russkii Vedomstvo* discern the figure of the editor of an underground sheet and the author of brochures for workers and peasants — Ulyanov?

Twice the workers and peasant masses rose; twice they shook the foundations of the ruling regime, and so won freedom of speech for their own publicists, their own teacher, their own tribune. The uprising of 1905 was needed to give Ilyich the chance of talking for a few weeks with the workers of Russia; the October victory of the proletariat was needed to set free the words of Ilyich so that the villages and factory towns of all the world might hear them. The history of the publicist activities of Ilyich should become a striking example for our Soviet party schools and universities of what the bourgeois states and “freedom of the press” within the bourgeois state really mean. Better than any theoretical consideration of the question, a study of the

conditions of the publicist work of Ilyich reveals the existence of those methods with which the bourgeoisie — under the most democratic covering — attempts to hold the workers in mental slavery.

We shall never know what an amount of mental energy ready to be poured into articles, books, and investigations has not been availed of for the education of the masses, and only very rarely do we meet with an outburst of indignation from Ilyich against the wall of lies, hypocrisy, and repression which stood for decades between him and his readers. Nine-tenths of all that Ilyich wrote (up to 1917) was written for illegal publication. There were years when even this possibility of talking with the party and the working class was not within his reach. And when such opportunity did present itself, it was, of necessity, extremely limited. During the three years (1900–1903) of Ilyich’s closest associations with *Iskra* (Geneva), altogether fifty-two numbers were issued, that is, about three numbers in two months. During the period of the war, from August 1914 to February 1917, that is, throughout two-and-a-half years of unprecedented deception practiced on the working class, Ilyich — the great, the only unmasker of those lies, he who was to save the name and honor of socialism — was able to issue only twenty numbers of his own paper. This “newspaper,” by the way, consisted of only one sheet, comprising less than one-tenth of the daily text of one bourgeois paper, *The Times*. With this weapon of propaganda, Ilyich took up the fight against the poison which the world press carried to all sections of humanity, having entered the service of the Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, Romanovs, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George.

These are only examples of the weakness of that weapon which the bourgeoisie left in the hands of Ilyich for the spreading of his ideas. But the possibility of utilizing the illegal press was limited still further by the very conditions governing its distribution. How many of the articles and works of Ilyich, printed on the underground presses of Petersburg and Moscow, Geneva or Paris, actually reached the workers and peasants? How many were destroyed in arrests and raids? And even those which reached the masses could not be preserved, could not serve as a constant source for research, reference, and study. Once read, the article passed out of reach of the readers. A reader would often obtain the first part of an article, but not its conclusion. In the end, the working masses received the thoughts of Ilyich as passed on by local workers, propagandists, agitators, and organizers — the fortunate few to whom was given the opportunity to read the original numbers of the underground, illegal, and foreign papers or brochures. As a rule, the underground literature was anonymous. It was a collective and not an individual production. Lenin’s articles in *Iskra* and *Proletaria* were unsigned. Not only for the masses, but even

for those responsible workers who were in close reach of the center, the personality of their leader, Ilyich, was concealed in the group, in the collective editorship and the collective authorship of the resolutions. To this it is necessary to add that Ilyich's articles in the illegal periodical journals were not once reprinted until 1920, when his articles from the *Iskra* were printed in the fourth volume of his *Collected Works*. They were to be found only in files of old illegal newspapers, which were kept, of course, not in public libraries, but in the police department.

Summing up: as a result of the united efforts of the liberal supporters of the "freedom of the press" and the zealous guardians of the existing order, the overwhelming majority of the political works of Ilyich, even those already printed, are in fact novelties for any wide circle of readers.

Only during the last year or two have hundreds and thousands of pages of Lenin's political writings of the period 1900–1907 come within the reach of the wide circles of the party and the masses for whom they were intended. Thus did the bourgeoisie do their work; and if, notwithstanding all their efforts, the ideas of Ilyich (if not his original work) became accessible to the wide masses of the workers even prior to October, it was only because the bourgeois conspiracy came up against the indomitable will of the party, which in actuality was a mass apparatus for broadcasting Ilyich's ideas among the workers.

III. Reaching Out to Workers

To talk with the workers — that was the fundamental purpose of all the literary activity of Ilyich. In 1897, during his Siberian exile, he wrote abroad to the place where his brochure *Penalties* (intended for the rank-and-file work) was published: "I would wish for nothing so much, I have dreamed of nothing so much as the possibility of writing for the workers. But how can that be done from here? It is very, very difficult, but in my opinion not impossible."

Everybody knows now that Ilyich, better than anybody else, knew how to write and speak for the wide masses. He could not endure superficial elegance of phrase, he scorned any attempt to adorn a thought, and was very fond of quoting the words of Bazarov, "My dear friend, Arkady Nikolayevitch, do not talk so beautifully." He regarded confused style as an indication of confused thought, which he was organically incapable of enduring.¹

With all his strength of will, therefore, Ilyich sought opportunities for talking openly to the masses, and that is why he prized so highly every possibility of acting directly upon the people by means of the printed word. After ten years of underground publicist activity, the first opportunity that came to Ilyich of working openly was in November 1905. But the workers' movement was comparatively still so weak at that time that Lenin

was able to address his articles openly to the masses only during one month in 1905 (*Novy Zhizn*, November–December, 1905) and for a month and a half in 1906 (the period of the First Duma). During the period of the Second Duma (1907) the Bolshevik press enjoyed literally only a few days of open existence. Then the door was forcibly shut, and for a long period. The rise of the workers' movement after the Lena massacre gave the weapon of the legal press once more into the hands of Lenin. The uninterrupted development of the workers' movement, from that moment (April 1912) right up to the catastrophic war of August 1914, guaranteed almost continuous existence to the Bolshevik *Pravda* newspaper. But in what form! Confiscations, fines, arrests of the editors, and suppressions poured down upon Lenin's paper in a constant stream, as if from the horn of plenty. So highly did Lenin value the opportunity of open intercourse with the workers through the open press that he perused with the utmost strictness every expression and every phrase that might implicate the paper.²

It is only necessary to compare the style, tone, and content of Ilyich's articles in the *Social Democrat* with those in *Pravda* of 1912–1914 in order to feel that before us in *Pravda* stands a giant with bound hands. Collaboration with the editors of *Pravda* from abroad was, indeed, the greatest joy for Ilyich, but it was torment at the same time. Every comment on this or that event was inevitably delayed for a week at the very least. The choice of theme was extraordinarily difficult. The paper came out irregularly. The articles very often did not reach the editors, were lost in the post, fell into the hands of the police. To this must be added the fact that the Petersburg editorship, thanks to suppressions, arrests, etc., was often under the control of comrades whose ideas did not harmonize with those of Ilyich's group. "We haven't enough capable people," writes Ilyich in September 1913. "It was only with the greatest difficulty that a year after the starting of the paper we were able to find even a tolerable editorial staff in Petersburg." One of the best editors of *Pravda* during that period, Comrade M. Olminsky, writes of those days: "Lenin's articles were cut to pieces not only by the censor, but also as a result of an incorrect attitude toward the authors on the part of the editors — 'Any article,' said they, 'which falls into my hands, becomes my very own — *I shall do with it whatever I wish.*'" (Italics mine.)

Such were the conditions under which Ilyich had to work even in his own legal, Bolshevik press, in those short moments when this press was allowed to exist at all. Under such conditions special importance attaches to Ilyich's correspondence during the entire period of his activities. Ilyich carried on a voluminous correspondence with the comrades scattered all over Russia and

Europe. No comrade ever addressed himself to Ilyich with a request for the elucidation of some problem or other who did not receive a letter in reply or, more often, a small tract on the subject which interested him. During certain periods — when the opportunities of appearing in print were especially restricted, his letters grew into whole notebooks. During the first period of Ilyich's work — up to 1901 — these "notebooks" were circulated throughout Russia, awakening the mind of the party, and forcing it to define its position on the basic questions of the world conceptions and tactics of Marxism. This correspondence, these "notebooks" of the nineties, played the same role in the whole future course of the revolution as the correspondence of Belinsky, Bakunin, and Gertzen played in the Russian liberation movement of the forties. A mass of these "notebooks" was lost in the depths of the secret police archives, but some of them were preserved, and will serve for a long time as objects of study. Savants and historians will still write their dissertations about them for many decades to come.

IV. The Collected Works

All that concerned Lenin is important. And of extreme importance is the form in which Lenin's works will be given to the world proletariat.

When, by the will of the workers' revolution, Ilyich was transformed from the leader of the party and a Communist publicist into the leader and organizer of a new state, the great majority of his writings from 1893 to 1916, in their original form, were unknown not only to the wide masses of the people, but even to more or less wide circles of the younger members of the party. It was simply impossible to obtain them.

When, in connection with his 50th birthday, at the beginning of 1920, I told Vladimir Ilyich that I was about to begin collecting his works, and introducing a proposal to that effect at the party congress, Ilyich protested, "What for? It's of no use — why bother with all that I've written for thirty years. It isn't worth it." I was only able to make him budge from his position by referring to the fact that the youth must learn, and that it was better that they should learn from his works than from the works of the Martovs and Tugan-Baranovskys. This first attempt to give Ilyich's writings into the hands of the party and the working class is completed.

All of the material, which will take up in all probability not less than forty volumes, must be arranged in chronological order and supplied with commentaries not so much of a bibliographical, as, what is more important, of a historical character. The commentaries must make it possible for the readers to orientate themselves on those questions and those movements of the class struggle treated by Ilyich, without turning to other sources.

The collected works must be supplemented by one or two volumes in the form of

"Guides to Lenin," containing bibliographies, names, topical chronological tables of events, etc.

We must turn our attention to the working masses, and make available for them those works of Lenin which for years and decades have been hidden from them by the bourgeoisie and the tsarist government with the active support of the whole apparatus of the bourgeois press and bourgeois "public opinion." To give to the working masses the writings of Lenin means to hasten their victory. To this end all our strength must be directed.

V. A Science of Revolution

In the collected writings of Lenin are reflected not only the revolutionary struggle of the Russian workers, but the whole course of world history during its most decisive decades. These writings are the best and most profound commentary on the events of world importance which have taken place during the last thirty years; it is the only commentary dealing with them from the revolutionary point of view.

Furthermore, the works of Lenin must become the core of the *new science* — the science of the liberation of humanity. Here the question naturally arises as to whether the science expounded in the collected works of Lenin is actually a new science. Is it not rather simply an exposition or popularization of the science of Karl Marx?

This is certainly true, but only in the sense that the teachings of Lenin as a whole and in all their aspects and ramifications are based on the scientific socialism of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. That is the iron foundation on which stands the whole structure of Leninism. Tear Leninism away from this foundation and we completely fail to understand Leninism. But, nevertheless, we undoubtedly have in the works of Lenin a new science. The new element in this science consists in the adaptation of the basic principles and methods of Marxism to a historical setting and period entirely unknown to Marx.

In the first period of his activities (1890–1914) Lenin, with the help of the methods of Karl Marx, had to solve the problems arising out of the peculiar conditions of a bourgeois-democratic revolution taking place in a backward agrarian country with a proletariat, developed and unified out of all proportion to the general backwardness of the country. This unique situation directed Lenin's attention to that aspect of the teaching of Karl Marx in which the theoretical and practical Marxians of Europe in that period were least interested, and which they studied and understood least of all. Already the "Marxism" of Lenin differed strikingly from the Marxian shibboleths voiced during the eighties and nineties by the German pupils of Marx.

During the second period of his activities (1914–1917), and in the midst of the increas-

ing contradictions of the imperialistic epoch, Lenin had to apply the methods of Karl Marx to the formulation of the tactics of the working class. During that time the teachings of Lenin in its very fundamentals, and built on the basic principles of Marx, for all time, diverged from the teaching of those who considered themselves the internationally recognized expounders of Karl Marx (Kautsky, Plekhanov, and the others) to the adaptation of the teachings of Karl Marx to an epoch of developing imperialism, the deduction from the basic principles of Marxism of conclusions applicable to an essentially new epoch in the history of humanity, and the elaboration of a new tactic for the working class from these conclusions; here indeed one may discern the element of a new science.

But Lenin was destined to introduce further still new elements into the teaching of Marx when he — foremost of the pupils of Marx — became the organizer of the first government of the victorious proletariat. Here, in the realm of theory, he was turning over ground hitherto untouched and undeveloped; new processes were being revealed; the manner in which revolution is prepared and ripened in the depths of capitalist society; the reasons for the inevitability of revolution; and finally the realization that although the first steps could be learned from Marx, beyond that the virgin soil of theory began. "The way to make a proletarian revolution is not told in any book," Vladimir Ilyich was fond of saying. And here began that work for which Lenin had no predecessors nor teachers. Each position, not only of policy, but also of theory, had to be won in the heat of battle. Most dangerous of all were the established formulas, the natural tendency to apply to the entirely new conditions created by the first victory of the proletariat the principles and formulas developed in another epoch and for different ends. In the decrees, orders, telegrams, and resolutions, which Lenin wrote in those years, he completed in action that part of the theory of scientific socialism which had not been written by his teacher.

The teaching of Lenin was created in the course of the struggle. Lenin did not write and could not have written a textbook of Leninism. I am even afraid that every attempt to expound the teaching of Lenin in paragraphs, divisions, and subdivisions, to create any kind of a "Handbook" of Leninism, a collection of formulae applicable to all questions at any time — will certainly fail. Nothing would be more foreign to Lenin in his work than any tendency to catechism. The general of a fighting army, he experienced defeats and gave battle under constantly changing conditions and therefore had no time to expound academically (or, if preferred, systematically) his general theory of war. He always considered that it was "pleasanter and more use-

ful to make revolution than to write about revolution."

There it is that his teaching, the science of proletarian revolution which he created, is to be found only in that long series of works, each one of which is permeated through and through with the anxieties and lessons of a particular historical situation. Even the most "academic" of his books: *The Development of Capitalism in Russia, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, productions of a strongly polemical nature, were written under great pressure and were concerned with a given situation. This is why we can only approach the real science of Lenin through a consideration of his *complete works* in the light of contemporary events.

In addition to its active, vital character, this science is also remarkable for its comprehensiveness. There is probably not a single question which Lenin has not touched upon in his works. Everything from the basic questions of philosophy to the detailed questions of cooperative or financial policy under socialism engaged the attention of this mastermind, and found therein a clear and exact solution, having its place in a unified system. Lenin, a scholar, publicist, and statesman of unprecedented capacity, propounded in his teachings all the questions which must inevitably face the world proletariat, that most active part of humanity. The collected works of Lenin can be called satisfactory only if they help the proletariat to master Leninism, the magnitude of his idea, and all the concreteness of his policy in the most simple, orderly, and thorough manner.

It is possible for the proletariat to fulfill its historic mission, break the chains in which the workers are bound, and "conquer the whole world" only if it is armed with a clear and well-ordered theory of its emancipation. In the works of Lenin this theory, created by Karl Marx, found its most complete and revolutionary expression. In this period, the beginning of the world proletarian revolution, the proletariat will attain their final victory only if they hold in their hands the lantern of Leninism. □

Notes

1. Because of this, in Russian artistic literature he preferred Tolstoy, Pushkin, Nekrasov, and Chekhov to all others, and kept the "classics" in his permanent library. Of the publicists he had the greatest admiration and respect for Chernishevsky, whom he knew very well, and was fond of quoting.
2. For this reason, Ilyich changed the signature to his articles almost every day. In *Pravda* his articles were signed with the most diversified combinations of letters, having nothing in common with his usual literary signature, such as P.P., F.L.-ko, V.F., R.S., etc., etc. This necessity of constantly changing his signature was still another obstacle between the words of Ilyich and his readers — the working masses.

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Book Review:

A History of World Trotskyism

International Trotskyism, 1929–1985, A Documented Analysis of the Movement, by Robert J. Alexander. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991. 1125 pages, \$165.00.

Reviewed by Paul Le Blanc

This immense volume stands as a remarkable achievement which will be a standard reference for scholars and a useful source for others seriously interested in the revolutionary socialist movement that was organized under the influence of Leon Trotsky. The price puts it out of reach for most readers of this journal, but libraries should be strongly encouraged to acquire copies.

“Trotskyism” is a current originally arising out of a struggle in the Russian Communist Party and world Communist movement. It was uncompromisingly Marxist, defending the original ideals and perspectives of the Russian Revolution. It opposed the anti-democratic, antirevolutionary, anti-working-class policies being introduced by the bureaucracy that was replacing, with its own increasingly totalitarian domination, the power won by the workers in 1917.

Oddly enough, the author — Robert J. Alexander, Professor Emeritus of Economics and Political Science at Rutgers University — has been a political opponent of Trotskyism since the late 1930s. In 1937, as a member of the Socialist Party’s Clarity Caucus (“in fact,” as he notes, “one of the most confused groups to appear in U.S. left-wing politics”), he was a strong supporter of the expulsion of Trotskyists from the Socialist Party one year after they had joined that organization. This expulsion resulted in the formation of the Socialist Workers Party by the expelled dissidents. Alexander comments: “By then, Bolshevism, whether in its Leninist, Stalinist or its Trotskyist form, had completely lost whatever passing attraction it might once have had for me.” Later — primarily as an authority on labor and left-wing movements in Latin America — he became known as a “State Department socialist,” supporting U.S. foreign policy as a “bulwark against Communism” during the Cold War.

In his preface, Alexander expresses the hope that “this present volume can qualify for the kind of assessment which the late Joseph Hansen gave in a two-part review of my earlier work on Latin American Trotskyism, which can be summed up as ‘for a Social Democrat, he’s done a pretty good job.’” A fair characterization of Hansen’s assessment (contained in the August 29 and September 5, 1977 issues of *Intercontinental Press*), this can also be said of the present volume. In

addition to reading through enormous quantities of material — books, articles, internal documents, etc. — the author interviewed, consulted with, and/or corresponded with such veterans of the Trotskyist movement as Max Shachtman, Pierre Frank, George Breitman, Ernest Mandel, Pierre Broué, Rudolphe Prager, Livio Maitan, Charles van Gelderen, and others. The immense amount of scholarly effort has resulted in a work of genuine value.

The Importance of Trotskyism

Why has such a person as Alexander deemed this to be an effort worthy of his time and energy? He explains:

It is clear that International Trotskyism has been a recognizable current in world politics for more than sixty years. It has, or has had, organizations in about sixty different countries in America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia. In some countries these parties or groups have existed for more than fifty years, in others they are of quite recent vintage. In any case, the mere persistence of the movement qualifies it as a serious participant in world politics, and as such worthy of study....

As of the end of the 1980s the Trotskyists have never come to power in any country... [but] the persistence of the movement in a wide variety of countries together with the instability of the political life of most of the world’s nations means that the possibility that a Trotskyist party might come to power in the foreseeable future cannot be totally ruled out.

He quotes from 1984 and 1985 letters sent to him by Ernest Mandel: “Electorally, Trotskyist organizations get between 2 and 3 million votes in the world; they lead large trade unions (or have representatives even in top leaderships of trade union confederations) in a dozen countries. And around fifteen of their organizations have obviously passed the stage of ‘sects’ and are taken seriously by workers’ public opinion, and even the bourgeois press, as forces in the political life of their countries.” Mandel added: “I leave out the British SWP and the Sri Lanka LSSP as having gone beyond the limits of ‘Trotskyism.’ If you want to include them, the above figure is raised to 17.” Eleven of these (including in France, Mexico, Spain, Brazil, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan, Belgium) were part of the international organization known as the Fourth International, founded by Trotsky and others in 1938 and presently led by the United Secretariat of which Mandel is a member. Other non-FI groups of significance mentioned by Mandel included the Militant Tendency in Britain, two groups —

Lutte Ouvrière and Pierre Lambert’s PCI — in France, and the PST led by the late Nahuel Moreno in Argentina.

This brings us to a limitation of Alexander’s study. It ends with 1985, and some things have changed since then. For example, in that year a very substantial group in Sri Lanka, the NSSP, was aligned with the Militant Tendency of Britain, whereas now — after several years of growth and political development — it has affiliated with the Fourth International. Another example: one of the largest concentrations of Fourth Internationalists in the United States can now be found in Solidarity, which didn’t exist in 1985 and so is not mentioned in Alexander’s book. The 1985 cutoff is a reasonable limitation, but it results in a failure to record more recent positive, and also negative, developments.

The Political Content of Trotskyism

More important than specific membership statistics at any one point in time, however, is the political content of the movement. This has been decisive for its long-term durability and capacity for maintaining and renewing itself under difficult circumstances. To Alexander’s credit, although not in a fully adequate manner, he attempts early in his study to sketch the components of this theoretical and programmatic orientation.

Central to classical Trotskyism’s political program, according to Alexander, is the *theory of permanent revolution*, which posits a relationship of democratic revolution — whose victory requires working-class leadership — to socialist revolution, plus an uncompromising revolutionary internationalism.

Related to this is Trotsky’s *theory of uneven and combined development*, which provides a nondogmatic method of understanding specific political and cultural peculiarities in various countries, and their relationship to international socioeconomic developments.

Also stressed by Alexander is the *transitional program* (involving transitional demands that provide a bridge between present-day workers’ struggles and future socialist revolution), and also belief in the *united front* tactic (an alliance of revolutionary and reformist working-class organizations to struggle for the interests of the workers and the oppressed), linked with the notion of the *political independence of the working class* from the capitalists and capitalist parties.

Trotsky’s analysis of Stalinism — the authoritarian, bureaucratic, reactionary degeneration of the Soviet Union and of the world Communist movement — is termed by Alexander as “Trotsky’s Defence of the USSR as a Workers State.” The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution under Lenin and Trotsky was a mass upsurge of the workers and peasants which resulted in genuine gains; the subsequent rise

of the bureaucratic dictatorship under Stalin was a betrayal of that revolution and had to be opposed — in part to defend the previous gains. The fact that Trotsky's complex analysis precluded the sort of Cold War anti-Communism to which Alexander was committed causes him to describe that position somewhat polemically, although he acknowledges that Trotsky was insistent that "free labor is incompatible with the existence of a bureaucratic state." Alexander gives substantial attention to differences that arose among Trotskyists over the analysis of the USSR as a "bureaucratically degenerated workers' state," with some arguing that it was a new form of class society, either "state capitalist" or "bureaucratic collectivist." (Trotsky's view that the Stalinist structures were far less durable than "a new form of class society" seems vindicated by recent developments.)

"Another basic element of Trotskyism," according to Alexander, "was acceptance of Leninism. This involved the concepts of the vanguard party, democratic centralism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat." He adds: "Related to Trotsky's acceptance of Leninism is the issue of where he and his followers have stood with regard to political democracy. There is conflicting evidence on this subject." As a reformist social democrat, Alexander views Lenin's revolutionary perspectives as inherently undemocratic. At the same time, he honestly records the fact that "mainstream" Trotskyists of the Fourth International have understood Leninist organizational concepts, and such notions as "dictatorship of the proletariat" (or *political rule by the working class*), in a profoundly democratic manner, being firm partisans of working-class democracy.

Alexander defines the term "Trotskyist movement" quite broadly, including a variety of different kinds of groups — some of which have very little in common — and tends to place on an equal footing the substantial world organization known as the Fourth International, gathered around the United Secretariat, with numerous splinter groups and breakaways that have tangled little histories and exceedingly dim futures. Sometimes this makes his account more confusing than may have been necessary.

Nor is this the only problematical feature of his book. He has termed the Fourth International as among the "more or less 'orthodox,' adhering basically to the ideas which Trotsky had put forward." The term "orthodox" seems to contradict the nondogmatic, creative approach which has so often characterized the approach of Fourth Internationalists. Also, though not as evident in 1985 as it is today, the immense changes in the world since 1940 — especially since the end of World War II, and even more over the past decade — have generated considerable questioning and ferment in the thinking of those gathered in the Fourth International. Far-reaching discussions and debates are re-

vealing that some are leaving old "orthodoxies" far behind, while others are intent upon holding onto but also critically refining and developing traditional perspectives within the new and changing context.

Problems and Accomplishments

After a preface, and two sections entitled "Origins and Nature of International Trotskyism" and "Some General Characteristics of International Trotskyism," Alexander takes us through a country-by-country and faction-by-faction tour of Trotskyist history, alphabetically moving from Albania to Yugoslavia.

Sometimes his information is quite thin — Albania, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Norway each get less than two pages, Honduras and Morocco each get one short paragraph, Egypt, El Salvador, and Yugoslavia get two paragraphs — though others (such as Belgium, Ceylon/Sri Lanka, France, Germany, Britain, the United States) receive quite substantial coverage. Included is a 77-page history of the Fourth International as such, plus accounts of various subcurrents and splitoffs. There are 80 pages of reference notes, a dozen-page bibliography, and four indexes (people, organizations, publications, miscellaneous).

It should be said that this is a large format book and that the more than 1000 pages of text and notes are in double columns, holding about twice the amount of text as would usually be the case. Given the quantity of information that Alexander is attempting to supply, it is inevitable that questionable assertions and errors will crop up. It would be almost impossible (and unnecessary for purposes of this review) to compile a list of "politically incorrect" statements and factual errors. Those who utilize this book would be well advised to check other sources also (a number of which the author usefully draws our attention to). Someone acquainted with the history of Swedish Trotskyism has assured me that Alexander has basically gotten that story right. Here I will limit myself to a partial examination of the account of U.S. Trotskyism offered in this volume.

Eleven chapters, consisting of over 250 pages, are devoted to the history of Trotskyism in the United States. Of these, eight chapters (137 pages) are devoted to the Socialist Workers Party and its predecessors, with an eleven-page chapter on the anti-Trotskyist purge of the early 1980s and the formation of Socialist Action and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (as well as Peter Camejo's North Star Network). There are also: a twelve-page chapter on the Shachtmanite tradition; a twenty-page chapter on Workers World Party, Spartacist League, Workers League, and their offshoots; and a nineteen-page chapter on other U.S. Trotskyist and ex-Trotskyist groups.

A substantial (more than eight pages) subsection of this last chapter tells the story of

Lyndon LaRouche's various organizational incarnations, from a semi-"Trotskyist" to a bizarre antileftist cult warning against "a corporate-Marxist conspiracy to control the world." This is an intriguing story, told in elaborate detail, but it is difficult to understand its inclusion in this volume, given LaRouche's very early "evolution not only away from orthodox Trotskyism, but away from Trotskyism of any kind," as Alexander puts it, "from the far left to the far right." It is like "including a history of fascism as part of a history of Italian Socialism — quite inappropriate," as Alexander sheepishly acknowledges, and yet he does it.

This is a relatively minor flaw in so massive a book. Even more minor are the times when the author gets people's names wrong. A few examples: Edgar Keemer, the prominent African American physician from Detroit who wrote for the SWP press during the 1940s under the name Charles Jackson, is identified as Edgar *Kramer*; Kate Curry, presently an editorial board member of this magazine, is identified as *Kay Curry*; at one point an obvious typographical error garbles the name of Farrell Dobbs; in the index Morris Stein (the party name of Morris Lewit, which is consistently misspelled by Alexander either as Levitt or Lewitt) is identified as being from the United Kingdom, i.e., Britain, although in fact he was born in Russia where he participated in the revolution, before coming to the United States to become a pioneer Communist and Trotskyist. In some cases Alexander has only partial information. Discussing a 1960s offshoot from the SWP, the Freedom Socialist Party, he refers to a split in which the majority followed Clara Fraser (whose SWP party name had been Clara Kaye) and the minority formed a new group led "by a Mr. Kirk, who had been a member of the SWP National Committee..." The actual name of this mysterious "Mr. Kirk" (also a party name) was Dick Fraser, the former husband of his factional adversary.

A more serious problem is a certain impressionism that pervades the author's account. He offers innumerable assertions and many snippets of quotations (from a resolution, a letter to the author, a book, a public article, an interview) which in some cases do not seem to be checked for accuracy. The book is weakened by an absence of a coherent overall analysis that is grounded in a consistent body of evidence — it all has a much more patchwork quality. Also, there are a number of important sources that are not integrated into this study. Only the second volume of Farrell Dobbs' four-volume account of Trotskyists in the Teamsters Union is cited, and Art Preis's classic *Labor's Giant Step* is completely ignored. So is Fred Halstead's indispensable *Out Now! A Participant's Account of the American Movement Against the Vietnam War*. Memoirs by Edgar Keemer, Irving Howe, Bernard Wolfe, Sidney Hook, and other participants are not util-

ized. Nor does the author consult the voluminous and fine research of Alan Wald on Trotskyist intellectuals — not only *The New York Intellectuals* (which may have appeared too late for Alexander to use), but also *James T. Farrell: The Revolutionary Socialist Years* and *The Revolutionary Imagination: The Poetry and Politics of John Wheelwright and Sherry Mangan*, not to mention literally dozens of articles.

The fact remains: here stands a truly massive book, obviously the product of immense labor, which makes an incredible amount of useful information available to all. It gives a definite sense of the geographical and historical breadth of the Trotskyist movement. The author — despite his own particular political preferences — has obviously taken the subject seriously and has sought to give an accurate and detailed description of international Trotskyism. Whatever its limitations, this is an important study that must be consulted by all who seek an in-depth knowledge of the revolutionary socialist movement of the 20th century.

More work needs to be done on this subject, and Alexander's book can help us do it. To make the best use of the book, however, it is necessary to conclude this review with a deepening of our critique.

A Fundamental Problem of Method

Not only is Alexander's massive work far from definitive, but its methodology is seriously deficient. The subject matter cries out for a study of the relationship between intellectual history and social history, and a grounding of both in an examination of the political and economic developments of our century. Instead we are treated here to an internal factional history, with only the most minimal references to the economic, politi-

cal, or cultural developments of the time — economic depressions, struggles of the working class, political repression, fascism, war, imperialism etc.

Who were the people in these organizations who wrote or read the polemics that Alexander quotes from? What did they do for a living, where did they come from, how did they feel, and what did they accomplish or fail to accomplish in their trade unions, anti-racist and antiwar coalitions, women's liberation groups, etc.? What was the accumulation of experience from which activists of today and tomorrow can learn? The answers to such questions cannot be found in this huge book.

The great Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci addressed this question from the cell of a fascist prison in the 1930s. "In what will the history of a political party consist?" he asked. "Will it be a simple narrative of the internal life of a political organization? How it comes into existence, the first groups which constitute it, the ideological controversies through which its program and its conception of the world and life are formed?" He dismissed such an approach, arguing that an adequate history requires "a vaster and more comprehensive framework." This history must look not only at the words and actions of the party's most prominent or articulate personalities but also at the membership that "sustained them with their trust, loyalty and discipline, or criticized them 'realistically' by dispersing or remaining passive before certain initiatives." He went on to insist that the history must also go beyond this, giving attention to broader social layers, in particular the working class:

Clearly it will be necessary to take some account of the social group of which the party in question is the expression and the most advanced element. The history of a party, in other words, can only be the history

of a particular social group. But this group is not isolated; it has friends, kindred groups, opponents, enemies. The history of any given party can only emerge from the complex portrayal of the totality of society and State (often with international ramifications too). Hence it may be said that to write a history of a party means nothing less than to write the general history of a country from a monographic viewpoint, in order to highlight a particular aspect of it. A party will have had greater or less significance and weight precisely to the extent to which its particular activity has been more or less decisive in determining a country's history.

Gramsci counterposed the approach to party history of a sectarian, "who will become excited over petty internal matters, which will have an esoteric significance for him," with the approach of a serious Marxist historian who, "though giving everything its due importance in the overall picture, will emphasize above all the real effectiveness of the party, its determining force, positive and negative, in having contributed to bringing certain events about and in having prevented other events from taking place." (See Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks* [New York: International Publishers, 1971], pp. 150–151; also p. 194.) One thinks here of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, the work of Isaac Deutscher, Pierre Broué, and others with whom it would be unfair to compare the author of *International Trotskyism*.

Robert J. Alexander should not be faulted for not being what he makes no pretense of being. He offers something of value for those who want to develop the kind of historical understanding urged by Gramsci — but he hasn't done our own job for us. We should gratefully utilize what he has offered as we seek to do the necessary work of adequately understanding and changing the world. □

Cuba: Still a Thorn in the Side of U.S. Imperialism

Continued from page 7

institutions controlled by the United States — we have lost \$1,463 billion (I'm talking about the annual figure); with the countries of Eastern Europe, \$162 million. The loss of credit we used to receive from the International Bank of Soviet Investments has been \$13 million. Through difficulties in finding a market for products, citrus fruits, for example, we are losing \$144.6 million; in others, \$55 million. In this respect, we are losing a total of \$4,701 a year, and these are not the only losses; this is in regard to direct losses from what we used to earn from imports....

This comparison shows that the country's purchasing power in 1989 was \$8.139 billion as opposed to this year's figure, estimated to be \$2.2 billion....

The U.S. government is stepping up the blockade.... Not satisfied with this, it wants to submit our country to even harder tests. It does all it can to prevent us from buying fuel

on the international market, and makes even more of an effort to prevent us from having the money to pay for the small amount of fuel the country receives. It pursues every effort Cuba makes to increase exports, it pursues every effort Cuba makes to enter into joint enterprises with capitalist firms, it pursues every effort, even the slightest effort, Cuba makes to export the new products it is developing, it acts against our economy like never before and with a power that has never been greater. These are the reasons why the U.S. blockade is much more harmful in today's situation....

Who would believe that in the middle of such difficult circumstances our country could claim something that no other Latin American country can claim, that no other Third World country can claim: that at the start of the school year, no child or adolescent has been left without a school; the new academic year has started and not a single university student — either continuing students

or new students — has been left without a classroom, without a university.

We are already into September, and in this year of the special period the infant mortality rate is lower than that recorded on the same date last year and any previous year. We are in a special period, and not a single worker has been left without employment or payments consisting of a considerable part of their former salary, if they have not been given a new job. In other words, we are in the special period, and not a single citizen has been abandoned in this country.

The fact remains that Cuba must be allowed to trade with Latin America if it is to survive. Ultimately there is no other option. This requires new diplomatic and political initiatives on the part of Cuba, hand-in-hand with an increased struggle outside of Cuba against the imperialist blockade. □

December 4, 1992

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In Defense of American Trotskyism

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This book consists of selected documents mostly produced by a political tendency that was organized in the Socialist Workers Party to defend and advance the revolutionary perspectives of Trotskyism. This tendency, which began to develop in the party in 1979, waged a struggle inside the Socialist Workers Party until the expulsion of its adherents in 1984, when they established a new group called the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. Also represented here are oppositionists who became prominent in other groups — Socialist Action and the Fourth International Caucus of Solidarity. Included are materials produced by two of the oldest and most prestigious veterans in the SWP, Tom Kerry and George Breitman. A substantial introductory essay by Frank Lovell, "The Meaning of the Struggle Inside the Socialist Workers Party," provides valuable background information and places the volume in a larger historical perspective.

Volume Two:

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edited by Paul Le Blanc, 412 pages (1992) — \$12.00

This book focuses on the waves of expulsions which hit the Socialist Workers Party from 1981 through 1984. It provides an inspiring record — and reaffirmation — of the revolutionary ideas and commitments of those who were being forced out of the organization to which many had given "the whole of their lives." also included are: substantial pieces by SWP leaders Jack Barnes and Larry Seigle defending the expulsions; a critique by representatives of the Fourth International; letters and a talk by pioneer Trotskyist James P. Cannon, originally published under the title *Don't Strangle the Party*. A substantial introductory essay by Paul Le Blanc, "Leninism in the United States and the Decline of the Socialist Workers Party," relates the 1981-84 experience to broader questions of "the vanguard party" and Leninism, the history and character of American Trotskyism, the development of the U.S. working class, and the realities of world politics in the 20th century.

Volume Three:

Rebuilding the Revolutionary Party

edited by Paul Le Blanc, 148 pages (1990) — \$9.00

This book consists of eight documents. The longest, written in 1983 by Paul Le Blanc and Dianne Feeley, is entitled "In Defense of Revolutionary Continuity" — a response to SWP leader Jack Barnes's attack on Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. Also included is the founding platform of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, a lengthy 1988 analysis of the SWP by Frank Lovell and Paul Le Blanc, and two major documents produced by the FIT when the Socialist Workers Party formally broke from the Fourth International in 1990. The volume concludes with three documents dealing with the need for unity among revolutionary socialists in the United States.
