

Information, Education, Discussion

BULLETIN in Defense of Marxism

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Who We Are

The *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* is published monthly (except for a combined July-August issue) by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. We have dedicated this journal to the process of clarifying the program and theory of revolutionary Marxism—of discussing its application to the class struggle both internationally and here in the United States. This vital task must be undertaken if we want to forge a political party in this country capable of bringing an end to the domination of the U.S. imperialist ruling class and of establishing a socialist society based on human need instead of private greed.

The F.I.T. was created in the winter of 1984 by members expelled from the Socialist Workers Party because we opposed abandoning the Trotskyist principles and methods on which the SWP was founded and built for more than half a century. Since our formation we have fought to win the party back to a revolutionary Marxist perspective and for our readmission to the SWP. In addition our members are active in the U.S. class struggle.

At the 1985 World Congress of the Fourth International, the appeals of the F.I.T. and other expelled members were upheld, and the congress delegates demanded, by an overwhelming majority, that the SWP readmit those who had been purged. So far the SWP has refused to take any steps to comply with this decision.

"All members of the party must begin to *study*, completely dispassionately and with utmost honesty, first the essence of the differences and second the course of the dispute in the party. . . . It is necessary to *study* both the one and the other, unfailingly demanding the most exact, printed documents, open to verification by all sides. Whoever believes things simply on someone else's say-so is a hopeless idiot, to be dismissed with a wave of the hand."

—V.I. Lenin, "The Party Crisis," Jan. 19, 1921.

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APRIL 25, 1987: A BIG STEP FORWARD FOR THE ANTI-INTERVENTION MOVEMENT

by Bill Onasch

A quarter of a million people—150,000 in Washington D.C. and 100,000 in San Francisco—marched April 25 in the biggest anti-intervention demonstrations since the massive protests during the height of the anti-Vietnam war movement fifteen years ago. This spring's mobilizations were 2-3 times bigger than the last national demonstrations protesting U.S. policy in Central America and Southern Africa which took place on April 20, 1985. They were a welcome reassertion of power by a national movement which, at least on the issue of Central America, has had a relatively low profile for the last two years—despite a marked escalation during that time of U.S. intervention.

This massive turnout occurred despite some substantial obstacles, which included an aggressive red-baiting campaign by the national leadership of the AFL-CIO; nonparticipation by the leaders of Black organizations such as the NAACP; aloofness on the part of most liberal politicians who are already gearing up for the 1988 elections and want no diversions from electoral activity; and—in Washington—miserable weather conditions.

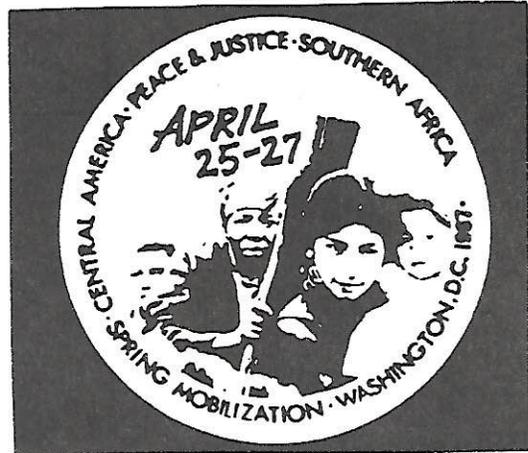
This year's demonstrations were not only much bigger than any which had been held in the recent past, but the social and racial composition of the marchers showed a marked change from previous Central America demonstrations. The same religious, "peace and justice," and solidarity forces that dominated the April 20, 1985, action were back. But this year the ranks of the march were swelled by huge additional contingents mobilized by unions and, to a lesser extent, college campus groups. Though the march was still overwhelmingly white, the union delegations, reflecting the composition of their memberships, brought substantial numbers of Blacks.

Differences Between the Two Years

It is important to note a number of significant differences in the organization of the 1985 and 1987 mobilizations:

1. *The national calls to action:* In 1987 the call had a clear, sharp, limited focus on Central America and South Africa. In 1985, however, these two issues were lumped in with disarmament, jobs, funding for social programs, and many other problems. All of these are worthy issues, but trying to organize around such a broad range of topics blurred the focus of the 1985 action.

2. *The overall perspectives of the national leadership:* In 1987 the national mobilization leader-



ship worked hard and effectively to build the action. In 1985, on the other hand, national coalition leaders—in many cases the same people—issued the call reluctantly, twice tried to cancel the march, and generally continued only in response to pressure from local coalitions.

3. *Union participation:* While some trade unionists lent their names as endorsers of the 1985 Washington action, actual efforts by labor to publicize the demonstration and mobilize its rank and file were quite limited. (In San Francisco, we should note, union involvement was substantial in both years.)

4. *The deepening of anti-intervention sentiment:* Though a majority of the U.S. population opposed Washington's intervention in Central America in 1985, this sentiment has grown and intensified—to a large degree in response to the escalation of the war against the Nicaraguan revolution and opposition to contra aid. The struggles of workers and students in South Africa have also had a growing impact, winning the attention and sympathy of increasing numbers. "Contragate," consciousness about the "off-shore" operations of U.S. big business, increasing identification with South African struggles by U.S. Blacks, all contributed to an increased willingness of people to *take action* in opposition to Washington's reactionary foreign policy.

The Split in Labor

Without question, union participation in the D.C. April 25 mobilization represents a qualitative breakthrough for the anti-intervention movement. It is difficult to overestimate the social weight of organized labor—whose twenty million

members operate basic industry, transportation, communications, and even the day-to-day operations of government.

The bosses and their representatives in Washington certainly understand this power and know that attempts to conduct war in the face of substantial labor opposition would be an extremely risky venture. That is why they have cultivated a wing of the union bureaucracy—presently represented by Lane Kirkland—which has served, to all intents and purposes, as a direct agency of the State Department and Pentagon in furthering and defending Washington's international policies. The first faint cracks in this prowar bureaucratic monolith during the Vietnam war was a powerful factor in the decision of U.S. imperialism to give up its attempt to destroy the Vietnamese revolution through direct military intervention.

For years the government has doled out millions of dollars to the AFL-CIO bureaucrats for promotion of imperialist interests and class-collaborationist unionism in other countries. The American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), working hand-in-glove with the CIA, has diligently tried to create company unions in Central America. There have been similar attempts to create phony unions in South Africa.

But the memory of the Vietnam war stimulates a more general anti-intervention sentiment among union members, and this has caused a split in the bureaucracy around Central America and South Africa. While no major section of the trade union officialdom has rejected the general imperialist perspective of the ruling class (with very few exceptions they all continue to support the need for a "strong defense against the Soviet Union," and are in favor of Zionism, NATO, etc.), an important wing has decided that it is politically expedient to identify with the growing Central America/South Africa movement. This is a genuine split that opens up important opportunities.

Kirkland Campaign Backfires

Alarmed at official labor endorsements of the April 25 actions, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland launched a counterattack. In a March letter, filled with slanders about the mobilizations, Kirkland warned state and local AFL-CIO bodies against endorsing, implying they could lose their charters if they did. Other top labor skates chipped in as well. John T. Joyce, president of the Bricklayer's union, circulated a red-baiting attack—backed by a 16-page "memo" consisting mainly of quotations from the *Guardian* newspaper—to all union presidents. Albert Shanker, a "State Department socialist" of long-standing, president of the United (New York) and American Federations of Teachers, featured Joyce's crude red-baiting in his paid advertising column in the April 19 Sunday *New York Times*.

But these attacks failed to achieve the desired results. On the contrary, the Kirkland wing's heavy-handed assault seemed to strengthen

the commitment of trade unionists who had endorsed April 25. Not a single major union body or official anywhere backed down—including several county labor councils in the San Francisco Bay Area who could be vulnerable to a Kirkland-imposed trusteeship. In the end nineteen national unions, representing a majority of all union members in this country, endorsed the April 25 actions.

Stanley Hill, executive director of New York's largest union—American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) District Council 37, representing thousands of municipal workers—took out an ad in the April 24 *New York Times* to answer Shanker's red-baiting column of the previous Sunday. Said Hill about Shanker:

He dragged up the tired cliches about "radical left wing groups . . . who use trade unionists, religious leaders, community activists and other people of good will."

The same infuriating cliches and innuendos we heard in the days before Dr. Martin Luther King's legendary March on Washington in 1963.

That march made American history. And officers in labor who warned against it then, now proudly proclaim the inspiration and achievement of that march.

John Joyce, President of the Bricklayer's Union, an active pro-Contra supporter, also felt it necessary to warn about "Marxist-Leninist Revolutionaries."

Nobody's going to mislead anybody on this march. . . . They'll be walking away from the old ideas and feeble rhetoric that have served labor so poorly recently.

I will be proud to be with them—and with 50 busloads of DC 37 members who will head for Washington at 6:45 a.m.

The Thin End of the Wedge

In actual fact, the endorsements of national unions gained for April 25 were, in most cases, more posture than substance. Relatively little was done by national staffs to mobilize their members. But, unlike 1985, word trickled down that it was alright to build these actions and that those willing to take the initiative had at least the tacit support of their national unions. This allowed many secondary leaders, on the regional and local levels, to utilize the considerable resources of their organizations to provide office space for coalitions, put out mailings, print posters and leaflets, and charter buses. In some areas local labor-based committees on Central America pried small cracks into wider openings, involving a layer of the ranks in building activities. Many of these activists gathered at a post-march reception hosted by the Washington Area Labor Committee. This gathering had the character of a real victory celebration, testimony to the broad anti-intervention current falling into place within the labor movement.

Anticoncession fighters also were clearly visible in the April 25 mobilizations: contingents of Hormel and Cudahy strikers, TWA flight attendants, Farm Workers, and the New Directions caucus in the UAW.

Local Coalitions

One step backward from 1985 was the relative weakness of local coalitions leading up to the April 25 action. These bodies, usually initiated by local branches of solidarity or peace and justice groups but open to all activists, were the backbone of the organization of the April 1985 protests. Over the past two years, however, while no one was providing a national orientation for the movement as a whole, these coalitions tended to fade. This year, with some notable exceptions such as Los Angeles, local coalitions were largely bypassed as unions, churches, and campus groups took the initiative—making their own preparations for participating in April 25 activities. In some cities, such as Chicago and the Twin Cities (St. Paul/Minneapolis), the coalitions practically disappeared. Even in places such as New York and San Francisco, coalition activities were smaller than anticipated in advance, fund-raising harder than expected.

Open, democratic local coalitions are essential to a vigorous national anti-intervention movement. But clearly if there is no national coalition, no nationally coordinated perspective for action, there is little nourishment to sustain such local bodies. Hopefully the success of April 25 will help to restimulate the growth of ongoing efforts to build local coalitions all across the country focused on the questions of Central America and Southern Africa.

The momentum generated by the April 25 mobilizations has the potential for creating new organizational gains for the anti-intervention move-

ment, gains that can lay the basis for even bigger, broader mass actions in the future. New layers of unionists and students can be expected to become involved in ongoing anti-intervention efforts. These successful actions were a dramatic confirmation of the validity of a mass action perspective fought for by movement currents such as the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean (ENC).

But while there is a basis for optimism, we can also expect serious challenges to arise regarding the maintenance of a movement with a mass action perspective. First and foremost will be the inevitable attempt to divert the anti-intervention movement into electoral activity—in particular Democratic Party electoral activity. If past performance is any indication, much of the leadership of the solidarity and peace and justice groups will be advocating immersion into the Rainbow Coalition while most of the union bureaucracy will throw their energies into hustling support for more "mainstream" Democratic hopefuls.

The electoral perspective held by many movement activists is one of the main reasons why, despite massive public sentiment against intervention, there have been only two major national actions in the past five years. It is crucial not to allow ourselves to be sidetracked again for an extended period. Regardless of what various sectors of the movement may do around the elections we must insure that there will be frequent, periodic mass demonstrations focused clearly on the issues of Central America and South Africa.

It is the responsibility of those who organized the April 25 mobilizations to maintain the national coalition, with its present character, and to encourage continued efforts on a local level. There must be a call for another round of national or nationally coordinated regional or local actions in the fall. ■

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A MEMORY OF BENJAMIN LINDER

by Jack Bresee



Benjamin Linder

I met Benjamin the second time he came looking for me at the house in which I was staying in Maximo Jerez Barrio, Managua. The woman of the house told me he had come by earlier and would return at 5:00 p.m. I asked her who he was and she told me his name, but it didn't mean anything to me.

I asked her for more details—what did he look like, was he "Nica" or North American? She said she didn't know. He looked like a "gringo" but sounded like a "Nica." He spoke Spanish as if it was his native tongue, with a perfect "Nica" accent, she explained. Then she said he worked for the energy department, and I remembered.

During my stay at *Casa Nicaraguense de Espanol* the coordinator of the school, a woman, gave him my name, since I expressed an interest to stay on in the country and work after my time at the school ended. She knew of Benjamin's efforts. All internationals seemed to know of his work—and his love of things Nicaraguan, of the country's people, and of their language.

Now he was coming by to meet me. He wanted to know if I would be suitable for a position with the water systems project in San Jose de Bocay, in Jinotega province. When he returned at five I liked him at once. Most people I saw him with liked him as well. He always seemed incredibly calm—*tranquilo* as the Nicas say—considering the

places he was known to be working in. He smiled and laughed often. He told me he had studied to be a professional clown. The Nicaraguans nicknamed him "*payaso*," which means clown in Spanish. I was told that he often performed simple, spontaneous acts of magic, or tricks for children in small towns in the rural areas where his work took him.

During that first meeting we talked on the patio—a dirt floor, small but cool. He lay down in a hammock Nica style and talked of the work he had done. He asked me many questions and I asked some as well. Then he told me of the project in San Jose de Bocay. His department was making this a total effort for the people of San Jose, who had never had running water, toilets or sewers, or electricity. He said the government felt that these were the most deserving of "Nicas" and he agreed.

The government believed that if the people had these kinds of tangible things, decent things, to protect and fight for, they would better understand the arguments in favor of the revolutionary process—and he agreed with that too. "Some things," he said, making a little joke, "are worth fighting for. No-things are not worth fighting for."

He told me that the very young men of the village now saw little promise for the future. That made it easier for the contras to buy their services as mercenaries, since they had plentiful *yanqui* dollars. With something worth staying for in San Jose they will be less likely to leave and join the enemy.

During the next two months Benjamin and I talked often. I would walk to his house in the next barrio where all who lived close to him seemed to know him and keep track of his comings and goings. I could leave messages and he would always get them—and that is not often the case in Nicaragua.

Benjamin was a professional in every respect that I could measure. He wanted to make absolutely sure that I could contribute to his life's work: building Nicaragua. When he asked me to do a simple schematic drawing for a lo-tech water filtration system it wasn't because he was in need of new ideas. He was just checking up on the answer to an earlier question he had asked about my qualifications.

* * *

In late April Benjamin Linder became the first United States citizen killed by the contras in Nicaragua.

Ben was killed by people inferior to him in every respect. Not only inferior from a cultural or intellectual point of view—for that can be

attributed to an accident of birth—but from a human point of view. They are cowardly, mercenary, destructive, and cruel. They are, no doubt, much like the profiles of captured contras often published by *Barricada*, or like the captured contras sometimes presented to the townspeople in places like Esteli or San Jose de Bocay. The government shows what the contras are like not to inflame the people or create a vigilante spirit. They do it simply so people know the contras for what they are.

In a few cases they are simply poor, scared, bewildered individuals who signed up for food and money. "Oh!" the people say when they see one. "He is so young. It is sad to think of it." "Ah, look at that one! I know that one. His family lives next to my cousin. Oh, they were so poor, and such a large family."

But for the most part, the stories read like those of Al Capone or Charles Manson. These are the *real* contras—who have their roots in the Somoza National Guard. Their most important duties before the revolution were to act as pimps for exploited prostitutes or extort protection money from the shopkeepers in their district. They enjoy the excitement of destruction, the feeling of power over innocent people. They have a personality which manifests itself in depravity and violence.

These pathological personalities are the ones the U.S. State Department and the CIA support with weapons, money, and talk of "religious freedom." These are the people who killed Benjamin Linder. They committed this heinous crime because Linder was working to build a better future for impoverished people whom he loved deeply. The term "reactionary" is abundantly appropriate when applied to

Linder's assassins. They want to kill not only this man, but the entire future for which he was working. Their desire is to return to the brutal past in which they, and others like them, were free to prey upon the Nicaraguan people.

* * *

Only the further advance of the Nicaraguan people's revolution can compensate us for the great loss we have suffered. Our revenge for Linder's killing must be taken with the same spirit and understanding that Tomas Borge showed when he spoke to his former jailers and torturers from the National Guard: "My revenge will be to see your children well fed, well educated, and healthy."

Ben cannot be replaced. His death is a certain loss: for his family, for those who knew him, and most of all for Nicaragua. But others will come forward to carry on his work—to help to fill the void created by his murder. Ben's existence demonstrates once again that a life dedicated to the advancement of working people everywhere in the world—the poor, the oppressed, the exploited—is not utopian. It is real, it is concrete, it is possible. We *can* live without compromise, struggle without giving up. In death, as in life, he is an example to us, one which illustrates full well the validity of the Sandinista slogan:

*Aqui ni se vende!
Aqui ni se rinde!*

Here we don't sell out!
Here we don't surrender!



DEFEND COSATU

On April 29 the headquarters of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in Johannesburg was surrounded by armed police who proceeded to raid the building, attacking methodically every unionist they found. Thus, the Pretoria regime engaged in an open confrontation with the principal union federation in the country. This occurred on the eve of two decisive political events: May Day, which in 1986 was the occasion for the most massive strike in the country's history; and the "white" legislative elections of May 6, for which COSATU had just called two days of "peaceful protests."

This attack against COSATU followed a series of grave incidents. We have in fact seen over the last several days an escalation of the repression against the independent union movement, which over the course of the last few years has constituted one of the strongest links in the popular movement. On April 22 on the outskirts of Doornfontein, near Johannesburg, the South African police killed six Black men. This would have only been a sad isolated incident in racist and reactionary South Africa had it not involved six striking railway workers. The same day, the police raided the local Johannesburg offices of COSATU and committed outrageous atrocities while they looked for strikers wounded at Doornfontein.

Moses Mayekiso, leader of the metal workers' union (MAWU) and of a community organization in his township, Alexandra, who had been imprisoned for months with four of his comrades, has just been accused of high treason for having led neighborhood committees. He is facing a very heavy prison sentence.

These attacks against COSATU occurred at a particular conjuncture. On the one hand, they were a response to May Day, on which all the independent unions called a one-day strike against both the government and the bosses. They also reflected the fact that the South African whites were preparing the May 6 parliamentary elections, which were expected to result in gains for the far right and the regime. Though the state of emergency, in effect since June 1986, has resulted in hard blows to the popular movement in general, attacks against COSATU constitute a new offensive by the government.

The international workers' movement must mobilize itself for the defense of COSATU and all other independent South African unions. The re-

pression against COSATU, if it continues, will only contribute to the repression already being imposed against the ANC, the United Democratic Front (UDF), the National Forum, etc. It constitutes a supplementary expedient extended by the government against the mass movement. The South African trade union movement, and especially COSATU, represents the highest level of combativity and unity attained in the country. Practically all the political currents are gathered there and debate the future of their struggle. The congress of COSATU, scheduled for July, can likewise mark an important step toward affirming class unity. In the course of a national campaign for a guaranteed minimum wage, COSATU has recently confirmed its combativeness. In its March newspaper, it proclaimed that the workers can lead society, that the bosses should no longer make the laws in the factories, that the books must be opened, and that the anti-apartheid struggle is a part of the struggle for socialism.

COSATU has also stepped up its collaboration with community organizations, most notably with those of the UDF. It confirmed its decision to aid and collaborate with what are the most militant and radical elements in the communities, particularly the youth. The recent founding of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) unified youth movements which had looked to the UDF; that group has established a number of contacts with COSATU.

The regime of P. Botha cannot tolerate any of this. It cannot indefinitely let the workers' movement be reinforced and radicalized. While the community associations have been seriously subdued by the repression, the trade union movement has, thanks to its implantation in the factories, succeeded in growing, leading a spectacular number of strikes and developing the consciousness of those it influences. *The Observer* of London noted in its April 26 issue that "the Black resistance struggle has changed. There has been a shift away from the political and community organizations, which had been seriously disorganized by the forces of order under the state of emergency, and toward the union movement, which has remained intact throughout the state of emergency, even enjoying a growth of its forces."

This very movement has just taken an important step forward. The strike of Black railway workers is the first of its scale in such a vital public sector. The state can no longer tolerate such audacity. It is likewise confronted with another problem: that of the unhappiness of white public sector workers who do not want to continue to do the tasks left undone by Black strikers whom they consider inferior. They consider it degrading

(Continued on page 36)

*This is the text of an editorial which is scheduled to appear in an upcoming issue of **Inprecor**, a French-language magazine published by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The translation from the French is by the **Bulletin IDOM**.*

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT BUILDS FOR MICHAEL WARSHAWSKY

by Rafael Sabatini

International protest against the Israeli government's repression of the Alternative Information Center (AIC) and its director, Michael Warshawsky, continues to mount. The AIC had been a legal typing, translating, and information service, providing an independent source of news about the treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and the occupied territories. As reported in the last two issues of the *Bulletin IDOM*, Israeli authorities raided the AIC on February 16, arresting Warshawsky and several other staff members. They also confiscated printing equipment and materials, and ordered the center closed for six months. Though the other staff members were released within 48 hours, Warshawsky was held for weeks in solitary confinement, denied access to reading and writing materials, and subjected to prolonged interrogation.

A broad international defense campaign combined with significant opposition within Israel itself won Warshawsky's release on \$50,000 bail March 17. Nevertheless, the AIC remains closed and the charges against Warshawsky and the center have not been withdrawn. Furthermore, Warshawsky is barred from doing any work involving printing, typesetting, copying, or editing—whether paid or unpaid—and must report to police in Jerusalem three days a week. In spite of the loss of their equipment, the AIC has, thanks to the help of sympathizers, continued to publish its newsletter, *News From Within*.

The initial reaction to Warshawsky's release was a brief decline in the level of the international solidarity campaign. Following that lull, however, support has begun to pick up again. Sponsors and supporters of the case who have joined the campaign since the report was compiled for our last issue include: thirty Danish members of Parliament; the National Teachers Union in France; a group of lawyers in Spain; and several Jewish organizations in Switzerland.

In the U.S. new supporters of the Committee to Defend Michael Warshawsky and the Alternative Information Center include: the American-Israeli Civil Liberties Coalition; the Palestinian Human Rights Campaign; Professor Gordon Sellman, co-chair of the New Jewish Agenda; Clergy and Laity Concerned; Robert C. Alpern of the Unitarian and Universalist Churches of North America; Nat Hentoff; Professor George Wald, nobel laureate of Harvard University; attorney James Lafferty; Dan Stormer, attorney for the Los Angeles 8 (the 7 Palestinians and a Kenyan woman threatened with deportation in Los Angeles); Reverend Don Wagner, director of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign; and writer Jose Yglesias.

Philippa Strum and Rabbi Balfour Brickner, president and vice president of the American-Israeli Civil Liberties Coalition and initiating sponsors of the Committee to Defend Michael Warshawsky and the Alternative Information Center continue to lend energetic support to the campaign. Rabbi Brickner was a featured speaker at the April 25 demonstration in Washington D.C. against U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean and U.S. support to the apartheid regime in South Africa. At that demonstration, supporters of the defense committee gathered hundreds of signatures on petitions which will be sent to the Israeli authorities. It is essential that the campaign be continued until *all* charges against Michael Warshawsky have been dropped and the AIC's equipment has been returned. ■

Legal expenses, costs for bail, loss of printing equipment, etc., seriously threaten the ability of the AIC to continue both their political fight around this case and their existence as a source of independent news. To aid them, a \$25,000 fund drive has been launched. Donations can be sent to News From Within, Acct #061668/28, Bank Hapoalin, Main Branch (690), Jerusalem, Israel, or to the Committee to Defend Michael Warshawsky (see address below).

Statements of protest against the actions of Israeli authorities should be sent to:

Ministry of Justice
29 Salah-Al-Din
Jerusalem 91010
Israel

With copies to:

Committee to Defend Michael Warshawsky
and the Alternative Information Center
c/o Berta Langston
Topping Lane
Norwalk, CT 06854

Those wishing to subscribe to News From Within can do so by sending \$45 for a 6-month airmail subscription to: NFW, P.O. Box 165, Jerusalem.

CORRECTION—The West Coast address given for the Committee to Defend Michael Warshawsky and the Alternative Information Center in our May issue was erroneous. All correspondence, copies of statements, etc. should go to the Norwalk, CT address.

MAJOR SETBACK IN FREEDOM SOCIALIST DEFENSE CASE

A two-year debate over the privacy of Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) meeting minutes climaxed on April 10 in Washington State's King County Superior Court. Judge Warren Chan ruled the FSP in default for refusing to hand over its minutes as ordered during pretrial discovery. The minutes are sought in a lawsuit brought against the FSP and nine radical leaders in 1984 by former FSP member Richard Snedigar. Chan gave the defendants twenty days to comply with the discovery order, or else Snedigar becomes the victor without a trial on the merits of his suit.

Defendants Gloria Martin, Eldon Durham, and Guerry Hoddersen said afterward that they would not turn over the party minutes then or in the future. They said they would appeal the default order.

Snedigar lodged the suit in an effort to reclaim a \$22,500 donation made in 1979 to an FSP fund for the purchase of a new headquarters. He charged fraud. In order to prove this, he asserted he needed confidential internal minutes of FSP meetings. Judge Chan repeatedly questioned the party's refusal to allow a judge to privately read the minutes to decide whether they were relevant to Snedigar's charges. He remained unswayed by defense attorney Val Carlson's responses, in which she argued that the everyday reality of discrimination and retaliation against radical political parties and other minority groups makes heightened protection of these groups' privacy rights essential. She explained that turning over minutes to a judge, or to any outsider, would breach the FSP's organizational privacy irreparably. Even if the defendants were to win on appeal, the damage could not be undone.

The FSP characterized Snedigar's strategy as political blackmail—a demand for "your money or

your minutes." However, the party was unable to convince appellate courts to accept discretionary review of the constitutional issues raised by the disclosure order. (After a default order, however, higher courts are mandated to accept review of the Superior Court decisions.) The party will move for reconsideration of Chan's decision, which attorney Carlson asserts is discriminatory because it flagrantly violates standards for imposing default. If denied reconsideration, the defendants will appeal in state court.

The FSP presented the judge with affidavits from six current and former officers of organizations stating that in a similar situation they, too, would refuse to divulge internal records. They were James K. Bender, secretary treasurer, Kings County Labor Council; Oscar Eason, Jr., chair, National Board of Directors of Blacks in Government; Ramona Bennett, former chair, Puyallup Tribal Council; Terri Mast, business agent, Cannery Workers Union Local 37, ILWU; John Caughlin, executive board member, Seattle Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild; and Ivan King, editor of the Socialist Party newspaper, *Northwest Call*.

A number of financial contributions to the Freeway Hall Case Defense Committee also reflect a strong commitment to the principles on trial in the case. These include \$1,000 from both AFSCME International Union and the New York Hotel and Motel Trades Council and, recently, \$100 and \$300 donations from three locals of the Washington Federation of State Employees and from the Seattle local of the Service Employees International Union. The defense committee is calling on supporters to continue their efforts. The threat looms of fines, jail sentences, or attempts to attach the defendants' bank accounts and property to recover the money Snedigar says he is owed. Those wishing to offer financial or other assistance can contact the Freeway Hall Case Defense Committee, 5018 Rainier Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118; (206) 722-2453. ■

This article is based on a news release distributed by the Freeway Hall Case Defense Committee, dated April 12, 1987.

STILL CHASING RAINBOWS?

by Bernard Daniels



As the 1988 presidential election campaign gets into high gear, the radical movement in the United States faces a familiar dilemma. In the absence of a mass working class electoral alternative, in a situation where the overwhelming majority of trade unionists and other working people who vote at all will vote for the Democratic Party's nominee, what should be done? The choices are the same as have confronted us for decades: Advocate the formation of a new party based on labor? Support the campaign of some small left party? Work within the Democratic Party to push things as far as possible to the left? Some combination of tactics?

Added to the complications this year is the "unannounced candidacy" of Jesse Jackson, whose Rainbow Coalition made the transition several months ago from a vague general concept to a national organization. Many on the left see Jackson as a genuine alternative to the old-line Democrats. Others view his effort as a vehicle which, though flawed, can still provide a means for advancing the interests of working people and their allies. All expect him to run, and many plan to support him.

But these efforts on Jackson's behalf are misplaced. Jesse Jackson will not and cannot contribute to building a positive alternative to Democratic-Republican politics as usual. That is the vise which still holds working people in its grip, that is the political reality that must be overcome.

Democracy and Individual Leadership

The first thing to note is that the Rainbow Coalition is Jesse Jackson and Jesse Jackson is the Rainbow Coalition. There is a danger inherent in any such organization—where the entire process hinges completely on the goals (even the whims) of any single individual. If Jackson alters his perspectives, or if something should happen to him, the Rainbow Coalition could not survive.

More importantly, when a leader arrogates to himself all basic authority within the movement, as Jackson clearly did at the Rainbow Coalition's founding convention, then this constitutes dictatorship, not democracy. Jackson's followers are faced with a serious contradiction, because they insist on the democratic nature of their movement. During the 1984 Democratic primaries, Jackson repeatedly attacked the lack of democracy within the Democratic Party. Yet he has constructed an organization in which he, alone, has the power to

determine the program, leadership, etc. No one can call him to account.

Jesse Jackson and Martin Luther King

Jackson seems to perceive himself as the successor within the Black movement to Martin Luther King, Jr. Many will no doubt agree with him on this—though others will surely protest. Jackson participated in the civil rights struggles in the South, he was with King in the 1963 March on Washington, and at the moment of his death in 1968.

Jackson first gained national recognition in 1966 when, as head of "Operation Breadbasket"—which was sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) of which Martin Luther King was a leader—he negotiated over 2,000 jobs for Chicago Blacks in previously all-white firms. After King's assassination a year later, Jackson broke with the SCLC and started his own "Operation PUSH."

Jackson seems to be more politically ambitious than King—who never aspired for political office or personal prestige, qualities which made him a particularly effective mass leader. Jackson would apparently like to be the first Black president of the United States, though he might well present this ambition in more convoluted language, attempting to pose as a personal symbol for Black liberation and social justice in general.

Obstacles in His Path

There are, however, a number of obstacles in Jackson's path, not the least of which is that the U.S. ruling class, which controls the Democratic Party, doesn't share his political goal. The mainstream Democrats didn't want to see Jackson win the nomination in 1984, when he made his first bid for the presidency, and there is no sign that they will feel any differently in 1988, when he will make his second effort. Of course, the Democrats are very interested in keeping their influence with Jackson's constituency, and it is certainly possible that they might offer some concessions on the level of the 1988 platform, or try to buy him off with a lesser post.

In 1984, as we know, the Democrats not only shunted Jackson aside, they failed to make any effort to appease him. But things could be different in 1988, especially after Mondale's '84 failure in trying to out-Reagan Reagan (proposing to quarantine Nicaragua, beef up military spending,

and raise taxes). There is likely to be more dissatisfaction among the electorate in 1988. Democratic leaders may sense a need to tap sentiment addressed by Jackson through the more progressive positions he espouses (anti-intervention in Central America, support to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, no "first strike" of nuclear weapons, sharp reductions in Pentagon spending, increased outlays for social programs, etc.).

But the hope of the more starry-eyed of Jackson's supporters, that they might somehow capture the Democratic Party, remains an impossible dream. The most that they can realistically hope for is a few nice words in the platform (a meaningless document in any case) and a possible personal promotion for their leader. None of this will advance the goals of those who have joined the Rainbow Coalition out of a sincere desire to improve social realities in the U.S.

Contradiction of the Rainbow

The Rainbow Coalition itself maintains a hybrid character. It cannot ultimately be both a social movement representing the oppressed in the U.S. and a wing of the capitalist Democratic Party, which is responsible for enforcing that oppression. Jackson's long-term goals are not completely clear, but all of his activity points to the idea that his main objective is to use the *threat* of an independent social movement as a bargaining chip in order to gain more authority for himself within the Democratic Party. The fact that he has insisted on maintaining such tight personal control over the reins of his new organization reinforces this impression. Such an approach is completely contradictory if his objective is to build a social movement. But it is obviously a necessity if his objective is to use that movement to advance his own personal political future.

The existence of the Rainbow constitutes an implied threat of a split if Democratic leaders refuse to make concessions to Jackson. The propagandists of the Rainbow Coalition are vigorously spreading rumors around the country that Jackson is ready to break with the Democrats and set up a third party if the Democrats deny him the nomination for president. But this cannot be taken at face value, since if Jackson's objectives are simply to pressure the party leaders seriously that is precisely the kinds of rumors he would have to spread.

There is, of course, a possibility that Jackson will ultimately decide that the creation of a new party (still, of course, under his tight control) and its independent existence for a time would be more effective than remaining within the Democratic organization. But even a formal split would not in and of itself constitute a *fundamental* change in Jackson's basic political perspective—the reform of the Democrats.

Role of the Democratic Party

Jackson is not the first Black or working class leader to proclaim that the goals of advancing social justice could be best advanced by working within, or trying to influence, the Democrats. The strength of this fiction is reinforced by the illusions many working people and oppressed minorities in the U.S. have about how "democracy" works in this country—the belief that "the people" really control the government through the bourgeois electoral system. But even a cursory historical survey puts an end to this notion, and clarifies whose interests the Democratic Party has inevitably served whenever it has been in power.

We need start no further back than the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the patron saint of the Democratic Party, to whom even Ronald Reagan tips his hat. Wasn't Roosevelt the one who promised the American people in 1940 "never to send American boys to fight on foreign soil"? And wasn't it Roosevelt who stifled any dissent to his war plans and was mainly responsible for the prosecution and imprisonment of 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and Teamsters Local 544 in Minneapolis under the notorious Smith Act, simply because they opposed World War II?

Then there was Harry S. Truman, Roosevelt's successor. Wasn't he the one who dropped the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children? And didn't Truman follow the repressive policies of his mentor, Roosevelt, when he instituted the Truman loyalty oath, paving the way for the McCarthy era? And what about Truman's efforts to use U.S. troops in China to roll back the gains of the revolution there, and his actual intervention in Korea?

Then comes the almost mythical leader whom Gary Hart would emulate, John F. Kennedy. Kennedy was the man responsible for the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, an undeclared war that was financed, organized, and directed by the CIA and American military, under his administration. Kennedy was also responsible for the Cuban missile crisis—when the world held its breath as the Soviet ships were met on the high seas by the American naval forces and told to turn back, or else. The "or else" is why the world had to hold its breath. And, of course, under Kennedy, the U.S. began its military intervention into Vietnam.

Then there was Lyndon B. Johnson, a cowboy of the Reagan type. Under his administration the Vietnam war was escalated to its highest levels.

Finally we come to the last Democratic administration under Jimmy Carter. It is ironic that the fall of Carter and the crisis of the Reagan administration should revolve around the same issue, Iran. Carter decided that the proper course was to mount a helicopter assault to free the hostages at the U.S. Embassy, instead of trying to make amends for the years of imperialist manipulation and exploitation against which the Iranian people were justly rebelling.

That, in brief, is a history of the Democratic Party in power for more than the last 50 years. Each Democratic administration has promised basic social reforms; each has promised not to get involved in wars; each has broken its promises. The Democratic Party has served capitalism well, and especially so when capitalism suffers one of its periodic crises and needs a liberal mask. The Democrats could not possibly be as effective in this if it weren't for individuals like Jesse Jackson, who continue to reinforce illusions in that party amongst working people.

These illusions allow the Democrats to carry out their actual policies—defense of capitalist and imperialist interests—while maintaining a facade of democracy and concern over the needs of the oppressed. They allow the Democrats to come to the rescue of the capitalists in a time of crisis. When Herbert Hoover floundered in the flood of the Great Depression, FDR was waiting in the wings. When Nixon's corruption and dishonesty threatened the stability of the system, Jimmy Carter gave capitalism a more congenial face. And in 1988, in the wake of the contra/Iran scandal, another Democrat will be available to change the image of the White House—without changing anything of substance about Washington's policies.

Jackson's Loyalties

Given this history, how could anyone seek the presidential nomination of this party, the tweedledum of capitalism, and still claim to be progressive? Yet, at least for now, Jesse Jackson remains loyal to the Democratic Party. In November 1986, speaking to a meeting at the Harvard Law School, Jackson repeated once again that the Democratic Party is where he belonged. "I choose to fight rather than switch. I choose to get the attention of the Party and the nation."

The "Rainbow Reporter," official organ of the Rainbow Coalition, in its November 1986 issue, says, "All Rainbow supporters and members should be aware of a report just released by the Democratic National Committee (DNC) entitled, 'New Choices In A Changing America.' This wide-ranging policy report of the Democratic Policy Commission, over a year in the making, is the official guide of the DNC. *The Rev. Jackson and the Rainbow were effectively excluded* from the deliberations on this important document" (emphasis in original).

Since this action of the Democratic Party is

an emphatic rejection of Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition, what is there left to do? The Rainbow Reporter concludes, "We must challenge the Democratic Party decision to imitate Reagan rather than to oppose him."

The basic problem is that Jackson does not have any principled position or program to offer the American people. Neither does he have faith in the American people to rally to a third party which would offer a genuine alternative to the Republicans and Democrats—a party which would have to be based on the mass organizations of working people and/or oppressed nationalities. Jackson does not have the consciousness, or the intellectual or moral courage, to say out loud, "The Republican and Democratic parties represent the rich and the powerful. What we need is a party to represent workers, the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the minorities, women, youth, and all of the oppressed masses. The first demand of this party shall be: not one cent for nuclear or any other weapons of destruction. Our first priorities shall be jobs for all, decent housing, health care, education, and international solidarity with all who fight for human progress."

If Jesse Jackson made such a statement, and followed it through in action, he would have the possibility of really contributing to a basic change in U.S. politics. He would have the potential to win the backing of a majority of the U.S. population. But Jackson is not a leader of that stripe—one who relies solely on the masses who represent his social base. He is another in the long line of reformers who would like to improve the system a little here and there, and carve out a place for himself in the process. He is a part of the petty-bourgeois radical elite—who would like to think of themselves, and be portrayed as, representatives of the people, but who can never really play that role.

The world does not need any more messiahs and it's time to stop chasing rainbows. What we truly need in the U.S. is an aroused working class which will launch a labor party based on the trade union movement. In contrast to Jackson's efforts at challenging the Democratic Party with the goal of reforming it, a labor party would constitute a challenge to *both* of the twin parties of capitalism, which can ultimately lead to the overthrow of that hated system of oppression and its replacement with one which will truly guarantee social justice for all. ■

The Workers' and Farmers' Government and the Socialist Revolution

by Steve Bloom

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THE MOVEMENT AGAINST THE WAR IN VIETNAM— ITS LESSONS FOR TODAY

by James Lafferty

During a trip to Hanoi in 1971, Premier Pham Van Dong said to us that one reason why he was confident that the Vietnamese would win their war with the United States was that "the American Government has very little sense of history." I think he meant several things by that remark, including that Americans do not tend to learn the lessons of history.

And so, today, as growing numbers of U.S. citizens like you and I once again seek to build a movement to end the latest manifestation of U.S. interventionist policies—this time in Central America/the Caribbean—the question is: "What are the lessons from the anti-Vietnam war movement that we can utilize today in building a successful movement against U.S. intervention in Central America/the Caribbean?" After all, our brothers and sisters in Central America who strive for liberation have learned a great deal from the Vietnamese liberation struggle; and I believe that today's peace movement can learn a great deal from the anti-Vietnam war movement—both from the things that movement did that were right, and from the things it did that were mistakes.

A Successful Movement

I want to start by reviewing some of the things we did that were right, because—and this is very important—we did enough things that were right to ultimately succeed in our cause! And we should never forget that fact, or let the government strip us of this knowledge through its dishonest recountings of that period of U.S. history.

First, after a lot of early debate, the anti-Vietnam war movement came to understand the need to make its demands unconditional. That is, we came to demand no less than the total and immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Vietnam—as opposed to following the urgings of some in the movement who argued we should only demand a "nego-

tiated settlement" of the war. In short, we came to understand that this was the only correct moral and strategic position for a U.S. citizen to take. In this regard, we understood the difference between the strategic necessity of the Vietnamese who, being under the bullet and the bomb, were forced to think in terms of a "negotiated settlement," and the strategy of the U.S. peace movement who, as citizens of the aggressor nation in the war, could not, on principle, demand less than immediate, unconditional withdrawal. That, after all, is what allegiance to the principle of self-determination demanded.

Second, a most important lesson from the Vietnam war years—advanced by the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) then, as well as by most of the forces in the movement—was that we made the central demand of the movement a demand that the U.S. government end its intervention in Vietnam. We did not demand "victory for the Viet Cong," or "support the Vietnamese revolution," as some urged us to do. We did this because we recognized that all the "support" that the Vietnamese needed from our movement was help in getting the U.S. government off of their backs!

Today, there are some who argue that our demands should be "support for the Nicaraguan revolution," or some such similar demand. But I believe the Vietnam experience teaches us that the best way to support the Nicaraguan revolution is to build the kind of movement in the United States that can most quickly put an end to U.S. intervention in all of Central America/the Caribbean—and that the best way to do that is to build a movement around the demand, "End U.S. Intervention"—because that's the kind of demand that the majority of U.S. citizens can and will support. And it's also a demand that fully recognizes the Central American peoples' right to self-determination—to be left alone to choose whatever form of government they wish.

Political Independence

Third, the anti-Vietnam war movement was most successful when it placed its faith in the people of the United States, as opposed to the politicians of the United States. We learned this lesson the hard way: remember, some of us had voted for Lyndon Johnson over former Senator Barry Goldwater, because Goldwater was supposed to be the "hawk" and Johnson was supposed to keep us from getting more deeply involved in Vietnam. But what happened? Well, no sooner was Johnson elected than

James Lafferty is presently East Coast Regional Coordinator of the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean. In the 1970s he was one of five coordinators of the National Peace Action Coalition. We are printing here the text of a talk he gave on March 21 to a New York City student conference which was discussing the problem of building a movement against U.S. involvement in Central America. Copies were distributed by Lafferty for reprinting where desired.

he began a policy of constant escalation of troops and bombing—finally putting over 500,000 U.S. troops into Vietnam.

And today we must remember that the Vietnam war ended under presidents Nixon and Ford—hardly men of peace! We must remember that the war ended only because of the valiant efforts of the Vietnamese and the persistence of the U.S. peace movement—not because of the good will of any U.S. president. In short, we came to understand that the question we should always be asking is not who sits in the White House—or in Congress—but who is marching in the streets of America!

Fourth, I believe that our movement then was most massive—and most effective—when we resisted the temptation to tack on to our antiwar demands a long list of other worthy demands concerning other social issues of the day. We came to understand that adding such other demands and causes would only have served to dilute the strength of our central demand to end the war in Vietnam. In short, we did best when we remained single-focused. Of course, we always related the issue of the war to the issues of poverty and racism and sexism and the draft, etc. But to join in our movement against the war you did not have to pass a litmus test comprised of political demands on a myriad of other important social issues. In this way we were able to build a powerful movement of U.S. citizens from every walk of life and political persuasion who may not have been in agreement on the other issues of the day, but who could nevertheless work and march together on the single issue of the war. And because we did not dilute our antiwar demands with other demands and issues, when we marched in the streets the press and government could not further dilute our message by reporting only on those issues that struck their fancy.

Strength in Unity

Fifth, we discovered that to be a strong and united movement we had to build our coalitions on the principle of nonexclusion. This was not true in the early stages of our movement. But once we finally established this principle we never again had to cower in the face of red-baiting by the government—or by anyone else for that matter! We recognized that once you start down the unsavory road of exclusion the only thing you can be sure of is that when you get to the end of that road you will find yourself standing alone.

Sixth, the anti-Vietnam war movement learned that to build a truly effective movement it had to be built on democratic principles. We did best when we put our faith in the rank-and-file members of our movement and not only in our leaders. We learned that all who participated in our movement had to have equal voice and vote on the decisions affecting the course of the movement. It was for this reason that coalitions like NPAC held periodical conferences of movement activists—conferences not unlike this one today—which were open

to all on a democratic basis. In short, we decried the example of the U.S. government itself, and put our trust in the people—even if that sometimes meant a slow and cumbersome governing process. And our faith was rewarded by the creation of more effective and democratic coalitions.

Seventh, although the anti-Vietnam war movement relied on a number of tactics and strategies, I believe that our movement was most effective when we relied principally upon the tactic of organizing massive, peaceful mobilizations of the people in the streets of the nation.

Imagine, if you will, the impact of a mass demonstration such as occurred on April 24, 1971, in Washington D.C. and San Francisco. On that day approximately one million Americans marched in the streets demanding "Out Now!" That means that nearly one out of every two hundred U.S. citizens—including those unable to make the trip to one of these cities—were in the streets that day in opposition to the war. Imagine how such a broad-based and massive demonstration of citizens undermined the ability of the government to carry on the war. Imagine, for example, that you were a young man who had just gotten your draft notice that day—or that you were a soldier who had just been ordered to "take that next hill." And then you hear about this demonstration of one million of your fellow citizens marching to protest the very war you are being asked to fight, and kill, and die for. Are you now going to be willing to make the sacrifices a soldier is asked to make without at least raising your voice against the war—either from within, or from without, the military?

We also understood that a demonstration like April 24, 1971—or such as the one that will take place on April 25th of this year—is not a one-day affair as some argued. We knew that such demonstrations gave our movement a chance to do real grass-roots organizing on a day-to-day basis for several months leading up to the demonstration. Any upcoming demonstration gave us a good chance to talk to groups of students and trade unionists and church congregations and others about the war and why they should join us in opposing it on the day of the demonstration.

And we certainly know now—if we couldn't prove it then—that these mass mobilizations were very, very effective indeed. The Pentagon Papers disclose that when President Johnson was considering what to do next in Vietnam, and he had called in his advisers, and they had suggested that he bomb the dikes in Vietnam, Johnson said to his advisers, "I have one more question for your computers. If I do what you suggest, how long will it take 500,000 Americans to scale the White House fence and lynch their president for having done so?"

And Nixon's memoirs give yet another bit of proof of the efficacy of mass marches. Remember, Nixon said he had a "secret plan" to end the Vietnam war. It turns out his plan was to issue an ultimatum to the Vietnamese to capitulate by November 1, 1969, and, if they did not, to then try

with nuclear weapons to bomb them back into the dark ages. But, in his memoirs, Nixon said of his plan, "Two weeks before the ultimatum deadline a half million antiwar protesters filled the streets of Washington D.C. and similar demonstrations were planned for the following month. *The very people who said they were against the war prevented me from carrying out my plan to end the war!*"

Errors and Problems

But now let me turn to a consideration of the lessons to be learned from some of the mistakes we made during the anti-Vietnam war movement:

First, the anti-Vietnam war movement often failed to overcome its internal divisions in order to achieve the *unity* so vital to our success. Sometimes we let strategic differences or organizational jealousies keep us divided and, as a direct consequence, weaker than we would otherwise have been. But when we did overcome these divisions and found unity in action—such as on April 24, 1971—we were much more effective—not only in terms of the numbers at the demonstrations, but also in terms of the breadth of the representation at the demonstration.

In this regard, I urge us all today to pledge that we will not, in our present struggle, let our differences over strategy and tactics divide our movement. Rather, let us pledge to use April 25 of this year as an example of how we can overcome these divisions and unite for what will, no doubt, be the biggest protest to date against U.S. intervention in Central America/the Caribbean.

Second, the anti-Vietnam war movement often—after a big demonstration—allowed long gaps of time to occur between our united protest actions in the streets. Sometimes this was the result of what I believe were misguided attempts to win through the ballot what could only be won in the streets; sometimes it was the result of other tactical disputes. And I must say that it seems to me that even today we have not yet learned from this mistake. Between May of 1981 and this April 25, there will have been only three nationally coordinated mobilizations against the war in Cen-

tral America. I repeat—only three national actions in six years! We must vow that we will not—following April 25—let our movement wait for a year or more before we are again back in the streets in united, national actions against this war. To those who say after a demonstration that they are "tired of marching," I can only ask, "Are you as tired of marching as our brothers and sisters in Central America are tired of fighting for their very lives?"

Third, today's movement should remember and reflect upon the inability of the anti-Vietnam war movement to adequately involve labor forces and G.I.s in that movement. Both of these constituencies are of critical importance to *any* antiwar movement. The soldier is not the enemy of such a movement, and labor is our most powerful domestic ally in such a cause. In this regard, I remember the words of John T. Williams, who was then a coordinator of the National Peace Action Coalition. John was a leading trade unionist on the West Coast, and he used to say that "When students stood up and were counted on the question of the war, the nation listened. But if we can get labor to sit down and stop producing for this damned war, the war will stop."

In this regard, I think that April 25 represents good news for our movement today, because so many leading labor officials have endorsed this action. I think we should vow here and now to work like hell after April 25 to find ways to bring even more workers into this movement in recognition of the power such forces can bring to our movement.

Well, let me end on the same note upon which I began: the things we did that were right during the anti-Vietnam war movement far outweighed the things we did that were wrong—that's why we ultimately prevailed! But that movement certainly made some mistakes. And I believe we can and must learn from our mistakes as well as from our successes. Finally, I believe that if we will remember the admonition of Pham Van Dong as to the value of the lessons of history, then this time around success can again be ours—and much sooner this time than last. ■

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE NEW EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

by Evelyn Sell

The National Organization for Women (NOW) is marking the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution with a "Bicentennial Drive for the New Equal Rights Amendment." Currently the largest women's rights organization in the world, NOW launched its campaign "to include women in the Constitution" with a national mailing to all members outlining the campaign. Lobbying activities were kicked off by sending postcards to the two majority leaders in Congress. Future plans include: phone-banking to pressure U.S. congresspersons in key districts; contacting members of Congress as the new ERA comes up for committee and floor votes; and holding the NOW national conference in Philadelphia during the week of July 16—the same time and place where Congress will gather to commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.

In the "Bicentennial Membership Action Alert" packet sent out by NOW, it is explained, "The Mistake Can Be Corrected—Two hundred years after Abigail Adams urged the Constitutional Convention to include women in the fundamental law of the land, our elected representatives once again have another chance to right a grave wrong."

Deliberate Exclusion

The men who wrote the Constitution deliberately excluded women—it was no *mistake!* It was also no mistake when the 14th Amendment specified "male citizens" in safeguarding voting rights for ex-slaves. The Constitution was deliberately constructed to maintain the privileges of an elite minority of property holders. It required revolutionary struggles to add the first ten amendments

The new ERA was introduced in the 100th Congress in January. The complete text reads:

SECTION I: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. [Same wording as before.]

SECTION II: The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

SECTION III: This article shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

(the Bill of Rights) and then to abolish slavery and to spell out legal rights of Blacks. It took a powerful and persistent women's movement to add the 19th Amendment in 1920. Voting rights for women were won after suffragists carried out 480 campaigns to get state legislatures to submit their amendment to voters, 277 state and 30 national campaigns to get party conventions to include women's-suffrage planks in their platforms, 19 campaigns for the amendment in 19 successive Congresses, and many other battles over a 72-year period.

Suffrage leader Alice Paul proposed the next step: an Equal Rights Amendment. Feminists started their effort to win an ERA in 1923. For many years ERA resolutions were bottled up in the House Judiciary Committee which was ruled by antifeminist Emmanuel Celler. In the late 1960s, however, the organized women's liberation movement powerfully challenged traditional attitudes and practices. The first Women's Strike for Equality Day was held in 1970, and immediately became an annual event to press for feminist demands.

The impact of this development reached into Congress. A significant breakthrough came in the spring of 1970 when Congresswoman Martha Griffiths collected more than enough signatures on a discharge petition to bypass the Judiciary Committee and take the ERA directly to a floor debate. The House of Representatives approved the resolution 346 to 15—but the Senate did not approve the resolution. ERA was again stopped dead in its tracks. That's part of the ingenious system erected by the Constitution-makers to thwart the popular will and preserve the status quo: toss measures back and forth from one part of Congress to the other.

In 1971 the House again approved the ERA resolution by 354 to 23—but again the Senate blocked further progress. Significant sections of the women's rights movement gave the ERA top priority, and the march and rally for the 1972 Women's Equality Day was organized with a focus on the ERA. Responding to mounting pressures, the U.S. Senate finally approved the ERA resolution on March 22, 1972, by a vote of 84 to 8. Then came the next series of roadblocks set up by the Constitution-makers: 38 state legislatures had to approve the ERA before it could be included in the Constitution.

Fight for Ratification

At first it appeared that the ERA was rushing towards victory. Thirty states approved the amendment during the first year. But ratification sput-

tered from that point. The total crept up to 34 by the beginning of the 1976 bicentennial year. Four more states were needed. Then, Indiana ratified in 1977—the last state to do so before the March 22, 1979, deadline.

The initial success of the ERA—which reflected majority support for women's rights—galvanized antifeminist and reactionary forces across the U.S. Stop ERA became the best known of these. Opponents of the ERA argued: child support and alimony benefits will be abolished; women will be drafted into the armed services and thrown into frontline battles; women will lose their right to privacy in public restrooms, dressing rooms, and prisons; homosexuality will be legalized; women will lose existing protective laws covering rest periods, maternity leave, and other job-related measures.

These myths and outright lies were answered by a wide variety of means: publication of fact sheets, public meetings and conferences, media debates, presentations at marches and rallies, advertisements in all types of media, and informational picketing.

Although NOW relied most heavily on direct lobbying of state legislators, other tactics were utilized to pressure legislators and to involve women's rights supporters in ERA campaigns. For example, in February 1976, NOW called an economic boycott and urged organizations not to hold their conventions in states which had not ratified. Within eighteen months, 45 groups had pledged not to meet in the targeted states. When the attorney general of Missouri unsuccessfully sued NOW for damages, he stated the boycott had cost St. Louis \$11 million and Kansas City \$8 million in convention business.

NOW received most of the media attention but many established organizations campaigned for the ERA and new groups, such as ERAmerica, were formed. Pressed to put more weight behind his pro-ERA stance, President Carter proclaimed August 26, 1977, "Women's Equality Day." The ERA was the focus of events held around the country.

"Star power" was utilized in fund-raising parties, media statements, and personal appeals to legislators. A 1978 party at Marlo Thomas's estate drew 500 film industry celebrities who paid \$100 each. Director Robert Altman pledged the \$2 million profit he expected to make from his film, *The Wedding*. As part of a special project of the National Women's Political Caucus, Carol Burnett and Valerie Harper pushed for the ERA during talk shows. Fund-raising dinners in New York City were sponsored by well-known theater, film, and television figures.

In 1978, ERAmerica worked hard to get pro-ERA supporters to the polls in Florida and Virginia to elect candidates pledged to ratification. The limitations of such election efforts was shown over and over. The ERA was killed in the South Carolina Senate when five legislators *withdrew their support after they had assured their constituents that they would vote for the ERA*. Ratifica-

tion was blocked in the Illinois Assembly by a series of switched votes and abstentions—including one pro-ERA legislator who abstained *because he said he was tired of voting so often on the ERA*. In Nevada and North Carolina, the ERA vote was lost when legislators *who made election campaign promises to vote "yes" cast "no" votes at the last minute*. ERA campaigners were hit hard when ratification lost by six votes in the Illinois legislature in June 1978—the second time in a year—in spite of \$150,000 spent lobbying legislators, efforts to defeat anti-ERA candidates, and a personal appeal to the state's attorney general from President Carter.

Deadline Extension

With the deadline less than one year away and ratification completely stalled, ERA supporters mobilized to win an extension. It appeared that given another seven years (until March 22, 1986) all obstacles would be overcome since the ERA continued to be supported by the majority of Americans. In the week before the Florida legislature rejected ratification by two votes, 65 percent of those polled in the state wanted the ERA to be part of the Constitution. In Virginia, where 59 percent wanted the ERA, the resolution was killed in a committee before the full house could vote on it. In Arizona, 54 percent of the people supported the ERA.

To pressure Congress to extend the deadline, a march and rally were held in Washington D.C. on July 9, 1978. It was the largest women's rights demonstration in U.S. history. The movement won a limited victory in October when Congress voted to extend 39 months, until June 30, 1982.

Renewed Efforts

This new lease on life spurred renewed lobbying efforts. In March 1979, a strategy-planning meeting was held by representatives of 200 pro-ERA groups. Individuals and groups which had been silent up to this time began to speak out in favor of the ERA. But the drive to win three more states was hit by one blow after another. Ratification was blocked or defeated again and again. Responding to conservative pressures and positioning itself for the 1980 Reagan presidential campaign, the Republican platform committee canceled the party's forty-year support for an ERA.

With only one year of the extension left, NOW organized "ERA countdown rallies" in about 180 cities on May 30, 1981. In August, NOW's Countdown Campaign raised over \$1 million in walkathons around the U.S. In October, NOW carried out its first-ever multimillion dollar media blitz to raise funds to fight for the ERA. NOW President Eleanor Smeal announced that women were taking off from jobs and college classes to work for the ERA "missionary project"—a campaign in states which had not yet ratified. NOW activists concentrated on Illinois, Oklahoma, Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, and Missouri while other groups, such

as the National Women's Political Caucus, focused on Virginia and Georgia.

As 1982 opened, ratification efforts were defeated in Oklahoma, Illinois, Georgia, and Virginia. During the hundred days left before the June 30 deadline, ERA forces stepped up their activities in a final push. Large advertisements appeared in major newspapers, door-to-door canvassing took place in targeted states, millions of letters were sent to legislators, television commercials in targeted states featured Alan Alda, Betty Ford, and Representative Claude Pepper. NOW organized mass rallies on June 6 in the capitols of four target states. About 10,000 rallied in Tallahassee, Florida; 7,000 in Springfield, Illinois; 11,000 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and over 5,000 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The final nails in the coffin were hammered in when the ERA was defeated again in Florida and Illinois. Not one state had been won over during the 39-month extension although a national Harris poll, taken just before the June 30 deadline, showed that 73 percent supported the ERA. Over 450 national organizations, representing 50 million Americans, endorsed the ERA; most of the groups had actively worked for ratification. The 35 states which had ratified contained a majority of the American population. In terms of legislators' votes, the losing margin was so tiny that a change in ten votes in three key states would have resulted in an ERA victory.

Different Strategy Needed

After the ten-year fight ended in defeat, ERA supporters offered various assessments of why they had failed: the country had swung to the right, the economic downturn in the 1970s engendered fear of change, the ERA movement hadn't organized itself early and strongly enough but had been too complacent about the irresistible power of the women's movement, legislators had been antagonized by "overly-militant" activities, the ERA movement was weakened by differences over strategy and tactics while its opponents were strengthened by the combined power of conservative forces (major church groups, political groups like the John Birch Society, antifeminist organizations like the Eagle Forum founded by Phyllis Schlafly).

NOW President Smeal charged, "History will record that President Reagan and the Republican Right were the people most responsible for block-

ing the equal rights amendment." Smeal, still focused on wheeling and dealing within the electoral/legislative arena, wrote in her January letter to NOW members: "I believe the time is ripe for a new ERA. We have a clear signal to take action. The results of the 1986 elections present a rare opportunity. The U.S. Senate is now back in the hands of a pro-ERA majority. The House of Representatives has a stronger pro-ERA majority than ever."

However, Smeal's attention on the U.S. Congress is misplaced. It shows that she has learned little from the defeat of the last campaign for the ERA—in which NOW and others poured millions of dollars into lobbying and electoral efforts. Mass mobilizations to express popular sentiment were rare and exceptional events, secondary and subordinate to the lobbying effort. There is, today, a "clear signal to take action" again on the ERA, but it comes from another source and indicates a different approach.

Over the past few years the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid movements in this country have displayed an impressive growth and vigor, which can encourage and stimulate other struggles. Student activism is on the rise—a sign of fresh resources to be tapped. The women's rights movement has continued to defend past gains and to win new victories in spite of right-wing violence and an economic downturn. The enthusiasm for mass actions to defend abortion rights was proven by last year's demonstrations of over 125,000 in Washington D.C. and Los Angeles. Women recently won important victories in comparable worth and affirmative action cases—rulings that show that advances can be made. There is a favorable climate for a renewed fight for the ERA.

Obviously the battles to come must include tactics to win legally required votes in Congress and state legislatures. But as the 1972-82 experiences prove, lobbying efforts are not the primary nor the most effective means "to include women in the Constitution." The key to success is a strategy which mobilizes the pro-ERA majority for independent mass actions. Such actions educate and win over hesitant elements in the population—including legislators who must retain the support of their constituents or find another line of work.

Pressures exerted 200 years ago resulted in the addition of the first amendments. Persistent mass mobilizations can win the new Equal Rights Amendment. ■

F.I.T. SETS PLANS FOR NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

"Educate, Agitate, Organize: Rebuilding an American Socialist Movement" will be the theme of a Socialist Educational Conference being organized by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency to be held over the Labor Day weekend. The gathering, which will be held in the St Paul/Minneapolis area, will feature the following major presentations:

- "Developments in the Capitalist Economy": talks by Carol McAlister, Pittsburgh and Steve Bloom, New York.

- "The American Class Struggle Today": a presentation on the socialist program for the labor movement, by Dave Riehle, Twin Cities.

- "Problems of Labor Activism": a panel of participants in union and unemployed struggles.

- "The Revolutionary International": a talk on the present situation of the world socialist movement by a representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Also planned are presentations by Fourth Internationalists from Mexico and Canada.

- "The Dialectics of the Transitional Program": an examination by David Weiss, New York, of how Marxist methodology is indispensable in bridging the gap between day to day struggles of working people and the revolutionary reorganization of society.

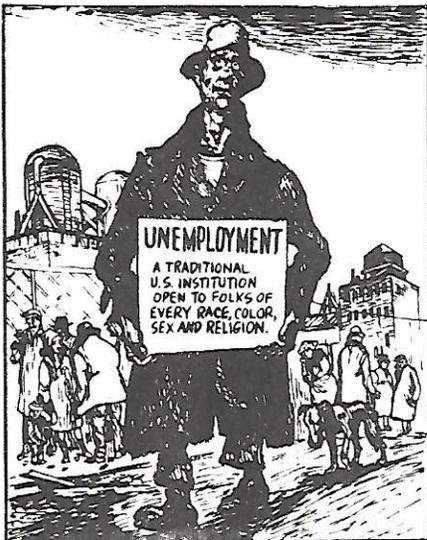
- "Building the Revolutionary Party in the U.S.": an assessment by Evelyn Sell, Los Angeles, of the present stage and the necessary next steps in the process of building a mass revolutionary Marxist party in this country.

In addition to these presentations several films and slide shows will be available for viewing. Time has also been set aside for informal discussions and socializing, and there will be many forms of indoor and outdoor recreation at the conference site.

* * *

The conference is open to all members of the Fourth Internationalist movement in the United States, which includes members of the F.I.T., the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Action, and Solidarity. In addition, guests invited by Local Organizing Committees of the F.I.T. are welcome. The gathering promises to be enjoyable and informative, as well as an ideal opportunity to meet activists in the trade union, anti-intervention, and women's liberation movements from around the country—along with guests from other countries.

Housing and meals will cost \$30 per day and there is a \$10 registration fee. If you are interested in attending the conference contact the F.I.T., P.O. Box 1947, New York, NY 10009; or get in touch with the Local Organizing Committee of the F.I.T. nearest you. (See directory in this issue of the *Bulletin IDOM*.) ■



DON'T STRANGLE THE PARTY

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

Introduction by George Breitman

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A NEW TREND IN SOVIET STUDIES 'Stalin Wasn't So Bad, Trotsky Wasn't So Good'

by Paul Le Blanc and Thomas Twiss

Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin have traditionally been counterposed as the defender and the betrayer of communist ideals. Among revolutionary Marxists, Trotsky was the shining symbol of the Bolshevik-Leninist principles of socialist internationalism and workers' democracy which animated the Russian revolution and the early Communist movement, opposing the bureaucratic-conservative degeneration represented by Stalin. For the official Communist movement from the 1930s at least until the 1950s, Stalin was the benevolent and all-knowing leader who protected the revolution from a variety of dangers—including "the mad power-lust of the unprincipled Trotsky." In the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the People's Republic of China, Stalin was long projected as being second only to Lenin in the hierarchy of 20th century deities.

Recently within the Soviet Union and China there has been a tilt away from Stalin among official scholars. In the USSR a new wave of anti-Stalin works has been encouraged by the predominant Gorbachev wing of the bureaucracy, picking up where Khrushchev left off when he was deposed in 1964, undoing the partial rehabilitation of Stalin which occurred during the Brezhnev years. It appears that some of Stalin's most prominent victims—Nikolai Bukharin, perhaps even Gregory Zinoviev and Leon Kamenev—may finally be restored to the revolutionary pantheon from which they were brutally ejected in the 1930s. In China even Trotsky is being treated, within very definite limits, with a modicum of respect as a genuine revolutionary who went wrong but who had some interesting ideas and made some contributions to the cause.¹

Ironically, there has been a tilt in the opposite direction among scholarly and not-so-scholarly elements in the United States. These elements are hardly beating the drums for Joseph Stalin as the wise, humane, heroic leader of world communism. Rather, there is an insistence that we must move beyond anti-Stalin (especially Trotskyist) "prejudices" to gain a more "balanced" view. If anything, this suggests not a disagreement but instead a convergence with some of the new trends of Soviet and Chinese official historiography.

Most dramatic, perhaps, has been the shift from within the Trotskyist movement engineered by Socialist Workers Party leader Jack Barnes. Barnes's reevaluation of Trotsky's role and decision to jettison elements of the "old Trotskyism" have been explicitly designed to achieve a convergence with the ideological and historical sensi-

bilities of Carlos Rafael Rodriguez of the Cuban Communist Party, whose outlook on these questions is in harmony with the innovations of certain official Soviet historians. They could certainly be expected to agree with Rodriguez's admonition that "out of wanting to escape what seem to be dangerous Stalinist nets, one falls into Trotskyist traps." Jack Barnes has indicated that he himself agrees with this. On the other hand, Barnes has no scholarly pretensions, and his pragmatic manipulation of historical data and theoretical quotations has little impact outside the narrow universe over which he reigns.²

More influential among serious scholars has been some of the recent work by historians such as Sheila Fitzpatrick and J. Arch Getty who have sought to stake out new ground in the realm of Soviet studies. Reviewers have lauded their works in scholarly journals as exciting and timely landmark studies which have "cleared the ground of many influential myths" and have "advanced many challenging hypotheses." They make the case, in Getty's words, for moving beyond "totalitarian models, Great Man theories of history, and 'revolution betrayed' polemics" in order to develop, as Fitzpatrick puts it, a "less judgmental approach" to the Stalin era.³

Contributions

Without question, the new wave of historians that Fitzpatrick and Getty are part of is making important contributions to the field of Soviet studies. Particularly in regard to the Russian workers' movement and the Bolshevik upsurge of 1917, there have been important studies which corroborate and enrich earlier accounts such as John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*, Victor Serge's *Year One of the Russian Revolution*, and Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution*. Especially interesting are works by Victoria Bonnell, Laura Engelstein, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, Heather Hogan, Diane Koenker, David Mandel, Alexander Rabinowitch, David Raleigh, William Rosenberg, S.A. Smith, Ronald Suny, Rex Wade, and Reginald Zelnik. Employing sophisticated statistical methods, drawing from an array of untranslated memoirs, and utilizing a variety of archival sources, these scholars provide a more comprehensive and nuanced account of the revolutionary struggle which overturned tsarism and capitalism in Russia.⁴

One of the essential insights which the new historians have both utilized and documented is that a mighty upheaval such as the Russian revolu-

tion cannot be the product of a fanatical elite or condescending savior somehow manipulating the ignorant masses—a view which has been dominant among the still powerfully influential interpretations of cold war anti-communists (and even among some would-be revolutionaries). They have found, to the contrary, that the revolutionary process involved, as Trotsky once put it, "the gradual comprehension by a class of the problems arising from the social crisis—the active orientation of the masses by a method of successive approximations."⁵ In 1917 large numbers of working people thought long and hard about what they were experiencing, discussed and debated a number of options before them, and—although not without deep passion—made reasoned choices about what to do next. Because the Bolshevik party, after many years of struggle and of organizational and programmatic development, had substantial authority among the most militant layers of the insurgent workers and also proved capable of articulating a political program in harmony with the needs, experience, and aspirations of the working class majority, the socialist revolution became a reality. A consensus among the new historians has cohered around this basic interpretation.

Some of the new scholarship has begun to deal with the period following the Bolshevik triumph, both before and after Stalin succeeded Lenin as the foremost leader of Soviet Russia. It is here that Sheila Fitzpatrick and J. Arch Getty have attempted to make their contribution, analyzing the meaning of the bureaucratic regime which arose on the ruins of the workers' democracy of 1917. This is an even more complex reality, and to date there is no consensus among the new historians over what happened. The interpretations of Fitzpatrick and Getty—in some ways seeking to extend the new approach toward the Russian revolution into the Stalin period (but at the same time giving the approach an odd twist)—are by no means embraced by all.

Fitzpatrick in particular has played an important role in stimulating probing studies into the Soviet realities of the 1920s and '30s, in a fascinating anthology which she edited entitled *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-31* and also in a bold introductory synthesis entitled *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932*. Getty has authored an even bolder interpretation of the Stalinist purges, *The Origins of the Great Purges, the Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938*.

Some of the points which Getty makes in his controversial book are well taken. One of the thrusts of his analysis is that the Stalin period cannot be adequately understood as the exercise of total power by an evil genius, and that the purges of the 1930s can't be comprehended if they are seen in that manner. Describing the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during this time, he writes:

Its upper ranks were divided, and its lower organizations were disorganized, chaotic, undisciplined. Moscow leaders were divided on policy

issues, and central leaders were at odds with territorial secretaries whose organizations suffered from internal disorder and conflict. A bloated party membership containing political illiterates and apolitical opportunists plus a lazy and unresponsive regional leadership was hardly the formula for a Leninist party. Such a clumsy and unwieldy organization could not have been an efficient and satisfying instrument for Moscow's purposes.⁶

As we will see, Getty has little sympathy for Leon Trotsky, but he is nonetheless struck by the great revolutionary's "particularly lucid analysis of Stalin's role. . . . Trotsky noted that Stalin was the front man, the symbol of the bureaucracy. In Trotsky's view, Stalin did not create the bureaucracy but vice versa. Stalin was a manifestation of the bureaucratic phenomenon: 'Stalin is the personification of the bureaucracy. That is the substance of the political personality.'"

Getty argues:

Stalin did not initiate or control everything that happened in the party and the country. The number of hours in the day, divided by the number of things for which he was responsible, suggests his role in many areas could have been little more than occasional intervention, prodding, threatening, or correcting. . . . He was an executive, and reality forced him to delegate most of his authority to his subordinates, each of whom had his own opinions, client groups, and interests.⁷

He concludes:

It is not necessary for us to put Stalin in day-to-day control of events to judge him. A chaotic local bureaucracy, a quasi-feudal network of politicians accustomed to arresting people, and a set of perhaps insoluble political and social problems created an atmosphere conducive to violence. All it took from Stalin were catalytic and probably ad hoc interventions . . . to spark an uncontrolled explosion.⁸

These comments appear to be grounded in actualities of Soviet Russia, correspond to the analyses of the shrewdest contemporary observers (including Trotsky, Christian Rakovsky, Victor Serge, and other Left Oppositionists), and could contribute to a deeper understanding of the all-too-human horror of the 1930s purges.⁹

Unfortunately, they are misused to buttress an "objective" justification of the Stalin era.

The Grandchildren of Walter Duranty

A clever and somewhat cynical observer in the Soviet Union during the Stalin era was *New York Times* correspondent Walter Duranty, who was sympa-

thetic to Stalin—though with a decidedly non-revolutionary detachment. He noted that by the 1920s a growing number of old Bolsheviks "were showing signs of restiveness, partly because they saw that Stalinism was progressing from Leninism (as Leninism had progressed from Marxism) towards a form and development of its own, partly because they were jealous and alarmed by Stalin's growing predominance." According to Duranty:

When Lenin died what ignorant mortal could know whether Stalin or Trotsky was the chosen son? Only results could prove that. . . . Stalin rose and Trotsky fell; therefore Stalin, inevitably, was right and Trotsky wrong. . . . Stalin deserved his victory because he was the strongest, and because his policies were most fitted to the Russian character and folkways in that they established Asiatic absolutism and put the interests of Russian Socialism before those of international Socialism.¹⁰

Duranty viewed Stalin's methods as a tough-minded continuation of Lenin's mode of operation, which involved "the brutality of purpose which drove through to its goal regardless of sacrifice and suffering." As he elaborated it: "Stalin was no less of a Marxist than Lenin who never allowed Marxism to blind him to the needs of expediency. . . . When Lenin began a fight, whether the weapons were words or bullets, he showed no mercy to his opponents."¹¹

In a similar manner, Sheila Fitzpatrick has explained that "Stalin used Leninist methods against his opponents." She tells us that "Lenin's dislike of looser mass organizations allowing greater diversity and spontaneity was not purely expedient but reflected a natural authoritarian bent."¹² Fitzpatrick's account is not in harmony with the character of Bolshevism (as documented by many of her colleagues who've written about 1917), just as Duranty's was inconsistent with the earlier realities described by Reed, Serge, Max Eastman, and others. But such distortion may help if one wishes to affirm Stalin's "achievements."

Fitzpatrick dispassionately summarizes the Russian revolution's meaning as "terror, progress and upward mobility."¹³ By *upward mobility* she means the many thousands of workers who rose above their class to get relatively lucrative and high-status jobs in the massive postrevolutionary bureaucracy (which she sees as a perversely nuts-and-bolts realization of the revolutionary socialist goal of "working class rule"). By *progress* she presumably means the leap forward into industrialization and "modernization," the elimination of the backward and inefficient semifeudal and tsarist order, the establishment (despite bureaucratic distortion) of a planned economy, the great strides in spreading education and health care to all, etc. And by *terror* she means the disruption and destruction of millions of lives, the violence and coercion against peasants and workers during

the so-called "revolution from above" of forced collectivization and industrialization under Stalin, the purges and labor camps and other authoritarian measures.

This may be qualitatively different from what inspired the workers' revolution of 1917. But Fitzpatrick tells us that, after all, "there was a wildly impractical and utopian streak in a great deal of Bolshevik thinking," adding: "No doubt all successful revolutions have this characteristic: the revolutionaries must always be driven by enthusiasm and irrational hope, since they would otherwise make the commonsense judgment that the risks and costs of revolution outweigh the possible benefits."¹⁴ What Stalin represented, apparently, was a more down-to-earth and attainable version of the liberating workers' republic after the euphoria wore off.

Where do the purges fit in? According to J. Arch Getty it would be wrong to interpret them as an effort to consolidate the power of an increasingly totalitarian bureaucracy. In their own distorted way, he tells us, they represented an assertion of the power of the people and of the old revolutionary ideals. They were "often populist, even subversive" constituting "a radical, even hysterical reaction to bureaucracy. The entrenched officeholders were destroyed from above and below in a chaotic wave of voluntarism and revolutionary puritanism."¹⁵ Stalin symbolized not simply a more practical and down-to-earth consolidation of Lenin's revolutionary project, but also a defense of the old revolutionary aspirations against the deadening encroachments of bureaucratic privilege!

Getty provides data which suggests the elimination of certain abusive bureaucrats who were resented by the masses, a move serving to legitimate the Stalin regime. Yet it should be pointed out that others were purged for being oppositionists—actual or potential. Nor were *all* "entrenched officeholders" destroyed. In fact, those "above" (i.e., Stalin and his closest circle) eliminated real or imagined rivals with the enthusiastic assistance—and sometimes even the overzealous initiative—of ambitious lower-level bureaucrats "from below," with considerable populist and even Marxist rhetoric, to be sure. The fact remains that, far from being a continuator of the revolution, Stalin served his role as its gravedigger.

If Getty hopes to establish that Stalin remained a true defender of the Bolshevik heritage, he would need to challenge the authority of those who laid claim to that heritage in opposing Stalin—the foremost representative of this opposition being Leon Trotsky.

And so he does.

Trotsky: Ambition vs. Principles

Getty's critique, "Trotsky in Exile: The Founding of the Fourth International," has recently been published in the prestigious journal *Soviet Studies*. It's worth examining his argument.

Getty's challenge takes the form of a fundamental assault on Trotsky's political integrity. While Stalin is portrayed as being motivated by revolutionary principles tempered by the dictates of practicality, Trotsky is painted as simply an ambitious, self-seeking politician. Getty arrives at this interpretation through a reexamination of Trotsky's 1933 decision to break with the Comintern and form the Fourth International.¹⁶

Until early 1933 Trotsky had insisted upon a reform perspective for the Communist International and each of its member-parties. However, on March 12, 1933, Trotsky urged his German supporters to break with the German Communist Party (KPD) because of that organization's responsibility for the recent victory of fascism in Germany. Even though he held the Comintern leadership equally responsible, Trotsky hesitated over a similar break with the Comintern until mid-July.

Getty finds Trotsky's behavior suspiciously inconsistent. He quickly dismisses Trotsky's own explanations for the delay as "self-justifying." Instead, he explains both the break with the KPD and the ensuing four-month delay as part of an elaborate conspiracy by Trotsky to regain his seat in the Kremlin. According to Getty, Trotsky's call for a break with the KPD was largely a ploy to put pressure on Moscow to take him back rather than face a split in the Comintern. Thus, Trotsky signed the initial call "G. Gurov" in order to maintain the option of later claiming that he had never advocated the break. Having raised the stick, Trotsky quickly offered the Soviet leadership a carrot: three days after his call for a break with the KPD, Trotsky addressed a secret letter to the Politbureau of the CPSU which Getty interprets as an offer to return to the party leadership in exchange for the promise that the Left Opposition would refrain from criticizing the party line indefinitely. When no response was forthcoming, Trotsky turned his attention to a second "secret strategy" for returning to power. He now counted upon a secret opposition bloc which had been established in the CPSU in 1932.¹⁷ But these hopes, too, were dashed by the capitulations of Zinoviev and Kamenev in May of 1933. Frustrated in his attempts to regain power, Trotsky finally abandoned the Comintern and proclaimed the necessity of establishing a new international.

Getty's construction appears impressive at first glance. But a closer examination reveals that virtually every plank in his argument is rotten. Let us take them one by one:

1. Trotsky's "threat" to split the Comintern certainly would have been a hollow one since the majority of his supporters had been expelled from that organization years before.

2. If Trotsky signed the call for a break with the KPD "Gurov" to retain the option of later disavowing it, he would have been vastly more incompetent politically than even his greatest detractors have suggested. For in the same period he repeatedly

published statements of the same position under his own name.¹⁸

3. In his secret letter to the Politbureau Trotsky said nothing about his own return to party leadership. Rather, the letter called only for "the opportunity for normal work within the party" for the Left Opposition. Nor did the letter contain an offer to abandon criticism of the party line. It proposed only a "preliminary agreement" on how best to conduct the necessary discussion in the context of an explosive economic and political situation.¹⁹

4. Trotsky may have hoped the 1932 opposition bloc would develop into a mass movement for reform that would have restored the Left Opposition to the party and its leadership. But the Left Opposition had always seen its readmission as a necessary part of the process of reform. There is no reason to believe Trotsky's support for the bloc was inspired by personal ambition as opposed to the stated goals of the Left Opposition.

5. By 1933 Zinoviev and Kamenev did not have the authority which Getty seems to give them, nor is it clear that they were central figures in the leadership of the 1932 opposition bloc. It is likely that Trotsky abandoned hope for the bloc months before the capitulations of Zinoviev and Kamenev as a result of the arrest of a large number of oppositionists in the fall and winter of 1932.²⁰

6. Even if Trotsky gave up on the bloc only when he first heard of the Zinoviev-Kamenev capitulations, this still leaves Getty with more than seven unexplained weeks before Trotsky's break with the Comintern.

The real reasons for the delay are hardly a mystery. Trotsky's own explanations (the need to first convince the majority of his German supporters of the necessity of the split with the KPD and to see what effect the German events would have on the other sections of the Comintern) are far more convincing than Getty's flimsy construction. Further, it is understandable that Trotsky would hesitate before the enormous historical responsibility of abandoning the Comintern and setting up a rival international. Finally, there is evidence that Trotsky was grappling with the major theoretical difficulties posed by a break with the CPSU while the Soviet Union remained a workers' state.²¹ Such reasons as these provide a more coherent explanation of the facts than Getty is able to offer. And in contrast with Getty's explanation, they underscore Trotsky's commitment to the theory, program, and ideals of Bolshevism.

The Relevance of Trotsky's Analysis

The historians discussed here have been admirable in their desire to correct the distorted and

one-sided accounts of traditional cold war historians in dealing with the 1920s and '30s. Some of their work has real value. But a one-sidedness and profound distortion have been produced in their own interpretation of Soviet history. Correctly, they note that Soviet policy was the outcome of intense conflict between diverse wings of a heterogeneous state and party apparatus. But in identifying the diversity of trees, they miss the bureaucratic forest. They ignore the ways in which the broad contours of Soviet policy reflected the common values and interests of a powerful and privileged bureaucracy. They accurately portray Stalin as the foremost *representative* of the bureaucracy. But they fail to see that in order to represent bureaucratic interests Stalin had to actively intervene between wings of the bureaucracy and even between the bureaucracy as a whole and the Soviet people. They correctly emphasize the objective factors which shaped Soviet policies. But they tend to overlook the fact that a revolutionary leadership can respond differently to objective difficulties than a bureaucratic one, and also that the objective difficulties of the 1930s were to a large extent the product of earlier, conscious decisions by the Stalinist leadership. While reporting examples of mass initiative in the late '20s and '30s, they fail to clarify the ways in which mass sentiment was shaped, canalized, blocked, and repressed by the bureaucracy.

At bottom, it is the absence of an alternate revolutionary vision that accounts for the distortion and imbalance in the work of these historians. Lacking such a vision, they easily accept the Stalinist counterfeit as a reasonable approximation of the original Bolshevik program. From there, it is a short step to interpreting the Soviet reality of the '30s as, in essence, a reasonable approximation of the Stalinist ideal—to be sure, with gritty human foibles and contradictions factored-in with scholarly objectivity. The bottom line is Duranty's pragmatist assumption that only results can prove what made sense: "Stalin rose and Trotsky fell: therefore Stalin, inevitably, was right."

Compare this with Trotsky's words of 1940:

For forty-three years of my conscious life I have remained a revolutionist; for forty-two of them I have fought under the banner of Marxism. If I had to begin all over again I would of course try to avoid this or that mistake, but the main course of my life would remain unchanged. I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist, and, consequently, an irreconcilable atheist. My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in the days of my youth.

Natasha has just come up to the window from the courtyard and opened it wider so that the air may enter more freely into my room. I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall, and the clear blue sky above the wall, and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression, and violence and enjoy it to the full.²²

As we can see, the revolutionary Marxism of Trotsky, and of Marx and Luxemburg and Lenin, represents a qualitatively different approach, in which revolutionary passion opens up alternative possibilities and sheds light on the dynamics of historical development. Because of this, Trotsky was able to arrive at insights which continue to influence the work of serious students of both Soviet history and contemporary Soviet politics. Unlike the work of the historians we have looked at, Trotsky's approach suggests forms of activity which go beyond passivity or accommodation to the powers-that-be. For this reason it also continues to have relevance for those who seek to transform the USSR and other bureaucratized workers' states into authentic workers' democracies. It has similar relevance for those in capitalist societies—scholars and non-scholars alike—who would not only understand the world, but change it. ■

April 15, 1987

NOTES

1. Philip Taubman, "Dismantling the Stalin Myth: New Effort Under Gorbachev," New York Times, March 15, 1987; Ernest Mandel, "Chinese Writers Partially Rehabilitate Trotsky," Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, October 1986, reprinted from International Viewpoint, May 19, 1986.

2. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, "Lenin and the Colonial Question," New International, Fall 1983, p. 142. Also see Jack Barnes, "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today" in the same issue of New International. For a critique, see Dianne Feeley and Paul Le Blanc, In Defense of Revolutionary Continuity (San Francisco: Socialist Action, 1984).

3. J. Arch Getty, The Origins of the Great Purges, the Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 5; Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 5.

4. Much of this new scholarship is cited and discussed in Ronald Grigor Suny, "Toward a Social History of the October Revolution," American Historical Review, February 1983.

5. Leon Trotsky, The History of the Russian Revolution, Three Volumes in One (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), Volume 1, p. xviii.

6. Getty, Origins, p. 37.

7. Ibid., pp. 205, 203.

8. Ibid., p. 206.

9. Trotsky's classic analysis is The Revolution Betrayed (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), but essential material is contained also in the 14-volume Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1929-1940 published under the supervision of George Breitman by Pathfinder Press from 1969 to 1979. For Rakovsky, see Gus Fagen, ed., Christian Rakovsky, Selected Writings in Opposi-

(Notes continued on page 36)

NOTEBOOKS FOR THE GRANDCHILDREN

by Mikhail Baitalsky

9. The Family of an Odessa Tailor

Full of remorse and resurrected love, I wrote very long letters to Yeva in Kherson. And she came to me. One more Komsomol family was added to our district. We lived with Yeva's family on Tiraspol'skoy Street.

The family was noisy. The youngest sister was barely seven. Two brothers studied at the Jewish trade school "Labor." Not long before the war began, the Jewish schools in our country were converted into Russian, Ukrainian, and other language schools. Undoubtedly "at the request of the workers."

Yeva's older brothers, both members of the party since the first days of the February revolution, were already married and lived away from home. But the most interesting of these youngsters in my opinion was the middle brother Moishe. When he was little, a threshing machine cut off his leg up to the knee. He was a distinguished example of a jack-of-all-trades—a genuine, gifted craftsman of the people.

In tsarist schools, they taught me from readers full of jingoism and stories of Russian craftsmen, who made everything from scratch.

"You Jews don't like physical labor. You'd rather stand behind a counter." This was said to me more than once in 1950 by a person who was not long ago a member of the Communist Party and who was imprisoned in a camp because of a false report (and, consequently, expelled from the party unjustly). Ivan Matveyevich Chernousov slept alongside me on the plank bed. This advocate of physical labor, freed before his term ended but without the right to leave Vorkuta, having been spared the pick and shovel, got the opportunity to seek work more suitable to him. He became the clerk in a shop serving the women's camp.

The women prisoners did hard physical labor. These women toilers of the earth, after their hard workday, arrived at the shop to buy with their pitiful pennies a handful of sugar candies for their tea. Behind the counter was a young, brawny man who had grown fat standing near his wares.

Once Ivan Matveyevich colorfully noted down for me his feelings:

"When I read or hear about Jews, I have to think about the descriptions of the Jewish streets in Warsaw from *Taras Bulba* . . . filthy, stinking, filled with garbage."

And he would wrinkle up his face in disgust. But I remember other descriptions. Sometimes, it is the description of those same streets after the suppression of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto

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

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

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

by Hitler's forces. The Jewish streets then were filled with blood, and it was not without reason that Poland erected a monument to the heroes of the uprising, and the name of Mordechai Anielewicz was known to almost every Jew.¹ It is only in our country that his name is not known. What have you read about the people of the Warsaw ghetto? And another thing that comes to mind is Goebbels's journal *Racenpolitik*—Race Politics. I managed to get a copy when I served in the Soviet occupation forces in Germany. It was printed on fine quality art paper with photographs. It spoke about Jews in a way that would have made Ivan Matveyevich envious. There, for example, I read a scholarly investigation about German cleanliness, as contrasted with the congenital uncleanness of Semites and Slavs. It turns out that the Germans' penchant for cleanliness significantly predates their victories in the Teutoburg Forest. On Arminius, the lice did not crawl. They died from one whiff of his skin.²

On the other hand, the journal alleges, the most unclean race that will remain (after the annihilation of all the Jews, which for the sake of science is called "the final solution to the Jewish question") will be the Slavic race, and particularly the Russians. But Ivan Matveyevich, not knowing German, cannot connect in his mind the

question of Russian and Jewish uncleanness and has been left with his not fully scientific position.

I would not bother myself with the former Communist Chernousov if I had not also heard bitter bewilderment from other, far better, people:

"Why, though, are so many Jews in Odessa involved in commerce?"

The boys and girls from Odessa's Jewish Moldavian region with whom I spent my youth did not trade in small goods or in matters of conscience—nor did they sell out their friends. No one then tried to remind them of their national origin as if it were some shameful disease about which one is more often than not silent.

In those years, except for the White Guard journalists abroad, no one considered that the national disproportion that existed from the first years in the ranks of the Social Democratic Marxist parties in Russia, Poland, and Lithuania was disgraceful for the Russian revolution. Lenin wrote about this in praise of the Jewish people, and it is not out of place to recall the composition of the Politbureau of the Central Committee during his lifetime. But the emigre newspapers placed the Jewish names of the first Soviet leaders in parentheses after their party names: Trotsky (Bronstein), Kamenev (Rozenfeld), Zinoviev (Radomyslsky), etc., etc.

In my wife's family, gaiety always reigned, the remarkable gaiety of Jewish poverty, the undying spirit of Sholom Aleichem.³ The boys romped around, satisfied with pieces of dry bread; Moishe was forever singing songs while busying himself with a soldering iron, a screwdriver, and wires.

Lev Tolstoy expressed the thought that every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.⁴ Unhappiness came to our families in an identical way: it was not dissipation, drunkenness, or prejudices that destroyed our love. Misfortune rang the doorbell in the night and kept a written record of the search.

Yeva's oldest brother died recently. He was able to endure prison, exile, camp, interrogation, humiliation, slander, and estrangement. He lived a hard, noble, and beautiful life, as the other three did. In 1917, he—a tailor's apprentice—joined the party of the Bolsheviks, went through the underground and the front, and only afterward began to study, virtually starting from the beginning. In military school, he first studied, and then began to teach. He loved books and books loved him. Studying as an adult, he learned easily. Rummaging around in his remarkable library, collected over decades, I was surprised by his broad knowledge and multifaceted interests.

At the time of his last arrest, almost his whole library was confiscated. It turns out that there are many authors whose works not only are unpublished in our country but may not even be kept in a personal library, even if these works were printed by Soviet publishing houses before Lenin's death, even if these authors were then members of the Politbureau, and even if the books

were co-authored by Lenin. There was such a collection and I also had it at one time: a collection of articles entitled "Against the Current." The authors were Lenin and Zinoviev. Find it now, go ahead and try. But not only such seditious literature as this was confiscated from my brother-in-law, but he had even rarer old books.

When the searcher read through several titles, my brother-in-law told me, his eyes lit up and he set aside all the best books in a separate pile and did not include them in the record of the search. He simply stole them. My brother-in-law complained to the investigator, but there is honor among thieves, and the investigator dreamed up as revenge against this insolent prisoner a new charge, over and above those usual for the times: possession of stolen books.

What became of the other books that the searcher did not steal but honorably entered into the record? Of course, they were not returned to the owner after his rehabilitation for the simple reason that not a single page from them remained.

In Butyrka prison, when letting us use the privy, the warder handed out to us carefully cut quarters of book pages: from dictionaries, from old and some new writers. Apparently, books that a Soviet citizen was allowed to read were not cut into quarters but were sent to the libraries of the prisons and camps. Such I presume, judging from the fact that I never once got a piece of the books of Azhayev, Bubenny, Babayevsky, and other good writers. But I got pieces from pages by A.K. Tolstoy—A.K., and not A.N.¹⁵—that same Aleksei Konstantinovich Tolstoy about whom under Stalin not a word was uttered. Having died long before Stalin's epoch, he was able, nevertheless, to write a truly prophetic verse about him. "Kurgan," read it. It is understandable that Soviet school children were not given this Tolstoy to read.

All the Asiatic khans were sovereigns who questioned fortune-tellers and killed those who foretold the wrong thing. But if it wasn't possible to get at the fortune-teller because he was already dead, then the khan ordered that at least all the prophet's literary works be buried, in prison latrines.

My brother-in-law never became a prominent figure. The whirlwind that descended upon the people in 1928 destroyed everything in its path. It carried, whirled, and flung. Not the least distressed that he never became a general, Philip died a tailor's cutter.

He told me a story, heard from people very close to Lenin with whom he, in turn, was close. I have never read it in any memoirs; and, therefore, I am venturing to cite it.

After the revolution, a certain sectarian community established something resembling an agricultural commune near Moscow. Under the tsar, sects had been severely persecuted; and now they wanted to do a good turn for the Council of People's Commissars. And one of the Council's staff undertook to provide co-workers with vegetables from this community. It was the year of famine.

How this was all arranged is not important, but the idea behind it was similar to the closed distribution networks of the 1930s when every institution and enterprise alike had its distributor but the goods they sold in them (at that time, it is true, they said "give" instead of "sell") were unequal. Although 1919 and 1920 were years of famine (1931 and 1932, as you can learn from history, were not), a system of preferential supplies for some categories of workers in 1919 was not devised. And anyone who had devised one would have gotten into trouble with Lenin.

This is what happened with the vegetable venture. Finding out about it, Lenin got very angry. He ordered it be immediately ceased and the vegetables given to a children's home.

As a child of the 1920s, a cult of any kind is alien to me, even one of a very great personality. In our country, they believe it is not reprehensible to establish a cult of someone who has died, and they canonize all his words and deeds. I cite this instance from Lenin's life not to establish a canon of sacred conduct, but as an illustration of our norms, since the day-to-day behavior of Lenin could have been, and often was, the day-to-day behavior of any of us. We also stood for equality of wages for a worker and for a secretary of the provincial committee. We also disapproved of preferential provisioning; we considered party maximum an institution necessary to

the interest of the party itself. This was not asceticism. It was a principle.

We believed that egalitarianism among Communists (particularly material egalitarianism) was the very essence of the party spirit.

* * *

On the day of my marriage to Yeva (we did not go to the official registration bureau and did not play at marriage; I remember Maryusa once said: "Why must I parade the fact that I have become a woman?"), we were not yet twenty; and we, of course, did not know what misfortune would destroy our family.

That winter Lenin died. When, coming home in the evening from the city's party club, I brought Yeva the news, she fainted.

Our son, born six months after Lenin's death, we named with the first letters of Lenin's name: his first and middle initials. At Yeva's bedside, the four of us—Rafa, Maryusa, Yeva, and I—drank a bottle of wine; this was the sum total of our christening party. We made no high-sounding toasts.

Some of my friends are amazed to imagine parents who want to be reminded of Lenin every time they address their child. ■

[Next month: "Ideology and Collectivism."]

NOTES

1. Mordechai Anielewicz was a leader of the Jewish resistance in Poland against the German occupation forces from 1939 on. He was a military leader of the Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto. He was killed on May 8, 1943, during the fascist siege of the ghetto.

2. Arminius (18 B.C.—A.D. 19) was a German who inflicted a major defeat on the Romans by destroying three legions in battles in the Teutoburg Forest.

3. Sholom Aleichem (1859-1916) was a Yiddish-language author born in Russia who is best known for his humorous tales of life among the impoverished and oppressed Russian Jews of his time.

4. This is from the opening sentence of Anna Karenina.

5. A.K. Tolstoy (1817-1875), a distant cousin of Leo Tolstoy, wrote humorous verse as well as narrative lyrics and epics. A.N. Tolstoy (1882-1945) became an outstanding figure in Soviet literary life after 1922.

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This statement is being circulated for additional signatures in Britain by the Moscow Trials Campaign, 46 Princes Way, London SW 19. We are publishing it here for the information of our readers. The committee is also seeking financial support.

CLEAR THE NAMES OF THE ACCUSED IN THE MOSCOW TRIALS

IT IS now over fifty years since the infamous Moscow Show Trials. It is astounding that at a time when the Soviet government is at pains to emphasise its concern with 'human rights' and proclaims the need for 'glasnost' — 'openness' — the accused in these trials, with a few exceptions, are still considered guilty of being paid agents of Nazism, and other crimes.

Among these men were numbered several who played outstanding roles in the Russian Revolution of 1917. The reputations of founders of the Soviet state like Zinoviev, Radek, Trotsky and Bukharin were besmirched or expunged from the history books. Today, no-one doubts that the 'confessions' at the trials — the sole basis for the prosecution — were utterly false. Seven defendants in the third trial, Krestinsky and others, have been both judicially rehabilitated and politically exonerated. So have the military leaders, Tukhachevsky and others, whose military trial in 1937 was held in secret. But the admittedly false evidence against these men was inseparable from the charges against all the other accused.

None of the accused, of course, is alive today. Many were executed immediately after their trials. Others died in prison or camps. Leon Trotsky, the chief accused in all three of the trials, was murdered in exile in 1940. However, families of some of the defendants are still living in the Soviet Union. Some had also suffered imprisonment and exile. It is worth recalling that a review of all these cases was promised by Khrushchev, but this promise was broken.

We the undersigned therefore call on the Soviet government to re-examine the cases against all these victims of the perversion of Soviet justice, as took place with Krestinsky. We are confident that all those accused in the Trials of 1936-1938 will be shown to have been innocent. They should immediately be rehabilitated, their honour restored, their families compensated and their graves marked.

Tariq Ali
Sydney Bidwell, MP
Paul Boateng
Sam Bornstein
Fenner Brockway
Raymond Challinor
Jeremy Corbyn, MP
Terry Davis, MP
Meghnad Desai
Tamara Deutscher
Linda Douglas
Peter Fryer
Mildred Gordon
Reg Groves
Eric Heffer, MP

Tom Kemp
Walter Kendall
George Krasso
Eddie Loyden, MP
Oliver MacDonald
Ian Mikardo, MP
Stan Newens, MEP
Brian Pearce
Felix Pirani
Al Richardson
Frank Ridley
Cyril Smith
Harry Wicks
David Winnick, MP
Charlie van Gelderen

Top Bolsheviks, Long Taboo, Re-emerge in a Moscow Play

By **BILL KELLER**

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, April 29 — Two prominent Bolshevik revolutionaries who have long been denigrated in the Soviet Union have re-emerged as characters in a play published this month.

The two men, Leon Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin, were associated with Lenin in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, but were ousted by Stalin from the Soviet leadership in the 1920's.

The play, "The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk," by Mikhail Shatrov, was written in 1962, during Nikita S. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign, but has only now been approved for publication. It appears in the April issue of the literary monthly *Novy Mir*.

It portrays Trotsky and Bukharin as devoted associates of Lenin, though misguided by excessive revolutionary zeal. Another character is Stalin, who is depicted as opportunistic.

Mr. Shatrov said in an interview today that the play would open in November at the Vakhtangov Theater on the 70th anniversary of the Revolution.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed March 3, 1918, was one of the first acts of the new Bolshevik Government, making a separate peace with Germany in World War I. Lenin favored accepting the humiliating German terms in the hope of preserving his regime, but Trotsky was opposed, advocating a policy of "no war, no peace."

Mr. Shatrov, who is 54 years old, specializes in revolutionary themes, often with an anti-Stalinist bent. He began writing in the early 1960's and his plays have generally been highly successful.

He won a State Prize in 1983 under Leonid I. Brezhnev for the play "This Is How We Shall Win," in which a sick Lenin worries over the undesirable qualities of Stalin. A current production, "The Dictatorship of Conscience," playing to full houses, is a mock trial of Lenin in which he defends his theories.

The possible restoration of Trotsky and Bukharin to their place in history has been a subject of speculation since Mikhail S. Gorbachev told news executives in February that "there must be no forgotten names, no blank spaces, either in history or in literature."

Mr. Shatrov said in the interview that it is "only a matter of time" before Trotsky and Bukharin are again recognized as historical figures.



The New York Times

"Hardly anyone knows these men except at the level of stereotype," he said. "We don't need myths. We don't need legends. We need to sort out everything as it really was."

Current Soviet reference works carry no biographical entries on Trotsky or Bukharin. There is an entry for "Trotskyism," described as a heresy.

Trotsky Was Assassinated in 1940

Trotsky served as Foreign Commissar and War Commissar. In the mid-1920's he came into conflict with Stalin, lost his posts and was deported. He was assassinated in 1940 in Mexico City by a presumed Stalinist agent.

Bukharin, an economist and theorist, opposed the treaty as a member of the so-called Left Communists on the ground that it betrayed the goals of the Revolution. He sided with Stalin against Trotsky, but was in turn ousted in 1929 and executed in 1938 purge.

In "The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk," the events and the players' viewpoints are generally consistent with those reported by Western historians. Mr. Shatrov said Bukharin's widow had told him recently that her husband was faithfully reflected.

A biographer of Bukharin, the Princeton historian Stephen F. Cohen, said today that the play was an important step toward repairing history.

The play portrays the divisions within the new Bolshevik Government over whether to sign the humbling peace treaty and yield a large area.

Lenin, the pragmatist, concludes that the treaty is the only way to prevent the Government from being swept away by the tide of war.

Trotsky and Bukharin, along with a majority, argue that Russia should wage revolutionary war as a matter of principle, in the hope that it will spark a workers' uprising in Germany and spread the revolution.

'Experiments for Laboratories'

"We will never forgive ourselves if we don't make the experiment," Trotsky insists. "We can win everything by clever tactics."

"Experiments are for laboratories," Lenin replies. "They are too costly in real life."

Trotsky, as the negotiator at Brest-Litovsk, is torn between the party's vote against a treaty and Lenin's order to accept it. He promises to sign, but when the moment comes, he does not.

"Only time will tell if this is an act of genius, as you think, or adventure and betrayal, as I think," Lenin says.

Lenin is soon vindicated when the Germans make rapid military advances, and the Russians are forced to sue for peace on even worse terms.

Although Lenin considers Trotsky arrogant and somewhat untrustworthy, Trotsky is also shown to be an inventive tactical thinker.

Bukharin is treated more kindly, as a headstrong young idealist for whom Lenin feels paternal affection.

Trotsky chides Lenin for being too soft on Bukharin: "I have been watching your romance for a long time."

Lenin replies: "We are friends, friends in one party." Later he upbraids Bukharin for his faith in an impending workers' uprising in Europe.

"Maybe you still believe in Immaculate Conception?" he says, to which Bukharin replies, "Somebody has to. Otherwise anything goes."

Stalin is portrayed as an expedient and not terribly bright man, ready to switch sides and envious of the others.

MARXISM AND RELIGION

by Leon Trotsky

It is perfectly evident and beyond dispute at the present time that we cannot place our anti-religious propaganda on the level of a straightforward fight against God. That would not be sufficient for us. We supplant mysticism by materialism, broadening above all the collective experience of the masses, heightening their active influence on society, widening the horizon of their positive knowledge, and in this field we deal also, where necessary, direct blows at religious prejudices.

The problem of religion has colossal significance and is most closely bound up with cultural work and with the socialistic structure. Marx in his youth said: "The criticism of religion is the basis of any other criticism." In what sense? In the sense that religion is a kind of fictitious knowledge of the universe. This fiction has two sources: the weakness of man before nature, and the incoherence of social relations. Fearing nature or ignoring it, being unable to analyze the social relations or ignoring them, man in society endeavored to meet his needs by creating fantastic images, endowing them with imaginary reality and kneeling before his own creations. The basis of this creativeness lies in the practical need of man to orient himself, which, in turn, springs from the conditions of the struggle for existence.

Religion is an attempted adaptation to surrounding environment in order successfully to meet the struggle for existence. There are in this adaptation practical and appropriate rules. But all this is bound up with myths, fantasies, superstitions, unreal knowledge. Just as all development of culture is the accumulation of knowledge and skill, so is the criticism of religion the foundation for other criticism. In order to pave the way for correct and real knowledge, it is necessary to remove fictitious knowledge. In this case, however, it is true only when one considers the question as a whole. Historically, not only in individual cases, but also in the development of whole classes, real knowledge is bound up, in different forms and proportions, with religious prejudices. The struggle against a given religion or against religion in general and against all forms of mythology and superstition is usually successful only when the religious ideology conflicts with the needs of a given class in a new social environment. In other words, when the accumulation of knowledge and the need for knowledge does not fit into the frames of the unreal truths of religion, then one blow with a critical knife

sometimes suffices, and the shell of religion drops off.

The success of antireligious pressure which we have exerted during the last few years is explicable by the fact that the advanced layers of the working class, who went through the school of revolution, that is, the active relation towards the country and social institutions, have easily shaken off from themselves the shell of religious prejudices, which was completely undermined by the preceding developments. But the situation changes considerably when the antireligious propaganda spread its influence to the less active layers of the population, not only of the villages, but also of the cities. The real knowledge which has been acquired by them is so limited and fragmentary that it can exist side by side with religious prejudices. Naked criticism of these prejudices, finding no support in personal and collective experience, produces no results. It is, therefore, necessary to make the approach from another angle and to enlarge the sphere of social experience and realistic knowledge. The means towards this end differ. Public dining halls and nurseries may give a revolutionary stimulus to the consciousness of the housewife and may quicken enormously the process of her breaking from religion. The aviation-chemical methods of destroying the locusts may play the same role in regard to the peasant. The very fact that the working man and woman participate in club life, which leads them out of the close little cage of the family flat with its ikon and image lamp, opens one of the ways to freedom from religious prejudices. And so forth and so forth. The club can and must measure the strength of resistance to religious prejudices and find indirect ways to widen experience and knowledge. And so, instead of direct attacks by anti-religious propaganda, we use blockades, barricades, and indirect maneuvers. In general we have just entered such a period, but that does not mean that we will not make a direct attack in the future. It is only necessary to prepare for it.

Is our attack on religion legitimate or illegitimate? It is legitimate. Has it brought any results? It has. Whom has it drawn to us? Those who by previous experience have been prepared to free themselves completely from religious prejudices. And further? There still remain those whom even the great revolutionary experience of October did not shake free from religion. And here the formal methods of antireligious criticism, satire, caricature, and the like can accomplish very little. And if one presses too strongly one may get an opposite result. One must drill the rock—it is true the rock is not very firm—block

This article is reprinted from the book Labor Speaks for Itself on Religion, Jerome Davis, editor. New York: Macmillan Co., 1929.

it up with dynamite sticks, use indirect attack. After a while there will be a new explosion and a new falling off, that is, another layer of the people will be torn from the larger mass. . . . The resolution of the eighth meeting of the party tells us that in this field we must at present pass from the explosion and the attack to a more prolonged work of undermining, first of all, by way of propaganda of the natural sciences.

To show how an unprepared frontal attack can sometimes give an entirely unexpected result, I will cite a very interesting example from the experience of the Norwegian Communist Party. As is well known, in 1923 this party split into an opportunist majority under the leadership of Tranmel, and a revolutionary minority faithful to the Communist International. I asked a comrade who lived in Norway how Tranmel succeeded in winning over the majority—of course, only temporarily. He gave me as one of the causes the religious character of the Norwegian workers and fishermen. The fisheries, as you know, have a very low standard of technique and are wholly dependent upon nature. This is the basis for prejudices and superstitions; and religion for the Norwegian fishermen, as wittily expressed by a comrade, is something like a suit of protective clothes. In Scandinavia there were members of the intelligentsia, academicians, who were flirting with religion. They were, quite justly, beaten with the merciless whip of Marxism. The Norwegian opportunists have skillfully taken advantage of this in order to get the fishermen to oppose the Communist International. The fisherman, a revolutionary, deeply sympathetic to the Soviet Republic, favoring with all his soul the Communist International, said to himself: "It comes down to this. Either I must be for the Communist International, but then without God and fish, or willy-nilly, break off." And he did. . . . This illustrates the way in which religion cuts into the proletarian policy.

Of course, this applies in a greater degree to our own peasantry whose traditional religious nature is closely knit with the conditions of our backward agriculture. We shall vanquish the deep-rooted religious prejudices of the peasantry only by electrification and chemicalization of peasant agriculture. This of course does not mean that we must not take advantage of each separate technical improvement and of each favorable social movement in general for antireligious propaganda, for attaining a partial break with religious consciousness. No, all this is as obligatory as before, but we must have a correct general perspective. By simply closing the churches, as has been done in

some places, and by other administrative excesses, you will not only be unable to reach any decisive success but on the contrary you will prepare the way for a stronger return of religion.

If it is true that religious criticism is the basis for any other criticism, it is also no less true that in our epoch the electrification of agriculture is the basis for the liquidation of the peasant's superstitions. I shall quote the remarkable words of Engels, until a short time ago unknown, which apply directly to the question of electrification and the abolition of the abyss between the city and the village. The letter was written by Engels to Bernstein in the year 1883. You remember in the year 1882 the French engineer, Depre, found a method of transmitting electric energy through a wire. And if I am not mistaken, at an exhibition in Munich, he demonstrated the transmission of electrical energy of one or two horsepower for about fifty kilometers. It made a tremendous impression on Engels, who was extremely sensitive to any inventions in the field of natural science, technique, etc. He wrote to Bernstein: "The newest invention of Depre . . . frees industry from any local limitations, makes possible the use of even the most distant water powers. And even if at the beginning it will be used by the cities only, ultimately it must become the most powerful lever for the abolition of the antagonism between the city and the village."

Vladimir Ilyich (Lenin) did not know of these lines. This correspondence has appeared only recently, yet he shared this view of the great transformation electricity would make in the peasant psychology.

There are periods of different tempos in the process of abolishing religion, determined by the general conditions of culture. All our clubs must be points for observation. They must always help the party orient itself in this problem, find the moment, take the right tempo.

The complete abolition of religion will be attained only when there is a fully developed socialistic structure, that is, a technique which frees man from any degrading form of dependence upon nature. It can be attained only under social relationships that are free from mystery, that are thoroughly lucid and do not oppress mankind. Religion translates the chaos of nature and the chaos of social relations into the language of fantastic images. Only the abolition of earthly chaos can end forever its religious reflection. A conscious, reasonable, planned guidance of social life, in all its aspects, will abolish for all time any mysticism and devilry. ■

TOWARD A MARXIST UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGION

The Meek and the Militant, Religion and Power Across the World, by Paul N. Siegel. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986. (Distributed in the U.S. by Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey.) 229 pages, \$12.95 in paperback.

Reviewed by Paul Le Blanc

In a previous article ("Marxism, Christianity and Class Struggle," *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* No. 41) it was noted that Marxism remains vital only through its ongoing engagement with an ever-changing reality, and that among the tasks of Marxists today is the development of the scientific socialist analysis of religion. An important discussion of religion by Leon Trotsky appears on page 29 of this issue. At the same time, readers should be aware of a new study which seeks to provide a wide-ranging Marxist analysis of the major religious currents in the world today.

Paul Siegel's *The Meek and the Militant* belongs in the library of every Marxist and every person who wants to understand the nature and function of religion. Utilizing the method of historical materialism, he offers in clear and straightforward prose a succinct introduction to this vitally important phenomenon.

In recent years, religious currents have played a particularly important role in a variety of liberation struggles—including in Central America, South Africa, Poland, the Middle East, and East Asia. In the United States and Western Europe religious activists have been intimately involved in peace and justice struggles. Especially with the rise of Liberation Theology, many secular radicals have shown a new interest in religion as a potentially revolutionary force. Because of this, there has been a tendency to denigrate the Marxist critique of religion and to blur differences between the outlooks of Marxism and Christianity. Of course, it makes obvious tactical sense for religious and secular activists to work together in struggles on whose goals they agree. It also makes considerable sense for such activists to seek to understand and learn from each other's underlying perspectives. Far less useful is succumbing to a gregarious temptation to declaim uncritically that "we fundamentally all believe in the same thing," or, worse, for a Marxist to dilute or abandon the materialism which is an essential component of scientific socialism. Marxism must remain true to itself if it is to be of value to anyone, including critical-minded activists from a religious background.

One of the values of Siegel's study is his refusal to compromise the Marxist critique of religion. Actually, he begins with what is essentially a pre-Marxist critique—and for good reason. Lenin once commented: "The keen, vivacious and talented writings of the old eighteenth-century

atheists wittily and openly attacked the prevailing clericalism and will very often prove a thousand times more suitable for arousing people from their religious torpor than the dull and dry paraphrases of Marxism, almost completely unillustrated by skillfully selected facts, which predominate in our literature and which . . . frequently distort Marxism." The first lively chapter of Siegel's book draws from the French Enlightenment materialists to provide a devastating discussion of contradictory and reactionary elements and the (at best) dubious morality which can be found in the Bible. The points that Siegel makes are especially relevant to Christian fundamentalism, but they also throw into question the perspectives of more sophisticated and liberal theologians.

Fortunately, the rest of Siegel's book suffers neither from the dryness nor the dullness that Lenin warned against, and his points are well illustrated by skillfully selected facts throughout. The second chapter deepens the critique of religion by examining the philosophical, historical, and sociological insights which Karl Marx and his co-thinkers developed as they analyzed religious ideology. The third chapter compares and contrasts the quite different approaches of religion and scientific socialism, and in the process Siegel refutes the oft-stated notion that Marxism is merely another form of religion. In subsequent chapters he examines: the origin and development of Judaism in Europe and Israel; the origin and development of Catholicism and Protestantism in Europe; and the development of religion in the United States. He then turns his attention to the chief religions of Asia and the Middle East: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. He concludes with a discussion of religion and the struggle for socialism, giving special attention to the experience of the Russian and Chinese Communist parties, as well as of revolutionary Cuba and Nicaragua.

As a Marxist, Siegel is a philosophical *materialist*. This doesn't mean that he shrugs off ideas or ideals as unimportant—quite the contrary—but rather that he has a view of reality that can be summarized as follows: All of reality consists of *natural* phenomena that are ultimately reducible to matter and energy (which, as Albert Einstein demonstrated, are two aspects of the same thing). There is nothing that is *supernatural*—whether gods or ghosts or ethereal ideas—existing above or beyond this natural reality; material reality is an infinite and infinitely complex, interrelated whole, subject to the specific dynamics and laws of motion which are inherent within its elements, and everything which happens can be traced to causes existing within this material reality. What's more, the ideas and ideals which people have arise from their experience of, and

Works which further illuminate the nature of religion in a manner consistent with historical materialism include:

- E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*
- Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*
- Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Rockdale, The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution*
- Michael Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*
- Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*
- Colin Turnbull, *The Forest People*

thereby reflect (but also can help change), the world around them, particularly the economic and social relations in which they are involved. One can understand ideas, including religious ideas, only by seeing them in their specific historical and socio-economic context.

One of the most important functions of *The Meek and the Militant* is to undermine the mystified notions which the various religions present regarding where the religions came from and what they represent. Drawing on a wide range of informed sources, he traces the origins of and dramatic changes within the major world religions. Some of the changes are especially intriguing because in many cases certain of the original doctrines and practices of an early religion would horrify its latter-day adherents (for example, the Old Testament God's demand for human sacrifice in His honor, and the early Christians' abolition of the family unit in favor of communes, as recorded in the New Testament). Invariably they arose among one or another tribal, ethnic, or social grouping, competing with (though also absorbing important elements from) the religions of neighboring groups. Often going through an "incubation" period of providing a mystical but frequently radical-plebeian worldview and ethos for the oppressed, they were ultimately embraced (and doctrinally transformed) by powerful elites for the purpose of creating greater stability in society, and then spread, in many cases, through invasions and conquest of other peoples. Social tensions and class conflicts, however, created diverse currents and innumerable "heresies" and schisms within the religion—sometimes generating socially radical religious ideologies, at other times simply providing a more vital psychological outlet for people facing desperately oppressive situations.

When examined historically and comparatively, none of the great religions can avoid assuming human rather than divine proportions. While this may be upsetting for an adherent of one or another religion, the Marxist is interested precisely in the *human* dimensions of religion.

Marx and Engels, drawing on the analysis of Ludwig Feuerbach, stressed that *alienation* was the

psychological key to understanding religion. As Engels put it "Religion is essentially the emptying of man and nature of all content, the transferring of this content to the phantom of a distant God who then in his turn graciously allows something from his abundance to come to human beings and to nature." Basing himself on this and on Sigmund Freud's classic *The Future of an Illusion*, Siegel elaborates:

Prostrating themselves before the God of their own creation, human beings are alienated from themselves and their fellows. The protection they gain from this God is at the cost of the integrity of the self. Just as with a child submitting to a domineering and capricious father, submission to God only increases insecurity by creating dependence on an arbitrary force and fosters a repressed rebelliousness against Big Daddy that adds to fears of retaliation. It is only when humanity has finally freed itself from this dependence that it can be free (p. 37).

Throughout his study, Siegel demonstrates how oppressors and demagogues have utilized religious ideology—often combining it with the worst brutality and hypocrisy—to obtain the acquiescence of the oppressed in their own misery. And yet, he also cautions against the one-sided view of religion as ministering exclusively to reaction at all times and in all respects:

In accord with the method of dialectical materialism Marx and Engels gave a much more concretely historical explanation of the role of religion through the ages which took account of its contradictory functions. Although the primary function of religion was to sanctify repressive institutions, because it dominated people's thinking and the world and society around them, rebellious moods and movements among the oppressed . . . tended spontaneously to acquire a religious coloration and heretical cast. The aims and aspirations of social agitators were expressed through traditional religious ideas adapted to the needs and demands of the insurgent masses (p. 26).

How religion, as Siegel has analyzed it, could play this revolutionary role is never really explained in *The Meek and the Militant*. Related to this is the question of what it is in religion which has given it such vitality and resiliency in such a variety of human communities, and how humanity—given the profoundly destructive characteristics of religion discussed by Siegel—has in fact been capable of surviving it over the span of centuries, and not simply surviving it or tolerating it, but embracing it. To grapple with this question satisfactorily, Siegel would undoubtedly have had to immerse himself in an immense histori-

cal and anthropological literature and produced a work perhaps double the size of this fine book.

The Meek and the Militant thus brings us to the point where Marxist theory must begin to dig deeper. It doesn't claim to be the last word, but it's not a bad place to begin. Appropriately, it is dedicated "to the memory of Thomas Munzer (c.

1489-1525), religious fighter for freedom, and of Thomas Paine (1737-1809), anti-religious fighter for freedom." As secular and religious activists of today seek to explore the common ground from which they can struggle for a better future, they will find a valuable resource in Paul Siegel's thoughtful and honest book. ■

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A SANDINISTA

Fire From the Mountain: The Making of a Sandinista, by Omar Cabezas. Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, 1985. 233 pages. \$13.95

Reviewed by Jean Y. Tussey

Fire From the Mountain is an autobiographical account of the formative years of a current Nicaraguan Sandinista leader. It was originally published in Spanish in 1982 by Editorial Nuevo, Nicaragua, under the title *La Montana Es Algo Mas Que Una Inmensa Estepa Verde* (The Mountain Is Something More Than an Immense Green Treeless Plain).

Added in the 1985 English edition are a Foreword by Carlos Fuentes, dated February 1985, Mexico City; and an "Afterword—Nicaragua: The Historical Framework to 1979," by Walter LaFeber, March 1985.

Fuentes's introduction deals with the literary and artistic qualities of the book. The LaFeber essay provides the historical/political context and includes a helpful chronology of events and identification of persons referred to in the book. Reading the "Afterword" in advance makes it easier to "go with the flow" of the narrative.

The jacket describes the author, Omar Cabezas, age 34, as "one of the most popular members of the Sandinista government . . . currently the Chief of Political Direction at the Ministry of the Interior" and a commandante in the armed forces of Nicaragua.

The autobiography reads like a novel, but it is in fact a strong political statement that adds to the comprehensibility and credibility of the Nicaraguan revolution for English language readers.

The story deals mainly with the author's life from 1968 through 1975, during his evolution from a radical student activist at the University of Nicaragua to disciplined guerrilla, and then a political organizer for the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN).

Cabezas gives a believably honest account of what he and his companions did and why they did it, what their political and personal life was like as he experienced it and as he remembers it. He doesn't claim to speak for all Sandinistas or say that his evolution is typical or a model.

"Of course, there are companeros who've had different experiences. But this was my case, this was what happened to me."

The different views of Sandinista women, Indians, and workers are only implied in the scanty references to them that reflect the limits of Cabezas's personal experiences in that period.

The vivid scenes from his campus political activity of the late '60s and early '70s, however, are especially recognizable for all who witnessed the worldwide student radicalization of that period.

Cabezas was a member of both the FSLN and FER (Student Revolutionary Front) on the campus in his hometown of Leon from 1968. He participated in study circles on historical materialism, on Che Guevara and the "new man," arguments about Lenin's "Ultraleftism: An Infantile Disorder of Communism."

But 1970 was the banner year of his student activism. That was when "El Gato [Edgard Munguia] was the first CUUN [University of Nicaragua Student Council] president to be elected by going from class to class repeating over and over again that he was a communist, a Sandinista, and a member of FER."

"El Gato's election, or I should say his campaign . . . was frenetic. FER had about one hundred members, most of them first year students," Cabezas writes.

"And we won. I remember that the vote tallying lasted until dawn. We jumped up and down, we screamed, we sobbed, we jeered at the losers and tore down the posters they had plastered all over the university. We carried El Gato on our shoulders. It was a total collective hysteria—hugs, kisses, sighs, open arms. Finally, we were in power in the university for the first time. Long live FER! Long live the FSLN! Long live Carlos Fonseca! Long live Commandante Julio Buitrago! Until we were hoarse from screaming. And exhausted from all those sleepless nights painting banners and posters and making up slogans or drafting replies to all the questions Edgard's opponents might ask him after his speeches. Exhausted but still grilling El Gato on how to stand in the auditorium, how to hold the mike, on what gestures to make when they asked him hostile questions. Or when he greeted the women voters. Exhausted from lack of sleep from dreaming on our feet, morning, noon, and night. Exhausted from making love with our girl friends in the brief moments of relaxation. Almost voiceless from yelling so much. But

there, on the brink of dawn, with the wind blowing at 3:00 A.M. on the grounds of the Ruben Dario section of the university, we who had been three or four were now around five hundred; we who had been three or four were now the leaders of hundreds of young people who, like us only a few years earlier, were making their first appearance on the scene of student politics. And also like us, many of them, very many, would continue on until victory or death."

His political education continued in the mountains, informally, while undergoing rigorous guerrilla military training under the direction of young Sandinista leaders like "Tello" (Rene Tejada), "Modesto" (Henry Ruiz), and "Rodrigo" (Carlos Agüero).

He describes one "unforgettable image" from that period: "At the end of the day, after not having fought the Guard, waiting for God knows what, without much knowledge of tactics or strategy of war, freezing cold, in the shittiest kind of shape and all of that—there was Modesto reading Ernest Mandel's *Political Economy*. If somebody had a book floating around up there it would never occur to us to get it out and read. We didn't feel up to dealing with that foolishness. Maybe it wasn't foolishness, but we weren't capable of reading a book on the theory of revolution. So that was the sort of stuff Modesto was made of: he passed the time reading, studying. Rodrigo was a good talker, and he was always teaching. We talked less to Modesto. . . . He was so quick, so intelligent, that sometimes you couldn't figure out what the hell he was talking about. I understand him a little better now. . . . Rodrigo understood Modesto. I think Nelson Suarez was more intelligent than any of us, because he understood Modesto; he was a campesino, and they always got along very well. Rodrigo was completely understandable when he talked. So we would sit around talking when it seemed that the danger had subsided. We were always talking about Vietnam, about international politics, or telling stories or kidding around. Rodrigo was always teaching us, until finally we left that area."

Cabezas's book is a healthy antidote for the guerrilla mystique and uncritical romanticism of some of the "friends of Nicaragua" in the United States. It helps counteract what the author re-

portedly called (in a *New York Times* interview) "The junk that has been written, especially in Latin America, about what it means to be a guerrilla. The guerrilla is made into a mythical being who never feels pain and is happy to die at any moment. My book shows the fears and the longings and the pain we felt during our years underground."

Cabezas describes the specific Nicaraguan conditions under which Sandinistas found it necessary to resort to guerrilla training, and how that training related to the other tasks of uniting and mobilizing the masses in the cities and the countryside to defeat the Somoza puppet dictatorship and take power.

Cabezas's account ends in 1975, after he is returned from the mountains to build support for the FSLN among the peasants and slum-dwellers.

He meets and talks with Don Leandro, an old man who served with Augusto Sandino in the historic rebellion against U.S. occupation of Nicaragua in the 1920s.

"I had been a young student who came to Sandino through books," Cabezas writes. But through the old Sandinista he finally understood his own genesis and continuity: "I felt that my feet were solidly planted on the ground; I wasn't in the air. Not only was I the child of an elaborate theory, but I was also walking on something concrete; I was rooted in the earth, attached to the soil, to history. I felt invincible."

Four years later, the Nicaraguan people, with FSLN leadership, succeeded in ousting the Somoza dictatorship and U.S. control. But the struggle against U.S. government support for counterrevolutionary mercenaries and terrorists goes on.

The chief brake on the U.S. war in Central America is the anti-intervention movement. *Fire From the Mountain* can strengthen that movement by educating more people, North Americans and others, on the indefensibility of denying Nicaraguans their democratic right to self-determination.

Cabezas's political autobiography does not draw any "lessons" or "models"—guerrilla, front, or other—for revolutionists in other countries. It does make a very impressive case for the importance of building mass movements for social change on indigenous historical revolutionary experience and on the requirements for survival and continuity, as the Sandinistas have done. ■

A Participant's View of April 25

It could not have been much worse weather for a spring mobilization against apartheid and intervention in Central America.

Rain, cold, and wind made for mud, misery, torn signs, and wet placards. But spirits of the marchers couldn't have been much higher. Everyone seemed upbeat and energized—in spite of the elements.

Unions were there, political groups were there, religious groups and peace groups and anti-nuke groups . . . all were there.

Well-known entertainers were there too: Peter, Paul, and Mary; Ed Asner; many more came to protest U.S. policies in Central America, Africa, and elsewhere.

Three times as many came this year as to the April 20 rally in 1985. Two years—three times the turnout!

I was surprised—pleasantly—at so large a turnout from labor unions, some of whose leaders had attempted the lowest forms of red-baiting tactics to manipulate the rank and file from going to D.C. to protest.

It was a comfort to collapse into bed, late last night, exhausted from the extra work and excitement, knowing that by our efforts we could sleep better—and also that by those same efforts the super rich and their puppets would be kept from sleeping so easily.

Jack Bresee
New York City

Fruits of SWP's Sectarianism

At the April 25 march in Washington I was circulating petitions, trying to get signatures demanding that the Israeli government drop its charges against Michel Warshawsky and allow the reopening of the Alternative Information Center. Though the raindrops made it a challenge to keep my signatures dry, the response from the overwhelming majority of those I spoke to was encouraging. I just had to explain what the case was about. Rabbi Balfour Brickner, one of the founders of the Committee to Defend Michel Warshawsky and the Alternative Information Center, was a speaker at the rally and many in attendance knew him.

In the course of the day I had occasion to speak to around a dozen present members of the Socialist Workers Party and ask them for their signatures. Though many agreed readily, one or two hesitated a while before signing. They seemed to be suspicious that since I was a member of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency I might be trying to trick them in some way. Four SWPers *actually refused to sign my petition*—even though it was in defense of a fellow Fourth Internationalist—apparently on the grounds that since I was one of

those who had been expelled from the party I couldn't possibly be up to anything good.

This reaction is a small but significant indication of the kind of sectarian mentality which the Barnes faction has succeeded in inculcating into at least some of those who remain members of the SWP through its effort to make pariahs of the expelled. In the long run it will not be the expelled members who will suffer most from this sectarianization of the SWP's cadre, but the SWP itself.

Steve Bloom
New York City

More on the Labor Party and Detroit

James Gorman's response (*Bulletin IDOM*, March) to my comment (*Bulletin IDOM*, February) on George Breitman's discussion of the labor party question was informative but irrelevant to my frame of reference. I referred to the nearly 100-member Socialist Party fraction in the UAW in Detroit in 1937. His six points ignored the facts as I stated them:

1) We were in principle opposed to a labor party or labor slate.

2) We were thereby discredited as sectarians in the UAW fraction of the SP. The applause for Reuther and the silence greeting my remarks proved it. *I didn't overstate anything.*

We had entered the Socialist Party because there was a leftward development on the heels of the rise of the CIO, and we had hoped at least to win support for and recruits to our program.

Our sectarianism on the labor party question destroyed that possibility. When the expulsion drive occurred we were isolated. Only a few people recognized the overall correctness of our program, and *they* were opposed to a labor party.

It's true that the movement toward the formation of a labor party was undeveloped. And it's true that the CP and the CIO bureaucracy were supporting the Democratic Party.

But when the Socialist Party rank and file pushed for a labor slate and we opposed it, that was a further blow against its formation. Whatever Reuther's motivations may have been, his action was progressive in the light of our *current* understanding, and today we would support it; in fact we *did* in 1938, a year later.

Nat Simon
New York City

From a Prisoner

Following the exchange of notes several months ago, I became very interested in your publication and your literature. I was just beginning to receive the *Bulletin IDOM* and getting to

know about your activities when I was suddenly transferred to another unit of the prison system. Such a move caused a break in all of my publications and personal correspondence. It was necessary that I draw up a letter and an address change card for these services to be resumed. I learned only recently that this administration does not forward prisoner and captive mail.

I have landed a job in this unit's regular and law library. I am hoping this will serve the cause of spreading Marxism. You can be sure any materials that you will send will be well displayed for our large population to read.

Arizona State Captive
Tucson, Arizona

(Continued from page 6)

to their race. These railway and post office strikes thus constitute a serious and unprecedented challenge. They only confirm the workers' militancy demonstrated during the strike at the OK Bazaar stores, which enjoyed great support from several other unions and the population at large.

With such stakes, it is vital that statements of support to the South African unionists, to COSATU and all its components, increase. COSATU is a gain for the entire popular movement; every threat against the union is a threat against the mass movement as a whole.

It is extremely important that workers' organ-

izations throughout the world be informed about what is happening in South Africa. Union delegations must visit the country in order to help legitimize the workers' and popular movements there. It is necessary to financially aid the struggling unions that have been suppressed. South African unionists must tour other countries to publicize their struggle and take advantage of the greatest possible solidarity.

These events must, without further delay, stimulate the most extensive and militant international support for the independent South African unions. ■

(Continued from page 23)

tion in the USSR, 1923-30 (London: Allison and Busby, 1980). Relevant works by Victor Serge include Russia Twenty Years After (New York: Hillman-Curl, 1937), Memoirs of a Revolutionary, 1901-1941 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), and his superb novel The Case of Comrade Tulayev (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1963).

10. Walter Duranty, I Write As I Please (New York: Halycon House, 1935), pp. 262, 273, 274.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 274.

12. Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, p. 25.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 8. Another leading scholar who advances this general perspective is political scientist Jerry Hough in his generally useful synthesis How the Soviet Union Is Governed (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979)—a revision of Merle Fainsod's How Russia Is Ruled—especially Chapter 5 on the Stalin years, which he sums up like this: "The great tour de force of Stalinism was the construction of a political system which combined the revolutionary and authoritarian heritage of Leninism, the traditional nationalism of tsarism, the stabilizing equilibrium of conservative social institutions, the dynamics of rapid industrialization, and the terror apparatus of a full-blown police state." (p. 192) He develops this line of thought in relation to the post-Stalin years in The

Soviet Union and Social Science Theory (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977).

14. Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, p. 76.

15. Getty, Origins, p. 206.

16. J. Arch Getty, "Trotsky in Exile: The Founding of the Fourth International." Soviet Studies, January 1986, pp. 24-35.

17. For a more detailed discussion of the 1932 bloc, see Pierre Broue, "Trotsky et le bloc des oppositions de 1932." Cahiers Leon Trotsky, No. 5, January-March 1980.

18. See Leon Trotsky, The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971), pp. 375-384; Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1932-33 (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), pp. 140, 189-197. As indicated in Louis Sinclair, Leon Trotsky: A Bibliography (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), Trotsky signed at least 24 articles and letters "G. Gurov" or some variation of that pseudonym between 1929 and 1934.

19. Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1932-33, pp. 141-142.

20. This is the conclusion of Pierre Broue, "Trotsky et le bloc . . ." p. 19.

21. See Thomas Twiss, "Trotsky's Break With the Comintern: A Comment on J. Arch Getty." Soviet Studies, January 1987, pp. 131-137.

22. Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1939-40, (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973), pp. 158-159.

LEON TROTSKY and the ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES of the REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

By Dianne Feeley, Paul Le Blanc, and Tom Twiss

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