

## 'Gang of four' purge debated in Chicago

By Mike Taber

CHICAGO—Some 400 people filled an auditorium at the University of Chicago here April 3 to hear a panel debate on the question "What Is Happening in China?"

This was the first large public meeting held in the United States to discuss the issues raised by the purge of Chiang Ch'ing, Mao's widow, and three other top leaders of the Chinese Communist party last October.

The meeting was remarkable not only for its size and the intense interest in the issues under discussion—the question period had to be extended from a scheduled one hour to almost two and a half hours—but also for the range of opinions represented.

The panelists were Jack Smith, managing editor of the New York weekly *Guardian*; Les Evans, a contributor to the *Militant* on China and a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers party; and William Hinton, a well-known unofficial spokesperson for the Peking government. Hinton is the author of *Fanshen*, an eyewitness account of the Chinese revolution in the late 1940s in a peasant village, and is a former chairperson of the U.S.-China People's Friendship Association.

The debate was sponsored by the University of Chicago Student Government Speakers' Committee, and ably chaired by Quintin Young, a doctor on the staff of the university who has visited China as part of a medical exchange program.

Although both the audience and the speakers were sharply divided on the issues under debate, all points of view were listened to with complete courtesy and the meeting stuck to the issues throughout.

### Smith's remarks

In his opening remarks Jack Smith made the following points:

"The world was stunned last October, first by the death of Chairman Mao, and then by the arrests of the so-called gang of four.

"These were not just four minor party members or a small faction. They constituted four of the leading six members of the party Politburo. And heretofore, at least, they had been identified as the left wing of the party. All of them in one degree or another owed their elevation to their proximity to Chairman Mao."

The *Guardian's* position on the purge, Smith said, was that "it's a legitimate campaign against left dogmatism, which, if carried too far, could lead to rightist errors."

While giving this general endorsement to the new government, Smith raised some criticisms and questions:

"We find it impossible to believe that high-ranking Politburo members could have behaved in the reprehensible manner that these four are supposed to have behaved, and not to have been chastened by the masses or by Mao or by the party. How could they be pornographers, be rightists, be Kuomintang agents all these years and no one could stop them? To what extent, we wonder, is Mao Tsetung himself being criticized in the current campaign against the 'gang of four'?"

"It is possible that the correct verdicts of the Cultural Revolution are being overturned. These questions are raised by the nature of the campaign. We find it unbelievable that they were capitalist roaders."

Les Evans said that it was to the *Guardian's* credit that it "has asked for facts and not just for assertions" from China's new government. He asked, if the charge that the supporters of Mao in the government were "capitalist restorationists" was false, and if, as the *Guardian* now admits, the same charge made against acting-premier

Teng Hsiao-p'ing a year before was also false, wasn't this whole concept, put forward by Mao, "a convenient epithet the government uses to cut off debate, to silence and defeat an opposition?"

Evans said that the purge revealed four features of Chinese politics today: 1) an attack on Mao and his policies by the new government; 2) extensive repression of the Chinese masses under Mao, which was continuing under Hua Kuo-feng; 3) "the extent of the privileges, the life-style, of the top leaders of the government, as revealed by the new regime itself in the attacks on the 'gang of four'"; and 4) "the stirrings of mass discontent, as indicated by the Tien An Men demonstration" of April 1976.

Evans cited four criteria Jack Smith had proposed in the *Guardian* last November to judge if the new regime was continuing Mao's policies or breaking from them. Smith had listed the campaign to criticize Teng Hsiao-p'ing, the campaign to criticize Confu-



From left: JACK SMITH, WILLIAM HINTON, LES EVANS

cius, the upholding of Mao's claim that a "bourgeoisie is to be found within the party"; and Mao's dictum that "class struggle" is the "key link."

Evans cited recent articles in the Peking press to show that on each one of these issues the new government has openly attacked Mao's campaign and slogans.

### Repression

On repression in China, Evans said:

"The Chinese press accuses the 'gang of four' of throwing political prisoners into jail for disliking Chiang Ch'ing's movies. It accuses them of firing workers from their jobs, of deporting people to the countryside, and even torture, murder, executions. It accuses them of stealing from the state treasury for their own benefit.

"These are gross crimes in any country, under any regime. If you take the position that these things are true, then Mao is not guilty of failing to reform these people, as Jack Smith says. He is guilty of covering up before the Chinese masses crimes committed primarily by members of his own personal circle and of his own family.

"Jack Smith does not want to believe the government's accusations. If these things are true, he says, then what do we have to say about Chairman Mao? I agree. I would add, if they are all lies, then what do we have to say about the current government of China?"

Evans granted that Smith was probably correct in his view that the new government was lying to the people of China on many of the accusations against Mao's followers. But he cited the publication in the Chinese press of the names and dates of arrest of many political prisoners by the previous government, and Chiang Ch'ing's revelations to Roxane Witke, recently published in *Time* magazine, on her privileged living standards, as

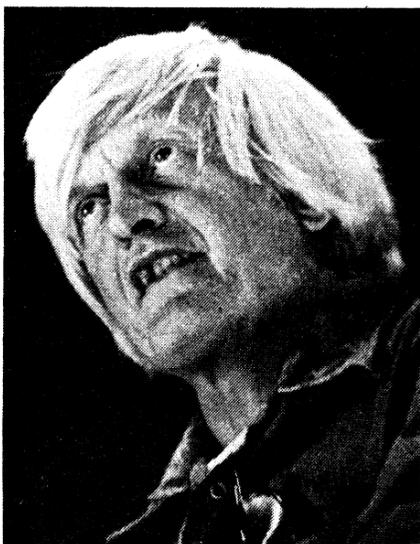
convincing proofs of the repression and privileges that characterized the regime in China under Mao.

### Chiang Ch'ing

"Chiang Ch'ing met with Roxane Witke in a private mansion in Canton; she had Garbo films flown in for her amusement; she had a staff of ladies-in-waiting, all dressed in matching silk gowns. . . .

"The question Jack Smith raises is how is that possible? I say that it is possible only on one condition: Only on the condition that it is *generalized*, that it is the common practice of the leadership of the Chinese Communist party.

"The repression that the government describes is the means by which the masses are prevented from changing that. The new government does not permit any discussion or debate openly over its *own* conduct, over its *own* financial disclosure, over the right of somebody now in China to debate its current policy. I think that is endemic



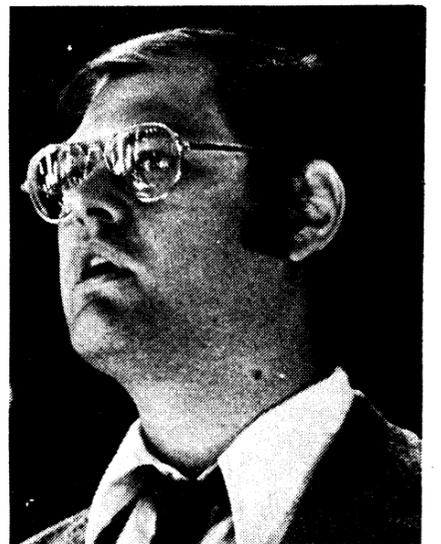
new communist party to overthrow the current regime.

A leader of the New World Information Center, a group friendly to the Chinese government, asked Evans to explain why he considered the formation of a new party in China necessary and realistic. He replied:

### Workers democracy

"I think that the question of workers democracy is at the very heart of all of the disputes between the different factions. I think that the way these disputes are carried out reveals precisely the lack of any genuine workers democracy in China.

"You have people who are top leaders of the party. A dispute breaks out over many different kinds of government policy. Some of the accusations involve crimes, but other accusations against the 'gang of four' do not. They involve *alternative* cultural policies, *alternative* economic strategies, etc. These are questions that should be *debated* in China, publicly.



Militant/Charles Ostrofsky

to the regime. I think that it flows from the privileged character of the regime.

"I think that can be changed in only one way. It can be changed when the masses of the Chinese people take the reins of government into their own hands, and do not rely on any wing of the Chinese Communist party to do their thinking for them and to decide for them.

"The future of China lies in a mass antibureaucratic revolution to replace the present leadership of China with a democratic, proletarian government based on Leninist internationalism."

### Hinton

William Hinton took the position that "the 'gang of four' developed into a reactionary group, that their exposure and arrest was necessary, and that it does not represent a rightist trend in China, but a solution of a very serious counterrevolutionary trend."

Hinton said the accusations of extreme privilege on the part of the "gang of four" were accurate. "Les has said this is typical of the higher cadres in China. I don't think it's typical. It's a matter of great struggle."

Chiang Ch'ing, he added, "didn't have a private villa; she had the *use* of a publicly owned rest home or resort, but I think she abused this privilege." Mao, he said, had tried to block the four by appointing Hua Kuo-feng as premier in April 1976.

A wide range of questions were raised in the discussion period: the character of Chinese foreign policy, whether Lenin as well as Mao held the idea that there was a "bourgeoisie" in the Communist party, the meaning of the Tien An Men demonstrations, and so on.

The central issue, however, raised in many forms, was workers democracy and whether its absence in China justified calling for the formation of a

"You don't have that. In place of that you have the single dominant line of whoever happens to control the press apparatus and the party apparatus. And when that particular group is defeated and jailed and ousted from the party, their line is replaced by a different line. You do not have the participation of the Chinese working class in any serious way in the formulation of national policy.

"The ruling party has shown no indication of correcting that. There is no debate *today*. There is one position: to attack the 'gang of four.' The fundamental belief of Marxism is trust in the masses. William Hinton says the revolution must be secured by being tough.

"The revolution is most insecure when decisions are made in a group of six people and two of them throw the other four into jail and no one knows what the debate is all about."

Smith and Hinton responded that from what they had seen in China, Evans's position was false and slanderous. China, they maintained, was the freest country in the world, where the most wide-ranging debate takes place.

The next question was on the meaning of the Tien An Men demonstrations in April 1976. Both Smith and Hinton said that they believed the demonstrations were a genuine outpouring of popular discontent and of support for Chou En-lai against the influence of the "gang of four" in the government.

Evans commented:

"I think that the Tien An Men events demonstrate very graphically exactly what I said on how decisions are made in China. Today Bill Hinton suggests that this demonstration was a genuine reaction by the Chinese masses. How then do we explain the fact that the press of China reported

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# Calendar

BERKELEY, CALIF.

## THE FIGHT FOR CHICANA LIBERATION.

Speaker: Anna Nieto Gómez, Presenting a slide show on Chicana liberation. Fri., April 22, 8 p.m. 3264 Adeline. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (415) 653-7156.

CLEVELAND

## SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE.

Fri., April 29, 8 p.m.: *State of Black America*. Speaker: Thabo Ntweng, SWP National Committee. Sat., April 30, 1 p.m.: *The Fight for Democracy in the Trade Unions*. Speaker: Andy Rose, staff writer for the *Militant*. 3 p.m.: *Women's Fight for Equality*. Speaker: Trudy Hawkins. 7 p.m.: reception. 8 p.m.: Socialist mayoral campaign kickoff rally. 2300 Payne Ave. Donation: \$1 per session; \$3 for entire weekend. Ausp: Cleveland Socialist Workers 1977 Campaign Committee. For more information call (216) 861-4166.

KANSAS CITY, MO.

## THE BLACK STRUGGLE: U.S. TO SOUTH AFRICA.

Speakers: Rev. Emmanuel Cleaver, chairperson, Kansas City SCLC; Pat Wright, SWP National Committee. Thurs., April 21, 7:30 p.m. 4715 Troost. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (816) 753-0404.

MIAMI

## PROSPECTS FOR SOCIALISM IN AMERICA.

Speaker: Derrick Morrison, SWP National Committee. Mon., April 18, 8 p.m. Center for Dialogue, 2175 NW 26th St. (at 22nd Ave.). Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum.

**SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL WEEKEND.** Speaker: Harry Ring, *Militant* Southwest Bureau. *The Trotskyist Movement in the 1930s: Personal Recollections*. Part 1: Fri., April 22, 8 p.m. Part 2: Sat., April 23, 11 a.m. *The Ideological Struggle in the SWP in the 1940s*. Part 1: Sat., April 23, 2 p.m. Part 2: Sun., April 24, 12:00 noon. Center for Dialogue, 2175 NW 26th St. (at 22nd Ave.). Donation: \$1 on Friday; 50¢ for each class on Saturday and Sunday. Ausp: Militant Forum.

MILWAUKEE

## THE STRUGGLE FOR BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL EDUCATION.

Speakers: Tony Baez, bilingual parent coordinator for MPS; two bilingual education teachers from South Division High School; a Latino high school student; representative from the SWP. Fri., April 22, 8 p.m. Guadalupe Center, 3rd and Washington. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (414) 442-8170.

NEW ORLEANS

**'WOMAN TALK':** A series of monologues about women, by women. Featuring Kathy Kendall & Betty Hugh. Fri., April 22, 7:30 p.m. 3812 Magazine St. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (504) 891-5324.

NEW YORK

## CRISIS IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN TODAY.

Speaker: Tariq Ali, member of the political committee of the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International; recently toured Pakistan. Fri., April 22, 8 p.m. Third St. Music Settlement, 235 E. 11th St. at Second Ave. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: New York City Militant Forum. For more information call (212) 260-6461.

NEW YORK: THE BRONX

**CLASSES ON SOCIALISM.** Wednesdays, 8 p.m.

2271 Morris Ave. (near 183rd St.) Ausp: SWP. For more information call (212) 365-6652.

PITTSBURGH

## THE HYPOCRISY OF U.S. SUPPORT TO HUMAN RIGHTS—UGANDA, IRAN, SOVIET UNION.

Speakers: Fr. Augustus Taylor; Jonathan Harris, professor of political science, University of Pittsburgh; Martha Harris, SWP. Fri., April 22, 8 p.m. 5504 Penn Ave. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (412) 441-1419.

SAN DIEGO

## PROSPECTS FOR SOCIALISM IN AMERICA.

Fri., April 22, 8 p.m. Speaker: Sam Manuel, 1977 SWP candidate for mayor of Los Angeles. Sat., April 23, 11 a.m.: *Women's Evolution*; 1 p.m.: Speaker: Fred Halstead, plaintiff in SWP suit against the government. UCSD, Student Center, North Conference Room. Donation: Conference, \$1.50; Fri. only—\$1; Sat. only—\$1. Ausp: YSA. For more information call: (714) 234-4630.

SEATTLE

## GROWING OLD IN AMERICA: INSULT & INJURY.

Speakers: Stephanie Coontz, author of *What Socialists Stand For*; Dawn Steere, co-coordinator, NOW Women & Aging Task Force. Fri., April 22, 8 p.m. 5623 University Way NE. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (206) 522-7800.

TACOMA, WASH.

## SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL WEEKEND.

Speaker: Clifton DeBerry, SWP National Committee. Fri., April 22, 8 p.m.: *History of Blacks in the Labor Movement*. Sat., April 23, 2 p.m.: *Civil Rights Movement*; 4 p.m.: *History of Black Nationalism*.

1022 South J St. Donation: \$1 for each class. Ausp: Militant Labor Forum and SWP. For more information call (206) 627-0432.

# ...China

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afterwards that the Politburo met and *unanimously* voted to condemn this as a 'counterrevolutionary incident'?

"There was no public debate over that. Nobody had a chance to write even a letter to the editor or make a speech anywhere or protest the government's decision. Hundreds of people were arrested at the end of the demonstration. A number of people were killed by the troops. Their lives aren't going to be brought back by the fact that after the 'gang of four' are in jail, a year later, the government *may* decide—it hasn't done it yet—that Bill Hinton was right, and it really wasn't a counterrevolutionary incident after all.

"This shows how decisions are really made in China. And it shows something about the explosive character of a mass movement, or just simply people in the streets, who have to submit to that."

# ...CP

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"In the area of housing," he told the *Reader*, "well . . . I think that with the right attitude and lots of giving and taking, we could arrive at some solutions."

Washington is equally vague on school desegregation, refusing to be pinned down in support of busing.

And on jobs, even the *Daily World* reported that "some workers have expressed concern . . . over a recent statement by Washington that he would create jobs by giving tax breaks to big business. . . ."

But to the Communist party, such "details" seem to have no bearing on Black political independence. Reporting on a Chicago meeting for Black CP leader Claude Lightfoot, the March 23 *Daily World* said, "Dr. Lightfoot described Black political power in the South and its coming of age in the North. He gave Detroit and Los Angeles as examples. . . ."

These examples provide some insight into what the CP really means by "Black political power."

Take Detroit, for example. The March 15 *Daily World* carried an article on "the fight of Black incumbent Mayor Coleman Young for re-election."

"Mayor Young is already the target of attack by ultra-Right forces. . . ." the article reported. "'Crime in the streets' is the main slogan of the anti-Young groupings."

The *World* failed to mention, however, that Young has been Detroit's most vocal "crime in the streets" scare-monger, using it as an excuse to hire more cops. The article also ignored Young's opposition to the city's court-ordered busing plan and his doing nothing approach to the massive joblessness among Motor City workers, the great majority of whom are Black.

In Los Angeles the CP urged "progressives to mobilize independent pressure in the coming primary election April 5 to defeat the attempt of reactionary forces to regain control of City Hall. . . ."

In the *Daily World's* special vocabulary, "mobilize independent pressure" clearly meant, "Vote for Mayor Thomas Bradley," the incumbent Black Democrat and former L.A. policeman.

In this case, at least, the *World* was slightly more critical. An April 1 article pointed out that Bradley "has retreated under pressure on the busing controversy. . . ." The full truth is that Bradley is an *outspoken opponent* of "massive crosstown busing" in Los Angeles.

Another Black Democrat whose election the CP backed is Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, who has just fired more than 1,000 striking sanitation workers—most of them Black—in a vicious union-busting effort.

It's no coincidence that all these Black Democratic mayors—whatever their campaign promises—end up attacking the interests of Blacks and other working people. That's what the party they serve was set up to do.

Both the Democratic and Republican parties are controlled by big business. Both are racist, anti-labor organizations run in the interests of bankers, brokers, and wealthy corporate stockholders.

When these parties put up a token Black for office, it is only to better disguise their attacks on the oppressed and exploited. Since 1967, for example, the number of Black elected officials in this country has risen from fewer than 100 to around 3,500. But conditions in the Black ghettos continue to decline.

The CP's support to Democrats such as Washington, Bradley, and Young has nothing to do with "Black political power." In fact, the CP has a long history of supporting white liberal Democrats.

In the 1975 Chicago mayoral race, for example, the CP backed white Alderman William Singer's primary challenge to Daley. Yet, in the general election, the CP refused to support the only Black independent—Willie Mae Reid, candidate of the Socialist Workers party.

And the CP has recently supported many other Democratic liberals—from Ramsey Clark and Bella Abzug in New York, to Tom Hayden in California, and Paul Soglin in Madison, Wisconsin.

The only candidate in the Chicago mayoral election who is putting forward the perspective of real political independence from the big-business parties is Socialist Workers party candidate Dennis Brasky. "Only Black and labor political action independent of the Democrats and Republicans can defend our democratic rights and living standards from the attacks both parties are carrying out," Brasky is telling Chicagoans.

This stands in stark contrast to Washington, who says, "My purpose is to reform the Democratic Party, not to dismantle it or destroy it."

The CP's support to Washington—and its failure to even mention Brasky's socialist campaign—should give pause to those who may have been taken in by the Stalinists' empty rhetoric about political independence.

CP General Secretary Gus Hall told the party's national committee last November, "For a long time we have been talking about mass breakaways from the two-party system, and the need to build a broad, meaningful alternative to the two old parties."

From their showing in the important municipal elections this spring, they are evidently still just talking.

# ...taxes

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following breakdown of government expenditures for all the major federal income security programs for 1975:

**Social security:** \$62.6 billion;  
**Supplemental security income (SSI—age or disability income):** \$5.5 billion;  
**Aid to Families with Dependent Children:** \$8.6 billion;  
**Food stamp:** \$4.4 billion;  
**Unemployment compensation:** \$13.0 billion;  
**Medicare:** \$14.1 billion; and  
**Medicaid:** \$13.1 billion.

These figures reveal that in 1975 social security tax income (\$86.4 billion) was \$23.8 billion *higher* than the amount of social security the government paid out. What happened—and still happens—is that a considerable amount of the income taken in in social security taxes, which goes into the "social

security trust fund," is spent by the government in other categories, such as weapons.

It is hard to figure out exactly what constitutes a "welfare cheat" in the confused right-wing mind, but it probably does not include recipients of social security. This minimal payment to older people is crucially necessary for the subsistence survival that it provides. Look at the figures.

In 1975, a year of bitter economic slump, workers received \$62.6 billion in social security. The president's report gives the average of \$206 per month per recipient. That keeps social security "benefits" at the poverty level pure and simple—less than \$2,500 a year.

The unemployment benefits of \$13 billion were paid to an average of 16 million workers a month in 1975—or \$68 per month per worker.

The government spent more than eight times as much money in its 1975 military program as in its 1975 unemployment relief program.

"Welfare cheats"? Perhaps that is supposed to include the parents and children who receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). In 1975 there was an average of 11.1 million people receiving AFDC per month, coming to about \$65 per individual. The 1975 military expenditures were thirteen times as high as AFDC.

"Food-stamp cadillacs"? The average monthly benefit here, in 1975, was \$21 per person. Washington's military budget was twenty-five times higher than its food-stamp relief program.

Similar figures could be put down for Medicare and Medicaid.

The point is plain.

Military requirements get the top priority in U.S. government expenditures. The government gives only minimal aid to working people. And whenever a choice must be made, social welfare programs are cut, military programs are increased, and workers are asked to pay higher taxes.

# ...TFWU

Continued from back page

provision that makes it mandatory for a newly hired farm worker to join the union after five days. Therefore, the ALRA is a direct challenge to the antiunion "right to work" law.

Farm workers in Texas have an average yearly income of \$3,000. Frequently, minimum wages, child labor, and the eight-hour day are not enforced.

The Austin rally demonstrated that the Chicano community strongly supports the *campesinos*. One of the main supporters of the farm workers is the Raza Unida party. Several Mexican-American legislators spoke at the rally, including the sponsors of the ALRA, as did Hector Garcia of GI Forum and Santiago Anaya of the Alianza, the land-grant movement in New Mexico.

TFWU President Antonio Orendain introduced the speakers.

Speaking on behalf of the RUP, José Angel Gutiérrez offered the *partido's* support to the effort to pass the ALRA. He blasted Gov. Dolph Briscoe's hypocritical ploy of pretending to listen to farm workers' needs, when Briscoe is a staunch opponent of the rights of farm workers.