

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

The Workers' Advocate

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Down with Reagan's war hysteria against Nicaragua!

In order to justify aggression against Nicaragua, Reagan and his friends have been hysterically accusing Nicaragua of a military buildup. You would think that a sense of shame would stop Reagan from accusing others of a military buildup. Reagan has increased the military budget so much that the U.S. is swimming in debt. But such is the logic of warmongers -- they have the right to arm to the teeth, but their victims must put their faith in prayer.

Imagine That -- Reagan Complaining About A Military Buildup

The latest round of war hysteria against Nicaragua began with the defection of a Sandinista official, Major Roger Miranda Bengoechea. There were allegedly secret plans to expand the Nicaraguan army to 600,000 men, the entire male population. What a warmongering country, the Reaganites said.

True, neither Reagan nor his liberal opponents in Congress have made any bones about the U.S. contingency plans to invade Nicaragua if all other methods of applying pressure fail. (One liberal after another has left open the military option as a final resort in articles in the **New York Times** and elsewhere.) But that isn't warmongering. That's just the American way. It is allegedly only Nicaragua that threatens to stand up as a military colossus that will single-handedly wipe out the giant U.S. network of troops and allies.

Now the very idea of a standing army consisting of every adult male is absurd on the face of it. Who would run the economy? As it turned out, the Nicaraguan government was pondering extending the system of reserves or militia. Such systems are widely used by pro-Western countries, from "neutral" Switzerland to NATO countries. The U.S. uses it too, and has sent such "National Guard" troops to Honduras to threaten Nicaragua,

although in the U.S. the system of reserves covers only part of the male population.

It would have been better if the Sandinistas had not dismantled the workers' militias and other revolutionary forms of military defense against the contras and direct U.S. invasion. It is revolution, not forms copied from the Western armed forces, that is the key to the defense of Nicaragua. But Reaganites can hardly point the finger at Nicaragua for considering methods that Reagan and company routinely use.

But What About Elections?

But hardly had the ink dried on this "proof" of Nicaragua's dark intentions, then another absurdity was hatched. Why, it was alleged, Daniel Ortega, president of Nicaragua, had declared that elections in Nicaragua were a fraud and no victor other than the Sandinistas would be recognized.

What Reagan and company were hiding is that the contras and their supporters are deathly unpopular inside Nicaragua. The bourgeois parties lost the last election to the Sandinistas. It is

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CORRESPONDENCE

ON THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF OPPRESSION AND JAIL

Alberto Aranda of Prisoners United for Revolutionary Education (PURE) wrote the following article, which he entitled Letter on the Vicious Cycle of Class Crime and Prisoners. Comrade Aranda has been persecuted by the Texas prison authorities for his militant political stands (see Defend Prison Activist Alberto Aranda! in the **Supplement** for July 20, 1987).

Dear comrades,

In conjunction with our previous materials printed, I would like to add the following brief analysis on some particulars of the criminalization of the working class by the system of capitalist oppression--in that we feel it is necessary to express our views as prisoners about these matters to our counterparts outside the prison walls--to give clarity to our struggle. We also feel it essential that the prisoners' development as class conscious elements for proletarian revolution be reported on a continuing basis to encourage the working class to participate in revolutionary education.

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There are over 500,000 prisoners confined in amerikkkas' federal and state prisons today, with a growth rate of 8.6% or more, the largest since 1982. (Statistics taken from the U.S. Dept. of Justice Statistics for end of year 1986.) The majority of prisoners come from the lower economic level or strata of the working class, are mostly black and hispanic, but inclusive of all nationalities to lesser percentages. The origins of crime are complex through its historical development, and in this brief analysis we will only highlight the basic features. The "state", we recognize, is the proximate foremost origin of crime in modern day capitalist society, which as Lenin stated, quoting Engels,

"...first, divides its subjects according to territory" and "the second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a public power which no longer directly coincided with the population organizing itself as an armed force. This special public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organization of the population has become impossible since the split into classes.... This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons and institutions of coercion of all kinds..." (V.I. Lenin, The State and Revolution, Ch. I, Sec. 2, emphasis added)

Next we look at the elements of society and how they are produced, how the irreconcilable antagonistic classes create the "prisoner". The majority of prisoners are first youth born economically disadvantaged and into a working class family--the greatest percentage of whom are the subject to experience at early age racism, discrimination, bigotry, child abuse, alcoholism, inferior public school education, and the already established (street sub-culture of crime, drug use/addiction, and of that kind, peer-pressures and

role-models). These youth also experience the irrational family-to-community social relationships that destroy self-respect, dignity and pride. These social-relationships are of such a nature that most poor working class families can expect that all the children will become orientated with street crime and that some will become criminals. This is perpetuated because there does not exist rational social-relationships that would naturally cultivate the youth for a better way of life. Adding to this social neurosis is the day-to-day propagation of capitalist illusions which distorts the reality of the rebelling youth into believing on the one hand that there is no way out but to work hard and follow the program (robotization), or on the other hand to live fast, party, do drugs, steal, rob, kill and find "temporary" release in fantasizing.

These particular descriptions of the prisoner before prison are proven when we see this vicious cycle, as pertains to the class situation of the poor working class sector, repeat itself over and over before our very eyes. For example, return-to-prison (recidivism) rates show that an estimated 37% of a group of young parolees--representing a fair cross section of the nation--were rearrested while still on parole. These young parolees become the big brothers and future role models for the little brothers of the same ghettos, barrios and central cities. The national statistics further show that time served in prison has no consistent impact on recidivism rates--those who served six months or less in prison were about as likely to be rearrested as those who had served more than two years. This also shows or gives credence to the view that prisons are a good business for the capitalist, who reap millions from prison industry. What is more devastating about this vicious cycle--is that 90% of all crime committed is committed against the same poor and working class areas from where the prisoner originates! Blacks kill blacks and hispanics kill hispanics more than they do others not of their race. The average theft

loss is \$447, half of which involved losses of about \$82 or less, and 44% were for less than \$50. The highest 10% of thefts were for \$800 or more. Thus, it becomes obvious how the state has succeeded in keeping crime concentrated within the divided territories, within the working class, because our brothers and sisters sure ain't robbing the rich man!

Inside the vicious cycle a part of us becomes prison fodder, surplus labor that capitalist society places in prison to control the masses.

While this takes place at ever increasing rates, it too in its irreconcilable contradictions has created and is developing a growing class consciousness within the prison masses themselves; a class consciousness that opens the eyes to the nature and character of the way they are exploited--which in turn presents opportunities for prisoners to discover and re-discover their humanity, their natural origin, self-respect, dignity, pride and social being--where it is that we stand in capitalist class society.

Prisoners United for Revolutionary Education (P.U.R.E.) within the infamous class institution, the Texas Department of Corrections, reach out in class solidarity to all other progressive working class people in and outside prison walls to build greater class consciousness for the people's movement against amerikkas' capitalist system; to prepare and train the youth of the ghettos, barrios and central cities to rebel with cause, with revolutionary education, "as the party of the class, as the party of the masses"!

**TRANSFORM THE CRIMINAL MENTALITY
INTO A REVOLUTIONARY MENTALITY!!
BUILD THE MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY
IN AND OUTSIDE PRISON WALLS!!
REMEMBER THE ATTICA PRISON UPRISING!!**

Comrade Alberto Aranda
Sept. 22, 1987<>

CORRESPONDENCE ON THE ARIAS PLAN

From a Boston area reader:

Dust in the Eyes

The petty-bourgeois Sandinistas, to cover their betrayal before the Nicaraguan masses and progressive world opinion, are trying to throw dust in people's eyes. That is, they are attempting to fool people with "militant" phrases that throw people off the track. They are also continuing their policy of concessions to the U.S. imperialists and the internal reactionaries.

The Sandinistas have made some significant concessions to these reactionary forces. They have allowed the CIA-backed La Prensa to reopen without censorship. The counter-revolutionary clergy are broadcasting on their "Radio Catolica". They have given some of the Somocistas their freedom. Most significantly they have agreed to hold indirect talks with the Reaganite mercenary contras. (In fact, the "mediator" for these talks is CIA-backed contra-loving cardinal of Managua, Miguel Obando y Bravo!) All of these moves are to support the imperialist-sponsored "Arias peace plan".

All these moves by the FSLN have not stopped the contra war or lessened the U.S. pressure on the Nicaraguans. In fact, Reagan is using the fascist logic that the U.S.-sponsored aggression is responsible and therefore should be stepped up (to induce even more concessions!). His dance partners, the Democrats, agree to give the murdering contra thugs "humanitarian aid".

Of course, all these concessions to reaction do not go down well with the Nicaraguan masses. The MLPN is leading the fight against concessions and the reactionary "peace plan". The rank-and-file Sandinistas also cannot see the merit of the one-sided giveaways to imperialism and counter-revolution. Therefore Mr. Ortega and company must try and "pull a fast one".

Thus we see Mr. Ortega making brave speeches about "putting the country on a war basis" if the U.S. Congress approves the 270 million that Reagan wants for the mercenaries (of course, several millions of "humanitarian" aid is O.K.). He and Defense Minister Humberto also talk about an armed militia of six hundred thousand to defend the country against U.S. aggression. They also protested U.S. military maneuvers in Honduras, the sale of the F-5 fighter planes, etc. Also, contra supporter Denby was shot down in his private plane over Nicaragua (his support for the mer-

cenaries [being] no secret to the Sandinistas. In fact, he even asked permission for overflight of Nicaraguan territory!).

All of this "militancy" is an attempt to cover their tracks. The leadership of FSLN is hellbent on a deal with U.S. imperialism and the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. Some of the concessions are noted; others may be in the making. To quiet their rank-and-file, and to deflect criticism from the MLPN, the Ortega group puts on a show of "revolutionary" rhetoric. They seek to escape the quagmire their vacillating, unstable policies have created.

Solidarity with the Nicaraguan people!

To express solidarity with the Nicaraguan people, one must support unreservedly their right to self-determination. The party that stands most strongly for the independence and revolution is the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua (MLPN). The MLPN stands for socialism and independence for Nicaragua. They are against the concessions to contras, the bourgeoisie and U.S. imperialism, especially as these infringe upon the revolutionary gains of the people. They oppose the bureaucratization of the revolution and stand for the mass mobilization of the workers and peasants, as the best way to defeat the contra thugs and safeguard and advance the revolution. In fact, the MLPN will (undoubtedly) use the demagogical promises of the Sandinista leadership to expose their deceit and hypocrisy.

In the U.S., the Marxist-Leninist Party (MLP-USA) leads the fight against the deceitful and aggressive Arias "peace plan", which aims to put Nicaragua's sovereignty on the chopping block. The Party exposes the criminal intentions of U.S. imperialism to destroy the revolution, both the openly fascist Reaganite contra invasion and the crafty "Democratic" diplomatic blackmail. The Party promotes the MLPN as the leading force fighting for socialism and self-determination in Nicaragua. The links between the two parties are based on Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

The MLP-USA exposes those opportunists who attempt to tie the solidarity movement to the "Democratic" Party imperialists. The Party fights for solidarity on a militant basis with the workers and peasants of Nicaragua.

With revolutionary greetings,

J.R.

December 27, 1987<>

CORRESPONDENCE

GREENSBORO: DOWN WITH THE LINE OF NONRESISTANCE TO RACISM

A reader sent in the following denunciation of the line of non-resistance to a demonstration by the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups in Greensboro, North Carolina. The white racists were demanding an end to non-white immigration into the U.S., the end to integration, the repeal of civil rights laws, and the abolition of the national observance of the birthday of the reformist leader Martin Luther King Jr. A number of church groups, organized into the Coalition of Racial Justice and Unity, decided against a counter-demonstration or other means of active, mass resistance. Instead they decided to preach unity and love the Sunday of the racist march and to ring church bells.

Oppose Racist Organizations!

The ugly face of organized racism will again rear its head in Greensboro with a march scheduled for December 20 in the downtown area. As in the past, the police will be protecting the racists.

All workers and progressive people should oppose this march. If possible, legal, on-site protest should denounce the racists when they appear publicly.

White supremacy seeks to organize white people on the basis of the ridiculous notion that whites as a race are superior to non-white people. U.S. white supremacist ideology justified slavery and the formation of the Confederacy. U.S. white supremacist ideas justified the post-Civil War Jim Crow laws, a form of U.S. apartheid. Although Jim Crow discrimination is no longer legal, discrimination, segregation, economic exploitation and the denial of the right of national self-determination force the Black laboring people in the U.S. to live as second class citizens.

The call of the white supremacists for 'white unity' must be rejected by white people. Black people must be careful and not be provoked into lumping all whites into the camp of the white supremacists.

The Workers' Freedom Bulletin warns readers

from following a popular strategy that says to 'ignore the Klan', a strategy that relies upon the government to prosecute racist organizers, a strategy that 'recognizes' the 'democratic rights' of racist organizations. There is no reason to promote pacifism, or to rely upon the government or its courts. Throughout U.S. history the government has either encouraged racist attacks or it has turned its head when these attacks have occurred. Racist organizers are prosecuted only when it is politically expedient.

Workers' Freedom Bulletin calls for principled unity between workers and progressive people -- women, Blacks, and whites. This type of unity is needed to defeat supremacist groups and to build an effective movement against the economic crisis facing working people today.

This unity will not come easily. Racism, sexism, and prejudice have been used for years to keep people separated, Workers and toilers have always been discouraged from organizing themselves with their own class agenda.

There is a lot to learn and a lot of work to do. But as the old saying goes, "the sooner begun, the sooner done."

--Workers' Freedom Bulletin
December 16, 1987<>

**IN DEFENSE OF REVOLUTIONARY LITERATURE:
A REPLY TO THE DRAFT LETTER**

-- Part Two --

The November 10, 1987 issue of the **Supplement** contained the draft letter criticizing the first issue of **Struggle**. It also contained part one of a reply which set forward the views of one member of the Central Committee. The reply continues in this issue. Page references to the draft letter are to the published version in the Nov. 10 **Supplement**.

By a member of the Central Committee

In the first part of this reply I pointed out the draft letter verifies the concerns of the **Supplement** in taking up the question of the literary debate. While the draft letter pays lip-service to the phrase "revolutionary literature", in fact it raises the white flag to the current literary establishment. It wants to liberate literature from what it regards as the narrow and doctrinaire fetters of politics and ideology.

One of its central themes is opposing the passionate advice by the editor of **Struggle** to revolutionary writers to "take full part in the struggle of ideas in society and in the class struggle which is at the root of the ideological struggle". It analyzed this and found it to be, in essence, sectarianism and doctrinairism. In fact, the draft letter had fallen prey to the arguments and viewpoints of the bourgeois literary and university circles. The draft letter even mocks the very existence of a correct Marxist-Leninist line on literature.

Part one also pointed out that the draft letter, in essence, didn't just concern literary questions. It also expressed an attitude to the relation of our Party to the various political trends of today. For example, its opposition to the struggle against unclarity was expressed both with reference to poetry and to political trends in the mass struggles of the '60s. It opposed communist independence with respect to confused and unclear ideas and forces in the mass movements. It denounced such communist independence as sectarianism and opposition to the mass movement.

In part one I dealt with the draft letter from the point of view of what advice was it offering to revolutionary writers. After all, its declared purpose was to improve their work. Here, in part two, I would like to take up some of the more theoretical views on literature put forward in the draft letter.

Abandoning the Class Stand in Literature

On the theoretical side, the draft letter tries to replace the class standpoint in literature with something else. In practice, among those defending the standpoint of the draft letter, the relation of class analysis to literature is denigrated one way or another. They may call the basic Marxist stands just platitudes. As far as the real analysis of literature goes, there is the search for something else.

The draft letter felt it found this something else in three things: the criterion that literature should be true to life, the evaluation of literature according to its technique (literature "as literature"), and worship of the brilliance of the history and "isms" of bourgeois literature. Here, in part two of my reply, I shall deal mainly with the issue of faithfulness to life. If I have time, I may later come back to the other issues, such as technique.

The Criterion of Life

One of the draft letter's main concepts is that, since literature should reflect life, it goes beyond politics and ideology. This is repeated over and over.

For example, it stated:

"Our demand of art and literature should be that it be faithful to life as it really is and in its own way. Literature is accountable first and foremost to social reality, not to political theory and ideology." (p. 22, col. 1-2)

In this passage, which is typical of the draft letter, the draft letter connected faithfulness to life and social reality as something that is different from political theory and ideology.

What does this mean for writers?

The draft letter, which is dealing with advice for revolutionary writers, suggested that politics can somehow be removed from literature. The draft letter gave the example of the French writer Balzac. It made the astounding assertion that Balzac of all people did not put his political and social opinions into his numerous novels and wrote that

"If he [Balzac] had felt compelled to use his novels as a sounding board for his political views -- if he did not rather use them to portray life as he saw it

(not his politics as he thought them) -- he would be worthless then as now." (p. 23, col. 1)

The draft letter made this point not only with respect to Balzac, but with respect to the communist writer Maxim Gorky. It wrote that:

"...it [a literary work] is not a political document, not a political profession de foi of its author -- or very rarely at any rate, and for this (including in the case of Gorky) we should be thankful." (p. 22, col. 2)

Here the draft letter asserted that not only should politics be excluded from literature, but that in all but very rare cases it usually was. And this is said about Gorky, the author of Mother, which dealt with building up of the proletarian party in Russia.

Indeed, the letter held that whenever politics enters, one cannot truly talk of art. It talked of "...films and books which, although sometimes dressed out as 'fictions' and 'art', are in essence political statements." (p. 23, col.2)

Thus the letter held that it suffices for something to be in essence a political statement for it to only be so-called "art".

One can imagine what this means about the attitude of the authors of the draft letter towards the songs and poems and other works in **Struggle**. It appears to be a reflection of the current ideas fashionable among the university and literary circles that works that are "political" are flawed and phrasemongering.

Does Ideology Have Anything to Do With Life?

But the problem is not the criterion of life in itself. The liquidationism resides in the view that the criterion of life takes one beyond ideology and politics.

I agree totally that literature should be true to life. Our criterion really is life. This is a basic stand of materialism and of Marxism-Leninism on literature.

But I also believe that this is the criterion by which we must judge politics and ideology. Only a politics that is true to life can be a politics that is worthy to dedicate one's life too.

It is precisely because literature should reflect life that the class standpoint can be applied to it. It is precisely because literature should reflect life that it should reflect revolutionary practice. It is precisely because literary and artistic trends reflect different ideas about life that they are part of the ideological struggle.

The draft letter blundered, and ran up the white flag before bourgeois ideas, by implying

that revolutionary politics and ideology are something separate from life. That is a major blunder both with respect to theory and in its implication for practical work. That is one of the places where, whatever its intention, the draft letter implicitly degraded Marxist-Leninist revolutionary politics to the level of bourgeois politics.

On the Depiction of Working Class Struggle

Consider even such a political question as the assessment of the present-day trade union bureaucracy in the U.S.. This is an intensely political issue. It is even one of the major fronts of the struggle between Marxism-Leninism and liquidationism.

But suppose a modern-day Gorky or Balzac were to write a novel about the struggle of the meat-packing workers against Hormel, or the postal workers, or the auto workers. As long as such a novel dealt with the actual struggle, it would have to depict the labor bureaucrats. If they were presented as the great champions of the workers, this would be a violation of reality, of real life. The more the literary work was well-written and convincing and enjoyable, the more it made the working class reader really feel that the labor bureaucrats were his friends and comrades, the more such a work would depart from reality.

But wouldn't this judgment on the basis of faithfulness to life also be a political or ideological judgement? Or would it be wrong to point out that a novel that praises the labor bureaucrats is departing from reality? Or can the criterion of life be different for literature and for politics? Is there one reality for politics and another one for literature, a separate reality where anything goes so long as it is described with the proper technique?

Going Beyond Ideology

But the draft letter held that the criterion of life brought literature into a sphere that goes beyond ideology and politics. Oh yes, ideology might have some role. Presumably it might be acceptable for such activities as condemning a Rambo movie. But the real profound issues of literature allegedly go way beyond such crudities as ideology.

For example, one passage from the letter starts out by talking about some political and ideological factors. But the point of the passage is that literature goes beyond such things.

"But there is a great deal more that goes into making an author -- and hence will be reflected in his works -- a keen observer of life, able to penetrate the

overgrowth of official ideology to see things as they are, to assess men's character, to discover what is typical through the wealth of the merely accidental and contingent, etc., etc.. While this great deal more is not the main thing in assessing a man's political tendency... it plays a vital role in assessing an author as such and his literary productions." (p. 22, col. 2, emphasis added)

Here the draft letter claimed that it is the specific features of the author "as such", of literature as such, that penetrates the overgrowth of official (presumably bourgeois) ideology. It is now the role of literature to tear aside the veils of false ideology. It is literature that discovers the typical, separates the wheat from the chaff, ensures that one doesn't miss the forest for the trees, etc. It is the author "as author" and literature "as literature" that do all these good things.

The Real Situation with respect to Ideology and Literature

Is that so?

In fact, the bulk of present-day literature in the U.S. is devoted to obscuring the view of life as it is. The author "as author" seeks to set forward a vivid image, but whether it is a true or false image of life depends on something other than loyalty to the idea of literary production.

It is the role of revolutionary literature and revolutionary theory to cut through the veils set up by bourgeois ideology and the bulk of bourgeois literature. The revolutionary proletariat makes use of and appreciates all useful things from bourgeois and other nonproletarian literature and culture, but it also keenly feels the falsities, lies, and class prejudice that pervades bourgeois culture as a whole. This is why it develops proletarian and revolutionary culture.

If revolutionary literature weren't needed for cutting through the veils of ruling class ideology, if literature "as literature" accomplished this purpose, what would be the point of developing a revolutionary literary trend at all?

Contrasting Politics to Ideology Instead of Revolutionary to Bourgeois Views

Once the draft letter gave the criterion of life, one might have thought that it would have contrasted true pictures or conceptions of life to false pictures or conceptions of life. Instead it contrasted literature, as the reflection of reality and life, to politics and ideology, which presumably

is something else.

In fact, both politics and literature can be true to life or false. It is the role of revolutionary literature and other useful literature to be true to life. Meanwhile the bulk of contemporary American literature is superficial, or hypocritical, or even downright disgusting. In the same way, it is the role of revolutionary politics to be true to life, while it is bourgeois politics that is hypocritical and oppressive. But the draft letter implicitly trampled on this distinction by contrasting ideology and politics to literature rather than revolutionary standpoints to bourgeois standpoints.

It wasn't that the draft letter ignored the existence of bourgeois literature. On the contrary, the draft letter explicitly brought up the issue of literature produced by unclear writers, and of literature produced by "fuzzy-headed or even wrong-headed writers" (p. 21, col. 1), and even made a point to protest against the opposition by the lead editorial of **Struggle** to the method of "esoteric meanderings in the manner of the fascist Ezra Pound and the clerical aristocrat T.S. Eliot". But it managed to avoid talking about the fierce struggle that the revolutionary literary trend would have to wage for its very existence against bourgeois literature.

Instead, with all its talk of literature "as literature" having all sorts of good features, the draft letter implied that the revolutionary writers should merge into the general literary world, which presumably is above classes in what concerns the most important features of literature "as literature".

Different Views of Life

But back to the issue of life.

Perhaps at one time the mere use of terms like life was an attack on certain idealist and religious views of art and literature. Even now, it plays a certain role, such as in the criticism of "art for art's sake" or the view that elevates technique into the main criterion of literature.

But nowadays the struggle to maintain the criterion of truthfulness to life is waged mainly over what life is. The different trends of literature argue over what life is, how it should be reflected, and so forth. Even some partisans of the "art for art's sake" concept may defend it as being the true reality. Indeed, the draft letter itself, while talking in terms of life, simultaneously took big steps towards the "art for art's sake" concept.

The universities and bourgeois literary circles have made a business of debasing general phrases about "life" and "truth" and "beauty" in order to hide the concrete realities of life in class society. Lenin pointed to this trick long ago in condemning

the way the liberals praised Tolstoy to the skies while they attempted to empty his work of content. He wrote:

"Look at the estimate of Tolstoy in the liberal newspapers. They confine themselves to those hollow, official-liberal, hackneyed professorial phrases about the 'voice of civilized mankind', 'the unanimous response of the world', the 'ideas of truth, good', etc., for which Tolstoy so castigated--and justly castigated--bourgeois science. They cannot voice plainly and clearly their opinion of Tolstoy's views on the state, the church, private property in land, capitalism ... because each proposition in Tolstoy's criticism is a slap in the face of bourgeois liberalism, ... a rebuff to the commonplace phrases, trite quirks and evasive, 'civilized' falsehoods of our liberal (and liberal-Narodnik) publicists." ("L. N. Tolstoy", Collected Works, vol. 16, p. 326)

(Here I will not go into Lenin's analysis of Tolstoy's work, its limitations and its value, as interesting as that is as an example of the class standpoint in literary affairs.)

Advancing Beyond Classes

So the question is posed: what use did the draft letter make of the criterion of life?

As we have seen, it believed that this criterion ruled out politics and ideology. And it went on to cast doubt about the relevance of class analysis to literature. It stated that:

"Should we not strive to advance beyond the stage of plotting a book or film onto a political-ideological grid--assigning each character a class to represent and a line to espouse..." (p. 23, col. 2)

But suppose classes really exist in real life. Then wouldn't a literary work reveal this "political-ideological grid" the more it revealed real life?

Wouldn't the demand to advance beyond the "political-ideological grid" then mean the desire to depart from a reality that is regarded as unpleasant, a desire to get away from the reality of class struggle? Wouldn't it reflect the desire to eliminate the real description of the class structure of life under pleasant phrases about "life" in general?

Of course, the letter tried to present class analysis as something narrow and ugly by calling it plotting a "political-ideological grid". It tried to conjure up the image of politics and ideology constricting real life into a series of narrow, constricted cells. And just to make sure this image

isn't missed, the draft letter tacked on the issue of "a line to espouse". Given the narrow and rigid conception that the draft letter has of "the line", this means that the draft letter was parodying class analysis as the view that everyone speaks in the language of conscious, well-formulated political phrases.

But actually, when one analyzes the idea of a "political-ideological grid", what does it really mean? In and of itself, all it means is cutting through the mass of accidental details to the real forces underneath. What's wrong with literature bringing out to the reader the class forces involved in life, the "political-ideological grid" underlying life in class society?

Furthermore, it is important for the working class to see and recognize the features of the different social classes. The working class, if it is to be a communist and revolutionary class, cannot concentrate attention solely on itself. It must learn to deal with the other classes, and with individuals who are intermediate between or float among different classes. But if revolutionary authors are to be afraid to portray classes, if they are to be advised to miss the forest for the trees, miss the underlying reality in the mass of merely accidental, then how will they present life as it really is to the working class?

The draft letter did not deny classes explicitly. But by denouncing this "grid" it was opposing the passionate application of class analysis to literature. These days even liberals and anti-Marxist university professors make use of some class analysis in their articles and works. But they oppose showing the working class a consistent class view of society and politics. The draft letter fell prey to this fashionable bourgeois ideological view.

A Narrow View of Ideology

In order to separate literature from ideology, the draft letter put forward a narrow and mechanical view of ideology. The draft letter then used this to justify its casting aside of literature that presents "the line" as allegedly not art, and in presenting other literature as extending beyond ideology.

The draft letter implied that, to judge literature from the ideological standpoint, meant simply labelling the author as a good guy or a reactionary and checking to see whether the novel or play or poem repeats word for word the latest party resolutions. This is the "line", and the political-ideological approach is supposed to consist simply of checking the literary work against this line.

This explains the amazing fact, the truly absurd fact, that the draft letter explicitly denies that world outlook is truly part of ideology. (One

might have thought that world outlook was almost the same as ideology, and at the very least was one of its most essential parts. But new discoveries never cease.) In a passage discussing the role of the politics and ideology in literature, it makes the correction that

"...it would be more correct to say the whole world outlook, something less concentrated and explicit than politics and ideology..." (p. 22, col. 2)

The draft letter explicitly contrasted literature to

"...politics and ideology, the line, strictly speaking..." (p. 23, col. 1, top)

It also stated that:

"We could pose this difference between literature and politics in the following example: if you want to know the correct line for the class struggle in the early 20th century Russia, read Lenin; if you want to know what the people who participated in this struggle were really like, if you want to see them, to meet them, to live with them, read Gorky." (p. 22, col. 2, emphasis added)

As a matter of fact, Lenin wrote so well on the political situation and with such a variety of types of articles that you get a good picture of the workers and revolutionaries of Russia from his works. But for the draft letter, direct political writing is simply the directives, the party resolutions, the particular orders for battle. The draft letter presents ideology and politics as simply such directives. And it sounded again the theme that politics is separate from what the people "were really like", in short, from real life.

With respect to the above quote, it can also be noted that while literature as a whole reflects ideological stands, often in a very indirect way, there is a part of literature that directly promotes various stands. The above quote implied a disdainful attitude to such revolutionary cultural work, for example those works that are used to popularize revolutionary stands at demonstrations, meetings, etc. As we have seen, the draft letter holds that such "political statements" are allegedly not art.

Class Standpoint and Nonproletarian Literature

Thus, in essence, the draft letter narrowed the class standpoint in literature to simply checking whether "the line" was repeated by rote.

This is why the draft letter thought that it discredited the role of politics in literature to bring up an example of a writer who was reactionary but nevertheless produced good works. (This is how it characterized Balzac, using an example of

an author who most Party activists and sympathizers have never read.) Marxism-Leninism has always taken whatever was of value from non-proletarian literature. But the draft letter, having reduced the issue of class stand in literature to simply repeating the correct line, felt triumphant in then showing that there was something of value in nonproletarian literature.

The draft letter and Balzac

The draft letter proudly exhibited the writer Balzac to prove its point. Balzac is supposed to be an example of a writer who removed his political views from his novels, and thus wrote great literature. This presumably is supposed to be a triumph of removing literature from the ideological sphere. So the draft letter stated:

"If this were not the case -- if politics and ideology, the line, strictly speaking -- were the essential thing, then we would be unable to explain phenomena such as a Balzac, who despite his reactionary political views wrote great novels of the highest merit for their content, for their accurate and truthful and critical depiction of his society. If he had felt compelled to use his novels as a sounding board for his political views -- if he did not rather use them to portray life as he saw it (not his politics as he thought them) -- he would be worthless then as now. Indeed, we could not even account for the work of Maxim Gorky, for in his political and ideological views he often wandered like a wild ass in the wilderness." (p. 23, col. 1, underlining as in the original)

What conclusion can one draw from this? One apparently should remove one's politics from one's novels not only if one is a Balzac, but even if one is a communist writer like Maxim Gorky.

In What Did Balzac's Realism Consist?

As it happens, I had the opportunity some time ago to read a few of Balzac's novels. (This was well before I had seen the draft letter.) I do not yet have a view on Balzac's overall merits and whether his work is really "great novels of the highest merit". But in the small amount of Balzac's work that I have read, certain features stuck out.

One of the reasons I wanted to read some Balzac was because I was aware that Balzac was regarded highly by Marx and Engels. Engels wrote about his realism.

Now, in our society, the official literary and

academic circles have created the view that realism means refraining from comments and opinions and politics. But, in fact, I found that Balzac is not hesitant at all about his opinions. He tells you what he thinks. In case you miss it, he tells you again, and he designs the whole theme and plot of his novels around these political and social views.

He believes, for example, that there was an old aristocracy with wonderful virtues, unlike the money-grubbing bourgeoisie. But he sees that the aristocracy itself was becoming bourgeoisified, and the old virtuous aristocracy was losing to the bourgeoisie and the corrupted aristocracy.

He was by no means reticent to say this openly in his novels. In A Commission in Lunacy, for example, the whole plot is based on this. A model aristocrat is pictured as really meritorious, praiseworthy, refined, and principled. Why he is even voluntarily giving away his fortune to a family his ancestors stole from and ruined before his birth. But his wife and another relative are examples of the bourgeoisified aristocrats, and they are having him declared insane to get his money.

As we pointed out, the draft letter demanded "Should we not strive to advance beyond the stage of plotting a book or film onto a political-ideological grid..." (p. 23, col. 2)

Such an ideological-political grid is presumably supposed to be an example of the doctrinairism around **Struggle**.

But if ever there was a writer who consciously used an ideological-political grid, it was Balzac. He had a grand plan to set this grid over France and write one novel after another, each one taking up an individual cell. This was his Comedie Humaine, a grouping of about 90 novels.

For example, one novel, Gobseck, presents the usurer. A usurer who is nothing but the embodiment of usury, a man who is a powerful symbol of this feature of French society, who is presented in a purified form, as the essence of usury. Novel after novel takes up different types.

Balzac violated precept after precept that the draft letter set forward. He revelled in his politics; he not only wrote rapidly but, in the opinion of some, even carelessly, putting the emphasis not on technique but on content; he methodically examined the class structure of France; etc.

So where was his realism?

It consisted precisely in his having violated the principles of the draft letter.

It consisted precisely in his portrayal of the class relations in France, precisely in his "political-ideological grid".

It consisted in such things as his interest in depicting the new features of bourgeois life developing in France. He wasn't just interested in

fine words or pretty pictures, but was concerned in the actual development of the society and economics of his time.

Nor was his politics irrelevant to his work, as the draft letter put forward. His political and social views were critical of bourgeois society. Presumably this had something to do with his interest in the new economic developments of his time and his harsh depiction of the reality of capitalist society, a depiction which is at the heart of the value of his work. (Naturally the point here is not that the value of Balzac's work resides in the statement of his opinions, what the draft letter would regard as the "ideological and political" part of his work. Instead the point here concerns what he depicted.)

And the reactionary side of his views did weaken his work. Or is one to believe that his idyllic pictures of the sublime virtues of the old aristocracy and the old monarchy is an accurate reflection of life, of social reality, a tearing aside of the veils of ruling class ideology? <>

MARX ON ART AS PART OF IDEOLOGY

"The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which there arises a legal and political superstructure and to which there correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary it is their social being that determines their consciousness. ... At that point an era of social revolution begins. With the change in the economic foundation the whole immense superstructure is more slowly or more rapidly transformed. In considering such transformation it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic, in short, ideological, forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out." (From the preface to Marx's **Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy**, emphasis added)

TROTSKYISM DEFENDS REFORMISM
A reply to "Bolshevik Tendency's" newest article on our Party

**Continued from the Supplement
of 20 December 1987:**

**BT'S "MILITARY SUPPORT" FOR
SOVIET REVISIONISM**

The BT not only looks toward the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucrats and the mass reformist forces in the U.S. It also has expectations in the Soviet revisionists.

Yes, just as in the case of the trade union bureaucrats, the BT can go on and on about the crimes of revisionism. In its latest issue, there are pages criticizing Gorbachev.

But the BT still holds to the "military defense" of Soviet revisionism. In our original article on BT, we pointed out that below its fancy words against revisionism, the BT pledges support to Russian military action against Poland and Afghanistan. But this isn't gross hypocrisy and shameless support for revisionism. Oh no. Why? Because BT claims that it is "military, but not political, support". It is not political support because BT says so. What's so political about bayonets and tanks and cannons anyway?

BT's article passed over this issue in silence.

BT Denies Capitalist Nature of Revisionist Rule

And look even at its analysis of the Soviet Union. The BT goes on and on about the sins of "socialism in one country". The attempt to have socialism in one country is supposedly the root of all evil in the Soviet Union and in the world working class movement.

But ahem, ahem. Even in the latest issue of their journal 1917 (No.4) it calls the Soviet Union a "workers' state" (p. 18) and they usually call it a "degenerated workers' state". This is why it regards it as a matter of principle to defend it militarily. It quotes Trotsky on that capitalist restoration would take "a social revolution". It states that this still hasn't happened.

Is it possible to make heads or tails of this? There is no socialism. Oh no. There supposedly can't be socialism in a single country. But despite what it calls "sixty years of Stalinist repression" (p. 12), it presents the economy as being essentially socialist; it talks of "working class property forms" (1917, #3, p. 20).

We, ordinary mortals, believe that the Soviet Union used to be socialist but is now a state capitalist society. The degeneration of the Soviet Union did not begin in 1924, and it was correct to work to build up socialism in the Soviet Union.

But when revisionism emerged and consolidated, it destroyed socialism when it removed working class rule. We will not defend the Soviet revisionists, either militarily or politically. We leave that to the Trotskyist hypocrites.

REPEATING THE ERRORS OF THE SEVENTH CONGRESS

The BT not only defends revisionism militarily. It also shares many of the errors and even the ways of arguing from the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935, the Congress which turned away from Marxism-Leninism. The BT's belief in the wonder-working powers of what it calls "united fronts" with the labor bureaucracy and the reformists is similar to views from the Seventh Congress. It is impossible to uphold Marxism-Leninism against the Seventh Congress without simultaneously striking a blow at BT's errors.

How does BT deal with this? After all, it seems to pride itself on its theoretical abilities, on its Trotskyist wisdom.

It doesn't even try to deny the similarity of its views with the Seventh Congress.

Instead it runs as far away from considering the Seventh Congress as possible. It actually argues against studying the line for the world working class movement set by the Seventh Congress. Why bother making a serious study of the strategy and tactics for the world communist movement? All one is supposed to have to do is repeat "Down with 'Socialism in One Country'" three times.

The BT argues that studying the questions raised by the Seventh Congress

"is like trying to understand contemporary South Korean politics from the resolutions of Chun Doo-hwan's hand-picked National Assembly." (1917, #4, p. 3)

Well, let's accept for the sake of argument that the Seventh Congress was like Chun Doo-Hwan's handpicked National Assembly. It makes sense to examine reactionary Korean resolutions to discredit them in front of the masses. But what can we say about the BT, whose attitude on question after question duplicates that of these resolutions from the dictator's National Assembly? What can we say about the BT, which hides its agreement with the essence of these resolutions by trying to get activists to forget about them?

But let's return from BT's phrasemongering analogy to real life. The fact is that the views of the Seventh Congress of the CI are still influential

today. And despite BT's implications to the contrary, the Seventh Congress views don't just affect those taking orders from Moscow. Even some groups which oppose Soviet revisionism -- and oppose it far more seriously than BT, for they don't want to render it "military support" of any type -- are still influenced by the Seventh Congress.

The BT can't get rid of the ghost of Seventh Congress politics without repudiating Trotskyism as well. And so, instead of opposing the wrong lines from the Seventh Congress, it basically duplicates them. This can be seen in BT's very article on our Party. It blames independent communist work, which it calls "Third Period" politics, for the Nazi takeover in Germany. This disgusting lie was brought forth by the Seventh Congress, and the BT dances and leaps around it.

RELYING ON THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

The BT believes that reliance on the social-democrats would have prevented the victory of fascism in Germany. It doesn't don't want to deal with the actual history of social-democratic treachery. It doesn't want to hear about how reformism ushered in Hitler's rule. So what that reformist strategy was to try to harness Hitler in a coalition government or to hope that Hitler would obey constitutional laws if he came to power constitutionally. The BT complains that it is irrelevant, just "knock[ing] down a straw man", for our article to document this social-democratic plan. (p. 5)

Who needs facts? BT's article doesn't.

And once one departs from the real world, it is so easy to defeat fascism. Why, all it would take is

"without for a moment abandoning its [the German communists'] criticisms of social-democratic reformism, approach the SPD [Social-Democratic Party of Germany] with a proposal for joint action against the fascists." (p. 5)

But the Communist Party of Germany did this. More than once. And with always the same result. The SPD leadership didn't want to fight fascism. According to them, the only thing that could be agreed to was the stopping of mutual criticism. But they refused to coordinate action against the fascists.

The BT provides theoretical arguments as to why this shouldn't be. Such proposals should inevitably have worked. BT quotes Trotsky. It twists and turns. But all this amounts to is trying to prove theoretically that social-democratic reformism isn't so bad.

The BT says that if the social-democratic leaders refused the united front offers, the rank-

and-file social-democrats would turn to the communists. Indeed, many social-democratic sympathizers did start turning to the communists. This is revealed by voting statistics, for example. But the process was not fast enough. The main social-democratic rank-and-file remained passive because their leaders told them not to fight.

Furthermore, BT's real view is that the social-democratic organizations will themselves fight. Even if the top leaders don't want to fight, the rank-and-file will force the social-democratic organizations to throw themselves into the struggle. BT gave two examples of the fight against fascism -- both being cases where the social-democratic organizations did fight a bit.

The Austrian Uprising of February 1934

BT points smugly to the Austrian social-democratic uprising of February 1934 against the right-wing dictatorship of Dollfuss. It doesn't say what this proves. But we think it is a fine example.

First of all, the fact that the BT is forced to refer to Austria proves that it has no facts at all to back up its opinion on Germany. For that matter, the fiasco of German social-democracy in 1933, the failure of its plan to tame fascism, was undoubtedly one of the factors spurring the Austrian rank-and-file social-democrats to action.

Furthermore, the Austrian uprising shows that even when the rank-and-file force the social-democratic organizations to enter the struggle, the undermining role of the social-democratic leadership is not over. It shows that independent revolutionary organization is needed even when, or even more so when, the social-democratic rank-and-file begin to stir.

But unfortunately the Austrian Communist Party was very small and couldn't play a significant role in the uprising. The result was that Austrian workers paid a heavy price for faith in social-democracy. Despite the inspiring heroism of the armed workers, especially young Viennese workers, the four-day uprising failed. Here the issue isn't just that it failed, for BT to the contrary, not all struggles can be victorious. But how the uprising failed is most instructive.

For one thing, the top social-democratic leaders, with their theory of self-defense, let the government prepare for the struggle and frittered away the position of the workers for months on end. They opposed the uprising itself, which was forced upon them by the rank-and-file social-democrats. At first they even failed to call a general strike. They did call one eventually, but the call didn't reach most workers.

The results were tragic. For example, while the armed working class fighters were bleeding and

dying in Vienna, the reactionary government was ferrying troops to Vienna on trains run by social-democratic workers.

For another thing, the heroic proletarian fighters were hamstrung by lack of any central direction by the social-democrats and by reformist theories on only self-defense being acceptable. It meant that the workers were put completely on the defensive from the start.

So the workers' detachments defending each workers' housing project, each street, had to wait passively while the right-wing troops isolated them, set up their positions, got reinforcements, and choose the moment for attack.

Is it any wonder that after this uprising there was a huge wave of desertions from the social-democratic party to the Austrian communists? The Austrian activists of the time were hardly as enthusiastic about what the role of social-democratic organizations as BT is now.

Reformist Strategy

The BT assures everyone, with its Trotskyite texts at its side, that social-democracy has to fight. It is threatened with extinction by fascism. But it neglects to study what actual social-democratic strategy was. The social-democratic leadership wanted to avoid a German revolutionary upsurge, which might well have been triggered by an active mass struggle against fascism.

The German social-democrats still had in their hands, until quite late, the Prussian provincial government. And to the bitter end, they had their powerful trade unions. They could have fought. But to carry this out against a united bourgeois opposition would have meant intensifying the class struggle to the boiling point. This they did not want to do.

Or to be exact, the social-democratic leadership fought, but not against the fascists. With their government posts in Prussia, they had banned communist fighting organization, but not fascist fighting organization.

And when the Nazis took over, the social-democratic leaders banked on the British and French and Americans imperialists to set them up again. And lo and behold, they weren't disappointed. They did get this support.

Well, the example of the Austrian revolt doesn't do much for BT's stand. In fact, we think that this example illustrates the bankruptcy of BT's strategy. Just as the PATCO strike was lost despite AFL-CIO endorsement, so the Austrian social-democratic apparatus fought half-heartedly at best during the Feb. 1934 uprising. (And to be half-hearted in an uprising is to play with the blood of the workers.) These examples show

that there has to be independent communist work when the reformists "endorse" a struggle or even call it themselves.

The Example of the Kornilov Revolt

So the BT has another argument. What about the fight against Kornilov's attempt to set up a military dictatorship in Russia which occurred in the midst of the period between the February (democratic) and October (socialist) revolutions? They proudly write:

"Members of the MLP who can think...should consider Lenin's tactical military alliance (i.e. united front) with Kerensky [reformist leader of the Russian Provisional Government at the time] and the Mensheviks against Kornilov. Was Kerensky less cowardly or treacherous than the SPD leaders?"

The parenthetical remark about this being a "united front" is BT's.

Actually, we like this example too. We already studied it and wrote about it several years ago. This was part of our study of the questions of strategy and tactics raised by the Seventh Congress. You know, that study that BT regards as so bad that it is equivalent to studying the resolutions from Korean dictators. See the article "Some Notes on the Seventh World Congress of the CI" in the May 1, 1985 issue of the Supplement. One section is entitled "The Bolsheviks in the Fight Against the Kornilov Revolt".

The first thing that strikes one is that there is an important difference between the Russian reformist Kerensky and the German social-democratic leadership. Kerensky originally vacillated in favor of the Kornilov revolt, but he came out at the last moment against it. He did settle on the use of force against Kornilov. The German social-democratic leadership did not take this step, but instead welcomed the fact that Hitler took power constitutionally.

This makes quite a bit of difference concerning how the struggle was going to be carried out. This was a crucial difference. By slurring over this difference, the BT is revealing that its guiding idea is that the social-democratic leaders will always fight fascism. And if they don't fight fascism, it's supposed to be the fault of communist "Third Period" politics and insults. Fascist insults to the social-democrats never stopped the social-democratic leaders from fighting communism, but communist criticism supposedly stopped them from fighting fascism.

Secondly, even in the case of the Kornilov revolt, communist independent work was crucial. Otherwise the struggle against Kornilov might have

been no more successful than the Austrian uprising.

Lenin Against Playing with Phrases About the United Front

At the time of the Kornilov revolt, Lenin also pointed to the fact that empty words about "united fronts" were being used to throw dust in the eyes of the workers. The reformists shouted about the united front to hide their inaction and passivity. The task was not to play with the words "united front", but to lead the workers into action. In our article, we gave a long, interesting quote from Lenin, a small part of which goes as follows:

"At the moment we must campaign not so much directly against Kerensky, as **indirectly** against him, namely, by demanding a more and more active, truly revolutionary war against Kornilov. ... We must relentlessly fight against phrases about the defense of the country, about a united front of revolutionary democrats, about supporting the Provisional Government, etc., etc., since they are just empty **phrases**. We must say: now is the time for **action**; you S.R. and Menshevik gentlemen have long since worn those phrases threadbare." (Collected Works, vol. 25, p. 289, emphasis as in the original)

Well, BT has continued to wear reformist phrases threadbare in leaflet after leaflet, article after article. It builds up faith in the labor bureaucrats, the reformists, the revisionists, etc. doing something. What else can BT do, since it attacks independent communist politics?

BT REPLACES PARTY-BUILDING WITH FACTIONALISM

Another feature of the Seventh Congress was the liquidationist turn against party-building. And BT carries this to a fine art, although it uses different turns of phrase than the Seven Congress did. For BT, party-building has been replaced by what they themselves call factionalism. They don't pay attention to what a militant revolutionary party should be. Instead their eyes are filled with visions of splits in this or that organization.

Indeed, Party-building has always been one of the central disagreements between Leninism and Trotskyism. The Trotskyist disdain for party-building proves that they have nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism.

BT Presents Lenin as a Factionalist

Of course BT says otherwise. According to them:

"The cadres of the Bolshevik Party were assembled largely through the long factional struggle within the Russian social-democratic movement." (1917, #4, p. 6)

You see, factionalism was supposed to be Lenin's way too. BT neglects to mention that Lenin waged a long struggle against factionalism and regarded it as a curse.

Naturally, once the reformist Mensheviks forced the formation of factions inside the Party, one couldn't overcome this division by simply wishing it away. The Bolsheviks were forced into the struggle of inner-party groups. Only in this sense did Lenin take part in factionalism. But Lenin despised this factional situation. He fought to build up a united Party, which was done through a long struggle against factionalism leading up the Prague Congress of 1912. And of course BT neglects to mention Lenin's views denouncing factionalism at the time of the Tenth Party Congress of the Bolsheviks.

So how does BT prove that Lenin actually didn't spend time on party-building but on factionalism? Here's how they do it:

"Lenin's party did not triumph in October 1917 by recruiting ones and twos in isolated 'work with the individual activists under the influence of the reformists' as the MLP advocates. Only through open political struggle with the Mensheviks and other 'moderate' socialists **in the soviets...** did the Bolsheviks win over the majority of the proletariat." (Ibid.)

Ahem, ahem. First of all, prior to the October socialist revolution in 1917 the Soviets only existed for several months in 1905 and then for a longer period in 1917. So it was quite impossible for the Bolshevik Party to have been built up just by work in the Soviets. Obviously the Russian Communist Party was built up through long arduous work outside the Soviets, or else it couldn't have taken part effectively in the Soviets when they existed.

Of course, Trotsky wasn't a member of the Bolshevik Party until 1917. Trotsky was known for his loud-mouthed condemnation of Bolshevik organization as a "barracks regime", a "dictatorship" by intellectuals over the workers, etc. But BT just slides over this and blithely tells the world that Trotskyist factionalism was Lenin's path. This, of course, is a perfect example of a factional trick, and so is in accord with their factionalist theory.

BT Presents Political Struggle as Factionalism

Secondly, since when is the open political struggle of communism against reformism "factionalism".

The Bolsheviks did not factionalize the Soviets. They fought opportunism. Nor could they have won over the majority by restricting their work to the Soviets.

Yes, work in the Soviets was vital. But it had to be communist work. This means that the communists also had to engage in that dreadful, dreadful, dreadful (to BT) work with individual worker after individual worker right on the shop-floor. They had to build up organization right in the factory. Without that, the struggle in the Soviets would have degenerated into simply a new version of parliamentary wrangling and empty talkshop rhetoric.

The Bolshevik strength in the Soviets was, in fact, a reflection of Bolshevik strength in the factories. But BT, with its thoroughly bourgeois conception of politics, can only see work at the top, which it converts to factional maneuvers.

BT Forgets the CI's Struggle Against Social-Democratic Traditions and Carryovers

But, BT sputters, "the Communist International was created by splitting the parties of the Second International". With this argument, BT hopes to slide over the point we made in our reply to them. (See the **Supplement**, 20 May 1987, p. 16-17) We didn't deny that splits can and do occur in reformist organizations. But we pointed out that unless the communists are dedicated and zealous in building independent revolutionary organization, they will be useless even in the case of splits in reformist organizations. We pointed out that those who despise the "gradualism", as BT called it, of building up independent organization

"would be despised as useless--and just so--by any sincere and honest elements that arise in a reformist organization or anywhere else."

Take the Communist International. The very fact that most communist parties at that time rose as splits from social-democratic parties meant that a protracted and difficult process of transforming these parties into true revolutionary parties had to be accomplished. BT neglects this. Not because we haven't talked about it over and over again in our literature. Not because the CI didn't talk about over and over again in their literature. Not because Lenin didn't talk about it over and over again. But because BT's idea of factionalism and splittist maneuvering means accepting the whole reformist apparatus and just giving it a Trotskyist signboard to hang out.

The CI stressed over and over again, before it changed its line at the Seventh Congress, that the whole social-democratic style of organization sucked away the energy of the masses. To baptize a social-democratic organization with the "communist" or "revolutionary" label simply meant leaving the masses vulnerable before the class enemy.

The Austrian revolt of Feb. 1934, which BT exhibits to prove its stand of relying on the social-democratic organizations to fight, is a good example of the need to eliminate social-democratic traditions and methods of organization. It illustrated that even if reformist organizations do take up a struggle, the reformist apparatus and ideology will still prove incompetent to lead the masses in struggle. And how much more it shows the futility of BT's exaggerated belief in the wonders of getting the trade union bureaucrats to pass a resolution to fight.

(To be continued)

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DOWN WITH REAGAN'S WAR HYSTERIA AGAINST NICARAGUA!

Continued from the front page

Reagan who refuses to recognize this election simply because his side lost.

Ortega's speech was irrelevant. But still, let's see what he said. In it, he had announced that "the government" would be handed over to the victor in elections, but not "power".

What did this mean? Ortega was actually, in his speech, justifying making concessions to the U.S. He was claiming that these concessions didn't matter, because even if the government was lost to the CIA agents, "power" would still be in the hands of the Sandinistas. This was simply empty bravado designed to stop the masses from rising in anger against the undemocratic, il-

legitimate concessions to the CIA and the contras being made by the Sandinistas. These concessions were a futile attempt to appease President Arias of Costa Rica and the heads of the death-squad regimes of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

It is only the utter corruption of the capitalist TV, radio, and newspapers that allows such stories to be spread and taken seriously. But as long as capitalism and imperialism rule, their mass media will remain tools of war hysteria and anti-people lying. As long as the bourgeoisie seeks to strangle Nicaragua, the mass media will try to whip up hysteria against it. This is why we must build up the Workers' Advocate and other working class papers so that the truth can be heard. <>