International VIEWPOINT

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Chernobyl - the bureaucracy makes a very big mess

South African workers' movement takes the lead

Chinese Communist Party «reevaluates» Trotsky

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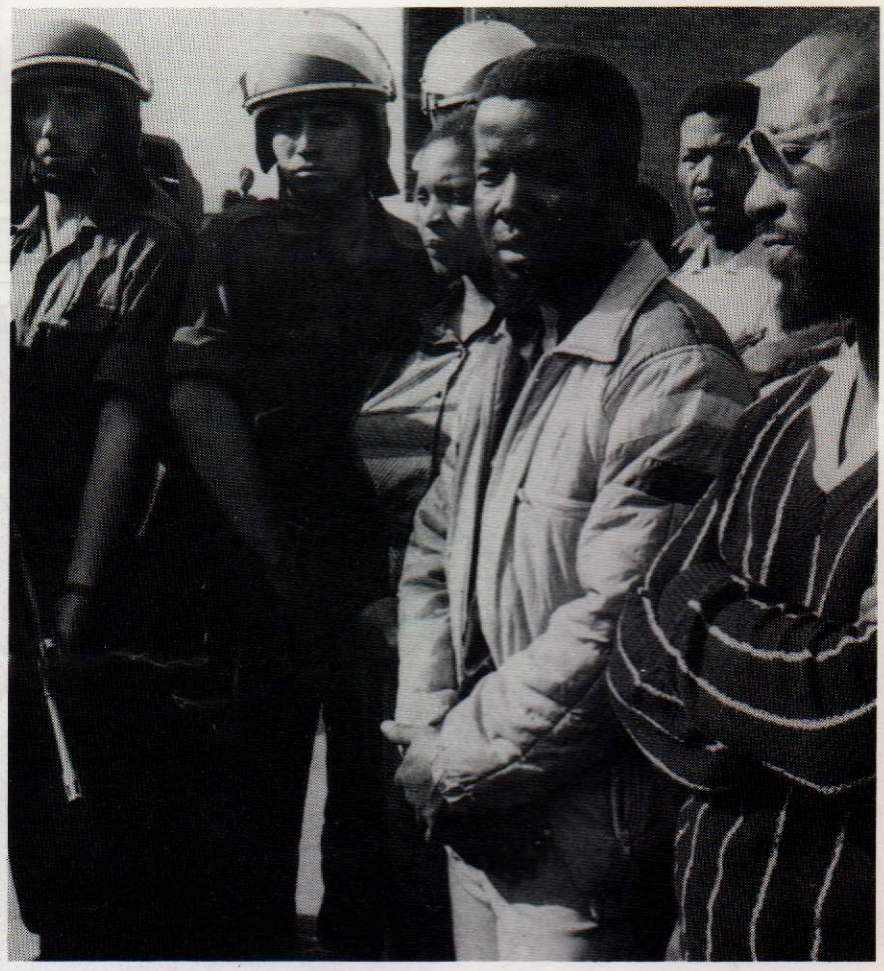

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View from under the nuclear cloud

STOCKHOLM — The accident that was too improbable to be true has actually happened.

"Naturally, it was the Russians that did this, with their contempt for human life." That sums up the official Swedish reaction to the nuclear power plant breakdown in Chernobyl.

The overflowing news pages and editorials of the papers and the May Day speeches of the social democratic leaders have spread the government's, the industrialists' and the right's common picture of the problem over the country like a great cloud of poisonous fallout.

GORAN EKLOF

But there was absolutely nothing improbable, unbelievable or incredible about the meltdown in Chernobyl. Everything could have been expected, except for the exact time and place.

In fact, the probabilities for such a catastrophe were accurately foreseen, the risks were calculated, the effects plotted and countermeasures planned by the 30 or so countries that are operating the world's 370 nuclear power plants.

The risk of meltdown is estimated by the establishment experts in general as one in 10,000 reactors. Already 4,000 reactors have operated in the world's nuclear power plants. So, the probability that a meltdown would occur now rather than later was almost exactly equal.

"With an extensive nuclear-power program, you have to reckon on such events at reguar intervals," a professor at the Danish nuclear research station in Risoe has said. In the same breath he said that Europe should increase nuclear-power production in order to advance economic development.

The same nonchalance in the face of the Soviet disaster can be seen in the *first* comments on the nuclear disaster by the Swedish nuclear-power industry and the business paper *Dagens Industri*:

"Of course, such an accident creates a more complicated business climate," said the chief of the reactor division at the nuclear-power concern Asea Atom. The concern may lose two orders worth 20 billion crowns [roughly 7 to the US dollar].

The paper stressed that Swedish nuclear technology has a good reputation internationally.

At least in the beginning, the Swedish government took a similar attitude. It stressed that the alerts had worked, that no conclusions about the Swedish nuclear-power program should be drawn from the experiences at Chernobyl.

All demands for a reappraisal were dismissed from the outset in an almost provocative way. And instead of discussion there were just denunciations of the Russians and the Moderaterna [the conservative party in the last bourgeois government that were the strongest advocates of nuclear power].

What are the facts about the claims that are being repeated over and over again in Sweden and other Western countries that the Soviet nuclear-power program is qualitatively more dangerous than, say, the Swedish one?

Let us start by reviewing what the Soviet minister responsible for nuclear power, Vitalii Sklyarov, wrote in the magazine *Soviet Life*, as late as this February:

"The odds on a meltdown are 1 in 10,000 reactors. The installations have reliable safeguards, which are assured against breakdown by a three-tier system. Each system functions independently of the others ...

"Hermetically sealed buildings, a closed system for radiocative material and a cleaning system prevent any kind of leakage into the environment."

You could certainly find almost identical statements by the Swedish energy minister, Birgitta Dahl, and her colleagues in other Western countries about the nuclear power plants in their countries. But this sort of statement by the authorities responsible proves nothing about the real safety or lack of it of the reactors.

The Swedish government has been quick to point out that the Swedish reactors are of a different model than the one that broke down in Chernobyl. And a representative of the Swedish industrialists' organization Industriforbundet has argued that "The Soviet reactors are so unlike the Swedish ones in their basic construction that a similar accident is impossible in any of the Swedish nuclear power plants."

It is obvious that a "similar accident" is highly unlikely, since the Swedish reactors do not use graphite dampers like the Soviet ones. But that does not exclude *another* kind of meltdown.

After the accident at Three Mile Island in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the argument was used that such an accident could not happen here, because the Swedish reactors were different. But the Chernobyl reactors were also different from those in Harrisburg.

Now the Swedish authorities are pointing to a strong concrete casing surrounding the Swedish reactors. There are reports that the Soviet Chernobyl reactor was also enclosed in a protective concrete casing. But in any event the idea that a concrete casing could provide any guarantee against the diabolic forces released by the meltdown is a pipe dream.

Sweden's radioactivity safeguards fail the test

The Swedish authorities have also pointed to the existence of protective filter chambers that can filter out up to 99 per cent of the radiation released in a serious accident.

The problem is just that the Swedish government did not make filter chambers obligatory before 1981, and the time allotted for building them extends to 1988. In fact, only two of the 12 Swedish reactors in operation are equipped with filter chambers. That is meager assurance against a "Soviet" accident in Sweden.

Naturally, the prettied-up, late and, to say the least, incomplete information from the Soviets about the accident was irresponsible, unacceptable and criminal. But in this respect also, the Swedish authorities have no reason to congratulate themselves.

At first, it was thought that the increased radioactivity in the atmosphere over Sweden came from the Forsmark reactor north of Stockholm. This was because the instruments

of the monitoring institutions could not be read over the weekend (!), and so the higher radioactivity was only noticed when workers came off work showing higher radioactivity levels that they picked up over the weekend.

Then, when it was ascertained that the radiation came from Ukraine, emergency measures came one after the other. There were radiation checks on traffic coming from the south-eastern part of the Soviet Union. Doctors were assigned to examine tourists, returning students and construction workers. A directive was given that in the worst hit areas cows should be kept in and not let out to graze. And anxious questions were put to the Soviet authorities about why they did not evacuate Kiev.

However, not a word was said about Swedish preparedness for dealing with a similar accident. Was it by chance that the Swedish Institute for Protection Against Radioactivity [Straalskuddsinstitutet] failed to publish figures about the doses of radioactivity measured in greater Stockholm? Or did that have something to do with not wanting to "alarm" people in a city that in fact cannot be evacuated?

Criticism of the failure to evacuate Kiev, which is within 80 miles of the site of the accident, would boomerang if people realized that the Swedish authorities have only worked out contingency plans for an area 50 kilometers from the Swedish reactors — apparently to avoid having to consider plans for bigger cities such as Goteborg and Uppsala, which are just a bit further away from reactors.

But the worst of all is that the social democratic government has flatly rejected the demand for closing the two nuclear power plants at Barsebaeck in Skaane, which are only 12 miles from Sweden's third largest city, Malmo, and a like distance from Copenhagen. That is, the Swedish reactors are only 12 miles from Denmark's capital and major population center, one-sixth of the distance from Chernobyl to Kiev.

In Denmark, the use of nuclear power has been rejected. Now the Danish social democrats have taken the initiative to demand that their comrades in the Swedish government shut down the Barsebaeck plants, and this initiative has just gotten a clear majority in the Danish parliament.

"Here in the West, nuclear power is safer — that's the comforting refrain," wrote the bourgeois Danish evening paper *B.T.*

"Yes, but *if* one day it was Barsebaeck that melted down, we would be saying goodby to Copenhagen.

This risk is small, but it still exists. But after all is such a risk acceptable for the sake of a power plant. Of course not!"

A lot of Danes are thinking that way, now that the threat has become more palpable, with a measurable contamination of the land, the ban on grazing on the Swedish side of the Oeresund, warnings about green vegetables in Eastern and Southern Europe, and so on.

On May 2, the Danish daily paper *Ekstra-bladet* started a petition campaign calling for shutting down the Barsebaeck plants. It ran a banner head across its first page saying "Get rid of Barsebaeck now!" And at the same time, it published a list of names of people supporting the demand.

In a letter to the Swedish premier, Ingvar Carlsson, the paper's editor in chief described Barsebaeck as "a daily threat to 2 million Danes. Only Sweden has had the effrontery to build a nuclear power plant less than 20 kilometers from the capital of another country."

The letter ended:

"We are not going to let ourselves be pacified and sedated by irresponsible experts' talk. Take this menace away from our door! Barsebaeck must go!"

This reaction, along with others since the Chernobyl disaster, fits in with the campaign that the powerful Danish antinuclear movement has waged over the last ten years against Barsebaeck and against the subsequently shelved plans for a Danish nuclear program.

By its persistant work, the Danish social democratic party was brought over to demanding that Barsebaeck be removed without any delay.

"We are going to ask the Swedes to shut down Barsebaeck," the Danish social democratic party chair, Anker Jorgensen repeated on May 1.

The polls now show that 60 per cent of Swedes are against nuclear power. And so the pro-nuclear-power social democratic government has had to take a softer tone.

With time, this pressure should lead to something more concrete. The criticisms made of the Soviets have not always been well enough thought out by those who defend the Swedish nuclear-power program, and a lot of the arguments backfire against almost every aspect of the government's and the nuclear-power industry's own plans.

The official Swedish line, set by the government's proposition in the 1980 referendum, is that nuclear power should be phased out before 2010. But the People's Campaign Against Nuclear Power [Folkkampanjen mot kaernkraft], which has now got a new wind in its sails, is demanding an immediate dismantling.

Other sections of public opinion, which are also reflected in the social democratic party, are not for such a radical line. But stronger and stronger demands are being raised in Swedish society that the dismantling should start now, and not some time in the 1990s, which is the government's position.

Naturally this pressure is being focused on the call for shutting down Barsebaeck, a demand that the government is finding it more and more difficult to oppose, and on the demand that the government go back on its decision to invest billions of crowns to expand the Ringhal nuclear-power plant south of Goteborg.

The Swedish spring has come late but it has finally arrived and it is a hot one. For the government and the nuclear industry, it is going to continue into a hot summer and fall. We can expect powerful mobilizations by antinuclear opinion in Sweden. □

One million out on May Day in run up to June strikes

THE EVENTS of May 1 in South Africa, when over one million people participated in the largest protest action in the country's history, are testimony to the continuing development of the mass movement.

But as the movement develops in breadth and experience and as the daily confrontations continue, huge debates have also started up. The combativity of the masses continues to come up against the organizational limits of the movement and it is around this question that discussion is focussing. The following article looks at the events of the last few months and towards the possibilities of the future.

PETER BLUMER

One of the most noticeable developments of this year has been the broadening of the popular mobilizations into areas which were not affected in 1985.

This is particularly the case in the bantustan of Bophuthatswana which was declared "independent" by Pretoria and is made up of seven separate districts around Johannesburg. This bantustan, which consists of 2 million inhabitants, was set up by the racist authorities to house the Tswana ethnic group. But many of those living there are not Tswana and, largely for that reason, have been subjected to harassment and intimidation from the bantustan's puppet regime. A large section of the male population of the territory is composed of migrant workers working in industry and commerce, in the Transvaal region. Others work in the mines within the bantustan itself or in "border" industries where employers can take advantage of a cheap labour force amongst the miserable population of the reserve.

Because of this, the authorities in the bantustans, particularly Bophuthatswana, do not recognize even the meagre rights won by Black workers in the large industrial towns. They also feel able to introduce forms of repression which even the Botha government is wary of. Assassination, kidnappings and stonings are the most common forms of maintaining law and order used by these local potentates.

The industrial and mining areas of Bophuthatswana have been the most prone to popular revolt and repression. On January 6, the Gencor mining company at the Impala platinum mine decided to sack 23,000 mineworkers because they had refused to call off a strike. The bantustan authorities proved ready to deny the people any trade union rights and to put themselves at the disposal of the bosses in clamping down on the workers. The National Union of Mineworkers [NUM] was not recognized by this particular company. (1)

During the month of March there were several popular assemblies which the local police deliberately attacked. It was on one of these occasions that two French doctors from a charity organization were arrested and beaten up. They later explained to the press how the Blacks arrested with them by bantustan police had been systematically beaten and tortured. These clashes resulted in dozens of deaths and hundreds of people wounded.

The unrest in Bophuthatswana has two main implications. First it reflects the general situation in the Transvaal, since any reserve situated 50 to 80 kilometres from Pretoria and Johannesburg must be tied in with the social and economic situation in this central industrial area of the country. The unrest is also a sign of a new destabilization of the apartheid system, in that it involves a direct confrontation between the population of a bantustan and the Black police authorities.

The mass movement in the large white-dominated areas has, in the meantime, been continuing at the same level as last year. More than half a million days were lost in strike action in the first three months of 1986. The next few weeks will be a period of heightened activity on the trade-union front. Important wage negotiations in mines and metallurgy are due to take place.

On May 1, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's [of the KwaZulu bantustan] Inkatha party launched its own reactionary trade union — UWUSA (United Workers Union of South Africa).

However, the events of May Day proved a vital opportunity for the trade-union movement to show its strength. These events were an important prelude to June 16, 17 and 18, the proposed dates for the general strike on the issue of the education system. And finally July 1 should be the date for the implementation of wage increases in the mines and is therefore an important date for the trade unions. As the South African *Weekly Mail* points out in its April 4, 1986, issue: "All these dates take on an added significance because of the events of the past three months, which have seen the most sustained expression of workers' militancy since 1973."

Occupations and strikes escalate

Engineering workers and other sections have been occupying their workplaces in the last few weeks; the mining industry has been affected by 30 strikes since January. Already this year there have been more people participating in strikes in the mines than during the great 1946 strike or during the strikes in 1984 and 1985 in this sector. It is estimated that there have been 11,000 people per day on strike in the mines since the beginning of the year. The demands of the strikers vary according to where the strikes occur. They include demands for wage increases and in the case of Bophuthatswana, NUM recognition. In some mines demands were also thrown up around the issue of migrant labour or for non-racialism, that is, against preferential treatment for whites.

The situation in industry as a whole is very tense and some observers on the employers' side believe that it is critical. Again according to the *Weekly Mail* of April 4, 1986, "a number of different factors have been trotted out to explain these trends, but perhaps the crucial one is the effect of the overall political climate and

1. A director of the Gencor company was quoted as saying that "you run into a point where they get completely unreasonable. The alternative is to get rid of the whole labour force and replace them. There is a condition of massive unemployment in the country and that encourages us to take this kind of action".

the impetus given to politics in the labour movement by the formation of COSATU four months ago". (2)

This is why it is important to follow with great attention the debate on the crisis in the education system, on the schools boycott and on the organization of the mass movement around these issues. Having decided to return to classes after long months of boycott, the school students movement — which groups together young people, parents and teachers — has re-raised the demands that have not yet been met and is proposing a new national initiative for the middle of June. One important and unknown factor in this regard is COSATU's attitude toward this action. There is little doubt that the trade-union federation will decide to get involved in this movement, which would mean a real coming together of industrial struggles with the struggles in the townships and popular quarters. This kind of united activity is taking place in the context of a much higher level of consciousness and organization than existed in the united-front actions of 1984 and 1985.

The schools boycott was one of the main events of 1985 affecting society as a whole, and it constituted the main point of physical confrontation between the mass movement and the regime. In the last months it was the coloured school students movement in the Cape area which was in the forefront against both the ministers of education and so-called "coloured affairs" and the whole repressive policy of President PW Botha.

As we wrote at the time, the boycott movement was tending to run out of steam through lack of an immediate perspective and a real liaison with the mass movement as a whole, in particular with the working class and the trade unions.

On December 29 and 30, 1986, a large national meeting took place in Johannesburg at which 161 organizations met to discuss the follow-up to the schools boycott. The conference was organized by the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC) which is an organization with strong links to the United Democratic Front [UDF]. All the different currents were represented there including the trade unions.

This national meeting registered the difficulties facing the movement. Replying to the slogan of some young people that there would be "no education without liberation", Desmond Tutu explained that people need education in order to be liberated ("education for liberation"). (3) According to the January 7 edition of *Argus*, Stone Sixani, secretary of the UDF for the Eastern Cape, is supposed to have said that for his part "children had a role to play in the 'struggle for liberation', but in the classroom, not in the streets."

As a result the conference decided on a plan for a return to school along with a list of demands on the regime and a perspective of renewed activity if these demands were not met.

The Johannesburg meeting was important for several reasons. It represented an attempt to achieve unity at a higher level than before. Of course there were some problems but it cannot be denied that the meeting represented a step forward in the fight for a united front. Also the implementation of conference decisions was a way of testing the real possibility for exercising control on the part of the organizations and committees that are leading the various mass activities in the communities. There were some problems in this regard but their real significance is not apparent. The firmness of the decisions taken in Johannesburg on December 29 shows that the UDF leadership had decided to put an end to what was coming to be regarded as disorderliness in the youth movement. It is obviously too early to judge the correctness of this approach and the implications in the medium term. But the national meeting showed a willingness to take up precise strategies rather than to just be carried along by the spontaneity of the movement.

Riots in Johannesburg, September 1984 (DR)

"Turn the classrooms into zones of liberation"

On January 26, in the Cape area, a similar meeting on a regional level decided to support the decisions taken in Johannesburg. The final statement drawn up by most of the political tendencies explained: "One view is that the boycott should continue until all our demands are met, even if we have to sacrifice another year, or even two or three years of inferior education. This view is based on a completely false reading of the political situation in South Africa, since it supposes that the National Party government is about to fall and that an indefinite schools boycott will hasten this fall ... There is no moral, political or educational reason for continuing the boycott of classes 'indefinitely'. But we want to say here briefly that the boycott as a weapon of struggle is used most successfully when the oppressed have it in their power to withhold their consent when the government needs it to give legitimacy to its institutions (such as management committees, community councils, tricameral parliaments etc ...) ... We can and should, quite simply, turn the classrooms into zones of liberation; we can and should turn the whole educational system into a weapon against our oppressors ..." (*Cape Times*, January 27, 1986).

It seems, then, that the decision has been taken on the basis of an evaluation of the current relation of forces. Compared to statements made in September or October 1985, this represents an indisputable step forward. But the most important thing politically is the statement on the boycott tactic. Here this is presen-

2. In January 1986, 385,000 days were lost in strikes. This is the highest figure since 1979. In January 1985, there were 5,000 days lost and in January 1984, 96,000.

3. "Weekly Mail", January 19, 1986.

ted as being more effective when seeking to present an obstacle to the state institutions. There were two boycott movements in 1985, one of the schools and the other of white-owned shops. In the latter case, the boycott sometimes brought local distribution trade to a halt. In the case of the schools boycott, it became necessary to call a halt in order to avoid the risk of its disintegrating of its own accord. But the implicit question raised by the Cape statement is on the nature of the objectives of a boycott. Should they be reduced to objectives aimed at the state or broadened to include economic objectives which would obviously hit the white employers and thus also the liberal sections?

It is obvious that the debate is a very complicated one which goes beyond this or that tactical requirement. The debate on ending the schools boycott thus had the merit of touching on wider issues.

The national organization which has taken on the role of coordination, the National Education Crisis Committee, met on the weekend of March 29 and 30 in Durban. It took up the debate on the tactics of the struggle (4) and Zwelakhe Sisulu, son of the imprisoned African National Congress [ANC] leader Walter Sisulu, explained things in the following way: "We will not defeat apartheid while the youth alone carry on the struggle against Bantu education or other aspects of racist rule. We will not win while our ranks are split by teachers who have not yet thrown in their lot with the democratic movement. We will not win while parents remain alienated from the demands of their children ... Our task is to look for strategies which continually strengthen and enlarge the ranks of the people and constantly weaken, divide and isolate the ranks of the enemy." (*Weekly Mail*, April 4, 1986).

This latest national meeting therefore confirmed the decision to go back to school. But it also decided to call for a National Youth Day on June 16 and a three-day national stayaway on June 16, 17, and 18 for all sections of the Black movement. It is on this point that COSATU's response is still awaited.

In the *Weekly Mail* of April 4 it is noted that "student delegates to the conference ... anticipated difficulty in having conference decisions accepted in their constituencies."

More than two weeks after the Durban decision there are several places where students have not gone back to classes. However in Soweto, where the movement is the most organized, the students went back to school, although according to a member of the National Education Crisis Committee, the classes did not take place. "The main problem in Soweto schools", according to the *Weekly Mail* of April 11, 1986, "is the demand by students that they should be promoted to the next class and the popular slogan of 'pass one, pass all'."

May Day protests

IN A MASSIVE show of strength by the trade-union movement, one million Black workers and school students staged a stayaway on May 1, demanding that May Day be a paid holiday.

Since 1979 when the trade unions were "legalized" there has been a consistent struggle for May Day to be a paid holiday. This year a small number of employers had conceded that demand. The National Union of Mineworkers had managed to obtain legal recognition for this year's strike on the grounds that the demand had been lodged one year beforehand.

The May Day events were a tremendous boost for the newly unified trade-union movement. Business associations reported 70% to 100% absenteeism, with the highest support for the strike being in the Transvaal area. The Anglo-American mining corporation reported that 83% of workers were on strike.

But this strike was also seen by many as merely a practice run for the three-day strike called for June 16-18 in commemoration of those killed in Soweto and in protest against the bantu education system.

The September and October 1985 meetings between the ANC and various employers' representatives and liberal leaders of the Progressive Federal Party [PFP] constituted a sort of green light for all those who might find it useful to meet the leadership of the movement. In other words the ability of bourgeois personalities to carry out a strictly illegal action has given others a margin for manoeuvre that they did not have before.

Church representatives also went to Lusaka, Zambia, to meet the ANC, and, according to the January 10 *Weekly Mail*, just before the big conference on education in Johannesburg on December 29, 1985, "a Soweto Parents Crisis Committee delegation travelled to Lusaka to meet with executive members of the African National Congress." (5)

But the most important visit was undoubtedly that of the COSATU delegation, following an initial meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, at the end of last year. This second meeting was the occasion for the publication of a joint communique whose importance cannot be underestimated (see *International Viewpoint*, No. 97, April 21, 1986).

According to some newspapers, the first meeting in December 1985 between Jay Naidoo, the general secretary of COSATU, and the ANC delegation raised certain problems within the union federation. COSATU is supposed to have called for a boycott of the journal *The Sowetan* which reported that Naidoo had no mandate for the meeting. According to the *Weekly Mail*, "the few murmurings of discontent over the ANC meeting were silenced by the unanimous vote of confidence in the general secretary and the executive."

Although the second meeting between COSATU and the ANC does not seem to have caused any major problem within the federation, the precise political consequences are not yet clear. Most observers have remarked on the very "balanced" character of the final statement with an acceptance by COSATU of the role of the ANC and a recognition by the latter of the special importance of COSATU on the social and political scene.

At any rate, this friendly exchange between the two organizations marks a change on the South African political scene and will undoubtedly improve relations between the UDF and the trade unions in future mass campaigns. Something like the approaches to COSATU following on the schools boycott movement, for example, is a relatively new phenomenon. When the schools boycott was at its height in October 1985, very few people in the UDF were concerned with the role of the trade unions in the mobilizations. The result of the critical balance sheet of these struggles and also the outcome of the Lusaka and Harare meetings mean that the role of the workers' movement is now recognized and even sought after by the leaders of the community organizations.

Another slightly less important meeting was the one that took place

4. The Durban meeting was attacked by men from the Zulu party, Inkatha. Two members of their commando were killed in the clashes.

5. Other important meetings with the ANC include an official interview with a delegation of the British foreign office. It was also recently learned that the masonic Afrikaner organization, the Afrikaner Broederbond, would be interested in discussing with the ANC and has made some approaches. Its problem is that a number of them are members of the government and Botha has until now refused all discussions with the ANC.

Despite Botha's "reforms", the repression continues (DR)

between the white student organization, NUSAS [National Union of South African Students] and the ANC. This meeting, which took place at the beginning of April, came after a broad referendum among white English-speaking students to mandate their leaders to call it. Nearly 95 per cent of the 10,000 students in the different assemblies voted in favour of the meeting taking place. In October 1985 students trying to leave the country had had their passports withdrawn by the authorities. This time the government was hard put to it to place any obstacle in their way. A communique from the meeting explained that "the real interests of the majority of the white South Africans do not lie in the system of racial domination and national oppression". According to observers, the discussion centered on the role of whites in a future democratic South Africa, on the economic perspectives of the ANC and on relations with the South African Communist Party, as well as on a whole series of other issues like ecology, nuclear energy and women's oppression.

This meeting shows the developments taking place among English-speaking whites, radical democrats, Christians and petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The success of the campaign against conscription illustrates the same phenomenon. What animates these layers is not a radical and class-based political perspective but rather a desire to get out of the current crisis and put forward a general democratic solution. The behaviour of such layers often seems to reveal a fear of civil war.

Nevertheless, this movement by a section of the white population is useful for two reasons. The first is that it really puts pressure on the government which has great difficulty in repressing or even opposing democratic or liberal movements. The second reason is that gradually, and despite confusions within this milieu, the ANC has managed to win a substantial number as members and sympathizers working on their behalf.

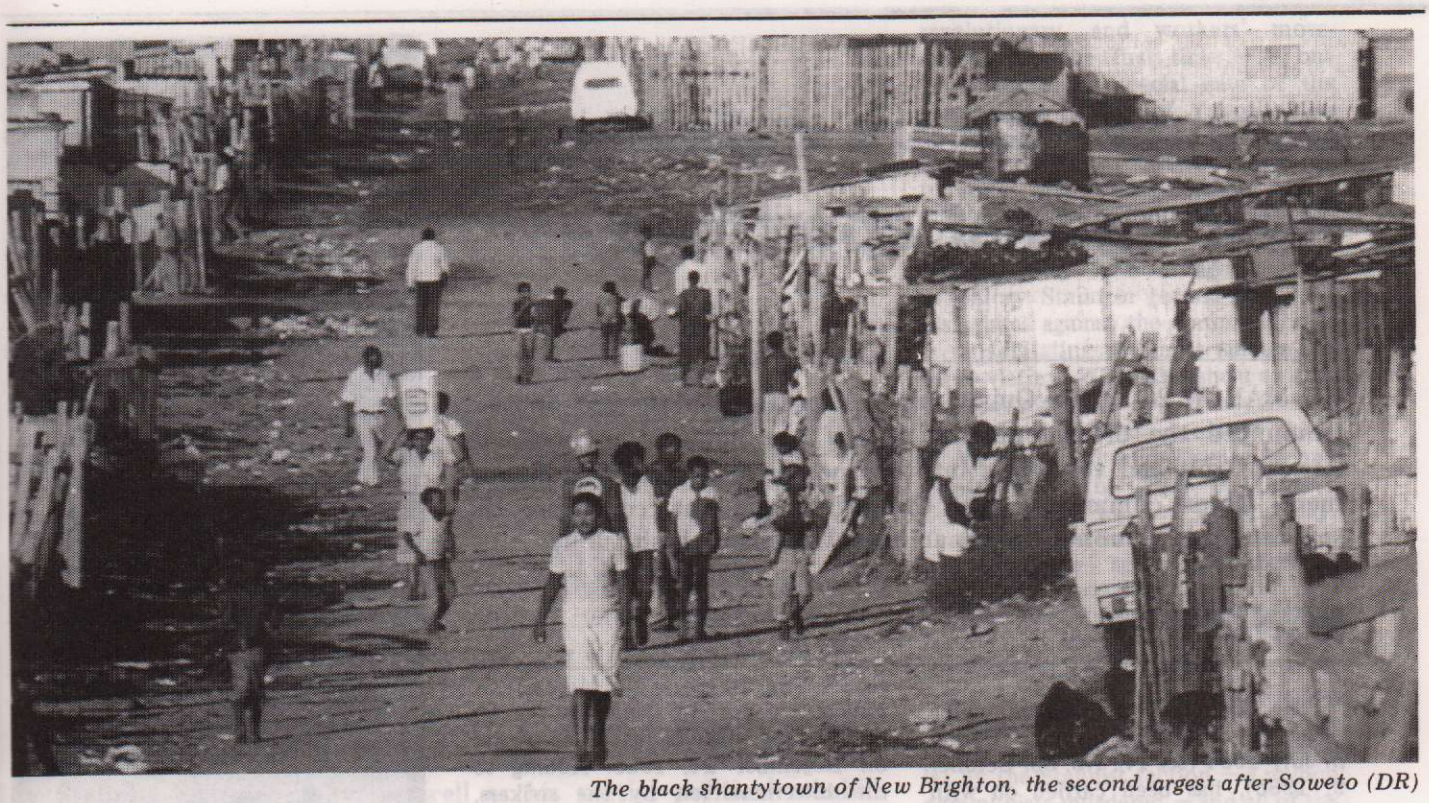
On April 3 a conference of 31 organizations took place in Durban, Natal, whose aim was to set up a new system of administration for the whole region. This would not just be for "white" Natal but for the KwaZulu bantustan headed by Buthelezi and his party, Inkatha. According to participants the new structure would mark the beginnings of a federalist system capable of overcoming all the current contradictions in the apartheid system. The so-called "Kwa-Natal" perspective came from Inkatha leaders and leaders of a small liberal party, the New Republican Party which, although not very large on a national level, is in a majority in the Natal provincial council. A significant fact is that representatives of the ruling National Party were also present at the conference as observers. The government has already accepted the principle of an administrative fusion of KwaZulu and Natal but are a long way from accepting the creation of a single and unique legislative provincial assembly — that is involving Black people's right to vote. The Natal area consists of 600,000 whites, 700,000 Indians, 100,000 coloureds and 1.4 million Blacks.

Crisis affects government and National Party

The spectrum of progressive political and trade-union organizations have rejected this perspective which they see as an attempt to salvage the system through constitutional formal measures.

This whole business shows the complexity of changes occurring in the white bourgeois camp. Of course the case of Natal is special and this kind of reformist project would have little chance of even being discussed at the moment in other regions.

The "KwaNatal" project is only possible because the white employers, the Indian bourgeoisie and Zulu capitalist entrepreneurs in the area all have common objective interests. It is the particular social formation in Natal which has permitted such negotiations. But it is important to look beyond this and relate it to the crisis affecting the government itself and the National Party. The discussion in Natal is aimed at finding an echo in the new project of the President's Council entitled "An urbaniza-



The black shantytown of New Brighton, the second largest after Soweto (DR)

tion strategy for the Republic of South Africa". This latter has its roots in a widespread questioning of the whole bantustan and labour-control policy. This development at the very heart of the regime, which could sow divisions amongst its base, is not just a result of social pressure. It is also a necessary response for overcoming the inherent contradictions of the apartheid system and the current stage of capitalist accumulation in the country. According to a paper prepared by DC Hudson and entitled *Orderly Urbanization and Influx Control*, "this new phase has been brought on by a crisis of profitability, the irreversible erosion of the material basis of temporary migration, the weakening of bureaucratic labour controls and the failure to attain either the economic or political aims of territorial apartheid.

"There is evidence to suggest that the regional ordering of the proletariat is superceding the existing dualistic division with the urban areas between settled and migratory labour ...

"The ruling class's search for more radical solutions to the deepening economic and political crisis of the mid-1980s has finally led to an abandonment of territorial apartheid and an acceptance of the need to reintegrate the bantustans into some form of single national system, albeit one constituted on the basis of ethnic-cum-regional / federal / confederal units."

Here we find the real thinking behind Botha's speech on January 31, 1986, known as "Rubicon 2", when he announced that apartheid was outmoded, that the pass system would be abolished on July 1, 1986, and that South Africa was going toward a system of power sharing between the two races. (6)

The President's Council report mentioned above was published in November 1985, and explains also that "neither the present system nor any other direct form of 'negative' influx control should be retained. There is, however, a need for a positive approach to urbanization that would allow the orderliness of the process to be promoted. It is necessary for influx control to be replaced by a positive urbanization strategy that, by making use of market forces, subsidies and development, among other things, will encourage people to settle in certain suitable areas rather than forbidding them to move to certain urban areas."

Division on short-term objectives

This debate is running through the whole of the ruling class. The liberals' only perspective is to put pressure on the regime. But they have a tendency to be divided on short-term objectives. Botha's Rubicon 2 speech was aimed essentially at their ranks. The question now for this bourgeois opposition and for the many employers who support it is to choose between Botha's promises, some kind of intermediate solution like "Kwa-Natal" aimed at showing that a multiracial bourgeois rule is possible, or to maintain the systematically radical stance of last year. Strangely enough, it was after Botha's speech that the PFP leader, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and another leader, Alex Borain, made their noisy departure from parliament. Slabbert's "*j'accuse*" gesture, when he explained that he was wasting his time in an assembly which was incapable of changing the system, surprised more than one observer. Slabbert was no newcomer, and the most one can say is that he took a long time to recognize the limits of the system. His decision was not well received by large sections of the PFP and the liberal press.

With hindsight it seems that Slabbert's gesture had more to do with the problems within the liberal camp than with a sudden awakening as to the true nature of the Botha regime.

It is quite probable that after the intense phase of polemics against the government by the liberals in 1985 and the series of visits to the ANC, things will now be clarified and the differences will reappear. It is interesting to note that whilst some liberals are turning their attention to Botha's utterances, others are discussing Buthelezi's formula in Natal, and Slabbert has attended a meeting of the UDF in Johannesburg. Underlying all this to-ing and fro-ing are the classical problems of the liberals: deciding who to discuss with and guessing who will be the key representatives. Slabbert is betting on the ANC and the others are sticking to the usual channels. □

6. Among the recent measures of so-called liberalization note the opening up of business centres in the large towns to non-white traders.

Dunnes strikers continue fight against apartheid

ON MARCH 26, Ruairi Quinn, minister for labour in the 26 Counties, announced the official phasing out of the importation of South African fruit and vegetables into Ireland. In making this announcement, Quinn commented that the government was recognizing the support for the Dunnes strikers amongst the general Irish public.

BRIAN DAVITT

The strike against apartheid, which began at the Dunnes Stores in Dublin in July 1984 (see *IV*, No. 83, October 9, 1985), has been carried on with great courage by 11 young workers for 21 months now. Public support for the strikers reached its peak last November when over 3,000 turned out on a wet day in Dublin at a rally to support the strikers and show solidarity with the strikers.

The first major initiative in the dispute occurred after this march, when the Dublin government announced in December that it would ban South African fruit and vegetables from the 26 Counties if it could prove that prison labour was being used to pick these products.

This ban was to be introduced by April 1, 1986, if sufficient evidence could be found. (The chief sources for the Dublin government were the International Labour Organization and the Swedish government.)

The strikers condemned this half-hearted approach, pointing out that the apartheid regime and its basic tenets are reason enough for a ban on South African goods.

Union sells out

The Irish Distributive and Administrative Trades Union (IDATU), the strikers' union, grasped the government's offer with both hands. Its executive agreed to lift the pickets at Dunnes' Stores "as a gesture of good will," pending a government decision on the ban.

This decision was taken against the will of *all* the strikers who had been picketing for 18 months until then.

IDATU informed the strikers that they must follow its decision or lose the support of the union. Under protest, the strikers lifted the picket on December 24, 1985. Adding to the bitterness felt by the strikers, they were instructed by IDATU to: a) disband their support group; b) not to speak to the press; c) not to speak at public meetings without prior approval from the union executive.

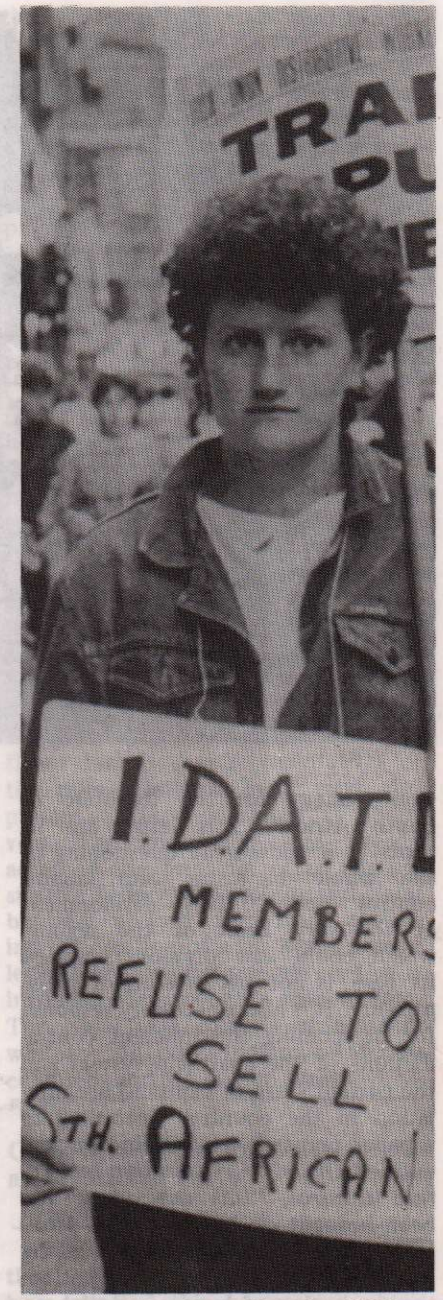
The lifting of the picket confused the Dublin shopping public. Was the strike over? No. Where are the strikers? At home.

IDATU's decision took the pressure off the government, demoralized the strikers by isolating them from their union and their supporters and removed the strike from the public eye. The net effect was to end the strike for Dunne by leaving the strikers in the cold.

By late January, the strikers' support group had reformed under another name. Postering, leafletting and shop-ins took place throughout February, and the issue of sanctions against South Africa was raised once more. These actions, with their direct references to the strikers, plus the recurring images of state violence against Blacks in South Africa helped remind people of the Dunnes' Stores strike. IDATU gave its blessing to the strikers' picket of Dail Eireann (the Irish parliament) that began in March.

On March 26, after a series of public statements by TDs (teachtai Dala, members of parliament) and senators, Ruairi Quinn announced limited sanctions against South Africa.

A ban on the importation of South African fruit and vegetables is being phased in to take effect from October 1, 1986. The delay, the minister for labour claims, is to allow suppliers enough time to find alternative supplies. There are loopholes even in this limited concession. Suppliers who have purchased South African fruit for more than three years may continue to do so under a "strict" licensing system!



Dunnes striker Mary Manning (DR)

For the strikers, the "solution" is no solution. Dunne claims that their jobs await them, but for as long as he sells South African goods they will not return. So, from now until October they will continue to struggle but without any focus for their incredible energies. For this partial victory, it is they who must take all the credit.

Grudgingly the Dublin government has recognized their struggle, but in doing so it insults that cause with a limited and cautious action. The Dublin Government earlier insulted the strikers by abstaining on a UN motion declared the South African regime to be "degrading." Only the United States voted against.

Chinese writers partially rehabilitate Trotsky

LI XIANRONG, a member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has recently published a book entitled *Critical Biography of Trotsky*. The work, which was commissioned by the Institute for Research in World History, a subsidiary of the Academy of Sciences of the People's Republic of China, has not yet reached the West.

But another important member of the CCP has just published a review of the book in the journal, *Shijie Lishi (World History)*, No. 7, 1985 which has shown up in Europe, the United States and Hong Kong. The article, "My View of the Critical Evaluation of Important Figures in World History," constitutes a complete juridical rehabilitation of Leon Trotsky in relation to the "crimes" attributed to him by Stalinist historiography, as well as his partial political rehabilitation as the founder of our movement.

The authors of the book and the article are not obscure individuals but important cadres of the CCP, and these publications should be seen in the far broader context of a critical examination of the entire past of the international communist movement. The rehabilitation indicated by the lifting of the bans on the publication of such texts, then, undoubtedly represents the opinions of at least some, if not all, of the CCP's leadership.

We are publishing below an analysis of these documents, as well as a translation of the article that appeared in *Shijie Lishi*.

ERNEST MANDEL

Zhu Tingguan's article, judging from this translation, and Li Xianrong's book, according to Chinese readers, who are for the moment our only references, categorically reject the accusations made at the Moscow Trial against Leon Trotsky and his comrades, that they were spies, agents, counterrevolutionary renegades, or even objective tools of imperialism and counterrevolution. These authors condemn his assassination for what it was — a murder — and implicitly attribute the responsibility for it to his "persecutors," Stalin and his accomplices.

They also categorically reject the version that is to be found in *The History of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the USSR: a Short Survey*, of Trotsky's role in the Russian and international workers' movements, in the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, as well as in the building of the Soviet state.

This book was officially adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1938 and has been the international Stalinist bible on the question of Trotsky and Trotskyism for more than two decades. It inspired the Maoists in China even as recently as the 1970s. It is now judged contemptuously to be a falsification of history, pure and simple.

Completely at odds with this falsification, the writings of CCP members, Li Xianrong and Zhu Tingguan, characterize Leon Trotsky as one of the CPSU's chief leaders, who prepared and initiated the Petrograd insurrection during the October revolution, who then created the Red Army and ensured its victory in the civil war, thanks to a correct strategic orientation.

The publication of these writings, then, constitutes an important political event for the entire international revolutionary and workers' movements. For the first time — if one leaves aside the special case of the Communist League of Yugoslavia — a Communist Party in power, the largest Communist Party in the world, is going much further than Nikita Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU.

This party is no longer content to pillory Stalin in general terms for his crimes against the communists. It is rehabilitating the most eminent of those victims. What Khrushchev either did not dare to do, or could not, despite the implicit promises made at the Twentieth and Twenty-Second Congresses of the CPSU, the Chinese Communist leaders are doing today. Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev and their comrades are again presented as authentic communists.

The conflict between the Stalinist faction and the other factions within the CPSU and the Communist International is presented as a clash inside the party, not as a battle with an enemy and/or agents. All of the blood let by the Stalinist faction — a million communists murdered — and all of the mud slung at the victims is thus losing all of its adhesiveness, all of its class justification.

Although Zhu Tingguan does not explicitly recognize it, the conclusion is inevitable: the massive and barbaric repression carried out by Stalin against his political adversaries inside the communist movement was criminal. (1) It delivered a terrible blow to the interests of communism, to the workers in the USSR and to the world proletariat.

It is, moreover, a conclusion already reached by some of the leaders and ideologues of Eurocommunism and by some other Communist parties such as the Mexican one, which had, on this point at least, agreed with the Eurocommunists.

The use of the formula, "inner-party struggle," to characterize the political struggle between the Stalinist faction, the Trotskyist faction — later the unified Trotsky-Zinoviev Left Opposition — and the Bukharinist faction, is not accidental. It harks back to two famous articles by Mao Tse-tung: *On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* and *On the Contradictions Within the People*, written shortly after the Khrushchev revelations to the CPSU Twentieth Congress.

In these articles Mao made a judgement implicitly supporting the denunciation of Stalinist methods.

1. It seems that Li Xianrong may have been even more explicit on this point in his book by describing Trotsky's assassination as a "vile crime." But verification of this point will have to wait until the book becomes available.

In the same vein, he violently opposed the Soviet Army's intervention in Poland when Wladyslaw Gomulka returned to power in October 1956.

Later, the Chinese leader changed his mind and rehabilitated Stalin. Was that because of the impact of the Hungarian revolution? Was he influenced by the explosion of critical and oppositional opinion in China itself at the time of the "Hundred Flowers" experience in 1957? Was it a function of the exigencies of his factional struggle inside the CCP? To analyze the stages and the motivating forces of this about face in greater depth would strain the limits of this article.

In any case, the defence of Stalin profoundly branded Maoism for two decades, from 1957 to 1977. The stance now taken by Li Xianrong and Zhu Tingguan constitutes at the very least a return to Mao Tse-tung's initial attitude toward the Khrushchev revelations — and, indeed, goes far beyond it.

Not only is the denunciation of Stalin's cult of personality vigorously seconded. But from the methodological point of view, the writers have reestablished two principles that were challenged by Stalinism, and yet which are close to the very heart of Marxism.

First of all, the Chinese authors insist on the primacy of historical truth above any considerations of state, of party or of *realpolitik*. They reiterate that one must "fight superstition," "liberate thought," rigorously verify the facts, in order to be able to speak authoritatively about the building of socialism. In other words, they are sending us back to that basic principle, so often affirmed by Marx and Engels, that only the truth is revolutionary. From the Marxist point of view it is absolute nonsense to try to defend the revolution while suppressing or falsifying historical truth.

Out of the dusty archives with the 1920s debates

Then, the Chinese authors refer explicitly to the international character of the revolution and the revolutionary experience. The debates that took place inside the CPSU during the 1920s are not just literary phenomena, masses of dusty archives to be classified and studied. The experience of those debates is a source of political enlightenment for all countries and parties, for all leaders, cadres and activists, who are today confronted with the problems of the survival of the revolution in the midst of a hostile capitalist environment, who are faced with class relationships

Leon Trotsky (DR)

specific to the conditions of relative underdevelopment in their countries and with the problem of the timing and the forms necessary for building a classless society. The rigorously scientific study of this experience is therefore indispensible to better equip the communist movement to solve the problems confronting it today.

For all of these reasons we must salute the partial political rehabilitation of Trotsky by the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party as an event of great importance, one that continues the tradition of the Khrushchev report to the Twentieth Congress. In spite of all the reservations that we have and the criticisms we can offer in regard to the limits and contradictions of this rehabilitation — in spite of our overall judgement of the political and social nature of the present Chinese bureaucracy, which we are not modifying one iota — it is apparent that taking such a position greatly favors the development of critical thought in all those who look to communism and to the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

All assaults on obscurantism, on the falsification of history, on lies and calumny, all explicit challenges to the use of violence and terror to settle differences inside the workers' movement objectively constitute a step toward the liberation of that movement from the bureaucratic straitjacket that keeps it from achieving the worldwide victory of socialism. That these blows are more necessary now than ever before is shown by the tragic experiences of Grenada and South Yemen — citing only the most obvious recent cases. They suffice to justify this programmatic thesis of our movement.

The publication of the "Critical Biography of Trotsky" and the favorable commentary accorded it by the revue *Shijie Lishi* are not isolated phenomena. Since 1978 in the People's Republic of China, a partial thaw has occurred where literary and ideological pluralism is concerned. It has increased the latitude accorded to publications without, however, establishing complete freedom or removing censorship. Some critical Chinese authors — notably those in the New Democratic Movement — continue to be victims of banning and suppression; some of them are stagnating in prison. The possibilities for public debate remain very limited, but they are nevertheless more extensive than at the time of the cultural revolution or during the first decade after the victory of the Chinese socialist revolution in 1949.

After the "liberalization" instituted by Deng Xiaoping, some of the authors banned in the USSR and in most of the other workers' states — once again with the honorable exception of Yugoslavia — began to be published in China, albeit on a limited scale. Contrary to the periods of "liberalization" in the USSR (the

Khrushchev era), in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (1968-69), in Poland (1980-81) and partially in Hungary, this opening in China was available not only to novelists and petty-bourgeois scholars and ideologues, but also to Marxist and anarchist authors who were considered to be nonconformist and to the left of the CCP officials. Thus, specific works by Bakunin, Bukharin, Kropotkin, Luxemburg and Kardelj, still banned in the USSR, have appeared in the People's Republic of China.

This lifting of the prohibition likewise applies to works by authors associated with the Trotskyist current as well as to the works of Leon Trotsky himself. Trotsky's *My Life*, *Diary in Exile* and *Results and Prospects* have been published in China. And apparently *The Permanent Revolution* is on its way to publication.

Among other works published in China are: Isaac Deutscher's biography of Stalin; Pierre Frank's *History of the Fourth International* and Ernest Mandel's *Marxist Economic Theory*, *Late Capitalism*, *Critique of Eurocommunism*, (published in a run of 6,000 and with a favorable commentary printed on the cover), and *Theories of Transitional Societies* (combining *The Political Economy of the Transition Period* and *On Bureaucracy*), of which 10,000 copies were published.

Publications thaw necessary for modernization

This thaw belongs in the political context of Deng Xiaoping's overall orientation. The policy of modernization and accelerated growth implies a rapprochement with the intelligentsia who were repressed during the cultural revolution, and a strengthening of the technocratic layers of the bureaucracy, as well as of the "scientific" currents. It is impossible to carry out such a rapprochement and to succeed in a policy of modernization without increasing the latitude for discussion and debate, and consequently the variety of publications.

More generally, since the rupture with the "gang of four" and orthodox Maoism, the leadership of the Chinese CP has been facing a serious problem of historical identity. (2) It no longer considers itself either Maoist or Stalinist, but only Marxist. Between Marx and contemporary reality there is obviously a gap that the leadership hopes somehow or other to fill up with a critical investigation of the contributions made to Marxism not only by Lenin, but also by Luxemburg, Gramsci, Mao and the principal Yugoslav theoreticians. This can lead in both good and bad directions, but it involves a tolerably objective approach. Trotsky is no longer excluded a priori from possible reexamination.

He is explicitly mentioned in this context by Su Shaozhi, the director of the Mao Tse-tung Institute of Marxist-Leninist Thought of the Academy of Social Sciences of the People's Republic of China and, so it seems, a member of the Central Committee of the CCP. He declared:

"The discovery and publication of an enormous body of literature and other data concerning the history of the international communist movement — that is the publication of the deleted parts of the text of the previous editions of Lenin's *Works;* of the daily records written by Lenin's secretary during his illness; of Lenin's will; of the memoirs of some famous persons and their letters to family members; of the original data regarding some major events; of many unofficial histories whose authenticity we should naturally ascertain — have made it possible to reassess many important events and personalities in the history of the international communist movement.

"This means reassessment of, for instance, 'war communism,' the 'new economic policy,' Stalin's 'road to industrialization' and his 'revolution from top to bottom,' the truth of the magnification of the scope of the Soviet struggle against the counterrevolutionaries, the historical role of the Third International, the relationship between Trotsky and the Fourth International and the theories of Rosa Luxemburg, Nikolay Bukharin and Antonio Gramsci.

"The publication of the works Lenin wrote shortly before his death and the related background material has all the more aroused the interest of people in his thinking in the evening of his life. During later years Lenin found that, despite the great successes of the cause initiated by the October Revolution, it suffered from quite a few defects and inadequacies, and that is why he raised the questions of democratizing the organs of the proletarian dictatorship and the Soviets, of opposing bureaucratization and over-concentration of powers and of giving full play to the role of cooperatives. Stalin deviated from Lenin's thinking on these questions and this led to serious tragedy for the Soviet party and state as well as for Stalin himself." (3)

At the same time, this course is fraught with danger for the bureaucratic faction in power. There is the danger of ultraleft reactions from conservative layers and/or Maoists, who stress that such openings may unleash differentiations that run the risk of ending up in explosions. And there is also the danger of popular rebellions (both urban — by workers and students — and rural, on the part of the poor peasants) against the growing inequality brought on by the "economic liberalization."

Under these conditions, in order to protect the bureaucracy, the trend toward freedom of discussion, of publication and of opinion is, then, still very limited. Deng Xiaoping adroitly applies the old adage: "Cover your left; cover your right." But at the same time, especially in a country like China, it is impossible for the central apparatus to exercise absolute control. Because of that, the limited thaw, following its own logic, is partially autonomous from the not always clearly expressed intentions of the supreme leaders.

The rehabilitation of Bukharin had "removed the roadblocks" that obstructed the objective study of the history of the CPSU in China. But does Bukharin's rehabilitation lead logically and inevitably to Trotsky's? The cadres of the Chinese CP are hesitant. They do not seem to have received precise instructions on the subject. Hence the occasionally opaque style and the constrained if not plainly contradictory phrases that we find in Zhu Tingguan's article.

This is all the more the case where Trotsky is concerned. Although this question is less explosive for the bureaucracy as a whole in China than in the USSR, it entails no fewer consequences for the appreciation of the history of the Chinese CP itself, at least from the 1950s until the "Hundred Flowers" episode, or even later.

As Zhu Tingguan himself recalls, Chen Duxiu quickly rejoined Trotsky and the Chinese and international Left Opposition after their expulsion from the Communist International. In fact, Chen Duxiu is a pivotal figure in the history of the Chinese CP, one of the central personnages in all of Chinese twentieth-century history. It was he who introduced Marxism to China. He was a sort of Chinese Plekhanov. He was a passionate advocate of China's assimilation of Western culture, a culture which he believed had Marxism as its logical outcome. In this sense he can be considered the "ancestor" of Deng

2. The members of the "gang of four", including Mao's widow, Jiang Qing, were brought to trial in the early 1980s as part of the process of the reevaluation of Mao's role and ideas that the Chinese Communist party was engaged in at that time.

3. Su Shaozhi, "Developing Marxism under Contemporary Conditions," published in commemoration of the centenial of the death of Karl Marx and translated in "Marxism in China," edited and with a preface by Ken Coates, Nottingham, England, The Spokesman, 1983, pp. 33-34.

Mao's portrait still hangs even after "deMaoisation" (DR)

Xiaoping in the intense struggle between the "Occidentalists" and the "traditionalists" that took place within the progressive Chinese intelligentsia throughout the twentieth century.

But Chen Duxiu was more than a theoretician. He was first and foremost the real founder of the Chinese workers' movement and later the Chinese Communist Party, which he headed for eight years as general secretary. It is impossible to discuss Trotsky and Trotskyism in China without at the same time taking up Chen Duxiu and Chinese Trotskyism. And it is impossible to carry out an objective evaluation of Chen Duxiu — just as of Stalin, Bukharin and Trotsky — without making a critical judgement about the second Chinese revolution of 1925-27 and of the course imposed on the Chinese CP by the Communist International during that revolution, and without assigning exact responsibility for the April 1927 defeat in Shanghai.

This is explosive material for the leadership of the CCP. Of course, while appearing to maintain a general continuity with Mao, the party is not necessarily incapable of undertaking this critical examination of the second Chinese revolution; the future Maoist faction was not directly implicated in the events that led to the disaster of April 1927.

It is also significant that although the article by Zhu Tingguan continues to accuse Chen Duxiu of having formed a "liquidationist clique in opposition to the correct line of armed struggle defended by Mao Tse-tung," this accusation relates to debates concerning the period *after* the 1927 events and not to the events themselves.

The same article abandons the accusation long directed at the Chinese Trotskyists that they were agents of the Kuomintang and even spies for Japanese imperialism. The CCP cadres today explicitly reject this charge brought against Chen Duxiu and attribute it to Kang Sheng, a famous factional adversary of Mao's.

Moreover, two works by early Trotskyists have also been published in China, albeit in strictly limited editions and with circumscribed distribution. These are the *Memoirs* of Zheng Chaolin and Wang Fanxi's *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*. There is also a partial rehabilitation of Chinese Trotskyists implied in the recent positions taken on the question of Trotsky.

The place of Trotsky in Chinese-Soviet talks

Finally, we must not overlook the international aspect of this process, that of the relationship between Peking and Moscow. The Deng leadership team is engaged in delicate, protracted negotiations with the leaders of the Soviet bureaucracy. The question of Trotsky also takes its place in that context.

These steps toward the limited rehabilitation of Trotsky and the old Bolsheviks are a discreet way of exerting pressure on the Kremlin. The Chinese bureaucracy is reminding Moscow that with the resources at its disposal, it could make a real nuisance of itself to the Gorbachev team inasmuch as the latter did not, contrary to some expectations, announce a return to the Khrushchev policies in this area at the recently held CPSU Twenty-Seventh Congress.

On the other hand, a complete rehabilitation of Trotsky and the publication of all of his main works and those of his principal allies would be viewed by Peking as a major obstacle on the road to normalization of its relations with Moscow. So, again, an intermediate solution has been chosen.

Zhu Tingguan's article reveals once again the inevitable contradictions inherent in all attempts to step back from Stalinist slanders of the anti-Trotskyist, proto-Stalinist positions that gained currency in the USSR in 1923-27 under the impetus, first of Zinoviev and Radek, and later of Bukharin and Rykov.

Such attempts insist on the necessity of basing judgements of Trotsky and Stalin on rigorously and scientifically verified documents and historical evidence. But they continue to reproach Trotsky for being opposed to the building of socialism in the USSR. And they do this without referring to the many documents written by him, alone or in association with his political allies between 1923 and 1928, which clearly demonstrate that he was the principle proponent — and with his allies, the principle author — of the country's modernization and industrialization.

The dispute with the Stalin and Bukharin factions in the CPSU did not turn on the necessity for the building of socialism, but on its time scale, the most adequate forms for it to take and its outcome in the medium term. A resolute advocate of the commencement and even of the acceleration of the building of socialism in the USSR, Trotsky was an equally determined adversary of any capitulation to the international bourgeoisie and to all precapitalist tendencies in the USSR. At the same time, he defended the classical Marxist premise that this process was not going to result in the advent of a classless society within the narrow national framework of Russia alone. This result could only be achieved on the international scale.

In other words, the dispute was not between the advocates and the opponents of building socialism in the USSR. It was between the advocates and the opponents of the revisionist hypothesis that the building of socialism could be brought to fruition in one country. Implicit in this dispute, moreover, was another one — the debate over the definition of socialism itself.

Is socialism simply the suppression of the private ownership of the means of production? This definition is totally opposed to the Marxist tradition, in which the suppression of the private ownership of the means of production is only one characteristic — necessary but insufficient — of the advent of socialism, the first

phase of a communist society. The latter is characterized further by the disappearance of society's division into classes, by the withering away of the state, the disappearance of commodity production and social inequality — particularly in regard to effective access to the means of production and of subsistence — and the consequent eradication of the alienated and alienating character of work.

These debates continue to have burning immediacy. It is impossible to deal with them responsibly without the publication of all the important documents of the period in question as well as of the later period in which the earlier events are discussed. If Zhu Tingguan takes seriously the importance he ascribes to the verification of historical sources, he would advocate the publication in China of all those documents originally appearing both in the USSR and abroad. He would begin with: *The New Course* and *Whither Russia: Toward Capitalism or Toward Socialism?* by Leon Trotsky, *The New Economics* by Preobrazhensky, *The Professional Dangers of Power* by Rakovsky, the principal speeches and articles of Zinoviev, Kamenev and their comrades on the question of socialism in one country; the principal articles and speeches of Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky, Yakolev and others who replied to the Opposition; the chief works relating to the workers' struggles (including strikes) and the differentiation of the peasantry in the USSR between 1923 and 1929-1932.

Zhu Tingguan asserts that Trotsky "degenerated into an anti-Soviet exile" after 1928. But he recognizes at the same time that Stalin had "excessively broadened the inner-party struggle." By stating this he has said both too much and too little. Does this "broadening" imply the use of inadmissible methods of repression in 1924 against the Opposition — methods that were never employed in Lenin's time — long before the bloody purges of 1936-38, or does it not?

Questions that must be answered

Were Trotsky, his wife and son exiled from the USSR by Stalin and his acolytes, against their will and despite their vehement protests, or were they not? How can he be reproached under these conditions with his exile for which he bears no responsibility? How can he be characterized as "anti-Soviet" without specifying the political and analytical positions on the nature of the USSR that he held after 1928; without making clear particularly that he remained a stalwart supporter of the military defence of the Soviet Union until the end of his days; without publishing all of his writings on the USSR beginning with *The Revolution Betrayed*, *The Fourth International and the USSR* and *The Defence of Marxism*?

For the same reasons the accusation of "anti-party factional activities" hurled at Trotsky, as well as the charge that he had "split" the Russian and international communist movement, is meaningless. Should he have capitulated to Stalin's acts of repression and his crimes — crimes not only against those in opposition but against all communists and against the entire Russian and international proletariat? That is the real question!

Let us remember that neither Trotsky nor the Opposition ever refused to recognize the discipline of the party or of the Communist International before their expulsion; that they never refused to apply the majority decisions of the party congresses and the Central Committee.

The only thing they demanded was the right to defend their opinions within the party, a right that had been self-evident in Lenin's time. When the Tenth Congress of the CPSU banned factions — not on principle, but as a temporary measure — Lenin immediately carried out his promise made to the Workers Opposition of that period to publish 250,000 copies (enough for every member of the party) of that Opposition's documents.

Stalin, on the contrary, refused to publish the "Platform of the United Opposition" before the Fifteenth Congress in 1927. The Opposition itself was therefore obliged to publish it in accordance with democratic centralism. Rather than intolerable factionalism, this action was an attempt to return to Leninist organizational norms.

What Trotsky and the Opposition found unacceptable was not the demand to respect discipline, but the requirement that they declare themselves mistaken, although to do so would be totally at odds with their convictions. This organizational and political innovation — to oblige party members to take positions inside the party that were contrary to their convictions — could only lead to duplicity, to the destruction of cadres, to bureaucratic monolithism, to obscurantism and to the demoralization of the entire party. That is exactly what happened. A thousand times Trotsky had reasons to oppose this Stalinist principle, which was totally foreign to the spirit and the practice of Marx and Lenin.

The Chinese Communists are in a rather uncomfortable position in this regard. For Stalin and Khrushchev had many a time demanded of them — beginning with Mao Tse-tung himself — the same sort of capitulation. It is to the credit of the Chinese that they refused, and, indeed, without making such a stand, they could not have been victorious in the Chinese revolution of 1949. It was for this reason that the Soviet bureaucracy has resorted to repression and economic and military pressure against the People's Republic of China. In this "factional struggle" the Chinese CP has been 100 per cent right to oppose this pressure. We were, and we continue to be, completely on its side in this matter.

But has not the CCP contributed through that stand to "dividing the international communist movement"? Rather, does not the responsibility for such divisions fall upon those

Deng Xiaoping (left) with Hua Guofeng (DR)

China's Communist Party repudiates both Maoism and Stalinism (DR)

who would impose such shackles, not on those who are defending themselves against such inadmissible practices? Why would the resistance of the Chinese CP be legitimate, despite the "divisions" that it "broadened", and that of Trotsky be illegitimate solely on the basis of "divisions" and "factionalism"?

Chinese charges against Soviets have far outstripped Trotsky's

Has not the CCP leadership long waged an anti-Soviet campaign of propaganda and agitation more virulent than that which Trotsky led? Has it not accused the Soviet government and state of "imperialism" and even of "fascism"? Has it not placed Soviet "expansionism" on the same plane as American "imperialism," speaking even-handedly of the two "superpowers," and viewing the USSR as the more aggressive and the more dangerous of the two? These are wild charges of which Trotsky was never guilty. Even if the present leaders of the CCP challenge these excesses, would they be ready to accuse Mao Tse-tung of "anti-Soviet agitation" and of "division of the international communist movement"? What right have they, then, to hurl these same accusations at Trotsky?

In the light of historical materialism, a more fundamental question must finally be posed. The "excessive broadening" of the struggle within the party and of the repression inside the USSR has not concerned only the oppositional tendencies, which are rather limited even if the tens of thousands of Communists are included. It has concerned entire layers of Soviet society. It has brought about structural modification of the state and of a part of the relations of production. Leaders of industry have been proclaimed the only captains of the ship by the application of the principle of "one-man leadership."

The workers and the trade unions have lost the right of effective control over economic management. The right to strike has been suppressed. One of the most repressive bodies of labor law in the world has been in effect for more than 15 years. A bloody repression has been launched against the workers and peasants. At the same time, the bureaucracy has been provided with enormous material privileges, which continue to exist today.

Obviously, these profound political and social transformations cannot be solely or even chiefly explained by superstructural phenomena such as Stalin's cult of personality or his excessive reliance on repressive methods. These transformations signal a genuine counterrevolution.

Contrary to the former Maoist theory, the Chinese leadership today agrees with Trotsky and the Fourth International that there is no question of a restoration of capitalism, that is, a social counterrevolution, in the USSR, but, at least from that time on, what exists is a political counterrevolution, that is a Soviet Thermidor.

If one does not at least acknowledge this hypothesis — explicitly considered possible by Lenin from 1922 on — one is forced to pull back from historical materialism in favor of historical idealism to explain the evolution of the USSR since the 1920s. But if one allows the existence of a Soviet Thermidor, then Trotsky's fight against this Thermidor, far from being a sin of factionalism, was an elementary duty of a proletarian revolutionary; it was an indispensable struggle to defend the immediate and historical interests of the proletariat.

And when Zhu Tingguan asserts that "such methods of struggle (used by Trotsky) are not normal in a country under proletarian leadership," that is, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, he obscures the real problem: that is, that the USSR from 1923 or 1927, to say nothing of the USSR under the Stalin dictatorship, was no longer a country ruled by a proletarian leadership, the normal dictatorship of the proletariat. While it was a dictatorship of the proletariat, it was a proletarian leadership with strong bureaucratic deformations — once again to use Lenin's formulation. The forms of struggle employed by Trotsky in the interests of the proletariat corresponded to the precise nature of the Thermidorian power in the USSR.

The contradictions in the positions of the Chinese leadership on the question of Trotsky are difficult to resolve if the question of the bureaucracy is not addressed in a critical and scientific manner. Now the question of the bureaucracy turns back on China just as much as on the USSR. Therein lies the objective, social basis for the inadequacies in the stands taken by Li Xianrong and Zhu Tingguan. But that in no way diminishes the importance of their having taken a stand. It represents a constructive contribution in the battle of communists to restore historical truth. This battle is indispensable to the cleaning up of the political situation in all of the workers' states, indispensable to the struggle for socialist democracy, indispensable for the elimination of all bureaucratic roadblocks in the path of the building of socialism and the world revolution. □

A review of 'A Critical Biography of Trotsky'

WE ARE PUBLISHING below a translation of the part of an article referring to Trotsky that appeared in the revue *Shijie Lishi* (World History), No. 7, in 1985. The author, Zhu Tingguan, born in 1924, is the chief editor of *Shijie Lishi*.

ZHU TINGGUAN

Comrade Li Xianrong's *Critical Biography of Trotsky* is his second study of a historical personality. His first was *A Critical Biography of Bakunin*, published in 1982.

To make an assessment of Trotsky is an audacious enterprise, for Trotsky occupies a difficult position in the field of world historical research. Now that we have criticized Stalin's cult of personality and in particular have realized Stalin's mistakes in excessively broadening the scope of the inner-party struggle and in the "purging of counterrevolutionaries," it would not be in accord with the scientific standpoint of historical materialism to continue defending, without the slightest amendment, the assessment made of Trotsky in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. That assessment does not correspond to the facts.

However, it is not easy to assess objectively a complex historical figure like Trotsky. A prerequisite for such an assessment would be adequate reliable historical materials. The Soviet Union has not published sufficient materials on which to base such a study. Some historical documents including Trotsky's personal archives have been collected in Western countries, and various historical data have been put forward or cited in numerous works. Some of these materials are of value, but the reliability of others still needs to be ascertained, and even if they are reliable, conclusions cannot be based simply on one-sided quotations.

Once the historical documents have been assembled, the next step is to make a concrete and objective historical analysis of them. This requires a rather broad historical framework. In writing a biography of Trotsky it is not enough simply to narrate his words and actions; they must be placed in the broader context of groups of people and a series of historical events. For example how should we assess the Trotskyist faction and the Trotsky-Zinoviev alliance? Our evaluation would also involve figures in opposition to Trotsky such as a related assessment of Stalin. Trotsky cannot be viewed in isolation from these people, factions and events — nor can research on individuals be thoroughly carried out without setting limits to a detailed research on a welter of historical issues. If this latter precept is ignored, no study of a particular figure can ever be completed.

When we say that in the past the assessment of Trotsky did not square with the historical facts, that does not mean that we can simply conclude that because Stalin made serious mistakes, the assessment of Trotsky was of necessity seriously mistaken. Even less can we conclude that since Trotsky cannot be unequivocally branded as an enemy, we must reverse our assessment that Stalin's merits exceed his faults. Any assessment must be based on facts and evidence. Theory can only convince if it is well-grounded.

In China, for a time, the word Trotskyist was almost synonymous with "renegade," "enemy," "agent" and "spy." There were historical reasons why this was so. Not long after the first national revolutionary war, the Chinese Trotskyists linked up with Chen Duxiu. Chen, who was upholding a right-opportunist line, had broken with the ranks of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) to form the so-called Trotskyist-Chen liquidationist clique in opposition to the CCP's correct line and the revolutionary armed struggle led by the party. Later, in the war of resistance against Japan, some Chinese Trotskyists like Ren Zhuoxuan (Ye Qing), Zhang Mutao and Liang Gangiao joined up with Kuomintang anti-Communist diehards and special agents to engage in anti-Communist activities and to sabotage the anti-Japanese national united front. If today we are to reassess Trotsky, does that not mean that we must also reassess related questions in modern Chinese and CCP history?

In our country, such past events are still fresh in the memory of cadres of middle age and above, including at least some intellectuals who are active in teaching, research and journalism. For a long time most of these people believed implicitly the formal proclamations emanating from the Soviet Union. True, their knowledge and state of mind today have naturally changed greatly from what it was before the 1950s. But once talk begins about reassessing Trotsky, this will inevitably get some people's backs up.

Recently, in academic circles in our country, some articles and studies have already begun an assessment of issues relating to Trotsky. Although not all have been able to speak their minds freely, nonetheless, various views have been aired, and a book on this question will certainly arouse interest. It will not, however, be easy to win the approval of the great majority of readers.

Assessment of Trotsky linked to political problems

The Trotsky question is constantly used as a reproach by people in the capitalist countries who are dissatisfied with the socialist system and the communist movement. Some of these people are dissidents from the Soviet Union. There are also some disciples of Trotsky active in the political arena. In some countries they are active under the banner of Trotsky's Fourth International. The question of how to assess Trotsky is also linked to different views existing in the contemporary international Communist movement. In sum, we are not just dealing with an academic question, but with a historical issue that is inevitably connected in a complex way to political problems.

To say that Trotsky should be reassessed is not at all to say that the verdict on Trotsky should be reversed. Our aim is to conscientiously clarify the truth about numerous issues in the early history of the Soviet Union so that we can better learn from them. However, mentally we will still be working under an invisible pressure. Will we be guilty of heterodoxy and deviation, of formulating completely new and original points of view?

In short, we will need to be courageous in dealing with theoretical

Crusading for the thoughts of Chairman Mao (DR)

problems; we must dare to seek truth from the facts; we must uphold the truth; we must dare to take some risks; we must not be afraid of making mistakes and we must not worry about sarcastic comments. Needless to say, none of our historians wants to make mistakes, but there are probably fears of "leftism." This is an actual difficulty that the writer has to face.

Under today's conditions, it is both necessary and possible to make a scientific historical assessment of Trotsky's life that more or less corresponds with the historical facts. Trotsky was a rather influential figure in the early history of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet state. In the first few years after the victory of the October revolution he was extremely prominent. Simply to negate him with one stroke is to disrespect history and will not help later revolutionaries to absorb the lessons of history.

Much can be learned by studying the road that Trotsky traversed, his political proposals and theoretical standpoint, his contributions and his mistakes, his gradual passage from being a founder of the Soviet state to his degeneration into an anti-Soviet political exile, from being an important leader of the CPSU to the standard-bearer for splitting the international Communist movement.

A correct resolution of the problem of how to assess Trotsky will help deepen our understanding of many important controversies in the early Soviet Union about how to build socialism. It will help achieve a new major breakthrough in our understanding of the history of the transitional period in the USSR. Although we are at present engaged in socialist construction with special Chinese characteristics, under new historical conditions, with many explorations and creations and many new roads and methods, we still should not underestimate the importance of absorbing the historical experiences of other countries. Whether they occur in our country or in other countries, the victories, setbacks, the experiences and lessons on the road to socialism are the common spiritual property of communists and progressive humanity throughout the world.

The laws of development of socialist society cannot be fully demonstrated or adequately proved by the practice of any one country alone. This is especially true of China. At present we are conscientiously studying all the most advanced developments in science, technology and management, even from the capitalist countries — everything useful to us. Why, then, should we neglect and put to one side the historical experience and lessons of the socialist practice of other countries?

"...to fight superstition, to liberate thought"

In the past, our research on the history of the early years of the Soviet Union seemed to run into a series of snags that prevented our making progress. We could not shake off the style of *The History of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the USSR: a Short Survey*. It was a great achievement to criticize the Stalin cult, to fight superstition, to liberate thought. Unfortunately, for a while we followed a tortuous path.

Since 1978, through the impetus of the party's orientation toward liberating thought and seeking truth from the facts, our research into the history of the USSR's transitional period has progressed significantly. The discussion on the Bukharin question has removed a major roadblock. If we can now really resolve the question of Trotsky, we can make corresponding progress on other historical figures and controversies.

Breakthroughs of this sort are of great importance not only for the field of world history. The questions of the victory of socialism in one country, permanent revolution, the question of socialist accumulation and its tempo, the methods of socialist transformation and construction, and in particular the historical experience of the inner-party struggle in the USSR, are all of enormous contemporary significance. They can serve us in many ways as a mirror for understanding and overcoming the "leftist" danger and for smoothly carrying out socialist modernization.

To make a reassessment is not to negate all the theories of the Stalin period; it is to give some basis in historical fact to that reassessment. We have not yet adequately mastered the historical materials. However, if we stick to a few big issues, especially important political and theoretical issues intimately connected with building socialism, and do not get bogged down in a mass of detail, we will find most of the essential materials are still available. As for political considerations, if we mainly confine ourselves to the period when Trotsky was still alive, in particular the period before his banishment, and set aside the activities of his followers in various countries, there is no reason why this issue should not become a topic of research in the field of historiography. It will soon be half a century since Trotsky was assassinated, and the overwhelming majority of those who worked with or disputed with him, who condemned or supported him, are now dead. Cannot such an issue be discussed by historians?

The main thing is that we need people who dare to be pioneers. Progress in historical science requires that we take up the work where our predecessors left off. It demands that we assimilate the fruits of the research of others, so that historical and specialist knowledge accumulates and research acquires increasing depth through the long-term common striving of large numbers of people. This is not in the slightest to deny that individual historians can make independent contributions.

Writers of world history have the task of correctly introducing and appraising a historical figure such as Trotsky to the people, the same responsibility they have in relation to other historical data that correspond to contemporary needs. This will be our small contribution to socialist modernization and construction. We

should accept this social responsibility and work actively to promote it.

Viewing comrade Li Xianrong's recent work in this perspective, I consider that his book portrays for the most part accurately Trotsky's evolution from young revolutionary to professional revolutionary, and his passage from central leader of the CPSU and the Soviet state to political exile. It summarily describes the sequence and main political and theoretical positions of Trotsky's development, from his inclination to populism to his acceptance of Marxism, to his later denial of the possibility of building socialism in one country and his championing of the theory of permanent revolution. The book, in chronological order, describes and assesses Trotsky's political practice. It approves of his joining the Bolshevik Party during Lenin's *Iskra* period, his preparation and launching of the Petrograd armed uprising during the October revolution, his creation and strategic command of the Red Army during the civil war.

At the same time the book analyzes and criticizes Trotsky's improper behaviour in trying to bring about a conciliation of the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, his position of neither war nor peace at Brest-Litovsk, his initiation of the controversy over the trade unions, his failure to attend Lenin's funeral and his continuous work to express himself. There are also his mistakes in carrying out numerous factional activities.

Although the author never says so point-blank, in his book he views the controversies that occurred after Lenin's death between Stalin and Bukharin on the one hand, and Trotsky on the other, as differences within the Bolshevik leadership on how to build socialism in Russia. That is, as contradictions within the party. If both sides had acted properly these contradictions need not have become exaggerated. This is an important historical lesson.

Several measures that Trotsky took caused the nature of the contradictions to be gradually changed. He violated the Tenth Congress's ban on factions. He allied himself with Zinoviev, published factional manifestos signed by a group and publicly opposed the political line decided by the majority of the Central Committee. Later Trotsky and others carried the differences to some grassroots organizations and masses, adopted conspiratorial methods and organized demonstrations. Such methods of struggle are not normal in a country under proletarian leadership. Differences of political line became exacerbated by organizational antagonisms and resulted in irreconcilable contradictions.

Stalin's mistakes

Clearly, in historical retrospect, Stalin sometimes handled the situation improperly. He did not properly resolve the problem of leaders like Trotsky who held different political views. In this he differed totally from Lenin who was magnanimous toward people who made mistakes.

Stalin adopted some categorical measures, and involved the lower levels. He set a very bad precedent and planted the seeds of the later broadening of the campaign to eradicate counterrevolutionaries. After Trotsky had been expelled from the USSR, the nature of the contradiction changed. It was no longer an issue within the CPSU or a controversy within the Soviet leadership. By then Trotsky's political activity, whatever he himself proclaimed, in reality could not but seriously damage the Soviet state and the entire international Communist movement.

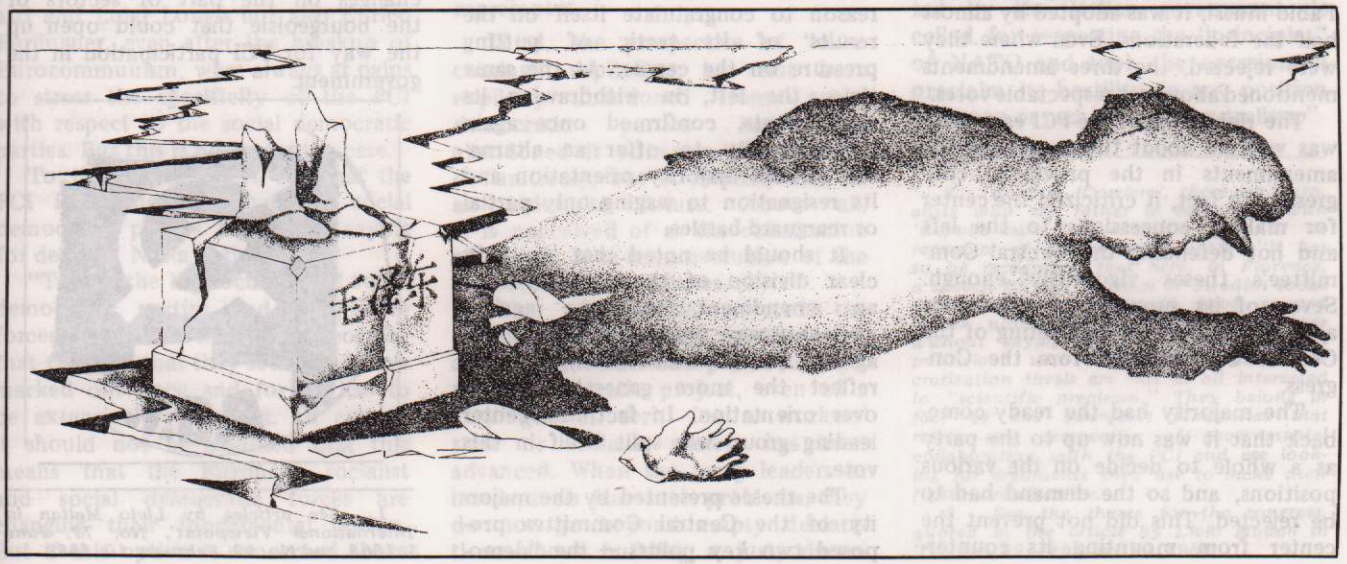
Comrade Li Xianrong's description and analysis of these issues are closer to the historical facts than some previous statements. Still, some comrades may feel that he does not go deep enough in exposing the truth of history, or they may have different views on the content of assessment, so views are not necessarily homogeneous. On this, we can continue to delve deeper into the truth to achieve an even better and more accurate understanding of early Soviet history and the people involved in it.

I think that *A Critical Biography of Trotsky* is based on adequate historical materials, it is well structured, well written and clearly arranged. It reflects Comrade Li Xianrong's command of narrative style supplemented by analysis and comment, with fair judgments.

If one were to point to weaknesses, it would be that in his research and writing his thought is not yet sufficiently liberated. His narrative and analysis seem rather inadequate on the political and theoretical ideas that Trotsky proposed or strongly supported during the New Economic Policy period, such as the essence of "tightening the screw," the significance of his stress on turning the trade unions into a state apparatus and militarizing economic management, the idea of socialist primitive accumulation that in essence extorts from the peasants. Some issues raised in the book will inevitably arouse controversies. This will be a good phenomenon. We should not ask too much but should give enthusiastic support to this academic study which constitutes the first work in our country that assesses the life of Trotsky at length.

For the above considerations, I offer my humble opinion. I wait for criticisms from readers on my inadequacies. □

Hua Guofeng pays homage to Mao (DR)



Italian Communist Party: the crisis continues

THE EIGHTEENTH Congress of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which was held in Florence, Italy, April 9-13, was preceded by debates and differences at all levels of party life such as have not been seen since the 1920s.

The theses finally adopted at the congress and the amendments debated in the sections and provincial federations go a long way toward providing an answer to the question posed in earlier articles: Is the PCI Communist or social democratic? (1)

LIVIO MAITAN

The grassroots votes on the amendments had a significance exceeding their intrinsic scope. For example, the support for the amendment on Reaganism backed by Luciana Castellina [a former leader of a centrist party, the Party of Proletarian Unity (PDUP)] reflected a more general opposition to the party's support for Italy's participation in NATO. And the backing for the amendment of Pietro Ingrao, historically a leader of the left wing of the party, on the lack of democracy in the unions reflected a widespread discontent about the overall positions taken in the trade unions.

It was all the more significant that the Castellina amendment got a majority in about 50 federations (out of a total of 112) and the Ingrao amendment in about 30.

As for the amendment against building nuclear power plants, introduced by Antonio Bassolio and Fabio Mussi, it was adopted by almost half the federations. Even where they were rejected, the three amendments mentioned above got respectable votes.

The right wing of the PCI especially was worried about the success of the amendments in the provincial congresses. In fact, it criticized the center for making concessions to the left and not defending the Central Committee's theses vigorously enough. Seven of its supporters went so far as to demand a special meeting of the Central Committee before the Congress.

The majority had the ready comeback that it was now up to the party as a whole to decide on the various positions, and so the demand had to be rejected. This did not prevent the center from mounting its counter-attack against the Ingrao and Castellina amendments. The signal was given by PCI national secretary Alessandro Natta himself in his speech to the Milan federation.

This riposte helped to assure the center the indisputable success that it gained at the national congress. And in the end, almost all the amendments were withdrawn. The theses were adopted almost unanimously (17 abstentions out of a total of a little more than 1,000 delegates), as was the programmatic document (3 votes against 72 abstentions). Not a single "no" vote or abstention was registered on Natta's report and conclusions.

Left incapable of offering an alternative

Thus, the right wing had good reason to congratulate itself on the results of its tactic of putting pressure on the center. At the same time, the left, in withdrawing its amendments, confirmed once again its incapacity to offer an alternative to the majority orientation and its resignation to waging only partial or rearguard battles.

It should be noted that the only clear division of the congress over an amendment, the one against nuclear-power plants (440 for, 457 against and 59 abstentions), did not reflect the more general divisions over orientation. In fact, the center leading group was split itself in this vote.

The theses presented by the majority of the Central Committee proposed two key points — the "democratic alternative" and a "government based on a program."

Rather sharp debates took place on the content of these two formulas. As for the democratic alternative, Natta gave the following definition in his conclusions:

"We have talked about the alternative as a project, that is, as a scheme, a line of renewal that cannot fail to make reference to choices of fundamental values, as a process to be realized through a policy of reforms, as an innovation in the system aimed at confronting the problems posed by the technological challenge and at mobilizing all the energies and capacities that are essential to direct this change ... For us Communists, and no one can deny this, the basis for this labor of transformation is the values and principles of our republican constitution."

Thus, after so much baloney about renewal and the originality of the various concepts and formulas, we end up with a forty-year-old leitmotiv: The precepts of the constitution have to be put into practice.

More concretely the congress confirmed that the alternative is not necessarily an alternative to the Christian Democracy [DC], the main bourgeois party. Natta explained this by pulling the following formula out of his hat: "Our opposition to the DC is not inscribed in heaven."

He was careful not to raise the question whether it might not be inscribed in the social reality. In any case, it is the "government based on program" that is to be the intermediate objective on the road to the alternative.

It should be said in passing that despite all the good will of the PCI leaders, there is not much chance that the "great alliance of reform forces" that the party advocates will take form. At least for the two years until the next legislative elections, there is no sign of decisive changes on the part of sectors of the bourgeoisie that could open up the way for PCI participation in the government.

1. See articles by Livio Maitan in 'International Viewpoint', No. 77, June 3, 1985, and No. 92, February 10, 1986.

In this respect, the 1988 electoral battle will be a real test for the party. Will it be able to take advantage of the weaknesses and contradictions of the present governmental coalition, or another that might succeed it, to broaden its influence and create a relationship of forces in the electoral and parliamentary arena that will make its inclusion in the government inevitable? Will it stagnate, or worse suffer a new setback?

We can wager that Natta will have more difficulty winning on that level than he had in getting his vote of approval in Florence.

Throughout the congress, the PCI daily stressed the turn that the congress was supposed to represent. But, in fact, the scope of the changes was quite limited. Once again the theme of this congress was the claim that the PCI is an "integral part of the European left." It became almost an agitational slogan.

In fact, when they talk about the "European left," the PCI leaders include in it movements of quite different origins and character (environmentalists, peace forces, etc.). But they refer mainly to social democratic parties.

So, it is legitimate to pose the question: Has the PCI completed this process of social democratization whose origins go back two or three decades?

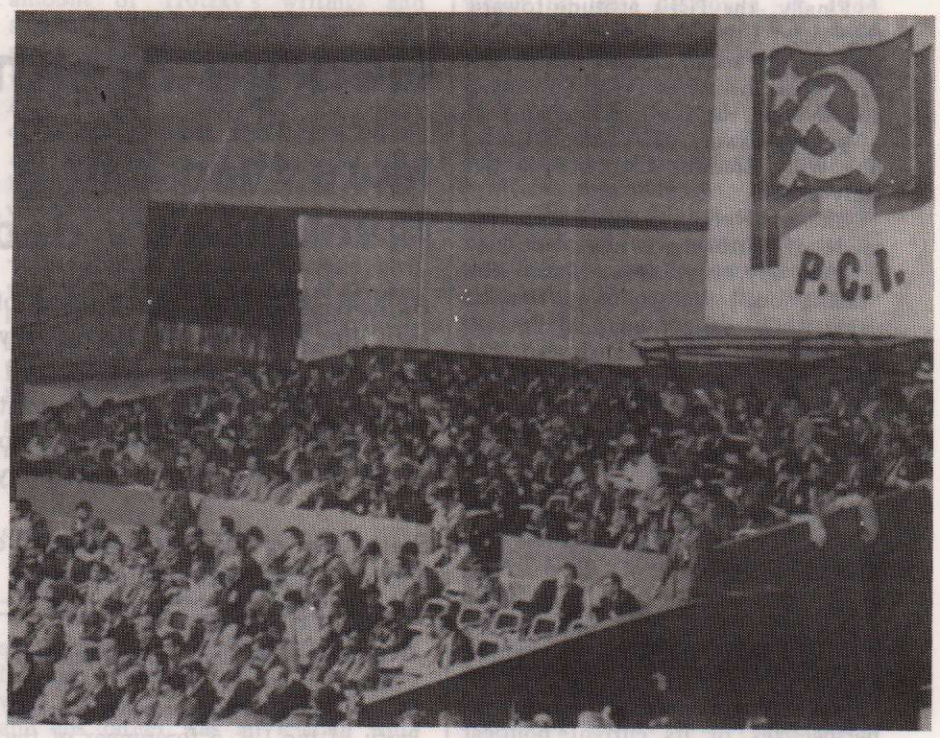
PCI takes social democratic road

This is a debate that is taking place in Italy even in the big bourgeois press. For example, *Repubblica* has explained that the PCI now belongs to the "Western industrial social democracy," while *Corriere della sera* does not share this view. (2)

We should recall that Natta's predecessors, not only Palmiro Togliatti and Luigi Longo but also Enrico Berlinguer, even after the breakup of Eurocommunism, were always at pains to stress the specificity of the PCI with respect to the social democratic parties. But this is no longer the case.

To those who point out that the PCI is taking up what the social democratic parties have been saying for decades, Natta answers:

"Today, the big socialist and social democratic parties and progressive forces in the west must also recognize that the path that they seemed to have marked out once and for all has to be extensively rethought. Of course, it should not be assumed that this means that the European socialist and social democratic forces are changing their fundamental option. But if this option is concerned above all and essentially with the democratic road in the struggle for reforms and with international detente inside the alliances to which one belongs, we do not see this as a reason for conflict."



The seventeenth congress of the PCI (DR)

To be precise, the PCI stands essentially — Natta only confirmed it — on the same ground as the social democrats.

First of all, it accepts unreservedly the framework of the bourgeois state and its institutions as well as the fundamental mechanisms of capitalism. In the regions and cities where the PCI governs, the PCI's whole activity is inspired by such a position.

Second, the PCI's strategic perspective, including its present incarnation of the democratic alternative, involves long-term collaboration with major sections of the bourgeoisie and with the political forces that represent it.

Third, the prespective of "overcoming" capitalism has not been explicity abandoned (some social democratic parties have not abandoned it either in their general declarations), but it is postponed to an indefinite future. Above all, it is conceived of as the culmination of a very long-term evolution of the socioeconomic structures. (3)

Since the party rejected the "model" of "actually existing socialism" of the East European countries, no programmatic project, even of a very general sort, for a workers' state or socialist society has been advanced. When the party leaders or intellectuals face such problems, they do not go beyond empty declarations about building a just, democratic and free society where everyone would have the same rights and the same opportunities, or general predictions about the enormous potential for humanity offered by the new technologies. Their methodological approach recalls alternately the social liberalism of the 1930s or pre-Marxist socialism.

In the fourth place, the PCI accepts NATO without reservations; it upholds the "principles" of the alliance and its ideology, claiming that it is defensive. Its criticisms of one or another position or action or one or another member countries by no means put in question its respect for the political and military framework of the alliance. Its response to the US aggression against Libya is a significant example. The PCI condemned Reagan's action, but it approved unreservedly the line adopted by the Italian government. It called for respecting the "principles" of NATO and took the occasion to proclaim its hostility to any position of "open or camouflaged neutralism."

2. Even in 'Corriere', there are journalists who are rather in agreement with 'Repubblica.' For example, one of its reporters at the congress wrote: "It has to be recognized that here, in Florence, a speech by any German or Swedish social democrat delegate would have seemed rather ultraleftist." (April 13). It goes without saying that the journalists and politicians who reject the social-democratization thesis are not at all interested in "scientific precision." They belong in fact to the bourgeois tendencies that reject any perspective of governmental collaboration with the PCI and are looking for arguments they use to make their fight more effective.

3. See the theses for the congress, quoted in the article by Livio Maitan in 'IV', No. 92, February 10, 1986.

Finally, the PCI's attitude toward the Soviet Union is now analogous to that of the social democratic parties that stress initiatives for disarmament and detente, or for a relaunching of a policy toward the Soviet Union like Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik in the early 1970s.

The relatively favorable assessments made of Gorbachev's course do not involve any turn away from the "falling out" that followed General Jaruzelski's military coup in Poland. On the one hand, the analyses in the theses are similar to those made by many social democrats or bourgeois specialists. On the other, they reflect the general philosophy of the leaders of the PCI, who cannot contemplate any change — even in the Soviet Union — except in a reformist and gradualist context.

All this confirms unambiguously that the PCI is not qualitatively different from the social democratic parties from the standpoint of its ideological conceptions, its strategic perspectives or its current political practice.

It would be absurd in characterizing this party to refer to what it was in the 1930s or 1940s. This past is outweighed by 40 years of integration into the framework of bourgeois democracy.

At the Florence congress, almost half the delegates were between 30 and 40 years old, and 20 per cent were between 40 and 49. A third of the delegates joined the party between 1969 and 1974. That means that the political experience of all those cadres who make up the skeletal structure of the party is marked not only by activity conducted systematically and without any interruption in the framework of bourgeois democracy but also by the party's evolution in relation to Stalinism and the Soviet Union since 1956.

It would be wrong in our opinion to think that the completion of the social-democratization of the PCI that we are seeing now is inevitably going to lead to a major crisis in the PCI. Given the relationship of forces in the Italian workers' movement and the loss of credibility that the Italian Socialist Party is suffering because of its practice in government, the PCI can try to play the role of a credible reformist alternative for some time yet.

From this standpoint, it can reasonably hope to hold its influence and even temporarily reconsolidate the unity of its ranks. It is only with a deepening of the social and political crisis that its contradictions — which are the contradictions of reformism — can explode and create new conditions for the recomposition of the workers' movement. □

George Breitman (1916-1986)

More than half a century of revolutionary dedication

AFTER ALMOST thirty years of unremitting illness, George Breitman died on April 19. He was seventy years old. Although he was in constant pain in the last period of his life and grew progressively weaker over the past several months, he continued to spend much of his waking time in productive political work, dictating three letters from his hospital bed only two days before his death.

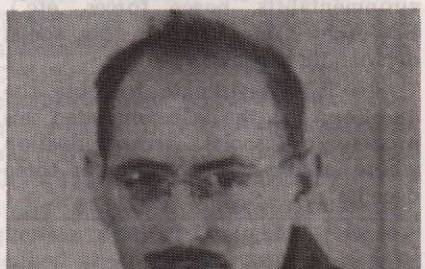
Statement by the Editorial Board of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*

Breitman joined the Spartacus Youth League in 1935, at the age of 19, and later that year the Workers Party of the US, a forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party. From that time until his death fifty-one years later he never wavered in his dedication to building the revolutionary socialist movement. He was a delegate to the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party in 1937, and remained a loyal and dedicated member of that organization until 1984.

In that year the present SWP leaders — who had developed profound political differences with the historical program of the party which Breitman continued to defend — shamefully expelled him and dozens of his comrades on trumped up charges of "disloyalty." After his expulsion from the SWP Breitman immediately set out to organize the expellees and to try to save the party and its program. He helped to found the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and was an editor of its journal, the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*.

During his years in the SWP Breitman served in many capacities. He was a candidate ten times on the party ticket, for offices ranging from State Assembly in New Jersey to the US Senate. He set such a good personal example with his election campaigns that James P Cannon, the founder of the American Trotskyist movement, referred jokingly to his "perennial" candidacies and suggested that Breitman was going to be regarded as a chronic office seeker.

In 1941 he began his first of several terms as editor of *The Militant*. Except for the two and a half years he spent in the army as a draftee during World War II, he served continuously on the party National Committee from 1939 to 1981, and was several times a member of its Political Committee. He took on the tasks of organizer, branch secretary, financial director, recruiter, educator, campaign manager and writer, along with many others.



George Breitman during World War II

Perhaps his greatest strength was his ability to explain difficult ideas so that they could be understood by people who were unfamiliar or uncomfortable with movement terminology or jargon. He had a knack for seeing opportunities to apply the party's program to the day to day life of working people. And he had an informal, unpretentious style in writing and speaking that made it easy for his audience to understand him. These qualities made him an outstanding candidate for office in the party's election campaigns and a particularly effective speaker and educator.

Breitman also helped in many efforts of the party to defend itself or its members from victimization by the government. The most famous of these was the "case of the legless veteran," James Kutcher. The Veterans Administration tried to fire Kutcher from his job as a clerk and

take away his veteran's benefits during the witch-hunt years of the 1950s because of his membership of the SWP, despite the fact that he had lost both of his legs in Italy as a GI in World War II. Breitman, along with others, helped Kutcher in his political and legal campaign against the government's attack. After a long battle the case won. Breitman collaborated with Kutcher in writing his book about this experience, and the two remained lifelong friends. Kutcher was expelled from the SWP in 1983, after a terrible slander campaign against him.

In the 1960s Breitman made one of his best-known contributions to revolutionary Marxism when he helped develop an analysis of the profound revolutionary implications of Black nationalism in the US. In particular, he became an authority on Malcolm X, and wrote *The Last Year of Malcolm X, The Evolution of a Revolutionary*, a book put out by Merit Publishers in 1967. He also edited, in whole or in part, many of Malcolm's writings and speeches for publication. These included the books *Malcolm X Speaks* and *By Any Means Necessary*, as well as the pamphlet *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*.

In the late '60s, the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance began to gain members from the radicalizing youth on the campuses, in the anti-Vietnam war movement, the Black struggle, and the beginnings of the women's liberation movement. The party was looking for ways to educate its new recruits in revolutionary Marxism. Breitman proposed an extensive project for Pathfinder Press: to collect and publish the writings of Leon Trotsky, who was, with Lenin, the foremost leader of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia.

Breitman chose Trotsky for three reasons. First, because unlike the writings of other outstanding figures of revolutionary history, Trotsky's writings had never been collected and published in a systematic way. Second, Breitman considered Trotsky to be the greatest popularizer of Lenin's ideas, just as Lenin had been Marx's most outstanding interpreter. Trotsky could present the most important ideas of Marx and Engels and Lenin in a way that contemporary young radicals could appreciate. Moreover, Trotsky's own seminal contributions to the Marxist heritage — his theory of permanent revolution, the Transitional Program, his analysis of nationalism — were of paramount importance for the revolutionary movements of today.

Breitman took primary responsibility for the project of locating, selecting, translating from many languages, editing and annotating the massive amount of Trotsky's writings and shaping it into cohesive form. Ultimately this consisted of fourteen volumes in the series *Writings of Leon Trotsky*, covering the years of Trotsky's last exile (1929-40). At the same time, he oversaw the work leading to the publication of several volumes of Trotsky's writings on specific countries and political themes — the Spanish revolution and civil war of the thirties, the rise of fascism in Germany, the French popular front, and many others. The result was that revolutionists now have an incomparable resource available to study the history and theory of revolution.

"Trotsky Square"

George was born and grew up in a working-class neighborhood in Newark, New Jersey. His mother was a maid for better-off families, and his father was an iceman who carried 50-pound blocks of ice up six flights of tenement stairs in the days before refrigeration. When his father died at the age of 40, George's older sister Celia had to quit school to help support the family. She was by far the most important influence on George as a child. She became a member of the Young Communist League and combined her baby-sitting responsibilities and her political ones by bringing George to meetings while he was still quite young. It was as a baby brother that he attended a demonstration, with hundreds of Newark residents, to protest the execution of the Boston anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927.

As a youngster, George read voraciously. Mostly he read junk — the hundreds of adventure and pulp novels for boys that were the diet of a generation before television turned reading for pleasure into an obsolete activity. But he also read good novels and short stories. His hangouts were his neighborhood corner, which later became known to many as "Trotsky Square" because so many of his gang joined the Trotskyist youth, and the Newark public library. Years later, George still spoke of the Newark public library with affection.

At the age of 16, in 1932, George graduated from Central High School during the depths of the Depression and joined the ranks of the unemployed. During the summer of 1933 he was often in a playground near his home playing baseball and editing the playground's mimeographed newspaper. The whole year after he graduated from high school he spent writing a novel about his neighborhood, which he later destroyed. In 1934 George went to Alabama as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a New Deal outfit intended to get unemployed youth off the streets. Here he received some copies of *The Militant* from a neighborhood friend.

After returning to Newark in 1935, Breitman joined the Trotskyist movement and turned his attention to mass work in the unemployed movement. He joined the organization of the unemployed, the Workers Alliance of America, which was thriving in New Jersey with several thousand members. He was soon in the thick of battles to protect the rights of unemployed workers and to gain higher pay on government-sponsored Works Progress Administration jobs. He was elected New Jersey state organization secretary of the Workers Alliance in 1936.

In August of that year he was the youngest (at age 20) of seven Workers Alliance leaders arrested and charged with "inciting to riot." They were organizing strikes and closing down WPA projects in Burlington County. Breitman spent a week in jail on that occasion. The charges were eventually dropped, the strikes were won and the strikers got a 5-cent hourly raise. This is only one incident in scores of such strikes in those years in which Breitman participated. He served as the state Workers Alliance secretary in 1936 and 1937, and then as Essex County secretary. During several of those years he was also editor of the news bulletin of the New Jersey Workers Alliance. He recruited many unemployed workers to the revolutionary movement.

In 1936 the organized unemployed occupied the state capitol in Trenton, forcing the state legislature to abandon the legislative chambers and begin negotiations for improved unemployment benefits. Breitman helped to organize the Trenton siege and later wrote a pamphlet about it.

The unemployed movement of the thirties was the main opportunity Breitman had to participate in the mass movement and to test himself and his politics in action. In 1941, eighteen leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, charged under the Smith Act with advocating the forcible overthrow of the US government, were imprisoned on the day the US entered World War II. The eighteen included Felix Morrow, editor of *The Militant*. Breitman was asked to take over as editor of the paper, a post he held until he was drafted in 1943 and sent to France.

In March 1946 he attended a pre-World Congress meeting of the Fourth International in Paris as an observer. The meeting was broken up by the police, who arrested all the partici-

pants. The conference continued in a French jail, but Breitman was released in a few hours and shipped home.

On his return to the US he again served as editor of *The Militant* from 1946-47 and 1951-53. In 1954 he moved to Detroit, where he worked as a proofreader for the *Detroit Free Press* and became a member of the International Typographical Union. He spent 13 years as an active leader of the Detroit party branch, where he founded the Friday Night Socialist Forum, which ran continuously from 1954 until 1967. When he left Detroit George returned to New York City where he remained for the rest of his life. He is survived by his wife, comrade, and companion of 46 years, Dorothea. □

Jean van Heijenoort (1912-1986)

JEAN VAN HEIJENOORT, secretary to Leon Trotsky from 1932 to 1939 died at the age of 73, in Mexico City on March 25, 1986. In 1977 he had retired from the philosophy department at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, and for the past several years lived in Palo Alto, California, where he was editing the papers of the logician Kurt Godel.

Van Heijenoort was born on July 23, 1912, in Creil, France, and attended the Lycee St. Louis in Paris. He became a radical at the age of 15, and in about 1931 joined the French Trotskyist group, the Communist League. He was the first adherent who had not been expelled from the French Communist Party or Young Communist League.

In October 1932, at the age of 20, van Heijenoort arrived in Prinkipo, Turkey, to begin seven years of service with Trotsky as secretary, translator and bodyguard, in Turkey, France, Norway and Mexico. This ended in November 1939, when he traveled to New York City on a political assignment for a few months. In May 1940, after a group of Mexican Communists led by David Alfaro Siqueiros assaulted the Trotsky household with machine guns and murdered an American guard, van Heijenoort volunteered to rejoin Trotsky's staff at once. But Trotsky urged that he stay in the United States; van Heijenoort was teaching French in Baltimore in August 1940 when he read in the newspaper that a second assassination attempt had succeeded.

Jean van Heijenoort (front), with Trotsky (left) and others. (DR)

For the next few years van Heijenoort, known under the pseudonyms "Marc Loris" and "Daniel Logan," served as secretary of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, which was located in New York City during World War II. Throughout the early 1940s he contributed copiously to *Fourth International*, theoretical journal of the Socialist Workers Party, especially on matters pertaining to Western Europe. He also participated in an internal party literary discussion on the nature of dialectical materialism.

In the mid-1940s, van Heijenoort supported a political tendency led by Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow which switched its allegiance to Max Shachtman's Workers Party in 1946. In the autumn of 1947 van Heijenoort read a paper on the 100th anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto* to a group of friends and political associates, in which he argued that, despite the reasonableness of Marx's predictions in 1848, the political incapacity of the working class had been definitively proven to be an inherent and not a conjunctural weakness. The paper was published in the March 1948 *Partisan Review* as "A Century's Balance Sheet" under the pseudonym "Jean Vannier."

Van Heijenoort subsequently departed from radical politics and devoted himself to an academic career. In the 1950s he joined the department of mathematics at New York University, and in 1965 he became a member of the philosophy department at Brandeis. A 1967 book published by Harvard University Press, *From Frege to Godel: A Sourcebook in Mathematical Logic*, earned him a national reputation. In 1978 Harvard University Press also published his book of recollections, *With Trotsky in Exile: From Prinkipo to Coyoacan.*

During the late 1970s, van Heijenoort assisted in the preparation of the Trotsky Archives at Houghton Library, Harvard University, which became open to the public in 1980. From then until his death he cooperated in aiding the research of scholars and others interested in Trotskyist historiography. □

Tunisian women launch appeal for rights

WE PUBLISH below a statement by Tunisian women on the occasion of International Women's Day, March 8, 1986. The statement is not only an expression of the present state of the women's movement in Tunisia. It describes as well the situation of workers and the state of the mass movement in general in contemporary Tunisia.

A decade has passed since the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized March 8 as International Women's Day. This day first and foremost commemorates a struggle, that of the striking New York textile workers who were violently repressed for their century-long defence of the right to work.

On the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Code du Statut Personnel [Personal Rights Code], it is appropriate that we examine the current meaning of the rights "bestowed" upon women thirty years ago. The Code and the body of legislation flowing from it do indeed protect some of the rights of women and allow them to participate in civil life. However, although this reformist legislation was a considerable advance for its time, it constitutes, at least for all women born after 1956, a minimal threshold below which we must never again fall. ...

The official self-satisfied pronouncements can hardly hide the fact that women — in the family, in their marriages, in the streets and at work — continue to suffer from a devalued and inferior status. This clearly reveals that not only do social and individual attitudes and practices often fall short of the intent of the legislation, but the application of the law itself sometimes fails to live up to its text. This places the government itself at odds with its own declarations.

This state of affairs renders the status of women all the more precarious since while they must support the official positions, they are thus placed on the defensive in relation to their newly acquired rights and in the face of backward-looking statements and practices. This leaves the door open to retrogression, and all the more since the choices made on the woman question have not evolved toward the materializing of the new rights to which women aspire.

One of the most endangered rights today is the right to work. In many sectors women still make up a labor force that is unqualified, under-paid and deprived of all job benefits and security.

The improper dismissals which have hit women particularly hard for a number of years are likely to reach alarming proportions today when illegal and arbitrary layoffs in many sectors have become frequent.

It is also the women workers who bear the brunt of the imposition of half-time work. In fact, trapped in a double workday, in the absence of the minimum social structures that would alleviate their domestic and material tasks, many women are "opting" for half-time work.

Trade unions muzzled

Are not these wrongful layoffs or the "choice of half-time" steps toward pushing women back into the kitchen? What, then, becomes of the right to work, which is one of the aspects of the emancipation of women over which the official speech-making waxes so enthusiastic.

Since their right to work is limited, women are also deprived of their trade-union rights, of representative bodies through which their just demands could be voiced, since the UGTT [General Union of Tunisian Workers] and all of its legitimate structures are muzzled today. Worse still, in the critical situation in which we live, the actions of women trade unionists who have reportedly joined their male comrades in struggle are even denigrated by intimations that this involves prostitution. This attitude, both based on women's sexual oppression and in turn reinforcing it, can only remove women from the social and trade-union battlefield, discredit their struggle in the eyes of the public and make even more precarious their position as workers. That is why today, since women constitute the most vulnerable — because the most defenceless — category of workers, they will bear the brunt of the crisis.

Marginalized as women, exploited as workers, we are today denied our citizenship in that the violation of individual and civil liberties has become the daily lot of citizens.

The trade unions have been brought to heel, the independent press gagged, political organizations strictly controlled and the university's immunity violated. Even the Tunisian Human Rights League has been banned. These most provocative elements of the current situation convey perfectly the arbitrary and authoritarian condition of our society today.

This arbitrariness and authoritarianism take the form of "cop rule" in the streets and in private life, with its daily share of roundups, of beatings, of illegal arrests and detentions and of frameups.

Eroded from within, ossified on the outside because it is incapable of offering dynamic solutions for the aspirations of a changing society, the whole system is in crisis.

Even this elementary form of liberalization of public and political life called "pluralism" has been called into question. This has led not only to the failure of the project of a society oriented toward democracy for all, but, worse yet, by allowing the hideous specter of totalitarianism to emerge, it has pushed our country to the edge of the abyss.

That is why, if our rebellion is fierce, it is coupled with a profound anxiety.

What future do they plan for us, the women and men of our country?

What kind of democracy can women aspire to where there is no respect for democratic principles?

What rights can they hope to claim where arbitrariness rules?

Let us dedicate March 8, 1986, to the launching of an appeal to women, to all democratic forces and to our people altogether that not only the rights of women but of all our people be preserved. □

Leila Hamrouni, Hafidha Chbir, Nozha Skik, Naila Jrad, Ilhem Abdelkafi, Suzanne Jrad, Faouza Chebbi, Zayneb Samendi, Jaouda Bkir, Selma Zmerli, Nadia Hakimi, Zoubeida Arfaoui, Olfa Latrach, Saida Aoun, Azza Ghonmi, Dorra Mah Foudh, Rafiqa Kilani, Mounia Abid, Faiza Mrabet, Ilhem Marzouki.

AROUND THE WORLD

USA

US Demonstration against war-drive

THE US bombing of Libya just four days earlier gave particular urgency to the massive April 19 demonstration organized by the [San Francisco] Bay Area Mobilization. The Mobilization is a coalition of labor, peace, anti-apartheid, church, nuclear-freeze and anti-intervention groups.

More than 25,000 people, according to the May *Socialist Action* newspaper, marched in support of four demands: End US Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean; Jobs and Justice, Not War; Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race; and No US Support to South African Apartheid.

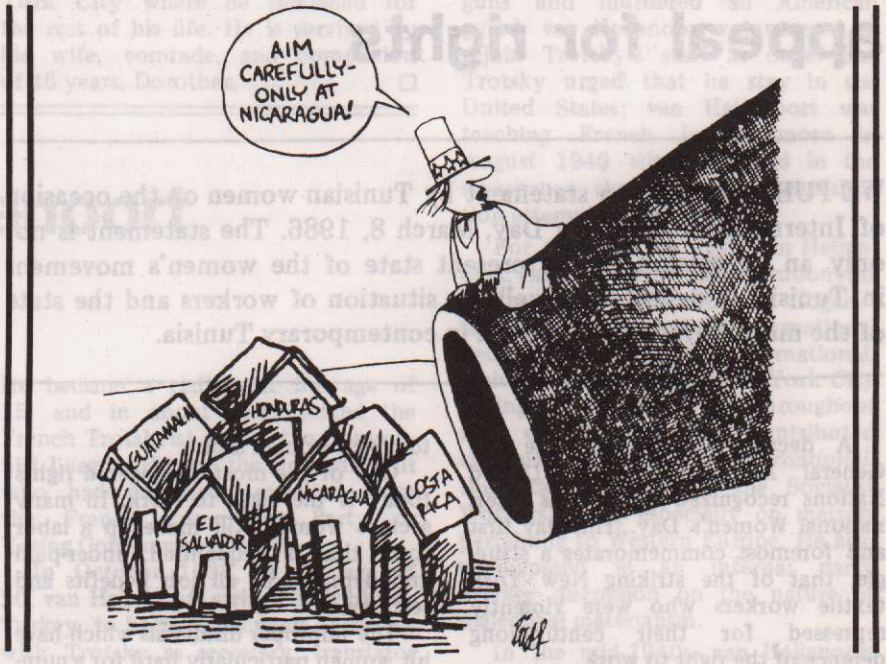
A sudden surge of opposition to the attack on Libya, which could not have been foreseen by the organizers of the demonstration, was evident among the marchers, who carried such signs as "Stop the Lies, Hands off Libya."

Many of the speakers at the rally that concluded the demonstration condemned the bombing, which they placed in the overall framework of US aggression, particularly in Central America. *Socialist Action* quoted such speakers as Abdeen Jabara, vice chair of the Arab Anti-Discrimination League, who said: "I join here today the families of the American hostages held in Lebanon in condemning the Reagan administration's bombing attack on Libya."

Jane Gruenebaum, executive director of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, told the receptive audience: "Our bombing of Libya was an aggressive act of war. It did not lessen the threat of terrorism."

A featured speaker, John Henning, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, made the connection between the Reagan administration's oppressive domestic policies and its interventionist foreign policy. He said:

"On the domestic front, we still suffer from 32 million Americans living in poverty. Thousands of homeless live in the streets of America. In foreign affairs, we see the reflections on the militarized foreign policy. We see it in the situation where we deplore terrorism in the Middle East and yet foster and sponsor it in Latin America ... Just this week we have seen the reflection of that policy in the bombing of Libya."



Union support of the demonstration was broadly based and strong, according to Al Lannon, president of International Longshoremens and Warehousemens Union [ILWU] Local 6 and a mobilization coordinator. He said:

"The Mobilization is endorsed and supported by every Bay Area labor council, by the ILWU and by dozens of local unions." Confirmation of his statement was provided by the large labor contingent that included striking cannery workers from Watsonville, California, and members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9, which has been on strike against the Geo. A. Hormel & Co, in Austin, Minnesota, since August 1985 (see *IV*, No. 96, April 7, 1986). The march was led by the striking TWA flight attendants who were hailed by the onlookers.

A number of speakers addressed the issues of US intervention in Central America. Gustavo Acosta, a representative of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador, protested the deepening US aggression in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras.

A Nicaraguan, Carmen Olivares, attacked the US government's role in supporting the contras. Referring to the Sandinista Army's defence of the revolution she concluded: "We are fighting and we will go down fighting. And they will have to kill each and every one of us, because we won't give it up." Marta Alicia Rivera of the National Association of Salvadoran Educators (ANDES) appealed: "In the name of 60,000 working people who have died in El Salvador, we are asking you to work hard to stop the US economic and military intervention in our country."

The anti-apartheid contingent was composed of hundreds of college students from Bay Area campuses. Their support for the struggles of the South African people was voiced by Pedro Noguera, the president of the student government at the University of California, Berkely.

"Throughout the nation," Noguera said, "students are taking action for divestment, action against apartheid." Summing up themes of the day, he added: "They [students] are becoming aware of the need to be part of a broad-based movement that is going to bring about change; that will make it no longer possible for our government to make war against Nicaragua or the people of Libya."

The April 19 Mobilization was only half the size of last year's demonstration. *Socialist Action* attributes the falloff in participation to several factors, a primary one being the lack of a national moblization this year. The turn toward electoral politics and the effort to get "progressive" democrats elected to the House of Representatives this fall were cited as major reasons for the decreased participation both nationally and in the Bay Area. Nevertheless, April 19 once again indicated the potential for mass independent actions against US government policies. □

Senegal

Statement on Libya

THE FOLLOWING statement was issued in Dakar, Senegal, on April 17, 1986, by a spectrum of Senegalese parties, including the Organisation Socialiste de Travailleurs, the Senegalese Fourth Internationalist organization:

When the peoples of the world and the great majority of governments have expressed their disapproval of the Reagan government's aggression against Libya, the Senegalese people and international public opinion have been shocked by the silence maintained by the president of the Organization of African states.

The acting president of the OAU has remained deaf and dumb in face of the urgent appeals from African heads of state and government who have called on him to take initiatives against this unprecedented criminal action, in particular to call an emergency summit of the heads of state of the OAU.

This attitude of the president of the OAU is arousing legitimate questions and concern. In fact, the American raids on Tripoli and Benghazi have opened a dangerous era for national security and sovereignty in Africa.

By this action, the Reagan government has given a warning to all the peoples and governments of Africa and presented them with the following ultimatum: Submit without reservations to the will of the United States or face the constant threat of aggression.

Reagan's warning is clear: Any people, country, or government in Africa that shows inclinations to independence from the United States will suffer aggression in one form or another, as has already been the case in Central America, notably in Nicaragua and Grenada.

It is a clear realization of what is at stake that explains the depth of the popular condemnation in many countries and the forms of the protest demonstrations.

Facing this situation of exceptional gravity, the parties signing this statement, faithful to their principles of support for the right of all peoples in the world to independence and sovereignty:

— Condemn with all their strength Reagan's aggression against Libya;

— express their sympathy and firm support for the Libyan government and people against Reagan's gunboat diplomacy;

— call on all the peoples of Africa and of the world, all the anti-imperialist and democratic organizations to undertake and continue actions in a united way that bring the American government to reason;

— express their astonishment and indignation at the guilty silence of the acting president of the OAU;

— demand an emergency meeting of the OAU summit to take the concrete solidarity measures with the Libyan government and people that are required.

For their part, the signatory organizations have decided to take initiatives to enable the Senegalese people to express their indignation and concrete solidarity with their sister people of Libya and its government.

Signatories included the Organisation socialiste de travailleurs, the AJ/MRDN [An Jeff: mouvement revolutionnaire pour une democratie nouvelle, Maoist], the LCT [Ligue Communiste de travailleurs, associated with the Lambert current], the LD/MPT [Ligue democratique, split from PAI in 1970s], the MDP [Mouvement democratique et populaire, the bourgeois nationalist party of Mamadon Dia], PAI [Parti africain d'independance, Stalinist], PDS [Parti democratique senegalais, bourgeois opposition party led by Abdoulaye Wade], PPS [Parti populaire senegalais, led by Dr. Oumar Wone] and UDP [Union democratique et populaire, Maoist]. □

South Africa

AT&T pulls back...

An official of American Telephone & Telegraph Co. (AT&T) announced on April 15 in Washington, DC, that the firm had decided to reduce its trade with South Africa. It will maintain essential telephone communications with that country, although it will break off some special services between the two countries.

The giant American corporation (it reported sales of more than 35,000 million dollars in 1985 according to *Fortune* magazine) projects a gradual end to its purchases of such rare metals as platinum and palladium from South Africa. Both metals are widely used in the manufacture of electronic equipment.

Platinum is the single most important US import from South Africa. In 1985, AT&T made purchases of 5,500 million US dollars from the South African company, Impala Platinum Ltd. Those contracts will not be renewed in 1986. AT&T, however, does not admit to any necessity for relying on the Soviet Union, the only other supplier of platinum, because of its capacity to recycle its current stock.

Among other steps that the American company plans to take are the stopping of sales of computers to South Africa and the breaking of a contract it has had with the Olivetti Co. for the sale and distribution of AT&T equipment in South Africa.

Anti-apartheid activists consider AT&T's decision to be the most important of all the measures that have been taken recently by American corporations to put pressure on the Pretoria government and to distance themselves from the apartheid regime. These measures include the Coca-Cola Corp.'s appeal to the South African government to free Nelson Mandela and to negotiate with the African National Congress.

... Alcan disinvests

THE CANADIAN company, Alcan Aluminium, announced in Montreal on March 21 that it had concluded an agreement with the South African corporation, Tongaat-Hulett. Alcan will sell to Tongaat its 24 per cent interest in Hulett Aluminium of Durban, South Africa. With this transaction Alcan will have liquidated its last remaining interests in South Africa. □

Interview with abortion rights campaigner

JUDY REBICK is a leader of Toronto's pro-choice abortion campaign and a spokesperson for the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics. She is also a member of the Ontario New Democratic Party, Canada's labor party.

Anne Brunelle, of the Alliance for Socialist Action, interviewed Judy in Toronto about the impact of the campaign and the current stage of the fight for legal, safe abortion.

Question. What is the status of the law in Canada?

Answer. Abortion in Canada is illegal except under certain circumstances. Abortions must be performed in an approved or accredited hospital and approved by a Therapeutic Abortion Committee (TAC) made up of three doctors to determine whether a woman's life or health is in danger. Hospitals are not required to establish TACs so only 30 per cent of hospitals have them.

Those who do have TACs usually have quotas, so access to abortion is extremely limited — especially in rural areas. Even in big cities there's a tremendous delay because of the bureaucratic character of the TACs, with an average of a six-week delay between the time a woman finds out she's pregnant and the time she actually gets the procedure.

Q. Are clinics legal in Canada?

A. No. But in Quebec there are clinics because of the struggle of the women's movement there and of Dr. Henry Morgentaler, who opened a clinic in Quebec in the early '70s. Morgentaler opened the clinic because the hospitals in Quebec were primarily Catholic and were refusing to set up TACs under the law which was passed in 1969. So he set up a clinic illegally and did thousands of abortions before he was finally arrested.

Then there was a ten-year struggle through the courts where he was acquitted by three juries, and finally, the Parti Quebecois government — which was a nationalist government — decided not to prosecute any doctor who performed abortions in safe medical conditions. As a result, today there are more than 15 government clinics in Quebec providing abortions, even though it's technically illegal to do so.

There's also now a clinic in Toronto, due to a struggle that's been taking place in Ontario over the last three years. Again, Dr. Morgentaler was arrested and acquitted of charges of performing an illegal abortion. That case is now going to the Supreme Court of Canada. In the meantime, the government has decided not to prosecute further. So the clinic remains open. It's been open for more than a year.

Q. Who decided to try to challenge the law in Ontario with a clinic and why that particular kind of challenge?

A. It was a group of women's health workers in Toronto that decided to ask Dr. Morgentaler to open a clinic here, because access to abortion was deteriorating for two reasons. The women's movement never found the '69 law acceptable, but it opened up access to legal abortions and demobilized the movement in the early '70s. But what started happening a number of years ago, because of hospital cutbacks and because of the pressure of the anti-choice groups, was that access to abortion was becoming more difficult. These women's health organizations had been lobbying the government for some sort of clinic system for many years and hadn't gotten anywhere.

Q. Have you been able to mobilize around the clinic?

A. Oh yes. There has been a tremendous and sustained mobilization around the clinic in Toronto. I think it has been the most significant mobilization of the women's movement in the history of English Canada.

When the clinic opened in July 1983, it was immediately raided. The doctors were arrested. Equipment was seized and there were large demonstrations of around 5,000 people protesting this.

There was a bit of a lull and then finally it went to trial. The doctors were acquitted and the clinic then reopened in December 1984, and was raided again. This time, though, they didn't do a heavy police raid like the first time, which had really outraged people because there were patients in the clinic. The second time they quietly arrested the doctor.

Nevertheless, there was a response. Finally the biggest mobilization came in February 1985, because the Catholic Church tried to pull out all of its troops and openly from its pulpits to organize a demonstration against the clinic.

We called a counterdemonstration and had 10,000 people in the streets supporting the clinic. That was the turning point in the struggle. It was after that that the government decided they couldn't close down the clinic and they had to wait for the thing to go through the courts.

Q. Has the trade-union movement been active in this campaign?

A. Yes. We've had tremendous support from the trade-union movement, the Ontario Federation of Labor, from the beginning. The reason for that is that we, in the Ontario Coallition of Abortion Clinics, have had a very strong orientation toward trying to win support from the labor movement. In Ontario there is also a very strong feminist influence in the labor movement.

Q. You are running for president of the Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP). Can you tell me a bit about the party and why you are running in this campaign?

A. The party is basically a labor party. It's different from any of the parties in the United States in the sense that it has a structured relationship to the labor movement. It's a social democratic party and its basic support comes from labor and working people.

In the pro-choice movement we have seen NDP support as essential in our struggle. And we have fought very hard inside the party to get the party to support the clinic and to support and defend Dr. Morgentaler.

I'm running for president not only because of that experience but because a number of us in the women's movement, in the international solidarity movements, the peace movement and the labor movement feel that potentially the NDP could be a tremendous support for our struggles. So we're organizing a campaign inside the party to change it to be much more an activist party, which gets politically involved in the various campaigns and social struggles that take place — not only speaking for those movements in parliament, but also being involved with them on the streets. □