

# TORCH

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## Black History Month: **The Legacy of Malcolm X**

By WILLIAM FALK

On February 21, 1965, Malcolm X was shot and killed at a public meeting in New York City's Audubon Ballroom. In honor of "Black History Month," we are commemorating the 18th anniversary of Malcolm's assassination.

Malcolm X was an example to and a catalyst in the creation of a whole generation of revolutionaries in the U.S.—including many people in the RSL today. In hundreds of speeches and interviews Malcolm X spoke the truth about U.S. society when few others dared to. And, though his ideas evolved over time—particularly during the 50

weeks between his break with Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam in March 1964 and his murder in February 1965—certain basic themes remained dominant throughout Malcolm's public life.

Malcolm attacked and exposed the racist structure and myths that hold together this so-called "land of opportunity." He taught that Black people have a history and a culture to be proud of. And, in contrast to the mainstream civil rights leaders of the time, Malcolm said that Black people in the U.S. could never win freedom by appealing to the supposed human values or "morality" of the ruling class. The lesson of history, he taught, is that the

U.S. ruling class has no moral conscience—it seeks to enslave its people and the people of the world and will lie, cheat, maim and kill to achieve its ends. Blacks and all oppressed people have to organize themselves for a power struggle against the rulers, Malcolm X said, because power is the only thing that they understand.

As the Statement of Basic Aims and Objectives of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), founded by Malcolm in May 1964, states: "Tactics based solely on morality can only succeed when you are dealing with basically moral people or a moral system. A man or system which oppresses a man because of his color is not

moral."

As a result, Malcolm rejected the idea—endorsed by nearly every other Black leader of his time—that Black people's struggle for freedom had to be non-violent. "If we're dealing with a non-violent enemy, then we would be non-violent too," he said in January 1965. "But as long as our people in this country have to face the continued acts of brutality on the part of the racist element in the North as well as in the South, then I don't think we should be called upon to be non-violent."

Malcolm also insisted that Black people had to organize and arm themselves against racist violence. Point II of the OAAU Aims and Objectives

says: "We assert that in those areas where the government is either unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of our people, that our people are within their rights to protect themselves by whatever means necessary. A man with a rifle or club can only be stopped by a person who defends himself with a rifle or club."

Equally important, Malcolm argued that Black people had to build powerful organizations of their own. They had to rely on themselves, not on other groups, to win their rights. Malcolm particularly warned about the danger of depending on the liberal wing of the ruling class  
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**SECCION EN  
ESPAÑOL**

# The Legacy of Malcolm X

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for political support:

"The only way to solve our problems is to realize that people we think are liberal are not as liberal as they profess and people we think are with us, when we put them to the test they are not really with us, they are not really for the oppressed people," he said in February 1965.

"The white liberal differs from the white conservative only in one way: the liberal is more deceitful than the conservative. The liberal is more hypocritical than the conservative," Malcolm said in a speech given in December 1963—his last as a member of the Nation of Islam.



Malcolm X in the summer of 1963, six months before an open breach with Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam.

## Capitalism inherently racist

Most Black leaders in the 1960s saw the Black struggle as a fight for reforms that would make what they considered a basically good system "color-blind." But Malcolm taught that the whole system was racist and rotten to the core.

"It's impossible for a chicken to produce a duck egg—even though they both belong to the same family of fowl. A chicken just doesn't have it within its system to produce a duck egg. It can't do it. It can only produce according to what that particular system was constructed to produce. The system in this country cannot produce freedom for an Afro-American. It is impossible for this system, this economic system, this political system, this social system, this system, period. It's impossible for this system, as it stands, to produce freedom for the Black man in this country.

"And if ever a chicken did produce a duck egg, I'm quite sure you would say it was certainly a revolutionary chicken!" (May 29, 1964)

In the early 1960s, virtually every Black leader emphasized his loyalty to the U.S. and support for its Cold War crusade. But not Malcolm X; he always stressed the fundamental unity between Black people inside the U.S. and people of color around the world:

"1964 will see the Negro revolt evolve and merge into the world-wide Black revolution that has been taking place on this earth since 1945...when I say Black, I mean non-white—black, brown, red or yellow. Our brothers and sisters in Asia, who were colonized by the Europeans, our brothers and sisters in Africa, who were colonized by the Europeans, our brothers and sisters in Latin America, the peasants, who were colonized by the Euro-

peans, have been involved in a struggle since 1945 to get the colonialists...off their land, out of their country." (April 1964)

After his last trip to Africa Malcolm noted approvingly that "now the African nations are speaking out and linking the problem of racism in Mississippi with the problem of racism in the Congo and also the problem of racism in South Vietnam. It's all racism. It's all part of the vicious racist system that the Western powers have used to continue to degrade and exploit and oppress the people in Africa and Asia and Latin America during the centuries." (January 1965)

Unfortunately, for many of the years that Malcolm X was correctly criticizing the mainstream civil rights leaders for

their compromises with the U.S. ruling class, he spoke from the sidelines while the other leaders participated in and led the fight for freedom. The reason for this was that members of the Nation of Islam were forbidden by Elijah Muhammad to take part in the actual struggles—the demonstrations, the marches, the sit-ins, etc.—that were taking place at the time. Malcolm's growing desire to be active in these struggles was one of the key reasons for his break with Elijah Muhammad. And, soon after his "declaration of independence," he changed his positions on other questions as well. It was at this time that he began to speak increasingly of the division in the world between the "haves" and the "have-nots," rather than between Black and white.

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"I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation. I believe that there will be that kind of clash, but I don't think that it will be based upon the color of the skin, as Elijah Muhammad has taught it," he said in January 1965.

Thus, though Malcolm X became an orthodox Sunni Muslim after leaving the Nation of Islam, he founded a non-religious organization that could unite Black people whether or not they accepted Islam.

When Malcolm was killed, the bourgeois press claimed "he got what he deserved." The *New York Times*, for example, called him a man who turned "many true gifts to evil purpose" and was killed by the "darkness that he spawned." The more liberal *Nation* magazine labeled him "one segment of the Negro lunatic fringe."

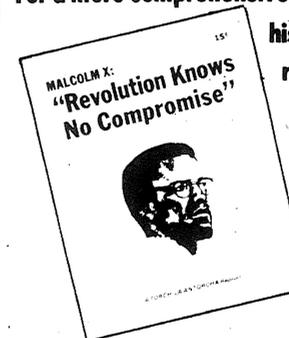
Today, however, Malcolm X

is routinely listed among Black heroes by these same publications and hundreds of other newspapers, magazines, and TV and radio stations. Government-built buildings are named after him and our children are often taught about him in school—although they are usually told that Malcolm's main message was to "study hard!" But the real heritage of Malcolm is not the brick buildings named after him but the uncompromising struggle for freedom that he so well represented.

Malcolm X had no fully-defined set of positions or ideology when he was murdered. Nor had he had sufficient time to build an organization capable of surviving after his death. No one can say exactly where Malcolm X would have gone politically had he lived. But one thing is clear: His future activity would have meant trouble for the U.S. ruling class. There can be little doubt that Malcolm X was assassinated—with police aid and complicity—for precisely that reason. □

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## Thanks Again!

At press time, our Winter 1983 fund drive has raised \$13,380—nearly 40 percent above our goal of \$10,000. The drive officially ended on January 15, but contributions are still coming in.

This has been one of the most successful fund drives we've ever held, and we believe the results point to a strong commitment by our friends to make sure the RSL survives and continues to grow. All RSL branches sent in more than had been expected, in some cases nearly twice as much. Particularly heartening with the response of *Torch/La Antorcha* readers—more money was raised from readers and other non-member supporters than in any previous fund drive.

Your contributions will enable us to continue our work without making cutbacks and to carry out projects, such as publishing new pamphlets, that previously had to be postponed for lack of funds. So once again, to everyone who helped make this drive successful—Thanks from all of us!

By PAUL BENJAMIN

Many bourgeois political commentators have concluded that Republican Party defeats in the 1982 elections signify a decisive defeat for the radical right in U.S. politics. Such claims have also been echoed by several U.S. left publications and groups.

For example, the January issue of *Democratic Left*, published by Michael Harrington's Democratic Socialists of America, includes an article by the organization's former chairperson, Jim Chapin, arguing that "This year's [1982] defeat of the New Right is equivalent to the defeat of Joe McCarthy in the Senate of 1954."

Earlier, another leftist newspaper, the *Guardian*, called the election results a "stunning reversal for the new right political machine" and claimed the rightists' "entire strategy" of winning working class support by stressing conservative social issues like abortion had "crumbled" in the face of the U.S. economic crisis.

While it is true that the right wing movement has lost some ground recently, we think claims that it is finished as a major political force in U.S. politics are overoptimistic and superficial.

The arch-conservatives have certainly suffered some defeats in recent months. For the radical right, the 1982 elections were a near-disaster: 15 of the 18 candidates backed by ultra-conservative Senator Jesse Helms' Congressional Club, for example, were beaten in the elections, including six in his home state of North Carolina.

More broadly, the New Right has lost some of the support it formerly enjoyed from sections of the U.S. ruling class. During the 1980 presidential election campaign and the elections themselves, a sizable portion of the capitalist class made a de facto alliance with the New Right to get rid of president Jimmy Carter and elect Ronald Reagan. But most of these ruling class elements were more concerned with questions of economic and foreign policy

than with rightist social crusades against abortion and for school prayer. And, with the failure of Reagan's economic programs, much of this ruling class support for the far right has eroded as the capitalist class searches for a consensus to try to solve the economic crisis. Now, virtually the entire ruling class is united in urging the administration to get together with moderate Republicans and Democrats in Congress to find practical solutions to the lingering recession, the mammoth budget deficits, possible trade wars and other problems.

Reagan and his advisers have been forced to bow to this pressure and move towards the political center. Thus, while Reagan continues to give verbal support to the New Right

through publicity gimmicks like declaring 1983 the "Year of the Bible," his administration is unlikely to commit its declining clout in Congress to any attempt to force through New Right social legislation.

### Right wing has popular support

But despite these and other setbacks, the radical right is far from dead. First of all, the right still has a large popular base in U.S. society.

For instance, although the elections showed widespread opposition to Reaganomics, they also revealed that racist and right-wing issues still have a strong appeal among many

white voters. In the California governor's race, Black Democratic candidate Tom Bradley was leading conservative Republican George Deukmejian only three weeks before the election. But Deukmejian won an upset victory by less than 50,000 votes. Exit polls showed that at least 150,000 people voted for Deukmejian because they would not support a Black candidate, clearly showing that racism was the decisive factor in Bradley's defeat. Similarly, in New York, Republican Lew Lehrman, an up-front supporter of Reaganomics, at first trailed far behind Democrat Mario Cuomo in the governor's race. But after Lehrman began stressing "anti-crime" issues like restoration of the death penalty and promises to appoint "tough" judges, he picked up support and came close to beating Cuomo.

Actually, while election results provide a rough idea of political trends in U.S. society, they tend to under-represent what happens at the political extremes. Thus, last fall's elections only partially reflect the right wing's popular base. The size of this base is revealed more clearly in the strength of the right-wing populist organizations that have grown so enormously in recent years.

Among the most important of these groups are the coalitions founded by various fundamentalist preachers. Under cover of demanding policies "in keeping with biblical standards of right and wrong," such groups organize flag-waving "I love America" rallies and sup-

port a hardline, militaristic foreign policy. They also flail away against abortion, gays, communists, foreigners and "welfare cheats" (a code word on the right for Latin and Black people). One such coalition, "One Nation Under God," brought 200,000 people to Washington D.C. in April 1980 to hold rallies, prayer meetings—and lobbying sessions with members of Congress. The Moral Majority, founded by one of the most notorious of these preachers, Jerry Falwell, claims over 400,000 members.

In addition to such broad groups, the arch-conservatives have established any number of single-issue organizations to drum up support for specific right-wing causes. Groups like the National Pro-Family Coalition and the American Life Lobby concentrate on "protecting traditional American values" and especially on opposing abortion rights for women. On January 22, these and other New Right groups were able to mass 26,000 demonstrators for the tenth "March for Life" in Washington D.C. to mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1973 decision legalizing abortion. This turnout, far larger than any of the pro-choice actions held to commemorate the anniversary, demonstrates that the right's support on social issues has far from "crumbled."

These right-wing organizations have enormous funds for propaganda and recruitment. The Moral Majority raked in over \$1 million last October alone, and has reported contributions totaling as much as \$200,000 in a single day. Some of this money comes from ultra-right businessmen such as Joseph Coors, head of the Coors Brewing Company, or from various self-made oil barons. But most of it comes from middle class and working class people who send in small contributions. Richard Viguerie, editor of the *Conservative Digest* and a professional fundraiser for numerous right-wing causes, maintains a computerized file of over 2.5 million potential donors.

### Klan, Nazis are growing

Alongside these so-called "respectable" groups are the outright fascists in the various Nazi and Ku Klux Klan organizations. According to estimates by the Anti-Defamation League and other sources, these groups have doubled in size since 1978. They now not only have an estimated 11,000 active members nationwide, but also more than 100,000 sympathizers who buy their literature, attend their rallies or give them contributions.

In fact, the number of actual  
(Continued on page 6)

# Is the Threat From the Far Right Declining?



Jerry Falwell, head of Moral Majority, leads an "I Love America" rally in Columbus, Ohio. More than 20 million people watch Falwell or other right-wing fundamentalist preachers on television every week.

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# Harold Washington Runs Against Chicago Machine

By DARRYL CLARK

CHICAGO—Harold Washington's candidacy for mayor of Chicago has stirred a great deal of interest and support, both from within this city's Black community and from numerous organizations on the U.S. left. (See, for example, "Up from the 'hood: Harold Washington takes on the Chicago machine," In *These Times*, February 9-15, 1983.)

After a huge surge in Black voter registration this past fall, Washington, a long-time Chicago politician, former U.S. congressman and unsuccessful candidate for mayor in 1977, decided to run in the Democratic primary, scheduled to be held February 22. Washington is running against Jane Byrne, the incumbent mayor, and State's Attorney Richard M. Daley, son of Chicago's long-time mayor, Richard M. Daley (Sr.). Washington has succeeded in making it a three-way race—in fact, the latest polls show him running second, just ahead of Daley. This is the best showing a Black candidate has ever made in a Chicago mayoral race, which, in this overwhelmingly Democratic city, is virtually always decided in the Democratic primary.

There are no serious differences between Daley and Byrne. Daley attacks Byrne for her corrupt fundraising; she has taken nearly \$10 million from city employees and businesses holding contracts with the city. Meanwhile, he is doing his best to catch up with her on this score. The race between Byrne and Daley is basically a circus: Both represent the corrupt and racist political machine that has run Chicago for decades.

For his part, Washington speaks of his candidacy as a "crusade." "When I get elected on February 22," says Washington, "the first message is going to go out to city hall. The second message is going to go out to Ronald Reagan. And the third message is going to go out to everyone that our people in this country have declared war on racism, war on Reaganism." And, indeed, many of his backers feel that they are battling the twin evils of racism and the long-entrenched Democratic Party machine by supporting him.

Racism in Chicago is certainly fierce. Black Chicagoans, 40 percent of the population, have always been excluded from any real power in this city. In many neighborhoods, including Daley's Bridgeport, Black people are in physical danger if they simply pass through; they are



Harold Washington.

guaranteed to be violently attacked if they actually try to move in. The Chicago school system is one of the most segregated in the nation and, this past summer, Mayor Byrne added insult to injury by reducing Black representation on the School Board. She did the same with the Chicago Housing Authority—in a city which has one of the most segregated housing patterns in the country. On top of all this, Byrne drew up a new ward map that would actually reduce Black representation on the City Council, even though Chicago's Black population is growing.

This has turned Washington's campaign into one of the larger political mobilizations this city's Black community has experienced in several years. If Washington were to surprise everyone and emerge as the winner of the primary, the machine would certainly be shaken. It might even run a "white hope" candidate as an "independent" against him in the spring general election, and would almost certainly resort to a variety of dirty tricks to defeat him, from stealing votes to violence and trumped-up arrests of Washington campaign workers on election day.

## What is Washington's program?

Washington correctly accuses Byrne of being erratic, crooked and a bad administrator. But he has little serious to say about the deepening economic crisis that is turning huge sections of Chicago into a sinking poverty area. He promises to work with all sectors of the city, including business, to plan a better future. Comments Washington, "Business wants the status quo, which happens to be white. If that's no longer the status quo, business will try to make an accommo-

dation with whoever's in charge. They will have no problem reaching an accommodation with me." The meaning of this was not lost on the conservative newspaper, *Crain's Chicago Business*, which assured its readers that Washington was quite sensible and certainly nothing to get alarmed about. Echoing this view, the British-based magazine, *The Economist*, a bedrock of conservatism, wrote: "He [Washington] is no black radical, but he is excited by the number of potential voters within his reach."

Washington has also said that his reputation as a "friend of labor" will be helpful in keeping the costs of contracts with city labor unions down: "I think my relationship with labor will permit me to sit down with them and talk without having to prove a lot." He added, "As mayor of this city, I wouldn't function like Daley did, arranging big wage increases without sufficient tax revenue."

## No foe of Democratic Party

Equally important, although Washington presents himself as an enemy of the Chicago machine, he is in no way an opponent of the capitalist Democratic Party itself, of which the machine is a fully integral part. If he become mayor, Washington will inevitably come to an "accommodation" with the machine as well.

Harold Washington in office is likely, at best, to resemble Coleman Young, the Black mayor of Detroit. Young had a

long and impressive record as an organizer and activist before becoming Detroit's chief administrator. Since his election as mayor in 1973, however, he has presided over devastating attacks on the mostly-Black working class of Detroit. Washington's background is nowhere nearly as radical as Young's; he has long been an elected Democratic Party politician with ties to the machine and always played by the rules. As a state legislator, he voted in 1968 for Boss Daley's anti-riot bill, a law so repressive that then-governor Ogilvie vetoed it. Washington has also been in trouble for taking legal clients' money and then not representing them, as well as for failing to file tax returns. Not too surprisingly, Washington is also a long-time admirer of former mayor Daley's Black southside boss, William Dawson.

## Left groups support Washington

Given Washington's record, his current campaign, and especially his affiliation with the Democratic Party, he basically represents a dead-end for real struggle against racial and class oppression in Chicago. It is certainly understandable why many Black people in Chicago will vote for Washington. But it is unfortunate that most left organizations in the city are also backing Washington, since those claiming to be socialists ought to be exposing the pro-capitalist nature of the Democratic Party, not building illusions in it and its candidates.

Much of the left, however, manages to find one way or

another to rationalize this issue. Thus, Nancy Cohn, speaking for the Workers World Party, proclaimed at a Chicago forum, "It's not a question of the Democratic Party, but of self-determination"—as if electing a Black Democratic politician meant freedom for Black people. Similarly, the radical *Guardian* newspaper ran a laudatory article on Washington while not surprisingly, the Communist Party, long known for tailing even moderately liberal Democrats, enthuses over his candidacy.

Perhaps most astonishing, Abdul Alkalimat, speaking from People's College, the best-known Black grouping on the Chicago left, described exactly how Washington would betray if elected—and then urged support for his campaign! (The Socialist Workers Party, to its credit, is running its own campaign, but appears to be keeping its profile low.)

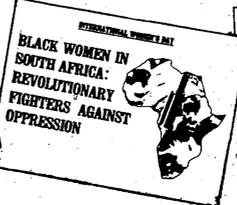
In our view, Washington's campaign, like most efforts of this sort, will not build a strong, politically conscious movement. Instead, it will channel Black people's anger into a firmly entrenched capitalist institution where it will bring about little change but, over time, a great deal of demoralization. If working class and oppressed people, Black, Latin, Asian and white, in Chicago and elsewhere, are to actually fulfill their needs, they have to organize independently of both capitalist parties. The unions, civil rights groups and the organizations of all oppressed people should join together to build an independent party and movement that can lead the fight against the capitalist attacks on all of us. □

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"Now you have  
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—Azanian woman

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# INTERNATIONAL

# WOMEN'S DAY, 1983

"Now you have touched the women, you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed."

—Azanian women's freedom song, 1956

"The boss looks for cheap workers. When the child can do the work cheaper, he displaces the woman. When the woman can do the work cheaper, she displaces the man. But when you are organized you have something to say about the conditions of labor and your wages. You must stand shoulder to shoulder. The woman must fight in the labor movement beside the man. Every strike I have ever been in was won by the women."

—Mother Jones, 1909

"That man over there says that woman needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place.

And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm. I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?"

—Sojourner Truth, 1851

"Our priorities for struggle are determined not only by our own immediate needs but by our evolving analysis of society as a whole. As women, we seek liberation in conjunction, not in competition, with others who are oppressed.

We recognize that our liberation and that of other oppressed groups cannot be achieved within the existing system. Therefore, our struggle against sexism necessarily involves us in the struggle against capitalism, racism, and all other forms of oppression, and must be waged simultaneously with these struggles if we are to achieve our vision of socialism."

—Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union, 1974

"True women's liberation isn't just a part of the fight for socialism, it's one and the same as the fight for socialism. Without socialism, there can be no true liberation of women. But at the same time there will be no true socialism if women are not truly free and equal."

—From "Woman Be Free"  
By Susan Edmunds,  
Revolutionary Socialist League

The above graphic is adapted from one carried by Iranian women at a demonstration for International Women's Day in Tehran in 1979. The women took to the streets to oppose reactionary Islamic legislation imposed after the overthrow of the shah, saying, "In the dawn of freedom, there is no freedom."

# Is the Threat From the Far Right Declining?

(Continued from page 3)

Klan or Nazi sympathizers is much higher than this. In 1980, Harold Covington, the leader of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party of America, got 56,000 votes in a losing bid to win the Republican primary for North Carolina state attorney general. Tom Metzger, then the director of California's largest Ku Klux Klan group, actually won the Democratic nomination for the House of Representatives in the state's 43rd Congressional District, receiving 32,344 votes. And Gerald Carlson, another Nazi member, won the Republican primary in Michigan's 15th Congressional District.

This wing of the ultra-right also includes a growing number of so-called "survivalist" organizations. The members of

from its potential to grow dramatically in the future. Unfortunately, racism, national chauvinism and crass bigotry of various other kinds are not the exclusive property of the far right. They have long been an integral part of "white America," that is, U.S. capitalist society. Many people in the middle class and among the white workers already share the prejudices of the rightists. All too many white people really do believe that Black people are inferior, lazy, immoral and are ruining the country by demands for "free handouts." Many think that Mexicans are stealing their jobs, that Jews are swindlers and gay people are perverts. Even more people assume that U.S. and Western European white, Christian society

tions they took for granted. And many cannot understand how the economic and military world supremacy of the United States can be challenged, not only by Russia and Western European rivals, but also by "little" Third World countries. These confused and very angry people could easily be seduced by right-wing promises to restore economic security, law and order, U.S. international leadership and "traditional family values."

## Racist attacks increasing

The world crisis is already provoking many of these people to move to the right. One of the

Salem, Oregon — and many other campuses—white fraternities and sororities are holding "Ghetto Parties" where students come dressed as pimps, prostitutes and drunks.

Another sign of the rightward motion of many people in the U.S. is the protectionist sentiment that is sweeping the entire country, including the working class. One Indiana autoworker told reporters, "We won the war against the Japanese and now they're starving us out." Bumper stickers have appeared in Detroit reading "Remember Pearl Harbor." The supposedly liberal United Auto Workers union leadership has posted a sign reading "Park Your Import in Tokyo" outside its headquarters in Detroit. And in Milwaukee last fall,

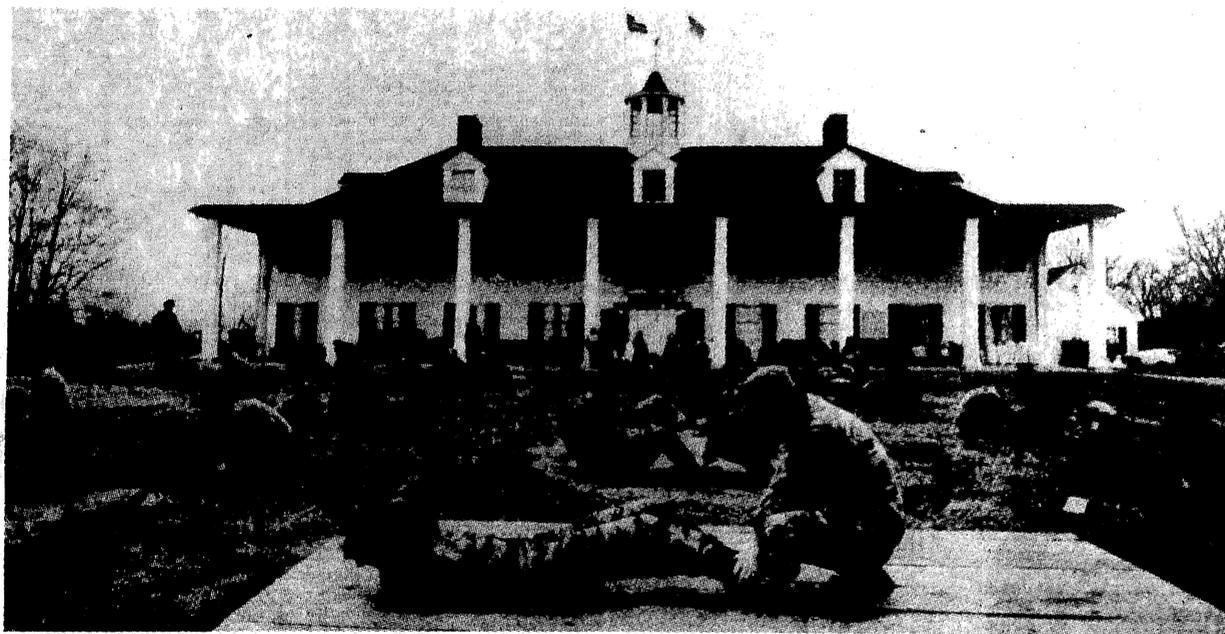
One of the most important of these movements is the spreading farmers' rebellion. In recent months farmers around the country have taken militant action to stop mortgage foreclosures or the forced auction of farmers' property to pay off loans. On January 4, for example, 250 members of the American Agricultural Movement (AAM), some from as far away as Missouri and Illinois, tried to stop the auction of Jerry Wright's farm in Springfield, Colorado. Sheriff's deputies had to use teargas and clubs to prevent the irate farmers from blocking the sale. Earlier, in November, AAM members forced the Farmers Home Administration, a federal agency set up during the Depression to provide cheap loans for farmers, to cancel a forced sale of equipment on a farm in Tennessee, Illinois. Similar actions have been organized by the Family Farmers Movement and other grassroots farmers' organizations.

Farmers have been forced into motion by the deepest agricultural crisis since the 1920s. They face a total debt of \$194.5 billion and can't pay off loans and mortgages because prices for crops like wheat, corn and cotton have dropped 25-35 percent over the past two years. Meanwhile, the FHA has been restricting loans and foreclosing mortgages in order to eliminate "inefficient" farmers.

Among the more militant farm leaders, some, like AAM member Alvin Jenkins, point to the 1960s Black civil rights movement as the inspiration for their actions, or favor trying to win trade union support. But others combine militant tactics with extreme right-wing politics. Jerry Wright himself, for example, has close ties to an ultra-right survivalist group, the Farmers Liberation Army. Last March, he joined 54 other farmers for "Bible classes" in Kansas that were actually FLA training sessions in guerrilla warfare. Wright told reporters last summer: "We're prepared right now for the outcome of the battle that's being waged for control of this country by the Rockefeller cartel and the international Jew-Bolshevik cartel." Other reactionary groups, such as Lyndon LaRouche's "National Democratic Policy Committee," are also trying to move into the farmers' movement.

## Truckers' strike had mixed character

Another example of the growing struggle of hard-pressed sections of the middle class was the 11-day independent truckers' strike in early February. The Independent Truckers As-



Members of the "Christian Patriots Defense League," an ultra-right para-military group, train on a church lawn.

these militaristic groups believe that white people in this country will soon have to resort to guerrilla warfare to save themselves and "white Christian culture" from hordes of Blacks, foreigners (particularly Latins and Asians) and "communists." One "Christian preparedness" group in California, the Legion of Zion Army, warns that "the people will turn to mob rule and civilization will be destroyed." Its members are urged to stockpile weapons, food and medical supplies and to "train in a military fashion" to protect themselves from "rioting, looting, murder, robbers, general insurrection or foreign attack on our soil."

## Crisis stirs up middle class fears

However, the real threat posed by the right comes not so much from its present size, but

represents the only truly "civilized" culture and on this basis condemn predominantly Black, Latin and Asian countries as "backward."

As long as the majority of people with such views were able to live relatively comfortable, sheltered lives, they had little reason to join up with the ultra-rightists (though hundreds of thousands did anyway). But today, many of these people are becoming angry and frustrated because the world they took for granted is falling to pieces. Those who thought they could "make it" simply by working hard are losing their jobs, their homes and their farms. Many who hoped their kids would become doctors, lawyers or other professionals are finding that they use drugs and can't get into college. Most feel threatened by the demands of Blacks, Latins, women, and lesbians and gay men who challenge the social, cultural and moral tradi-

clearest signs of this shift is the growing number of racist attacks against Black people. Such attacks are hardly new, but they are becoming more frequent and brutal. On January 27, for example, a gang of white youths in Elmont, New York, attacked Nanette Wade, a 45-year-old Black woman, with clubs—and this was just the latest in a half-dozen such assaults against Blacks in this one small town over recent weeks. Similarly, William Turks, a Black transit worker, was beaten to death last June by a racist gang in Brooklyn, NY, for no apparent reason other than "sport."

Meanwhile on college campuses, Pat Ewing, the seven-foot superstar Black center for the Georgetown University basketball team, is greeted by signs reading "Ewing Kant Read" and "Ewing is an Ape," while banana peels are thrown at him when he steps on the court. And at Willamette University in

workers tore down a Japanese flag and tried to burn it in a protest against imports.

## Militancy is not necessarily left-wing

At the same time, small business owners and middle class people are beginning to struggle against the very real attacks coming down on them from the ruling class. This resistance has been characterized by a number of very militant anti-government protests. However, such militancy is no guarantee that the majority of the white middle class will someday join up with workers and other oppressed people in a united fight against the capitalists. The radical right knows this and is actively seeking to gain leadership of protests springing out of the frustrations of "Middle America."

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sociation (ITA), which claims to represent some 30,000 of the more than 100,000 independent truckers, called the strike on January 31 to force the government to cancel increases in gas taxes and highway user fees adopted by Congress in December. Although ITA President Mike Parkhurst called the strike a victory, all the truckers won was a one-page "Expression of Concern" signed by 40 members of Congress.

Unlike truck drivers in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) who drive company-owned trucks, independent truckers own their own tractors (they are usually heavily mortgaged, however) and have to pay for gas and user fees out of their own pockets. These owner-operators, already squeezed by the recession and increased competition stemming from government deregulation of the trucking industry, correctly fear the new fees will drive many of them out of business. Their desperation led some of them to physically attack unionized drivers, many of whom were sympathetic to the strike but prevented by the reactionary IBT from joining in the action. One driver was killed, several wounded, and hundreds of trucks were damaged by rocks or gunfire.

The truckers' demands were legitimate, and their strike in many ways resembled a militant workers' walkout. However, the economic/social position of most independent truckers is contradictory; while in some aspects it resembles that of the unionized, non-owner drivers, in many respects it is closer to that of a small business owner. Most truckers dream not only of escaping the working class and being "their own boss," but of earning enough to buy additional tractors and to hire workers to drive for them—that is, of becoming small capitalists themselves. They believe government taxes are robbing them of their opportunity to fulfill "the American dream."

As a result, the truckers'

protest had strong parallels with the right-wing tax revolts of the late 1970s. Reagan became the standardbearer for this tax revolt in his 1980 election campaign. But the administration has been forced to raise taxes in order to cut down mushrooming budget deficits. Meanwhile, sections of the radical right have been seeking to gain popular support by opposing new taxes on the middle class and breaking with the Reagan administration on this issue. While both Democrats and Republicans joined to pass the gas tax bill, a handful of right-wing senators, led by Jesse Helms, organized a well-publicized filibuster against it; they claimed it was directed against "the little guy" and would eliminate jobs instead of creating them. The filibuster was undoubtedly noticed by the independent truckers.

In sum, there is a considerable potential mass base for the right wing in this country and the reactionaries are trying to organize it.

## No wall separates 'respectable right' from far right

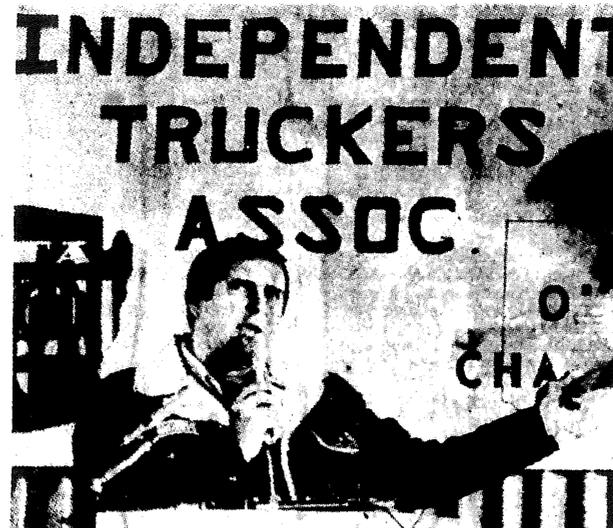
In warning that the popular base for the radical right could expand greatly as the crisis in U.S. society deepens, we are by no means arguing that the entire white middle class will automatically go over to the side of reaction and racism; rather, we are contending that it is highly likely that many of them will. The vast middle layers of U.S. society who have traditionally given their support to mainstream Republican and Democratic politics are rapidly losing their faith in the ability of either party to solve the country's economic and social crisis. At the moment when Republicans and Democrats are trying to find a moderate, centrist consensus, more and more people are being driven to abandon moderation and look for more radical solutions for their own problems. While some of these

people will move left, many, many others will not. Precisely because U.S. society is reactionary and racist even in the "best of times," many people will look to the far-right-wing organizations for leadership.

This dynamic could well result in the growth of a massive, militantly right-wing populist movement in this country, bitterly resentful of the government, big business, the unions, Latins, Blacks and other oppressed people, and the left. Kevin Phillips, a noted conservative political analyst, has predicted precisely such a movement, most notably in his book, **Post-Conservative America.** (Phillips' predictions have been all too glibly dismissed, both by the left and others.) Phillips' contention is that a reactionary mass movement that combines superpatriotism, racism and anti-gay prejudice with anti-Establishment resentment and demands for government guarantees of economic security for the middle class is likely to arise out of the failure of Reagan's economic program. Meanwhile, the conservative Heritage Foundation and right-wing spokespersons like Helms and Viguerie are already condemning the Reagan administration as a "prisoner of country-club conservatives" from big business and Wall Street, in order to prepare for seizing leadership of rightist populist revolts.

It is worth remembering that Hitler's Nazis and other German far-right movements of the inter-war years did not openly proclaim their pro-business, pro-capitalist leanings—"Nazi" is short for National Socialist and Hitler claimed to be defending the "little people," the "real Germans" from "Jewish capitalists" as well as the "Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy."

It's also worth noting that there is no wall separating "respectable" right-wing politicians like Jesse Helms from the fascists in the Nazis and the



Michael Parkhurst, president of the Independent Truckers Association, speaking to Ohio truckers just prior to the January 31 strike.

Klan. Helms' top adviser, Tom Ellis, was a former director of the Pioneer Fund, set up to "prove" that Black people are genetically inferior to white people. Another of Helms' aides, Jim Lucier, is a former writer for the arch-conservative John Birch Society. Popular support for "respectable" leaders like these can rapidly turn into support for the more out-right fascists.

## Fighting workers' movement needed

But while such a frightening development is a real danger, it is not inevitable. If working and oppressed people can build a militant, well-organized struggle against the capitalists, they will be able to convince many middle class people that their salvation lies with the workers' movement, not the radical right, and win them to a political alliance.

The first and most basic task of any such movement will be to actually fight. Unionized workers need to fight both to protect themselves from the capitalist attacks and to defend their organizations. The contract concessions negotiated by the union leaderships will not save a significant number of jobs. But they will provoke anti-union sentiment among both organized and unorganized workers. Many unionized workers who refuse to protect their members' wages and working conditions, let alone their jobs. At the same time, many unorganized workers, seeing the unions as large organizations that appear to do nothing but earn money for the Mafia, will have little reason to risk their jobs to organize or to support unionized workers' strikes. Thus, unless the existing workers' movement, particularly the unions, starts to fight back against the capitalist offensive, it will only be digging

its own grave.

For example, the independent truckers could and ought to be allies of the drivers in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. But the IBT, after signing a sellout contract with the trucking industry that included a wage freeze and other concessions, has done nothing to support the independents. As a result, instead of the unionized drivers and the independents uniting against both the government and the companies, the IBT has scabbed on the independents' strike, while the independents wound up shooting at union drivers. How many of the owner-operators will support the Teamsters the next time they strike?

But, equally important, the workers' movement must fight to defend everybody—women, gay people, Latins, Blacks, farmers and independent truckers—who is coming under attack from the capitalists. They must do so because every time the ruling class is successful in attacking anyone, whether through using the courts, the cops, the army or the banks, it gains more power and more legitimacy for its assaults against the working class as a whole. Moreover, if the workers' movement does not defend other oppressed groups, they will start looking elsewhere, including to the far right, for a way to defend themselves.

In our opinion, those who believe that the right-wing movement is no threat to working and oppressed people in the United States today have their heads in the sand. Militancy is not automatically leftist. The right will not disappear on its own. It will only be defeated by a mass revolutionary workers' movement that supports the just rights and needs of all oppressed people. Unless such a movement is built, the different sections of society may wind up fighting each other in a war of all against all that could make the nightmares of the survivalists a reality. □

# EVENTS

## NEW YORK

**February 27—Sexual Liberation, NAMBLA, and the Lesbian and Gay Community: A Forum.** Sunday, 3 pm, Taller Latino Americano, 19 W. 21st Street, 2nd floor. \$1 donation, wheelchair accessible. Panel speakers (including Ian Daniels of the RSL), open discussion, action planning. Sponsored by Stop the Witch-hunt Committee. For more info, (212) 695-6802.

**March 5—International Women's Day March and Fair.** March assemblies: Thompson Square (Ave. A at 7th St.), noon. March to Fair at P.S. 41 (12th St. between 6th & 7th). Fair includes workshops,

films, discussions, cultural activities. Sponsored by IWD Coalition. For more info, (212) 695-6802.

## LOS ANGELES

**March 5—International Women's Day Forum,** Saturday, 12-4 pm, 1st Unitarian Church, 2936 West 8th Street. Sponsored by Los Angeles Coalition to Fight the Family Protection Act. For more info, (213) 385-6029.

## DETROIT

**February 25 — Picket line** against "squeal laws" requiring parental notification of teenage contraception. Old Federal Building. Sponsored by International Women's Day

Coalition. For more info, call (313) 921-8398.

**March 12 — International Women's Day Celebration,** Saturday, 5 pm, Holy Trinity School at LaBross and 6th Street. Program will highlight struggles of Black women in Azania and Latina women in Mexico. Films, speakers, solidarity messages, literature displays of worldwide struggles, potluck dinner and party. Sponsored by IWD Coalition, which includes Detroit Reproductive Rights Committee, Revolutionary Socialist League, International Socialist Organization, International Socialists, Socialist Workers Party, News & Letters, Detroit NOW and others. For more info, (313) 921-8398.

# ANDROPOV CRACKS DOWN ON RUSSIAN WORKERS

Yuri Andropov, the former secret police chief who became head of the Communist Party following Leonid Brezhnev's death in November, has launched a major campaign aimed at solving Russia's economic problems by cracking down on the working class. The reason for this is that the Soviet economy, like the U.S. economy, is stagnating—among other things, it is straining under the weight of a monstrous military budget.

Under the banner of fighting corruption, inefficiency and shirking, Andropov wants to increase the abysmally low productivity of the Soviet economy. To do this, he is attempting to lengthen the working day, lower real wages and force people to work harder on the job—all at the same time.

The most dramatic aspect of this campaign, which got underway in January, is "Operation Trawl," aimed at ending the widespread absenteeism of Russian workers. Like truant offi-



Yuri Andropov, General Secretary of the Russian Communist Party.

cers chasing school kids, Russian police have swept through stores, restaurants, trolley buses and public squares during midday, checking to see if people had officially sanctioned reasons not to be at work. Those without proper papers were held by the police while their bosses were called and told to take

disciplinary action against them.

Many of the people rounded up in the operation were women standing in lines or traveling from store to store attempting to buy food and household items. In Russian cities today, there are acute shortages of meat, butter, eggs, milk and a host of small consumer products. Last year, the Russian weekly magazine *Literaturnaya Gazeta* sent a reporter to the city of Krasnodar with instructions to buy a toothbrush, soap, razor blades, shaving cream, underclothes, socks and writing paper. After a full day of going from store to store, the reporter hadn't found even one of these items. Recent reports from Moscow say that the daily supply of milk there sells out two hours after the groceries open.

As a result, to buy food and other needed items, working people in Russia (but not Communist Party bureaucrats, who can shop at special stores reserved just for them) must

spend many hours each day waiting in lines. "The problem of buying food has come to dominate people's lives," was one Moscow economist's comment on the situation.

Just to get the basic household tasks done, therefore (much less to bring home something special like fresh oranges or tomatoes), many Russian women—and in Russia cooking and maintaining the house are almost always a woman's job—go out first thing in the morning to shop and arrive at work late. Sometimes they leave work in the middle of the day or even take whole days off in order to ensure that their families have basic food items. This made women the primary victims of "Operation Trawl."

"Now they'll get a bit of the taste of how it was under Stalin," said one older worker as he saw the police in action, according to a report in the *New York Times*.

Andropov's productivity drive has not been limited to

"Operation Trawl." One Soviet worker who reported late for work in January found himself berated by a "workers' committee" while a television crew filmed the event for broadcast on the evening news. In other factories, the names of late workers are being posted.

Additional procedures have been implemented to curb "loafing" while at work. "Shoddy work, inactivity and irresponsibility should have an immediate and unavoidable effect on the earnings, official status and moral prestige of the workers," Andropov said in November.

One of the major targets of the campaign for increased productivity is workers who show up to work drunk or hung over. Vodka and moonshine vodka (samogon) are among the few items that are still widely available in the Soviet Union—per capita consumption of alcohol in Russia has more than doubled since 1955 and alcoholism is epidemic. On January 19, factory and farm managers were threatened with punishment if they failed to fire alcoholic workers.

Finally, January also saw the first set of a planned series of price hikes that will reportedly take place this year. Nearly 300 items went up approximately 30 percent. Toilet paper, for example (for which there are always long lines at the stores), went from 28 kopeks (35 cents U.S.) a roll to 48 kopeks (55 cents U.S.). Thread went from 14 cents a spool to 35 cents. An electric drill went from \$56 to \$100. Moreover, Russian newspapers have indicated that a leading candidate for a big price increase is bread, a major staple of the diet of the Russian workers. One result of these increases will be to make the standard of living of the Russian workers, already considerably below that of workers in the U.S., lower still.

What the current productivity drive by the Soviet leaders reveals is that Andropov and the rest of Russia's state-capitalist ruling class are attempting to solve their deepening economic crisis by stepping up their attacks on the working class. Official party proclamations notwithstanding, the drive for greater productivity in Russia—as with similar campaigns in the U.S.—is an effort to increase the exploitation of the Russian workers, that is, to raise the rate of surplus value. Workers in the Soviet Union, like workers in the U.S., are wage-slaves to a reactionary, capitalist system; their freedom, as with that of working and oppressed people everywhere, lies in a future socialist revolution. □



Ghanaian workers, expelled from Nigeria, are attacked by troops in Benin as they try to return home.

## Nigeria Expels One Million Ghanaians

On January 17, the Nigerian government suddenly ordered all foreign workers without proper papers to leave the country by January 31. At the time, there were about one million workers from Ghana in Nigeria and almost that many from other nearby countries. (Nigeria's total population is between 70 and 100 million.)

Like undocumented workers in the U.S., the workers from Ghana and elsewhere were paid far less than Nigerians and most held the least skilled jobs. Still, the wages and standards of living were better than at home. "We went because you could have everything—sugar, soap, and also send money home," said a Ghanaian woman who worked as a

hairdresser in Lagos, the Nigerian capital.

Nigeria's once prosperous economy—based on oil revenues—used to be held up as a model of African capitalist "progress." But a world oil glut and other factors have now plunged the country into an economic and political crisis. The government is blaming its problems on foreign workers, whipping up national chauvinism in preparation for elections later this year. Just after the expulsion order, a squatter settlement of Ghanaians in Lagos was burned down and groups of Nigerian youths in many cities began beating Ghanaians on the street.

By the end of the month, nearly all the foreign workers had been frightened into leaving, often paying the last of their

savings for the trip home. Because of tensions between the government of Ghana and those in Togo and Benin (the two countries between Nigeria and Ghana), hundreds of thousands of workers were held up at borders for days with little or no food or water. There were several deaths and injuries on the way, along with a reported six births.

The refugees will find little relief in Ghana. The Ghanaian economy is in chaos, all kinds of necessities are in short supply, and popular opposition to Jerry Rawlings' supposedly revolutionary regime is rising. As they arrived in Ghana, the returnees were told by government officials that they had no choice but to be shipped off to the countryside.

# State Capitalism or Marxism?

By ROD MILLER and RON TABER

This is the seventh and concluding article in our series on the factional struggle currently underway in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) and its affiliate in the U.S., the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

At the outset of the series, we argued that what appeared on the surface to be a comradely discussion within the USec over the relative merits of Leon Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution and V.I. Lenin's theory of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, actually represented an intense struggle over the fundamental program and direction of the main current of the international Trotskyist movement. Specifically, we maintained that the SWP leadership's polemics against Trotsky's theory foreshadowed a more thoroughgoing break with its Trotskyist traditions—and a decisive turn toward Stalinism.

Much of our analysis has already been confirmed, most notably in a speech given by the SWP's National Secretary, Jack Barnes, to the recent convention of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA—youth group of the SWP). In his talk, Barnes attacked Trotsky for making "serious sectarian errors" in his criticisms of Stalin's policies in China and Spain during the 1920s and 1930s. He said that "80 percent of all Trotskyists today" are "hopeless, unreformable sectarians," and added that the SWP was a "communist, not Trotskyist" organization. In addition, Barnes broadened the SWP leadership's attack on the theory of Permanent Revolution, arguing not only that the theory was a mistaken strategy for the Russian Revolution, but that it was never intended by Trotsky to apply more generally as a guide to revolutionary strategy elsewhere. (For a more complete account of Barnes' speech, see "Report from the YSA Convention: SWP Leaders Head Toward Stalinism," *Torch*, January 15-February 14, 1983.)

Beyond pointing to the SWP's increasingly pro-Stalinist course, we have had a second, equally important, aim in writing this series. We have tried to demonstrate that the SWP leadership's turn toward Stalinism is in fact a logical result of its efforts to resolve a long-standing contradiction in the basic outlook, theory and program of the Trotskyist movement—a contradiction present in Trotsky's own analysis of and attitude toward Stalinism. In our original introduction to this series we described this contradiction as follows:

"On the one hand, the movement, following the analyses and theories laid out by Trotsky, claims to oppose Stalinism: Trotsky considered Stalinism to be, overall, a counter-revolutionary force. Within Russia, he thought that the Stalinist bureaucracy was working to overturn the gains of the workers' revolution of 1917. In his view, the Stalinists had totally destroyed the soviets, the councils created during the October Revolution that had been the basis for the workers' state, and had strangled the Bolshevik Party, politically as well as physically in the purges of the 1930s. Trotsky also believed that the Stalinist bureaucracy was acting to restore capitalism by undermining the nationalized property and central planning, which Trotsky considered the foundations of the workers' state. Internationally, Trotsky believed the Stalinist bureaucracy and Stalinist parties were working to prevent successful proletarian revolutions.

"On the other hand, Trotsky's theory implied that Stalinism is progressive, although Trotsky himself never stated this directly. What Trotsky did argue was that nationalized (state) property and central planning in Russia—irrespective of whether the workers themselves had any control over the property, the planning or the state—constitute the essence of a 'workers' state.' This meant that to the extent that the Stalinist bureaucracy did actually defend state property and planning, it was defending the 'workers' state' and was therefore playing a progressive, rather than counter-revolutionary, role. Similarly, if Stalinist and semi-Stalinist forces around the world were able to come to power and

People of Prague confront Russian troops who invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 to reassert Russian control over the country.



nationalize property and institute some form of planning (such as happened in Eastern Europe, Cuba, Vietnam, China, etc.) then they were creating 'workers' states' and were also historically progressive."

During the 1920s and 1930s, this contradiction in Trotsky's outlook was, to a considerable extent, hidden, since Stalinism was a relatively new phenomenon and had not yet fully revealed its nature. However, in the aftermath of World War II, the Trotskyist movement could no longer ignore this problem. The Stalinists in Russia and Eastern Europe—including the Russian army—after having crushed or derailed the working class upsurges that took place, moved to transform the entire region into a virtual replica of Russia itself. The Eastern European economies were wholly or nearly wholly nationalized, independent political forces were eliminated, and one-party (Stalinist) rule established. By 1951, as we saw earlier in this series, the Trotskyist movement, after intense discussion, reached the conclusion that the economic and social transformations in Eastern Europe had created "workers' states" (which they labeled "bureaucratically deformed")—though the workers had not carried out any socialist revolutions, and though they did not control, never had controlled and, if anything, opposed the new regimes.

## FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECIDES STALINISM IS PROGRESSIVE

In reaching this conclusion, the Trotskyist movement had taken a qualitative step toward resolving in a pro-Stalinist direction the contradiction present in Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism—it had effectively decided that Stalinism was progressive.

The movement's capitulation to Stalinism continued throughout the 1950s and '60s, as the Fourth International hailed one Stalinist, semi-Stalinist or petty-bourgeois nationalist regime after another (Algeria, Egypt, Cuba) as "socialist," a "workers' state" or in some way "progressive." Despite this, it retained, on paper at least, a commitment to some of the key theoretical and programmatic ideas of Trotskyism, including the theory of Permanent Revolution, the call for "political revolutions" in the Stalinist countries, Trotsky's criticisms of the Communist International's tactics around the world (for example, the so-called People's Front) and, not least, the aim of building a

distinct international Trotskyist party—the Fourth International.

However, the logic of an outlook that saw Stalinist forces creating "workers' states" in country after country—while the Trotskyists had no such "victories" to their credit—was bound, sooner or later, to raise fundamental questions for the Trotskyist movement. Why, for example, defend the theory of the Permanent Revolution if capitalism was being overthrown and workers' states built without such a perspective? Why maintain that the Permanent Revolution is the only correct strategy for revolutionaries? Similarly, if Stalinist organizations were playing such a progressive role, why maintain a distinct Trotskyist movement? Why continue to fight to turn it into a mass Fourth International? Indeed, why be a Trotskyist at all?

In our estimation, the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party have now decided, for whatever precise set of reasons, to follow this political logic to its conclusion. They have declared their opposition to the theory of Permanent Revolution and are rapidly throwing overboard much of the remainder of their formal Trotskyist positions. They have dropped their commitment to building the Fourth International and are instead seeking to hook up in a common organization—what Barnes has termed a new "mass Leninist international"—with forces that are explicitly hostile to Trotskyism, in particular, Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and Maurice Bishop's New Jewel Movement in Grenada. In other words, the Barnes leadership is attempting to bring the SWP's formal politics into line with the actual political outlook it has held for years.

It should come as little surprise that a sizable portion of the SWP membership along with the overwhelming majority of the sections of the USec are resisting the more or less explicit pro-Stalinist course of the Barnes leadership. At the time of the SWP's last convention (held in 1981), two tendencies had formed in opposition to Barnes. These groups, while disagreeing with each other on certain questions, essentially sought to defend the USec's traditional theoretical positions and program from Barnes' revisions. (In addition, they put forward perspectives for the SWP's practical work in this country that were counterposed to those of the Barnes leadership—an aspect of the current faction fight we have not addressed in this series.) These oppositions reportedly gained the support of about 25 percent of the SWP membership, a significant showing given the rather limited internal democracy inside the SWP. (Minority political tendencies in the SWP are not allowed to exist in an organized fashion except during a brief, two-month discussion period prior to national conventions.)

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**Polish troops used water cannon to suppress supporters of outlawed Solidarity union in Warsaw last May. The state-capitalist rulers of Poland and other Eastern European countries are just as oppressive and brutal as their counterparts in Western capitalist countries. Workers in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Russia have organized strikes and rebellions against their rulers.**

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Since the 1981 convention, according to various reports and rumors, the opposition to Barnes has continued to be strong, despite the fact that the SWP leadership has placed new restrictions on internal discussion—members of the minority tendencies were reportedly forbidden to communicate with each other, even by exchanging Christmas cards (!)—and has expelled more than a few minority supporters.

On the international level, the majority of the USec's national sections, led by long-time USec theoretician Ernest Mandel, are also opposing Barnes. While we are not privy to the USec's internal discussion documents, a public polemic against the SWP leadership, written by Mandel, appeared in the April 1982 issue of *International Socialist Review*, a monthly theoretical supplement to the SWP's newspaper, the *Militant*. In this article, Mandel put forward the Trotskyist movement's traditional view of the merits of the theory of Permanent Revolution vs. the theory of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. He defended Trotsky's theory as essentially correct and confirmed by the events of 1917 in Russia, and he pointed to some of the weaknesses in Lenin's pre-1917 theory.

In our view, Mandel's article is competent and largely correct—although it fails to mention what we referred to as the "left variant" of Lenin's theory. (This omission enabled the Barnes faction to score some cheap points against Mandel by citing some quotations from Lenin that appear to contradict Mandel's presentation of Lenin's theory.) Since we have already elaborated our own views on this aspect of the dispute in considerable detail earlier in this series (see parts one and two), we do not propose to discuss Mandel's article here. Instead, we will try to describe the broader program that Mandel and the USec majority are defending and to show why it fails to provide the firm political ground needed to resist the pro-Stalinist, liquidationist course of the Barnes leadership. We will conclude by outlining our own alternative to those programs that rest, to one degree or another, on the pro-Stalinist strand of Trotsky's outlook.



The program that Mandel and his supporters internationally and inside the SWP are counterposing to that of the Barnes leadership can be broadly summarized as a defense of what we would term "orthodox Trotskyism"—the political program elaborated by the Fourth International in the period from Trotsky's death in 1940 until the present. In brief outline, this program consists of:

- 1) Defense of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution as the strategy followed in practice by the Bolsheviks in 1917 and as the correct strategy for revolution in the imperialized countries today;
- 2) Defense of the traditional Trotskyist view that Trotsky and the movement he led represented the "continuity" of Leninism after Lenin's death;
- 3) Defense of the traditional USec view that the state-capitalist countries are "workers' states"—either "degenerated" (Russia), "deformed" (Eastern Europe, China, etc.) or more or less "healthy" (Cuba);

4) Maintenance of Trotsky's call for "political revolution" to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish workers' democracy in Russia—and by extension in Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe, China, etc. (but not Cuba, where no such revolution is thought to be necessary);

5) Retention of the USec's traditional criticisms of the "bureaucratic deformations" in Cuba and of the view that the Cuban Communist Party (and the Sandinistas) are not, as Barnes now terms them, "fully revolutionary proletarian leaderships";

6) Retention of the goal of organizing a distinctly Trotskyist political current and of building a mass, Trotskyist international party—the Fourth International.

At first glance, there appear to be significant differences between the Mandel and Barnes wings of the USec: While Barnes wants to junk the theory of Permanent Revolution, Mandel wants to retain it; while Barnes increasingly stresses that the SWP is "communist, not Trotskyist," Mandel still views Trotskyism as the revolutionary extension of Leninism; while Barnes embraces the Cuban Communist Party, the New Jewel Movement and the Sandinistas as "the foremost revolutionary leaderships in the world today" and supports the Cuban, Grenadian and Nicaraguan regimes uncritically, Mandel has reservations about the Stalinist nature of the Cuban CP, differences with the policies of the Sandinistas and criticisms of the Cuban, Grenadian and Nicaraguan regimes, particularly of the lack of basic democratic rights for the working class in those countries; finally, while Barnes wishes to abandon the effort to build a Trotskyist Fourth International and instead seeks to build a new, non-Trotskyist international party, Mandel remains committed to building the Fourth International as the "world party of socialist revolution."

## MANDEL'S DIFFERENCES WITH BARNES NOT SUBSTANTIAL

However, if Mandel's program is looked at more closely, it turns out that its differences with Barnes' program are not as substantial as might appear.

To begin with, Mandel's commitment to the Trotskyist program is in large measure a commitment to certain words and phrases or Trotskyist formulations. First, the USec—with Mandel as one of its principal leaders—has spent the last 30 years stripping the Trotskyist program of much of its revolutionary, proletarian content. For example, Mandel's version of the Permanent Revolution is a caricature of Trotsky's. Trotsky argued that revolutions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries could only be successful if the working class led all the other oppressed classes and established its own government. In contrast, Mandel has stretched the theory of the Permanent Revolution to try to make it fit situations (such as the Chinese and Cuban revolutions)

where the workers never led the revolutions, never established their own governments and, in fact, never played any significant role in the revolutions at all. In these cases, according to Mandel, non-working class forces, particularly Stalinist and semi-Stalinist currents, were forced by "objective circumstances" to "carry out the logic of the Permanent Revolution." In other words, although social layers other than the working class carried out what Mandel considers to be socialist revolutions, in contradiction to the predictions of the Permanent Revolution, Mandel calls these revolutions a confirmation of the theory.

Second, while Mandel wants to retain a greater degree of criticism of the Stalinist regimes than Barnes, in many cases—particularly those that are important in the current faction fight, such as Cuba, Grenada and Nicaragua—Mandel's criticisms are so muted as to be virtually non-existent.

Third, although Mandel wants to maintain a distinctly Trotskyist organization, his opposition to Barnes' call for a new "mass Leninist international" is motivated, at least in part, by his belief that such an organization will never see the light of day. A representative of the USec explained to an RSL supporter attending the recent YSA convention that the Mandel forces would also like to hook up with Fidel Castro in an international party, but that they "had enough sense" to know that Castro isn't interested.

The final and most significant reason why Mandel's differences with Barnes are not as great as they might appear is that Mandel agrees with Barnes on the fundamental questions. Mandel, like Barnes, considers the Stalinist countries to be workers' states, even though the workers do not rule these societies; he believes that workers' states are defined by the presence of nationalized property and state planning, even though the workers do not control the property or do the planning; he believes that workers' states can be established in a variety of ways, only one of which is an actual workers' revolution. And, like Barnes, Mandel believes that Stalinist and semi-Stalinist forces can create, indeed have created, workers' states. He thus considers Stalinism to be progressive even if, now and then, he raises certain criticisms or, in convention resolutions, refers to the Stalinist states as "bureaucratically deformed."

Once one accepts these assumptions, Barnes' program is the logical conclusion. As we have tried to show throughout this series, the political course now being advocated by the SWP leadership was not pulled out of thin air; its roots lie in the same "orthodox Trotskyism" that Mandel and the USec majority are trying to defend. To put it differently, whereas Barnes wants to resolve the long-standing contradiction in the Trotskyist movement's attitude toward Stalinism in a decisively pro-Stalinist direction, Mandel and his supporters simply want to retain the old orthodoxy, contradictions and all.

As a result, Mandel's program cannot serve as a firm foundation to resist the current course of the SWP leadership. As long as Mandel and the USec majority continue to believe that the Stalinist regimes are "workers' states," and that the Stalinist forces can create such states, the pressure to capitulate to, if not dissolve into, Stalinist and semi-Stalinist organizations will continue to plague their movement. And, as long as the Trotskyist movement tries to stand on its contradictory "orthodoxy," forces proposing to resolve the contradiction in its politics in a more consistently pro-Stalinist direction will continually arise within it.

Those militants in the SWP and the USec who wish to defend Trotskyism against Barnes' pro-Stalinist revisionism must go beyond Mandel's untenable "orthodox Trotskyist" program. Rather than trying to base themselves on Trotsky's contradictory attitude toward Stalinism as Mandel does, they ought to build on, and make consistent, the anti-Stalinist aspect of Trotsky's outlook.

To do this, much of Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism should be retained. This includes: 1) his view that the Stalinist bureaucracy was counter-revolutionary, that it strangled the Bolshevik Party, undid the progressive reforms of the early post-revolutionary years and, most importantly, politically expropriated the Russian working class; 2) his assessment that Stalinism was a reactionary force internationally, as well as within Russia, that it opposed and obstructed working class revolutions in China, Spain and elsewhere; and, 3) his call for the workers and peasants in Russia to rise up in a mass revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy and establish their own direct control over the state and economy through truly democratic soviets, factory and neighborhood committees, cooperatives, etc., along with full democratic rights, including the right to strike, speak out, publish, form political parties, etc.

However, if Trotskyism is to be defended against those who want to liquidate it into Stalinism, the pro-Stalinist aspects of Trotsky's theory must be rejected. This means repudiating Trotsky's view that Russia remained a workers' state even after the workers had lost all control of the state and the economy and were, in fact, being subjected to the most frightful exploitation and oppression. It means discarding Trotsky's assessment that the Stalinist bureaucracy, which totally controlled the state and, by any reasonable criterion, politically and economically ran the

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## STALINIST SOCIAL STATE-CAPITALISM

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Finally, it means rejecting the key implications of Trotsky's erroneous analysis of Stalinism: 1) that there can be any such thing as a "workers' state" that the workers themselves do not control; 2) that such a state can be defined by its abstract forms (nationalized property and state planning) as opposed to its concrete social relations (i.e., who rules and who is ruled); and, 3) that a workers' state can be created by any means other than the workers and other oppressed classes seizing power and ruling society for themselves.

In short, those in the SWP/Usec who want to defend the anti-Stalinist aspect of Trotsky's legacy (and thus Trotskyism as a whole) must stand four-square on the fundamental Marxist idea—too often ignored by most Marxists—that the "emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves" and reject all notions that in any way imply that an elite can "bring freedom to the workers" or rule "in their interests."

## STALINIST SOCIETIES ARE STATE-CAPITALIST

In our view, the only way revolutionary socialists can consistently uphold and apply the key Marxist idea of the "self-emancipation of the working class" is by recognizing that the Stalinist (so-called communist) societies are in fact class societies, whose economies are based on the exploitation of the workers and peasants. To us, this means understanding that these countries are actually state-capitalist societies which rest on the same fundamental relations of production that characterize all capitalist societies. Let's examine this question more closely.

The chief producing class in the Stalinist countries is the working class. But, contrary to the propaganda that emerges from the ruling Communist Parties, workers in these societies do not control the state; they lack the institutions and democratic rights that would enable them to do so. As a result, they have no control over the state-owned means of production. The workers are therefore alienated (separated) from the means of production—like the workers in traditional capitalist societies.

This means that the workers in the state-capitalist countries have no choice but to sell their labor-power, their ability to work, to those who control the means of production—the bureaucracy—in exchange for wages. The workers receive, more or less, enough to survive and raise a family. (In Marx's terms, they are paid at value—the value of their labor-power.) However, the workers produce more

than they receive. The resulting surplus, produced in the production process, is appropriated by the bureaucracy. While some of this surplus is consumed by the bureaucracy, much of it is reinvested in the production process with the aim of modernizing the means of production and increasing the size of the surplus produced. In other words, the surplus is accumulated—as under traditional capitalism. Since the major means of production in the Stalinist countries are owned by the state, rather than by private individuals or corporations, these societies should be called state-capitalist.

State capitalism is a particular form of capitalism in which nationalist-minded sections of the middle class rule over a more or less state-run economy, supposedly "in the name of" the workers, peasants and other oppressed classes. Although this type of society can, often at great human cost, take certain radical and progressive measures—such as helping to defend a given country from imperialism, carrying out various economic/social tasks usually associated with the term "primitive accumulation" (such as the elimination of feudal classes, the creation of an industrial infrastructure and a modern working class), or implementing health and educational reforms—it is not a form of socialism. The workers do not rule these societies, and do not control the means of production. They are therefore exploited by a ruling (capitalist) class.

Of course, a person can define socialism any way she/he wants to. If Russia and the other state-capitalist countries are defined as socialist or as workers' states merely because property is nationalized and the economies run by a state plan, then there is no way we can prove that these countries are not socialist; we can only argue that we do not share such a definition of socialism. However, we do believe that our understanding of the state-capitalist nature of the "socialist" countries is being confirmed by the world crisis that is today engulfing them along with the rest of the world.

For years, Russia was considered to be progressive, if not socialist, because it experienced relatively rapid economic growth, even during periods when traditional capitalist societies were in crisis. But this is no longer the case. The Russian economy is stagnating; its gross national product grew only 2.8 percent a year from 1975 to 1980 and, today, the picture is probably worse. Planning goals are never met, often not even approached. The entire economy is plagued by extremely low productivity, corruption, and gluts and bottlenecks of all kinds. It only runs to the degree it does because of the huge underground (so-called black and gray) markets which operate as a "parallel economy." Today, it is estimated that as much as 25 to 30 percent of Russian consumer goods are produced in the parallel economy.

Perhaps even more important, the health and well-being of the people in Russia are declining. Death rates and the incidence of illness are rising. Alcoholism in particular has reached epidemic proportions. And, not least, the Russian ruling class, led by the former head of the KGB (the secret police), Yuri Andropov, is cracking down on the working

class and sections of the bureaucracy in order to improve the performance of the economy. Andropov is also raising prices of food and other state-subsidized necessities, thus further lowering the already-miserable living standards of the Russian people. (See article on page 8 of this issue.)

The purpose of these attacks is the same as the corporate/state offensive in the U.S., Great Britain, France, etc., etc. Whatever the precise form of government, the rulers must lower real wages and increase productivity in order to increase the rate of exploitation, the rate of surplus value, and hence the rate of capital accumulation. This is the only way that all these ruling classes can get their economies moving again, as well as finance their colossal military build-ups.

## SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM?

Already, the crisis in the state-capitalist countries has provoked a mass working class revolt in Poland. There are definite signs of working class unrest in East Germany, Romania—and in Russia itself. Where will the next revolt be?

Similarly, the "socialist" societies in Africa (the countries whose economies are wholly or partially staid) are total failures and many of these countries—Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania, Guinea, for example—are turning to the traditional capitalists, especially the U.S., for loans and technology. In doing so, they are joining their better-off Eastern European counterparts, which already owe the Western banks and financial institutions over \$60 billion. As for Cuba, it remains relatively stable only because the Russians pour over \$3 billion a year (about \$10 million a day) into its stagnant economy. Even so, when Castro opened the gates for two months in 1980 to allow Cubans to leave the country, more than 100,000 people fled. What will happen when the Russians cut back their subsidies, as they have already hinted?

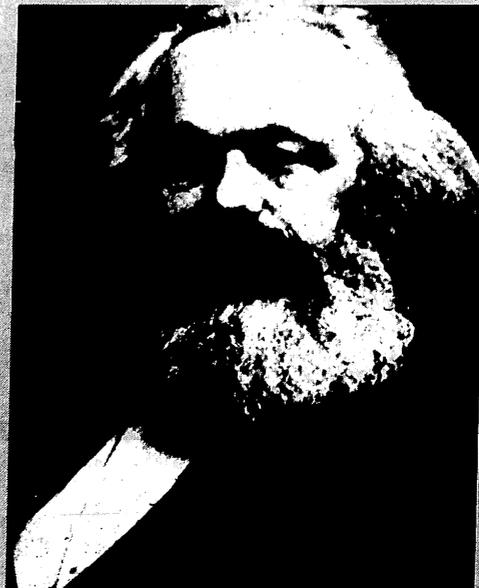
In short, the state-capitalist countries are in a crisis fundamentally similar to that in the traditional capitalist countries. This is not simply because these economies are subordinate to the world market and subject to its pressures (which, even by itself, would suggest that they are integral parts of the world capitalist economy); it is also because of the way they are organized internally. In each and every one, the workers and peasants do not control the means of production. They do not control the economy and they do not plan production. In other words, as in traditional capitalism, the means of production dominate the producers.

But in fact, the bureaucracy, despite its "planning" and its enormous police powers, is not really in control of the economy either. As a result, in the state-capitalist countries,

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**"The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves."**

**— Karl Marx**



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as everywhere, the means of production (along with the state and military apparatus) are totally out of control. This is the cause of the economic crisis, the environmental crisis and the political-military crisis that threatens to erupt into a nuclear holocaust. State capitalism, then, along with traditional capitalism, is leading us to the very barbarism that Marx warned would occur if world capitalism was not overthrown.

Although the theory of state capitalism was certainly not Trotsky's theory—in fact, he polemicized against it and against all other theories that defined Russia as a form of exploitive class society—we believe that only by adopting this theory can Trotskyism as a whole be placed on relatively firm theoretical and programmatic ground. As we have seen, if one considers Russia and the other Stalinist countries as workers' states, socialist, transitional (to socialism) or otherwise progressive, then the anti-Stalinist content of Trotskyism is totally undermined.

If, on the other hand, the Stalinist societies are considered to be exploitive but not capitalist—for example, James Burnham's theory of the "Managerial Society" or the similar "Bureaucratic Collectivist" theory of Max Shachtman—Trotskyism will be undercut from the other side. The logic of these positions is to view the Stalinist societies as more reactionary than (Western) capitalism. Since these theories do not consider the Stalinist countries to be socialist/workers' states or capitalist states, they imply that the chief producing class is not really a proletariat and that the production process does not involve the creation of surplus value, the rising organic composition of capital or the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. In short, if these societies are not capitalist, the class struggle that is an essential characteristic of capitalism does not take place within them and there is therefore no tendency driving the workers to overthrow the society and establish socialist societies. In any case, the workers in these countries don't even have the basic rights that would enable them to form trade unions to defend their day-to-day interests. By one route or another, these theories usually lead to the notion that the Stalinist countries represent a dead-end of history, from which there is no escape.

According to this outlook, then, it is better to support traditional capitalism as preferable to, or more progressive than, Stalinism, since at least the workers in the traditional capitalist countries have a chance to organize to defend themselves and, if they so desire, to fight for socialism. (It is worth mentioning that Shachtman and Burnham both became arch-reactionaries, and this has been, more or less, the political evolution of most of those former socialists who call themselves "neo-conservatives" and are today damning Ronald Reagan for getting "soft on the Russians.")

## THEORY OF STATE CAPITALISM CONSISTENT WITH PERMANENT REVOLUTION

That the theory of state capitalism is the logical extension of Trotsky's revolutionary heritage is suggested by the fact that it is consistent with Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution. The theory of Permanent Revolution explains not only what happened during the Russian Revolution itself, but also the subsequent rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the establishment of state capitalism.

In the original formulation of his theory, Trotsky emphasized that the Russian workers could only maintain their power if the revolution in Russia was accompanied by working class revolutions elsewhere. Without the political and material aid that such revolutions would provide, Trotsky argued, the workers' state in Russia would be overturned.

In our view, this is exactly what happened. For a variety of reasons, there were no successful working class revolutions outside Russia (uprisings in Germany and Hungary in 1918-1919, for example, were crushed) and the Russian workers, starving and freezing in a country decimated by years of war, revolution and famine, did lose state power. But they did not lose it to the traditional ruling classes, the landlords and capitalists; instead, they lost power to a new ruling class, built around the apparatus of the Stalinized Bolshevik Party and the state.

This same idea can be put more generally. The very essence of the theory of Permanent Revolution is that the only road to the true emancipation of the workers and peasants is for the workers to lead the peasants and all other oppressed classes in a revolutionary struggle to overthrow their ruling classes and establish their own revolutionary government as part of an international proletarian revolution. Freedom, Trotsky insisted, cannot be won by carrying out a bourgeois revolution that puts some class other than the workers and peasants—for example, the bourgeoisie or a section of the middle class—into power. It can only be won, and socialism can only be created, if the workers and peasants throughout the world consciously carry out revolutions and establish governments based on their own direct and democratic rule. Anything else, any other kind of strategy, leads not to workers' states and the establishment of socialism, but to the victory of the traditional ruling classes or, we would add, to the creation of state-capitalist societies.

At bottom, then, the real meaning of the theory of Permanent Revolution is identical to what we believe to be one of the most basic ideas of Marxism—"the emancipation

of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves." It is precisely this content that makes it so hated by the state-capitalist ruling classes and their apologists everywhere. And it is this same meaning that makes Jack Barnes and the rest of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party so anxious to abandon the theory as a first step toward the explicit repudiation of the rest of Trotskyism.

But the issues in the faction fight in the SWP/USec go well beyond Trotsky's theory vs. Lenin's theory, Stalinism vs. Trotskyism, a "mass Leninist international" vs. the Fourth International or Ernest Mandel vs. Jack Barnes. What is at stake is the very meaning of Marxism.

Marxism started out as a theoretical outlook and practical program for the liberation of humanity. It argued that the solution to the exploitation and oppression of capitalism, in fact to the horrors of almost the entirety of human history, was an international proletarian revolution. Under capitalism, Marx said, human beings are alienated from each other and dominated by the products of their own labor—the means of production and the state. The solution to this was to set up a truly democratic and cooperative society, without classes, without exploitation and oppression, without states. In such a society, human beings would no longer be alienated from each other and would no longer be slaves to products of their own creative activity. This society, in Marx's view, had to be—could only be—created by the mass of humanity itself, personified in the international working class.

But for most of the world today, Marxists and anti-Marxists alike, Marxism means quite the reverse. Although the Marxist left claims to stand for freedom, for a stateless and classless society, in practice it defends and advocates societies that are virtually the opposite of its ideal. The so-called socialist societies are by no means free; they are built on coercion and regimentation. They are by no means stateless; the states in these societies are as large and oppressive as the states of traditional capitalist society, if not more so. And they are by no means classless; the division between rulers and ruled, "haves" and "have-nots," is as great as in traditional capitalist societies—despite all the attempts by the left to delude itself by invoking sociological jargon ("caste," "strata," etc.).

In all these societies, human beings remain just as alienated from each other, just as dominated by the products of their labor, as in traditional capitalist society. Instead of the stateless, classless society, and the liberation of humanity, the goal of the Marxist left has become economic growth, to be achieved by a bloated state, bureaucratic planning and the regimentation of millions of people. Although there are aspects of Marxism that may have pointed toward this outcome (a subject we cannot pursue here), Marxism today has become a perversion of the original Marxist idea.

Moreover, Marxists are paying the price for this corruption of Marxism. Although they sacrificed their original humanitarian and libertarian ideals (almost embarrassing words on the left today) to worship at the shrine of economic growth, the new god is, and has always been, false. In Russia during the 1930s, for example, the industrialization of the country occurred at the expense of an estimated 20 million lives, if not more. Today, Russia and all the "socialist" countries, like the world capitalist economy of which they are an integral part, are in crisis. And Marxism, which has identified itself with the horrible regimes that exist in these countries, is in crisis as well.

The solution to this crisis—of capitalism and Marxism—lies in the original Marxist vision. If, as we maintain, the crisis is caused by the fact that the global means of production (along with the means of destruction and the state) have escaped from human control, the solution is to turn this situation upside down—or rather, right side up. In other words, what is needed is a worldwide popular revolution, led by the international working class, that places the means of production under the direct and democratic control of the majority of humanity.

Neither the market nor bureaucratic planning—nor any combination of the two—is capable of providing a sane, prosperous and healthy world. Only if the workers and peasants, in fact, all but the very rich, join together and collectively and democratically figure out how to allocate society's human and material resources—how to run the world economy and society as a whole—can a permanently peaceful and happy world ever come into existence.

We do not know exactly what this society will look like. What we do know is that none of the presently existing societies, all of which are various forms of capitalism, can solve the problems of the world. Worse, they are the cause of these problems and, today, threaten to destroy human society altogether. To us, the only solution, however difficult it may be to attain, is the construction of a truly democratic socialist society, created by the majority of people themselves through an international socialist revolution, as Marx and Engels advocated over a century ago. We in the Revolutionary Socialist League (U.S.) and the Revolutionary Marxist League (Jamaica, W.I.) are building an international political tendency dedicated to this vision. □

## For More Information About Our Vision of Socialism:

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# WHAT WE STAND FOR

## Program in Brief of the Revolutionary Socialist League

**1** The **REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE** is an organization dedicated to the fight for freedom for all the world's people—freedom from poverty and hunger; from racism and all forms of national, sexual, age and class-related oppression; from privileged rulers and wars—freedom from capitalism.

We believe that this fight is more necessary than ever. Today, the world capitalist system is sliding deeper and deeper into a massive economic, political and social crisis. This crisis is bringing conditions as bad as or worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s. In all countries, the ruling classes are responding to the crisis by bludgeoning down the living standards of the masses of people and curtailing our rights. Unemployment and wage-cutting, cutbacks in social services and a beefing up of the repressive apparatus—the police, military, prisons, etc.—are all part of the capitalist attack. As in the 1930s, the crisis is paving the way for the rise of fascist groups eager to impose their genocidal solution on humanity.

Internationally, the crisis will cause the battles among the different blocs of national capitalists to flare into full-scale wars, as each seeks to defend and increase its power, markets, investment outlets and control of natural resources against the others. Twice already this century the capitalists have fought devastating world wars, in which millions of people died. Now, with the development of huge nuclear arsenals capable of blowing up the planet hundreds of times over, human civilization itself hangs in the balance.

Thus the continued existence of the capitalist system is pushing us closer every day to depression, fascism, world war and possibly total destruction.

**2** We in the RSL believe there is an alternative to all this. That alternative lies in the workers, small farmers, peasants, unemployed, national and other oppressed minorities, youth, women, lesbians and gay men—in sum, the downtrodden and persecuted people of every society—uniting together to overthrow our common enemy, the capitalist system, and establish **SOCIALISM**.

This will require a **REVOLUTION** in which the masses of people fight to seize control of the governments, banks, means of transportation and communication, factories, fields, mills and mines. A revolution would also have to smash the capitalists' state apparatus: their police and armed forces, their courts and prisons, their political bodies (legislatures, congresses, parliaments, etc.) and mammoth bureaucracies, and other institutions of capitalist class rule.

While such revolutions are most likely to develop on a national basis, we believe that to be successful they must become worldwide in scope. Capitalism is an international system, with a world economy and a world market. Only through an international socialist revolution can the workers and their allies eliminate all capitalist oppression and have access to the human, natural and technical resources necessary to solve the problems confronting human society.

**3** In place of the dictatorship of the capitalists, the RSL believes working and oppressed people can build a cooperative, humane world society. Run by workers' councils and other mass organizations of farmers, housewives, soldiers and specially oppressed groups, the new society would provide the fullest democracy for the vast majority of people, while ruthlessly suppressing the capitalists and those who seek to get ahead by stepping on the backs of others.

Although the destructive legacy of capitalism would be severe, a truly democratic, mass-controlled government could begin to reorganize society to fulfill human needs, not provide a privileged existence for tiny elites. Resources currently thrown into the military, for example, could be used to end hunger, build housing, schools, roads, etc. The workweek could be shortened, creating jobs for millions of unemployed people.

In ways such as these, the inequality and scarcity that lie at the heart of capitalism's dog-eat-dog competitiveness could be eliminated. People would increasingly have no reason to get over on others, and the material basis of classes, the state, racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry would disappear. Increasingly, everyone would have the time and opportunity to develop their full human potential; everyone would become truly **FREE**, able to control their own destinies.

This is our vision of **SOCIALISM**. It will not be easy to achieve. And it is not inevitable—people have to want it and fight for it. But we believe it is the only alternative worth fighting for.

**4** Socialism does not exist anywhere in the world today. What is called socialism in countries like Russia, China, Cuba, Albania, Poland, etc., is **state capitalism**, a 20th century variation of traditional, private shareholding capitalism. In the state-capitalist (often called Stalinist) countries, as in the "regular" capitalist nations, a small elite dominates society, making all the decisions and reaping all the benefits. Working and

oppressed people have no more control of the factories and other workplaces, the economy, the government or anything else than do workers in traditional capitalist countries. The state-capitalist ruling class controls the state apparatus and nationalized industry, while the workers are in the position of being wage slaves, chained to a giant capitalist machine.

In these countries—as in all the countries of the world—**REVOLUTION** is the only way to establish real socialism and win freedom for all working and oppressed people.

At a time when the struggle between the world's two main imperialist powers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., is being portrayed wrongly as one between capitalism and socialism, democracy and totalitarianism, the RSL believes it is more important than ever to take a clear stand in opposition to capitalism in all its forms and to fight for a revolutionary, libertarian vision of socialism.

**5** In the coming period, as the capitalist crisis intensifies, we expect mass movements and mass struggles—both of the right and the left—to break out with increasing frequency around the world. The question is: Will these upheavals lead to fascist dictatorships, state-capitalist transformations, a new world war—or an international socialist revolution that puts all the capitalist garbage behind us?

The RSL believes that the last outcome can be brought to pass only with the active intervention and political leadership of a disciplined international revolutionary working class party. This party, and its sections in countries around the world, is needed to educate and organize workers and other oppressed people about the cause of their misery and the solution to it; to work in different movements and struggles to increase the class-consciousness and militancy of their participants; to combat reformist, social-democratic, state-capitalist, fascist and other leaderships that would derail mass, popular struggles and lead them to certain defeat; and to help unite the different forces oppressed by capitalism into a massive assault on the system.

The existence of revolutionary working class parties does not guarantee victory. But without them, the more-organized and powerful enemies of socialist revolution will surely triumph.

The RSL considers the construction of a revolutionary party in the U.S. and around the world to be our main strategic task. In so doing, we reject any and all elitist notions that have come to be associated with such parties: that the party stands separate from and above the working class; that the party may use any method, no matter how base or dishonest, to gain leadership of the masses in struggle; that its goal is to form a one-party state within a supposedly socialist society. Our goal is a society where human beings can consciously shape their own existence; we see a revolutionary party simply as the vehicle through which this can be made possible.

**6** The RSL identifies itself in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, particularly the pioneering theoretical work of Marx and Engels; the conception of the party, the stress on the importance of national liberation struggles and the anti-statism shown in *The State and Revolution* of Lenin; and the fight against Stalinism of Trotsky. But we also identify with the best of anarchism, particularly its libertarian spirit. And we hold in no less regard those leaders throughout the ages who have fought against various forms of exploitation and oppression: from Spartacus to Harriet Tubman, from Emiliano Zapata to Malcolm X.

We believe it is crucial for the left to rid itself of the state-capitalist baggage which it has carried for far too long. To do so requires a careful evaluation of the theoretical underpinnings of the modern left, from Marx to the Russian Revolution to the current day. Only in this way can the best of our heritage—the fight against oppression and for revolutionary socialism—be preserved and the worst of it—an infatuation with technocratic planning and strong states—be discarded. Revolutionaries must be the vanguard in the fight for common decency and true freedom. It is to that fight the RSL is committed, body and soul. Join us!

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