

Genuine trade union movement in the Soviet Union?

by JACK CLARK

Inspired by the tactics and the courage of the dissidents' movement, the working class in the Soviet Union is beginning to stir.

In recent months, members of the "Klebanov group" have begun to organize an independent trade union in the USSR. They have issued appeals to humanitarian groups and trade unions, as well as world opinion in general, to support their efforts. The group, organized by former mine foreman Vladimir Aleksandrovich Klebanov, includes among its 110 candidate members, factory workers, collective farmers, miners and engineers. Prior to the organization of the Association of

Free Trade Unions of Workers in the USSR, these workers had acted individually in taking complaints about job conditions to supervisors, to local party and governmental units, and finally to the highest decision-making bodies in the USSR. The results were unfruitful and unpleasant.

"When we have appealed to higher authorities," the Association said to the ILO and Western trade unions, "instead of taking constructive steps, they have applied impermissible methods against us for exercising our rights to complain. Under the pretext of registering us for reception by the leadership, they seize us one by one

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Newsletter of

THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

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Edited by MICHAEL HARRINGTON

by PAUL and LINDA DAVIDOFF

"Urban policy" is a shorthand for "federal policy on racial and class inequality," with emphasis on the physical locations where most lower income and minority citizens live. If cities were not the homes of concentrations of minorities and the poor, there would be little need for an explicit "urban policy"; we might have a national development policy or an industrial location policy, but cities would not have to be singled out for special treatment. Indeed, the Carter Administration's political need for announcing a special, forceful, "urban policy" arose when, early in the administration's first year, it was brought sharply to task by black leaders for its failure to deal with racial problems—now viewed by those leaders as problems of employment and income for minorities.

So an urban policy can be judged primarily by the impact it is likely to have on the poor and the minorities. Its success in other terms—beautification of some areas now marred by blight, halting the flight of whites and the affluent from the cities, preservation of historic landmarks and high culture—are important, but the first criterion is its impact on redistribution of goods and services to those who need them most.

There are some victories and some defeats in the Carter urban policy. The first defeat is the massive, central political fact that there will be no major federal budget shifts to change the economic rules for cities and their residents. The victories include a degree of clarity in defining unemployment and racial discrimination

as crucial issues in a year when even such an astute critic as Michael Harrington wrote about urban policy without identifying the issue of race.

In addition, the Carter policy contains a number of programs which may well have a positive redistributive impact in urban areas. Its best features include serious stress on minority business procurement programs by federal agencies; location of federal facilities in cities; several forms of direct aid to citizen groups and com-

Urban policy: Race is the issue

munity development corporations; and a flow of federally guaranteed credit into depressed urban communities. None of these programs involve enough money to make a massive impact on urban poverty, but each at least points in a positive direction.

Other parts of the Carter urban program are of less certain value. Sixteen years or so of federal urban renewal, with department stores, universities and parking lot operators given subsidized land development packages from which poor families had been driven, still echo in the new Urban Development Action Grants. While UDAC has enough flexibility to enable HUD to

(Continued on page 4)

Soares leads delegation to Latin America: Socialist International turns South

by LAURENCE R. BIRNS

Last month, for the first time in its history, the Socialist International sent a formal delegation to Latin America. The significance of the occasion was lost on neither the hosts nor the delegation. This was a flag-flying moment for an essentially European-bound organization anxious to further the commitment made by SI president Willy Brandt "to break out of European isolation and become a truly global organization."

The delegation was cordially and effectively led by Portuguese Prime Minister Mario Soares. In 10 days, the members of the delegation visited Mexico, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Venezuela. It should be noted that most of these nations are among the more democratic societies in Latin America.

Few regions of the world have had their institutions more despoiled by military regimes than has been the case in Latin America. Repression in the area takes many forms. In such countries as Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, constitutions have been abolished, legislative bodies disbanded, courts turned into fictions, educational institutions taken over by the armed forces and every semblance of free expression stifled. Even more depressing are the political assassinations, the torture of the innocent, the imprisonment of thousands without charges and the abduction and disappearance of thousands more.

This, then, was the setting for the SI visit, something quite different from the backgrounds of the visiting delegation, who came mostly from European socialist and social democratic parties. (I, as the sole DSOC representative, and the delegate from Senegal were the exotic elements of the party for our French, Finnish, Spanish, Portuguese and Swedish brothers and sisters.) Although the countries visited were not experiencing repression in its crudest forms, our Latin American hosts never let us forget their concern for the distressingly high levels of human rights violations in the other countries of their region.

In all of the countries visited, except the Dominican Republic, SI members or allies were holding power.

In Mexico, the delegation was hosted by the Party of Revolutionary Institutions (PRI). Sr. Lopez-Portillo, the President of Mexico, concentrated on such themes as his nation's inability to obtain a fair price for the natural gas it exports to the U.S., and his problems with the flow of illegal immigrants into the Southwestern U.S. His focus seemed to be on Mexico's external problems rather than its internal ones.

In Jamaica, Prime Minister Michael Manley, who heads the People's National Party government, stressed the nation's economic difficulties and the perilous situation of having its foreign exchange earnings based on a fickle tourist industry. Several members of the SI delegation felt that Manley was struggling over whether to look to Cuba or to the U.S. for solutions to some of the island's difficulties. It was the conclusion of all that the narrowness of its economy portends difficult days ahead for Jamaica.

Our stopover in the Dominican Republic provided the sole bit of comic relief. As the plane landed, a gaily dressed military band began to toot out the anthems of Portugal and the Dominican Republic, and President Balaguer and members of his cabinet were awaiting us. In his airport remarks, Balaguer addressed Prime Minister Soares and colleagues as if this was a state visit of the Portuguese, rather than an SI visit to its fraternal party, the PRD (Dominican Revolutionary Party). It was quickly divined that Balaguer, a puppet of the Trujillo dictatorship who had ruled the country almost continuously since U.S. intervention in 1965, was trying to take election year advantage of the occasion.

Behind the facade of the state visit—behind the fence in fact—we finally found our PRD hosts, waiting to greet us. A series of rallies was then staged in various districts of Santo Domingo, culminating in a mass meeting that drew 250,000 people. The following day, a nationwide tour was interrupted by the nation's chief of police. He threatened Soares and his party with arrest for interfering in the internal affairs of the Dominican Republic.

Ever the amiable tactician, Prime Minister Soares determined that the time for an unscheduled departure was at hand, and the SI group was flown out of the country on the personal plane of President Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela to its next stop, Costa Rica.

In Costa Rica, the delegation was the guest of the National Liberation Party (PLN), whose candidate had just been defeated in a presidential election. The recent campaign had been fought over the issues of corruption, the presence of Robert Vesco in the country, and inflated government expenditures. What wasn't contested was the leadership role the current government was giving to a strong human rights stand in hemispheric councils.

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Threatened Latin American free institutions, such as the trade unions, can be aided by strong efforts from allies in Western Europe and the United States.

Costa Rica is one of the few surviving democracies in Latin America. In our meetings with President Daniel Oduber, we encouraged Costa Rica to use her vote as well as her admirable rhetoric in regional bodies, to refuse loans and other forms of assistance to Latin American military dictatorships. All too often, it seems, Costa Rica had contented itself with the rhetoric of human rights and shied away from concrete actions. In our conversations with members of the PLN government, it became apparent that the opposition had some grounds in basing its campaign on corruption in high places and the need for authorities to examine prevailing definitions of public rectitude. We stressed the fact that democratic institutions must be serviced if they are to survive. We also warned against corruption.

In Venezuela we were the guests of the ruling Democratic Action Party (AD) and the nation's president, Carlos Andres Perez. This was the most important visit that the delegation made. Venezuela's importance derives from immense oil earnings, its leadership position in the region's human rights movement, the special relationship between Perez and President Carter, and the significant amounts of economic assistance that Venezuela gives to poorer economies in Latin America.

We met on several occasions with the president, including a dinner at the Casona, Venezuela's White House. We also met several times with Romulo Betancourt, the nation's former president and founder of its modern democratic epoch. Almost all of the cabinet met with us to discuss national and regional questions. While in Venezuela, we had the opportunity to meet with some of the exiled leaders from Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay and Panama. These people are among the more than 100,000 political exiles now living in Venezuela.

While we did praise Venezuela for its outstanding human rights record, we also raised questions about the inequitable distribution of the nation's wealth, reports of widespread corruption, and the difficulties meeting refugees from the southern cone nations who try to obtain immigration visas into the country. Our conclusion was that, domestic problems aside, Venezuela will continue to grow in importance as a force for the redemocratization of the hemisphere.

Throughout the trip we were aware how historic this effort was. A sitting prime minister and his colleagues were greeted at the highest level in all the countries we visited. Moreover, discussions about internal and regional problems were held without concern for the niceties of diplomatic protocol. Without question, the visit raised the consciousness of the participants regarding Latin America's abundant future and current despair. It also revealed that, in most countries of the region, a reign of terror is now in effect.

The results and recommendations of the visit will

be presented at the SI May planning meeting in Dakar.

Undoubtedly, democracy in Latin America can benefit directly from this new interest on the part of the Socialist International. Threatened Latin American free institutions, such as trade union movements, can be aided by a strong effort from allies in Europe and the U.S. Western private banks and corporations must be made to realize that they are mistaken, when they try to take advantage of the present prostrate conditions of many nations in the region. When they try to exploit unequal relationships, as Exxon has done with Chilean copper, banks and corporations risk expropriation by succeeding democratic governments.

One can expect that the SI's interest in the region will continue to grow. As for DSOC, this was the first time the organization has participated in a Latin American initiative, and the first time that many Latin American democrats have met with DSOC representatives. Now, more than ever, the U.S. must maintain its interest in Latin America and make the region a principal area of foreign policy concern. □

Chilean Radicals in U.S.

Anselmo Sule, the president of the Chilean Radical Party, and several other exiled Chilean Radicals visited the United States last month to build support for the cause of Chilean democracy.

Sule, a former Senator, Jorge Tapia, the former minister of both education and justice, and Hugo Vigorena, the former ambassador to Mexico, were all officials in the overthrown government of the late President Salvador Allende. The three of them and Carlos Parra, the international secretary of the Radical Party, have all played leading roles in the international movement to build solidarity for Chilean democrats.

A former prisoner at the infamous Dawson Island camp near the Antarctic Ocean, Sule stressed the importance of organized opposition to the Pinochet regime in the West. Besides occasionally securing the release of political prisoners, protests against the junta strengthen the morale of the democratic opposition. Finally, of course, the Western opposition to the junta could aid the democratic movement in Chile by forcing governments and private lending institutions to cut back their lavish support of the Pinochet dictatorship. "The level of aid going to Chile is higher than it has ever been in our history," Sule told an audience of more than 200 people in New York.

In Washington, Sule and the other members of the delegation met with Congressional and Administration officials. In both Washington and New York, the Chileans met with small groups of DSOC members for informal discussion. Sule's planned trip to Chicago had to be cancelled because of a meeting with Latin American government officials in Mexico, but both the Boston and Chicago locals of DSOC held meetings featuring Chilean emigre speakers.

Cities . . .

(Continued from page 1)

give grants to anything from Korvettes to the Harlem Commonwealth Council, the early rounds of funding applications are redolent with Hyatt Regency Hotels and downtown commercial malls.

In the past, federal policy has been designed, in part intentionally, to build suburbs—often at the expense of cities. Federal taxes have been reduced for families who bought homes, when cities had proportionately larger shares of rental housing. Federal highway funds built roads which helped move commuters from city jobs to suburban houses. Federal agencies built new headquarters and operating branches in suburban or rural areas, taking potential jobs away from urbanites.

To its great credit, the Carter approach to urban policy includes a recognition that certain actions and inactions by a national Administration in the conduct of its own responsibilities—raising revenue, choosing

Capital quotes

“Despite the controversy surrounding the funeral industry’s ethics, it remains an attractive business investment for many. Service Corporation International, part of an international chain of 171 funeral homes reported a net income of more than \$4 million last year on gross revenues of nearly \$81 million. The Northeast was the biggest single source of revenue for the corporation.

The management of Service Corporation International thinks the future looks even more promising, although in recent years the death rate has declined. In its last annual report, the corporation reported it felt “that the decline will be of short duration and that the long-term trend will be toward a higher rate of mortality.”

An industry trade magazine, *The American Funeral Director*, has advised undertakers that the apparent bottoming out of the death rate decline is a reason for “cautious optimism.””

New York Times
April 23, 1978

sites for federal buildings—can have immediate impact on a city’s life chances.

In an effort to cut through the present and future confusion about federal actions with respect to cities, the President proposes that each agency of the federal government submit together with all new major policy initiatives, an “urban and community impact analysis.” The hope presumably is that the federal Highway Administration, for example, might stop financing new interstate highway interchanges in the fringe areas of metropolitan regions whose impact is to drain jobs away from the region’s cities.

The Carter focus on reinvestment in cities is good. Cities need help, far more than Carter proposes. But

more important than the issue of places in distress is the question of people in distress. At the heart of a sound program should be policies aimed at liberating economic and racial minorities from their distress.

The bulk of the Carter urban program, like all the major urban programs since Model Cities in 1966, has been addressed to the problem of poor people who live in ghettos in cities, and has been designed to help them in their own neighborhoods. But any urban policy restricting choice to the ghetto limits the spatial mobility to gain social or economic advancement. The freedom to move to new opportunities as well as the right to stay in a decent rebuilt environment, are complementary and necessary components of a good policy. Locking a group into one area, albeit a rebuilt one, is antithetical to the expansion of opportunity.

The answers to problems of class and racial injustice lie in national economic and social policy: full employment, just and progressive taxes, an end to racism, guaranteed income for the disabled and elderly, adequate health care and nutrition for all. A society that achieves these goals will have slum-free cities, reduced crime, fear and tension in all its communities.

This program would begin to solve the problems that beset the people of urban America. But a narrower, more pessimistic realism leads us to say that at least the Carter Administration has proposed some modest, useful steps—and even the adoption of these in the present sullen Congress will be difficult. □



DEMOCRATIC AGENDA update

DURHAM, N.C.—DSOC Chair Michael Harrington was among the leaders of the labor and black movements who addressed a rally at the city auditorium here. The rally led to the formation of a North Carolina Full Employment Action Council.

The meeting, brought together by the kinetic North Carolina AFL-CIO President Wilbur Hobby and co-sponsored by the DSOC and the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA project, laid the groundwork for a coalition of labor, church, community and civil rights groups from around the state.

Elsewhere

The DEMOCRATIC AGENDA project held several other successful conferences and rallies around the country, organizers report.

In central Illinois, DEMOCRATIC AGENDA organizer George Wood brought together a group of community activists, trade unionists, area mayors and other public officials to talk about local strategies for full employment. A key speaker at that meeting, according to Wood, was Ohio Public Interest Campaign director Ira Arlook. He outlined progressive federal and local strategies for stopping runaway plants.

New York City DEMOCRATIC AGENDA organizers, including a large number of DSOC members, are coordinating a conference of area community, labor and housing activists to explore structural changes necessary to solve New York City's crisis. Among expected speakers is newly-elected member of Congress Robert Garcia, and DSOC's State Assemblymember Gerry Nadler and City Councilmember Ruth Messinger.

Onto the buses . . .

Buses to Washington, D.C. for the mass jobs lobby April 26 were being readied as we go to press. Regular NEWSLETTER readers will remember that this effort was launched by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project and the Philadelphia Coalition for Jobs. In the New York City area, the effort has drawn the endorsement,

More on plant closings

The Voluntary Job Preservation and Community Stabilization Act (H.R. 11222) was introduced March 1 by Representatives Kostmayer of Pennsylvania, Lundine and McHugh of New York. It would provide loans and technical assistance to employee and employee-community organizations that wished to buy and run plants that runaway companies leave behind. The bill would also provide loan money for employees to buy stock in their companies.

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In the "Resources" listing in last month's Newsletter, the address of the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy was listed incorrectly. The correct address is: Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, 120 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

support and participation of the United Auto Workers region and locals, the Clothing and Textile Union locals, AFSCME District Council 37, the Distributive Workers of America and the Brownsville (Brooklyn) Community Development Council. Other areas of support include Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Allentown, Pa. The DEMOCRATIC AGENDA, the Full Employment Action Council and the National Council of Churches are working hard to bring the unemployed to Washington to tell their own stories to their national legislators. More later. . . .

Finally, special DEMOCRATIC AGENDA newsletters have been mailed to Democratic Party activists. The newsletters outline major issues and rule debates coming up for the Democratic Mid-Term Conference scheduled for December in Memphis. The preliminary response has been enthusiastic, DEMOCRATIC AGENDA organizer Marjorie Phyfe reports. Responses indicate that all major delegations will include people who support the DEMOCRATIC AGENDA aim of making the Memphis conference a genuine forum for the discussion of issues facing the Democratic Party. □

Since the defeat of the Consumer Agency bill . . .

The climate for consumer affairs in Washington is pretty awful now. While things were dull in Congress, the lobbying community was getting steamed up about Ralph Nader's plans to target districts, to encourage back home support for consumer legislation and non-support for candidates who have bad voting records on consumer affairs. The places tentatively chosen for targeting are St. Louis, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Long Island, upstate New York, Kansas, Tennessee, Delaware and California.

But for many of those who fought long and hard for the Consumer Affairs Agency, these tactics seem unsophisticated and futile. The question they want answered is: if there was not support in the high energy form necessary to get the Agency passed originally, what will the targeting do to change the climate significantly enough to push through important legislation and push out those whose votes consistently go the wrong way?

The defeat of the Agency seems to have been caused by a general apathy towards consumer issues. This is not to say that the people who have been lobbying in Washington have not been lobbying very hard, but that the people back home do not see consumer affairs as a priority issue. The one issue to come up in the near future that might help get people excited again is National Health Insurance. This might be the issue that will enable people to link legislation to increasing their purchasing power.

National Health Insurance has the advantage of being legislation that people can relate directly to. Unlike the Consumer Protection Agency, which looked to many (wrongly) as only a bureaucratic technicality, the National Health Insurance legislation has direct service implications.

Klebanov group . . .

(Continued from page 1)

and in groups, sending us to police stations and psychiatric hospitals. This happens at the highest offices of authority: in the receptions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the USSR Procurator General's Office. We have decided to unite. We have decided to speak out collectively."

Politically unemployed

Beyond this predictable round of repression, the Soviet authorities cracked down in some ways not usually known about in the West. In the case of Klebanov, for example, he was first incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital in 1968 for speaking in defense of workers and service employees harassed by the administration. In 1973 Klebanov had, in his words, "refused to make peace with arbitrariness and lawlessness," so he was once again repressed. This time he was denied employment. The notation that he had been dismissed in connection with his 1968 arrest made it impossible for him to find a job. As he said, "This is both a flagrant violation of the labor code and a terrible lie, for I had never been convicted of any crime."

Apparently, Klebanov's situation is far from unique. The "workers' state" seems to have a system of blacklisting troublemakers in the labor force. Nikolai Pavlovich Ivanov presents another such case history. After working as a machinist in the city of Rudno, Kazakh from 1958 to 1974, he faced harassment from the administration that year for demanding wages which were due him under Soviet law. "The administration had begun shifting me to lower-paying positions, illegally foregoing the payment of work premiums . . . In violation of the KZOT [Labor Code] provisions concerning the procedure for dismissal from work, I was sacked in 1976 as a malicious violator of labor discipline, even though in my previous 18 years of work, I had not had similar incidents."

Dismissal for pointing out management violation of the law or official corruption also turns up more than once in the documents of the trade union group. Take the case of Mario Ivanovna Dvoretzkaya, a factory worker in Alma-Ata. She reports that her husband has been in a psychiatric hospital since May, 1977. His crime consisted of combining with other workers to send an appeal to the Department for Combatting the

Capital quotes

☞ One of the purposes of shoes is to indicate that the wearer doesn't need to plod through the muck and rain like ordinary people. . . .

In rainy, snowy days—until you become one of those very successful people you are trying to emulate who are driven in limousines and never get their feet wet—wear a good, stout pair of hiking boots to work, and keep your success shoes in the office. ☞

Success magazine
February, 1978

Embezzlement of Socialist Property and Speculation concerning the embezzlement of monies and payment of wages to non-existent workers. For this he was found legally incompetent and socially dangerous.

Despite Soviet boasts of having achieved universal economic rights, the documents also reveal stark poverty. The example of Yakov Aleksandrovich Shkorbatov is most disturbing. An ichthyologist by training and a wounded veteran of the Second World War, he was unable to get work in his profession. So instead he worked as a guard for 60 rubles a month. As of 1973, the average monthly wage in the USSR was 135 rubles, and the legal minimum has been 70 rubles. Shkorbatov's report dates from 1976. Besides living below socially accepted wages, he lacked a home and lived instead in a wagon once used for prisoners. Even worse, on December 29, 1976 while on his way to work, Shkorbatov was struck by a car driven by a militia officer who, according to Shkorbatov, was drunk. As a result of the injury, he was laid up for two months. Yet he was not compensated at all.

Of course, the repression against the individuals in the Association of Free Trade Unions continued and was stepped up after the formation of their group. In early February, according to Amnesty International (AI), four members of the new group were detained for not having official permission to reside in Moscow. They were: Mikhail Guriev, a metal worker from Rostov; Konstantin Gucherenko, a railway worker from the Caucasus; Valentin Poplavsky, a factory worker from near Moscow; and Victor Luchkov, a miner from Donetsk. Klebanov himself was arrested and placed in strict isolation in a psychiatric hospital. Another member was warned by authorities not to use his apartment for meetings between workers and foreign journalists.

Individual instances of repression and psychiatric abuse against workers were known earlier. But, as Amnesty International noted, "these documents provide the first systematic account of numerous such cases."

Larger political implications East and West

Beyond the horror stories and the gross violations of human rights, the documents of the Klebanov group raise important questions for the future of Soviet society and for the Western Left.

The organization of this trade union association is not the first known working class protest in the USSR. Sporadic strikes have occurred, particularly in regions outside Moscow and Leningrad. Back in 1962 in the city of Novocherkassk in the Donbas region, there was a strike and riot of major proportions. Lesser disturbances occurred in the early Seventies even in Moscow and Kiev. These events should not be blown out of proportion. They did not represent a revolutionary upsurge from the Soviet working class; they were all successfully repressed. As with the appearance of the Klebanov group, however, these industrial disturbances indicate deep-seated dissatisfactions. They also indicate the ability of the Soviet working class to organize protests.

Those strikes have inevitably had a character of spontaneity and, of course, illegality. The industrial grievances have often been accompanied by rioting. What the Association of Free Trade Unions brings to

Theory, Life & Politics

Michael Harrington
Deborah Meier

This 16-page pamphlet published by the Institute for Democratic Socialism contains the opening and closing speeches at the Institute's 1977 Youth Conference. Michael Harrington examines the importance of political theory and its relation to American politics. Deborah Meier looks at the contradictions facing us as we apply socialist values in a capitalist world.

Send to: Institute, 853 Broadway, 6th Floor New York, N.Y. 10003

- Please send me _____ copies of *Theory, Life and Politics* (.50 each)
 I also want _____ copies of Michael Harrington's *Full Employment: The Issue and The Movement* (\$1 each).
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an existing pattern of working class protest are the tactics of the dissident movement. Valentyn Turchin, the founder of the Moscow branch of Amnesty International, who is now living in New York, met with Klebanov last year. Turchin also wrote a major study for the Helsinki Monitoring Group (as its name implies—an organization devoted to monitoring Soviet compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki accords): "On the necessity of emigration for political-economic reasons from the standpoint of workers." Moreover, Turchin last year issued a call for a day of international labor solidarity each June to commemorate the murder of scores of workers at Novocherkassk. In short, he is a dissident with knowledge and concern about the Soviet working class.

Extending dissent

Despite press reports of a rift between Klebanov and Andrei Sakharov, Turchin sees the new workers' organization as an extension of the dissident movement to a new stratum of the population. Like the intellectual dissidents, Klebanov and his colleagues argue their case on the the basis of Soviet legality, make appeals to the highest Soviet authorities and to international organizations and, upon arrest, demand open trials. And they have won support from other dissidents. For instance, Yelena Bonner, Sakharov's wife, spoke for the worker dissidents at a press conference organized after Klebanov's arrest.

In an open letter on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Soviet Union, the group posed the question, "How many of us are there?" The answer seems at first outrageous: "tens, hundreds of thousands." At most, the Association of Free Trade Unions has 200 members. Turchin is even more daring than Klebanov. While the union can literally speak for only the 200 or so who have signed its petitions, Turchin believes there are millions who share the concerns of Klebanov and other workers in the Association. Like other Soviet citizens, they are frightened. If the Klebanov group is successfully repressed and Klebanov stays in psychiatric confine-

ment indefinitely, they will remain frightened. If the Association of Free Trade Unions can survive, well, the implications are staggering.

Needed: support from the West

The crucial variable for Klebanov and his group is the support they win from the West. The group has already applied to the International Labor Organization for recognition. On April 15 the ILO turned them down. Yet in spite of this, one trade union delegate championing the cause of Klebanov at ILO meetings could put pressure on the Soviets to ease up. Furthermore, expressions of support from numerous trade unions and from working class political parties could guarantee Klebanov's safety.

Amnesty International is championing the human rights of the Klebanov group and demanding their releases. AI is also approaching Western trade unions to support the Association. Every genuine democrat must welcome the support of this principled human rights organization. At the same time, those of us on the Left must consider a more political defense of Klebanov. In demanding basic trade union rights, Klebanov and his group are demanding a radical democratization of Soviet society. Even though the Association of Free Trade Unions is explicitly non-ideological, the logic of its existence points in the direction of democratic socialism.

Socialist democracy

Those of us who support their values, who support the rights of workers everywhere, cannot allow the Klebanov group to become the *cause celebre* of Cold Warriors. Re-escalation of the arms race will scarcely help Soviet workers; what's more, if the only people speaking in defense of the Association of Free Trade Unions are Cold War hawks, then the effort to build international solidarity will have failed. On the other hand, if all those who insist that socialism and democracy are inseparable speak out for the Klebanov group, then both the best currents of the Soviet democratic movement and the Western democratic socialist movement will be greatly strengthened.

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Jimmy Higgins reports . . .

CONGRATULATIONS . . . You paid more taxes than Chase Manhattan Bank. Consider the subsidy you just sent via Washington to some of the largest and richest corporations in the world. That's right: ordinary taxpayers are footing the bill for at least 17 corporations, which, according to a study by Ohio Representative Charles Vanik, paid no taxes. Actually, these companies claim they did pay taxes, even though they didn't turn over any money to IRS. Their reasoning is that their \$375 million in tax credits exceeded their tax bill. If so, says Vanik, their effective tax rate was zero. Overall Vanik's study of 168 corporations shows a decline in the effective tax rate over the last two years from 21.3 percent in 1975 to 13.04 percent in 1977. That burden is not just forgotten. We pay for it through higher individual taxes and underfinanced social programs. As Vanik says, the system has to change.

SWITZERLAND MIGHT SPILL SOME SECRETS. Switzerland may not be the haven for hidden capital too much longer. The Social Democratic Party is starting a campaign to end bank secrecy. By popular initiative they hope to make banks legally obliged to furnish information to the government on their clients' accounts. The initiative would give Swiss officials the right to supply foreign governments with information gotten from the bank. The de facto protection Swiss banks have afforded their clients has been a stumbling block to governments trying to investigate tax evasion or violations of foreign exchange regulations. But perhaps the most startling aspect of this attempted elimination of bank secrecy is that it would also require Swiss banks to make available information about their own investments and hidden reserves in other nations of the world. This move may meet with some controversy. Switzerland has always viewed the banks, which provide a favorable economic climate, as one of the major factors contributing to Switzerland's high standard of living.

PLAYING HARDBALL—That's how *Forbes* describes a new toughness in management's attitudes toward labor. The game has been played in collective bargaining situations where employers are demanding "givebacks" from public employees and mineworkers. According to *Forbes*, many businesses are gearing up to demand union concessions in such basic fringes as cost-of-living escalators. In several strikes recently, union workers have been summarily dismissed, to be replaced with unorganized workers; one of the better publicized incidents involved Iowa Beef dismissals of Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workers members. Beyond these management offensives on the collective bargaining front, *Forbes* sees these events as part of a larger, more political and ideological offensive against unions, which according to poll data have a lower level of public confidence than business. Some of this must be dismissed as the ramblings of a magazine which boasts that it is a "capitalist tool." But some of the hardball described really is being played by management. For example, union leaders hoped that unionized businesses would join the battle for labor law reform. Predictably the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers opposed labor law reform; so did the more "enlightened" Business Roundtable and even management in industries like shoes which are heavily dependent on labor lobbying against imports. This battle has also seen the break-up of several joint industry-labor lobbies, notably in aerospace and auto.

VETERANS AND JOBS—The Right loudly trumpets its rhetoric about the debt we owe our nation's veterans, but even the super-hawks want to forget about Vietnam and its veterans. Unemployment among Vietnam vets remains high, and traditional benefits have been cut. In response to this condition, a coalition of veterans' organizations is calling for a march and tent-in in Washington, June 1-10. They'll be demanding full employment, adequate housing and health care and redevelopment of the GI bill. More information on the march is available from the CUNY Veterans Action Committee, 280 Convent Ave., New York, N.Y. 10031.

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