

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

# The Workers' Advocate Supplement



50¢

vol. 3 #8

VOICE OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY, USA

August 20, 1987

## More news from the delegation to Nicaragua

The August 1 issue of the **Workers' Advocate** reported on the recent visit of the MLP,USA delegation to Nicaragua. Our delegation saw the revolutionary spirit of the working people, who are enduring great hardships in order to defend their revolution from U.S. imperialism and the Nicaraguan reactionaries. But the class collaborationist policy of the Sandinista government means that privileges are given to the bourgeoisie while the workers and toiling peasants bear ever heavier sacrifices.

Below we continue the coverage from the visit of the MLP,USA delegation. The **Workers' Advocate** contained information on the struggle of the Nicaraguan masses and the successes of the MLPN. Here we deal with background information on the sad results of the Sandinista policy of class conciliation.

### Results of the Sandinista Policy of Class Collaboration in Nicaragua

The fight against the U.S.-owned and operated contras affects every aspect of life in Nicaragua. This is especially the case for the workers and toiling peasants, who bear the brunt of contra atrocities in the countryside and war mobilization and austerity all through the country.

In this situation, the Sandinista government has attempted to carry out the war against the contras while leaving the economic power, privileges and profits of the rich intact. This is another cause of the disintegration of the economy and the soaring inflation. It has resulted in the growth of mass disenchantment with the policies of the Sandinista government and the reappearance of open class struggle in the factories and plantations. The Marxist-Leninists have been active in the class struggle. They organize the masses in their own interests, combat the Sandinista bureaucracy, and

oppose the rightist demagogy that revolution is responsible for the problems.

### The "Mixed Economy"

"Mixed economy" essentially means that the privileges of the rich get maintained. The idea is that the government will build up the public sector (roads, ports, utilities, certain key industries) and leave the private sector (everything else) to flourish. At the same time, there is supposed to be education, free health care and decent wages so working people will be happy too. This was more or less the promise of Sandinism.

But the government couldn't sit on two stools forever. The masses adhere fervently to the advantages that the revolution brought them. But, as push comes to shove and the war and the U.S. blockade strain the economy, the Sandinista government is increasingly sacrificing these gains in order to preserve scarce resources for incentives to the rich. It is steadily cutting away at the

Continued on page 13

### IN THIS ISSUE

<b>Where's Our Contract?</b> . . . . .	2
<b>Conyers' Moratorium-on-Plant-Closing Bill</b> . . . . .	3
<b>Six Days a Week, and a Double-Shift on the Seventh</b> . . . . .	4
<b>On the Literary Debate</b> . . . . .	6
<b>Literature and the Class Struggle</b> . . . . .	7
<b>Prisoner Correspondence</b>	
<b>Persecution by Gang Member Label</b> . . . . .	15
<b>P.U.R.E. on Prison Movement</b> . . . . .	15
<b>Correction</b> . . . . .	5

**WHERE'S OUR CONTRACT?**

From an August 4 leaflet by the MLP-New York:

The following announcement recently appeared among the "Wanted Posters" at various locations in New York City:

\*\*\*\*\*

**MISSING:**

TA/TWU [Transit Authority/Transit Workers' Union] Contract

**DESCRIPTION:**

Sheets of paper filled with fine print and hidden clauses. Signed by S. Hall and D. Gunn. Rumored to be in loose leaf binders.

**LAST SEEN:**

1980. The 1982 contract "awarded" by the arbitrator was never produced for TWU members. The 1985 agreement, promised by Sonny Hall for 90 days after ratification, has yet to be seen two years later.

**LAST PROMISED:**

Every time Sonny Hall and his top honchos show their face to meetings of transit workers.

**REWARD:**

For anyone who can come up with the best excuse for TWU hacks to use when asked, "Where's our contract?" Send responses, 25 words or less, to the address at the bottom of this leaflet. No lie is too outrageous. (Loyal TWU hacks and other professional liars are ineligible to apply.)

\*\*\*\*\*

All kidding aside, there is nothing funny about transit workers not having a written contract since 1980.

We know why management doesn't want us to see the contract. The contract specifies certain rights which the TA violates every day. Having a contract in hand, we would be in a somewhat better position to stand up to management abuses on the spot, without having to "call downtown" to the union.

But why do Sonny Hall & Co. also keep us from seeing the contract? Well, for the very same rea-

son! They, too, want to keep us down. The TWU misleaders have renounced all opposition to the TA's takeback offensive, especially the productivity drive which grinds us down every day. They don't want us to stand up to the foremen and supervisors. The TWU bureaucrats shake with worry over the possibility that having a written contract would even minimally help us in our resistance. After all, this might jeopardize Sonny Hall's comfortable new seat on the MTA Board!

In addition, the union sellouts don't want us to know the precise provisions of the contract because they don't want us to know what they've given up! They still try to hide the depth of their betrayal and the untold number of givebacks signed over to Kiley and Gunn in 1985 in the name of "labor peace."

**Not a Magic Wand**

Having a written contract is not a magic wand

**Continued on top of page 4**

**See Where's Our Contract?**

**The Workers' Advocate**



Theoretical-Political Newspaper of the Central Committee of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA

Rates: 75¢ for single copy; \$4.50 for 6 issues; \$9 for 12 issues by 1st class mail (U.S., Canada, Mexico).

From distributor: 25¢ ISSN 0276-363X

**The Workers' Advocate Supplement**



Rates: \$1 for single copy; \$12 for one year by 1st class mail (U.S., Canada, Mexico).

From distributor: 50¢ ISSN 0882-6366

**Letters:**

The Workers' Advocate or The Supplement  
P.O. Box 11942  
Ontario St. Station  
Chicago, IL 60611

**Orders:**

Marxist-Leninist Publications  
P.O. Box 11972  
Ontario St. Station  
Chicago, IL 60611

---

**ON THE CONYERS' MORATORIUM-ON-PLANT-CLOSING BILL**

---

From the June 30 issue of **Boston Worker**, paper of the MLP-Boston:

**GE LAYS OFF THOUSANDS WHILE  
RAKING IN BILLIONS**

The second wave of the 1987 layoffs are hitting the [GE] Riverworks mid-July. ... By the spring of '88, GE will have thrown out over 2,000 workers. And now they are saying up to a thousand more will be thrown out of Aircraft during 1988. ... GE is using the threat of layoffs to unleash a productivity and absenteeism crackdown, which is especially aimed against the militant workers who are the backbone of the workers' organization in the plant.

These layoffs are from the intense automation throughout GE, the sending of work to other locations, the setting up of a huge farm out network, and the speeding up of the whole workforce. From these productivity measures, GE is having the best year in its history! They are now making over two-and-a-half billion dollars a year in profit. ...

**Union Officials Sabotage the Fight  
Against Layoffs and Harassment  
-- While Signing on Conyers' Dotted Line**

And what are the local 201 union officials doing about this serious situation? Mostly they have been simply repeating the "hard times for GE" propaganda in the union paper. But they have also been circulating a petition supporting the Conyers plant closing moratorium bill now before [a House subcommittee] (see article below). McManus, Mahar and Ruitter are simply using the Conyers bill campaign to cover over the fact that they have given up the fight against layoffs.

**Build the Struggle of the Rank-and-File**

We must fight for every job by fighting speedup, absenteeism harassment, farmout, transfer of work, and Factory of the Future automation. This means slowdowns and vigorous defense of every militant worker singled out for harassment. It means an overtime boycott to spread the work around and [it means] stopping the job-killers who are helping GE set new production rates. We can

only expect more cold water from the union officials so we must organize networks and actions.

If the supporters of the Conyers bill call a march on Washington or any rallies or actions, the rank-and-file must turn them into fighting events to demand no more layoffs, and a decent job and income for EVERY worker. ...

**Build the Fight Against Capitalism --  
the Source of Unemployment**

We must carry out the fight against layoffs and wage cuts all the way through to the end. As long as capitalism exists, industry will be for the benefit of the wealthy few. Only when the working class overthrows the capitalists and builds a new society will the evil of unemployment be destroyed. With a militant fight today, we will build up our strength to get rid of unemployment once and for all.

**ON THE CONYERS BILL**

This Conyers plant closing moratorium bill will supposedly stop mass layoffs for the next 18 months by making the corporations pay wages and benefits to those they lay off. But the bill only applies to companies where over 500 workers are laid off in a month at each plant. GE or any other corporation could lay off 499 workers a month (5988 workers per year in each plant), and not be covered by the bill! There is an amendment to make it 100 instead of 500, but this allows 1188 to be laid off per year without any penalties whatsoever.

Also, there are no automatic benefits for laid off workers: there must be a suit filed in district court. This would tie up the workers in a legal battle for years, with the outcome to be determined by a federal judge, all of whom have to be approved by the rich to get the job.

The Conyers bill will not stop the layoffs at all. It calls for "orderly" job elimination and is designed to sabotage the mass struggle against layoffs.

The organizers of the Conyers bill campaign call on the workers to lobby Congress and plead with AFL-CIO chief Kirkland to stop the layoffs. But the Democrats and the union officials have not given an ounce of help to the workers to stop the layoffs and concessions. <>

## WHERE'S OUR CONTRACT?

Continued from page 2

that will solve our problems. At best it will help us to keep track of TA contract violations and lend some assistance to our fight on this front. It may also help expose the Sonny Hall crew to more workers and encourage discussion on the ways and means of organizing our struggle independently of

these sellouts.

Moreover, it is a basic democratic right that workers should know the terms of the contract under which they are working. We must not give up this right. At every opportunity, transit workers should continue to expose the lies of Sonny Hall and demand written copies of the entire contract. Don't let him wriggle out of this one! <>

---

## SIX DAYS A WEEK, AND A DOUBLE-SHIFT ON THE SEVENTH

---

From the July 28 issue of **Detroit Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-Detroit:

### END OVERTIME, RECALL THE LAID OFF

Long hours of overtime have become a permanent fact of life at GLS [National Steel's Great Lakes Steel plant]. In both the maintenance and production departments overtime has been increasing.

Some departments in maintenance have been on 6 and 7 day schedules for a year with no end in sight. For example, Cold Mill millwrights and electricians at times have even been forced to work 8 scheduled turns in a week (7 days and a mandatory double once a week).

The amount of overtime being worked is increasing. Last December we reported that by the company's own figures, 518 laid-off workers could have been brought back had it not been for overtime. Over the last months this number has jumped to 703 workers who are being displaced by overtime (see National Steel's May '87 Payday). There are still hundreds of workers laid off from GLS. Both the company and union have turned their backs on these workers, claiming "they've lost their recall rights".

While the company is stepping up the overtime, it is also decreasing the workforce. The total hourly workforce has fallen from over 4200 a year ago to 4068 today, including the recent new and rehires.

National Steel is building its profits from our overwork and at the expense of those still laid off.

The union bureaucrats are as much to blame as the company. They are the ones who agreed to help the company cut the workforce to the bone.

Recently the company has been pretending to complain about the overtime they've been forcing on us. But rather than recall all the laid-off they

want us to devise "innovative solutions" to cut the overtime. They want us to agree to even "more flexibility in scheduling" and to be "assigned temporarily or permanently to other jobs". All this double-talk amounts to is fewer workers doing the same overtime but in more wide-ranging areas. In other words, another cover for job combination and elimination.

If the company wants an "innovative solution", then call all the laid off back to work. But they will never do this voluntarily. We must demand in department meetings or wherever that more workers be brought into the departments where they are short and that forced overtime be stopped.

### NEW OUTRAGEOUS STANDARDS DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THE LAID OFF

In recent weeks the company has recalled a small number of the laid off. These workers are being subjected to outrageous new standards in order to have the "privilege" of returning to their old jobs.

First: The company will no longer consider someone for rehire if they don't have a high school diploma. ...

Second: The company won't recall those with "bad" work records. This means anyone could lose out on their job if they had a foreman who didn't like them and wrote bad activity reports. Or anyone who got sick due to working conditions or suffered lost time injuries can be considered having "poor attendance".

Third: Workers must now pass a much more difficult entrance test, lasting up to two hours. One section of the test contains "psychological" questions to determine whether a worker has the right "attitude" to be a wage slave for National Steel. ...

Fourth: The company has instituted Reaganite drug testing. On the one hand this is an invasion

of a person's privacy. On the other, even the government's own Center for Disease Control has stated that the common drug testing procedures used by companies have a very high inaccuracy rate. ... Also, urinalysis has a race bias...

Finally: It should be noted that those workers who are being recalled are losing past seniority, and given new badges.

These new stringent qualifications are a complete outrage to those workers who have already worked for the National Steel millionaires or for any workers. We should demand that such procedures be stopped and all former workers simply be offered their jobs back, with full seniority.

#### **MORE SAFETY HYPOCRISY FROM GLS**

During the last "safety award" program at St. Francis, the head of the GLS safety department moaned on and on about the sharp increase in the accident rate over the last period. As usual the company put the blame for the increase on the workers.

The fact is, though, that a large percentage of these "accidents" occurred during the same period and in the same departments that are working the forced overtime. The real blame for the increased accidents lies with the company for driving the workers to exhaustion. When the company complains about safety, their concern is not our welfare, but the insurance premiums they have to pay.

#### **RIGGER MECHANICS PROTEST JOB COMBINATION**

Some weeks ago a number of riggers got together to let the company know they don't like being "flexed" around (sent to do the work of other departments).

Standard procedure had been to send riggers to

fill in at the 80 inch mill for the millwrights on Sunday "down day". One day some riggers decided to call off together to let it be known that they opposed this type of job combination. The day they called off, some jobs in their shop had to be cancelled.

Since that time it appears that there has not been any flexing to the 80 inch mill on their turn and certainly not on Sundays.

#### **WORKERS IN #3 SLAB MILL PROTEST FORCED OVERTIME**

A few weeks ago production workers in #3 slab mill circulated a petition demanding a halt to the unreasonable work schedule they have been forced to work.

The production schedule at #3 slab mill has been outrageous for a few years. The workers swing to a new shift every day. On top of that, they are subject to be forced into overtime every day. Number three mill is scheduled to be shut down once the new caster is running. This has meant the company has done little more than bubble-gum and bailing wire it together, to keep it running. Of course, there are frequent break-downs.

As a rule the workers there cannot leave until all the mill's orders for that turn are rolled. This means they are frequently forced to work 10, 12, even 16 hours, often with only an hour's or two's notice.

The petition at #3 mill and the riggers' action are two examples showing how workers are trying to break the stranglehold of the "labor/management cooperation" imposed by company-union collaboration. Workers must take matters into their own hands to resist. <>

---

#### **CORRECTION ON HAITI**

---

The front page article in the August 1 issue of the **Workers' Advocate** entitled "Down with the military regime! Freedom for the Haitian toilers!" says in the second paragraph that

"The latest general strike was set off when the army fired on a demonstration on January 26 in Port-au-Prince."

The date was actually July 26. <>

---

ON THE LITERARY DEBATE

---

The revolutionary proletariat must carry out its class struggle on all fronts -- economic, political, and ideological. Cultural and literary work is an integral part of this.

Most of the Party's cultural work takes place in direct connection with the Party's agitation, meetings, newspapers, and participation in demonstrations. But since 1985 Struggle, a literary journal of the Detroit branch of the Party, has provided an additional forum for literary work by printing progressive works of various kinds and by bringing proletarian or revolutionary works of the past to light.

In establishing Struggle, the Party wanted to encourage proletarian revolutionary literature, but it did not want to become bogged down in various literary controversies. It recognized that "inside the general trend of revolutionary cultural and artistic work, and among communist activists linked with the working class, there are different views on certain cultural and artistic questions and different methods of approach." (From the "Editorial Policy" of Struggle.) The nature of literature requires more scope for individual inclination, for imaginative effects, for different forms and experiments. And literary works affect people differently depending on their circumstances, backgrounds, the work they are involved in and the inclinations of the masses they work among and wish to appeal to, etc. This naturally gives rise to differences on the merits of the different cultural works. Hence it is not a question of establishing a definitive Party ranking of all literary efforts, but of ensuring lively cultural work and a revolutionary orientation.

But our Party is also not hermetically sealed against the flood of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology in society. Indeed, our Party has found ways to immerse itself deeper and deeper among the masses despite the lull in the revolutionary movement. This brings our Party up against all the ideas in society.

It turns out that a certain controversy broke out immediately upon the appearance of Struggle. This controversy was not simply a disagreement over whether some works were good or bad. It concerned whether the proletarian class stand should be maintained at all in evaluating literature. It appeared to be an attempt to replace the class standpoint on literature and the active role of the Party in developing and promoting revolutionary works with ideas copied from bourgeois literary and university circles. It was raised by a few

comrades in Party circles in Buffalo and Chicago, mostly people around the Party who had become more or less demoralized with revolutionary work in the present period.

Unfortunately, these ideas were not expressed in the usual method of revolutionaries. Agitation against materialist literary views was carried out with this or that person, but discussions were cut off or avoided with those who stood up against the views. There was no attempt to openly champion another set of consistent ideas to replace the views of the Party, but simply to spread a negative atmosphere of some sort among those who were demoralized, an atmosphere of capitulation before various fashionable views. A document was prepared denouncing Struggle, shown to some people (but not to us), and then it vanished. When someone suggested the document should be sent to Struggle, it was said that it wasn't finished or that no document had been prepared. No doubt, no consistent views were worked out after all. But the campaign against materialist views on literature had begun anyway, and the methods used in this campaign made it hard to deal with it at all.

It would be easy to say that the Party's cultural work is proceeding vigorously, so why worry about what lurks in a few obscure corners? But the proletarian struggle requires enthusiasm of effort and unanimity of will. This is not created by decree nor by ignoring differences that arise. It is created by combining active revolutionary work with dealing openly and frankly with questions of ideology, theory, and orientation. The Party is not automatically immune from the pressure of the bourgeois world view, but must constantly keep its revolutionary ideology fresh.

So we are carrying below an article on this controversy. It is not a Party directive nor is it an editorial. It expresses the views of one member of the Central Committee on the literary debate that has been forced on the Party. We hope that it will serve as a way to begin to objectify this debate. Due to the way the discussion has been carried out up till now, it is not clear what new views are being counterposed to materialism or whether these are still simply the personal quirk of some individuals. But by objectifying the discussion, we hope that the situation will become clear.

And we want to ensure that all members and supporters of the Party will be able to judge the issue for themselves. We think that this is an

issue that affects the direction of Party work. We do not believe it is fair or revolutionary or honorable that an attempt should be made to erode or change the stand on literature behind the backs of most comrades. But until now the literary debate has been mainly restricted to narrow circles who

happened to be "fortunate" enough to be consulted by the discontented. We do not intend to let this situation continue. Let the literary debate be aired out in front of the whole Party! Let the discussion be open to all comrades who wish to take part! <>

---

## LITERATURE AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

---

In June 1985 Struggle, a literary journal of the Detroit Branch of the MLP, began publication. It is quite a modest journal. But it is closely linked to the actual development of revolutionary work in the U.S. It takes a broad, Marxist view of what it means to reflect and encourage the proletarian and revolutionary trends in literature. And the enthusiasm it has aroused and the variety of works that have appeared in it are indications of the development of the Party's cultural work.

It can be noted that it is not expected that comrades will like everything in Struggle. Many different attempts at writing are reflected in Struggle. Some are successful, some aren't. Publication in Struggle is not an official Party mark of approval. And besides that, tastes differ. It is natural that one would like some works and dislike others. Revolutionary fervor isn't measured by the percentage of works in Struggle that someone likes. Besides, there is no requirement that any comrade take any interest at all in this local literary magazine. Struggle spread widely throughout the Party not because of some Party mandate but because of the enthusiasm it aroused among comrades.

It was expected that the publication of a literary journal might give rise to differences of opinion on the relative merit of various works. But the very first issue of Struggle also gave rise to a different type of controversy in certain Party circles. This concerned the very question of whether the Party should maintain an active stand of developing the proletarian trend in culture, whether it should continue to link literary work with revolutionary work, and whether it should apply the class standpoint in the evaluation of literature.

It is hard to even to piece together the views of these comrades. They didn't work out ideas, but simply created a discouraged atmosphere. And

they used gossipy and backhand methods that made it difficult to take part in discussions on these issues even after one finally heard something about them. Sometimes something would be said here and denied there. The whole process tended to disorganization and decay. I have done my best to represent what I believe to be the basic spirit of the views of these comrades.

### The Question of Experimentation and Innovation

The main themes of the first attack on Struggle seemed to be that Struggle allegedly contained only one method or form of writing. The editorial statement in the first issue of Struggle was denounced as opposing experimentation in literature. It was said that even if this editorial didn't directly oppose experimentation, it did so in practice by denouncing the "esoteric meanderings" of the works of fascist sympathizer Ezra Pound and of T.S. Eliot, rather than recognizing their alleged contributions to new ways of expression. And what Struggle was supposed to do was study the theoretical views and controversies of Lukacs and Bertolt Brecht.

Any serious examination of Struggle shows that it contains many different styles of writing. Struggle is dedicated to promoting a literature that deals with the issues agitating the world, with the class struggle, and with the struggle of ideas, and a literature that is based on the needs and views and talents of the working class and its activists. Considering what the dominant culture is in the U.S. today, this is itself a plan of bold innovation in literature. And in the pursuit of this plan, Struggle does not restrict writers to any one style or method, but looks at the content of their work and their success in expressing it in artistic form. It seems to me that it tries to contain both relatively sophisticated works and crude but vigorous

works.

Actually those comrades who opposed Struggle as restricted to one style had not proposed anything additional to put in Struggle. They were not reacting to the rejection of certain proposed literary works, because they had proposed none. If anything, their activity, consciously or not, had the effect of discouraging submissions to Struggle.

It seems to me that they were under the influence of that type of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois view, found everywhere in universities and literary circles, that any poem or story that uses the word "imperialism" or "proletariat" is therefore stereotyped, dogmatic, unartistic, or you name it. The same thing goes for works that directly sympathize with the class struggle. For the sophisticated university critic, for the refined bourgeois writer, it is all the rage to find something good in the form of fascist and reactionary writers, but revolutionary literary works are often condemned as uniform, crude, uninteresting, simply for being revolutionary.

#### **Bowing Before Bourgeois and Petty-Bourgeois Fashion**

I believe that the criticism of Struggle was a capitulation to the pressure of these fashionable views of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. It reflected a bowing before the alleged brilliance of bourgeois culture, a surrender of any independence from it. In fact, it was suggested that there must be non-class criteria for literature.

It can be asked why did condemnation of Pound and Eliot strike such a chord that one such comrade could see no further and made this into the general question of opposing experimentation? I believe that this was because these are figures which are fashionable in university and bourgeois literary circles.

And I believe this also has a good deal to do with the recommendation that the Party must study the views of Lukacs and Brecht to know its errors. These comrades are treating the history of the communist movement in the breezy manner of university critics, reciting the fashionable views of the bourgeois critics on communist literary affairs. Meanwhile a serious study of materialism and its relation to literature is regarded as a dead horse. For that matter, these comrades have not yet presented the Party with anything but the names of Lukacs and Brecht and a list of a few works.

It is ironic, but in the name of experimentation, the discontented comrades were slavishly following bourgeois and petty-bourgeois views. They professed themselves incapable of finishing their own document on their views and working them up. This underlined that they were slaves to

current fashion, copying the dominant views on literature -- and then condemning the real forces for innovation, such as those grouped around Struggle, as being opposed to experimentation and innovation. Instead of studying the modest but encouraging development of real life as reflected in Struggle, they were in essence denouncing it for not being in accordance with one or other of the trends of official culture.

#### **Failing to Deal with the Materialist Theory of Literature**

These comrades approached the question from the theoretical side. But it seems to me that these opponents of Struggle were not really aware of the materialist stand on literature.

There were arguments like "Tolstoy is greater than Ostrovsky" which supposedly proved that there must be "independent [i.e. non-political] criteria" for literature. (Presumably these criteria would allow people of all classes to have the same views on literature -- if only they are educated and refined enough.) This worry about who is greatest seems to me to be a reflection of petty-bourgeois snobbery and desire for recognition. It also reflects the desire to strike at proletarian literature of the struggle, such as the Bolshevik Ostrovsky's novel "How the Steel was Tempered".

Moreover, it seems to reveal a complete ignorance (or perhaps a contemptuous throwing aside?) of the materialist assessment of Tolstoy. Tolstoy's work is full of class sentiment and dwells on assessment of Russian pre-revolutionary society-- only it approaches it from the point of view of a discontented but not yet revolutionary peasantry, and not from the proletarian point of view. This is what gives Tolstoy work its interest. And he is not simply discarded by the revolutionary proletariat.

#### **Recoiling Before Active Revolutionary Work**

Another argument was that much of Party cultural work was just leaflets set to music. Here a slogan used by some comrades of the Party in the struggle to improve literary work was turned into its opposite.

Some of the comrades in the Party who are most enthusiastic about Party cultural work had sought to propagate the need for attention to effective imagery and the different requirements of different literary forms by opposing the mechanical setting of political prose to music. And indeed over the years Party cultural work has improved both in artistic imagery and in political direction.

But here the slogan was converted into a general slur to discredit Party work. The revolution-



ary political content of a work would automatically leave it open to being just "setting leaflets to music". This way of distorting the slogan may reflect petty-bourgeois snobbery and concern that the literary authorities not find one's taste crude and unrefined.

As a matter of fact, if one is concerned with developing an active proletarian trend in literature, in bringing in the masses of activists, in linking this literature with revolutionary activity, then a more general sort of "setting leaflets to music" is a quite important front of literary work. It is not at all that simple, and it shouldn't be done mechanically. It requires that one find the essence of the political line in a situation, judge what will appeal to the masses and arouse their interest, develop striking images, etc. As the proletarian movement grows, this may well prove to be one part of a sort of "folk art" of the movement. The developments on this front today already show a rudimentary tendency for innovations to appear, different attempts at simplicity, at humor, at different styles. The universities artists may turn up their noses, but who cares?

#### Liquidationism on Literary Questions

It seems to me that these ideas are a reflection of liquidationism on the cultural front. With respect to literature, these ideas challenged the class standpoint. They seemed to show acute embarrassment at the alleged crudity of the revolutionary movement.

By pointing to the liquidationism inherent in their ideas on literary questions, I am by no means "writing off" these comrades or denouncing them as people. But on questions of political orientation, it is necessary to deal objectively with what various stands mean. Such an objective approach should not interfere with, in fact it should strengthen, principled bonds of political comradeship and personal friendship.

I think it has to be born in mind that a fierce fight goes on over cultural questions in the U.S. The bourgeoisie, as the ruling class, saturates society with its ideas, its ideology, with literary images that express the "greatness" of bourgeois society and the alleged futility of communist revolt. The proletariat must fight for its own world view. As long as the proletariat is an oppressed class, its ideas and culture will remain subordinate and restricted and almost "underground". Its culture will be slighted and ridiculed and hunted down by the educated lackeys of the bourgeoisie -- whether in schools or universities, in newspapers and TV -- with different methods but as much fury as the police and army have when suppressing strikes and putting down revolts.

But the fight for revolutionary culture is far from hopeless. Even today, in the midst of the lull in the revolutionary movement and the widespread liquidationism and renegacy on the left, proletarian culture develops in the midst of the class struggle. Our Party's cultural work is dedicated to inspiring the proletariat, to encouraging it to organize, to imbuing it with Party spirit, to presenting it with the overall picture of how change takes place in the world and in the U.S.

Of course, the struggle for revolutionary culture, and in general on the ideological front, has different methods than other class struggles. Literature reflects class issues, but often in a very indirect way. And the issue is not that one should stop reading or watching anything from the present-day bourgeois culture. There are certain things that can be made use of. There is the need to deal with the dominant culture in society; you can fight this culture, but it is useless and not revolutionary at all to pretend that it doesn't exist. And, depending on taste, various people relax with this or that product of the cultural establishment. But it is a mistake to give up one's independent communist assessment of the bourgeois culture. And it is a mistake to give up the fostering of proletarian cultural work.

#### From Buffalo to Chicago, and from theory to controversies on practice

From some people in Party circles in Buffalo, the literary debate seemed to shift towards a few people in Party circles in Chicago. This was not a continuous and consistent development. The precise views put forward by these comrades in Chicago are different from those in Buffalo. For that matter, this would follow just from the fact that they were actually involved in publishing literary works in *Struggle*.

Nevertheless it seems to me that these two circles sympathized with each other and tended to fuse. They were bound by a common tendency to capitulate to what is currently fashionable and to bourgeois or petty-bourgeois views. They appear to me to be linked by a common giving up of the desire to fight tooth and nail against the enslaving bourgeois culture.

Consistency of ideas is not necessary for these circles. Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology does not need consistency; they derive strength in various ways from the fact that the bourgeoisie rules in the U.S., or by reflecting an accommodation with those ideas that are supported by the ruling class ideologists. For one thing, the bourgeois ideas are made to seem reasonable by being repeated by all the bourgeois media day in and day out. It is proletarian ideology that needs a solid,

consistent development and a scientific basis, because its only strength lies in its successes in the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Since these Chicago comrades were more involved in literary work than in literary theory, there is even more ambiguity in dealing with their views. The assessment of literary works can give rise to different opinions, because the same work can often invoke different images in different comrades. But still I believe that a certain tendency can be seen here.

### **Banning Party Life from Literature**

There were however some theories.

For example, one of these comrades put forward the theory that literary works should not have Party members as characters, although they can depict individuals who sympathize with the Party.

The idea is that the life of Party comrades is not supposed to be really real, because it is different from the life of non-party people. Apparently it is one thing to live a so-called ordinary life, with an occasional foray into some individual act of resistance, but it is not right to devote one's life to organized struggle. Party people devote tremendous and sustained effort to their revolutionary work. This has presumably become only understandable to this comrade if it gives someone individual prominence, but apparently is entirely unreal when the comrades remain selfless soldiers of the revolution. Lenin talks of political activity raising people from philistine lives, but here the idea is the exact opposite: that only the philistine is real. Anything else is presumably strange, monotone, and certainly not worthy of being put forward to the masses as a model.

But all materialist theories of literature hold that literature should reflect life. (The different materialist theories differ on what they regard as life, as reality. There are narrow mechanical theories that hold that the description in great detail of the warts on a person's face is an example of the greatest reality. There are also the mechanical bourgeois methods that regard opinion polls as the height of reality. Dialectical materialism, on the other hand, puts emphasis on the contradictions that drive life forward and on the forces and processes that will be the agencies of revolutionary change.)

So if the Party doesn't deserve to be reflected in literature, it can only mean that it doesn't deserve to exist. If Party comrades and Party life really are so narrow, flat, and uninteresting, hardly of value to literature, then they are hardly of value to life. It means that everyone should desert the party and cease and desist from organ-

ized, consistent, protracted activity. It seems to me that no matter how gentle and careful one should be in characterizing various ideas, there is no way of avoiding the fact that the theory that Party membership should not be depicted in literary works is straightforward liquidationism.

Of course, it is not easy to depict Party life. Nor would I think of demanding that every literary work do so. But here I am dealing with a theory that discourages any attempt to depict Party life.

It can be noted that literature is one of the few places where Party life can be depicted openly, without fear of getting Party members fired from their jobs or blacklisted. Communist activity is persecuted in the U.S. This is why Party activists propagate the communist political line but have to be careful about organizational facts. But the fictional characters in stories cannot later be jailed or fired. In stories one can depict the role of the Party and Party members. And, if successful, one can create images that enhance Party concept.

And what is this theory about the life of Party members being unreal?

One would think that it is the height of struggle and self-sacrifice to take part in the most organized forms of struggle. One would think that such struggle brings forward the flowering of many talents and abilities that the individual comrade might not have even expected that he or she had. And furthermore the development of collective life and the discipline of a common struggle is one of the most important issues for the working class. It seems to me that this is what I have observed in Party life, with Party work bringing the masses to life out of the ordinary run of the mill philistine existence. Various individuals take part in this to the height of their abilities and possibilities, some as active supporters of the Party and others taking on the heavy load of Party members.

You would think that revolutionary literature should aim to help encourage people in this regard.

What is the alternative? To advocate that people do as little as possible in order not to avoid becoming unreal. To cut down one's political activity to the minimum? Or to imitate the opportunist somebodies who engage only in that struggle that serves to promote themselves?

### **The Purple Controversy**

Besides this theoretical issue concerning what to depict in works of literature, there is also the question of the evaluation of works of popular culture. It is possible that this was really one of the issues in Buffalo, perhaps concerning songs of the 1960's, but it stayed in the background. In the

case of Chicago, this came out over the issue of Alice Walker's book and Steven Spielberg's movie **The Color Purple**.

As it is normal that differences take place on the assessment of various films, such things are often not particularly notable in themselves. But in this case a real atmosphere of grievance seemed to develop. It appears that a few people from Party circles in Chicago were outraged that the Party would dare criticize The Color Purple. (Various comrades criticized it after seeing it, and then it was dealt with in the press in "A few comments on The Color Purple" in the **Supplement** for May 20, 1986.)

The nature of the discussion that ensued didn't really seem to depend on the content of the criticism. It seemed instead that the indignant elements didn't want to stand up against the fashionable wave for The Color Purple. Here was a film that wasn't openly racist, that achieved sympathy among many black people, that depicted the blacks in the South, etc. -- how dare the Party oppose it?

Nor was it a question of looking seriously into the issue and presenting the Party with the results. This was just shuffled aside. The attitude seemed to be "take it or leave it", but it wasn't worth the time or trouble for the outraged parties to develop consistent views and present them.

Here I will not go into all the arguments on the Color Purple. I will just point to one interesting feature. The film and book both trace rural black life in one part of the South through two or so decades, ending with the decade of the Great Depression. And the black people were hardly supposed to notice the depression. Reasonably early in the story it turns out that Celie's father-in-law and Shug Avery are well-off people. Fairly soon one of Celie's step-sons, Harpo, also began to make a good living with his bar. By the time the Depression has wreaked its vengeance (in real life, not in the story) and the book has drawn to a close, Celie has her own small business and employs two other women ("Folkpants, Unlimited") and "Mister" has made it big and is quite wealthy. This is certainly not a presentation of the life of the ordinary black masses. It has nothing to do with the grinding poverty of the black small farmers (both those who owned the land they farmed as well as the sharecroppers).

It is hard to see how comrades who orient themselves on the class struggle or want a realistic portrayal of the black people's struggle could be upset at criticism of The Color Purple. Of course the point was not to denounce people who liked the film. On the contrary the article in the Supplement is sympathetic to such audiences. But

one shouldn't join in with every fashionable craze and defend it, but use such crazes to engender discussion on the actual situation facing the people. The impression I had was that the indignation and irritation at criticism of The Color Purple reflected, for one thing, a giving up of the will to struggle for the independent communist viewpoint.

### **The Effect on Literary Production**

It seems to me that these ideas are bound to have their effect on writing as well. I think they already have had some effect on, for example, comrade Peter Poyas' writing.

Comrade Poyas has produced a number of works that have appeared in Struggle. I thought that some of these works, such as the poem on the execution of the activist Benjamin Moloise (Ballad of an Ordinary Man (For Those Who Remain)) were good works. But I think that a certain tendency is starting to appear in his writing.

Among the bourgeois intelligentsia, criticism would be poison to an author. The author (and artists generally) are supposed to be prima donnas, intolerant of the views of the rough multitude. But I trust that Comrade Poyas will react as a supporter of the class struggle and manifest a different attitude, a revolutionary attitude that will put bourgeois authors to shame.

### **The Play on the Homeless**

In particular, I am concerned with his play on the homeless. As is his custom, it has a cryptic title, namely, Whoever is in a hurry will never stop for me (the sudden adoration of so-called friends). I wasn't happy about this play when I read it, but I rationalized that tastes differ, perhaps someone else might like it, and perhaps any play about the homeless had some point in this Reaganite era of increasing homelessness. But it turned out when it was staged for the May Day meeting this year in Chicago it was a disaster. It does not go well at a militant meeting at all.

### **A Suffering Class, Not an Active Class**

It puts forward an image of a homeless person who is completely beat down. There is no struggle in the play. A kind-hearted worker befriends the homeless person and discovers his humanity but finds out that nothing can be done to help him.

When the play is staged, rather than read, these images come out even more sharply. (They came out vividly at the May Day meeting as the acting was superb. The comrades playing Emiliano and Za-Za the Scarecrow really threw themselves into the roles.) In the play as it was staged at

May Day, the final speech by "a voice" had music added and was expanded to use the word "revolution". But this didn't change anything, as these lyrics of revolution came out of the blue, without organic connection to the play.

The play, in essence, presents the working class as a suffering class, but not as an active class. There was nothing about the struggle of the homeless, which is rudimentary at the present but not nonexistent. There was no connection to any struggle at all. The effect was not good.

But the image of the working class as a suffering class does not go beyond what the liberal bourgeoisie will accept. What was new in the theory of Marx and Engels was not the recognition of the suffering of the working class, but of its revolutionary character. Marxism penetrates below the surface and shows that the working class is the historical giant that will destroy class society.

Of course, although proletarian literature as a whole should show the struggle of the working class, this does not mean that every individual item of literature shows sharp clashes. For one thing, sometimes exposure literature that shows exceptionally bad conditions of this or that section of the workers can be used to help inspire new sections of the masses to raise in struggle. (However, even such exposure literature is immensely strengthened when it can show something of struggle.)

#### **Not Good as Exposure Literature**

But, looked at as exposure literature, this play doesn't come out well either. What is notable about homelessness today is that families are the fastest growing section of the homeless. And that with the fantastic increase of rents in various places, (and this is gradually spreading everywhere), there are even employed people who cannot afford a place to live. These things would, I think, be useful for creating a powerful image of the present situation of the homeless; they would be particularly important for creating indignation.

Instead Comrade Poyas' play deals with a worker who has become mentally ill. Although the layoff offensive precipitated his problems, his mental illness is the factor that holds him completely down. This is one of the things that really bothered me when I first read the play, because the Reaganite bourgeoisie tries to explain away homelessness by saying that the homeless are mainly the mentally ill. And then one opens up what one expects to be a revolutionary play on the homeless, and the image is of the mentally ill. True, the callousness of the bourgeoisie to the mentally ill is a crime. But using the mentally ill as the symbol of homelessness in this play, as the

focal point of this play, seemed an incredibly careless concession to the fashionable bourgeois propaganda. It is as if one doesn't care about whether one opposes the bourgeois line -- just sprinkle a bit of progressive finery over it while accepting the basic "facts" presented by the bourgeoisie.

#### **More Carelessness**

There are other problems of the same type in the play. The following passage is a much more minor example of this, but it seemed to me that it did stand out in the play. This is the kind-hearted worker Emiliano presenting a big part of his criticism of capitalism:

"My god, the work that needs doing! And people are living in boxes? They have floods every year some places and droughts ever year in others. Someone should have realized by now that it takes a national reservoir system to take the water from where you don't want it to where you need it. You could raise a family on a project like that."

But, as a matter of fact, American capitalism has many large-scale water projects. At the time this play was written, there was already discussion of another huge project, the plan to take water from the Great Lakes to the Southwest, whether this will cause an environmental catastrophe, and whether the Southwest would pay for the water.

So this passage seemed to me something that looks good on the surface but ends up either a reflection of the way things presently are, propaganda for water projects, or an absurdity. It seems to me that not enough work was put into thinking about what really would be a useful and artistically powerful criticism of capitalism.

#### **Not Enough Serious Effort**

In general, it looks like one problem was that not enough work was put into the conception of this play. And the result was often reflecting the ordinary bourgeois ideas rather than striking at the points that really needed to be hit. This is reflected in not knowing anything about what rudimentary resistance the homeless were putting up and in using the image of the mentally ill as the focal point of the play. It looks like comrade Poyas neither tried to link up with the agitation of the Party nor did he do the necessary hard work himself to investigate conditions.

Instead he simply considered how to create striking images of "dignified" demoralization and despair. And indeed those images of demoralization and despair are what come through in the play. <>

---

**MORE NEWS FROM THE DELEGATION TO NICARAGUA**

---

Continued from the front page

social reforms that followed the revolution.

**The Decline of Social Services**

Thus, except for those built by foreign volunteers with donated materials, the construction of schools has come to a standstill. The same for health clinics. Prescription medicine, once subsidized, now must be paid for -- if it can be found at all. Childcare, once regarded as a right, has become an expensive privilege. This is a disaster for working people.

Meanwhile, the explosive inflation (in the neighborhood of 100% per year) which has lined the pockets of the dollar speculators has eaten into the living standard of the workers. The wage scale has been repeatedly readjusted, but not enough to keep up with prices. Food is incredibly expensive. To be sure, the government does provide rice, beans, and some other necessities at low prices for families holding ration cards, and this is different from elsewhere in Central America. But the ration quantities are too small to last a family more than a few days. According to a study by INES (the Nicaraguan Institute for Social Studies) even a highly salaried professional such as a professor does not make enough to feed a typical family of 6 properly.

**The Food and Wage Problem**

Under these conditions the masses must scramble to keep body and soul together. The worst hit are wage workers. If you sell beans on a street corner you may be able to raise your prices every week and keep even with inflation. On a fixed wage you cannot. For this reason many workers are forced to leave the factories and look for something else.

Meanwhile, the remaining workers are hit with speedup and heavy hours of overtime. Members of the Workers Front tell of instances where workers have been required to stay by their machines 24 hours at a time. Yet the workers are not given the materials necessary to carry out much production during their long hours. This includes sufficient provisions. Not only are the wages insufficient, but Workers' Front members tell of cases where workers have gone for weeks at a time

without getting paid.

**Not Only Due to War and Blockade Conditions**

This is not just due to difficult wartime conditions and the U.S. imperialist blockade. While the workers have a hard time existing, there are Nicaraguans who find things much easier. Today, although Reagan hollers about "socialism", most of the Nicaraguan economy remains in private hands. And while signs of hunger are appearing once again in the working class barrios, elsewhere there are signs of an odd type of prosperity.

**Toyotas for the Bourgeoisie**

The wealthy neighborhoods of Managua are flooded with new Toyotas.

Nicaragua has several rates of exchange. In early June, the official rate was about 4,000 cordobas to the dollar. The black market rate was nearer 7,000. For certain categories of imports, however, there is an official rate of 70 cordobas to the dollar - one percent of the black market rate. (In June, this was raised to about 200.) In theory, this special rate is for goods needed to improve production -- for example, spare parts for industrial machinery. But in practice, this has been used for many of the demands of the rich.

By playing off the different rates of exchange, a capitalist or landowner with 200 American dollars can pick up a new Toyota on the grounds that it is needed for production. And he will probably pick it up from Casa Pellas, the biggest of the Toyota franchises.

This situation has given rise to a thriving black market and to a dollar economy within the Nicaraguan economy. While the workers go without, the rich can buy anything from fresh butter to auto parts at a special dollar store. There are even dollar prostitutes at the better discos.

**Incentives to the Bourgeoisie  
Do Not Spur Production**

Despite all the Sandinista proclamations about spurring production, these policies end up giving the rich more incentive to sabotage production and put their money into dollar or other black market speculation.

### **What Class Collaboration Means for the Government Apparatus Itself**

And how does the Sandinista government react? The policy of class collaboration affects not just the policy of the government, but the very structure of the government. The Sandinistas aren't building up a workers' state; they aren't relying on the working people to build a new state apparatus. Instead the "mixed economy" is complemented by a bureaucratic apparatus and the imitation of various bourgeois forms, such as a talkshop parliament.

True, Reagan's attacks on the Sandinista government as undemocratic are utter hypocrisy. The Nicaraguan revolution has the support of the majority of the population, and they have supported it despite all the hardships of the U.S. aggression and blockade. Meanwhile Reagan's friends in Nicaragua, the contras, are regarded by the Nicaraguan people as the murderous fiends that they are. And if Reagan had his way in Nicaragua, there would be a new bloodbath of the left in the name of "democracy", just as in El Salvador and other of the repressive Central American regimes.

But the methods used by the Sandinistas go against the revolutionary mobilization of the masses. It is the MLPN which is striving for this mobilization.

#### **The Talkshop Parliament**

The Sandinistas use the National Assembly simply as a talk shop. Yes, you can find the best cup of coffee in Managua there. There, when the Assembly is in session, the delegates can pass the time of day, enjoy the coffee, the air conditioning and the conversation -- and pause occasionally to debate this month's solution to the economic crisis.

In June, for example, the Sandinista government introduced its latest economic measures. The central point was a new devaluation of the Nicaraguan currency, the cordoba. These measures were simply decreed by the Presidency and the Central Bank. Meanwhile, the National Assembly debated a bill to reintroduce checking accounts. (Checking accounts had collapsed in Nicaragua, due to the habit of the rich -- the only ones qualified for such accounts -- to bounce as many checks as possible and then grab the next flight out to Miami.)

From the point of view of bourgeois governments, this is typical. Whether it is the contra-gate scandal in the U.S. or the real power lying with the army in Guatemala, talkshop parliaments are the rule for bourgeois society. But what is typical for bourgeois societies of exploitation can

not serve as the revolutionary apparatus to arouse the initiative of the Nicaraguan people.

### **Sandinista "Institutionalization" of the Revolution**

The National Assembly talkshop is one of the show pieces of the Sandinista method of institutionalizing the revolution. This "institutionalization" actually means taking the initiative out of the hands of the workers and peasants who made the revolution and giving it over to a bureaucracy composed of Sandinista officials who work side by side with fat cats who haven't yet run off with the Contras. For example, while the masses (and the Sandinistas) were fighting on the barricades in the final days of the Somoza dictatorship, a lawyer working for the wealthy Pellas family, then the owners of Nicaragua's largest bank, was merrily sending the bank's funds out of the country. That lawyer now heads the Central Bank of Nicaragua.

### **Ties Between the Sandinista Officialdom and the Local Exploiters**

Bit by bit, the Sandinista officialdom is getting more bureaucratic, more isolated from the masses, and more tied with the wealthier and bourgeois-minded strata. There are now hundreds of threads tying the Sandinistas to the bourgeoisie that remains in Nicaragua. This can not only be seen in how they have built up the bureaucracy, but in the action of this bureaucracy. For example, one of the banks of the Pellas family is in the Grand Cayman Islands. According to the Sandinistas, it is the same bank used by Oliver North to launder money for the Contras. Yet the Sandinista government has worked to preserve the vast holdings of the Pellas family in Nicaragua.

### **The Class Struggle**

The desperate conditions for the masses, the profiteering of the rich, and the detachment of the Sandinistas from the masses have given rise to an intensification of class struggle in Nicaragua. The August 1 issue of **Workers' Advocate** reports on the rising struggle of the working class and the role of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua. This is giving rise to or extending class organization of the workers and poor peasants free from Sandinista bureaucratic control. And this class organization is the hope for the continuation of the revolution in the face of imperialist pressure and Sandinista bureaucracy. <>

---

**PRISONER CORRESPONDENCE**


---

**Texas Prison Authorities Carry out  
Political Persecution with "Gang Member" Label**

Below is an excerpt from a letter of July 9 from Alvaro Luna Hernandez, chairman of P.U.R.E. (Prisoners United for Revolutionary Education). It deals with the continuation of the political persecution which we first reported on in the Aug. 25, 1986 issue of the **Supplement**, pp. 7-9:

...In another political civil rights development, I will soon be going to trial in a federal civil rights suit I filed against prisoncrats. This suit raises claims on disciplinary segregation, discrimination, punishments, improper classification, all in retaliation for legal activities and because of my political beliefs. The prisoncrats have "criminalized" the advocacy of my political ideas by labeling me a "gang member" to justify their continued political repression against me. Documents turned over by the prisoncrats include references to me which state: "...he is a leader of the prisoners...a radical, revolutionary, communist...dangerous...has theoretical beliefs in socialism and has the potential to disrupt the population and is a threat to the security and order of institution..." (Prison records) The prisoncrats are bucking on other requested documents and a hearing should be held in the matter soon. As you know, imperialism's "disruption" programs are also implemented against us inside prison walls. COINTELPRO is not dead. But hasn't the ruling class classified Marxism as a "sect" historically? But as Lenin said in reference to the "zeal" of the bourgeoisie against Bolshevism:

"...we must bow and thank the capitalist gentry. They are working for us. They are helping us to get the masses interested in the nature and significance of Bolshevism. And they cannot do otherwise; for they have already failed to stifle Bolshevism, to 'ignore' it." (p. 107, 'Left-Wing' Communism, An Infantile Disorder, [Section X].)

.....

Hernandez' letter also contained various materials from P.U.R.E. Below we reproduce their

statement commemorating George Jackson on the anniversary of his assassination:

**ON THE PRISON MOVEMENT**

A Vow to the Martyr of Our Movement

A social "specter" is haunting the administrators of the fascist corporate state and its repressive class institution, the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC). That specter, created by the same repressive conditions of murderous prison oppression, is that which has begun to give revolutionary class consciousness, guidance and direction to the sporadic struggles of the prisoners with the building of a principled prison (people's) movement in the struggle to break the yoke of capitalist-imperialist brainwashing of the poor, for the reeducation of all prisoners, in the struggles for elementary human rights and for building revolutionary socialism, with the assembly of a prison vanguard that is marching at the head of the National Prison Movement inside prison walls in this state and in this country.

A vanguard detachment has been created composed of the most advanced class conscious prisoners, under the direction of Prisoners United for Revolutionary Education (PURE) and its Central Committee. PURE's purposes are to rekindle the spirit of revolutionary struggles in the prisons, to reeducate prisoners and to develop and deepen the prison movement in our collective struggles to resist prison fascism inside prison walls, linking our struggles with the struggles of the poor on the outside. We realize that prisons are organs of capitalist class rule for the oppression and repression of the workers by the blood-sucking exploiters, the capitalists; that prisons are kkkconcentration kkkamps for the poor; that prisoners are not "criminals" by nature but have been criminalized by the system of capitalist oppression and are rather victims of social injustice, victims of a racist, genocidal, unjust, criminal and fascist social order that robs the working class of its labor power, enslaves it through the use of political violence and reaction, and drives this class into abject poverty, into crime, degradation, ruin and misery; a parasite system that knows no other "values" but those of greed, profit and success of a handful of

class exploiters based on the ruthless economic oppression and exploitation and ruin of those who produce the wealth of society -- the workers -- but who only survive on the miserable crumbs that fall from the banquet tables of the fat capitalist cats, the gang of millionaires, the capitalist-imperialist ruling class.

We choose not to escape these class realities even if it means fighting against powerful odds, against naked fascist brutality, and giving up our life for the people, for the revolution, and have resolved to engage ourselves in this struggle, the class struggle, to bring about fundamental change in prison and in society -- the fundamental reorganization of society through the study of political revolution -- an inevitability which develops in accordance with a definite dialectical law. In order to bring about this change we have engaged ourselves in conscious self-study in order to discover our humanity, our class interests, to adopt a new revolutionary value system, and to fight for political working class democracy. Science is on our side and we have nothing to lose but our chains. Our main forte is as Comrade George Jackson put it: "...to transform the criminal mentality into a revolutionary mentality..." Our cadres come from the prison rank and file as principled fighters for working class democracy, for human rights and for freedom from capitalist-imperialist oppression. Capitalist class hypocrisy and the rise of political fascism in this country today finds raw expression inside prison walls more so as a result of fascist ideological assumptions and our status as slaves of the class state. We have collectivized our struggles into a revolutionary resistance movement in order to produce quality cadres, soldiers and leaders capable of leading a principled people's movement and a world revolutionary movement. These cadres are being trained and enlisted in the army of the prison collective and their character is being raised through revolutionary education to the level and standard of our Beloved Comrade George Jackson, the living martyr of our movement, framed-up and assassinated by fascist prison guards at San Quentin prison on August 21, 1971 because

he represented hope and was a beacon of light for all oppressed working people in the world.

PURE, conscious of its historic duty and mission in the struggle against capitalist-imperialist rule, is actively engaged in carrying out its revolutionary objectives despite immense and naked fascist terror, threats, brutality and other forms of reactionary violence by the corporate state against its cadres. The fascists will never succeed in destroying our efforts because we cannot be intimidated, nor can they break our spirit and our will to resist prison fascism. Comrade George was assassinated 16 years ago on this day, August 21. But to us his physical death did not mean the death of his ideas, and Comrade George lives amongst us and within our hearts, spirit and mind and he is the living martyr of our movement today in our struggles for revolutionary education and to create a new world economic order -- revolutionary socialism. Departing from us, Comrade George enjoined us to always remain faithful to the principles of "transforming the criminal mentality into a revolutionary mentality" and to work conscientiously to produce quality revolutionary cadres for our prison movement, for our working class movement. As a commemorative to Comrade George on this day, August 21, 1987, WE VOW TO YOU Comrade George that we shall not waste a single day of our "time" nor energies inside prison walls day dreaming about capitalist illusions, but shall spend our time and energies acquiring a true revolutionary education, discovering our humanity and our love in revolution, on building prisoner unity and solidarity and a principled people's movement, and always passing the torch and shining the light of revolution inside prison walls.

THEY KILLED GEORGE JACKSON BUT THEY'LL NEVER KILL THE PRISONERS' DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT!

DEFEAT FASCISM!

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

GEORGE LIVES!

Central Committee  
P.U.R.E.

<<