

A Socialist ACTION



The fight for
abortion
rights,
See page 11.

FEBRUARY 1988

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Nicaragua's concessions fail to halt U.S. war drive

Events in Nicaragua and the rest of Central America are moving at an increasingly rapid pace.

On Jan. 15, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega announced a series of concessions to the U.S. government and its mercenary army—the contras—in the hope of staving

April 30 protests
See page 3.

off a vote by the U.S. Congress for continued aid to the contras.

Ortega, in a sharp reversal of previous policies, agreed to lift the state of emergency, hold direct talks with the contras, and release thousands of contras and ex-Somoza National Guardsmen.

The state of emergency had been decreed in 1982 to prevent the internal front of the contras—the Nicaraguan capitalists—from destabilizing the revolution from within.

But the U.S. government and its contra puppets are still not satisfied with the latest Sandinista concessions. The more Ortega gives in to U.S. pressures, the more the imperialist warlords in Washington demand.

This was made clear in the first round of
(continued on page 12)



Nicaraguan victims of contra war protest against any further U.S. funding. In 1987 alone, 7,304 people died in the fighting. The Sandinista government estimates losses of over \$377 million due to contra destruction.

Donna Binder/Impact Visuals

Palestinians continue resisting Israeli terror

Resistance to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza continues to spread.

Palestinian workers and shopkeepers are pressing forward with their protest strikes, spurred on by organized street committees of militant youth. The work stoppages have taken their toll in the segments of Israel's economy where Palestinian labor predominates—such as construction, agriculture, and sanitation.

The resistance movement is fueled by the sheer brutality of the Israeli occupation troops, whose numbers have swelled to 30,000. Hundreds of people have been dragged from their homes—often in the middle of the night—and beaten.

Over 2000 people of all ages have had bones fractured. At least 59 Palestinians were killed between Dec. 9, 1987, and the end of January.

In the Palestinian refugee camps, the great majority are hungry all the time. But the Israeli soldiers have prevented people from leaving the camps and blocked trucks with food supplies from entering.

One soldier posted in Gaza told the newspaper *Hadashot* that the beatings administered by his unit "caused serious arguments among the soldiers." He said that "over time, the number who opposed

the beatings grew, but no one refused an order."

Indeed, orders for the atrocities committed by the occupying forces have come from the highest circles of the Israeli government. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has stated that the Palestinian uprising would never have taken place "had the troops used firearms from the very first moment."

"Our task," Shamir concluded, is to "once again put the fear of death into the Arabs of the areas." (*New York Times*, Jan. 27, 1988)

There are, however, growing divisions within Israel. A demonstration in Tel Aviv on Jan. 23 drew 100,000 people. Many of the demonstrators were more radical than the organizers of the event, demanding

freedom and equal rights for the Palestinians.

A demonstration in Nazareth on the same day drew 40,000 around the theme, "Freedom for All the Palestinian People."

The struggle of the Palestinians to regain their homeland is not confined to the West Bank and Gaza. Forty years ago, the Israeli settler state itself was set up on land brutally seized from the Palestinian people.

The Israeli government can only continue its apartheid-like policies because of the support of the U.S. government. This year alone, U.S. economic and military aid will exceed \$3 billion. People in this country who support human rights and self-determination must demand, "End All U.S. Aid to Israel!"—The editors



Peter Turnley/Newsweek

Revolt in Palestine

What is the meaning of the recent upsurge?
Is a Palestinian 'mini-state' a solution?
How should antiwar activists respond?

See Special Supplement,
Pages 7-10.

Our 'Jenny Higgins' showed the way forward!



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

Alice Snipper, a member of Socialist Action, died on New Year's Eve, 1987. She joined the revolutionary socialist movement in 1939 and dedicated her life to working-class internationalism and humankind. She never looked back but was part of that rock-solid foundation that will carry socialism and its ideas forward.

Alice was educated in the tradition of "Jimmy Higgins," that rank-and-file hero in Upton Sinclair's novel of the same name, written in 1919. Higgins gave his all to the cause of working people's dignity and worked without any other payment than the respect he earned from his comrades.

Jimmy Higgins became a model for all young people who joined the movement for a socialist society. Alice, herself, is another model for younger comrades to follow.

Hanging in there

Usually, when we read the history of revolutionary and working-class struggles, we are reading about the most exciting times—the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the upheavals that freed China, Cuba, and other countries from the iron fist of imperialism.

Most often, we see these historic events through the eyes of dynamic leaders such as Leon Trotsky, Vladimir Lenin, or Rosa Luxemburg. But what about those who work day after day, not as great leaders of a revolution, but as part of a socialist movement that must hang on in those difficult periods when the working class is not in motion?

It is that hanging in there—despite all adversity, making small advances one step at a time—that makes the big revolutionary events possible. It is the gaining and the keeping of the socialist foot soldiers that makes it possible to make the great leap forward when the historic opportunities arise.

What makes the Alices of this world become the material that will change the world? One advantage she had was to come into the movement when the American working class was winning their fight for labor unionization. She watched as the oppressed and hungry of this country got up off the ground, stood up on their two feet, and took on the giants of capitalism and beat them down.

Millions of workers in this country had just gone through a depression that could have melted anyone's will. But the working class, with a lot of help from rank-and-file socialist militants like Alice, learned the secret of success—in unity there is strength.

Another heroine

Along with that working-class hero, Jimmy Higgins, there should have been created another heroine, a Jennie Higgins—of whom there were many. My experience in the socialist movement since 1944 has been working along with the Jennie and Jimmy Higginses.

I will miss Alice at every

mailing of the paper, or when we must gather signatures to get our socialist candidates on the ballot, or when we must organize a social or a garage sale to raise funds to print leaflets and pamphlets or buy office supplies.

I will miss Alice when we go on marches against American intervention in someone else's country, when we have to set up a book table at an antiwar event, when we march for women's reproductive rights, when we join workers on their picket line to help them fight for the unions, or

when we go to a campus or a rally to sell our newspaper.

I will miss Alice Snipper—my model Jennie Higgins—because she was always there when she was needed.

Alice was a few years older than me. But in the socialist movement there is no generational difference. I'll tell you why. All of us are fighting for the future, for the next generation, to end racism, hunger, sexism, to bring about a real international fraternity of working people that will end, once and

for all, the terrible threat of nuclear destruction.

This next generation owes a debt to Alice Snipper, who held tight to her revolutionary principles and worked actively for her beliefs.

I am thankful that Alice Snipper threw herself into the socialist movement. And I know that there are many more Alices out there. Alice would be the first to say: "It's your turn now, join the socialist future, you have nothing to lose but your chains—and a world to gain."

Socialist Action forums this month:

Boston:

The Meaning of Gorbachev's Reforms. Speakers: Paul Siegel, author, and Jim Henle, Socialist Action. Sat., Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m., Cambridge YWCA "Living Room," 7 Temple St.

Chicago:

Film: El Hajj Malik El Shabazz. Thurs., Feb 25, 7 p.m., Computer Center, Rm. 218, Northeastern Univ., 5500 N. St. Louis Ave. Students for Socialist Action.

Cincinnati:

Campus Rules vs. Free Speech. Wed., Feb. 17, 7 p.m. U.C., Tangeman Ctr., Rm. 411. Students for Socialist Action.

Los Angeles:

The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination. Speaker: Ralph Schoenman, author. Fri., Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m., ILGWU Hall, 675 South Parkview St. (1 block west of Alvarado)



Henry Snipper/Socialist Action

Santa Barbara:

Revolt in Palestine. Speaker: Ralph Schoenman, author. Mon., Feb. 8, 7 p.m. UCSB Psychology Bldg., Rm. 1824. Students for Socialist Action.

Twin Cities:

Prospects for Socialism in America. Speaker: Adam Wood. Wed., Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m., Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave. St. Paul.

San Francisco:

Racism in the S.F. Fire Dept: The Struggle of Black Firefighters. Speakers: Lt. Robert Demmons, Pres., Black Firefighters Assoc.; Roland Sheppard, Socialist Action. Fri., Feb 5, 8 p.m.

Film on Malcolm X. Speaker: Kwame M.A. Somburu. Fri, Feb. 19, 8 p.m.

Place for both events: 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, S.F. Call: 821-0458.

Alice Snipper: A socialist activist for 50 years

By ASHER HARER

Alice Snipper died at her home in Oakland, Calif., on Dec. 31. She was 73 years old. She lived only six months after a diagnosis of terminal cancer.

Alice was one of that generation of American Trotskyists that came out of the great political and labor struggles of the 1930s and 1940s. In many ways her life, since joining the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1939, was virtually a history of the movement—especially that part played by the loyal and hard-working rank and file.

In August 1986, Alice was one of the 13 Socialist Action members honored at Socialist Action's celebration of "Fifty Years of Revolutionary Continuity." The 13 submitted "biographical notes" for the program.

Alice wrote that she joined the SWP because of the Moscow Trials and "because the Socialist Workers Party was a fighting party."

She wrote that during World War II she and her companion, Henry, "were asked to move to San Pedro to do the work the famous worker-fighter Jimmy Higgins did: leaflets, mailings, selling the press, contact



Alice Snipper

Henry Snipper/Socialist Action

work." [Higgins was a character in a novel by Upton Sinclair]

"During our seven years in San Pedro, I worked in the shipyards, at Firestone Rubber, and about three years as a cannery worker."

After returning to Los Angeles, Alice did volunteer work in the SWP office. "I ran off leaflets on an old A.B. Dick hand-run

mimeograph machine. In 1983, I along with many others, was expelled from the SWP solely because we were loyal to Trotskyism."

So ended Alice's biographical note—just a few short lines. But that was Alice—a very modest person. And she was not one to waste words—or anything else for that matter!

In addition to her other activities, Alice was a bookstore specialist, first in Los Angeles and also when she and Henry moved to Oakland in 1981. After her expulsion in 1983, she took charge of the fledgling San Francisco Socialist Action bookstore. Everywhere the bookstore went—demonstrations, special events, forums—there was Alice.

S.F. memorial planned

Alice and Henry have two children and four grandchildren. The Snippers enjoyed life, especially camping and travel. After Henry retired, he and Alice spent one whole year exploring Europe in a camper, from the British Isles to Greece.

We will remember Alice as a gentle, kind person, a dear friend, loving and loved. We feel a deep sense of personal loss, a sadness. But it is not the same kind of sadness that comes over one when a promising young life is cut short. Alice lived her life to the full, guided by that vision of our socialist future, a future which will be realized by the millions of young Alice Snippers of all nationalities, races, and colors who will join our ranks.

A memorial meeting for Alice Snipper will be held in San Francisco on Sunday, Feb. 28, at 2 p.m. For information on location call: (415) 821-0458. Please send

messages to the Socialist Action national office.

A memorial meeting was held in Los Angeles on Jan. 10. Both meetings will be covered in the March issue of *Socialist Action*.



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Peace plan disorients antiwar movement

By CARL FINAMORE

The international and domestic situation is growing more perilous for the Nicaraguan Revolution. The U.S. financed-contra war, dependence on erratic foreign aid, and constant economic disruption by Nicaraguan capitalists have created a severe crisis.

But perhaps the most significant challenge to the revolution has gone unnoticed. It is the political consequences of the Central American peace plan.

The Esquipulas II Peace Plan, which was adopted last August by the five Central American presidents, is being used as a shield for demanding that the Nicaraguan government allow greater freedom of movement for the contras. These demands are no different than the ones raised repeatedly by the U.S. government and the contras in their seven-year war against the revolution.

Rehashed demands to "democratize" gain greater authority, however, when raised by Central American governments participating in the peace plan. Thus, through skillful use of the peace plan, the imperialists have largely succeeded in shifting the debate over policy in Central America.

The axis of the discussion no longer centers on the source of the problem—the U.S. war on Nicaragua. Suddenly, the spotlight is on the Sandinista government to make more and more concessions to the contras.

No national protests

The misplaced euphoria over the Central American peace plan has disoriented many activists, preventing them from recognizing this dangerous shift. As a result, not one national peace or solidarity organization has called for nationally coordinated mass protests this spring against U.S. intervention.

A whole series of mistakes in judgment, flowing from a misunderstanding of the peace plan, have been made. Support of the peace plan by liberal Democrats, for example, has been misread as some sort of commitment to oppose contra aid.

Thus, false hopes have been placed in capitalist politicians to stop contra aid. This means that money, energy, and resources are being diverted from independent anti-intervention protests into various liberal Democratic Party election campaigns.

Illusions that the peace plan will ultimately resolve the crisis in Central America have also led many antiwar activists and leaders to retreat from anti-intervention activity. Despite the U.S. government's clearly stated objectives of toppling the Sandinista government, the notion that the United States has been pressured into adopting a less aggressive role in Central America has gained ground.

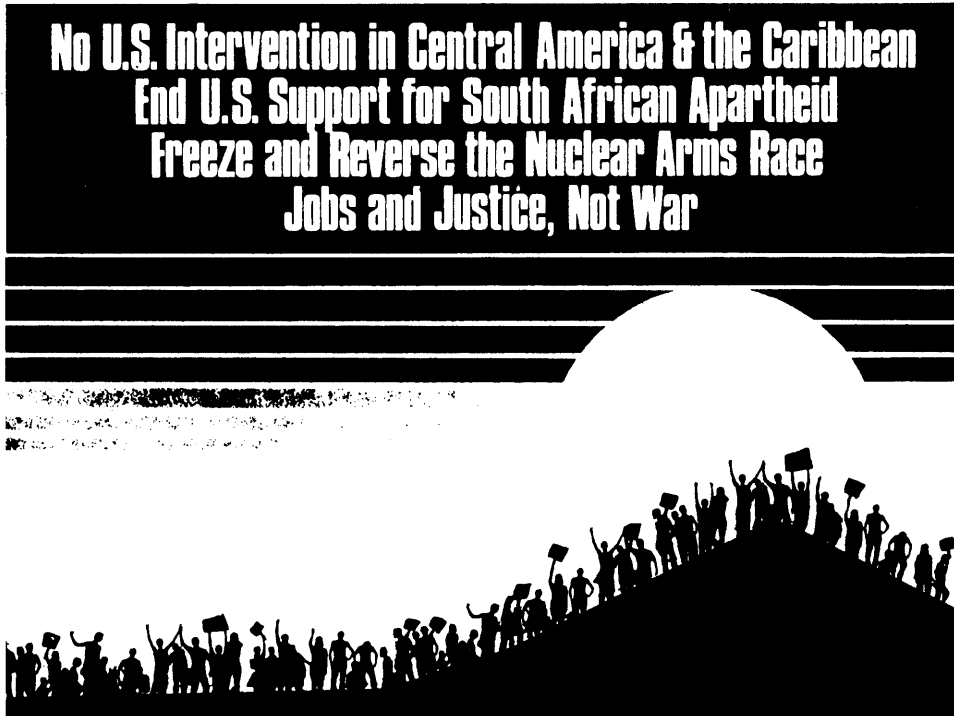
Nothing could be further from the truth. Imperialists have never been talked out of controlling other countries. It should be remembered that U.S. imperialism waged its war in Vietnam for five years after the start of the Paris peace talks in 1968. The majority of both Vietnamese and American casualties occurred during these "peace talks."

It was the revolutionary Vietnamese struggle for self-determination, with support from the U.S. mass antiwar movement, which ultimately forced the United States out of Southeast Asia.

Effects of the summit

Pressure to pursue diplomatic negotiations—rather than mass revolutionary struggle—as the answer to imperialist intervention is increasingly coming from places which for some people may be unexpected.

The Nov. 23, 1987, issue of the *Christian Science Monitor*, for example, noted that "It was Soviet officials who urged Ortega to accept a political settlement."



March and Rally in San Francisco

SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 1988

Assemble: 11:00am
Precita Park

March: 12 Noon
Through the Mission District

Rally: 1:00pm
Dolores Park

The San Francisco Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice is organizing a mass protest demonstration for April, 30, 1988. The four demands listed on the leaflet above have mobilized over 150,000 people during three consecutive years of spring actions.

This observation is consistent with what Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev stated last year when he pledged to help the United States promote "regional stability" throughout the world in exchange for an arms treaty today—and trade agreements tomorrow.

These goals were given a further boost by the Reagan/Gorbachev summit meeting last December. Gorbachev enthusiastically promoted the Central America peace plan process, thereby conceding the right of the United States to "negotiate" the internal affairs of Nicaragua.

This slight has not escaped attention. The Sandinistas may be forced to negotiate and make concessions because of grave imperialist pressures, but they have not

delegated this right to others—and that includes Gorbachev.

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, for example, in an interview with the French daily *Le Monde* (Dec. 15, 1987), highlighted the negative consequences for Nicaragua of the summit agreements between Reagan and Gorbachev.

"With the signature of this treaty," Ortega said, "the United States can now feel itself free to do whatever it wishes to Nicaragua. Strengthened by his new image, President Reagan can attempt to deal a mortal blow to Nicaragua without this calling into question the treaty signed with the Soviet Union."

What is the result of all this confusion? The answer is clear—not one national peace

or solidarity organization has agreed to a proposal by the Northern California Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice for nationally coordinated local area spring actions on April 30, 1988. [See box.]

June 11 protests

The U.S. Peace Council, the Mobilization for Survival, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the National Nicaragua Network, and the Pledge of Resistance all claimed that the Mobilization date of April 30 conflicted with a June 11 action proposal for New York City.

But there was more than a difference over dates. The Mobilization's April 30 date had as one of its central demands "No U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean." The April 30 date also meant that activists would be building the demonstration as the contra aid debate unfolded in Washington.

Clearly, the national organizations that rejected the Mobilization proposal disagreed with its premise that the U.S. war on Nicaragua was at a critical point.

Despite assurances by some June 11 organizers that the issue of Central America would be mentioned, the June 11 draft proposal by national antiwar leader Sid Peck did not contain one word about Nicaragua or El Salvador. The organizers of June 11 want their demonstration to focus exclusively on nuclear disarmament demands.

It is, of course, understandable that the anti-nuclear weapons issue should be highlighted, since June 11 coincides with the Third United Nations' Special Session on Disarmament. But it is a serious error to omit a demand against U.S. intervention in Central America.

The U.S. Peace Council, in particular, insists on *excluding* a Central American anti-intervention demand from a June 11 action. The U.S. Peace Council, which wholeheartedly supports the Central American peace plan, apparently expects that the plan will resolve the U.S. war against the workers and peasants of this region.

Organizers for June 11 will be meeting in New York City on Feb. 6-7 to determine the character and slogans of the actions. Hopefully, they will reconsider and adopt a clear stance in opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America.

Whatever happens in the short term, one thing is certain—the anti-intervention movement must recover its political balance before it can effectively launch massive national actions so desperately needed to stay the hand of the warmakers. ■

S.F. Mobilization calls April 30 demonstration



SAN FRANCISCO—The Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice has begun organizing a full range of spring activities supporting the four demands of the coalition. The demands are: No U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean; Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race; End U.S. Support for South African Apartheid; Jobs and Justice, Not War.

A mass march and rally is scheduled for Saturday, April 30. Demonstrators will march through the Latino community of San Francisco. Hundreds of refugees from Central America will participate.

On May 1, there will be legal civil disobedience at the Port Chicago Naval Weapons Station sponsored by the Pledge of Resistance and the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES).

The majority of arms shipments to the dictatorships in Central America leave from Port Chicago. Brian Willson lost both his legs in a protest there last summer.

The Mobilization is also sponsoring a Peace Day rally on June 11 to mark the

opening of the Third United Nations' Special Session on Disarmament.

A leaflet advertising all the events lists 150 endorsers.

A three-person staff has been hired, and a poster, button, and T-shirt will soon be produced. A smaller turnout is expected than last year's April 25 rally of 80,000, however. Organizers say that this is because this year's action will not have a national focus.

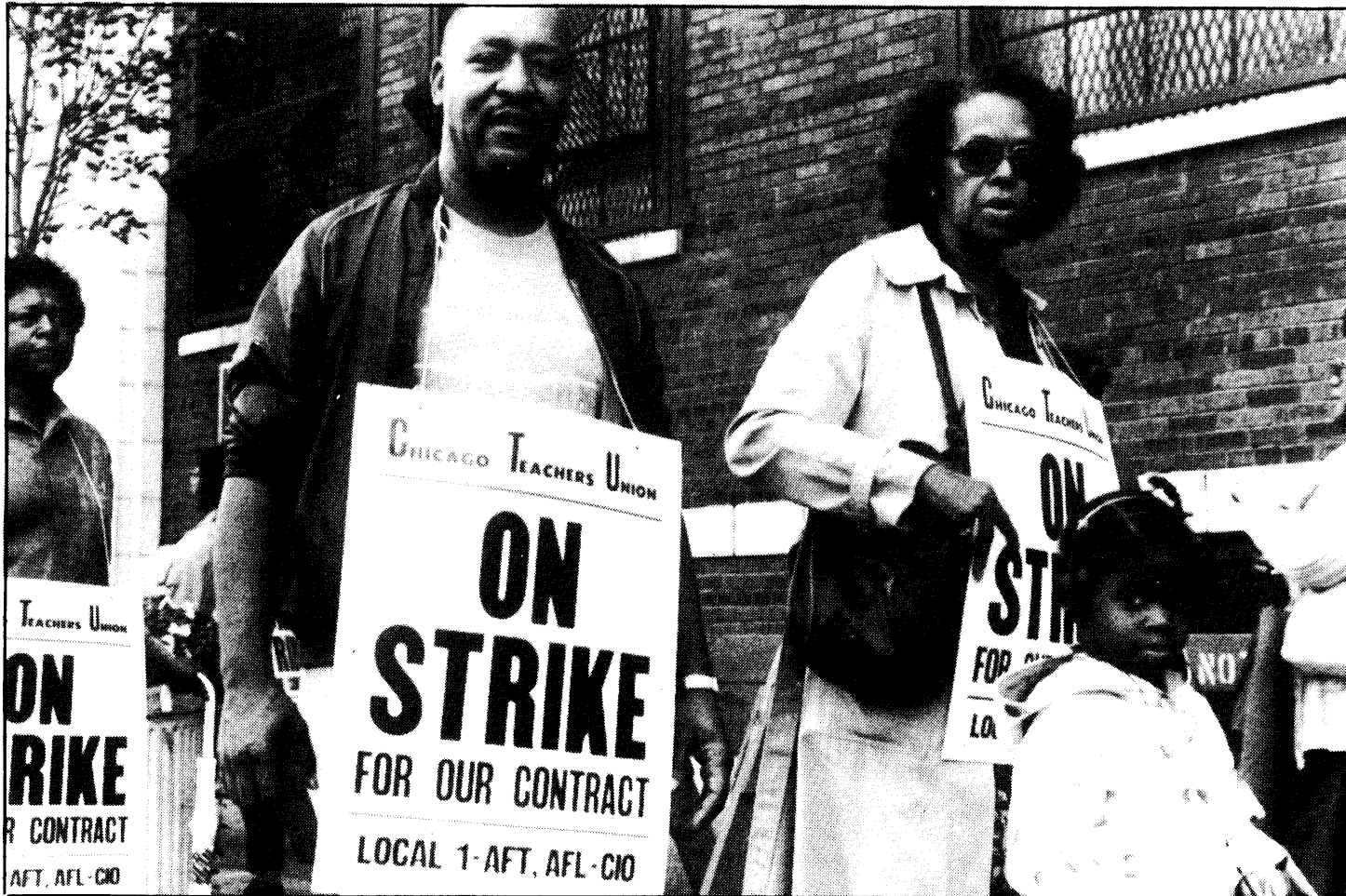
The Mobilization's efforts to gain support from national peace and solidarity groups for nationally coordinated local protests on April 30 did not succeed. Nonetheless, the Mobilization decided to go ahead with its plans in the San Francisco Bay Area. And so far, the 1988 spring actions are off to a good start.

For example, although April 30 is projected as a Northern California protest, activists as far away as Salt Lake City have already made plans to participate.

You can contact the Mobilization by calling (415) 626-8053. Funds and volunteers are always needed.—C.F.

Chicago after Mayor Washington's death:

'Machine' politics comes back with a vengeance



During the 19-day teachers' strike, Mayor Washington endorsed school board campaign to force teachers back to work. Only the independent mobilization of teachers prevented cutbacks that would have laid off 700 school workers.

By ADAM SHILS

CHICAGO—The death of Mayor Harold Washington brought forth two immediate reactions: a deep sense of mourning in the Black community and a rapid jockeying for position among the city council "politicos" and ward-healers.

Washington had a heart attack at 11:03 on the morning of Wednesday, Nov. 25. By 11:30, only four minutes after the ambulance had reached the hospital, Alderman Richard Mell, a leader of the white-racist bloc in the city council, was already on the telephone lining up votes in the struggle to elect a new mayor.

The stage was being set for an extraordinary week of political wheeling and dealing and screaming headlines about "mob violence in the streets of Chicago." If we untangle the mess of intrigue and headlines, some very old lessons about the nature of the Democratic Party stand out clearly.

Chicago politics has been dominated for several years by the constant struggle between Harold Washington's city-council bloc and the anti-reform, racist faction now led by Alderman Ed Burke.

This faction realized soon after Washington's death that they did not have the strength to elect one of their own as the new mayor. They decided, therefore, to settle on the next best thing—a pliant Black puppet who would do their bidding.

After much "to-ing and fro-ing," they settled on Alderman Eugene Sawyer (who has a long history as a minor figure in the Democratic Party machine) as such a candidate.

The Washington forces selected Alderman Tim Evans, who had been Washington's floor leader in the city council. Evans, an up-and-coming political star, had few ties

to the reform movement before joining Washington's camp.

Demonstration of Black pride

This backroom intrigue was not the only thing going on in Chicago over the Thanksgiving weekend. The lying in state of Washington's body became the occasion of a huge demonstration of Black pride. Hundreds of thousands of Black people walked past the casket, often having to first wait for several hours in freezing weather.

Monday, Nov. 30, saw two important events. In the morning, there was Washington's funeral. Interestingly, a large crowd which had waited for hours was unable to attend the funeral, as the church was already full of "visiting dignitaries" (read: political hacks and hangers-on attempting to cash in on Washington's popularity).

In the evening, there was a 13,000-strong memorial rally at the University of Illinois Pavilion. This rally became a pro-Tim Evans, anti-Sawyer rally. The crowd sang the South African ANC anthem and enthusiastically cheered calls for a demonstration at City Hall the next evening when the city council was due to vote on who the acting mayor was going to be.

One of the highpoints of the Pavilion rally was the speech by popular Black journalist Vernon Jarrett. Jarrett lambasted Black capitulationists (that is, Sawyer and his supporters) and said that they should be "dealt with in the same way as the Ku Klux Klan."

Racist leader Ed Vrdolyak then organized a massive campaign attempting to get Channel 7 and the *Sun-Times* to dismiss Jarrett—for "racism!" However, Channel 7 and the *Sun-Times* feared the Black community more than they feared Vrdolyak, and so far Jarrett's job is safe.

Rally demands "No deals!"

On the evening of Tuesday, Dec. 1, a crowd of 5000 Washington supporters gathered outside City Hall as the council began its deliberations. "No deals!" was the main slogan of the demonstration. Placards and chants denounced "Uncle Tom" Sawyer.

This demonstration threw the Chicago media into pure hysteria. TV reporters talked of plans to take over City Hall and even of death threats to aldermen supporting Sawyer. The next day, the papers talked of "Jacobin mobs" threatening the city!

This uproar shows how frightened the bosses' press is of any Black mass action.

As a matter of fact, the demonstration was multiracial, orderly, and disciplined. While the crowd was outside, the city council was having a marathon session inside. It was an orgy of floor fights, procedural motions, and tactical maneuvers. Finally, Sawyer was elected the new mayor by 29 votes to Evans's 19.

Sawyer's election has led to a real sense of demoralization and despondency among Washington's supporters and in much of the radical movement.

An article in the *Chicago Reader* (Dec. 25, 1987) was entitled "The Day the Movement Died." A recent editorial in *The Nation* (Dec. 19, 1987) spoke of how "the hopes of the progressive, multiracial coalition that briefly dominated Chicago politics died with Harold Washington."

There is indeed a tragedy in Chicago politics—but a different one than portrayed in these publications. The tragedy is that a real outpouring of Black pride and struggle has been totally sidetracked and channeled into the Democratic Party, which has proven yet again to be the graveyard of every progressive social movement that has entered it.

The huge crowds at Washington's lying in state, the Pavilion rally, the City Hall demonstration were all signs of Black action and movement. However, these actions were not focused on jobs and better housing, or against cutbacks in social services. They were supporting one faction against another faction in the racist, reactionary Democratic Party.

Tim Evans clearly capitalized on this as he addressed the crowd outside City Hall following Sawyer's election. "You will be mine in '89!" he told the crowd, expressing perfectly how a Democratic Party politician views the movement in the streets.

The Democratic Party "captured?"

Many activists in Chicago have spoken of how "the Washington movement captured the Democratic Party from the machine." It is true that certain elements of the city patronage system were weakened under Washington. Affirmative action was promoted in municipal hiring, and collective-bargaining agreements were won for thousands of city workers.

Nevertheless, a few short days after the mayor's death, the machine was back in

control. Within hours of Washington's burial, 12 Black aldermen, almost half of Washington's faction, were thinking of making a deal with Ed Burke, Washington's arch-enemy. In the end, six actually did.

This should come as no surprise. Every attempt by progressive social movements to "capture" the Democratic Party has always been a failure. Both the Republican and the Democratic parties serve the interests of the capitalist class.

Ultimately, both capitalist parties are antagonistic to the demands of working people and the oppressed for a higher quality of life. In the words of Malcolm X, "You can't get a chicken to lay a duck's egg."

The Washington administration dutifully paid some \$230 million in annual interest to the banks while communities were ravaged for "lack of funds." Social services were cut, and property taxes and other fees were raised.

Yet, according to recent reports, Chicago's minorities continue to have the highest unemployment, the worst schools, the highest crime rates, the lowest per-capita incomes, and the most completely segregated neighborhoods of any big city in the country.

The official unemployment rate among Blacks in Chicago stands at a staggering 25 percent. Last year, Washington bragged that more than 100,000 neighborhood jobs had been created since he took office. But most of these jobs were in low-paying services. Higher-paying industrial jobs continue to disappear.

The teachers' strike settlement

Washington's office did little to obstruct union-busting attempts by Chicago employers. In fact, the mayor supported lobbying efforts in the state legislature to prohibit strikes by city workers.

During the 19-day teachers' strike in September, Washington early on endorsed the school board's efforts to force the teachers back to work. In fact, Washington's allies on the city council prevented moves to forward \$17 million to the school board to settle the strike.

Late in the strike, the Chicago Teachers Union asked Washington to help gain a settlement by getting his appointees on the school board to negotiate. But when Washington did act to get an agreement, it was not what teachers had been waiting for. The teachers' 4-percent annual raise was to be paid for with layoffs of at least 700 people.

A spokesperson for a parents' group complained: "We met with Washington, and he promised the schools would be open—which they are. But he promised reform. And the first thing the school board did was cut teacher positions and areas directly affecting the students. That's not reform. That's business as usual."

The strong reaction against the layoffs—by teachers, other school-board employees, and parents—forced the school board to "discover" funds to restore some 600 jobs. After a rally of 1500 at the state capitol, the legislators came up with funds to prevent spring layoffs.

These successes owed nothing to the anti-union school board, supported by the Washington administration. They flowed from the strength of the teachers-union mobilization during the strike.

Socialists share the aspirations for social change expressed by many of those who voted for and who mourned Harold Washington. But recent events in Chicago have shown that the Democratic Party is an obstacle toward achieving real gains for working people and all the oppressed. ■

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Affordable photos, cartoons, caricatures and illustrations for the movement and the progressive press

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

The Meeting, a play by Jeff Stetson, directed by Keryl E. McCord, at the Oakland Ensemble Theatre, 1428 Alice Street, Oakland, Calif.

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. were among the greatest political leaders of their epoch. Both were uncompromising men of action. Each had his dream.

Malcolm X spoke to the masses in the Black ghettos of the fight for freedom "by any means necessary." King was, in contrast, the apostle of non-violent mass action.

Imagine: an electric night in Harlem, one week before

What would have happened in a Malcolm-MLK meeting?



Marcus Naylor as Malcolm X, and Isiah Whitlock, Jr. as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., arm wrestle to decide whose ideas for struggle are superior.

THEATER REVIEW

Malcolm was assassinated. Face to face in a hotel room, the two strategists attempt a reconciliation—a "unity" meeting. This hypothetical event is brought to the stage in "The Meeting," which opened last month at the Oakland Ensemble Theatre.

As much as it depicts the freedom struggle of the 1960s, "The Meeting" is concerned with the 1980s—and the future. Playwright Jeff Stetson, a university administrator, found that many of his students knew little about Martin Luther King and nothing about Malcolm X. Often, Malcolm was brushed aside as "an angry, militant, Muslim radical."

Yet, in the playwright's view, many of the gains that Black people made in the 1960s would not have come to pass without Malcolm's "radicalism." "You got some concessions," Malcolm chides King in the play, "because I was the alternative."

The civil-rights movement

The Oakland Ensemble's engaging performance captures the caustic wit that was Malcolm's trademark. But a stridency lurks behind Malcolm's remarks. The production gives little inkling of the degree to which Malcolm earnestly attempted to establish friendly relations with King and other leaders of the mainstream civil-rights groups.

Especially in the final months of his life, Malcolm gave active support to the sit-ins, demonstrations, and voter-registration drives of the civil-rights movement. He continued to point out, however, that (in the face of murderous attacks by the Ku Klux Klan and other racists) civil-rights workers should be permitted to defend themselves.

In giving this warning, Malcolm was compelled to maintain his distance from King, who had notified the racists, "We will wear you down with our capacity to

suffer."

Unfortunately, the playwright does not consider a more fundamental political difference that separated the two Black leaders. Although personally incorruptible, King never broke his dependency on liberal allies in the church, the labor bureaucracy, and the Democratic Party.

Malcolm, on the other hand, pointed out that the Democrats, no less than the Republicans, were responsible for the racism that exists in this country. Ultimately, he said, the capitalist system needs to be replaced.

"To free America"

At one point in the play, King bursts out, "You want to free Blacks. I want to free America." Here the playwright is unfair to Malcolm X, who far more than King, expressed himself vehemently on numerous issues of American political life and foreign policy.

For example, on the evening of Feb. 14, 1965, (when the playwright imagines Malcolm in a hotel room in

Harlem) he was actually speaking in Detroit—where he denounced America's neo-colonial policy in Africa and Vietnam.

It was to be two years before King dared to resist his Democratic Party allies and take a full public stand against the war in Vietnam. He had changed, he explained, under pressure from the militant Black youth. "The Meeting," unfortunately, gives no hint of King's future turnaround on any issue. Instead, the play's Martin Luther King states with his teeth set, "I can't change."

Despite their differences, toward the end of the play, the two men join in a warm bear hug. When I saw the performance, the overwhelmingly Black audience broke into applause at that point—in deep appreciation of the continuing need for unity in the Black liberation movement.

"The Meeting" continues at the Oakland Ensemble Theatre through Feb. 21, the anniversary of Malcolm's assassination. For more information, call (415) 839-5510. ■

By TINA BEACOCK

CHICAGO—A recent *Chicago Tribune* article (Dec. 13, 1987) claimed to describe a "terrorist cabal" at Northeastern Illinois University here, portraying the state-run school as a "threshold to the underground."

The article attempts to back its allegations by means of "unofficial" comments from the FBI and local police, as well as from a Justice Department "terrorism expert."

According to Daniel Stern, Prof. of Sociology at Northeastern, "This article has all the elements of an FBI media operation and political smear job" (unpublished paper, January 1988). The FBI has traditionally used smear campaigns, planted news stories, burglaries, and provocateurs against activists in groups for social change—including Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

Several of the people mentioned in the article have been accused by the government of various crimes. But clearly their real "crime" is their support to Puerto Rican independence and other political causes.

Secret-police operation smears campus activists

Jaime Delgado, a counselor at Northeastern, was convicted for allegedly plotting the escape of political prisoner Oscar Lopez-Rivera. As a well-known activist for Puerto Rican independence, he had spoken to the U.N. Decolonization Committee on this issue. A recent rally in his defense at Northeastern drew a wide cross-section of support from the campus.

Another who was mentioned, Professor Jose Lopez, was jailed for not talking to a grand jury—a notorious device for harassing activists and organizations. Another, Professor Charles Knox, was accused of impersonating a lawyer—although he is one.

In a bizarre and ominous twist, the files and school papers of one student, Irish Greene, were subpoenaed by the FBI after a charge was made against him by a

government informant in a courtroom. He stands accused of writing a paper.

In short, an elaborate web of accusations of "terrorism" is woven, even though no illegal actions ever occurred at Northeastern.

"Too many minority students?"

By far the most slanderous indictment in the *Tribune* article was made about the student body as a whole. The problems with Northeastern, we are told, are the following: the school has too many minority students. They have time for militancy because they don't study; the school has low academic standards.

And there's far too much academic freedom, allowing "rabid ideologues" to teach. The article contains commentary to this effect from a supposed expert on terrorism, M. Cherif Bassiouni, who teaches at DePaul University. "Universities that promote free speech and tolerate a wide range of ideas are particularly vulnerable to infiltration," he says.

Professor Fred J. MacDonald states in the article: "The last thing in the minds of most white middle-class kids is activism. Most live at home with their parents and work 20 hours a week....But some minority students from depressed circumstances have a different attitude."

These statements have outraged many students and faculty on the Northeastern campus. The article implies, wrote Professor Ronald Glick, "that minority students have time for militancy because they are not studying hard. When not in class or studying, most Northeastern students work 20 hours a week to pay for their education."

As a result of students' demands, the university has increased its minority

enrollment, now up to 33 percent of the student body. It also maintains a series of programs to aid and support inner-city students, ill-prepared by their high schools for college. These programs are now under attack and students have organized demonstrations to preserve them.

Apart from its blatant racism, the article reveals a secret-police mentality that sees every campaign for justice coming not from conditions in society itself, but from a conspiracy in which innocents are duped.

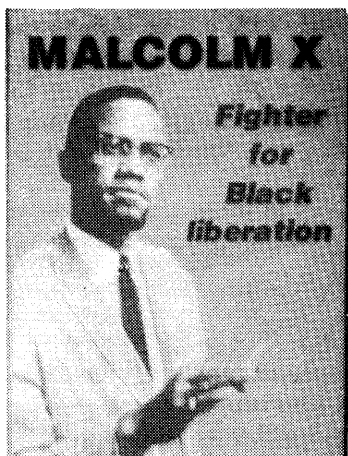
This means every student is suspect who ever took a leaflet, wrote a paper, checked out a political book from the library, took a political class, attended a sit-in, rally, or demonstration, or advocated social change. The article, then, calls for the suppression of students' freedom of speech, association, and political rights.

University Provost Barbara Hursh states that the university will begin "reviewing the employment" of teachers who are facing criminal charges. Jose Lopez has already been denied tenure at the school—in order, the article notes approvingly, "to achieve balance."

These measures are quite in line with developments on some other campuses. The CIA recently announced a program to send agents onto campus to teach as "visiting professors." The Supreme Court just ruled that the First Amendment does not apply to high-school student newspapers.

These attacks require a united response by students and their organizations. Every student has a stake in defending his or her right to write, to read, to join organizations, to take whatever course he or she may choose.

A united response by students, from the student senate to every other group, would send a powerful message that these kinds of attacks will not be tolerated. Statements, meetings, and letters to the *Tribune* could make clear what the majority of the students, and the faculty as well, think of these attacks on their rights. ■



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Boston labor activists discuss fightback tactics

By W.I. MOHAREB

BOSTON—On Dec. 12, the Boston branch of Socialist Action hosted a small but important forum titled "New England Labor vs. Corporate Greed."

Mike Fliss, a worker at the General Motors plant in Framingham, Mass., was the first speaker. Fliss, a member of United Auto Workers Local 422, examined the recent "indefinite" closing of the plant in the context of growing capitalist overproduction and the class struggle.

The auto industry suffers from massive overcapacity, with U.S. manufacturers alone capable of producing an estimated 5 million more cars than the market can absorb by 1990; non-U.S. makers are facing even greater overcapacity.

GM is laying off tens of thousands of workers and has announced plans to close a dozen or more plants in coming months. These closures are by no means indiscriminate.

As Fliss pointed out, Framingham and five other factories in North America, including one each in Canada and Mexico, produce two of the top five best-selling cars in the United States (the Cutlass Ciera and the Chevrolet Celebrity).

Sales of these models have fallen far less than for other comparable GM cars. Yet Framingham was closed while GM management stepped up production in Mexico.

The reason Framingham was singled out, Fliss explained, is that workers there had refused to submit to the speed-up scheme otherwise known as the "team concept." In fact, the bosses went out of their way to cite "problems with labor relations" as a factor in the decision to close the plant.

Cornerstone principles

The ultimate responsibility for the thousands of layoffs at Framingham and elsewhere lies on the bosses and their anarchic system. But Fliss pointed out that the GM management has been capable of whipsawing union local against union local only because of the weakness and conciliationism of the present labor leadership.

For example, Donald Ephlin, UAW vice president, is a leading supporter of the "team concept." And the UAW leadership has been compromising individual contracts by dealing with each car company separately. It then paints the contracts in unjustified rosy terms.

Fliss discussed the efforts of the Stand-Up Coalition at Framingham and of similar caucuses in other plants in providing an alternative program more faithful to the "cornerstone principles of our union: to increase our standard of living, to eliminate competition between workers, and to create

jobs for all who need work."

Laurie Haapenen, an organizer for UAW Region 9A, was the second speaker. The focus of her talk was the service sector—and office workers in particular. Traditionally unorganized, these people "generally don't consider themselves workers or part of the working class," she said.

Haapenen described common work conditions for an office worker—long days, low pay, speed-up, no respect, sexual harassment. Stress is "nearly as high as

that of an assembly-line worker," she emphasized.

Unfortunately, a relatively small proportion of office workers is organized. But the picture is changing as growing numbers seek unionization; the Boston area alone boasts several major drives. [Excerpts from Haapenen's speech are reprinted on this page.]

The unions in Maine

Greg Guckenberg, a member of Shipbuilders Local 6 in Bath, Maine, was

the final speaker. "Maine unions have been very much in the news over the past three years," he pointed out.

Four major strikes, "steps in a progression of learning experiences," have occurred during the last three years: Bath Iron Works (1985); Guilford Transportation and the Maine Central Railroad (1986); Boise-Cascade at Rumford, Maine (1986); and International Paper (IP) at Jay, Maine (ongoing since June 1987).

All of the strikes were against concessionary contracts. With the Jay strike, however, "the solidarity and preparedness of the union was a surprise to many unionists" as well as to the bosses, Guckenberg said.

The Jay local's public meetings of more than 1000 (in a town of 4000) were "inspiring and unlike anything I've seen in the labor movement before," he reported. The local's leaders have taken it upon themselves to lead the entire union.

Despite tremendous efforts, Guckenberg stressed, the Jay strikers "didn't do the one thing they had to do—stop production at the mill. The longer the strike goes on, the harder it is to do this because support becomes dissipated and the membership demoralized."

A new strategy is needed

Guckenberg then examined the conditions of the years during which the present labor leadership was "trained"—that is, the post-World War II period of relative labor peace in the United States that was bought by business to ensure their looting of the rest of the world.

Now the U.S. capitalists are increasingly squeezed by foreign competition. They also face "the continuing spread of unrest represented especially by the Cuban Revolution and the Vietnamese Revolution." So they seek "to take away our past gains and convert them into cash for themselves."

"Their strategy has become clear," Guckenberg continued. "Where they can't destroy the union, they close the plant. Where a buck can't be made, people will starve. Where resistance is strong, bring in the National Guard!"

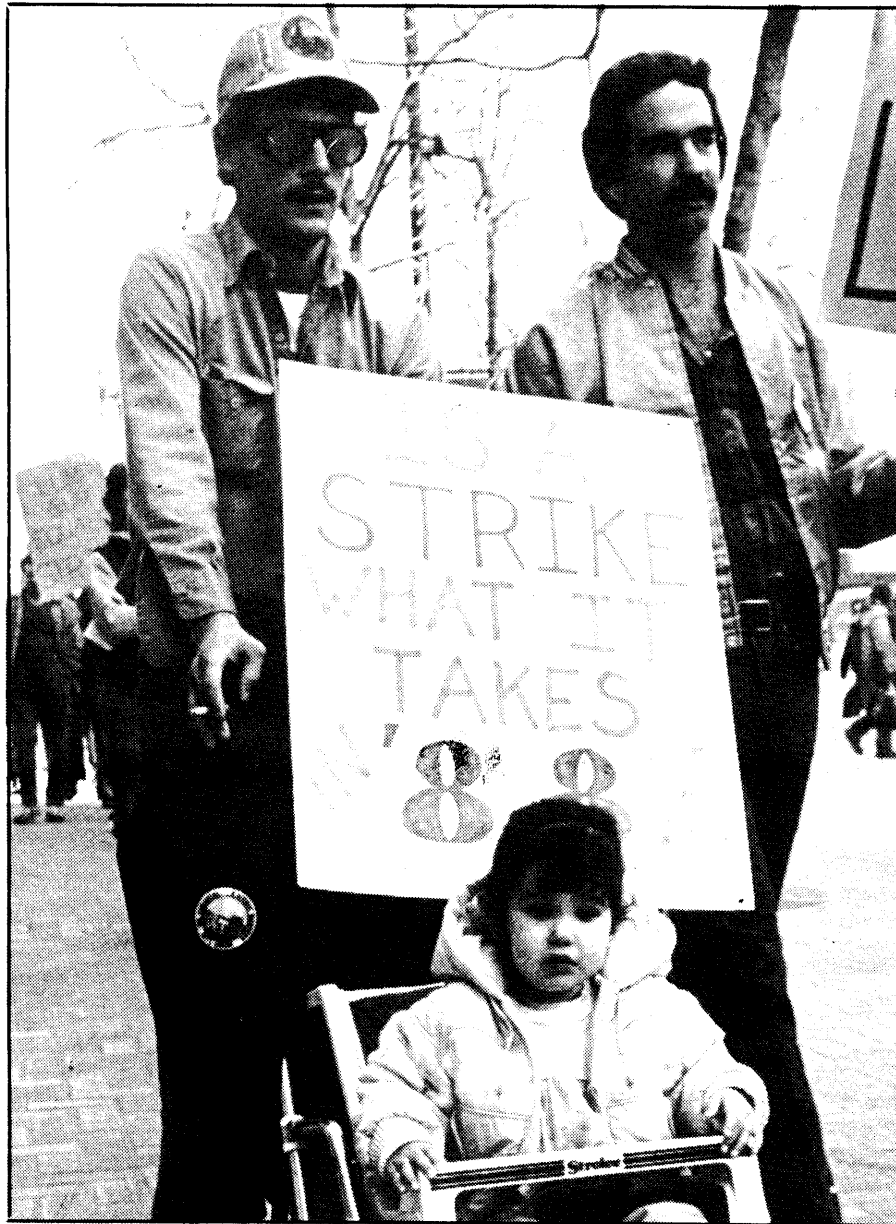
"And especially," he said, "they rely on those union bureaucrats who never had to fight, never learned how to fight, and have no intention of leading a fight."

A new generation of labor leadership will develop in today's climate of confrontation and struggle. "What we need," Guckenberg said, "is a new strategy. A strategy that recognizes that this is a class society, that the workers have interests that have nothing in common with those of the employers."

That goal demands an end to the unions' reliance on the Democratic Party and an end to their dependence on the courts to settle labor disputes. "We must get the unions out from behind the skirts of the lawyers and the politicians," Guckenberg said.

"We need new ways," he concluded, "and we need to rediscover the old ways to make our strikes effective and our voices heard."

Oil Workers prepare



As oil negotiations begin, over 50 Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers (OCAW) union members picketed the Chevron Corp. headquarters in San Francisco on Jan. 25. OCAW's opposition to concessions has attracted many young workers to the union. Contracts begin expiring at the end of January.

Joe Ryan/Socialist Action



Laurie Haapenen

Dave Walsh/Socialist Action

The following are major excerpts from the talk given by Laurie Haapenen at the forum on "New England Labor vs. Corporate Greed," sponsored by the Boston branch of Socialist Action on Dec. 12, 1987.

Office workers are the sweatshop factory workers of today (and of the future). At least 85 percent of us are female, and it is seen as a job ghetto for women. A lot of us are single parents.

The stress of clerical work is nearly as high as that of assembly-line workers. VDT (video-display terminal) users report more stress on the job than any occupation ever studied—including air-traffic controllers. Female clerical workers experience coronary heart disease twice more often than other working women.

If the health risks aren't enough, some terminal users are frequently monitored by a supervisor and reprimanded if they make too many errors or don't work fast enough. And you thought computers were supposed to enhance your worklife! Instead, the boss can demand five or 10 draft revisions

because "the computer will do it."

Fortunately, secretaries are beginning to see their jobs for what they really are. They are looking toward unionization as a solution to low pay, high stress, and no respect.

Clerical organizing is really nothing new, although every article written on it lately claims it is the latest rage in organizing. Anyone familiar with American labor history of the 1930s and '40s knows that massive union organizing took place, and the office was no exception. My union, the UAW, was organizing the white-collar sector 40 years ago.

But the more traditional and conservative unions didn't organize women, because they felt we were "unorganizable." Many union officials sadly still hold to this misconception—but they are hopelessly out of touch.

For example, in the 1930s, when the auto industry was first organized, wives of striking autoworkers organized the Women's Auxiliary Brigades. They kept the sit-down strikers fed and they picketed in support outside the plants. Although not

union members as such, they made the strike a success, and this built the union movement.

Today we see images of flight attendants, teachers, nurses, and chambermaids fighting for their rights on the job and for their unions.

There is a move today to return women to the home. With the advent of personal computers, women will be able to work at home on a VDT, and there will be no "office" to go to every day. The boss will still be able to monitor her work via the computer.

This will "dis-organize" the workforce. Unions should soundly oppose this form of subcontracting out to women at home. At the same time, they should be organizing all office workers who remain unorganized.

Divisions between male and female, union and non-union, Black and white, should be opposed by all of the organized labor movement. We are all allies... White-collar employees have to realize that they are part of the working class, too. And they will, I'm certain. ♦

REVOLT IN PALESTINE



Essies Baite/AFIP

'The struggle of the Palestinians will continue...'

The following are major excerpts from an interview with Ralph Schoenman which was broadcast on KPFFK Radio in Los Angeles on Jan. 14, 1988.

Schoenman, former general secretary of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, has been involved for over 30 years in solidarity work with the Palestinian people. He was interviewed by Suzi Weissman on her show, "Portraits of the USSR." The excerpts are reprinted with permission.

Suzi Weissman: Welcome back to "Portraits of the USSR." Today we are going to discuss the civil war in Israel. I understand you have some recent information about the situation in Palestine.

Ralph Schoenman: I got a report from friends of mine in Dheisheh camp, which is the most militant Palestinian camp in the West Bank and is located in the outskirts of Bethlehem. Dheisheh has been subjected to continuous repression by the Israelis for over 20 years.

What the Israelis have done in the last couple of days is to seal the camps. They have put up concrete barriers in front of the entrances and exits so that no one can go

in or out. And they have prevented food and medical supplies from going in.

They are doing the same thing in Gaza, the Jabalya, the Beach Camp, and elsewhere. In fact the United Nations officials are reporting that when the children are going to the U.N. depots to get powdered milk, the soldiers are shooting at them and beating them with sticks.

So essentially what the Israeli army is doing is attempting to create a series of Warsaw Ghettos by starving out the camps—preventing food, water, and medical supplies from getting in.

Weissman: When I started out this program I referred to recent events as a civil war. Perhaps I should reformulate this to say a war on the Palestinians by the Israeli state.

Schoenman: It is certainly a civil uprising, an open insurgency, a rebellion on the part of the Palestinian people. And, as the papers have begun to make clear, it is not confined to the territories occupied since 1967, but includes the territories occupied before 1967—the territories that are called Israel proper, or what is known as the territory inside the "Green Line."

Weissman: Could you describe for the listeners what the nature of the conflict is today?

Schoenman: To understand what is going on in Gaza and the West Bank you have to appreciate the day-to-day conditions under which people live. One cannot plant a tomato or an eggplant in the West Bank or Gaza without a military permit—which is not issued. You can't white-wash a house. You can't repair a window. You can't sink a well. You can't have a cassette which has Palestinian national songs.

The military law under which people live is that which the British had imposed during the Mandate, and which ironically enough the Jewish jurists at the time designated as worse than the laws that had been adopted during the Hitler rule in Germany. These are the laws which govern Palestinian life today throughout the territories.

It means that anybody can be detained or arrested without charge, without notification to family, without habeas corpus, without any due process—and can be "disappeared." This is a day-to-day constant of Palestinian life.

Weissman: Are you talking about just the West

Bank and Gaza or Israel itself?

Schoenman: The conditions inside the "Green Line" for Palestinians are equally onerous, but a little bit different. These conditions of military rule existed from 1948 to 1967. In 1967 military rule was modified for Palestinians, but one has to bear in mind that the process through which Palestine was colonized is only marginally different from what we see today in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Zionists represented approximately 29 percent of the population in 1947 and had about 6 percent of the land. And that land was largely obtained by force of arms. When Palestine was partitioned, the Zionists were given 55 percent of the most fertile lands.

But between the time that the United Nations partitioned Palestine and the time that the Israeli state was formally declared, the Zionist militia had already seized 75 percent of the land and had driven out 800,000 Palestinians. In that period, they systematically razed to the ground 385 towns and villages, out of the total of 475 towns and villages of Palestine. They were literally wiped off the face of the map.

Weissman: After these settlements were destroyed, what became of the inhabitants?

Schoenman: The inhabitants were in large majority driven out. Approximately 800,000 Palestinians were driven out, leaving approximately 138,000 in Palestine. The 90 remaining villages and towns had their land confiscated without compensation. So effectively what was done was to steal almost the entirety of Palestinian land.

The Jewish National Fund estimates that the figure was as high as 90 percent of the land. The value of that land and property is estimated by the United Nations at \$300 billion.

The Israeli state is really a function of piracy. It is the result of the sustained plunder of the Palestinian people and the seizure of their land and property. The slaughter that took place in Deir Yasin and other Palestinian villages in 1947-48 was designed to create a panic that would cause people to flee for their lives. This is the process through which the Palestinian exodus was accomplished.

So the conditions in which the Palestinians live in pre-1967 Israel are no less onerous than those facing the people in the West Bank and Gaza.

Weissman: Then what happened in 1967 to make things worse?

Schoenman: In 1967 the Israeli state expanded and absorbed the West Bank and Gaza and the Golan Heights. It imposed on the territories the conditions that I had mentioned earlier of military rule. One thing to bear in mind is that the absence of any formal rights means that

(continued on next page)



Ralph Schoenman

Regional peace conference will compromise Palestinian rights

By RALPH SCHOENMAN

On Jan. 10, 1988, *Al-Fajr*, a Jerusalem Palestinian weekly, published an ad signed by prominent Jews and Arabs living in the United States which called for an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In the ad the signatories offer their political perspective for "resolving the violence" in Palestine. They write:

"We Jews and Arabs believe that continuation of the occupation will only lead to more violence. We support a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to ensure both Israeli and Palestinian national rights. So do a growing number of Israelis, including former Defense Minister Ezer Weissman.

"We call for an end to the occupation through the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including Israel and the P.L.O."

In an interview with the Reuters press service on Jan. 18, Hanna Siniora, editor of *Al Fajr*, specified how Israeli and Palestinian "national rights" might be ensured at such an international peace conference.

Siniora called for "an association among Israel, Jordan, and a Palestinian state like that of the Benelux countries — with a demilitarized West Bank as the Luxemburg."

"Palestinians, including Arafat, would accept autonomy as an interim step toward independence," Siniora said. "Autonomy is a step that would lead eventually to negotiations between the state of Israel and the P.L.O., ending in a Palestinian state emerging as a result of those negotiations."

Siniora met with Secretary of State George Shultz in Washington on Jan. 28 to discuss this proposal.

The call for a Middle East peace conference has likewise been endorsed by a number of presidential candidates, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"Overtures from Arafat for talks with Israel ought to be welcomed," Jackson said. "When the United States gives up the right to talk to the Palestinians, it gives up its right to protect Israel."

Jackson said that ever since his meeting with Arafat eight years ago, he has realized that it would be possible "to move the P.L.O. from its position of destruction and

frustration to one of mutual recognition." (*San Francisco Examiner*, Jan. 20, 1988)

Defusing the powder keg

The strategy of the United States and Israel has always had one core objective: the eradication of the Palestinian resistance.

In the aftermath of the recent Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, a growing wing of the U.S. ruling class has

met by writing stringent, enforceable safeguards into a formal treaty, denying the new [Palestinian] state any armed force of its own and limiting the numbers and kinds of weapons available to its police.

"As a further safeguard, the settlement could require installation of surveillance posts larger, more numerous and more effective than those now functioning in the Sinai under Israel's peace agreement with

emancipation of the Arab masses of the region from the Israeli colonial-settler state; from the feudal sheiks of the Gulf and Arabian peninsula; and from the Egyptian regime, which has reduced the workers and peasants of Egypt to a level of poverty unknown even under King Farouk.

"Crackpot realism"

The appeal for mutual recognition and for a peace conference to set up a Palestinian "rump state" will do no service to the Palestinian people.

Those who call for mutual recognition argue that there are two peoples and that each should be entitled to national rights—that is, a state. The Palestinians, it is implied, should close the book on pre-1967 Israel and settle for a statelet on the West Bank and Gaza.

Others who hold this position have argued on the basis of "realism" that only by accepting the fact of the Israeli state can the Jews be induced to support the idea of Palestinian statehood.

These views are based upon a profound misunderstanding of the nature of the conflict and of the dangerous consequences of such advocacy.

Peace is inconceivable between a racist Israeli enclave—where even the "socialist" Mapam Party excludes Palestinians from full membership in its kibbutzim—and the Arab peoples of the region.

No Palestinian could recognize Israel in good faith. Some 90 percent of the land in Israel is administered by the Jewish National Fund under rules which require that those who lease or settle land prove that they descend from a Jewish mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

If, in the United States, we had to prove the absence of Jewish maternal ancestry to enjoy elementary rights no one would doubt the racist character of such a state.

Not one Zionist grouping supports even a "separate but equal" Palestinian state. Even the best of them insist that Israel maintain its full military might while the Palestinians are disarmed.

The Labor Alignment and Likud reject even this. To advance the view that a Palestinian state would be permitted by any Zionist government is to succumb to what C. Wright Mills called "crackpot realism."

As to the illusion that the recognition of



"The appeal for mutual recognition and for a peace conference to set up a Palestinian 'rump state' will do no service to the Palestinian people."

joined the call for the establishment of a Palestinian "mini-state" in the West Bank as a means toward accomplishing this objective and preventing the "destabilization" of the entire Arab East.

George Ball, who served as under secretary of state under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, recently spelled out how the United States and Israel should approach an international peace conference. Ball's article, which is titled "Peace for Israel hinges on a state for Palestinians," states the following:

"Israel's security worries could be largely

Egypt." (*Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 17, 1988)

Ball explains that the establishment of what he openly admits would be a "rump Palestinian state in the West Bank" is a matter of urgency. "If the United States does not seriously seek to bring the parties together," Ball warns, "the...warfare in the Holyland will spread and intensify; sooner or later, the neighboring Arab states—even Egypt—will be dragged into the maelstrom."

The "maelstrom" that this imperialist spokesperson so strongly fears is the

... Palestinian struggle

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torture is the standard procedure imposed on every prisoner.

Since 1967, for example, in Gaza and the West Bank, 300,000 Palestinians have been through Israeli prisons, and torture is institutionalized and constant. This has been acknowledged by most of the established newspapers in Europe, and Amnesty International has documented it thoroughly. In fact, the Amnesty report of October 1986 was particularly detailed.

Amnesty reports, "Israel brutally tortures Arab prisoners, violates their basic human rights, detains them illegally, expels them over the borders, and thwarts any attempt to publicize the truth with regard to these matters."

The report is very specific and detailed as to the methods that are employed. People are beaten all over their body, deprived of their sleep. Sacks are put on people's heads. Electric torture is applied routinely.

Weissman: There was a report, I believe in yesterday's *New York Times*, about five schoolchildren who were treated this way. These were children ages 10 to 14 who were taken and beaten up.

Schoenman: Children as young as 8 have been held in prisons under these conditions and tortured. These are not random acts, aberrant acts on the part of particularly sadistic prison guards. It is institutionalized. It is systematic.

The study that Mya Shone and I did for the United Nations—which is going to be published in an enlarged version called "Prisoners of Israel"—documents the sustained nature of the torture in prison after prison, not only in the West Bank and Gaza, but in the pre-1967 prisons of Israel as well.

Weissman: Why is it that there has been such a conspiracy of silence in this country about the real situation in Israel?

Schoenman: In the United States there has been a particular effort to preserve the myths about Zionism and about Israel because of the indispensable role that the Israeli state has played for U.S. imperialism in the region.

After all, over \$90 billion have been supplied to Israel since 1948. The Israeli state is really a complete creature and extension of U.S. imperialism in the region. The established press has been extremely careful to promote myths about the presumptive Israeli democracy and to keep from the public the apartheid nature of the state and its brutality toward the Palestinian population.

It's been very difficult in the United States, as you are aware, to puncture the myths about the Zionist state because any attempt to discuss dispassionately the actual behavior of the Israeli state is met with charges of anti-Semitism. People are intimidated and afraid to discuss what they would not hesitate to discuss in Chile or Bulgaria or South Africa. It is a form of intellectual terrorism.

Weissman: But the uprising in the last month has

received what I would say is a qualitatively different coverage by the establishment media. It seems to be much more sympathetic to the conditions of life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

We're seeing things in the United States that only people who wanted to know about before would have known about. Is that your perception as well? And if it is, why is this so? Is policy changing?

Schoenman: I think what you're saying is correct. There has been a tremendous amount of press coverage that has shown the face of Zionism to the world in a way that hasn't happened before. But that is a function of the magnitude of the uprising. It's the self-activation of the Palestinian masses which has forced upon the established media the reality of the conditions under which the Palestinian people live.

The specter of revolution in the entire region of the Arab East is haunting the ruling class in the United States. I think that the Palestinian upsurge is inducing them to report things by way of sending a message to the Zionist rulers that they've got to cut some sort of deal.

The Zionists are receiving pressure to concede some little "bantustan" [rural slums in South Africa where Blacks are confined] in the West Bank to the Palestinians, the better to quiet this uprising on the part of the population.

I don't think, however, that the Zionists are going to accede even to this modest demand.



Gorbachev's proposals signal rapprochement with Israel

On May 13, 1987, A. Vasilyev, the assistant director of the Institute of Africa of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, wrote an article in the Moscow daily *Izvestia* in support of the idea of an international conference on the Middle East. Vasilyev's article is revealing:

"To put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Soviet Union favors an international peace conference... A close examination of our proposals will show that they do not encroach on the rights and security of Israel... The existence of the state of Israel cannot be debated at an international conference."

Vasilyev's support to Israel and his concern for its security—the rationale the Zionist state has always used to crush the Palestinian people—should come as no surprise. The Soviet Union, along with the United States, was one of the first to recognize the Zionist state in 1948.

It is nonetheless somewhat surprising that on Jan. 19, 1988, at the very

moment the Israeli government was imposing a policy of collective punishment upon the insurgent people of the West Bank and Gaza, the Soviet Union announced that an Israeli delegation would be welcomed in Moscow to discuss the resumption of diplomatic relations.

The Soviet bureaucracy broke off ties with Israel following the 1967 Middle East war. But within the last year the Soviet Union has established a consulate in Israel. Moreover, according to the *Washington Post* (Jan. 20, 1988), "Moscow has said that ties [with Israel] could be resumed in the course of a Middle East settlement process, dropping its insistence that Israel first retreat from territories occupied in 1967."

This is just one more example of what Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev meant when he promised Ronald Reagan that he would help promote "regional stability" in key areas of the world. —R.S.

the state of Israel would remove a weapon from Zionism, quite the opposite would occur. The Zionist politicians would then be able to say that even the "terrorists" have been forced to accept Israel.

They would say that 40 years of "irrational intransigence" were responsible for the conflict and that at last it is clear that the only Palestinians with whom Israel can deal are the ones who all along accepted the Israeli state.

Jesse Jackson's denunciations of the P.L.O.'s past positions of "destruction and frustration" and his appeal for "mutual recognition" play right into the hands of the Zionists. Jackson's strong implication is that the Palestinians have gotten what they deserved over the years.

Were South Africans to advocate an

international conference predicated upon the preservation of the South African regime, the guarantee of its security, and the policing of a Black entity by the apartheid regime itself, no one would fail to see the social and political meaning of such a proposition.

An international conference designed to legitimize the security interests of apartheid Israel in exchange for a Palestinian "Bantustan" can never be viable except if a Palestinian leadership were to provide this plan with protective coloration.

Such an outcome will merely hand to the P.L.O. the unenviable task of policing the Palestinian people and of converting self-determination into another sad replica of the country-selling regimes which plague the Arab masses—from Jordan to Syria and

from Egypt to the Gulf.

It was but a few years ago that no Palestinian nationalist would dare associate him or herself with so blatant an effort to betray the long years of struggle for Palestinian self-determination and emancipation, let alone translate the Palestinian cause into a plea for a role in preserving the status quo in the region—with its grinding poverty and relentless exploitation and subordination to U.S. imperialist control.

Another strategy needed

The rights of the Palestinian people can never be advanced in this way.

The alternative is before us in the upsurge of the Palestinian masses. The struggle awaits a political strategy which poses the need to dismantle the Zionist state of Israel and to establish a democratic and secular Palestine.

Such a program was first advanced by Arafat's Fatah organization in 1968—though it has since been shunted aside in

favor of the "mini-state" proposal. The democratic Palestine of Fatah's vision was one "in which Jews and Palestinians would live as equals and without discrimination."

Arafat described his proposal as follows:

"We were saying 'no' to the Zionist state, but we were saying 'yes' to the Jewish people of Palestine. To them we were saying, 'You are welcome to live in our land, but on one condition—You must be prepared to live among us as equals, not as dominators.'"

We in this country must not advocate a peace based on acquiescence, a peace based on a "Bantustan" policed by Israel and its agents.

We must link our demands for the release of all the political prisoners in the West Bank and Gaza and for an end to the deportations of Palestinian activists to demands which address the root of the conflict in the Middle East—that is, the very existence of the state of Israel.

And for that we must campaign to end all U.S. aid to the Israeli state. ■

New Socialist Action pamphlet!



The hidden history of Zionism

by Ralph Schoenman

This pamphlet by Ralph Schoenman, former general secretary of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and author of the U.N. report 'Prisoners of Israel,' discusses the origins and sordid history of Zionism.

With thorough documentation, it shatters the myths that color the consciousness of most people in this society about Zionism.

'The Hidden History of Zionism' 96 pages. Price: \$3.00. Send \$1.00 for postage. Order today.

Weissman: Ralph, the news director of the station has just walked in with a dispatch from Associated Press which says that "Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat is offering to make a deal with Israel and the United States. He says that if those countries agree to an international conference on Middle East peace, he will recognize Israel's right to exist. The White House says this could be an encouraging sign..."

There has been a lot of noise about an international conference to discuss a negotiated solution. What do you make of this noise?

Schoenman: An international conference in which the Israeli state and its sponsor, the United States, are the principal participants is a conference which would be designed to find a formulation that is compatible with imperialism holding its sway in the region and which would be predicated upon legitimizing and preserving the Israeli state.

You cannot short-circuit the process through which people have to struggle for their emancipation from brutal forms of rule of this nature.

The P.L.O., which has been the national expression of the Palestinian people, has never followed through on a political program or strategy for the populations of the West Bank or Gaza, or for that matter for the people within Israel itself.

At a certain stage of the P.L.O.'s development, a program for Palestine—that of a democratic and secular Palestine—was put forward. This would be a Palestine where rights would be granted to anyone regardless of ethnicity and religion. But in the recent period, the

P.L.O. has abandoned this perspective, focusing instead upon what they call an "independent state" or a "two-state solution"—which is based upon accepting the continued existence of the Israeli state.

The Israeli state, as I mentioned before, with its \$90 billion subsidy over the past 40 years, is nothing but an extension of U.S. power in the region. It can only exist upon a base of exploited Palestinian labor and expansion. I do not regard an international conference as offering any prospects for the emancipation of the Palestinian people.

Weissman: It seems to me historically what you've had is two nationalisms confronting each other: Jewish nationalism, otherwise known as Zionism, and Palestinian nationalism. I'd like you to continue your discussion on what you think can be expected to come out of these recent events...

Schoenman: I don't accept your formulations of two nationalisms, of Jewish vs. Palestinian nationalism in the area. The Zionist movement is a colonial movement analogous to the colonial movements in Algeria or Southern Rhodesia.

I don't think anyone would say that in Rhodesia there were two nationalisms: European nationalism and African nationalism. Everybody understood that what was existing in Rhodesia was a colonial-settler state. And that is what we have in Israel: a colonial-settler state in which the people who came as settlers came with arms or came to live on land that had been taken by force of arms from the indigenous population.

Weissman: We probably will have to discuss this at some other time. We only have one minute left. I am

going to give it to you to wrap up and say what you think will come out of the situation.

Schoenman: I would just like to reiterate that we have to recognize that the state of Israel and the Zionist movement have been mythologized, that what we have here is a colonial movement modeled after the South African and Rhodesian colonial ideas of the late 19th century.

The struggle of the Palestinian people will continue. The attempts on the part of many in the leadership of the P.L.O. to cut the struggle short or to settle for less than the emancipation of their people cannot, in my judgment, succeed in the long run.

To my way of thinking, what has happened now in the past six to eight weeks in the West Bank and Gaza is the beginning of the generalized uprising of the Palestinian population in the territories, which is inevitably going to take on an increasingly political form.

I think the question of where the struggle goes turns in large part upon the emergence of a leadership from within the Palestinian struggle which poses the alternative of a Palestine without Zionism, of a Palestine which is not based upon rights flowing from ethnicity or from religious affiliations.

The future of the struggle of the Palestinian people is tied up with a political strategy which addresses itself to the working-class Jews as well, and which calls upon the Jews to join with the Palestinians in a struggle for a democratic and secular Palestine, in the struggle for a socialist society in Palestine and the Middle East. ■

How can antiwar activists best defend Palestinians?

By CARL FINAMORE

A serious debate has erupted in the anti-intervention movement over what stance to take toward events in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Northern California Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice has become a focal point for this dispute because it has refused to include demands referring to the Middle East in its previous demonstrations.

The Mobilization is one of the most authoritative local coalitions in the United States. It has consistently organized major protests during a three-year period with broad labor, church, and community support. Last year, it organized the Western States Mobilization of 80,000 in San Francisco.

The coalition maintained its original four demands throughout this period—No U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean; Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race; End U.S. Support to South African Apartheid; Jobs and Justice, Not War.

Some activists argue that it is now time for the Mobilization to include another major demand referring to recent developments in the Middle East. This point of view might appear to be quite reasonable at first.

Regular news broadcasts tell the story of Palestine today—stones against tanks, young children against heavily armed troops. These dramatic confrontations result from decades of national oppression at the hands of the expansionist and racist Zionist state.

More opportunities exist now than ever before to explain how imperialism manipulated Jewish refugee victims of Nazi oppression into becoming tools for the creation of the racist Zionist state of Israel.

Today, Israel is aligned with the most reactionary regimes in the world. It serves as a U.S. military outpost in the Middle East.

Nonetheless, it would be a major error to include a slogan on the Middle East among the demands of an anti-intervention coalition like the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice.

Maintain breadth and unity

A single coalition like the Mobilization cannot be the vehicle for expressing opposition to U.S. intervention everywhere in the world. There simply is not a uniform understanding by the American people of the role U.S. imperialism plays all over the world.

The broad unity of the Mobilization around four demands does not automatically transfer to a fifth or sixth demand. This is especially true of complex issues in the Middle East. Many coalition activists and leaders who oppose contra aid, oppose apartheid, and oppose nuclear weapons, for example, also support Israel.

This is a serious contradiction. But it would be a mistake for the Mobilization to force a resolution of this contradiction by adding demands which would cause a split—and therefore the destruction—of the coalition. This would do nothing to help the people of Central America, South Africa—or the Middle East.

The Mobilization is the only coalition in the country that is organizing a mass protest this spring against the increasing U.S. war on Nicaragua. A split in the coalition would represent a grave setback in the defense of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

The success of a coalition like the Mobilization is based upon its ability to unite the most divergent political forces behind an action program. This unity would fracture if confronted with an additional slogan over which there is substantially divided opinion. And, unfortunately, this is the case with the Middle East.

It is a mistake, therefore, to expect the Mobilization to



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

"There can be neither peace nor justice for Palestinians—or Jews—as long as the Zionist state of Israel exists."

retain its broad support and at the same time organize opposition to U.S. support to Israel or to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza—as some in the coalition have argued.

There are ways, however, for coalitions like the Mobilization to deal with the Middle East without tampering with its four basic demands.

In the past, the Mobilization has had several prominent rally speakers addressing the issue. Its coalition newspaper has published articles on the Middle East. Its educational conference has included workshops on the Middle East. And each year the coalition also encourages groups to organize march contingents which focus on the Middle East.

This year the Mobilization has called for the unconditional defense of Palestinian human rights in the West Bank and Gaza in its leaflet advertising its April 30 and June 11 spring protests.

But for the Mobilization to go further than human rights demands such as "Stop the Deportations of Palestinians, End the Brutality, Release the Detainees" will dangerously threaten the unity and effectiveness of the coalition.

The plain truth is that controversial issues like the Middle East require a full-scale educational campaign

exposing the colonial-settler character of the state of Israel.

Separate action coalitions needed

A separate coalition needs to be built for this purpose. Because of confusion around issues in the Middle East, the task won't be easy. A number of recent coalitions have already made serious political errors.

Supporting self-determination for the Palestinian people, for example, should not be confined to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. This is the most common mistake made by coalitions eager to obtain broad support.

The apparent broader support that comes from limiting political proposals to the West Bank and Gaza prevents a real defense of Palestinian rights. There can neither be peace nor justice for Palestinians—or Jews—as long as the Zionist state of Israel exists.

The Palestinian fight for self-determination is necessarily a struggle to replace the Zionist state of Israel itself with a democratic and secular Palestine in which Jews and Arabs can live together with equal rights.

Demands which recognize the Israeli state, confine their political slogans to freedom or "self-determination" in the West Bank or Gaza, or place the rights of Israelis on the same plane as those of the Palestinians are, therefore, incorrect because they concede the existence of an inherently racist and oppressive state.

This is particularly true of a demand which was recently proposed by representatives of Democratic Socialists of America and the U.S. Peace Council for adoption by the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice. This proposal called for the United States to support a peace conference in the Middle East which would recognize the national rights of both Israelis and Palestinians.

The reference to the national rights of Israelis, it must be understood, means recognition of the oppressive Zionist state. It is a demand which concedes, from the start, the preservation of the central problem: the state of Israel.

Which demands should be raised?

The complexities of a discussion over which political slogans to adopt makes it even more improbable for an anti-intervention coalition like the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice to survive such a discussion intact. But it is absolutely imperative for an action coalition focusing on the Middle East to take a clear stand on slogans.

The most important demand for these type of action coalitions to raise is "No U.S. Aid to Israel." This demand frames the whole debate. It zeroes in on the real problem.

Connecting specific demands dealing with problems in the West Bank and Gaza to the broader solution of stopping all U.S. aid to Israel gives real meaning to the call for self-determination for Palestinians—self-determination not restricted to a rump "mini-state" in the West Bank.

This approach is ultimately the only resolution to the conflict capable of uniting Arabs and Jews alike. A genuine settlement cannot ignore the historical fact that a whole people were forcibly evicted from their ancestral lands; made refugees in their own country.

The oppressive Zionist state appears strong; actually it is almost completely dependent on U.S. aid. And like all regimes founded on injustice, it rules through violence which daily threatens its stability. It is sitting on a powder-keg of its own making—a rebellious Palestinian people and growing sectors of the Israeli population who are dissatisfied with the racist policies of Zionism. ■

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On Jan. 16, the Boston branch of Socialist Action held a forum on "Fifteen Years After Roe vs. Wade: The Fight for Women's Rights." The featured speakers were Augusta Trainor, a 50-year veteran activist in the trade-union and women's movements, and Alexandra Folger, an activist in the women's movement and member of Boston Socialist Action. We are printing below excerpts from their talks.

Augusta Trainor:

Tonight we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Supreme Court Roe vs. Wade decision legalizing abortion. What we are really celebrating is the 15th year of fighting to defend and maintain the Roe vs. Wade decision giving the women of this country the right to choose whether or not to bear children.

This is a landmark decision because abortion and women's right to choose should have been legalized many years ago. Think how many women's lives could have been saved had they not been forced to resort to back-alley, illegal abortions.

A celebration such as this should be a memorial to those women who died or were maimed as a result of illegal abortions. Let me briefly review the history of abortion laws in the United States.

Prior to the 19th century, all but a few states followed the English common law on abortion. This law recognized the legality of abortion prior to "quickening"—that is, the first fetal movements which usually occur in the fourth month of pregnancy.

According to historian James Hall, a growing number of abortions were performed or induced at this time. This was believed to be a result of the commercialization of abortion. Fully trained practitioners began to advertise abortion services and drugs that would induce abortion. Many doctors began a movement to prohibit these untrained practitioners from performing abortions.

At this time, abortion became acceptable to middle- and upper-class women. They began to have more abortions than previously.

Meanwhile, the movement to restrict abortion continued to develop. Some historians believe that the restrictions came as a result of a change in moral sensibility and the desire to deny women their independence by keeping them "barefoot and pregnant."

By the end of the 19th century, abortion became illegal except in a few states and where the pregnancy was endangering the life of the mother. And so it was to remain for many decades.

A landmark decision

In the 1960s, the American Law Institute published the Model Abortion Law. Under this law, only a licensed physician could perform an abortion if the pregnancy was a threat to the physical or mental well-being of the woman. The law called for the physician and the hospital board to make the final determination for the abortion. Many states began to adopt this law.

Then in 1973 a dramatic decision on abortion came from the U.S. Supreme Court which resulted in a tremendous victory for women and for the women's and

The fight for women's rights 15 years after Roe vs. Wade

pro-choice movements.

What happened was a pregnant, single woman named Jane Roe, from Texas, instituted a class-action suit challenging the constitutionality of the Texas Criminal Abortion Law, which allowed abortion in a life-threatening situation only. She claimed the Texas statute abridged her rights of personal privacy and that she could not afford to travel to another jurisdiction to secure a legal abortion.

This case became known as Roe vs. Wade. It is considered to be the cornerstone

Gustie pointed out to me that most younger women take many of the gains of the women's movement for granted. Women my age cannot remember a time when abortion was not legal or when birth control was not generally available.

Because most of what I saw from my youthful vantage point outside the movement reflected the policies of the so-called leadership, I had a very ambivalent attitude toward what passed, in a large part of the movement, as "feminism." I realized that blaming men for everything wasn't going

rights are far from secure.

A wrong strategy

The defeat of the ERA also caused a tangible setback in the movement. I believe the misleadership of the women's movement was largely responsible for this. The main strategy of the leadership of the movement has been to actively support the Democratic Party—especially women Democrats—and to rely on "friendly" capitalist politicians. They've also relied heavily on the judicial system. This is a dangerous and ultimately futile policy, in my opinion.

The judicial system serves primarily to stabilize the existing system and only reacts favorably to mass popular demands when it is under extreme pressure. Judicial campaigns can only be successful in conjunction with independent, mass action and even then, the courts can be unpredictable and should not be relied upon.

Unfortunately, many recognized leaders of the women's movement continue to cling to the same strategy that led to the defeat of the ERA in the continual fight for women's rights.

Eleanor Smeal, past president of NOW, has launched her "Empowerment of Women" campaign, focusing on electing "pro-feminist delegates" to state and national Democratic Party conventions in order to nominate "pro-feminist candidates" for president and other offices. Smeal says that what stops people from voting is not apathy but the lack of alternatives—which is entirely true. But her alternative is more Democrats.

"Fight now for our demands"

In order to keep the women's movement on course, it must be viewed as an important part of the wider movement for social, economic, and political justice; that is, the class struggle.

The overwhelming majority of women, like the majority of people, belong to the working class and that is where exploitation serves the interest of the capitalist system. Working men do *not* benefit from women's exploitation. A lot of women think so, a lot of men think so. It means educating them. The underpayment of women has the effect of driving all wages down, including those of working men.

Chauvinism is a social fact, and an intolerable one. But when we work to educate men and ourselves, we must not lose sight of the fact that it is a product of the social conditions under which we live. Women's oppression will never be totally alleviated until we achieve socialism. But we will not achieve socialism without fighting for it now.

Women must push to have their demands put at the top of the agenda of the labor movement and must work to push this movement as a whole forward rather than separating themselves or counterposing themselves to it.

Women must mobilize themselves and their allies in mass, independent, political actions with their demands to have a party for working people, a labor party, which would support the demands of women as well as men. As Gustie said, "To bring about a new society." ■



Over 75 abortion rights activists picketed the Calif. State Building in San Francisco on Jan. 22 to protest a cut-off in Medical funds for abortions. The picketers also protested against a new law which requires teenage women to get parental consent before obtaining abortions.

of reproductive freedom in the United States.

Still, despite the Roe vs. Wade decision, abortion rights are far from secure. Already, numerous organizations and institutions are waging battles to amend this law, beginning by restricting abortion rights for poor and young women. The women's movement must continue to mobilize its forces in order to stop the right-to-lifers from changing or eliminating this law.

In order to have a *real* right to choose, women must be given the right to safe, legal abortion on demand.

There are many difficult issues that we must face in this society today. Teenage pregnancy, sex education in the schools, school clinics dispensing birth control, schools educating both male and female children on equality of the sexes, and childcare facilities, to name just a few.

I for one intend to work and fight for a better society that will address these problems of women, the poor, the working class. I have been working for over 50 years to change society's ills, to make a new society, to make a better world for our children to grow up in, and especially for our daughters and grand-daughters.

What the hell, I'm going to keep on fighting and I hope you all will too because you're all young and you should have the energy to get out there and fight for a better society, and fight for women's rights which go hand in hand with creating a better society.

Alexandra Folger:

As you can see from Gustie's talk, it's been a long fight with a lot of history. She said to me that she'd be interested in hearing some of my personal recollections, as a member of the younger generation, of what I thought of the women's movement.

to get anybody very far.

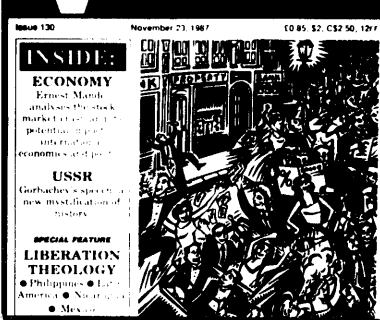
The women's movement has made some very definite gains. The movement itself was a product of other social movements of the 1960s—for civil rights, against the Vietnam War, where masses of people were in motion and the women's movement took its cue from that in a lot of ways. It has also shown its ability to mobilize large numbers of people in support of these demands.

The women's movement had, in many ways, won the battle of ideas. Women's rights to equality and independence have now received generalized recognition. A majority of people in this country support a woman's right to choose whether or not to have an abortion.

But the material conditions of women's lives today still leave much to be desired. Women make less than 64 cents for every dollar earned by male workers, who are also not paid what they're worth; childcare remains expensive, in short supply, and often inaccessibly located; and abortion

Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

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INTERNATIONAL MARXIST REVIEW



The significance of Gorbachev
By Ernest Mandel

The winter 1987 issue of *International Marxist Review* contains reports from the 1987 International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.

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- "Feminism in Latin America," by Heather Dashner
- "First lessons of the Philippine Revolution," by P. Roman (with alternative positions by S. Brown, FIT/USA, and Socialist Action/USA)
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U.S.—Mexico conference to plan Nicaragua solidarity work

The following is an interview with Miguel Gastelum, a leader of the Nicaragua Solidarity Committee in Mexicali, Mexico. Gastelum is one of the coordinators of the Mexico-U.S. Conference in Solidarity with Nicaragua that will take place Feb. 20-21 in Mexicali.

Socialist Action: What are the main themes and goals of the conference?

Miguel Gastelum: The three main slogans of the event are "Oil, Peace, and Solidarity for Nicaragua." We want to focus attention on the fact that Nicaragua vitally needs fuel oil. The Nicaraguan government has repeatedly called upon countries like Mexico and Venezuela to renew their shipments of oil to Nicaragua.

S.A.: Why have these countries discontinued their oil shipments, and what is your committee's specific demand on the Mexican government?

Gastelum: Mexico's policy toward Nicaragua has been totally demagogic. Mexico, which claims to stand for peace and justice in Central America, has refused to renew its oil shipments, arguing that Nicaragua owes it approximately \$500 million for previous shipments.

But Nicaragua has been unable to pay its debts because its resources and foreign-currency reserves have been depleted by the U.S.-contra war. So, the position of our committee is that Mexico should send oil to Nicaragua at

once—and at no charge. We are for free oil for Nicaragua.

S.A.: What about the other two slogans of the conference: peace and solidarity? These concepts can mean different things to different people...

Gastelum: We will propose that the conference resolution call for an end to U.S. intervention in Nicaragua and the rest of Central America. We think that peace can only be attained if the right to self-determination of the people of Nicaragua and the rest of Central America is respected. The people of this region must be free to forge their own destiny—free from U.S. intervention and pressures.

S.A.: How is the conference going to be organized?

Gastelum: The conference will take place here in Mexicali at the main auditorium of the Autonomous University of Baja California on Feb. 20-21. The first day will be devoted to a political discussion of the draft resolution which we would like to approve at the conference. On the second day, we will have a political/cultural rally.

It is a bi-national (Mexico-U.S.) conference. Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador solidarity committees from various cities in the U.S. Southwest have already accepted our invitation. We invite all your readers to come to our conference, to help clarify our political discussion, and to help chart a course of action not only for Mexico but for the United States as well.



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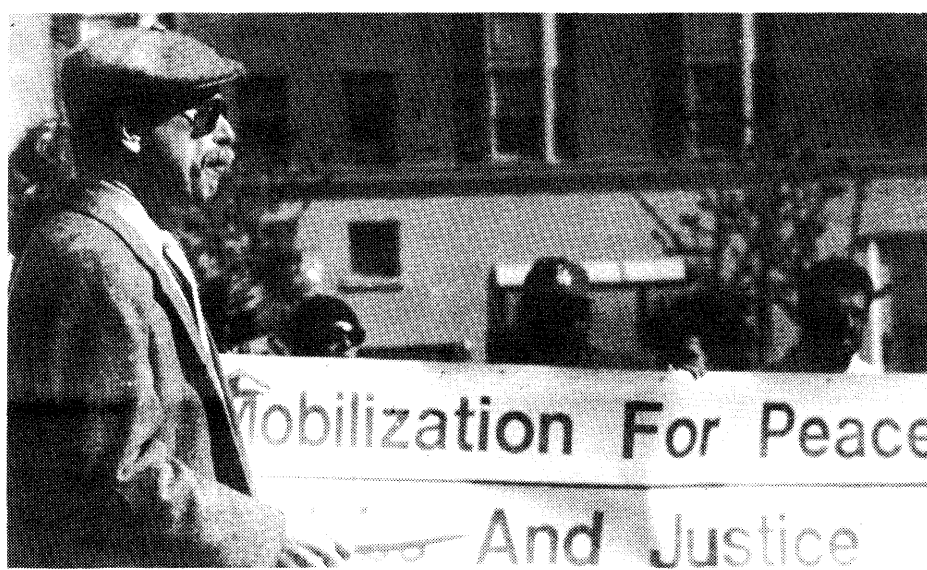
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"Oil, Solidarity, and Peace for Nicaragua"

S.F. Mobilization defies FBI spying, calls April 30 action



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action



The FBI is up to its dirty tricks once again. On Jan. 27, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the San Francisco Bay Area Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice; and nearly 100 other organizations that oppose U.S. policy in Central America learned that they had

been targeted during a six-year sweeping investigation by the FBI.

Documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act revealed that the FBI surveillance included wire-tapping, harassment, and infiltration.

Al Lannon, one of the Bay Area Mobilization co-chairs (photo above),

"I have a tip for the FBI. We'll be organizing demonstrations on April 30."

—Al Lannon,
Pres. ILWU Local 6

protested this surveillance at a press conference held at the San Francisco Federal Building on Feb. 1. "I had thought that in the post-McCarthy, post-Watergate America, government no longer spied on citizens democratically exercising their constitutional freedoms," Lannon said

... contra aid

(continued from page 1)

direct cease-fire talks between the Sandinistas and the contras. Alfredo César, a leader of the Nicaraguan Resistance, spelled out the contras' negotiating position. "No cease-fire will take place in Nicaragua if...simultaneously the democratic reforms have not been achieved," he said.

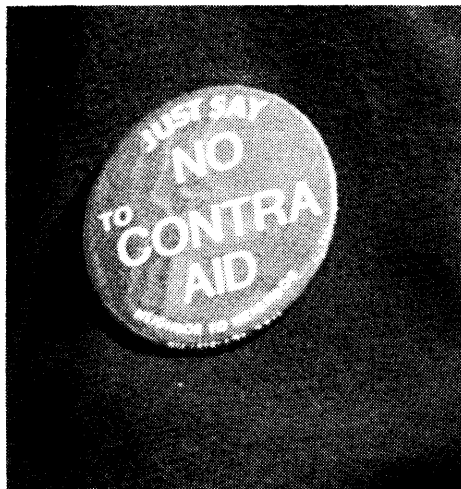
Ernesto Palazio, another contra leader, in an op-ed article in *The New York Times* (Feb. 1, 1988), shed further light on what the contras—and their U.S. patrons—mean by "democratic reforms."

"Last November, Nicaragua's internal opposition, ranging from the Communist Party to the conservative parties, detailed the minimum criteria for such reforms," Palazio said. "The Nicaraguan resistance has endorsed this position."

The internal opposition document which Palazio refers to calls for the Sandinistas to step down and permit the creation of a "provisional government of national unity."

"Constructive pressure"

The inclusion of the two small pro-Moscow Communist parties, the PSN and the PCdeN, in this anti-Sandinista front should come as no surprise. Both parties



have long called for "power-sharing between the Sandinistas and the 'patriotic' capitalist class."

The contras' negotiating stance reflects the position of the U.S. government, whose spokespersons have repeatedly stated that the "democratic reforms" in Nicaragua must be "irreversible" before the United States is willing to abandon the contras.

The contra-aid vote this month, whatever its final outcome, will not modify the overall objective of the U.S. capitalist class—of Democrats and Republicans alike—which is to overthrow the Sandinista government and reverse the gains of the

Nicaraguan Revolution.

The Democratic Party's alternative contra-aid proposal accepts the premise that aid, and the threat of future aid, are useful vehicles for putting what *The New York Times* called "constructive pressure on the Sandinista government to keep its grudging movement toward democracy."

All the Democrats need to open the floodgates for increased aid to the contras, including military aid, is a signal from someone like Costa Rican President Oscar Arias that the Sandinistas have not lived up to their promises of "democratization."

Arias, in fact, has already warned the Sandinistas to implement more than "merely cosmetic democratic reforms." He, too, is for wrenching more and more concessions from the Sandinistas with the purpose of providing the contras' internal front, the Democratic Coordinating Council, with unfettered freedom to organize against the revolution.

Tasks of antiwar movement

The U.S. capitalist class has never been willing to tolerate the Nicaraguan Revolution. It cannot live with a revolution that overthrew the U.S.-supported Somoza dictatorship, destroyed the old army, distributed land to the peasants, and gave out over 300,000 rifles to the workers and peasants.

The U.S. government cannot accept a

revolution that would serve as an example to the oppressed of Central America and beyond.

Today, thanks to U.S. intervention, the energy of the Nicaraguan Revolution has been sapped. The economy has virtually collapsed. Inflation ran at 1800 percent in 1987. And if it continues to rise as it has since November, annual inflation for 1988 will reach 13,000 percent.

The Central American peace plan has offered the revolution no reprieve. In fact, the fighting has intensified since the plan was signed, and now the Nicaraguan government is on the defensive, with the onus placed on its shoulders to accede to further imperialist demands.

Today, more than ever, the task of the American antiwar movement is to organize mass mobilizations to demand an end to contra aid and an end to U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.

As the U.S. government and its contra surrogates step up their mobilization against the Nicaraguan people, we must respond by mobilizing the mass antiwar sentiment here in the United States. Only by staying the hands of the U.S. imperialists will the Nicaraguan Revolution be free to live in peace.

No Aid to the contras!

Hands off Nicaragua!

No U.S. Intervention in Central America!

Nicaragua implements Atlantic Coast autonomy



Dorotea Wilson

Lita Blanc/Socialist Action

The following is an interview with Dorotea Wilson, a representative from the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua to the National Assembly. The interview was conducted in October 1987 by Socialist Action reporter Lita Blanc in Taxco, Mexico, at the Fourth Feminist Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Socialist Action: What is meant by the struggle for autonomy of the Atlantic Coast?

Dorotea Wilson: I would like to begin with a description of the Atlantic Coast. It is a region with 250,000 inhabitants distributed among six different ethnic groups: the mestizos [Spanish-speaking national majority], the Miskitus, the Creoles [mixed Black-mestizo-indigenous], the Sumus, the Garifunas, and the Ramas.

The region makes up 50 percent of the national territory. The economy was shaped by the presence of multinational companies which exploited the gold and silver mines. Our resources also include forests and fishing. We have 80 percent of the forest

Nicaragua's plan for autonomy

In December 1984, the newly elected government of Nicaragua announced a project to define an autonomous form of government for the Atlantic Coast. For the first time, the Sandinista government came out squarely in support of the legitimate demand of the coastal people for autonomy.

During the first years of the revolution, the Sandinistas had committed a series of political mistakes in the Atlantic Coast, all of which stemmed from their failure to recognize the legitimate aspirations of the coastal people. These errors provided the U.S.-backed contras with a fertile ground to recruit and organize against the revolution.

In late 1983, however, the Sandinista government openly acknowledged its errors and swiftly began to adjust its policies toward the Atlantic Coast. In December 1983, the government decreed its first amnesty law, specifically pardoning Miskitus who laid down their arms.

This amnesty, together with a change in government policy toward the Atlantic Coast, permitted thousands of Miskitu fighters who had taken up arms against the government to come back to Nicaragua and to pursue the fight for their demands within the framework of the

revolution.

In December 1984, the government announced the draft of a new Autonomy Project and began to take steps aimed at healing the rift with the Miskitus. In May 1985, for example, the government allowed Miskitu communities to return to the Rio Coco, from where they had been forcibly removed in January 1982.

Before long, the three contra-linked Miskitu groups began to lose popular support and members—to the point where, today, they have been reduced to a skeleton force. In addition, numerous ex-contra backed Miskitu groups—such as the Kisan Pro-Peace, Autonomy, and Development—are now cooperating with the Nicaraguan Army in defense of native communities against the contras.

Finally, on Sept. 2, 1987, the Nicaraguan National Assembly, after a day and a half of debate, ratified the autonomy statute with few changes. The new law includes 43 articles which "aspire to incorporate the six ethnically different communities of the Atlantic Coast into national life, guaranteeing their equal opportunity through their preservation and development of their distinct cultures." (*Envio*, November 1987)—L.B.

which affect the region. All this will be accomplished within the framework of respecting our own culture, traditions, and religion.

The first principle is that of national unity with ethnic diversity. We are against the concepts of integration and assimilation. We believe that the culture of the Atlantic Coast enriches that of the country as a whole.

Another principle of the Autonomy

Assembly—is over. Now the difficult part is the application of the law. The law provides for a Regional Autonomous Government and a Regional Autonomous Assembly in which all the ethnic groups shall be represented.

We are working together with the Supreme Electoral Council and with the local communities in order to figure out how all this will come about. The issue of representation is a difficult one. For example, we have 60,000 Miskitus, less than 10,000 Sumus, 800 Ramas, and 40,000 Creoles.

What mechanism will we use to ensure fair representation? Actually, we are discussing setting up two autonomous regions: one in the North Atlantic Coast, and one in the South Atlantic Coast. The specifics of it all still have to be worked out.

S.A.: What role have the contras played in the Atlantic Coast?

Wilson: In 1981 and 1982, native

groups were kidnapped *en masse* and taken to Honduras. In Honduras, they were armed and trained. U.S. imperialism had a plan to occupy the Atlantic Coast as a beachhead, to set up a provisional government there, and to separate the Atlantic Coast from the rest of Nicaragua.

The Reagan administration has not discarded this plan, but it has not been able to carry it out because of the participation of the inhabitants of the Atlantic Coast in the formation of 96 Peace and Autonomy Commissions. In fact, many native groups which had left Nicaragua have returned under the government's amnesty law. Just two weeks ago, 400 contra guerrillas of Kisan [the remaining CIA-backed Miskitu organization] came back after six years.

S.A.: What effect has the contra war had on the Atlantic Coast?

Wilson: The situation has been extremely difficult. Food, medical supplies, and basic infrastructure are problems for us. For example, two years ago 33 bridges were destroyed—some by the rain but many more by the contras.

S.A.: Have there been any recent incidents?

Wilson: Just a week ago, a group of 500 contras wanted to take over the town of Saint Thomas. We lost 20 comrades in that confrontation. The contras are driven to desperate actions in order to get the money they want from the Reagan administration.

S.A.: What role have women in the Atlantic Coast played in this process and how does their situation differ from women in the rest of Nicaragua?

Wilson: We have organized the Movement of Atlantic Coast Women for Peace. It is a movement where women from all the different ethnic groups can get involved. As women, we have raised the demand for the reunification of our families because the native family has been split up. Some are in Honduras, some are in Costa Rica.

Within the Peace and Autonomy Commissions, more than 60 percent of the members are women. Women have played an important role in the political process since the revolution. A Miskitu woman has a top government position in the Atlantic Coast, and two of our three delegates from the Atlantic Coast to the National Assembly are women. [The other two deputies are Hazel Law, a Miskitu activist, and Ray Hooker, a Creole leader.—L.B.]

As women, we share with all Nicaraguan women the goal of fighting for liberation and peace, but we have our specific demands as an ethnic minority in Nicaragua. ■

“Another aspect of the new law is the recognition of the right to bilingual, bicultural education.”

land of Nicaragua, but we have had to replant our forests because we inherited forests that were stripped of their resources.

Historically, the ethnic groups of the Atlantic Coast were extremely marginalized. We were cut off from the Pacific Coast, which is 640 kilometers [390 miles] away. It is only since the triumph of the revolution in 1979 that we have a paved road connecting the two coasts.

My father worked for more than 45 years in the mines. After the revolution, we were left with many miners with black-lung disease and tuberculosis. We were also left with obsolete machinery. Presently, the mines are not in use because, as a result of the economic boycott, we have not been able to refurbish the equipment.

We also had an illiteracy rate of 80 percent. We didn't have health clinics. Infant mortality was very high. You have to remember that the Atlantic Coast was doubly exploited—by the Spanish, from the early 1500s to 1560, and by the British, from 1560 to 1860. So our culture is a mixture of Spanish, English, and our own local ways and customs.

S.A.: So what are the basic principles of the Autonomy Project?

Wilson: Today, it is the Autonomy Project that will enable those who live in the Atlantic Coast to make the decisions

Project is respect for traditional forms of land tenure. This is one of our most important demands.

S.A.: What do you mean by that?

Wilson: Traditionally, land has been held collectively. Land titles are communal. Land cannot be sold, bought, rented out, or given away. It belongs to the whole community.

The land is worked in different ways. One way is called Panapana. This is when everyone has their own plot but everybody helps each other out at harvest time. We have been able to codify this right of traditional land tenure into the Law of Autonomy.

Another aspect of the new law is the recognition of the right to bilingual, bicultural education. Our experience over the past few years in this regard has been very positive.

During the national literacy campaign, we were able to teach the various ethnic groups in their own languages. Fifteen thousand people were taught to read and write in their first language.

S.A.: What is the mechanism for ensuring the political participation of the Atlantic Coast in the revolutionary process?

Wilson: The easy part—getting the Law of Autonomy passed in the National

ASSAULT ON NICARAGUA:

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Speeches by Daniel Sheehan Daniel Ortega

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New anthology by Magdoff and Sweezy:

The underlying reasons for stock market crash

By PAUL SIEGEL

Stagnation and the Financial Explosion, by Harry Magdoff and Paul M. Sweezy. Monthly Review Press, New York, 1987. 208 pp. \$8.

Harry Magdoff and Paul Sweezy are perhaps the two leading Marxist economists in the United States. Their new book is the fourth in a series of essays on the American economy taken from "The Review of the Month" in *Monthly Review*, the periodical they co-edit. It includes articles written from 1982 to 1986.

The re-publication of these articles without change except for the addition of a few footnotes involves some repetition. Counterbalancing this minor disadvantage is the perception the reader gains of how Marxist analysts were able to give a much clearer understanding of where the economy was going than were establishment commentators.

These commentators sang hosannahs to the length of the boom phase of the current boom-bust cycle, some of them, to be sure, occasionally glancing anxiously at the mounting imbalance in the system.

Magdoff and Sweezy, however, looked beyond the immediate phenomena to the underlying trends. What they had to say illuminates the significance of the recent stock exchange "Black Monday" better than the plethora of discussion in the media since that dramatic event.

A bus skidding

The economy today can be compared to a bus skidding violently on a road filled with oil slicks, with the driver (the ruling class) turning the steering wheel frantically from side to side in an effort to straighten out its course. The back-seat advisers, the economic experts, cry out in a confused chorus, "Right! Left! You're over-correcting!"

Magdoff and Sweezy, however, perceive that, even if the driver is able to get out of the skid without crashing (at the price of a severe knocking about of the occupants of the bus—that is, all of us), there are other skids that lie ahead. What is needed is for the working class to take the driver's seat and to drive the bus onto a new road, the road leading to socialism.

Because Magdoff and Sweezy are not mere economic technicians, they are able to stand outside of the wilderness of data that is available and to see the forest without getting lost among the trees. They are thus able to write lucidly in essays that are bite-size and easy to swallow for an audience that is not made up of economics specialists.

They make use of the charts and statistics that are the tools of their profession not to overwhelm or obfuscate but to enlighten.

The theme that they keep hammering away on, always with new data, is that the property forms in the United States and other advanced capitalist countries hold back the immense amount of production that is possible. Capitalists will not invest in additional capacity when they can already produce more than the market can absorb—that is, at a profit to them. There is thus a very strong tendency to stagnation.

Saved by war economy

This tendency was graphically proven during the Depression of the 1930s.

After the partial recovery in 1933 from the Great Depression, there was a totally unprecedented steep decline in 1937-38, rather than the achievement of full recovery, as had happened in previous business cycles.

In the last analysis, what brought the U.S. economy out of this downturn was the flood of war orders from Europe and then the United States itself entering the war.

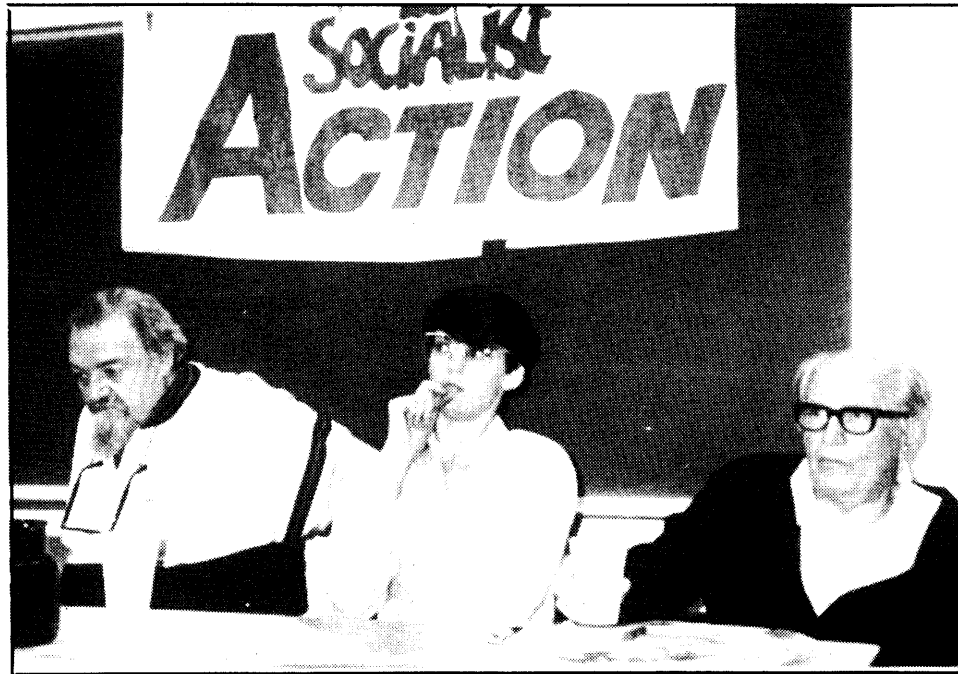
After the Second World War, the ten-

dency to stagnation was masked for a prolonged period by production to rebuild a war-torn Europe and to meet a pent-up desire for consumer goods in the United States and by the remilitarization program upon which the United States embarked.

However, even during this period, while unemployment was zig-zagging in accordance with the ups and downs of the

inevitable collapse of the Reaganite illusion is looming more and more ominously on the horizon." That collapse came in October 1987.

Now all the talk is of the dire need to reduce the federal trade and budgetary deficits. But, according to Magdoff and Sweezy, these deficits are only symptoms; it is the stagnation of late capitalism that is



Cliff Conner/Socialist Action

Left to right: Harry Magdoff, chairperson Brenda Bishop, and Paul Siegel speaking at a recent New York Socialist Action Forum entitled: "The Stock Market Crash—What it Means for Working people." Over 60 people attended the meeting, which took place at the New School for Social Research.

business cycle, the overall trend was up.

There were just two deviations from this overall trend—the periods of low unemployment that occurred during the wars in Korea and Vietnam. This is the way in which capitalism solves its problems—at the cost of creating greater problems for later.

By the mid-1970s, the tendency to stagnation became dominant. Officially recognized unemployment, which underestimates the actual rate, has remained within a range of 6 million to 9.3 million.

What has kept the economy propped up is the continued "fix" of an ever greater armaments program, which has become a habit to which capitalism cannot say no, and the development of a government, corporate, and individual debt structure whose like has never been seen.

Expansion of financial sector

There has accordingly been a monstrous expansion of the financial sector of the economy. Growth in speculation has taken the place of growth in production. As *Business Week* said in September 1985, "slow growth and today's rampant speculative binge are locked in some kind of symbiotic embrace."

But this speculative binge, the greatest since 1929, has been a stimulus to the economy, not a drag, as has often been alleged, resulting in the construction of new office buildings and the production of computers and other communications equipment.

This is why the government, afraid of setting off a chain reaction of bankruptcies, has made no effort to control it, merely coming to the rescue when banks threaten to fail. But every time it puts out a fire, it only postpones the fire storm which the accumulating debt, a mountain of inflammable material, is building towards.

"One can hardly avoid the conclusion," wrote Magdoff and Sweezy in June 1986, "that the expansionary forces that have been behind the upswing of the last few years—those normal to this phase of the cycle, the military buildup, the continuing deficits, and the structural shift from production to finance—are running out of steam and the

disease.

What they wrote in May 1985 is taking place today: "The economy as currently structured is (regarded as) sacrosanct. All blame for present troubles and future dangers is then heaped on the deficits and the federal debt load...And since it is supposedly imperative that the deficit be reduced, the agenda shifts to debate over where and how to cut welfare programs which—so the argument goes—we can no longer afford."

Problem of budget deficits

Although the budgetary deficits have acted as a stimulus to a stagnant economy and are now being used as a justification for

drastic cuts in the social wage of the working class, this does not mean that they do not constitute a problem. Capitalism cannot live with the deficits, and it cannot live without them.

The increase in interest payments on the federal debt since Reagan became president is even greater than the cuts in the health, education, and welfare programs. The cost of interest rose from 6.6 percent of all government expenditures in 1975 to 12.4 percent in 1984—at a rate that would bring it to 25 percent in the next five years.

The wealthy bondowners are acquiring greater wealth at the expense of the rest of us. Mass purchasing power is thus cut, reducing the domestic market, and the deficit ceases to be a stimulus to the economy becomes a brake.

What Magdoff and Sweezy advocate is a massive campaign similar to that of World War II. This campaign will produce miracles of production, not for the purpose of destruction but to feed the 20 million people that the Physicians' Task Force on Hunger estimates suffer from hunger each year and to house the millions of homeless and those suffering from inadequate living quarters.

"The more people move away from searching for illusory panaceas and begin to fight for their elementary rights to decent jobs, housing, and medical care, the closer they will come to coping with the real issues," they write.

Political strategy needed

What is required for the carrying on of such a struggle, as Magdoff and Sweezy (economists rather than political leaders) do not say, is a political strategy that will mobilize the masses and in the course of struggle raise their consciousness concerning the need for building a rational social order—that is, a socialist society.

This strategy has been formulated in the Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, first written in 1938 by Leon Trotsky in the light of the past experience of struggle and subsequently amplified by the Fourth International in the light of continued experience.

The Transitional Program is designed to meet the various turns taken by capitalist crisis. In the event of inflation, it calls for a sliding scale of wages to meet the rising cost of living.

In the event of recession and unemployment, it calls for a sliding scale of hours—shorter hours of work at no loss of pay—and the nationalization under the management of workers' committees of factories that have closed down.

The Transitional Program, however, is not a collection of slogans to be mechanically advanced. It is a guide to action that must be creatively applied. Magdoff's and Sweezy's book shows that is more significant than ever. ■

FREE MAYEKISO!

An urgent defense campaign is taking shape on behalf of South African labor leader Moses Mayekiso and four other jailed Black trade unionists, whose trial resumes this month.

The defendants are being tried for "high treason and sedition" for their community-organizing efforts in the Black township of Alexandra. The charges focus on activities that include organizing rent and consumer boycotts and encouraging the government security forces to leave the township. These charges could carry the death penalty.

Mayekiso, the general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, helped pioneer the democratic, shop-floor-based system of organization prevalent in the country's Black unions. He was also chairman of the grassroots Alexandra Action Committee, which displaced the government-appointed administrators of the township in February 1986.

In the United States, defense activities have been spearheaded by the United Auto Workers union. The



UAW has convened a committee of prominent judges and attorneys to monitor the trial. The union has also launched a campaign to send postcards demanding Mayekiso's freedom to the South African ambassador in Washington, D.C.

We urge our readers to order the postcards and brochures describing Mayekiso's case and to distribute them in their unions, workplaces, and schools. Send to the UAW's Governmental and International Affairs Department at 1757 N Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Letters of protest can also be sent to the Embassy of South Africa, 3051 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008. Mail copies to NUMSA, P.O. Box 9451, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa. ■

Medical-industrial complex impedes proper nutrition

By MYA SHONE

There is an epidemic in the United States of such degenerative ailments as heart disease, cancer, arthritis, cirrhosis of the liver, hypertension, and diabetes. The origin of these diseases is not an esoteric mystery.

Almost one half of the 1,987,000 annual deaths in the United States are attributable to problems arising from what we eat. Improper diet causes 84 percent of stroke and heart attack fatalities and 35 percent of all cancer deaths.

Colon cancer alone kills 50,900 people a year, more than any other form of the disease except cancer of the lung. It is the most frequent cancer killer among those who do not smoke.

The high incidence of colon cancer has been correlated to a diet high in fat and low in dietary fiber. Today, 40 percent of the typical American diet consists of fat. A diet high in fat has been linked to arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), the leading cause of heart attack and stroke.

More than two people each minute (1,250,000 annually) suffer a heart attack in the United States. Almost half of these attacks lead to immediate death. More than one in five victims is under the age of 65.

It has been difficult to gain public acceptance for the notion that life-threatening ailments such as cardiovascular disease and cancer could be related to such a simple factor as what we eat. But the accumulation of scientific evidence within the last 30 years has finally forced the American Heart Association, the American Institute for Cancer Research, and other institutes and agencies to issue warnings on fat consumption.

These institutions have now established dietary guidelines which call for reduced consumption of red meat, egg yolk, salt, sugar, refined flour, and alcohol, while recommending increased intake of fruit, vegetables, and whole grains.

Food for profit

The potential impact of these recommendations on the food economy of this country is immense and can be measured in billions of dollars. This has been duly and ominously recognized by the powerful meat, dairy, and egg industries. Over the years they have funded studies to refute the evidence and have lobbied powerfully to prevent either implementation of change or widespread



understanding of its necessity.

Enormous profits are at stake. The meat, dairy, and egg industries now provide some 60 percent of all food consumed in the United States. Our major agricultural resources, our stocks of grains, are primarily devoted to feeding the livestock that produce this food. Ninety-three percent of wheat, 90 percent of oats, soy beans and barley; and 80 percent of the corn produced in the United States are used to feed livestock.

There is a plethora of scientific and nutritional data confirming that this damages our resource base and national health. The very grains, legumes, and vegetables produced in abundance for animal feed could provide amply for our daily protein needs. The protein analysis of soy bean, for example, is remarkably similar to that of most animal protein—including milk protein.

The meat, dairy, and egg industries are not the only food conglomerates which feel threatened by potential

changes in America's eating habits. The food industry as a whole spends \$7 billion a year on advertising. These funds are used primarily to promote snack foods, candy, and soft drinks.

The impact on the American diet is huge. One-fourth of our total sugar intake derives just from the consumption of sodas. The employment of sweeteners is pervasive throughout the entire American menu. Sweeteners are added to many of the more than 12,000 different food products that line our supermarket shelves. On a per-capita basis, sweetener consumption is estimated at 125.6 pounds per year (1981), one-third pound of sweetener each day.

The major effect of this overconsumption of sweeteners is evidenced in the number of overweight and obese people and their concomitant health problems. In addition, nearly one in five Americans wears false teeth by the age of 50. Sugar feeds the bacteria normally present in the mouth and causes them to multiply, creating plaque which eat through the tooth and attack the gums and bones that support them.

Diabetes, a degenerative condition, is also associated with sugar consumption. In 1907, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company listed diabetes as the 27th leading cause of death. In 1974, it rose to fifth place.

Medical authorities have established that the epidemic of hypertension is tied to excess salt. Hypertension afflicts one out of four adults—50 percent of those over 65. The average American eats 20 to 30 times more sodium than the body requires, and 75 percent of this excess intake comes from processed foods.

Medical-industrial complex

The medical establishment is a major economic and political power in the United States, extracting over \$400 billion annually in medical and health services. It habitually opposes major public health initiatives and nutritional research.

As early as 1946, the medical lobby caused the narrow defeat of a bill which would have supported extensive research into nutritional cures for cancer. The National Cancer Institute, a federally funded center, has throughout most of its history spent its research funds in the quest for viral causes and pharmacological cures for cancer.

The A.M.A. is part of the problem. In 1977 it issued a statement attacking recommendations that people with high cholesterol levels (approximately one half of American adults) should follow a diet lower in saturated fat and cholesterol.

The health industry is one of the five largest business activities in the country. The financial stake of the medical-industrial complex, agro-business, the food-processing industry, and pharmaceutical conglomerates is so vast that the capitalist state itself is intimately linked to the epidemic of degenerative diseases and toxic pseudo-medication inflicted on the American people. ■

Our readers speak out

'Repentance'

Dear editor,

I recently saw "Repentance," a film by a Georgian student of the early Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein. The film is a powerful, bitter, intransigent exhortation of Stalin and Stalinism's monstrous evil ("unforgivable crimes," as Gorbachev said in his 70th-anniversary speech).

The film is poetic/metaphorical and all the more powerful for the artistry of its method. It even deals with the Moscow Trials, the false confessions, and the criminal greed of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

To see the Stalinists wrapped in the good values of socialism, culture, and "the will of the people," mouthing the jewels of humanism (such as a Shakespeare sonnet) for their most evil purposes is an experience in verification that goes deeper than anything I've ever felt in politics/culture.

The reviews say that the film is playing to standing-room-only houses in the Soviet Union, and

one can see why. This film can't really be discussed without using the concepts of Leon Trotsky who "wrote the book" on these matters and provided the vocabulary and analysis to define the Stalinist bureaucracy.

"Repentance" doesn't lay out a policy for future repair of the rotted superstructure. But it does define the problem and open a door which, in my opinion, can never close again.

J. Morgan,
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Israel

Dear editor,

Israel's air force is rated the third most powerful in the world. Financing doesn't appear to be much of a problem. As a rule, about half of U.S. military sales to Israel are an outright gift.

From 1974 to early 1978, some \$3 billion out of \$5.5 billion in military assistance was donated completely free. From 1946 to 1983, the U.S. government provided more than \$27 billion in military and economic aid to Israel.

Why such generosity? The U.S. relies on Israel to help maintain control over the region in order to exploit its raw materials and preserve it as a captive market for American manufactured goods. Nor will this objective change—regardless of

who is elected president this year.

Victor Saxe,
San Francisco, Calif.

Pap tests

Dear editor,

Several women in the United States have died of cervical cancer during the last few years after having received "negative" diagnoses through routine PAP-smear tests. I recently heard a radio report by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which said

that as many as one in four PAP tests in this country may be inaccurate.

More and more, PAP tests are performed by profit-oriented "factories," often by mail order. Technicians are generally paid according to a piece rate—about \$.80 per test. This has led to increasingly shoddy work, as the laboratory workers struggle to meet deadlines and specified workloads.

"When you do not see the victim," a doctor said of the mail-order labs, "there is no con-

science. In these so-called PAP mills and PAP factories, there is a compulsion to get the work out and to do it rapidly."

One laboratory was recently "taken over by venture capitalists," a technician stated on the radio. The workers now process about 160 PAP smears a day—twice the recommended quantity. The owners "know nothing about what we do," the technician complained. "They only know the 'bottom line.'"

Misha Butler,
San Francisco, Calif.

We welcome letters from our readers. Please keep them brief. Where necessary, they will be abridged.

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Blacks forge new fight against racism in N.Y.C.

By CHRIS BUTTERS

NEW YORK—"This is not the end of the movement against racism in New York; it is only the beginning." That is how one Black activist summed up the lessons of the trial of four white men charged with the lynching/murder of Black construction worker Michael Griffith in Howard Beach.

On Dec. 20, 1986, three Black men went to look for assistance after their car broke down in Howard Beach, a white working-class enclave. The defendants then chased the three with baseball bats, tire irons, and tree limbs, screaming racist epithets. Griffith was struck by a car while trying to escape across a highway.

Last month, one of the defendants was given a 30-year prison sentence. The other two defendants were sentenced to five years each. This brought to a close one of the most explosive trials involving race relations in recent American history.

The jury delivered its verdicts in Queens Supreme Court on Dec. 21, a year and a day after Michael Griffith's killing. Three of the four defendants were found guilty of manslaughter in the second degree and assault in the first degree. However, the top count of murder and the lesser charge of riot were dismissed.

That day, Dec. 21, was declared a "Day of Outrage" by Black activists. Some 1000 protesters blocked traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge and a major subway line while chanting "No justice, no peace."

The demonstrators heard the Rev. Timothy Mitchell proclaim the birth of a new civil-rights movement. "The movement has come North. The movement is in New York. The issue is Up South!" he said, repeating the term used by Malcolm X.

New coalition is formed

On Jan. 18, Martin Luther King Day, an estimated 3000 to 4000 people demonstrated in a "March for Racial Justice." The winding three-mile march route took the marchers past numerous institutions guilty of abetting acts of racist violence in recent years—the banks of Wall Street, various courthouses, and City Hall.

The demonstration was called by New Yorkers for Racial Justice. The newly formed coalition of over 70 union, church, and community organizations is pledged to a "multi-racial struggle to create a climate in New York City that guarantees racial justice and equality."

Numerous speakers placed the action squarely in the tradition not only of the demonstrations led by the Rev. King in the



New York City "March for Racial Justice" on Jan. 18—Martin Luther King Day—drew over 3000 people to demonstrate against local increase in racist attacks.

South in the late 1960s but of the more recent marches and civil disobedience actions protesting the increasing acts of racist violence in the North.

Police Department records show that racially motivated incidents in New York City doubled last year compared with 1986. To these attacks must be added the racist violence carried out by the police themselves and abetted by city and state authorities.

The still-unfolding subway police scandal has been cited by protest leaders. It was recently revealed that subway police made as many as 225 unfounded racially motivated arrests between 1983 and 1987. Blacks and Latinos were charged with phony sexual crimes to fulfill a quota system of arrests.

The case of Tawan Brawley—the young Black woman raped and sodomized in Wappingers Fall, N.Y., in late November—has also come into focus. Abducted by two white men identifying themselves as police officers, she was held by Ku Klux Klansmen for four days. Lawyers and family have charged a police coverup.

The special prosecutor

At a press conference soon after the Howard Beach verdict, Democratic Governor Mario Cuomo declared that the verdict showed that the criminal justice system, despite the need for a special prosecutor in the case, "worked very well."

It is testimony to the racist nature of the criminal justice system that any guilty verdict on even a lesser charge is presented as a victory. The *Amsterdam News* reported (Jan. 3, 1987) that no white man has ever been convicted of murder involving a Black during the present Queens district attorney's tenure.

Queens D.A. John Santucci, under investigation himself for connections to organized crime figures, failed to indict anyone other than the three who were originally booked—and then only for assault!

The police, the D.A.'s office, and the big-business media all treated the victims as defendants. The two attorneys for the victims quite reasonably concluded their clients could not get a fair trial. In January 1987, they demanded a special prosecutor in the case.

For this demand, they were subjected to a witchhunt and a stream of racist attacks in the big-business press. A high-ranking aide to Governor Cuomo dismissed the defense attorneys at that time as having "zero credibility."

But as a series of articles in the Black weekly *The City Sun* in January 1987 revealed, it was the fear of an independent mass movement which ultimately drove Cuomo to accede to the demand after having used every opportunity to play off one group of Black officials against another and against community organizers.

Further evidence of how deeply the ruling class fears a mass movement against racism in New York was provided by news articles which appeared in *Newsday* and the *Daily News* in July 1987.

The Special Services Bureau of the New York Police Department, it was revealed, had established a clandestine "Black Desk," assigned the job of snooping on the new generation of Black activists organizing against racist violence since the Howard Beach lynching. The Special Services Bureau has a history of spying on left, labor, and Black organizations extending back to 1920.

Anti-racist meetings and rallies were secretly videotaped. Talk shows on the Black-owned WLIB radio station were tape recorded. Secret riot-training sessions of police officers included briefings on Black leaders "most likely to be involved in civil disturbances."

A class-action suit has been brought by many of the leaders of the Howard Beach protests against the N.Y.P.D. for its "Black Desk" activities, involving as they do both

violations against democratic rights and the ruling class's own laws.

Building a new leadership

A whole layer of Black youth passionately desiring freedom, equality, and dignity have been brought into political life for the first time. They attended the demonstrations, chanted the slogans, and did much of the work.

For these young people, "Howard Beach!" became a symbol not just of racism in America, but of the dawning fightback. "No Justice, No Peace!" became their rallying cry.

As in all great struggles, the question of program began to be debated, whether informally in groups of twos and threes at demonstrations, or among callers on WLIB radio call-in programs. Demands were put forward and debated.

Of course, the demand for a special prosecutor was played up in the big-business media, since this was a demand that could most easily be granted by the capitalist state, involving as it does no fundamental structural change.

But a host of other demands and projects were also raised. The question of the right and duty to organize self-defense units to protect Black neighborhoods and organizations independently of the police was debated in a way it hadn't been since the 1960s.

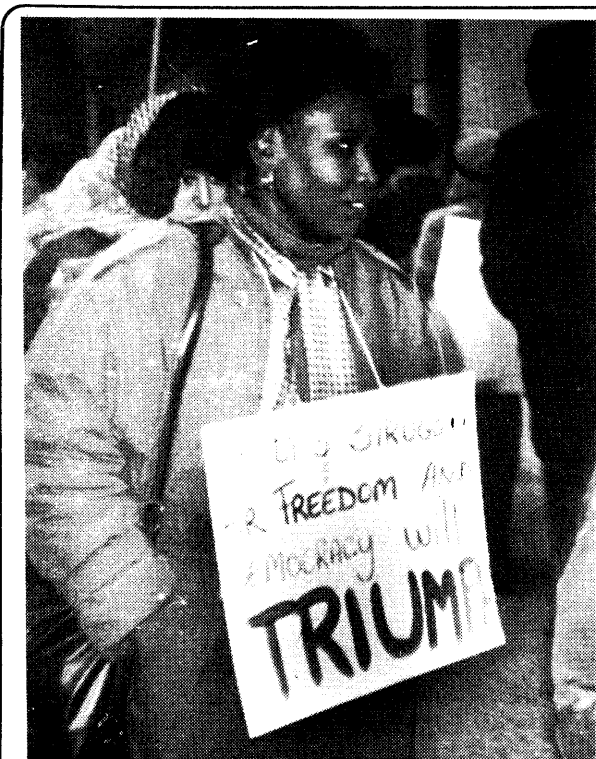
Some people spoke of the need for a Black political party, one that would be completely independent of Governor Cuomo's Democratic Party. The idea took on renewed force and urgency, given a movement that at times stood in danger of becoming subordinated to the tactics of lawyers—some of whom were also its leaders.

The need for Black people to link up their demands against racist violence with demands against the economic violence (cutbacks in social services, layoffs, evictions, plant closings) which affect all working people was also posed.

The week after the "Day of Outrage," Mayor Koch, whose pontifications and policies have done as much as anything to divide the races, came out for a blue-ribbon commission to "study" race relations in New York.

But Black people don't need to be "studied." What they want and need is very simple. They want jobs at union wages. They want housing, decent education, and health care. They want freedom from racist attacks.

Above all, they need a society where the material foundations for racism—production for profit instead of for human needs—is eradicated forever.



On Jan. 15, over 30 people picketed the Haitian consulate in New York to protest the rigged presidential election in that country. The protest was organized by the Concerned Latin American Students of Hunter College (CLASH).

As expected, Leslie F. Manigat, the choice of the Haitian army, was the winner of an election that was boycotted by over 90 percent of the electorate.

The Haitian junta and its U.S. backers will be unable to base a stable government on the electoral charade performed before the eyes of the world on Jan. 17, 1988.

—HAYDEN PERRY