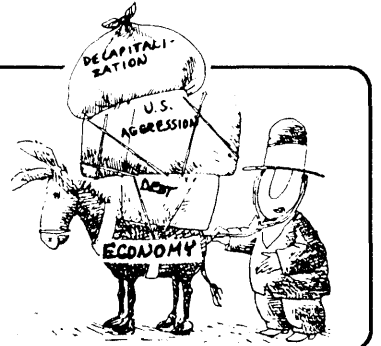


# SOCIALIST ACTION

Economic crisis sparks debate in Nicaragua over revolution's course, See pages 8-9.



FEBRUARY 1989 VOL. 7, No. 2 50 CENTS

## Bush's 'new breeze' spells an 'ill wind' for civil rights

A "new breeze" is blowing, President Bush announced to the world. He will follow "the dream" of the Rev. Martin Luther King, the president assured Black civil rights leaders. Bush also pledged that he will "keep talking" with leaders of women's rights organizations.

And not only that. Bush's now-famous "lips" dripped honey with promises to the poor. Visits to schools and childcare centers were placed high on the chief executive's list of things to do. The homeless, too, will receive his attention, Bush said.

The "new breeze," of course, is just so much hot air. When the hoopla of the

**S&L bailout,  
See page 3.**

inauguration festivities dies down, Bush's promises to women, Blacks, and the poor will be rapidly forgotten.

With the help of the Democratic Party-dominated Congress, Bush plans to slash medical and retirement funding, aid to the inner cities, and other social services. And only days into his term of office, Bush showed himself ready and eager to erase earlier gains of the women's liberation movement.

On Jan. 22 (the anniversary of the historic Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision of 1973 that gave women the legal right to end their pregnancies) Bush lent his support to an anti-abortion demonstration in Washington, D.C. "Roe v. Wade was wrong and should be overturned," Bush told the cheering rightwingers.

Bush called for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would outlaw a woman's right to choose abortion. The White House soon put teeth into these pronouncements when it revealed a list of anti-abortionists who have been appointed to the Health and Human Services Department.

### Supreme Court attacks rights

The Supreme Court has agreed to review a 1986 Missouri law that "protects the fetus from the moment of conception" and bans the use of public funds and facilities for abortions. Thus, the court has opened the possibility of reversing all or part of the Roe v. Wade ruling.

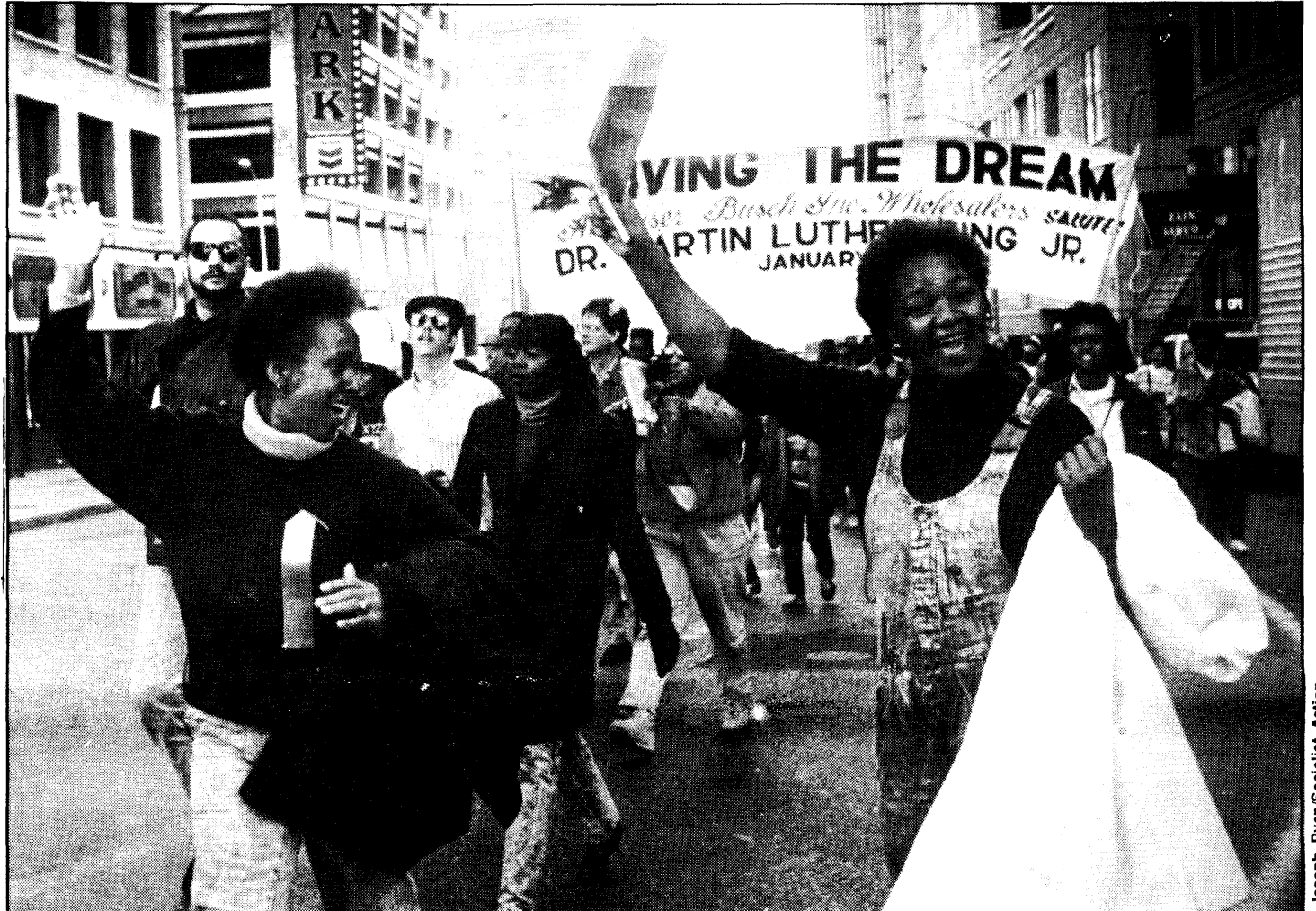
With similar enthusiasm, on Jan. 23, the Supreme Court demonstrated its willingness to toss Martin Luther King's "dream" onto the trashheap.

The court struck down a Richmond, Va., ordinance that set aside 30 percent of public-works funds to minority-owned construction companies. In so doing, the judges declared that state and local governments may use racial quotas or preferences only as "a last resort" in an "extreme case"—and only when there is hard proof of past racial bias.

This decision will make it more difficult for Blacks, other minorities, and women to fight against discriminatory policies in education and in the workplace. Two important court cases (in which workers sued their bosses for racial discrimination and harassment) are up for a hearing by the Supreme Court this term.

Affirmative action was won by the mass actions of the civil rights and women's liberation movements of the 1960s and early

(continued on page 4)



15,000 celebrated Martin Luther King's birthday on Jan. 16 in San Francisco. Meanwhile, just-inaugurated President Bush applauded attacks on affirmative action and abortion rights.

## Thousands march for women's abortion rights

By SUSAN JORGENSON

Anti-choice forces are maneuvering to make abortion illegal once again. And Operation Rescue is continuing its attempts to blockade women's health clinics and prevent abortions from occurring.

On Jan. 22, however, pro-choice activists across the country took to the streets and packed meeting halls to celebrate 16 years of legal and safe abortion. On that day, the anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision, women and men across the country demanded that the attacks on reproductive freedom end.

In seemingly remote Bath, Maine, for example, 300 people showed up at the Bowdoin College campus to hear attorney Sarah Weddington speak. Weddington successfully argued the Roe v. Wade case before the Supreme Court. The crowd was so large that a second meeting was scheduled to accommodate the overflow.

A roundup of a few pro-choice actions in other cities follows:

### Pittsburgh

The largest rally was in Pittsburgh, where over 1500 people "marched for women's lives." It was one of the largest women's



rights demonstrations here in years. The march was organized by local chapters of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and co-sponsored by more than 30 pro-choice, women's, civil rights, and religious groups.

Vowing to keep abortion and birth control safe and legal, the demonstrators marched to the Allegheny County Morgue, where they left hundreds of red-tipped coat hangers as a

symbol of what outlawing abortion would mean.

### Boston

More than 300 pro-choice activists rallied here and in nearby Brookline, Mass. A coalition of pro-choice groups—including Boston NOW, the Alliance Against Women's

(continued on page 5)

# 'Rich get richer, poor get children'



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

Nothing sets off legal mania as much as women's internal plumbing. Judges, presidents, preachers, popes, kings, and dictators have passed laws concerning the uterus, fertility, and sexual enjoyment (or lack thereof).

The need to control what women do with their bodies has been an all-consuming passion of dominant males since the advent of private property. After all, you wouldn't allow your horses, cows, and sheep any freedom. Why allow your main domestic chattel, your wife, any choices?

The first law controlling women's bodies was passed in 150 A.D. Clement of Alexandria ruled that procreation is not merely good but sacred and that, therefore, procreation is the sole "lawful reason for conjugal intercourse."

In the 4th century A.D., St. Augustine maintained that the male

embryo becomes a human being 40 days after conception and a female 80 days after conception. Although abortion is a sin, St. Augustine ruled, it is not murder.

From the 4th century until 1591, the Catholic Church seasawed back and forth on whether abortion was a sin or murder, or both. In 1803, Great Britain outlawed abortion after quickening but allowed abortion in the early stages.

In 1821, Connecticut passed the first law against abortion after quickening but allowed abortion in early stages. In the 1860s, many states passed comprehensive, restrictive, criminal abortion laws—many of which remained in effect until 1973. In fact, abortion was outlawed in every state until 1973;

only the penalties differed.

On Jan. 22, 1973, criminal laws against abortion across the nation were declared unconstitutional; the court held that abortion during the first two trimesters of pregnancy is a matter between a woman and her doctor. That was the famous *Roe v. Wade* ruling, which made abortion legal in this country.

**"The president hears you"**

Once again, the legislators, judges, evangelists, presidents, cabinet ministers, and the ruling rich are organizing foaming-at-the-mouth right-wingers in the streets to abolish a woman's right to control her own body. Thousands of "know nothings" have been using totally illegal methods to shut the

abortion clinics down.

Our president, "gentle and kindly" George Bush, greeted these political Neanderthals on Jan. 22 and assured them he was behind their illegal actions 100 percent.

Bush addressed the outlaws over a loudspeaker: "This is what I think.... The Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* was wrong and should be overturned. I think America needs a human-life amendment." He went on, "I promise you that the president hears you now and stands with you in a cause that must be won."

But "Operation Rescue," which is spearheading a wide-ranging ruling-class assault on democratic rights, is triggering a defensive movement by tens of thousands of women and their supporters. Women are outraged by the fascist-like attacks on clinic after clinic, in city after city.

If these people are permitted to get away with their gangster tactics today, tomorrow they may start sitting down in front of synagogues and mosques, shutting them down because they worship a false god, or shutting down hospitals because blood transfusions violate their beliefs, or shutting down libraries because they disapprove of their books—eventually shutting down union halls and political parties which they decide are "immoral."

The ruling class is financing and encouraging these experiments in extra-legal activity. While they permit the Bible-thumpers to break the law with nothing more than a slap on the wrist, they regularly

throw the book at unions who dare to put more than a few pickets at struck factory gates.

But just as workers in the 1930s told the ruling class to take their anti-labor laws and shove them, so will women do the same when they denied their democratic and human right to control their bodies.

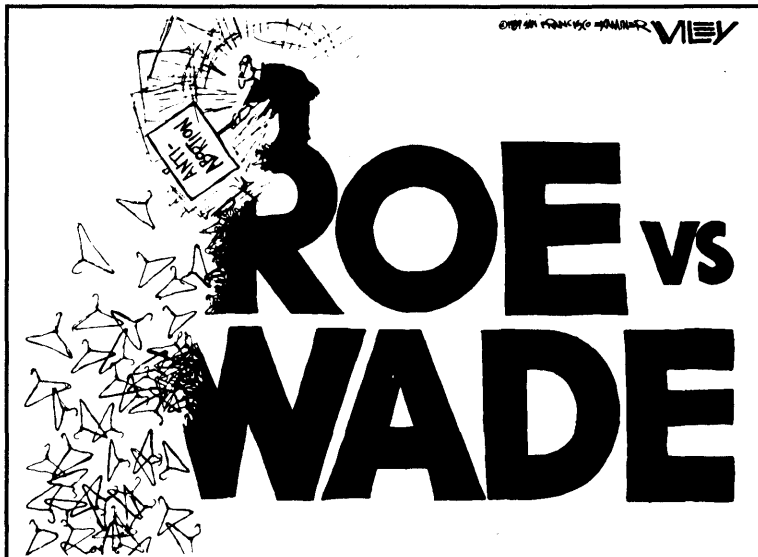
**The Missouri law**

Now the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear a 1986 Missouri law that "protects the fetus from the moment of conception and bars the use of public funds to counsel or encourage abortion" as well as barring "the use of public facilities for the procedure."

By not limiting its review to the law's restrictions on abortion, the Supreme Court left the door open to possible reversal of the *Roe v. Wade* decision itself. A decision by the court in favor of any portion of the Missouri law would seriously undermine the right of women to plan their families.

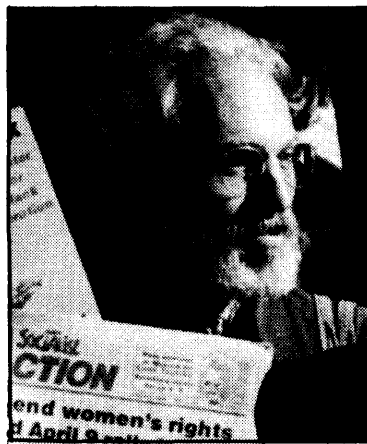
The first wave of feminism from the 1840s until the 1920s won women the right to vote; the second wave of feminism from the 1960s through the 1970s won reproductive rights for women. The third wave of feminism to defend these gains will make the first and second waves seem like little splashes.

The enemies of human rights will not be allowed to again condemn our sisters and daughters to the horrors of back-alley abortions. All out on April 9! Demonstrate for women's rights! ■



## BEHIND THE LINES

# Lynch mob is given the go-ahead



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Derek Tyrus was only 17 years old when he met his death. On Oct 7, 1988, he was chased by a mob into the path of an oncoming car.

What had Derek Tyrus done to be pursued like a wild animal through the streets of Staten Island, New York City? Nothing. He simply happened to be Black, and to have had the misfortune of being in a

white neighborhood.

There used to be a word for such events. Lynching. An ugly word. Some 200 years since Capt. William Lynch's vigilantes stalked the woodlands of Virginia and Pennsylvania, the captain's name still carries fear and disgust.

At the the turn of the century, a Black person was lynched every two days or so. Newspapers in the South advertised lynchings in advance. White spectators came on chartered trains to enjoy the spectacle. Lynching had become as "thrilling" a past-time (to some people) as following the play-by-play of the hometown nine.

The Aug. 14, 1911, *Coatesville Record*, published not far from "UpSouth" Philadelphia, Pa., reported that thousands came "from every direction" to watch the roasting to death of a man named Zachariah Walker: "Men stepped back as the women came forward and led them to points of vantage where they could obtain the best

view of the burning Negro."

The protection of White Womanhood, of course, was the article of faith first on the lips of every member of the lynch mob. The mythology was created (and repeated in newsprint and the movie screen right up until this day) that most lynchings were in retaliation for raping white women. An eye for an eye—as the Bible says.

But lynching was much more commonly employed as a means of coercion for political and economic purposes. Blacks were lynched for trying to vote, getting education, owning their own land, marketing their own crops, earning too much money, and striking for higher wages.

At Palestine, Texas, 20 Black plantation workers were lynched in 1910 for protesting their wage of \$1 a day, which was paid in scrip good only at the overpriced company store. When Black cotton pickers in Arkansas went on strike, mobs organized by the landlords

## Socialist ACTION

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lynched 10 of their leaders. There are many similar examples.

**Ancient history?**

February is Black History Month. And some people think that lynching is very ancient history indeed. Nowadays, things are different! Or are they?

A cross is set ablaze in front of a Black home in Cleveland; a racist mob throws rocks at a Black family in Philadelphia; a young Black man is chased into the path of a speeding car in Howard Beach—and again in Staten Island.

Instead of white sheets, the mob leaders today often wear blue police uniforms and riot gear. A Black motorist in Long Beach gets his head beaten in—for a "traffic violation." A Black bus driver in San Francisco is clubbed and called "nigger"—because "he didn't move

fast enough." A Black motorcyclist in Miami is shot—for who knows why?

And yet, to the racists, it makes sense. They've gotten the go-ahead signal from the people in power.

In his election campaign, George Bush repeatedly invoked the specter of "Willie Horton—paroled murderer." He clamored for a "mandatory death penalty for drug kingpins." He raised the alarm that "traditional family values" were under attack.

Such slogans play on the fears of the most backward and racist segments of the population. Translated, Bush's rhetoric means: "Those uppity Blacks (and Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, immigrants, homeless, and so on) must be kept in their place!" The door has been opened a bit wider for the lynch mob. ■

## Socialist Action calendar

### Detroit

Film: *'Labor's Turning Point'*  
Tues., Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m.  
Hilberly B at Student Ctr., Wayne State Univ.

### Boston

*'Report from El Salvador'*  
Slide show, speaker: Colleen Doherty, SEIU Local 509, just returned from El Salvador, Friday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m.  
Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St., Cambridge

### Los Angeles

*'Malcolm's Ideas for Today'*  
Speaker: Kwame M.A. Somburu  
Friday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m.

*Los Angeles continued:* L.A. City College, Franklin Hall, Rm. 101, 855 N. Vermont

### San Francisco

*'Malcolm X: His life and ideas'*  
Weekly Students for Socialist Action class series by Kwame M.A. Somburu, Fridays beginning Feb. 3, 12 noon, Rm. B-114, Student Union, S.F.S.U.

### Cleveland, Youngstown, Toledo

Film: *'Labor's Turning Point'*  
March 8-10  
Introduced by Jake Cooper, veteran labor activist, For more information on time and place, please call (216) 429-2167.

# S&L bailout gives crooks a free ride

the first place. How long before the taxpayers have to bail out the rescuers?

"Soak the poor"

The \$100-billion bailout cost is added to the woes of the budget deficit. Everything will be done to conceal it, to postpone it, and to pass it on to future generations. Meanwhile, they talk of measures to reduce the cost of the bailout.

A trial balloon launched by Bush proposes that savers buy insurance to protect their S&L and bank accounts. They suggest a premium of 30 cents for every \$100 on deposit. They might also institute deductibles, as in auto insurance. The depositor would absorb the first \$500 or \$1000 loss. This would be in harmony with capitalist "soak the poor" philosophy.

Regulation and reform will be widely discussed. There is a lot of talk about "blunders" being made, as though minor adjustments in regulations will solve the problem. But making more rules will not solve the inherent problem of business-for-profit being business-for-greed.

After the crash of 1929, the most far-reaching reforms of the banking system were instituted. This was supposed to prevent another financial collapse from happening. Now we are facing the threat of an even more devastating crash.

Band-aid solutions dictated by the financial interests concerned will solve nothing. The whole system of capitalist greed and corruption must be replaced. ■



By HAYDEN PERRY

Members of the House Banking Committee held hearings in San Francisco last month. They came to investigate "one of the most colossal blunders in regulatory history," as *The Wall Street Journal* described the savings-and-loan (S&L) crisis.

The committee members wanted to know, among other things, why 284 S&Ls had failed at a time of "unparalleled prosperity" and why over 200 applications for new S&Ls or thrift associations had been filed in California at a time when the industry was in a tailspin.

They also wanted to know how many crooks had seized control of S&Ls and why the California agency supervising the thrift industry was cut from 190 to 30 employees when the industry was booming.

Citizens across the country are also asking questions—with alarm—as they read of the cost of bailing out bankrupt thrifts. Succeeding news stories raise the estimated bill ever higher. The last report was \$100 billion, and they are still counting.

## Roots of the crisis

S&Ls used to be relatively small, hometown institutions taking in their neighbors' savings and lending the money to other neighbors who want to buy a house. They remained in the backwaters of the American financial scene, not considered true banks.

*The Wall Street Journal* describes the leisurely pace of executive life in the traditional thrift: They followed the "3-6-3 formula." "Pay depositors 3 percent, charge borrowers 6 percent," and get on the golf course by 3:00 p.m. How could such conservatively run institutions lose \$100 billion?

The downhill slide started with a rise in interest rates in the 1970s. When a saver could get 5 percent from a bank savings account, "3-6-3" was no longer realistic. And interest rates soared far higher than that by the '80s.

To keep savers from withdrawing their money, S&Ls had to pay higher interest. But they were stuck with 20-year and 30-year mortgages with interest rates of 7 percent or 8 percent—a losing proposition.

In Texas, the collapse of oil prices hit the S&Ls hard, as borrowers were unable to repay. These problems could have been overcome if the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC) had intervened in time. But this would have involved some belt tightening that thrift executives were loath to suffer.

Instead, they looked with envy at the commercial bankers across the way who were knee deep in exciting and profitable deals all over the world. Why should S&Ls be confined to boring home mortgages?

Lawmakers in Washington, D.C., where the prevailing philosophy is "get government off the backs of businessmen," listened. In 1986, they said, "You are now largely deregulated. You are now on your own to invest where you wish."

The thrifts did not want to be entirely on their own. They still wanted FSLIC around to insure deposits up to \$100,000 against loss. With this safety net, S&L officers could try their hands at big-time finance.

First they pulled in deposits by offering

ever higher rates of interest. Then they raised the interest on their loans higher yet. Sound businesses would not borrow at these rates, but fly-by-night speculators would.

The result was bad loans—loans that could not be repaid, loans that were "secured" by nearly completed buildings that turned out to be only a hole in the ground.

Defaulting borrowers produce "non-performing loans." Very bad in the banking business! But bad non-performing loans can be turned into good-performing loans by lending the borrower the money to keep up the interest payments.

This means luring more savers with higher interest rates, which means making more risky loans to depositors. It's a fascinating process to watch so long as your deposit is safely insured. FSLIC insurance made the money merry-go-round workable—for a time.

## Speculators and thieves

As paper profits, commissions, and executive perks multiplied, shady characters were attracted to the S&Ls like flies to honey. Speculators saw great advantages in owning an S&L. They could vote themselves loans with few questions asked, and use the money for risky speculation and high living.

If there was no thrift to buy, they could always start their own. California and other states charter S&Ls on very easy terms. Nearly 200 have been given charters in the last two years. This was far more than needed to supply home mortgages.

But no problem! The new S&Ls were not into home mortgages, but into speculative oil leases, junk bonds, and executive jets for high-flying officers. All this speculative activity and outright thievery was underpinned by FSLIC, which insured state as well as federal thrifts.

With crooks in the executive suites, the closest scrutiny by regulators was called for. But it did not happen. The San Francisco hearing revealed one reason why:

Larry Taggart, a former California Savings and Loan Commissioner, wrote the White House in 1988 to call off regulators who were checking California and Texas thrifts. Their regulatory action, he warned, would have an adverse effect on Republican fundraising.

So the FSLIC ignored the proliferation of non-performing loans and dwindling assets. Depositors were lulled into complacency by the insurance on their deposits, while the money machines rolled downhill to inevitable bankruptcy.

## The government payoff

Insolvent thrifts have to spend \$38 million a year in interest and expenses, while they take in only about \$32 billion. So they are losing \$6 billion a year. Day by day, the bailout bill grows by more than a million.

In desperation, the FSLIC put into motion "Operation Thrift Rescue." Failing thrifts would be taken over by large concerns that could absorb some losses, inject new capital into the business, and put the insolvent S&Ls back on their feet.

This tactic has worked with some other failing businesses, but there had to be incentives. FSLIC had to make offers that profit-hungry entrepreneurs could not refuse. Actually, the FSLIC is scarcely selling the S&Ls. More accurately, it is paying wheelers

and dealers to take them away.

In a typical deal, Michigan National Corp. paid \$52 million to buy Beverly Hills S&L (with assets of over a \$1 billion). FSLIC put up \$983 million in assistance. They also promised to cover any losses from rising interest rates, while Michigan National could keep any profits gained from falling rates.

If loans go bad, the government will absorb the loss. If they are paid off, the new owner keeps the profit.

On top of this bonanza, buyers of thrifts get huge tax writeoffs. Since the tax writeoff was reduced in 1989, FSLIC rushed through a bunch of deals in the last months of 1988. They disposed of 49 Thrifts at a cost of \$121 million to the buyers, and \$21.8 billion to the FSLIC.

With terms like these, there is no lack of buyers. The list of bidders looks like a "Who's Who" of corporate raiders. These pirates are not concerned with saving the S&Ls to make home loans. They have picked up these bargains to continue the speculative operations that got the thrifts in trouble in

## 'A thousand points of light?'



A soon to be released government report on homelessness should make crystal clear what George Bush means by his "thousand points of light" expression.

The Interagency Council on the Homeless has written an incredible report that praises the government, corporations, and private organizations for helping the estimated 3 million homeless.

"Not since the war on poverty and the civil rights movement," the report says, "has one particular group of people brought about such national attention and mobilized thousands of organizations and individuals to such immediate and successful action as has this particular group of Americans."

Tell that to this woman and child on Market St. in San Francisco. In that city alone, the number of street deaths among the homeless increased from 69 in 1987 to 103 in 1988.

What the death rate is in other cities nobody knows. The San Francisco city government, under pressure from activists in the homeless movement, is the only U.S. city that keeps these tragic statistics. Of course, the government report avoided this "point of light" like the plague. ■

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

# 800 autoworkers meet to slam concessions

By DAVID MARK

WARREN, Mich.—On Jan. 8, 1989, the "New Beginnings" movement, based in Region 1 of the United Auto Workers union, held a conference in opposition to the concessionary course being carried out under the present leadership of UAW President Owen Bieber.

More than 800 workers from the Detroit area registered for the conference. The vast majority were UAW rank and filers—including Black and women workers. The crowd was genuinely interested in reversing the concessionary course of the UAW, what Bieber and his Administration Caucus call "jointness" and the "team concept."

The keynote speaker was Jerry Tucker, the newly elected UAW Region 5 (Kansas-Missouri area) director. The panel for the conference included Don Douglas, president of the UAW local of truck and bus workers in Pontiac, Mich.; Pete Kelly, president of Local 160 (GM Tech Center); Victor Reuther, a founder of the UAW; and Sally Bier, president of the UAW Blue Cross-Blue Shield workers local.

## Tucker takes the floor

Tucker was introduced by Don Douglas, who chaired the conference. Tucker began by going over the history of the Region 5 struggle with the UAW International Executive Board (IEB). He told how he had been drafted by the "New Directions" movement within his region to run for director and a seat on the IEB.

Tucker explained how the Bieber clique had stolen the initial election through fraud. He said that, as a last resort, he had to go to court to force a new election—which he won in September 1988. [See the August 1988 and October 1988 issues of *Socialist Action*.]

Tucker focused his remarks on the coming UAW convention and preparations for the



1990 contract negotiations. He explained that he had no opposition to cooperating with the employers on such issues as quality and absenteeism, but said he was not for cooperating at the expense of the workers.

"Cooperating we've done for 52 years," Tucker said. "In fact, the greater problem is seeking cooperation from the corporations on our [UAW members'] needs."

He came out against Bieber's "jointness"

and "team concepts," stating that labor and capital have differences that cannot be erased through the notion that there is a new culture of work. He also said he was against the UAW making concessions in the name of remaining competitive with the Japanese automotive industry.

## A lively discussion

After Tucker's talk there were remarks by the rest of the panel, and the floor was opened up for discussion.

The panel members, basically from "New Beginnings" in UAW Region 1, echoed Tucker's opposition to concessions and the "team concept." Their participation also reflected the fact that Tucker's challenge to the Administration Caucus has succeeded in bringing together many different elements of opposition within the UAW.

Some of them, for example, went out of their way to explain that, contrary to rumors, they were not radicals or communists, but only "concerned UAW members."

Speakers from the floor offered no sentiment for cooperation with management. The problems of concessions was made clear when a member of Local 668 spoke up and said: "I heard a word at this conference I haven't heard in a long time, 'exploitation.' My local once had 8000 workers and we're down to 3000, and we still don't have the wagons circled."

The conference concluded with remarks from Victor Reuther. Reuther explained how the Saturn agreement between the UAW and General Motors, which cut wages and work rules of future Saturn workers, was done behind the backs of the membership through a private deal between the UAW tops and GM management.

In attacking Bieber's policies he asked if "having our president sitting on the board of directors of Chrysler had done any good?" The audience loudly replied, "Hell no."

The meeting clearly demonstrated that a serious opposition to concessions is beginning to develop within the UAW. How successful it will be, however, will depend on its ability to mobilize the fightback sentiment of the ranks expressed at this conference. ■

By CARL FINAMORE

SAN FRANCISCO—ACLU attorneys filed suit in Federal court on Jan. 19 on behalf of three socialists who refuse to disclose the identity of contributors to their 1988 Socialist Action local election campaign.

The candidates, Joseph Ryan and Sylvia Weinstein, and their treasurer, Joni Jacobs, face a fine of \$10,000 per violation and a prohibition against running for office for four years. If convicted, the socialists could be cited for a minimum of four violations.

The Ryan-Weinstein campaign has argued that public disclosure would subject contributors to police and government harassment. The campaign did disclose the amount of money it raised and spent.

The District Attorney of San Francisco previously warned the campaign committee on Oct. 21 that it was in violation of the law and must "comply immediately with the disclosure requirements...."

The three socialists decided to file for a permanent injunction before actual criminal prosecution against them began.

## Socialist Action files lawsuit against S.F.

At their first court appearance on Jan. 19, ACLU attorneys won an agreement that the city would postpone any prosecution until a later court hearing, which was set for March 15. Both San Francisco daily newspapers reported on this court victory.

### Evidence of harassment

The Socialist Action lawsuit mentions numerous court precedents establishing the right of non-disclosure by minor parties that fear government reprisal. A large packet of evidence has also been submitted which disproves the D.A.'s claim that there is no discrimination against political activists in San Francisco.

For example, the ACLU recently exposed a massive surveillance operation by the police and FBI against organizations participating in local demonstrations. The ACLU was among

the groups targeted.

But the city denies it all. A popular weekly in San Francisco, the *Bay Guardian*, recently asked for a list of all intelligence files kept by the police department.

The newspaper received a letter from Deputy City Attorney Mara Rosales stating that "the Department informs us that it does not maintain a list of its intelligence files." Requests for information on specific groups resulted in the same stonewalling.

A similar request by the Socialist Action candidates was also denied.

### Police have no Intelligence?

Very few people actually believe this coverup. In fact, the lawsuit by the socialists contains powerful evidence exposing unconstitutional police spying and harassment. The city's investigation of the brutal San

Francisco police attack on United Farmworker union leader Dolores Huerta is cited as proof.

The grand jury refused to indict the police officers responsible for the beating of Huerta. On the contrary, using police logic, the grand jury recommended that the cops increase their spying of protest groups.

The report states that "the Intelligence Bureau should keep apprised of the growing number of protest groups and inform tactical units and ranking officers of the potential for violence and/or size of crowds which may be encountered."

The report also advises that "police liaisons from the Intelligence Bureau should meet to provide TAC units with identification of particular groups and their mode of operations (civil disobedience, agitation, etc.)."

On March 15, a Federal Judge will hear arguments from both sides. A clear-cut victory protecting the rights of privacy and free speech will benefit the broader fight against government abuse of our constitutional liberties. ■

## ... Bush

(continued from page 1)

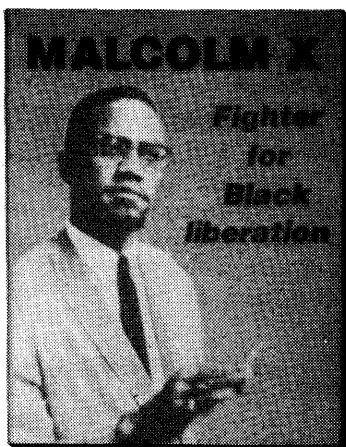
'70s. But these movements were demobilized by leaderships who instead called for support for the Democratic Party.

This mistaken policy allowed the government and the employers to chip away at civil liberties and living standards without challenge. A return to mass action is the necessary prerequisite to change the relationship of forces in the political arena.

The April 9 Washington, D.C., National March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives, called by the National Organization for Women (NOW), is a critical moment in the fight to defend the past gains of the movement. A demonstration is planned on the same date in San Francisco for West Coast supporters of women's rights who can't get to Washington.

All forces for social change should work to build these mass actions. We must not allow the Supreme Court, George Bush, and the Republican and Democratic lawmakers to whittle away our rights and our livelihood. — The editors

## Order your Socialist Action pamphlet



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# Pro-choice forces win court case against phony clinics

A unique victory was recently achieved when the California Superior Court ruled that "fake clinics" in California are deceiving people. It permanently enjoined the Free Pregnancy Center and the Robert Pearson Foundation from false advertising and deception. In addition, they may not engage in any conduct likely to deceive the public regarding abortions.

Below is an interview with Ann Menasche, a long-time activist in the fight for equal rights and one of two attorneys representing pro-choice advocates in the case. The other attorney is Julise Johanson. Gretchen Mackler did the interview for Socialist Action.

**Socialist Action:** Ann, how did you get involved in this case?

**Ann Menasche:** We were contacted by Carla Abbotts, a woman who had gone to a Free Pregnancy Center for a pregnancy test and was given more than she bargained for. She was shown a degrading slideshow depicting bloody fetuses and women dying from abortions.

The slide show clearly presented abortions as being very life threatening. The center staff also persuaded her not to choose abortion. She would not have gone to seek advice at the center had she known what the outcome would be.

**S.A.:** The pro-choice movement is aware that many of these so-called pregnancy centers are set up and supported by Robert J. Pearson. How did he figure in this case?

**Menasche:** Robert J. Pearson is a multi-millionaire who has embarked upon a crusade to turn the clock back to the days of dangerous self-induced abortions. He has developed the "Pearson Method" of thwarting women's right to abortions.

He gives workshops around the country helping the anti-abortion cause establish their deceptive clinics. His manual outlines in detail how to get the abortion-bound mother into the centers through false and misleading advertising and telephone techniques. He presently boasts of having 200 such anti-abortion centers throughout the nation.

**S.A.:** Has this case attracted support for the pro-choice movement?

**Menasche:** Definitely yes, and more than that, it uncovered a horror story which our case helped to expose. After we announced to the press that we and the Committee to Defend Reproductive Rights (CDRR) were going to file suit against the Free Pregnancy Centers in court, we were contacted by the San Francisco Police Department.

An incredible story unfolded, considerably strengthening our case.

A young Chinese high-school student had gone to the center in San Francisco to seek an abortion. At the center, she was given the run-around, deceived and misled by a staff person over a period of weeks. When she finally realized that the center was not prepared to offer her an abortion she was too far into her pregnancy.

The center staff realized that this misled

young woman was not going to return to her parent's home. They contrived a letter detailing a phony story about her receiving an out-of-country scholarship. She was to use this letter to deceive her parents so she could be sent out away to have her baby.

Her mother, through the assistance of a YMCA translator, uncovered the lie and reported it to the San Francisco Police Department, who referred the matter to the S. F. District Attorney's Consumer Fraud Division.

**S.A.:** Now the courts have ruled that the Free Pregnancy Centers and the Pearson Foundation are restrained from deceptive anti-

abortion advertising practices. They must not imply that they are prepared to conduct abortions or that they are a medical facility.

Also, they cannot operate their slideshow without a disclaimer indicating abortion is a safe medical procedure. Do you think we've seen the last of these clinics and their deceptive techniques?

**Menasche:** This case is going to be appealed by the anti-abortionists. Meanwhile, we need to build a real pro-choice coalition from a broad spectrum of feminists, family planning clinics, pro-choice organizations, lesbian and gay groups, and the labor movement. We need a large visible statement in support of women and their right to choose.

This case has put a dent in the anti-abortion movement, and it sends a signal that women are prepared to fight for their right to choose. We need to rebuild the women's movement. Stop losing ground, and start gaining ground.

## ... abortion rights

(continued from page 1)

Oppression, and the Reproductive Rights Network—organized the event.

Braving windy, sub-freezing weather, Boston NOW President Ellen Convisser summed up the militant fightback stance of the crowd. "Last year we celebrated the anniversary [of Roe v. Wade]," Convisser said. "But this year we are commemorating it. There's nothing to celebrate now, we know that, with all of these attacks. We are mobilizing."

Demonstrating their willingness to physically defend a woman's right to choose, the pro-choice forces rallied near four major family planning clinics. These clinics have been the sites of repeated stand-offs between defenders of women's rights and Operation Rescue.

### Chicago

Proclaiming, "We won't go back to the days of back-alley abortions," some 500 pro-choice demonstrators marched from the Illinois State Building to two fake "abortion clinics" in the Loop. These clinics advertise free pregnancy tests and counseling, but tell phony horror stories about abortion in order to deny women access to it.

March organizer Cathy Christeller, director of Women Organized for Reproductive Choice, was interviewed by the *Chicago Tribune*. She pointed out that the Supreme Court decision to decide whether a Missouri law restricting access to abortion is constitutional poses "a tremendous threat" to legal abortion.

"Does the right wing control the courts? Yes," Christeller said. "Do they have the majority of people behind them? No."

### Cincinnati

Over 400 people filled a United Auto Workers union hall to hear from two former nuns who challenged the Vatican's anti-choice position.

The speakers, Barbara Ferraro and Patricia Hussey, were among the "Vatican 24," a group of nuns who signed a 1984 signature ad in *The New York Times* titled "A Diversity of Opinion Regarding Abortion Exists Among Catholics." Ferraro and Hussey, the only two nuns who refused to recant their pro-choice sentiments, were finally forced to leave their convent.

Ferraro and Hussey remain convinced that people must fight for the right to dissent. They called on women, in particular, to be "adult moral decision-makers" when it comes to reproductive rights.

Cincinnati NOW President Shirley Rosser addressed the crowd and urged a massive

turnout for the April 9 demonstration in Washington, D.C. A collection was taken to defer the cost of bus tickets from Cincinnati to Washington for the march.

### San Francisco

Shouting "Illegal Abortion, Never Again!" over 200 pro-choice activists gave up watching the home team in the Super Bowl and instead marched past a phony "abortion clinic" to the Federal Building, where they held a spirited rally.

The Bay Area Coalition Against Operation Rescue (BACAOR), organized the event, which was co-sponsored by Planned Parenthood, San Francisco Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), and San Francisco NOW.

Sylvia Weinstein, 1988 Socialist Action candidate for Board of Education, was one of the speakers at the rally. She told the crowd about the stakes involved in abortion rights. "We're talking about women's lives," she said.

Weinstein said the question was not whether overturning Roe v. Wade would stop abortions, but how many women would die from botched, illegal abortions if the decision was overturned. Weinstein and other speakers urged pro-choice activists to mobilize for April 9 both in Washington and in San Francisco.

### Elsewhere

In Los Angeles, more than 500 people piled into a room designed to hold 150 to attend a pro-choice rally organized by NOW. Pro-choice actions also took place in Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Seattle, and several other cities.

## Mobilize for April 9!



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

Common to many pro-choice events was the call to mobilize for the April 9 march in Washington, D.C. Originally conceived as a call to reintroduce the ERA into Congress, National NOW broadened the march to include defense of abortion rights.

Molly Yard, president of National NOW, has declared a "state of emergency for women" amidst the increasing attacks on legal abortion. She vows that the April 9 march will be "the biggest march for women's rights ever held."

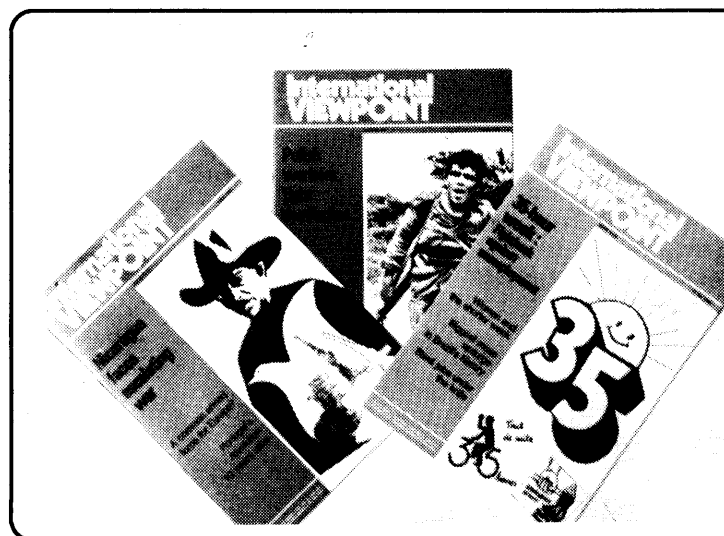
The Pro-Choice Coalition of San Francisco issued a call for a West Coast demonstration to coincide with and complement the march in Washington.

Last month more than 15 organi-

zations—including local chapters of NOW and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), which has endorsed the Washington march—met to discuss building a large pro-choice demonstration in San Francisco on April 9.

The Bay Area Coalition agreed to the same focus as the "Women's Equality/Women's Lives" theme of the Washington march. Organizers seek to involve the many pro-choice supporters who cannot attend the Washington, D.C., demonstration.

The West Coast action in San Francisco will add to the number of people speaking out on April 9 for a woman's right to choose.



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# Canadian elections: NDP snatched defeat from jaws of victory

Dave Hartman/Impact Visuals



Canada's labor party, the NDP, failed to distinguish itself from the Liberal Party in the elections.

By BARRY WEISLEDER

TORONTO—The New Democratic Party (NDP) blew it. Now an unprecedented debate on election strategy is underway in the party and its affiliated unions—leading up to the NDP federal convention next August in Winnipeg.

Over a 15-month period the social democratic, labor-based NDP tumbled from first place and over 42-percent popular support (according to opinion polls) down to its traditional third place and 20 percent in the Nov. 21 federal election in the Canadian state.

The party's lackluster performance allowed the scandal-plagued Progressive Conservative Party to form a second consecutive parliamentary majority government. Despite a 7-percent decline from their 1984 results, the Tories captured 169 of the 295 seats.

The NDP's slide particularly benefited the Liberal Party, which rose from a nearly paralytic internal leadership crisis to grab second place and double its parliamentary representation to 82 seats.

Although the NDP vote showed a 2.4-percent increase and elected 43 members of Parliament (its largest caucus ever), this result fell far short of all pre-election projections. In fact, NDP gains, which were concentrated in the western provinces, were largely the product of a shift of Tory votes to far-right parties.

So how did the NDP manage to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory? How did it fail to make the much-anticipated historical breakthrough, especially in Quebec?

The NDP brass took working people for granted, overlooking the gains made by the party in the wake of the 1986 strike wave. It tried to comfort conservative petty-bourgeois opinion by distancing itself from NDP anti-NATO policy, by advocating increased expenditures on Canada's armed forces, by attacking Quebec's language law, and by promising to be a willing partner in a capitalist coalition government.

Frankly, this approach didn't work because it couldn't work. That's not what people who

would newly consider voting for a labor party are looking for.

## A false debate

A week after the elections, public soul-searching for the New Democrats began during the Ontario Federation of Labour Convention in Toronto. On Nov. 28, United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Canadian District 6 Director Leo Gerrard complained that the NDP had downplayed its opposition to the recently negotiated "free-trade" deal with the United States.

The pact, ratified by Parliament in November, aims to eliminate most tariffs and duties on goods crossing the border over a 10-year period. It became the central issue in the elections, evoking both chauvinist anti-Americanism and legitimate concern about the future of social programs and government intervention in the economy.

But Gerrard's charges were off the mark. Next to the rather vacuous demand for "honesty and integrity in government," opposition to the trade deal was the major plank in the NDP election campaign. The problem was that the NDP's position was barely distinguishable from that of the Liberal Party.

NDP and labor leaders simply echoed Liberal claims that the trade deal would lead to a U.S. takeover of Canada (Canada is itself one of the seven leading imperialist countries in the world), and with it the loss of Canadian sovereignty and culture.

To this was added the usual social-democratic prescriptions for band-aid tax reform and "fiscal responsibility." The Liberals actually promised to spend much more to meet social needs than did the "responsible" NDP.

## Plugging the holes

NDP strategists had to scramble to salvage their traditional bases of support in the face of a Liberal resurgence following the televised leaders' debate. This rescue operation could be carried out only by attacking the Liberals, one of the twin parties of Canadian imperialist big business.

Of course, NDP leader Ed Broadbent should have been doing this from the beginning. Instead, he promoted the possibility of a coalition government with the Liberals, and even with the Tories, "in the interests of

parliamentary stability."

But the NDP shift in tactics was too late to reverse the trend to the Liberals by mid-November. The Pro-Canada Network (including the arch-reformist Communist Party of Canada, which fielded 50 candidates, few of whom received even 200 votes) helped to create an "anyone but Brian" [Mulroney, the incumbent prime minister] atmosphere among working people.

This was bound to benefit the Liberal Party, the traditional party of government in this century, with its superior apparatus and regional bases. The NDP, as a social-democratic labor party, couldn't hope to beat the Liberals at their own game of campaigning on a liberal-nationalist platform.

## Quebec is key

More Canadian nationalism would not have helped the NDP campaign. But a little Quebecois nationalism (the ideology of the oppressed, French-speaking, working-class majority in Quebec) wouldn't have hurt.

Instead, Broadbent publicly attacked his own candidates in Quebec when they spoke out in defense of pro-French language Law 101 (subsequently ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada on Dec. 15).

Broadbent also disowned them when they criticized Federal Bill C-72, legislation to authorize the expenditure of millions of dollars to promote the use of English in Quebec. And to its disgrace, the federal NDP caucus voted for the bill.

By once again demonstrating its hostility to the national aspirations of Quebecois workers, the NDP squandered a truly historic opportunity to make a breakthrough, despite having dozens of well-rooted, French-speaking candidates and—for the first time—the active support of the Quebec Federation of Labour. Such is the price of abject loyalty to the Canadian state.

## Two prescriptions for disaster

In early December, Robert White, president of the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) and a vice president of the federal NDP, issued a seven-page letter that bitterly attacked party electoral strategists for ignoring labor's ideas and leadership.

Seen as the opening salvo in White's bid for the NDP leadership, the letter accuses party officials of structuring the NDP's

campaign so as "to distance itself from the labor movement, both in appearance and issues."

There is much truth to what White wrote. But White and his colleagues in the Pro-Canada Network, an umbrella organization of anti-free-trade groups that include Canadian businessmen and Liberal politicians, offer no genuine alternative for working people.

White advocates inflationary protectionist policies rather than correctly portraying the "free-trade" deal with the United States as part of an international employers' offensive to drive down wages and working conditions—which can only be defeated by the mass mobilization of the working class.

Former NDP National Secretary Gerald Caplan also offers some observations to resolve the NDP's dilemma. Caplan's point of departure is economic policy—from the right.

Favorably citing austerity-minded social-democratic governments in Spain, New Zealand, France, Australia, and Sweden, Caplan urges the NDP to be more concerned with creating wealth rather than with redistributing it. (As if wealth is created by attacking workers' income and benefits!)

In Caplan's view, "That means moving well beyond outdated Keynesianism as well as discredited left-wing panaceas of wholesale nationalization." (As if the NDP ever advocated the latter!)

So Bob White wants the NDP to be more nationalist than the Liberals, and Gerald Caplan wants the party to embrace economic policy that will crowd out the Tories to the right. Both prescriptions are a deadly diversion for workers.

## The Tory agenda

The main result of the Nov. 21 federal election—yet another Tory majority government—gives the Canadian ruling class the green light to step up its anti-worker offensive. Implementation of the trade deal is just part of it.

Waiting in the wings is the new federal sales tax, which promises to be a substantial redistributor of wealth from workers to the government and corporations.

The Tory agenda of privatization (Air Canada, PetroCanada, Canada Post Corporation, etc.), deregulation of industry, and social-expenditure cutbacks will forge ahead.

An attempt to impose a new, anti-choice, anti-woman abortion law can be expected too. And instead of a much-needed expansion of childcare services, we can anticipate a bigger budget for the military (complete with multibillion-dollar nuclear-powered submarines).

Meanwhile, the federal Tories will continue to drive for ratification by the provinces of the Meech Lake constitutional amendments, which fail (despite appearances) to guarantee Quebec control over its own language and culture. At the same time, they weaken federal social programs and block future reform—just like the trade deal.

## The challenge is clear

The focus of the labor movement, and the NDP for that matter, must shift from the parliament of elections to the parliament of the streets. To wait four years for the next election is to court disaster. Now is the time to act, to organize our resistance as working people.

In 1975 Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau introduced wage controls (after promising not to do so in the 1974 election). The labor movement responded in October 1976 with a general strike in which over 1 million workers participated.

Is today's Tory agenda less threatening than Trudeau's? Can we afford to respond to it in any way less militant, less massive, less determined than our fight against wage controls? Labor should place the government and employers on notice that we will defend jobs, rights, and services with mass protest actions—including strike action. ■

Barry Weisleder is president of Local 595, Ontario Public Service Employees Union. He is a supporter of the publication *Socialist Challenge/Gauche Socialiste*.

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# 1919 Seattle general strike: For the first time in U.S., labor ruled a major city

By JOSEPH RYAN

This month marks the 70th anniversary of the 1919 Seattle general strike. For five working days—from Feb. 6 to Feb. 11, 1919—the Seattle labor movement ruled a city. It was the first general strike in U.S. history.

The catalyst for this historic event was a strike by Seattle shipyard workers, who were fighting for higher wages after suffering under a wartime-imposed wage freeze and no-strike pledge.

During the First World War, the wages of the shipyard workers were controlled by a government-appointed council known as the Macy Board. They kept the wages low, making appeals to the workers to make sacrifices for the "patriotic" war effort. By the beginning of 1919, the patience of the shipyard workers was pushed as far as it could go.

But once the war was ended, however, the government didn't need as much shipbuilding. It now saw a chance, in collaboration with the local bosses, to break the militant shipyard unions in Seattle—a city long considered a

rich with militant labor history. As the West Coast port grew by leaps and bounds during the shipbuilding heyday of the war, so did the unions. Of the 300,000 inhabitants in Seattle, over 60,000 belonged to unions.

The labor movement in Seattle had strong traditions of radicalism. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) had forged a strong base among the loggers and longshore workers. Left-wing socialists, utopian socialists, and radicals in general, had deep roots in all the local labor organizations.

Socialist and radical publications proliferated as bitter battles were waged by both the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the IWW to organize unions in the face of vicious employer resistance. In fact, Seattle was the first city to have a daily labor-published newspaper.

Many trade unionists were inspired by the example of the Russian Revolution, which was then fighting for its life against imperialist intervention. In one incident, longshore workers refused to load ships that were delivering

owned *Seattle Times* stated that a general strike was impossible: "A general strike directed at WHAT? The government of the United States? Bosh! Not 15 percent of Seattle laborites would consider such a proposition."

But to their surprise, when the fateful day of Thursday, Feb. 6 arrived, every trade unionist in Seattle dropped their tools, turned off their machines, and went home. The city was shut tight.

The General Strike Committee assumed the role of a dual government in the city. With all services shut down, it fell to the strike committee to determine what services would be run. The act of shutting down the city automatically put control in the hands of the workers.

The employers, the mayor, and the business-owned press ranted and raved about the "Bolshevik-inspired" general strike, but they still had to present themselves to the strike committee, hats in hand, to ask for permission to "load a particular ship" or "keep a certain business open." [See box for text of labor proclamation on how Seattle would be run during the general strike.]

## Lack of clear focus

Since this was the first time the general strike was used by labor, mistakes were bound to be made. The strike had no clear focus and its duration was never decided by the strike committee.

While the strike was organized to solidarize with the shipyard workers, it made no clear demands on the government. There was also tremendous pressure being put on the strike committee by the national AFL, which was opposed to the action from the beginning.

Three days into the general strike, some unions began to return to work. The strike committee, seeing the writing on the wall, voted to end the city-wide walkout on Thursday, Feb. 11.

But the workers wanted to have the last word. In a gesture that was designed to "thumb noses" at the bosses, many of the unionists who returned to work earlier walked off their jobs again so they could march with the whole labor movement on Feb. 11. The unionists returned to their jobs as an organized body—with their heads held high.

armaments to the White Armies in Russia. The Seattle unionists were clamoring to come to the aid of the shipyard workers.

## Strike!

Under pressure from the shipyard unions, the Seattle Central Labor Council carried out a general strike referendum among all the unions. The vote was overwhelming for a general strike.

At a Feb. 2 special meeting of union representatives, three from each union, a General Strike Committee was constituted, which elected an executive committee of 15. The General Strike Committee set Feb. 6 as the day for the strike to begin.

The employers predicted the strike would fail. The capitalist-

## 'The act of shutting down the city automatically put control in the hands of the workers'

"hotbed" of labor unrest and radicalism.

When 30,000 shipyard workers struck on Jan. 21, 1919, their chances for victory were slim. The government could have cared less about the shipyards being closed; they had planned on closing them now that war production was down.

The ensuing stalemate—with the yards closed and the strikers "withering on the vine"—inflamed the rest of the Seattle labor movement into action. Agitation spread throughout the city for a general strike in sympathy with the workers. A showdown was inevitable.

## "Red" Seattle

It was no accident that the first general strike in American history



## Labor's Proclamation

There will be many cheering, and there will be some who fear. Both these emotions are useful, but not too much of either. We are undertaking the most tremendous move ever made by LABOR in this country, a move which will lead — NO ONE KNOWS WHERE.

We do not need hysteria.

We need the iron march of labor.

LABOR WILL FEED THE PEOPLE.

Twelve great kitchens have been offered, and from them food will be distributed by the provision trades at low cost to all.

LABOR WILL CARE FOR THE BABIES AND THE SICK.

The milk-wagon drivers and the laundry drivers are arranging plans for supplying milk to babies, invalids and hospitals, and taking care of the cleaning of linen for hospitals.

LABOR WILL PRESERVE ORDER.

The strike committee is arranging for guards, and it is expected that the stopping of the cars will keep people at home.

A few hot-headed enthusiasts have complained that strikers only should be fed, and the general public left to endure severe discomfort. Aside from the inhumanitarian character of such suggestions, let them get this straight —

NOT THE WITHDRAWAL OF LABOR POWER, BUT THE POWER OF THE STRIKERS TO MANAGE WILL WIN THIS STRIKE. ...

The closing down of Seattle's industries, as a MERE SHUTDOWN, will not affect these eastern gentlemen much. They could let the whole northwest go to pieces, as far as money alone is concerned.

BUT, the closing down of the capitalistically controlled industries of Seattle, while the WORKERS ORGANIZE to feed the people, to care for the babies and the sick, to preserve order — THIS will move them, for this looks too much like the taking over of POWER by the workers.

Labor will not only SHUT DOWN the industries, but LABOR will REOPEN, under the management of the appropriate trades, such activities as are needed to preserve public health and public peace. If the strike continues, Labor may feel led to avoid public suffering by reopening more and more activities, UNDER ITS OWN MANAGEMENT.

And that is why we say that we are starting on a road that leads — NO ONE KNOWS WHERE.

Less than a month later, the shipyard workers were forced to return to work under pre-strike conditions.

Many labor historians probably consider the Seattle general strike to be a defeat for labor. After all, in the end, the shipyard workers were defeated. But many unionists who participated in the first-ever American general strike felt differently.

The vast majority of unionists saw the strike as a trial of trade-union strength, and not a call for social revolution. Undoubtedly, they were surprised at how easily they could shut down the city, and on the other hand, run the city so efficiently. A scant 15 years later, many of these trade unionists led the way for the big labor upsurge in the 1930s. They had tasted the potential power of the working class, and it stayed with them. ■

## ... Black

(continued from page 16)

Rainbow Coalition prior to the 1984 presidential elections, the party was ill prepared to withstand the pressures of being swept into Jackson's Democratic Party coalition. By July 1984, NBIPP was essentially non-existent. Soon many of its leaders would become the main organizers for Jackson's Rainbow Coalition.

## Purge of left wing

In this light, it is not surprising that in 1983 the NBIPP leadership engineered the expulsion of a large number of NBIPP members who had "left-wing" affiliations, among them dozens of members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

In the spring of 1982, the SWP press printed the charter that had been adopted at the NBIPP founding congress in 1980. This became the excuse for the NBIPP leadership, which had refused to publish and disseminate

the charter, to launch a "red-baiting" campaign.

The leadership understood correctly that making the NBIPP charter available to radicalizing Black workers and youth would make it more difficult for them to implement their pro-Democratic Party orientation.

The expulsions were carried through on the premise that SWP members and others had divided loyalties and a conflict of interest; that they had their own agenda they were attempting to carry out within NBIPP.

The reactionary nature of this action is highlighted by the fact that NBIPP members who belonged to the capitalist Democratic Party were *not* considered to have "divided loyalties." They, in fact, were the ones behind the expulsion of the SWP members, who were very vocal in their stance against support to any capitalist candidates—i.e., they simply wanted to uphold and implement the NBIPP charter.

A political purge was then necessary to impose the leadership's "dual-strategy" line. The NBIPP leadership denied that it was engaged in any form of "red-baiting" and instead claimed that it was simply protecting the party from "outside takeover."

It was during this period that many NBIPP members who wanted to uphold their charter became demoralized by the infighting and sectarianism and began voting with their feet, leaving what appeared to them to be an inactive organization.

## No balance sheet

On Dec. 2-4, 1988, 80 to 100 past NBIPP members gathered at Howard University in Washington, D.C., to discuss what NBIPP had accomplished, what errors it made in the past, and what lay on the road ahead. The meeting was organized by Ron Daniels, former national co-chair of NBIPP and more recently the national chair of the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign.

Sadly, according to reports received from this meeting, no viable political perspective was laid out there. No acknowledgement was made of the error committed by NBIPP's leadership of steering the party into the Democratic Party orbit.

And how could it be otherwise when the person convening the meeting was one of the people most responsible for taking NBIPP into the Democratic Party and for purging the party's left wing?

By ALAN BENJAMIN

# Economic crisis sparks debate in Nicaragua over revolution's course

The Nicaraguan economy, all observers agree, is rapidly disintegrating. The inflation rate in 1988, according to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, was 20,000 percent. More than one third of the workforce is unemployed. Factories close for lack of electric power. Hospitals are infested with vermin.

Tens of thousands of Nicaraguans are leaving the country in search of a better livelihood, mainly in the United States. Most are unemployed workers and poor urban dwellers. But a large number of those emigrating are skilled professionals, many of them defectors from the Sandinistas' own ranks.

And, for the first time in decades, there is widespread hunger—particularly among the children. Photos of entire families digging through garbage heaps in search of food have captured the tragedy of a war-weary population fighting desperately to survive.

## New course under discussion

Over the past few weeks, according to official Nicaraguan government spokespersons, the nine Sandinista government commanders have been meeting for as many as four hours a day to discuss what to do about the deteriorating economy. In mid-January, an extraordinary closed session of the Sandinista National Assembly was also held to take up this burning topic.

Sources close to the Sandinista leadership have reported that the government is seriously considering enacting economic and political measures that could radically modify the course of the Nicaraguan Revolution. These sources claim that among the policies under consideration are the return of confiscated lands and factories to the Nicaraguan capitalists.

In early January, government leaders approached leading representatives of the capitalist opposition for informal talks.

Ramiro Gudián, head of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), the major association of the Nicaraguan capitalists, said he was told by FSLN

Commander Luis Carrión, the Minister of Economy, that the Sandinistas now recognize "past mistakes."

"They say they should have been backing the private sector in the very beginning and that from now on, they will back us," Gudián said. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 28, 1989)

## Heightened anticipation

The latest flurry of debate over the future course of the economy comes amid growing speculation in the international press that Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega is ready to make a new peace overture to George Bush. *The New York Times*, for example, notes that "Many Nicaraguan leaders in and out of the government, believe there will soon be new talks aimed at creating a more open political climate." (Jan. 17, 1989)

Speculation over the Sandinistas' expected new course has been nourished by a growing number of conciliatory statements by top FSLN leaders and advisers that include the view that "1989 will be the year of 'normalization.'"

Also, in a statement reprinted with a favorable comment by the right-wing daily *La Prensa*, Economy Minister Luis Carrión ruled out further government expropriations of capitalist property.

"We do not see a leftward shift as a viable alternative," Carrión said. "The Sandinistas to embark on the course of 'creat[ing] a socialist state," he continued, "we would probably not create any socialist state at all. We would only bring upon ourselves an even more disastrous and chaotic situation than what we have now." (*La Prensa*, Nov. 15, 1988)

In a similar vein, FSLN Commander Bayardo Arce recently told *Barricada*, the official Sandinista newspaper, that the Sandinista leadership group is in the process of revising its "perception of reality" and "redefining how the Nicaraguan Revolution is going to advance." (quoted in *The New York Times*, Jan. 17, 1989)

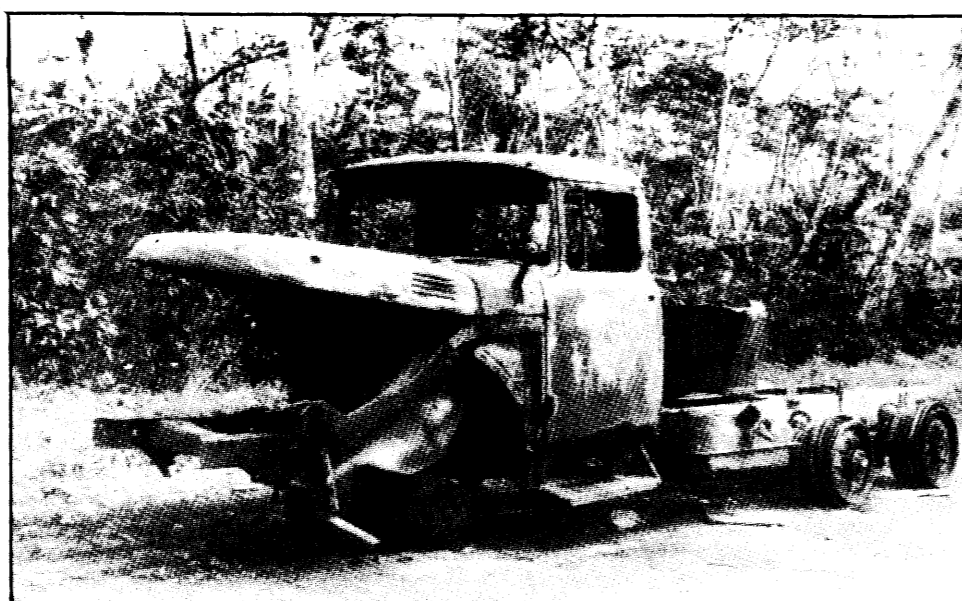
## The example of Inturismo

The Nicaraguan capitalists' anticipation of big changes to come has also been fueled by concrete actions taken by the Nicaraguan government in recent months.

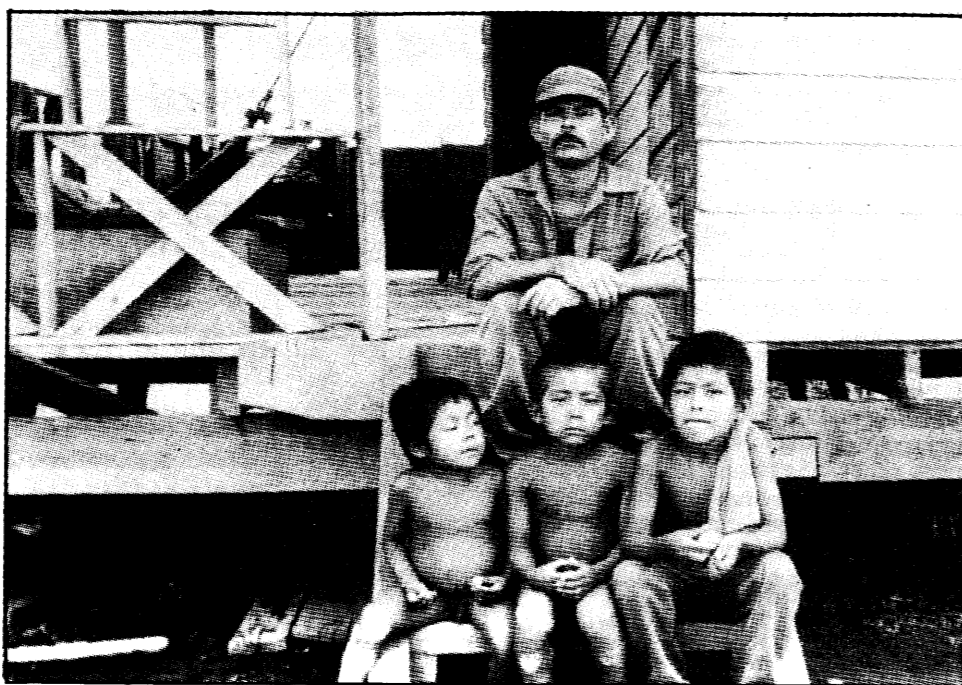
Last November, for example, Nicaraguan Minister of Tourism Herty Lewites announced that Inturismo, the state tourism corporation, had decided to privatize the state-owned hotels and restaurants, a substantial industry in Nicaragua.

The Nov. 11 edition of *La Prensa* includes interviews with 10 of the capitalists who met with Lewites to hear his privatization proposal. They all said they welcomed the idea but were reluctant to sink in a lot of capital at this time. Marthon Daetz, head of the firm AS-Daetz, told *La Prensa* that the Sandinistas "have yet to offer a favorable climate for investment."

Soon after this measure was announced,



**'Purpose of contra war was to cripple the economy and bring the Sandinistas to the negotiating table.'**



J.M. Rodrigo

Adolfo Miranda, a columnist for the pro-Sandinista daily *El Nuevo Diario*, applauded the government's decision. "It represent[s] the road forward not only for Inturismo, but for other state entities as well."

But for the privatization effort to be

successful, Miranda warned, there are "two indispensable conditions: Private businessmen must have sufficient guarantees to confidently invest, and workers must act maturely and not obstruct administrative and management efforts."

and I repeat, we are over 4000 workers."

## Revolutionary gains under threat

The Nicaraguan capitalists and their U.S.-government supporters resorted to open warfare against the Sandinista government in mid-1981 in order to press the Sandinistas to relinquish their monopoly on political power.

The purpose of the contra war was to cripple the economy and bring the Sandinistas to the negotiating table, where some form of power-sharing scheme could be worked out.

Despite the hefty government subsidies and credits granted yearly to induce them to invest productively, the Nicaraguan capitalists have been unwilling to coexist with the Sandinistas in the framework of a mixed

economy that denies them political power. They have "decapitalized"—that is, they have taken an estimated \$1.7 billion out of the country since the beginning of the revolution. [See accompanying articles in this section.]

If the Sandinistas expect the Nicaraguan capitalists—and ultimately imperialist investors—to come to the aid of the war-ravaged Nicaraguan economy, they will have to make the political concessions demanded of them. They will have to undermine and reverse the gains of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

This is the dilemma the Sandinista leaders face as they tackle the problems of a devastated economy. ■

## 'Government policies fuel growing social polarization'

In an interview with Alexander Cockburn published in the December 1988 issue of *Z Magazine*, Carlos Vilas, an Argentine economist and author of numerous books on Nicaragua, provides deep insight into the problems of the Nicaraguan economy.

Vilas speaks from first-hand experience. He worked in Nicaragua from 1980 to 1987, first at the Ministry of Education, then at the Ministry of Planning, then at the Ministry of Labor, and finally on a research project in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast region.

In his interview, Vilas describes the debates during the first years of the revolution over national policy priorities:

"There were two basic options: agro-exports versus development of the internal market and of basic consumption. In the end the agro-export strategy was preferred, which was mostly the MIDINRA [Ministry of Agrarian Reform] strategy and also the one dear to the heart of the segment of the more conservative bourgeoisie that was an important part of the government.

"So they said agro-exports would be the national salary paying for development projects. They thought that this support of agro-exports—coffee, cotton, sugar, bananas—would prove to the private sector that the government had a real commitment to defend and expand the mixed-economy strategy.

"But of course there were problems. First, the evolution, downward, of international commodity prices; second, private enterprise turned out not to be as committed to the mixed economy as the Sandinistas hoped."

## Punishing workers and peasants

Elsewhere in his interview, Vilas describes how the austerity measures implemented by the Sandinistas in February 1988 have severely punished Nicaragua's workers and peasants:

"If you look at the evolution of wages from 1980 to 1987, with 1980 as 100, they have dropped from 100 to 11. If this goes on, the working class will disintegrate and become self-employed, vendors, good-for-nothings, and the like. Is this the kind of society a revolution wants to build?"

"True, the middle and upper classes have been forced to pay, too, but they have managed far better because they started higher on the scale. This is one of the reasons why social differences are so deep in Nicaragua right now. There's been an additional polarization of incomes."

Vilas strongly criticizes the introduction of diplomatic "dollar" stores, where Nicaraguans can buy consumer items in dollars.

"The dollar stores introduce additional social differences between those who have dollars and those who don't. ... Outside the stores there are scores of children begging and people trying to get into the stores, asking you to get things for them. What has this to do with the Sandinista revolution and the war against the contras?"—A.B.

## Death of a contra



The coffin of top contra leader Dr. Manuel Rugama is carried into St. Paul's Church in San Francisco on Jan. 13. Rugama was killed in Honduras by unknown assailants. It is rumored his death is connected to political disputes among the contras.

The contra forces, defeated militarily, are split over how to deal with negotiations with the Sandinistas. One wing, led by Alfredo César, argues the contras must now accept the opening offered by the Sandinistas so as to eventually drive them from power.

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

## 'Maintenance of mixed economy, a principal reason for crisis'

By JOHN MILLER and JOE RICCIARDI

The following are excerpts from a lengthy article on the Nicaraguan economy that appeared in the January-February 1989 issue of *Dollars and Sense* magazine, which is published in Somerville, Mass.

John Miller teaches economics at Wheaton College. He worked in Niquinohomo, Nicaragua. Joe Ricciardi teaches economics at Babson College. He worked at the Central Bank of Nicaragua and taught economics at the University of Central America in Managua.

With traditional government spending, such as the defense budget, already consuming

more than government revenues, subsidies aimed at inducing private investment produced deficits amounting to 11.7 percent of GDP.

Within the progressive community, the usual explanation of what forced the Sandinistas to adopt an austerity program [in February 1988] is U.S. imperialism.

Without doubt, the economic cost of U.S.-sponsored military, trade, and financial aggression has been severe. Estimates range from \$1.4 billion to \$4 billion—equivalent to the destruction of nearly three years of Nicaragua's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Foreign aggression alone, however, does not fully account for the problems within Nicaragua's economy. The financial costs of maintaining the political alliance with the wealthy producers—who would gladly throw

the Sandinistas out of power—are also a principal reason for the severe economic crisis.

These subsidies have been a major contributor to the nation's deficits and therefore its hyperinflation. (Over the last eight years, the Sandinistas have financed these deficits primarily by printing money, substantially contributing to inflation.)

The lion's share of these deficits (9.8 percent of GDP) arose from exchange-rate losses by government subsidies to exporters. Large producers, who control the majority of private lands tilled for export crops, were the chief beneficiaries of these subsidies.

The other private-sector subsidy that has contributed to the deficit is the massive dose of free credit the state has distributed to

producers. The Nicaraguan government financed 100 percent of working capital and new investments at interest rates far below the rate of inflation, while much of private capital was in flight to Miami. About three-quarters of agricultural credit went to the export sector dominated by large producers.

## "Sacrificing the working class"

The Sandinistas were well aware that concessions to large producers contributed to inflation and imposed additional sacrifices on the Nicaraguan people. Inflation eroded average real earnings in 1988 to less than 10 percent of 1981 levels. Tomás Borge, Minister of the Interior, observed in 1987 that the Sandinistas had "sacrificed the working class in favor of the economy as part of a strategic plan."

Hence it is even more tragic that the credit and exchange-rate subsidies financed by the people did not provide a "favorable investment climate" for large private production in the face of the contra war. Although more than 60 percent of production has remained in private hands since the

revolution, the private sector has accounted for only 20 percent of investment.

## Antagonistic class alliance

At this juncture, the central question for Nicaragua appears to be the viability of its mixed economy.

When socialist revolutionary goals are joined at the hip with private control of production, economic performance is at the mercy of unstable and ultimately antagonistic class alliances.

In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas have faced intransigent large producers whose only term for negotiation is the Sandinistas' relinquishment of political power. Capitalists fear that no matter what concessions the government grants them, they are being asked to invest in their own euthanasia. Large producers refuse to invest, and the private sector generates lackluster performance.

The economic battle initiated in February 1988 [with the adoption of the austerity measures] will continue after the contra war is over. In some ways, it will be as difficult to win as the war itself. ■

## San Antonio workers protest

Several months after the July 13, 1988, nationalization of the San Antonio sugar plantation and refinery, the workers began to mobilize to demand better wages and working conditions.

Production has increased substantially, but the workers claim they have received no benefits. In fact, many of them are angrier than before.

[The former owners, the wealthy Pellas family, had received 60 percent of all state money devoted to the sugar industry to stimulate production. But they had totally decapitalized the plant. In 1987 alone, \$30 million were taken out of San Antonio and used to open a bank in the United States.]

A considerable percentage of the sugarcane cutters, Nicaraguan economist Orlando Morales told *Socialist Action*, are

opposed to the new daily production norms and wage rate—six tons of cut cane at 400 córdobas a ton. They claim their wage does not even permit them to provide food for their families.

The workers have demanded that the scales used by the previous owners, which were rigged to underpay the cutters, be corrected. They have also complained that the prices in the state stores have gone up while wages have not, and that food bonuses have been cut in half.

Many of the workers were also outraged by a statement made by Minister of Agriculture Jaime Wheelock threatening workers who considered striking to press their demands.

On Nov. 12, Jaime Wheelock told an assembly at San Antonio: "The revolution rewards, but it also punishes. Any-

one who raises the banner of the strike will have his or her hands cut off, because it would be a crime against the people, who need sugar and the medicine that are bought with the our export earnings." (*Barricada*, Nov. 13, 1988)

The pro-contra daily *La Prensa*, posing as a friend of the Nicaraguan workers, ran a banner headline in its Nov. 14, 1988, issue proclaiming: "Violent threat to anyone who starts a strike: Wheelock threatens to 'cut off the hands of the workers.'"

*La Prensa's* article gloated that Wheelock's statement ran counter to Nicaraguan law. With the lifting of martial law in 1987, *La Prensa* noted, it is no longer illegal to strike.

Wheelock's attitude unfortunately played right into the hands of the Nicaraguan capitalists.—A.B.



# Support builds for missing Mexican political activist

## International appeal to save García Gómez

On Jan. 15, 400 workers, peasants, and students left Cuautla, in Mexico's state of Morelos, on a 90-mile march to Mexico City to demand that José Ramón García Gómez be safely "reappeared."

García Gómez, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT, Mexican section of the Fourth International) in the state of Morelos, was kidnapped in front of his home on Dec. 16, 1988. [See accompanying story.]

The march was met on the outskirts of Mexico City on Jan. 18 by 4000 people, who accompanied the marchers across the city to a rally in front of the Ministry of the Interior.

A rally was held upon the arrival of the marchers. It was addressed by García Gómez's wife, Ana Santander de García, and by former presidential candidates Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Rosario Ibarra.

Following the rally, a delegation of Edgar Sánchez, a national leader of the PRT, Rosario Ibarra, and Ana Santander de García was received by a representative of the Ministry of the Interior.

There they were told that the government had decided to form a special commission to investigate García Gómez's disappearance. Commission members include Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, Rosario Ibarra, and Monsignor Mendes Arceo.

On Jan. 18, as well, a paid advertisement appeared in the daily newspaper *La Jornada* with 1000 signatures of prominent individuals demanding García Gómez's release.

This protest came on the heels of other mass actions that began the very day García Gómez was disappeared.

For example, simultaneous demonstrations were held on Dec. 16 in both Cuautla and Cuernavaca, the capital of the state.

From Dec. 19 to Dec. 23, numerous leaders of the popular movement went on a hunger strike. And on Dec. 24, a mass rally in Cuautla with Ana Santander de García, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Rosario Ibarra brought together 5000 people to demand his immediate freedom.

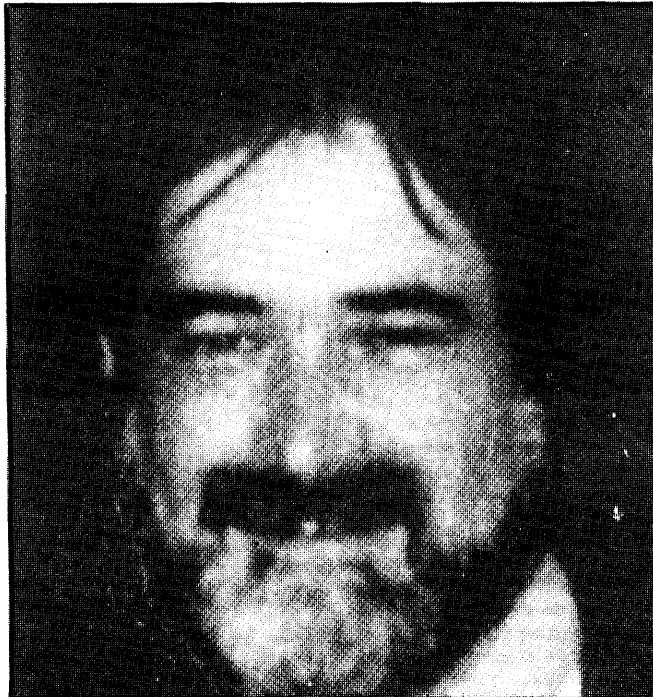
### International campaign

Thousands of signatures are being gathered internationally on a statement demanding the "reappearance" and safe return of García Gómez.

Delegations of human rights activists, trade-union leaders, and other prominent personalities have also been organized in various European and Latin American cities to take these petitions to the Mexican embassies or consulates.

In the United States, a telegram was sent from San Francisco to Mexico's Minister of the Interior. It was signed by David Aroner, Executive Director, Social Service Employees Union 535; Walter Johnson, Secretary Treasurer, San Francisco Labor Council; Margaret Butz, Deputy

### HIS LIFE IS IN DANGER!



José Ramón García Gómez

Director, SEIU 790; Bill Leumer, President, IAM 565; Howard Wallace, Field Representative, SEIU 250; Miles Myers, President, California Federation of Teachers; Bill May, Past President, American Immigration Lawyers Association; Ignacio de la Fuente, International Representative, Molders International Union; Tom Rankin, Legislative Director, California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO; Dion Aroner, Legislative Consultant to California Assemblyman Tom Bates; Lucy Rideout, President, Hayward Education Association; and Jeff Mackler, National Secretary, Socialist Action.

In France, a delegation made up of leaders of the General Federation of Labor (CGT), National Teachers Association (SNES), International Federation of Human Rights, among others, was received at the Mexican Embassy on Jan. 12.

In Brazil, a delegation of the Workers Party, the Unified Labor Federation (CUT), and other prominent supporters of democratic rights presented a petition to the Mexican Consulate in Sao Paulo on Jan. 10. They also presented a letter demanding his safe return signed by Luiza Erundina, the newly elected mayor of Sao Paulo.

José Ramón García Gómez's wife, Ana Santander de García, and his comrades have launched an international appeal for his safe return.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Rosario Ibarra, both candidates in the July 1988 presidential elections; Monsignor Mendes Arceo, Bishop of Cuernavaca; as well as deputies, prominent personalities, and thousands of workers and young people from around the world have already signed this appeal.

The appeal states in part:

"José Ramón García Gómez, former mayoral candidate for the town of Cuautla in the state of Morelos, organizer of the People's Defense Committees created after July 6, 1988, and leader of the PRT in the state of Morelos, was kidnapped on Friday, Dec. 16, 1988, at 5 p.m.

"The kidnapping took place when he left his house at number 56, calle Privada de las Palmas, in Colonia San José on his way to a meeting of the Cárdenas Front of Morelos, scheduled to take place downtown....

"On the day of his disappearance, his house was under surveillance all morning by six undercover agents.... The police had spent the morning questioning neighbors about the personal and family life of the kidnapped comrade....

"He has committed no crime, unless his political activity in working against electoral fraud can be considered as such.

"We demand of the Salinas de Gortari government the immediate liberation and safe return of our comrade."

In Spain, a 32-person delegation including various national deputies and trade-union leaders of the General Workers Union (UGT) presented a similar petition to the Mexican Embassy in Madrid on Jan. 10.

Similar efforts are being organized in Switzerland, Peru, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal.

### What you can do

Readers of *Socialist Action* can help save the life of José Ramón García Gómez. Please send letters or telegrams demanding his safe return to:

- Fernando Gutierrez Barrios, Secretario de Gobernación, Bucareli 99, Mexico D.F., Mexico;
- Antonio Riva Palacio López, Gobernador Constitucional, Estado de Morelos, Palacio de Gobierno, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.

Please send copies of letters or telegrams to the National Front Against Repression, Medellín 366, Col. Roma Sur, 06760 Mexico, D.F. Mexico. ■

By ADAM WOOD

The small industrial town of Ciudad Madero was awakened by the blasts of a bazooka on Jan. 10. Mexican police and army units were launching a raid at the home of Joaquin Hernandez Galicia, long-time leader of the Mexican oil workers union.

Galicia, better known as La Quina, was taken from his home in his underwear after a brief gun battle. He was charged with illegal possession of weapons. Police allegedly found 200 machine guns and 30,000 rounds of ammunition in the house. About 50 other union officials were arrested in similar raids.

Workers at refineries around the country responded to La Quina's arrest with spontaneous strike actions. Notimex, Mexico's official news agency, reported that half of the nation's 18 refineries were closed by strikes. Over 20,000 oil workers protested the arrest at a Jan. 12 demonstration at the National Palace.

Many observers, while surprised at the ferocity of the government raid, were expecting some move against La Quina by the Mexican government. A strong antagonism had developed over the years between La Quina and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

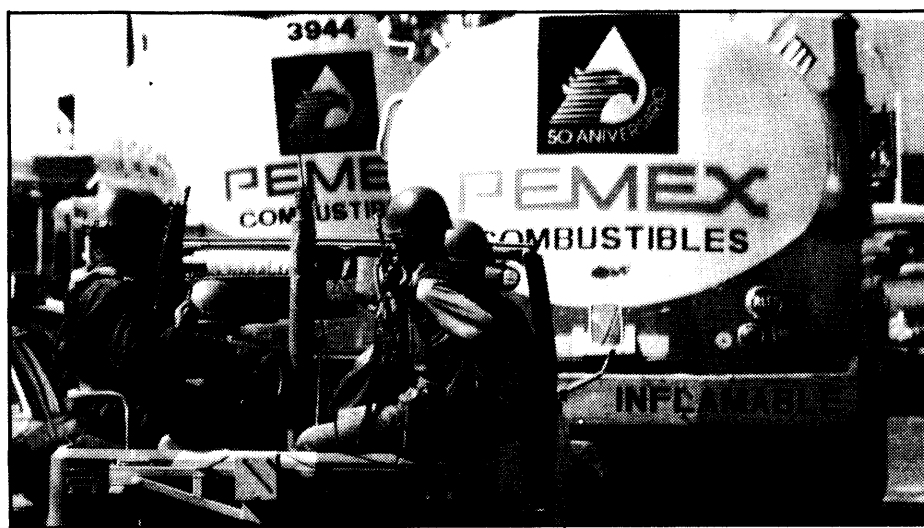
Under former President Miguel de la Madrid, Salinas, then Minister of Finance, had blocked union attempts to extend control over Pemex, Mexico's oil industry. During the last presidential campaign, La Quina tried to block Salinas's nomination as candidate of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

After Salinas received the nomination, La Quina and the oil workers gave under-the-table support to opposition candidate Cuauhtémoc Cardenas in the form of campaign contributions and rallies.

The dramatic police raid against one of the most powerful individuals in the country was meant to drive a message home. But what exactly was that message?

Salinas and others in the Mexican government have railed against the corruption

## Mexico's rulers launch attack on oil workers



20,000 oil workers protested arrest of union leader "La Quina."

in the leadership of the oil workers union. There is truth to this charge. The union is one of the most powerful in Latin America, and the leadership has amassed tremendous wealth through privately owned businesses and services financed by union funds.

### Dumping the "trade-off"

In the town of Ciudad Madero, the supermarkets, funeral homes, garages, and gas stations are owned by the union. Leaders such as La Quina are also known to commit violence against political opponents within the union.

Attorney General Enrique Alvarez del Castillo insisted that the raid was nothing broader than an attack on corrupt individuals. "This is by no means an aggressive act against a specific union. It is a prosecution of crimes committed by individuals. We have

complete respect for the oil workers of Mexico."

If the government is so concerned about corruption, why did they wait until now to make a move? In fact, the ruling PRI is built on corruption. The party only won the presidency last July through massive electoral fraud.

For 40 years the PRI has made a trade-off of privileges for the nation's labor bureaucrats in exchange for labor peace and political support. La Quina and others like him are the backbone of the PRI's mass base.

"The greatest beneficiaries [of this trade-off]," according to Jorge Castaneda, professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, "were the government—which was able to impose wage and economic policies that it could never have gotten away with if confronted by real unions—and the private

sector—which paid off corrupt union leaders instead of paying decent wages to union workers."

Since the oil glut in the late 1970s threw the Mexican economy into a tailspin, the capitalists and their representatives in the ruling party have sought to dismantle most of the reforms which gave the party its populist image in the past.

Price raises and a wage freeze have been implemented. Workers' purchasing power has declined by 50 percent since the start of the decade. Oil workers, who made 10 times the minimum wage in the 1970s, make only twice the minimum wage today.

### Real goal: Union-busting

While the austerity program has succeeded in driving down the Mexican workers' standard of living, the economy still remains in a shambles. The Mexican capitalists and the U.S. banks are targeting Pemex and the other nationalized industries for privatization. Of the 1800 state-run industries in 1983, 1400 have been either privatized or closed. To complete this task, the unions must be broken.

The unions are seen as a major obstacle to Salinas's modernization program. The oil workers remain a powerful force with a strong nationalist past rooted in the 1930s' mobilizations that led to the nationalization of the oil industry under Gen. Lazaro Cardenas. Decapitating the most powerful union in Mexico would be a major blow to the labor movement as a whole.

The arrest of La Quina and the oil workers leadership was meant as a strong signal to the Mexican and international capitalists that the labor movement is getting the ax. Salinas has made it clear that the days of populism are over.

Mexican labor must be on guard against these attacks. The criminal Mexican government is incapable of fighting corruption in the unions. The Mexican workers will put forward a new leadership on their own—and once they've cleaned up their own house, the National Palace won't be far behind. ■

# The meaning of the general strike in Spain



The Dec. 14, 1988, general strike of 8 million workers shook Socialist Party's grip on unions.

By ROLAND SHEPPARD

On Dec. 14, 1988, close to 8 million Spanish workers, more than two-thirds of the entire workforce, staged a one-day general strike that paralyzed the country. It was the largest mobilization since the October 1934 Spanish general strike.

The strike had been called one month earlier by the two major Spanish union confederations, the Workers Commissions (CCOO) and the much larger General Workers Union (UGT)—linked respectively to the Communist Party (PCE) and the Socialist Party (PSOE).

In some sectors, the strike was 100 percent effective. The unions also refused to yield to orders to provide "minimum services" during the general strike and decided to organize "emergency services" themselves in appropriate areas such as health, childcare, security services, gas, and electricity. Even the soccer players struck!

Two days after the strike, on Dec. 16, another action brought tens of thousands of people into the streets of Madrid, virtually

paralyzing the city.

The central demands of the strike were around:

- dropping the Youth Employment Plan (YEP), a government-sponsored scheme to provide 800,000 jobs for young people on a part-time basis and a two-tier wage scale;
- catching up on purchasing power lost through inflation in 1988, especially among public employees;
- making pensions come up to the minimum wage; that is, to the guaranteed inter-professional wage scale;
- reviewing the conditions for granting unemployment benefits; and
- defending the right of public employees to collective bargaining.

#### Setback for PSOE government

The strike was a major setback for the PSOE government, led by Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez. For the past six years since coming to power, the PSOE government had enjoyed the support of the UGT and CCOO.

The Spanish economy had been in a

"boom" due to Spain's entry into the European Economic Community and the large investments by capitalists from other European countries who were attracted by Spain's high unemployment rate of 20 percent and its subsequent low wages.

The contradiction between the capitalist "boom," on the one hand, and increasing unemployment and austerity for the majority of the working class, on the other, led the UGT and the CCOO to break from past policies of social pacts with the government and to call a general strike.

The general strike call in turn opened the way for the expression of a long-festering social discontent. Since 1985, strikes had repeatedly occurred in various sectors, but this was the first work stoppage called jointly by the two union confederations against the government's austerity policies.

#### PSOE's tactical retreat

The PSOE did its best to prevent the strike, taking a hard line against negotiating with the unions, organizing with union officials loyal to the PSOE to try to sabotage the strike, and then threatening and using police force to

break the strike. But the unions held firm.

A week later, addressing a special session of Parliament, Felipe Gonzalez was forced to recognize the success of the strike. "The conclusion is clear, he said, "those who called it won and the government failed. The government's policy can and should be negotiated."

Gonzalez proposed a meeting to negotiate with the unions and said he was willing to drop parts, if not all, of the proposed Youth Employment Plan. He remained adamant, however, in insisting that the government would not change the direction of its economic and social policies.

Hence, while the strike may have compelled him to make a minor tactical retreat, Gonzalez has stressed that his "modernization" programs—which are responsible for the anti-working class austerity policies—will go ahead as projected. "We have no alternative," Gonzalez told the Parliament.

#### Some important lessons

The highly successful general strike of the Spanish workers should be instructive to all American workers because the Spanish unionists were reacting with a fury to years of austerity and concessions—imposed on them by one of their own political parties, the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE).

The Spanish working class, less than 10 percent of which is organized in unions, had been depicted in the media as weakened, atomized, and totally unable to resist the capitalist austerity programs. The general strike shattered this illusion and demonstrated the power of the industrial unions to lead the entire working class and its allies in struggle.

But the one-day general strike wasn't enough to alter the course of the Spanish government and capitalist class. What became apparent to many workers throughout these mobilizations was that another government was needed—a government of the striking unions and mass organizations—that would respond to the needs of the majority of the population.

The general strike posed the question of another government—but it didn't resolve it.

Numerous capitalist publications—such as the British weekly *The Economist* were clear to point out that there is presently no political alternative to the Socialist Party. This is true.

Unfortunately there is no mass workers' party based on the power demonstrated by the Spanish working class that can be seen as an alternative to the PSOE and the PCE. The potential for building such a party clearly exists. It is the next task ahead for revolutionists in Spain. ■

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) has stepped up its offensive recently, with bold attacks on military bases in the capital and an intimidation campaign that has left more than a third of the nation's municipalities without mayors.

The upswing has provoked a deadly response from the Salvadoran military, with new attacks against individuals and groups it terms sympathetic to the FMLN. Several new "death squads," linked to the military, have appeared. They have stepped up a campaign of bombings and murders.

On Dec. 22, three explosions destroyed the National University's biology department. A watchman who survived the attack fingered a heavily armed squad of about 50 men, some in uniform. He said that most were armed with G-3's, an automatic weapon commonly used by the Salvadoran Armed Forces.

Public figures, including University Rector Luis Argueta, have laid the blame for the bombing squarely on the military. Maria Julia Hernandez, head of the Catholic Church's human rights office, Tutela Legal, said in *The Christian Science Monitor* (Jan. 13, 1989): "These are actions of people with military training, heavily armed and moving with total liberty. These are the classic actions of death squads, but we are very clear in our vocabulary—death squads are clearly linked to military structures."

Defense Minister Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova denies accusations that the Salvadoran army bombed the university. The army had charged that the FMLN was storing weapons at the university. "If we want to go onto the university, we will do it with the law in our hand," he said.

#### Green light to death squads

Vides Casanova indicated after the bombings that the Salvadoran government is

## El Salvador As war heats up, Death Squads escalate terror



considering extending the state of siege and martial law to the capital. (A state of siege has already been declared in La Paz province.)

This was seen as a green light for the death squads, and it was only one day later that three new death squads were formed, all threatening to kill leftist leaders and their sympathizers.

The first of the groups to surface, the Revolutionary Anticommunist Association of Extermination (ARDE), has promised retribution for every action by the FMLN.

An ARDE communiqué of Dec. 26 focused on the FMLN's campaign against the mayors, stating that "for every mayor that is forced to resign, a communist leader will be executed."

The FMLN's has threatened mayors because of their participation in the U.S.-funded "Municipalities in Action" program. This

program provides mayors with Agency for International Development funds for local projects designed to win support for the government.

A study conducted for the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador last September characterized the program as "a counterinsurgency strategy." The mass resignations have undercut this program and further frustrated government efforts to project a positive image in the countryside.

#### "Government to collapse"

An FMLN representative, speaking in Cambridge, Mass., on Jan. 18, said that of 262 municipalities, 100 do not have mayors. He stated that these towns were not leaderless, but were under the influence of the FMLN.

Mayors have been flocking to San Salvador

to appear on national television and resign, an admission that they have little or no confidence in the army's ability to defend their towns. "The government of El Salvador is about to collapse," the FMLN representative said.

*The Monitor* quoted one source with close contacts in the military as saying that army leaders "are not worried about an immediate guerrilla victory [but] they feel the situation is serious. They believe they need to counter the guerrillas and the only way to do that is with selective terror."

It is widely felt that the death-squad activity of December and January is only the beginning of a new wave of state-sponsored terror against the Salvadoran people. National elections are slated for March 19, and many feel that the immediate post-election period will see a dramatic increase in right-wing brutality.

Last minute: As we go to press, the FMLN has announced that it will participate in national elections provided these are postponed from March to September. This announcement has been greeted with cautious approval in Washington, but has been rejected in San Salvador. Our next issue will feature an article by Jim Henle and Scott Adams-Cooper, both antiwar activists in Boston, on the meaning of the elections and the strategy of the FMLN.—The editors

# Gorbachev uses earthquake tragedy to attack Armenians

By GERRY FOLEY

"When the earthquake left 100,000 victims buried in ruins, when the Armenians were plunged into sorrow, and hundreds left the capital to help their fellow citizens, the people were stabbed in the back," the Karabakh Committee, the 11-person leadership of the Armenian independent mass movement, declared in a Dec. 11, 1988, communiqué.

"No other country, even the least democratic, would have dared to insult the mourning of our people, who were beaten and wounded by bullets two days after the earthquake. In view of Moscow's attitude, it is hard to convince the people that the only problem is a natural earthquake.

"This catastrophe has served to show that we were really deprived of sovereignty. ... Gorbachev sent his army to shut down the Karabakh Committee. Then he came to offer his condolences to our people. He arrested people, he shed blood, and he left. All those who do not condemn that, condemn themselves to slavery." (*Libération*, Dec. 17)

The reaction of the Karabakh Committee was on the mark. The Kremlin's attack on the Armenian movement had clearly nothing to do with maintaining "order." It was a response to the Karabakh Committee's attempt to mobilize support for the victims of the earthquake in the face of the paralysis, incompetence, and confusion of the bureaucratic institutions.

Supposedly, one of the principal objectives of *perestroika* is to promote rank-and-file initiative. But who could doubt that an organization that had proved itself capable of organizing demonstrations of up to a third of the population of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic as well as national general strikes could effectively organize help for the earthquake victims?

## Committee leaders arrested

During the days immediately following the earthquake—the most important days in the rescue operation—the population had to rely on its own efforts. All eyewitness accounts agree in stating that the official relief agencies responded to the emergency late and inefficiently.

But the self-organization of the Armenians to rescue the victims was brutally repressed by the Soviet armed forces.

A correspondent for the French daily *Le Monde* reported on Dec. 13:

"While all the sirens were screaming and the ambulances continued to bring hundreds of wounded to the Yerevan surgical institute, on Dec. 10 the military authorities in the city forcibly dispersed a crowd that had come to offer contributions for the victims."

Five leaders of the 11 on the Karabakh

Committee were arrested and sentenced to 30 days in prison after they refused to call on the people to go home. The following day, Sunday, Dec. 11, troops fired warning shots to disperse a crowd gathered to protest the arrests. Reports of the number wounded vary from one to three, but there seems no doubt that blood was shed.

For over a year, the Soviet authorities had refrained from using violence against the independent Armenian mass movement. It was only after the latest anti-Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijan that the authorities began to punish the victims, rather than those responsible for the violence. Now, in an open and blatant manner, the Soviet leadership decided to exploit the earthquake disaster to attempt to crush the Armenian mass

movement.

The Soviet bureaucrats welcomed the hypocritical assistance of the imperialist nations—of those who at best offered only a few crumbs to the hurricane victims in Nicaragua. But at the same time, they condemned the efforts of the leaders of the Armenian people to come to the aid of their own people.

## Rise of independent mass activity

The Armenian people have played the vanguard role in the struggle of oppressed peoples fighting for national rights. That is undoubtedly why the Kremlin is taking the gamble of trying to crush them now.

The bureaucracy's crackdown in Armenia

poses a life-or-death challenge to the movements of other oppressed peoples, but not only to them.

The movements for national rights are the first form of the revival of independent mass activity since the establishment of the bureaucratic dictatorship. They have been opening the road for democratic action for the Great Russian workers and workers themselves.

The democratic aspirations of all the Soviet masses explain why the bureaucracy could not crush the movements for national rights at their birth. Therefore, the attacks being carried out on them today—in particular on the Armenian movement—represent a turnabout by the Gorbachev leadership that threatens the entire movement for democratic and social rights of every kind in the U.S.S.R.

No socialist or democrat should be confused about the terms of this confrontation by the bureaucracy's claims about the dangers of "nationalism," "communal conflict," or "local mafia." What is at stake is the right of the masses to solve their problems through mobilization, open debate, and democracy. ■

## 'more sand than cement'



On Dec. 12, *Pravda*, the newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, admitted facts that showed that while the Armenian earthquake was a natural occurrence, the scale of damage and loss of life was in fact caused by the mismanagement of the economy during the "years of stagnation." This was a direct reference to the period under Leonid Brezhnev.

"Everything that was built during those years of stagnation collapsed," the *Pravda* article noted. "How could it be otherwise, since seismologists warned the builders several times. ... Nevertheless buildings of five, eight floors rose up stubbornly."

The construction of the housing projects was of poor quality. Buildings that had "more sand than cement"—to quote *Pravda*—collapsed like a house of cards with the first tremor.

The attempt to blame shoddy construction on Brezhnev is not likely to convince the Armenian masses. This sort of construction is typical of the bureaucracy's economic mismanagement everywhere from the time the bureaucratic caste usurped political power and freed itself from democratic control.—G.F.

## What is the Karabakh Committee?

By ALEXANDER AMERISOV

(The following are excerpts from an article appearing in the December 1988 issue of *Soviet-American Review*, which is published in Chicago.)

In a widely publicized interview on Dec. 11 in Yerevan [capital of Armenia], Mikhail Gorbachev unleashed a barrage of attacks against the Karabakh Committee, calling them "unscrupulous ... demagogues ... corrupt ... parasitical ... rumormongers."

The Soviet press went equally berserk. From "provocateurs" (*Moscow Radio*, Dec. 12) and "irresponsible extremists" (*Izvestiya*, Dec. 14), the language grew increasingly bizarre and ornate.

The members of the Committee were people "who have forgotten honor and conscience for the sake of their selfish ambitions (the Soviet Army daily, *Krasnaya*

*Zvezda*, Dec. 14); "Dark forces, representing a mishmash of opportunists, nationalists, prosperous conservatives, and mafiosi ... [whose] propaganda is clearly directed against CPSU leadership (*Pravda*, Dec. 14); or "Scum ... on the wave of growing democracy and *glasnost*" (*Izvestiya*-TASS report, Dec. 18).

Who are these "scum" on the wave of Gorbachev's democracy and *glasnost*? And why does Gorbachev need to use "all our might" to stop them?

They are some of the best people today's Soviet Armenia has to offer. In October, the Karabakh Committee's 11 members included: Raphael Khazaryan, professor of engineering and director of the Institute of Physics of the Armenian Academy of Sciences; Vano Serateryan, writer and member of the Armenian Writers' Union; Vazgen Manukayan, doctor of physics and mathematics and professor at Yerevan State University; Alek-

san Hakobian, Ph.D. in history and member of the Department of Oriental Studies of the Armenian Academy of Sciences; and Ashot Manucharyan, deputy to the Armenian Supreme Soviet.

As of Dec. 29, 1988, all the Committee's members, except three, were in prison. Five of them were arrested several hours before Gorbachev's interview was broadcast and three shortly thereafter. Three others are presently in hiding.

Also more than 200 various Armenian political activists, representing different groups, are in detention awaiting charges. That does not include thousands more who were detained for violation of martial law. According to our sources in Moscow, "essentially all leaders of the Armenian democratic-national movement are presently in jail."

Most of them have been detained for 30

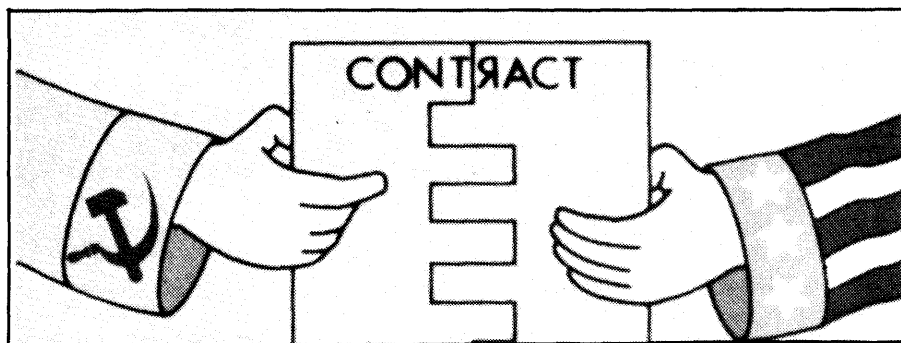
days under powers granted to military authorities in the conditions of martial law that have been imposed in Armenia and parts of Azerbaijan.

As for the Karabakh Committee, several members' relatives were told that they may be charged with "inciting mass disorder" and face a possible term of up to 15 years. The truth is that it is the Karabakh Committee, through its immense popularity in Armenia, which on several occasions brought a halt to massive strikes that paralyzed the republic.

With the Karabakh Committee in jail, Moscow will have no choice but to keep the military in the area indefinitely, thus preventing resolution of the bloody Azeri-Armenian conflict, which it itself unleashed. Maintenance of martial law in Armenia will further the clampdown on the movement for democracy in Russia proper and in the Ukraine. ■

# Soviet trade reforms enacted to lure capitalist investment

**Gorbachev's measures pose threat to monopoly on foreign trade, one of first conquests of Russian Revolution**



By ALAN BENJAMIN

In December 1988, on the eve of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to New York, the Soviet government gave the green light to a series of foreign-trade reforms aimed at luring greater amounts of foreign investment to the Soviet Union.

These reforms will provide (1) wider trade rights for Soviet factories, (2) more favorable joint-venture rules for foreign capitalists, and (3) a gradual transition toward the convertibility of the ruble, the Soviet currency.

What will all these reforms mean for the Soviet economy?

## Opening the trade door

The Soviet bureaucracy headed by Gorbachev is trying to revive the Soviet economy by offering profitable openings into the Soviet economy to world capitalism. This has entailed allowing the growth of private enterprise—domestic and foreign—in the Soviet Union and the use of capitalist "incentives" such as piece-work, inflation, bankruptcies, and unemployment to increase the productivity of the Soviet workers and farmers.

One of the main conditions demanded by the capitalists for investing in the Soviet Union is that the Soviet leadership open "free trade" doors in the state's monopoly on foreign trade. Gorbachev's December 1988 reforms do just that.

At present some 200 state factories in the Soviet Union (out of a total of 48,000 factories) have import-export rights; that is, they can trade directly on the world market instead of going through the special state import-export houses. Beginning next April, all Soviet enterprises whose output is "competitive on the foreign market" will have the right to trade directly.

To attract capitalist investment, the Soviet government is also relaxing the rules governing joint ventures. These are companies with mixed Soviet and foreign capital. There are currently 130 joint ventures operating in

the Soviet Union.

In December 1988, the law requiring 51 percent Soviet equity in a joint venture was scrapped. From now on, foreign investors will be able to hold controlling interests in Soviet companies. And, for the first time, foreign bosses will have the right to hire and fire Soviet workers.

## Convertibility of the ruble

A further reform that has long been demanded by the capitalists involves the Soviet currency: the ruble. [For more on the ruble, see accompanying article.]

The ruble is not used outside the Soviet Union. Foreign investors anxious to repatriate profits have had to establish specific agreements with the Soviet government enabling them to exchange their rubles either for Soviet goods or for a foreign currency (usually marks or yen) they can use.

But this set-up has been very cumbersome for foreign capitalists, who continue to insist that the Soviet leadership must make the ruble convertible to other currencies at a fixed rate. (There are currently about 6000 different rates of exchange, each one determined by the specific foreign transaction.)

Beginning in January 1990, the ruble reform will begin. The ruble will be devalued by 50 percent on various business transactions, making it cheaper for foreign capitalists to operate in the Soviet Union.

Top Soviet economists have publicly stated that their goal is to have a fully convertible ruble by the year 2000.

Soon after the announcement of these new measures, six of the largest U.S. corporations (Eastman Kodak, Ford Motor, RJR Nabisco, Archer-Daniels-Midland, Chevron, Johnson & Johnson, and Mercator Corp.) announced they were on the verge of signing joint-venture agreements worth billions of dollars.

## Undermining planned economy

The free convertibility of the ruble under the condition of uncontrolled capitalist penetration as is being projected poses a major

threat to the economic foundation of the Soviet workers' state.

The step-by-step erosion of the state's monopoly of foreign trade and the gradual devaluation and convertibility of the currency will allow the uncontrolled penetration of cheaper and higher-quality commodities from other countries into the Soviet economy.

The inevitable consequence of this process is that nationalized industry, unable to compete in an open world market, will be severely undermined.

Uncontrolled direct purchases by Soviet bureaucrats and other individuals of cheap imported goods would immediately begin to erode the socialized planned economy. And as production is shifted toward high-profit luxury items, shortages of basic consumer items will inevitably appear.

In recent months, moreover, the Soviet bureaucracy has announced its desire to join the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and the International Monetary Fund. (Already Poland, Yugoslavia, and Hungary have joined the IMF.)

In an article published in the Sept. 2, 1988, issue of *Soviet Current Affairs* a top Soviet official noted that "the entry of the Soviet Union into the IMF would go a long way in helping to resolve many of our internal problems."

Joining the IMF would open wide the door to submitting the Soviet planned economy to the dictates of imperialist finance capital. It would mean dismantling industries that the capitalists deem "unproductive"—as occurred in the case of the Gdansk shipyards in Poland—or industries oriented to meeting the internal needs of the population.

And it would require implementing auster-

ity packages to guarantee a flow of profits to imperialist investors.

## Another alternative needed

There is an alternative to resolving the crisis of the Soviet economy other than Gorbachev's increased reliance on world capitalism and market mechanisms. But it is one that Gorbachev is incapable of proposing. It is one that entails, among other things, fully democratizing the planned economy, replacing the bureaucratic administration altogether with genuine forms of soviet democracy.

This would mean instituting democratically controlled planning at all levels of society in which both the planners and the plan implementers are one and the same: They are workers.

This alternative program is beginning to be formulated by currents within the Soviet opposition movement. For example, a Soviet dissident was recently quoted by a French socialist weekly as follows:

"There are today in the Soviet Union 15 or so Popular Fronts [mass opposition organizations, some independent of the bureaucracy, others not.] This does not include the Popular Fronts in the Baltic countries, which are legally recognized and registered. Our Popular Front in Moscow has 1800 members today. We have many members in five factories. This is not that much, but it's a start. ...

"We call for the full democratization of Soviet society, the restoration of the power of the soviets, full freedom of the press, and the defense of the social guarantees and services—and their extension. ...

"The people shouldn't be made to pay for the mismanagement and crimes of the bureaucracy." (quoted in *Informations Ouvrieres*, Dec. 14-21, 1988) ■

## Why is monopoly on foreign trade important?

Two years ago, *Time* magazine formulated the U.S. capitalists' support for Gorbachev's *perestroika* reforms as follows:

"Gorbachev may represent the West's last chance, at least in this century, of better integrating the Soviet Union into the world economy. There it could come under pressure to behave like a Western country, competing for capital and markets, lowering the barriers to foreign investment, and even making its currency convertible." (July 27, 1987)

The "barriers to foreign investment" referred to in the *Time* article stem from the monopoly on foreign trade imposed by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the early years of the Russian Revolution as a protectionist measure to help shelter the young Soviet state from imperialist economic penetration.

This monopoly was an explicit recognition of the fact that the relative backwardness of the Soviet economy could not be overcome without both the extension of the socialist revolution and the corresponding raising of the cultural and technical level of Soviet workers.

The vast natural resources of the Soviet state, its gold reserves, and concentrated working class were special and exceptional resources that allowed the Soviet state to survive the worldwide capitalist embargo and military intervention which followed the 1917 revolution.

The "shut-in" character of the workers' state, however, with its foreign-trade monopoly was imposed by necessity. A "free-trade" policy would have ended the revolution's potential for development in a short time.

## Trotsky on the ruble

In his writings during the 1930s, Leon Trotsky, the co-leader of the Russian Revolution, did not oppose the convertibility of the ruble in principle. He did, however, establish stringent conditions under which convertibility would be beneficial to the Soviet economy.

Trotsky pointed out that a stable ruble would best allow the Soviet state to measure its economic progress relative to the capitalist world.

Bureaucratic planning implemented by an arbitrary pricing system, he argued, had to be replaced with democratic planning based on realistic determinations of value, eventually allowing the Soviet state to effectively participate in a world market with a fully convertible currency.

But Trotsky posed this eventuality in the context of a monopoly on foreign trade—as well as an internationalist foreign policy. Gorbachev, on the other hand, is undermining the monopoly on foreign trade and pushing the traditional Stalinist policy of "peaceful coexistence" to new levels as he moves to make the ruble convertible. ■

# Rise of Survivalist Right documented in new book

By HAYDEN PERRY

*Armed and Dangerous: The Rise of the Survivalist Right*, by James Coates. Hill and Wang, New York, 286 pages. \$17.95.

Opening the pages of this book is like turning over a flat rock in the garden. Of course, the creatures who live under the rock—despite being scaly, slimy, and somewhat repellent—are healthy links in the chain of life. The human creatures James Coates reveals, on the other hand, are

## BOOK REVIEW

virulently infected social psychopaths spreading contagion wherever they go.

Coates holds up a number of specimens for inspection. He lists them as varieties of the Survivalist Right.

One variety of Survivalists are the individuals who believe they can survive a nuclear war by hiding out in underground bunkers, stocked with piles of freeze-dried food and large stocks of firearms, to repel neighbors who might seek sanctuary.

More dangerous than these people, Coates tells us, are those Survivalists who are motivated by a world view: a view that sees "good" as fair haired, Anglo-Saxon Aryans—and evil as Jews and Blacks. To establish the supremacy of the white race, these Survivalists will rob, torture, and kill.

### The murder of Alan Berg

Coates starts his book with a murder. On June 18, 1984, Alan Berg—a talk-show host on Denver radio station KOA—was assassinated by members of the Order, a neo-Nazi survivalist group. Berg's death has been dramatized in the new film "Talk Radio."

Berg, a Jew, had aroused their ire by alerting his listeners to the growing presence of racists and anti-Semites around Denver. He was waylaid before his house, and 12 bullets were pumped into his body.

It was a well-planned operation by a group that had robbed a Seattle bank of \$25,000, held up an armored car for \$500,000, and hit another armored car for \$3.6 million.

Ten members of the Order were arrested for the Berg murder. In the courtroom they may have appeared as just another holdup and murder squad—until they talked of their motives.

They were Knights of the Aryan Order, they said. They were at war with the Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG) in Washington. There is a conspiracy by Jews and communists to destroy the white race through intermarriage and mongrelization.

Jewish international bankers, the Knights said, are intent on bankrupting this country by taking gold out of Fort Knox, and instituting the income tax. Plots against America are hatched at meetings of the Trilateral Commission.

The white race, they said, can be saved only through armed conflict—which must be prepared for. Attacks on the enemy now are only guerrilla skirmishes. Victory, they concluded, will come after a cleansing nuclear holocaust.

Then the Aryans will emerge from their bunkers to breed the pure white race.

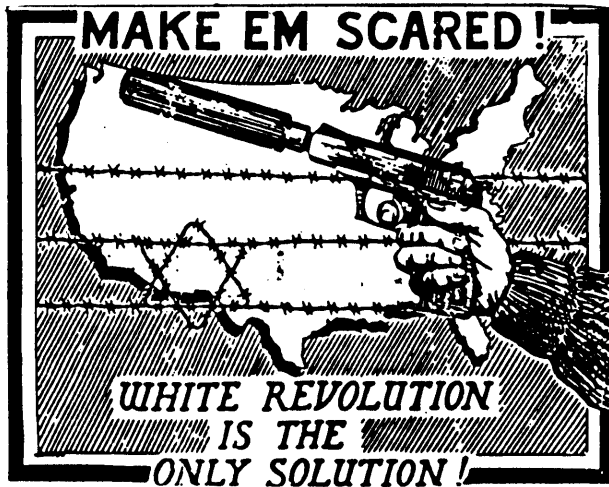
### A long history of hate

Coates points out that hate groups have a long history in America. In the 1840s and '50s, Irish Catholic immigrants alarmed some native-born Americans, who formed the Know Nothing Party to combat "Papist plots." They made their point by burning down the largest convent in Boston.

After the Civil War, freed slaves became the target of fear and hatred. The Ku Klux Klan arose to "protect pure Southern womanhood," by terrorizing Blacks into submission. For over 125 years, this sheeted order has carried the virus of race hatred from one generation to another.

Today the hate movement is split into numerous splinter groups: the Minutemen, Posse Comitatus, Aryan Brotherhood, and others. They have their own particular agenda that puts them in competition with each other.

But there is a glue that binds them together and justifies



their most heinous crimes. That is religious doctrine: a theology of hate, expounded by bigots in preachers' robes, in churches sometimes displaying romanticized portraits of Adolph Hitler. It is called Identity Christianity.

### Soldiers of Christ

There are about 50 of these churches, with names such as "Anglo-Saxon Christian Congregation." Coates says, they "meld nuclear anxiety, pseudo-science, biblical fragments, and hatred into a single creed."

This creed has something for every hater. Blacks, they say, are inferior because they are the result of a botched attempt by God to make a man. They are "mud people" fit only to serve Anglo-Saxons and Nordics, who represent God's greatest creation.

Much of their cosmogony is drawn from the Book of Revelations, prophesying a final battle of Armageddon between God and Satan. In the modern version it will be fought on the Kansas wheatfields between U.S. and Soviet armies.

Armed with this doctrine, Survivalists are convinced they are soldiers of Christ, carrying God's sanction for any crime committed for the cause.

Women are also enlisted, but only as bearers of Aryan children—often in plural marriages—so that Aryan "seed"

can be implanted into as many wombs as possible.

Coates points out that the recruiting grounds of the Survivalists are the rural Northwest, Midwest, and South. Embittered farmers who see bankers foreclose on their farms might be convinced there is an international bankers' conspiracy. With talk of nuclear weapons and war dominating the news, the story of Armageddon might not seem so unreal.

More important, the message of the Survivalists gives a sense of power to the powerless. Coates quotes from a Minuteman handbill: "See that old man on the corner where you buy your paper? He may have a silencer-equipped pistol under his coat.... What about your milkman? Arsenic works slow but sure.... These patriots are not going to let you take their freedom away from them.... Traitors beware! Even now the cross-hairs are on the back of your necks."

### High-tech weaponry

The daily fare of Survivalists is race hatred. A former member said, "You don't read sports. You don't watch TV. All you do is read about Israel and race. It is race, race, race."

These messages of hate are spread by news sheets, video cassettes, cable TV, and computer "bulletin boards." Their weapons of propaganda, like their lethal weapons, employ the latest technology—thanks in part to proceeds from the \$4 million heists that were widely distributed among the Aryans.

Periodically, Survivalists hold conferences that attract as many as 1000 people. Seminars are held on such topics as "Archery, crossbow, and black-powder guns," "Street action," and "Knife fighting." These seminars are not academic, but have been followed by murders that have shocked the nation.

In 1973, Ku Kluxers and neo-Nazis gunned down four leaders of the Communist Workers Party in Greensboro, N.C. On May 18, 1986, a husband-and-wife team of Survivalists wheeled a bomb in a shopping cart into an elementary school in the hamlet of Cokesville, Wyo. They wanted to seize the children to form a nucleus of a colony that would breed a master race. After a three-hour standoff, the bomb exploded—spraying 78 students with flaming gasoline.

Coates recognizes that the Survivalists, often holed up in bunkers on lonely farms, consumed with hate and misogyny, will not be the leaders of a mass fascist movement. But they give ideological nourishment to new layers of disaffected youth, such as the Fascist Skinheads, who have spread from Britain to America.

Many of the Survivalists have been prosecuted and jailed. But they have found the prisons fertile grounds for recruitment. Their virulent strain of race hatred has so far infected only a tiny minority. This is because, for most people, everyday life in capitalist America remains livable. No devastating economic or political crisis is compelling Americans to search for radical solutions just to get by in life.

The Survivalists hope to expand their ranks as the economy worsens and more people lose confidence in the U.S. government. In all likelihood, demoralized elements of the population will gravitate toward their reactionary ideology.

James Coates is to be commended for bringing this contagion to the light of day. The question before us is, "What do we do with this information?"

The antidote is a revival of the mass working-class movement. In the '30s, workers' mobilizations effectively squelched the Silver Shirts, Coughlinites, and other hate mongers.

This time, the working class must move on to seize political power—and cut the merchants of hate from their roots in the capitalist system. ■

## Milt Alvin: 1908-1989 Veteran socialist leader



Milt Genecin, known in the socialist movement as Milt Alvin, died in Los Angeles on Jan. 26 after surgery for a broken hip. His health had been failing in recent years. Milt would have been 81 years old on March 3.

Born in Czarist Russia in 1908, Milt moved to the United States at the age of five. Radicalized during the turbulent Depression years, he joined the Socialist Party (SP) in 1935 because someone told him "that's where the Trotskyists are."

When the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) was formed in 1938, Milt was a founding member. He moved around the country as a union and party organizer and served as a national committee member for many years. He became a founding member of Socialist Action in 1983.

His life represents a span of over 50 years of service and dedication to the revolutionary movement and for humanity's struggle for a better world. The next issue of *Socialist Action* will include a more complete article celebrating Milt's life and contributions.

Memorial meetings will be held for Milt in San Francisco on Sat. Feb. 4 at 7: 30 p.m. (3435 Army St., Rm. 308) and in Los Angeles on Sunday, Feb. 19 at 2 p.m. (location to be announced, for more information call 213-250-4608).

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# 'Don't worry, be happy'

Sending invitations to the President Bush inaugural festivities must have given a bevy of social secretaries some sleepless nights. Some 450,000 invitations were sent out, but only a short list of the most elite got invitations to all nine events, including a \$1500-a-plate dinner. (RSVP with a check please.)

About 400,000 people were sent commemorative invitations, which gave admittance to no events, but could be framed and hung on the wall.

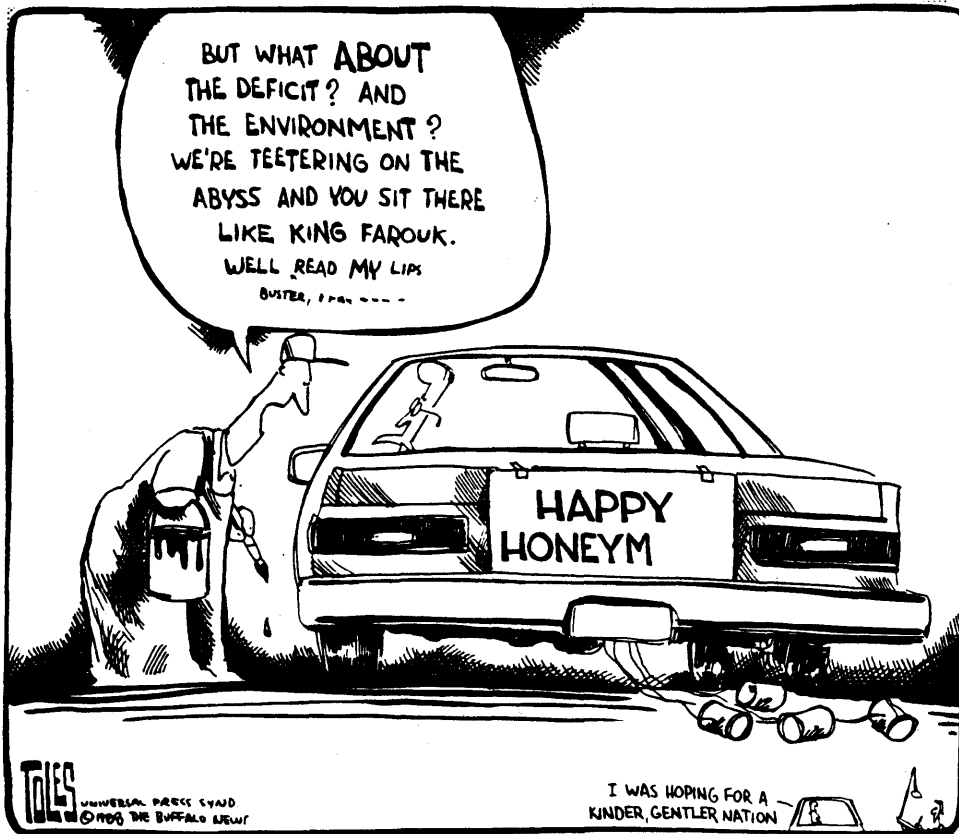
At the inaugural banquet at Union Station, dead animals (in the form of coats and mufflers) outnumbered the people. "I do a lot of this sort of work," confided one of the 28 coat checkers hired for the occasion. "And I've never seen mink like I've seen here."

As Republican merry-makers gorged themselves (they were served a commemorative Early American menu), protestors and homeless people outside Union Station made do with chili, rice, and tortilla chips for supper.

Bush's son, George Jr., staunchly defended his father's multi-million-dollar celebration for the wealthy. But he conceded, "If the people outside want to express their views, that's fine." (Very kind and gentle of him, to be sure!)

Protests by students and faculty of Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y., cancelled a speech by Oliver North, who is facing trial for the Iran-Contra scam. He would have been paid \$25,000.

"They felt it was obscene that this man, who would be coming to the campus for a few hours, should be getting more (money) than half the employees here make in a year," said Thomas Miller, of the student-affairs committee.



President George Bush has decided to send Dan Quayle on his first major assignment as VP. Quayle—one of the most ardent backers of the contra death squads in Nicaragua—is to travel to El Salvador to tell the generals to clean up their act and curb the death squads.

It wasn't that long ago that Reagan sent Bush on a similar mission. In December 1983, Bush traveled to El Salvador with a list of 25 military officers involved in civilian death squads. "Put these officers on trial or

U.S. will be cut off," he is alleged to have told the Salvadoran government.

Of course, nothing ever happened to those 25 officers, and billions of taxpayers' dollars are still being funneled down to the death-squad regime. As Yogi Berra once said, it's *deja-vu* all over again.

The California legislature passed 1647 laws in 1988. Not one of them tackled the burning problems of health care, transportation, and high auto-insurance rates. The legislature, however, came to the aid of

retailers by lifting the ceiling of 18 percent on credit-card interest rates. Now the sky is the limit. Usury is in fashion.

U.S. tobacco corporations are doing very well, thank you, despite the health problems caused by their products. They simply export the cigarette habit to teenagers in Asia and Latin America.

The United States forced Taiwan and South Korea to repeal laws banning cigarette advertising. In Taiwan, a year after the U.S. companies entered the market, smoking had risen by 4 percent.

Now the U.S. tobacco giants are establishing sales opportunities in the Peoples Republic of China. Think of it—1 billion potential nicotine addicts!

Liu Xigui has stirred a national controversy in China. He is a 33-year-old tycoon who took Deng Xiaoping's "Enrich Yourself" maxim to heart: He made a fortune with his private trucking business. Last month, Liu Xigui asked to join the Communist Party.

Many said "no," there should be no millionaires in the party. Others in the ruling circles were not so sure. After all, they argued, the new economic reforms have given China such institutions as stock markets and a private business sector employing over 26 million people; so why shouldn't there be room in the party for the country's leading entrepreneurs?

As we go to press, the debate is still raging. Stay tuned.

"Mississippi Burning," the movie that applauds the FBI as the savior of helpless Blacks during the civil-rights movement, opened in movie houses across the country on Martin Luther King Day. That was quite appropriate, since J. Edgar Hoover's Fat Boys spared no efforts in their attempts to disrupt Dr. King's life and work.

At San Francisco's Coronet Theater, young people in the audience were quite vocal in stating what they thought of the film. The cops were called, the projector was shut down, and everyone was told to go home.

## Our readers speak out

### Mark Curtis

*Socialist Action urges our readers to join the defense of Mark Curtis, a member of the Socialist Workers Party in Des Moines, Iowa, who was recently sentenced to 25 years in prison on frameup rape charges. The following letter is from a defense supporter.*

Dear editor,

In October, the Mark Curtis Defense Committee appeared before our union executive board (UAW Local 2071 at Wayne State Univ.) in an attempt to win more solid support for his defense. But our Chief Steward, a supporter of the Workers League (WL), used the meeting to demagogically attack the defense committee.

Material published by the Workers League has confused some potential defense supporters about the facts of the case. Other people do not want to be associated with what appears to them to be a dispute among leftists.

The Curtis Defense Committee has recently made available a video of parts of the Curtis trial. The

video was produced by a TV show in Des Moines called "On Trial." It's similar to Judge Wapner's TV court except that the people are not actors but real.

Joseph Gonzalez, the same cop who beat Curtis and broke bones in his face, is shown on the tape lying his head off. Yet, no clear evidence was presented in the trial or anywhere else connecting Curtis with the alleged rape. The medical examiner admits this in the video.

Most cops, with the ideological support of those who rule, take the attitude that rape is caused by women—by our manner or clothing. Now, enter Joseph Gonzalez, and reality is stood on its head!

We are to believe that the cops suddenly came to the rescue of a damsel in distress. They say that Mark Curtis, a socialist gone berserk, allegedly foreswore his life's work of defending women, Blacks, and workers, and sought out the victim—a total stranger—after attending a rally in defense of immigrant workers. Give us a break!

I listened carefully to Mark's

moving testimony and to that of a Black woman friend of his who said he called her at the same time he was supposedly at the victim's house. His wife Kate likewise gave the truth a brief televised airing. No, he was not hostile to women, she said. He has worked on a daily basis to end their degradation.

As the jury foreman read the verdict—"guilty"—my blood ran cold. The cops, the judge, and the FBI wanted a conviction and they got it. "On Trial" should have been called, "Day in Kangaroo Court."

The video and other materials explaining the facts of the case are available from the defense committee for use in your union or organization. The address of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee is P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Telephone (515) 246-1695.

Barbara Putnam,  
Detroit, Mich.

### A pleasure

Dear editor,

Enclosed is a contribution to your publications fund. The January issue of Socialist Action was a pleasure to read. Accept my congratulations as an appreciative reader for the obvious care and thought that goes into each issue.

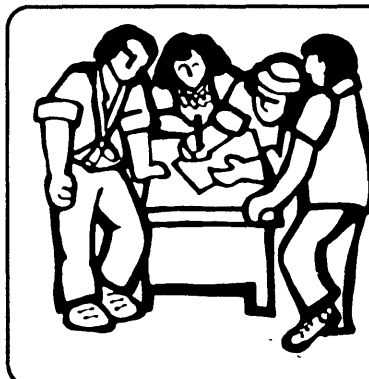
S.P.,  
El Paso, Texas

### Paying off

Dear editor,

I want to tell you how much I enjoyed the January issue of Socialist Action. While all the articles were interesting and informative, I especially liked the story on the Moscow rally for Leon Trotsky.

The dedication to truth in history



This is a page where our readers can speak out. We welcome letters. But please keep them short. When necessary, for reasons of space, they will be abridged.

—The editors

that the Fourth International exemplifies is paying off. If it is exciting for me to read about it, I can only imagine how it will feel to be a Soviet worker confronting this history for the first time.

I wish Socialist Action the best during the coming year, and I hope the year brings unity among the groups representing the Fourth International in the United States.

G.K.,  
Lancaster, Texas

### Haiti

Dear editor,

On Jan. 14, an audience of 42 people heard Jean-Claude Martineau, Haitian activist and playwright, and Isabel Prime of the Haitian Students Association. The occasion was a forum on U.S. foreign policy toward Haiti, sponsored by Socialist Action.

Martineau traced the history of Haitian struggle, from the time of French imperialism and slavery to occupation by the United States and the executions of dissidents. He described the media's role as a "silence that is deafening" to his people.

The United States has been

propping up Haitian dictatorships since they began. Democracy and living conditions of the people have never been a concern. U.S. business and political interests see Haiti as fair game for exploitation, a cheap and never-ending source of cheap labor.

Martineau ended his talk by summing up the message of the Haitian people to the U.S. government. "We are saying to the United States, you do have borders and *your* interest cannot cross these borders and be the priority of every single nation in the world. You can recognize your sovereignty from Canada to Mexico, from sea to shining sea, but, when it comes to our little island, you will have to stop talking about the world this way."

Haitian activists are having an annual fund-raising dinner for the Center of Information Documentation and Research on Haiti on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 6 p.m. at Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Ave. in Boston. Martineau will speak, and there will be music and dancing. Further information is available from the League of Haitian Family at (617) 266-3363.

Rick Tudor,  
Boston, Mass.

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# Black independent party sabotaged by Democrats



James Karales

By MAY MAY GONG

"The crises we face as Black people are the crises of the entire society. They go deep to the very bones and marrow, to the essential nature of America's economic, political, and cultural systems. They are the natural end product of a society built on the twin foundations of white racism and white capitalism.

"A Black Political Convention, indeed all truly Black politics, must begin from this truth: The American system does not work for the masses of our people, and it cannot be made to work without radical fundamental change (indeed, this system does not really work in favor of humanity or anyone in America).

"Both parties have betrayed us whenever their interests conflicted with ours (which has been most of the time). ..."

So declares the founding document of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP), a party that was founded by 1500 activists at a convention in Philadelphia in November 1980 and that had close to a four-year existence.

The NBIPP charter is one of the most aggressive, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist documents of its kind. It clearly defines the need for Blacks as well as all working people to make a break from the twin parties of the capitalists, the Democrats and Republicans.

The NBIPP charter also includes demands for full employment; jobs for all; an end to racist job practices; an end to plant closings, the repeal of "right-to-work" laws; and the call for massive public-works programs, affirmative-action programs, free education, job-training programs, and health-care programs.

Another striking aspect of the NBIPP program is the section on women's rights. There is no Black organization or labor union that has such a strong policy in support of the rights of women. Among other points, the program states that NBIPP will fight against all constitutional or legal barriers to abortion upon demand.

## A "dual strategy"

More important than what an organization writes, however, is what it does. And NBIPP, in its brief existence, failed to implement its charter. It failed, in this sense, to fulfill its tremendous potential.

The reasons for NBIPP's failure are not hard to find: The leadership of NBIPP perpetuated a "dual strategy" of having one foot in NBIPP and one foot in the Democratic Party. It was this violation of the political orientation laid out in its charter that kept NBIPP locked into the two-party framework.

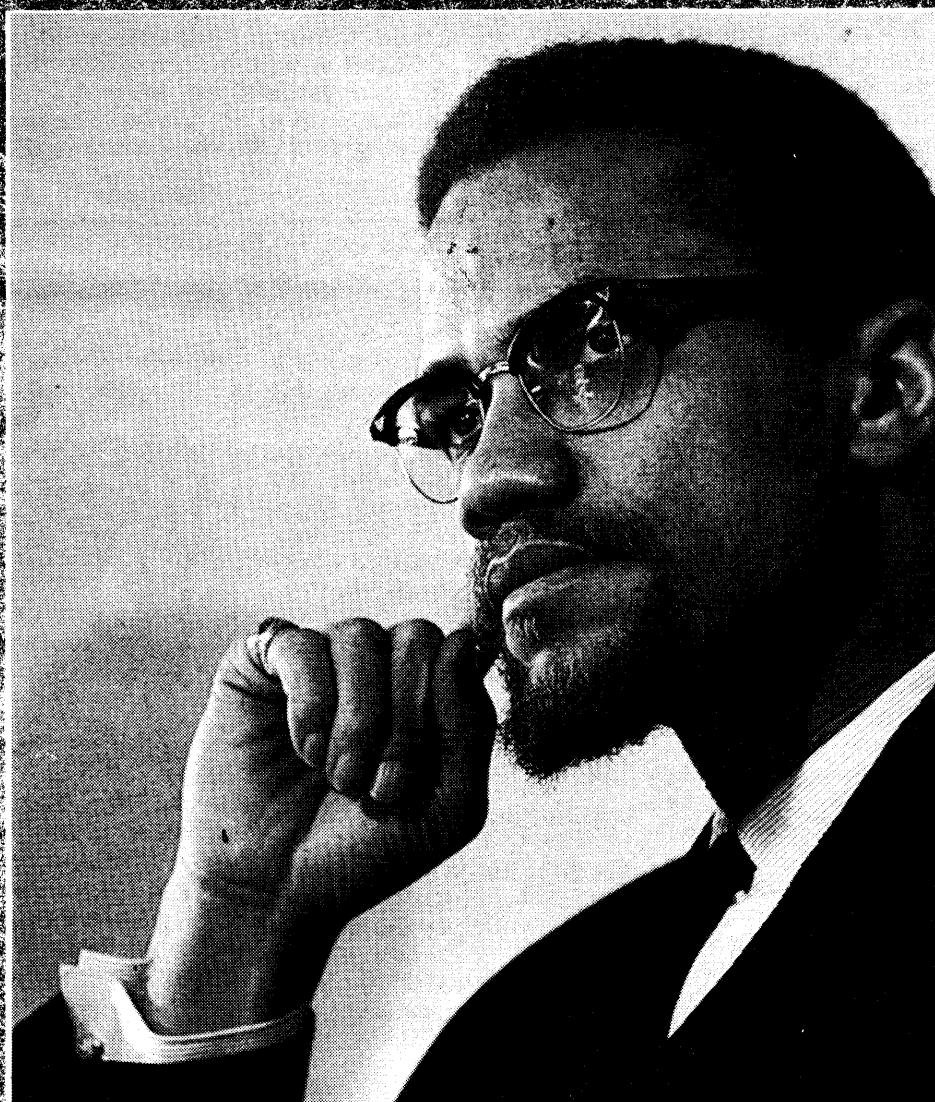
Because of this incorrect strategy, NBIPP was never able to run its own candidates against the Democrats and Republicans. It was never given the chance to implement its charter. In fact, it never functioned as a political party in any real sense. Consequently, most people never even knew of its existence.

When Jesse Jackson decided to organize his

(continued on page 7)

## MALCOLM X

May 19, 1925—Feb. 21, 1965



Michael Ochs Archives

On June 28, 1964, at a public rally called to launch the Organization of Afro-American Unity, Malcolm X revealed the vast gulf in consciousness and commitment between himself and the many political hucksters and misleaders of Black people. He stated: "We won't organize any Black man to be a Democrat or a Republican because both of them have sold us out."

In his famous "Ballot or the Bullet" speech, he said, "You put the Democrats first and the Democrats put you last." He characterized the role played by different segments of the Democratic Party as "a giant political con game" that keeps Blacks politically impotent by keeping them in its clutches.

Malcolm was also anti-capitalist. He characterized capitalism as a system that "needs some blood to suck" in order to survive. He realized that the capitalist system dominates the political structure in this country and that it must be eliminated here and around the world in order for real liberation to come into existence.

If Malcolm X were alive today, his record proves that he would be involved in the many local, national, and international battlefronts against oppression—from Harlem to Central America to South Africa to the Middle East.

Above all, Malcolm X was an uncompromising revolutionary. He advocated that the world's oppressed free themselves totally from all forms of oppression and take control of their lives and destiny *By Any Means Necessary*. —KWAME M.A. SOMBURU

## NBIPP's Charter for Black Liberation

The heart of the charter is captured in the following section from the preamble:

"We, therefore, establish this Charter of an Independent National Black Political Party which will first be *Black* in that it seeks to organize people of African-American descent first and foremost; it will be *National* in that it will seek to organize Black people in every state and region in this country; it will be *Independent* in that it will draw its source of support, strength and direction from Black people and not from their oppressors, in accordance with our belief in the value and dignity of our history and culture, and with charity and respect for all other peoples; it will be a *Party* in the sense that it must reflect the multi-faceted nature of the social, economic, and political power which must be organized to challenge the many forms of oppression arrayed against the masses of Black people.

"Our party will not be like the Democratic and Republican parties. Our party is a political organization which unites with the needs of the people and invites the people around a program. It synthesizes the desires of the people and begins to define them politically. It is aimed at altering the balance of power to affect the quality of goods and services to the people. Our party is a formation that contends for power within the socio-economic institutions.

"There are two kinds of mass parties, bourgeois and progressive. The bourgeois party exists to serve a regime that is in power which represents the interests of a minority, but claims a mass constituency, i.e., Republican and Democratic parties. The progressive party exists to serve the interests of the working class and the poor, therefore our party will actively oppose racism, sexism, capitalism, and imperialism.

"Both major parties (the Democratic and Republican parties) have betrayed us because their interests essentially conflict with ours. They have consistently used power and government to create policies for Black economic underdevelopment, political exploitation, and cultural destruction. Their policies reveal contempt for the interests of Black people, and have existed solely for the maintenance of the existing political and socio-economic system."

And in the party platform subsection on "Electoral politics," the charter says: "The electoral strategy of NBIPP is independent of the Democratic, Republican, and all other parties."