



## Court declares war on women's abortion rights



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

On Day of the Court decision: Over 4000 protest in San Francisco. Other cities saw similar rallies.

## Coal miners expand strike against bosses' offensive

By ROLAND PETERSON

NORTON, Va.—The class war between labor and capital is heating up in the coal fields of America. On June 12, over 43,000 members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)—more than half the unionized workforce—staged "wildcat" strikes in 11 states, including West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania.

Rank-and-file mine workers organized the walkouts to express solidarity with 1700 UMWA members who have been on strike against the Pittston Coal Group in Virginia for nearly three months.

The bitter strike against Pittston is shaping up to be a decisive test for the UMWA. If the miners suffer a defeat here, the coal operators will undoubtedly intensify their campaign to wipe out the union completely. With that in mind, the UMWA ranks are linking their fate to the outcome of the Pittston strike.

The "wildcat" strikers' anger is infecting other workers in the coal fields. At several factories in Pennsylvania, workers demonstrated their solidarity by refusing to go to work after miners showed up and passed out flyers that explained the strike issues. At a Bethlehem Steel plant in Johnstown, Pa., only 37 out of a workforce of 600 went to work.

The catalyst for the miners' inspiration is located in a seemingly obscure corner of the nation. As you fly over southwestern Virginia, you see green fields and soft, rolling hills; it looks like a peaceful, serene place. But once your feet touch the ground, you quickly realize there is a militant class battle taking place—with lines clearly drawn.

After 14 months of working without a contract, the 1700 UMWA miners based at Pittston, the nation's largest coal exporter, were forced to go on strike on April 5. In their "best final offer," Pittston had demanded the elimination of certain jobs, unlimited overtime (including running coal on

(continued on page 8)

### Nationally coordinated mass protests are needed

By CAROLE SELIGMAN and JONI JACOBS

Without completely outlawing abortion, the U.S. Supreme Court did all it could to deny women the right to choose safe, legal, accessible abortions. In a sense, the Court issued a death sentence to unknown numbers of women by upholding a Missouri law that places severe restrictions on legalized abortion, affecting low-income women most of all.

The Court's July 3 ruling in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* dealt one more major blow to the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. That historic decision overturned anti-abortion laws in every state by giving women a constitutional right to privacy in family-planning decisions.

The first setback to accessible abortion came in 1977 when Congress enacted the Hyde Amendment. This law cut off federal Medicaid funding for low-income women needing abortions.

The *Webster* decision upholds the state of Missouri's right to restrict access to abortions by:

- 1) prohibiting public funding ("not one penny"), facilities, and employees from being involved in performing abortions except to save a woman's life;
- 2) mandating tests for "fetal viability" after 20 weeks of pregnancy, even if the tests endanger women;
- 3) prohibiting public funds for anyone who counsels a pregnant woman about the option of abortion—unless her life is in danger.

The Court also let stand the Missouri law's preamble, which declares that human life begins at conception. The decision thus provided justification for a possible attempt to outlaw all future abortions.

#### Specter of further restrictions

This decision opens the door for all states to severely restrict access to abortion. Although the Court did not overturn *Roe v. Wade*, it may be only a matter of time until it does. In fact, the Court announced that it will hear three more anti-abortion cases in its next session.

All three cases raise the specter of further restrictions on abortion. *Ragsdale v. Turnock* (Illinois) challenges restrictive licensing of outpatient abortion clinics, which makes abortion so expensive it is inaccessible to most working-class and poor women.

*Ohio v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health* and *Hodgson v. Minnesota* challenge state laws requiring parental notice or a court order for minors to obtain abortions. Twenty-six states currently have such parental-consent laws.

The right to abortion has been so th-

(continued on page 4)

# 'From sea to shining sea'



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

In the last few weeks, we've witnessed an extreme reaffirmation of the fact that "capitalism fouls things up" and that the capitalist system places profits before human needs.

From the Pacific to the Atlantic, our oceans are being turned into oil dumps. The huge oil conglomerates are not only gobbling up massive profits, but they are doing so at the expense of the world's oceans, lakes, rivers, and streams—risking the destruction of life itself.

On March 24, the tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground and spilled 10.2 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound off Alaska. Only about 10 percent of the oil has been recovered. And last month, on June 23 and June 24, there were three more giant spills within hours of each other; close to 3 million gallons were lost.

But the current rash of tanker spills is part of a pattern. The

Coast Guard recently reported that from 1980 through 1986, 91 million gallons of oil and 36 million gallons of other toxic substances have been dumped into U.S. waters. Of the oil, two thirds came from tankers and barges (often from "routine" discharges) and the rest was runoff from land-based sources such as refineries.

Last year alone, there were 5000

to 6000 spills of oil and other toxic substances along the U.S. coast. It's no wonder that the supermarkets report that people are eating less seafood.

Of course, the oil companies deny any wrongdoing on their part. They immediately try to place the blame on the ships' crews or on the plant managers.

In every case, the oil giants have

been incapable of doing the clean-up. Ironically, only three days before the June 23 disasters, the oil companies called a news conference in which they finally admitted that they had "neither the equipment nor the response personnel in place and ready to deal with catastrophic tanker spills."

The oil companies swore on a stack of Bibles that in five years

they would have an emergency program in place. In the meantime, they left it up to the Coast Guard or local environmentalists to organize clean-ups. Teams of workers were forced to use pitchforks—the most primitive tools imaginable—to remove globs of oil from the banks of the Delaware River. The damage will be impossible to erase completely.

Why these continuous disasters? The oil companies, in order to increase their profits, have built enormous tankers with single hulls (the cheapest ships possible) and have continued to decrease the personnel on these unsafe tankers. The government—from congress to the president (a former oil man himself)—has been in the pocket of the oil oligarchies since they were formed.

As long as corporations are allowed to place profits above all human needs and as long as the politicians continue to act as the guard dogs of the profit system, they place our planet's existence in jeopardy. This cannot continue.

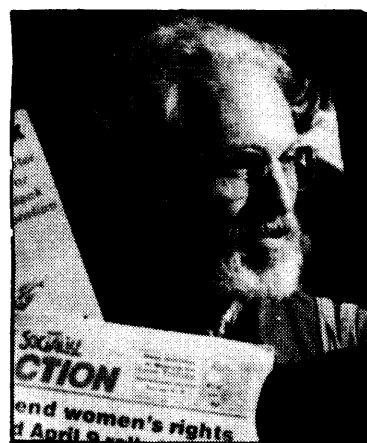
The oil companies must not be permitted to plead "poverty" as they foul our soil, water, and food. Open the companies' account books! Their profits and assets should be taxed up to 100 percent in order to clean up the environment and prevent further disasters.

If the bosses are unable to take the necessary steps, then the oil corporations should be nationalized. Let the workers take control. ■



## BEHIND THE LINES

# Bush fiddles while our eyes burn



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

"This will be the time when America pays its back debt to the past by reclaiming the purity of its air, its water, and our living environment. It is literally now or never."

These glowing words were spoken by none other than President Richard M. Nixon when

he signed the National Environmental Policy Act into law. The year was 1969.

In the 1970s, Nixon vowed, air pollution would be made by a thing of the past. In rapid succession, the Clean Air Act was passed and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created—with a mandate to make sure that the law was carried out.

Twenty years have passed since Nixon's bold promise of "purity." The White House has changed hands several times—from Republican to Democratic and back again. And the air, as anybody with eyes can see and a nose can smell, is dirtier than ever.

Because of air pollution, about 2000 citizens die of cancer each year. Ozone in the form of smog irritates the lungs of one-fourth of all Americans. At least 100 million

Americans live in areas where the air is dangerous to breathe because of chemical waste, carbon monoxide, and smog.

What has been done to overcome this disaster? Next to nothing. Over the years, ozone-compliance standards for the cities have been relaxed. Miles-per-gallon requirements for the automakers have also been reduced. Government regulations have been placed on only a handful of toxic chemicals in the air.

In reply to most demands for action, the EPA repeats the same refrain: "We're still assessing the situation."

### "Competing objectives"

A couple of years ago, Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.) questioned the EPA as to why they were acting at no more than a tortoise-pace. "They said," Waxman reported, "they wouldn't regulate a pollutant until it was determined to be hazardous and they wouldn't determine a pollutant to be hazardous until they were ready to regulate."

"It was like a dog chasing its tail," Waxman concluded. But the government's inaction, which the Democratic Party congressman chose to lampoon, deserves far closer scrutiny: Industries, say EPA officials, should be required to submit to harsher emission standards only if it can be proven that "large" numbers of people are at risk.

The EPA calls this policy "balancing competing social objectives." In plain English, the government is saying, "Human needs must be carefully weighed against private profits!"

### The Green Giant

Now along comes George Bush the "environmentalist." There's no denying that after Ronald Reagan,

## Eastern strikers fight scab flights

Eastern Airlines is trying to "upgrade" its operation using strike-breakers. By the end of July, company officials hope, the number of flights will be increased to 390. On July 2, the airline tried to resume cross-country flights from San Francisco to Atlanta.

But strikers say that Eastern doesn't have enough pilots to continue the extra flights. The airline will need at least 800 new pilots to reach its goal. So far, they've only been able to recruit about 350 scabs.

About 300 people carried picket signs and chanted slogans at the San Francisco airport on July 2 to protest the new flights. In eight other cities, on June 30, hundreds of people took part in automobile "slowdowns" on the roads leading to the airports. Many of the cars with "engine trouble" were festooned with banners supporting the Eastern strikers.

A representative of the International Association of Machinists told *Socialist Action* the actions were called "to raise awareness that the strike is still going on" after four months of struggle. In next month's paper, we will have a full analysis of the Eastern strike.—M.S.

who voiced the opinion that "trees pollute," Bush might seem to loom as tall as the Jolly Green Giant.

"We will make the 1990s the era for clean air," proclaims the president—without as much as tipping his hat to Tricky Dick's "now or never" speech of 20 years ago.

Bush tells us that factories and power stations would be given yet another 10 years to "clean themselves up." And once again, the EPA would be authorized to give a little help to the big polluters by rendering judgment on how much risk is "acceptable."

"Let the market decide the cheapest way to contain smokestack emissions," Bush goes on. "Let them buy and sell the right to pollute." In other words, air-pollution cleanup would be strictly managed to ensure profit-taking by the capitalists.

In all, Bush is asking Congress to allocate \$700 million to fight air pollution. That is the same amount that the government is paying to produce two B-1 bombers or only one of the Navy's new Arleigh

Burke-class destroyers.

In the meantime, Bush has proposed a cutback in research and development funds for renewable energy. He wants to cut subsidies for mass transportation. And he backs selling development rights in wilderness areas.

*Newsweek* greeted Bush's clean-air proposals with the observation that "because air toxics are so poorly regulated today, almost any initiative would signify progress." By the same logic, a teaspoon of rice might signify "progress" to a person who is starving. But it's not enough to save a life.

America's "spacious skies" are raining filth. Whole forests have withered. Hundreds of lakes and ponds no longer support life. And people are dying. The capitalist "marketplace," which Bush extolls as a bold new solution to air pollution, is in fact the major source of the crisis.

Our health—and the health of the entire planet—must be placed before the capitalist drive for profits. ■

**Socialist ACTION**

Closing date:  
July 4, 1989

Editor: ALAN BENJAMIN  
Asst. Editors: MICHAEL SCHREIBER  
JOE RYAN

Staff: Paul Colvin, May May Gong, David Kirschner, Hayden Perry, Kwame M.A. Somburu, Sylvia Weinstein.

Business Manager: KATHY SANDS

*Socialist Action* (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly for \$8 per year by Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Second-class postage is paid at San Francisco, Calif.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Socialist Action*, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

RATES: For one year (12 issues)—U.S. 2nd Class: \$8, 1st Class: \$12; Canada and Mexico 2nd Class: \$12, 1st Class: \$15; All other countries 2nd Class: \$15, 1st Class: \$30. (Canada money orders or checks should be in U.S. dollars.)

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialist Action*. These are expressed in editorials.

# S.F. socialist campaign will not have to disclose names

Socialist Action won a significant victory recently regarding its 1988 campaign for elected office in San Francisco. The San Francisco District Attorney's office dropped its demand that the Socialist Action Election Campaign Committee disclose the names of financial contributors.

The District Attorney's retreat resulted from a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on behalf of Joseph Ryan, 1988 Socialist Action candidate for S.F. Board of Supervisors; Sylvia Weinstein, 1988 Socialist Action candidate for S.F. Board of Education; and Joni Jacobs, Socialist Action Election Campaign Treasurer.

Prior to the D.A.'s announced decision, Ryan, Weinstein, and Jacobs faced criminal prosecution by the D.A.'s office for their refusal to disclose the names of contributors to the 1988 election campaign.

ACLU cooperating attorneys Mark White, Anna Rossi, and ACLU staff counsel Alan Schlosser stated that the whole situation could have been avoided from the beginning.

"We are gratified," the ACLU attorneys said, "that the District Attorney has finally recognized what was clear to us all along—that the right of political association was threatened. It is just regrettable, that it required a federal lawsuit to vindicate the First Amendment rights of Socialist Action members and supporters."

## "A chilling effect"

The District Attorney's Office decision came before the case was scheduled for trial. In a letter to Socialist Action's attorneys dated June 2, 1989, Assistant D.A. George Beckwith admitted that "there is a reasonable likelihood that disclosure of contributor names and addresses will have a chilling effect on potential contributors because of evidence of acts of private harassment over which we have no control."

Beckwith further stated that "absent a change in the law ... the Socialist Action Party may continue to omit the names and addresses of its contributors under the authority of the *Brown* decision."

*Brown v. Socialist Workers Party '74 Campaign Committee (Ohio)*, a 1982 U.S. Supreme Court decision, specifically exempted the Socialist Workers Party—and other minority parties—from disclosing the names of campaign contributors. The landmark decision was based on a documented history of governmental and private harassment of Socialist Workers Party members



Left to right: Anna Rossi, ACLU attorney; Sylvia Weinstein, S.F. Board of Education candidate; Joni Jacobs, Socialist campaign treasurer; Joseph Ryan, S.F. Board of Supervisors candidate; and Mark White, ACLU attorney.

Alan Benjamin/Socialist Action

because of their espousal of dissident views.

Socialist Action claimed from the beginning that it was exempted from disclosing contributors' names under the *Brown* decision. In fact, the Registrar of Voters accepted Socialist Action's financial forms for elections held in 1984, 1985, and 1987 without requiring disclosure of contributors' names.

The D.A.'s recent decision contradicted its earlier contention that Socialist Action was not entitled to an exemption under *Brown*. Beckwith earlier had insisted that without proof of harassment, Socialist Action did not fall within the guidelines of the *Brown* decision.

## A "liberal oasis?"

The D.A.'s narrow interpretation of the *Brown* decision reflected his contention that

political spying and harassment does not occur in the "liberal oasis" of San Francisco.

During the course of the case, however, the ACLU presented documentary evidence that the S.F. Police Dept., as well as other state and federal agencies, had spied on political groups in San Francisco, including the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice, the National Lawyers Guild, and even the ACLU itself.

These revelations were just the tip of the iceberg. As the lawsuit proceeded, Socialist Action and the ACLU planned to further unearth the vast network of spying, harassment, and cover-ups in which city authorities were willing participants. In the last analysis, the threat of exposure forced the District Attorney to back off.

"The fact that the District Attorney retreated

from its original position indicated two things to me," stated plaintiff Ryan. "One, it conceded that disclosing the names of our contributors could open them up to harassment and have a chilling effect on our ability to function; and two, if the case had continued, it would have exposed a network of spying and harassment by police on different groups—be they socialist, antiwar, pro-civil rights, etc."

"In that sense," Ryan added, "this exemption for Socialist Action is a victory for all those who are fighting for progress and social change."

The only unfinished, but not unimportant, business in the settlement is the collection of lawyers' fees and damages—a small price for the District Attorney to pay for an aborted fishing expedition against First Amendment rights.

# Why U.S. Supreme Court gutted affirmative action

The past couple of months have seen 30 years of civil rights struggles and gains crippled by the U.S. Supreme Court.

In cases of discrimination by employers, the court has ruled that hiring and firing practices are governed purely by "business concerns." The Court had ruled previously that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was directed at "the consequences of employment practices, not simply their motivation" (*Griggs v. Duke Power Co.*, 1971).

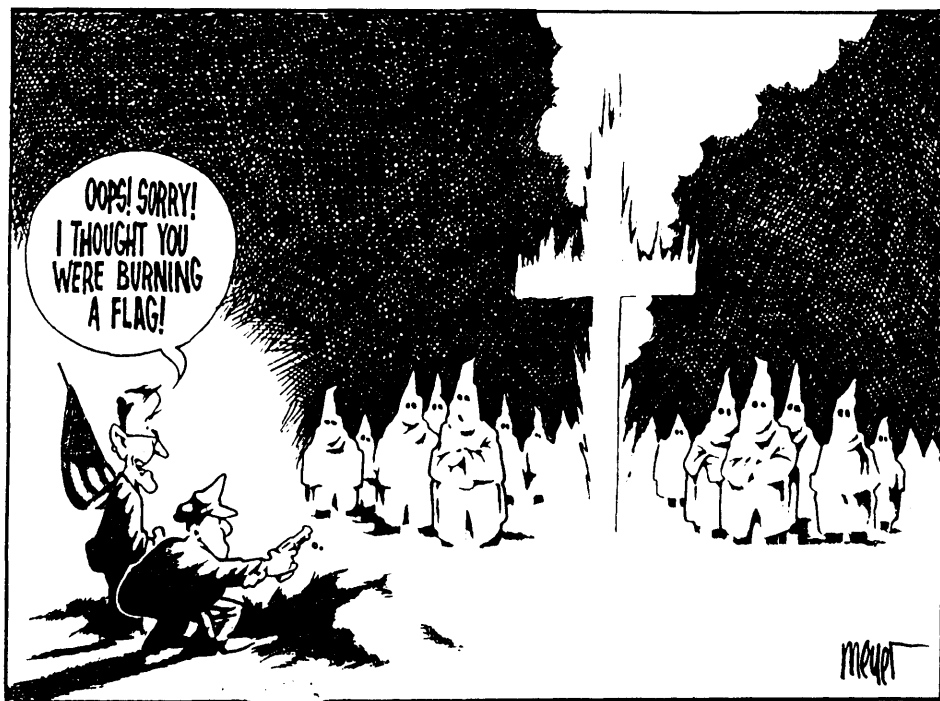
The Court has now ruled that affirmative action victories won on the job can be challenged in court by white employees. The Court has also decided that while employers may not discriminate on the basis of race or sex when hiring, the Civil Rights Act of 1866 does not cover racial harassment on the job.

In addition to these blows, the Supreme Court upheld the right of employers in transportation and other industries to violate the privacy of their workers with mandatory drug tests.

## A constitutional amendment?

Meanwhile, the president and the capitalist-owned media are preparing to go to war with the Court over its most "horrible" and "unspeakable" decision to date!

President Bush is calling for a constitutional amendment. It's not to safeguard the rights of Blacks, women, Latinos, and other victims of prejudice. Nor is it to protect a worker's right to a job free from employer



harassment and drug tests.

Bush is coming to the rescue of the most "helpless," victim of the Court's assault—the American flag. That's the "old Glory" that waved proudly over the atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the flag that draped the coffins of 55,000 U.S. servicemen during the Vietnam War; the Stars and Stripes that billowed in the tropical winds over the wreckage of Grenada.

The hoopla over the flag is a smokescreen

covering up the real damage done by the Court. But what is behind these rulings?

American capitalism entered the post-World War II period as the dominant world power, with enough wealth to make concessions to its own workers in exchange for social stability. The social-protest movements of the period were able to win major victories without creating an entirely new economic and social system.

But for the past two decades, beginning in

the last years of the Vietnam War, U.S. capitalism has been on the decline. Overproduction and a low rate of profit have plagued American industry, while competitors in Japan and West Germany have caught up and surpassed many elements of U.S. technology. The United States is now the world's largest debtor nation.

## Capitalism on the decline

The capitalist class has been forced to take their losses out on working people in this country in the form of lower wages, cutbacks in social programs, and attacks on democratic rights that gave working people more room to maneuver.

The recent Supreme Court decisions should be seen in this context.

By attacking affirmative action, civil rights, and the right to privacy for workers, the Court has taken from working people some of the control they had over their jobs and lives—and it has handed more control over to the bosses.

The Court's actions should not be blamed on this or that right-wing justice on the bench, either. The decisions of this court reflect a pressing need of the entire capitalist class to cut back the American workers' standard of living. The justices on the Court were put there to carry out the needs of the capitalist class, and they did their job.

As long as we live in a society where profit takes priority over human needs, no social gains will ever be secure. When times are tough, education, health, and wages will be the first to go.

Working people in this country will have to fight again for the rights stolen by the Supreme Court. But the capitalist class and its government will be much less willing to make concessions this time around. The fight for civil rights today will ultimately have to end with a new society free of capitalists and their courts.

# Industrial toxins are still deadly after 'recycling'

By JEFFREY GOLDMAN

In 1987, U.S. industries poured 22.5 billion pounds of toxic chemicals into the air, water, or ground—or shipped them off to sewage-treatment plants. That's 1000 pounds for each American citizen. These are unaudited industry figures; the reality is probably far higher.

In the past, landfill was the most common method of disposal. But with the tremendous amounts of industrial waste—coupled with the dilemma of regular garbage—we are running out of room. Understandably, most communities do not want landfills in their own backyards.

Most landfills leak into our underground water supplies—a major source of drinking water. A recent federal report stated that 37 states have widespread contamination of ground water.

Another means of disposal is direct dumping in water resources such as lakes, rivers, streams, and oceans. The Environmental Protection Agency reported last month that 17,365 of the country's waterways are polluted.

Much of this dumping is still legal. The few laws that exist to regulate these activities are usually not enforced—in part due to lack of funding for the regulators. Corruption is also a factor.

## Is incineration a "solution?"

Another "solution," which began in Europe and is now being greeted with favor in this country, is the toxic-waste incinerator. Burned at high temperatures, large amounts of toxics are seemingly made to disappear.

But filling the air with these deadly poisons is hardly a long-term solution. Industry figures—which at first glance appear impressive—point to a 99.99-percent burning efficiency. Let's say for a moment that this is possible. A few facts can soon dispel their sense of reality.

Even small amounts of this highly unstable toxic smoke should be a source of concern. These airborne elements combine with others, which create unpredictable compounds. And the effects are magnified, of course, given that each incinerator burns hundreds of tons of material.

But let's delve deeper into this issue of deadly deceit. Accidents occur even in the best situations. Industry locates these incinerators side by side with low-income neighborhoods, posing a fundamental question—which way is the wind blowing?

*This article is a contribution from a Socialist Action reader. Jeffrey Goldman is an activist in the environmental movement in the San Francisco Bay Area.*



Periodically, burners must blow their stacks free, which releases large amounts of cancer-causing smoke. The large volumes of ash from burning and the scrubbers and liquids used to clean the stacks are all highly toxic. This material then goes for burial or dumping in our waterways. Big business as usual!

Furthermore, even under the best of circumstances, the distorted industry figures are not possible. A 99.99-percent efficiency cannot be achieved.

## Corporation-style "recycling"

Portions of the corporations' overhead goes to buying government officials. A little more is used to deceive the public through a number of gimmicks—or what they call "public relations."

Let's take a look at a recent case to illustrate the corporations' tactics. Marine Shale, a disposal company in Amelia, La., is a good place to start.

Owner Jack Kent seemed nice enough at first, with plenty

of community spirit. He helped support the chamber of commerce in neighboring Morgan City. He also bought the town's Little League uniforms and financed the high-school band. Actually, all that was a smokescreen of inexpensive overhead.

Things changed for the worse when five children contracted neuroblastoma, a rare cancer. Then two of them died. All five children lived downwind from the largest hazardous-waste incinerator in the United States. Other residents complained of illnesses and skin irritations.

But Jack Kent, who owns the incinerator, reaped \$40 million profit in 1988 from the project. That was all to "recycle" (as Jack refers to it) the deadly chemicals that other companies don't want to handle. Marine Shale burns an average of over 100,000 tons a year of every toxin used in this country.

When Marine Shale first opened, it was licensed for disposal of "non-toxic" waste only. But the company soon began to burn toxics. When people complained of the smell, a judge placed a 10-day restraining order on the company. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LADEQ) also issued a compliance order.

## Government lends a hand

In late 1985, Pat Norton, the secretary of LADEQ, was called into Governor Edwin Edwards' mansion. In the presence of Jack Kent, he was told to sign a letter of authorization. The company was now allowed to burn the toxic chemical creosote. Soon, through a series of maneuvers, Kent expanded his ability to store and burn all types of toxic waste.

Kent is able to counter every investigation and complaint against him with legal loopholes and whitewashing in the media. All of his commercials end with the tag line, "Marine Shale processors—environmentally safe."

Now following Jack Kent's lead, other companies across the country are using a federal loophole by calling themselves "recyclers."

Workers and communities have been taken advantage of and misled through deception by corporate bosses and their two hands—the government and the mass media. Lies—like the threat that jobs will be lost if the waste facilities are shut down—have gone on too long.

We cannot afford to create toxic waste since there is no safe means of disposal. Let the bosses answer for their wrongdoings. The workers must take control of the factories in order to adapt to today's changing world.

The workers are the majority; the bosses are but a few. These modern-day barons are not capable of serving the interests of society. Let the ones who made the mess clean it up and not perpetuate it. At least they won't be unemployed!

With community activism, we can make an impact. We can begin to destroy their elitist mentality. Let them answer for their wrong-doings. We must pass stiff penalties for the violators. Take away their businesses, so they can't repeat their incompetence.

Ultimately, a much more radical change is needed to face the numerous global nightmares in regard to pollution. Unless big steps are taken, new faces will ultimately emerge serving corrupt ideas with new methods of exploitation. Time is indeed running out. ■

## ... Court's war on abortion rights

(continued from page 1)

roughly eroded by the Supreme Court's ruling that—unless the pro-choice majority mounts a mass-action campaign—soon only the wealthy will retain access to abortion. Currently, all but 13 states deny public funding for poor women wanting abortions.

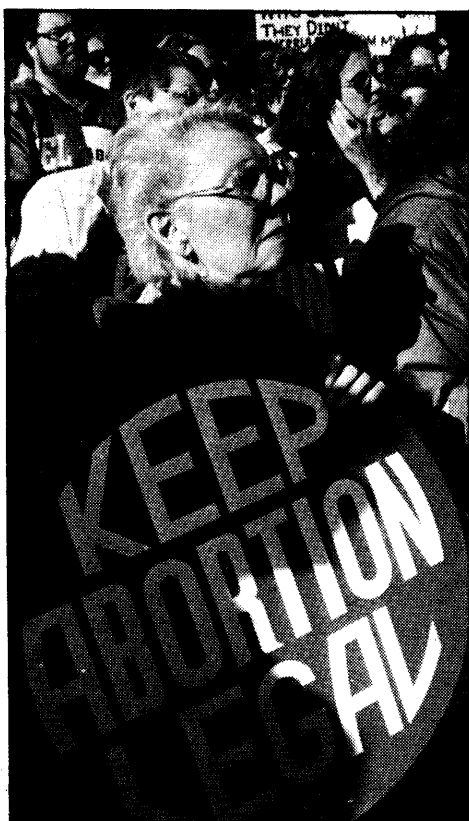
### OR plans more blockades

Randall Terry, leader of the right-wing, anti-choice Operation Rescue (OR), promised that an "avalanche of [anti-choice] legislation" will hit all 50 states. More ominously, he promised a big escalation of blockades at clinics that perform abortions. OR insists, justifiably, that it has the blessing of the Supreme Court.

The Court's decision escalates the war against women's rights. The casualties—women dead and injured—will be seen in the days to come. No laws actually stop abortions—they just drive them underground. The rate of abortion has been constant throughout modern U.S. history; the only statistic that changes is the number of women who die from back-alley abortions.

On one side of this war are the Supreme Court, the White House, Congress, and state governments—in conjunction with Operation Rescue and other incipient fascist groups which consider their war on women's rights to be a holy crusade. On the other side are the majority of the people, women's rights organizations such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), unions, and many other organizations.

NOW is the most important organization in the leadership of the pro-choice movement. NOW initiated and organized the largest demonstration for women's right in history. Six hundred thousand people—men, women,



Thousands protested Court decision

and children—marched in Washington, D.C., on April 9 to keep abortion safe, legal and accessible.

### Challenge before NOW convention

On July 21-23, NOW will hold its national conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. This conference represents an historic opportunity for NOW to launch the next campaign of the mass movement to defend reproductive rights.

A debate is developing over what the character of this campaign should be. Several pro-choice leaders have declared that the task before the movement is to channel the energies of pro-choice activists into the electoral arena. Their aim is to defeat "anti-abortion" legislators (Republicans) and elect those with "pro-choice" positions (Democrats) in order to pass pro-choice bills in state legislatures.

But this course of action would deliver the pro-choice movement into the hands of those who would demobilize it. Democratic and Republican party politicians would like nothing better than to funnel the anger generated by the Supreme Court decision into the two-party political shell game.

Both capitalist parties have played a treacherous role in opposing women's rights—defeating the Equal Rights Amendment, implementing the 1977 Hyde Amendment, gutting affirmative-action programs. There are no fundamental differences between the Republicans and the Democrats.

At the same time, several pro-choice leaders have declared that the fight is at the state capitols. But letting ourselves be diverted from a nationwide protest into separate state-by-state actions would be a serious mistake, tending to isolate activists in states where the pro-choice movement is weaker.

The Supreme Court's invitation to the states to put new restrictions on women's rights was designed precisely to forestall a unified nationwide response by the pro-choice movement.

On April 9, over 600,000 women and men—of all ages, from all walks of life, and from all over the country—gathered on the Mall in Washington, D.C. to defend the right to abortion. Today, as the consequences of the Supreme Court's decision become known, an ever larger number of people can be mobilized in mass action.

The National NOW convention should set the date for a massive pro-choice march and

rally this fall that will once again bring together hundreds of thousands of people.

### Clinic defense and mass protests


Mass demonstrations and massive defense of abortion clinics are inseparable tasks. The only way to effectively counter the "one-two punch" of the government and the anti-choice terrorists is to fight them on both fronts.

These two tasks—if carried out by NOW and all the supporters of every woman's right to choose—will have a big impact on the legislatures and the courts.

In fact, the extent to which the movement retains its independence and its mass mobilization character is the extent to which women's rights will be preserved—and expanded.

Women will never accept going back to the days when their choices were between bearing children against their will or facing serious risks—possibly even death—from illegal, back-alley abortions. The Supreme Court and the clinic terrorists want to send us back to those days. The women's rights movement must reach out to all supporters of democratic rights—especially the unions—for help.

The stakes in the struggle to defend *Roe v. Wade* and keep the clinics open have risen dramatically. To paraphrase an axiom of the workers' movement, "An injury to one-half of the human race is an injury to the entire human race." ■



Post Office Box 404830  
 Brooklyn, NY 11240-4830

212-966-9619

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

# Marine Corps targets women in witch hunt

By SANDY DOYLE

In late 1987, Naval Investigative Services began an intensive investigation aimed at exposing and prosecuting a widespread criminal network operating out of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Focusing their initial efforts at the Marine recruit depot at Parris Island, S.C., the intrepid investigators netted some 17 criminals by September 1987. They succeeded in jailing three of these, with the other 14 being discharged from the service.

Was this another spy operation similar to the one that uncovered infiltration at U.S. embassies last year? Or a conspiracy to sell defense secrets? No, but those who control military spending can rest assured that taxpayer dollars have been wisely used to protect this country from a much greater threat!

This investigation was aimed at uncovering and disbanding what one of the NIS employees referred to as a "lesbian mafia operating out of the training depot at Parris Island."

According to Cheryl Jameson and Barbara Baum, two of the victims who were jailed, the witch hunt began after the new Marine Corps commander announced that he thought "lesbians in the Corps were out of control."

He alleged that the Drill Instructors at Parris Island, the main training center for women, were arranging transfers of the trainees to bases where the instructors would also be going. He didn't explain how these transfers—aimed, according to him, at keeping lesbian affairs going—were being put into effect by drill instructors who normally are not the personnel charged with these decisions. Transfer orders come from Washington, as far as any soldier knows.

## Not a new policy

Following these allegations by the new man in charge of the Corps, all old investi-



Cheryl Jameson

gation files pertaining to alleged homosexuality were reopened.

The NIS did not even need this excuse to begin their witch hunt. A 1981 Department of Defense Policy on Homosexuality claims that homosexuality is incompatible with military service and recommends the discharge of any person committing, attempting to commit, or stating the desire or intent to commit homosexual acts.

The 1981 policy was not a new one. Investigations and discharges for alleged homosexual activities occurred regularly throughout the 1950s, with about 2000 personnel being dismissed annually during that decade. About 75 percent of those dismissed from the service were women soldiers.

Now, as in years past, many soldiers facing such accusations simply accept discharges—no matter what the truth or falsity of the

charges. Those who choose to fight often cannot afford any private counsel but are forced to use military counsel.

These "homosexuality" discharges slowed down markedly during the Korean and Vietnam wars, and soldiers who admitted to being gay were allowed to stay in the service. The recent case of Sergeant Perry Watkins, whose admission of being gay was ignored by the Army from 1967 until 1981, gives a clear example of this. In 1981, the Army suddenly refused to re-enlist Watkins. Lower courts have ruled that he must be reinstated, but the case is currently being appealed to the Supreme Court.

## "They don't smile"

In the meanwhile, all women military personnel remain a special target of these investigations. An officer testifying at Barbara Baum's court martial explained how women are viewed in the military. "If they're too friendly, they're sluts; if they don't smile at all (in response to overtures from male personnel), they're dykes."

Baum—who served six months of a one-year sentence for sodomy, indecent acts, and obstruction of justice—was informed that she was on legal hold in January 1988, as she was about to transfer to Hawaii.

In mid-March she was served with papers containing allegations of homosexuality. She was being reinvestigated for a two-month affair in 1986. The file had been closed at that time due to lack of evidence. They still had no concrete evidence—merely allegations.

Tired of wondering from day to day who was going to make another allegation, Baum decided to accept a discharge. Her military attorney urged her to think about it over the weekend. The following Monday, the attorney called her and said, "Get back up here. You're going to jail." Baum was told she faced from 38 to 43 years in prison.

Over the weekend, Baum's former lover had been induced to give a statement with details of their relationship. Baum believes that the woman was threatened with loss of custody of her child.

The former lover received an honorable discharge and was awarded disability payments for an injury she received in service. Meanwhile, the military prosecutors requested a stiff sentence for Baum to "protect society from her and her way of life."

## Front-page news

Cheryl Jameson, a 10-year marine who served almost 10 months on similar charges, was originally called into the NIS office and questioned about another women's alleged homosexuality. She told them she knew nothing about it. Then she was called in a second and third time and told she was under investigation.

When she refused to give permission for a search of her belongings, the NIS obtained a search warrant and went through her belongings in storage. The story of the charges filed against Jameson made front-page news even before she was informed of them.

At her hearing, 48 hours later, her current lover and her former lover testified against her. Both were granted immunity. Two drill instructors who testified that they would work with Jameson again were subsequently relieved of their duties.

Baum and Jameson recently spoke at a meeting sponsored by Lesbian Uprising in San Francisco. They explained to the audience of supporters the pattern that the witch hunt has taken at Parris Island and other military installations.

Many women have been questioned. Women who play softball, socialize with other women, hug each other, don't wear makeup or appear "feminine" enough, refuse the advances of male personnel, or go to "questionable" bars have all been interrogated. They are encouraged to give statements on any other women who are suspect.

Baum, who is appealing her case, is currently in debt over \$12,000 to her civilian lawyer. Jameson has been unable to afford a civilian lawyer and has to rely on military lawyers. But they both want to keep fighting to keep other women from going through their experience.

## Clinic defense battle escalates in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO—On July 1, Operation Rescue (OR) struck again in the Bay Area—this time with mixed results.

The anti-abortion zealots, numbering 150 to 200, failed to close the Oakland Family Planning Services clinic. Access to the clinic was defended by large numbers of people who were mobilized by the Bay Area Coalition Against Operation Rescue and the National Organization for Women.

In response to the pro-choice mobilization, the Oakland police, whose previous inaction during an OR blockade of Planned Parenthood in March had been vigorously protested, cooperated in keeping the clinic open.

When word began to spread about the attack on the Oakland clinic, pro-choice forces (who had assembled at 5:30 a.m. at other area clinics) came to Oakland. Outnumbered and

hemmed in, OR moved their operation to Daly City, just outside San Francisco, where the Planned Parenthood clinic director decided to allow the police—not the pro-choice defenders—to take charge of opening the clinic.

Despite the fact that pro-choice counter-demonstrators outnumbered them at least two to one, the OR forces managed to block the clinic doors. Police took over three hours to arrest and remove 90 blockaders, assuring that the clinic would remain inaccessible during that time. Patients were treated at other locations.

The Bay Area pro-choice movement now has the job of redoubling its recruitment of clinic defenders for the battles ahead.—C.S.

## Boston NOW leader speaks out

BOSTON—Ellen Convisser, president of the Boston chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), was among the speakers at a recent Boston Socialist Action forum titled, "After April 9: What's Next for the Women's Movement."

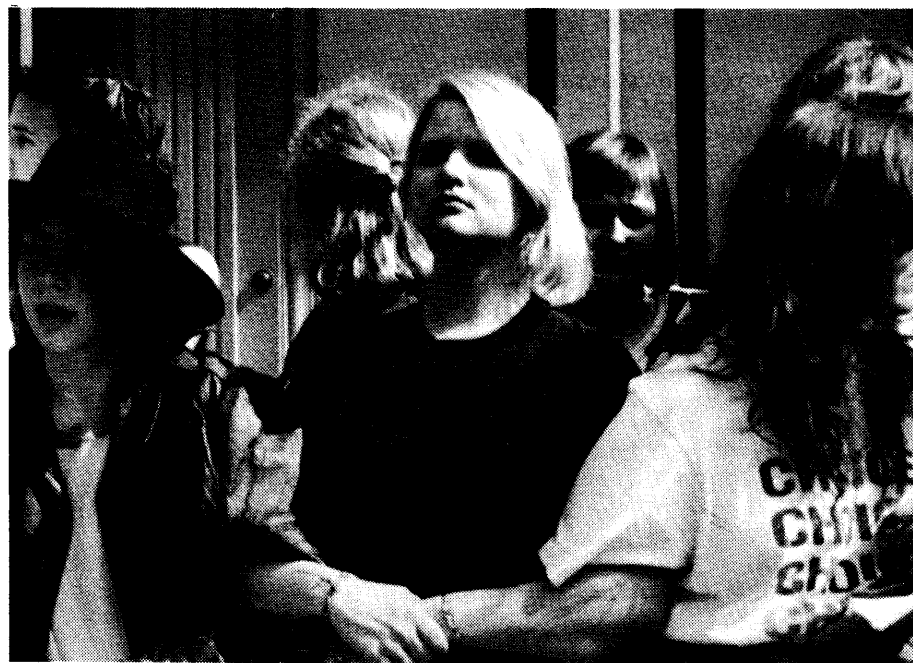
"We've been living in a climate that is unbelievably hostile to individual rights," Convisser said. She pointed out that since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, poor people in many states have been denied public funding for abortions. "We only have funding in 12 states and Washington, D.C., she noted. "We lost federal funding in 1977."

Convisser continued, "Some people have said that the Court will 'modify' *Roe*. How can you 'modify' *Roe*? There's nowhere to go. It's not like we can live with losing a little bit of our rights. We don't have that many."

"Another strategy that we have to work on is Operation Rescue," Convisser said. "We have to continue to defend the clinics, to defend women, to defend the issue. And we have to be there every time they're there. We cannot let them get the upper hand. We can always outnumber them."

Convisser pointed out that the pro-choice movement in Boston was able to outmobilize Operation Rescue and "chase them out of town." The following week, however, Opera-

## Minn. pro-choice supporters beat back Operation Rescue



Lynn Henderson/Socialist Action

MINNEAPOLIS—Six of the seven abortion clinics in the Twin Cities area were kept open on June 23 in spite of plans by Operation Rescue to close them down. The pro-choice movement here mobilized sufficient numbers to discourage OR from attacking all but one of the clinics. OR spotters and buses loaded with the faithful circled clinics ringed with pro-choice demonstrators only to drive off in disgust.

The June 23 clinic defense action here was a first for the pro-choice movement. The fact that OR was not able to close or even significantly interfere with the clinics on its main hit list means a victory for the new but growing clinic-defense movement in the Twin Cities.—R.S.

## Thousands rally for choice in Chicago

CHICAGO—On June 17, about 3000 people rallied outside City Hall to "keep abortion safe and legal." The event was sponsored by a pro-choice coalition organized by NOW. Several local Democratic Party politicians addressed the crowd.

Earlier that morning, two clinics in the area were hit by Operation Rescue (OR), which succeeded in closing one of them down.

OR sent about 100 people to heckle the pro-choice rally. But they were out-chanted by the thousands of demonstrators and kept at a safe distance by demonstration marshals.—V.L.

tion Rescue struck in Providence, R.I. For that reason, she said, it is important to set up a regional network for clinic defense. Ultimately, a network must be built on a national scale.

Clinic defense is "an opportunity to build our movement," Convisser emphasized.

She concluded, "We need to be active, we

need to work together, we need to use whatever strategies we can. And it's a long battle."

Also speaking at the forum were Elizabeth Ling, a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who was a speaker at the April 9 rally in Washington, D.C., and Alexei Folger, a member of NOW and of Socialist Action.—A.F.



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action



Carole Seligman speaking at "Socialism and Feminism Conference."

Socialists seek to mobilize pro-choice supporters—like these women at the 30,000—strong April 2 demonstration in San Francisco—to express the numbers and power of the women's fight for equality.

# Why socialists fight for women's equality

The following is an updated version of a talk given by Carole Seligman at a Socialist Action-sponsored "Conference on Socialism and Feminism" in San Francisco on April 15. Seligman is a national committee member of Socialist Action.

What are revolutionary socialists doing in the women's rights movement? An excellent answer to that question was given by Louise Neland in a socialist magazine, *New Review*, in 1914:

"The socialist who is not a feminist lacks breadth, the feminist who is not a socialist is lacking in strategy. To the narrow-minded socialist who says, 'socialism is a working class movement for the freedom of the working class; with women as women we have nothing to do,' the far-sighted feminist will reply, 'the socialist movement is the only means whereby women, as women, can gain real freedom. Therefore I must work for it.'"

Since the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848, revolutionary socialists have struggled for the emancipation of women. Marx and Engels point out that "The bourgeois [capitalist] sees in his wife a mere instrument of production.... He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at [by communists] is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production."

In fact, one criterion the revolutionary socialist movement uses to evaluate a social regime, government, or society is the status of women. This is one way we know that the Soviet Union—despite the overthrow of capitalism in that country—is not socialist. The very idea of socialism is based on the full emancipation of women—not household drudgery for women or differentiation between the status of women and men in society, such as exists in the Soviet Union today.

Our whole outlook is at one with the goals of feminism. But our contribution to the women's rights movement is unique. Revolutionary socialists bring to this movement a class analysis of who the real enemy is and an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the forces we are fighting against.

## Who are our enemies?

Take the example of Operation Rescue. I think they can be called an *incipient* fascist movement. They operate on the basis of fanatical woman-hatred. Through extra-legal methods they try to physically prevent women from obtaining abortions. But just because they are the most rabid opponents of women's rights, it doesn't mean that they are the most dangerous of our enemies.

There were attacks on abortion rights long before Operation Rescue appeared. The first serious attack came in 1977 from the U.S.

Congress with the adoption of the Hyde Amendment. This amendment prohibited spending public funds for abortions, thereby preventing poor and minority women from having equal access to abortion.

The first woman to die as a direct result of the cut-off of public funds was a young Latina named Rosie Jimenez. She died, not because of Operation Rescue, but because the U.S. Congress—Democrats and Republicans alike—cut funds for abortion.

When we look at who the enemies of women's rights are, we see that they are not only the fanatical fundamentalists, or the Roman Catholic Church. In the last analysis, our biggest enemy is the government.

And who does the government represent? It represents those who profit from the oppression of women—the capitalist class. This is the most important idea that revolutionary socialists bring into the women's rights movement. The bosses who pay women 60 cents an hour for every dollar men get are the same people who finance both the Democratic and Republican parties. They are the real owners of the Congress and the administration in the White House.

## International scope of struggle

Another important perspective that revolutionary socialists contribute to the feminist movement is the *international* scope of the fight for women's equality.

The women's rights movement is a worldwide struggle. This movement is not just limited to women in advanced capitalist countries. In fact, the feminist movement is of *most* benefit to women in the underdeveloped nations of the world where women don't have the right to vote, the right to own property, or any of the democratic rights we take for granted here.

In these countries women die by the thousands from botched abortions; the most extreme violence against women not only occurs but is tolerated and officially sanctioned. On a world scale, the same enemy of women—the capitalist class—is also the enemy of working people.

## Class struggle approach

This one idea underlies the proposals that we bring into the movement. We don't think that full women's equality is possible within the framework of the capitalist system. This may make some people in the women's movement suspicious of us. They ask, "If you don't think that we can get equality anyway, what are you doing in a group like the National Organization for Women (NOW), which is fighting for equality within the system?"

We respond that although the full rights

that women demand cannot be won within the framework of this system, it doesn't mean that we don't fight for them. Even though full emancipation for women won't come without defeating capitalism, it doesn't mean that important reforms cannot be achieved.

*Roe v. Wade* was an important reform. Fewer women have died from complications of botched abortions in this country since abortion was legalized. That in itself is a profound victory—and the 600,000 people who turned out in Washington, D.C., on April 9 attest to that.

But under the capitalist system, no reform, no victory for democratic rights, is assured. Today, under this system, forces are being mobilized to take back the hard won gains of the women's rights movement. And the right to abortion is one of their main targets.

Another important reform which revolutionary socialists fought for was the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). While this fundamental democratic reform could theoretically have been won under capitalism, it was betrayed by the capitalist politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties.

Affirmative action was a victory for women. But this important gain is today being reversed by a stroke of the pen of the U.S. Supreme Court.

What the ruling class giveth, the ruling class taketh away. And if the movement is not vigilant—and mobilized—these gains, like abortion rights and affirmative action, will be taken away.

So these fights for basic democratic reforms are important because they represent *real* gains; they expose the opposition and resistance of the ruling class; and most important, they demonstrate that when we are organized we can win.

## Working-class issues

Abortion rights, education, childcare, higher pay, an end to sterilization abuse—are all women's issues because we are the most affected by them. But every single one of them is also in the interest of working class men—in other words—the majority of men. None of these issues sets us up against men.

It's true there are plenty of working class men who have ideas to the contrary. They don't think women's rights are in their interests. But they're wrong. Their daughters, their wives, their sisters will die, too, if abortion is illegal. The huge turnout of men at the April 2 and April 9 demonstrations graphically demonstrated that.

Revolutionary socialists believe the demands of women are in the interests of the working class as a whole. Therefore, our strategy for pressing our demands is through mass demonstrations like April 2 and April 9,

petition campaigns and speak-outs, and the whole range of activities that we put forward in the women's movement. These are the kinds of activities that can attract majority support.

Mass action is the key. It expresses the power of our numbers, of the great support we have. The whole strategy of our movement has to be based on mobilizing those numbers, that strength. Mass action and self reliance are the fundamental ideas that socialists advocate in the women's movement.

We need mass independent feminist organizations like the National Organization for Women. We also need independent mass actions that are organized by coalitions. We need all the different groups to work together to put on mass actions such as defending abortion clinics against the attacks of the Operation Rescue fanatics.

## Independent political action

Most important, we need independent political action. It's a fatal mistake for the feminist movement to tie itself to the coattails of the Democratic Party. That was a disaster for the ERA. We lost the ERA because the movement tied itself to the Democratic Party, instead of continuing the mass actions which they had so successfully started.

Focusing on political support for candidates who promised to support the ERA proved to be a false strategy. Many of these politicians, once safely elected, voted against the ERA, thus dooming it to defeat. The lesson is that women need to organize outside of the political channels controlled by the capitalist class.

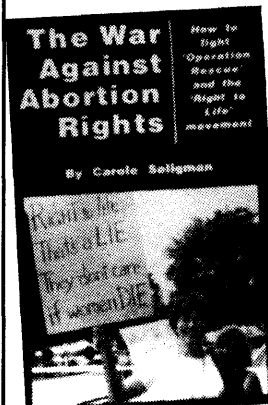
Unfortunately, there is a political void in this country. What we really need is a Labor Party where workers, half of whom are women, can fight for their interests in the political arena. We need a Labor Party to represent the interests of women, of the whole working class, African-Americans, Latinos, all those who suffer under and have no material interests in continuing capitalist exploitation.

There will be emergency response demonstrations all over this country on the day the Supreme Court renders its decision in the *Webster v. Reproductive Services* case. No matter what the court decides—and you can be sure some inroad against abortion rights will occur—the women's rights movement has to go on the offensive in the streets.

Socialists and their ideas will remain an integral part of the national campaign to assure women's rights to safe, legal, and accessible abortion. Like their sisters in the past, they see this movement as part of the struggle of working people everywhere for political, economic, and social emancipation.

A victory for women's rights, whether in defense of rights already won, or in the ongoing campaign to expand our rights, is a victory for us all. ■

## A key pamphlet



*The War on Abortion Rights: How to Fight 'Operation Rescue' and the 'Right to Life' Movement*

By Carole Seligman

Price: \$1.00

Mail order to: 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

# Hidden history of U.S. abortion laws

By GAYLE SWANN

The following article is reprinted from the April 1989 issue of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism (BIDOM)*. It is the text of a talk presented to a forum on "What Next in the Struggle to Defend Abortion Rights?" held in Minneapolis, Minn., on January 27, 1989.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* did not give us legalized abortion. The impact of this decision was to remove the prohibition and consequently *reinstitute* a woman's right to choose abortion.

It was just a little over a hundred years ago when abortion was decreed illegal by the states and a sin by the Catholic Church. Prior to that time, abortion was accepted in this country, condoned by the church, and recognized as legal by the states.

No doctors, or judges, or churches condemned abortion before quickening of the fetus. [Approximately six months into pregnancy. Ed.] It was considered to be a medically safe as well as socially acceptable procedure.

Our laws and traditions, our social norms, came directly from English common law which was based on the ancient traditions and laws from the Greek and Roman cultures. Collectively, throughout history, these laws and traditions did not recognize the existence of the fetus until quickening. Abortion, before quickening, was never illegal.

In the year 1800 there was *no* legislation, no law against abortion in the United States.

In 1812 the Massachusetts Supreme Court asserted: Abortion in early pregnancy would remain beyond the scope of the law...abortion was not a crime. This would be the ruling precedent throughout the first half of the 19th century.

Not only was the procedure legal, American women had access to a wide range of information on methods and procedures of abortion. They had books, pamphlets, available medication and instruments; and the knowledge of practicing midwives. Abortion was truly accessible to the women of this country. One could even say abortion was the first specialty in American medical history. It certainly was a firmly established practice in the United States by the 1860s.

## Women's safety came first

The first law passed in the U.S. concerning abortion occurred in 1821 by the state of Connecticut. The issue in this law was the method of using poison to induce abortion, and the focus of concern was on safeguarding the health of women. In actuality this was an anti-poison law and did not interfere with or alter the common law as it related to abortion. It declared one method to be illegal in the state of Connecticut, and only the person who administered the poison was subject to punishment, not any woman who was seeking an abortion.

All abortion laws passed in the first half of the 19th century dealt with safeguarding the health of women. None of these laws held women responsible for any crime. The only ones held responsible for a crime were those who endangered the lives of women. It is evident the states were interested in protecting the health of women from dangerous medical practices. The states were not interested in making abortion a crime. In fact, in 1828, New York passed a law providing for therapeutic abortion (abortion past quickening) for the sake of the health of the mother.

## What happened to change the laws?

The most significant campaign against abortion is tied to the history of the medical profession in this country, specifically to the formation of the American Medical Association (AMA). As late as the 1820s medical doctors, that is, those who graduated from medical schools, were looked at as a *menace* to society. Medical schools were commonly known as degree mills for rich kids.

These graduates had no real knowledge of medicine and basically were unable to help sick people, much less cure them. They were, however, known to maim and to kill their unfortunate patients. Consequently these

doctors did not have much influence in their communities, and they did not have very large practices. It is important to note that for the most part they did not perform abortions.

Thankfully, the American public had other choices for medical care. During the 19th century Americans chose folk-practitioners, osteopaths, homeopaths, and midwives for their health care and medical advice. These doctors also performed abortions.

The American Medical Association was formed in 1847 by graduates of medical schools as an organizational attempt to discredit all other medical practitioners. The obvious reason was to build up their own practice. The AMA's first act was to label themselves regular doctors and to refer to all other as "irregulars."

It wasn't until after the Civil War that the

- Huge profits were being made by those specializing in performing abortions and by drug companies like Parke/Davis that were providing drugs and instruments.

- Advertising for abortion had become extremely competitive and very public.

- There had been a steep decline in the population exactly when abortion information and services were the most available (1840-1850).

- The country had suffered a huge loss of life in the Civil War.

The cumulative effect of these conditions not only gave ammunition to the AMA but also teeth to their propaganda against abortion. Armed with arrogance, the AMA launched a speaking tour and a barrage of written material aimed at the American public. They made claim to three consistent



*'No doctors, or judges, or churches condemned abortion before quickening of the fetus. It was considered to be a medically safe as well as socially acceptable procedure'*

American Medical Association began to seriously organize against abortion and to attempt to put the procedure under AMA jurisdiction and regulation.

Horatio Storer, an AMA doctor, and Walter Channing, a Harvard professor, are two names to remember in the formation of this anti-abortion campaign. It was Storer who laid the groundwork in this campaign and Channing who wrote most of the literature. At the 1857 AMA convention Storer urged his cohorts to take a stand against abortion; he reaffirmed this position at the 1859 convention. It wasn't until the late 1860s, however, that Storer's proposition became active reality.

The post-Civil War period presented social, political, and economic conditions which became fertile soil for Storer's and the AMA's developing campaign against abortion.

- There had been a sharp rise in abortion between 1840 and 1870 (some sources quoting that from 35 to 40 percent of all pregnancies ended in abortion).

- Those who were keeping track could no longer deny that white, married women were actively using abortion to limit and postpone their families.

- The first wave of feminism was being felt. Young women were leaving home, not to get married but to educate themselves and to work in their own behalf.

points: abortion was murder, abortion was a sin, and abortion was an unsafe medical procedure.

The AMA attempted to recruit those doctors they had labeled "irregulars" to the campaign against abortion, even publishing special literature and making special tours for this effort. Those "irregulars" who refused to be converted were from then on called "quacks."

## Role of the church

Prior to the Civil War the AMA and organized religion were uncooperative towards each other. The AMA accused church leaders of valuing abortion, accepting abortion because they were afraid to criticize the practice. As the AMA gained momentum they challenged the churches to join the moral trend-setting.

One of the first public statements by a church leader was in 1869 by Bishop Spaulding, who condemned abortion as murder of an infant before birth, adding "no mother was permitted the death of an infant... not even to preserve her own life."

Let it be noted that the religious communities of America put more effort into the temperance movement than they ever put into the crusade against abortion.

The AMA tapped on the shoulders of their friends and relatives in state legislatures. The state governments had a vested interest in an expanding population, a population needed to develop the land and to fill the factories and mills of industrializing America. (It was also true that these same state governments were pressured by drug companies to protect their interests in practicing abortion.)

The AMA at this time was also opposed to contraception. For this reason they joined forces with Anthony Comstock, the Joe McCarthy of the 19th century. Comstock's general obsession was obscenity and he dabbled everywhere he imagined sex could be implied. Mr. Comstock prosecuted abortionists by citing their advertising as obscene.

The *New York Times* endorsed the AMA's campaign and began writing stories sensationalizing deaths from abortion. Eventually the paper no longer allowed abortion services to advertise.

And, unfortunately, the leaders of the feminist movement of the day joined the AMA in the fight to outlaw abortion.

By 1880 the AMA had effective control over medical education: one result was evidenced in women's health manuals, all stating opposition to abortion. They too were calling abortion a crime against nature, an evil, murder, and an unsafe medical practice.

By 1890 virtually all the states had enacted anti-abortion legislation.

Abortions did not stop throughout the whole period it was under attack. It went underground...a little deeper with each new law that was passed.

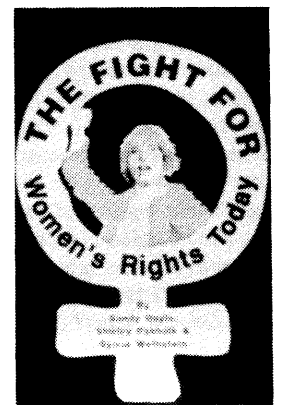
## Yesterday and today

It is ironic, a hundred years later, to find the American Medical Association defending the right of women to choose safe and legal abortion. They, after all, have a professional and financial investment in keeping it legal. The AMA, however, remains a conservative and self-serving organization which has an equal investment in childbirth. We must not have false confidence in the AMA organizing any campaign for abortion equal to the campaign against abortion of the 19th century.

We cannot look to the political parties and their politicians to organize a massive campaign to keep abortion safe and legal. Organized religion, for the most part, is not our ally on this issue. The media continue to sensationalize the subject.

We need to keep in perspective: during the 19th century the AMA never convinced the majority, the working class, that abortion was wrong. Women continued to practice abortion regardless and in spite of laws or taboos against it. And many women died a needless and painful death. Unless we are willing to accept a return to home remedies, coat hangers, quinine water, knitting needles, and the like; unless we are willing to accept ruinous futures for unwanted children, or the fate of possible criminal charges, or death for women; we, the majority, the working class, must organize and lead our own independent campaign to demand abortion remain safe and legal. ■

## Pamphlet on Women's Liberation



## The Fight for Women's Rights Today

By Sandy Doyle, Shirley Pasholk and Sylvia Weinstein  
Price: \$1.25.

Mail order to: 3435 Army St. # 308, S.F., CA 94110.  
Send 65 cents for postage

# ...Miners extend strike

(continued from page 1)

Sundays), and cuts in healthcare and pension benefits.

The company was itching for a fight. When the previous contract expired on Feb. 1, 1988, Pittston unilaterally cut off healthcare benefits to more than 1500 pensioners, surviving spouses, and disabled miners. The UMWA called the strike after a National Labor Relations Board ruling charged Pittston with "unfair labor practices."

The strike came at a time when fortunes for the UMWA were not good. With the growth of non-union mining and the closing down of union mines, coupled with increases in productivity through automation (longwalling and strip mining), the UMWA membership has dropped from 500,000 in 1950 to 65,000 members today.

It is in this context that the union was forced to take a stand and wage a battle at Pittston. Another defeat would directly pose the question of the continued existence of the UMWA, the most militant and democratic union in the country.

## Pittston imports scabs

Pittston thought it could defeat the strike by hiring local unemployed workers as strikebreakers. The unemployment rate in the coal fields of Virginia and West Virginia is over 20 percent.

But the company wasn't able to recruit a sizeable force of strikebreakers from these depressed areas. Local working people consider "scabbing" the worst possible sin—to be dealt with accordingly. So Pittston imported scabs from other areas. Yet even these strikebreakers refused to work at night on swing and graveyard shifts.

From the beginning, the miners were faced with the intervention of the Commonwealth of Virginia on the side of the company. Democratic Party Gov. Gerald Baliles dispatched 300 state troopers to the coal fields to intimidate the strikers.

Despite the police presence, the miners have continued their mass picketing and civil disobedience. Pittston is now operating at less than 10 percent of its capacity. This is the result of the solid community support for the strikers, which has transformed the strike into a social movement. Thousands have been arrested—including high-school students, teachers, and religious leaders.

The state and federal courts in "right to work" Virginia have issued injunctions against the UMWA. The union now faces the possibility of being fined over \$1.4 trillion—plus prison terms for its leaders.

Yet the UMWA maintains that it has a First Amendment right to freedom of speech and assembly. The Pittston strikers are confident they can win.

One striking coal miner told me that the

employer always acts as if the miners are stupid. But then he proudly described how the miners have countered every move by the company and the government. He also felt that if it were not for the intervention of the government, they could have won the strike in three days.

## State Democratic Party convention

The open collaboration of the state government and courts with Pittston's strikebreaking has encouraged the UMWA to consider some political solutions to this battle.

On June 10, 1989, the UMWA organized a protest against Gov. Baliles at the State Democratic Party Convention. UMWA delegates, with the reluctant support of AFL-CIO delegates, staged a protest inside the convention hall when Baliles spoke. The union delegates tried to convince the state Democratic Party to support the miners, but they were blatantly rejected and not even allowed to speak on the issue.

To underscore the fact that the entire Democratic Party machine is lining up behind Pittston, their new candidate for governor, Lt. Gov. Doug Wilder, has come out squarely in support of the actions carried out by Gov. Baliles.

Consequently, the UMWA is considering running its own workers' solidarity election campaign—independent of the Democrats—for the main statewide posts in Virginia. The campaign is being proposed as a protest against the anti-labor and pro-employer policies of the Democratic Party. The election campaign would also be a tactic to counter the anti-union propaganda generated by the press and the state government.

## Rally in Charleston

I attended a June 11 solidarity rally in Charleston, W.Va. Speakers from many labor unions gave support to the Pittston strike and to the striking Eastern Airlines workers.

The speakers list included William Winpisinger, retiring president of the International Association of Machinists (IAM); Joyce Miller, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW); and a Chinese student from a West Virginia university, who sought solidarity with the struggle of China's students and workers.

But it was the last speaker—Richard Trumka, president of the UMWA—who set the tone for the rally. He spoke about the Pittston strike and the attempt of the state and federal government to break the UMWA.

Trumka pointed out that the state refused to fine the company when seven miners died in a mine accident but, on the other hand, was fining and jailing striking miners. He declared that the UMWA was on strike not only against Pittston but also against the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Trumka exposed the hypocrisy of the U.S.

government when it claimed to support workers in Poland and China who are fighting for democracy and justice. At the same time, he noted, government authorities physically assaulted, fined, and jailed striking miners in southwest Virginia.

Making a direct analogy with the civil rights movement, Trumka declared that the UMWA would defy all unjust injunctions and laws that oppose the basic rights of working people to achieve justice. The day after Trumka's militant speech, the "wildcat" strikes began.

## Willingness to fight

These "wildcat" strikes demonstrate the willingness and capacity of the union ranks to fight. The UMWA has had a democratic tradition from the time of the Miners for Democracy in the early 1970s. This makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for the government to co-opt the leadership in order

to housebreak the membership—as in other international unions in the recent period.

The coal bosses and the government are faced with a situation they did not foresee. In order to defeat the miners, they now face the likelihood of a never-ending war in the coal fields. But, in fact, the coal operators have been conducting such a war for years.

Despite its small size, the UMWA is carrying on a fight that has the potential to win; it could signal the end of the recent spiral of capitulation, concessions, and betrayals that American trade unions have suffered since the PATCO strike in 1981.

The Pittston strike, combined with the solidarity "wildcats" of the UMWA rank and file, could become a turning point for labor. It deserves the support of all working people. The UMWA membership has pointed the way forward by expanding the strike. They are teaching the American labor movement some very fundamental lessons. ■



Pittston coal miners and families demonstrate in Charleston, W.Va., on June 11.

# Miners tour New England, build solidarity for strike

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

BOSTON—I met Luther Chaffin, a striking Pittston miner from Cleveland, Va., on the picket line at South Station here June 30. Along with his wife Judy and daughter Heather, he was there to show his solidarity with rail workers who are fighting back against the union-busting attempts of Amtrak management.

Chaffin, a 19-year-veteran of the mines, has been touring New England, speaking at local union meetings to raise money and spread the word about the Pittston strike. Pittston miners went out on April 5, and miners throughout Appalachia and the Midwest have followed in wildcat sympathy strikes.

"All the unions are one big family," Chaffin told me. He said that was the connection between the strike against Eastern Air Lines, the struggle of Amtrak workers against sub-standard wages and working conditions, and his fight back home.

Chaffin said that he had met with the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, as well as with union nurses, teachers, hotel workers, laundry workers, auto workers, Eastern machinists and flight attendants, electrical workers, and workers in the building trades. "Everybody's been real supportive."

Judy Chaffin spoke of her active involvement in the Women's Auxiliary of the United Mine Workers of America, joining picket lines and helping to raise money for the strikers and their families.

Heather was excited to be seeing New England, where she noted "everything moves much faster" than back home. She has been a leader of a Student Auxiliary in Dickinson County, Va., comprised of students from the elementary grades through high school.

The Student Auxiliary organized fund-raising activities for the miners' strike fund—a walkathon, a car wash, and the sale of camouflage ties. They sang solidarity songs at rallies, and did some pretty effective picketing on their own.

In addition, Heather described how students from Irvington and Clintwood High Schools "walked out of school and marched to the Clintwood Courthouse," where those arrested for obstructing the entrance to Pittston mines were being held. She said that over 200 students joined their picket line.

"Everybody [involved in the strike] is in good spirits," said Luther Chaffin. "But all we have is coal mining, and that's why we're not going back without a contract we can live with." ■

# Amtrak workers serve notice to bosses

By MARK SCHNEIDER

BOSTON—Amtrak workers staged informational picket lines in 26 cities on June 30 to put management on notice that the union ranks are prepared to strike if necessary. In a letter addressed to the public, a coalition of railroad unions placed the blame on management for creating a possible "shutdown [that] we don't want and you don't need."

Two contracts back, Amtrak workers were forced to "defer" a 12-percent wage hike over

three years, which was granted to other rail workers. Management argued that Amtrak, unlike the freight lines, lost money, so the employees would have to lose money.

When the following contract failed to recover the lost 12 percent, Amtrak workers decided to negotiate a separate agreement this time around. They are now 14 months without a contract.

Negotiators for the Transportation Communication International Union (TCU) outlined management's union-busting stance in a letter to all members. Management demands pay cuts of 30 percent to 50 percent, changes in protective "scope" rules (which define what work an employee must do), and "reform" of the medical plan so that workers will now have to pay for this benefit.

Track workers organized in the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees face loss of jobs to scab contractors, sub-standard wages, and unsafe and unsanitary working conditions.

Over 250 rail workers in Boston picketed in front of South Station. Speakers included representatives from a wide range of rail unions, a striking Pittston miner from Virginia, and an Eastern Air Lines machinist.

Chinese student activists came to observe the picket. As one union president said, "We've got to show the administration that if union-busting is no good in Poland, and repression is no good in Beijing, it's no good here too!" ■

(Mark Schneider is a railroad clerk and member of TCU Local 1089.)

Celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Nicaraguan Revolution

Live TV transmission from Nicaragua:  
President Daniel Ortega  
Dance to salsa sounds & music by  
The Looters

Saturday, July 22, 6 p.m., Longshore Hall, 400 North Point, San Francisco. Donation: \$12. Call (408) 288-6678.





Chinese students demonstrate in Minneapolis, Minn., on June 8 to protest massacre and crackdown.

Lynn Henderson/Socialist Action

## Hong Kong socialists assess new stage of China upheaval

*The following is an interview with Dan Yang, a writer for October Review, a revolutionary socialist newsmagazine published in Hong Kong. The interview was conducted in Hong Kong on June 20 by the Socialist Action delegation to China. October Review has actively supported the Chinese pro-democracy movement and has regularly reprinted documents from the struggle of the Chinese students and workers.*

**Socialist Action:** What were the main triggers of the massive mobilizations of the Chinese students and workers in April and May?

**Dan Yang:** The social contradictions of the bureaucratic regime had reached a point of explosion. The economic crisis, resulting in large part from the introduction of capitalist market reforms, had deepened tremendously.

Initially, the student movement did not ask for the government to step down. It simply demanded basic democratic rights—particularly freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of association. Also demanded were the right to form independent political parties and student organizations.

Why did this mobilization break out as it did? It is clear that a factional fight broke out between different wings of the Communist Party (CCP) leadership—parts of the intelligentsia and the "reform wing" of the bureaucracy versus the "hardliners."

From the beginning the student movement was drawn into this factional struggle. At the time of his death, the students began by praising Hu Yaobang [former CCP head] as a reformer. One of the demands of the Organizing Committee of the Beijing University Students called for "reevaluating the actions of comrades Hu Yaobang and approving his point of view on the great harmony existing between democracy and freedom."

But the students had their own aims, which were different from those of the intellectuals who had initially promoted the movement and who aspired to "reform" the ruling CCP. While many, if not most, of the students agreed that the CCP should reform itself, they also strongly believed that the people would have to take power into their own hands and change the institutions and structures of the system. In this sense, their demands and motion were revolutionary.

During the whole period of struggle at Tiananmen Square, the student movement matured very quickly. It rapidly organized itself and reached a stage where it was able to control not just the square itself, but also the surrounding area—and all the material resources needed to maintain the center of Beijing. There was a high degree of organization and discipline.

The mobilizations were unprecedented. They were perhaps even more massive than those 40 years ago at the time of the Third Chinese Revolution.

**S.A.:** Do you think that after the June 4 massacre, the students and workers still think it is possible to reform the bureaucracy?

**D.Y.:** Even before the massacre, as the

movement was developing, illusions and expectations in leaders or factions within the ruling party were being shed. The masses were awakening to a generalized struggle for democracy.

The massacre proved that the CCP cannot accommodate any of the demands of the people for democracy. It shows that all wings in the leadership are wholly united against the people. And this fact is now widely recognized by the people.

The Democracy Movement has suffered a serious setback at the moment. But this setback has also prepared the conditions for the next phase of struggle—the struggle for political revolution. It is difficult to forecast when this next phase will be. But already we can judge that the people have seen and recognized the true face of the ruling bureaucracy.

**S.A.:** What do you mean by political revolution?

**D.Y.:** Capitalism was overthrown in the Third Chinese Revolution. The property system was nationalized. Central economic planning was instituted. These were historic gains for the Chinese workers. But from the outset a bureaucratic caste took over the apparatus of the state and central planning.

Political revolution means the overthrow of this parasitic bureaucracy, the abolition of its privileges, and its replacement with true people's power—meaning the working class, small peasants, independent traders, and the honest rank-and-file elements of the party.

Through a political revolution the working people of China will take control of their lives and their production within the context of nationalized property with democratically organized planning.

**S.A.:** How long will the bureaucracy be

able to maintain its current phase of repression?

**D.Y.:** The masses didn't wake up because of the students but because of the social, economic, and political crisis of bureaucratic rule. This repression did nothing but aggravate the entire crisis of the bureaucracy. The regime is more isolated than ever. Despite its outward appearance of unity, it is fraught with factional fighting. It is a fragile regime.

How long can this situation last? This is a matter of speculation. A key factor will be the unfolding economic crisis. This will determine how fast the resistance—particularly among the workers—will expand.

**S.A.:** The whole country has undergone tremendous economic changes over the last decade. What is your view of the economic reforms? And how have these reforms fueled the current crisis?

**D.Y.:** The reforms started in 1978. They have undergone a number of changes since that time.

On one level, the reforms reversed the forced collectivization policy in the countryside. In this sense the government corrected a very wrong policy of past years. The people were able to work on their own plot. There was also a corresponding change in the social control. People were allowed to set up their own businesses, in trade, in small manufacturing, in transport, etc.

But, more important, while the reforms reversed incorrect policies of the past, they also actively promoted social polarization by lending a free hand to capitalist market forces. This was symbolized by the CCP leadership's call to the peasants to "enrich themselves."

The economic and social polarization occurred at a very rapid speed. In just a few years, millionaires appeared. And this in the

context of China is very grave because the average income of an average peasant is extremely low.

In addition, all the evils of the market economy—all the anarchy of market forces—have been gradually reintroduced. I'll give you one example: In the county of Shangdong the growth of garlic was promoted. The whole county went into the production of garlic.

When it came to harvest time, the government office was flooded with people coming in with garlic, and so the government had to stop buying garlic. This immediately triggered a riot.

Speculation and corruption by the bureaucracy accompanied the introduction of market mechanisms, particularly over the past five years.

**S.A.:** Can you describe what has been happening here in Hong Kong? What has been the response to the pro-democracy movement on the mainland?

**D.Y.:** The first phase of the student struggle in China in mid-April was echoed also in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong struggle continued until mid-May, when the hunger strike started in Beijing. There were corresponding sit-ins and hunger strikes by the students in Hong Kong. And ever since then, because of the reports from Beijing, the people in Hong Kong have been following events in China very closely. So the movement in Hong Kong is also building up.

From the point of view of the colonial government here, this type of mobilization is a definite threat.

**S.A.:** The mainstream media in the United States has been saying that the massacre in China—and the large votes against the ruling Communist parties in Poland and the Soviet Union—mean that socialism is finished as an historical force and that capitalism has shown its superiority. What is your response to this?

**D.Y.:** Well, of course, time will tell. I think those who go around saying this kind of thing will be proven wrong. There is a combined worldwide crisis of capitalism and of Stalinism—not socialism. The capitalist system is rotting all around us.

If you look carefully at all the statements of the Democracy Movement, at all the wall posters by the students and workers, you will see that there is no indication of any desire to restore capitalism, or individual enterprise, or getting rich. What they all emphasize is that the people have stood up to take control of what is owed to them. And it is precisely in this sense that this is the beginning of the political revolution.

Of course, when the ruling party promotes individualism, praises the market economy, and urges people to get rich—this has the effect of sowing confusion among certain sectors of the population. But the actual material effects of the pro-capitalist reforms—the exacerbation of social inequalities, the promotion of greater unemployment, etc.—are already being deeply felt by the workers and poor peasants. They are not being fooled; they know that these reforms are not good for them.

The Democracy Movement did not advocate, not even remotely, the reintroduction of capitalism. Certain wings of the bureaucracy and certain intellectuals advocated more market reforms, this is true. But among the students, despite their confusion, there were no appeals for capitalism.

And as for the workers, they do not see capitalism as their way out. What they are struggling for is socialist democracy. ■

# 十月評論

October Review

**SPECIAL ISSUE:**

*Documents of the struggle*

訂閱：每年港幣五十元

通訊處：香港郵政總局信箱10144號

## 十月書屋

地址：深水埗大南街321-323號四樓A座

電話：3-862780

The June/July issue of *October Review* is a 100-page special issue (12 pages in color) devoted to reprinting the main documents of the Chinese Democracy Movement. It is published entirely in Chinese. Included are 30 pages of documents from the autonomous workers' movement.

Copies of this special issue can be ordered from Socialist Action, 3435 Army St., Room 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Send \$5.00. (Contributions are welcome.) Proceeds will go to *October Review*.

# Appeal to defend China students, workers made public in Hong Kong

By ALAN BENJAMIN

An international appeal in defense of the Chinese Democracy Movement was made public at a July 4 press conference in Hong Kong by Ralph Schoenman and Mya Shone. Schoenman is the former director of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

The appeal calls on the Chinese government to end martial law, stop the executions, release all those imprisoned, and bring to justice all those responsible for the massacre of the Chinese students and workers. It is signed by notable writers, artists, intellectuals, trade unionists, political figures, and human rights activists throughout the world. [See text and signatories on opposite page.]

The press conference, which was covered by 19 international media services, was organized and chaired by Li Cheuk Yan, general secretary of the Clothing Industry Workers General Union in Hong Kong. Li was in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, when the massacre of thousands of students and workers occurred. He was detained and then deported. Li had been collaborating with workers in Beijing who were calling for independent trade unions.

In his introductory statement, Li stressed the important role of unionists and all supporters of workers' rights in the struggle to defend the Chinese Democracy Movement. He said that Hong Kong unions would be in the forefront of this international effort and

noted that considerable follow-up work would be needed to advance the goals of the appeal.

Schoenman fielded questions by reporters, many of whom were curious about the important number of trade-union leaders and socialists among the signers of the appeal.

"We emphasized that people who are involved in this appeal are people who have been active in social struggles for workers' rights, students' rights, and democratic rights in all parts of the world," Schoenman told *Socialist Action*.

"We made it clear that we deplore the hypocrisy of those who shed crocodile tears for the Chinese workers and students while obstructing and often repressing the struggles of workers and students in their own

countries," Schoenman said. "Our theme was that to be a supporter of worker and student struggles in China requires that you are a genuine supporter of worker and student struggles everywhere."

Schoenman continued, "Our point of departure as initiators of the appeal is that socialism and democracy are inseparable. Of course, the broad list of signers who subscribe to the content of the appeal are not asked to endorse this view."

Schoenman reported that meetings to discuss the appeal were held with Andrew To, president of the Hong Kong Federation of Students; Chow Wing Hang, president of the Hong Kong University Students Union; and Irene Ng, acting president of the Chinese University Federation of Students.

Schoenman and Shone also met with Leung Hon Hoi, deputy general secretary of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, the broadest alliance of trade unions in Hong Kong. All supported the appeal and undertook to get the endorsement of their organizations.



## Chinese student addresses Socialist Action forum in Boston

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

BOSTON—Seventy-five people gathered at a Socialist Action forum here on June 16 to hear a Boston-area Chinese student activist.

The Chinese student, C.W., asked that only his initials be used in this article because of serious threats the Chinese regime has made against student activists in the United States. During the forum, a local TV news team arrived, and C.W., citing potential danger to his parents back home, asked that he not be filmed.

C.W. began by tracing the origins of the student movement. Students in China have never recovered, he said, from the aftermath of the 1986 demonstrations for democracy. "There was the 'Campaign Against Bourgeois Liberalization,' in which everybody was forced to criticize themselves. I think most students were very angry, and felt like they'd been kidnapped politically" because free expression was muzzled. "That explains the enthusiasm shown in April and May."

"I know why [the government] crushed the student movement so brutally," he continued. "They think that if they make a concession now to 1 million people—what about 10 million people when they demonstrate?"

C.W. pointed out that the demonstrators do not represent "an anti-communist movement." He stated, "We realize that our movement might potentially be used by certain groups, whatever their line would be, just to benefit their cause. So, we have definitely engaged in such activities that would directly benefit the pro-democracy demonstrators in China."

Chinese students in the Boston area, through the May 4th Foundation for Democracy, have been raising money to support the students in Beijing. At the meeting, a collection for the Foundation netted \$160. ■

In our June 1989 special supplement on China, we reprinted portions of the guiding principles of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation, an independent union formed on May 25.

We reprint below an article by a Hong Kong trade unionist, Trini Leung, who describes the Federation's goals and the repression it suffered at the hands of the regime on June 4. The article, dated June 10, appeared in "Echoes From Tiananmen," a compilation of documents published by the Hong Kong Trade Union Education Centre.

The Workers' Autonomous Federation emerged in May 1989 as a prototype for a future independent trade-union movement in China. It arose alongside the student demonstrations which began in April 1989 calling for greater democracy, an end to corruption, a more open and accountable government, and autonomous student unions.

Under the red banner of the Workers' Autonomous Federation and fluttering slogans calling for democracy and freedom of association, between 50 and 100 workers erected a tented headquarters on the outskirts of the students' tents at the Tiananmen Square in Beijing in mid-May.

Members of the union were mostly production workers, service-sector workers, and worker intellectuals. Among the core members there were steelworkers, railway workers, aviation workers, and restaurant cooks.... Their action was the first open attempt by workers to set up an autonomous organization outside the official All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACTFU).

### Singing the Internationale

The organizers launched their action by issuing pamphlets and leaflets to publicize criticisms of the present labor policies and union structure as well as to spread their call for a genuine and democratic workers' movement. They also set up a public-address system at Tiananmen Square to explain their demands....

On the one side, their own broadcasts continued to repeat their calls, punctuated by the Internationale and other songs. On the other side of the Square, the Central government address system blared official propaganda, repeating Martial Law regulations and issuing warnings to the demonstrators.

At any time during the day, hundreds and

## Worker describes China's first independent union

sometimes thousands of workers and residents crowded round the Federation's loudspeakers, listening to the speeches....

The founders of the Federation reckoned that the fight [of the students] for democracy and liberty bore relevance to their immediate interests, allowing the workers to have independent and genuine representation in policy-making as well as improvements in their own economic position....

The problems the Federation was addressing focused on the corrupt bureaucracy and the existence of a privileged elite in China. The wide-range discrepancy between the workers and plant managers, the lack of workplace democracy, the lack of genuine workers' representation in the policy-making process, poor labor protection and working conditions, and the deterioration of workers' living standards in recent years were among their main grievances.

On June 3, the Federation's leaders were still talking of finding ways of legalizing their organization.... They were insistent that they wanted to organize their Autonomous Federation through constitutional and legal means and stated that they did not oppose the rule of the Chinese Communist Party.

### Confrontation at square

The Autonomous Federation camp was toward the northeast of the square. On the evening before the massacre, troops were massing at that end of the square, and it was clear that a confrontation of some sort was about to occur.

The members of the union were among the most courageous of the demonstrators, and holding their union banner high, they marched to the front of the crowds, facing the waiting troops. It was from this corner of Tiananmen Square that the massacre began.

Students who survived the massacre told us that in the following hours most of the representatives of the Autonomous Workers Federation were killed as the troops attacked.

On June 8, four days after the massacre, the

regime announced that the Workers' Autonomous Federation, alongside the Student Autonomous Federation, were "counterrevolutionary" organizations, and they would specifically round up and arrest the organizers and activists in these groups.

On Friday, June 9, demonstrations numbering more than 100,000 people were staged in Shanghai. Among the protesting banners were those from the Shanghai Workers' Autonomous Federation. It was reported that there were at least 1000 workers rallying behind this banner.

There have also been reports that similar independent trade-union banners were raised in Guangzhou since the Beijing massacre. Demonstrations continue in most cities of China as the truth about events in Beijing spreads through the nation. ■

## Socialist Action calendar

### SAN FRANCISCO

#### *The Port Chicago Massacre*

Hear: Robert Allen, *Black Scholar*.  
Friday, July 14, 8:00 p.m., 3435 Army St.  
#308, (415) 821-0458.

#### *Drugs, Corruption, and Brutality*

Hear: Tito Flores, attorney; Roberto Lovato, Dolores Huerta Coalition, and Kwame Somburu, Socialist Action.  
Friday, July 28, 8:00 p.m., 3435 Army St.  
#308, (415) 821-0458.

### CLEVELAND

#### *Film: Abortion Stories North and South.*

Friday, July 28, 7:30 p.m., Cleveland Heights Public Library, 2345 Lee Rd.  
Tel. (216) 429-2167.

### LOS ANGELES

#### *"Uprising in China:" An Eyewitness Report*

Hear: Nat Weinstein, national secretary, Socialist Action; Ralph Schoenman, past dir., Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation; and Mya Shone, photographer.

Friday, July 7, 7:30 p.m., Patriotic Hall, 1816 S. Figueroa, 6th Fl.  
(213) 396-6945.

### CHICAGO

#### *"The Revolutionary Crisis in China"*

Hear: Nat Weinstein, national secretary, Socialist Action.

Saturday, July 29, 7:00 p.m.  
656 W. Barry.  
(312) 327-5752.



# International Appeal: Stop the Repression!

## Signers:

**ALGERIA:** Fawzia Abassa, journalist; Abderahmane Arfountni, OST; Mustapha Ben Mohamed; Luisa Hanoune, Gen. Sec., Alg. Assoc. for Equal Rights Between Men and Women; Omar Menouer, Hon. Pres., Alg. League for Human Rights. **BELGIUM:** Philippe de Menten, OSI; Philippe Larsimont, unionist, Liege; Ernest Mandel; Franck Slegers, SAP-POS. **BRAZIL:** Jacó Bitar, Mayor, Campinas, PT; Olivio Dutra, Mayor, Porto Alegre, PT; Eduardo Jorge, Federal Deputy, PT; Joao Machado, Exec. Com., PT; Jair Meneguelli, General Secretary, CUT; Luiz Ignacio (Lula) Da Silva, Candidate of PT for Pres.; Luiza Erundina De Souza, Mayor, Sao Paulo, Eduardo N. Suplicy, Pres., Municipal Council of Sao Paulo; Francisco Weffort, Chairperson, International Relations, PT. **CANADA:** Sir John Polanyi, FRS, Nobel Laureate/Chemistry; Barry Weisleder, Pres., Ontario Public Serv. Employees, Local 595; Andre Kolompar, Pres., United Postal Workers of Toronto; Ron Jones, Pres. UPW Scarborough. **CZECHOSLOVAKIA:** Jan Kavan, Palach Press; Petr Uhl, journalist; Jaroslav Sabata, political scientist; Sasa Vondra, geographer; Jiri Hajek, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs; Hana Holcnerova, engineer; Ivan Lamper, publicist; Jiri Stencl, worker; Petr Pospichal, journalist; Jan Klement, medical worker; Martin Kapecky, educator; Ludek Marks, public employee; Petruska Sustrova, publicist; Pavel Julmann, librarian; Petr Bartos, economist; Petrích Koutly, worker; Vladimír Trlída, worker; Miroslav Odložel, worker; Stanislav Devaty, technician; Anna Sabatova; Petr Holubar, mechanic; Jan Urban, journalist; Antonín Liehm. **DENMARK:** Anton Schou, unionist, PSP (SF); Borge Trolle; Bo Larsen, Vice Pres., Telecommunication Workers Union; Arne Nygreen, SID Trade Union Staff Dir. **FRANCE:** Laurent Jacquemin, AJR; Sam Ayache, League for Human Rights, Maison-Lafitte; Daniel Singer, author; Maître Mourad Oussedick, lawyer, Paris City Council; Dr. Jean Ayme, psychiatrist; Prof. Jean-Pierre Barrois, Univ. of Paris XII; Prof. M-Th. Cousin, doctor; Pierre Debat, doctor, union rep.; Maître Yves Dechezelles, lawyer; Prof. Druet, doctor; Béatrice Faucher, Pres., League of Human Rights, Versailles; Prof. Florence Gauthier, Univ. of Paris VII, historian; Daniel Gluckstein, National Bureau, MPPT Corp.; Prof. F. Guerin, doctor; François Guigue, Pres., League for Human Rights, St. Quentin; Prof. Catherine Kinstler, author; Jean-Jacques Marie, historian; Victoria Melgar Oberschmidt, translator; Serge Meusnier, Union Rep.; Richard Mijoule, mathematician; Zbigniew Kowalewski, author; Prof. Paul Milliez; Prof. H. Monod, doctor; Alain Montintin, Union Rep.; Pierre de Noyelles, Libre Pensée, Yvelines; Alain Pointillart, Research Dir., INRA; Dr. F. Pinon, doctor; Alain Roques, Union Rep.; Daniel Bensaïd, LCR; Dr. W. Rosenbaum, doctor; Robert and Lise Sautereau, veterans of Résistance, FI-FTP; Prof. L. Schwartzberg, doctor; Alexandre Hebert, unionist. **GERMANY:** Reinhard Buttner, Pres. Working Comm., SPD—Lower Bavaria; Prof. Ossip Flechtheim, Vice-Pres., Intl Human Rights League, Berlin; Carl Lohmann, Union for Workers Policy; Werner Uhde, editor, *Sozialistische Arbeiter Zeitung*; Freya Klier, filmmaker; League of Chinese Univ. Students in Berlin; Eva Quistorp, M.P., European Parliament, Green Party; Max Weber, M.P., Bavaria, SPD; Gert Weisskirchen, M.P., SPD. **GREAT BRITAIN:** Tariq Ali, author; John Berger, author, art critic; Tamara Deutscher; Quintin Hoare, author; Dave Packer; Pat Pottle; Arnold Wesker, playwright. **ITALY:** Alberto Pian, unionist, Turin; Franco Turigliatti, LCR. **N. IRELAND:** Bernadette Devlin McAliskey. **ISRAEL:** Prof. Akiva Orr, author, Meir Vanunu. **LEBANON:** Kameel Dagher, author,

The movement for democracy in China has aroused the conscience of the world. Selfless and dedicated students, inspired by the highest ideals and the revolutionary example of their own predecessors in the May 4th Movement of 1919, aroused the Chinese people who rose in their millions in support of the student calls for political democracy and an end to autocracy and official corruption.

Chinese workers have sought to organize independent trade unions as their counterparts did in Poland. They have carried out factory occupations and a general strike in cities across China.

This vast movement expresses the desires and the will of the Chinese nation for political democracy, social justice and the self-organization of the people in their own interests.

A small, discredited and isolated oligarchy has used brutal force to slaughter and suppress the youth of China. Nothing so clearly marks the current regime as an enemy of its own people as the barbarous methods it has used to preserve its hated rule.

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels repudiated what they termed "reactionary or feudal socialism" and the cynical officials who betray the ideals of freedom and social justice:

"In political practice, therefore, they join in all coercive measures against the working class, and in ordinary life, despite their pretentious phrases, they stoop to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love and honor for traffic in wool, beetroot sugar and potato spirits."

We hereby declare that the students and workers of China are the true bearers of the revolutionary ideal. It is their selflessness, their devotion, their sacrifice and their banner of justice and democracy which have touched our hearts and galvanized our will.

It is the democracy movement of China which will triumph because the reliance on force by the despised few must ultimately fail.

We call upon the Chinese government to end martial law, stop the executions, release all those imprisoned and bring to justice those responsible for the massacre of the youth and workers of China. We appeal as human beings to human beings: Join us — in the conviction that the people of China must not be allowed to stand alone.

**MEXICO:** Rosario Ibarra, National Front Against Repression; Edgar Sanchez, former deputy, PRT; Efraim Calvo, former deputy, PRT; Sergio L. Rodriguez, Natl Comm., PRT; Lucinda Nava, Natl Comm., PRT; Manuel Aguilar Mora, author. **NICARAGUA:** Moisés Hassan, Former member, Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction; Melvin Wallace, Dir., CIRA; Luis Sanchez Sancho, First Secy., Nicaraguan Socialist Party; Carlos Luca, Natl Assembly, MAP; Oscar Rene Vargas, former FSLN economic advisor; Marvin Ortega, Dir., ITZTANI Research Institute. **Peru:** Jorge Villaran, Natl. Exec. Comm., Workers Party; Hernan Cuentas, Organizing Comm., Intl. Tribunal Against the Debt; Daniel Vasquez, Defense Front of Lambayeque. **POLAND:** Czeslaw Borowczyk, National Council, PPS-RD; Andrzej Gwiazda, Solidarity-Gdansk; Ryszard Kapuscinski, author; Jan Minkiewicz, Poland F.P.; Jozef Pinior, National Council, PPS-RD; Jarek Wardega, PPS-DR, Wroclaw; Piotr Ikonowicz, PPS-DR; Zuzanna Dabrowska, PPS-DR; Andrzej Kowalski, PPS-DR; Milka Tyszkiewicz, PPS-DR. **SOUTH AFRICA:** Saths Cooper, Former Pres., AZAPO. **SPAIN:** Vincent Garces, M.P., Valencia; Raul Gomez, Sec., Alliance for the Republic; José A. Lago Celaya, Pres., Republican Left, Euskadi; Mikel Urriz Deusto, Municipal Council, Erandio, Herri Batasuna; José Ramón Agote, ex-leader PSOE, Guipuzcoa; Joaquin Nieto, Natl Exec. Comm., CCOO; Miguel Romero, LCR; Koldo Mendez, Socialist October; Miguel Gutierrez Aja, Pres., Cantabrica Commission on Human Rights; Vicent Ventura, journalist; Benjamin

Bastida, Prof., U. of Barcelona; Juan María Bandres, M.P., European Parliament; Kepa Aulestia, M.P., Basque Parliament; Ion Larrinaga, Federal M.P., Koro Garmendia, M.P., Basque Parliament; Xabier Garmendia, M.P., Basque Parliament; Jesus Bejar, CCOO, John Deere; Angel Hernandez, CCOO John Deere; Teodoro Rivera, UGT, John Deere; Pablo Flores, CCOO, John Deere; Miguel Fernandez, CCOO, John Deere; Francisco Escudero, UGT, John Deere. **Union Local USO-UGT and UGT, Hispano Ollivetti.** Manuel Cuso, POSI; Ni Ming Pong Ping, Chinese citizen; Mario Onaindia, M.P., Basque Parliament; Pablo Ruiz de Gordejuela, M.P., Basque Parliament; Xabier Gurruchaga, M.P., Basque Parliament; Ramón Penangaricano, Intl Secy., Euskadiko Eskerra; Jorge Diez Gomez, Gen. Secy., Bank Workers Union-FEBASO/UGT; Xabier Olaberri, M.P., Basque Parliament; Martin Auzmendi, M.P., Basque Parliament; Victoriano Sanchez Moreno, Gen. Secy., Transport and Communication Workers Union-UGT; Santiago Nieves Andreu, Gen. Secy., Public Employees Union, UGT; Xabier Markiegi, M.P., Basque Parliament; Rafael Recuenco Montoro, Gen. Secy., UGT, Valencia; Alberto Perez Garcia, Gen. Secy., UGT, Basque Country; Fernando Moreno, Natl. Secy., National Teachers Union-UGT; José Miguel Villa Antonana, Intl Secy., FEBASO-UGT; Evelio Angula Alvarez, Education Dir., FEBASO-UGT; José A. Llorente Gomez, Org. Secy., Transport and Communication Workers Union-UGT; Miguel Martinez Tapia, Gen. Secy., Madrid Teachers Union-UGT; José Luis Blancs Ibañez, Gen. Secy., Textile and Furriers

Union, Valencia; Paula Garcia Olasso, Gen. Secy., Commercial Workers Union, Valencia; Carlos Trevilla Acebo, Exec. Comm., UGT Euskadi; Iosu Frade Odiozola, Exec. Comm., UGT Euskadi; Felipe Pedrosa Velasco, Exec. Comm., UGT Bizcaya; José María Aldana Sansebastian, Exec. Comm., UGT Bizcaya; María Olga Zuloaga, Exec. Comm., Chemical Workers Union, UGT-Bizcaya; Angel Diaz Garcia, Exec. Comm., Chemical Workers Union, UGT-Bizcaya; Pedro Brigido, member, Xativa CCOO; Luis Lozano, Gen. Secy., Public Employees Union, UGT-Valencia; Maria Jesus Posada, member, Teachers Union, UGT; Ignacio Amestoy Landa, Economist, UGT; José Ortega Alcalde, member, Textile Workers Union, Bizcaya; Jesus Maria Perez Martinez, member, Chemical Workers Union, UGT-Bizcaya; Eduardo Marquina Nagore, member, Chemical Workers Union, UGT-Bizcaya; Felipe Pardo Titos, Org. Secy., FEMCA-UGT, Catalonia; Victorio Lopez Rubio, Exec. Comm., Health Workers Union, CCOO-Madrid; Trinidad Villanueva Perez, Org. Secy., CCOO Valme Hospital; Fernando Andujar Dominguez, Enterp. Comm., TUSSAM; Eduardo Benito Benitez, Enterp. Comm., TUSSAM. **SWITZERLAND:** Jean Ziegler, M.P., Swiss S.P. **SWEDEN:** Hans Göran Franck, M.P., SAP; Marcus Carlstedt, Swed. Comm. Against EEC; Göran Malmqvist, Dir., Chin. Institut., U. of Stockholm; Viola Claesson, M.P., Swedish Communist Party (VPK). **TURKEY:** Sungur Savran, editor, *Sinif Bilinci*. **UNITED STATES:** Grace Paley, author; Henry Ziegler, Labor Solidarity Network; Paul Sweezy, editor, *Monthly Review*; Annette Rubinstein, editorial board, *Science and Society*; James D. Seymour, Sr. researcher, Columbia Univ.; Richard Smith, historian; Alan Benjamin, editor, *Socialist Action*; Nancy Holmstrom, Prof. Rutgers Univ.; Samuel Farber, edit. board, *Against the Current*; Manuela Dobos, Prof., College of Staten Island; Paul Siegel, Prof. Emeritus, L.I. University; Holly Near, singer; Orville Schell, author; Steve Bloom, editor, *BIDOM*; Jerry Gordon, labor rights activist; Judith R. Dushku, Assoc. Prof., Suffolk U.; John Berg, Prof., Suffolk U.; Michael Pattberg, Exec. Bd., Boston DSA; Tom Gallagher, former Mass. State Assembly; Bill Russell, author; Rudy Sulenta, Sec. Treas., Local 209, UAW retirees; Lynn Adelman, Flight Attendants Union, TWA (L.A.); Dolores Huerta, Co-founder and First Vice Pres., UFW; Debra Evenson, Pres., National Lawyers Guild; Blase Bonpane, Dir., Office of the Americas; Maxine Hong-Kingston, author; Deirdre English, Former editor *Mother Jones*; Helen Grieco, Exec. Dir., S.F. NOW; Daniel Ellsberg, peace activist; Daniel Berrigan, peace activist; Robert Bowman, former dir., Star Wars research program; Genora Dollinger, veteran labor activist; Kay Boyle, author; Allen Ginsberg, poet; Herbert Gold, author; Stephen Jay Gould, science writer; Dick Gregory, civil rights activist; Rod Holt, solidarity activist; Jim Lafferty, labor activist; Roy Lichtenstein; Prof. Robert Jay Lifton, Yale University; Jeff Mackler, co-Natl Secy., Socialist Action; Norman Mailer, author; Joan Mellen; Jessica Mitford, author; John Nathan, filmmaker; Aryeh Neier, journalist; Hugh Nissenson; Mayumi Oda, artist; Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize Laureate; Ralph Schoenman, former exec. dir., Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation; Mya Shone, photographer; Mike Smith, attorney; Frank Stella, artist; George Wald, Nobel Prize Laureate; Nat Weinstein, co-Natl Secy., Socialist Action; Suzy Weismann, radio commentator; Howard Zinn, historian. **USSR:** Alexander Fedarowsky, Editor, *People's Front*; Boris Kagarlitsky; Moscow People's Front; Vitaly Ponomarov, Chair, Information Ctr, Moscow People's Front. **VENEZUELA:** Perez Marcano, M.P., MIR/MAS; Tomas Armas Mata, M.P., MIR/MAS; Moises Molcero, M.P., MIR/MAS. **YUGOSLAVIA:** Vladimir Dedijer; Pavluso Imsirovic; Branka Magas; Shklezen Maliki.



# ... U.S. socialists in China

(continued from page 24)

because the student demonstrators' call for an end to corruption seemed to have been a point of common ground with the workers.

One feature of official corruption was the use of position for personal gain. Some workers told us: "The salary of a plant director is not that high. But they make their money in bribery. There is always an official if you want to get anything done."

Red tape is terrible, and you have to grease palms to get through it. Or you have to know someone. One lower government official remarked on the special advantages of the children of top officials.

By all accounts, the advantages of privileged position were getting more blatant. For example, as plants compete on the market for raw materials, government officials who control raw material supply can sell favors. We were told that it is common for bureaucrats to buy a scarce item like a TV and sell it at black-market rates.

Some of what people call corruption is actually legal. One young official complained that the government allows officials to eat everywhere free at a cost of \$48 billion yuan per year to the people. This is actually more, he said, than is invested in education. Meanwhile, the regime vilifies student leader Wu'er Kaixi for once having lunch in the Beijing Hotel with a visiting student delegation from Hong Kong.

Corruption is an integral part of the bureaucracy. Shanghai worker Sam was asked to characterize the system. Is it bureaucracy, we asked? "Bureaucracy is only one side of it," he responded. "Corruption is the other."

He continued: "Corruption is like a dead body starting to stink. Officials have to be corrupt just to be in the bureaucracy. To be a director of a factory you have to be trusted by those above. The whole system and government create corruption."

In Sam's mind, and in the view of many workers we talked with, when the students demanded an end to corruption and arbitrary practices, they spoke for the workers. As times get harder, workers resent the growing privileges of the bureaucracy all the more. And they resent the political system which amounts to little more than a mutual-aid society for the bureaucracy.

## "We support the students"

When we asked Sam what the cause of the uprising was, he said, "Inflation is part of it, but many are getting used to inflation. The dictatorship is what people hate."

Another worker told us: "We need more democracy. This is reasonable. Democracy is more than freedom of speech. We need input



Government poster urges population to "combat bourgeois liberalism" and hails crushing of "counterrevolutionary rats."

into decisions. We don't need a dictator, whether he's called 'emperor' or 'general secretary.'"

The young workers we lunched with in Shanghai told us: "You have to be careful what you say even among friends. We cannot say it openly, but in our hearts we support the students."

Sam was an active participant in the Shanghai protest demonstrations that followed the June 4 massacre. About half-a-million people were involved in Shanghai in street actions. A government train ran over and killed some protesters, and violence erupted.

"Some of us," Sam told us, "were able to see the broadcasts in the hotels serving foreigners. [He was referring to Cable Network News coverage of the massacre in Tiananmen Square]. We saw that the people attacked after the government atrocities occurred. Then, the government attacked again. Official TV showed pictures of people attacking trains, but put an earlier date on the film. So it seemed like the people initiated the violence. But in 10 years all of China will know the truth."

"Ninety percent of the people in Shanghai support the students," Sam continued. "Students stopped transportation for four days by blocking over 150 main intersections in Shanghai."

Workers couldn't get to work and used the breakdown of the public-transportation system as an excuse for staying home. Some students later told us that the workers were

instrumental in shutting down the city. In Beijing we also found support for the students. We met a worker who had led a contingent from his factory to Tiananmen. He had also begun organizing an independent union.

For the moment, the army preserves order. According to Sam, "The soldiers come from the country and are little aware of the political situation, so they don't care. Control and censorship in the army is very strict. Soldiers believe in the ruling stratum very strongly. Most officers, meanwhile, are involved in the black market."

## A life-and-death struggle

Fully three weeks after the massacre, troops maintain a strong presence. The regime sees this fight as a life-and-death struggle. Moreover, we are told, about 400 rifles were taken from the soldiers, and only about 100 have been recovered. Sniper fire has been reported, and there is a rumor that two soldiers have been garroted at night.

Giant red banners hang from the main buildings. "Combat bourgeois liberalism!" "Insist on support for the leadership of the Communist Party!"

Our hotel, the Jinglun, where the army opened fire on a group of tourists, now sports a banner that reads, "Hail the Communist Party!" In the workers' districts, notices read, "Don't listen to rumors! Don't go to underground meetings!"

Everywhere people were concerned that the truth not be drowned out by government lies. Even in martial-law Beijing, we were approached by people who told us that we must go and tell the truth of what happened in Tiananmen.

While we heard outrage at the regime for its violence, and exasperation at its power, we did not find a mood of dejection. The general feeling was that this was the first round of a long fight which would be won.

## Debate on alternatives

We heard workers' perspectives of how change could take place. A number of workers looked to the reform wing of the bureaucracy around Zhao Ziyang as an alternative. Several spoke of Mikhail Gorbachev as the model, a sentiment we also found among some students.

But support for the reform wing was not a vote for the market-reform strategy—a strategy which hard-liner Deng Xiaoping also advocates. It expressed a belief that the reformers can be a vehicle for political reform. Some who saw the changing attitudes in the young students and workers looked to the next generation of CCP leaders, waiting for the old to die, especially Deng.

The most extensive and most interesting conversation we had about reform was with the Shanghai worker Sam. He said that there should be a separation of the ruling party from the government and that the rule of law should replace arbitrary rule. He clearly saw the need for new leadership.

Sam agreed with us that Zhao was part of the bureaucracy and would not be bold enough to provide the needed change. His support for Zhao was conditional, and he even stated, "There should be more than one party." The workers, he recognized, needed an independent political voice. We thought that Sam's thinking was unusually farsighted.

In Shanghai, a setback has been suffered. Even at the height of the movement, only the beginnings of workers' organizations developed. Some independent unions and worker groups formed, but there were no mass committees.

While workers and students maintained order in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the brutal crackdown pre-empted mass self-organization. Workers are now cut off from each other and from many of the ideas and experiences that can enrich their movement.

Most workers we talked to had not thought things through like Sam. We told him we thought his insight into the government and the crackdown were especially clear and that he had a rare understanding of the situation.

"There are many people like me," he said. "Most just don't talk about it [the government massacre] in public. When people go home, everybody talks about it. Before the massacre, people had little understanding of their situation, but now people are awakening. This awakening will be broad—and it will be deep."

## Summer Socialist Educational Conference

August 3 - 6, 1989  
Kent State University  
Kent, Ohio

### Highlights of the conference:

**Upheaval in China: The Political Revolution Begins**, a special panel discussion with Nat Weinstein, Co-National Secretary, Socialist Action; Jim Henle, National Committee member, Socialist Action; Rod Holt, editor, Walnut Publishing Co.; and a Chinese student to be announced. These panelists toured Beijing and Shanghai after the June 4 massacre and will bring back an up-to-date report on the continuing struggle for socialist democracy in China.

**Trotsky, the Left Opposition and the Soviet Union Today**, a panel discussion with Carl Finamore, National Committee, Socialist Action; Ralph Schoenman, former Executive Director, Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation; Paul Siegel, Professor Emeritus, Long Island University and Marxist scholar; and (tentative) Professor Pierre Broué, Director, Leon Trotsky Institute, Grenoble, France.

**Nicaragua: Ten Years After**, a panel discussion with Alan Benjamin, editor, *Socialist Action*; and Rolando Urrutia, Nicaraguan political economist.

**Understanding the World Economy Today: A Marxist Approach**, a two-part class with Lynn Henderson, former professor of economics and history, University of Illinois, National Committee, Socialist Action.

**Dialectical Materialism and Its Application to the Class Struggle Today**, a two-part class with Cliff Conner, former Associate Editor, *International Socialist Review*.

**Special Banquet**, featuring Jeff Mackler, Co-National Secretary, Socialist Action on "The Transitional Program Today: Revolutionary Strategy in the Imperialist Countries, the Stalinist States and the Underdeveloped World."

Additional workshops on: *Marxism and Feminism/Defending Abortion Rights, Trade Union Activism, Building the Antiwar Movement, and Organizing the Revolutionary Party Today.*



If you are interested in attending this conference, contact the Socialist Action branch nearest you. See the directory on page 23, or call (415) 821-0458.

# Background to the upheaval in China

By NAT WEINSTEIN

The following are excerpts from a talk given at a Socialist Action forum in San Francisco on June 16.

To understand the current situation in China it is important to understand the origins and evolution of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The nucleus of the CCP was established in May 1920 by a representative of the Communist International—or Third International—who had been sent to China. The CCP was formally founded in July 1921.

The founding cadre of the CCP had been inspired by the example of the Russian Revolution of October 1917. The declared goal of the CCP was in complete harmony with the goals of the Communist International founded by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party in March 1919.

This goal was to establish the Communist International as a world party of the working class for the purpose of organizing to carry out a socialist revolution and end exploitation and oppression in every country of the world.

In the subsequent four years of class struggle, the CCP grew into a mass party of tens of thousands, with influence over millions. A dynamic working-class upsurge had shown the enormous social power of the workers in the course of a series of insurrectionary mobilizations, general strikes, and factory occupations.

This was in line with the Communist International's strategic orientation toward a struggle for a workers' government in every country of the world.

## Stalin's road to defeat

But as Stalin was gaining decisive control over the Soviet Communist Party and the Communist International, he ordered the fledgling Communist Party of China to enter the Kuomintang, the political party that was the main bulwark of Chinese capitalism, and accept its discipline.

The CCP and the workers of China at the very beginning of the revolutionary situation which had opened up in 1925 were politically disarmed by this policy of subordination to the leaders of Chinese capitalism.

The rationale that Stalin used to justify this policy was based on what was called the "two-stage theory." It went like this: The Chinese revolution was a bourgeois revolution against semi-feudal landlords and against imperialist domination that could only be led by the Chinese capitalists.

Therefore, the Chinese workers and peasants were obligated to follow the lead of the capitalist class in the struggle for national liberation. The Stalinists thereby blatantly skipped over the jointly shared interests in landlordism and capitalist exploitation of both landlords and capitalists.

The socialist revolution—which would mean the emancipation of the workers and peasants against landlords, capitalists, and world imperialism—was put off to some time in the distant future. And by the same token, the democratic revolution itself was derailed.

In reality, Stalin's "theory" was a smoke-screen for keeping the Chinese revolution confined—regardless of its devastating counterrevolutionary consequences—to maintaining capitalism. The Chinese workers and peasants subsequently paid for Stalin's treachery with their blood.

## The Shanghai insurrection

On March 21, 1927, the revolutionists in the CCP led the Shanghai workers in an armed insurrection. They succeeded in smashing the power of the Northern warlords and occupied Shanghai with armed workers.

But they were prevented by Stalin from establishing a revolutionary workers' regime and organizing a military defense against a threatened assault by Chiang Kai-shek because, according to Stalin, it would destroy "Kuomintang-CCP collaboration" and obstruct Stalin's "two-stage" line.

Three weeks later, on April 12—as Leon Trotsky and his supporters in China had warned—Chiang began an attack on Shanghai. Hog-tied by Stalin's pro-Kuo-

mintang policy, the CCP was unable to stop the crushing of the insurrection and the slaughter of thousands of fighting workers.

In the days that followed, Chiang Kai-shek hunted down the Communists and other working-class fighters just as today we see Deng Xiaoping hunting down the leaders of the anti-bureaucratic insurgency. Three months later, by July 1927, the Second Chinese Revolution was defeated.

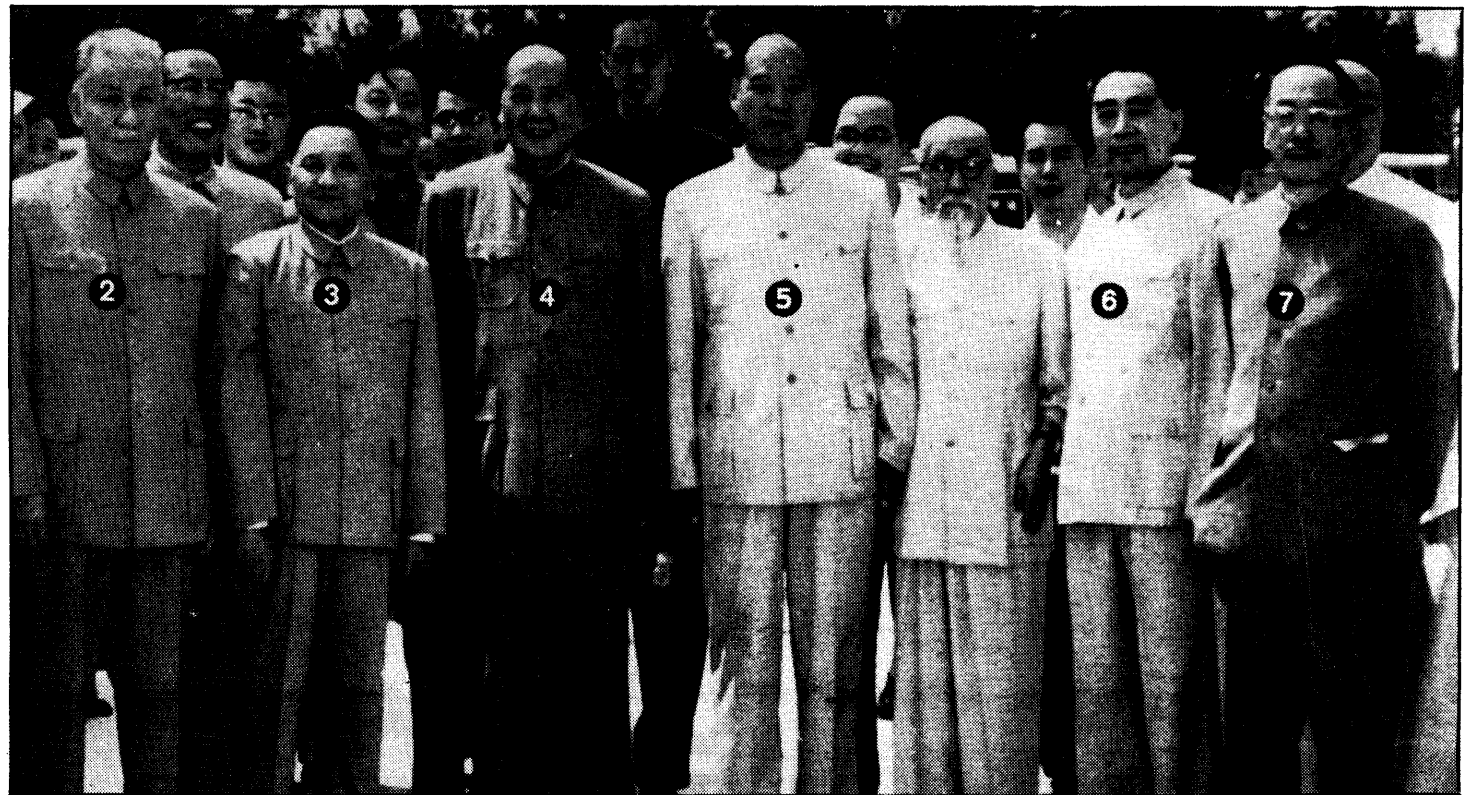
## "Bloc of Four Classes"

Following this defeat, the CCP turned its face away from the workers and oriented exclusively toward the peasantry. Under the leadership of the CCP, China's peasants fought a war for over 20 years against the

power of the U.S. imperialist army on its border, mounted an effective campaign of economic sabotage. They hoped that as the imperialist army swept through China, they would be reinstalled in exclusive governmental control over China.

In 1950, the Mao government—its very existence threatened by this fifth-column inside China's borders—was compelled to unleash the peasants who were straining for a piece of land. An agrarian reform was carried out by revolutionary peasants which eradicated landlordism throughout China.

Mao was also forced to cautiously mobilize workers to hold the insurgent capitalists at bay while the peasants confiscated the land. By 1953 his regime was compelled to follow



The leadership of the Chinese Communist Party in 1963: Prominent among them are Mao Tse-tung (4); Deng Xiaoping (3); and Chou En-lai (6).

semi-feudal landlords and capitalists of China and an invading Japanese imperialist army.

But throughout this period, the Stalinized CCP's strategic objective was limited to winning a coalition government with the Kuomintang in line with Stalin's "Bloc of Four Classes" orientation. The CCP continued to reject the goal of a workers' government.

The CCP, in effect, blocked an anti-capitalist workers' struggle from taking place in the cities of China. Mao, as party chairman, continued to lead the CCP in line with this policy from 1935 on.

The CCP built a peasant army, which despite its unbroken policy in favor of a strategic alliance with Chinese capitalism, was impelled by the logic of civil war to drive Chiang Kai-shek and his government of capitalists and landlords off the mainland of China.

The defeat of Chiang was primarily the result of the internal decay and loss of self-confidence by the Chinese capitalists and their resulting fear of sharing power with the CCP.

But true to its "Bloc of Four Classes" strategy, Mao and the CCP immediately set up a coalition government with those capitalists who remained in China after the Kuomintang was driven into the sea.

The Stalinists followed a policy which ruled out the overthrow of capitalism in both word and deed. The new government headed by Mao Tse-tung blocked the workers from carrying out a struggle against the capitalist class and prevented the peasants from taking the land from the landlords.

## A workers' state is formed

Only after imperialist intervention in the Korean War, and after U.S. troops drove the North Korean army across the Yalu River and pursued them up to the Chinese border, was the Stalinist regime forced to drive the capitalists out of the government and state apparatus and to break their social and economic power.

China's capitalists, inspired by the military

this logic to its end; expropriating and nationalizing the great bulk of industry, banking and commerce, and establishing a planned economy.

By these acts, the Mao regime destroyed the social and economic base of capitalist power inside China. A social revolution was carried through. China had been fundamentally changed. China had become a workers' state—a form of society in transition between capitalism and socialism.

But this workers' state came into existence grotesquely deformed. No sooner had the new government removed the threat from imperialism and its capitalist fifth column in China, than it began to demobilize workers and peasants, placing them under the yoke of a bureaucratic-military dictatorship.

To this day a hardened bureaucratic dictatorship has blocked the natural development of workers' control over the economic system and democratic control over the political life of the new state.

## Contradictory sides of new state

If you were to make the mistake of believing the capitalist media, you would think that the Chinese people, during the recent upheaval, were longing for a return to so-called capitalist "freedom." You would think they were dying to turn their land back to the landlords, and that they were holding their breath until the capitalists were given back the industrial, commercial, and banking property that the revolution took from them.

No, only scoundrels and fools would have you believe that Chinese workers and students and peasants are longing for the "good old days" of capitalist barbarism, unemployment, famine, and pestilence.

Just compare where China is today—despite the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy—to India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. I think this is a very fair comparison. China in 1950 was at least as economically backward as these three nations—formerly all part of British India before its independence. Today, capitalist barbarism, pestilence, and famine—

with literally millions of homeless people sleeping in the teeming city streets—still prevail in these nations.

The anti-capitalist revolution of the early 1950s is understood by the Chinese people as a great conquest. And despite the crimes of the bureaucracy, this conquest has resulted in a guarantee of a certain minimum living standard—the so-called iron rice bowl—denied the workers and peasants of all other economically backward capitalist nations.

## Singing the Internationale

What the Chinese masses have risen up against is not the socialized economy, but against bureaucratic privilege, economic mismanagement, and a political dictatorship which parallels, in its methods, those of fascism in power.

Chinese students and workers have risen up against bureaucratic privilege and nepotism. They are outraged that a Communist Party which claims to be the political heir of Marx, Engels, and Lenin—even if not Trotsky—is led by a bloated bureaucracy that denies nothing for itself from the storehouses of the nation, which they themselves say belong to the people.

And now that bureaucratic mismanagement of the economy has caused great economic

dislocations—including the reintroduction of unemployment and accelerated inflation—Deng Xiaoping and company make workers, peasants, and rank-and-file soldiers pay for their mistakes, as their purchasing power is eroded by inflation.

Is it therefore any mystery that the masses who rose up against the Chinese Stalinists sang the Internationale—and that they denounced these tyrants as "fascist"—not "Communist" beasts?

The great majority of capitalist media reporters and commentators grudgingly admit that no one in China who had been in Tiananmen Square and other demonstrations called for the reintroduction of capitalism in China. Even capitalist government spokespersons are forced to admit that the Chinese people are not against socialism, but only want to make it live up to its great promise.

In a nutshell, that's why the unfolding struggle is most accurately described as the first barrage of the coming Chinese political revolution.

**International  
VIEWPOINT**

BLOODY BAPTISM OF  
WORKERS' STRUGGLE  
FOR DEMOCRACY

One-year subscription: \$47  
Write to: 2 rue Richard Lenoir  
93108 Montreuil, France

# Revulsion of Stalinism sparks revolt for workers' democracy



By LYNN HENDERSON

*"Communists have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole."*

*The Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels, 1848*

On March 26, Soviet citizens elected delegates to a new Congress of People's Deputies. Despite numerous measures that restricted candidate nominations and assured tremendous advantage to those running with the support of the Communist Party apparatus, the results were a humiliating defeat for official Communist Party candidates across the country.

In Moscow, Boris Yeltsin, who earlier had been deposed as city party chief after being attacked by Communist Party head Mikhail Gorbachev, won with a stunning 89 per cent of the vote over the candidate backed by the local party machine.

In Leningrad, the top five Communists in the Leningrad power structure went down to defeat. Two of the losers, including the Leningrad regional party chief and Politburo member Yuri F. Solovyev, were running unopposed. The complex and restricted nomination process assured that many of the top Communist Party officials ran unchallenged. However, so many Leningrad voters scratched their names off the ballots that they were unable to gain the 51 percent required to take their seats.

This was the pattern across the country where hundreds of senior party functionaries were defeated, including over 30 regional Communist Party chiefs, many of whom ran unopposed.

In the ethnic republics the rejection of the apparatus candidates was even more sweeping. The victors included most of the candidates who campaigned for greater autonomy in the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and

Estonia—including some candidates who favored the secession of their republics from the Soviet Union.

The Lithuanian movement Sajudis all but swept the elections, claiming victory for 32 of the republic's 42 seats, with eight others forced into runoffs.

## Repeat in Poland

During the first week of June, Poles voted in an election for a new bicameral parliament. After attempts to crush Solidarity for a decade through repression, banning, and martial law, General Wojciech Jaruzelski negotiated with Solidarity President Lech Walesa for a limited election designed to guarantee the Communist Party a large and automatic majority. In 1981, Jaruzelski had ordered tanks into the streets, killing over 200 Solidarity supporters.

Solidarity was only allowed to run candidates unrestricted in the 100-seat Senate. There, Solidarity won 92 seats outright; the remaining eight were undecided in the first round, but seven of those were won by Solidarity in the subsequent runoff election.

In the 460-seat lower house, Solidarity was restricted to running candidates for only 161 seats (35 percent), leaving the Communist Party free to run unopposed for the remaining 299 seats (65 percent). Solidarity won all but one of the 161 seats where it was allowed to run head to head against the Communist Party.

But even where Communist Party candidates ran unopposed, almost all failed to be elected. Only three Communist Party candidates running unopposed for the 299 seats apportioned them were able to obtain enough votes to be certified. Again the electorate overwhelmingly crossed their names off the ballots.

This constituted virtually a complete rejection of the Polish Communist Party by the Polish workers. It's hard to recall in

modern history a more decisive rejection by the electorate of a ruling party.

## Response in China

Like the Soviet Union and Poland, but even more aggressively, the Chinese Communist Party has been driving ahead with the new strategy of pro-capitalist economic "reforms." But in China the Communist Party makes no pretense of risking even limited elections, no matter how controlled and restricted as a safety valve for worker discontent.

The result this spring was the spontaneous emergence of the massive pro-democracy movement. Singing the "Internationale" and chanting "Workers of the World Unite," students and workers organized demonstrations ranging from 10,000 to 1 million in major cities throughout China.

The demands of the pro-democracy movement focused on freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, the right to strike, and financial audit of the notoriously high-living Communist Party elite.

The response of the Chinese Communist Party? The shooting down of thousands of unarmed workers and students in the streets and the imposition of a massive campaign of repression, arrests, and executions.

We have here three of the major Communist parties of the world, presiding for many years over supposedly socialist societies. Yet the events of this spring demonstrate conclusively, and not for the first time, that these regimes do not have the support of the workers of the Soviet Union, Poland, or China. In the final analysis all three parties retain government control only by brute force or the threat of force.

For workers throughout the world, this situation represents a central contradiction of our era. It can hardly be claimed that such Communist parties "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat

as a whole." On the contrary, their relationship with and attitude toward the proletariat is without exception one of fear and contempt. Anyone calling himself or herself a Marxist has to decisively address and explain this contradiction.

It is this contradiction that is the principal source of the deep and continuing crisis of leadership facing the world proletariat today.

## Common Stalinist heritage

All three of these Communist parties have a common historical heritage and common political roots based on the defeat and crushing of the Bolshevik Party that made the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Their political origins can be traced to the parasitic bureaucracy that emerged in the late 1920s, with the degeneration of the Russian Revolution. Stalin was its spokesperson.

This defeat of the party of Vladimir I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky was a watershed defeat for the leadership of the world working class. The Stalinization of the early Communist parties remains the principal roadblock to the building of effective revolutionary leaderships throughout the world.

This historic defeat was only accomplished with the physical liquidation of the Bolshevik Party. Stalin arrested, executed, or had murdered almost every important living Bolshevik participant in the revolution.

Of 1966 delegates to the 17th party congress in 1934, 1108 were arrested. Of 139 members of the Central Committee, 98 were arrested. Almost all of these leaders were either executed or died while imprisoned. Along with three Soviet marshals, one third to one half of the 75,000 Red Army officers were arrested or shot.

The purges of the 1930s were so sweeping that no major party figure of the October Revolution, which gave power to the Bolsheviks, survived to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the event, except Stalin's faithful lieutenant, Vyacheslav Molotov, who was retired in disgrace in 1958.

## Soviet democracy crushed

One of the first victims of the Stalinist bureaucratization was workers' democracy. Not only was democracy crushed in the party but throughout the entire structure successfully established by the 1917 revolution—in the Soviets, in the trade unions, and in the agricultural collectives.

Through the bureaucracy's control of the Third International, the international party formed by Lenin and Trotsky in 1919, this same character was imposed on Communist parties throughout the world.

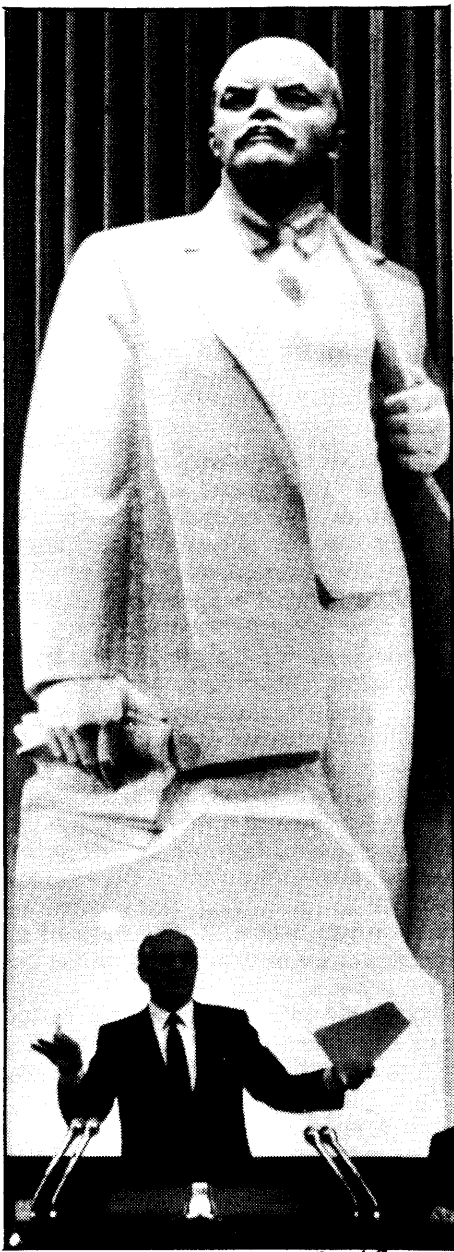
In the long run, a socialist economy cannot function without democracy—it is a necessity. The Left Opposition, founded by Trotsky to defend the program of the Bolshevik Party against Stalin, correctly predicted the results would be growing economic crises.

The wholesale success of the heavy industries in the workers' states is a gigantic conquest—a stunning accomplishment for economies forcibly isolated from the world market and a tribute to the intrinsic advantages of a planned economy. It was possible to accomplish the rough work of borrowing, imitating, transplanting, and grafting from capitalist technology on the basis initially laid down by the successful revolution itself.

However, the test of modern industry is the production of delicate mechanisms, electronics, computers, etc., which demand both technical and general culture. The further you go in this direction the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, "which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow."

As Leon Trotsky wrote in 1936: "The Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery....Soviet

(continued on next page)



Sergel Gunev



Baldev/Sygma



Carl Finamore/Socialist Action

*'The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly, and for the freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy.'*

**—Leon Trotsky**

**'The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution'**

(continued from preceding page)

democracy is not the demand of an abstract policy, still less an abstract moral. It has become a life-and-death need of the country."

The bureaucracy's needs in defending its material privileges and maintaining its special monopoly status as a governing elite, free from the constraints of workers' control, are what drove them to smash the Soviet democracy created by the 1917 revolution.

These same forces are what moved them to abandon Lenin's concept of internationalism and replace it with a policy of class collaboration under the euphemism of "Building Socialism in One Country."

#### Stalin's "peaceful coexistence"

Lenin and the Bolsheviks were convinced that the only defense of the Soviet Union in the long run lay in extending the revolution. This was the guiding principle of the Bolshevik foreign policy.

The bureaucracy, characterized by revolutionary pessimism, looks to a deal with world imperialism, or a segment of it, to maintain the status quo and secure their position within it. Revolutionary struggles and upsurges throughout the world are principally seen as opportunities and bargaining chips for brokering a deal with the imperialist powers.

Gorbachev, in his transparently crude offer to help settle "regional disputes" in return for more favorable treatment on the part of U.S. imperialism, is just the latest sorry chapter in this disastrous policy.

It is nothing less than an offer by the bureaucracy to use its influence to extinguish revolutionary struggles in South Africa, Angola, the Middle East, Nicaragua, and El Salvador for a will-of-the-wisp quid pro quo.

Similarly, the Chinese Stalinists' invasion of Vietnam in 1979—at the behest of U.S. imperialism in return for the lifting of the U.S. trade blockade—graphically demonstrated what the counterrevolutionary policy

of building socialism in one country concretely means.

#### Restoring capitalism?

The entrenched bureaucracies in the workers' states characterize workers' opposition, the democratic movements, and the emergence through Solidarnosc of an independent trade-union movement, as steps by counterrevolutionary and alien class forces to reintroduce capitalist rule.

This claim is even given credence outside the workers' states by various currents on the left, sometimes openly, sometimes halfheartedly and surreptitiously.

Behind such an idea has to lie the ridiculous assumption that the struggle of workers, farmers, peasants, and students in the bureaucratized workers' states for democratic rights and control over their own government would, if successful, be used by them to return land to large landowners and factories back to capitalists.

As demonstrated in the recent events in China, it was the students—supported by millions of working people throughout the country—who were demanding a real socialist system, a system based on workers' democracy.

The Left Opposition 50 years ago correctly predicted that the fight against the Stalinized bureaucracy would begin precisely around such slogans and demands.

In 1938 Trotsky wrote in "The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution:" "A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against social inequality and political oppression."

"The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly, and for the freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of Soviet democracy."

In fact the growing opposition in the Soviet Union, Poland, and China is in

response to pro-capitalist economic "reforms" introduced by the bureaucratized Communist parties which have produced inflation, unemployment, and a lowered standard of living for workers.

The bureaucracy is not a ruling class—they are a privileged, parasitic caste feeding off the historic gains of the revolution—but a caste which aspires to transform itself into a ruling class.

#### Danger stems from bureaucracy

The economic crisis in the workers' states is deepening. The bureaucracy's rule is a prime factor in this process. Centralized planning without democracy is leading to ever greater bureaucratic inefficiencies and stagnation. Their counterrevolutionary policies of class collaboration and so-called "peaceful coexistence" is the principle brake on the successful extension of the world revolution.

As the economic crisis in the workers' states deepens, the bureaucracy's primary concern is to save itself and preserve its privileges. Ever more it sees as its only option a policy to allow the penetration of world capitalism directly into the workers' states and allow market relations to develop without the check of workers' democracy.

It is the bureaucracy itself that represents the growing danger for the restoration of capitalism. It is the bureaucracy that functions ever more openly as a transmission belt for the introduction of bourgeois ideology and practice into the workers' states.

If some currents on the left are confused about the fundamental nature of the democratic movements in the workers' states, the imperialists are not.

Some commentators have expressed puzzlement as to why the Bush administration has offered such lukewarm support to the demonstrations for democratic rights in China and has been so obviously reluctant to criticize the Deng regime for drowning them in blood.

The Bush administration correctly calculates its best hope for restoring capitalism in China is the bureaucratized Communist Party. The imperialists also understand that workers' states under democratic workers' control would pose a qualitatively increased threat to continued imperialist rule everywhere in the world.

#### Workers' control

But how can democratic workers' control be re-established in the bureaucratized workers' states? Can the bureaucratic caste, in whose hands the power and wealth are now concentrated, be peacefully reformed out of existence? There is not a scintilla of evidence to indicate that is a realistic possibility.

On the contrary, as the economic crisis of the workers' states becomes more acute the bureaucracy gives every indication that it intends to defend its privileges above all—even if it means the introduction of capitalist methods and institutions.

These entrenched bureaucracies cannot be reformed—they will be removed only by a revolutionary force. Their removal will require a political revolution in the bureaucratized workers' states. And, as always, there will be fewer victims the more bold and decisive is the attack.

But boldness and decisiveness in and of itself is not sufficient; preparation and organization are required.

Victory can be assured only through the building of organizations based on the program of the Bolsheviks and the Left Opposition.

This was the bitter lesson the Chinese students and workers were forced to learn on the streets of Beijing this spring.

There are those on the left, even some who come from a long tradition of revolutionary anti-Stalinism, who nonetheless have evolved in an unfortunate political direction in recent years.

They have concluded that a new world reality has been established by a series of events which include the Cuban Revolution, the Nicaraguan Revolution, the defeat of American imperialism by the Vietnamese people, and the revolutionary upsurges in El Salvador and Grenada, among others.

In their view this new world reality supersedes the problems raised by the role of Stalinism. For them this new world reality precludes the ability of the Stalinized bureaucracies to play the kind of counter-revolutionary role they had in the past. Stalinism was relegated to a largely historical problem—the question of Stalinism was becoming irrelevant.

Of course, if Stalinism was no longer relevant, then the program of the Left Opposition was no longer relevant. The need for political revolution in the bureaucratized workers' states was no longer relevant. And the need to prepare organizations which could lead such revolutions was no longer relevant.

Even the need to build parties throughout the world committed to the kind of revolutionary program Lenin and Trotsky had forged to successfully lead the Russian Revolution was, perhaps, irrelevant.

Those who objected to this view were seen as sectarians who insisted on viewing all events in today's world through the now distorting lens of the outdated Stalin/Trotsky debate.

In truth, as recent events are constantly demonstrating, the political questions raised in the struggle of the Left Opposition against the Stalinist degeneration remain today, in ever greater force, the central political questions facing the world working class. ■



# The Great Revolution of 1789: French masses changed the face of Europe...and the world

(Part 1 of a 3-part series)

By CLIFF CONNER

In Paris on July 14 of this year, the world will be treated to a surrealistic spectacle: a coterie of counterrevolutionaries—including George Bush, Margaret Thatcher, and Helmut Kohl—are scheduled to gather in celebration of the Great Revolution of 1789.

This festival of hypocrisy will dishonor the French Revolution, but it should not be allowed to obscure the real legacy of that event. The French Revolution was an explosion of mass action against an oppressive status quo. It dealt the death blow to the traditional social structure in Europe and cleared the way for the transformation of the continent and the world.

Although we, as revolutionary socialists, can identify with the men and women of 1789 much more sincerely than can Margaret Thatcher and her ilk, it is not quite "our" bicentennial, either.

The conservative historian Francois Furet has correctly pointed out that participants in and interpreters of the French Revolution can be divided into two groups: "'89ers" and "'93ers." The '89ers are the revolutionaries of 1789 and those who identify with them. Like Furet himself, they believe the Revolution would have been much better if it had been more moderate; if it had been satisfied with what had been done in 1789 and stopped with that.

The '93ers, on the other hand, are the radical Jacobins and their latter-day sympathizers, who believe that turning the world upside down in 1793 was absolutely necessary to consolidate the Revolution's achievements. Revolutionary socialists today are in the latter category; for us the real bicentennial will occur four years from now.

But without 1789, of course, there could have been no 1793, so let us commence the celebration now. Let us honor our revolutionary forebears by recalling what it was they fought for and what they ultimately accomplished. Our interest in these events does not derive from antiquarian curiosity, but from the desire to learn from historical experience.

## Rebellion of the aristocrats

We celebrate July 14, Bastille Day, as the date on which the Revolution broke out with a major insurrection in Paris. But the revolutionary process had been developing beneath the surface for many years.

The beginning of any chain of historical causation is impossible to pinpoint, but a good case can be made for starting with the American Revolution. The expenses of France's involvement in that war stretched the royal government's finances to the breaking point. The monarchy was so deeply in debt that 50 percent of its budget was going for interest on its loans.

Louis XVI's advisors began desperately seeking new sources of revenue. The peasants were already so heavily taxed that squeezing them harder could only produce minimal returns. The crown's frantic search for new financial resources forced it to turn to the aristocracy, which had traditionally enjoyed extensive exemption from taxation.

In spite of their privileged social position, the nobles had long been excluded from a direct political role in governing the country. The threat to their economic interest prompted them to begin agitating for political rights as a means of defense.

The aristocratic rebellion succeeded in shaking the monarchy, but in doing so it opened the door for other social layers to begin raising demands as well. And thereby hangs the tale of the French Revolution. One of the great ironies of 1789 is that the social class that began the Revolution was the one that was ultimately destroyed by it.

Georges Lefebvre, in his brilliant book "The Coming of the French Revolution," described how the process unfolded in 1789 as a succession of four overlapping revolutionary waves crashing against the monarchy. The nobles initiated the turmoil,



'The French Revolution was an explosion of massive action against an oppressive status quo...a death blow to the traditional social structure in Europe...'

followed by the bourgeoisie, the peasants, and the urban "crowd"—the *sans-culottes*.

## The Estates General

The nobles' drive for political rights led to the demand for reconvening the Estates General, a medieval parliamentary body that had last met in 1614—more than a century and a half earlier.

The Estates General was hardly a democratic institution, since the three estates were to have equal weight in the assembly but represented vastly unequal numbers of constituents. In the population as a whole the First Estate (the clergy) numbered about 100,000, the Second Estate (the nobility) about 400,000, and the Third Estate (everybody else) about 25 million people.

Since the clergy could generally be counted upon to vote with the nobles, the assembly would effectively be under aristocratic control. Nonetheless, because the nobles' call for an Estates General was seen as a challenge to the oppressive monarchy, it gathered broad support among the population at large.

Louis XVI's government, pushed to the wall by the fiscal crisis, was forced to accede; the Estates General was set to be held at the beginning of May 1789. The leaders of the Third Estate, however, had another kind of Estates General in mind; one that would more clearly reflect the real numerical strength of their following.

When the nobles, with the King's backing, refused to consider their demand, the representatives of the Third Estate held their own meeting and on June 17 declared themselves the National Assembly. France

had a new potential focus of governmental power in competition with the existing royal regime. While the leaders of the Third Estate—and now of the National Assembly—were almost uniformly bourgeois, they enjoyed broad popular support.

(What is the meaning of the term "bourgeois?" This and the allied term "feudalism" have been the focus of no end of confusion and debate; they will be discussed in the second article in this series: "The French Revolution and the Historians.")

## The insurrection begins

The Parisian *sans-culottes*—especially the petty-bourgeois masses of artisans and tradespeople—were on the verge of open revolt. The spark that ignited the conflagration was the dismissal of an undeservedly popular finance minister, Jacques Necker, on July 12. The insurrection had begun.

Angry crowds began arming themselves by looting gunsmiths' shops. Revolutionary-minded bourgeois political leaders attempted to bring order to the rebellion by organizing a citizens militia, the National Guard. The royal troops withdrew to their barracks; their ranks had been strongly affected by the spread of revolutionary ideas.

After two days, on July 14, the mass action in the streets came to a climax with the famous assault on the Bastille. The old prison had been used as an armory, and the crowd proceeded to liberate its guns and ammunition. The old municipal administration was swept aside and a new city government,

the Paris Commune was formed.

Louis XVI recognized the triumph of the Revolution by accepting the tricolor cockade—to the cheers of the Parisian masses. The insurrection had legitimized the rule of the National Assembly and initiated a period of *de facto* constitutional monarchy.

While Paris led the way, it was by no means the only urban revolution. As news of July 14 spread, insurrections occurred in cities throughout France and established the role of revolutionary committees.

Meanwhile, in the countryside, the peasants were engaged in their own revolution. During July and August, they rose up against their landlords all over the country. Oppressed for centuries by feudal dues, taxes, tithes, and forced labor, they took advantage of the weakness of the royal regime to redress their own grievances.

Manor houses were sacked and burned, some *seigneurs* were chased away, but most importantly the peasant revolts—coming right at harvest time—were able to forcibly block the collection of dues, taxes and tithes. As the peasants set their fires, their main targets were the archives where records and documents defining their obligations were kept.

## Fait accompli

On Aug. 4—less than a month after Bastille Day—a most peculiar session of the National Assembly took place. Aristocrats stood up, one after the other, to voluntarily renounce their privileges.

This was not a case of belated generosity or guilty consciences as might be supposed if the remarkable session were viewed in isolation from its social context. For one thing, the nobles were renouncing rights and privileges that had already come under sharp attack by the peasants' revolt. They were in a sense putting the best face possible on a *fait accompli*.

More importantly, the aristocrats were hoping by their action to win compensation for the privileges they were "giving up" and, indeed, the National Assembly backed their requests.

The peasants would be expected to pay for their emancipation. Feudal dues were to be legally done away with, but only in exchange for large cash payments. Since hardly any peasants were able to pay such amounts, they were faced with being perpetually in debt to their former landlords. Instead of feudal dues, they would now be making payment on their "loans."

The peasants, understandably, were not at all satisfied. Their struggle continued (often in open rebellion to the point of civil war) from 1789 until their complete victory in 1793, when the Jacobin Convention declared the peasants' redemptive debts null and void.

Meanwhile, back in Paris after the fall of the Bastille, the democratic aspects of the French Revolution began to manifest themselves very directly. The monarchy's repressive apparatus ceased to function, and Parisians began to exercise long-denied democratic rights of free assembly and free expression.

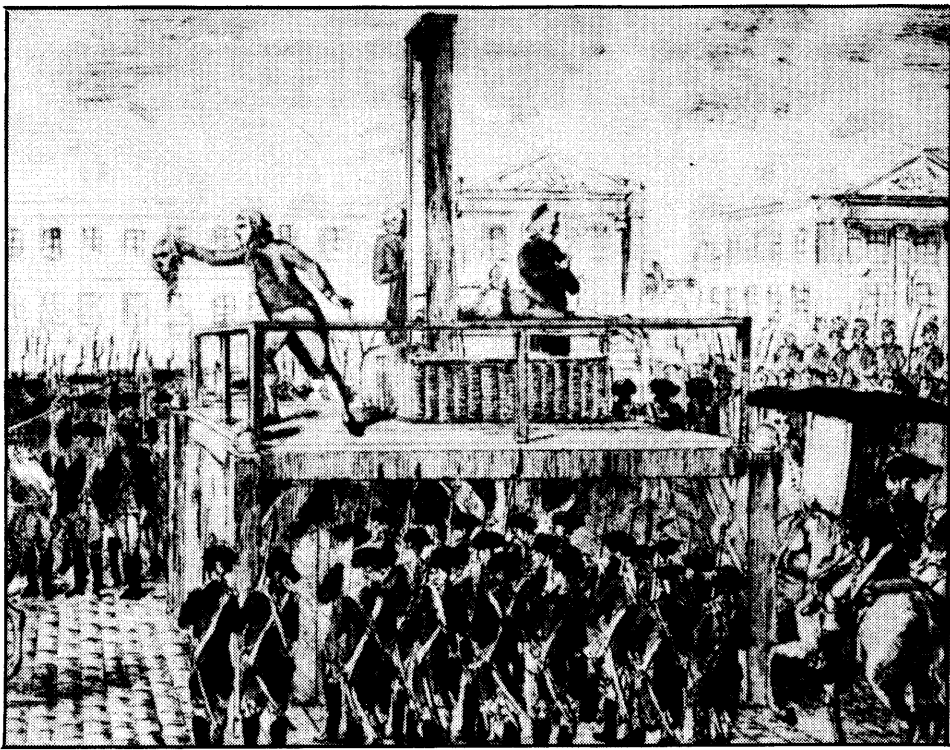
The breakdown of royal censorship resulted in an immediate explosion of publication. In Paris alone, 180 new journals appeared in 1789; by the end of the following year the number had risen to 355.

These newfound liberties were codified by the National Assembly on Aug. 26 in its Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom from arbitrary arrest, and religious freedom became the law of the land.

In addition to these basic democratic rights, the Declaration affirmed the inviolability and sacredness of *property* rights, underlining the bourgeois character of the Revolution. Its aim was to promote personal liberty and civil equality, not social equality.

At the beginning of October another major mass action occurred, stimulated by the continuing high price of bread and the fear of

(continued on next page)



King Louis XVI is guillotined; the terror begins against the *Ancien Régime*.

(continued from preceding page)

an aristocratic plot to militarily crush revolutionary Paris.

The King's court at Versailles, about 15 miles from Paris, was assumed to be a nest of reactionary intrigue. A seemingly spontaneous movement erupted with the aim of marching to Versailles, "rescuing" the King from his treasonous advisors, and bringing him and his family to live in Paris under the watchful eyes of patriotic citizens.

On Oct. 5, a huge crowd—largely made up of women armed with broomsticks, pitchforks, swords and muskets—set out on foot to march to Versailles. Later about 20,000 men, including large numbers of National Guards, set out after them. General Lafayette was at their head but it would not be accurate to say that he was leading them; he was straining to keep up.

The royal forces were overwhelmed and the King had no choice but to obey the demand of the crowds. He and his family were escorted to Paris and installed in the Tuilleries palace.

With the King pretending to accept his constitutionally limited role, the Revolution entered a phase of relative calm that lasted a year and a half. Throughout 1790 and the first half of 1791, mass actions subsided and the class struggle seemed to have dissolved into a pervasive mood of social unity.

The spell was broken, however, on June 20, 1791, when the King attempted to make a run for it. In the dark of night he and his family hid themselves in a carriage and sneaked out of the palace, heading for the border—where they hoped to join up with counterrevolutionary emigrés and their Austrian-backed armed forces.

Many of these dispossessed aristocrats had gained military skills in the officer corps of the royal army. Their object now was to reconquer France and destroy the Revolution. Upon them Louis XVI pinned his hopes for a return to full autocratic power.

The disguised King's flight was interrupted close to the border in a small town named Varennes. The strange entourage attracted attention, the King was recognized by local patriots, and he was forced to return to Paris under armed guard.

The illusions of social unity that had prevailed over the previous year and a half rapidly dissipated. The mass radicalization deepened significantly; the influence of Jean Paul Marat and other radical agitators increased by leaps and bounds. Nonetheless, another year would pass before the tension would once again explode in insurrection in Paris.

#### The monarchy is overthrown

On Aug. 10, 1792—more than three years after the original Bastille Day—the most powerful insurrection to date took place. The *sans-culottes* emerged as a more independent political force, seeking ever more radical leadership. Lafayette attempted to march on Paris to restore bourgeois order, but his troops deserted him and he fled to join the Austrians. The monarchy was overthrown and the Republic was proclaimed the following month.

A National Convention was elected on the basis of adult male suffrage, making the new Republic far more democratic and popular than the ousted constitutional monarchy.

Meanwhile, France had been at war since April against a coalition of old-regime powers determined to crush the Revolution. The government had appealed to revolutionary

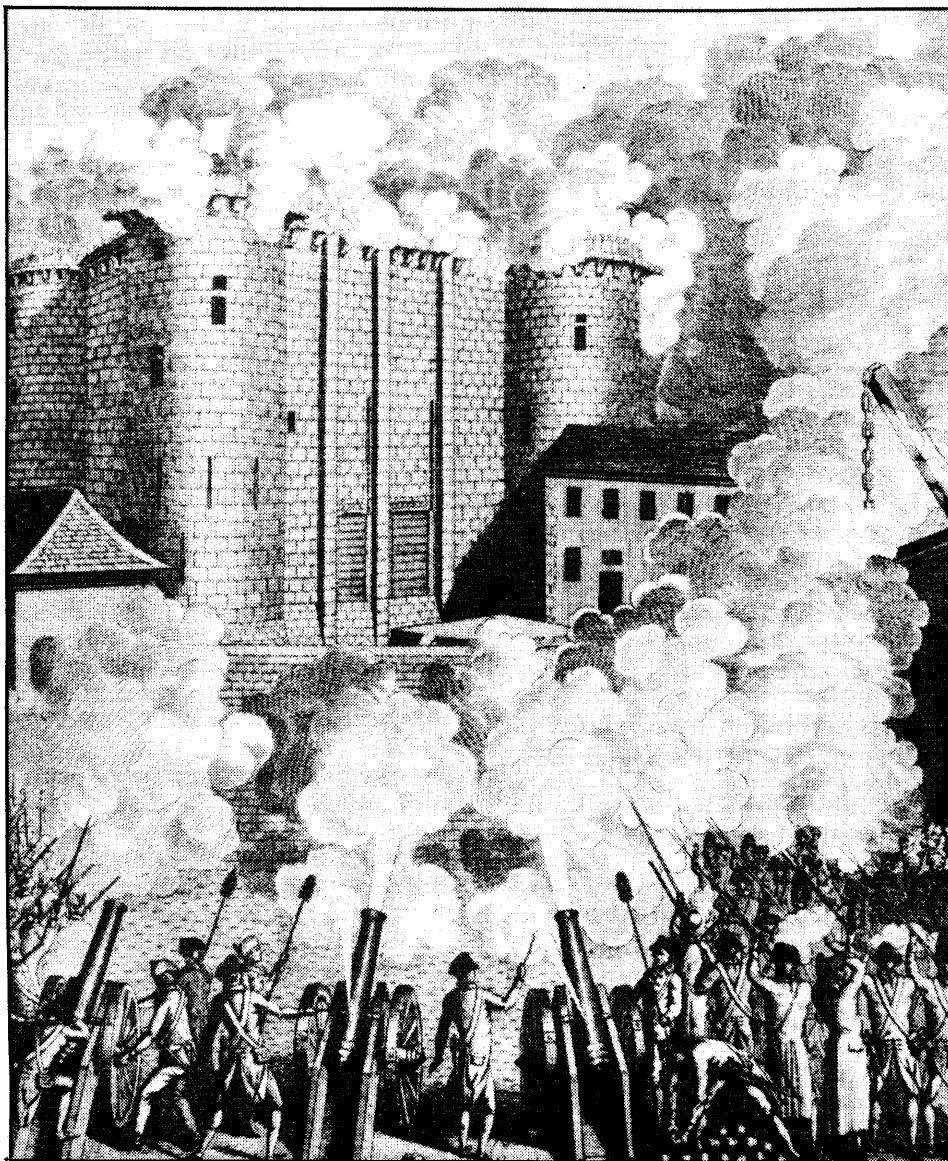
internationalism by calling on oppressed people throughout Europe to rise against their monarchs, pledging French armed support.

But in the field the ragtag French armies, shorn of their traditional officer corps, seemed no match for the professionally led Austrian and Prussian forces. Before long the revolutionary enthusiasm of free French soldiers fighting in their own interests would begin to turn the tide, but at first the Revolution appeared to be in grave danger of military defeat.

A chest of Louis XVI's correspondence was discovered that proved what had been suspected since his flight to Varennes: the King was neck-deep in collaboration with the counterrevolutionary armies invading France. In Jan. 1793, citizen Louis Capet—formerly King Louis XVI—was tried, condemned to death, and guillotined for his treason.

The execution of the ex-King stood as a powerful symbol of the irreversibility of the Revolution. It threw down the gauntlet to the counterrevolutionary forces inside France and throughout Europe. In the following months England, Holland, and Spain joined the war coalition against France, and a major counterrevolutionary revolt erupted in the Vendée in western France.

With the Revolution under siege from all sides, the class struggle intensified apace. The mood of the Parisian masses was white-hot with revolutionary fervor. They began to perceive the new republican leaders as too moderate and too conciliatory toward the Revolution's enemies; as a result, the radical



July 14, 1789: The insurrection begins as the masses storm the Bastille to 'liberate' guns and ammunition.

Montagnard faction gained in influence within the Convention.

The Girondins, the moderates, were ousted from power and replaced by the Montagnards, led by Robespierre, Marat, Danton, and other popular left-wingers.

(The name "Montagnards," men of the Mountain, derived from the seating arrangements in the hall that housed the Convention; the radicals occupied a bank of high seats overlooking the others. The name "Girondin" reflected the fact that a number of the moderate leaders hailed from the Gironde region. "Girondins" was not a contemporary term; at the time they were known as "Brissotins" after their leader, Jacques-Pierre Brissot.)

#### Beginning of the Terror

The revolutionary crisis continued to deepen throughout the summer as the counterrevolutionary armies drew closer. On Sept. 5, yet another popular insurrection in Paris brought Robespierre to the head of a much more centralized government and marked the onset of the Terror.

The climax of the Great French Revolution was at hand. The radical petty-bourgeois government, in alliance with the rebellious peasants and *sans-culottes*, dealt the final, mortal blows to the aristocracy as a class.

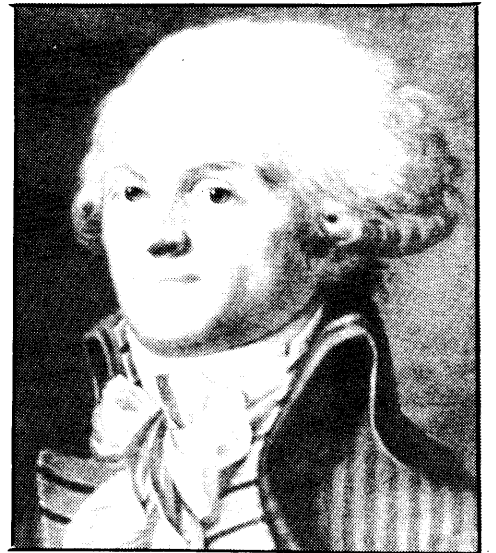
Moralizing conservative historians have labored long to discredit the French Revolution by portraying Robespierre and other members of the Committee of Public Safety as bloodthirsty paranoids who used the guillotine to intimidate the masses and eliminate their factional opponents. But in fact, the danger to the Revolution was no paranoid fantasy; its external and internal enemies were numerous and powerful.

The Terror was a justifiable policy necessary to the defense of the Revolution. The need for unity and security, however, led to abuses of power. Numerous individuals—including dissident revolutionaries such as Danton, Hebert, and Desmoulins—were unjustly condemned to death.

The dangers of war and counterrevolution pressed the Jacobin government to bring the turbulent mass movement under strict control. In doing so, it suppressed the revolutionary energy of its own political base and sowed the seeds of its own downfall. The execution of ultraradical leaders like Hebert was particularly disorienting and demoralizing.

#### "Law of the Maximum"

The Jacobins' problems reflect the fact that the *sans-culottes* were not a homogeneous social class, but combined elements with different, and at times opposing social interests. When bread prices rose to the crisis point, artisans and wage-workers alike hit the



Robespierre

streets—and sometimes hanged the baker from the nearest lamppost.

A socialist solution to this problem, including nationalization of production and a planned economy, might have appealed to the proletarian part of the urban crowd but not to its more active petty-bourgeois part. The Jacobins instead attempted to impose equality of consumption—socialization of distribution rather than of production.

To that end, the radical government of 1793 instituted the "Law of the Maximum," which fixed price ceilings on necessary commodities—in the first place, bread—and threatened speculators and hoarders with the guillotine.

Such policies made production less profitable and inevitably lead to a drop in production, growing pressure to raise prices, and an increasing scarcity of goods. The Law of the Maximum, far from solving the problem of bread prices, only exacerbated it.

This was the bind that radical revolutionaries like Robespierre found themselves in; the low level of productive forces in late 18th-century France prevented them from transcending the bounds of a bourgeois, or capitalist, revolution. Since the masses' demands for social and economic equality were unrealizable, their demoralization was inevitable.

#### Moderates return to power

By the middle of 1794, the military tide had turned and the threat from the counterrevolution had eased considerably. With the primary justification for the Terror disappearing, a moderate faction in the Convention was able to isolate and defeat Robespierre and send him and his supporters to the guillotine. Revolutionary organizations called an insurrection in defence of the Jacobin leaders, but this time the demoralized Parisian masses failed to respond.

The fall of Robespierre, according to the revolutionary calendar, occurred on the 9th of Thermidor; hence this event marking the end of the radical phase of the Revolution became known as Thermidor.

The Thermidorian reaction brought the moderates back to the fore—the '89ers and the remnants of the Girondins. It was their task to begin the process of stabilizing French society on a capitalist basis; in 1799 Napoleon Bonaparte would take over the job.

Who "won" the Revolution? At the beginning of this article I distinguished the '89ers, the moderates, from the '93ers, the radicals, and stated that the really definitive revolutionary acts that accomplished lasting social change were those of 1793. But the final result of the Revolution fulfilled the program of the moderates, not the radicals; in that sense, the '89ers were the real winners.

The radicals' goal was a society neither bourgeois nor socialist. They tried to create a petty-bourgeois utopia—an egalitarian democracy of small producers that would combine private property rights with social justice.

Although they failed, it was the struggle of the '93ers for their impossible dream that mobilized the urban and rural masses to destroy the old regime, clearing the way for the development of bourgeois society. The '93ers, it might be said, made the revolution, but the '89ers came out on top.

The Revolution succeeded in ridding France of a class whose right to rule was based upon aristocratic birth and traditional privilege. The new ruling class based its claim to social dominance on wealth and wealth alone. The problems of poverty and social inequality remained.

Was the game worth the candle? The next article in this series, in the August issue of *Socialist Action*, will attempt to define the positive accomplishments of the Great Revolution. ■

# Ten years of Nicaraguan Revolution critically examined in new book

July 19, 1989, marks the 10th anniversary of the Nicaraguan Revolution. Socialist Action editor Alan Benjamin has just published a new book on the 10 years of the revolution titled "Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution" (San Francisco: Walnut Publishing Co., Inc., 192 pp.). We are reprinting below, with permission, the introduction by Rod Holt and Jeff Mackler. Subtitles have been added by Socialist Action.

July 19, 1979, was a day of great victory as the Sandinista Army, assisted by untold thousands of youth, routed the last of Somoza's National Guard and took possession of Managua—and with it, the entire country.

The mood was euphoric, tempered only by the mourning for those who did not live to see the triumph. The future of Nicaragua seemed to be in the hands of its revolutionary people. They were resolved that a new society could be constructed, a society where reason prevailed, where the needs and aspirations of the majority were no longer subordinate to the greed of the few.

Today, a decade later, the initial euphoria seems a distant memory. The beleaguered Nicaraguan Revolution has survived, but the Sandinista government faces a series of grave crises. The gains of the revolution and the existence of the Sandinista government itself are in jeopardy.

The effects of the eight-year-long U.S.-contra war, the U.S. economic blockade, massive decapitalization and sabotage by the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, and the international isolation of the Nicaraguan Revolution have combined to create an unprecedented economic crisis. And Hurricane Joan, which staggered the country in late 1988, added nature's destruction to that of Nicaragua's implacable enemies. Nicaragua's economy, in fact, has all but collapsed.

In the face of a 25,000 percent annual inflation rate, virtually every official wage scale is incapable of providing even the minimum level of subsistence. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of people have been driven from productive labor to the "informal," street-peddler sector of the economy. Thousands more—including many who had enthusiastically supported the revolution and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)—have left Nicaragua in search of a



Nicaraguan workers and peasants will celebrate their victorious revolution at a time when economic and political conditions are at their lowest point. The survival of the revolution will hinge largely on which road the Sandinistas follow.

better livelihood. Political idealism is giving way to hunger.

#### Unrelenting reactionary pressure

The unrelenting pressure of the U.S. government has reduced the minimum level of trade, loans, and even short-term credits from the world's capitalist nations to virtually nothing. From Washington's point of view, the Nicaraguan Revolution and Sandinista power, even in their most weakened and conciliatory forms, represent a threat to imperialist interests in Central America that must be crushed at all costs. U.S. policy from 1979 to the present has been to return Nicaragua to its previous state of semi-colonial dependency.

The Soviet Union and the other so-called socialist states have provided little comfort

to embattled Nicaragua. They have reduced their support to below the level required for even a subsistence economy.

For Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet bureaucracy, Nicaragua is but a card in the Soviet Union's hand, to be played or discarded in cynical negotiations with the United States over the world's future. In the name of peaceful coexistence—or *détente*—the revolutionary struggles of the world's people are sacrificed to preserve the system of bureaucratic rule of Soviet Stalinism.

Gorbachev has conceded to U.S. policymakers that the Nicaraguan Revolution is expendable; that it, and the rest of Latin America, can remain in the U.S. "backyard."

#### Sandinista policy choices

What choices have been made in Managua? Economic activity is the cornerstone of society. There must be production—food, clothing, shelter. Nicaragua has been sliding downhill since 1979.

For a while, more egalitarian distribution disguised this fact, and the general health and welfare of the people as a whole rose—but only for a time. Machines were wearing out and were not being replaced. Housing, transport, and roads were steadily eroding.

Productivity of labor declined. This did not reflect at all upon the efforts of the workers, for productivity does not depend on the willingness of the worker but rather on the availability of tools and materials. This is just as true in the Nicaraguan countryside as it is in Detroit. Tractors, gas for the tractors, and fertilizer are the counterparts of sheet steel, glass, and rubber.

Prior to the revolution, distribution of the necessities for production was left to the native capitalists, the branches of multinational corporations, and Somoza and his collaborators. After the revolution, it was left to the native capitalists and the FSLN-led government.

As detailed in this volume, the native capitalists declined to play by the new rules. Encouraged by the U.S. government, they used their ingenuity to have it both ways. They solicited and received large government grants, ostensibly to increase production, while they smuggled every dime they could to Miami.

Production declined as machinery was run into the ground or illegally hustled over the border. The domestic policies of the Sandinistas, largely dependent on the good will of supposedly patriotic native capitalists, failed.

This is the national and international context of Alan Benjamin's critical book, "Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution."

Using a wealth of primary sources, Benjamin offers us one of the most concise guides yet available to understanding the phenomenon of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

#### Defending gains of the revolution

The author's point of departure is a deep sense of solidarity with the revolution. The agrarian reform, albeit still incomplete, the nationalization of sectors of the economy, and the arming of the masses represent important gains that must be defended against all the enemies of the revolution.

Many of the essential tasks of the revolution, however, remain unresolved. The large majority of the land producing Nicaragua's cash crops remains in the hands of a tiny capitalist elite, while close to 50,000 peasant families have still not benefited from the agrarian reform program. The FSLN leadership has rejected the socialist option for Nicaragua and has instead proceeded to confine Nicaragua's development to the framework of a mixed—or capitalist—economy.

The FSLN is a party of "revolutionists of action," a term that has been applied to the leaders of the Cuban Revolution, who won political power without a clear understanding of the program of Marxism.

The Cuban leadership's commitment to the abolition of the social injustice inherent in imperialist-dominated countries pressed them to move beyond their original program.

They broke from their nationalist goals—including the belief that it was essential to preserve a capitalist economy—and proceeded on a socialist course of development. This involved the most far-reaching land reform the world had seen since the 1917 Russian Revolution and the nationalization of almost every capitalist enterprise in Cuba. It also involved the mobilization of virtually the entire population, arms in hand, to attain their objectives.

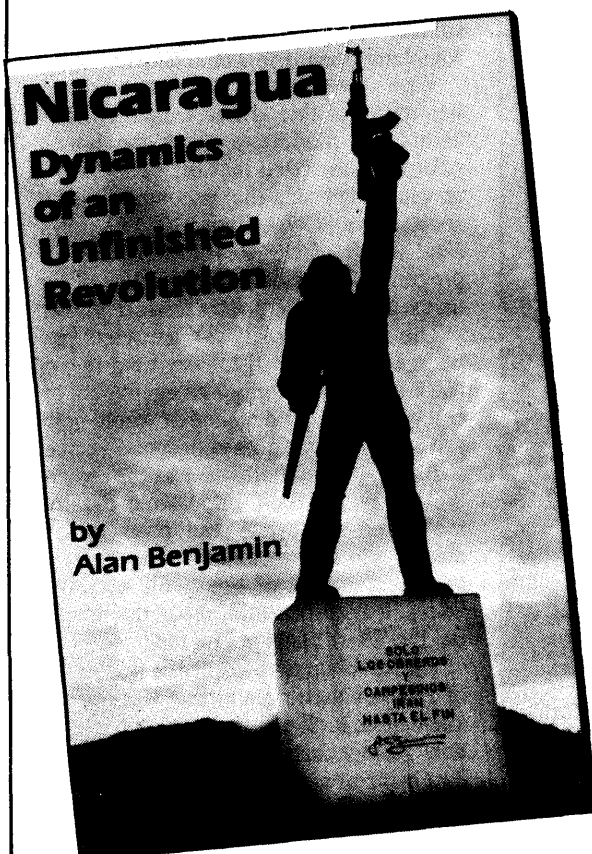
But today, for many reasons—not the least of which is their material dependence on Soviet aid—the Fidelista leaders of the Cuban Revolution deny the lessons of their own rich experience. Thus, throughout Latin America and the Caribbean—the areas in the world most vital to their immediate interests and highly susceptible to their influence—they practice a variety of peaceful coexistence no less harmful to the cause of extending the socialist revolution.

The Cuban revolutionaries today incorrectly advise their Nicaraguan comrades to contain their revolution at the democratic, capitalist stage.

The Sandinista leaders, mindful of the Cu-

(continued on next page)

## Now available!



A penetrating analysis of 10 years of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

"Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution" (192 pp.) provides the key to understanding the situation in Nicaragua today.

Written by Socialist Action editor Alan Benjamin (in collaboration with researchers at the ITZTANI Institute in Managua), with an introduction by Rod Holt and Jeff Mackler. Price: \$7.95.

To order, write to: Walnut Publishing Co., 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Include \$1 for postage.

# Doctor guilty of 'infanticide'

Dr. Joseph Melnick, an obstetrician in Philadelphia, faces several years in prison. Last month, he was found guilty of infanticide in an abortion he performed. Although Dr. Melnick insisted the eight-month-old fetus was stillborn, some witnesses testified that they detected movement and a heartbeat. This is the first prosecution under Pennsylvania's Abortion Control Act, which requires a doctor to try to keep a fetus alive.

**Planning a trip overseas** this summer? The London Times reports that American aircraft have at least 30 fewer safety requirements than European ones. Bon voyage!

**Nuclear-powered satellites** are "small Chernobyls waiting to happen," say scientists. One accident could produce two-and-a-half times more than all the plutonium released in the atmosphere to date. There are about 60 U.S. and Soviet nuclear satellites in orbit, and the United States plans to add 100 more for its Star Wars system.

**Bovine Growth Hormone** is a new drug that, when injected into cows, can increase milk production. But most dairy farmers say they don't need it. A Wisconsin farmer told reporters, "Someone else will make the profit, not the farmers." Indeed, the drug manufacturers stand to pocket up to \$500 million every year—if they can just convince farmers to use the stuff.

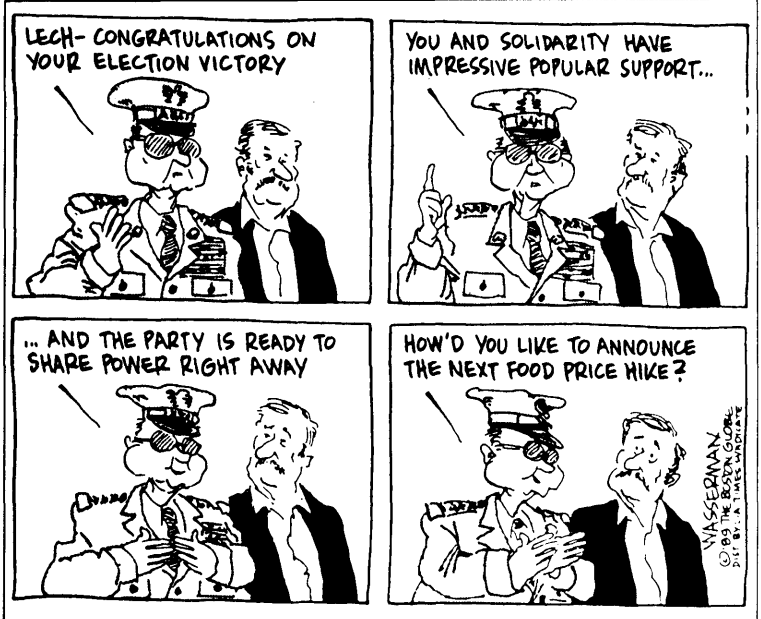
**There is a new furor** over furs. Protests by animal-rights activists caused furriers to cancel their annual convention in New York a month ago. But the fur industry is gearing up for a new autumn offensive. Women will be asked to buy furs as a symbol of their "success."

**"Off with their heads!"** That could be the answer to drug-dealers, suggests William Bennett, federal drug policy coordinator. "Morally, I don't have any problem [with beheadings] at all," Bennett said on a call-in television show. He added, "I used to teach ethics, trust me."

**Desperate for new recruits**, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston is resorting to television commercials to attract young men. Opening with a display of a Mercedes-Benz, a Rolex watch, and diamond bracelet, the ad switches to the outstretched arms of a priest and the slogan "A world that doesn't deny itself anything could use a few men who do."

It remains to be seen whether Madison Avenue tactics will halt the decline in recruits to the priesthood. There are only five new priests in the archdiocese's graduating class this year. This compares with the average class of 50 in the early 1960s.

**Attacks on gays and lesbians** have increased and are "alarmingly widespread," says Kevin Berrill of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Anti-gay episodes—which include threats, taunts, vandalism, bombings, assaults, and murder—increased from 2042 in 1985 to 7248 in 1988.



**Is an economic "Big Bang"** in the works for Poland? Both the Polish government and leaders of Solidarity have expressed interest in two privatization plans that advocate swapping stock in state enterprises against the country's debt.

In one proposal, put forth by New York financier George Soros, a "liquidating agency" would be set up to supervise selling off portions of the enterprises to private investors. Soros calls for an end to most subsidies and tight monetary policies—which would lead to high unemployment.

Another proposal, by Solidarity's chief economist, Witold Trzeciakowski, goes even further. It suggests that the new program be managed by the new Senate—which is 99-percent controlled by Solidarity. Many Solidarity leaders have expressed reservations about the frankness of the proposals on unemployment.

## ... Nicaragua

(continued from preceding page)

bans' views and for their own reasons, consciously reject the Cuban road. Instead, they seek to straddle the conflicting class interests in Nicaraguan society. The history of this policy can be traced from the formation in 1979 of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction (which included leading capitalist representatives), to the Sandinista government's most recent decision to return land to the pre-1979 capitalist owners.

The very measures taken by the government to preserve the prerogatives of capital and private profit have inevitably led to the restricted and distorted development of Nicaragua's trade unions and mass organizations. At the workplace, for example, the limitations of the FSLN conception of "participation" have alienated broad layers of the working class and peasantry. Workers, either discouraged from or prevented from striking against profit-gouging capitalists, are implored to produce more and ask for less, while peasants are denied the essential loans and infrastructure to produce effectively.

### Hard-learned lessons of the past

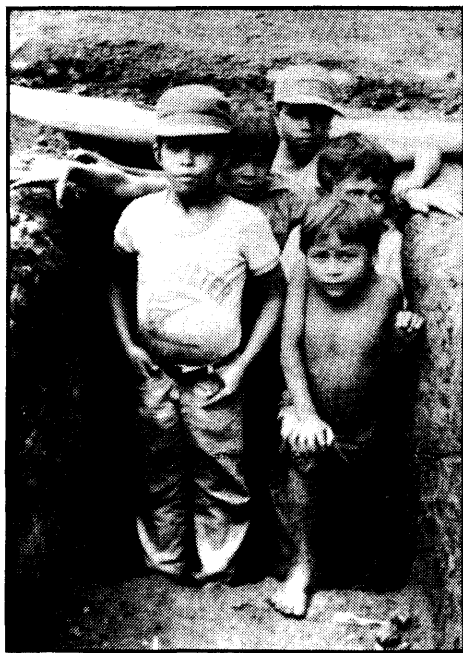
This book will undoubtedly disturb many of those whose concept of advancing the struggle for socialism consists in uncritically supporting, if not justifying, whatever measures are undertaken by the Sandinista leadership. Such a stance does a disservice to the struggle for socialism.

The hard-learned lessons of the class struggle and revolutionary politics are discarded in deference to those who have "made the revolution." In time, pragmatism posing as Marxism will give way to cynicism and demoralization when life itself passes judgment on faulty policies.

There is no doubt that isolated Nicaragua, a tiny and terribly underdeveloped nation of 3 million people, cannot by itself overcome both the obstacle of its own history as a semi-colony and the combined hostility of world imperialism and Stalinism. This is not to say, however, that Nicaragua's situation is hopeless, that the Sandinistas must stoically await their own demise, either at the hands of imperialist invaders or by the domestic capitalists they have encouraged.

Another course is available to the Nicaraguan people—the establishment of an extensive system of workers' control of the economy based on mass democratic decision-making institutions akin to the "soviets" (or councils) formed in the Soviet Union in 1917 under the revolutionary leadership of Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

The establishment of workers' control and the distribution of land to the peasantry would transfer the fundamental economic levers of society to the great majority of the Nicaraguan people. It would link their destinies to the revolution's success, as opposed



to the increased profits of capitalist exploiters.

These measures would signal the creation of a new state form in Nicaragua, a workers' state, which would defend the interests of the oppressed above all others.

The Sandinistas' search for a political alliance with the Latin American and European bourgeoisies against U.S. imperialism has proved fruitless—and often even harmful. This is especially true when the price of the alliance included FSLN political support to capitalist parties like the ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) in Mexico or the Democratic Party in the United States.

A strategy of proletarian internationalism—that is, a strategy aimed at solidarizing Nicaragua with every struggle of the workers and peasants in Latin America and the rest of the world—would bring Nicaragua its most fervent allies. This would place Nicaragua unambiguously on the side of the victims of capitalist injustice.

### Based on Permanent Revolution

These ideas constitute the essence of the theory of permanent revolution, first advanced in 1906 and further developed in the 1920s and '30s by the Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky. This theory holds that the capitalist class in the nations dominated by imperialism is incapable of accomplishing the tasks of the democratic revolution; that is, it is incapable of leading a struggle for economic independence from foreign domination.

Only a workers' government, in alliance with the poor peasants, can accomplish this task in a revolutionary process that organically connects the democratic revolution with the beginning of the socialist revolution.

This strategic conception of permanent revolution was adopted by the founding conference of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution inspired by

Leon Trotsky in 1938. It was summed up in its basic program—the "Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution."

While the 1917 Russian example of democratic, soviet government, prior to Stalin, remains the best living model for revolution everywhere, there are many sincere revolutionary fighters who are not yet convinced that the oppressed majority can rule in their own name.

The Sandinistas of Nicaragua constitute an authentic example of the revolutionists of action who raise the hopes for the socialist future. The revolution continually generates such rebels. Revolutionary workers' parties cannot be built without these forces. Revolutionary parties of action arise in every sphere of the class struggle.

In the United States, for example, such revolutionists emerged during the birth of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the 1930s. The upsurge of the Black masses in the United States in the 1950s and '60s also gave birth to thousands of such revolutionaries. They were best exemplified by Malcolm X and the forces around him, as well as by thousands of other fighters in the historic struggle for civil rights.

But to be an effective fighter for the future

of humanity, one needs to have a clear view of the past and of the forces at work in the present. Lenin noted that there cannot be consistent revolutionary action without revolutionary theory. This truth has a vital urgency today—particularly in Nicaragua, where the revolution is at a critical crossroads.

The political program expressed in this book is not only of interest to students of revolutionary politics in the United States. It is a vital necessity for the defense and deepening of the Nicaraguan Revolution itself and for the struggle for socialism everywhere.

It is for this reason that "Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution" is being translated into Spanish. The programmatic positions advocated by the author, based on the historic program of the Fourth International, are essential guides to action for all revolutionists in Nicaragua seeking an alternative to the mistaken policies of the Sandinista leadership.

For these ideas to find support among the Nicaraguan people, however, it is essential that a political party based on the program of the Fourth International be constructed in Nicaragua. It is also with the hope of aiding this process that this book has been written.

## Native Americans meet

By LINDA THOMPSON

**BALTIMORE**—Close to 300 Native American people from North, Central, and South America met in Southern Maryland over the Memorial Day weekend. The conference was sponsored by the Eastern Region of the American Indian Movement (AIM).

The theme of the conference was "building a vision for the 21st century for native people in the Western Hemisphere." This reflects the fact that indigenous people are developing a new international consciousness and a desire to collaborate organizationally across national boundaries.

Margarito Crespin Esquina brought greetings from the indigenous people of El Salvador. He pointed out that over 50 percent of the population of his country is made up of indigenous people.

Kuiz, one of the last Aztec priests of Mexico, said that there is a new unity among Indians in Mexico. He reported on a spiritual conference at the ancient pyramid at Chichen Itza that was attended by over 60,000 indigenous people.

Anita Marlow, a lawyer and writer, spoke on the land grab of Indian resources by multinational corporations. She described how the U.S. government and the corporations had conspired to rob the Hopi and Navaho nations of their coal, oil, and uranium.

Jim Robideau represented the International

Office of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee. Leonard Peltier is the Lake Anishnabe leader of AIM who was framed by the U.S. government for the deaths of two FBI agents at the Pine Ridge reservation in 1975. He is serving two life terms at the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary.

The U.S. government and the FBI falsified, fabricated, and suppressed evidence in order to ensure his conviction. Canadian authorities aided the frameup when they refused his plea for political asylum. After 13 years of imprisonment, Peltier is standing up well and would like to hear from his supporters, Robideau said.

Vernon Bellecourt, another AIM leader, pointed out that greater unity and communication between native peoples was in the tradition of Tecumseh, a great Shawnee martyr, who had appealed for the Indian nations to unite years ago.

Bellecourt reported on the conference of indigenous people from the Americas that took place in Libya in 1988. At another conference, held in Panama this spring, a Central American coordinating body was established.

Conferences like the Memorial Day gathering are planned for five other regions of the United States. A goal is to prepare counteractions to the 500-year anniversary celebration of the "discovery" of America by Columbus, planned for 1992. For more information, write the Eastern Regional Office of AIM, P.O. Box 131, Acokeek, MD 20607.

By PAUL SIEGEL

# Soviet historian calls for publishing Trotsky's works

In late April, I met Prof. Victor Danilov, a Soviet historian doing research in the United States on Leon Trotsky.

Danilov had learned that I was a member of a committee that had been to Moscow to petition for the clearing of Trotsky's name and the publication of his writings. He was interested in finding out more about this and in exchanging ideas.

I began by saying that I did not regard Trotsky as an infallible seer but that I did believe he was so perceptive of the direction in which the Soviet Union was going under Stalin that much of what he had to say remains relevant and a guide to understand what needs to be done in the Soviet Union today.

Danilov replied that this is his own position exactly. He added that he considers the publication of Trotsky's writings as necessary not just for the work of Soviet historians but for the sake of the Soviet people, who will find in it much of value.

## An "internal dissident"

Danilov, as a result of the restrictions on Soviet historians in the past and even today, has been much hampered in his study of Trotsky. A man of 64 years of age, he was denounced in the 1960s by top officials of the historians' organization as an "internal dissident." He has more freedom today, but there is much material he has been unable to obtain.

For instance, he was able to read only parts of Trotsky's book, "The Revolution Betrayed." Here in the United States, however, he has been able to get a copy of it. He has also been able to study Trotsky's archives at Harvard University and at the Hoover Institution in Stanford University. He does not know the publications of the Fourth International or any of its sections.

As a consequence of his recent study, he will write an article on Trotsky for a Soviet



Lenin and Trotsky (in the center) with Petrograd workers and soldiers, cc. 1921.

publication, which he expects to get published. He will work in conjunction with Professor Stuartsev, the historian whom we heard deliver a lecture on Trotsky in Moscow before the Writers' Union.

Stuartsev will write an article on Trotsky during the 1917 revolution and the civil war, and Danilov will write one on Trotsky during the periods of the New Economic Policy of the 1920s and collectivization.

## Gorbachev attacks Trotsky

Danilov has in the past polemicized with Otto Latsis, the deputy editor of the Central Committee's theoretical journal, whom we saw in Moscow. Danilov said that Latsis is not sympathetic to Trotsky's ideas. He told me that at a recent plenum of the Central Committee, Gorbachev attacked Trotsky as

the originator of Stalin's program of collectivization of agriculture. This section of Gorbachev's speech, he believed, was probably written by Latsis.

I pointed out that Trotsky had advocated collectivization not through force but through patient explanation and gradual demonstration of its advantages for poor peasants, with ample state credits and the prior production of agricultural machinery. He opposed the brutal manner that brought the country to the brink of disaster. Danilov expressed agreement.

As for *perestroika*, Danilov stated, there are differing views among Soviet intellectuals as to whether it is conducive to building socialism or to restoring capitalism. Some are not dismayed by the latter prospect.

Danilov himself believes that market reforms are necessary but must be carefully

controlled. He agreed with me that Lenin regarded the New Economic Policy, with its market mechanisms, as a temporary forced retreat instead of a solution to all ills. Trotsky also pointed to its dangers as well as to its advantages.

Finally, we discussed the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee's petition to clear Trotsky's name and publish his writings. The petition, which we gave to Latsis and others in the Soviet Union, had been signed by many leading intellectuals, trade-union leaders, and left-wing parliament members in Europe, the United States, and the rest of the world.

Danilov said that the petition has not been extensively circulated in the Soviet Union. He volunteered to take it back and see that it gets around. ■

The following article appeared on page 12 of *Moskovskiya Novosti* (MN) issue No. 13, dated March 26, 1989.

MN has been in the forefront of the campaign for more openness, or *glasnost*, and has become known for offering more open discussions on more issues than most Soviet periodicals. Printed in a run of approximately 250,000 Russian-language copies in the U.S.S.R., MN also appears abroad, published in translation into a number of foreign languages.

Contrary to the normal practice, this article was excluded from the English-language publication, called *Moscow News*. In what could not have been an accident, the corresponding space on page 12 of the English-language paper carried an article entitled "Why Siberian Pravda Criticizes MN," the opening sentence of which reads: "The newspaper Pravda differs, depending on where you read it."

This is what should have been in that space. We are indebted to Trotsky bibliographer Louis Sinclair for bringing this article to our attention.

—Marilyn Vogt-Downey, co-chair U.S. Moscow Trials Campaign Committee

## Soviet newspaper interviews touring American Trotskyists

### American Delegation Delivers to Moscow a Petition From the Descendants of Trotsky

"We, the undersigned, the grandson and great-grandchildren of the Russian revolutionary Marxist Lev Davidovich Bronstein, known as Lev [Leon] Trotsky ... request that all the slander and false criminal charges raised against him on the direct orders of Stalin be officially withdrawn from our grandfather and great-grandfather, his family, and his comrades in struggle...."

"We also request that the works of Leon Trotsky, which represent a valuable collection of historic and contemporary Marxist study and thought be freely published in the Soviet Union."

The letter with this petition, signed by direct descendants of Trotsky who live in Mexico, was brought to Moscow by four

members of the "Moscow Trials Committee" in the U.S.A., which is studying the crimes of Stalinism. Joining them was Vladimir Kibalchich, the son of Viktor Serge, a Russian revolutionary well known in the West, who was repressed by Stalin for participating in the "Left Opposition."

"In recent months, a whole number of well-known party activists repressed under Stalin have been restored to a place of honor," said Carl Finamore, a journalist from the radical American newspaper *Socialist Action*. "It seems to us that the time has come to do the same with respect to Trotsky, regardless of what one may think of his political views. All that is necessary is to affirm, for example, that the charge made against him that he conspired to murder the top Soviet leaders was a lie."

"Every person must have the opportunity independently to judge Trotsky's views, after

having read his works—and they comprise 80 volumes—and become familiar with precisely what he meant by 'permanent revolution.' As it is now, people in the Soviet Union to a significant degree are still under the influence of the view of Trotsky that was formulated by Stalin himself," was the opinion of social activist and the director of the "Campaign in Support of Palestine," Ralph Schoenman.

Members of the American group sought a meeting with Trotsky's granddaughter Aleksandra of Moscow; however they learned that she had died literally on the eve of their arrival.—Andrei Bezruchenko

## Kagarlitsky

The April 1989 issue of *Socialist Action* contained an article by Carl Finamore that reported on the results of a trip to the Soviet Union by a delegation representing the family of Leon Trotsky.

A section of the article stated that large numbers of intellectuals and leftist activists within the Moscow People's Front resisted raising political demands such as the right to strike and the right to form independent trade unions. The article also noted the lack of working-class participation in the Moscow People's Front.

It was in this context that Boris Kagarlitsky, a central leader of the Moscow People's Front and one of the most prominent leftists in the Soviet Union, was mentioned in the article. In a recent phone conversation with Finamore, Kagarlitsky commented on the article by emphasizing that he strongly advocated more working-class participation.

He made the following statement for publication to clarify his position on this matter: "The People's Front movement—that is true. But I have always said that this is one of its weaknesses, though it has certain objective reasons. We are trying to build up mutual understanding between the People's Front and the working class."

Kagarlitsky agreed to expand on his views in a future article for *Socialist Action*.—the editors

# Socialist ACTION

# Subscribe today!

one year for \$8.

Enclosed is a \_\_\_\_\_

6 months for \$4.

contribution.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.



# PACs pay for the 'best Congress money can buy'

By PAUL SIEGEL

*The Best Congress Money Can Buy*, by Philip M. Stern. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988. 321 pp. \$18.95.

Although "The Best Congress Money Can Buy" is a padded and repetitious book (it would have been greatly improved by being considerably cut and properly organized), it contains much useful information about how members of Congress are dependent on big business.

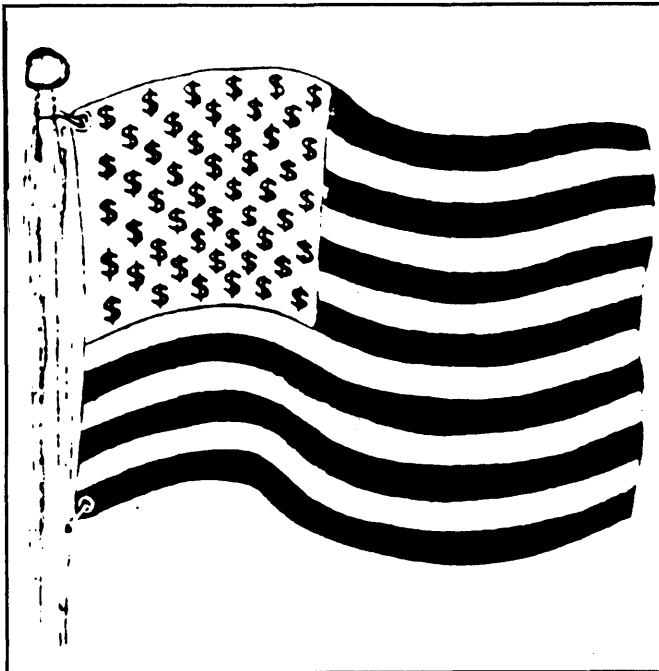
The chief financial means members of Congress use to run for office—and the average senator raises almost \$10,000 a week every week for his (or her) entire six-year term to fund the next electoral campaign—is contributions from Political Action Committees (PACs). Most of this money comes from PACs that have been formed by corporations and trade associations.

In 1986 about half of the members of the House of Representatives got more than 50 percent of their campaign funds—many of them 60 percent to 80 percent—from PACs outside their congressional districts; 82 percent got more than 30 percent of their campaign funds from such PACs.

Those who get the most PAC money are members of committees—popularly known as "PAC heavens"—that write legislation affecting important industries. Thus Banking Committee Chairman Ferdinand St. Germain got nearly a third of a million dollars from banks and other financial institutions over a period of eight years. It may more properly be said that he is the representative of the banking industry more than of his district in Rhode Island.

## Buying a "sure thing"

PACs are really concerned with buying influence, not winning elections. They gave more than \$23 million in 1986 to House candidates who were sure winners—\$8.5



What do PACs get for their money? Stern has a number of charts showing the very high correlation between campaign contributions and votes on bills in which the PACs are interested.

An example is a vote in 1979 on a bill to contain the soaring costs of hospital stays that, it was estimated, would have saved consumers and the government about \$10 billion a year. Opposed by the American Medical Association, it was defeated by 234 to 166.

Of those who from 1977 through 1980 received from the AMA more than \$15,000, 100 percent voted against the bill; of those who received \$10,000 to \$15,000, 95 percent voted against it; of those who received \$2500 to \$5000, 80 percent voted against it; of those who received less than \$2500, 38 percent voted against it; of those who received nothing, 37 percent voted against it. Well-placed dollars yield huge dividends.

## Labor bureaucrats and big business

Besides business PACs, there are labor unions PACs and, much fewer, "ideological" PACs, conservative and "liberal." Ironically, PACs were introduced by organized labor, but business PACs now contribute three times as much as labor.

The labor bureaucrats, playing the same game as the capitalists with their members' money, are the capitalists' partners more often than not. The same Congressman James J. Howard, Chairman of the House Public Works

and Transportation committee, which has jurisdiction over the regulation of transportation, received \$8500 from the American Trucking Association and over \$14,000 from various trucking firms. But he also received \$10,000 from the Teamsters Union.

Another way of buying influence is through honoraria of speaking fees. Members of Congress get \$1000 or \$2000 an hour for speaking to industry representatives. This is money that goes into their pockets, not into campaign funds.

They don't even have to make a speech; they can just go to a breakfast and answer some questions or tour a plant, be wined and dined, and chat with some company officers. Members of congressional defense committees got over \$182,000 in honoraria in 1985 from defense contractors who benefit from legislation emanating from these committees—all perfectly legal according to the rules Congress itself has set.

## Pointing the finger

Republicans, pointing to former Speaker Jim Wright and former majority whip Tony Coelho, have recently charged Democrats with having grown corrupt in power. But Stern shows that Republicans and Democrats feed from the same trough. He tells of how, after the winemaking Gallo brothers contributed \$13,000 to Coelho's campaign and \$31,750 to the Democratic Campaign Committee that Coelho chaired, Coelho took a personal interest in getting through the House of Representatives a special tax provision permitting the Gallos to save \$27 million in estate taxes.

However, the "Gallo Amendment" had to make its way through the Senate Finance Committee, of which Robert Dole was the ranking Republican member—and Dole received \$20,000 in personal campaign gifts from the Gallo brothers and their wives. Of course, it passed.

In 1981, Dole blocked a Democratic party proposal for a tax loophole that would benefit Chicago commodity traders; however, in 1984 he approved the same provision, gaining these traders \$300 million. This reversal would seem to have something to do with the fact that in 1983-84 individuals and PACs of the commodity industry gave \$70,500—six times as much as in 1981-82—to Dole's own PAC, Campaign America.

Through Campaign America, Dole contributed \$300,000 to the campaigns of 47 Republican senators, helping him in his bid to become the Senate Republican leader. So, too, did Wright form a PAC to contribute to 141 Democratic members' campaigns before he was chosen speaker. Those who are bought—in turn buy others.

As is obligatory in such books, Stern concludes with a "solution," a list of reforms that it is said will take care of the problem. He forgets that it was himself who told of how big business circumvented the reform laws of 1907 and 1925 and the post-Watergate laws of the early 1970s. The very title of his book, in fact, is a quip made by Will Rogers over 60 years ago.

Despite all the efforts of the reformers, big business is more firmly in command of the political process than ever. As long as the United States remains a plutocracy—as long as the capitalist system prevails—there can be no genuine democracy. ■

## BOOK REVIEW

million to those who had no major-party opponents and \$14.8 million to those who had won their previous four elections by better than three-to-one margins. In so doing, they weren't betting on a race horse; they were rewarding a delivery horse.

Because they were concerned with buying influence from office-holders, PACs formed by corporations and trade associations gave 90 percent of their contributions to incumbents. This helped incumbents to outspend their challengers by three to one and no doubt had more than a little to do with the fact that 98 percent of the incumbents won. Once you get in and go along with the game, you are

## Our readers speak out

### Poland

Dear editor,

I recently came across a copy of your paper at a friend's house and was most impressed. I had heard of it before. I'm a member of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution (Left Current). It's impossible to obtain your paper here in Poland. I would be very interested in obtaining a subscription.

G.P.,  
Warsaw, Poland

me in my work and in ordering subscriptions if you would send me information, including subscription rates and sample copies.

Norman Lederer,  
Education Director,  
District 65, UAW,  
Woodbridge, N.J.

### Charles Cornell

Dear editor,

Charles Olney Cornell, 78, one of the devoted American guards of Leon Trotsky in Mexico in 1939-1940, died Jan. 1, 1989, in San Mateo, Calif., of leukemia after a two-week illness. He was born March 14, 1911, in Cochise, Ariz. He leaves

his widow, Betty, and their son and daughter.

Cornell was present at Trotsky's Avenida Viena residence in Coyoacan during the attempted assassination of Trotsky by Communist Party thugs led by the Mexican artist David Alfaro Siqueiros in May 1940. On Aug. 20, 1940, Trotsky was murdered by a GPU agent later awarded the Order of the Red Flag by Moscow.

Cornell participated in Socialist Workers Party activities in New York City subsequent to his stay with Trotsky. He described his life with Trotsky in a colorful article "With Trotsky in Mexico," published in the *Fourth International* magazine of August 1940.

After being engaged in real-estate development and home building in Connecticut and from 1978 to 1988 in Prescott, Ariz., he retired and moved to San Mateo. Those who knew him will remember him respectfully and fondly.

A reader,  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Some of the signs read "Catholics for Choice" and "Curb your Dogma." Demonstrators chanted, "Not the church, not the state, women will decide their fate."

Archbishop Mahony had arrived at the Los Angeles Midland Medical Clinic on June 10 as police were arresting the last of the anti-abortion protesters who barred the clinic entrance. He declared that the OR people were people of "great commitment and courage" and said, "I commend them very highly."

The June 15 protest was sponsored by the coalition of organizations and pro-choice activists which has been defending the clinics of the Los Angeles area against Operation Rescue.

David Cooper,  
Los Angeles, Calif.

### D.O.E.

Dear editor,

Despite a history of callous indifference toward safety and environmental protection, the Department of Energy (DOE) seems hell-bent on opening a nuclear-waste storage facility near Carlsbad, N.M.

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) currently under construction by the Westinghouse Corporation is designed to be an underground repository for the disposal of radioactive wastes generated by nuclear-weapons production operations.

DOE is pushing to open WIPP in September, or at the latest, February 1990. The DOE plans to send more than 34,000 truckloads of pluto-

onium-contaminated "hot trash" in inadequately tested containers through major population centers based on unrealistically optimistic assumptions regarding the potential for accidents and the release of radioactivity.

The DOE's and Westinghouse Corporation's assurance in regard to the "best technology" and "surefire contingency plans" ring hollow in light of the recent tragic loss of life on the U.S.S. Iowa and the environmental disaster at Valdez Harbor. Only this time, an "accident" involving nuclear waste may render the area involved uninhabitable for as many as 10,000 years.

Brine has been found to be seeping into the storage facility. In addition, there is a large body of pressurized brine located directly beneath the site. The water in the WIPP could mix with wastes to form a "radioactive slurry," which could contaminate the water table flowing directly into the Rio Grande.

Common sense demands an immediate halt to the production of nuclear weapons and redirecting the nation's resources towards socially useful and environmentally sound investments which will satisfy human needs rather than the greed of corporations like Westinghouse.

Sean Padilla,  
El Paso, Tex.

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

### Unionist

Dear editor,

I am interested in your publication. I would appreciate it very much and it would be most useful to

## Where To Find Us

**Baltimore**  
P.O. Box 18005  
Baltimore, MD 21218

**Boston**  
P.O. Box 1046 GMF  
Boston, MA 02205  
(617) 497-0230

**Chicago**  
P.O. Box 578428  
Chicago, IL 60657  
(312) 327-5752

**Cincinnati**  
P.O. Box 21015  
Cincinnati, OH 45219  
(513) 272-2596

**Cleveland**  
P.O. Box 6151  
Cleveland, OH 44101  
(216) 429-2167

**Detroit**  
P.O. Box 32546  
Detroit, MI 48232

**Los Angeles**  
P.O. Box 862014  
Los Angeles, CA  
90086-2014  
(213) 250-4608

For information in other cities call 415-821-0458.

**Minneapolis**  
P.O. Box 14087  
Dinkytown Station  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

**New York**  
P.O. Box 20209 Ca. Finance  
693 Columbus Ave.  
New York, N.Y. 10025

**San Francisco**  
3435 Army St., Suite 308  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
(415) 821-0458

**Santa Barbara**  
P.O. Box 90644  
Santa Barbara, CA 93190  
(805) 962-4011

### Pro-choice

Dear editor,

Pro-choice activists picketed the offices of Archbishop Roger M. Mahony of the Los Angeles Archdiocese on June 15 to protest Mahony's support of Operation Rescue (OR) demonstrators as well as his letters to California Catholic legislators warning them that good Catholics must be against abortion.

# U.S. socialists travel to China after crackdown

By JIM HENLE

BEIJING—The April demonstrations in Tiananmen Square opened a new chapter in the history of the Chinese revolution. A movement was born in the streets of the capital that shook the foundations of the Stalinist regime.

Beijing students, a whole generation of the best educated and most political of China's youth, began organizing independently for a dialogue with the regime and for democracy.

Their directness and courage inspired mass support from the workers of Beijing. Their calls for an end to official corruption and for accountability to the people seemed to have wide resonance. A million gathered in Tiananmen. Mass mobilizations followed in Shanghai, Tianjin, and elsewhere.

The massacre of June 4 and the ensuing repression dealt the movement a harsh blow. At the same time, the regime exposed itself—the simple demand for dialogue was met with guns, lies, arrests, and executions.

The repression could not turn back the clock, however. Awakened by the students' call, the workers of China began to move on their own.

The first rumblings of their power, like the sound of a distant train, were heard in the reports of workers' demonstrations, strikes, and the organizing of independent unions. Chinese workers have the power that students by themselves cannot have—to create socialist democracy by mass organization. The Chinese government is well aware of this. So far, only workers have been tried and executed.

The Chinese workers' movement has largely been ignored by the world press. While *Time* magazine was chortling about the death agony of socialism, none of the capitalist press could find a single shred of evidence—not a single document or wall poster—by the Chinese students and workers calling for a restoration of capitalism in China. In fact, the demonstrators often sang the "Internationale," the anthem of the international workers' movement.

## Socialist Action delegation

Socialist Action sent a five-person delegation (Mya Shone, Nat Weinstein, Rod Holt, Ralph Schoenman, and me) to travel to Shanghai and Beijing for 10 days in late June.

We wanted to find out from Chinese workers themselves what their feelings were about the regime, the students, their own living situations. We wanted to know what they had witnessed and what they thought about the future.

We knew this would be difficult. When we arrived in China, arrests were continuing, police were searching for activists. In Beijing, martial law was in full force, with troops stationed throughout the city. Reports of shooting incidents persisted, and the troops were especially aggressive at night. In Shanghai's People's Park, government wall cartoons showed the army skewering "bad element" rats with bayonets. It could be dangerous for workers even to speak with us.

Nonetheless, we were able to have wide-ranging discussions with workers in Shanghai and even in Beijing. After cautious preliminaries, workers were often very eager to speak their minds. They used direct language that revealed their frustrations and anger.

## Trading information

Our conversations often began by trading information about living conditions for workers in the United States and China. Chinese workers work a 48-hour week. Wages are low—railroad workers we met made 145 yuan (\$40) a month, with 100-200 yuan bonuses supplementing this wage.

On the other hand, workers have job security and rent is nominal (around 2 percent to 4 percent of monthly salary, according to our informants). Retirement age for most men is 60; for women and some men, it is 55. Health care is free and, according to rail



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

workers themselves, of good quality.

These workers were astonished at the higher salaries of average American workers, but also at the high cost of rent and medical coverage. They value highly the security that is provided by the "iron rice bowl"—that is, guaranteed income and job.

Many workers complained loudly of the lack of adequate housing. In Beijing, where high-rises stand over ancient walled neighborhoods, workers are allotted six square meters per person. Ignoring soldiers standing only a few yards away, residents of a cramped workers' neighborhood complained of rats and roaches.

Mainly, they blamed the government for the bad situation. When we asked who the new housing was for, we always got the same answer: "Not for workers." Most of the new housing was for foreigners, officials, or those whose factories were profitable enough to provide new housing.

Many workers complained that living conditions were getting worse. Inflation is a serious problem, estimated at 30 percent per year or more. In a neighborhood restaurant in a workers' area of Shanghai, one group of young workers told us that prices, especially on vegetables, were going way up.

## "Reforms hurt the people"

Even the lunch we had ordered was becoming unaffordable for most workers. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), they felt, was allowing the peasants and other entrepreneurs to get rich at the expense of the great

majority. They said: "The Party's policy of economic reform is wrong. It hurts the people."

Today, a month's wages only last two or three weeks. We asked how they managed to survive. "You have to find a way," was the standard reply. They pointed out that many workers were moonlighting or peddling to make up the difference. One of them even claimed that he could make more money by not working, and instead doing "business"—i.e., petty trading and black-market activities.

Since many goods are expensive and in

scarce supply, extra money is often saved up for big purchases. Savings are deposited in state banks that earn, we were told, only 0.7 percent interest. Now inflation is eating away the purchasing power of those savings. This is another way workers are being robbed by inflation.

"The distribution of income is unfair," one well-off worker told us. For example, he had worked a year in a moderately skilled post in connection with foreign trade. He makes five times what his father is making after 24 years as a teacher.

We met construction workers who earned only 2 yuan (\$ .54) a day and worked only half the month. Many like them were farmers who were unable to make a living now under the single family "household responsibility" system. While some farmers are getting rich off the market reforms, many others are unable to make ends meet. "You have to pull in your stomach," one construction worker told us.

This hardship is making workers very angry. Some of the young workers could not even afford to get married. "There is no love," one said bitterly. "Only money is important." We asked these workers: "What can you do? People must be angry about inflation."

All of them exploded at once: "There's nothing you can do!" We asked them: "Don't workers ever get together to fight inflation, to demand raises from the managers?" "They do," they responded, "and they're promised raises. But the raises never come. The bureaucrats [this was the term they used] speak with their lips, not with their hearts."

The inflation inevitably follows the economic "reforms" the CCP has introduced. The reforms allow for the expanded role of the market, including an expansion of foreign investment. Widely praised in the capitalist press, the reforms did not gain much favor with the workers we spoke with.

We met one Shanghai worker, "Sam," who was extremely insightful about this and many other issues. On the reforms, he was adamant: "The reforms have no real effect [in modernizing China]. Ninety-five percent of private business does nothing for the people. Many capitalists just buy from Guangzhao [near Hong Kong in the special economic zone in the Southern coast] and sell to Shanghai at a profit.

"If people were involved in production through better organization," Sam continued, "it would have a lot more effect than private business. It's the government's fault. So much of the economy is lost because people have nothing to do." For Sam the alternative to the current situation was not more capitalism—as the regime proposed—but better planning, planning that involved the workers.

## Endemic and rampant corruption

Everyone spoke about the corruption of the regime. We were especially interested in this

(continued on page 14)

## Inside This Issue: Special 8-Page Eyewitness Report on China

- "A Meeting with an Underground Shanghai Student" by Ralph Schoenman and Mya Shone
- "International Appeal: Stop the Repression!"
- Exclusive interview: "Hong Kong Socialists Assess New Stage of China Upheaval"
- "Background to the Current Upheaval in China" by Nat Weinstein