

A Socialist ACTION



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Brazil,

See pp. 14 - 15.

SEPTEMBER 1989

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50 CENTS

Pro-choice activists gear up for Nov. 12 protest in D.C.

In the face of the government assault on the right of women to control their own bodies, the most important event ahead is the Nov. 12 demonstration in Washington, D.C., called by the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Following the Supreme Court's *Webster* anti-abortion decision, NOW President Molly Yard called for 1 million people to mobilize on Nov. 12.

Pro-choice organizations, including NOW chapters across the country, have responded to Yard's call. After initial opposition, Planned Parenthood and the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) have endorsed Nov. 12, creating broad unity for the event among all the major pro-choice groups.

In upholding the power of the states to restrict abortion, the Supreme Court intended to defuse the strength of a national movement that could place the onus for the attack on the federal government. By calling for 1 million to demonstrate in Washington on Nov. 12, NOW has kept a national focus for the pro-choice movement.

Electoral pressures that could shift this focus—and detract from building Nov. 12—have begun to surface within the NOW leadership, however. NOW spokesperson Susie Averell told *Socialist Action* on Aug. 28 that "elections [in New Jersey, Florida, and Virginia] come first this fall," and that "NOW is organizing the political machinery in each state" to press for pro-choice elected officials and legislation.

Threats by Operation Rescue

Operation Rescue (OR), the anti-woman outfit that blockades clinics in the effort to prevent abortion, was buoyed by the *Webster* decision. It carried out its biggest (though unsuccessful) attack yet on Aug. 12 in Los Angeles [see article page 3].

In Boston, OR was able to get a justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to lift an injunction that had forbidden the group to block clinics. OR is planning a "rescue" (read clinic blockade) by veterans and police in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 10 and 11.

NOW activists in Boston have already held two huge planning meetings for the Nov. 12 mobilization and have public biweekly planning meetings scheduled. They are launching a campus campaign involving massive numbers of college students. Over 20 colleges will be leafleted at class registrations this month.

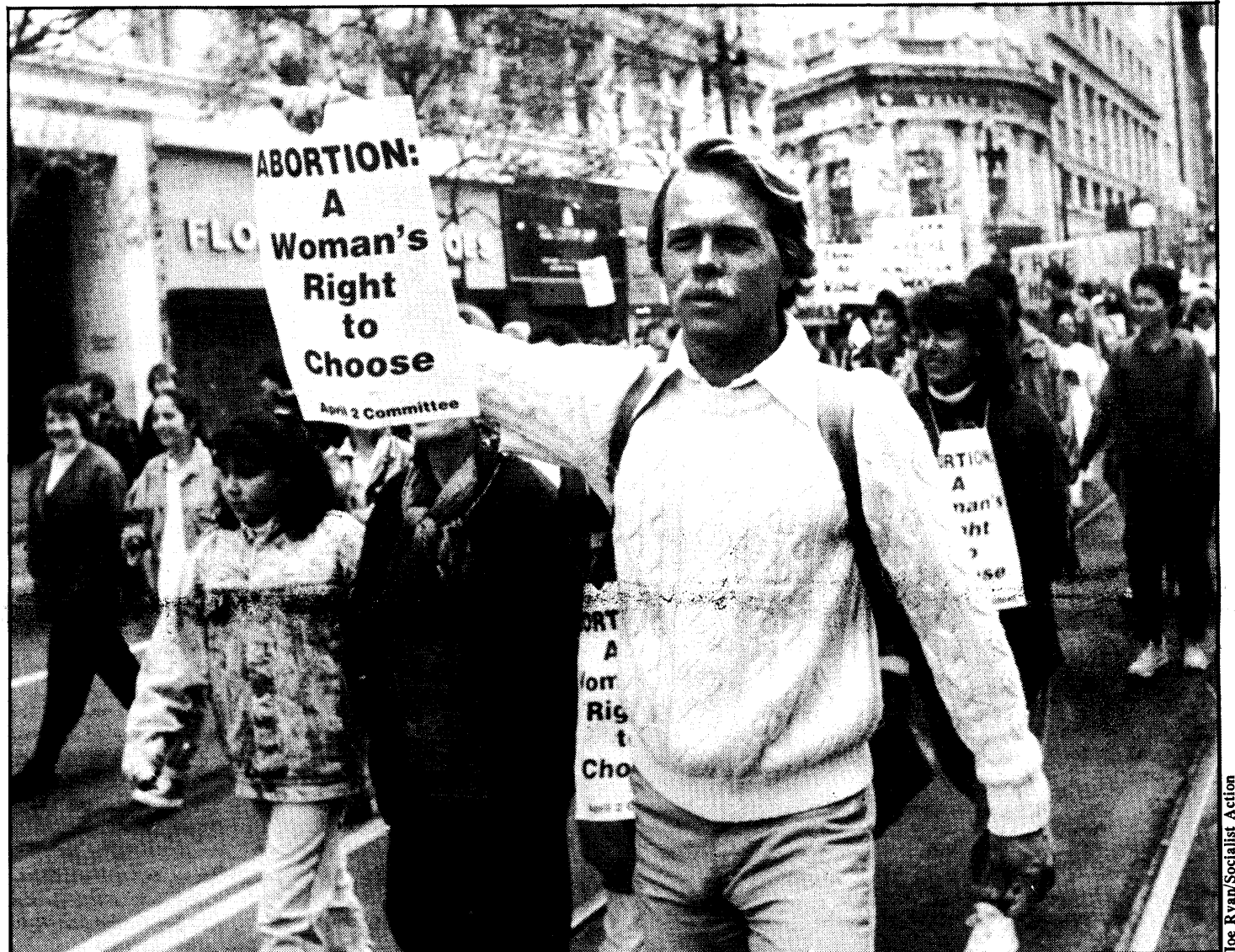
Regional building actions

NOW expects to have every bus in the Boston area reserved for transporting people to Washington, and they are also chartering trains and planes. Molly Yard will be in Boston the weekend of Oct. 12 to build the mobilization.

Chicago area NOW chapters are calling a public planning meeting in September and anticipate organizing bus centers throughout Illinois. Ohio NOW chapters in Cincinnati and Cleveland are already reserving buses for Nov. 12.

California NOW is building Nov. 12 by holding two regional actions—a march and rally in San Francisco on Oct. 15 and a rally in Los Angeles on Oct. 22. These are only a few highlights of the thousands of activities planned for making Nov. 12 an action of historical significance.

Socialist Action urges all of our readers to get involved. Call the NOW chapter in your area to offer your help.—the editors



April 2, 1989, pro-choice demonstration in San Francisco. Nov. 12 rally may be one of largest protests in U.S. history.

Three months after massacre, resistance continues in China

By JIM HENLE

Two months after the June 4 massacre in Tiananmen Square, Chinese Public Security Minister Wang Fang stated, "Various domestic forces hostile to government will not resign themselves to defeat, and they will look further for new opportunities to attack us." This was a telling admission that the

movement born in Tiananmen Square has not been crushed by government repression.

The Chinese Communist Party has successfully maintained a surface calm. The official press spews out reams of denunciations of the democracy movement as "a rebel clique and a large number of the dregs of society" inspired by capitalist ideas and organizations to "overthrow the State and the Party."

Signs are posted in Beijing with the message of normalization: "Happily, happily we go to work. Safely, safely we come home."

Some, however, are not making it home. Arrests are conservatively estimated at 10,000 or more, with 20 or more suspects jammed into prison cells built for six. There are reports of torture and beatings as well. Several workers have been executed.

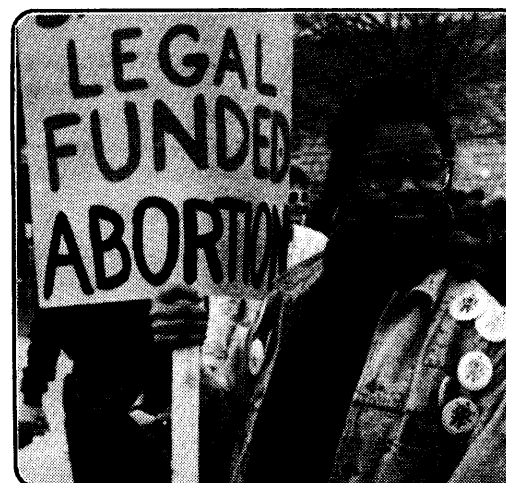
These methods are not surprising in a regime where the death penalty is meted out for bicycle thievery and where—by the government's own figures—in 1987 alone there were 30,000 illegal detentions and 202 cases in which officers raped, beat to death, or seriously injured prisoners.

Movement not halted

What is surprising is that the repression does not seem to be halting the movement. Many of the "most wanted" students remain at large. Student activists fleeing the repression in Beijing have spread the truth of the events of June 4 across the country.

There are reports of work slowdowns (*dai gong*) in Beijing. Chen Ji, an official at the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, says

(continued on page 18)



Marxism and Feminism

See pp. 9 - 12.

Christian terrorists lose in Seattle court



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

On Aug. 11, a U.S. District Court in Seattle awarded the Feminist Women's Health Center of Yakima, Wash., \$268,500 plus \$23,000 for lost salaries to three employees.

The Yakima center is the parent to the Feminist Women's Health Center in Everett, Wash. The jury convicted three defendants of conspiring to drive the Everett abortion clinic out of business.

One of the defendants, Curtis Beseda, had previously been sentenced to 20 years in jail in 1984 for firebombing the clinic three times. He has 15 more years to serve. His original defense for having bombed the clinic was that "God wanted him to do it."

The other two convicted Christian terrorists are Republican Party activists Dotti Roberts and Sharon Codispodi of Lake Stevens, Wash. They were convicted of conspiring with Beseda to violate the federal law called RICO (Racketeer-Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act of 1970).

Roberts and Codispodi were not given jail terms but were ordered to pay another \$11,000 in damages to the clinic. They will also have to pay for court costs, which could amount to \$100,000 in attorney fees, alone, for four years' work.

Criminal tactics

RICO was originally designed to be used to fight "organized crime." Last year, for the first time, the RICO statute was used against anti-abortion protesters in Philadelphia. A women's clinic there was awarded \$100,000 in damages, and 26 "pro-lifers" were found guilty of "assaulting clinic workers, destroying surgical equipment and causing employees to resign because of threats."

That judgment was upheld in March 1989. The "pro-lifers" say they will take their case to the Supreme Court. Evidently, they feel that they have friends on the High Court.

If ever a group matched the RICO statute of "organized conspiratorial

criminals," it is the Operation Rescue (OR) bunch. At clinic after clinic across the country, they have defied the laws that allow women access to legal abortions by sitting down at clinic doors, or actually entering the clinics, to harass patients and destroy property.

At the Aradia Women's Center in Seattle, women have had to climb ladders to a second-story window to get to the clinic when barred by Operation Oppress-you thugs. And when these tactics didn't work, God's little devils firebombed the clinics.

Pulling a "Jimmy Carter"

Although the courts occasionally crack down on them when they go embarrassingly too far, OR fanatics have continued their illegal attacks because the power structure has blatantly encouraged them. Even the gutless wonders, the politicians who claim to support the legal right to abortion, have been very quiet in the face of these attacks.

In fact, at a recent governors' conference, the abortion issue was declared to be the number-one issue. The conference turned into a big "pity party" for the "boys." These weasels did little more than grapple with how to speak out of both sides of their mouth at once. How could they appeal to both the Christian terrorists and the vast majority who support women's right to choose?

Some of them tried to pull the "old Jimmy Carter act" by saying that while on the one hand, they

personally abhor abortion—and if they got pregnant they certainly would not get an abortion—on the other hand, they would uphold the laws of the land. Since the majority are men, it is not likely they will ever have to make such a choice.

Other politicians said they weren't opposed to adult women having an abortion but wanted to impose parental consent upon teenagers. They thought this might smooth the feathers of the OR vultures a little.

But the recent Supreme Court decision on the Webster case threw the ball into the governors' laps by making abortion a "states rights" issue. Now, unlike Jimmy Carter,

they are forced to make the laws they will uphold.

First-rate liars

Many of these politicians complained that the majority of women didn't listen to their advice or take their statements for good coin. The reason is not hard to explain: Most women know that the political crooks who run the country are first-rate liars and cannot be trusted to carry out any promise they make anyway.

Fortunately, women and men who support choice are not depending on politicians or judges. They are organizing all over the country to stop Operation Rescue at clinics.

They are defending choice with their bodies.

And the National Organization for Women has called for another massive march in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 12. On April 9, there were 600,000 pro-choice supporters and this time they expect over 1 million.

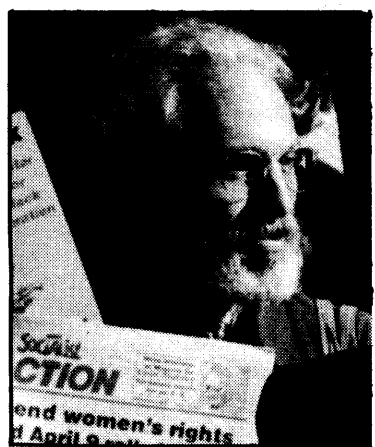
Also, California State NOW has called for two Western states marches—on Oct. 15 in San Francisco and Oct. 22 in Los Angeles. Those marches will be used to organize people for the Washington, D.C., march in November.

Call your local NOW office; you are needed to defend your right to choose, now!



BEHIND THE LINES

Huey Newton electrified the nation



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

I read the news today, oh boy: "Former Black Panther Huey Newton found dead on West Oakland street," sang the headlines. "Newton's death by violence seemed preordained," the newswriters ex-

plained. The reason? "Cocaine and alcohol," they pointed out.

I read what some people thought about Huey Newton. Law-enforcement officers were especially eager to share their opinions. They had worked for years to put Newton behind bars; now they felt vindicated.

"He who lives by the sword dies by the sword," Assistant District Attorney Tom Orloff observed. "He was nothing more than a gangster." And Sheriff Charles Plummer heartily agreed. "An intimidator," he said.

Other opinions appeared on the inside pages. "For everyone under 30, it's just another dead guy in Oakland," shrugged *San Francisco Examiner* columnist Rob Morse. On the other hand, attorney Charles Garry ventured that Newton was an historic figure—right up with Martin Luther King.

A gangster? Just another dead guy? Or an historic figure? I approached one of my union brothers, Frank, who works on the streetcars with me. Twenty years ago, Frank came to the Bay Area from his native Louisiana in order to join the Black Panther Party.

"Huey Newton? I loved the man," Frank told me. "In his early years, Huey made a profound contribution. He helped Black people get over our fear. We saw that they'll shoot you down even if you don't fight. So you might as well stand up for your rights."

"Followed Malcolm X"

Like it or not, Huey Newton was a hero to thousands of people like Frank. "Free Huey" was a rallying cry for young people—Black and white—all over America.

It's possible to look beyond Newton's postcard publicity image. Newton's role as a leader of the Black Panther Party was an important one in the history of the Black

liberation movement; that's why his failures also loom so large.

Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense on Oct. 22, 1966. "Peaceful demonstrators all over America were being brutalized," Seale recently explained. "We decided to take the stand Malcolm X told us to and defend ourselves."

Six months later, Newton was one of about 40 Panthers who startled the country when they entered the California state capitol carrying loaded weapons. That incident is still highlighted as evidence of the Panther's "gangsterism."

Actually, the Panthers' campaign against police brutality and repression rapidly gained support in the Black community.

The Panthers began to build an organization of a new type; it was one that held great promise.

Other militant Black organizations that had come out of the civil rights struggle, like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), saw themselves as small bands of "specialists." The Panthers, on the other hand, set out to build a large membership organization in which masses of people could "get involved" in the struggle.

During the next two years, hundreds of Black youth around the country—including college and high-school students—flocked into Panther chapters in their areas.

Need for alliances

The Panthers published a Ten Point Program that incorporated demands coming out of the struggle of the Black community. But they never seriously attempted to build a movement around those demands. They refused to make common cause with other groups in united-front-type action coalitions.

Readers of the "Panther Paper" were exhorted to build a "Marxist-Leninist Vanguard." At the same time, the Panthers gave support to Black politicians who were up and coming in the ruling-class Democratic Party. This and empty jargon like "Off the Pigs!" did nothing to educate the Panther cadre and only cut them off from movements in the Black community and the campuses.

The pronouncements, fiats, and decrees made by Newton and the other top leaders came forth with little discussion by the membership. Those who disagreed were denounced as "pigs" and "counterrevolutionaries" and purged from the rolls. Such undemocratic functioning only helped pave the way for disruption by the FBI and the police.

In the early 1970s, soon after Newton was released from jail on his manslaughter conviction (he was later cleared of all charges), the Black Panther Party split in two. One faction of the party, led by Newton, opted for a "Black capitalism" strategy. Another faction, led by Eldredge Cleaver, kept up the old "pick up the gun" rhetoric.

From time to time during the next few years, Black and white supporters of the Panthers continued to haunt the fringes of protest demonstrations, hawking the "Panther Paper" and admonishing the crowd with their slogans. The Panthers were about to go the way of the saber-toothed tiger—into extinction.

But the Panthers have not been forgotten. A new generation is awakening in the Black communities. These young people will fulfill the promise shown by Huey Newton and his comrades when, for a brief instant, they electrified the nation.

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By MARIE WIEGAND

Canadian women confront legacy of Webster decision

The U.S. Supreme Court's *Webster* decision has emboldened anti-choice forces in Canada. Although pro-choice forces have successfully mobilized to maintain access to abortion clinics, Operation Rescue (OR) thugs have become increasingly violent. In Toronto, a policewoman was hospitalized for a week after an OR goon pushed her contact lenses into her eye.

Capitalist political figures point to the U.S. decision as a possible model for Canada. Justice Minister Douglas Lewis states that the federal government should seriously consider leaving the question of abortion up to the individual provinces.

Government spokespersons say the question of abortion will definitely be on the agenda in the fall. The Tories are aiming to enact as restrictive a law as possible in Parliament. It's expected that they will then settle for "compromise" legislation containing strict time limits on abortion.

Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) spokesperson Cherie MacDonald told *Socialist Action* that the Canadian women's movement opposes any new abortion law.

MacDonald explained: "There should be nothing in the Criminal Code. Instead of thinking about limitations, the government should be thinking about how to make access easier. They should use the Canada Health Act, which is supposed to assure equal access to health services, to guarantee full funding for and access to abortion in all the provinces."

The Barbara Dodd case

After the U.S. Supreme Court decision, the misnamed "Campaign Life" launched a series of court cases designed to prevent individual women from obtaining abortions.

The first case occurred on July 4 when Greg Murphy, represented by a leading "Campaign Life" attorney, sought an injunction in the Ontario courts to stop his ex-companion, Barbara Dodd, from having an already-scheduled abortion. This case was heard by Judge O'Driscoll, who had previously written in a book, "Catholic Laymen Speak Out," that abortion is always wrong and illegal.

Despite a Canadian Supreme Court decision clearly stating that a woman has a right to abortion (at least in the

early stages of pregnancy) and other court decisions saying the fetus doesn't have the rights of a person, Judge O'Driscoll—ruling against precedent and on his own prejudice—granted the injunction.

As Barbara Dodd appealed this decision, OCAC organized opposition to the ruling. On short notice, approximately 8000 people turned out. A press conference was called by all the major women's organizations.

In addition, the major organizations representing disabled and hearing-impaired people held a press conference protesting the fact that Dodd, a deaf woman, was not providing notice in sign language.

Without ruling on the issues of law, an appeals judge set aside the injunction on a number of technicalities, including the fact that Dodd had been given insufficient notice. He also ruled that Murphy had defrauded the court by testifying that Dodd's doctor claimed having the abortion would severely endanger her health whereas there was little danger of carrying the pregnancy to term. (The doctor submitted a sworn affidavit that this was untrue.)

The Chantal Daigle case

At the same time, a "Campaign Life" lawyer in Winnipeg filed suit on behalf of an ex-boyfriend trying to stop an abortion. This time, the judge refused to grant the injunction.

Chantal Daigle's former companion, Jean-Guy Tremblay, went to a Quebec court and—although Daigle was already 17 weeks pregnant—succeeded in gaining a 10-day temporary injunction against her planned abortion.

After the 10 days, the Quebec court granted a permanent injunction, ruling that the fetus is human and that all human beings are protected under the Quebec Charter of Human Rights. The five-member appeals court upheld this ruling by three to two.

This decision sparked an immediate pro-choice response

throughout English Canada and Quebec. In the largest pro-choice mobilization in years, 12,000 marched in Montreal, demanding that the Supreme Court of Canada immediately set aside the injunction. Sizable demonstrations were also held in Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa, Regina, Saint John, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Vancouver, Windsor, and Winnipeg.

Men for Women's Choice called a press conference at which they presented a statement signed by prominent Canadian men—including trade-union leaders, actors, authors, and academics.

Last month, when the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled in Daigle's favor, there were victory demonstrations all across the country.

Fall actions are planned

Pointing out that abortion has been front-page news for the last month, Cherie MacDonald told *Socialist Action* that the pro-choice movement plans to continue to build on this momentum and oppose announced attempts to impose new legal restrictions this fall. On Oct. 14, the anniversary of Persons Day (the day that women were declared to be persons) a cross-country Day of Actions for Choice is planned.

MacDonald described how this summer's actions have paved the way for an ever-larger outpouring in the fall: "There's been more visible support from the trade-union movement. There's been more participation from women of color and immigrant women's organizations. New organizations are springing up in towns all over Canada."

"Grass-roots organizing," she said, "will include outreach to the colleges and high schools. More and more people are getting involved. We expect actions in towns that have never seen pro-choice demonstrations before."

A Canadian contingent plans on marching in the Nov. 12 pro-choice rally in Washington, D.C. ■

Organizing accelerates in S.F. for Oct. 15 pro-choice march

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—The local chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) is a beehive of activity. The immediate project underway is the Oct. 15, 1989, "March to Protect Women's Rights, Save Women's Lives."

This San Francisco demonstration—called by the statewide organization, California NOW, to "Keep Abortion Safe, Legal and Accessible"—is being organized out of the NOW office in coordination with the Bay Area Pro-Choice Coalition.

Linda Joplin, coordinator of California NOW, told *Socialist Action*, "The over 27,000 NOW members in California and the new ones that are joining every day are vitally concerned about this issue and want to send a strong message to the California legislature

and to the Congress."

Joplin says she expects people from "Northern California and beyond to come together and express their support for the continuation of reproductive rights."

The demonstration will be aimed as much at the federal government as at the California legislature. "The reproductive rights of women in every state in this country must be guaranteed at the federal level," Joplin stated.

Georgianna Low, S.F. NOW activist and coordinator of the Bay Area Pro-Choice Coalition, told *Socialist Action* that the Oct. 15 march and rally is timed to "show huge public support for pro-choice before the Supreme Court makes decisions" in the abortion cases it is hearing during its next session.

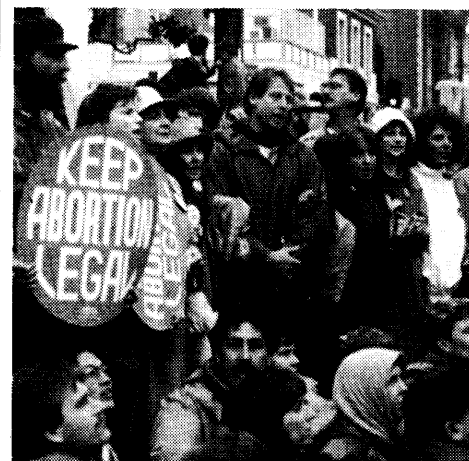
"We need to concentrate on abortion rights now," Low emphasized, "because of the

Supreme Court decision and because of the power being amassed to attack it." The right to abortion "is a stepping stone for full equality for women," she added.

Low explained that California NOW's "Campaign to Protect Women's Rights, Save Women's Lives" has three major prongs: the Oct. 15 San Francisco march, a demonstration in Los Angeles on Oct. 22, and the Nov. 12 NOW national mobilization in Washington, D.C.

California NOW chapters are raising funds to help get a large West Coast contingent to Washington. Weekly meetings to organize the Oct. 15 march are held every Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Women's Building, 3543 18th St. (between Valencia and Guerrero), San Francisco. Everyone is welcome to participate. For more information, call (415) 861-8937 or 861-8880. ■

Anti-abortionists target L.A. women's clinics



By BRAD JUDD

LOS ANGELES—On Sat., Aug 12, Operation Rescue (OR) attempted to close down nine abortion clinics in Southern California. The goal of the anti-abortionists,

to close down many clinics simultaneously, was a new one for this region.

But pro-choice activists responded at all nine clinics where OR hit. They also kept watch over the more than 80 other clinics in the area that were threatened. This was the largest pro-choice countermobilization to date.

The pro-choice movement's task was made much more difficult by the police, who acted with glacial slowness in enforcing a state injunction that forbids OR's presence within 15 feet of any clinic.

At several clinics, the police played no role whatever; OR had no chance to block the clinics because of the masses of pro-choice forces involved. At a clinic on Pico Blvd., all the police could do was insulate OR leader Randall Terry from pro-choice supporters.

At other clinics, however, where OR was able to block one door (but not other access), the police took all day to enforce the

injunction. At one central Los Angeles clinic, for example, it took police seven hours before giving the order to leave. By that time, all scheduled appointments had been seen, so OR promptly quit.

The media chose to give news coverage to OR at another Pico Blvd. clinic that is closed on Saturdays. While the pictures showed OR "blocking" a clinic without any challenge, the fact that the clinic was closed was buried in the story. This was the kind of coverage presented in the *Los Angeles Times* and on several TV news programs.

These actions coincided with the trial of Randall Terry on charges of conspiracy for his role in OR's March 25, 1989, "Holy Week of Rescue." So far, in preliminary sessions the emerging issue of contention has been how continuously Terry and his defense team can wave the Bible in the courtroom—especially towards the jury.

The Bible waving exceeded the tolerance of the judge, who is a Mormon. He would not permit Terry's defense to stray from the simple facts of the case, in which a court injunction was violated.

For more information on how to help defend the clinics, call the American Civil Liberties Union pro-choice hotline at (213) 487-INFO. ■



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

30,000 marched in S.F. on April 2. Even more are expected for Oct. 15.



Mark Schneider/Socialist Action

Boston unionists organized a huge rally to express solidarity with CWA strike.

Boston phone workers rally 'largest in memory'

By MARK SCHNEIDER and RICK TUDOR

BOSTON—Between 10,000 and 15,000 NYNEX telephone company workers and their supporters marched through downtown Boston on Aug. 15 in the second week of a nationwide strike against four regional "Baby Bells."

The NYNEX Group, Bell Atlantic, Pacific Telesis Group, and Ameritech—all created as part of the breakup of AT&T in 1984—are demanding that workers pay a larger share of medical costs. The response from phone operators, installers, technicians, and other workers, has been determined resistance.

Nearly 200,000 phone workers—organized in the Communication Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)—have been on

strike since Aug. 6. In what has become an all-too-frequent occurrence during labor disputes, one picketing worker, Jerry Horgan, was killed by a scab-driven car in New York City.

Over 18,000 workers are on strike in the New England area, and the union has organized mass picketlines. Eighty strikers were arrested by police during the first 10 days of the strike.

Militant labor gathering

Before the march to the local NYNEX company headquarters, striking phone workers and thousands of supporters jammed City Hall Plaza amphitheater for a spirited rally.

The rally was the largest in anyone's memory. The atmosphere was electric. The plaza had begun to fill hours before the noon speeches as busloads of workers from

throughout the state pulled in. When striking pilots, flight attendants, and machinists from Eastern Airlines marched onto the stage, the throng responded with a cheering standing ovation.

The explosive sentiment of the crowd was reminiscent of the early days of labor here. Women telephone operators first organized in Boston in 1912 and staged a successful strike—with large mobilizations—in 1919.

The rally, chaired by IBEW leader Miles Coavey, began with a moment of silence for picket captain Jerry Horgan, the union member struck down in New York.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson was the keynote speaker and he fired-up the crowd with passionate oratory.

"We don't need a Stealth plan—we need a health plan," he said, referring to the half-billion dollar B-2 bomber being touted by the Bush administration. He referred to Dr. Martin Luther King's support for striking sanitation workers in Memphis when he was killed in 1968, and urged the crowd to win the scabs over to the union side: "I say to scabs—if you take somebody's \$10-an-hour job for \$8 an hour, there's a \$6-an-hour scab waiting for you."

Significantly, this was the first time ever that Jackson addressed a labor gathering in Boston. This city is only 10 years removed from a time when openly racist demagogues could hold rallies at City Hall.

The enthusiastic welcome extended to Jackson showed the change of consciousness among the mostly white workers at the rally.

The telephone operators, largely female, have a large African-American membership. Black workers were highly visible at the rally, especially in the marshalling team.

Super-exploited phone operators

The IBEW's Adelle Stacey told the rally how phone operators start at \$5 per hour: "Women are now 60 percent of the workforce at NYNEX and we want equal pay for equal work. We are still at the bottom of the pay scale."

Jan Pierce, a CWA vice president from New York, traced the history of contract negotiations over the last 10 years.

"We tried cooperation in 1980, 1983, and 1986, saving NYNEX billions of dollars. Now, when they are highly profitable, they want to take back our benefits. But there is a new wave of solidarity sweeping the nation," Pierce stated, "Wall Street and NYNEX—you ain't seen nothing yet!"

The workers gave a particularly warm re-

Strike update

The Communication Workers of America (CWA) ended their strike against the Pacific Telesis Group (California and Nevada) after a tentative agreement was reached on Aug. 21.

On Aug. 27, an agreement was reached with Wisconsin Bell and Ohio Bell, (both subsidiaries of the Ameritech Group), but CWA officials announced that these workers will stay out until an agreement is reached with all five Ameritech companies.

Details of the yet-to-be-ratified agreements are sketchy, but union leaders say the contracts represent a significant retreat by the phone companies from their original takeback demands concerning health benefits and wages.

Meanwhile, over 125,000 communications workers remain on strike against Ameritech (Midwest), NYNEX (New York-New England area), and Atlantic Bell (Mid-Atlantic states).

sponse to Judy Coughlin, an international vice president representing striking Eastern Airlines flight attendants, and Jim Baker, from the United Mine Workers of America's Pittston strikers.

The rally also heard from Massachusetts AFL-CIO President Arthur Osborne. Mayor Ray Flynn and City Council member Bruce Bolling also spoke. The City Council unanimously passed a resolution backing the strikers.

Greetings from NOW

NOW President Molly Yard sent a message of support to the rally. "The fight for decent working conditions, health benefits, parental concerns for childcare, pension benefits, etc.," she said, "is the fight for justice and dignity for all working women and men in the U.S. The National Organization for Women stands with you. On to victory."

Boston-area NOW leaders and members have joined the CWA/IBEW picketlines. At an Aug. 17 planning meeting for NOW's Nov. 12 march on Washington, D.C., to defend abortion rights, IBEW leaders stressed the union's commitment to women's rights.

Adelle Stacey recounted the abuse faced by women workers on the job, company sabotage of the grievance procedure, low pay, and lack of childcare. National NOW Vice President Patricia Ireland stressed the interrelationship of women's demands with those of labor. "Labor issues," she said, "are NOW issues."

By ROLAND PETERSON

Since the 1981 PATCO strike, there has been a constant decline in the power of the trade unions in the United States. The current leadership of the trade-union movement has worked hand in hand with the employers to introduce workplace concessions. They join the bosses in declaring that the corporations must become more profitable and competitive in a declining share of the world market.

These policies—known as "business unionism"—became clear during the 1985-86 Hormel strike by Local P-9 of the International Union of Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). With the support of the entire executive board of the AFL-CIO, William Wynn (UFCW president) collaborated with Hormel, the Minnesota National Guard, and the courts and police to defeat Local P-9.

Virtually all of the AFL-CIO international unions have followed this same class-collaborationist policy at the expense of the rank and file.

The United Auto Workers (UAW) has been stumbling over itself in retreat ever since its historic concession agreement with Chrysler in 1979. The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) has allowed the establishment of the 12-hour day. And the International Association of Machinists (IAM) has made enormous concessionary offers during the Eastern strike.

"Corporate campaigns"

The unions have all adopted the strategy of "corporate campaigns." These public-relation activities, aimed primarily at embarrassing the bosses and their financial partners, are no substitute for effective methods of struggle (such as well-organized picketlines) that can force the bosses to make the concessions.

The "corporate campaigns" demoralize workers when they see they have lost their rights without a fight. Many times, the result is a membership that has lost confidence in their union and even the concept of being in a union.

Labor unions need a winning strategy



Jonathan Halabi/Socialist Action

40,000 unionists, organized by Local 1100 and the CWA, marched in New York on Aug. 15 to demand an end to erosion of health care benefits.

Each concession, instead of appeasing the employers, only whets their appetite for more concessions. (Frank Lorenzo of Eastern Airlines is a prime example of this.) But the employers have demanded more than the rank and file can give. And, as the Eastern strike shows, when this happens the workers are forced to go on strike.

Unfortunately, the IAM's strike strategy at Eastern has been based on the leadership's wish to avoid any danger to the union treasury. So instead of carrying out an effective strike—based on a policy of solidarity which could pose the question of closing the airports despite the risk of fines—the IAM has been looking for a "good" capitalist to buy the airline and sign another concessionary agreement.

The recent defeat of the UAW organizing campaign at the Nissan plant in Smyrna, Tenn., is another result of concessionary bargaining. The UAW no longer appears to many autoworkers as a champion of their rights, but rather as another institution taking a bite out of their take-home pay.

The Nissan workers were paid relatively the same as UAW members but did not suffer from the same speed-up and miserable working conditions tolerated by the union leadership at the nearby Ford plant.

As a result, the UAW lost the union recognition election, and Nissan declared that it would immediately double the capacity of the plant. If the UAW reverses its policies and again defends its membership against speed-up schemes at Ford, Chrysler, and GM,

it will have a better chance in the future to organize the now speeded-up Nissan workers.

United Mine Workers

The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) has been the one exception to this overall policy of concessions and takebacks. Because of the victory of the Miners for Democracy in the late 1960s, the UMWA bureaucracy is unable to housebreak and police its membership like the AFL-CIO misleaders. At its last convention it took the position, contrary to all other unions, of "not one step backwards."

At the Pittston mines in Virginia, the UMWA is carrying out a militant strike and it has risked its treasury to defend the strike and thwart the attack upon the union as a whole. But the recently inaugurated selective strike policy has led the mineworkers union into a dilemma.

Pittston is a large multinational corporation supported by the rest of the coal operators and it can hold out for a long time. After a nearly one-month-long "wildcat" strike throughout the union coal mines—an action which demonstrated the fighting capacity of the rank-and-file miners—the strike has now settled down to a militant local strike coupled with a national "corporate campaign" designed to embarrass the owners of Pittston.

This strategy will not be enough to win the strike. What is required is the same level of solidarity among coal miners that the coal bosses give to Pittston. For the same reasons that the "wildcat" strikes forced Pittston to the bargaining table, a national walkout will prove necessary to win this strike.

UMWA President Richard Trumka alluded to this when he spoke at the recent Virginia State AFL-CIO convention. He implied that a strike of these proportions might happen and that the AFL-CIO should strike in support of the UMWA. If, indeed, this does occur, it will represent a turning point in the one-sided battle that labor has been losing since the defeat of PATCO.

Univ. of Cincinnati workers mobilize for union contract

By MARGARET O'KAIN

Mary Cervantes is a library associate in the reference department at Langsam Library on the University of Cincinnati (UC) campus and is currently on the negotiating committee for the UC Chapter of District 925 ("9 to 5") of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). In between negotiations and family responsibilities she graciously agreed to talk to me about her union activities.

Last October, 1200 office workers at the University of Cincinnati overwhelmingly voted to join District 925 of SEIU in order to improve their wages and working conditions. This was the biggest union organizing victory in the Greater Cincinnati area in recent years. The UC administration had cut starting pay by 10 percent, reduced benefits, forced a less desirable health plan through, and threatened hundreds of layoffs.

In the District 925 brochure written shortly after contract negotiations began, new members of the bargaining unit were advised to first join the union and then join the contract campaign. I asked Mary about this and she replied: "It is extremely important that management never, never, believes that for one moment the ten employees that they see across the table are the only people in the bargaining unit."

Members have attended a whole number of union meetings, "power luncheons," and press conferences proudly wearing buttons and stickers as well as posting union materials in visible areas on the UC campus. "All of these things send a message to management," Mary said, "that there is a heck of a lot of support out there and they are indeed not facing just a few of us across the table."

The National Organization for Women (NOW), nationally and locally has also given continual support to the union's efforts. During its recent July 21-23 national conference in Cincinnati, NOW sponsored a press conference on the UC campus so NOW President Molly Yard could emphatically express her wholehearted support to the current negotiation efforts as well as future District 925 endeavors.

Importance of solidarity

Mary stressed the importance of this kind of solidarity. "When an organization [with] the stature of NOW supports the organizing and campaign efforts of District 925 or any other union that is primarily made up of women, it helps establish credibility, authority, and visibility—which can do nothing but add invaluable support to the workers here at UC."

Because the bargaining unit is 93 percent women, a number of issues such as decent health benefits, adequate paid sick leave, child care, and parental leave take on an added importance in the negotiations. "We have children to raise," Mary stated, "we have ailments ourselves and we are faced with the problems facing all of America; the care of our elderly parents."

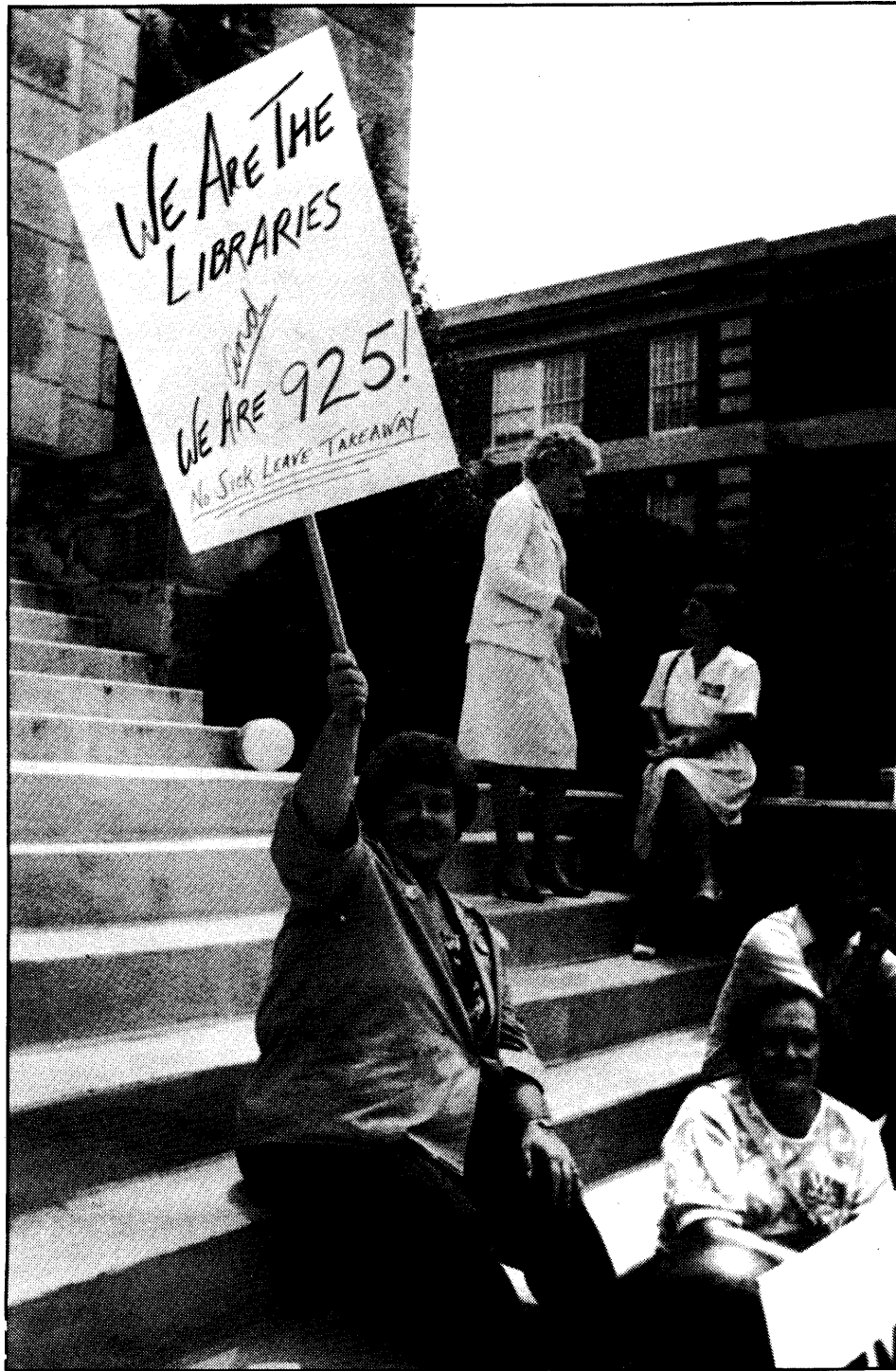
Currently the economic issues are being taken up in earnest and "the waters are very rough." The administration's initial wage offer was an insulting 2 percent for each of the three years of the contract, which does not even begin to keep up with inflation.

Health benefits, Mary explained, are right up there in importance with wages in these negotiations.

"Everyone agrees that health-care costs are skyrocketing. But we do not agree that we should have to absorb all the increases in these costs. Initially UC wanted us to sign a contract that can be compared to an open-ended mortgage, where there would be a cap on their contribution to health care but no cap on what the employee contributions would be."

The negotiating team is also pushing hard for equitable paid sick leave.

"In my own experience there have been two women who have had hysterectomies in the past 12 months in the segment of the bargaining unit that I represent. The fact that a woman needs to have a hysterectomy should not impact on whether or not she can earn a living. The fact that a person has a sick child should not impact on whether or not she gets paid."



SEIU Local 925 members demonstrate at the University of Cincinnati.



Mary Cervantes

In its contract negotiations, the union is addressing the serious problems of age, race, and sex discrimination. These women office workers have been historically treated, at best, as 2nd-class citizens.

Mary states the problem: "Originally, when contract negotiations began we wanted precise contract language that addressed what we called 'Dignity and Respect.' We ran into a lot of trouble [but] finally we got management to agree that there would be no verbal abuse, no humiliating postures taken toward employees; especially in front of other staff."

"After we gave them example after example, they finally acknowledged that this does happen and we now have contract language enabling us to file grievances against any such actions on the part of the supervisors. As far as sexual harassment

goes, we have been able to obtain excellent language in the contract dealing with this which we are very proud of."

Mary also explained: "UC has an excellent affirmative action policy in place which they have agreed to incorporate into the contract. We are very pleased with this because we need safeguards, in light of the Reaganized Supreme Court, which will insure that affirmative action will always be a policy at the University of Cincinnati, regardless of budget constraints."

Community support is decisive

Shirley Rosser, Cincinnati NOW president and the first African-American union pipefitter in the Cincinnati area, was invited to speak at a recent bargaining session and addressed this important issue. According to Mary, "Shirley's presentation was extremely impressive ... we were all running over ourselves to shake this woman's hand. There is no doubt that she helped us win the language we needed."

District 925 sees soliciting community support as a critical element in the process of effective negotiations with the university. Many community leaders have been given the opportunity to lend their support.

"We had a guest at every bargaining session for the entire month of June," Mary told me, "so we have quite a bit of support in the community and of course we are getting a lot of assistance and support from Dan Radford, head of the AFL-CIO Labor Council here in Greater Cincinnati."

A series of ads have also been printed listing a broad array of union supporters, including labor leaders, prominent religious figures, political activists, and employees and students on the UC campus.

Mary continued: "These kinds of expressions of solidarity are extremely important because UC is the second largest employer in the greater Cincinnati area and

they wish to be recognized as the center for excellence in academic achievement and rightly so.

"They have a meaningful presence in the Greater Cincinnati community, both professionally and economically. If they are allowed to run rampant with their medieval attitudes toward women workers in their employ, it behooves us to garner as much community support as we can."

Mary further emphasized that in addition to winning community support, the need to gain greater student support is seen as an important goal.

"Essentially I have seen two schools of thought expressed by the students in the campus newspaper. One being, if the office workers get pay raises it will increase our tuition; and the second being a much more enlightened response, coming especially from the female students, that these office workers are the backbone of this university and these women are underpaid and their work is undervalued."

"On the first point of view, students need to be aware that all personnel costs of members in our bargaining unit are legitimate budget items at the University of Cincinnati. Salaries of office workers should not be singled out as a particularly high budget item or one that causes any raise in tuition."

"Salaries of the management and top level administrators at UC is another issue. You could pay five or six office workers on the salary of one administrator alone. The office workers salaries, I repeat, should not be singled out as a budget item that will relate to the cost of tuition. Tuition will go up whether or not office workers are adequately paid."

"I am confident that at a large state-supported university like this one, a large segment of the student population is not that removed from working backgrounds. Many of the students here have mothers, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers who have been working all their lives, perhaps in office jobs, and will be able to relate to how committed their mothers and sisters have been in jobs such as these, but also how tired and underpaid they are."

Victories on other campuses

Mary relates the successful organizing drive at UC to union victories on other college campuses.

"Harvard workers recently negotiated a 32 percent wage increase over the life of their contract, which I believe is three years. They had a long and difficult session. It took them 10 years to get to the elections. Once they had the elections and won, Harvard contested it and appealed the election in court and lost."

"By that time the union had successfully garnered a lot of community support; again we must emphasize community support. A 32 percent wage increase is an inspiring example. This certainly gives us heart and something to work towards. They ought to be commended."

When asked if she saw her efforts at UC affecting future organizing drives among service workers, Mary replied:

"These kinds of victories will definitely lead to more successful organizing drives. It was said at our victory party last October that we are in the vanguard of a new labor movement, and it is very exciting. The office workers, who are mostly women, are traditionally the last bastion of a management-controlled employee population."

"Office workers at the universities are just a smidgen more organized than their sisters in the private sector. The office workers and staff at any university are the silent unrecognized partners and they are taken for granted. The women in our union are the hardest working people I have ever met."

"These are not the women who are the grumblers who hate their jobs. We have the *creme de la creme* here at UC and we recognize them as such. These are women who have unequalled commitment to the UC community. We have people on the negotiating team who have been here 19 years and more!"

Mary also stated that the SEIU organizing drive is ongoing:

"SEIU is currently organizing what we call the non-supervisory professional positions here at UC. SEIU is organizing them even as we speak. This includes research assistants and many technical classifications at the Medical Center, in particular. And SEIU is going out to other universities as well. This makes these current negotiations even more exciting."

Postcards or letters in support of 925's negotiating efforts can be sent to Joseph Steger, President; and Stanley Chesley, Chairman of the Board at University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221. ■

The socialist strategy for defending abortion rights

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

The following is the women's liberation report approved by the national committee of Socialist Action in August 1989. The report, presented by Carole Seligman, has been edited for publication.

Socialist Action members were deeply involved in the work of building the April 9 national demonstration organized by the National Organization for Women (NOW). We have built emergency-response actions to the *Webster* decision, are building mass defense of the clinics, and are now building the Nov. 12 NOW mobilization in Washington, D.C.

We have joined the main organization in the abortion rights fight—the National Organization for Women. We played an important role at the NOW national conference held recently in Cincinnati, supporting the leadership's call to mass action on Nov. 12.

We put forth our ideas on electoral politics, independent political action, and opposing a move to link the feminist fight for abortion rights with reactionary population-control plans.

The *Webster* decision—representing a tremendous body blow to women's lives—has created a storm of protest and a giant growth in the movement to fight back. In anticipation of the decision, all the pro-choice organizations experienced a growth in membership and funds. *Ms.* magazine reported in April that tens of thousands of dollars per day were pouring into NOW, NARAL, and Planned Parenthood offices.

Most significant is the growth of NOW to 200,000 members, almost up to the level of 220,000 at the height of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) campaign 10 years ago.

An oft-repeated theme at the national NOW conference was the tremendous number of calls coming into NOW chapters across the country from women asking what they can do to join the fight and the willingness of the new callers to join NOW and do anything they are asked to help win back our rights.

Men also are getting involved in this fight. And why not? Abortion rights are directly in the interests of all workers to control their own lives. Men have wives, mothers, and daughters who will face the dangers of illegal abortion—so this is as much a man's fight as the fight to bring the boys home from Vietnam was woman's fight. And, we notice, men are welcome in NOW and especially at defense of the clinics.

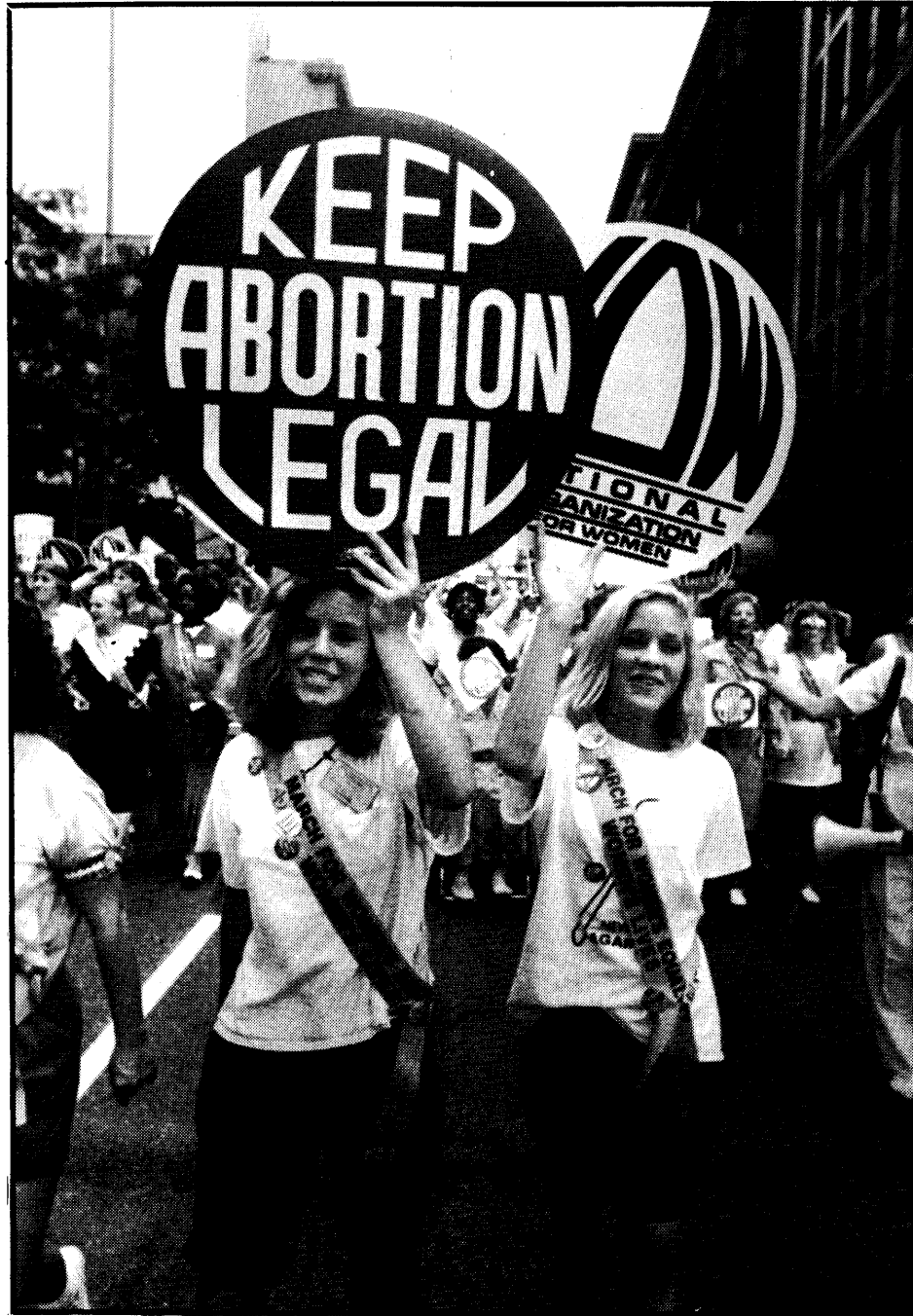
The power of a defensive struggle

There is something very powerful about fighting to defend yourself, about fighting to keep something you won and which is now being taken away or threatened. A repeated refrain of the young women joining the movement now is "We Won't Go Back!"—an assumption that the right to control their own bodies was secure, was their own throughout their fertile years. What a giant affront it is to their consciousness that the government now steps in and takes control of women's bodies.

Abortion is a matter of survival. The pro-choice movement—with the April 9 massive march of 600,000 and the mass-circulated film "Abortion for Survival" (which shows graphically how botched abortions kill a woman every three minutes at the rate of 200,000 women per year worldwide)—has taken the offensive in the fight to mobilize the majority who support abortion rights.

The latest polls show the highest support ever in this country for legal abortion. The defensive posture of the movement—as NOW puts it, "protecting women's rights, saving women's lives"—is providing a very powerful moral underpinning for the movement.

The government attack, the Operation Rescue attacks at the clinics, the enormous growth of the women's movement in defense of assumed rights, the majority support in the population for legal abortion, the center-stage position of NOW as the largest nationally organized membership organization in the pro-choice fight—these factors provide the context for the application of Socialist



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

"A repeated refrain of the young women joining the movement today is 'We Won't Go Back!'—an assumption that the right to control their own bodies was secure..."

Action's strategy and tactics in this movement. This strategy can be summed up in the idea of independent mass action, the working-class method of fighting for justice.

National vs. state strategy

Even before the *Webster* decision came down, some of the key forces in the movement were talking about changing the terrain of the abortion rights fight from the federal to the state level.

Their view was that now that the Supreme Court was ready to allow the states to restrict access to abortion—in effect overturning *Roe v. Wade*—the task for the movement was to fight at the level of the state legislatures to make sure that they would not rush to duplicate the Missouri restrictions in every state.

The reformists are threatening electoral action to elect pro-choice legislators and defeat those who are against choice. Some statewide demonstrations at state capitols are anticipated as well.

Since the *Webster* decision, the state-by-state strategy has caused an open division in the movement, with NARAL, Planned Parenthood, and others opposing NOW's call to mobilize in Washington, D.C. NARAL and Planned Parenthood favor state action as opposed to a national campaign.

The NOW leadership has counterposed a two-pronged strategy—national and state.

While they embrace electoral action, they wisely recognize that the movement will lose some of the clout it has now if it doesn't organize and mobilize on a national basis.

The arguments advanced by the NOW leadership in support of a national focus and national mass action are sophisticated and militant. They compare the need for the pro-choice movement to mobilize in Washington with the civil rights movement and the Vietnam antiwar movement.

NOW leader Sheri O'Dell said, in response to the Supreme Court decision (and to some NOW members who opposed the Washington, D.C., mobilization), "states rights is a code word for segregation." We cannot win on a state level and we cannot accept restrictions in any state.

The power of mass action

The NOW leadership also recognizes the power of the April 9 demonstration and the militancy and anger of its members and the growing movement. April 9 put NOW back into the leadership of the women's rights movement and the abortion fight.

It put the abortion fight on a feminist basis (something that is not always true of NARAL and Planned Parenthood's pro-choice position). The feminist argument for abortion rights is based on a woman's—and only a woman's—right to control her own body.

The April 9 march recruited tens of

thousands of people into NOW and brought tens of thousands—if not millions—of dollars into NOW's coffers. It put the fear of women's rage into many of the politicians the NOW leadership perceives as their friends.

NOW's mobilization tactic dovetails with Socialist Action's mobilization strategy. For the NOW leadership, the mobilizations are just tactics, useful sometimes, shelved at others—particularly when there's a hotly contested election in progress.

For socialists, independent mass mobilizations are the means of organizing a movement—a movement that learns to rely on its own power to force change, instead of reliance on capitalist politicians. We believe the mass movement is a school for activists on the way to becoming more radicalized and ready for further steps of independence, such as joining the socialist movement.

Single issue

Prior to *Webster*, the idea of a single-issue focus was not as widely understood in the movement as it is now. But even in the building for April 9, as the Operation Rescue attacks were escalating and the attention of the country was focusing on the possible results of the Court's deliberations, the abortion issue started to become the issue around which people were coming to Washington, D.C.

It was the sense of urgency around protecting a right we already thought we had—as compared with rights we wanted to gain (such as the ERA)—that pushed the movement to focus on this one pressing issue. After *Webster*, the need for a single-issue focus for the mass mobilizations has become very well accepted within NOW.

The most effective way to build mass actions today is to organize around one demand for which the broadest support in the streets can be mobilized. Keep abortion safe, legal, and accessible; this should be the focus of the actions.

Many women and men are coming into this movement who are aroused to anger on this issue but completely uneducated about other issues. Even people who voted for Bush in the last election are getting into this fight.

Bringing in a host of other demands such as pay equity, comparable worth, childcare, lesbian parent rights (all of which are important issues supported by feminists and socialists alike) will not help to build a truly massive movement.

Defending the clinics

A mass-action strategy also encompasses mass action at the clinics to keep them open. The only way to defeat Operation Rescue at the clinics is to outmobilize them and prevent them from closing the clinics and terrorizing women. This is a massive task and the movement has only been partially successful so far. We've been successful, for the most part, in maintaining access to the clinics but not in maintaining the rights of privacy for the clinic patients.

Our goal must be to thoroughly demoralize Operation Rescue so that they see their attacks as useless and are forced to abandon them.

Whether this will happen depends on a lot of factors: whether the movement can stay mobilized and increase pro-choice numbers at the clinics, whether we can beat back the government attacks, whether we can get more efficiently organized.

Defense at the clinics is as important as pickets at plant gates to prevent scabs from taking jobs during a strike. During strikes, labor bureaucrats come up with all kinds of alternatives to the basic picket-line defense—corporate campaigns, obeying restrictive court injunctions (such as putting only two pickets at the gate), lobbying, and sometimes marches at public sites, which can be a very good means for building public support for a strike.

But during a strike, none of these is a substitute for defense at the point of production. The same is true for clinic defense. No other tactic can substitute for stopping the

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fanatics at the clinics themselves.

The duty of the movement to put Operation Rescue out of business has only become more clear in the wake of the *Webster* decision, which has encouraged them tremendously.

The ruling class, some of its more astute representatives are noting, may have bit off more than they can chew with the Supreme Court's ruling against women. They intended, with this decision, to divide up the movement piecemeal on a state by state basis. But the call for national mobilizations and the intense degree of resistance may be more than they are ready to take on.

The importance of NOW

Why is NOW the pivotal force in today's fight to defend women's rights? NOW has the moral authority after the historic success of April 9 to make the Nov. 12 mobilization even more massive. They openly say they want a million people to show up.

The fact that NOW is a membership organization makes it the best vehicle for involving new activists directly in the fight for abortion rights.

NOW is already recruiting and involving thousands of new people, and young people—mainly campus women—in the organizing. NOW can, as it did for April 9, get the endorsement and involvement of labor unions. April 9 was proof of that. CLUW had no problem joining with NOW to build the action. Labor support was very high. Hopefully, as the groundswell of support for Nov. 12 grows, those organizations that previously abstained will now turn around.

Electoral vs. independent mass action

But one dangerous flaw in NOW's fightback strategy is its single-issue focus in the electoral arena. The NOW leadership has developed the tactic of the single-issue voter. This means that for NOW the one issue that counts in the local and legislative elections ahead is where the candidate stands on abortion.

This can mean: to hell with all other issues of importance—gay rights, childcare, the environment, war, workers' rights, education. Choice is the only issue.

NOW's stance on this, unfortunately, dovetails with the other major pro-choice groups: Planned Parenthood and NARAL.

Already, projects are being organized to get newspapers to publish the voting records of legislators on the choice issue, raising PAC funds for pro-choice candidates, moving towards making choice the "centerpiece of the 1990 elections."

Echoing this line, the Communist Party had a banner headline in a recent issue of its *People's Daily World* stating that the next stage in the abortion fight is at the ballot box.

However, it's hard to see how a radicalizing movement would go for a single-issue vote. Radicalized women are not about to go out and vote for conservative legislators who may happen to be pro-choice. But it's hard to predict at this time how successful the leadership will be in corralling the pro-choice sentiment into capitalist politics.

Keeping the movement for abortion rights independent of the capitalist parties will be a central issue in the months to come. The Nov. 12 action takes on added importance given the possibility that NOW will join with other pro-choice groups on an electoral focus as the 1990 elections draw nearer. Unfortunately, we can expect the electoral focus to dominate the speakers' platform on Nov. 12.

The NOW leadership is also concerned about their ability to carry out the "single issue" electoral focus in the framework of the Democratic Party. There was a strong sentiment for independent political action at the national NOW conference in Cincinnati.

One of the most interesting aspects of the conference was the number of women who were Democratic Party activists who were angry about how ineffective such work inside the party had been in terms of protecting or promoting women's rights.

A workshop called to explore the possibility of launching a new party committed to the feminist agenda was packed with people. It was at this workshop that *Socialist Action* columnist Sylvia Weinstein got a rousing standing ovation (and subsequently was quoted in several major newspapers) when she explained how women have succeeded in winning rights in the past—through independent mass action—and how



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

3000 NOW members and pro-choice supporters protested in Cincinnati on July 22.

useless and counterproductive working in the capitalist parties really is.

Legislative work

An important tactic in the abortion fight is the legislative one. Legislative attempts to rid states of any restrictions on women's right to privacy and choice should be supported.

Pro-choice ballot initiatives will be used effectively in some states. Efforts to repeal all anti-abortion legislation and restrictions such as requirements for parental consent, waiting periods, and clinic restrictions will be an important component of the fight ahead.

Unfortunately, one of the legislative proposals some NOW-backed legislators (such as California's Maxine Waters) are putting forward calls for state support for all children born against the mother's will. While we are in favor of state support for children's needs, we cannot tie this support to abortion and imply a willingness to trade women's rights to abortion for state support for children.

Population control

In her keynote address at the NOW Conference, President Molly Yard's linking of abortion rights with population control constituted an important political retreat. Fortunately, no resolution with this position was passed at the NOW conference. Yard's support to state-imposed fertility control—legislating family size—would cut NOW off from its potential base of support among African-American women and Latinas, who understand that such a stance is aimed at women of oppressed minorities.

Since the advanced capitalist countries with a degree of prosperity (and therefore a generally lower birthrate) are white, such

population-control plans are perpetrated on "Third World" peoples. Population control constitutes a refusal to oppose imperialism's impoverishment of the peoples of the semi-colonial world and its destruction of the planet's environment.

Support for a woman's inalienable right to control her own body is the best answer not only to Randall Terry and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, but also to anyone who would link abortion rights to population control schemes.

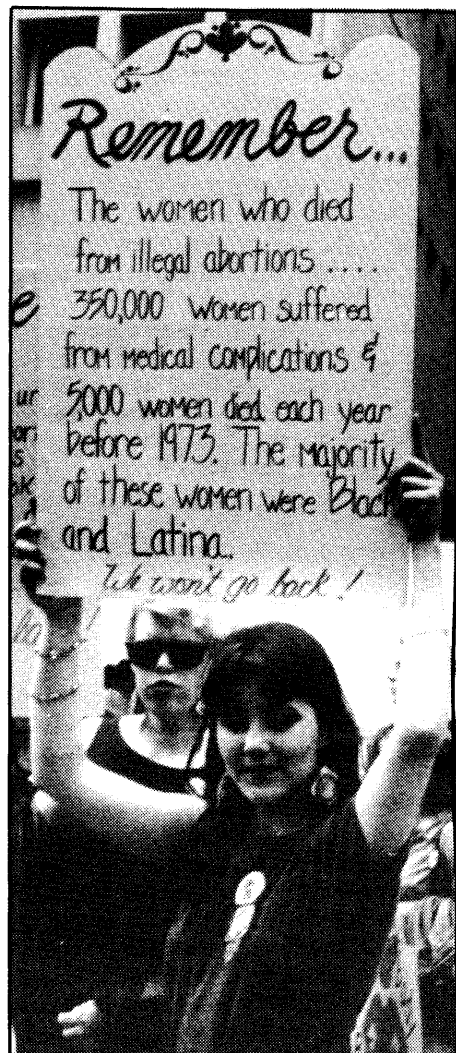
Build Socialist Action

Socialist Action wholeheartedly and actively supports NOW and the call for the Nov. 12 mobilization in Washington, D.C. Because we are firmly convinced that only a thoroughgoing transformation of society will secure women's rights, we seek as well to build our organization—a revolutionary socialist party.

Socialist Action newspaper—and our forums and classes—will be an important tool for educating activists in the movement. We have an important contribution to make to the abortion rights movement and to the National Organization for Women.

Our program, our knowledge of how working people have struggled and won victories in the past (as well as our knowledge of what methods have produced defeats) are vital to the success of this movement.

There is no contradiction between working actively within the feminist movement and working at the same time toward a totally transformed society—a socialist society built on the institutions of workers' control of all we produce, production for human needs—not private profits, democracy, peace, and full human rights for all.



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

Chicago pro-choice supporters protest Webster decision. The stakes are high for women.

Panels on China, USSR among socialist conference highlights

By SANDY DOYLE

Eighty members and friends of Socialist Action attended a four-day educational conference at Kent State University, Ohio, on Aug. 3-6. The conference was preceded by a meeting of the Socialist Action national committee, the organization's elected leadership body.

At the conference, Socialist Action activists reported on their work in the women's

liberation movement in defending abortion rights at women's health clinics and helping to organize marches and rallies.

Panels were organized to discuss the historic events in China and the USSR. The audience heard presentations by Socialist Action members who recently toured these countries. A national speaking tour by several of the panelists is planned for the fall.

Long-time socialists and new activists alike attended classes on Marxist economics, dia-

lectical materialism, and Marxism and feminism. Transcriptions of several of these lectures will be published in *Socialist Action* in the coming months. Shirley Pasholk's talk on "Marxism and Feminism" appears on pages 9 - 12 of this month's issue.

Conference participants active in union struggles exchanged information and experiences at organized workshops.

Socialist Action branches around the country reported on planned activities in their cities. Public forums on topics of interest are held in several cities each month. Classes on Marxist theory and practice are also being arranged. Look at the directory on page 19 to find out how to get in touch with the Socialist Action branch nearest you.



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

Conference participants in front of a memorial dedicated to the four students killed at Kent State by Ohio National Guardsmen during 1970 antiwar protest.

Socialist Action members and supporters at the Kent State conference launched a three-month \$20,000 fund drive to finance several new publishing projects. The drive will also help defray the expenses of the upcoming 11-city tour of socialists reporting back from the Soviet Union.

The Fund Drive ends on Dec. 1, 1989. *Socialist Action* readers are requested to send donations to 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Why abortion rights should not be linked to population control

By JONI JACOBS

Outraged by the Supreme Court's *Webster* decision, the women's movement is fighting harder than it has in a decade. The Supreme Court's decision taught young women that rights are not guaranteed—they come only through struggle.

Unfortunately, some erroneous ideas have surfaced in the struggle. Molly Yard, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), told the 1989 NOW Conference delegates that the "morality of the question of abortion rights is directly tied up with the life of this planet."

Yard recited a litany of environmental evils—deforestation of the Amazon, destruction of the ozone layer and the resultant warming of the earth's surface temperature (the "greenhouse effect"), and acid rain. But she blamed the destruction of the environment on a rampantly growing population.

Yard said we face a "population bomb [which] is accelerating rapidly and if not checked will destroy this planet." In this context, she argued, legalized, accessible abortion and birth control are morally necessary.

To many feminists, Yard's argument may have been new—and logical. The environment is being destroyed on a daily basis. Scientists tell us that fossil fuels and fluorocarbons contribute to the greenhouse effect. Isn't it possible that fewer people driving cars and using hair spray could salvage the earth? Isn't Yard's argument a rational reason to fight for safe, legal, accessible abortion and birth control worldwide?

Malthus's reactionary role

Actually, Yard raises an old idea in a new context. The idea that population is growing too rapidly for the earth to sustain it is an old one, which Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and others successfully refuted years ago.

Reverend Thomas Malthus articulated an argument for population control as early as 1798 in his pamphlet *Essay on the Principle of Population*. Although he claimed to lay a "scientific" basis for population control, his theories were not at all based in science.

In fact, Malthus's essay was, by his own admission, a political tract aimed against the ideals of the French Revolution. Malthus was trying to refute "the possible existence of a society, all members of which, should live in ease, happiness, and comparative leisure; and feel no anxiety about providing the means of subsistence for themselves and their families."

In a nutshell, Malthus said that population grows geometrically while the resources of the world (subsistence) only grow arithmetically. In other words, people increase 1+2+4+16+32+64+128, etc., while subsistence increases 1+2+3+4+5+6+7, etc.

Malthus said his equation proved that human beings will soon outgrow the earth's ability to feed them, and the situation will progressively deteriorate. The poor and hungry will always exist and we will never have the resources to help them. Therefore, any attempts at reform are futile and only encourage the poor to reproduce irresponsibly. Instead, society ought to advocate birth control and sterilization for the poor masses.

Malthus's ideas were quickly championed by the rulers of 18th and 19th century England, who were threatened if the French Revolution spread. Malthus's theories relieved the rich and powerful of any responsibility for the condition of the working class by blaming the victims of oppressive social and economic institutions, rather than blaming the institutions themselves.

But Malthus's theories didn't stand up for long. Karl Marx was outraged by the lack of scientific basis and called Malthus "a bought advocate, a sycophant of the ruling class." Marx exposed Malthus—and his ideas—as an enemy of the working class, and provided a scientific basis to refute Malthus.

Marx refutes Malthus

For one thing, Malthus's theory ignored the role of technology in agricultural development or the capacity of human labor

High	Low	Stocks Div.	100s	Open	High	Low	Close	Chg.
17 1/2	9 1/2	Cole Drug .25	77	17 3/4	18 1/2	17 3/4	18	+ 1/4
37	6 1/2	Cole Natl .44	154	11	11 1/4	10 3/4	10 7/8	- 1/8
22 1/2	11	Colecolnd .08	2	18 1/4	19	18 3/4	19	+ 1/4
37 1/2	21 1/2	Coleman .40	10	30 1/4	30 3/4	30	30	.....
10 1/2	6 1/4	Colon Snd .30	12	8 1/4	8 1/4	8	8	.....
23 1/2	13 1/2	Cowell .30	32	23	23	22 1/2	22 1/2	- 1/4
41	6	Combustn Eq	146	17	17 1/2	15 1/2	15 1/2	- 2/8
1 1/2	1 1/2	Cominco 1.40	3	21 1/4	21 1/4	21 1/4	21 1/4	+ 3/8
1 1/2	1 1/2	Comin Intl .40	5	19	19	19	19	.....
1 1/2	1 1/2	Coml All .10	27	5 1/4	6 1/4	5 3/4	6	+ 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	ComlMtl .60	9	18 1/4	18	18 1/4	18	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Comodo .06	36	9 1/4	9 1/4	9 1/4	9	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	CompSv 1.50	3	21 1/2	21 1/2	21 1/2	21 1/2	.....
1 1/2	1 1/2	CompInd .36	10	10 1/4	10 3/4	10 3/4	10 3/4	+ 1/8
1 1/2	1 1/2	CompDes .70	2	8 1/2	8 1/2	8 1/2	8 1/2	.....
1 1/2	1 1/2	CompuDyne	76	4 1/4	4 1/4	4 1/4	4 1/4	.....
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 50	34	6	6	5 1/4	5 1/2	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 17	6	6 1/4	6	6 1/4	6	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 33	10 1/2	10 1/4	9 1/4	9 1/4	9 1/4	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 25	19	19	18	18	18	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 142	36	36 1/4	34 1/2	34 1/2	34 1/2	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 28	8 1/4	8 1/4	7 3/4	7 3/4	7 3/4	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 24	15 1/4	15 1/4	14 3/4	14 3/4	14 3/4	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 12	12	12	12	12	12	.....
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 7	5 1/4	5 1/4	5	5	5	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 2	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	7 1/4	.....
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	.....
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 13	5-16	7-16	5-16	7-16	7-16	.....
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 2	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	.....
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 4	6 1/4	6 1/4	6	6	6	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 125	12 1/2	12 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2	11 1/2	- 1/4
1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 28	11 1/2	11 1/2	10 1/2	10 1/2	10 1/2	- 1/4
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1 1/2	1 1/2	Compu 1	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2

'Advocating population control as a means to save the planet lets these corporate rapists off the hook. Only a new economic system... can make it possible to provide for all the earth's people without destroying the earth in the process.'

to produce surpluses. In 1850, four farmers could produce enough food for five persons. Today one farmer can produce enough to feed and clothe hundreds of people. Even taking into consideration the shrinking number of farmers in this country, the development of technology allows those that do farm to continually increase their productivity.

The problem is not one of famine—it is one of overproduction; that is, irrational distribution of abundant food and other necessities. Today, U.S. government warehouses are full to the brim with surplus corn, wheat, cheese, and other products which are never distributed—\$9 billion worth in 1987. Farmers are paid by the government to keep millions of acres out of production in order to cut back the mounting surpluses and to artificially stabilize prices.

Why does our government advocate crop reduction and store—rather than distribute—surpluses when people are starving every day? Because in a capitalist society, farmers don't grow food to feed people, they produce commodities to be sold at a profit. Giving away food does not generate profit, and—unlike destroying surplus grain—it decreases the demand for commodities.

Our economic system doesn't distribute food to people who are hungry—it distributes food to people who can pay for it. As Joseph Hansen says in *Too Many Babies? The Myth of the Population Explosion*, "Under capitalism, the distribution of hunger in the population is not due to the abundance of the poor but to poor distribution of society's abundance."

Another flaw in Malthus's theory is the lack of historical context. In feudal societies, large families provided more labor to work the fields and improve the standard of living for all family members. As capitalism developed, more children meant more mouths to feed—the economic incentive to reproduce was removed.

At the beginning of the Industrial Revo-

lution, the level of technology was low and large expenditures of human labor were necessary to produce commodities. With advances in science and technology, however, productivity increased rapidly. Factories soon required less and less human labor to produce more and more commodities.

Workers unemployed by increased productivity become part of a "reserve army" of labor which is necessary for the capitalist system to survive. Capitalists put this reserve army to work when a boom cycle is on and put it out of work during a depression. This army also acts as a weight on the back of the working class. It creates a constant pressure to work harder for longer hours at lower rates of pay, in order to avoid joining the ranks of the unemployed.

What we see, then, is not overpopulation but underemployment. After all, population-control advocates usually are not concerned with controlling prosperous populations—only those unable to provide for themselves.

Imperialist plunder

In underdeveloped "Third World" countries—the focus of most population control proponents—this idea becomes clearer. Imperialists exploited underdeveloped countries in their search for natural resources for manufacturing and markets in which to sell the resulting commodities. They introduced technology which at once increased the lifespan of the indigent populations and decreased their hope for escaping the cycle of poverty.

For example, swamps were drained in Latin America and modern health care was introduced to cut down on malaria and other diseases. Modern sanitation was introduced in some places. Latin Americans thus lived longer and were able to produce more children. Their numbers grew.

The imperialists, however, were not so generous with providing employment for this

growing population. They replaced the subsistence farming of the indigent people with more marketable cash crops (coffee, cotton, tobacco), and controlled the markets in which these commodities were sold.

They monopolized all the manufacturing, squelching all nationally controlled manufacturing. Imperialists gained complete control of the economic life of Latin America. The indigenous population served as cheap labor, but were deprived of the wealth their labor created.

Millions of agricultural and manufacturing workers were displaced and pauperized. In addition, natural resources were robbed from "Third World" countries—through strip mining, deforestation, and poor crop rotation. Rivers and streams were fouled with raw manufacturing waste. Unchecked smokestacks belched clouds of pollutants into the air.

Molly Yard is right to decry the destruction of the environment. But she commits the same error as Malthus when she blames the problems of the environment on an "exploding population."

The Brazilian rain forests are not being cut down to house a burgeoning Brazilian population. They are being cut down to clear land for American businesses to exploit.

Under capitalism there is no rational planning for production; commodities are produced for profit rather than for human need. There is no incentive for corporations to use technology in ecologically rational ways. Companies don't clean up after themselves because the process is very expensive and cuts into their profits.

Advocating population control as a means to save the planet lets these corporate rapists off the hook. Only a new economic system—one based on human needs before profits—can make it possible to provide for all the earth's people without destroying the earth in the process.

If Yard's argument is so flawed, why is she raising it? Claiming that she is "reaching out to new allies," Yard said she wants to bring conservationists into the fight for abortion rights. In reality, she was more likely reaching out to some old "allies" of the women's movement—the Democratic Party.

Two bills in Congress—the National Energy Policy Act and the Global Warming Prevention Act—both tie environmental problems to population control. NOW supports both of these bills and is probably trying to cut a deal of mutual support between NOW and Democratic Party politicians.

History shows, however, that the Democratic Party is not an ally of the women's movement. Both the Democratic and Republican parties represent the capitalist class against the interests of women. The ERA was defeated by both Democratic and Republican Party politicians. A Democratic Party controlled Congress passed the Hyde Amendment in 1977, which cut off federal funding for low-income women needing abortions.

A correct framework

The only way the women's movement will win the fight for abortion rights is to remain independent of both the Democratic and Republican parties. They are our enemies, not our allies.

Moreover, framing the fight for abortion rights on population control arguments alienates our true allies in this fight—the working class, Blacks, and Latinas. Abortion is a *democratic right* of all women—just like the right to vote and the right to a decent job at a living wage.

Interestingly, NOW delegates rejected Yard's flawed argument. In a resolution which called for the wide production and distribution of RU 486, a French-produced pill which induces abortion, delegates removed language calling for outreach to population control groups. They also inserted language which based the fight for RU 486—and all reproductive rights—on the democratic right of all women to control their bodies.

MARXISM and FEMINISM



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

The following speech was presented by Socialist Action National Committee member Shirley Pasholk to the Socialist Action Educational Conference at Kent State University on Aug. 4, 1989.

Background information for this speech was provided from the resolution on women's liberation adopted by the 1979 Eleventh World Congress of the Fourth International. (This resolution is available from Walnut Publishing Co. under the title, "Marxism and Feminism: The Worldwide Struggle for Women's Equality," \$1.50.)

This is an exciting time for the women's movement. In response to increased attacks on abortion rights, hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets. While many of these are young women, participating in their first political activity, their ideas have clearly been influenced by the protest movements of the '60s and '70s.

In the 1960s and '70s, as tens of thousands of women participated in political activity for the first time, a whole generation of women discovered that their inferior status is a social phenomenon, not a natural one. The fault lies not in our "stars," nor in our biological makeup, nor in ourselves, but in the society we live in.

Today this same lesson is being graphically illustrated. The oppression of women as a sex became intolerable to women who could see it was not inevitable.

As today's activists debate how best to secure our rights, they will naturally also search for answers as to why slightly more than half the population is discriminated against on the basis of sex. While many theories will be bandied about, we can expect an increased interest in and receptivity to our class analysis of women's oppression.

This talk, in addressing the relationship between Marxism and feminism, will

examine the history of women's oppression and point out how the demands for women's equality can be achieved.

The women's movement of the '60s, '70s, and '80s stands on the shoulders of the late 19th and early 20th-century wave of feminism. This previous struggle won many important democratic rights for women, including the right to vote, the right to receive and dispose of their own wages, the right to own property, and the right to divorce. This extension of democratic rights gave women greater latitude for action.

The roots of today's women's movement lay in the economic and social changes of the post World War II years which produced deepening contradictions in the capitalist economy, the status of women, and in the patriarchal family system.

Women in the workforce

The prolonged post-war economic expansion significantly increased the percentage of women in the paid workforce. The introduction of effective birth control made real the possibility that women could control their own bodies. The civil rights movement and the movement against the Vietnam War inspired women to take up the fight for their own rights.

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the rise of consciousness-raising groups, feminist newspapers, and campus and citywide women's liberation organizations.

Women came to see that they were not alone and that women all over the country and, in fact, throughout the world, were beginning to act in a similar fashion. "Sisterhood is powerful" became an international slogan.

The massive Aug. 16, 1970, march for women's equality organized on the 50th anniversary of women's suffrage was followed by numerous pickets, rallies, demonstrations, and meetings on a whole range of feminist issues. These included reproductive rights,

childcare, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), affirmative action, campus women's studies departments, violence against women, and more recently, comparable worth.

A recent workshop for women interested in non-traditional jobs demonstrated how established the idea of women's equality has become. Hundreds of women, including many young women just out of high school, attended. Although most wouldn't call themselves feminists, they all believed they had a right to a high-paying union job in a construction trade.

Think of the change from when many of us grew up. As recently as the 1960s, newspaper classified ads were divided into "help wanted men" and "help wanted women." In high schools, shop classes were closed to young women, who instead studied home economics, typing, and shorthand. Young women who voiced an interest in becoming doctors were told to become nurses.

Today, in the steel mill where I work (something else which would have been unthinkable in the '60s) over 25 percent of the college students hired as summer help are women.

Emergence of NOW

The National Organization for Women (NOW), founded in 1965, grew into a true national organization as it spearheaded the campaign for the ERA throughout the country.

With chapters in cities and towns in all 50 states, NOW remains the only truly national activist feminist organization. Last month's national convention was attended by hundreds of young women. They had come to NOW mad as hell over the *Webster* decision and Operation Rescue's attacks. They were looking for a way to defend their reproductive freedom.

The tremendous outpouring for the March 9, 1986, March for Women's Lives sponsored by NOW was another example of this

changed consciousness. More recently we've seen the enthusiastic response to NOW's call for the April 9, 1989, March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives in which 600,000 demonstrators converged on Washington D.C.

We've seen the immediate outpouring of outrage to the Supreme Court's *Webster* decision and the tremendous potential for the Nov. 12 demonstration—a rally which NOW President Molly Yard forecasts will draw a million people to Washington.

Many of the participants in today's pro-choice demonstrations came of age after the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision. They grew up believing the decision on when and whether to have children is theirs alone.

Endemic discrimination

While there is a great awareness of the need for women's rights, the material conditions of women's existence have not substantially changed. Women still earn about 64 cents for every dollar men earn—and men's wages have declined somewhat with the massive layoffs, plant closings, and concession bargaining of the '80s.

Despite the well-publicized entrance of some women into better-paying "men's" jobs, the overwhelming majority of women are still confined to the same spectrum of traditional low-paid "women's" jobs. Many of those who did temporarily win better-paying jobs have since fallen victim to the last-hired practice in an economy with large-scale permanent unemployment.

Sixty percent of U.S. working women have no legal right to maternity leave and many lack any health benefits. Low pay and poor benefits lead to economic deprivation for many women, with 35 percent of all single women living below the official government poverty line.

Massive cutbacks in social services, including health and education, dispro-

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A SOCIALIST ACTION SUPPLEMENT

... Marxism and feminism

Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

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portionately affect women. The Equal Rights Amendment, a simple recognition of legal equality, was defeated. A campaign is underway to roll back those gains women have won on the right to choose abortion, access to birth control—and even sex education. (In Illinois, the legislature recently nearly banned high-school clinics from giving out birth-control information.)

The campaign against abortion has taken a brutal turn. In addition to legal threats, anti-choice groups employ such terrorist methods as arson, bombing, kidnapping of staff, and intimidation of women patients. After a wave of physical assaults against clinics, the FBI ruled there wasn't enough evidence to pursue an investigation, thus giving the green light to continued attacks. Emboldened by this, the misnamed Operation Rescue has tried to physically shut down clinics in many cities.

These violent attacks follow the gradual erosion of the right to choose through federal and state funding cuts. Many poor women have already effectively been denied the right to a safe, legal abortion. Medicaid no longer pays for abortion in 37 states, and several states are currently enforcing parental-consent laws.

Origin of women's oppression

What is the source of this contradiction between the needs and aspirations of women and what actually exists today? To answer this, it is necessary to step back, take a look at the society as a whole, and ask what the origin of women's oppression is. This requires looking beyond the policies of any one administration and examining women's historical position.

From a Marxist perspective, all human societies in recorded history have been class societies. They are composed of opposing classes defined by their relationship to production—slaves and slaveowners, serfs and lords, or, in today's capitalist society, workers and capitalists.

In each of these societies, while other classes and layers exist, the opposition between the producing class and the owning class decides the shape of that society. Today, this is expressed by the antagonism between the workers—the wage slaves who produce all the wealth—and the capitalists—who appropriate all this wealth through their private ownership of the means of production. Production, therefore, is carried out for private profits, not human needs.

The oppression of women is not biological or natural, but social. While women have always borne children, their status has not always been that of a degraded domestic servant subject to man's control and command.

Before the rise of class society, the production of the means of life was organized communally and its product shared equally. During this period of primitive communism, there was no exploitation of one group or sex by another because there was no material basis for it. While a sexual division of labor came into existence, the material basis for oppression didn't yet exist.

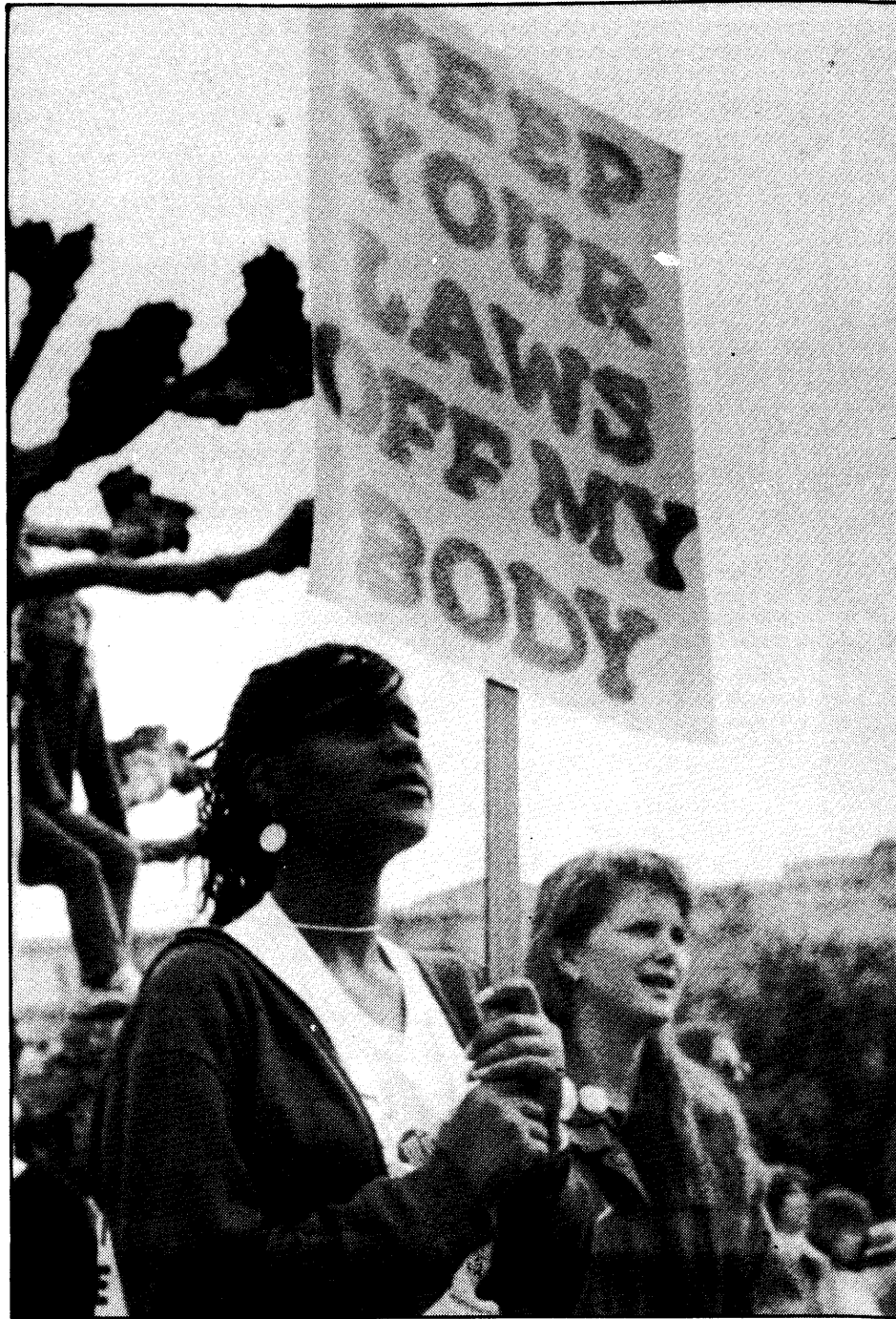
There was no social surplus. Life in such a society was no Eden because its members depended on natural forces they couldn't control for their survival. However, they were not at the mercy of an elite exploiting class.

The origin of women's oppression, her change in status, is intertwined with the rise of this elite, that is, with the rise of class society.

New divisions of labor

Women's oppression did not originate in ideas or in psychology or in religious myths, but on solid socio-economic grounds. Although the psychological justification for women's oppression flowed from the social conditions which produced it, the weight of religion, laws, traditions, and social mores later helped convince women that their inferior position was part of the natural order.

The path through which women's subordination took place is pretty clear. The increasing productivity of human labor based on agriculture, livestock domestication, and the rise of new divisions of labor,



The attack against women's rights will add to the burden already suffered by oppressed minorities—African-Americans, Latinas, Asians, and others.

craftsmanship and commerce, produced a growing social surplus. This opened up the possibility some humans could live and prosper by exploiting the labor of others. The family and patriarchal inheritance was a way to regulate and uphold this unequal distribution by passing this property on from one generation to the next.

Along with preserving the private accumulation of wealth, the patriarchal family was the institution by which care for the unproductive members of society—the old, the sick, and particularly the young—was transferred from the whole to a private small group. It was the primary institution for perpetuating class divisions from one generation to the next. The destruction of the egalitarian and communal traditions and structures of "primitive communism" was essential for the rise of an exploiting class and its private accumulation of wealth.

As the exploitation of human labor came to benefit a privileged few who did not labor, women as a sex became valuable property. Like slaves or cattle, women were a source of wealth. They alone could produce human beings whose labor could be exploited. This gave rise to the patriarchal family in which women were increasingly defined as domestic servants and child-bearers. In fact, the word "family" itself derives from the Latin word "familia"—all the slaves belonging to one man.

Women ceased to have an independent role in production. Instead their productive role was determined by the family to which they belonged, by the man to whom they were subordinate. Their livelihood was now dependent upon him.

The state arose concurrent with the rise of the family. Both are institutions of class rule. The state with its police, armies, courts, and jails maintained the rule of a few over the majority. While the state forcibly defended the property against the propertyless and

enforced women's dependence and subordination, religion provided the ideological justification for women's inferior status.

Role of the family

The form of the family evolved with the forms of class rule. The slave-owning states of ancient Greece and Rome had different family forms than the medieval European states. However, the family's essential nature, as an economic unit which assured women's subordination, did not change. The family fulfills different social and economic requirements for different classes, but its basic function is the same.

In addition to passing on property from one generation to the next, the family serves another function. For the ruling class, it is the least expensive way of reproducing human labor. Making women responsible for the unpaid labor to care for their children assures that the least possible share of society's wealth is used to reproduce the producers. The family teaches and reinforces the sexual division of labor in which women are primarily defined by their childbearing role.

The family also has a repressive and conservative side that reproduces all the hierarchical, authoritarian relationships basic to society as a whole. It fosters the traits necessary for the maintenance of class society, including a competitive attitude and submission to authority. It represses sexuality and ties it, especially for women, to reproduction. In short, the family inculcates all the social and behavioral norms necessary to survive in class society.

Capitalism did not give rise to the family. However, like many pre-existing institutions, capitalism preserved the family and shaped it to its needs. Even though much of the domestic and agricultural labor which once went on inside the family have been eliminated, women still spend a large amount of time in unpaid domestic labor. This is

equally true for the millions of women capitalism drew into the paid labor force.

As the Industrial Revolution forced family after family off the farm and into the mines and factories, it was women and children who most easily found work. The owners consciously hired women to destroy the previous male monopoly on skilled trades and drive down wage levels, using gender to divide the working class and increase their profits. Thus, the factory system was built on the superexploitation of women.

Lower wages were justified on the basis of women's domestic responsibilities. As one apologist for the manufacturers, Dr. Andre Ure, explained, "Factory females have in general much lower wages than males, and they have been pitied on this account with perhaps injudicious sympathy, since the low price of their labor here tends to make household duties their most profitable as well as agreeable occupation and prevents them from being tempted by the mill to abandon the care of their offspring at home. Thus Providence effects its purpose."

Women's oppression in society as a whole is tied to their role in the family. Continued responsibility for childcare, emotional and psychological support for other family members, and economic dependence shape the situation of women. It continues to serve as the justification for keeping women in low-paying jobs. After all, why invest in training someone who might prove an unreliable worker, taking off to care for sick children.

Sometimes women who do manage to enter into better-paying so-called men's jobs find it impossible to keep them because of their other unpaid job as wife and mother.

Two women who were hired the same year I was illustrate my point. The first never made it through probation. She was fired for excessive absenteeism when she took time off work to be with her two-year-old son who was dying from cancer. The second lasted a year. She quit after being denied an unpaid leave of absence to return to Kentucky to take care of her dying mother.

Women's response

Women have responded to these conditions by creating a movement with a revolutionary dynamic; a movement that has the potential for inspiring a vision of a completely transformed society. After initial attempts to dismiss the women's movement with ridicule and scorn failed, the rulers of the United States and other advanced capitalist countries responded by paying lip service to women's demands while seeking to contain them

**'Women's oppression
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within a capitalist framework of limited reforms.

Since the right of women to control their own bodies is a fundamental precondition for women's liberation, access to safe, legal abortion is one of the most important gains extracted by the feminist movement. In more than 20 countries, there has been a marked liberalization of abortion laws.

While the campaign to reverse this victory is led by the most retrograde elements in the bourgeois camp, they only continue to exist because of the support of official government policies. Maintenance of abortion rights in the face of these mounting attacks remains the key task facing today's activists.

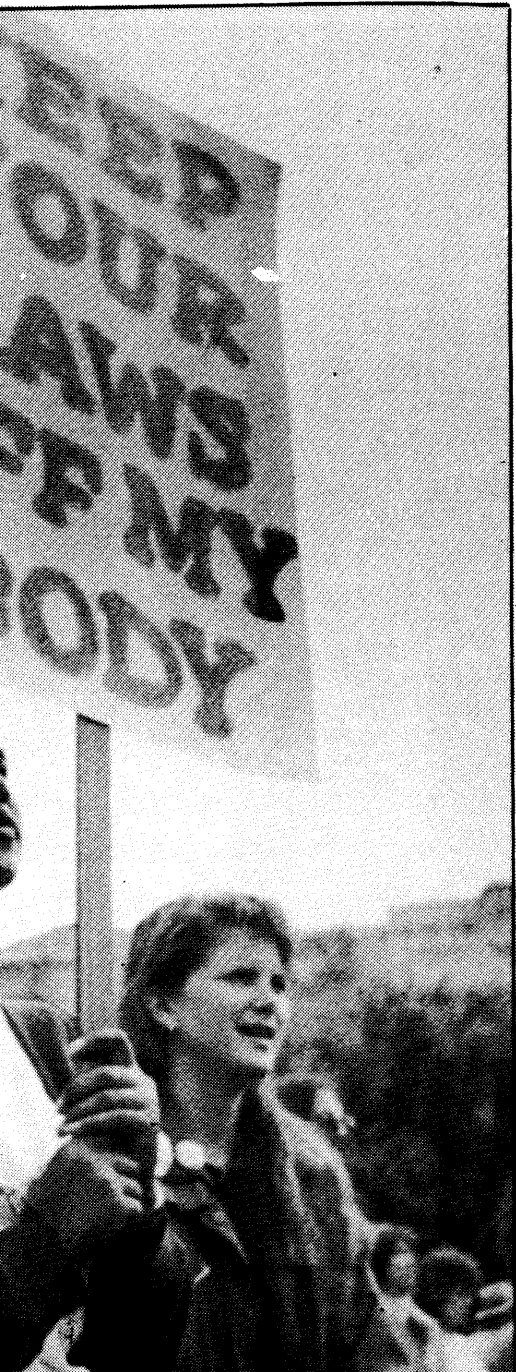
The feminist movement isn't isolated from the general situation of the working class and other progressive movements. The bourgeoisie seeks to shift the cost of its crisis onto the working class as a whole and onto working class women in particular.

Real wages of working people have declined so sharply that it now takes two full-

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and feminism

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the justification for keeping women in low-
paying jobs. After all, why invest in training
someone who might prove an unreliable
worker, taking off to care for sick children.

Sometimes women who do manage to enter
into better-paying so-called men's jobs find it
impossible to keep them because of their
other unpaid job as wife and mother.

Two women who were hired the same year
I was illustrate my point. The first never
made it through probation. She was fired for
excessive absenteeism when she took time
off work to be with her two-year-old son who
was dying from cancer. The second lasted a
year. She quit after being denied an unpaid
leave of absence to return to Kentucky to take
care of her dying mother.

Women's response

Women have responded to these conditions
by creating a movement with a revolutionary
dynamic; a movement that has the potential
for inspiring a vision of a completely
transformed society. After initial attempts to
dismiss the women's movement with ridicule
and scorn failed, the rulers of the United
States and other advanced capitalist countries
responded by paying lip service to women's
demands while seeking to contain them

'Women's oppression did not originate in ideas or in psychology or in religious myths, but on solid socio-economic grounds.'

within a capitalist framework of limited
reforms.

Since the right of women to control their
own bodies is a fundamental precondition for
women's liberation, access to safe, legal
abortion is one of the most important gains
extracted by the feminist movement. In more
than 20 countries, there has been a marked
liberalization of abortion laws.

While the campaign to reverse this victory
is led by the most retrograde elements in the
bourgeois camp, they only continue to exist
because of the support of official government
policies. Maintenance of abortion rights in
the face of these mounting attacks remains
the key task facing today's activists.

The feminist movement isn't isolated from
the general situation of the working class and
other progressive movements. The bourgeois
seeks to shift the cost of its crisis onto
the working class as a whole and onto
working class women in particular.

Real wages of working people have
declined so sharply that it now takes two full-

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time wage earners to maintain the same
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Despite increased employment by women
with small children, childcare is being cut
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At the same time, popular magazines and
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exhorted to get back in the kitchen.

Developing links

The picture, however, is not unrelentingly
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ington. Abortion rights demonstrations were
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In the United States, women's groups have
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Women's peace encampments like those in
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One misconception held by some partic-
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It is not generic male violence which is the
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group of people who determine this policy—
the U.S. capitalists who see nuclear deterrence
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Labor struggles

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Support for this march was debated in
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Many women participated actively in the
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Women's peace encampments like those in Greenham Commons (England), and Seneca Falls, (N.Y.), make important connections between the lack of resources for women's needs and the vast resources wasted on the war industry.

One misconception held by some participants in the women's peace movement is that militarism arises from the irrational warlike nature of man and that war is simply a more dramatic expression of male violence—like rape. This is a reflection of the conservative view which says women are more loving, more emotional, and less rational, etc. This confuses cause and effect.

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During the British coal strike, "Women Against Pit Closures" played an essential role. One aspect of the fight was the active participation of women on the picketlines, reminiscent of the old movie "Salt of the Earth." And, it produced similar discussions in the mining families over whose turn it was to picket and whose turn to mind the kids. This participation by miners' wives also drew feminists into actively supporting the miners against the government.

Today we see the Daughters of Mother Jones, women relatives of striking Pittston coal miners, participating actively in all aspects of the strike.

Women workers have also played a role in winning support from the labor movement for feminist demands. Active pressure from women members caused the AFL-CIO to reverse its earlier position against the ERA. Affirmative action, paid maternity leave, and

subsequent defeat of the ERA by both Democratic and Republican party elected officials had to leave a bitter taste in women's mouths.

At its July 1989 national convention, the leadership of NOW correctly answered those who proposed following a similar strategy for abortion rights—that is, concentrating on influencing legislators on a state by state basis.

They explained that abortion rights is a federal issue and that access to safe, legal abortion in some states but not others is no more acceptable for women than advocating voting rights for Black people in some states but not others would be acceptable for Blacks.

However, they failed to directly address their failed ERA strategy. We can expect continued pressure to take the abortion rights fight off the streets and into state legislative

lution resulted in a policy of reviving and fortifying the family system. In 1936, a new Soviet constitution declared the victory of socialism—and the *recriminalization* of abortion.

Just as in capitalist society, the Soviet bureaucracy utilized the family system to inculcate attitudes of submission to authority and perpetuate the privileges of a minority. Reinforcement of the family continued the division between men as head of the family and breadwinner and women as responsible for tasks inside the home—in addition to whatever else she may do.

While 50 percent of the wage earners in the Soviet Union are women, like their counterparts in capitalist society, they are disproportionately concentrated in less-skilled, lower-paying, less responsible jobs.

For example, 43.6 percent of all women



Women's Auxiliary of the United Mine Workers of America rally in Pittsburgh, Pa., during 1980 coal miners strike.

Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

quality affordable childcare are now viewed as labor issues.

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Support for this march was debated in international union executive boards, citywide central labor councils, and local union meetings. Labor groups which had never spoken out on abortion rights—ranging from the United Steelworkers of America to the Minnesota State AFL-CIO, to the Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation of Labor—were pressured into supporting this march. We can expect even more openings for winning labor support for the Nov. 12 rally.

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cloakrooms.

In other countries, as the unions begin to take up women's demands, the reformist workers' parties have reacted to the feminist movement. This is much clearer in Europe, where these parties exist as mass organizations.

Although the European social-democrats adopted feminist slogans and rhetoric, they have shown a total disregard for women's rights. From the Socialist Party in France to the Socialist Party in Spain, these parties have supported their governments' austerity programs. As in the United States, such cutbacks in social services impact particularly severely on working women.

After initially condemning the women's movement as bourgeois, the U.S. Communist Party adopted some of its slogans and set up its own organization, Women for Radical and Economic Equality, to channel support for women's rights back into the Democratic party.

In 1976, Italian Communist Party parliamentary deputies blocked with Christian Democrats to kill abortion law reform. Their opposition to women's liberation duplicates their opposition to a class-struggle fight for other needs of the working class.

Workers' states

This position has a history related to the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the jettisoning of women's demands with the consolidation of bureaucratic rule.

The Bolshevik tradition on women was quite different from present Stalinist policy. After the 1917 Russian Revolution, despite Russia's extreme economic underdevelopment, the Soviet government legalized abortion, eliminated legal inequality and illegitimacy, made marriage and divorce accessible, eliminated anti-homosexual laws, and laid plans for the real socialization of domestic toil.

This process was cut short by the isolation of the revolution, the continued cultural and material backwardness of Russian society, the rise of a bureaucratic caste led by Stalin, and the destruction of many of the institutions of workers' rule.

For women, this Stalinist counter-revo-

lution resulted in a policy of reviving and fortifying the family system. Eighty percent of all primary and secondary school teachers and 100 percent of all preschool teachers are women.

Even where women have achieved gains in certain jobs (e.g., 60 percent of Soviet doctors and 40 percent of Soviet scientists are women) their advancement in these occupations is hindered by their continuing domestic responsibilities. The average Soviet woman spends four to seven hours per day on housework in addition to eight hours on her outside job.

Despite historical, cultural, economic, and social variations from one country to another, maintenance of the economic and social inequality of women through official government policies aimed at reinforcing and justifying the domestic labor of women are common in all the deformed workers' states (Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, etc.).

In 1970, despite laws on equal pay that had been in effect for decades, women's earnings in Eastern Europe averaged 27 percent to 30 percent less than men's.

Today legal abortion is generally available in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. However, in those Eastern European countries with labor shortages, women seeking abortions face humiliating conditions and economic penalties such as denial of paid sick-leave time and refusal to cover abortions as a free medical procedure.

Access to safe, effective birth control is limited in much of Eastern Europe, forcing women to use abortion as a form of contraception. In Poland, in an attempt to placate the still influential Catholic Church, severe legal restrictions have been proposed.

In China, on the other hand, strict steps have been taken to limit the population, resulting in many forced abortions and sterilizations. Instead of recognizing the right to choose abortion as a fundamental human right, reproductive freedom is subordinated to the economic needs of the bureaucracy—in some cases to promote population growth, in others to promote population control.

Women in the deformed and degenerated workers' states will not win their full

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liberation short of a political revolution that removes the bureaucratic caste from power and restores workers' democracy.

Colonial and semi-colonial countries

Women's liberation is also vitally important to women in the colonial and semicolonial world. While women's circumstances vary from country to country, all experience an added oppression from the weight of imperialist domination.

The predominance of the capitalist market economy has a contradictory aspect for women in the semicolonial countries and colonial world.

On the one hand, it introduces new market relations that begin to lay the basis for women to overcome their centuries-old oppression. But, on the other hand, it takes over and utilizes the archaic traditions, religious codes, and anti-women prejudices—initially reinforcing them through new forms of discrimination and super-exploitation.

In these countries, the development of capitalist production proceeds according to the needs of world imperialism. In most semicolonial countries, the majority of the population still engages in subsistence farming, utilizing extremely backward methods.

In such societies, although women play a decisive economic role, working long hours in the field and home and producing the children, they are barely considered human. In practice, they scarcely have any legal or social rights as individuals. They live under virtually total domination and control by male members of their family.

However, the incorporation of the colonial and semicolonial countries into the world capitalist market inevitably has an impact on the rural areas. Inflation coupled with the inability to compete with larger units utilizing more productive methods lead to continued waves of migration from the countryside to the cities.

Women in the Third World generally comprise a much lower percentage of the workforce than in imperialist countries. Although the rate is sometimes as high as 20 percent, it normally varies between 8 percent and 15 percent.

Women are concentrated in the least skilled, lowest-paying jobs which are least protected by laws on safety conditions, minimum wage, etc. A high proportion are employed in agriculture, piecework in the home, and as domestics.

Their average wage tends to be one-third to one-half that of male workers. Those women who are able to acquire some skills and education are strictly confined to such "female" occupations as nursing and teaching.

Women also frequently make up a majority of the labor force in textile, garment, food processing, and electrical parts—the largest industries in many semicolonial countries. The employment of women at lower wages allows the capitalists to divide and weaken the working class and keep down the overall wage scale.

Unemployment and underemployment are of crisis proportions, and much of this burden falls upon women. In many Third World countries, women still don't enjoy even the most basic democratic rights. Educational opportunities, as reflected in the high female illiteracy rate, are severely restricted. Religious prejudice also serves to severely curtail women's rights.

Women in the Third World have less control over their reproductive functions than women in imperialist countries. They have little if any scientific information about reproduction or sex. Economically and socially they are pressured to produce more children. What access there is to birth control is almost always in the framework of racist population-control programs imposed by imperialism. [See accompanying article in this issue.]

Women are used as unwitting guinea pigs for testing birth-control devices and drugs. Even after the dalcon shield IUD was recognized as harmful to women's health, it continued to be shipped to these countries. Millions of women are forced to seek illegal abortions under the most unsanitary and degrading conditions. In some Third World countries, women are jailed for having abortions performed.

Such basic democratic demands as giving women rights as individuals independent of their husbands' control will have great weight in the struggle for liberation in the colonial and semicolonial countries. At the same time, they will immediately be combined with such social and economic issues as rising prices,

unemployment, inadequate health and educational facilities, and housing.

They also include the general demands that have been raised by women in the advanced capitalist countries, including reproductive rights, childcare facilities, and access to jobs and education. Even the most elementary of these demands can only be won by the mobilization and organization of the working class.

Since political repression is widespread and civil liberties are generally quite tenuous in colonial and semicolonial countries, women must frequently fight even for their right to hold meetings, have their own organization, publish a newspaper, and demonstrate. Thus, the struggle for women's liberation cannot be separated from the more general struggle for political freedoms.

The fight for women's liberation has always been intertwined with national liberation struggles.

Women played a decisive role in the mass upsurge which ousted the Shah of Iran. Women in Chile, Argentina, and Mexico have organized massive demonstrations demanding the return of "disappeared" political prisoners. Women in Nicaragua, who played a key role in the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, now continue to press the Sandinista government for legalized abortion and an end to sex discrimination.

Only socialist revolution can open the way to a qualitative transformation of the lives of

The feminist movement has already raised many demands. As the fight for women's rights continues, other important demands will come to the fore. Sexism in all its forms and expressions must be understood and opposed. More and more, we can expect to see feminist demands interrelated with demands raised by other oppressed sectors of society and the needs of the working class as a whole.

Our demands

While emphasizing that pro-choice demonstrations be organized around the demand with the broadest possible support—keeping abortion safe, legal, and accessible—we will use our paper, forums, and classes to explain that a coherent fight for women's liberation includes demands:

- For full legal, political, and social equality; no discrimination on the basis of sex; an end to all laws and regulations with special penalties for women; pass the Equal Rights Amendment.
- For full economic independence; for guaranteed jobs at union wages and a sliding scale of wages and hours to combat inflation and unemployment; for training and preferential hiring to rectify past discrimination; challenging the sexual division of labor in the factory and on the farm and beyond; for equal pay for jobs of comparable worth; for a minimum wage based on union wages; for paid parental leave; for an end to

This list is only the beginning and doesn't include everything women will struggle for and demand. As women organize and fight for their rights independently, and within the working class as a whole, they will gain the experience and self-confidence necessary to win their demands.

Though some may view this list as utopian, what's actually unrealistic is to expect a society based on exploitation to be able to provide women real equality.

How to win

Some strategies utilized by feminist groups are doomed to failure. These include reliance on electing "feminist" Democrats and Republicans and lobbying elected office-holders. Repeatedly, these politicians have gladly accepted money and campaign volunteers from women's groups—only to vote against women's concerns once elected.

Other feminists mistakenly attribute women's inferior place in society to a flawed male character. They argue that the only solution for women is organizing ever-expanding, women-only collectives and institutions. Such a utopian individualistic approach fails to address the needs of the vast majority of women.

From the suffrage movement of the early 1900s to the reproductive rights campaigns of the 1970s and '80s, victories have only resulted from women, and their male supporters, mobilizing in action independently of the Democrats and Republicans. Demonstrations, teach-ins, conferences, and speak-outs, reaching out to broader and broader layers of society, forced these concessions.

On Jan. 23, 1973, the Nixon Supreme Court only issued the famous *Roe v. Wade* decision ruling abortion is protected by the Constitutional right to privacy under the pressure of a massive, developing protest movement.

Similarly, the way to assure that this important victory is not reversed is by mobilizing the millions who support women's right to choose in visible protest actions. The April 9, 1989, March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives provides an example of the type of actions which are needed.

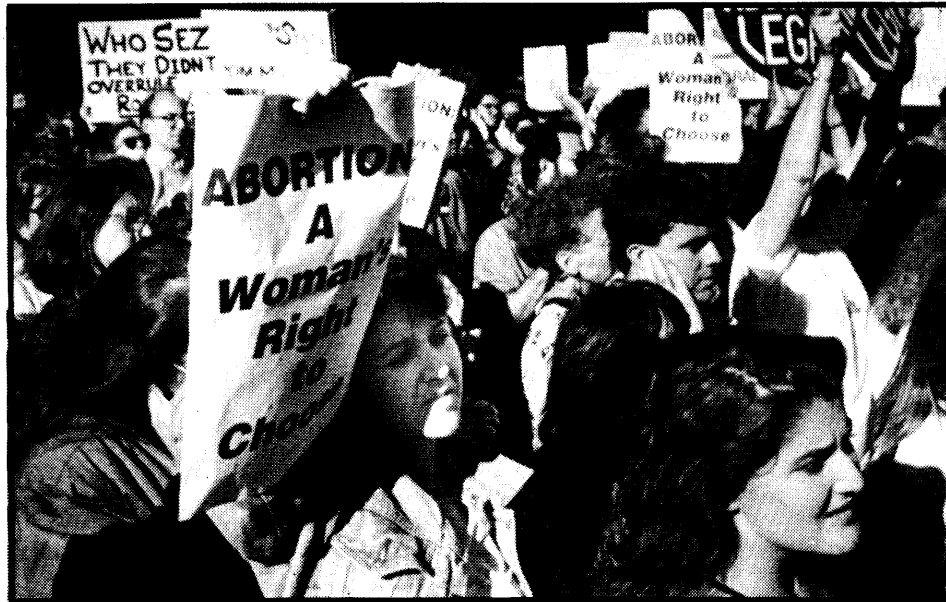
Just as the suffragists organized 486 marches before women won the right to vote, today's feminists must also continue organizing larger and ever-growing pro-choice demonstrations.

Through the experience of fighting for their demands, women will see the connection between these demands and those of minorities and the working class as a whole.

At the same time, increasing numbers of men will learn that sexism and racism are not in their interests, that they simply divide the working class, driving down the wages and working conditions of both men and women. Millions will eventually learn that true equality can never be won within an economic system based on exploitation, that a revolutionary struggle is necessary against the capitalist roots of sexism.

No longer will these millions be tricked by the promises of "Tweedle Dee" Democrats and "Tweedle Dum" Republicans. Instead they will look to—and join—the revolutionary party which is prepared to lead the total reconstruction of this society from one based on private profits, to one based on human needs.

Not only will the active participation of millions of women fighting for their liberation help ensure the success of this struggle for a just society, but it will also provide an important safeguard against bureaucratic degeneration. For the first time, all humanity will have the opportunity to realize our full potential. ■



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

the masses of women in the colonial and semicolonial countries. Once capitalism is eliminated, unemployment and underemployment, with their devastating effects on women's lives, become scourges of the past.

As Cuba has demonstrated, even in an impoverished Third World country, once the laws of capitalist accumulation are replaced by a planned economy based on the nationalization of the decisive sectors of production, massive resources can be turned toward the development of education, childcare, medical services, and housing.

Our perspective

Socialist Action recognizes that since sexual inequality is built into the very foundation of capitalism, the struggle by masses of women against their oppression will be an important component of the fight to end capitalist rule. Therefore, we welcome and champion the emergence of all struggles by women against their oppression. Like other feminists, members of Socialist Action actively participate in these struggles.

We understand that women's liberation is not something that will be handed to women by some higher, wiser body the day after a revolution. Freedom comes when you take it. Women are both a significant component of the working class and a potential powerful ally of the working class in the fight to overthrow capitalism.

Women's liberation cannot be won in a capitalist society. Women's oppression is too fundamental a part of class rule to be given up lightly, no matter how many women are elected to office. It poses too basic a question to the state.

We support the fight for every right that can be wrested from the powers that be, but we know that the only way any right can be fully secured is through the replacement of capitalism with socialism—that is, a society based on human needs, not profits.

Eliminating the material basis for women's oppression will establish the conditions necessary to achieve women's liberation. To paraphrase Marx, then real human history will begin, when human beings have a conscious say about what shape and direction their society will take.

two-tiered wage systems; for part-time workers to be guaranteed the same hourly wages and benefits as full-time workers; against piecework homework schemes.

- Against reactionary family and marriage laws; against all discrimination against unwed mothers; against laws which victimize prostitutes or laws against adultery, those two companions of marriage in this society; against laws which criminalize homosexuality.

- For the reorganization of society to eliminate domestic slavery; for the society as a whole to take responsibility for the rearing, education, and welfare of children; for free 24-hour daycare and schools, for free medical care, decent low-cost housing, and high-quality social service centers which can provide restaurants, collective laundries and house-cleaning services.

- Against all forms of violence against women; for strict laws against child and spousal abuse.

- For minority rights; for an end to discrimination against Black, Latina, Asian, and Native American women; for access to jobs, education, and social services for immigrant women.

Pamphlets on Women's Liberation



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by Sandy Doyle, Shirley Pasholk, and Sylvia Weinstein (\$1.25)

The War on Abortion Rights: 'Operation Rescue' and the 'Right to Life' Movement
by Carole Seligman (\$1.00)

Marxism and Feminism: The Worldwide Struggle for Women's Equality (\$1.50)

To order, or for list of 15 other pamphlets, mail to 3435 Army St., Room 308, San Fran., CA 94110. Make checks payable to Walnut Publishing Co.

Barry Sheppard's resignation from the Socialist Workers Party: Former SWP leader criticizes party policies and methods

By ROLAND SHEPPARD

Barry Sheppard, a former central leader of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), has launched a political critique of the party's top leadership. His criticism is contained in a July 9, 1989, letter to the SWP's Political Committee he is circulating among members of that party.

Sheppard resigned from the SWP in June 1988 because he had "become demoralized by certain actions the party leadership" had taken against him.

He had been, along with current SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, one of the most authoritative of the party's national leaders coming from the generation that had been recruited to the SWP in the early 1960s. This new layer of youthful recruits to Trotskyism was rapidly incorporated into every level of party leadership by the older party cadres, who enthusiastically welcomed this influx of fresh forces.

The Barnes leadership gradually gained dominance in the party as the older generation of party leaders died off or were eased out of the party's central leadership.

Between 1978 and 1983, the new leadership grouping formed a secret faction to overturn the fundamental theoretical and programmatic bases upon which the party was founded. They carried out this political overturn behind the backs of the party membership—denying that they were changing the program. The 1983 SWP convention, where these questions would have been taken up, was undemocratically cancelled.

A monolithic regime was decisively consolidated by the end of 1983 with the expulsion of the remaining cadre still loyal to the founding program of the party. The expelled members went on to form Socialist Action.

In his letter, Barry Sheppard relates a series of organizational attacks on him, which he attributes to the Barnes leadership, that led to his resignation from the SWP. He goes on to explain the underlying political differences which lay behind the "administrative" measures taken against him.

Barry Sheppard makes many criticisms of SWP policy over the last 10 years that confirm the position of Socialist Action's founders before their expulsion from the SWP. His letter is a powerful vindication of Socialist Action's defense of the historic program of American Trotskyism.

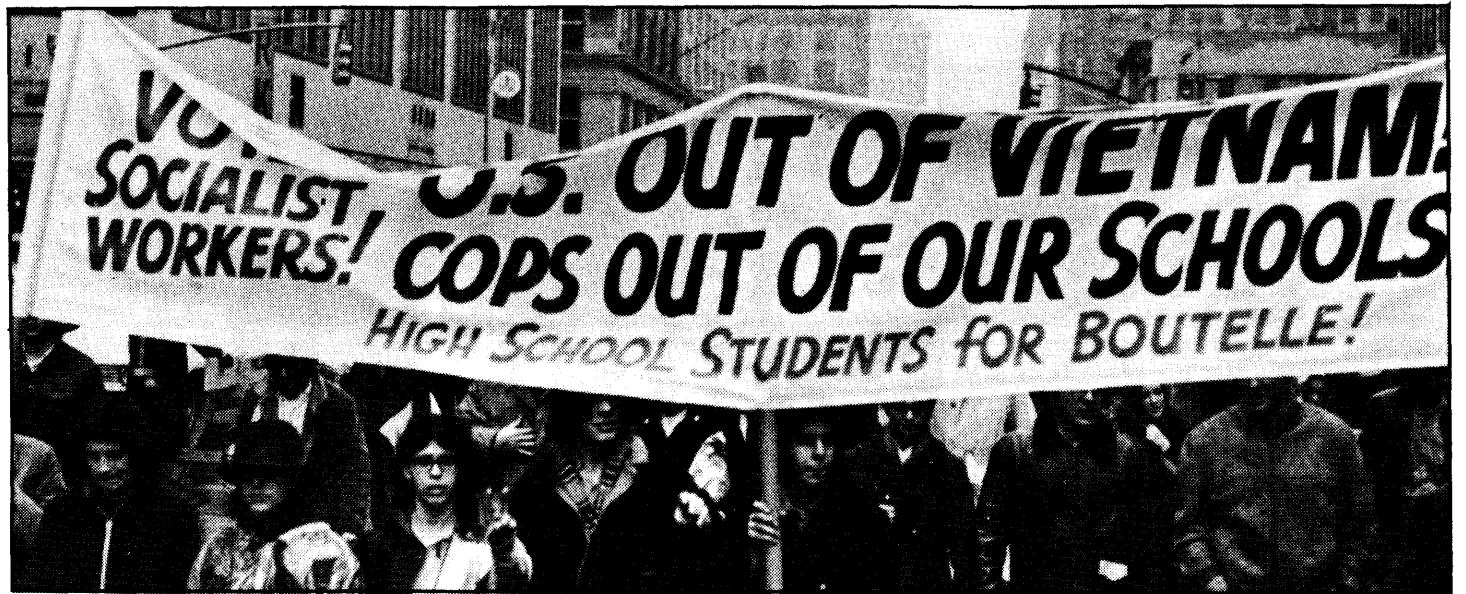
Excerpts from Barry Sheppard's letter to the SWP Political Committee appear below:

"Behind the growing hostility of the central leaders in New York towards myself, as evidenced in the above episodes [organizational disputes], were simmering political differences.

"At the 1979 World Congress of the Fourth International, Jack Barnes made a report on the turn to industry, which was adopted. The decade that has since passed has confirmed the correctness of the general line of this report and the correctness of the turn. But it contained one argument in favor of the turn which has turned out to be incorrect. That was the prediction that on a world scale and including in the imperialist countries, 'a political radicalization of the working class—uneven and at different tempos from country to country—is on the agenda.'

"This was not some unfortunate phrase that crept into the report. On the contrary, it was the bedrock of our political analysis of the stage of the class struggle in the U.S. and the other imperialist countries. This sentence was also very precise—it predicted a political radicalization of the working class, not just increased economic struggles but a turn by workers on a mass scale toward seeking radical solutions in the political arena. It was also not meant as a vague Marxist commonplace that sooner or later the working class would radicalize politically, but that this was on the agenda.

"Not only was this prediction wrong, but things evolved in the opposite direction in the imperialist countries, including in the



Barbara Perkus

'The failure to hold a convention in 1983 to clarify the issues in dispute reversed the correct priorities between the organizational and political questions, directly contrary to the lessons drawn by Cannon and Trotsky...'



Barry Sheppard

U.S. This fact does not invalidate the turn. There were many other valid reasons for the turn given in the 1979 World Congress report. But for years we have acted on the assumption that the political radicalization of the working class was beginning or just about to begin, which has led to ultraleft errors in our political work in the factories, and an organizational 'tightening up' in the branches in preparation for the political radicalization that always seemed to be just around the corner.

"An example of such unrealistic tightening up was the establishment of the norm of membership that every comrade would participate in weekly plant gate sales. This 'norm' never became established in fact, and the reason was that there was never the kind of sustained response to these sales that would have happened if we really were entering a period of working class radicalization. ...

"In pointing out these mistakes, I am aware that I participated in the making of many of them. It was only after I got into industry that I began to have doubts about our characterization of the period, and began to raise some of these points in a partial way.

"In any case, the gap between reality and our rhetoric fed a kind of paranoia in the central party leadership, that any questioning of 'the political radicalization of the working class is on the agenda,' was tantamount to betrayal of the turn to industry. [Barry Sheppard and his companion, Caroline Lund, have been steelworkers in the Pittsburgh area for the past few years.]

"Increasingly the central leadership (of which I was no longer a part by 1985) adopted a kind of siege mentality in the face of the decline in party membership fed by the actual objective situation. All this has fostered a factional atmosphere in the party, which was bolstered by some very destructive mistakes we made during the split. [This refers to the expulsion between 1982 and 1984 of the cadre that founded Socialist Action.]

"In the summer of 1987, I helped lead a class in the Pittsburgh branch on "In De-

fense of Marxism" by Trotsky and "The Struggle for a Proletarian Party" by Cannon, about the 1940 split in the SWP. I became increasingly uncomfortable with the contrast between how the SWP majority and Trotsky acted in that situation and how we acted in the course of the 1980-84 struggle.

"One of the central lessons of the 1940 split contained in these two works is that in any such struggle *political clarity* must take priority over the organizational questions. But this the majority failed to do. The political questions in dispute—the nature of the turn to industry, the Polish events, the nature of the Nicaraguan state and government, the role of the Cuban leadership, and the theory of the permanent revolution—were not clarified fully at all.

"The worst error the majority made in this regard was to not hold a convention in 1983, although one was constitutionally due. ...

"A result was that the majority was not educated in the issues either. I know from personal discussion that many leading young comrades do not know what the theory of permanent revolution is and what the party thinks is wrong about it.

"Small wonder, when there has never been a position on this question adopted by the party, even though the theory of the permanent revolution was part of our programmatic foundations until the early 1980s.

"What we have instead is a speech by Jack Barnes, 'Their Trotsky and Ours,' which contained certain corrections to Trotsky's theory—corrections that I agree with. But without the full discussion that should have been held in the party and in the Fourth International there is confusion on it.

"This confusion was further confounded at the 1985 World Congress [of the Fourth International, with which the SWP is in political solidarity, having been barred from membership by the reactionary Voorhees Act]. The question of permanent revolution was on the agenda, and we were given time to present our position. Instead, we took this time to explain the workers' and farmers' government, which was an evasion of the issue.

"The failure to hold a convention in 1983

to clarify the issues in dispute reversed the correct priorities between the organizational and political questions, directly contrary to the lessons drawn by Cannon and Trotsky in the above mentioned books. This not only taught the exactly wrong lesson about those priorities, it also reinforced the atmosphere inside the party of fearfulness and factionalism when confronted with any 'differences' raised by comrades. ...

"An example [of the atmosphere of fearfulness and factionalism] occurred in the [Pittsburgh] branch in February 1988. We were discussing support to the Paperworkers' strike, and a comrade raised the question ... about the Corporate Campaign line the union had embarked upon.

"I made a short remark to the effect that the strike had already been defeated on the picketline by the police, that production was not stopped, and the factories were running with scab labor, and in that context, the "corporate campaign" was not leading the workers towards a winning strike strategy.

"While we wanted to solidarize with the outreach efforts the paperworkers were making, we also wanted to find a way to begin discussing with them the kind of strategy needed to win when the bosses and government resort to open strike-breaking tactics.

"The 'discussion' in the branch consisted of heated assertions such as that I had the mentality of a trade union bureaucrat, that what I was saying was that strikes could never be won, that it was 'unscientific' to say that the strike had been defeated when the workers were still trying to fight even if only with the 'corporate campaign,' that the 'corporate campaign' could win the strike. ...

"I do not think that the political and organizational differences I have outlined here politically justify my resigning from the party, or for not being allowed to be a supporter of the party. If my temperament were different, I could have stayed and fought on these questions. But I became demoralized by the acts taken against me, and decided to resign.

"After the year that has passed, I now feel I can take on the responsibilities of an active supporter of the party, and ask that you consider me as such."

[Attachments include Statement to Pittsburgh Branch on Paperworkers Strike, and Letter of Resignation from the SWP.] ■

Editor's note: A copy of Barry Sheppard's letter and attachments, along with a selection of documents outlining the political basis of the 1979-1984 struggle in the SWP can be obtained by sending \$2.00 for the *Socialist Action Educational Bulletin* "On the Continuing History of American Trotskyism—The Struggle in the SWP" to: Socialist Action, 3435 Army Street, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Also available are six issues of the *Socialist Action Information Bulletin* published in 1984 containing the major resolutions and documents of the oppositionists inside the SWP. These can be obtained for \$12 (includes postage).

Brazil: A powder keg on the verge of exploding

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

(Part one of a two-part series)

Today, Brazil is in the midst of a tremendous upheaval such as the country has never seen.

Although Brazil is the most advanced country in Latin America in terms of industrial development—with a well-formed indigenous capitalist class and a sizable and concentrated industrial working class—its economy is in a shambles.

Inflation is worse than ever—running at a rate that could exceed 1500 percent this year. Each successive economic plan of the government has been a dismal failure. The burden of the foreign debt hangs like a noose around the neck of the country. Land for the peasantry is a burning issue.

Brazil's foreign debt—\$120 billion—is the highest of all the world's underdeveloped countries, and debt-driven austerity measures weigh heavily on the population, particularly the most exploited sectors.

Imperialism, under the guise of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has exacted a series of economic policies designed to guarantee its continued domination. The country is on a collision course with hyperinflation, the political and social consequences of which have already been profound.

The depths to which the economy and those running the government have already sunk has caused even the Brazilian ruling class to lose almost all confidence. Banks refuse to finance the internal deficit with any long-term credits. The government is forced to roll over \$60 billion on local overnight money markets everyday just to keep the country going.

Making the workers pay

Brazil has an on-again, off-again policy on debt repayment, sometimes choosing to institute "technical" moratoriums, but always squeezing the Brazilian workers. President José Sarney explains that "the foreign debt payment is a logical question: if we have the money we pay, if we don't, we don't." And when they don't have the money, they put on the squeeze. This has been the driving force of all of the government's so-called "stabilization" plans.



CUT President Jair Meneguelli addresses striking metalworkers on March 14, 1989.

But each of the government's plans to stabilize the *cruzado* (Brazil's currency) has failed. Last January, Sarney introduced the *Plano Verão* (the "Summer Plan") with an attack on wages, the privatization of state-run enterprises, and the decimation of public services. The plan was dubbed *Plano Ladrão* (the "Thieves' Plan") by the workers.

Plano Ladrão had imposed a partial freeze on wage increases, but the outcry of the workers and the inflationary facts of life in Brazil—934 percent inflation in 1988, 1500 percent in 1989—forced the Sarney government to abandon this in mid-June and reintroduce indexation. This, in theory, but hardly in practice, allows for wages to rise at the economy's overall inflation rate. It was

designed by the government to avoid a social explosion like the one that rocked Argentina in the midst of its hyperinflation earlier this year.

In addition, daily mini-devaluations of the *cruzado* have been reintroduced to keep the exchange rate current with rising prices.

Plano Ladrão was the work of the IMF. Its components were classic IMF-imposed measures, directed against the workers and designed to shore up the economy only to the degree that it doesn't collapse and thus adversely affect the bigger capitalists in the more advanced countries.

Plano Ladrão was a fiasco. It precipitated a general strike by 35 million Brazilian workers in mid-March of this year.

in those cities not under PT councils. It was a mass political strike.

Culmination of rising strike wave

The March 14-15 general strike was the culmination of an upsurge in the Brazilian class struggle that began last fall, as hundreds of thousands of workers struck the steel and petroleum industries, electrical utilities, and the municipal service sector.

In October 1988, approximately 800,000 federal employees in 17 of the 23 governmental ministries struck. In November, every oil refinery in the country was shut down. In Rio de Janeiro, municipal workers struck the bankrupt city for several weeks. But none of these struggles galvanized the Brazilian working class quite like the strike at the state-owned Volta Redonda steel mill.

On Nov. 7, over 25,000 workers at Volta Redonda (just north of Rio de Janeiro) began a sit-down strike. They were protesting wages that had declined 26 percent in purchasing power since their last pay adjustment. They were striking against conditions that had them working 10-hour shifts, with no protective clothing to guard against the extreme heat, noise, and toxic dust from the blast furnaces.

And the workers were lashing out against the Brazilian National Steel Company's refusal to implement the new constitutional provision that sets at six hours the maximum work shift for industries with uninterrupted production.

The next day, the Brazilian Army and federal police arrived, 500 strong, with tanks and machine guns. Seeking to evict the strikers, they killed at least five strikers and wounded 50 in one day. Sarney wanted to teach them a lesson about "legal" strike action.

November's municipal elections

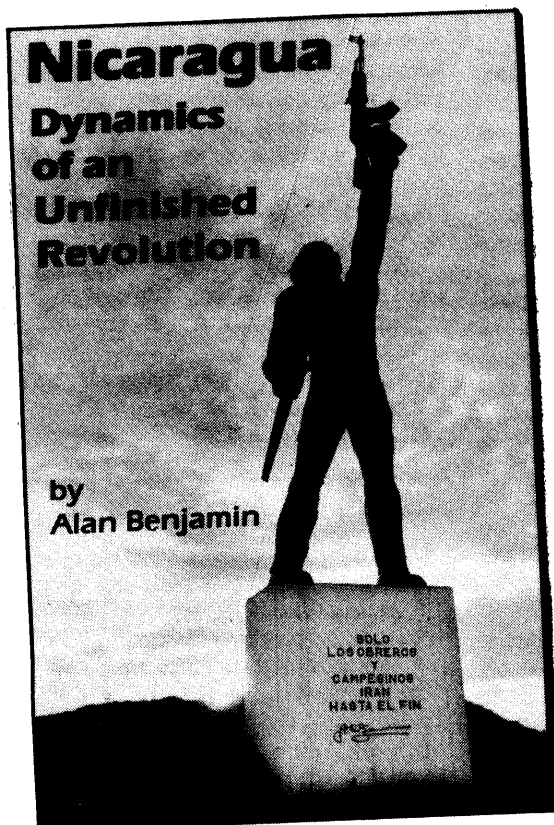
The municipal elections of November 1988 came one week after the Volta Redonda massacre. And the left scored big gains—big enough to make the U.S. rulers sit up and take notice. *The Wall Street Journal* described a "leftward lurch in the major centers of industrial and financial activity" in Brazil.

The working-class party that progressed the most in the elections was the Workers Party (PT), a party of 550,000 members based on the militant trade unions and peasant federations.

The PT was born out of the social explosions and strikes against the military dictatorship in the late 1970s. It resulted from a recognition by trade-union activists of the need for an independent party that could ex-

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... Brazil

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tend their struggles into the political arena and challenge the reformism of the traditional "left" parties.

In the November 1988 municipal elections, the PT went from having three elected mayors to 36 throughout the country, and from 170 municipal councilors to 2000. The PT won in almost all of the cities in the state of Sao Paulo, the most industrialized sector in Brazil. In Sao Paulo, Brazil's largest city with 14 million people, PT candidate Luiza Erundina was elected mayor.

Many cities in the interior of the country went for the PT as well. These mainly rural, peasant-populated cities had traditionally voted for rightist candidates. In many other cities, the PT came in second, scoring larger percentages of the vote than ever before.

The PMDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party), the "liberal" party of the Brazilian bourgeoisie and the party of the president, lost almost everywhere. This was nearly a death blow to the Sarney government, reflecting the failure of his policies.

The Brazilian ruling class responded to this stunning victory for the PT with a series of explanations designed to minimize the left's gains. They claimed that it was a "protest vote" in the aftermath of the Volta Redonda massacre. They claimed that the workers were just countering Sarney's refusal to increase their wages.

And Sarney himself warned that political centrists must unite for the upcoming presidential election, lest the left come to power nationally. "The country is moving toward totalitarianism," he stated. "We will take off for a socialist revolution. ... Brazil today is on a slope to the left, and there are no forces on the horizon capable of reversing that situation."

Indeed, the working class had used the elections as an extension of their strikes. The elections showed the tremendous potential of the PT to represent the will of the Brazilian masses. Voters saw the PT addressing their aspirations and responding in action to the government's assault.

A major issue facing the PT has been the administration of the cities in which they elected mayors or gained control of municipal councils. The case of Luiza Erundina in Sao

Paulo illustrates the role played by PT governmental representatives.

Erundina's election capped the PT's victory throughout the state of Sao Paulo—the capital city and 13 others that represent 15 million people and virtually all of its most important urban centers, including the giant ABC industrial triangle. With the election, the PT became the dominant political force in greater Sao Paulo. And it put on the PT's plate a new responsibility—municipal administration.

Challenge to PT mayors

The Sao Paulo directorate of the PT passed a resolution last December that articulated some of their goals for municipal governments. It included improving living standards; exposing the limitations of local administration, stressing that Brazil's basic problems could only be solved through workers' power and an end to capitalism; creation of organs for direct participation by workers in municipal matters; and support from the PT municipal administrations to workers' struggles in their localities.

The resolution correctly stated that "the fact that the PT has won some towns does not mean that the workers have taken power in their cities, much less in their country. ...



Luiza Erundina

[Power] remains in one way or another under the direct control of the bourgeoisie. ... [I]n practically every case we will face city councils where the majority of councilors will be in the service of the ruling class, and who will mount a furious resistance to the PT's municipal administration."

In Sao Paulo, Erundina faced a municipal council of 53, of whom the majority formed an opposition bloc. This was coupled with local capitalists who control public-sector businesses such as the buses, waste disposal, and so forth.

On top of this, the Brazilian government allocates portions of its foreign debt to the municipalities. Sao Paulo's is 6.5 percent, or \$7.8 billion. Over the last year, the IMF (through Sarney) has demanded that 25 percent of this figure be repaid. In addition, Erundina's Sao Paulo was left with a debt equal to one-third of the city budget, as well as a number of unfinished public-works projects.

There are an estimated 200,000 children in the city without schools to attend. Thousands of people live in shantytowns, and the homeless occupy vacant land in the city (called "land invasions") and face repression from the police and army. Erundina, just after the election, was photographed being dragged away by police during one occupation she was supporting.

PT leadership shifts under pressure

Erundina's initial response was to call for the establishment of "popular councils" in the city's neighborhoods and districts, which would represent the interest of the workers and poor in the formation of policy. Brazil's capitalists called these "soviets"—a reference to the workers' and peasant councils that formed prior to the Russian Revolution of 1917—and denounced them. [See *Socialist Action*, January 1989].

Erundina's perspective of establishing these "popular councils" was extremely progressive. But her perspective, and that of the PT, changed as the party began to rise in the presidential polls after the municipal elections.

Soon, Luis Ignacio da Silva (Lula), the PT's presidential candidate, was concerned about appearing "presidential" and showing that the PT could lead the country. It wasn't long before appearing "mayoral" became a driving force for the PT in Sao Paulo and other cities. The danger of co-optation was becoming imminent.

The pressure to become a good and efficient administrator caused Erundina, for example, to drop the perspective of forming a common front of mayors to repudiate the payment of the foreign debt apportioned to the municipalities—a tool used by the national government to strangle the cities. The decision to "meet debt obligations" openly contradicted the PT's longstanding position that the debt must be rejected at the local and national levels, and that the masses must be organized against the debt.

Erundina—along with most of the other PT mayors—also backed off from using their positions to organize a national fightback against the Sarney government and against all aspects of imperialist and capitalist domination.

Calls from trade union leaders and minority currents in the PT for a national march on Brasilia, the nation's capital, and for an extended general strike to win the unmet demands were received with little more than lip service by top PT leaders and elected officials.

Worse still, Erundina increased prices for transportation to meet operating costs, rather than organize politically to overcome the maneuvers of the private bus owners. She refused to implement a decision passed unanimously by a convention of the Sao Paulo PT that called for the creation of a Public Fund for Urban Transportation (FPTU) to be collected from a tax on the city's wealthy residents.

Similar price hikes in public services—as well as the decision to lay off thousands of city workers—were implemented by a majority of the PT mayors.

The PT has become caught in a web of "administering" capitalist austerity. This has led to a serious decline in the standing of the PT in national polls. And it poses the very serious question of whether the PT can and will continue to grow, retain its independence from the ruling class, and lead the Brazilian workers and peasants forward.

This is the backdrop against which the current presidential campaign is being played out. (National elections are to be held in November.)

In next month's issue of *Socialist Action*, we will examine the campaign, the candidates, and the programs of the parties. And we will closely examine the recent electoral front formed by the PT, a front which represents a sharp break from the independent political course charted by the PT since its inception.

(to be continued next month)

... Poland

(continued from page 20)

the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

In this letter, Gorbachev called for greater economic cooperation between Eastern Europe and the capitalist West "now that the old barriers between different economic systems are being destroyed." He continued, "Our *perestroika* is inseparable from a policy aiming at our full participation in the world economy. The world can only gain from the opening up of a market as big as the Soviet Union."

Hoping to be bailed out

Solidarity and the PUWP are banking on massive aid from the United States and other capitalist countries to bail them out. The Walesa leadership asked for \$10 billion over three years from the U.S. government as shock treatment for the Polish economy.

But George Bush dashed these hopes on his recent trip through Eastern Europe. While expressing support for the changes in Poland, he offered a measly \$325 million in new loans and promised to ask Congress for a \$100 million fund "to capitalize and invigorate the Polish private sector."

Secretary of State James Baker explained the meager proposal: "In the 1970s, we and our allies and the Polish people made a mistake. We shovelled a lot of money into this country with no requirement for economic reform."

The British business weekly magazine *The Economist* further explained the go-slow approach of the imperialists in a recent editorial. While stating that the West must not block Poland and Hungary's access to the capitalist world, the editorial states:

"Should the West send money to help the reformers? Not for now. The pressure of the external debt is one of the principal factors that has impelled Poland and Hungary to search for freer markets. ...

"It would be foolish for the Western governments to loosen the pressure as long as the

majority of the reforms exist only on paper (so that it is convenient to answer with a polite 'no' to Mr. Lech Walesa if the Polish government sends him to pass the hat in the countries of the West).

"But once the effects of the reform are observed—brisk growth in unemployment, major flow of Western investments, drastic monetary reforms—then it would be worthwhile to offer the kind of help that would be agreeable to bring: capitalization of interest payments above certain percentage on the benefit of exports."

In short, the capitalists want to be assured that property relations are well on their way to being overturned and that Poland is reduced to a pauperized "Third World" country dependent on Western imperialism.

But the increased mobilization of Polish workers for better wages and working conditions may compel the imperialist governments to speed their economic aid to Poland. If the new government is unable to contain and co-opt the working class, the entire framework set at the "round-table agreements" could be shattered.

On Aug. 25, shortly after the official press agency reported that thousands of railworkers in Lodz had gone on strike for higher pay and that a national rail strike was planned, Prime Minister Mazowiecki issued an urgent appeal to George Bush to accelerate economic aid.

(Walesa denounced the strikers as "provocateurs" and called on workers to "display resolve in stopping the increasingly dangerous strike in the region.")

Deep opposition to Walesa

Walesa's cooperation with the Stalinist regime and his enthusiastic endorsement of pro-capitalist market reforms have already met with strong opposition within the ranks—and even among prominent leaders—of Solidarity.

And as Solidarity is compelled to administer the IMF-imposed austerity program—the very same program that sparked the creation of the massive trade union in the first place back in 1980—these divisions are bound to deepen.

National Solidarity leaders Andrzej Gwiazda

and Anna Walentynowicz, among others, have loudly opposed the "round-table agreements." Gwiazda, who was elected vice president at the first national congress of Solidarity in 1981, accused Walesa of "dream[ing] of converting Poland into an immense pool of cheap labor and a good market for the capitalist West."

But it is at the regional and local levels of Solidarity that the divisions have been the sharpest. In Szczecin, the great majority of Solidarity's rank-and-file activists are demanding that regional and national elections for leadership positions in the union be held to defeat the Walesa leadership and its supporters.

In Lodz, the totality of the regional leadership, which had been named by Walesa, was repudiated by the citywide Solidarity leadership and by the region's rank and file for signing the agreement with Jaruzelski. They also demanded an emergency second national congress of Solidarity.

Pro-socialist opposition

The most consistent oppositionists within Solidarity are organized in the Polish Socialist Party—Democratic Revolution (PPS-RD). These socialists are opposed to Stalinism and capitalism, and call for the overthrow of the bureaucracy and its replacement by a "system of workers' self-management."

Josef Piniór, the main leader of the PPS-RD, explained the party's views:

"We in the PPS-RD are building a new socialist alternative in Poland. We are elaborating a political program not just for Poland. We aspire to be an internationalist party—in the good sense of the term. We are not a nationalist party; we seek a new alternative for the workers in the East and in the West.

"Our alternative to the bureaucratic system is a system of workers' self-management. Our first priority is workers' democracy.

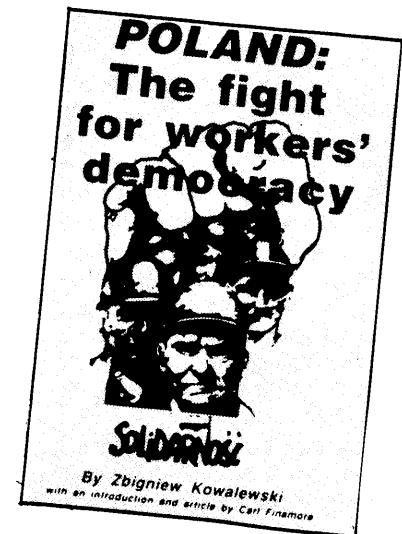
"As for our views on the West, on the capitalist system, we were the first organized tendency to insist in its written political program that capitalism is bad, and to severely criticize the capitalist countries.

"Ours is the party of the young generation

of workers and students who want to combat the neo-Stalinist bureaucracy, and to build in Poland—in the East as well as in the West—a new socialist alternative."

The workers who have been mobilized by mass strikes over the past two years will be looking for solutions to the austerity imposed on them by their leaders. The conditions are ripe for the PPS-RD to become a pole of attraction for the militant sectors of the Polish working class.

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The renewed controversy over the meaning of the French Revolution

(Last of a three-part series)

By CLIFF CONNER

As one of the seminal actions of human history, the French Revolution has been the subject of enough books to fill a library. The passions aroused by the event itself have never completely subsided; even today controversy continues over how to interpret the Revolution.

The main axis of contention is the interpretation of an author who was not primarily a historian and never wrote a book specifically devoted to the French Revolution: Karl Marx. The debate, ironically, centers on a proposition that did not originate with Marx: that the French Revolution was essentially a bourgeois revolution aimed at overturning a feudal society.

Those who lived through the Revolution themselves described their experience in those terms. Marx's contribution was to incorporate this view of the French Revolution into a comprehensive theory of history, thereby giving specific content to the words "bourgeois" and "feudal."

As Marx acknowledged, "It is not I who should receive the credit for having discovered either the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me, bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle." In particular, Augustin Thierry was identified by Marx as the "father of the class struggle in French historiography."

The first historian to arrive at a social interpretation of the French Revolution was Antoine Barnave, himself an active participant. In his "Introduction to the French Revolution," written in 1792, he explained that during the 18th century artisan production and commerce had "succeeded in penetrating the people and created a new means to wealth" to such a degree that "all was ready for a revolution in political laws; a new distribution of wealth produced a new distribution of power."

Historians writing in the first half of the 19th century took Barnave's basic insight, the bourgeois character of the Revolution, for granted. Why did this concept, so solidly grounded in pre-Marx scholarship, later become controversial?

The answer lies in the fact that historians are not immune to the influence of their own political environment and have often incorporated their own political sentiments into their interpretations of the Revolution. The modern debate over the French Revolution was fueled by Cold War anti-Marxism.

Opposing political views

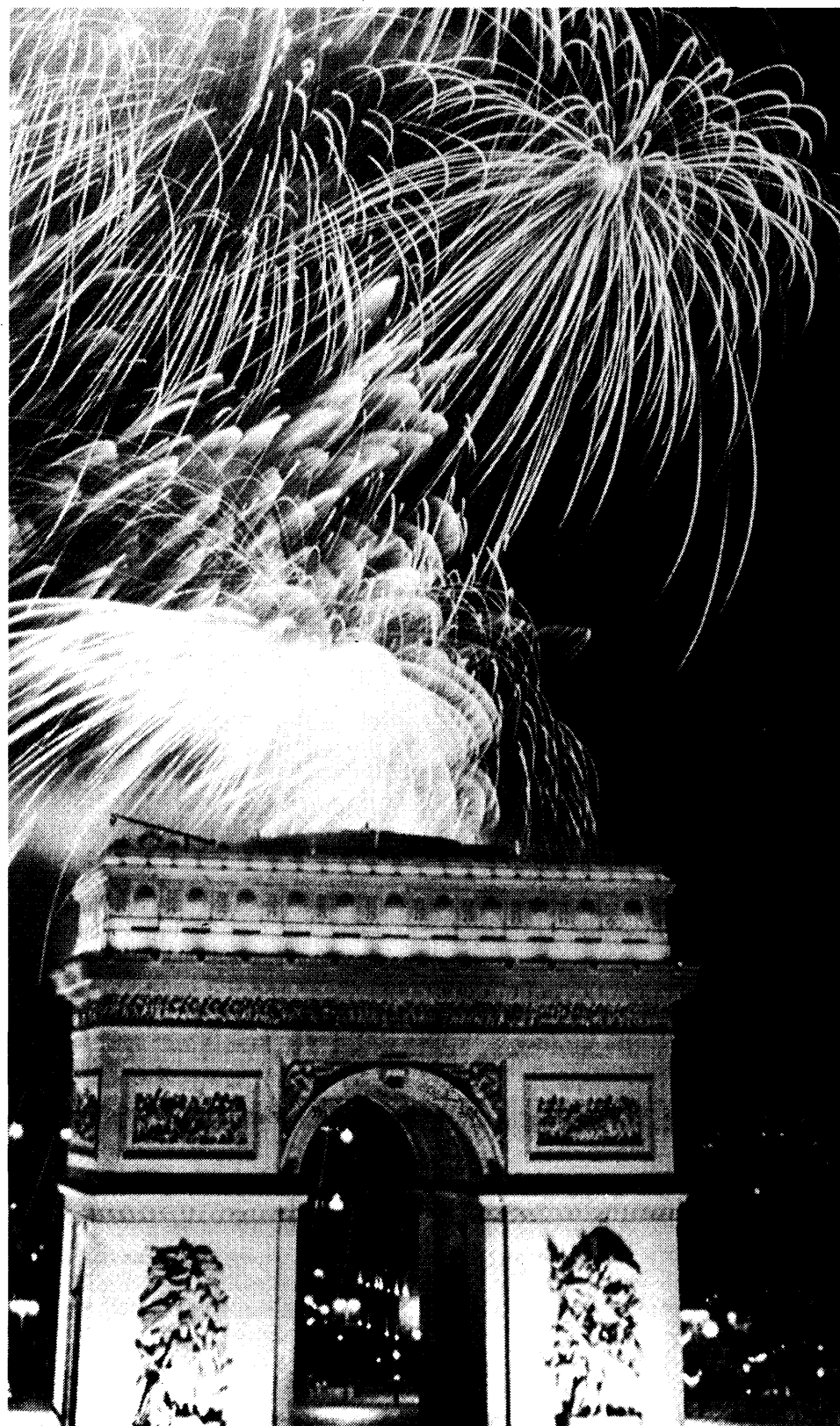
Writing history with the use of insights derived from later experience does not always yield negative results. When historians have projected their current social prejudices onto the past, however, their accounts have invariably been distorted. A prominent example is the way historians have portrayed the *sans-culottes*, whose insurrections in Paris periodically drove the Revolution forward.

To Hippolyte Taine the Parisian masses were the scum of the earth, "the mob"—beggars, thieves, and prostitutes. His extreme hostility to and contempt for the masses reflected his own conservative revulsion when confronted with the Paris Commune in 1871.

For Jules Michelet, on the other hand, the *sans-culottes* were not "the mob" but "the people," and they were the heroes of the First Republic. Michelet's interpretation reflected his own strong partisanship toward the Second Republic that was born of revolution in 1848.

What these opposite views had in common was that both were abstractions based on impressions and assumptions rather than on concrete evidence. More recently an English Marxist historian, George Rude, performed a careful analysis of documentary sources—especially police records—and was able to construct a convincing picture of the participants in the great mass actions of the Revolution. Rather than "the mob" or "the people," Rude chose a more neutral term: "the crowd."

Rude was able to prove that Taine had been wrong about the social composition of the



Parisian crowd. Virtually all of those arrested (who would presumably have been among the most conspicuous and militant of the insurrectionaries) were people who although often desperately poor, had fixed places of residence and steady occupations. They were not bums, drifters, or other *lumpen* elements. The Parisian crowd was of a transitional social character encompassing both petty bourgeois and proletarian elements.

A new perspective

Rude's work demonstrates that the use of modern political insights to interpret past events does not necessarily lead to distortion. The mass revolutionary movements of the 20th century have provided a rich resource of concepts and categories that can enrich historical understanding. Those historians who, like Rude, carefully test their hypotheses against the documentary evidence can apply the experience of more recent revolutions to their interpretation of the French Revolution without falling into anachronism and false analogy.

Rude's analysis of the Parisian crowd exemplifies a major shift of focus in historical studies that can also be traced to the influence of Karl Marx. Before Marx, history writing was almost exclusively of the "great man" variety, concerned only with the activities of monarchs, generals, and parliamentary leaders.

Marx's contention that classes and masses are the active agents of historic change required a new perspective. Historians began paying more attention to the lives of ordinary people, and social history—"history from below"—was born. While not all present-day

social historians are Marxists, all owe a debt to Marx for laying the philosophical foundations of their discipline.

"Revisionism" vs. "Orthodoxy"

Marx's contributions to historical theory, however, have not been universally accepted or appreciated. In the 1950s, during the height of the Cold War, a group of historians in England and the United States devoted themselves to challenging the Marxist viewpoint. They came to be known as the "revisionist" school and their most prominent representative was the British historian Alfred Cobban. The revisionists' primary target was the Marxist interpretation of the French Revolution, which they attacked as an "outmoded orthodoxy."

It may seem peculiar that in any field of study Marxism could be viewed as *orthodox* in Western Europe and North America. Leaving aside the false imputation of rigidity or dogmatism, it is true that Marxist and Marxist-influenced historians had long dominated the study of the Revolution.

At the turn of the century the great French socialist leader Jean Jaures published his four-volume "Socialist History of the French Revolution." Jaures looked to Marx for inspiration and produced the first serious treatment of the Revolution that focused on the actions of the masses rather than on the maneuvers of political leaders.

Jaures was somewhat inconsistent in his historical materialism. In the introduction to the "Socialist History" he described his approach as both "materialist with Marx and mystical with Michelet." In spite of the work's weaknesses, however, Jaures blazed a

new trail for others to follow, and one who acknowledged Jaures as his master was the most important of the modern historians of the Revolution, Georges Lefebvre.

Lefebvre's first major contribution was to bring the great mass of the French population, the peasantry, into the historical picture. Lefebvre's research demonstrated that the rural rebellion was indispensable to the success of the Revolution. It follows that the French Revolution cannot be understood without adding the forces of the peasantry into the equation.

Lefebvre did not stop with the peasantry, however, but went on to develop a comprehensive picture that took into consideration all of the social classes and their complex interactions in the course of the Revolution. His masterful weaving together of all the disparate strands of social history is known as the "Lefebvre synthesis." It became the standard account—the "orthodox version," if you will—of the Revolution.

It was the Lefebvre synthesis that I briefly summarized in the first article in this series. [See July 1989 *Socialist Action*.] Some of Lefebvre's works that are readily available in English are "The Coming of the French Revolution," "The French Revolution" (in two volumes), "The Great Fear of 1789," and "Napoleon" (Vol. I: 1799-1807; Vol II: 1807-1815).

Lefebvre held the chair of the History of the French Revolution at the Sorbonne, the institutional reflection of his stature as the leading interpreter of the great event. He was not a Marxist in all aspects of his thinking and activity, but he certainly acknowledged the centrality of Marxism to his work on the French Revolution.

Lefebvre died in 1960; in 1967 his chair at the Sorbonne was occupied by another of France's most prominent Marxist historians, Albert Soboul, a long-time member of the French Communist Party. (In spite of the fact that his scholarly work on the French Revolution was in the best Marxist tradition, Soboul was a staunch Stalinist in his day-to-day politics. As such, he bitterly opposed the revolutionary upsurge in France in May-June 1968 and supported his party's betrayal of the general strike.)

"Revisionists" gain influence

The virtually unchallenged dominance of the Lefebvre synthesis seemed to mock the Marxist axiom that bourgeois society is dominated by bourgeois ideology. For a Marxist interpretation to hold sway over an important academic discipline was an anomalous situation, especially in the extreme anti-communist political context of the 1950s. It is not surprising that many historians in the English-speaking world flocked to Cobban's revisionist banner when he raised it. (Cobban first articulated the revisionist theme in 1955. His major work is "The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution," published in 1964.)

Since then the revisionists have occupied a rather ambiguous position. Their influence is strong in English and American universities and they have even picked up a few adherents in France. The most prominent French revisionist, Francois Furet, is explicit in his political antipathies; he complains of "Leninist-Populist Holy Writ" and identifies Soboul's "Short History of the French Revolution" as "undoubtedly the best example."

Most recent books on the French Revolution published in the United States reflect the revisionists' anti-Marxist bias. Nonetheless, they cannot be said to have triumphed over the Lefebvre synthesis because they have been unable to offer a new synthesis of their own to take its place. Their attack on the Marxist view has consisted of a set of unconnected partial criticisms.

Anyone who seeks to understand the *meaning* of the French Revolution, then, will not find what they are looking for in the works of the revisionists. The only comprehensive picture of the Revolution in all its complexity is still the Marxist interpretation in the form provided by Lefebvre.

Some historians have sought to avoid the problem by way of a retreat from meaning.

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They do not address the question of the essential dynamics of the Revolution. The works of Richard Cobb, for example, are valuable for the wealth of information they assemble and present, but Cobb steadfastly resists drawing any conclusions as to the meaning of the Revolution.

Marxists, by contrast, are committed to the proposition that there is meaning and lawfulness in history and that with effort it is possible to shed some light on its meaning and its laws. That is not to say, as is often alleged, that Marxists seek absolute, deterministic laws on the model of Newtonian physics. Such notions have even been abandoned in physics. But the development of human societies has not been a random process; significant regularities can be identified by a careful study of history.

Marx's purpose in analyzing history, he declared, was not merely to interpret the world but to *change* it. Marx was a revolutionary. It is this aspect of his thought that is most unpalatable to the revisionists: the idea of learning from the past in order to revolutionize the present simply has no meaning for them. It is not their job.

The revisionists, then, have no interest in constructing a superior theoretical vehicle that can outperform Marxism. Their aim is to weaken the vehicle that already exists. That is why their response to the Lefebvre synthesis consists solely of negative criticisms and why they are constitutionally incapable of developing a synthesis of their own.

The revisionists concentrate primarily on discrediting what Cobban called the "myth" of the bourgeois, capitalist, anti-feudal social revolution. "The 'bourgeois revolution' is a metaphysical monster," says Furet, "that strangles historical reality."

The objections are many: There was no clear-cut bourgeoisie sharply distinguishable from the nobility. There was no feudalism left in France to overthrow. The people who led the Revolution were not bourgeois. There was a lot of capitalism in France before the Revolution and not very much more after it. Many of the individuals who were at the top of the social ladder before the Revolution were still on top after it. And finally, if anything really did change, it would have changed anyway in spite of the Revolution.

Glorifying violence?

The last objection is the most clearly politically motivated. The Revolution, according to this view, was simply gratuitous violence, at best irrelevant to the process of social change; at worst, counterproductive. The Marxists, it is said, glorify violence in the past in order to justify it in the present.

Revisionists, of course, are frequently charged with advocating violence when in fact they are merely predicting it and preparing to defend themselves against it. To blame Marx for advocating violence in his writings on the Paris Commune, for example, is a case of blaming the messenger for the bad news.

Marx simply recognized as an objective fact that most social change has occurred as a



'Jaures looked to Marx for inspiration and produced the first serious treatment of the Revolution that focused on the action of the masses rather than on the maneuvers of political leaders.'

result of class struggle, often including violent warfare between classes contending for power. The French Revolution, he believed, was a classic and obvious example.

Those who challenge that contention hold that France could just as well have achieved social progress by evolution rather than revolution. The abuses of monarchical power and aristocratic privilege could have been eliminated through reforms if, say, a more competent ruler than Louis XVI had been on the throne.

Such possibilities can never be absolutely ruled out, but the actual course of the French Revolution makes them seem unlikely in the extreme. The "reforms" demanded by the peasants threatened the very existence of most of the rural nobility; had the latter lost their fiscal privileges they would have been driven into poverty.

With their backs against the wall they chose to fight to the death. A compromise solution was attempted in August 1789, ending the nobles' privileges but at the expense of the peasants. The peasants refused the deal and fought on to total victory in 1793.

Given that history, it is very difficult to imagine any negotiated settlement that could have avoided the violent showdown. Furthermore, once the forces of the old regime coalesced throughout Europe in an effort to crush the Revolution by military violence, it is likewise difficult to imagine how the counterviolence of the Terror could have been avoided.

The revisionists' contention that feudalism had disappeared in France long before 1789 is based on a purely legalistic definition of feudalism. The fiefs that formed the original basis of the feudal order had indeed ceased to exist many centuries earlier. Ninety-five percent of the French peasants were not serfs.

Caricatures of Marxism

Nonetheless, the peasants continued to be bound to the land by legal and economic restrictions that had survived from the feudal system. The revisionists insist that this should be called "seigneurialism" rather than "feudalism." To deny the social character of the Revolution by appealing to a definition of feudalism applicable to Charlemagne's time is not a compelling argument; it is simply playing with words.

Some of the other revisionist arguments against Marxist interpretation are not necessarily untrue, but they are based on a straw-man version of what is meant by "bourgeois revolution." A caricature of the Marxist view is presented and then demolished.

The revisionists' criteria for a bourgeois revolution require that the two classes be sharply delineated, that the wealthiest capitalists be the Revolution's staunchest supporters, that its political leaders come directly from the big-business class, and that the Revolution must be shown to have rapidly produced a flourishing capitalist economy.

Since all of these propositions are

demonstrably false, the conclusion follows naturally that there was no bourgeois revolution. After falsely attributing this simple-minded schema to Marxists, the revisionists will add insult to injury by accusing Marxists of schematism.

It is certainly true, for example, that the line dividing the nobility from the bourgeoisie was far from absolute; some nobles made money the capitalist way and some capitalists bought their way into the nobility. But what of it? What is at issue is not capitalists but capitalism; not biological individuals but their *social* role. The significant transformation was that of the mode of production from precapitalist to capitalist. Which individuals made up the capitalist class is beside the point.

In any event, the fuzziness of the boundary line dividing the nobility from the bourgeoisie does not invalidate the categories, as the revisionists imply. There was a noble class and there was a bourgeois class and they were not the same despite the fact that their memberships overlapped.

It is ironic that those who persistently bewail the "oversimplification" of the Marxist interpretation have such difficulty comprehending the real complexity of social classes. Definitions of social class that cannot in principle pigeonhole every individual lead to contradictions, they say, and therefore must be ruled out of consideration.

What they fail to understand is that the contradiction is not in the Marxist interpretation, but was a genuine aspect of the social reality of the French Revolution.

Debt of gratitude

Another "contradiction:" The fact that the wealthiest capitalists did not enthusiastically greet the Revolution does not call its bourgeois character into question. The upper bourgeoisie served as financiers to the monarchy; it was tied to the old regime by strong bonds of self-interest. But this exceptional group was by no means representative of the bourgeoisie class as a whole.

The revisionists' method, however, is precisely to seek out exceptional circumstances, label them "contradictions," and use them to deny the validity of any generalization they wish to discredit. Small wonder that these critics have been unable, by their own admission, to offer a comprehensive view to replace the Lefebvre synthesis.

The revisionists' ultimate goal was to cast doubt on the reality of the French Revolution itself, and by extension on all social revolutions, past, present, and future. If no significant social change occurred as a result of the French Revolution, then all of the fighting and suffering was in vain. The intended moral for the youth of today is clear.

In spite of their efforts, however, the French Revolution remains a vibrant source of inspiration to a new generation struggling for liberation. In this bicentennial year we should acknowledge our debt of gratitude to Marxist historians like Jaures, Lefebvre, Labrousse, Soboul, and Rude for preserving and defending the real legacy of the French Revolution. ■

Soviet coal miners polled after their strike victory

By CARL FINAMORE

Over 500,000 miners struck the coal fields in the Ukraine and Siberia in July. [See the July 1989 *Socialist Action*.] During a 1962 miners' strike, troops opened fire. Today the situation is much different; workers' self-confidence has grown considerably.

In the 1989 coal strike, plodding government and trade-union bureaucrats were paralyzed, stunned by the defiant rejection of President Gorbachev's reforms. Demands for more pay, more food, and better housing dramatically escalated into political slogans for workers' self-management.

The largest work stoppage in Soviet history was a warning shot to the bureaucracy; working-class political consciousness was growing as the government's authority was deteriorating.

A poll of striking miners conducted in late July by the government's All-Union Center for Studying Public Opinion confirms the worst fears of the ruling elite.

[See *Moscow News*, No. 33, Aug. 20-27, 1989.]

The miners had greatest confidence in the strike committees of their enterprises (43 percent in the Ukraine, 50 percent in Siberia) and in the central strike committee (33 percent in the Ukraine, 40 percent in Siberia). Not a single worker who was polled registered confidence in the administration, government-sanctioned trade unions, or the Communist Party.

Also noteworthy is the fact that none of those polled had confidence in reactionary, chauvinist organizations such as Pamyat (Memory) or Otechestvo (Fatherland). Neither did the pro-capitalist Democratic Union gain one single vote among the workers.

The poll also made a very revealing observation that is quite familiar to anyone who has been on strike but is seldom recognized by the capitalist media. *Moscow News* reported the mood of the workers following their strike victory: "The psychological atmosphere is characterized by the combination of good feel-

ings for one another, with the realization of one's own righteousness and with a feeling of hope (60 percent in the Ukraine, 70 percent in Siberia)."

This solidarity among the workers is perhaps the strike movement's most important achievement. Relying on their own power won them more concessions in a few weeks than they had received in several decades. That's why discussions of forming independent unions and flexing the workers' strike muscle cannot be suppressed with empty government promises for a better future.

"No, a cosmetic overhaul won't do," said Teimuraz Avaliani, a strike leader from Kemerovo in Siberia. "We must start setting up a fundamentally new type of trade union. Maybe, alternative trade unions." (*Moscow News*, No. 32, Aug. 13-20, 1989.)

Avaliani told the press that the coal miners "realized what a mighty weapon [a strike] is. We don't intend to abuse it, nor do we intend to let it go."

This simple statement sums up the new balance of forces which exists now in the Soviet Union. The government is confronting a population growing in political consciousness and organization. As with the example of the miners, when people break their long silence and finally decide to speak, it's likely they will want to have the last word. ■

Chinese revolutionary speaks out

The following are excerpts from remarks by Chinese dissident Lin Hsi-Ling to a European rally in solidarity with the Chinese workers and students held in Paris on June 7, 1989.

Lin Hsi-Ling was a participant in the Youth Brigade of the Red Army during the victorious 1949 revolution. At the age of 21, during the period of the "Hundred Flowers," she was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

At the time of her arrest in 1958, she denounced the party and state bureaucracy. A brochure published shortly after her arrest quotes her as saying: "The party and the state have become a bureaucratic apparatus that governs the people without democracy. ... It is necessary to fundamentally change the superstructure of the state by means of a total transformation involving the full mobilization and upheaval of the masses."

Over 30 years after she made these remarks, the Chinese workers and students rose up against bureaucratic rule to demand genuine socialist democracy. Lin Hsi-Ling's comments below came three days after the massacre at Tiananmen Square.

... China

(continued from page 1)

that both slowdowns and small-scale strikes are ongoing problems. Even the independent worker organizations that sprang up in April and May maintain a precarious clandestine existence.

Seven members of the Beijing Autonomous Workers' Union, which had counted several thousand members before the crackdown, still organize activities. According to a report in *The New York Times*: "They meet secretly, in considerable danger, and scribble their appeals for change on pieces of paper. They await until twilight before they furtively paste up the messages on lampposts and signboards."

And on July 23, 500 Beijing University students assembled for a mourning ceremony for their comrades massacred in Tiananmen. It was 49 days after June 4, the traditional Chinese mourning period. Defying martial law, the students played tapes from Tiananmen of the singing of the Internationale, the workers' anthem. Then they themselves sang revolutionary songs.

Restoring orthodox thinking

The government, while seeking out the organizers of this action, has not been able to engage in widespread purges of dissident intellectuals. Instead, it has launched a bombastic and futile campaign to restore orthodox thinking against "bourgeois liberalism."

And it has taken further steps to curtail the development of the intellectual stratum. Education is being cut back, especially in social science fields that have historically produced dissidents. Proposals have been made to require a year of military service before college and two years of labor in the countryside after graduation.

Like similar policies during the Cultural Revolution, these measures may intimidate, but they will only make it more difficult for China to generate the skilled personnel needed for modernization.

Economy in crisis

Fundamentally, the repression is solving none of the real problems the regime faces. Before the June crackdown, prospects for the economic reforms were already dimming. Growth rates sagged in 1989; inflation soared to 30 percent. Imports grew five times faster than exports in the first five months of 1989, and a \$5 billion trade deficit resulted. The World Bank estimates China's total foreign debt at \$42 billion.

China's workers now face unemployment, economic chaos, and unbridled corruption. In the Special Economic Zones, where foreign investment is encouraged, it is often even worse.

Even *The New York Times*, amidst its glowing reports of economic reform, admits: "Many of the woes of 19th-century laissez-faire capitalism and of feudal China have re-emerged in these coastal areas: child labor, prostitution, gambling, income inequities, criminal gangs, and unregulated production of

goods that are useless or even dangerous."

Some predict an agricultural crisis soon. Since last year, the government has been paying farmers IOUs for their crops.

The crackdown made matters even worse. In its wake, tourist trade has been halved, and billions in international loans have been cancelled. Almost a billion dollars in production was lost in strikes in May and June; the government has cancelled summer vacations to "make up for the losses caused by recent political unrest."

According to the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*: "Three out of four industrialists [now] plan to leave Hong Kong before it reverts to Chinese rule in 1997. ... Hong Kong companies account for more than half the overseas investment in China."

These problems have not led to a major change of course for the regime, despite the fact that it is discredited in the eyes of China's workers. On the contrary, the government has been at pains to reassure foreign capitalists that political repression does not mean an end to the market reform policies. Instead, it has chosen two campaigns to shore up its image and regiment the people.

Shoring up image

The first is a drive "against corruption." A government spokesperson admits that "the students put forth slogans against corruption and official profiteering that compelled us to take action." The dramatic mass support of the workers for these slogans was especially frightening to the regime. Consequently, the government has trumpeted its intention to cleanse itself from top to bottom.

Bureaucratic privilege is at the core of the government's function, however. Control of

scarce resources and luxuries is the prerogative of the ruling stratum.

As James L. Tyson notes in the *Christian Science Monitor*: "If similar public campaigns since 1985 are any indication, the anti-corruption drive will fizzle after a few months of strident, official propaganda extolling clean government. Watchdog bodies are notoriously subordinate to the Communist Party and lack the independent power critical to an effort to ensure proper conduct."

The government claims that its new campaign means tightening up equally for all. It has reserved special attention for the workers, though, in its second campaign, for "plain living." Here, the government intends to lower the expectations it raised when it declared "to get rich is glorious." It is also trying to use intimidation against the temptations of modernization, i.e., against a more aware and powerful workers' movement.

In a stern warning, Deng Xiaoping declared: "Promoting plain living must be a major objective of education, and this should be the keynote for the next 60 or 70 years." This campaign combines austerity with rigorous indoctrination, including the memorization of demoralizing quotations like the above.

Significantly, the regime has not made good on the workers' economic losses suffered through inflation nor even (with the "plain living" campaign) cut back on promises. It will be up to the workers themselves to institute the democratic planning that can lead China out of its morass.

With key leader Deng Xiaoping in uncertain health, an ongoing economic crisis, and an awakened and still defiant movement among workers and students, China's future looks explosive. ■

I am happy to be here among you. You [rally organizers] were the first to join us in front of the Chinese Embassy.

At the root of the recent events in China is the discontent of the students and workers with the ruling bureaucracy. Corruption is unbearable. The great bulk of the workers receive extremely low wages, while the state functionaries are paid very high wages in addition to their hidden privileges. The root cause of the current revolution is not unlike that of the 1949 revolution: It is a revolution against the oppressive sectors of society.

The current Chinese leaders are attempting to open the road to capitalism. There is no democracy, no freedom. Some people in France say, "It is not yet capitalism." For my part, I think there is too much capitalism! What the workers and students are doing in China is what you did in 1789—the revolution.

The demonstrations were peaceful. The brutal response by the government is what compels us to make a revolution. Shame to the Chinese government, which is not only an enemy of the Chinese people but of people throughout the world! We hope that you will aid us in the struggle against this regime. Long live internationalism! ■

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BROOKLYN, N.Y.—A Black youth, Yusef Hawkins, was shot and killed on Aug. 23 after he and his friends were attacked by a white lynch mob. Earlier that week, a letterbomb exploded in the NAACP office in Atlanta. These incidents came on the heels of several Supreme Court rulings that gutted affirmative-action rights. On Aug. 26, over 35,000 people joined an

NAACP-sponsored demonstration in Washington, D.C., to protest the rising tide of racist attacks, which are promoted by government policy.

For an in-depth assessment of the anti-racist movement today, be sure to read the October issue of *Socialist Action*. Send in your subscription now—and take advantage of our low-price offer.

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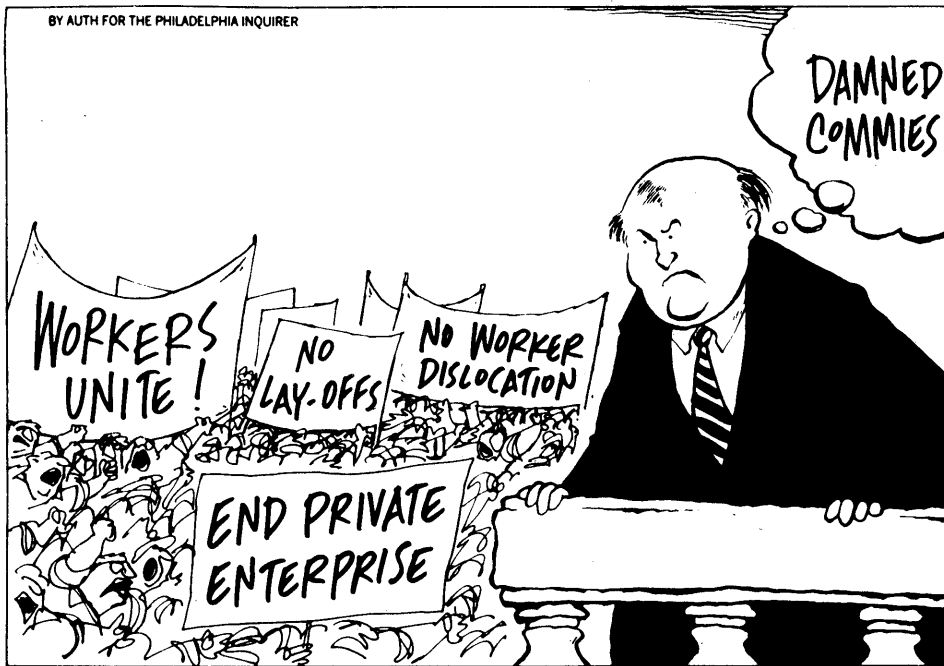
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Back in the U.S.S.R. ...

Toilet paper. That's the top lottery prize in the Ukrainian city of Stakhanov. Other valuable prizes include detergent, hens, and pigs. "Except for the lottery, one cannot get these goods," comments the newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta*.

Over 3000 people have been told to flee a region of the Soviet Union affected by the Chernobyl nuclear-reactor disaster. Illnesses have doubled in the area, despite decontamination efforts during the last three years. Some scientists insist that 106,000 additional people need to be evacuated.

Reports of flying saucers have become common in the Soviet press. The daily *Socialist Industry*, published by the Communist Party's central committee, recently interviewed a milkmaid who spied "a fluorescent creature" on the road. Something unusual is going on in the territory of our two collective farms," acknowledged the Communist Party head in the Chernushinsky region.



The Soviet Union has 300 to 400 legal millionaires and 3000 to 10,000 underground millionaires, reports *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

Back in the USA, Alcoa Corporation has been granted the distinction of heading up this year's "Toxic 500" (published by the National Wildlife Federation). Alcoa is responsible for over one-tenth of the 10.3 billion pounds of toxic waste produced by the 500 most-polluting corporations in the United States.

The Second Coming of Jesus will be unavoidably delayed, says prophet Edgar C. Whisenant of Little Rock, Ark. Last year, Whisenant predicted that the Rapture heralding Christ's Coming would take place on Sept. 12, 1988. This triggered hundreds of "rapture parties," thousands of last-minute conversions, and millions of dollars in sales of Whisenant's book.

But Sept. 12, 1988, came and went with scarcely a sign from Jesus. Whisenant consulted the Scriptures and is now fairly certain that he was one year off. "Jesus is coming, and I would give it at least a 50-percent chance in 1989," says the prophet. So keep an ear tuned for the sound of the trumpets.

Old skeletons pop up in HUD's messy closet

By HAYDEN PERRY

Cities Destroyed for Cash: The FHA scandal at HUD, by Brian D. Boyer. Follett Publishing Co., Chicago, 1973. 250 pp. \$7.95.

In view of the still unfolding scandal at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a most significant aspect of this book is its publication date—1973. It was 16 years ago when another federal housing scandal evoked Congressional cries of outrage and promises of reform.

The focus of malfeasance and corruption at that time was in the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). This was a

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program designed to put poor people in decent renovated houses. Instead, FHA produced embittered, impoverished home buyers, intensified civic blight, and raised a new crop of millionaires.

Brian D. Boyer, an editor on the *Detroit Free Press*, became aware of the problems at FHA as he traveled through the inner city on his way to work. He describes what he saw in a landscape he compares with the bombed-out cities of Europe after World War II.

"Half and more of the houses on any given block are boarded up with plywood squares," he reports. "Ruined by the elements and gutted by thieves, the houses seem to be disintegrating like the stumps of rotted trees."

"What makes these vistas of urban ruin so compelling," he writes, "are the little signs nailed on the doors. The signs tell you that the property is protected by the FBI, and belongs to the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal. The slums, in other words, belong to us."

"A stake in the system"

As a good investigative reporter, Boyer determined to uncover the story behind the boarded-up windows; to discover why the government owned thousands of derelict houses all over America. What he learned is graphically described in "Cities Destroyed for Cash."

The FHA was set up in 1934, Boyer tells us, as a federal lending agent to help middle-class renters buy homes. Most Blacks were too poor to qualify. They were penned up in the inner cities. Then, in the 1960s, the Black ghettos exploded.

Almost in panic, the ruling class paid attention to the city slums. President Lyndon B. Johnson said in effect, "Get those restless natives into homes of their own. It will give them a stake in the system." This was translated into the Federal Housing Act of 1968, which made terms of purchase so easy even a welfare mother could hope to buy a home.

The spirit of the Act was expressed by the exhortation of HUD Secretary Robert Weaver to his staff: Deliver housing. Deliver it as fast as you can, and as much of it as possible to anybody who wants it.

Where was the government going to find the houses? There were plenty for sale in the older areas of America's cities. Better-paid workers were moving to newer homes in the suburbs and were anxious to sell their old houses. Most of the buildings needed renovation but, properly rehabilitated, could offer decent shelter for years to come.

Johnson could have given FHA or HUD the job of

buying, renovating, and selling. But the real-estate interests were crowding him to give them a part of the action. They said market forces could be counted to move the program along.

Reliance on "market forces"

Market forces had not produced houses for the poor before, but Johnson made bankers and real-estate interests an offer they could not refuse. First a big tax break. Boyer estimated that if an investor put as little as \$20,000 of his own money in a \$1 million project, he would get tax savings based on the \$1 million. This meant a \$12,500-a-year tax break, or \$375,000 over the life of the mortgage.

And the mortgage was guaranteed. If the buyer defaulted, FHA would pay off the mortgage holder and take over the house.

Here was a fail-safe, no-lose proposition that attracted speculators all over the country. There were not only guaranteed profits, but *super-profits* to be made by those who understood the situation. The situation was the chaos prevailing at HUD as it was confronted by thousands of FHA mortgage applications thrust upon it by speculators and outright con artists. Boyer explains how incompetence, venality, and plain larceny combined to wreck a program that held out hope to our poorest citizens.

He takes a typical FHA transaction and follows it through to its bitter end. First, an unscrupulous real-estate agent finds a decrepit house that is on the verge of condemnation. The owner, who is moving to the suburbs, is glad to unload it for \$2000. (These are Midwestern 1970 prices.)

Now the agent calls for an FHA-HUD appraiser. This is the tricky part. He wants the appraiser to set a value of \$13,000 on the house. The appraiser is inexperienced and venal. He can be persuaded that a similar house had just been sold for that price. Of course, price and value are not the same, but the appraiser could scarcely care less.

Then there is the matter of repairs. A few of the most obvious defects are noted to make the appraisal credible. The furnace must be replaced, but a second-hand one will do. Paint can be slapped over the dry rot, hiding it for a while.

"Walking the papers through"

After a few cosmetic touches, the old house is ready for a new buyer. This might be a welfare mother with four children, who has been paying too much rent for a rat- and roach-infested apartment. "How would you like to live in your own home?" she is asked. She jumps at the chance. But she does not have even the \$200 down payment. Never mind, the real-estate agent will lend it to her. (Strictly against FHA rules.)

Also violating the rules is the employment record the agent concocts to make his client appear eligible. He does not worry because he is going to "walk the papers through" HUD. This means he will personally deliver the application to the bureaucrat he has bribed. The papers sail through and the agent is assured of his \$13,000, whatever happens.

What happens is a quick default by the welfare mother who finds that the furnace does not work, the roof leaks, and water is standing in the basement. Her calls for help to the real-estate agent and HUD are ignored. A building contractor tells her the house is not worth repairing. Her response is to stop making payments, and eventually abandon the house.

This does not bother the real-estate agent. He has sold the mortgage to a banker at a discount. The banker takes the defaulted mortgage to FHA, which pays him the full value.

FHA is left holding the bag, or rather the house, and responsibility for all its defects.

Was this an extreme and unusual scenario? Boyer says no. He points out that in 1972 HUD had an inventory of 44,386 foreclosed and abandoned houses. These were the boarded-up houses Boyer saw on his way to work. HUD would try to sell them again. Often the same scenario was repeated with another speculator pocketing thousands, and dumping the property back on FHA.

Astute bankers found a way to transfer a conventional mortgage, which was about to default, into an FHA mortgage to be paid off by the taxpayer. This required even more corruption of HUD bureaucrats, and larceny by "respectable" bankers.

As in today's scandal, the corruption in HUD came to light when a new administration took over in 1973. President Richard Nixon shut down the low-income housing program, and a Congressional committee called witnesses. Federal grand juries indicted 250 speculators, mortgage bankers, and HUD officials. But few convictions followed.

Shutting down this FHA program threw home buyers into the arms of the savings and loans. They refused to make loans in the inner cities, making the houses there unsaleable. To reduce their inventory, the FHA bulldozed many homes—to produce weed- and refuse-covered vacant lots. The government also bulldozed thousands of poor people's hopes of getting a decent home.

Boyer offers a number of proposals for the reform of HUD. But in a very prophetic paragraph he declares, "I am not optimistic that disclosure of the FHA scandal will lead to a more virtuous future. It may only be a prelude to worse things to come."

Sixteen years later, worse things have come. The cancer in the system has spread to ever higher political and financial circles. The failure of reform in 1973 foreshadows a whitewash in 1989. Corruption is endemic to the profit system, and neither Republicans nor Democrats will eliminate it. They will only pile the costs of the scandal on the backs of the poor.

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Walesa steps in to direct attacks on Polish workers

By ADAM WOOD

Poland should be a nation rejoicing—or so you might think.

Following massive strikes in 1988 against the economic austerity measures imposed through agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Polish government decided to legalize Solidarity and to negotiate with it.

The government, headed by General Wojciech Jaruzelski, realized it had no legitimacy to push through its unpopular economic "reforms." It needed to directly involve Solidarity in the stepped-up attacks on the workers' standard of living.

In April 1989, the "round-table agreements" were signed by leaders of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP, the ruling Stalinist party) and Solidarity leader Lech Walesa. These negotiations led to the legalization of the banned independent union and an agreement to hold rigged parliamentary elections in June in which Solidarity could participate.

The rigged elections were intended to guarantee the Stalinist bureaucracy's full control of the government, with Solidarity—at most—becoming a minority partner in a Stalinist-led coalition.

Solidarity-led government

Despite the fact that Solidarity was allowed only 35 percent of the seats in the Polish Assembly (the Sejm), the working people of Poland used the elections to strike a blow against the ruling PUWP.

Solidarity won all of the seats allotted to it in the Sejm as well as 99 of the 100 seats in the newly created Senate. Voters crossed out the names of Stalinist candidates running unopposed, preventing many from achieving the majority of votes needed to win the election.

Following the electoral rout of the PUWP, Stalinist Prime Minister Czeslaw Kiszczak proved unable to form a government and was forced to step down. After weeks of skirmishes over the number of ministries to be allocated to each of the governmental allies, Solidarity leader Tadeusz Mazowiecki was elected prime minister on Aug. 24.

Under the final agreement, the PUWP would hold the powerful Interior and Defense ministries, and Stalinist leader Jaruzelski would remain in the office of president. All other ministries could be held by Solidarity. This "partnerlike cooperation," the first of its kind in any workers' state, was made possible only after Soviet President Gorbachev called Mieczyslaw Rakowski, head of the PUWP, to insist that he place no obstacles to the formation of a Solidarity-led government.

Solidarity, which the Stalinist bureaucracy tried to smash in 1981 with martial law, was now at the helm of the Polish state.



Power sharing between Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski (left) and Lech Walesa (right) will mean increased austerity.

While it is undeniable that most Poles have been encouraged by the new political openings of the past few months, it is equally clear that great uncertainty and anxiety prevail. The reason is that the new government will have to sink its foundations in the shifting sands of the Polish economy.

At a Solidarity rally on Aug. 20 in Gdansk, which featured Lech Walesa and new Prime Minister Mazowiecki, part of the crowd began chanting "We need bread, not a prime minister."

Indeed, Poland is burdened with an enormous foreign debt of \$40 billion and a stagnant domestic economy. Inflation has hit a rate of 100 percent a year. The government's decision to lift price controls on food products on July 30 resulted in prices of meat, cheese, and milk jumping as much as 500 percent. People are reportedly out in the streets as late as 2 a.m. searching for affordable and available ingredients for a meal.

Workers responded to the price hikes with massive strikes throughout Poland's major industries. Thousands of railworkers in Silesia and Gdansk staged hour-long strikes during the first week of August. Similar strikes were launched by bus drivers and telecommunications workers. One-hour protest strikes

continued after Aug. 11 in over 400 factories.

The leadership of Solidarity supported the one-hour strike tactic as a means to register a protest—but not to force the retreat of the austerity measures. They denounced the workers who sought to extend the strikes. Solidarity's accepted role in this framework is to make the austerity more acceptable to the workers and to prevent destabilizing protests.

Same economic framework

The fact is that Walesa and the majority of the Solidarity leadership (known as the "Working Group") accept the same economic framework as the Stalinists. The basis of the "round-table agreement" between Walesa and Jaruzelski, for example, was that privatization of industry and the loosening of price controls are necessary to attract the intervention of Western capital.

Everyone in the new Polish government—from the PUWP, to Solidarity, to the lone millionaire elected to the new senate—agree that the only solution to Poland's economic problems is the increased introduction of capitalist market mechanisms—which will mean more austerity and a dismantling of state control over industry.

The French financial journal *La Tribune de*

l'Expansion characterized this aspect of the "round-table agreement" in its June 9 issue:

"The new economic order defined by this agreement seeks a greater reintroduction of market mechanisms into Poland. ... According to the document signed by Jaruzelski and Walesa, the march toward marketization of the economy will specifically entail the suppression of the monopoly and state control over the means of production; the partial or total privatization of numerous state industries; the development of stock-issuing corporations, and its corollary, the creation of a stock market by 1991; restrictions on the role of central planning; the reduction of state subsidies to national enterprises; and the termination of prices according to the laws of supply and demand."

The article concludes: "This agreed-to package of reforms resembles a veritable restoration of capitalism."

Jaruzelski and the PUWP were prompted on this pro-capitalist course by Soviet leader Gorbachev, who, in a public letter to the summit leaders of the seven most advanced capitalist countries on July 14, openly called for the greater penetration of capitalism into

(continued on page 15)

Nadezhda Joffe to join U.S. tour

Walnut Publishing is proud to announce that Nadezhda Joffe, imprisoned and persecuted member of the original Bolshevik opposition to Stalin, will be a featured guest at public meetings in Boston and New York in October 1989. Nadezhda's father was the prominent Bolshevik opposition leader Adolph Joffe. He committed suicide in 1927 to protest the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Soon after, as a member of the Young Communists, Nadezhda joined the Trotskyist Left Opposition.

As a result of her activities, Nadezhda was arrested three times and spent several years in prison. She was released in 1956 during the Khrushchev thaw.

Nadezhda, 82, has recently become an active member of Memorial, a group founded by survivors of the political repression that claimed the lives of over 20 million people.



Nadezhda Joffe

A \$3000 fund raising effort has been launched to help finance Nadezhda Joffe's visit. All donations will go directly to these expenses. Please make out checks to Walnut Publishing Co. and earmark "Nadezhda fund."

Joining Nadezhda in her two-city tour will be Esteban Volkov, grandson of Leon Trotsky, and Pierre Broue, Marxist historian and biographer of Trotsky.

Other speakers in a national tour scheduled for 11 cities are Susan Weissman, Ralph Schoenman, Paul Siegel and Carl Finamore. They were all participants in a delegation which recently visited Moscow representing the family of Leon Trotsky. The delegation met with government officials and leaders of today's opposition movement.

Tour schedule

Cleveland	Boston	Chicago
Oct. 13	Oct. 18-19	Oct. 25
Youngstown	New York	Minneapolis
Oct. 14	Oct. 21-23	Oct. 26-27
Cincinnati	Baltimore	San Francisco
Oct. 16	Oct. 24	Oct. 28-30
Kansas City		Los Angeles
Oct. 17		Oct. 31-Nov. 3

Note: Not all speakers will be available to speak in every city. For information on time, place, and speakers, call the Socialist Action branch in your city or the national office. List page 19.