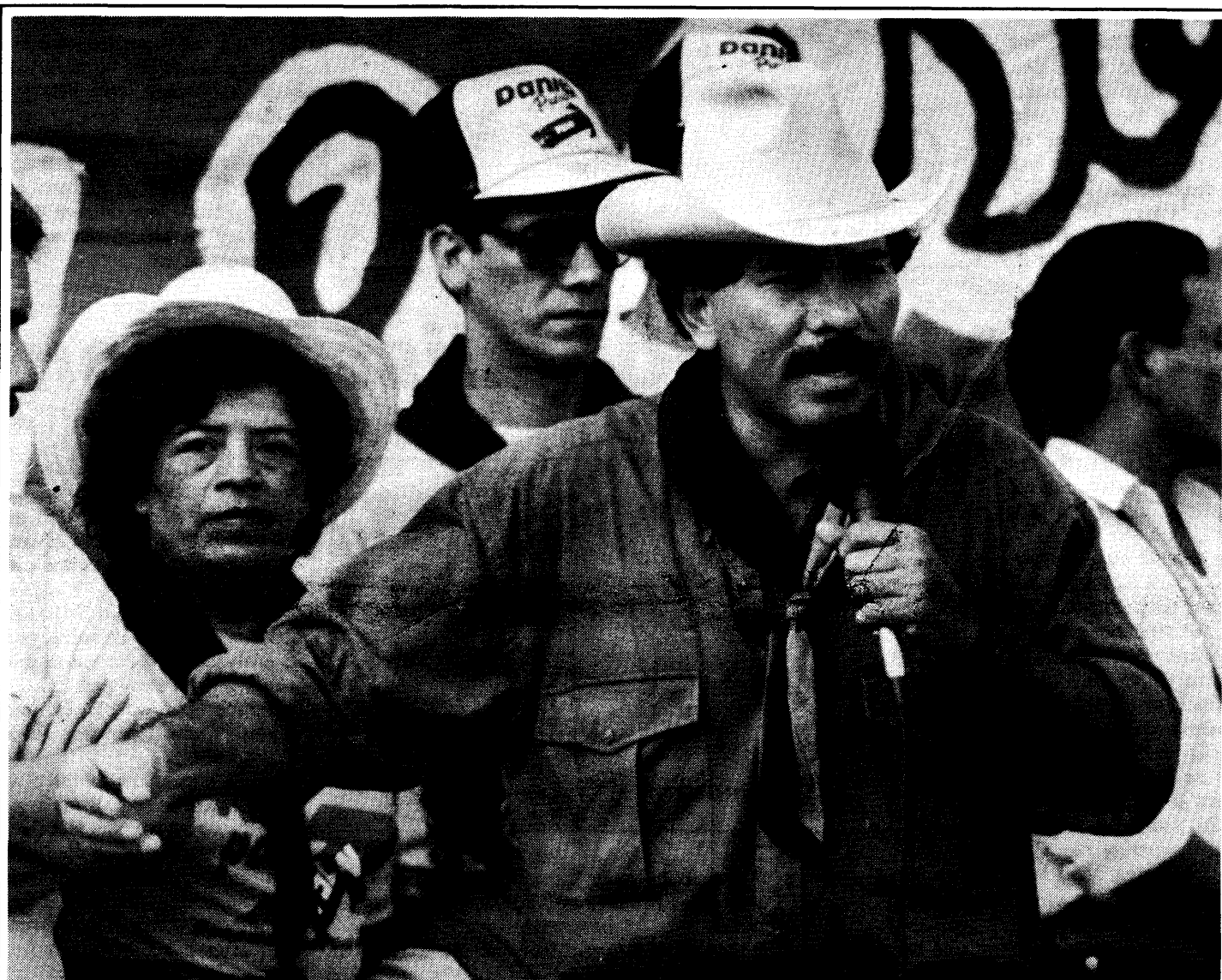




Eastern Europe:
Is
Socialism
Dead?
See pp. 7-13.

Why Sandinistas lost elections in Nicaragua

By ALAN BENJAMIN



President Daniel Ortega campaigning in the town of La Trinidad, 75 miles north of Managua.

The Nicaraguan Revolution was dealt a mortal blow on Feb. 25, when Violeta Chamorro, candidate of the U.S.-financed National Opposition Union (UNO), soundly defeated incumbent President Daniel Ortega of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

A Sandinista victory had been expected by most observers of the Nicaraguan elections. They pointed to opinion polls and to a Sandinista election rally of 800,000 in Managua on Feb. 21, the largest in Nicaraguan history, to back their prediction that the Sandinistas would win.

Even the *New York Times*, one of the major mouthpieces of the U.S. ruling class, warned President Bush to respect an imminent Sandinista victory and to "condition an end to [U.S.] sanctions on continued acceptance [by the Sandinistas] of genuine political pluralism" (Feb. 17).

But to the shock of the Sandinistas and their supporters, the Nicaraguan people—moved by their desire to see an end to economic deprivation and deepening hardships—voted for a candidate who they believed would best deliver U.S. economic aid and hasten an end to the U.S.-contra war. "They voted with their stomachs," is the way most observers described the vote.

"It is clear that at least half of the 800,000 people at the [Feb. 21] closing election rally of the FSLN, and a good number of those interviewed by the pollsters, actually voted for Chamorro," Fernando Lopez, a Nicaraguan election observer, told *Socialist Action*.

"A large proportion of them," Lopez continued, "were government employees. They were scared to publicly reveal their support for Chamorro for fear of losing their jobs if the Sandinistas won. Others were simply too embarrassed to tell. They probably considered themselves supporters of the revolution, but could not vote for six more years of economic austerity—and, besides, they saw no credible alternative."

An incorrect balance sheet

Following the election, the U.S. media asked numerous pro-Sandinista solidarity activists to explain why the Sandinistas lost the election. They said that the Sandinista defeat was due exclusively to the criminal war policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations, which had worn down the Nicaraguan masses and forced them to turn to Chamorro out of desperation.

There is, of course, much truth to this statement. The U.S.-sponsored contra war and economic embargo were consciously aimed at wearing down the revolution and undermining popular support for the government. Billions of dollars in damage and lost income, on top of the tens of thousands of dead and injured, became an unbearable burden on the Nicaraguan people and on an economy already devastated by Somoza's tyranny and by a bloody revolutionary upheaval.

But this explanation is incomplete. For one, it leaves out the complicity of the Democratic Party politicians in Congress. These alleged supporters of peace and democ-

New stage opens in fight for Black majority rule in S. Africa

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

The cry "Free Nelson Mandela" has now become a victory chant. For the 27 years he spent in prison, Mandela never let down his defiance of the white-supremacist regime in South Africa. Mandela's personal struggle was an inspiration—indeed, it became the major symbol—for anti-apartheid fighters everywhere.

This victory can give new impetus to the South African freedom movement to relaunch a mass mobilization to overthrow apartheid and establish Black majority rule.

Freedom for Nelson Mandela was announced by President F.W. de Klerk on Feb. 11. It came on the heels of a series of reforms, including the easing of press restrictions, desegregation of public beaches and other facilities, lifting banning orders against some individuals, suspending the death penalty, and releasing some political prisoners.

On Feb. 2, De Klerk informed parliament

that close to 40 anti-apartheid organizations, including the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) would be unbanned.

"Walk through the open door," De Klerk told his adversaries, "Take your place at the negotiating table."

The government laid out the welcome mat to several other groups besides the ANC. The conservative Inkatha movement, headed by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, was specifically invited to participate in negotiations.

But some left-wing organizations, such as those in the Black Consciousness movement, have been pointedly denied a welcome. De Klerk enforced his divide-and-conquer tactics with the cynical charge that "all sorts of people," including "radicals of the far left," might threaten the life of Nelson Mandela!

"Gorbachev of southern Africa?"

De Klerk said recently that he felt vindicated in his reform measures—despite oppo-

sition among whites on the far right—because South Africa's image had improved around the world.

International sanctions demanded by the anti-apartheid movement have helped deepen the country's economic crisis. And the government has been further shaken by disclosures that it supported a secret "hit squad," responsible for dozens of political assassinations.

Thus the De Klerk regime was gratified when, scarcely a week after Mandela was freed, Britain announced it was ending its ban on new investments in South Africa. President Bush said that he also would weigh proposals to roll back U.S. economic sanctions.

De Klerk is becoming known as a man that leaders in Washington and London can "do business with." In that respect, his reputation as the "Gorbachev of southern Africa" (a phrase coined by former British foreign

(continued on page 16)

(continued on page 5)

A women's work is never done



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

Driving your car around the city at six or seven in the morning will open your eyes to women's burdens. Women are standing on the corners, waiting for the bus, with one or more children draped around them. Sometimes they are holding an infant child in their arms while holding the hand of a toddler.

All of them look tired and sleepy. They have probably been up since the crack of dawn to get ready for childcare and work.

Fixing breakfast, getting the clothes ready, waking sleepy children up, and seeing that they get dressed and fed, then trying to keep them awake while getting herself dressed and ready for work is the way a woman's day begins.

Sickness in the family is another burden. The boss doesn't want to know her problems with fevers, colds, and childcare. Baby sitters or childcare centers do not usually have facilities to separate a sick child from the others and will not allow the child with a fever or cold to come into the childcare group.

So the woman has to frantically search for a relative, friend, or acquaintance to drop her child off. Either that, or miss a day's work and a day's pay. Employers don't allow for chicken pox, measles, earaches, or the million other things that demand the mother stay at home to care for her children's health.

Women who make too many phone calls from their place of work to check upon their child's welfare are usually reprimanded and ordered to "place those calls on your lunch hour," not during working hours.

Who are these women?

Who are these women who shoulder this massive burden? They're usually single women who must work to pay the bills or married women who must work to help pay for the high cost of living, rent, food, etc. They're teachers, waitresses, nurses, pink-collar office workers, saleswomen, and those women who hold those jobs

with long hours and very little pay. They are not your bank executives, stock brokers, or rising stars of industry.

A recent *New York Times* article reported that women who hold second jobs (moonlighting) has increased from 2.2 percent of 28.9 million women workers in 1970 to 5.9 percent of 52.8 million who were working in 1989. The Bureau of Labor Statistics found, in a sampling of the workforce last year, that the number of women with two or more jobs had quintupled, from 636,000 in 1970 to 3.1 million in May 1989.

The number of men who were moonlighting rose more slowly in

the same 20 years, from 3.4 million out of the 48.7 million men who worked in 1970 to 4.1 million of the 64.3 million working men last year. (The percentage of moonlighting among men declined, from 7 percent in 1970 to 6.4 percent in 1989.)

For both men and women, the survey showed that moonlighting

was concentrated among people 25 to 44 years old, the most able-bodied and the most likely to have children to support. The survey also showed that most moonlighting men were married, while most moonlighting women were divorced, separated, widowed, or had never married.

The average woman working

full time is paid 70 percent as much as the average man working full time. When increases in the cost of living are taken into account, hourly wages have fallen about 5 percent in 20 years.

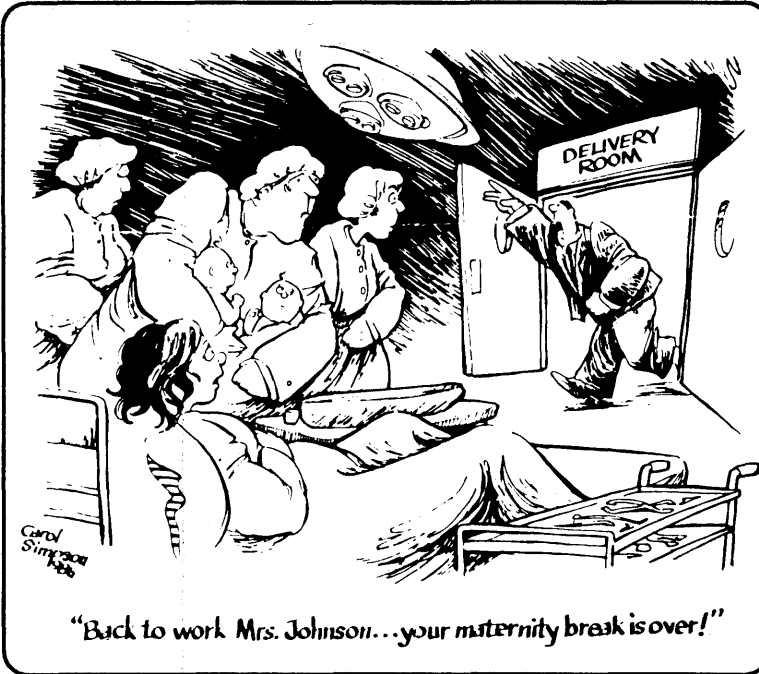
Shorter workweek

Eighty-two years ago, on March 8, 1908, socialist women of New York City marched by the thousands for the shorter workweek; for the end of child labor in the factories, mills, and mines; and for safer working conditions in those workplaces.

That march established March 8 as Women's Day on a national scale, and in 1910 the Socialist Congress made March 8 International Women's Day.

When we see the decline of living standards for women and children in this rich capitalist country, then we know that our sisters over the world are suffering as we are. They too must carry the burden of children and labor on their backs as if they were beasts of burden.

Only a society which puts humankind before profits will ease the burden of all of us, male and female. Happy International Women's Day to all of our sisters, wherever you are!



Why I joined Socialist Action

The following is written by Malik Miah, a former central leader of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Miah was recently undemocratically expelled from that organization for raising his political differences with the SWP's analysis of the airline industry, particularly its analysis of a failed buyout at United Airlines last October, and of the 11-month strike at Eastern Airlines. [See Miah's Eastern strike story on page 20.]

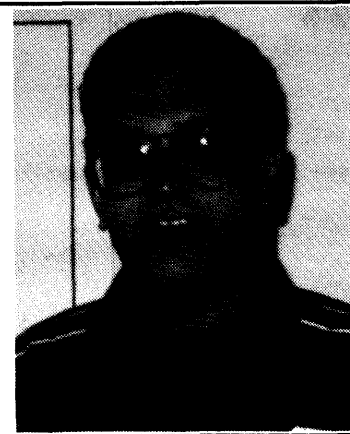
Miah was a member of the SWP for 20 years, serving 15 years as a member of the SWP National Committee. He is a former editor of *The Militant*, the newspaper of the SWP. He edited several books and pamphlets on politics and the Black Liberation struggle, including "The Assassination of Malcolm X."

Although Miah's expulsion will be reviewed by the SWP convention in June 1990, he has since joined Socialist Action. Here he explains why.

Why have I joined Socialist Action (SA) today instead of wait-

Behind the Lines

By Malik Miah
Guest Columnist



ing for the results of the June Socialist Workers Party (SWP) convention? It is the most effective way to respond to the SWP leaders' attempt to keep from their members why I was removed from the party.

In addition, Socialist Action is a revolutionary Marxist organization. The leaders and most of the members of Socialist Action were expelled from the SWP in the early 1980s. At the time, I wholeheartedly agreed with their expulsion. In fact, while I still disagree with SA on many of the political questions that were a factor in their expulsion—theory of Permanent Revolution, role of the Cuban leadership in world politics, how to rebuild an international communist movement—SA has been impacted by national and international developments. It is politically stronger.

SA has gone through two clarifying political splits and has adopted the 1965 organizational resolution of the SWP as its own. While some former SA members sought to dump traditions that had guided the SWP so well for over 50 years, the SA majority said "No."

Since the Political Committee and National Committee of the SWP have decided forthwith that I will no longer be treated as a comrade of the SWP, I had only two choices: drop out of active politics, at least as an independent-thinking revolutionary worker; or seek out another group (or start

one) that stands on the best traditions of Marxism in the United States.

I still consider the SWP as an organization closely identified with those traditions. But the SWP does not want me unless I say I was wrong and the central leaders were correct. Even then I'm not sure I would ever be allowed back in the SWP.

SA's Marxist traditions

On the other hand, Socialist Action stands on those same Marxist traditions and will allow me full democratic rights within the organization. I believe, in light of my recent expulsion from the SWP, that this question of internal democracy is crucial to building a revolutionary party here and abroad.

Furthermore, SA supports building a working-class based party in the United States and urges its members to work at industrial jobs with industrial unions. It orients to the unions. But unlike the SWP, it does not see the current stage of working-class politics as a reflection of greater radicalization of the unions and thus putting them at center stage of U.S. politics.

SA more correctly sees the capitalist system in deep crisis, as best reflected in the 1987 Stock Market Crash and sees a major economic depression on the near horizon. When that recession will hit and which workers will move to resist first, SA does not predict. It seeks,

as Marxists have always done, to join the battles that arise (such as the Eastern Airlines strike) and through that participation advance workers' political and class consciousness.

My agreement with SA on the question of internal democracy and its analysis of the current stage of working-class struggles and how that impacts on work in the trade unions is why I can join forces with SA today.

While a member of the SWP leadership, I raised all my questions through the proper leadership bodies. This is why no one in the San Francisco and Oakland branches was aware of my "counterline" and other "errors" until after I was removed from membership.

I wasn't allowed to answer my accusers in my branch. Even at the SWP plenum, where my appeal was heard, I was not allowed to answer questions or participate in the discussion on whether the charge against me was valid. Is that democratic?

"Join forces with SA!"

I urge former members of the SWP who felt they were unjustly expelled or forced to resign out of frustration with the party's methods to seriously reconsider their political future. If you want to remain in politics, fight back. Former SWP leaders Comrades Barry Sheppard and Caroline Lund have taken this course and joined Socialist Action. Consider our actions and join forces with SA.

SA's goal is a fusion with the SWP that protects the rights of the membership. Both SA and the SWP are small revolutionary nuclei. Fused into one group they can be more effective and lay the basis for building a stronger Marxist party in the United States.

Malik Miah has put together an 80-page bulletin documenting his political expulsion. Those interested in obtaining a copy can reach Miah c/o Socialist Action. A \$4 contribution to cover expenses is suggested.—the editors

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By JIM HENLE

The murder of six prominent Jesuit priests and their two co-workers in San Salvador last December brought the issue of El Salvador back into the U.S. press, which prefers U.S. involvement there to remain a dirty secret.

Following on the heels of a spectacular military offensive by the FMLN guerrilla forces, this atrocity created a deep sense of outrage in U.S. religious communities and again raised the question of U.S. support to the Salvadoran government.

The Cristiani government continues to cover up high-level officers responsible for this brutal slaying, one of the most publicized of El Salvador's estimated 70,000 military/death-squad murders over the last 10 years. During this period, the United States has sent billions of dollars in aid. Currently, aid flows in at the rate of \$1.5 million a day.

A timely call to action

A call for ending all U.S. aid was thus timely and necessary. A national day of actions against the U.S. war in Central America has been called for Saturday, March 24. Commemorating the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, an array of peace and religious organizations have called for marches and rallies in Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Los Angeles; and Austin, Texas.

The largest march, expected by organizers to be in the tens of thousands, will be in Washington, D.C. Event sponsors include CISPES, the Nicaragua Network, NISGUA, SANE-Freeze, the Rainbow Coalition, and several national religious denominations.

Demands center on U.S. intervention against El Salvador and Nicaragua, calling for cutting off all U.S. aid to the vicious Cristiani regime, and an end to the policy of contra harassment and economic strangulation of Nicaragua. Other key demands are "no invasions; end the occupation of Panama; U.S. troops and bases out of Central America; end military aid to Guatemala; cut military spending and fund human needs."

This action is receiving its primary support from Central America activists and concerned religious constituencies. Unlike the April 25 march of three years ago, there is only marginal labor support. A number of unions have backed away from the demand of ending all aid to El Salvador, either remaining silent or focusing on legislation such as the Kerry Bill.

The Kerry Bill, named after the Democratic senator from Massachusetts, calls for ending military aid and suspending economic aid, while tying future support to the Salvadoran government to "progress in human rights."

Polishing the image of a right-wing military regime is necessary when atrocities occasionally reach the attention of the public in this country. Conditional aid bills provide a mechanism for this. Kerry and other Democrats in Congress hope to use U.S. leverage to produce a more "stable" situation in El Salvador, while securing U.S. business interests "in our backyard."

Many opponents of U.S. policy in El Salvador back these legislative efforts. The movement against U.S. intervention in Nicaragua has similarly played the legislative game, for example, by supporting lesser-evil "humanitarian aid" bills for the contras.

But far from being stepping stones to a cut-off in U.S. aid, such bills are designed to derail the anti-intervention movement by giving a humanistic cover to U.S. interventionism. Moreover, focusing on this legisla-

Stop U.S. Intervention in Central America!

What's the most effective way to build a movement



tion demobilizes the movement, which can only grow by organizing an independent force around the compelling principle of self-determination.

D.C. march: smaller than needed

That this march in Washington, D.C., will be smaller than previous marches—and certainly smaller than what is needed to end U.S. intervention—is due to many factors.

The anti-intervention movement has been increasingly quiet as it relies on diplomatic negotiations for the solution of fundamental problems in Central America.

Confusion and false hopes have followed the diplomatic "peace process." While liberation movements like the Sandinistas and the FMLN have every right to enter into negotiations with the United States, it is necessary to recognize that the "peace process" promoted by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias in 1987 has provided a vehicle for the continuation of U.S. domination in the region.

The U.S. antiwar movement should forthrightly oppose the right of the U.S. government to negotiate the future of the peoples of Central America. The United States wields enormous military and economic power which it uses to exact one concession after another from the liberation movements at the negotiating table and behind the scenes. This is particularly so when the USSR is willing to cut off vital aid to liberation movements as a way of ingratiating itself with the U.S. administration.

The task of U.S. citizens is not to support the results of negotiations that will inevitably reflect U.S. terms, but to organize

around ending U.S. intervention altogether.

Unfortunately, the March 24 Washington, D.C., organizers have called for "an end to all U.S. aid" (an anti-intervention position) and "support a political negotiated solution" (a call for the U.S. government to intervene in a supposedly progressive way in El Salvador). Removal by local activists of this unprincipled demand for negotiations would help orient the action toward respect for the basic right of self-determination.

Adapting to Democrats

The D.C. organizers have also backed away from a clear anti-interventionist position around the Panama invasion. At a Jan. 15 organizing meeting in Washington, D.C., a debate was held on whether to include Panama at all. Subsequently, the official poster and a national youth call failed to mention the Panama invasion.

The Panama invasion was a classic example of U.S. gunboat diplomacy, securing U.S. capitalists' interests in the Canal and legitimizing military adventures in the region.

The omission of the Panama invasion on the poster and youth call reflect a desire to not offend supposed Democratic allies of the Salvadoran people like Senator Kerry, who joined in the euphoria as the imperialist invasion progressed.

Nothing makes clearer the real attitude of Democrats and Republicans in Congress toward Central America than their support for this brutal invasion. To tailor principles to gain their support is to sell your birthright for a mess of pottage.

The mass demonstrations that helped force U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam were built on a clear anti-interventionist basis. They were effective in reaching the greatest number of people with principled slogans like "Out Now!"

Militant form of lobbying

The organizers of the Romero march have departed from a correct strategic orientation in another important respect. Non-violent civil disobedience (CD) is being set to immediately follow the march, rather than on the next day, as has been the norm.

After the main rally, a march to surround the White House will begin. An area will be declared "Romero Plaza," and CD will ensue. This high profile of CD indicates a move away from mobilizing the greatest number of people.

CD actions by their nature exclude most working people, who are unwilling to face arrest and jail. Instead, CD relies on a small group of people to convey outrage in highly visible ways. In this context, it is a militant form of lobbying, rather than a means for mobilizing the forces that can change the political landscape.

Despite the problems with the March 24 action, an important statement of opposition to U.S. policy in Central America will be made by thousands of protesters. But to be truly effective in staying the hand of the warmakers in Washington, the anti-intervention movement must come to grips with the grave political shortcomings that have affected this Romero commemoration rally in Washington, D.C. ■

By ALEX CHIS

SAN FRANCISCO—Organizing for the Archbishop Romero Commemoration March to End the U.S. War in Central America, called for March 24 in this city, is well on its way.

Participants will gather at 10:30 a.m. in Jefferson Sq. Park, Gough and Turk Streets here, and march to a rally at the Civic Center Plaza at 12:30 p.m., where entertainers and speakers will include Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Rosario Anaya, and Ying Lee Kelley.

As the march passes the Federal Building, coffins will be laid down, with the marchers covering them with wreaths and crosses commemorating the dead in the Central American struggles.

S.F. protest gains momentum

Building for the action has been quite encouraging. Meetings are being held to reach out to the community in both the East Bay and San Francisco. A recent San Francisco meeting showed students from area campuses starting to organize, with Sacramento State and Sonoma State represented.

Speakers from Central American refugee groups have been invited to speak before area high school and college classes. Student organizers at many area campuses, including UC Berkeley, are planning rallies and showings of the film *Romero*.

The coalition has also been able to reach out with some success to the labor move-

ment. The Santa Clara County Central Labor Council and the San Benito County Central Labor Council have both endorsed the March 24 actions.

The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Locals Nos. 6 and 34 have also endorsed. Further labor endorsements are expected, as area religious leaders, representing a wide range of denominations, continue to speak before union gatherings.

The fact that the San Francisco coalition took a position early on of not calling any civil disobedience actions has made reaching out more possible in this area.

EPOCA, the Environmental Project on

Central America, has been reaching out to other environmental groups in the area. The Committees in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador in San Francisco and the East Bay are providing the main day-to-day organizational support for the action, lending staff support and tabling to help build it.

While the lack of any major national support from the labor movement, and the political climate engendered by the Bush-Gorbachev deals, has made it unlikely the March 24 actions will be truly massive, they are an important demonstration by people in this country who want to respond to the American government by telling it "NO! to All U.S. Aid to El Salvador," — "NO! to the U.S. Invasion of Panama," and "NO! to U.S. War in Central America!"

All Out on March 24 in San Francisco!

Boston-area antiwar speakout draws broad range of activists

BOSTON—As one participant put it, the Boston Area Speak-Out on El Salvador "was a different kind of meeting" for the region's Central America solidarity movement. Held on Feb. 11, and organized to demand an end to all U.S. aid to El Salvador, the meeting was attended by over 150 antiwar activists and featured a broad representation from labor, the churches, the women's movement, and the solidarity movement.

Noted historian Howard Zinn, professor emeritus at Boston University and author of "A People's History of the United States," addressed the crowd on an upbeat note. He asserted that "now, for the first time in American history, there is a very large number of people in the United States who are aware of what is going on in Central America."

That awareness was evident in Linda Harrison, a telephone worker and leader of Local 2222 of the IBEW who recently won a militant strike against Nynex.

Harrison prefaced her written remarks with an explanation of what brought her to the meeting. "I have to tell you one thing—that from this strike, I've become angry. And because I've become angry, I've become more aware. That's why I'm here. When you access people like me," she declared, "you know that you've begun to win your battle."

Her call for international worker solidarity was low key but eloquent. "If I allow a worker in another country to be paid less for his [or her] labor, I will be paid less for mine. If I allow a worker in another country to lose his [or her] rights, I will lose mine. It's as simple as that."

"Drug-mania" propaganda

Paul Atwood of the Smedley Butler Brigade of Veterans for Peace denounced the Panama invasion, pointing out the danger the invasion represents to El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the rest of Central America.

Atwood noted that "the U.S. has been dishing out retail terror up until now. The invasion signals their intention to escalate to wholesale terror." He characterized it as "a propaganda tactic to convince the American public that the Bush Administration is serious about the so-called 'war on drugs.'"

"In fact," said Atwood, "the CIA and other agencies invented this drug-mania.... It is no accident that crack is now afflicting the very people in society who benefit least [from society], and who have the best reason to oppose our racist and inequitable system."

"Just as the bogey-man of a 'world communist conspiracy' was invented, so too have the international drug traffickers, who are utterly dependent upon the services and capital of banks and other financial institutions in this country." Atwood warned that the invasion of Panama may be a prelude "for a deadly assault planned for the entire

region."

The Rev. Graylan Ellis-Hagler, a leading spokesperson for Boston's Black community, stated that "this country has been the plantation owner of the world, and it's time for it to stop—in South Africa, in Central America, in the Caribbean."

Ellis-Hagler condemned U.S. economic and military support to El Salvador. "Millions of dollars a day go to El Salvador. For what? For death squads. For keeping people down and 'in their place,' for exploiting workers and poor people ... to murder priests, to murder housekeepers, to murder all types of people, and workers. That's where our money goes."

"As we look around this country, what do we see on our streets? We see sick and suffering addicts who have no place to go and recover. We see men and women without a place to lay their heads. And yet we spend millions of dollars a day in El Salvador—for death."

International solidarity

Ellen Zucker, a vice president of the Boston chapter of the National Organization for Women, proclaimed NOW's solidarity with the people of El Salvador [see sidebar]. She drew parallels between their struggle and two struggles taking place in the streets of Boston—to keep abortion clinics open, and against the racist "stop and search" policy used by Boston cops to terrorize the Black and Latino communities. [See *Socialist Action*, February 1990.]

Jean-Claude Martineau, noted Haitian author and activist, recounted the "tremendous brutality" against the people of Haiti "that matches apartheid." He spoke of the famine there that is every bit as bad as that in Ethiopia.

Martineau implored the Central American solidarity movement to address the issue of Haiti, and described how the story of his country is buried in the U.S. press. The American people, he said, are the "least-informed people on Earth," and the function of the American press is to misinform and serve the interests of the American rulers.

Looking to Eastern Europe, Martineau portrayed the uprisings there as "a struggle for self-determination," and compared the actions of the workers and students there with those of the people of Central America and the Caribbean.

Oscar Chacon of the Interfaith Office of Accompaniment gave an update on the cur-

rent situation in El Salvador. Also speaking were Felix Arroyo of the Democratic Latino Committee, and Mary Jean Maguire from the Cambridge Sister City project. Jim Henle chaired on behalf of the Coalition for Peace and Justice in El Salvador, the organizers of the speak-out.

Greetings were read from Pedro Cruz of FENASTRAS (National Federation of

Salvadoran Workers). A collection was taken for two Salvadoran union funds, and a meeting was announced to build the March 24 demonstration in Washington, D.C., to demand an end to the U.S. war in Central America.

At the conclusion, the 150 participants joined a nearby meeting called to celebrate the release from prison of Nelson Mandela.



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

'Their guns and money help kill innocent people in El Salvador'

We reprint here major excerpts from a speech by Boston NOW Vice President Ellen Zucker to the "Speak-Out to End All U.S. Aid to El Salvador."

Tonight, right before I came over here, I heard George Bush waxing eloquently about human rights and democracy. I wish desperately that I could believe him.

I knew that I had to come over here and make this speech, and had been thinking long and hard about what goes on in El Salvador, and why we—as the National Organization for Women—must take a stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in El Salvador, against U.S. intervention in that country, and against U.S. financial and military support of the repressive regime in that country.

It is somewhat ironic to listen to what has gone on in the past few months and to look at our government's reaction. We hear them talk about democratic movements. They talk of civil rights. But we have to wonder: How can they do this?

How dare they talk about civil rights when we know that they are funding death squads

in El Salvador. How can they care about democracy when they work so shamelessly with those who would deny the voice of public opinion in El Salvador and throughout Latin America?

U.S. seeks to control

We know that our government's actions have everything to do with its desire to control, and very little to do with that precious word "democracy." We know that because of what they do in Latin America, and we know that because of what they do here. They offer no response to the fact that their guns and their money help kill innocent people in El Salvador.

We know this also because there are other forms of [U.S. government] violence that take place not in El Salvador but in our city's streets, and in our country. We know that they encourage acts of violence against all those who threaten their control—working people, people of color, and women.

So while they fund death squads in El Salvador, here they urge the smashing of unions, here they endorse terrorizing activities—"stop and search" policies that terrorize

the communities of color. And here they seek to empower the terrorists of Operation Rescue, who would deny [us] our right to control our own bodies and deny us access to health care and abortion services.

And so, while we should be absolutely shocked by their actions in El Salvador, and we wish that we could believe the words of our president tonight, we know that we can't. The list is too long; the history is too bloody.

We need to condemn the violence in El Salvador, but we can't just concentrate on that which is far away. We need to be in solidarity with these sisters and brothers, but we also have to look at what is happening in our city's streets.

We need to stand up and say that we do not approve of the "stop and search" policy in this city. We need to fight with our sisters and brothers in trade unions to make sure that their benefits are not cut back and their unions are not slowly eroded.

And we need to make sure that we are out there protecting every woman's right to choose. That means ensuring access to clin-

ics. That means getting out there at obscene hours on Saturday mornings to make sure that you can get to that door, that you can get an abortion, and that they [Operation Rescue] leave.

They're to blame

Now, there's an interesting thing happening in this city. There are people—politicians, the police, Mayor Flynn—telling us that we're expanding the violence. But our presence, we know, has made a substantial difference in the lives of the people who come to these clinics.

They say that our presence at the clinics is, in fact, escalating the violence. It sounds all too familiar, doesn't it. It's now our fault, they try to tell us, that the thugs of Operation Rescue get there and try to take the doors.

Well, we can't relax. We have to stand up and say that's not right. We have to stand up and say that we know we're responsible for keeping those doors open.

I also take a page out of what Nelson Mandela wrote, and what Nelson Mandela said this afternoon about mass action. It is with the position of mass action that our victory is assured.

We all should remember those words. NOW will stand with the people of El Salvador as they reach for freedom, and we must make sure that their voices are not denied. We must equally stand with our sisters and brothers in the streets of this city to make sure that civil rights are not denied here. ■

...Nicaraguan elections

(continued from page 1)

racy were fully aware of the illegal acts of the Reagan administration in pursuing funding for the contras, but went along with the administration's policy, voting time after time for so-called humanitarian aid to the contras.

The Reagan-Bush villain explanation also leaves out the complicity of the Soviet bureaucracy and the capitalist regimes in Latin America, all of whom pushed a deadly "peace plan" onto the Sandinista leadership in order to steer the revolution into a dead end from which it could not emerge.

Indeed, in mid-1987 the U.S. ruling class adopted a more flexible anti-Sandinista policy. Seeing that the contras were unable to hold any portion of Nicaraguan territory, U.S. policymakers turned to Costa Rican President Oscar Arias and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev for help.

They wanted Arias and Gorbachev (and their cronies) to put the kind of economic and diplomatic pressure on the Sandinistas that could force them to make major concessions to the U.S. government and the contras.

An editorial in the *New York Times* (Aug. 15, 1987) explained this shift. It called for the implementation of a "peace treaty [to] achieve the contras' purposes—like ending the emergency-rule dictatorship [sic], giving real freedom to opposition parties, and holding internationally supervised elections."

Arias and Gorbachev came to the aid of U.S. imperialism. Arias drafted a "peace plan" which gradually gave the contras at the bargaining table everything they had been unable to obtain on the battlefield: political legitimacy, the release of all Somoza and contra prisoners, elections in which they could obtain unlimited financing from the U.S. government, and more. In other words, they were given unfettered freedom to mobilize against the Nicaraguan Revolution.

Role of Soviet bureaucracy

For his part, Gorbachev wielded the threat of withholding vitally needed economic aid—primarily Soviet oil—to pressure Nicaragua into accepting all the counterrevolutionary provisions of the Arias Plan that the Sandinistas had vowed never to accept. Gorbachev was anxious to demonstrate his willingness to help resolve "regional conflicts" in exchange for increased imperialist credits and investment in the Soviet Union.

Joseph C. Harsch, in an article in the Feb. 6, 1988, *Christian Science Monitor*, fully captured the role of the Soviet bureaucracy:

"One of the more interesting facts on the world scene now is that Moscow is not saving Daniel Ortega Saavedra. Mr. Ortega, the president of Nicaragua, is in political retreat under the pressures that forced him to lift his state of emergency, permit opposition rallies, and release some of his political prisoners. None of this would have happened had Moscow given him the economic and military support for which he has repeatedly asked.

"The Soviets' biggest omission has been in the supply of oil.... Soviet oil or Soviet money for oil would make it possible for Mr. Ortega to defy his neighbors and the Arias peace plan that he has been forced to accept. He has not been able to defy them."

Harsch, an editorial writer for the *Monitor*, went on to fully describe Soviet policy toward Nicaragua. He then concluded: "The chances are that Soviet neglect damaged the Sandinista cause more, perhaps much more, than the contras and the U.S. boycott did."

Sandinista responsibility

The biggest problem with the explanations advanced by most solidarity activists concerning Chamorro's victory is that they let the Sandinista leaders totally off the hook for their responsibility in paving the way for this historic defeat.

The Sandinistas persisted in maintaining a capitalist mixed economy—even when it became crystal clear that the Nicaraguan capitalists, who were subsidized by the Sandinista government to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars per year, were taking the money out of the country instead of investing it productively in the economy.

According to a report published by the Managua-based CRIES Research Institute in 1988, the flight of capital between 1979, the

year the Sandinista revolution triumphed, and 1988 reached \$1.7 billion, roughly 40 percent of the total value of the damage resulting from the U.S.-contra war.

To this day, the Nicaraguan capitalists control more than 60 percent of the Nicaraguan economy. The percentage of their control of the agro-export sector is even higher.

With such preponderant control over the commanding heights of the economy, the Nicaraguan capitalists have been able to bring the economy to its knees—mainly through the process of decapitalization—while falsely claiming that Sandinista "mismanagement" is responsible for the economic chaos.

Throughout the 10 years of the Nicaraguan Revolution, the Nicaraguan capitalists acted as the internal agents of the contras and U.S. imperialism. But the Sandinistas obstinately refused to break off their one-sided "partnership" with the Nicaraguan capitalists. And by failing to do this, they were compelled more and more to make the Nicaraguan workers and peasants shoulder the burden of the increasing hardships and austerity.

In an interview which appeared in *New Left Review* in July-August 1987, FSLN Commander Tomás Borge actually stated that the Sandinistas had "sacrificed the working class" in pursuit of their alliance with the capitalists. He said:

"The Nicaraguan bourgeoisie has not resigned itself to losing political power and is fighting with all its weapons—including economic weapons which threaten the very existence of the economy. It is no accident that the bourgeoisie has been given so many economic incentives, more than the workers; we ourselves have been more attentive in giving the bourgeoisie economic opportunities than in responding to the demands of the working class.

"We have sacrificed the working class in favor of the economy as part of a strategic plan; but the bourgeoisie continues to resist, sometimes boycotting the economy for the



sake of its political interests."

The Nicaraguan working class, which waged bitter strikes against the Sandinista government's austerity policies in 1988-89, had a chance to vent their anger at the Sandinistas on election day 1990. Most of the working-class districts of Managua, Leon, and the other main cities voted overwhelmingly for Chamorro.

The Nicaraguan peasants were also sacrificed by the Sandinistas' "mixed-economy" strategy.

While the Sandinistas did distribute land to approximately 70,000 farm families—largely under pressure from peasant land occupations and from the contra inroads among the peasants—the remaining 60,000 farm families never received any land from the government. Their hopes in receiving indi-

vidual titles to the land were dashed—and they too turned to Chamorro and her U.S. backers in the hope of securing a better life.

"Everything will get better"

Daniel Ortega's 1990 electoral campaign promised the Nicaraguans that "Everything will get better." The Sandinistas hoped that their new package of political and economic concessions to the capitalists—a policy known as *concertación*—and their seemingly assured victory in the February elections would convince the U.S. government to end the contra war and the trade embargo against Nicaragua.

On the eve of the elections, Daniel Ortega reaffirmed in the strongest terms yet the Sandinistas' willingness to abandon and repudiate the Salvadoran freedom struggle and the FMLN guerrilla fighters. Ortega also pledged that no more land would be redistributed to the peasants and that, in fact, some land illegally seized would be returned to the former owners.

And to prove their good intentions of coexisting peacefully with U.S. imperialism, Sandinista leaders even leaked the idea that numerous representatives of the "patriotic" capitalist sectors would be taken back into the government following a Sandinista electoral victory.

These Sandinista statements were applauded by contra representatives and U.S. government officials, who, expecting a Sandinista victory, were willing to accept the deal. Contra leader Arturo Cruz, for example, is quoted by the *New York Times* (Feb. 22) as saying that the best hope for the Bush administration would be a narrow Sandinista victory, which would force a "cabinet of national reconstruction, including Violeta Chamorro and the united opposition parties."

But Ortega's election campaign, replete with T-shirts and baby-kissing, provided no solutions to the desperate plight facing the Nicaraguan people—just promises that things would get better thanks to eventual U.S. aid. The Sandinistas offered no revolutionary alternative to defend and advance the Nicaraguan Revolution. In fact, their campaign represented a pledge to further reverse the gains of the revolution.

The Nicaraguan people saw the annual inflation rate surge to close to 30,000 percent in 1989. They saw their average real income decline by more than 70 percent over the past 10 years. They saw various versions of the Sandinistas' *concertación* implemented in the past—but to no avail.

It is quite natural that in this context, a majority of the Nicaraguan people, seeing no way out of the economic crisis other than reliance on the U.S. government, should opt for the candidate who could best secure a deal with U.S. imperialism: Violeta Chamorro. Why vote for Ortega when Chamorro is most likely to deliver the goods?

A new situation

Whether the United States will be able to deliver the goods to the Nicaraguan people—at least at the hoped-for levels—is another matter.

U.S. policymakers, who have funded the contras and their 1990 election campaign, will obviously fully support the Chamorro government. It is their creature. But, surprisingly, in the two days following the elections, numerous U.S. government spokespersons and economic advisers warned that economic aid to Nicaragua would be moderate and "far below expectations."

They argued that U.S. investors were more anxious to penetrate into Eastern Europe than Nicaragua, and that in the days of mounting budget deficits, the economic aid trough had all but dried up. Obviously, to the extent the Nicaraguan people do not see an improvement in their standard of living under Chamorro, social unrest is bound to resume at some undetermined point in the future.

But whatever happens in the long term, one thing is certain. The Nicaraguan Revolution—and the entire world revolutionary movement—has been dealt a tremendous blow. Absorbing the lessons of this defeat will be essential for the next wave of revolutionists in Nicaragua and for all those around the world seeking to advance the struggle for socialism. ■

For reasons of space, part IV of Linda Thompson's series on the environment will be published in our April issue.

A critical assessment of the Sandinista Revolution



• **Moisés Hassan** (former Sandinista leader and ex-mayor of Managua):

"In a short space, Alan Benjamin has selected the essential issues facing the Nicaraguan Revolution and presented a coherent analysis of the social forces in contention over the past decade.

"Foreign observers who support the revolution tend to uncritically echo the policy positions of the Sandinista leadership, thereby doing a disservice to the revolution itself. Benjamin has avoided this pitfall. He is not afraid to approach the problems confronting the revolution and to offer an alternative solution to the crisis facing Nicaragua."

• **John Weeks**, Professor of International Economics, Middlebury College:

"For those who look for new thinking on Nicaragua, 'Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution' is necessary reading. Alan Benjamin offers a well-argued answer to the question, where does the revolution go from here?"

• **Joe Ricciardi**, Economist, academic visitor, Central Bank of Nicaragua:

"A useful treatment of Nicaragua's mixed economy."

• **Professor James Rhodes**, Luther College (*Library Journal*):

"Benjamin provides a tightly argued and carefully documented case for what he terms 'an incomplete revolution.' This book is unique in that it assesses the impact of U.S. policy within the Nicaraguan political system."

"Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution"

by Alan Benjamin, editor of *Socialist Action* newspaper, in collaboration with researchers at Managua's ITZTANI Institute, 186 pp. Introduction by Rod Holt and Jeff Mackler. To order, send \$8.95 (includes \$1 postage) to: Walnut Publishing Co., 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Right-wing terrorists fail to close down Pittsburgh abortion clinics

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action



Pro-choice clinic defenders in Cincinnati, Ohio, successfully hold back OR fanatics during June demonstration.

By CAROLINE LUND

PITTSBURGH—Anti-abortion bigots have made Pennsylvania a major national focus. The Pennsylvania legislature recently passed what has been called the most restrictive state abortion law since the July 1989 Supreme Court ruling that gave the states leeway to restrict abortion.

At the same time, Operation Rescue (OR) and other right-wing groups are employing terrorist methods against abortion clinics here.

Last summer, Operation Rescue used an old car to block the door of a clinic in the East Liberty section of Pittsburgh. OR fanatics chained themselves to the car and under the car to prevent patients entering. On

another occasion, an arson attempt was made against the East Liberty clinic.

Last fall, OR managed to smear gallons of tar all over the interior of the downtown Women's Health Services clinic, which cost thousands of dollars to repair.

But these tactics have not deterred the clinics from remaining open and providing services to patients. The clinics have been aided by some 200 volunteer escorts, who take their turns standing on corners near clinic entrances every Saturday. These volunteers greet arriving patients and escort them past the anti-abortion fanatics and into the clinics.

Wearing bright yellow tee-shirts saying "pro-choice escort," the escorts have become a well-known fixture on Pittsburgh streets.

The pro-choice movement here was strengthened and unified by the formation of the Campaign for Abortion Rights two years ago. This organization helps coordinate and focus the efforts of a broad spectrum of groups, including the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), the League of Women Voters, the YWCA, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Women of Color for Reproductive Rights, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and the United Electrical Workers union.

On Feb. 17, the Women's Health Services clinic was targeted by a new religious anti-abortion outfit called Project Multitude, which was holding its national conference at the convention center in Pittsburgh.

Abortion rights advocates began to gather at 6:15 a.m. to defend the clinic. By mid-morning, police estimated that some 1200 anti-abortion and pro-choice demonstrators filled the street in front of the clinic building.

As the patients arrived, well-organized pro-choice escorts formed human wedges around them to plow a path through the crowd of anti-abortion bigots. All 37 patients were able to enter the clinic and receive treatment, although a dozen chose to enter at 6 a.m. to avoid the harassment.

Major builders of the Feb. 17 pro-choice action were NARAL (which organized the clinic escorts), NOW, and the Campaign for Abortion Rights.

On the legal front, the ACLU and other pro-choice forces won a victory on Jan. 11, when a federal district judge placed an injunction on enforcement of two key provisions of Pennsylvania's new restrictive law on abortions. The court ruled against sections requiring a 24-hour waiting period before any abortion, and on requiring notification of the woman's husband.

The new law, which took effect Jan. 16, bans all abortions after the 24th week, unless the life or permanent health of the woman is endangered. It also bans all abortions for the reason of sex-selection (which virtually never takes place).

Despite this victory, the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act of 1989 is an attack on women's rights. Doctors who perform abortions have spoken out against the new law, pointing to the chilling effect of the threat of felony charges against doctors.

"To this point, there has been no criminal liability [in performing abortions]," said Dr. Morris Turner of the Allegheny Reproductive Health Center in East Liberty. "We're talking crime here. We're talking jail. It's very disheartening."

Doctors now face seven years in prison and fines of up to \$15,000 for violating the 24-week limit or the sex-selection ban.

On Jan. 6, Dr. Turner's office was attacked by a crowd of anti-abortion protesters. Twenty-three were arrested. The pro-choice escorts have offered their services to doctors who have been under attack, but so far they have simply demanded police protection.

Speaking of the anti-abortion terrorists, Dr. Turner vowed, "I am not going to let a group like this change me."

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

An important discussion is taking place in the feminist movement: Can feminists advance women's rights in the electoral arena and, if so—how?

In California, the discussion takes the form of a debate over whether or not to endorse Dianne Feinstein, who is running for governor in the Democratic Party primary. Feinstein is promoting her candidacy among women's organizations on the basis of being a woman and her new-found support for the pro-choice cause.

Of course, feminists in the National Organization for Women (NOW) and other groups—particularly those in San Francisco, where Feinstein was the mayor—are all too familiar with Feinstein's actual record in office.

In a recent meeting in San Francisco held to discuss the Feinstein candidacy, NOW members exposed her dismal record. Feinstein, they pointed out, opposed San Francisco's comparable-worth settlements to increase the pay of women workers, vetoed a pro-choice resolution, gave financial support to an anti-choice candidate, played a leadership role in defeating a ballot proposition that would have expanded public childcare centers, fired people serving on the Commission on the Status of Women when they didn't toe her line, and more.

Those activists who sought NOW's endorsement of Feinstein argued that it's necessary to support women over men in elections because women are bound to be more supportive of at least some women's issues in the halls of government.

But the tactic of promoting women candidates just because they are women without regard for their record on the issues is not very appealing. While it's apparent that the men who run the government do not represent women at all, they clearly do not represent most men either.

In fact, the only segment of the population fully represented by the Democrats and Republicans are the super-rich—who seek to preserve their power and privileges at the ex-

Women's rights movement debates electoral strategy

pense of the rest of us.

The women's movement has made great strides in winning the support of working-class men. After all, working-class men have an interest in women obtaining their full rights. When some people (such as women or Black people) earn lower wages based on their sex or race, this just drives all wages down.

An electoral blind alley

One proponent of the idea that women candidates should "get extra points" is Eleanor Smeal, former president of the National Organization for Women. Smeal's role in NOW was to steer the organization into electoral politics, especially toward the Democratic Party.

Today, Smeal and current NOW President Molly Yard claim to advocate "independence" for the women's movement in the electoral arena. They've even promoted the idea of NOW helping to form an independent political party at some future time, and they set up a commission to explore this project.

At the NOW national conference last July, the idea of an independent party was discussed and embraced by enthusiastic delegates who were sick and tired of the betrayals by Democratic politicians. Since that time, however, the whole concept of independent political action has been reshaped and distorted by the NOW leadership.

Today Yard and Smeal propose that NOW endorse candidates for public office regardless of their political affiliation. Whether the candidates are Democrats or Republicans, endorsement would be based on their commitment to the pro-choice position on abortion. Even a watered-down, half-way pro-choice position (such as the position held by Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder) is sufficient grounds for endorsement, say the NOW

leaders.

While this moves NOW out of the Democratic Party's back-pocket to some small extent, it is a far cry from "independence." All it means in real life is that, if none of the Democrats in contention claim to be pro-choice, NOW will endorse an occasional Republican.

For mass action!

The voters themselves have a deeper understanding of the two-party political shell game than the NOW leadership. Opinion polls and the high abstention on election day reveal that more and more Americans have come to believe that neither the Republicans nor the Democrats can offer a solution to the pressing problems of the day—such as homelessness, poverty, racism, the poisoning of the environment, and a government at war against women's fundamental rights.

The women's rights movement needs a strategy of mass action to combat sexism, not a strategy of promoting candidates from either of the two parties of sexism and racism. We must keep our movement in the streets.

The movement already represents the opinion of the majority of Americans. We have the ability to mobilize millions of people in protest rallies, marches, and teach-ins. Through these activities, we can educate and attract millions more who may be undecided on the full range of women's rights issues. Finally, we have the ability to effectively defend the abortion clinics against right-wing thugs.

No politician will win our rights for us. During the Vietnam War, likewise, it was not the election of so-called peace candidates that forced the U.S. government to pull out, but the ever-growing mass movement in the

streets (combined, of course, with the unrelenting resistance of the Vietnamese people).

Until it becomes possible to build a truly independent political party, a mass workers' party, it behooves the women's rights movement to jealously guard its independence and to deny any candidates of the Republican or Democratic parties the support they want so much to have.

Canada pro-choice activists mobilize

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

A series of pro-choice events took place in cities and towns across Canada on Feb. 12. Included was a rally at the Toronto City Hall at which 25 to 30 Campaign Life supporters attempted to drown out the speakers throughout the event.

Following the rally, 800 pro-choice supporters gathered to march. As they passed the Conservative Party headquarters, an anti-choice disrupter unfurled a banner. Cops who had taken no action against the anti-choice goons tried to arrest a demonstrator who had removed this banner. As she disappeared into the crowd, the cops attacked the marchers with their billy clubs and arrested two demonstrators.

The annual International Women's Day demonstration in Toronto will be March 3. The theme is "Stop the Attacks—No Going Back!" There are four demands: No to Racism and Police Violence, No New Abortion Law, No to the GST (Goods and Services Tax) and Social Cutbacks, and No to Violence Against Women.

Plans are also underway for actions across Quebec and English Canada on May 12 to commemorate the 1970 cross-country caravan to Ottawa and to signify that the battle for full reproductive rights continues.

Upsurge in Eastern Europe: Is socialism dead?

The following is a speech presented by Cliff Conner to a Socialist Action forum in New York City on Jan. 26. The speech has been abridged for reasons of space.

By CLIFF CONNER

The dramatic events that have rocked Eastern Europe over the past few months caught almost everybody by surprise. Dictatorial Stalinist regimes that had ruled for decades—with the appearance of eternal stability—suddenly crumbled into dust in the face of some of the most massive popular mobilizations the world has ever seen. Clearly a major social transformation is under way, and every thinking person in the world is trying to understand what it means.

Here in the United States the daily press and the television news have interpreted it for us. The people of Eastern Europe are overjoyed, we are told, because they have liberated themselves from socialism and communism and Marxism.

And this, according to an op-ed article in the *New York Times*, has "proved beyond doubt to all (except perhaps for a handful of left-wing faculty members in our best universities) that capitalism is superior to socialism and communism. Our economy is the guiding beacon for all those countries that are ripping apart the ruthless collectivist regimes that ruined the lives of their people for so long" (Jan. 17, 1990).

This is a particularly crude statement, but it is representative of the immense propaganda barrage we've been subjected to around the theme that "socialism is dead." According to this interpretation, what we've seen is the climax of a gigantic controlled experiment in the laboratory of history, testing the relative merits of socialism and capitalism—and socialism lost.

Some have even gone so far as to suggest that this marks the "end of history"; that the collapse of socialism means that the capitalist order has now achieved its final triumph—there is no other direction in which historical development can proceed, and so history has reached its ultimate goal and simply ends right here.

If this is true, there is not much left to do for those of us who call ourselves socialists. It is time for us to fold our tents and steal silently into the night.

But, no, we're not quite ready for that. Our attitude, I think, was summed up in the slogan carried on the placard of a demonstrator in East Germany: "Socialism is dead! Long live socialism!"

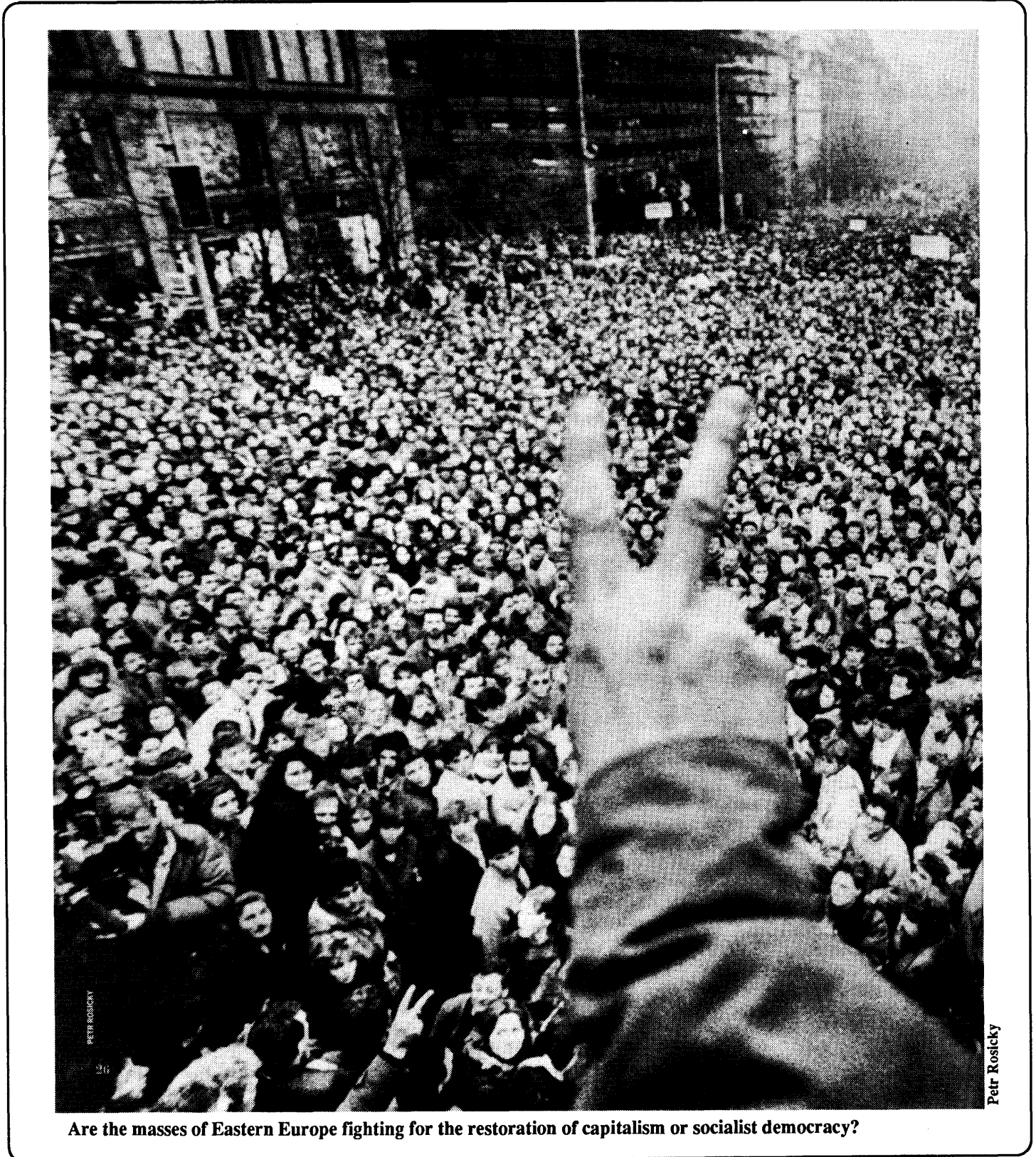
Masses have won great victory

As defenders of the interests of the working class in every country, we in Socialist Action share the joy of the East European workers who have smashed the old Stalinist regimes that have oppressed them for decades.

Make no mistake about it: It wasn't capitalists who overthrew Honecker or Ceausescu or the rest. It was the workers in those countries. It was the workers of East Berlin who tore down the Berlin Wall, and it was a general strike that shattered the Stalinist regime in Czechoslovakia.

These workers were fighting for basic democratic rights, and they have won a great deal already in the way of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom to travel, and freedom of religion.

In Romania, women have won the right to choose to have abortions. In Bulgaria, the Turkish ethnic minority has won the right to use their Turkish names and speak their own language. The old censorship apparatuses have broken down, the right to form opposition political parties and independent trade unions has been won, and elections are being



Are the masses of Eastern Europe fighting for the restoration of capitalism or socialist democracy?

scheduled all over the place.

All of these new rights and freedoms give the working people of Eastern Europe more opportunity to defend their own interests. We consider that they have won a great victory and we support it 100 percent.

Our movement—the Trotskyist movement—has said for more than 60 years, ever since Stalin usurped power in the Soviet Union, that Stalinism was a disease; that Stalinism was the cancer of the working class; that Stalinism was not socialism, but an obstacle to socialism; that Stalinism doesn't defend socialism, it discredits socialism.

Our program has always called for the destruction of that obstacle to socialism. So we haven't viewed the recent events in Eastern Europe as a setback. To the contrary, they give us hope that at long last, the way can be opened for the genuine development of socialism.

Down but not out

But it is important to understand that the Stalinist obstacle hasn't been completely removed yet. The Stalinist current has been greatly weakened throughout Eastern Europe, but it still exists in all of these countries and is maneuvering furiously to make a come-

back in one form or another—even as part of a new capitalist class.

When I use the term Stalinist, I am not referring to people who look up to Joseph Stalin as a hero. I don't think there are many of that kind of Stalinist left any more. I am using the term in its sociological sense to mean the privileged bureaucracy that developed as a parasitic growth on the planned economies in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe.

By that definition, Stalinists are not only the so-called "hard-liners" like Honecker and Ceausescu, but also the reform bureaucrats, like Mikhail Gorbachev or Hans Modrow, the new prime minister in East Germany.

The tendency Gorbachev represents is not attempting to get rid of the privileged bureaucracies that control Eastern Europe, but to reform them—so that they can survive the crisis they've got themselves into.

So although the old Communist parties have been dealt a harsh blow, and they are shrinking and splitting and changing their names, they haven't been completely knocked out. They still control the armies,

(continued on page 8)

INSIDE:

- Eastern Europe and World Revolution Today
- The Stakes in German Reunification Plan
- History of Stalinist Repression in Eastern Europe
- and more

and that is no small matter.

What they've lost is their absolute monopoly of power. They have been forced to give up their legally guaranteed right to run the governments of Eastern Europe without opposition. And in all six of these countries, elections are scheduled to be held over the next few months—which will probably deal them some more blows.

But as the old representatives of the privileged bureaucracies are swept aside, the important question is: Who is going to replace them? What social forces are going to flow into the void? Will the vacuum be filled by representatives of the interests of the working people, or will it be filled by the growth of a new capitalist class?

And here we come to the heart of the propaganda barrage we've been subjected to. The daily press in this country simply assumes that the only alternative to Stalinist rule is capitalism.

Run aground by bureaucracy

When the editorial writers say that socialism is dead, their primary meaning is that the economic structures of Eastern Europe are no longer viable and must be done away with. By this they mean that the system of planned economy based on nationalized property has failed, and must be replaced by the system they call a "free-market" economy, based on private property.

There are some problems with this counterposition of planned economy and free-market economy. First, with regard to the planned economy, the editorial writers say: planned economy equals socialism and socialism equals planned economy. That's not true.

The planned economy is *part* of the socialist program—but there's much more to socialism than that. When we speak of planned economies in Eastern Europe, we have to qualify that and say *bureaucratically* planned economies—that is, planned economies with serious distortions.

These bureaucratically planned economies are characterized by a rigid form of centralization, where all of the commands flow from the top of a bureaucratic hierarchy downward, and there is no input into the planning by the workers themselves.

If the economies of Eastern Europe have failed in the 1980s—and I would agree, in a sense, that they have—it is not because they are planned economies, but because they are bureaucratically planned. The bureaucratic distortions are what have caused them to run aground.

For example: Eastern Europe made big industrial gains in the 1950s and '60s, but these were achieved on the basis of relatively simple technology—big steel mills, big chemical plants, and so forth. But the 1980s demanded a much more sophisticated level of technology. For one thing, it required a high level of computer literacy in the population as a whole.

But the Stalinist bureaucrats didn't trust their own people with computers. They had nightmares of dissidents with word processors and modems spreading subversion everywhere.

The lack of democratic rights prevented the countries of the Soviet bloc from developing a "hacker culture." In the United States, there is a 14-year-old computer whiz on every block. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, those talents were repressed, and that had a great deal to do with the technological malaise that afflicted them. The problem was not in the economic structure *per se*—it was in the undemocratic *political* system.

The bourgeois propagandists tell us that there's no such thing as a planned economy that isn't rigidly centralized and commanded from the top down. Socialists point out, however, that planned economies don't have to be bureaucratized, that they can exist in a context of political democracy, and that they can be operated by a system of democratic workers' control. We believe this represents the only way out of the present dilemma in Eastern Europe.

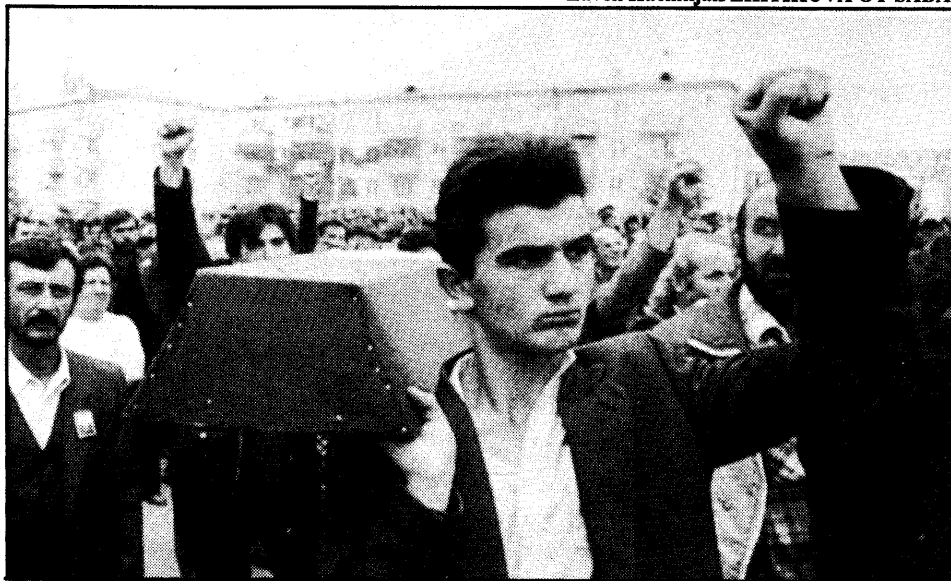
What role for market mechanisms?

There has been a great deal written about the "introduction of market mechanisms" into the East European economies—usually with the implication that this represents the antithesis of socialism. That's a red herring.

The goal of socialism is to eventually create an economic system that is so productive that the laws of market economics will sim-



Mikhail Gorbachev



Armenians demanding self-determination

'The threat to the planned economies in Eastern Europe comes not from the introduction of market mechanisms *per se* but from the proposed changes in property relations...'

ply fade away, because they will become meaningless.

The laws of the market—that is, the law of supply and demand—apply only in a context of economic scarcity. If productivity increases to the point where the supply of commodities permanently drives their prices down to the vanishing point, then the law of supply and demand becomes useless.

But in the context of economic scarcity, the laws of the market cannot be ignored. The Stalinist bureaucrats have often tried to pass laws abolishing market relations, but they might just as well have tried to abolish the law of gravity. It can't be done.

The introduction of market mechanisms *per se* is not incompatible with planned economies. Market mechanisms for the distribution of goods are necessary to allow prices to accurately reflect costs of productions. This means allowing prices of commodities to rise when shortages of those commodities develop. Without that, immense waste occurs from a misallocation of resources.

It is not true, then, that market mechanisms have no legitimate place in planned economies. On the other hand, we are against the dictatorship of the market. It is necessary for the planners to regulate the market in the interests of the population.

The point for socialist planners is to utilize market mechanisms as a means of measuring real production costs, in order to increase productivity and gradually move toward socialism; that is, toward the day when the law of supply and demand is nothing but a bad memory. Meanwhile, subsidies and price controls on the basic necessities of life must be defended.

The threat to the planned economies in Eastern Europe comes not from the introduction of market mechanisms *per se* but from the proposed changes in property relations—that is, from the move toward denationalizing the industry and converting to a system of private ownership.

That is what the American, West European, and Japanese capitalists are pushing

for—and that is what Gorbachev's perestroika program is paving the way for in the entire region.

The process of dismantling the planned economies, in fact, has begun—and if it does eventually succeed in accomplishing its purpose, it would constitute a genuine counter-revolution—a major historical step backward for the people of Eastern Europe, and for the working people of the whole world.

More than new laws needed

When the media announce that socialism is dead, they try to give the impression that this process is virtually complete—that Eastern Europe has all but accomplished the transformation to capitalism. General Electric is manufacturing light bulbs in Hungary, and Rupert Murdoch has just bought two newspapers there. Volkswagen is moving into East Germany, and the golden arches of McDonald's will be springing up everywhere.

But if you look closer, you see that the economies of Eastern Europe are still predominantly under state control, and will be for some time to come, even if the capitalists' most optimistic dreams come true.

This transformation cannot occur simply by passing a new set of laws. Working people will be powerfully and negatively affected by this process, and can be expected to offer resistance. So while this counterrevolutionary process has begun, its outcome has yet to be decided—and it will certainly be decided in struggle. Working people of Eastern Europe over the last few months have demonstrated a fighting mood, a desire to defend their interests.

So when the newspapers say "socialism is dead," if by socialism they mean the planned economy, we can respond that in fact the struggle has only just begun, and there are some aspects of the situation that are encouraging from the socialist point of view.

On the other hand, we shouldn't kid ourselves—the planned economies of Eastern Europe are definitely under heavy attack, and we need to be aware of the dimensions of

this attack.

One of the key weapons in the propaganda war against the planned economies is the charge that they deserve to be scrapped because they have failed. Planned economies are less productive, they say, and the evidence lies in the fact that the standard of living of people in Eastern Europe is lower than that of people in Western Europe.

It is true that the East European economies have stagnated in the 1980s, while Western Europe was experiencing an economic boom. But to generalize from this limited period that the whole historical experience of planned economy has been a failure is simply absurd.

The *New York Times* says that the problem has been "four decades of stifling central planning" (Jan. 11, 1990). A look at statistical data reveals, on the contrary, that the planned economies outperformed the advanced capitalist economies from 1950 to the early 1980s. It is only in recent years that the planned economies' annual rate of growth has slowed down.

This helps to explain why the Stalinist regimes have begun to crumble now rather than 10 or 20 years earlier. They were relatively stable because their planned economies were able to deliver the goods reasonably well.

A misleading comparison

It should also be noted that those who compare Eastern and Western Europe simply assume that they are comparable and can therefore be measured with the same yardstick. Before World War II nobody would have imagined such a thing. Western Europe was industrialized, modern, and advanced. Eastern Europe was agrarian, feudal, and backward. Nobody would have thought to compare them on an equal basis.

But after World War II ended, Eastern Europe wound up with planned economies [see article on page 14]—and far from stifling productivity, an immense burst of productivity occurred. In just a few years, Eastern Europe was transformed from agrarian economies into modern industrialized economies. This meant, among other things, great steps forward in the literacy and the health and nutrition of the people of those countries.

Comparing them today is like comparing two runners, one of whom gets a one-mile head start in a two-mile race and then goes on to win. This doesn't prove that the runner with a head start is a superior athlete.

Two sides of a single coin

There is another major reason why it's false to compare Eastern Europe with Western Europe, or the Soviet Union with the United States. When you do that you're weighing one economic system against only part of another.

By using Western Europe and the United States as a basis of comparison, you're selecting only the richest capitalist nations and measuring them against the Soviet bloc as a whole. It leaves the underdeveloped world—the so-called Third World—out of the picture, and that is extremely misleading.

The great wealth of Western Europe and the United States wasn't created in a vacuum—their great productivity depends upon the poverty of Latin America and Africa and Asia. It is a parasitic relationship. The affluence of some countries in the capitalist world and the poverty of the others can't be separated: They are the two sides of a single coin.

The economic relationship of the United States to the countries of Latin America, for example, consists of a continuous, one-way flow of profits from the south to the north. It is an imperialistic relationship that enriches the United States at the expense of its client states.

But what about the Soviet Union's relationship to Eastern Europe? Isn't that an imperialistic relationship, too?

While the Soviet Union has exercised political domination over Eastern Europe, the economic relationship is another matter altogether.

The recent news stories about the negotiations in COMECON, the Soviet bloc's counterpart to the Common Market, make that clear. All of the new reform governments of Eastern Europe have said they want out of COMECON; they're tired of being pushed around by the Kremlin and want to be free to trade with Western Europe on their own.

To do that, they have to make their cur-

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rencies convertible and exchangeable in the international currency markets. So what was Gorbachev's response to this demand? He seemed overjoyed. He said that the Soviet Union would gladly exchange all its goods with Eastern Europe on the basis of world market prices.

But then the East European finance ministers suddenly had second thoughts. It dawned on them that they had been buying their gas and oil from the Soviet Union at prices way below market value—and had been selling their products to the Soviet Union at prices way above market value.

So the net flow of economic benefits had been going from the Soviet Union into Eastern Europe. Not only that, but several of the East European countries have a standard of living above that of the Soviet Union.

This adds up to a very peculiar kind of "imperialism." While the Soviet Union did oppress the East European countries politically and militarily, it did not drain them economically; in fact, it was subsidizing their economies.

Qualitatively different systems

That points to a major difference between the two economic systems: Under capitalism, the strong economies exploit the weak. The planned economies do not exhibit that kind of exploitation. It's not built into their economic machinery. This has been the case in spite of Stalinist rule in the Soviet bloc.

The two economic systems are qualitatively different. The capitalist machinery is geared to producing profits for individual bankers and industrialists. The normal working of the machine produces social differentiation—which is just a compact way of saying "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer."

The planned economies, on the other hand, are geared primarily to fulfilling human needs. The *New York Times* gave this reasonably good description of the benefits of the East German planned economy:

"Until the current upheaval, East Germany was tenacious in preserving central planning, with all its trappings of full employment, free medical care, low-cost housing, free education, and price controls that make the staples of life affordable even on East Germany's low wages" (Dec. 11, 1989).

There is social differentiation in Eastern Europe, of course. The bureaucrats have a higher standard of living than the working people. But this represents a distortion of the planned economy, not its normal operation.

In East Germany recently, there was a massive cry of outrage throughout the whole country when the Wandlitz compound—the living quarters of a few of the top party leaders—was opened for the first time to public inspection. The houses there were large and well furnished, but they certainly weren't opulent, at least not by American standards.

The important thing to notice is that the bureaucrats took great pains to keep their privileged community hidden from public view. In our society, great extremes of wealth and poverty are considered normal, and rich people flaunt their affluence. The stretch limo has become their symbol. But in Eastern Europe, the bureaucrats' privileges were considered to be against the rules—illegitimate—something to keep hidden.

We've been led to believe that the East German workers broke down the Berlin Wall because they were clamoring for capitalism. But the outrage they expressed over Wandlitz suggests just the opposite. It showed a deep attachment to the ideals of social justice and equality—an opposition to social differentiation. How can it be supposed that they would welcome a transformation to capitalism, which would bring with it far more social differentiation?

The example of Poland

The attempt to dismantle the planned economy has gone farthest in Poland.

The hatred that the masses felt toward the old repressive Stalinist regime has led them to want to wipe the slate clean—to get rid of everything associated with the old undemocratic methods of control, including the centralized control over the economy. But in doing so, they're running the risk of throwing the baby out with the bath water.

Near the end of December, the Polish government—now led by people in and around the leadership of the Solidarity trade-union movement—announced a new economic program that would attempt to reintroduce capitalism to Poland in a dramatic way.

And they meant it to be dramatic. The finance minister—a Solidarity economist—said that Poland had to go cold turkey; that it had to take an ice-water plunge into free-market economics; that this was the only cure for its ills. What this meant, first of all, was doing away with government subsidies for foods, housing, and heating fuel.

The working people of Poland took a plunge, all right. They woke up on Jan. 1, 1990, the day the new program went into effect, and found their bread now cost 38 percent more, their ham 55 percent more, and their electricity 400 percent more. If they wanted the luxury of heating their homes in January, their coal would now cost them six times what it cost the day before! Welcome to capitalism!

And guess what? In the face of these price rises, the new economic program freezes wages! And that's not all. For the first time in 40 years, unemployment will be legal in Poland. It is predicted that up to 1 million workers—15 percent of the workforce—will soon be out of work.

And don't forget—all of these blessings of capitalism are being bestowed on a country where a considerable part of the population was already living at a subsistence level. These price rises will mean that a lot of

bitter medicine" if they want to cure Poland's economic sickness. The pain will not last long, the editorial states. Polish workers have to grit their teeth and wait it out.

It all sounds a bit like the old song: "Work and pray, live on hay, You'll get pie in the sky bye and bye."

But it's a lie! This is the central falsehood of the whole ideological campaign. The Polish workers will find no pot of gold at the end of this process. They will not be better off for all the pain they're enduring now. They'll be worse off.

If the Polish workers think that the new economic program will bring them a lifestyle full of the consumer goods they see advertised on West German TV, they're in for a rude awakening.

If they want to see what the future holds for them if they join the capitalist world, they should not look at France or West Germany; they should look at Bolivia or Brazil. That's what the imperialists have in store for Poland, and it's really not very difficult to see.

The Solidarity-led government is counting on foreign investment pouring in soon to expand production and provide work for the unemployed. But here is the catch. The massive infusion of capital that they're hoping

explosion of malcontent" (*New York Times*, Dec. 26, 1989).

Now consider the worries of one Jaroslav Pietras, a 34-year-old University of Warsaw professor: "The transition," he says, "will inevitably bring irrational behavior from people not used to the unemployment and dislocation that come with free markets" (*Ibid.*, Dec. 30, 1989).

That's really adding insult to injury. If the workers resist being thrown out of work, they will be acting irrationally, according to this arrogant yuppie.

We socialists are not worried that the workers will resist. We say they should resist! They should tear up this program and throw it back in the face of the IMF and their Polish collaborators. It's not in their interests to suffer in silence and allow the imperialists to regain control of their country.

Are the Polish people going to allow their nation to be sold to the imperialists? I don't think that's what they have in mind. As the *New York Times* put it, oh so delicately, "[M]any Eastern Europeans are not eager for their economies to become wholly owned subsidiaries of the West" (Dec. 17, 1989).

Historic struggle under way

The East European masses are presently engaged in a historic struggle for democratic rights. That fight isn't over yet, but now they have to combine it with the struggle to defend the social gains represented by the planned economy. There is no question of going backward to Stalinism, but rather going forward to economic democracy and to workers' control of the planned economy.

And there are some positive signs that this will happen.

In East Germany there is a strong wing of the popular movement that has clearly stated its intention to resist the return of industries to private ownership. In Czechoslovakia, opinion polls show a large majority opposed to the privatization of the economy. And as for Poland, the *Times* quoted the editor of a new business magazine as saying: "Our people hate Communism, but when you start talking about privatization, many of them act like Communists" (Nov. 30, 1989).

So while the words "socialism" and "communism" may be temporarily repugnant in Eastern Europe, in an objective sense the desire for socialism—for social justice and equality—is far from dead.

The leaders of Polish Solidarity are leading in the wrong direction, but there is no telling how far the millions of rank-and-file workers will follow them. The tradition of this mass workers' organization in Poland is a positive asset for the battles that lie ahead. The big question is whether an alternative leadership will come to the fore.

In Hungary there has been some motion toward the formation of workers' councils in the factories—not a mass movement as yet, but one that points the way forward toward a form of democratic workers' government, and a means of democratically managing a planned economy.

In Czechoslovakia there are more than 10,000 strike committees in existence that could become the basis of a system of workers' councils.

Also, for the first time in more than 40 years, the program of the Fourth International can be openly published and circulated and discussed in Eastern Europe. The Fourth International represents the most consistent historical opposition to Stalinism within the socialist movement. Its ideas are sure to get a hearing, and its members will be working to bring a revolutionary socialist leadership to the workers' struggles.

Join us in fight for socialism!

In summary—speaking for socialists everywhere, I'll close by paraphrasing Mark Twain: The reports of our death are greatly exaggerated.

Socialism is alive in Eastern Europe, and it is alive here in this country, too.

The lesson of what happened in Berlin is that a mass workers' movement can bring down walls. It is only a matter of time before workers in other parts of the world follow their example—and their purpose will be to get rid of capitalism.

The full development of socialism can only be achieved on a worldwide scale, not in one country or all of the countries of Eastern Europe—not even together with the Soviet Union. Above all socialism requires a revolutionary transformation of the imperialist colossus, the United States.

So I appeal to you to consider becoming part of the socialist movement yourself. ■



'For the first time in 40 years, unemployment will be legal in Poland. It is predicted that up to 1 million workers—15 percent of the workforce—will soon be out of work.'

people will be driven below subsistence; they'll be going hungry.

How will workers react?

How will the Polish people react to all of this? It must be remembered that the powerful decade-long struggle of Solidarity against the Stalinists very often focused upon opposition to price increases for the basic necessities of life. Every major battle was initiated by a rise in the price of bread or milk or meat or heating oil. And those price rises were peanuts compared to this!

So far there hasn't been a massive response. There was a report that 35,000 miners went out on strike in Silesia in protest over the wage freeze. Then it was reported that the strike had been settled, but the government refused to say what concessions they had made.

The reason the Polish workers have remained relatively quiet isn't hard to figure out. It's because this economic program has been imposed by a government that they consider their own: the Solidarity government that they brought to power and mistakenly believe is bound to represent the best interests of the workers.

But the new Solidarity-led government is misleading the people they're supposed to represent. An editorial in the Jan. 3 issue of the *New York Times* described this situation: "There is no certainty that the brazen plan to revive the economy will work. Success depends on the willingness of the Polish workers to swallow severe short-term losses because they trust that their new government is working for their long-term benefit."

The *Times* editorial goes on to explain that the Polish workers have to "swallow

for has to be organized by financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

New loans to Poland have already been arranged by the IMF. But the IMF does not lend out money for the asking. To borrow money through the IMF, Poland is required to agree to meet certain economic conditions.

First, it has to take steps toward dismantling the planned economy. And second, it has to impose conditions of economic austerity on the Polish population. As a matter of fact, Poland's new economic program was submitted to the IMF, and it was approved.

Ask the nations of Latin America, Africa, and Asia how IMF loans have helped them? These loans don't solve their problems. They simply sink the debtor nations into debt bondage; into a deeper cycle of poverty and deeper dependency upon the imperialist banks.

What the IMF and their sponsors have in mind is the "Latinamericanization" of Eastern Europe. They want to open up the whole region as a field of private investment for themselves.

What worries the capitalists

But there is one factor that might prevent them from accomplishing their goal—and that is resistance on the part of the workers themselves. This is what the capitalist bankers and the reformist Solidarity leaders in the Polish government are worried about.

One of them, Adrian Wozniakowski, an economist at the Labor Research Institute in Warsaw, said: "We don't know if there are going to be 100,000 or 1 million unemployed... I'm worried that it will produce strong social pressures." Another economist, Eva Kulesza, says, "I'm worried about an

Eastern Euro world revolu

Simon Robine/AFP



Petrograd, October 1917: Workers and soldiers lead the Bolshevik revolution.



Romania, December 1989: workers and soldiers lead the anti-Stalinist revolution.

By NAT WEINSTEIN

The capitalist news media continue to rejoice at the spectacle of the Communist (Stalinist) parties' headlong rush to save themselves from the "anarchy" of snowballing anti-bureaucratic mass movements. Seeing the grisly specter of their own future in the executions of Nicolae and Elena Ceaucescu, the late heads of Romanian Stalinism, has persuaded the Soviet Stalinists—from Gorbachev, the reformer, to Ligachev, the hardliner—to give up their formal monopoly on political power.

But no one should be fooled. The Stalinists have no intention of giving up their positions of power and privilege. On the contrary, they are desperately striving to find a way, at whatever cost, to hold on to the levers of domination.

The world's leading capitalists keep pinching themselves to make sure they're not dreaming. They sincerely believe that the anti-capitalist conquests that they delight in calling "communism" or "socialism" are on their way out. Nor are their hopes totally misplaced.

They have confidence in the Gorbachevs and Ligachevs throughout the Stalinist world for good reason. They understand that the bureaucrats have nowhere to go except toward the restoration of capitalism in order to maintain their privileges, including their affluent life-styles.

It is evident, moreover, that there has been a meeting of minds on this fundamental question between Gorbachev and Bush at Malta and at other secret meetings. But the workers are an enormous obstacle to the anti-socialist perspective of both bosses and bureaucrats.

The most sober ideologists of world capitalism are acutely aware that these societies are on the edge of "anarchy," by which they really mean an uncontrollable workers' anti-bureaucratic revolution—not at all an anti-socialist uprising. The ruling capitalists, with President Bush at their head, therefore, have not for one moment been complacent; they have been working assiduously to assist the bureaucracy in maintaining its hold on the basic elements of power.

At the same time, imperialism has not missed a trick in its efforts to establish further footholds wherever the opportunity arises among the more unrestrained pro-capitalist middle-class competitors with the bureaucracy.

The world's capitalist rulers are not fools and pushovers. They are ardent students of history. They consistently strive to correct their mistakes. They are flexible, as their current close collaboration with Stalinist "reformers" again demonstrates.

These facts of life underscore the absolute necessity for the working classes to construct their own conscious revolutionary leadership. As long as world capitalism retains its equilibrium in its main bastions of power in the imperialist centers, they also retain the ability to mobilize counter-revolutionary forces that can only be overcome by a mass revolutionary party that has absorbed the lessons of history, a party that is no less respectful of historical lessons than are the ideologists of capitalism.

Such a proletarian party would not be a mere electoral formation. Its main tasks must be to organize workers into their own natural fighting organizations—unions, workplace committees, neighborhood com-

mittees, consumers' committees, and other mass organizations—oriented toward mobilizing every sector of the working class, and its natural allies in a determined struggle for a genuine workers' democratic government.

Teachings of Leon Trotsky

It would be next to impossible to fully comprehend the meaning of the struggle unfolding in the world's bureaucratized workers' states (the so-called socialist countries) and its effect on the world movement toward socialism without studying Leon Trotsky's "The Revolution Betrayed."¹

The unprecedented upsurge in the bureaucratized workers' states has already made an indelible impact on the consciousness of working people in every corner of our planet. The demonstration of the power of millions in the streets to bring down oppressive regimes will play a big role in the capitalist world when the threatening economic crisis erupts and sends the class struggle to new heights.

Trotsky was not a mere critic of Stalinism. He, along with V.I. Lenin, played a decisive role in the October Revolution and in the military and political defense of the new workers' state in the difficult early years of its existence. He also led the fight against the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union.

Trotsky's viewpoint, therefore, represents a vital link in the continuity of revolutionary Marxist thought. Today, in fact, Trotskyism is the name of revolutionary Marxism.

From the very outset, the strategy guiding the Russian revolutionary leadership headed

by Lenin and Trotsky was based on the goal of extending the workers' conquest of state power in Russia to the entire world. The concept of world revolution is at the very heart of socialist strategy going back to the time of Marx and Engels, since only on a world scale do the necessary resources exist for the actual construction of socialism.

The Third (Communist) International was formed in 1919 by the victorious Bolshevik leadership of the October Revolution to carry out this goal. Lenin summed up their central outlook by characterizing the new Soviet state as "the advanced outpost of the world revolution."

Democracy is inseparable from this orientation. Workers' democracy everywhere, on every level—in the party, the unions, the workplaces, and in the soviets (workers' councils) is a vital component of all revolutionary processes.

Revolution requires the greatest individual and group freedom, and initiative for problem-solving. Democracy is indispensable for mobilizing mass creativity in the struggle for workers' power—and afterward, when workers must shoulder the task of managing the planned economy. It was, therefore, deeply rooted in the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky and in the state and governmental institutions created by the October Revolution. [See accompanying article on soviet democracy.]

The outrageous slander that the source of Stalinist terror and dictatorship is to be found in Leninism is now gleefully promoted by both capitalists and Stalinists. This shameless assault on truth was first made by Stalin, who insisted that his grotesque smashing of soviet and party democracy was Leninism *par excellence!*

Eastern Europe and the world revolution today

Simon Robine/AFP



Romania, December 1989: workers and soldiers lead the anti-Stalinist revolution.

When Stalin's faction, representing the bureaucratic apparatus of the party and state, definitively broke from the Bolsheviks' internationalist perspective at the end of 1924 and took the road of preserving and extending their caste privileges, they were compelled to begin suppressing all forms of opposition.

The logic of their political course, whatever their original intentions, sucked them into a vortex of increasingly open opposition to the class interests of the Soviet and international proletariat. Once on this reactionary path, they could hold on to power in the Soviet Union only through an ever-more brutal suppression of workers' democracy everywhere and on every level—including in all the sections of the Communist International (Comintern).

A pact to fight Stalin

By the spring of 1923, Lenin became convinced that the bureaucracy was threatening the democratic and socialist conquests of the Russian Revolution. Stalin's suppression of the national rights of Georgians aroused Lenin's greatest concern. He viewed the aspirations of oppressed nationalities as entirely just and, in fact, an organic component of the class struggle. Most importantly, he explained, proletarian international solidarity was impossible through compulsion!

Lenin urgently proposed that Trotsky join him in a bloc against the anti-democratic course being followed by Stalin's faction. Trotsky enthusiastically accepted, with the words: "It is a pleasure to form a bloc with a good man."

Unfortunately, before they could take joint action, Lenin's lingering illness grew worse. He was incapacitated, for the most part, until his death in January 1924, and was unable to mount a decisive attack on Stalin and bureaucratism.

Still, before his death, he took the demonstrative step of formally breaking off all personal and political relations with Stalin and writing his "Last Testament." (In this document he urged that Stalin be removed from his position as general secretary of the Communist Party.)

Trotsky, fulfilling his pact with Lenin, went on to become the most intransigent opponent of the bureaucratic caste and its trampling of workers' democracy in the Soviet Union.

Stalin's blood purges

Hundreds of thousands of Lenin and Trotsky's supporters were ultimately imprisoned and murdered by Stalin—including virtually the entire generation of Bolsheviks who had led the Soviet workers to power. This essentially lawless beheading of the revolution's leadership was accompanied by show trials in which virtually every defendant was first tortured, or lives of loved ones threatened, and thus forced to "confess."

Millions of others were terrorized, many suffering abominable conditions of imprisonment in Stalin's gulags. Of those imprisoned, additional hundreds of thousands (according to the most conservative estimates) died from the extreme hardship in these prison camps, or were shot.

Trotsky himself was exiled and relentlessly hounded by Stalin from country to country. He eventually found refuge in Mexico but was assassinated in August 1940 by Stalin's agent.

"The Revolution Betrayed," Trotsky's insightful theoretical analysis of the root causes of the Stalinist degeneration, provides the only consistent basis for understanding today's unfolding political revolution in the bureaucratized workers' states.

The prognosis in this 1936 book was that either the working class will topple the

Soviet bureaucratic dictatorship from political power and re-establish a regime of workers' democracy, or the Stalinist bureaucracy will ultimately restore capitalist property as the new social base for its privileges. This prediction is being dramatically played out today in Eastern Europe and China, as well as in the Soviet Union itself.

Role of middle-class opposition

Despite the crumbling of the system of monolithic control in all these countries, the Stalinist bureaucrats have not been dislodged from their positions of power and privilege. On the contrary, in every case the bureaucratic dictatorships have so far been compelled only to *share* political power with sections of the middle classes which had previously been excluded from direct influence.

Even as the Stalinist Communist parties disintegrate, the bureaucracies which had ruled through these parties remain in control of the industrial and state institutions where power is still lodged.

For the moment, the middle-class opponents of the bureaucratic dictatorship play a dual role. While they have articulated and championed the mass aspirations for democracy and political freedom, they have also given a powerful impetus to the pro-capitalist tendency of the bureaucracy.

This should come as no surprise. The middle class cannot advance an independent solution to society's problems. They invariably reflect the ideology of one or the other of the main contending classes—in modern society—workers and capitalists. In

Soviet democracy parliamentary

The parliamentary system being put in place in East Europe and the Soviet Union is a sophisticated political mechanism developed during hundreds of years of capitalism to block the workers from power while it provides the ruling class the luxury of democratic resolution of differences among themselves.

While parliamentary electoralism must be utilized as a tool to organize workers, raise their level of consciousness, and as a measure of the revolutionary party's influence, it would be a colossal mistake to believe that a shift of state power from the oppressors to the oppressed can be accomplished through the parliamentary system.

History has shown that the road to a workers' government is through the kind of revolutionary democracy that enabled the Russian workers to take power in October 1917. The soviet-type state, based on workers' councils which are composed of elected delegates coming from every workplace, every fighting class institution, and every political faction of the working class is the most democratic system the world has seen.

Such a system of democracy includes a few other essential conditions. In contrast to the bourgeois parliamentary system now being established in the East, which is based on a division of governmental and state powers, the soviet, or Commune-type state, combines in one body both legislative and executive functions.

It provides for immediate recall of delegates by its constituencies, and for good measure, it also provides for delegates to be paid workers' wages—a provision intended to forestall a

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Hope and the revolution today

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The logic of their political course, whatever their original intentions, sucked them into a vortex of increasingly open opposition to the class interests of the Soviet and international proletariat. Once on this reactionary path, they could hold on to power in the Soviet Union only through an ever-more brutal suppression of workers' democracy everywhere and on every level—including in all the sections of the Communist International (Comintern).

A pact to fight Stalin

By the spring of 1923, Lenin became convinced that the bureaucracy was threatening the democratic and socialist conquests of the Russian Revolution. Stalin's suppression of the national rights of Georgians aroused Lenin's greatest concern. He viewed the aspirations of oppressed nationalities as entirely just and, in fact, an organic component of the class struggle. Most importantly, he explained, proletarian international solidarity was impossible through compulsion!

Lenin urgently proposed that Trotsky join him in a bloc against the anti-democratic course being followed by Stalin's faction. Trotsky enthusiastically accepted, with the words: "It is a pleasure to form a bloc with a good man."

Unfortunately, before they could take joint action, Lenin's lingering illness grew worse. He was incapacitated, for the most part, until his death in January 1924, and was unable to mount a decisive attack on Stalin and bureaucratism.

Still, before his death, he took the demonstrative step of formally breaking off all personal and political relations with Stalin and writing his "Last Testament." (In this document he urged that Stalin be removed from his position as general secretary of the Communist Party.)

Trotsky, fulfilling his pact with Lenin, went on to become the most intransigent opponent of the bureaucratic caste and its trampling of workers' democracy in the Soviet Union.

Stalin's blood purges

Hundreds of thousands of Lenin and Trotsky's supporters were ultimately imprisoned and murdered by Stalin—including virtually the entire generation of Bolsheviks who had led the Soviet workers to power. This essentially lawless beheading of the revolution's leadership was accompanied by show trials in which virtually every defendant was first tortured, or lives of loved ones threatened, and thus forced to "confess."

Millions of others were terrorized, many suffering abominable conditions of imprisonment in Stalin's gulags. Of those imprisoned, additional hundreds of thousands (according to the most conservative estimates) died from the extreme hardship in these prison camps, or were shot.

Trotsky himself was exiled and relentlessly hounded by Stalin from country to country. He eventually found refuge in Mexico but was assassinated in August 1940 by Stalin's agent.

"The Revolution Betrayed," Trotsky's insightful theoretical analysis of the root causes of the Stalinist degeneration, provides the only consistent basis for understanding today's unfolding political revolution in the bureaucratized workers' states.

The prognosis in this 1936 book was that either the working class will topple the

Soviet bureaucratic dictatorship from political power and re-establish a regime of workers' democracy, or the Stalinist bureaucracy will ultimately restore capitalist property as the new social base for its privileges. This prediction is being dramatically played out today in Eastern Europe and China, as well as in the Soviet Union itself.

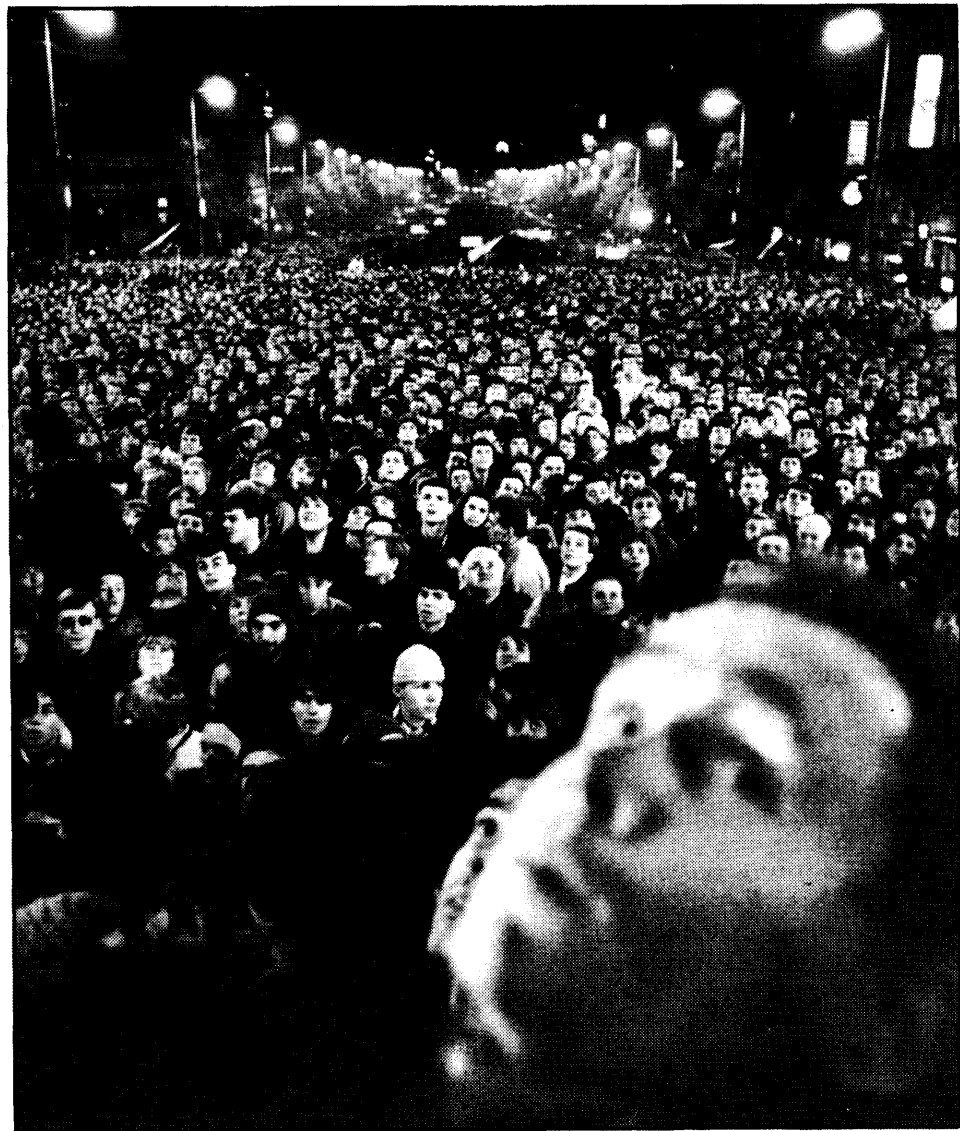
Role of middle-class opposition

Despite the crumbling of the system of monolithic control in all these countries, the Stalinist bureaucrats have not been dislodged from their positions of power and privilege. On the contrary, in every case the bureaucratic dictatorships have so far been compelled only to *share* political power with sections of the middle classes which had previously been excluded from direct influence.

Even as the Stalinist Communist parties disintegrate, the bureaucracies which had ruled through these parties remain in control of the industrial and state institutions where power is still lodged.

For the moment, the middle-class opponents of the bureaucratic dictatorship play a dual role. While they have articulated and championed the mass aspirations for democracy and political freedom, they have also given a powerful impetus to the pro-capitalist tendency of the bureaucracy.

This should come as no surprise. The middle class cannot advance an independent solution to society's problems. They invariably reflect the ideology of one or the other of the main contending classes in modern society—workers and capitalists. In



Hundreds of thousands demonstrate in Prague, Czechoslovakia, on Nov. 20, after resignation of Stalinist government.

the absence of an organized revolutionary workers' party in these countries, middle-class intellectuals tend to fall under the influence of world capitalism.

When masses of people are first drawn by events onto the field of history, their consciousness inevitably lags behind events. And those who are first chosen to lead reflect *past* consciousness, but are rapidly replaced as the level of consciousness of the masses

advances in accord with experience.

The course of revolution tends to follow a logic in which middle-class reformers are the first to rise to the head of the objectively revolutionary process erupting from the depths of society. And as the masses become more conscious of the gulf between their class needs and the petty-bourgeois leadership, they help push the more radical of the reformers onto the center of the stage upon which history plays itself out—until they are replaced by a conscious revolutionary proletarian leadership.

This law of revolution was first analyzed in detail by Karl Marx who described it and gave it its name: "The Revolution in Permanence."

Origin of Permanent Revolution

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels developed the conception of permanent revolution in a speech written by them for the Central Committee of the Communist League (the predecessor to the First International) in March 1850.

This speech drew the lessons of the explosion of revolutionary events in the Europe of 1848-49, primarily in France and Germany. The main lesson, they explained to the vanguard of Europe's workers, was the centrality of maintaining the independent organization and action by the working class. Under no circumstance, they warned, should the proletariat subordinate itself to any temporary middle-class ally.

The speech, "Address of Central Committee to the Communist League,"² is short but exceptionally rich. The following extract typifies the address as a whole—a lucid generalized description of the laws of permanent revolution in our epoch. [See also the accompanying article on Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.]

It outlines the revolutionary dynamic, applicable to the workers' states as well as to the capitalist world. It sounds almost as if it were written just yesterday to guide revolutionary-minded workers toward the overthrow of the privileged castes in the bureaucratized workers' states and toward the overthrow of world capitalism:

"The demands of the petty-bourgeois democracy ... are not put forward by all of its factions at the same time and only a very few members of them consider that these demands constitute definite aims in their entirety.

"The further separate individuals or

Soviet democracy vs. parliamentary democracy

The parliamentary system being put in place in East Europe and the Soviet Union is a sophisticated political mechanism developed during hundreds of years of capitalism to block the workers from power while it provides the ruling class the luxury of democratic resolution of differences among themselves.

While parliamentary electoralism must be utilized as a tool to organize workers, raise their level of consciousness, and as a measure of the revolutionary party's influence, it would be a colossal mistake to believe that a shift of state power from the oppressors to the oppressed can be accomplished through the parliamentary system.

History has shown that the road to a workers' government is through the kind of revolutionary democracy that enabled the Russian workers to take power in October 1917. The soviet-type state, based on workers' councils which are composed of elected delegates coming from every workplace, every fighting class institution, and every political faction of the working class is the most democratic system the world has seen.

Such a system of democracy includes a few other essential conditions. In contrast to the bourgeois parliamentary system now being established in the East, which is based on a division of governmental and state powers, the soviet, or Commune-type state^a, combines in one body both legislative and executive functions.

It provides for immediate recall of delegates by its constituencies, and for good measure, it also provides for delegates to be paid workers' wages—a provision intended to forestall a

scrambling for official position by self-seeking careerists.

The division of powers, such as the establishment of Gorbachev's position as chairman of the Supreme Soviet, invests this post with independent powers (following the model of most European parliamentary systems) which are intended as a safeguard against a legislative majority won by representatives of the revolutionary proletariat.

Now, the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee plenum has decided to strengthen the Bonapartist^b character of the presidency by orienting toward direct election of this most powerful executive agency of the state, *a-la* American system. This, as some Stalinist spokespersons have explained, gives the chief executive the exclusive power to send troops anywhere; that is, to put down mass protests internally or to make war.

The democratic essentials of the early soviet system were suppressed by Stalin and the bureaucracy he headed. Today, the Gorbachevs and Ligachevs of all Eastern Europe are intent on blocking any expression of soviet or Commune-type democracy, one of whose first acts would be the proscription of a capitalist-style income for bureaucrats. ■

Footnotes:

a- A reference to the Paris Commune of 1871. For further reading see Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France" (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977).

b- Bonapartism is a regime that appears to stand above the nation and to have gained complete independence of classes. See Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, Chapter XI.

(continued on page 12)

Leon Trotsky's ideas on 'Permanent Revolution'

In 1930, Leon Trotsky, in an introduction to his defense of the theory of permanent revolution, summarized Marx's conception of "the revolution in permanence" in one sentence:

"The permanent revolution, in the sense which Marx attached to the conception, means a revolution which makes no compromise with any form of class rule, which does not stop at the democratic stage, which goes over to socialist measures and to war against the reaction from without, that is, a revolution whose every next stage is anchored in the preceding one and which can only end in the complete liquidation of all class society."

This succinct but profound statement also reveals the essence of Marx's dialectical method to which Trotsky remained faithful to the end.

The theory of permanent revolution was developed further by Trotsky. He first applied it in 1906 to an analysis of revolutionary strategy for Czarist Russia, and later to all underdeveloped countries. Trotsky explained that capitalists and landlords were no longer purely distinct classes with fundamentally opposed interests. The economic interests of these two classes had intertwined; and in many cases landlords were also stockholders, and capitalists were also landowners.

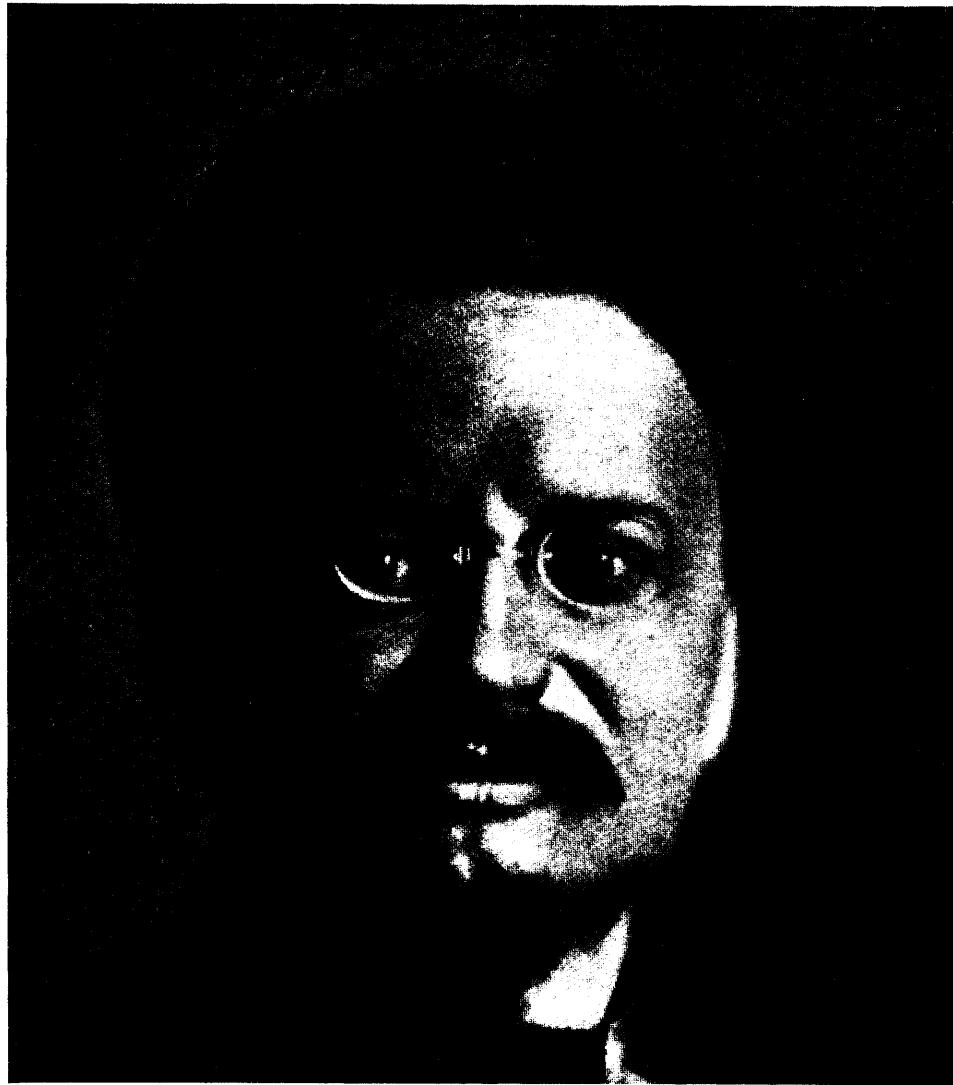
He concluded that capitalists could no longer carry out the democratic revolution; that is, the thoroughgoing overthrow of pre-capitalist forms of exploitation and the abolition of landed property. For the capitalists to do this would be to deal a fatal blow at their own social and political power.

Combined revolution

Lenin and Trotsky had long been in agreement that the capitalists of Russia could no longer carry through the tasks of the democratic revolution. But Trotsky went further. He predicted that only the workers, with peasant support, could carry through these tasks.

That meant a combined revolution. Only by establishing the rule of the working class could the capitalist class be held immobilized while the peasants expropriated the land from the landlord. This, Trotsky explained, was what Marx and Engels meant by the *dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasant war*—that is, the democratic rule of the working class supported by their natural allies, the poor peasants.

Trotsky argued that only the Commune-type state could carry the democratic revolution through to the end. Furthermore, following Marx's lead, he predicted that the proletariat in power would not stop until the means of production were wrenched out of the hands of the capitalist class and a nationalized, planned economy was put in its place—not only in Russia, but on a world scale.



Leon Trotsky

This outlook became the theoretical foundation for Bolshevik strategy. It was introduced by Lenin and adopted by the Bolshevik Party in April 1917.¹ This resulted in the overthrow by the Russian working class of both semi-feudal and capitalist rule in October 1917 and the establishment of a workers' state, "under the control of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies."

The April Theses also called for changing the party's name and for the foundation of the Third (Communist) International as the world party of socialist revolution.²

Marx's transitional method

But while "permanent revolution" is most identified with revolutionary strategy in the colonial and semi-colonial world, it underlies Trotsky's world outlook and runs like a red thread throughout his analyses of revo-

lutionary problems and their solution—in all countries.

This conception is at the heart of the "Transitional Program," which Trotsky wrote in 1938 as the basic programmatic foundation for the Fourth International. This new international was made necessary after Stalin had transformed the Third International from the world party of socialist revolution into an instrument of the counter-revolutionary Soviet bureaucracy.³

The "Transitional Program" addresses the problem of revolution in a world which, at that time, was divided into countries of four basic types:

- The imperialist countries, in which capitalists rule in their own name through bourgeois-democratic political institutions.
- The imperialist countries ruled by a fascist political dictatorship.
- The colonial and semi-colonial countries,

which are ruled by "comprador" capitalist classes; that is, by dependent capitalists who function as "junior partners" and agents of imperialism. The political forms of capitalist rule in these countries then, as now, ranged from left bourgeois democratic governments to military-police dictatorships.

• The workers' state, ruled by the Stalinist political dictatorship. (At that time the Soviet Union was the only one in this category.)

The peculiarities of each type of state and political regime were examined and the special tactical problems of each addressed. The strategic road in all cases, however, was toward a world socialist society.

The "Transitional Program" was not intended to constitute a mere collection of tactics, but was primarily a *method* for taking the proletariat from their given consciousness to higher levels. It is identical to the method which underlies Marx and Engels' Revolution in Permanence.

The method of the "Transitional Program" was summarized well by American Trotskyist, Joseph Hansen:

"The real solution to the problem of bridging the gap between the masses and our program of revolutionary socialism is to be found in the proper application of the transitional method taught us by Trotsky. The method is not complicated. It consists in approaching the masses at whatever level they may stand and in drawing them through progressive struggles and explanations toward a higher level of thought and action, that is, in the direction of socialist revolution...."

"Moreover, our own wishes, or our own level of class consciousness, must not be permitted to influence our judgement as to the real nature of the current concerns of the masses or the issues on which they are prepared to go into action."⁴

Footnotes:

1—"V.I. Lenin, "April Theses," *V.I. Lenin Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), Vol. 24, pp. 21-26.

2—The Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were factions of the Russian Social Democratic Party, but they functioned essentially as separate parties. In line with Lenin's "April Theses," the Bolsheviks changed their name to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

3—Trotsky declared the Third International dead and called for the formation of the Fourth International after Stalin led the German workers to defeat in 1933.

4—Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977).

...revolution and E. Europe

(continued from page 11)

factions among them go, the more of these demands will they make their own, and those few who see their own program in what has been outlined above might believe that thereby they have put forward the utmost that can be demanded from the revolution.

"But these demands can in nowise suffice for the party of the proletariat. While the democratic petty bourgeoisie wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above [democratic] demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians.

"For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only

its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society but the foundation of a new one....

"At the present moment when the democratic petty bourgeois are everywhere oppressed, they preach in general unity and reconciliation to the proletariat, they offer it their hand and strive for the establishment of a large opposition party which will embrace all shades of opinion in the democratic party, that is, they strive to entangle the workers in a party organization in which general social-democratic phrases predominate, behind which their special interests are concealed and in which the particular demands of the proletariat may not be brought forward for the sake of beloved peace.

"Such a union would turn out solely to their advantage and altogether to the disadvantage of the proletariat. The proletariat would lose its whole independent, laboriously achieved position and once more sink down to being an appendage of official bourgeois democracy.

"This union must, therefore, be decisively rejected. Instead of once again

stooping to serve as the applauding chorus of the bourgeois democrats, the workers, and above all the [Communist] League, must exert themselves to establish an independent, secret and public organization of the workers' party alongside of the official democrats and make each section the central point and nucleus of workers' societies in which the attitude and interests of the proletariat will be discussed independently of bourgeois influences.

"In the case of a struggle against a common adversary no special union is required. As soon as such an adversary has to be fought directly, the interests of both parties, for the moment, coincide, and, as previously, so also in the future, this connection, calculated to last only for the moment, will arise of itself."

Political and social revolution

A false picture of the forces at work in the upheavals sweeping through the Stalinist world can easily be drawn from the superficial and slanted interpretations we get from most reports presented in the mass media.

These reports are not all conscious distortions of events by capitalists and Stalinists eager to manufacture self-serving "public opinion." They also reflect their own adaptation to transient moods and wishful thinking. Serious revolutionists cannot

afford anything less than a sober look at the facts in all their contradictory reality.

Following Trotsky's example in his analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet state, it is necessary to note the class conquests that exist in these countries, despite the anti-working class role of the bureaucracies, and their impact on masses of people.

The collective ownership of the means of production, the planned economy, and the state monopoly of foreign trade (together constituting the socialization of the process of production) set into motion forces which objectively benefit the great majority in the workers' states, and represent a qualitative break from capitalism.

In its simplest terms, these socialized economies objectively serve to expand the productive forces, which is the only real foundation for progress. Moreover, the system of production-for-use guarantees everyone a job, shelter, food, clothing, and medical care.

Even the toiling masses of post-capitalist China—which emerged from generations of war, revolution, and devastating economic destruction—gained the fundamental right to a minimum level of living standards rivaling many countries far ahead of them in economic development.

The least-advantaged members of these societies, in fact, are better off than their

(continued on page 13)

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counterparts in the backward capitalist countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

It is for this reason that revolutionary Marxists make a sharp distinction between the anti-capitalist conquests of the workers' states and the parasitic bureaucratic castes fastened upon these objectively progressive foundations.

That is why we see the character of the revolution developing in the workers' states not as *social* but as *political*. This means the overthrow of the privileged bureaucracy and their system of political dictatorship; and at the same time, the preservation and development of the social and economic foundations for a socialist society.

Political revolution is by itself no solution to the task of constructing a socialist society, although it is an indispensable beginning for the bureaucratized states to go forward.

Socialism can be achieved only after the revolution is extended to the major industrialized capitalist societies. It cannot be built on an economic foundation lower than that of the most advanced capitalist countries, least of all in countries that are excluded from access to a world division of labor.

Entering the threshold to socialism, in short, is impossible without planned economic cooperation between workers' states which approaches, in technological development and scale, the level achieved in the sphere of the planet dominated by capitalist market relations.

For instance, a *socialist* West Germany plus East Europe including the Soviet Union, united in a single planned economy and managed by democratic workers' committees, would provide a material base that would open the door to equalling and surpassing the productivity of the capitalist world.

Pre-conditions for revolution

The objective conditions for revolution are determined by the unconscious forces of history. We are in an epoch which long ago became rotten ripe for socialist revolution. But Trotsky warned in 1938:

"The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.... [W]ithout a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind...."

"[T]he chief obstacle in the path of transforming the pre-revolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership: its petty-bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony."³

Since that was written the world has indeed suffered that catastrophe! World War II resulted in scores of millions killed, including the holocaust in which 6 million Jews and other "inferior" peoples were slaughtered, and ended with the nuclear destruction of two Japanese cities along with hundreds of thousands of their inhabitants.

This horror, a direct result of betrayal by the reformist and Stalinist handmaidens to imperialism, was followed by further betrayals in the aftermath of World War II. This brought to a close the pre-revolutionary situation in Western Europe which Trotsky spoke of, giving world imperialism a new lease on life. A new period of capitalist expansion was permitted to unfold with the indispensable aid and assistance of the reformists, especially the Stalinists.

Thus since shortly after World War II, broad layers of the middle classes, including even a layer of workers, have been able to share more or less in the fruits of property ownership. Millions of workers for instance, have accumulated savings from a lifetime of labor which they have invested in some form, including in stocks and bonds, from which they augment their income from wages or pensions. These are not capitalists, but they nevertheless have a stake in a *stable* capitalism.

So long as this stability in the centers of imperialism persists, such social layers constitute a bulwark of the system. But unfortunately for the luckier portions of the exploited millions, this security is doomed by the financial adventures of the masterminds of capitalist financial and monetary manipulation.

This changed objective situation—the stabilization of capitalist society in the major countries—also limits possibilities

for the time being in the workers' states. The internationalist perspective of the early Bolsheviks, the orientation toward the extension of the revolution to the advanced countries of the world as the only real road to socialism, appears to be a utopian vision. But this too will change when the contradictions boiling beneath the surface of world capitalism break through their artificially imposed limits.

Inevitable capitalist crisis

Although world capitalism has successfully avoided a major economic collapse such as erupted in 1929 for nearly half a century, it has done so at the heavy price of mortgaging the future in the course of an unparalleled and ultimately hyper-inflationary expansion of credit. And the longer the crisis is postponed, the more explosive will be its effects.

In the United States alone, the potential for disaster is indicated by a national debt

advantage of every missed opportunity, every delay, to save itself.

The ruling classes are always more or less conscious of their interests and their goals. And they know that because they are invariably a tiny minority, they can rarely rule in their own name.

In the final analysis they can maintain their monopoly on power only with the help of elements within the majority of the oppressed who have been bribed or corrupted or demoralized. These more or less conscious agents of the ruling classes then serve to hitch the proletarians to the capitalist wagon in the name of reform; that is, to ameliorate the worst evils of capitalism.

And what invariably follows from this reformist strategy is to counsel the proletariat to rely on alliances with "reform-minded" sections of the ruling capitalists.

Reformism disarms the working class. It leads logically toward an outlook that denies the conflicting material interests between

International also exists.

Socialist Action is in political solidarity with this world nucleus. In the coming months and years—no one can predict when—the long-postponed but unavoidable collapse of capitalist stability will open up a new pre-revolutionary period.

In this new situation, the festering wounds suffered by workers in the course of a twenty year-long anti-labor offensive, the unfulfilled promise of the long struggles of Blacks and women for equality, the outrage by the many-millioned masses at the uninterrupted poisoning of the planet, and the ever-present threat of nuclear destruction will all come together in a massive eruption of resistance and a swift rise in class consciousness.

The example provided by the labor upsurge of the 1930s and '40s, which showed the irresistible power of American workers; the mass Black mobilizations in the 1950s and '60s here in the United States that killed Jim Crow laws (legally imposed

Vladimir Sumovsky/ZOJA PICTURES



Soviet demonstrators in Moscow demand Communist Party end one-party rule on day before Plenum.

which is rapidly approaching \$3 trillion. The debtor nations are bankrupt and repayment of the \$300 billion principal owed imperialist governments and banks is virtually ruled out. Even interest payments have been halted in many instances. The speculative and credit-fueled boom has already bankrupted savings and loan institutions, threatening the entire banking system.

Freeing the world's currencies from the dictatorship of a gold base has played the decisive part in enabling the world's capitalist rulers to enormously expand the role of credit as a vehicle for carrying world capitalist economy to unsupportable heights.

At this very moment the monstrous debt harnessed by a maze of financial mechanisms threatens to burst free and engulf the capitalist world in uncontrollable hyper-inflation. The collapse of monetary stability in the Latin American backyard of U.S. imperialism already appears to be just inches away—and the rest of the capitalist world may not be far behind.

Crisis of revolutionary leadership

But there is no crisis from which capitalism is unable to extricate itself. Without a conscious revolutionary proletarian leadership to carry the struggle through to the end, capitalism will take

opposed classes. Instead of a strategy based on uniting all exploited and oppressed in their common class interests, reformism substitutes a strategy of uniting all people of "good will" in the interest of an undifferentiated humanity.

This not only disarms the workers, it leads them into coalitions with the class enemy which can only be at the expense of sacrificing the interests of sections of the working class—especially the most exploited and oppressed—in the name of the alliance with *good* capitalists.

Class collaboration disorients, confuses and leads the masses into the dens of the class enemy which feeds off them. It is a road that can only lead to defeats and demoralization.

Without the construction in time of a mass-based revolutionary party in every country on Earth, the petty bourgeois "socialist" and labor lieutenants of the capitalist class will again lead the masses to defeat and a catastrophe that will dwarf that of World War II.

Fortunately, it's not necessary to start from scratch in the task of reconstructing the world party of socialist revolution. The programmatic basis for reconstructing a mass proletarian leadership in every country exists. Its organizational nucleus, the Fourth

segregation); the women's struggle, which legalized abortion in many countries in the 1970s; the colonial revolutions from Asia to Africa to Latin America unfolding without let-up since the end of World War I; and the series of working-class revolts in the Stalinist states, starting in 1953, reaching ever-higher and continuing to this day, will all provide the launching pad from which the next upsurge will take off.

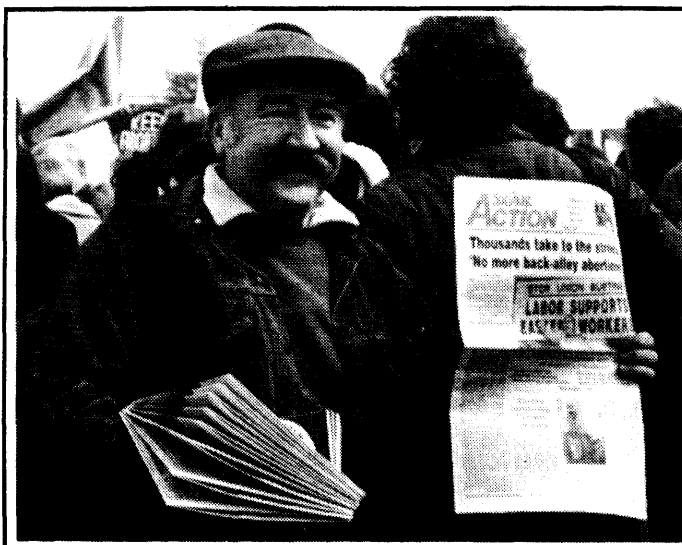
The diverse experiences of the exploited and oppressed in every land will feed each other and ultimately converge in a series of interlinked revolutionary risings everywhere, East and West. Revolutionary parties will sprout and grow as if from the Earth itself. The human race can be rescued from capitalist barbarism and a new age of socialist cooperation will open up for the whole human race. ■

Footnote

1—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977).

2—Published in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works* (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), Vol. I.

3—Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977). Introduction by Joseph Hansen.



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Stakes are high for workers in German reunification plan

David Burnett/CONTACT



If East Germany is absorbed by capitalist West Germany, the euphoria of toppling the Berlin Wall will soon fade away.

By ALAN BENJAMIN

When millions of German workers from the East and the West knocked down the Berlin Wall on Nov. 8, 1989, they sent a clear signal that on both sides of this artificial border there is one German working class.

Since that historic day, hundreds of thousands of marchers in East Germany have staged weekly demonstrations in Leipzig and other East German cities to demand: "Free elections in all of Germany!" — "Twelve years of Nazis and 40 years of STASIS [East German secret police] is enough!" — "No unemployment!" — "Independent trade unions and the right to strike!"

After the Berlin Wall came crumbling down, the imperialist nations and their Stalinist cohorts were quick to point out that the demand for German reunification was "not realistic at this point" and that "stability" in Europe comes first.

Within months of the collapse of the Wall, however, the East German economy began to crumble. Production approached a standstill, as raw materials and parts were no longer delivered—mainly because of strikes (in the construction, health, and transportation industries), slowdowns, and a lack of workers.

Thousands of East German workers—in addition to the hundreds of thousands who had already left—continued to cross the border daily into West Germany. The opening of the Brandenburg Gate had not relieved the pressure and halted the mass exodus, as the imperialists and the Stalinists had hoped would occur.

This, in turn, created tremendous strains on the West Germany economy and society, as hundreds of thousands of newly migrated East German workers demanded unemployment insurance, housing, jobs, and education—which were already in short supply for West German workers.

The West German imperialists sent out an alarm signal that unless something was done quickly, the East German economy would simply collapse, and West Germany would run the risk of being destabilized.

Kohl's capitalist reunification

West German Prime Minister Helmut Kohl began to push for a unified German currency and international aid to prop up the East German Stalinist bureaucracy. His stated goal was to link the East German economy to the West German capitalist system. Specifically, he proposed that a unified German currency be established as soon as possible.

The imperialist powers, meeting in

Ottawa, Canada, understood that the process of German reunification was inevitable—in fact, it was already taking place independently of their will—and that they had to support it in order to steer it on a political course best suited to promote their own interests.

They also understood that the East German Stalinists, with Gorbachev's endorsement, were now willing to acquiesce to the overturn of the socialized property relations in East Germany to maintain some of their own privileges.

For West German imperialism, a capitalist reunification of Germany would open the possibility of German imperialism going its own way to take full advantage of its imposing economic power in Europe.

For the United States and the other Western European imperialist powers, on the other hand, the specter of a reunified capitalist Germany—80 million strong and potentially the world's third largest military power—is highly problematic.

A united capitalist Germany would dwarf the other countries in the European Economic Community and challenge U.S. economic and political domination. This explains the U.S. insistence that a united Germany remain in NATO and that U.S. troops

remain stationed on German soil.

East German left opposes Kohl

Opposition to the Kohl reunification plan—though not to German reunification *per se*—has been strongly expressed in East Germany by such groups as New Forum, Democracy Now, and the United Left.

Hans Jürgen Fischbeck, a spokesperson for Democracy Now, explained that Kohl's proposed unified currency would lead to the collapse of the East German economy and the erosion of the social gains of the workers' state:

"No one would buy our goods at the same price as West German goods," Fischbeck said. He added that this would lead to the closing of East German factories and to mass unemployment. (*New York Times*, Feb. 17, 1990)

A recent news article also reported that tens of thousands of West Germans are making legal claims on former family or business property lying in East Germany. "With economic union approaching, West Germans are racing to reassert property rights, prompting a near panic among thousands of East German tenants," wrote *Baltimore Sun* correspondent Ian Johnson (Feb. 18, 1990).

Notes on discussions in Donetsk

By ROD HOLT

I've recently returned from a stay in Donetsk, in the Soviet Union. Our small group was invited by coal miners in the area. Through our trip, we became aware of a severe problem of division among the coal miners, fostered by the bureaucracy, and a concomitant decay in morale.

The life expectancy of a below-ground miner is less than 50 years. Few can work more than 15 years without being crippled by loss of the lung's capacity to deliver oxygen to heart and brain.

They consider the age of full pension eligibility of 55 to 60 a cruel joke. The fact is that no miner expects to remain healthy—or for that matter, to even live long enough to collect his pension.

As a result, by the time a miner approaches his early thirties, concerned for the future of his wife and kids, he is compelled to search for an above-ground job. Here the bureaucracies of the mine management, the official trade union, and the Communist Party control the only routes out. Yet these

are the very agencies responsible for the condition of the miners.

The bureaucrats take full advantage. Before they hand out a job, they insist that the miner demonstrate that he is housebroken, that he will betray his class. This naturally creates suspicion between miners.

We saw that the most militant, mature, and respected miners were from the thirtyish age group. Those approaching their forties had mostly learned to keep their complaints to themselves or were even already known careerists, having secured above-ground jobs or even jobs with one of the bureaucracies.

In a few conspicuous cases, the miners had elected members of this older group to high positions in their organizations. Five thousand workers at the Kalinin mine elected one of them as president of the official trade union. "He was in the mine for over 10 years," we were told, "and is known to us as an honest man, even if too soft with management."

Yet, even here, there was grumbling about the fairness with which the union president

Birgit Rausch, an official with the East German housing administration, told the *Sun*: "The tenants feel very insecure when they see West Germans looking around. No one wants to end up homeless like in the West."

The organizations of the East German left, however, are oriented almost exclusively toward the self-reform of the East German Stalinist bureaucracy and have no perspective for uniting the German and European working class in a struggle for socialist democracy.

Where socialists should stand

What should the position of revolutionary Marxists be on the question of German reunification?

Revolutionary Marxists should take a position, without any ambiguity, for the right to self-determination of the German working class.

West German Prime Minister Helmut Kohl is for German unity—but on the condition that capitalism is safeguarded. The people in East Germany are not about to oust the bureaucrats just to replace them with capitalist bosses. What they are fighting for is their emancipation, not a change of masters.

Their mass demonstrations have combined the demands for (1) an end to bureaucratic rule, (2) German reunification, and (3) the defense of the conquests of the workers' state (full employment, and guaranteed job security and social welfare).

Revolutionary Marxists must strongly oppose Kohl's reactionary capitalist reunification plan. It is essential to explain that the proposed unified German currency would mean the end of the East German monopoly of foreign trade and planned economy.

We must call for the unification of the German working class based on the mobilization of the workers in the East against bureaucratic oppression and in the West against capitalist exploitation. We must advocate a united, socialist Germany as part of an overall call for a united, socialist Europe.

But the recognition of the right to self-determination is the condition for being able to wage a serious fight for a Germany without bosses and bureaucrats.

Common initiatives around the fight against unemployment and austerity and for the defense of the conquests of the East German working class will prepare the conditions for genuine, working-class reunification.

To accomplish the task of unifying the German working class, East and West, a Trotskyist party based on the "Transitional Program" of the Fourth International and rooted in the struggles of the entire German working class is essential. ■

The long history of Stalinist repression in Eastern Europe

By HAYDEN PERRY

In the final days of 1944, hope replaced despair for millions of Eastern Europeans under Nazi occupation. The Red Army was advancing on a line from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The day of liberation approached ever closer.

Partisan bands growing in strength and confidence moved from harassing the Nazis to taking control of limited areas. Town and village councils were set up.

In September 1944, partisans in Sofia, Bulgaria hoisted red flags over the capital. Workers' committees took over factories as the owners fled west to escape the Russians. Power was falling into workers' hands almost by default.

In Poland, the Soviet army reached the east bank of the Vistula River, which flows through the suburbs of Warsaw. Inside the city, Polish partisans were in desperate struggle with the Germans. But the guerrillas were outnumbered and outgunned. Partisan couriers swam the Vistula to beg for munitions, medicines, and food from the Soviet forces.

To the amazement of the partisans, the Soviet commander refused all help. The Soviets kept their troops immobilized on the east bank of the Vistula for 63 days while the Polish fighters were slaughtered. The Russians crossed the river to liberate Warsaw only after all resistance was crushed, and the Germans were retreating from the city.

This episode would remain inexplicable unless one understands Stalin's policy in World War II. Stalin was fighting to defend Russian territory and the bureaucracy's power and privileges, and nothing more. He was on no crusade to spread socialist revolution.

The threat from Hitler's armies was obvious. But Stalin saw another threat in uncontrolled partisan bands who might establish independent centers of workers' power. The partisans fighting in Warsaw were independent, hence unreliable. It was better to let Hitler eliminate them, and avoid trouble later.

As Soviet armies moved west into Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia they were welcomed by many workers' and nationalist formations who filled the power vacuum left by the fascist puppet governments fleeing west.

How Lenin and Trotsky would have embraced these revolutionary workers! But Stalin saw only a movement he could not control. He preferred to deal with the weak and discredited capitalist class. These capitalists would help keep the workers in their place.

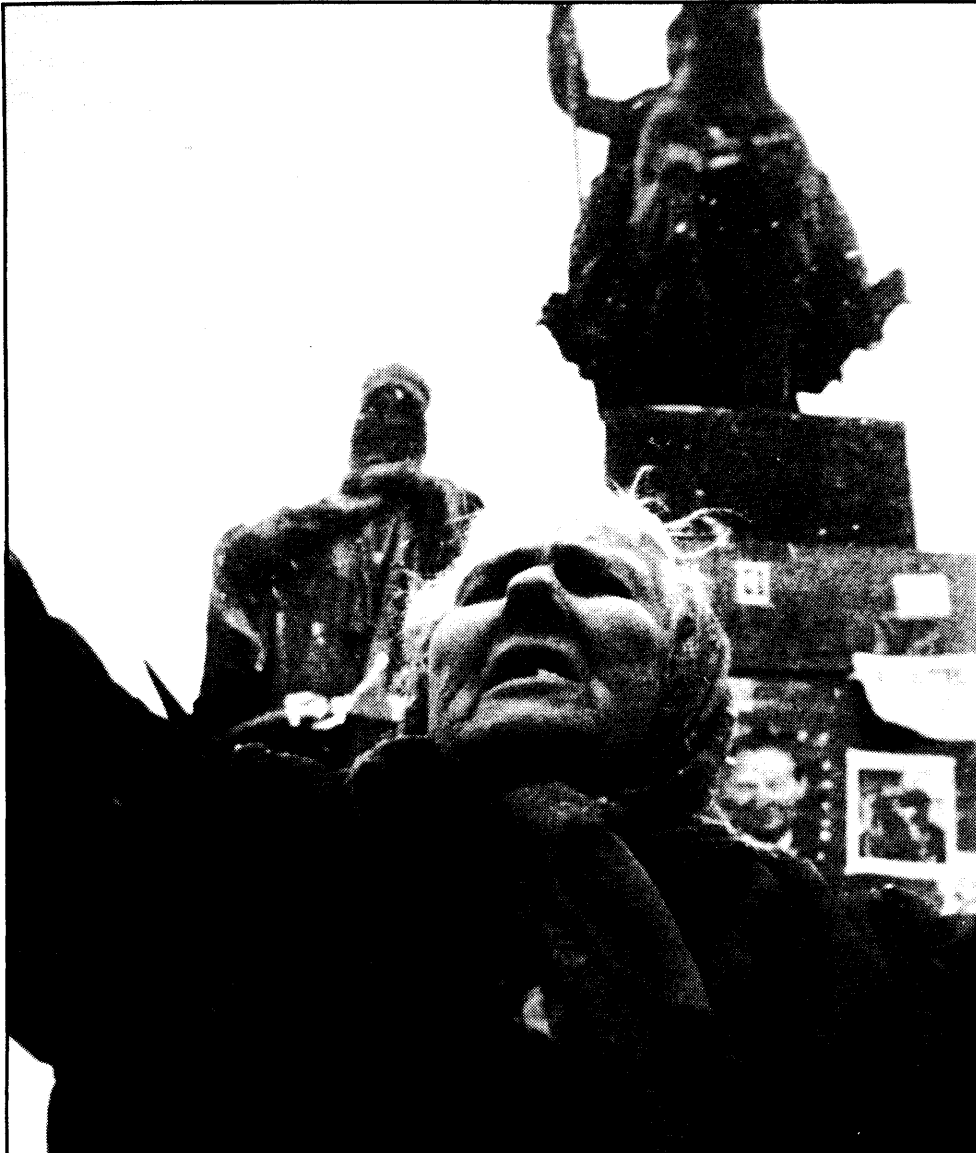
Under tight control

After the Red Army took control, the Stalinists nurtured these remaining capitalists, forming coalition governments with them. A few reliable Stalinists in cabinet seats would keep the coalition government on a pro-Soviet course. From their cabinet seats and department offices, the Stalinists could assure that the workers' parties were kept under tight control.

Keeping the workers under control meant eliminating a whole generation of revolutionaries who had preserved the traditions of the Bolshevik Revolution. Many had spent years in bourgeois and fascist jails.

Within a few years of the liberation of these countries, show trials in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary condemned these heroic working-class leaders as enemies of the workers. Like the Moscow Trials of 1937, these prosecutions destroyed a leadership that would have resisted the Stalinization of their countries.

With the militant workers' movements beheaded, the Stalinists proceeded to rebuild local Communist parties. From small groups they became mass parties of hundreds of thousands. The rival Social Democrats were absorbed into the new Communist parties. But these fused parties were still not firmly in the grip of the Stalinists. It took vast purges of the membership to reduce them to organizations of careerists and blind followers.



Czechoslovakia 1990: Many people who endured Stalinist repression for over 40 years came out to support the students fight for democracy.

In Romania, 200,000 dissidents were purged in 1948, and 550,000 were expelled in Czechoslovakia. The careerists then crystallized a bureaucracy that developed a measure of independence from the Kremlin, but the ultimate power to enforce Stalinist discipline lay with the Soviet occupation forces.

The warm welcome the workers gave the Soviet army quickly cooled as they saw the Russians carting off scarce machinery and whole factories to the Soviet Union. In Romania and Bulgaria, whose governments willingly supported Germany, such plundering was termed "collecting reparations." But it is unclear what they called this wholesale looting in countries forcibly occupied by Nazi aggression.

The economies of these so-called buffer states were left in capitalist hands, but Stalin set up joint stock companies with local capitalists to direct production to commodities needed by the Soviet Union. Here contradictions broke out between profit-motivated business interests and the Soviet planned economy. Which would prevail? The drive for maximum profit or the Soviet desire for cheap products?

Precedent in the Baltic region

The Kremlin had faced this problem earlier, in 1939, when Stalin seized the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. When these nations were absorbed by the workers' state, there was no place for the Baltic capitalists. Stalin found a place for them—in Siberia. But along with the capitalists, many workers who were deemed "unreliable" were among the 200,000 deported to Siberia.

Carefully controlled workers' committees took over the factories which were incorporated into the thoroughly bureaucratized Soviet system. The Baltic workers' control of their own countries was further diluted as thousands of Russians were sent to Estonia and Latvia to Russify the provinces.

Contradictions in East Europe developed more slowly. So long as these states served as buffer zones insulating the Soviet Union, Stalin had no problem. The workers may prefer socialism, but that wish could be ignored by a government interested only in

preserving their bureaucratic position.

While these events were occurring in Eastern Europe, the Stalinists were also active in the West. The workers' anti-capitalist struggles in post-World War II Western Europe were derailed as the Stalinists entered bourgeois cabinets to prop up capitalist regimes, restrain strikes, and smother the revolutionary aspirations of the workers.

Forced to overturn capitalism

Stalin thought he could live peacefully with the capitalist world. But world imperialism had no desire to live peacefully with the Soviet Union. Their first aggressive act was the creation of the Marshall plan in 1946. This put a gun to Stalin's head.

The Marshall Plan involved the infusion of American money to restore European capitalism and to pull it into the American orbit. If the East European capitalists participated, these states would no longer be buffer states against anti-Soviet attacks. All the contradictions between the profit system and planned economy would be exacerbated as American economic might was exerted through the East European capitalists. Stalin felt he had to move against them.

Having used the capitalists against the workers, Stalin now used the workers against the capitalists. Carefully controlled workers' committees led a partial mobiliza-

tion of the working class to oust the capitalists in the six East European states. There was little resistance. The native bourgeoisies were weak, and the United States was unable to intervene militarily because of antiwar sentiment at home.

Nationalizations took place at various times in the six countries. They were carried out as early as 1945 in Czechoslovakia and as late as 1948 in Bulgaria. In all countries the process was much the same. In no case did the workers play an independent role.

Bourgeois representatives were eased out of coalition governments by the overwhelming power of the Stalinist forces. They were replaced by leaders of the mass Communist parties, in some cases with representatives of small peasant parties subservient to the Stalinists.

Control of factories, banks, and wholesale trade was taken from the capitalists and transferred to thoroughly bureaucratized workers' councils. Rank-and-file workers had no voice in any decisions. The new order was formalized by the promulgation in 1948 of new constitutions based on the 1936 Soviet constitution.

Stalinist clones

This made the new regimes in the buffer states full fledged clones of the Stalinist dictatorship. The Soviet bureaucracy had decades to develop all the privileges and vices of a hardened caste. The new bureaucracies of Hungary, Bulgaria, etc. were created with all the vices of a caste already well developed. The Ceausescu clan in Romania showed how an absolute dictatorship could go beyond even the excesses of Stalin.

The possibility that rational, planned production could replace the anarchy of market forces made the nationalizations progressive. But each country's plans were geared first to the needs of the Soviet Union, and based on the false theory of building socialism in one country.

Development of heavy industry was stressed in each country regardless of consumers' need. Even consumer goods in short supply were exported to the Soviet Union. For years cooperation among the six workers' states was discouraged. In each country lopsided plans of development, imposed from above, led to economic crisis. Recent borrowing from the capitalist world has only exacerbated the problems.

The regimes never had popular support, and were highly unstable, as uprisings in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, Poland in 1958, and Czechoslovakia in 1968 demonstrated. The Soviet troops that crushed these revolts proved that ultimate power lay in Moscow.

Although Soviet military might could restore Stalinist order in the 1950s and even the 1960s, today things are different. Now the workers of the Soviet Union itself are challenging their own bureaucracy. Gorbachev does not dare try military repression against the millions in revolt in East Europe today. He can only attempt to salvage what he can of the wreckage of Stalinism.

American capitalists are exulting that "socialism" has failed. But real socialism has not even been approached in these deformed workers' states. What has been rejected is the Stalinist dictatorship imposed by the Kremlin. ■

Gorbachev's USSR: Is Stalinism Dead?

A collection of essays in defense of socialist democracy

Edited by Carl Finamore

Gorbachev's USSR: Is Stalinism Dead: A collection of essays in defense of socialist democracy

Edited by Carl Finamore, with essays by Esteban Volkov (Leon Trotsky's grandson), Pierre Broué (Trotsky's biographer), et al. (208 pp. w/ photos.) paper: \$8.95, plus \$1 for postage. Make checks payable to Walnut Publishing Co., 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, S.F., CA 94110.

(continued from page 1)

secretary David Owen) is quite accurate.

For many years, De Klerk counted himself among the die-hard advocates of apartheid. Like Gorbachev, he is a party *apparatchik* whose goal is to reform the system in order to preserve it.

The lessons of Eastern Europe, where hard-line bureaucrats were brought down by struggles in the streets, were not lost on De Klerk and other ruling-class representatives in South Africa. To try to avoid a similar fate at the hands of the mobilized Black population, new thinking was necessary in the land of apartheid.

De Klerk announced his reforms after several months of stepped-up protests—mass rallies, strikes, sit-ins, and boycotts—by Black people fighting the apartheid system. Despite the state of emergency, the Black freedom movement was rebounding. For that reason, the door was "opened" to negotiations.

De Klerk now hopes to corral the Black movement into a drawn-out process of back-room talks and compromises.

Conditions for talks

The ANC leadership has agreed that initial talks should start as soon as possible. "The day is not very far" when discussions can take place, Mandela stressed soon after his release.

The ANC said that talks can be undertaken once the government complies with three major demands—and end to the state of emergency, the freeing of *all* political prisoners, and the withdrawal of troops from the Black townships.

But the South African regime is insisting that negotiations be conducted on its own terms. It has resisted setting free those prisoners who are charged with "violent" crimes.

De Klerk has extolled the role of the police in "combatting violence and other crimes" that members of anti-apartheid groups might commit. And police officials have said that exiles returning to South Africa could be subject to prosecution under still-existing regulations.

As if to give teeth to these statements,



Nelson Mandela just before his trial and imprisonment

Peter Magubane/AP

government forces soon set out on a hunt for nine ANC members who are charged with being "guerrillas." Several rallies were broken up with tear gas, shotguns, and attack dogs—resulting in some deaths.

Items on the table

The ANC also said that it looked favorably on the possibility of later negotiations dealing with the question of "power sharing." But here, too, the De Klerk regime is determined to wring substantial concessions from the Black movement.

De Klerk proposed discussions of a new "democratic" constitution that would include assurances of "no domination." In plain words, the regime wants it clear from the outset that whites will be guaranteed veto power under a post-apartheid government; Blacks would be denied majority rule.

At the same time, De Klerk chided Nelson Mandela's "archaic policies" supporting the continuation of guerrilla warfare and the future nationalization of the banks and the mines.

De Klerk is hoping that the ANC will

back away from the nationalization demand. He knows that ANC leaders have held numerous meetings with representatives of the South African capitalist class, in which they stressed that the bosses have "nothing to fear."

As far as giving veto power to the white minority (or some other system of checks and balances to thwart Black majority rule), the ANC has been more cryptic. On the one hand, Mandela has repeatedly called for "universal suffrage on a common voters' roll," a formula that counters De Klerk's insistence on parliamentary representation for racially defined groups.

On the other hand, Mandela has said that he is "against Black domination" and that the ANC wishes "to find a solution which will suit both the whites and the Blacks in this country." He has not indicated, however, what form such a solution could possibly take.

As long as the Black masses remain mobilized *in the streets*, the white-supremacist regime can be compelled to give up more concessions. Still, it would be an illusion to

think that Blacks in South Africa will gain their freedom simply because the government has agreed to sit down at the table with some of their leaders.

It will take a long struggle to dismantle the apartheid system and rebuild a nation in which all the people can obtain political justice, jobs, and decent housing, education, and healthcare.

Important debates are going on in the Black movement, including the trade unions, on how to achieve these ends. A sizable component of the movement already understands that inequality and injustice are inherent in the basic structure of the capitalist system.

A democratic constitution, guaranteeing Black majority rule, is only a first step for the new South Africa. But this cannot be worked out in common with the oppressors. It is necessary to convene a constituent assembly, elected by all South Africans according to the principle of one person, one vote.

Free all political prisoners! End apartheid! Black majority rule! ■

Changing economic needs of South African capitalism

By CARL FINAMORE

South African society is not as simple as it was in 1948 when the ruling Nationalist Party began to vastly strengthen the apartheid system. Big changes in economic and social relations have forced the regime to modify some of its racist policies.

The recent mass reception given Nelson Mandela upon his release from prison shows that the consciousness and militancy of the Black population is higher than at any previous time.

At the same time, Black workers—integrated into a wide range of strategic industries—have shown that they have the power to bring the economy to a grinding halt. Close to a million workers have joined the mass Black trade unions.

This growth of a powerful and increasingly combative Black working class is a by-product of the expansion of the South African economy over the past four decades.

It has compelled the government to adopt a series of skillful political maneuvers—in combination with their time-tested variant of repression—to contain the enormous power of the Black majority. Loosening the iron grip of apartheid is the first step on this road.

Original capitalist development

For centuries, Blacks in southern Africa engaged in cattle raising and farming. This all changed dramatically when diamonds and gold were discovered on their farm and grazing lands. White settlers poisoned the soil, slaughtered the cattle, and destroyed the indigenous handicrafts industry.

Expelling Blacks from the land occurred simultaneously with driving them into the mines. These two related economic features of capitalist development shaped the racist social character of South Africa—the minority white property owners and the Black majority workforce.

Oppression in the mines was staggering. [South Africa continues to have the highest record of mine accidents in the world.] Black miners suffered intolerable exploitation at sub-poverty level wages. As a consequence, until the last decade, capitalist investors in South Africa were realizing a profit rate twice as high as anywhere else in the world.

Why apartheid began

Driven off the land and super-exploited in the mines, Blacks began to drift into the cities in search of work. Beginning in the early years of this century, a series of laws were passed to keep large numbers of Blacks permanently dependent on working in the mines and in white-owned agriculture.

Pass laws were enacted which provided for the forced expulsion of millions of Blacks from "white" South Africa to artificially established "reserves" (later called "homelands" or Bantustans). These barren regions became nothing more than dumping grounds for the excess labor pool which the mine owners and wealthy farmers could tap as needed.

From 1916 to 1981, over 17 million Black people were arrested for escaping from these reserves.

After the Second World War, the system of racial separation was adopted to serve a growing industrial economy. From 1960 to 1983, 2 million Blacks were removed from "white" urban areas to the Bantustans. In the meantime, by 1986, unemployment among Blacks had grown officially to about 25 percent.

Why capitalists want it to end

By the 1960s, the industrial and commercial sector of the economy was over twice as large as mining and agriculture. The new diversification of the economy was directly financed by the super-profits resulting from apartheid. But, paradoxically, once the economy reached its present state of advanced industrial development, the stringent rules of apartheid became obstacles to further development.

For example, a permanent and reliable workforce is needed by modern industrial firms such as auto, electronics, and chemical production. To achieve this stability, it is not practical to prohibit Black families from living together in the major cities, which were defined exclusively as "white areas."

Inevitably, illegal township settlements

arose on the fringes of every major city. The Soweto township where Nelson Mandela lives has well over one million residents.

By the same token, South African industry desperately requires a more educated workforce to increase productivity, an absolutely essential step needed to reverse the decline in their competitiveness in the world market. Once again, apartheid stands in the way. In 1984, 68 percent of the Black population was illiterate.

In addition, to compensate for the loss in their export earnings, South African capitalists want what all capitalists enjoy—the right to increase profits by expanding their own domestic market.

Already, seven out of every 10 rand spent in Johannesburg are spent by Black consumers. The potential national market is enormous with a Black population of 27 million. Cultivating a domestic market was not previously relevant to the mining and agricultural sectors, which were export oriented.

Reaching a political accommodation limiting the power of the Black masses while at the same time allowing a section to rise above their sub-human conditions to become "wage slaves" and consumers explains the dual, and delicate, nature of South African President F.W. de Klerk's negotiations.

Today, apartheid's brutally simple formula of racial separation is not only socially explosive but it is an obstacle to the needs of the complex South African economy.

The government is attempting to shift gears while it's still in the driver's seat. Abandoning certain aspects of apartheid is a cheap price to pay if the government can win major political concessions from Black leaders which legitimize the regime. ■

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James P. Cannon (1890-1974) Founder of American Trotskyism

By ASHER HARER

Feb. 11 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism and perhaps the best representative, so far, of the type of revolutionary that will bring socialism to America.

Cannon was an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) from 1911 to 1918 and was active in the left wing of the American Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs. He was one of the young leaders who founded the American Communist Party in 1919. He was elected to its political committee and served on the presidium of the Communist International in Moscow from 1922 to 1925.

In the IWW he served his apprenticeship under the great "Wobbly" leaders "Big Bill" Haywood and Vincent St. John. In the Communist International he worked with Lenin, Trotsky, and other leaders of the Russian Revolution.

Opponent of Stalinism

In the great class struggles that took place during and after World War I, the only revolution that succeeded was the Russian, led by Lenin and Trotsky. As the smoke cleared, backward Russia stood alone, isolated, and devastated by civil war. The pressure on its leadership was tremendous.

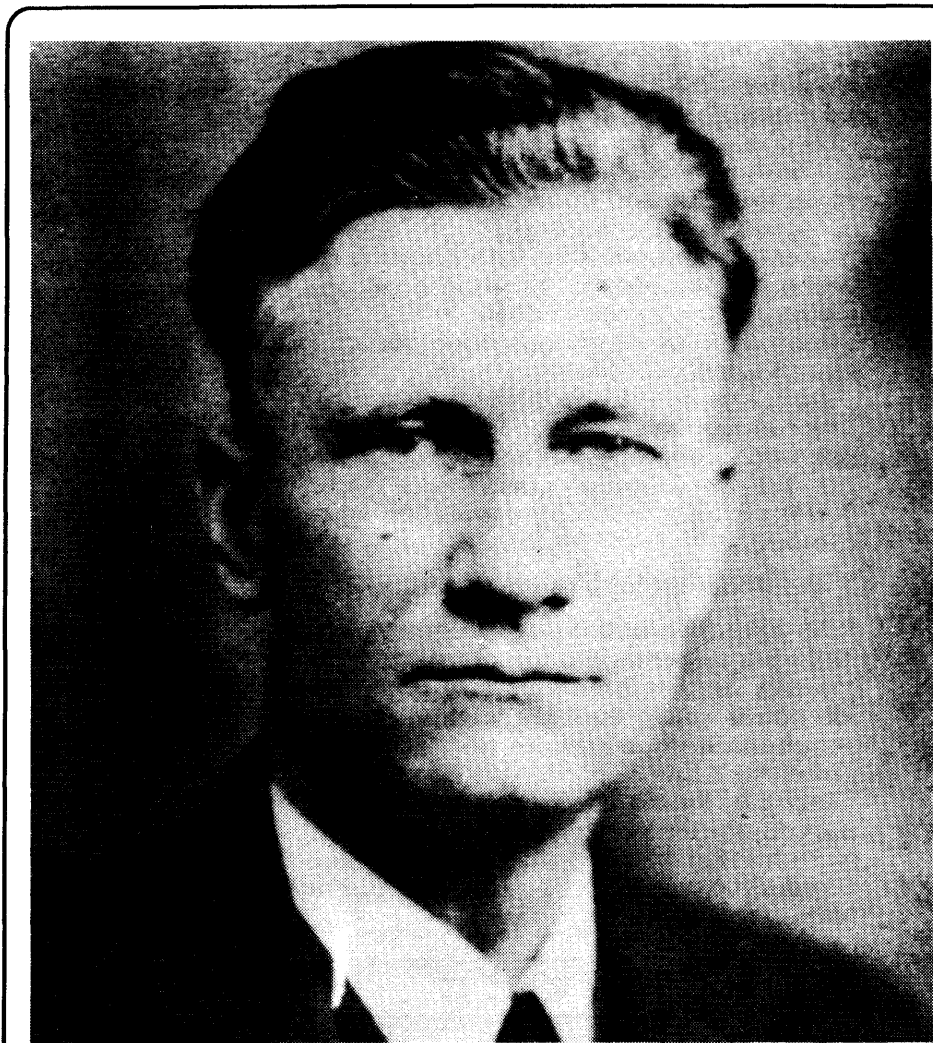
Gradually, a self-serving bureaucracy, led by Joseph Stalin, developed. It lost confidence in the ability of the world working class to extend the revolution. It sought instead accommodations with world imperialism: "We'll lay off world revolution if you lay off us."

In time, this strategy led to the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939, which marked the opening of World War II.

Lenin and Trotsky had seen what was happening and formed a bloc against Stalin. But Lenin died in 1924. Trotsky's Left Opposition was defeated. In 1928 Trotsky was exiled, hounded from one country to another, and in 1940 assassinated by a Stalinist agent in Mexico.

In 1928 Cannon was a delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow. Almost by accident, he and a Canadian delegate, Maurice Spector, came into possession of exiled Trotsky's "Draft Program of the Communist International—A Criticism of Fundamentals."

They decided that Trotsky was right—but



James P. Cannon in 1935

didn't dare say so at the time.

Back in America they spoke out and were promptly expelled. They proceeded to set up political organizations to support Trotsky.

Trotsky and Cannon

In 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany, without the million-member CP putting up a serious struggle against him.

Now it was clear that the Communist International (also known as the Third International) was unreformable—that it had become basically counterrevolutionary under Stalin.

Trotsky called for the formation of a new international to combat and replace the Stalinist international. Five years were to

pass before this took place.

In 1938, Trotsky, now in Mexico, began a collaborative relationship with the American Trotskyists, led by Cannon. He "adopted the American party [the Socialist Workers Party] as his own," Cannon often remarked.

Trotsky, like Cannon, considered the founding of the SWP to be one of the great achievements of the American working class and of the Fourth International.

When Trotsky wrote the program for the new international, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," he asked the SWP to adopt it and present it to the founding conference of the Fourth International in Europe in the fall of 1938.

In addition, he asked that Cannon be sent to Europe to help organize the conference. Cannon did so—under Trotsky's direction.

For a mass Leninist party

Cannon made it his life's work to build a centralized, disciplined working-class party, fully democratic in decision-making—but with one face to its enemies and opponents.

His goal was a mass Leninist party that could take on the American capitalist class and establish a socialist America. His "American Theses" (1946) laid out the basic strategic line to accomplish this goal.

Trotsky called America "the foundry in which the fate of humanity is to be forged." He stated that "in the last historic analysis all the problems of our planet will be decided on American soil."

Cannon agreed. He recognized the destructive power of the American imperialist colossus astride the world, armed with the most technology and nuclear weapons. He insisted that no revolution anywhere in the world—from Latin America, to Cuba, to the Soviet Union itself—was safe until American capitalism was toppled.

The SWP's new course

It is a tragedy that the present leadership of the SWP, the party founded by Cannon and to which he dedicated most of his life, has turned its back on many of the revolutionary traditions that Cannon stood for.

The SWP's sectarian and abstentionist attitude toward the trade unions, the women's movement and the antiwar movement, for example, stands in stark contrast to the practice of the SWP under Cannon.

In this process, many proven concepts of Lenin and Trotsky on the strategy of world revolution and the methods of party building are being jettisoned. In fact, Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution has now been discarded by the current SWP leaders.

Those of us in the SWP who sounded a warning to reverse this trend were framed up and expelled in 1983-84, just as Cannon was expelled from the Communist Party in 1928.

Socialist Action was founded by expelled members of the SWP in order to defend the party against the destructive course of its present leadership. Socialist Action was formed to defend the basic ideas of Trotskyism and the Fourth International.

In that sense, James P. Cannon, chief architect of the strategy of the American revolution, stands in our ranks. ■

For further reading, see "Toward a Socialist America: What Socialist Action stands for," edited by Asher Harer, with speeches by James P. Cannon, \$1.10 (includes postage). Make checks payable to Walnut Publishing Co.

... Eastern strike

(continued from page 20)

Some 2500 planes worth \$130 billion are on order for the next decade. Eight airlines control 90 percent of the market.

But the competitive restructuring in the industry is far from over. Three of the eight are in big trouble. Texas Air, Pan Am, and TWA are facing possible sell-offs or mergers.

Two smaller carriers filed for bankruptcy last year—Braniff for the second time in the 1980s, and Presidential.

Carl Icahn, owner of TWA, is demanding big concessions from the workers there. If they refuse, he threatens to sell more TWA assets. At United Airlines, Chairman Stephen Wolf is pressuring the three unions—all of which are working under expired contracts. The Association of Flight Attendants' (AFA) contract expired Nov. 1, 1987; the pilots', April 1, 1988; and the IAM's, Nov. 1, 1989.

Wolf, a former president of Continental, tried to arrange a so-called Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) buyout last fall. This would have given United the largest debt in the industry. To pay it, Wolf told the "new owners" they would have to give major concessions. The IAM said "No", thus convincing a number of bankers to scuttle the deal.

The pilots' leadership, who supported the Wolf-organized ESOP, have joined with the IAM and AFA for a new ESOP proposal at a lower price. This ESOP is not in our inter-

ests. It is a proposal for voluntary givebacks by workers in exchange for company stock whose future value is even questionable.

Many workers blame government deregulation of the industry in 1978 as the source of the airlines' problems. But the government and employers were just responding to the laws of capitalism.

The airline industry was a regulated monopoly where many inefficient carriers existed. To increase competition and raise the profit levels for investors as a whole, deregulation was imposed. Inevitably this meant more attacks on the workforce: on our wages, working conditions, and safety.

Twelve years later the industry is more of a monopoly than before deregulation, with real wages and working conditions declining.

The brutal workings-out of the capitalist system are behind the attacks on airline labor—at Eastern as well as other carriers. Cut-throat competition is the main reason for the collapse of small and large airlines.

The 1977-78 and 1981-82 recessions hit all the airlines especially hard. Afterwards, two-tier contracts were imposed in the industry, not only for lower-paid flight attendants and machinists, but also for the labor aristocracy of the industry, pilots.

The 1987 Stock Market Crash exacerbated the situation further. Although that crash had little immediate effect on profits, it pointed to an unstable future of more leveraged buyouts and mergers.

It is in this context that the strike at Eastern began.

"Union-made" LBOs

Unfortunately, the response of the top labor leadership to the airline bosses' stepped-up attacks has not been to tap the militancy of the union membership. Instead, it is to seek a new cooperative agreement with capitalist investors and shareholders to "save" jobs.

At Eastern, the IAM policy for the past year has been to find another capitalist to buy the airline from Lorenzo.

At United, the IAM's strategy is to negotiate better terms for an ESOP.

The AFL-CIO, in fact, has institutionalized this perspective by setting up the Employee Partnership Fund (EPF). The EPF, according to the Feb. 26 *Business Week*, will set up union-made LBOs (Leveraged Buyouts).

"It will provide money for employee groups that buy a chunk of their own companies," reports *Business Week*. "This is not a humanitarian exercise. The AFL-CIO, which has no firm commitments yet, hopes union pension funds will invest in the effort to raise \$200 million for small and medium-sized deals."

The new ESOP fund will not be controlled by the AFL-CIO. It will be in the hands of investment brokers Keilin & Bloom. "This is an investment fund with a union label," said Eugene Keilin. "But," he added, "this is not social investing." The transactions will have to stand on their financial merits.

"Union made" ESOPs and LBOs are still fancy terms for employee concessions and must be opposed.

Union consciousness is beginning to

change among a layer of workers. The rank-and-file activists at Eastern are the motor force of their strike.

The change taking place among a layer of IAM members is impacting other airline workers too, including pilots, the most highly paid workers in the industry. Not surprisingly, 90 percent of Eastern pilots said they were ready to honor the picket line even before the IAM went on strike.

Some observations

The unprecedented unity of the three unions at Eastern is one of the most important advances for airline labor. It is the type of unity necessary for airline workers to resist company attacks, and win broader solidarity. And we need unity not just at one airline, but across all airlines and throughout all industry.

Another advance of the Eastern strike is the beginning stages of real rank-and-file democracy. It is the rank and file who are leading the strike in action. But the no-win strategy has been set on top. That needs to be fundamentally changed from below.

Another lesson being learned by strikers and others is the class bias of the government and courts. Labor has no genuine friends in Congress. Discussions on independent working-class politics are long overdue.

Union activists are stepping forward as leaders in the Eastern strike and other strikes. It is out of these fights that a new, more militant leadership will be forged in the labor movement. Fighting for effective solidarity, more rank-and-file democracy, and independent labor politics will be part of developing a fighting leadership in the unions.

UMW miners push back Pittston's union-busting

After almost a year of bitter struggle, 1700 coal miners in Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky voted on Feb. 19 to ratify a new four-year contract agreement with the Pittston Coal Group.

Unlike the outcome of many other strikes over the last decade, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) members prevailed over most of the takeback demands of the company, specifically turning back Pittston's demand to discontinue paying health benefits.

In the new agreement, approved by a 2 to 1 margin, miners' and retirees' health benefits are covered 100 percent. While the new agreement states that

Editorial

coverage kicks in after \$1000 in medical expenses, the company will give miners \$500 every six months to defray that cost.

The new agreement also pledges Pittston to retreat from its practice of contracting out to non-union mines, forcing the company to hire laid-off UMWA members for the first four out of five job openings at Pittston's non-union mines and the first 19 out of 20 job openings in companies that provide contract workers.

Furthermore, Pittston was forced to provide pension benefits identical to the 1988 pact between the UMWA and the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA), which Pittston pulled out of in 1988 so it could wage a union-busting campaign at its mines.

On the other hand, Pittston won concessions on work schedules, allowing them the flexibility of four-day weeks of 10 hours per day and 28-day shift rotations, which would allow them almost around-the-clock operations at the mines, with the exception of Sunday afternoons.

Overall, the Pittston bosses came out of this struggle with much less than they had hoped for when they provoked the strike by unilaterally stopping pension and health benefits in April 1989. Pittston has admitted to losses of \$27 million in "lost sales and other expenses." Undoubtedly the figure is much higher.

However, defeating Pittston's union-busting offensive was not without cost. Virginia State Courts and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) leveled over \$64 million in fines against the UMWA for its refusal to comply with injunctions that limited picketing at the Pittston mines. UMWA President Richard Trumka states that the union has no intention of paying the fines and will tie up the courts for years with appeals.

Labor at its best

The Pittston strike showed labor at its best. UMWA miners turned their strike into a national rallying cry for thousands of class-conscious trade unionists throughout the country. Despite state-sponsored repression by the cops and courts, the Pittston miners tenaciously kept up the fight, at times even escalating it:

- Over 3700 strikers and their supporters were arrested as they attempted to shut down the Pittston mines through mass picketing, sit-ins, and rallies.

- 8000 miners rallied in Charleston, W.Va., on July 12 to show support for the Pittston miners and striking Eastern Airlines machinists.

- The next day, 10,000 UMWA miners staged "wildcat" walkouts throughout the coal fields in sympathy with the Pittston strikers. By the end of the week over 40,000 miners were out.

- In August, miners set up picketlines at steel plants and non-union mines in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, shutting them down for a couple of days just to make a point.

- In September, 98 camouflage-clad strikers occupied Pittston's Moss #3 preparation plant near Carbo, Va., for over 77 hours. The occupiers were supported outside by 5000 pro-UMWA demonstrators who protected the miners from police.

Ultimately, these militant class-struggle activities are what forced Pittston and its allies—the U.S. and Virginia State governments—to negotiate a settlement with the valiant strikers.

Effective struggle

In the face of a major challenge to their picketlines by coal operators, state and local cops, and court injunctions, the Pittston strike was one of the most effective labor struggles since the 1977-78 national miners' strike.

At that time, the miners were victorious despite Democratic Party President Jimmy Carter's strike-

breaking attempt to use troops to force miners to mine coal, and despite a stab in the back by the AFL-CIO's top bureaucrats, who backed Carter's invocation of Taft-Hartley.

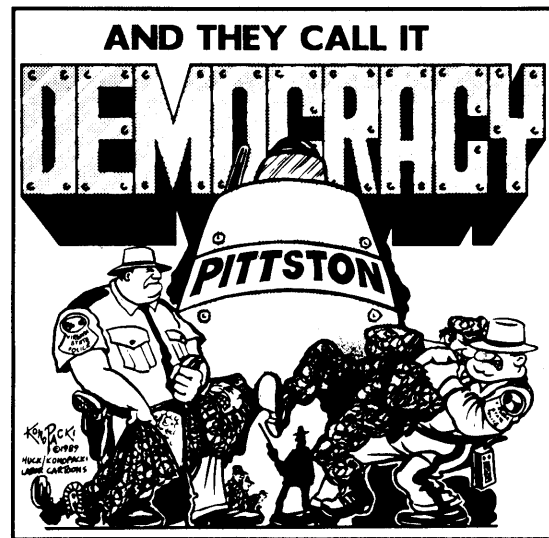
The main reason Pittston chose to attempt to break the union is based on the hard times the union has faced over the last decade. Since the 1977-78 miners' strike, a gradual erosion of the miners' position has taken place, primarily as a result of automation (long-walling), which has led to a massive reduction in the number of working miners. (Automation has eliminated almost half-a-million mining jobs since the 1950s while, at the same time, increasing production.)

The fewer jobs available increased competition among miners. This advantage for coal operators gave them the ability to break the union hold over a large section of the industry. (Union control slipped from 90 percent in the 1950s to a third of the industry today.)

Treachery of labor bureaucracy

But the decisive factor in the current struggle was the 20-year-long series of outright givebacks to the bosses by the labor bureaucracy. In line with their concessions policy, the labor bureaucrats have worked assiduously to block any mass fightback by the working class.

During the Pittston strike, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy played a treacherous role despite the fact that the UMWA had recently re-affiliated with the labor federation. On June 26, the AFL-CIO sent a letter to



all its affiliates stating that local units could only assist UMWA strike activities where they did not conflict with existing court prohibitions (injunctions) and contract agreements.

This meant crossing UMWA picketlines at plants where "no strike agreements" were in effect.

Even so, the strike inspired an unusually high level of solidarity: A thousand unions, churches, and community groups in the areas closest to the struggle rallied to the miners' cause.

In a sense, the sheer weight of their class-struggle traditions permitted the Pittston miners to mount a remarkable defensive struggle based on mass picketing to stop coal deliveries—in defiance of anti-strike injunctions and massive fines. The high cost to the struck company brought it to the bargaining table.

But a larger factor bringing the bosses to terms was the UMWA's actual steps toward initiating a general miners' strike. Rank-and-file miners throughout the coal fields showed their readiness to stop all coal production. This could have set in motion a general rise in class consciousness that would have altered the overall relation of forces between capital and labor.

Carrot and stick

The ruling class responded to the miners' mobilization with both the stick and the carrot. It issued new fines and other threats while also giving a signal of its willingness to back off from some of its worst take-away demands.

The UMWA leadership chose to compromise. They were able to hold on to most of their health and retirement benefits and job security—two of the key issues in dispute—in the new contract. But they have been compelled to promise to adhere to anti-strike laws in the future.

They were also forced to go back to work with \$64 million in fines still hanging over the union's head—even though the company joined the union in asking the court to forgive the fine.

Overall, the strike must be seen as a victory for miners and all labor, given the unfavorable objective context created by over four decades of a step-by-step, bureaucratic demobilization of a fighting labor movement.

Our readers speak out

Armenia

Dear editor,

As an Armenian, I'd like to submit my view of the recent events in Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Armenians have faced nothing less than a pogrom in Azerbaijan. In Baku, at rallies organized by the Azeri Popular Front, Armenians were scapegoated for the nation's problems and the crowds whipped up into frenzy. Then lists with the names and addresses were read off and posted.

According to the *New York Times*, people were thrown out windows, set on fire, and in some cases beheaded. This was a smaller version of the pogroms Jews faced by anti-Semites in Russia. At the same time there were those Azeris who protected and hid potential victims.

I've seen television footage of Armenian elders from Baku who'd been shot at, women who'd been doused with benzene, and other gruesome sights.

Soviet troops only arrived after that carnage had ended, yet when the Azeri Popular Front had taken to the streets and was talking independence.

The Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh and those in the rest of Armenia have been simply demanding to be able to live peacefully and to determine their own fate as a nation.

Nagorno Karabakh was historically Armenian, though all peoples lived there peacefully. The area was ceded to the Azeris by the new, weaker USSR as a concession. The attempt was an effort to appease Turkey, which was a hostile neighbor, by giving more land to their Shia cousins, the Azeris.

The situation in Soviet Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh has become very grave for the Armenians living there. Because of the blockades set up by Azeris, supply trains which pass through Azerbaijan are not making it to Armenia.

Through the harsh winter, fuel for heating is almost non-existent for Armenians. Food and emergency supplies are just not making it through.

As a result, Soviet Armenia is becoming more self-reliant. There is also more of a direct support network now between Yerevan and the Nagorno Karabakh autonomous area. Today, militias from Armenia patrol and protect the population in Nagorno Karabakh.

Large factories in Armenia are now solidifying with and financially adopting smaller factories in Nagorno Karabakh. Armenians see little if any aid coming from Moscow.

Language and cultural preservation is important to Armenia. To go to a high school where Armenian was taught and used meant that you wouldn't be able to enter any of the universities outside Armenia. But today more students are attending high schools where their language is used.

Self-reliance, self-determination, but not immediate independence are the code words in Armenia.

The situation in Yerevan is critical. The economic impact of the December 1988 earthquake and the huge influx of refugees from Azerbaijan continue to strangle the economy. And the ongoing blockades of supplies to the region by the Azeris are devastating.

The Armenian diaspora is organizing worldwide to get money and supplies to Yerevan. Support of whatever size or amount would be appreciated and should be sent to the Save Armenia Fund, 51 Commonwealth Ave., San Francisco, CA 94118.

Vaughn Hovanessian,
Oakland, Calif.

Police

Dear editor,

Thank you for your article on the Boston murder hoax in the February issue. New York City has also been plagued with blatantly racist police violence in the recent shootings of several unarmed Black and Latino young people.

The white supremacist mainstream press treats these as isolated incidents, but—as in Boston—they are connected, crude attempts to maintain a racist, sexist, classist status quo. Amandla!

Dawn Reel,
New York, N.Y.

Bolsheviks

Dear editor,

An article by Genrikh Ioffe in the Feb. 11-18 issue of *Moscow News*, "The night of missed opportunities," strongly criticizes the Bolsheviks for their failure to form a coalition government with the Mensheviks and other left-wing groups at the 2nd All-Russia Congress of Soviets in 1917.

Ioffe credits both Menshevik hotheads speaking out of order and irreconcilable Bolsheviks such as Trotsky with turning a favorable opportunity into hardened opposition on both sides. The Menshevik representatives and their allies walked out of the Congress, leaving the "field of revolution" to the Bolsheviks, who then proceeded to the formation of a workers' government.

The author says the time has come to pass judgment on the October Revolution. He credits perestroika with raising the question of what the possibilities were for a more favorable course of development had bourgeois democracy prevailed.

If the views expressed in the *Moscow News* are representative of the Gorbachev "left wing," then restoration of capitalist formations is being seriously contemplated by them.

P.C.,
San Francisco, Calif.

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Legacy of Malcolm X honored at public forum

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.—One hundred seventeen people gathered here on Feb. 23 to celebrate the legacy of Malcolm X, who was assassinated 25 years ago. The Boston Socialist Action forum featured speakers active in the struggle for Black liberation locally and abroad.

The meeting began with a video on Malcolm. First to speak was Jean-Claude Martineau, a noted Haitian author and leading activist in the Haitian liberation struggle. Martineau was drawn to Malcolm's ideas soon after his arrival in the United States in the early 1960s.

Malcolm's thinking evolved in the last year, said Martineau, and "he started to understand that it was not a question of color.

[Then] he became extremely dangerous. And no matter who pulled the trigger, we know who killed Malcolm X."

Kwame M.A. Somburu of Socialist Action, a former member of the Organization of Afro-American Unity and an eyewitness to Malcolm's assassination, described how "Malcolm developed anti-capitalist views as a result of his experiences."

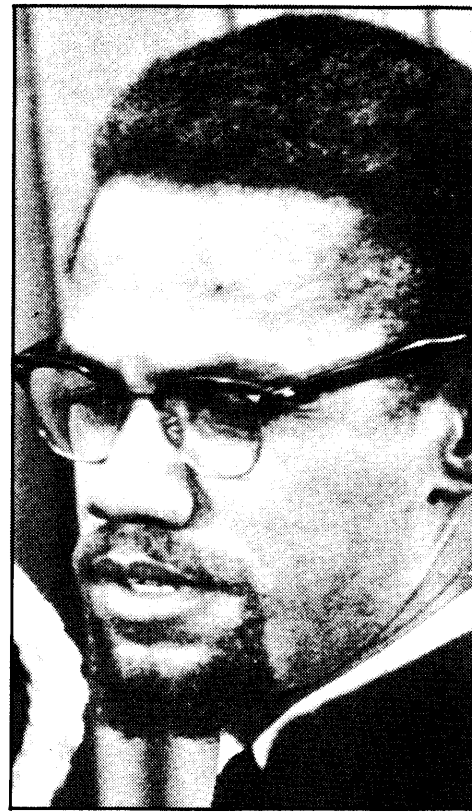
"If Malcolm were alive today," Somburu declared, "he would be condemning the reactionary invasion of Panama. He would not feel that freedom was won in South Africa, even if they eliminated apartheid, because who's going to control the land? What about the wealth that is produced there?"

[Major excerpts from the Martineau and Somburu speeches at the forum will be published in next month's *Socialist Action*.]

Chris Carter, president of the Brandeis Black Student Organization, advised that we must honor Malcolm's message over the man. That message "is as important today as it was" when Malcolm lived.

The final speaker was the Rev. Graylan Ellis-Hagler of the Church of the United Community. He is a prominent independent leader in Boston's Black community. He focused his remarks on imprisoned Black and Latino youth—in jails and in their neighborhoods—and the power of Malcolm's message for them. [See speech on this page.]

Many books and pamphlets on Malcolm were sold, and a number of people signed up to attend an upcoming series of classes based on Malcolm's speeches.



Malcolm X

The following are major excerpts from the talk by the Rev. Graylan Ellis-Hagler to the Boston Socialist Action forum on Feb. 23.

'Malcolm talked to people about their own dignity'

We forget sometimes Brother Malcolm's formative years, the years he spent in the Norfolk House of Corrections, here in Massachusetts. That is the place where his education began to take shape, where he began to learn how to read and to write. And he also began on his path of spiritual awakening in that prison facility.

We need to somehow focus in on that, because I think that as we talk about the legacy of Malcolm, we must understand the numbers of brothers and sisters in Massachusetts and all across this country who are currently incarcerated. We must not forget them.

It seems too often that those of us who like to call ourselves enlightened, progressive or politically active, we so easily and so often forget about those locked up, behind some prison bars, unless they are in some place like South Africa, or El Salvador....

In 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. Slaves became physically free, but not psychologically, sociologically, or economically free. And today I think we can clearly say that still we are not free.

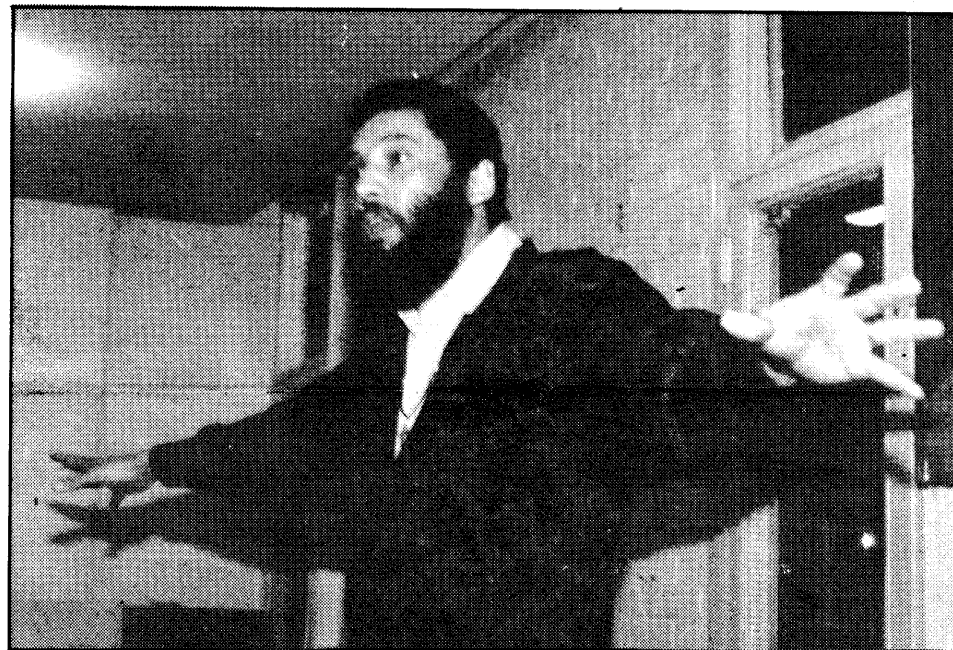
In 1790, the first prison was opened in the United States. That prison was primed and readied, of course, to absorb the ex-slave population after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.... Those who society cannot exploit any longer end up in that jailhouse, in that prison.

1990 marks the 200-year observance of prisons here in the United States.... [Since 1790] we have just continued to expand, and to allow to grow, and to absorb masses of people into that dark dungeon that offers neither hope, nor education, nor direction.

Barbaric, ineffective system

We must understand where Malcolm came from, and the sisters and brothers who are there today. Today we are not discussing doing away with the barbaric and ineffective system called the criminal justice system. But we should be discussing that. Instead we end up talking about things like larger budgets, which means more prisons, larger police forces, more district attorneys....

The United States has the highest incarceration



Rev. Graylan Ellis-Hagler speaking at Malcolm X forum

rate in the world, except for the Republic of South Africa.... [but] remove Black and Spanish-speaking folks and Native Americans from that prison population, you would discover that we would then have the lowest incarceration rate in the world.

That just tells you who goes to jail, who ends up in those dungeons, who they throw away the key on. The role of prisons and jails has never changed....

The issue is how to keep the mind captive, because if you can keep the mind captive, you don't have to worry about a chain, a lock, a handcuff, or a shackle. If you can control the mind, you can control the personality, and you can control the yearning of anybody to be free.

That is what's going on in prison.

[Prisoners] may know who Malcolm X is, but they don't know Malcolm X. They don't know what he said, what he did. They don't necessarily know where he came from.... They are a lost generation, unless somebody chooses to find them....

Who will find them? In jail, they are 17, 18, 19, 20. On the streets, in this other, larger jail, they're even younger.... They're angry and hopeless. They see the contradictions of society. They know all about the "dog-eat-dog" mentality of capitalism, and the "I got mine, you get yours" obsession of colonialism.

They fight over drug turf, and they hang out in organizations that give identity, because nothing else in this society gives identity to them. We call those organizations gangs. Some engage in drive-by shootings, and some hang on the fringes of those misguided youth organizations in order to survive in [their] neighborhoods.

Frustration continues to rise

The community screams for a police crackdown, and the police scream for a police crackdown, and kids are indiscriminately thrown up against a wall and pants are made to drop, and as a consequence the prison population and the frustration among our youth continues to rise and expand.

That is the cycle of violence that we're in.... Those are young lives that could be offering leadership to the liberation of a community....

There's a real issue on our streets. Young people are being blown away before they even have a chance to grow up and make a difference in the culture and in the society and in the historical process....

It should be no mystery why youth are dying, wholesale, in the streets. We have something at the state level that is called a "budget cut." The safety net programs ... and youth programs and youth street workers are cut, and the death rate among youth begins to rise, because there's no one there to do the work that needs to be done in the midst of the community....

The fact of the matter is [government] is our enemy. But the reality is, they still have the power to force the types of conceptualizations on our community that they choose ... to give, and to take back. We have to hold those folks accountable, as long as they take one red cent out of the community of people who work hard to earn a living....

Process of liberation

The process of liberation rests with all of us. First, you have to name and claim yourself as a doer. Being about some business, not just thinking proper thoughts, but doing something with those proper thoughts that you think you think....

The reality before us is to do something. That is all Malcolm was talking about. Malcolm got cultivated out of a prison, and that cultivation didn't end. He knew he had to take his thoughts and do something with them.

And he talked to people about their own dignity, and their own worth. From a prison cell, his *nobody-ness* became a *somebody-ness*. And he felt a burning desire to give that *somebody-ness* to all of those he encountered—to organize, to enlighten, to lift up, to motivate....

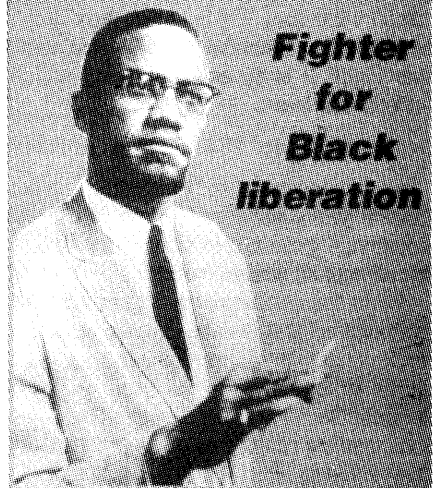
We've got to have the courage to start talking about collaborators in our community, and figuring out what we do with those collaborators. We've got collaborators on both ends of the spectrum. One [type] is those who sit down with the mayor and the governor and cut deals that benefit their own pockets and sell out their community...

On the other hand, those who sell death in the form of drugs and guns to their community, who blow each other away without thinking twice about it, they are also collaborators....

When are we going to begin to define what nationhood is all about? What nationalism is all about? Not this old brand, but a new brand of nationalism. We must be in solidarity with all of those who struggle for dignity and for human rights. And those on either end of the spectrum, blocking that kind of work, are collaborators, and we must figure out the process for punishing each and every one of them....

We need to be doing the work we can be doing, each one teaching, each one loving, and each one helping one. That is the legacy of Malcolm. That is also the future of the liberation. Unless we understand that, no freedom is ever possible.

MALCOLM X



A pamphlet for struggle

by Kwame M.A. Somburu, Joe Ryan, and Nat Weinstein

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Eastern strike one year later: Lessons for working people

By MALIK MIAH

March 4 marks the first anniversary of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) strike against Eastern Airlines. Despite the claims of Texas Air Chairman Frank Lorenzo, the corporate owner of Eastern Airlines, the machinist strike has dealt blows to his plans to build the largest non-union airline empire in the world.

In 1986 the combined market share of Texas Air's two airlines—Continental and Eastern—was the largest in the country. Today Texas Air ranks fourth, with 12.7 percent of the market. Its debt of \$5.1 billion is one of the highest in the industry.

The rank and file IAM strikers have displayed tremendous heroism and determination throughout the strike. They have inspired broad support throughout the airline industry and among other unions and union supporters.

But the strikers' determination has not been enough to force Lorenzo to the bargaining table, or force Texas Air to sell the company to someone who would negotiate with the unions.

At this stage of the strike, prospects for victory are slim. An important layer of strike activists continue to fight and defend their dignity. These workers want to bring Lorenzo down, making him pay a big price for his union-busting. They need the solidarity of all supporters of unionism.

The IAM strikers have refused to be broken by Lorenzo. While many workers have lost marriages, homes, and other personal possessions, few became scabs.

Lorenzo had made clear at the outset of the strike that no union members would be allowed to work for Eastern—except on his terms. After two years of working under Lorenzo's rule of organized terror, the strikers knew what Lorenzo's terms were. They didn't want any part of it.

The question for them was simple: stand up and fight or lose all self-respect and move on to another job. The overwhelming majority chose the first course.

Unprecedented unity

The unity of the three unions at Eastern—the IAM, the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA), and the flight attendants' Transport Workers Union (TWU)—was unprecedented.

It was not anticipated by the owners of Eastern or the Bush government. It was the primary reason less than 10 percent of the flights were scheduled the first three months of the strike. That early success helped to isolate Lorenzo in the public's eye and aided the consumer boycott of Eastern and Continental.

Lorenzo was shocked by the pilots actions. He assumed he could replace the machinists and flight attendants. But he needed the pilots.

I asked a co-worker of mine at United, who was a long-time shop steward at Eastern's Miami maintenance base but was fired 15 months before the strike for his union activity, why he thought the pilots and flight attendants went on sympathy strikes.

"They had no choice but to walk," he said. "Like us, they knew if Lorenzo broke us, they would be next."

Lorenzo underestimated the pilots and flight attendants. The ALPA and TWU were ready to strike. The action of the highly paid pilots was a big surprise to those outside of Eastern. But according to Capt. Lew Baldwin, as told to Matt Witt of *Airline Pilot*, the pilots had been polled before the strike and were ready to walk out.

"In applying the lessons of Continental," where the unions were broken by Lorenzo in

1983, Baldwin said, "Eastern pilots saw they had two choices: (1) to let Lorenzo continue to destroy pilot job security by taking the airline apart, breaking IAM, and then attacking the ALPA contract, or (2) supporting other Eastern employees to bring about a change in the course of the company."

Once the pilots went out, the long struggle was on. The question became who could hold out longer and if the IAM leadership could tap the sentiment of the ranks and other IAM members to keep the scabs off

Reagan administration and Bush supporters.

Lorenzo feels he's in good hands and can wait out the strike despite the record losses Eastern and Texas Air suffered in 1989—\$885.6 million.

Officials' response

How have the IAM top leadership responded to Lorenzo's and the government's attacks? What policy have they followed to win the strike?

The IAM international leadership have not

rail workers was also not organized into any meaningful solidarity actions.

What needed to be done to aid the fight and move it forward was to reach out to all airline workers, other transportation workers, and working people in general to take militant action to keep the scabs from working Eastern planes.

Other solidarity actions within the transportation industry—sympathy strikes at other airlines or rail carriers—would have put pressure on Lorenzo to settle with the IAM. While this is not likely today, it was what was needed to force Lorenzo to negotiate with the IAM.

At the beginning of the strike such broad action was possible. Airline workers would have been open to doing more if the IAM leadership clearly explained before the strike why broad united action was needed to win. That was lacking in the 1981 PATCO (air traffic controllers) strike broken by Reagan. We needed to build on the unity of the IAM/ALPA/TWU members at Eastern.

Several months into the strike, lacking a fighting perspective to shut down Eastern and broaden the strike, strike activities became focused on convincing consumers not to fly Eastern and Continental. As effective as the boycott tactic has been, it hasn't been enough to keep Eastern aircraft from flying.

The focus of the fight now—for both the officialdom and ranks of the IAM—is liquidation of Eastern. A battle on this level reflects the anger of the workers who have lost their jobs and want revenge against Lorenzo.

But the failure of the IAM policy (which was supported by ALPA and TWU officials) must be noted and discussed.

The ALPA and TWU leaderships decided to call off their sympathy strikes in November. They came to the conclusion that it was no longer possible to win the strike. The likelihood of a union Eastern seemed remote.

The union officials and many of the ranks believe that beating Lorenzo today means to bust up his empire. But that won't minimize the failure to win union contracts at Eastern. Nor will it get any of the former Eastern employees their jobs back.

Pittston example

An important example of a better way to conduct a strike was seen in the Pittston coal strike. The United Mineworkers Union (UMWA) went on strike against a union-busting coal operator a few weeks after the Eastern workers went on strike. Ten months later they came out victorious. [See story, page 18.]

By using militant pickets, refusing to accept court injunctions (and incurring \$64 million in fines), and winning over local communities, they forced the owners of Pittston, the courts, and government to back down. They organized Camp Solidarity where other workers, including Eastern strikers, came to express support for the miners and receive solidarity in turn.

While the new Pittston contract contains some concessions, miners won a big advance from what Pittston first demanded. They gained what they did because they didn't let the anti-labor laws deter them from winning their fight. It is an example from which all workers can learn.

Turmoil in the airline industry

It is important to place the strike at Eastern in the broader context of the airline industry. A generalized shakeout is underway that affects all airline workers.

While the problems of Texas Air are severe, exacerbated by the Eastern strike, other carriers are in deep trouble. "Troubling Times in the US Airline Industry" reports the Feb. 26 *New York Times*. The industry is expanding rapidly even as profits decline.

(continued on page 17)



Eastern Airlines machinists have been on strike for one year.

Eastern property and force Lorenzo to negotiate with the unions.

Lorenzo and government in bed

Lorenzo's goal was to rebuild a smaller nonunion Eastern. Even before the strike began, he had started selling off Eastern assets, and this accelerated after the walkout. He has sold aircraft, gates, routes, and a majority interest in the System One computer reservation system.

The Bush administration came to Lorenzo's aid by siding with Lorenzo from day one of the conflict. After Lorenzo turned down the IAM officials' call for arbitration, Bush rejected a National Mediation Board (NMB) request that he intervene under the Railway Labor Act to delay the strike for 60 days. "In 211 previous cases," wrote the *Airline Pilot*, "every president since 1928 had always agreed to such an NMB recommendation."

In November Bush vetoed a Congressional decision to establish a "blue-ribbon" panel to investigate and recommend solutions for the conflict at Eastern. And in December the General Services Administration, with Labor Department blessing, granted Eastern a \$120 million contract.

Many Texas Air top employees are former

tapped the rank and file's militancy to push Lorenzo to the wall. Instead, from day one, the strategy of the officialdom has been to find another airline boss to buy Eastern from Texas Air, while pressuring the government and the courts to intervene against Lorenzo.

A new owner was almost found in April. Former Baseball Commissioner Peter Ueberroth reached a tentative agreement with the IAM which included major concessions from Eastern workers. Lorenzo balked and the deal fell through.

Unfortunately, the IAM officials have maintained that dead-end strategy—looking for a friendly businessman to buy Eastern.

They have sought to get labor "friends" in Congress to pressure Bush to intervene. These Democratic Party politicians have been no real help. The biggest problem with this perspective is it tells the IAM membership that a resolution of the conflict is dependent on the courts and government and not their own actions.

Opportunities to extend the strike have been missed. Most important is the failure to tap the anti-Lorenzo sentiment of other airline workers. No preparation was done at airlines such as Northwest and United to take demonstrative actions for the Eastern strike before and after it began. Sympathy among