



## U.S. gov't set to step up attacks on abortion rights

### Bush seeks anti-woman Supreme Court

You can't get a silk purse from a sow's ear. Likewise, expecting Bush to choose a nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court who will vigorously uphold women's rights under the Constitution is naive. But no one should take lightly the scrutiny of New Hampshire nominee David H. Souter by women anxious to defend rights we still have—especially the right to abortion.

"This is the most divisive issue facing the country since slavery," lamented Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter, revealing more about the abortion issue than perhaps he wanted to. Like abolition, the fight to keep abortion safe and legal is one that pits the women's rights movement against reactionary "states' rights" advocates who want to chip away at our rights state by state.

Before the 1989 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Missouri *Webster* case (which allowed states to restrict abortion), an editorial in the *National NOW Times* argued that the Supreme Court was not immune to political pressure. History has shown this to be true. A massive movement expressing the will of the people can force the court to bend to pressure for reforms.

Remember, prior to the rise of the powerful industrial union movement in the 1930s, a multitude of laws prohibited unionization. These were obliterated by an irrepressible mass movement—not because the judges, who are committed to the status quo, had a change of heart. They simply realized that if they didn't make concessions to the workers they might be swept aside entirely, and the capitalist system along with them.

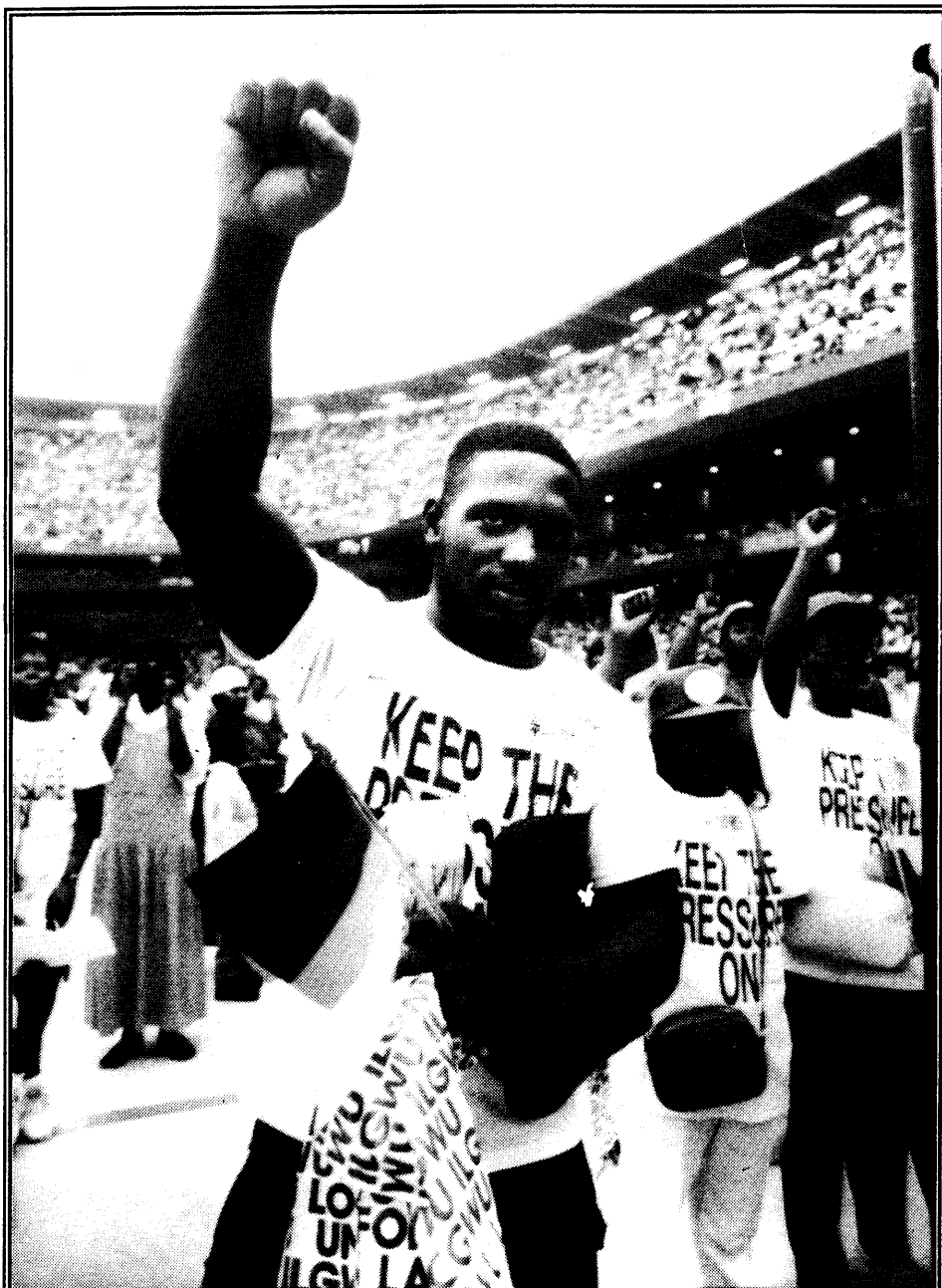
The Court could have thrown out *Roe v. Wade* altogether were it not for the unprecedented mobilization of 600,000 pro-choice demonstrators in Washington, D.C., just three months prior to the decision.

If Bush doesn't get Souter confirmed, he's sure to come up with an equally repulsive choice. When the pro-choice movement was mobilized to dump Bork in 1987, the payoff was getting saddled with anti-abortion Justice Kennedy for its efforts.

But even the most "liberal" justices are fundamentally committed to the capitalist system, which is responsible for the second-class status of women (because that status creates profits for the employing class). And they have a string of decisions to prove it.

The long-term lesson is the need to replace the capitalist government with one that represents the workers—the majority of women and men who have no material interest in oppressing and exploiting people.

The short-term lesson for the pro-choice movement is that we need to keep the movement independent and in the streets—regardless of who is running for office from the parties of our oppressors or running for confirmation for the capitalist courts. We'll never return to the days of back-alley abortions!



Over 60,000 attended Yankee Stadium rally for Nelson Mandela on June 21. (See story below.)

### NOW backs off from calling mass actions

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

The National Organization for Women (NOW), the largest feminist organization in the United States, held its national conference June 29-July 1 in San Francisco. Some 2500 people participated, with about 980 delegates representing NOW's over 800 chapters.

NOW took a step back at the conference from the militant, independent stance by which it had earned the leadership of the pro-choice movement. After mobilizing the largest women's rights demonstrations ever held (on April 9 and Nov. 12, 1989) the NOW leadership failed to call another national action and declined to allow a resolution which called for such an action to reach the floor of the conference.

The San Francisco conference was dominated by the November 1990 elections, with appearances by gubernatorial candidates Dianne Feinstein (California), Evelyn Murphy (Massachusetts), and others. Several candidates for public office also spoke at the short pro-choice rally organized for the noon hour of Saturday, June 30, at Union Square near the conference hotel.

In the absence of any call by the NOW leadership for unified national actions in response to the continuing attack on abortion rights, the elections loomed as the main project of NOW.

#### Third party discussion

The daily news media's coverage of the conference focused attention on NOW's discussions of a new political party separate

(continued on page 4)

## South African regime presses Black majority for concessions

By MALIK MIAH

The oppressed Black majority of South Africa is pressing ahead with confidence. Three centuries of white rule are nearing an end. And now, all the players representing the oppressors of the Blacks are scrambling to protect their interests.

In recent days, the South African government has launched a "Red Scare" against the anti-apartheid movement. At least 40 members of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) were arrested in the crackdown.

The arrests took place little more than a week before the Aug. 6 talks scheduled between the government and the ANC and only

four days before a rally was planned in Johannesburg to relaunch the SACP as a legal party.

President F.W. de Klerk alleged that a "plot" was underway by ANC and SACP "hardliners" to overthrow the government if talks should fail. The De Klerk regime hopes to press the more "moderate" ANC leaders, including Nelson Mandela, to give major concessions to the white minority in order to avoid being associated with a "communist" bogeyman.

De Klerk (and his international backers from Washington to London to Tokyo) want to negotiate a peaceful transition from apartheid to a "democratic" South Africa, where most property and wealth remains in the hands of the white capitalist oppressors. They hope to quell any possibilities of a

revolutionary upsurge that could threaten the flow of corporate profits.

#### Changes in Black workforce

What's behind the maneuvering by the white rulers and their imperialist supporters? It is a combination of the economic and political problems stemming from a system where 87 percent of all land is in the hands of less than 5 million whites out of a population of 33 million (24 million African Blacks).

As South Africa became an industrialized country in its own right after World War II, it needed more educated workers who are Black. There are not enough whites to run the economy. More than 10 years ago, the government—under the pressure of illegal

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Robert Fox/Impact Visuals

# 'I was a racketeer for capitalism'



## Fightback

By  
Sylvia Weinstein

The homeless in the cities of this, the richest country in the world, are bringing home the message that capitalism cannot solve its most urgent problem.

Their message is that the social system is sick and getting sicker. Many of the homeless do work at fulltime jobs but are still unable to afford the skyrocketing rents.

Hostility toward the homeless is growing among many sectors of the population, including the liberals. City governments have for years destroyed low-cost housing and allowed it to be replaced by high-priced condos.

They have also allowed the banks, real estate brokers, and speculators absolutely free rein in amassing the largest profits possible from housing. However, the homeless, who are the victims, become the target of hostility.

Recently in San Francisco, the police were called in to herd the homeless from the Civic Center park and force them into shelters which by comparison make jails look like high-class hotels.

The homeless have actually broken no laws; it's not illegal to be poor. But City Fathers know how to create laws. Make everything illegal, and it is impossible not to become a law breaker.

Sleeping on public property such as parks and streets and in motor vehicles became outlawed during the Depression, when millions of working people were driven from their homes and apartments because they could not pay rents.

That was at a time when millions of workers were laid off and unable to find work. The United States today is not in an economic depression or even a major recession, yet thousands of homeless men, women, and children are unable to afford a roof over their heads. What will it look like when the economy goes into a real crisis?

Major corporations are announcing cutbacks everyday. McDonnell Douglas says it is to cut back on 17,000 jobs by the end of this year; Boeing, which is reaping massive

profits, will lay off 5600 workers this year; and the Grumman Corp. has eliminated 6000 jobs. It is not hard to imagine the anguish of workers who are waiting for the ax to fall on their necks. How many more homeless will be created by those layoffs?

Lieut. Col. Phelps

In Santa Cruz, Calif., on July 4, an anti-homeless rally of 1500 demonstrators took place. They wanted to express their anger at the homeless. Not at those who had caused the homelessness, but at the homeless themselves.

One of the leaders was a retired Army lieutenant colonel who lives in the town of Aptos, Calif. He ranted: "It's time some of these people realized that work of any kind is not demeaning, and they're not above it."

Lieut. Col. Phelps places most of the homeless in the "4-D category: people who, by their own choice, are dope pushers, drug addicts, drunkards, and dropouts."

He went on to tell of the hard life he and his family had during the Depression, of backbreaking labor in order to just survive. Anyone who lived through the Depression could recount the same stories.

But let's take a closer look at our retired lieutenant colonel. What has he done to deserve his pension and retirement in the city of Aptos? The last time I looked, it was the working people (not the rich) who were paying the bill for our retired lieutenant colonel.

"Racketeer for capitalism"

Now Phelps may believe that he has somehow contributed to the well-being of the U.S.A. by fighting foreign enemies. But I would remind him of the famous words of U.S. Marine Commander Smedley Butler when describing his contribution to the U.S.A.

Butler declared: "I spent 33 years [in the Marines] ... most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a

racketeer for capitalism."

"I helped purify Nicaragua," Butler said, "for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City [Bank] boys to col-

lect revenue in. I helped in the rape of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street."

"In China in 1927," Butler related, "I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.... I had a swell racket. I was rewarded with honors, medals, promotions.... I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate a racket in

three city districts. The Marines operated on three continents."

These words by Commander Smedley Butler were written in 1931. Can you imagine him declaring war on the homeless, as has been done by retired Lieut. Col. Phelps? The problem with Phelps is he doesn't know who the real enemy is. That's why he and people like him are the danger—not the homeless.



## Our taxes fill S&L coffers

The Bush administration has finally been flushed out into the open. The president now admits he plans to raise taxes in order to "balance the budget."

Where will our tax money go? To begin with, the "budget" includes interest paid to the banks on government loans. Then, of course, the military will get a big share; ultra-lethal B-2 bombers cost \$800 million a plane!

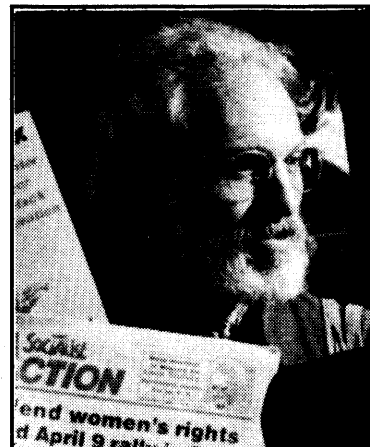
And then, hundreds of billions will be needed to "rescue" the savings-and-loan industry. The Resolution Trust Agency (RTA), the government's handout office for the bankers, complains that it will soon be broke unless Congress authorizes more money.

The only trouble is nobody knows how much the bailout will eventually cost. *One trillion* dollars, has now been mentioned. The figure keeps going up.

The RTA has taken control of hundreds of failing S&Ls so far. Federal agents now manage S&L assets that exceed in value those held by all but the very largest corporations.

Taking over the banks sounds like socialism. But this is socialism for people whose names are engraved on the doors of Wall Street banks and brokerage firms. All of the bad loans and inflated investments are to be kept profitable by means of federal subsidies. And who will pay the bills? Working people. You and me.

To see how the S&L racketeers operate with our tax money, let's take a look at just one case—the Silverado Banking, Savings and Loan Association. That's the



## Behind the Lines

By  
Michael Schreiber

Denver-based thrift connected with Neil Bush, the president's son.

After "discovering" financial wrongdoings at Silverado, the government delayed action until after George Bush was elected president. Then, a sale was quietly arranged to the First Nationwide Bank of San Francisco. In the first year, over a half-billion dollars were given in government subsidies to the new enterprise. Further subsidies will keep all of the money-losing assets profitable for another 10 years.

These subsidies, combined with special tax advantages, allowed the merged S&L to make a profit of \$48 million in one year. That's a hefty profit, representing a 50 percent return on First Nationwide's investment. As they say, some thieves rob banks, and some thieves rob with a bank!

Actually, a growing body of evidence links Neil Bush and the Silverado gang (as well as 21 other failed thrifts) with the more usual

activities of big-time criminals, including drug-running and gun-running to the Nicaraguan contras.

According to a *Houston Post* article of March 11, 1990, Silverado and four of its major borrowers "all had connections to individuals or S&Ls in Texas that did business with organized crime figures or CIA operatives." The *Post* linked Silverado with Robert Corson, a Texas developer and "money launderer" for the CIA, and Herman Beebe, a Louisiana Mafioso.

Shouldn't Congress investigate this connection between the Mafia, corrupt businessmen, and undercover operatives? Not a chance. President Bush was almost snared by Contragate, despite the sizable coverup. He's liable to meet his downfall in Silverado-gate.

Aside from the *Houston Post*, the mainstream press has found this story too hot to handle. "Behind the Lines," however, will follow the story as it develops.

# SOCIALIST ACTION

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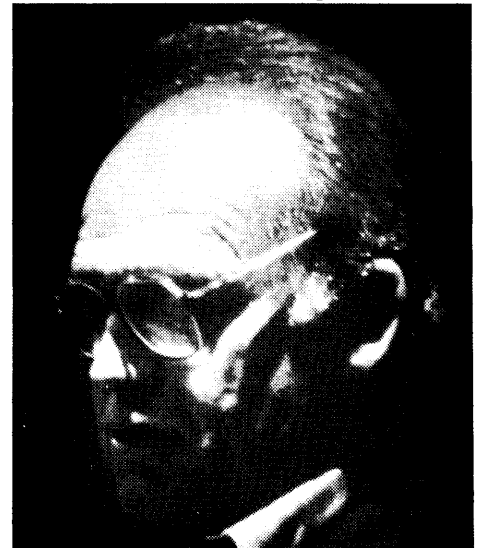
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## Rally for socialism & democracy trumpets support for struggles around the world

Socialist Action, a revolutionary socialist organization in political solidarity with the Fourth International, held its 4th national convention over the July 4 week in the San Francisco Bay area.

The delegates, representing all the organization's local branches, discussed and passed resolutions and reports on the international prospects for socialism, the political situation in the United States, an assessment of the Socialist Workers Party, work in the women's rights movement, and plans for building the party in the months ahead.

International guests from Nicaragua, Poland, China, South Africa, France, Brazil, England, Denmark, Sweden, Argentina, El

Salvador, and Panama participated in convention workshops. Highpoints were workshops conducted by South African and Polish revolutionaries which discussed prospects for socialist and political revolutions in those countries.

One of the highlights of the convention was a "Rally in Defense of Socialism and Democracy," held at the First Unitarian Church in San Francisco on Saturday, July 7. The rally also marked the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Russian revolutionist Leon Trotsky.

Close to 250 people gathered to hear international representatives from revolutionary struggles throughout the world underline why the struggles for socialism and democ-

cracy are inseparable today. The featured speaker was Esteban Volkov, the grandson of Leon Trotsky, who is heading up an international campaign to clear Trotsky's name.

Other speakers were Sarah Nelson, executive director of the Christic Institute; Alain Mathieu, a leader of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, Heidi Wallentine, an organizer of Seeds for Peace and the Redwood Summer; Rodrigo Ibarra, a leader of the Movement for Revolutionary Unity (MUR) in Nicaragua; and Terry Conway, a representative of the International Socialist Group (ISG) in Britain.

Also speaking were Socialist Action leaders Carole Seligman and Malik Miah; Karen Wald, a U.S. correspondent in Cuba; Chris

Nteta, a supporter of South Africa's Black Consciousness Movement; Sun Rui-jun, an activist in the Chinese pro-Democracy Movement; Stefan Wolanski, a socialist activist in Warsaw; and Ocimar Munhoz, a member of the Struggle for Socialism current in Brazil's Workers Party.

The convention launched a drive, starting in September, for 700 new subscriptions to *Socialist Action* newspaper. A fund drive to raise \$25,000 to pay for essential party-sustaining equipment and activities was also begun. Of this, \$16,500 was pledged at the July 7 convention rally.

Readers are urged to help achieve both these goals—and better yet, to join Socialist Action!—The Editors

## Trotsky books published in USSR; special publishing fund established

By ALEX CHIS

For the first time in over six decades, a book by Trotsky has been published in the Soviet Union. On July 19, Walnut Publishing Co. received the four-volume "Archives of Trotsky: Communist Opposition in the USSR 1923-1927." Its pub-

lication is a major event in the history of the socialist movement in the USSR and throughout the world.

The four-volume set was printed by Terra Publishers, a Moscow cooperative, in an edition of 100,000 copies, and is going on sale throughout the Soviet Union.

"The Communist Opposition in the USSR 1923-1927" consists primarily of documents and letters of Trotsky from that period. It also includes material from other oppositionists as well as major documents such as the "Draft Platform of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition)" from September 1927, which was signed by Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rakovsky, and Pyatakov, among others.

The set was compiled by noted Trotsky scholar Dr. Yuri Felshinsky who has worked at the Trotsky archives at Harvard University, the Hoover Institute, and the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. Originally published in Russian in 1988 by Chalidze Publishers in Vermont, these four volumes make available to the Soviet people for the first time the true history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in those early years.

Dr. Felshinsky has been working, as has Walnut Publishing Co., to get Trotsky published in the Soviet Union. He told *Socialist Action*, "This is a very

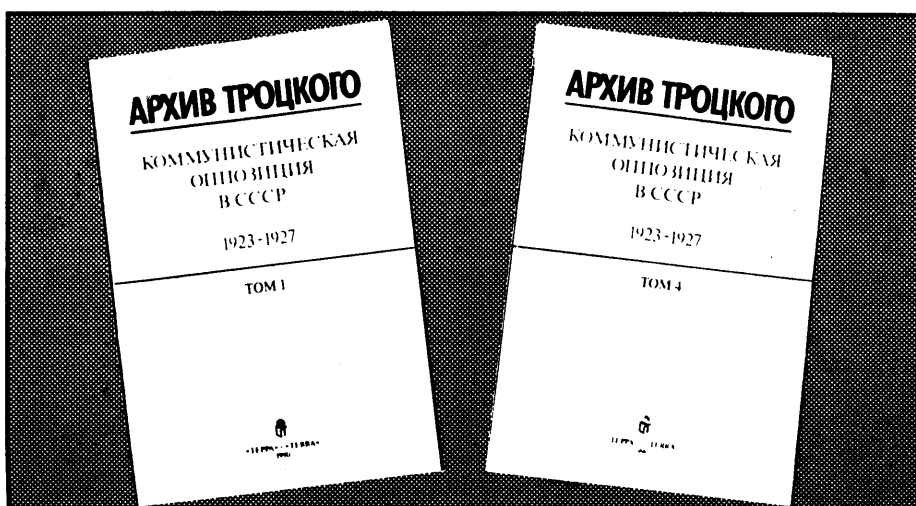
important event. Books by Trotsky have not been published in the Soviet Union since the 1920s. I want to thank Walnut Publishers for their invaluable help in getting this edition published in the USSR."

Trotsky's ideas are crucial to the debate now raging in the Soviet Union, and it is very encouraging that they are beginning to find a wide audience. Walnut Publishing Co. has recently received five magazines published in the Soviet Union, some with editions of 400,000 to over 1 million, which have recently printed Trotsky articles, and there are many more.

Negotiations are underway to publish "Stalin" by Trotsky, and *Socialist Action* has also learned that an agreement has been reached to publish the "Revolution Betrayed" this October in an edition of 150,000.

In order to continue to help the essential work of getting Trotsky published in the USSR, Walnut Publishing Co. is setting up a special Trotsky Publications Fund, and is asking all those who would like to see Trotsky being read in the USSR to contribute generously.

Please make contributions payable to Walnut Publishing Co./Trotsky Fund, 3435 Army St., Suite #308, San Francisco, CA 94110, or call Alex Chis at (415) 821-0458 for more details. ■



# ... NOW convention debates future strategy

(continued from page 1)

from the Democratic and Republican parties. Such a party is projected as one committed to the feminist agenda—the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion rights, childcare, equal pay, lesbian and gay rights, and all other issues of concern to women.

Excitement was generated one year ago in a workshop on political action at the national NOW conference in Cincinnati when speaker after speaker blasted the two main parties as enemies of women and then voted overwhelmingly to explore the establishment of a third party.

NOW members continued to have great interest in this project again this year. Over 300 people attended the conference workshop scheduled to discuss it. The apparent contradiction of calling for a new party while working to elect Democrats in 1990 didn't seem to bother the NOW leadership. Neither did the appointment of commissioners, who are active Democratic Party members, to hear testimony on the new party issue.

Some NOW leaders claim that a third party could throw its support to one of the major party candidates. Statements like this, also reported in the daily press, indicate that the third party idea may be meant as a palliative for militants in NOW who are fed up with the performance of so-called feminist politicians. Such politicians, once elected to public office, do nothing to further the cause and often join with others to defeat or compromise away women's rights.

For example, Dianne Feinstein, running for California governor as a "feminist" candidate, did nothing to advance the cause of women's rights when she was mayor of San Francisco. She fought against expanding childcare programs, opposed pro-choice resolutions, opposed a comparable-worth plan for city employees, and failed to appoint a greater percentage of women to city commissions than her predecessor had.

NOW leaders who are committed to the Democrats (such as Molly Yard, whose active involvement with the Democratic Party goes back, she boasts, to Franklin Roosevelt's fourth-term election) may hope that all this talk of a new party will convince the activists to work for the Democrats while waiting for NOW to get a better party launched.

The NOW leadership is well aware that thousands joined the organization this past year because NOW took the leadership of the struggle to defend abortion rights by calling the two mobilizations in Washington. They did not come pouring into NOW to work for politicians.

## Attacks on abortion continue

A recent study by the Worldwatch Institute reports that "of the 50 million abortions performed globally each year, nearly half are illegal, and of those at least 200,000—perhaps more—women die." Jodi Jacobson, author of the study, was quoted in a UPI report, saying, "Laws and policies that restrict access to abortion don't curb the abortion rate. Instead, they cause women to die."

The National Organization for Women knows well that restrictions on abortion mean deaths. NOW leader and former president, Ellie Smeal, called the June 25 U.S. Supreme Court decision, which upheld state laws requiring pregnant teens to notify parents before getting a legal abortion, the beginnings of a "women's Vietnam."

These laws pose a life and death question because many young women who unintentionally become pregnant find it impossible to tell their parents and thus seek abortions by unsafe means.

Smeal cited statistics to back up NOW's contempt for the Supreme Court's decision against young women's rights to abortion. Forty percent of teenage women and 20 percent of those under 18 get pregnant. Of these, 400,000 opt for abortion, but half will not be able to get parental consent.

"This is 'The Handmaid's Tale.' This is Romania," Smeal told the national conference. She was referring to Margaret Atwood's nightmare novel where state-organized compulsory pregnancy is women's lot in a future misogynous society. Smeal was also referring to the recently deposed Stalinist dictatorship in Romania, where compulsory pregnancies resulted in orphanages filled with abandoned and sick babies and jail terms for women and doctors who violated the anti-abortion laws.

Sheri O'Dell, outgoing NOW Vice



NOW leadership has to organize more mass actions for the right to choose.

President for Action, answering the phony argument of the court that claimed parental notification laws protect the rights of families, said, "The only power these laws protect is the coercive power of the state. They're states' rights laws."

"Fundamental rights are not treated this way," said O'Dell, who warned that the court is "telling us that they don't think abortion is a fundamental right" and therefore are moving in the direction of throwing out the *Roe v. Wade* decision. To indicate how medically harmful the Court's decision was, O'Dell reported that every major medical association opposes parental consent laws.

## Population issue reappears

Re-elected NOW President Molly Yard called the actions of the Supreme Court "cruel and uncaring" and said that the Supreme Court gave greater rights to fertilized eggs than to young women.

Yard reaffirmed NOW's commitment to reproductive choice, saying, "We would never force anyone to have an abortion." But at the same time, she continued with a theme she began at last year's conference, saying, "We must control population worldwide in order to save the planet."

Yard's linking of abortion rights to population control is a dangerous direction for NOW to take. Population control is the solution posed by those who blame the devastating problems of the environment on the size of the world's population instead of on the capitalist system. Capitalism uses technology and production strictly for the generation of private profit rather than to meet human needs and to protect the earth's ecology.

If the NOW leadership continues to argue along these lines, they will deepen terrible divisions within the women's movement along class and racial lines. Population-control arguments are aimed primarily at the underdeveloped world of non-white peoples, who correctly brand such measures as racist.

## Democracy in NOW

The 1990 conference took NOW further down the road to bureaucratizing the organization. In 1989, a hotly debated by-laws change—pushed by the leadership—passed, requiring all candidates for national NOW office to run as part of a slate. This year, with the new rule in effect, there was no opposition to Molly Yard's slate. Not only did they

run unopposed, but they also took the unusual step of picking the next leadership team.

They pushed through a "Team Transition Resolution," which announced Yard's intention of resigning mid-way through her three-year term of office, at which point Patricia Ireland, who now serves as Executive Vice President, will assume the presidency and

# Operation Rescue helped NOW grow

An important workshop at the National Organization for Women's 1990 conference was titled "Project Stand Up for Women: Turning Back 'Operation Bully.'" This workshop discussed the experience of NOW chapters in fighting back against the illegal abortion clinic blockades of Operation Rescue (OR), the fanatical terrorist group trying to stop abortion through extra-legal means.

Panelists included NOW Executive Vice President Patricia Ireland, Boston NOW President Ellen Convisser, Feminist Majority Director Kathy Spillar, and NOW National Board Member Olga Vives.

The panelists reported that Operation Rescue has stepped back from the frequency of their blockades over the past year and a half in response to the highly effective defense NOW has organized both at the clinics themselves and through the courts.

Injunctions against OR's illegal acts and harassment of women at the clinics, fines levied against their leaders, and jail terms have effectively cut into their ability to mobilize large numbers of anti-abortion law-breakers.

Patricia Ireland reported that arrests of OR blockaders went from 12,000 in 1988 and 1989 to 400 so far in 1990. These figures show that OR has forsaken its frequent blockades and substituted picket-line harassment of clinic patients. Operation Rescue isn't entirely smashed, however, and the women's movement still needs to be well prepared for the blockades that will occur.

It was reported that the police sometimes helped OR to close clinics by the way in which they handled mass arrests. In many

run as the incumbent in the following election. Other posts affected by this resignation were also filled by this resolution.

Delegates to the conference, while approving the resolution in a divided vote, registered their discomfort with this method of leadership selection by giving Yard only a 54 percent vote in the uncontested election!

Many NOW members believe that a movement which strives for full democratic rights for the female half of the population must have the fullest democratic procedures within its own organization.

## Mass action needed

The new Supreme Court decision against young women, which chips away at the right to abortion, combined with the extreme anti-abortion laws in Pennsylvania, Guam, and Louisiana show that the right to abortion must be defended even more vigorously now than before.

Unfortunately, a resolution calling for a national abortion rights march in the spring of 1991 (which was supported by over 700 conference participants who signed a petition for it) was placed low enough on the agenda to preclude debate and adoption. It was referred to the National NOW Board, where it faces certain defeat.

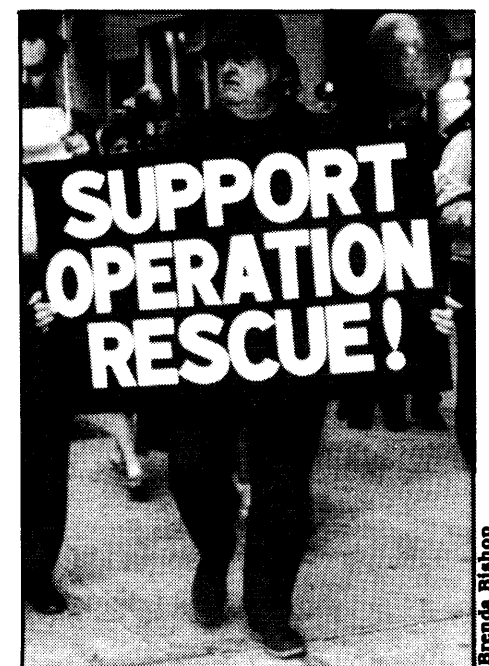
The national leadership claims that it will mobilize 1 million in the streets again when one of the current state anti-abortion laws reaches the Supreme Court as "the challenge to *Roe v. Wade*."

This is good, but a date should be set, and we should be working on a national action now while the stakes are so high. Instead, the leadership is counting on the election of some supposedly pro-choice candidates to stop the anti-abortion steamroller. This reliance on the politicians has already begun to demobilize the movement.

An important resolution passed at the conference set up a "campus caravan for women's lives," with the aim of organizing youth in the fight for reproductive rights. But a major portion of this resolution calls on youth to work on electoral political (read: Democratic Party) campaigns.

The organization of youth in the fight for women's rights could be the crucial factor in saving legal abortion in the United States—but this can only happen if the movement stays independent of the two status-quo capitalist political parties.

A lesson from the Vietnam antiwar movement is extremely relevant today. The movement needs to be independent and in the streets. This is the only way we can win! ■



Clinic attacks backfired on OR.

cases, police cleared all people from the clinic doors—both the illegal blockaders and the pro-choice defenders.

This played into the hands of OR by cutting off access to the clinics while the police took hours to remove the blockaders. Panelists explained that mobilizing great numbers of clinic defenders is what forces the police to do their job.

Socialist Action would appreciate hearing from our readers about clinic defense in your areas.—C.S.

## Sixth Int'l Conference on AIDS:

# Boycotted by activists and filled with discouraging news

### Reports highlight alarming spread of disease in face of gov't inaction



30,000-strong "United Call to Action" demonstration in San Francisco on June 23.

Millie Gonzalez

By MILLIE GONZALEZ

The Sixth International Conference on AIDS, held in San Francisco June 20-24, was filled with controversy.

Dozens of international and national organizations boycotted the conference due to U.S. immigration laws restricting entry of people infected with HIV.

According to Sue Balen of the Names Project-San Francisco, the Red Cross alerted the international community to the INS restrictions. Individuals entering the country would have to declare if they were HIV infected, have their passports posted with an indelible stamp, and only be allowed 10 days in the country.

Along with the INS restrictions, a 1950 McCarthy-era statute was enforced by the INS. The law denies entry to "people with a psychopathic personality, sexual deviations or mental defect." In 1967, homosexuals were included in the above provisions by the U.S. Supreme Court.

## Cops aid clinic blockaders

Operation Rescue came up with new tactics Saturday, July 21, in Northern California. For the first time they did not announce their plan to blockade a clinic, but secretly mobilized only their most trusted fanatics. Meeting in Fremont, Calif., they drove in a convoy to San Mateo, where they blockaded the front door of the Planned Parenthood clinic.

The police knew in advance of OR's plan and were prepared to cut a deal with the illegal blockaders! They let them sit on clinic property, blocking the front door, but allowed the clients to be escorted in through the clinic's back door.

The cops formed a solid line between OR and 100 angry pro-choice defenders, who converged on the clinic when they learned that it was being blockaded. The police prevented the clinic defenders from keeping the front doors accessible to clients.

All the clients were able to get into the clinic, but not without intolerable harassment by OR members. The police allowed the blockaders to defy a court injunction which prohibits them from coming within 15 feet of the clinic. Pro-choice organizations will have to intensify their mobilizations and put pressure on the police and city governments to uphold the laws.—C.S.

The boycott of the conference was not aimed at organizers of the conference but at the U.S. government. Some of the U.S. organizations involved in the boycott were the Names Project; Gay Men's Health Crisis-N.Y.; Shanti-S.F.; National Association of People with AIDS; National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; and several chapters of ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), with the exception of the New York chapter. Organizations and individuals from Europe, Australia, and Canada also joined the boycott.

Conference organizers and attending delegates also noted that it was medically unsupported to restrict travel by those we can learn from. As a result, the international dialogue among scientists was cut, as 50 scientific papers were withdrawn.

### Discouraging international reports

Inside the conference, news from the international community was very discouraging. This was particularly true of the reports from Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union.

Due to the Stalinist position on homosexuality (homosexuality is viewed as a form of social deviancy), Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have largely ignored the problem till now.

News reports concerning mothers catching AIDS from their babies also highlight the inadequate health-care procedures used in those countries. Apparently, the virus has been traced back to infection from re-used needles, giving the babies thrush (oral candidiasis, a manifestation of AIDS). The mothers then catch the virus through cracks in their nipples when breastfeeding.

In Romania, similar unsanitary practices under the former Ceausescu government were revealed. Ceausescu had outlawed abortion, forcing many women to leave their babies in local orphanages or hospitals where hundreds of infants became infected with the AIDS virus.

From Africa, where some believe the virus originated, the news is not much better. There the disease is mainly transmitted throughout the heterosexual community and again due to unsanitary medical practices such as re-used needles.

Eunice Kiereini, chairperson of WHO (World Health Organization) Regional Nursing and Midwifery Task Force in Kenya, stated in her remarks to the opening session of the conference:

"Four-hundred thousand or more [in Africa] are ill with AIDS, and 3.5 million more are infected with the virus. [Both sexes are equally represented.] Six-hundred thousand [of those infected] are infants under 5 years of age."

The lack of funds to purchase disposable needles has compounded the problem.

In the United States, enormous barriers also exist to solving the AIDS epidemic. These have been created by Congress, the Reagan and Bush administrations, and the health-care industry.

In his book, "And the Band Played On," Randy Shilts describes the policies of the Reagan administration:

"From 1980, when the first isolated gay men began falling ill from strange and exotic ailments, nearly five years passed before all these institutions—medicine, public health, the federal and private scientific research establishments, the mass media and the gay community's leadership—mobilized the way they should in time of threat.

"The story of those first five years of AIDS in America is a drama of national failure, played out against a backdrop of needless deaths."

Today, the federal and health agencies are still mired in bureaucratic red tape, which impedes any real progress toward finding a cure or a vaccine.

While scientists at the Sixth International Conference noted the declining rate of deaths within the gay community, they also noted that unsafe sex practices were rising within the 18-25 age group among gay men.

According to a new study released by the *Journal of American Medical Association* (July 11, 1990), AIDS is the leading cause of death among Black women between the ages of 15 and 44 in New York and New Jersey.

In a *New York Times* op-ed piece (July 16, 1990), Larry Kramer, playwright, founder of both the Gay Men's Health Crisis and ACT-UP, further underscored how the epidemic is outpacing the federal government's response with these statistics:

"In America," he wrote, "212 new cases of full-blown AIDS are diagnosed every day; there is one AIDS death every 12 minutes, and a new case of infection every 54 seconds. At a minimum, 1 million to 1.5 million are infected."

Educational efforts to reach out to different communities have also been stymied. According to Donita Hicks of the AIDS Action Council (a lobbying group for AIDS concerns based in Washington, D.C.), "Jesse Helms is successful in attaching his amendment to any appropriations bill for AIDS. His amendment in essence states that any educational material should not promote homosexual activity, be too explicit in heterosexual activity, and not be too offensive to the general public."

For the most part AIDS has struck hardest in the oppressed sectors of the population: gays, IV drug users, minorities, and women.

To date, Hawaii is the only state to approve a needle-exchange program. San Francisco's Project Point has been around for several years, but it operates underground. This means that no federal monies are used to study its effectiveness.

### Profits come before people

And how has the U.S. drug industry reacted to this epidemic? According to an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 19, 1990): "A seldom acknowledged reason for drug company reluctance to commit resources to AIDS research is that the AIDS market, despite its high visibility, is small compared to that of other diseases. Worldwide sales of AZT last year were \$215 million."

When AZT first came out on the market it was priced prohibitively high. It wasn't until ACT-UP took over the floor of the stock exchange in protest that Burroughs-Wellcome lowered the price for AZT.

According to New York ACT-UP leader Peter Staley, in his address to the conference, "The gap between AIDS activists and scientists is widening." Little wonder this is occurring when you look at the priorities of the drug industry and some scientists in the medical community.

The U.S. government has not made a concerted effort to wage an all out war against this pandemic. Monies are tied up in red tape, and legislation of a homophobic nature stymies any attempt to educate the public. The drug industry, concerned only with profits, clings to marketing AZT while ignoring the potential of experimental drugs—and the Federal Drug Administration delays the approval and release of new drugs.

An all-out effort—a Manhattan Project for AIDS research—is needed. This country has the medical, educational, and social resources to meet this epidemic. Unfortunately, the government puts profits before human needs.

Mobilizations like the "United Call to Action" on June 23 (which drew 30,000 in San Francisco) are needed. This march included AIDS researchers and delegates to the conference, ACT-UP members from around the country, as well as Black, lesbian and gay, and religious organizations, service providers, and members of the scientific community. Alliances such as this one can make a difference. ■

## Texas-style 'rescue' a big flop

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

Two anti-abortion groups threatened to blockade clinics in Houston, Texas, during the International Economic Summit on July 11-12. But this attempt to garner media coverage for their anti-woman acts fizzled.

The groups, Pro-Life Advocates Network and Rescue America (formerly Operation Rescue), boasted that they would have the "world's largest rescue, Texas-Style," with shock troops numbering 3500. According to Phyllis Tucker, state president of the Texas National Organization for Women (NOW), the anti-women fanatics were able to mobilize only 200 people.

On July 11, all but one Houston-area clinic were closed in memory of the women who died from illegal abortions

before 1973. Houston Planned Parenthood remained open and was assaulted, but NOW's vigorous organizing brought police protection to the clinic.

The police informed the terrorists that they would face felony charges with possible fines of \$10,000 if they used any acts of violence. This must have deterred the attackers because only one "rescuer" was arrested and fined \$1000 for trespassing on clinic property.

On July 11, all but one of the Houston-area clinics were closed in memory of the women who died from illegal abortions before 1973. Houston Planned Parenthood remained open and was assaulted, but NOW's vigorous organizing brought police protection to the clinic. ■

# S&L bailout: workers pay while thieves play

By HAYDEN PERRY

U.S. history is replete with financial scandals. But nothing in the past comes close to matching the thievery and corruption inherent in a "free enterprise system" as the S&L scandal.

The Republicans and Democrats are both right. Blame for the savings-and-loan debacle rests with the "other party." But it was both Democrats and Republicans in the White House and Congress who opened the doors to the speculators and looters, shouted down those who sounded the alarm, and blocked every move to stop the financial rot before billions were lost.

Edwin Gray, a bureaucrat appointed by Reagan to keep an eye on the S&Ls after deregulation, took his job seriously. He saw little Main Street S&Ls with \$2 million in deposits balloon overnight to mega-buck institutions with as much as \$2 billion in customers' accounts.

Gray knew these billions represented brokered deposits: accumulations of money from pension funds and other sources seeking safe and profitable investments. S&Ls could not be safer. Every penny was insured by the government.

Money managers could move millions into an S&L overnight. They could also pull millions out overnight, leaving executives frantically searching for new deposits and paying ever higher interest rates. The risky investments thrift managers were making to pay these high rates of interest made Gray shudder.

As brokered deposits rose from \$3 billion to \$29 billion in 1984, Gray decided to call a halt. He would limit insurance to only one \$100,000 deposit per person or institution. By presenting this proposal, Gray brought a storm of abuse on his head.

Secretary of the Treasury Donald Regan angrily declared that Gray "had strayed off the reservation. He was not a team player." Regan was scarcely unbiased. He had built his Wall Street firm, Merrill Lynch, into the biggest deposit broker in the country.

S&L executives went to court. A judge ruled in 1987 that only Congress could change the terms of insurance. Congressmen were not about to offend the thrift industry that lavished so many campaign dollars upon them. So the taxpayer continued to be responsible for all the billions on deposit, but had no say about the crapshoots the S&Ls were investing in.

Eminent economists told Gray not to worry so much. Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, pointed to 17 S&Ls he said had sound conservative managers. Within four years, 15 of these "sound" S&Ls were bankrupt, at a cost to the taxpayer of \$3 billion.

## Neil Bush's "normal practices"

Probably Greenspan would have considered Silverado Savings and Loan of Colorado a well-managed thrift. Neil Bush, the president's son, sat on the board of directors. But this did not ensure that only sound, honest business practices would be followed.

Neil Bush may be correct in saying he and other directors were only following normal business practices in running Silverado Savings. It was normal to put a man with no experience—but high political connections—on the board of directors.

It was also normal for Kenneth Good, a speculator, to give Bush a cost-free loan, and to invest in Bush's oil-exploration company. Naturally, Bush would reciprocate by persuading Silverado to lend many millions to Good. When Good's enterprises failed, he owed Silverado over \$31 million.

Denver developer William Walters also invested in Bush's company and got \$200 million in Silverado loans. He failed to repay \$40 million. These and other defaulting loans pushed Silverado's losses to \$1 billion—losses to be made good by the taxpayer.

What Bush calls "normal business practices" were characterized by regulators as "insider abuses." They charged that directors served as "rubber stamps" for management's

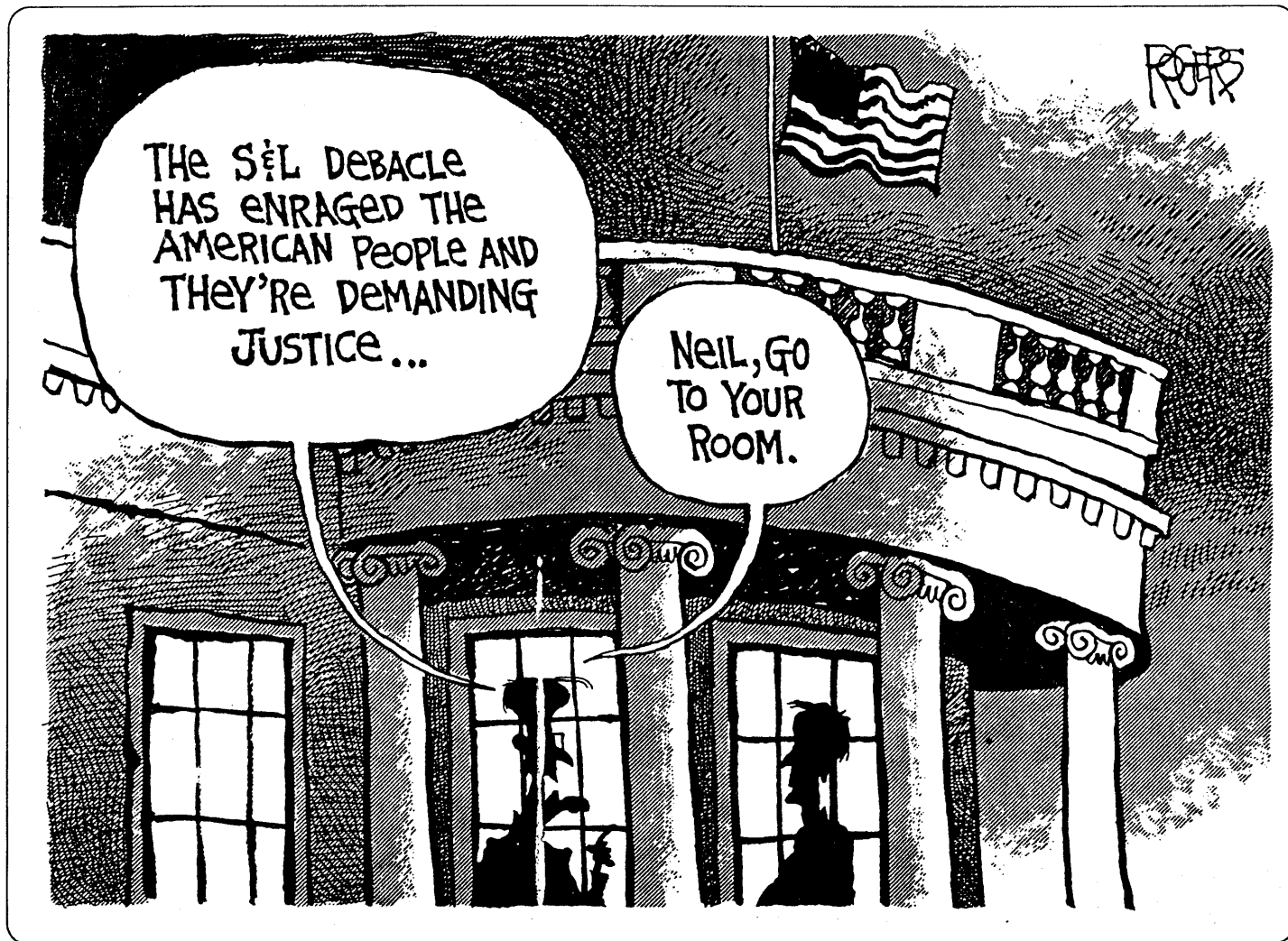
"abusive or questionable practices to make short term gains."

"Come and get it!"

Democrats are making much of the Silverado failure because of the president's son. But malfeasance at Silverado was only typical of policies pursued at the other 223

had previously been indicted for fraud, put up only \$1000 of his own money to get 15 Texas S&Ls. He borrowed \$60 million, but was still \$10 million short of the down payment.

Someone close to the White House said, "Approve him anyway. Forget the indictment." Furthermore, Fail was to get \$250



insolvent thrifts closed by the end of 1988.

Strangely, however, while hundreds of S&Ls were collapsing, hundreds more were being created. Texas, Arizona, and California spawned new thrifts as fast as the old ones failed.

The federal government, as well as the states, chartered S&Ls. As state thrifts switched to the easier federal charters, California decided to lure them back by making its rules even more lax. Politicians wanted the income and payoffs the thrift industry brought in. They also wanted, and got, 100 percent federal insurance.

Lawrence Taggart, the California savings-and-loan commissioner, in effect called on all the sleaze artists in the country to "come and get it." He approved 235 new S&Ls in 400 days. Not surprisingly, more thrifts failed in California than in any other state.

In 1985, Gray asked Congress to authorize a \$15 billion bond issue to pay off depositors in the seized S&Ls. Congress denied Gray the money, arguing that the problem was not so serious. Furthermore, if Gray did not have the money he could not seize all these thrifts, and the problem might go away—at least till Reagan was out of office.

## Hemorrhage of red ink

But the problem did not go away. Instead, it grew and grew. Insolvent thrifts, allowed to operate because there were no funds to liquidate them, had to pay interest to their depositors, even as their borrowers stopped paying on their loans. This hemorrhage of red ink continued at an estimated rate of \$35 million a day for two years—all to be added to the cost of the bailout.

In 1987, Gray's term ran out and he was followed by Danny Wall. Here was the thrift industry's own man. He had helped deregulate the industry and thought things were going just fine. He would sell the seized S&Ls to new entrepreneurs, and everything would roll along as before.

But selling the insolvent thrifts meant practically giving them away, often to the same con artists who wrecked them in the first place. One speculator, James Fail, who

million in federal payments over 10 years to create Bluebonnet Savings, the most profitable S&L in Texas.

This was not so profitable for the government. A series of such deals, with huge subsidies to attract buyers, cost the taxpayer \$52 billion more than it would have if the failed thrifts had been closed down. But this would have disappointed a lot of big campaign contributors who still wanted to play the S&L game.

## Giant garage sales

As of June 1990, a new government agency, the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC), was holding 35,908 properties formerly owned by 148 failed S&Ls. It is estimated that a total of 1700 insolvent thrifts with 300,000 properties will eventually be in government hands. These range from athletic clubs to unfinished office buildings, to two uranium mines.

To liquidate these properties, RTC is planning a series of giant "garage sales" with prices slashed below the market. This is alarming property owners everywhere who are already suffering from falling land values.

Until the Silverado fiasco, President Bush said very little about the S&L crisis, which has been described as a "financial Vietnam." His concern has been to avoid responsibility for the debacle and to push the cost of the clean-up onto future generations. He intends to do this by selling bonds to raise money, putting the charges "off budget," and stretching the rescue operation over 40 years. This enormously increases the cost of the bailout.

The *New York Times* estimates the actual losses of the S&Ls to be \$155 billion, while interest on the bonds and the cost of working capital will total another \$133 billion. The *Times* predicts another \$37 billion will be needed over 40 years for administrative and other costs. This adds up to \$325 billion. They say this is an optimistic estimate. It could rise to \$500 billion—three times the cost of the Vietnam War!

Since the actual loss of the S&Ls is "only" \$155 billion, nearly all the additional cost must be ascribed to criminal pandering

to the thrift industry by Congress and the White House.

## An unworkable "solution"

Financial experts say there is little need for S&Ls today. Banks and other institutions are making home loans. But politicians look on the thrift industry as the goose that lays golden eggs for them. With the skyrocketing costs of elections, every member of Congress must constantly seek huge campaign donations. S&Ls have been a major source, providing payoffs in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

So the S&Ls are as American as apple pie, the politicians say. We have only to go after a few crooks, put them in jail, and take back the millions they stole. This simplistic

solution is not going to work. Congress has been protecting these con men for years, allowing them to stash much of their loot overseas. Putting all the crooked S&L directors, like Neil Bush, in jail would hopelessly clog the country club section of the federal prison system. It won't happen.

The administration hopes the S&L debacle, like the HUD scandal, will disappear after a few trials and many assurances that "the system works." But the "system" is not going to work this time. Too many billions are involved, too many social programs will have to be cut to pay for the bailout, billions of dollars worth of unsold property will destabilize the market for years to come, and the commercial banking system could go the way of the S&Ls.

While our ruling class gloats over the failure of Stalinism, their own system of capitalism has failed the test. It cannot provide housing, health care, or education—it can only produce scandals in abundance.

Each succeeding scandal costs the taxpayer ever more billions. The S&L debacle tops them all. It threatens the stability of the financial system, and the political system that fostered it. Long before the 40-year bailout program ends, the American people will challenge the system that produces such monstrosities as the S&L scandal. ■

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# Twin Cities Black community rallies against police violence, racist attacks

By LYNN HENDERSON

MINNEAPOLIS—On July 14, over 500 people marched here from the Black community in north Minneapolis to North Memorial Hospital to protest the latest in a series of racist attacks by police and others on African-Americans in the Twin Cities area.

This latest incident occurred June 30 following the shooting of a young Black man, Clarence Smith, age 23, after a party. Smith was taken to North Memorial Hospital where he died that night.

When 40 members of Smith's family and friends arrived at North Memorial to obtain information and medical assistance they were met by belligerent and racist comments from police.

When the peacefully assembled group learned of Smith's death, some people began to grieve and mourn outside the hospital. The hospital administration was so unnerved by the sight of African-Americans grieving that they called the police to have them removed. A multi-jurisdictional force of more than 50 police from Minneapolis, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale and the State Patrol responded to the call in full riot gear and proceeded to brutalize all Black people present.

Despite the complete absence of danger to the police they unleashed trained attack dogs for the sole purpose of dispersing the peacefully assembled crowd. The dogs bit several African-Americans in a scene that was reminiscent of Alabama in the 1950s and South Africa today.

The police ran behind one Black man, declared that he was not moving his "black ass" fast enough, tripped him and then released dogs on him, who bit him in the groin, throat, and face.

In another incident, the dogs bit one young boy in the arm. The police, crazed by racism, chased down one young Black girl who was trying to escape the mayhem in her car, stopped her, forced her car door open by breaking the handle, and attempted to put the dog in the car with her.

The final human rights violation occurred when police and hospital staff refused medical attention to the African-Americans they had moments before brutalized.

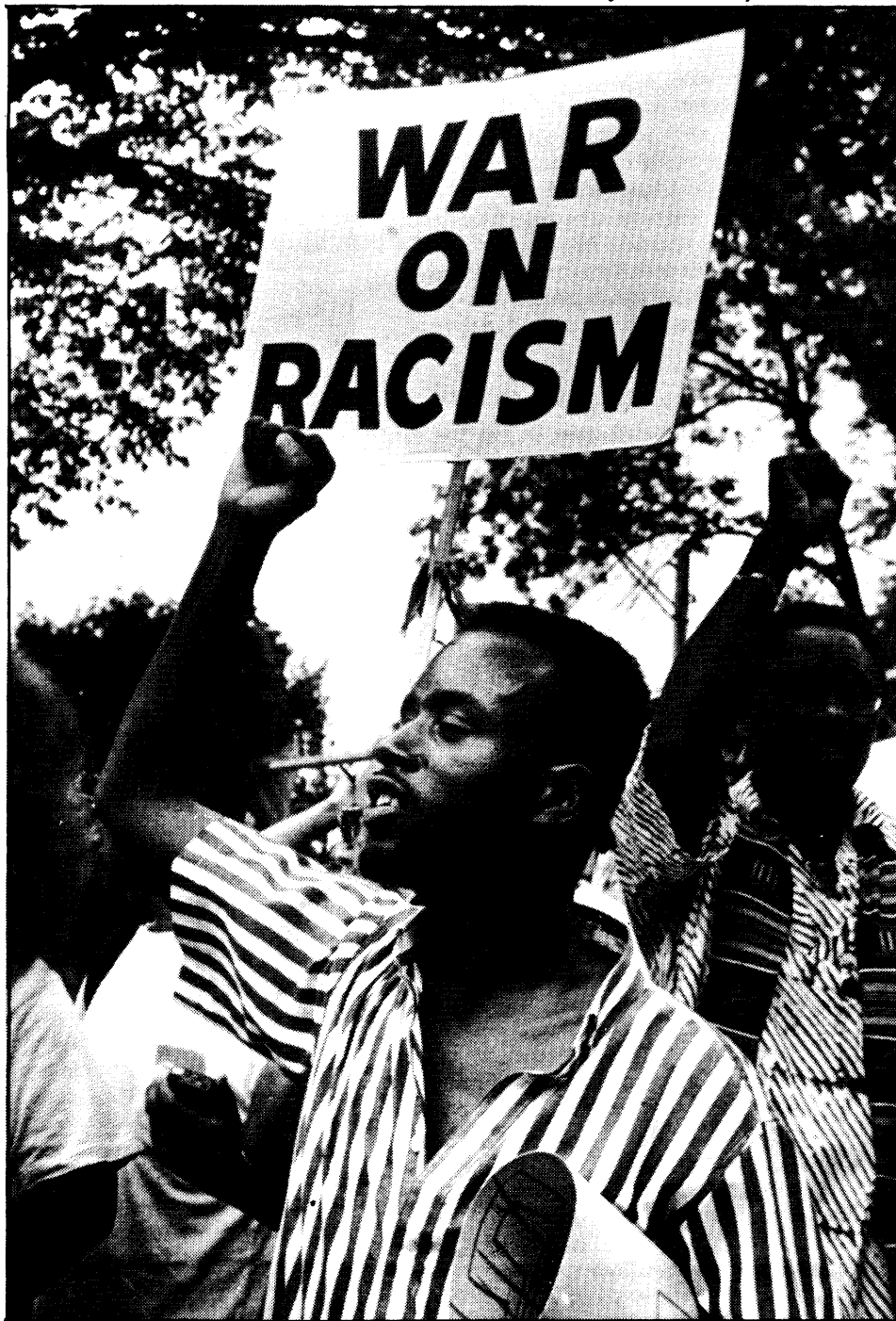
## Defense committee formed

The July 14 march and rally was organized by the newly formed Committee Against Racism, Police Brutality, and Community Violence. The Black Ministerial Alliance and Black church congregations throughout the Twin Cities played the major role in initiating the committee and organizing the protest.

In a widely distributed leaflet the committee stated, "Incidents like the one at North Memorial Hospital are an all-too common occurrence in communities of color and working-class communities.... People of color and working-class people, who are most often the victims of police violence, must begin to fight back by raising their voices in protest and demanding justice."

Chris Nisan, one of the leading young Black activists in the committee, told an organizing meeting of over 100 at Minneapolis Zion Baptist Church that demonstrations can and do make a difference. Nisan told the crowd that we only have to look at events in Eastern Europe for proof of that.

Last year the same type of multi-jurisdictional police force killed two elderly African-Americans in a so-called drug raid in which no drugs were found. In a before-dawn raid



June 14 protest march by Twin Cities Black community.

on the supposed "crack house," police without warning threw "concussion" grenades in the windows, and ignited a fire that killed Lloyd Smalley, 71, and Lillian Weisse, 68, who were asleep in the house.

## Burning cross on lawn

Increasingly, African-Americans in the Twin Cities area are targets for racist attacks. At 2:00 a.m. on the morning of June 21, Russell and Laura Jones, a young African-American couple with five young children, awoke to find a burning cross on the lawn of their East St. Paul residence. The police who were called extinguished the burning cross, but at 4:30 a.m. another burning cross was placed on the boulevard opposite the Jones' house. The Jones family had moved into the neighborhood, in which white racist skinheads have been active, last March.

Three 17-year-old white skinheads have been charged with three misdemeanors in connection with the cross-burning incident. However, on Monday, July 16, Ramsey County District Judge Charles Flinn dismissed a disorderly conduct charge, ruling the St. Paul ordinance banning cross burning to be an unconstitutional restriction of free speech. The Judge cited recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings that flag burning is protected

by the First Amendment.

Laura Jones, whose family was the target of the cross burnings, expressed outrage at the decision. "The judge equated cross burning and flag burning," said Laura Jones. "To us, it's just outlandish. Cross burning is a direct threat, flag burning is just a protest. When you go on somebody's property and

threaten them, that's not protected free speech."

## Committee issues demands

A picketline and news conference was held on Saturday, July 21, by the Twin Cities Committee Against Racism to protest yet another racist incident—this time at a Cost Cutters hair salon in St. Paul.

On May 20, Terryann Nash, a young African-American who is the St. Paul representative for the Miss Black U.S.A. pageant, a city bus driver, and a student, had made a hair appointment over the phone at Cost Cutters. When Ms. Nash arrived in person the stylist refused her service, claiming she was not going to do any more hair that day.

When Ms. Nash requested the name of the stylist she was assaulted by the stylist and another Cost Cutters' employee. Ms. Nash received bruises and cuts on her face and arm which required hospital treatment.

The news conference and picket raised the following demands:

1. That the two Cost Cutter stylists who assaulted Terryann Nash be fired.
2. That Cost Cutters' management meet with officials of the State Human Rights Department to review Cost Cutters hiring practices and employee training program.
3. That Cost Cutters must set standards of non-discriminatory behavior and inform all employees that their jobs depend on their meeting this standard.

4. That Cost Cutters' management must issue a public apology to Terryann Nash and a public statement that the company will not tolerate racial discrimination.

In the North Memorial Hospital incident the Committee Against Racism, Police Brutality, and Community Violence has raised the following demands:

1. That the Governor and the Attorney General launch a criminal investigation of the police involved and prosecute them!
2. That the Federal authorities launch an investigation into criminal civil-rights violations by the police involved and prosecute them!
3. That the State Human Rights Department investigate North Memorial Hospital for violations of the victims civil rights and award the victims money damages!
4. That the administration of North Memorial Hospital issue a formal apology to the victims and to the community!
5. That the visual media release all film of the incident!

While many witnesses testify to the presence of TV cameras, the stations now claim that either film was not shot or it cannot be located.

Sections of this article have been taken from material published by the Committee Against Racism, Police Brutality, and Community Violence.

## Black Workers for Justice (BWFJ): 'Organize workers in the South'

By CAROLINE LUND

PITTSBURGH—In early July, Eastern Airlines strikers here sponsored a rally and "walk-through" at the Pittsburgh International Airport. Among the many unionists present was a delegation from the Black Workers For Justice (BWFJ).

BWFJ is an organization based in North Carolina. A delegation of 18 members drove north in a couple of vans to make a tour of several Midwest cities—including Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago—spreading their message of union solidarity.

Following the rally at the Pittsburgh airport, I was able to interview a member of the steering committee of BWFJ, Nathanelle Mayo. She explained that BWFJ developed out of a struggle in defense of three Black workers who had been fired for challenging harassment and discrimination at a K-mart store in Rocky Mount, N.C., in 1981.

The primary goal of BWFJ, said Mayo, is to promote union organization in the South as well as solidarity between workers, North and South. Here in Pittsburgh, the delegation plans a "strike-solidarity tour," visiting the picket lines of unions on strike in the area.

The organization publishes a monthly newsletter, *Justice Speaks*, and operates a library and workers' center in Rocky Mount,

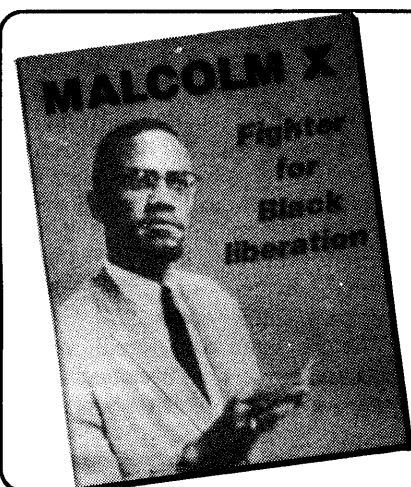


N.C. It also sponsors educational forums, a workers' legal clinic, a workers' hotline, and a workers' health and safety committee.

The delegation on tour includes members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union and of the American Postal Workers Union, as well as a textile worker and a poultry worker, among others.

Mayo explained that the organization helps form workplace committees to teach about unions and prepare workers for organizing drives by established unions. Contacts and requests for help come from the members' own unions or from co-workers and church acquaintances, spread generally by word of mouth and through the newsletter.

For more information or to subscribe to *Justice Speaks*, write to Black Workers For Justice, P.O. Box 5574, Raleigh, N.C. 27650.



## A key pamphlet on the Black struggle

By Kwame M.A. Somburu, et al.

Send \$2 (includes postage) to:  
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Walnut Publishing Co.

By NAT WEINSTEIN

The recently concluded general strike registers a stage in the process of revolution and counterrevolution in Nicaragua that is properly understood only in the light of over ten years of sharp class struggle.

A promising revolutionary period opened up when the July 1979 working class insurrection, with the decisive assistance of the Sandinista guerrilla army, took possession of Managua and routed the last of Somoza's National Guard. The revolution in Nicaragua, moreover, constituted a new stage in the social upheaval begun in the Western hemisphere by the Cuban Revolution of 1959-60.

Unfortunately, the revolutionists of action in Nicaragua did not follow the example of their Cuban counterparts.

The Castro leadership had steadily deepened the Cuban Revolution from the time it overthrew the brutal capitalist dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista on Jan. 1, 1959. At first, the Castroists shared power with Cuban capitalists. But when the Fidelista leadership saw that the revolution was being blocked by their capitalist "allies," they came into increasing conflict with them. The Castroists backed up their anti-capitalist struggle by vigorously encouraging the masses of workers and farmers to mobilize in defense of their class interests.

By July 1960, with the elimination of pro-capitalist representatives, the government was no longer a coalition that defended capitalist property relations and held back land reform. This ever-deepening social revolution in Cuba continued until, by December of 1960, the political power of capitalism and American imperialism was stripped of its economic and social base on the Caribbean island. The Castroist leadership had carried through a socialist revolution in Cuba.

In sharp contrast, the Sandinista leadership took back its pledge—on the first day after Somoza's overthrow—to carry through the main task of the democratic revolution. They revoked their previous commitment to nationalize all the land and to distribute it to the landless peasantry of Nicaragua.

While the Sandinistas responded at times favorably to peasant mobilizations and demands for land, limits were rigidly established by their strategic commitment to restricting the revolution within a framework acceptable to an important section of the Nicaraguan capitalists and landlords. And even though section after section of the Sandinistas' capitalist allies went over to

openly counterrevolutionary opposition, the government remained committed to what they euphemistically termed their "mixed economy" policy—their strategic alliance with the ruling Nicaraguan capitalist class, albeit an ever-smaller section of it.

The Nicaraguan workers and peasants, however, have maintained a virtually uninterrupted series of offensive and defensive mobilizations for the entire period beginning with the overthrow of Somoza to the present day. But the essential role of Sandinista leadership throughout has been to strive to balance itself between these mobilizations and the unrelenting efforts by Nicaraguan capitalism and U.S. imperialism to resist and roll back the efforts of the exploited masses to defend and advance the limited conquests of their struggle.<sup>1</sup>

#### Hobbled by capitalist alliance

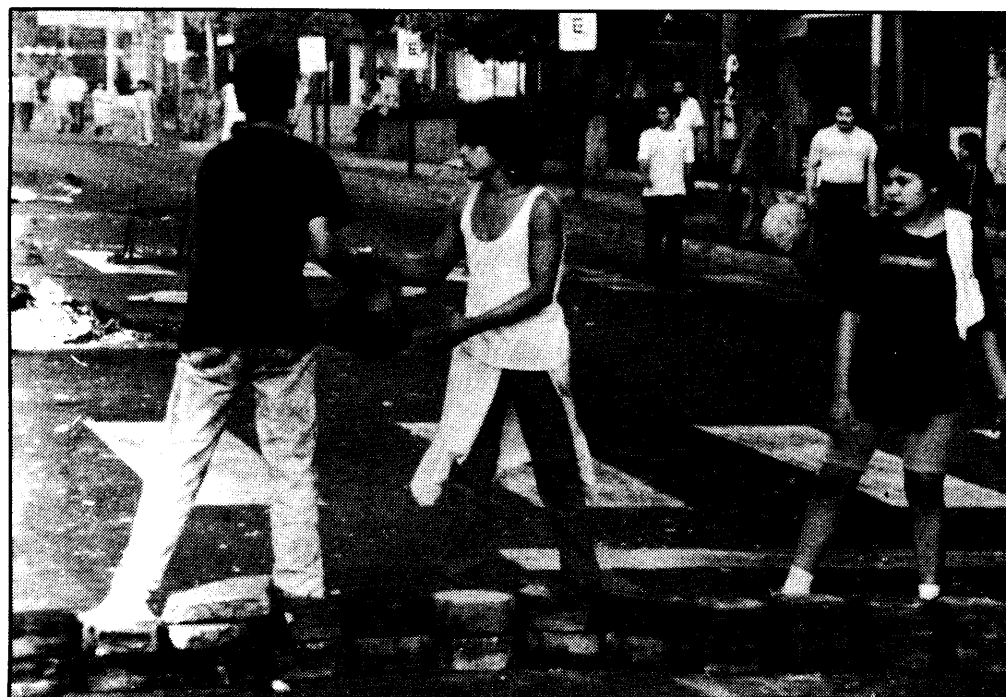
The Sandinista leadership, attempting to hold a course between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution, was threatened on one side by Nicaraguan and world capitalism, which would like nothing better than to crush them along with the continuing revolutionary threat; and on the other, by the worker and peasant masses who just as relentlessly pressed the Sandinistas to deepen the revolution and resolve the question of which class shall rule.

One of the most important lessons of history is that such mass mobilizations cannot go on indefinitely. Time is an element in the revolutionary equation. Whole classes, like individual combatants, can ultimately get worn out in the course of prolonged periods of heightened class struggle. In the *last* analysis, time is *not* on the side of the masses; the masses must find their way through the window of revolutionary opportunity before the ruling class regains its balance and it inevitably closes.

A revolutionary crisis is reached when the masses can no longer endure intensified hardship and when workers in their great majority enter the field of combat. In such mass upsurges the *intrinsic social power* of the workers is manifested by generalized strikes and occupations of society's workplaces.

In contrast, the "almighty" capitalist class is suddenly deprived of the very source of its social and economic power. The workers' capacity to wrest control over the economy away from the capitalists has electrifying impact on all classes. It stuns, demoralizes, splinters and immobilizes the capitalists. It inspires the suffering layers of the middle classes to follow the workers' example. They are also drawn onto the field of battle

# Nicaragua today: Resistance and the meaning of the ge



Sandinista strikers put up barricades in Managua.

on the side of the workers to bring an end to their misery as swiftly as possible.

But the ruling class will gradually recover if the initial blow dealt them is not followed up in time with the institutionalization and consolidation of the newly revealed power of the workers and their natural allies. The least conscious layers of the workers and the middle classes will gradually tire and lose confidence in ultimately gaining a decisive victory over the oppressors. In the end, revolutionary leadership or misleadership is decisive.

The Sandinista leadership failed to follow the example of their Castroist predecessors, who made a successful transition to fuller revolutionary consciousness in the very heat of the revolution, enabling them to bring it to a victorious conclusion.

Why they failed, despite the very best of intentions, is no mystery. Castro, himself, advised the Sandinistas not to follow Cuba's example! He, in turn, was no doubt motivated by concern over the greater geographic vulnerability to imperialist invasion of Nicaragua, which, unlike Cuba, is not surrounded by an ocean.

Castro, and of course the Sandinistas, must also have correctly calculated (and were probably even straight-out told by the Stalinists) that the Soviet bureaucracy would not risk granting Nicaragua the kind of assistance they gave Cuba. They knew that another socialist revolution—this time on the mainland of the Americas—would be received by U.S. imperialism with the utmost hostility. Thus, the Sandinistas, with the support of the Cuban leadership, decided to try a "middle" course.

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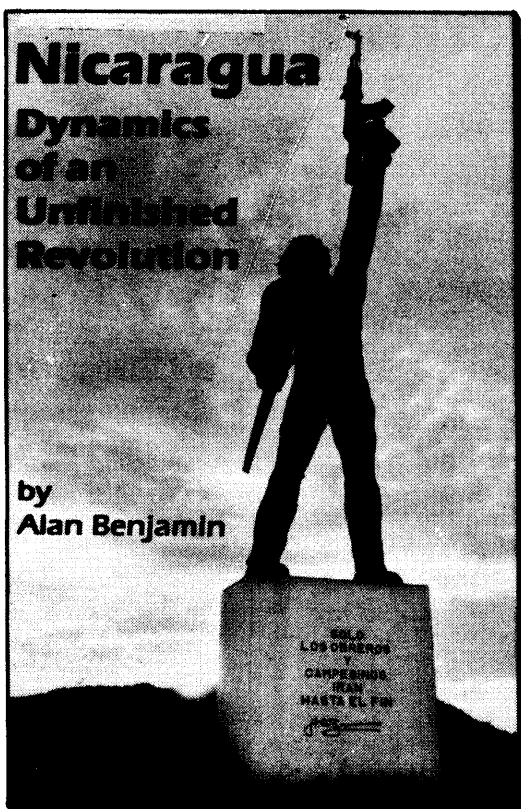
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ly counterrevolutionary opposition, the government remained committed to what euphemistically termed their "mixed economy" policy—their strategic alliance with the ruling Nicaraguan capitalist class, and an ever-smaller section of it.

The Nicaraguan workers and peasants, however, have maintained a virtually uninterrupted series of offensive and defensive mobilizations for the entire period beginning with the overthrow of Somoza to the present. But the essential role of Sandinista leadership throughout has been to strive to balance itself between these mobilizations and unremitting efforts by Nicaraguan capitalist and U.S. imperialism to resist and roll back the efforts of the exploited masses to defend and advance the limited conquests of their struggle.<sup>1</sup>

#### Hobbled by capitalist alliance

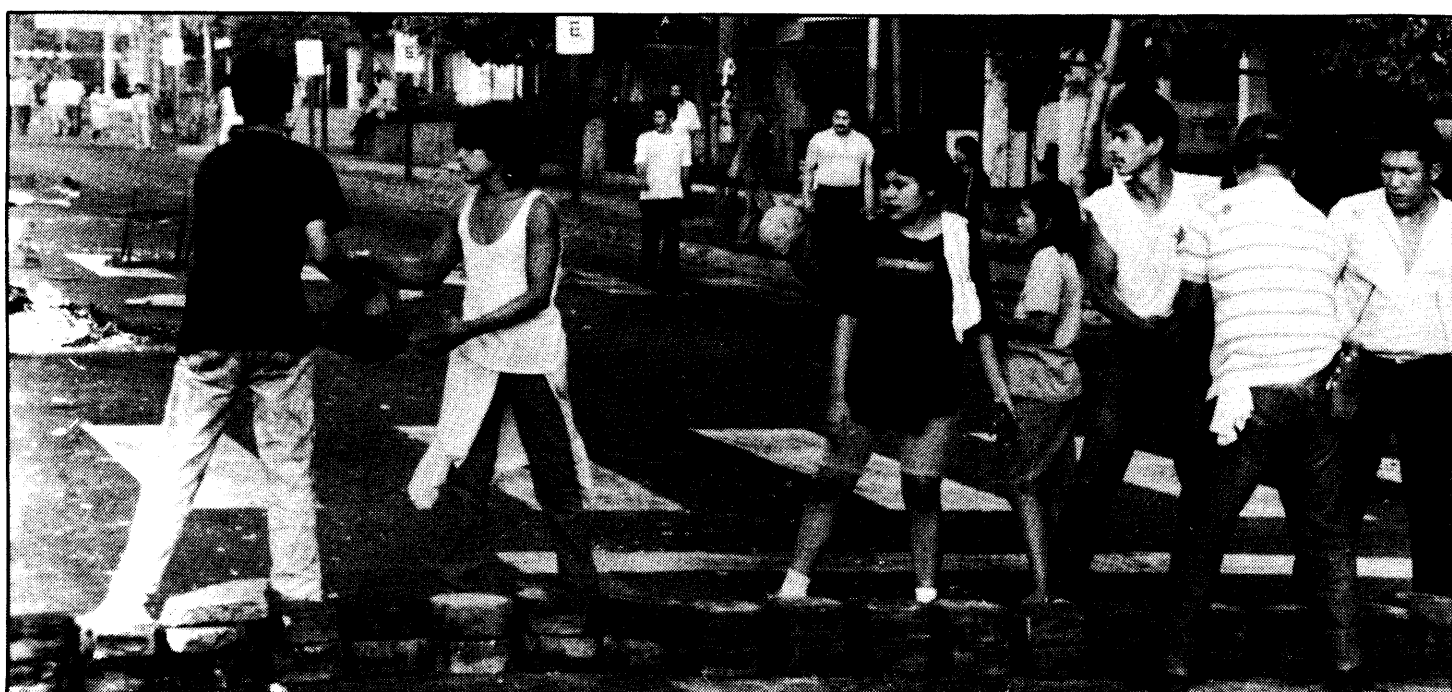
The Sandinista leadership, attempting to find a course between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution, was threatened on one side by Nicaraguan and world capitalism, which would like nothing better than to push them along with the continuing revolutionary threat; and on the other, by the worker and peasant masses who just as relentlessly pressed the Sandinistas to deepen their revolution and resolve the question of which class shall rule.

One of the most important lessons of history is that such mass mobilizations cannot last indefinitely. Time is an element in the revolutionary equation. Whole classes, like individual combatants, can ultimately get worn out in the course of prolonged periods of heightened class struggle. In the last analysis, time is *not* on the side of the masses; the masses must find their way through the window of revolutionary opportunity before the ruling class regains its balance and inevitably closes.

A revolutionary crisis is reached when the masses can no longer endure intensified hardships and when workers in their great majority enter the field of combat. In such mass struggles the *intrinsic social power* of the workers is manifested by generalized strikes and occupations of society's workplaces.

In contrast, the "almighty" capitalist class suddenly deprived of the very source of its social and economic power. The workers' capacity to wrest control over the economy away from the capitalists has electrifying effects on all classes. It stuns, demoralizes, paralyzes and immobilizes the capitalists. It inspires the suffering layers of the middle classes to follow the workers' example. They are also drawn onto the field of battle

# Nicaragua today: Resistance, reaction, and the meaning of the general strike



Sandinista strikers put up barricades in Managua.

Enrique Marti/Impact Visuals

on the side of the workers to bring an end to their misery as swiftly as possible.

But the ruling class will gradually recover if the initial blow dealt them is not followed up in time with the institutionalization and consolidation of the newly revealed power of the workers and their natural allies. The least conscious layers of the workers and the middle classes will gradually tire and lose confidence in ultimately gaining a decisive victory over the oppressors. In the end, revolutionary leadership or misleadership is decisive.

The Sandinista leadership failed to follow the example of their Castroist predecessors, who made a successful transition to fuller revolutionary consciousness in the very heat of the revolution, enabling them to bring it to a victorious conclusion.

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#### On the barricades

On Friday, July 6, three weeks after the general strike began, negotiations between Chamorro's minister of labor, Francisco Rosales, and the negotiators for the striking unions, Lucío Jimenez and Damaso Vargas, broke off. The Chamorro government adamantly refused to make any concessions to the strikers.

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## Leading Nicaragua

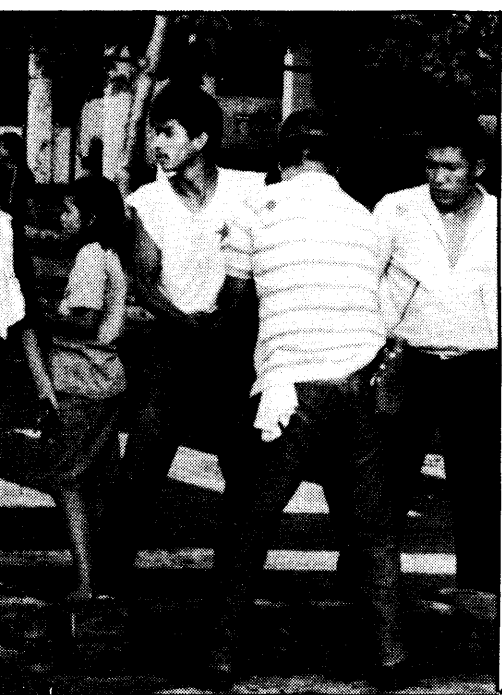
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# Force, reaction, General strike



Enrique Marti/Impact Visuals

cated in the 'development poles' in the department of Chontales."

But an agreement was apparently reached between the FSLN army and police and strikers for the latter to put away their weapons when confronted by the armed forces. Those who didn't, had them taken away. And even earlier the peasantry had been disarmed, as had been many in the cities, by the Sandinista controlled armed forces.

On Monday morning, after the barricades were set up, the regional committee of the FSLN sent out its most authoritative members to try to convince the workers to tear down the barricades. They told the workers that if they didn't do this, the police would have to defy the Chamorro government's order to tear them down—and this could lead Chamorro to take the police out of the hands of the Sandinistas.

According to MUR leader Rodrigo Ibarra, those on the barricades listened patiently to the explanations by the FSLN regional leaders and some were confused. "But the overwhelming majority defied the FSLN representatives and decided to maintain the barricades," Ibarra explained. "They were buoyed in this decision by a public declaration later that day by FNT leader Lucío Jimenez, who called on the workers to resist the government with all means of struggle. This was a clear call to keep the barricades up."

On Monday night, however, Daniel Ortega, in the name of the national leadership of the FSLN, went on nationwide TV to urge the strikers to take down the barricades.

Ortega blamed the Chamorro government for provoking the strike through its austerity policies, but insisted that law and order must be respected. The next morning Lucío Jimenez, who was obviously reined in by Ortega, also appealed to the workers to tear down the barricades.

This same tension between the Sandinista leadership and the union heads had come to the surface in mid-May, when the Rural Workers Association (ATC) threatened to occupy the lands of large private growers if the government went ahead and reprivatized the APPs [the state farms].

The peasants and agricultural workers on 22 private farms, not waiting for an okay from their leaders, moved swiftly to occupy the lands of the private owners. They demanded that they be given the land. They said they were angry at Chamorro for not following through on her election promise to redistribute land to the peasants.

The ATC leadership initially backed the peasants who occupied the land, but when Chamorro and the FSLN insisted that these land occupations were "illegal," the ATC leaders backed down and many of the peasants, shortly afterward, either ended their land takeover or left it to the courts to adjudicate the underlying dispute.

### A settlement is reached

Soon after the barricades were taken down, negotiations were begun to reach a settlement of the strike.

Throughout Tuesday, July 10, rumors circulated throughout Managua that negotiations had been re-established between Chamorro and the union leadership. It was also announced that Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez had offered to mediate a "negotiated solution" between the Sandinistas and the government.

The next day that's what happened; the agreement between the FNT [National Workers Front] and the government was made public. It included an insignificant (given the monthly rate of inflation) 43 percent wage increase for July. This had been the central demand of the strikers. Other "concessions" included an agreement to permit top Sandinista leaders to "have voice" in the government's plan to reprivatize the state farms. Also, there was an agreement to offer three months' compensation to 6000 laid-off state workers, and a "pledge" to take no reprisals against strikers. The subsidies for public transportation, healthcare, and education were also reinstated.

But even these "concessions" can be expected to be taken back when the counterrevolutionary government feels it is opportune.

The strikers, seeing no fighting perspective from the FSLN leadership, decided not to continue the struggle on their own. Moreover, Humberto Ortega, the head of the

army, had warned early Wednesday morning that he would use the armed forces to impose law and order against the "left-wing and right-wing extremists."

This was the second time in the three months since Violeta Chamorro took office that the unions were forced to strike to try to prevent the government from dismantling many of the hard-won gains of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

The earlier nationwide strike of public workers had begun on May 10 and ended six days later. Strikers had demanded a 200 percent increase in wages and the maintenance of the civil service law guaranteeing no firings of Sandinista government workers. This law was enacted by the Ortega government just prior to Chamorro's election.

The strike settlement, then, also included an insignificant 60 percent wage increase for public workers, representing almost nothing when you take into account the skyrocketing inflation rate. And the strikers were forced back to work without any guarantee of job protection—and with little else—leaving many of them demoralized.<sup>1</sup>

### Rearguard actions or new upsurge?

How is the changed relation of class forces expressed in Nicaragua today? How does it effect the fighting mood of the workers and peasants? And what are the prospects for a renewed struggle to regain the offensive and deepen the revolution?

The Sandinista leadership has definitively committed itself to collaboration with the counterrevolutionary Chamorro government and its "Program of Austerity and Revitalization." The Nicaraguan capitalists and their imperialist sponsors welcome this collaboration. They have everything to gain from the assistance they are getting from the Sandinista leaders and the army and police, which are for the moment still under Sandinista control.

The capitalist electoral victory has qualitatively enhanced the capability of imperialism to directly intervene to put down resistance by the Nicaraguan masses to counterrevolution. The election gives imperialism's phony pretense for military intervention, "in defense of democracy," more credibility. Concomitantly, the likelihood of massive resistance by the American people to direct U.S. military intervention, is also considerably reduced.

This major change in the objective situation undoubtedly contributes further to the Sandinista leadership's decision to collaborate with the counterrevolution. There can be no doubt, however, that they are motivated by a concern to gain the best from a very bad situation. But just as their earlier policy of holding back the revolution was wrong—and led to the qualitative shift in favor of counterrevolution—it is just as wrong today to help undermine worker resistance.

Thousands of armed contras are now positioned inside Managua and other major cities. Many have already been incorporated

into the army and police and will polarize the demoralized elements there around themselves. This, in turn, will contribute to the breakdown of the strong bonds of solidarity between Sandinista soldiers and their worker and peasant sisters and brothers.

And within the civilian population, the armed contras now constitute the core around which the shock-troops of the counterrevolutionary forces will be formed.

These big changes in the relation of class forces have shown their effects in the two national strikes just ended. While a militant vanguard of strikers has shown its willingness to take to the barricades to mount a struggle to defend the gains of the revolution, they constituted a relatively small minority of the working class. The hundreds of thousands—and more—who had participated in demonstrations, marches and rallies in previous mobilizations have been reduced to a few thousands, in addition to strikers, in the two recent national strikes.

It is extremely unlikely that more than rearguard actions will be possible in Nicaragua based on the relation of forces inside Nicaragua alone. Only a major class upsurge outside Nicaragua—altering class relationships on an international scale, especially in Latin America—can reasonably be expected to open up the possibility of a renewed revolutionary offensive in Nicaragua.

Proletarian revolutionists in Nicaragua will undoubtedly be on guard against misreading the objective possibilities for a new revolutionary upsurge.

It is absolutely imperative to take whatever actions are necessary to preserve the fighting capabilities of the proletarian vanguard. The nucleus of a new revolutionary proletarian leadership can be built in this most difficult time. But it cannot be done by throwing caution to the winds. *Intelligently* organized resistance to the counterrevolution is absolutely imperative.

The cadre of a future mass revolutionary workers' party in Nicaragua will be alert to provocations that are certain to come when imperialism believes mass resistance has been sufficiently reduced so as to permit a final bloody settling of accounts with the best of the class struggle fighters.

Of course, it's better to go down fighting than not to fight at all, but it is even better to struggle to hold our fighting forces together while avoiding deadly traps set in our path, and be prepared for the next big battles, on more favorable ground, which are certain to come. ■

### Footnotes:

1—For documentation of this process see "Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution," by Alan Benjamin (San Francisco, Walnut Publishing Co., Inc., 1988).

2—See "Why Sandinistas Lost Elections in Nicaragua," by Alan Benjamin, March 1990 *Socialist Action*.

3—See June 1990 issue of *Socialist Action* for analysis of the May public employees' general strike.

## Nicaragua farmworkers leader sends greetings to SA convention

July 5, 1990  
Managua, Nicaragua

To: Socialist Action International  
Convention

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Farmworkers Unions of Nicaragua salute the Socialist Action International Convention. We would have liked to be with you on this occasion, but as you know, your government has denied our visa application.

We continue our struggle. Presently, 15,000 farmworkers are on strike, demanding recognition and respect for their collective-bargaining agreements, as well as protesting the reprivatization of state farms. Four thousand landless campesinos have initiated land takeovers to demand their right to land. More farmworkers and campesinos are joining the struggle everyday.

For taking part in this struggle, I and

other union leaders of the National Workers Front (FNT) were detained yesterday, in an attempt to break our strike. Due to the pressure of workers and students, we were released, and our struggle is stronger than ever. Today, more than 82,000 workers across the country are on strike.

We hope that we will be able to visit you soon, if your government allows us. We look forward to sharing our experiences with you.

For the moment, we appreciate your solidarity with the working people of Nicaragua.

The struggle continues!

Long live the international solidarity of the workers of the world!

Fraternally,  
Edgardo García,  
Secretary General,  
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them out of business and allowing the reconcentration of land in the hands of the largest landlords, many of whom are returning from their exile in Miami.

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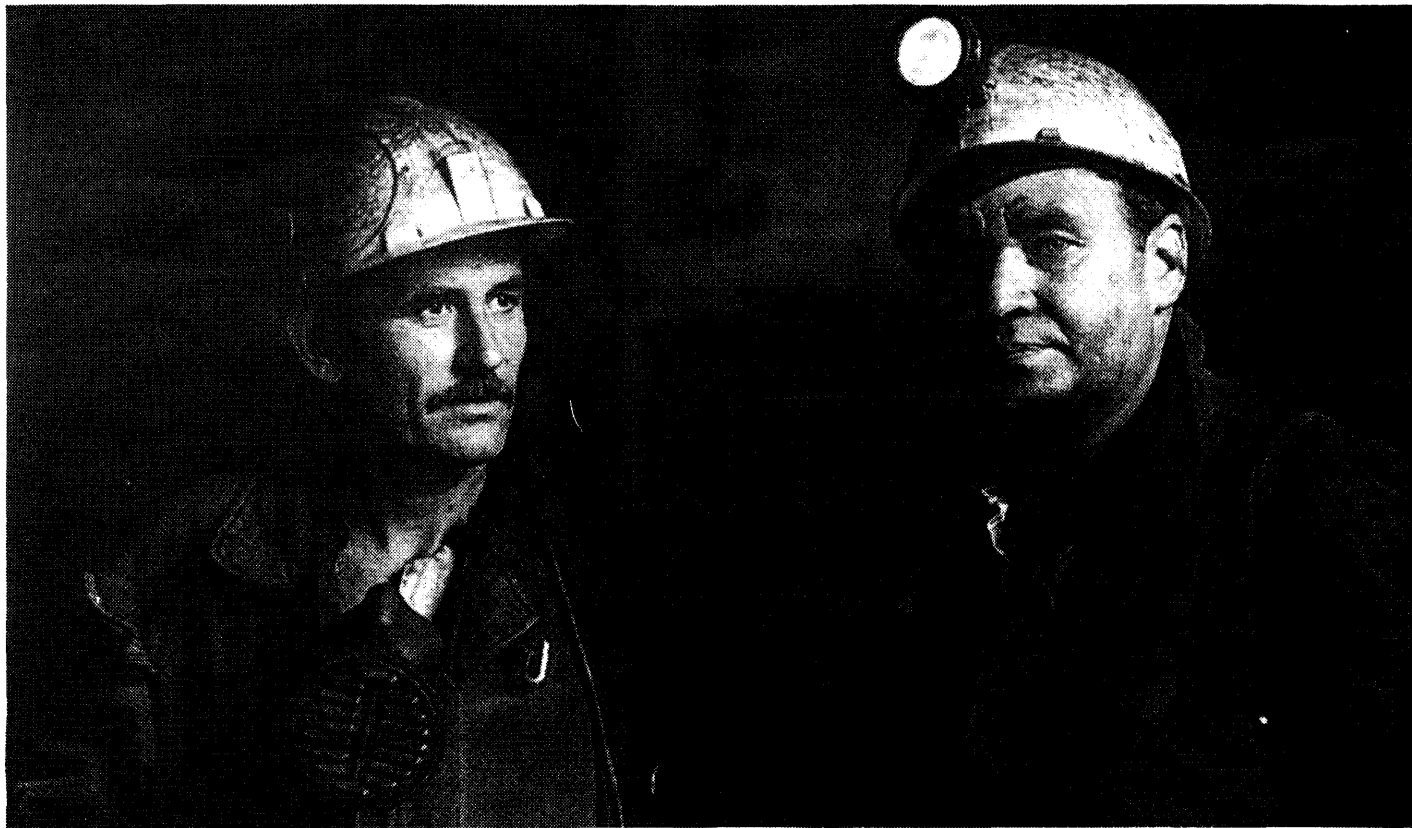
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# Soviet miners walkout spotlights deep roots of workers' discontent



Gerd Ludwig/Woodfin Camp

Soviet coal miners are serving notice to the bureaucracy: "Improve conditions and wages—or else!"

By ALAN BENJAMIN

On July 11, hundreds of thousands of Soviet miners staged a one-day nationwide strike to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov's government. This militant action was reminiscent of the three-week strike that shut down the mines one year ago in protest against living and working conditions.

The decision to hold the July 11 nationwide strike was made at a June 15-16 congress of Soviet miners, which took place in Donetsk. The miners said they felt betrayed for the past year by the government's failure to fulfill promises of increased salaries, food supplies, and other benefits. The miners' congress also voted to discuss forming an independent miners' union at a special congress to be held Aug. 15-16 in Moscow.

The miners' anger was fueled by Prime Minister Ryzhkov's announcement on May 24 of the government's new program for a "gradual transition toward a market economy." The program's first phase called for major price increases as of July 1. The price of bread, for example, would triple. Meat, fish, oil, and milk products would double.

The miners' congress highlighted the widespread economic anxiety throughout the Soviet Union over the perestroika reforms and particularly over Ryzhkov's proposed price increases.

The miners stated in a resolution that was approved by a 308-116 vote that the Communist Party no longer protects or represents the interests of the country's workers. "We do not consider the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) our party," they stated. "Our aspiration for independence dictates our attitude toward the CPSU. Despite the fact that the party is witnessing a deep crisis, it is still seeking to hold onto its monopoly on political power.... We call for a mass exit from the party; we call on workers in other industries to sever their connections to the government."

Responding to this mass discontent, the Supreme Soviet voted June 14 to delay bread price increases till September. It realized that food riots and a generalized working-class upsurge such as the one that gave rise to Polish Solidarnosc in 1980 could have taken place.

V. Yakovlev, a miner from Vorkuta, expressed the depth of the anti-government sentiment when he wrote in *The Messenger*, a miners' bulletin: "I hope the formation of an independent miners' union will be followed soon after by the formation of independent unions of metalworkers, construction workers, and others—culminating in a nationwide congress of independent unions."

Another miner, V. Utkin, wrote in the same bulletin: "How can we become stronger and more united? Only by forming an independent union. But the next step after

this should be the formation of an independent mass workers' party."

### "Shock therapy needed"

To carry through his perestroika reforms, Gorbachev knows he must increase prices and enact mass layoffs and plant closures—that is, he must institute the "shock therapy" implemented by the round-table government in Poland.

U.S. policymakers and investors insist that Gorbachev's "half measures" toward market reforms over the past five years have prevented the Soviet Union from "turning the corner" toward economic prosperity. "You must clear the hurdle toward the genuine introduction of market relations and guarantee our right to make a profit," Western officials are telling Gorbachev.

Up until now, the capitalists have been extremely leery about investing large sums in the Soviet Union. The president of the French Banking Association explained the concerns of the Western bankers in lending money to investors in the Soviet Union: "We don't even know who we are lending money to. The state apparatus is collapsing while no new appropriate structures are emerging capable of managing the risks of credit." (*Libération*, March 3, 1990)

Specifically, Western bankers are calling on Gorbachev to use his newly established presidential powers to (1) abolish all government regulatory agencies, (2) create a stock market that would place most state-owned factories in the hands of stockholders, (3) establish an independent banking system, and (4) make the ruble fully convertible.

### Why Gorbachev pulled back

Soviet economists close to Gorbachev agree with these bankers that a rapid transition to a market economy following the Polish model must be implemented in the Soviet Union if the perestroika reforms are to bear any fruit. Earlier this year, Gorbachev himself argued that drastic measures had to be taken to resolve the deteriorating state of the economy.

But on April 23, a spokesperson of the Soviet government announced that after a meeting of Gorbachev's Council of Ministers, the idea of "employing a shock therapy for the Soviet economy was discarded in favor of a gradual transition to a market-oriented economy." (*Washington Post*, April 24)

What had happened? Gorbachev had simply realized that the austerity measures needed to implement this "shock therapy" would not be tolerated by the Soviet people.

*The New York Times* noted on May 15, for example, that Gorbachev retreated from his goal of revamping the Soviet economy because he recognized that the Soviet people were not prepared to accept unemployment and the increasing inequality of incomes. The *Times* article pointed out that the pro-

posed "shock therapy" would result in 15 million to 20 million unemployed Soviet workers and a sharp increase in the price of basic foodstuffs following an end to government subsidies.

*Newsweek* magazine (April 24) fully captured Gorbachev's dilemma:

"After five years of tinkering with the economy, Gorbachev has fixed too little, too late; but more radical reforms promise inflation and unemployment—and the danger of strikes and food riots. ... Even as he tightens his grip on the government, the government loses control over the country.

"Perestroika (restructuring) hasn't worked despite constant tinkering. Last week the Soviet government unveiled the latest in a series of half-baked economic reform packages. The 'regulated market economy,' as Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov defined it, will triple bread prices and otherwise add to the epic misery of the Soviet consumer, but without applying the free-market 'shock therapy' that many of Gorbachev's own advisers think is necessary....

"Now, on the eve of Gorbachev's second meeting with Bush, many in the West are worried about the Soviet leader's prospects....

"The real threat to him comes from far below, in streets, factories, and mines and on the farms. Nationalist unrest, strikes, or food

riots pose a greater danger to Gorbachev than any political machinations."

### Debate in upper echelons

The entire debate in the upper echelons of the Soviet bureaucracy is over how fast to implement the market reforms. The dominant sectors of the bureaucracy have embarked on a course that points in the direction of the restoration of capitalism. But they fear that if they move too fast they will spark a social explosion that could topple the bureaucracy and lead in the direction of a genuine working-class political revolution.

The imperialists, too, are worried about the obstacles posed by the Soviet workers and the oppressed nationalities. That is why, when Gorbachev's rule was being challenged by the Soviet miners, the Lithuanians, and the other oppressed nationalities, Bush and the U.S. capitalists invited Gorbachev to the United States to show their support for him. (Bush went so far as to urge the new Lithuanian president to withdraw the declaration of independence issued by the Lithuanian national assembly.)

Leaders of the main Western capitalist countries, meeting at a NATO summit in early July, also pledged \$14 billion in aid to the Soviet Union to help Gorbachev implement his reform program.

This Western aid will not significantly help the faltering economy, however. The Soviet economy and regime will continue to collapse. And as this happens, it is not out of the question that Gorbachev may decide to take the plunge and risk a head-on confrontation with the Soviet working class, using his power to institute presidential decrees to ram through the new reforms. His close personal adviser, Nikolai Y. Petrakov, has already publicly urged him to go this route. (*New York Times*, June 10, 1990)

At the recent Soviet party congress, Gorbachev indicated that he may well choose this course when he said:

"The advantages of the market economy have been proven on a world scale and the question now is only whether high social protection—which is characteristic of our socialist system, the system of the working people—can be ensured under market conditions.

"The answer is this: It is not only possible but it is precisely a regulated market economy that will make it possible to augment social wealth and raise the living standards of everyone." (Quote of the Week, *People's Daily World*, July 14)

Gorbachev's proposed "regulated market economy" will mean austerity, unemployment, and increased misery for millions of Soviet workers—not an increase in their living standards, as Gorbachev claims.

As the bureaucracy proceeds to implement these pro-capitalist policies, workers' resistance, as expressed in the July 11 nationwide strike by the Soviet miners, is bound to increase. If the miners follow up with their plan to form an independent union later this summer, this could set a magnificent example for all Soviet workers in the period ahead.

## Gorbachev's USSR: Is Stalinism Dead?



A collection of essays in defense of socialist democracy

Edited by Carl Finamore

Essays by Esteban Volkov, Pierre Broué, Susan Weissman, Nat Weinstein, Paul Siegel, Ralph Schoenman, Zbigniew Kowalewski, Gerry Foley, Hayden Perry, and Carl Finamore

Walnut Publishing's "Gorbachev's USSR: Is Stalinism Dead" (208 pages with photos) analyzes current events in the Soviet Union against the backdrop of the struggle for socialist democracy waged by Leon Trotsky and his supporters against Josef Stalin in the 1920s and '30s.

To order, send \$9.95 (includes \$1 for postage and handling) to Walnut Publishing Co., 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

By ALAN BENJAMIN

On July 2, the State Treaty—which sets the terms of the monetary, economic, and political reunification of the two Germans—was signed by the two German heads of state, Helmut Kohl and Lothar de Maiziere.

The various clauses of the State Treaty represent a declaration of war against the conquests of the East German workers' state. They stipulate the introduction of a capitalist market economy and the suppression of state planning in East Germany. They call for the elimination of guaranteed permanent jobs and of cheap, subsidized housing. (Under the new treaty, rents can go up by 500 percent in the east.)

The Treaty calls for monetary union in which approximately 30 percent of the savings of the East German workers will be lost. West German economists estimate that as many as 4 million workers may be unemployed within two years!

But nowhere in the State Treaty is any reference made to disbanding the remaining Stalinist bureaucratic state apparatus. In fact, current East German Interior Minister Diestel has been openly recruiting ex-STASI agents to his new police force on the grounds they are "well trained, highly disciplined, and skilled in the use of arms" (*Informations Ouvrieres*, May 23-30, 1990).

#### What did they really vote for?

Kohl and De Maiziere claim that the victory of the Christian Democrats in the March 18 East German elections represented a mandate for implementing the provisions stipulated in the State Treaty. This is false.

East German workers voted for the rapid reunification with West Germany proposed by Kohl because of their deep and legitimate aspiration for German unity and because they wanted to quickly attain the standard of living of the West German workers they had seen portrayed over the years on television.

Though many East Germans, who suffered for decades under Stalinist mismanagement and repression, may have indicated their support in the abstract for a "free market economy," they weren't supporting massive joblessness, homelessness, and increased austerity. They will not give up their social gains unless they see concrete evidence of higher living standards in the near future.

Kohl, it must be remembered, totally downplayed any mention of unemployment or increased prices during his election campaign. His advisers told him that this would be too unpopular to mention. Kohl's pledge was simple: Vote for my party and you'll

# Phase one of German reunification: Frontal assault on German workers



Anti-Kohl demonstration in Leipzig. Workers want to defend gains and social programs of previous years.

Yves Morro/Sygma

get rich quick!

#### Explosive situation in the making

With the announcement of the State Treaty, however, things have changed rapidly. An explosive situation is in the making. In fact, even before the new measures were put into effect, the East German workers began to organize and protest.

The railworkers went on strike on May 10 to demand a 300 percent wage increase. Workers in the textile and shoe industries struck for a 100 percent wage increase and a 38-hour week. Farmworkers began to organize against the proposed return of farmlands to the former capitalist owners.

Following the introduction of the State

Treaty on July 1, about 20,000 East German metalworkers held brief work stoppages to press their demands for a two-year job guarantee and wage increases.

Another brief warning strike was reported at the Ludwigsfelde auto parts plant near East Berlin, where workers are demanding a shorter workweek and higher pay. And on July 19, about 2500 East German police demonstrated in front of the parliament building in East Berlin to demand higher wages to cope with rising food costs.

#### Independent unions needed

To accomplish the task of defending and extending their gains, the East German workers are seeking to create new, indepen-

dent unions. The Stalinist-led FDGB federation is not an adequate vehicle to fight against the attempts to restore capitalism.

The recent national convention of the FDGB adopted a resolution that supports the framework of the economic reforms and calls for co-management between the workers and the employers. Such co-management would gut the independence of the union, transforming it into a relay mechanism of the government's austerity measures—as is currently the case with Solidarnosc in Poland.

To fight for their interests, the East German workers will need to have the unrestricted right to strike and to organize against the bosses and bureaucrats.

## View from the East: German currency union goes into effect

By MARC LEVY

In the week before July 1, the date for the introduction of the West German D-Mark as the official currency for East Germany, there was no need to clear the supermarket shelves in preparation for the new shipments of western goods already waiting in the stock rooms for DM-Day. Customers in East Germany (GDR) took care of that themselves.

In preparation for higher prices (up to 400 percent higher for staples like bread), East Germans literally bought everything in sight. Many also found themselves burdened with devalued money since "additional savings" (balances of over 2000 Mark-GDR for minors, 4000 M-GDR for adults, and 6000 M-GDR for pensioners) were slated to lose half their value on July 1.

With traditional German orderliness and efficiency, the armored cars delivered sufficient supplies of the crisp new currency to the banks on time and the show windows were filled with freshly unpacked consumer goods. Monday morning brought a few surprises as the stores opened for business. Most depositors withdrew small sums (200-300 DM) from their bank accounts to meet current expenses and limited themselves to window shopping.

It wasn't until the second week that the spending spree began. TV-sets, microwave ovens, washing machines, and other substantial purchases were on the order of the day. In West Germany the prices on the used car market rose sharply as automobile-hungry East German families bought up everything

they could drive away.

Meanwhile East German goods were either unsalable—no one wanted to pay 12,000 DM for a two-cylinder Trabant (the GDR's woefully inadequate answer to the VW)—or else they were offered at giveaway prices.

Another surprise was the prices. Everyone in East Germany expected "western" prices to go along with western goods, but, in fact, prices were running 20 percent to 30 percent higher than in the Federal Republic. Distributors claimed that "high start-up costs" were responsible for the discrepancies, but the natural monopolies which arose through the takeover of eastern outlets by western firms certainly played a major role.

In Magdeburg, for example, a city of about 300,000, there is only one department store. When it was taken over by the West German Kaufhof chain, comparison shoppers had nowhere to go.

#### Plant closures on horizon

On other fronts, East German Labor Minister Regine Hildebrandt announced two weeks after phase one of the "social, political, and economic union" took effect, that approximately 30 percent of East German enterprises are already unable to meet their financial obligations. In a discussion with construction workers on July 17, she maintained that the demands raised by the unions were "exaggerated and wrong-headed."

The market, she said, would decide the fate of the insolvent concerns, and wage increases and job guarantees were the wrong way of dealing with the problems of unemployment. The way to save jobs was to increase

productivity. The union demands would simply endanger the solvent concerns.

Considering that East German industrial workers earn on the average one-third of what their West German counterparts make and that unemployment is increasing at the rate of 40,000 jobs lost per week (up 60 percent from July 1), the minister's statement is hardly likely to restore confidence.

#### Attacks on many fronts

On the agricultural front things look dismal as well. Massive imports of raw agricultural products into East Germany in recent weeks have driven many of the Agricultural Production Cooperatives (LPGs) to the brink of ruin. Werner Wühst, a leader of the East German Bauernverband (Farmers' Association), announced large-scale protests for the weekend of July 20 if a midweek emergency meeting with GDR Prime Minister Lothar

de Maiziere did not produce results.

Meanwhile the mayors of Leipzig, Dresden, Halle, Magdeburg, Rockstock, and Potsdam met with their East Berlin colleague to consider new ways of raising money to fill the empty coffers of the city administrations. Potsdam's mayor, Dr. Gramlich, pointed out that the deplorable state of affairs in the cities was one of the prime movers in last fall's mobilizations that brought down the government. Dr. Keller, the vice mayor of Dresden, noted that 2 billion Marks would be necessary just to keep the buildings in the cities from falling apart.

There's no doubt about it—an entirely new situation has developed. How the German working class will respond to these escalated attacks is a question that will be posed with increasing urgency in the next months.

### Financial harassment trial held against Mark Curtis

The following is an abridged version of a July 10 newsletter by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. Mark Curtis is a Des Moines, Iowa, member of the Socialist Workers Party and trade union activist who was framed-up on charges of rape and burglary in 1988. He is currently serving a 25-year prison term which is being appealed. The lawsuit went to trial on July 9.

Last December a financial harassment lawsuit against Curtis was filed by Keith and Denise Morris, the parents of the young woman Curtis was charged with attacking. The suit aims to put a massive financial burden on Curtis and his wife—to make them pay for the rest of their lives for a crime he did not commit. Its goal is to break Curtis and his wife, to shut them up.

"Today Mark Curtis and Kate Kaku, his wife and defense committee spokesperson, faced a stacked trial," [defense committee coordinator John] Studer reported. "Because of the way Iowa law is written, there was no question [that] Mark would lose." Judge Arthur Gamble ruled last month [in June] that Curtis' prior conviction barred him from contesting liability for the charges against him. The only issue for trial would be the size of the damages to be assessed against him.

"Even though we did as well as we could [at the July 9 trial] given the circumstances," Curtis defense lawyer William Kutmus explained, "we have to remember that they will get damages against Mark." Judge Gamble ruled that summary arguments would be presented to the court in writing on August 10. At the defense committee meeting that night, John Studer reported, "this trial was the continuation of the cop frame-up against Mark. It's goal is to undermine the success of the international defense campaign. Mark—who remains a political activist in prison—and Kate are winning respect and support all over the world."

# An analysis of two strategies for the trade unions: The SWP's flawed assessment of the Eastern and Pittston strikes

(Third in a Series)

By MALIK MIAH  
and BARRY SHEPPARD

Last month we discussed the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) leadership's view that the labor movement has been at the "center stage" of politics in the U.S. since the 1976 campaign for union democracy in the United Steelworkers and the successful 1977-78 strike of the United Mineworkers. This concept is closely associated with the idea that the working class has begun to politically radicalize.

This article will take up the SWP leadership's view of some of the important labor battles of the last five years, concentrating on the strikes at Eastern Airlines and Pittston Coal.

## Eastern Strike lessons

The current strike at Eastern Airlines is pointed to by the SWP leadership as confirmation of their analysis that the labor movement is at center stage of American politics. To do this, they have exaggerated the importance of this strike compared to others, and have overblown the real correlation of forces in the strike.

The "World Political Resolution" adopted by the SWP at its June 1990 convention claimed that the Eastern strike is "the first sustained nationwide strike in the decade that was not rapidly checked if not defeated by the bosses."

This is an overstatement. Not only Eastern, but the current Greyhound strike is a nationwide strike. The Greyhound strike of 1983 was also national. The strikes by the meatpackers in 1985-86, the paperworkers in 1987-88, the telephone and Boeing workers in 1989 also had national significance. None were "checked rapidly" by the employers, and the telephone and Boeing workers won modest gains.

Reflecting this exaggeration of the Eastern strike's importance over other labor battles was the error made by the SWP when the coal miners first struck the Pittston company in the spring of 1989. They counterposed the Eastern strike to the Pittston strike and claimed the former was more important. This went so far as to lead the editors of *The Militant* to say—one week before the victory of the miners—that the Pittston strikers should learn from the Eastern strikers how to wage a strike.

## Pittston Strikers Show Way

The exact opposite was the case. Through their use of militant tactics in the face of a combined assault by the employers and the government the Pittston strikers refused to be bound by the rules as laid down by their adversary.

They kept up massive picketing by the strikers and their families in the face of court injunctions. They organized "Camp Solidarity" which attracted thousands of union fighters from around the country to participate in the battle, and which mobilized the strikers on a daily basis. They mobilized contingents to go out and support other strike struggles—like going to rallies and other activities for the Eastern workers.

A high point of the strike was the wave of wildcat sympathy walkouts by miners in other companies in the summer of 1989, which the top United Mineworkers officials could not immediately dissipate and which remained a potential threat the employers and the government knew was real.

These and other tactics that transgressed anti-labor "legality" were in sharp contrast to the strait-jacket the top Machinist leaders imposed on the Eastern strikers. At the beginning of the strike the potential existed to spread the strike to workers at the other airlines and the railroads.

Such sympathy strikes are technically legal in the transportation industry as contrasted to other sectors of industry. Such action would no doubt have been countered by injunctions the employers would get from the courts, but the Pittston workers showed that can be defeated, too. The top

leadership of the IAM backed away from that course, however, and the momentum of the strike was progressively dissipated.

The Eastern strikers have shown the labor movement, as have other strikes of the past decade, that it is better to fight against the concessions demanded by the bosses in this period—even if you lose—than to accept such concessions without a fight (and lose anyway). Their example of tenacity in refusing to give in is important.

But in contrast, the Pittston strikers were not only tenacious, they began to go in the direction labor has to go to be successful when the employers utilize the government to mount a combined assault on the workers. The lessons of the Pittston strike are more important because they show that class struggle tactics, even if hampered by the top union officialdom, can lead to victory even in difficult situations.

In their recently adopted "World Political

The SWP's approach to the Eastern strike involves more than overstating the place of the strike in U.S. politics. It also involves adapting to the policies of the union officialdom as well as to the current level of consciousness of the striking workers.

When the strike began, *The Militant*, which reflects the views of the SWP, explained that the strike was against union-busting and for a decent contract. *The Militant* correctly explained that the issue wasn't who owned Eastern, but the need to defend the union and its members.

The IAM, pilots and flight attendants' union leadership had another view. They said the strike was over getting a "good" boss. They had tried to work with Eastern boss Frank Lorenzo but he refused. The issue, they said, was how to "save" Eastern from anti-labor bosses like Lorenzo.

When Lorenzo failed to get the pilots and flight attendants to cross the IAM picketline,

Resolution. "'Stop Lorenzo' was not a slogan that could or should be bypassed. Only through 'Stop Lorenzo' could the ranks wage the fight against Lorenzoism."

Later the resolution states, "By pressing along this course in a determined way—by doing more of the same—it would be possible to strengthen the rank and file fighters of the IAM, continue using union power to nail Lorenzoism, and, as has now happened, bring the fight to a new, as yet unresolved, level. It would be possible to face-off Lorenzoism with its slave-labor contracts and scab havens, in order to prepare for the most difficult battle—to maintain the union and the spirit of its fighting cadres, not Eastern Airlines with or without Lorenzo."

But this misses the main point. The fight at Eastern has always been to defend the union and win a decent contract. Identifying with the rank and file strikers' hatred of Lorenzo does not mean going along with how the IAM tops misused that sentiment to turn the workers towards the courts and finding a "better boss."

When the bankruptcy court removed Lorenzo it was not to reject his union-busting, but because Eastern's creditors were concerned that he could no longer protect their assets. The new trustee continues to press the same course as Lorenzo did. He has no intention of firing the scabs and replacing them with strikers. That can only happen by winning the strike.



Eastern strike supporters rally in Boston shortly after walkout began nearly 18 months ago.

Resolution," the SWP has made a partial correction. They now say it was an error on their part to counterpose the Eastern strike to the Pittston strike. But they still exaggerate the importance of the Eastern strike compared to the Pittston battle.

## Eastern Strike "Stronger Than Ever"?

The SWP leadership's exaggeration of the importance of the 18-month-long Eastern strike in comparison with others is reflected in its wrong assessment of the relationship of forces as the strike has progressed.

The high point of the battle was at the beginning when the machinists had the support of the pilots and flight attendants, who refused to cross the picketline. Eastern was grounded.

The potential existed to extend the strike to other airlines and branches of transportation. When that road was rejected, the effectiveness of the strike was slowly eroded. Scabs were gradually hired.

A turning point for the worse came when the pilots and flight attendants called off their supporting strikes in November of last year. It was to the credit of the striking machinists that they continued their battle, but the real relationship of forces had become much worse for the workers.

The SWP, however, took this occasion to claim the strike was stronger than ever! And to this day, they maintain this grossly unrealistic assessment.

he went on the offensive, declared bankruptcy, sought to use the courts to trim down Eastern, get rid of unprofitable routes, and reopen it on a non-union basis.

The IAM officials rejected the course of extending the strike. Instead of deepening the mobilization of the workers, they turned towards the bankruptcy court to help find a "friendly" boss to replace Lorenzo. They said that if such a "nice" boss could be found, they would be ready to accept deep concessions.

In late spring of 1989, they were almost successful in this, but the deal fell through. With the workers hobbled by this strategy, Lorenzo was able to begin rebuilding the airline and hire scabs. After the pilots and flight attendants decided the strike was lost and crossed the picketline in November of last year, the focus of the struggle became more and more a boycott of the airline, as opposed to a strike to shut down the carrier.

Consumer boycotts can be an effective adjunct to a strike, but are generally a weak substitute for shutting down the operation.

## SWP Adapts to a Wrong Policy

The SWP shifted its stance by the summer of 1989. Contrary to its initial position, it accepted the IAM leaders' view that the main issue was Lorenzo. "Stop Lorenzo" became the slogan for the SWP, not winning a decent contract.

"It was necessary to keep the fire focused on Lorenzo as chief executive officer of Eastern," says the SWP World Political

The role of class conscious workers in strikes like the one at Eastern is not only to be on the picket line and in rallies in support of the strike. That's important. But we must also explain the broader issues in the fight, and explain why class struggle methods are the best ones to maximize the possibility of winning.

We do not start out as opponents of the trade union bureaucracy. We start out as opponents of the bosses's attacks on workers. But when we raise the need for class struggle methods we are bound to come into conflict with the bureaucracy's class collaborationism. We should not shrink back from a class struggle perspective on that account.

If we do, we help depoliticize and miseducate those involved in fights. In articles in *The Militant*, SWP leaders have placed more criticism on the pilots, and misguided mechanics who have signed up for craft unionism because of dissatisfaction with the IAM, than countering the false policy of the union officialdom.

The IAM officials at Eastern, for example, advocate employee buyouts as the answer to future Lorenzos. At United Airlines, where one of the authors of this article is employed, the IAM put together an employee buyout plan. Many Eastern strikers now employed at United are some of the strongest advocates of such plans. The main lesson they draw from their Eastern experience is,

(continued on next page)

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"we need to own our own company!"

Currently *the Militant* says the fight must focus on "no contract, no peace." That's an advance. But there is no criticism of the old policy. There is no presentation of broader questions for strikers and other thinking workers: why the officials' policy on employee buyouts is wrong; why the "good" boss vs "bad" boss approach is wrong; and why the labor movement needs to draw lessons on the role of the capitalist government and courts.

The SWP got into the position of tailing the IAM bureaucracy not by seeking to become part of this privileged layer that sits on top of the unions, but through adaptation to the rank and file militants who came forward to help lead the struggle, who themselves were confused by the IAM tops.

#### A "Minimum-Maximum" approach

In their new "World Political Resolution," the SWP leadership has codified its trade union strategy. In it they state that revolutionists in the unions have two tasks. One of these is to join in labor battles as they emerge, working with the rank and filers who come forward. The other main focus of our work should be to distribute socialist propaganda and "talk socialism."

We should, of course, seek to work with the rank and file fighters who come forward in such battles. And, of course, we shouldn't come in as "tactical" experts telling the workers just how to wage their fight. We should seek to reach them at their level of understanding and consciousness.

But we don't have to adapt to their wrong views, and we should explain why the road forward is through class struggle methods, and not class collaborationism; that is, that there is no commonality of interest between the bosses and workers.

We should not, as the SWP did in the Eastern strike, go along with whatever the fighters think, on the one hand, and raise our maximum program, on the other. We have many important things to say about everything in-between. Our objective has to be to link up with workers in struggle at *their* level, but also to seek transitional steps that help bring them along the class struggle road that leads to socialism. If not, we become adaptationist on the one hand, and ultra-left socialist proselytizers on the other.

#### Hormel and Paperworkers strikes

The 1985-86 strike by Local P-9 of the meatpackers at the Hormel plant in Austin, Minn. demonstrated how powerful the workers can be when the rank and file is mobilized. Preceding the strike, the workers at this plant threw out the entrenched leadership that had helped the bosses force concessions down the workers' throats in the past. The workers took over their own local. They sought help in their battle from the Corporate Campaign of Ray Rogers.

Rogers helped the local to see the importance of mobilizing the families of the strikers and the rest of the community. They organized daily rank and file meetings, set up a kitchen and other strike support activities and reached out to union militants and other fighters across the country. Thousands were inspired to come to Austin, as later thousands were inspired to join the Pittston miners' Camp Solidarity.

When P-9 members and supporters challenged scabs entering the Austin plant in January 1986, Minnesota governor Perpich, a liberal democrat, called in the National Guard to herd the strikebreakers through the picketline. This was a mortal blow to the strike because the P-9 leadership was not prepared to wage a struggle against the National Guard, Minnesota state troopers, Hormel management, and the UFCW bureaucracy—all at the same time.

In the face of the use of the Guard, Ray Rogers' Corporate Campaign strategy counseled pacifism, and the scab herding was left unchallenged. The axis of the fight shifted from mass picketlines to shut down production, to "embarrassment" campaigns against Hormel and its anti-labor policies combined with an attempt to organize a consumer boycott of Hormel products. Thus the strike just withered away.

In addition, the P-9 leaders, faced with the treachery of their own international union leadership, abstained from supporting a wave of meatpacker strikes that swept many areas in the summer and fall of 1986, on the false grounds that since these strikes were supported by the UFCW international bureaucracy, they were somehow phony. This left



Striking Pittston coal miners at UMWA-organized "Camp Solidarity."

Donna Binder/Impact Visuals

P-9 further isolated.

The SWP remained silent on these developments for months, and never took up the negative aspects of the role of the Corporate Campaign, which, in the last analysis, misdirected the striking P-9 workers.

In the paperworkers' strike of 1987, the International officials themselves employed the Corporate Campaign. The workers put up a big fight against the union busting of International Paper, but once again, the use of police power broke the workers' picketlines; the plants were reopened with scab labor and the strikers lost their jobs.

#### Leadership Default

The SWP refused to recognize this defeat, claiming that the strike continued because some of the militant fighters—to their credit—wanted to continue the battle, and continue to reach out for solidarity. But by following the strategy of the Corporate Campaign of seeking to embarrass members of the boards of directors of other companies, they paved the road for the strikers' demoralization and ultimate defeat. And

that's exactly what happened.

Once again, the SWP said nothing about the wrong strategy of the Corporate Campaign, recognizing the defeat of the strike months and months later when the top paperworker officials formally acknowledged the defeat.

The question of what to do when the employers use the courts, police, national guard and other instruments of the state to break strikes and break unions is one that more and more workers have to face in the present period of employer-organized offensives against working people.

Revolutionists should be helping emerging fighters figure out how to counter such attacks through political mobilizations, the use of mass picketing, sit-down strikes and other tactics that workers developed in the past when confronted with such tactics by the employers.

This doesn't mean prescribing tactics to the workers in any particular battle, but explaining the lessons of past struggles of the workers and the need for class struggle methods to defeat such employer

strikebreaking.

This default by the SWP to educate rank and file leaders who are stepping forward in the Eastern and other strikes is a retreat from its traditional policy in the unions. That policy centered on presenting a class struggle program and seeking to win the most conscious workers to a revolutionary policy.

Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution and a mentor of the SWP, explained the Marxist approach to work in the unions this way:

"We know that the mentality of every class of society is determined by the objective conditions, by the productive forces, by the economic state of the country, but this determination is not immediately reflected. The mentality is in general backward, delayed, in relation to the economic development. This delay can be short or long...."

"The program must express the objective tasks of the working class rather than the backwardness of the workers." It must reflect society as it is, and not the backwardness of the working class. It is an instrument to overcome and vanquish the backwardness. That is why we must express in our program the whole acuteness of the social crisis of the capitalist society.

"We cannot postpone or modify objective conditions which don't depend on us. We cannot guarantee that the masses will solve the crisis; but we must express the situation as it is, and that is the task of the program." (*The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, Pathfinder Press, pages 233-4)

In other words, socialists have to tell the truth. We do so in a manner that makes our ideas most understandable to the workers we are seeking to reach. We do so pedagogically. And we do it not only in times of "labor peace" but especially when workers are in fights. That's the policy the SWP followed for 50 years and in other social protest movements such as the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements in the 1960s.

To sell *the Militant*, disseminate pamphlets, and talk about the gains of the Cuban revolution while adapting to the present views of the workers seeking answers to what way forward in their battles, is not sufficient to win unionists to a revolutionary policy in the labor movement. It can, in fact, become a left cover for an opportunist course. ■

## Socialist Action political committee statement

On Aug. 20, 1940, Leon Trotsky was killed in Coyoacán, Mexico, by an assassin sent by Joseph Stalin. Fifty years later, almost to the month, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP)—which Leon Trotsky thought of as his own—has broken from political solidarity with the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded by him in 1938.

Trotsky, along with V.I. Lenin, was a central leader of the Bolshevik-led revolution that established the first workers' state and opened up an era of struggle for a world socialist society of fraternity and cooperation.

Trotsky was the organizer and commander of the Red Army which successfully defended the infant workers' republic from internal and external counterrevolutionary assault. This was the first time in history since the Paris Commune of 1871 that the armed forces of the state were democratically organized and controlled by the ranks.

Along with Lenin, Trotsky led the fight against the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union. After Lenin died, Trotsky, almost alone at first, continued the struggle to defend the system of soviet democracy established by the October 1917 Revolution.

Soon after Lenin's death it became clear that Stalin's "theory" of "Socialism in One Country" really meant the rejection of

the Bolshevik perspective, which viewed the first workers' republic as the "advanced outpost of the world revolution." Trotsky became Stalin's most intransigent opponent and he devoted his life to defending and explaining the organic connection between workers' democracy and the goal of a world socialist society.

The Socialist Workers Party, in withdrawing from solidarity with the Fourth International, has made clear this also constitutes a break from the "Trotskyist movement." The SWP includes in this category all those who are defenders of revolutionary Marxism—i.e., Trotskyism—as well as some who have revised our historic program.

Socialist Action, however, is determined to carry on the struggle begun by the Bolsheviks when, under Lenin and Trotsky's leadership, they founded the Third International and which Trotsky continued under the banner of the Fourth International. We intend, moreover, to maintain the best traditions of the Socialist Workers Party before its break from Trotskyism.

And even though the SWP is now outside our world movement, we intend to carry on the struggle to win the party founded by Trotsky back to its proud theoretical and programmatic heritage—a heritage based on political positions which have stood up splendidly to the test of events. ■

## Correction

Our July issue failed to state that Mike Alewitz's speech dedicating a mural in Los Angeles to undocumented workers (page 15) was abridged for reasons of space.

The article on the same page by artist Samia Halaby ("An artist reports on 3rd Havana Biennial") was also highly abridged. Copies of the original version, which includes a poignant critique of the recent art biennial in Venice, Italy, can be obtained from *Socialist Action*.—The editors

# ... Apartheid regime pressing for concessions

(continued from page 1)

strikes (especially the 1973 Durban strikes) and the 1976 Soweto uprising—allowed unions to be officially established among Blacks.

Unionized Black labor forced major concessions from the employers. The result has been a closing of the wage gap between unionized Black and white workers.

According to the British publication, *The Economist*, "Between 1976 and 1985, pay inequality between [unionized] Blacks and whites was reduced by roughly half; and by 1989 the gap had shrunk to the point that Blacks got 15 percent less than whites for doing the same job."

At the same time, most Black workers' families live in the countryside and in poverty. Relatively few urban workers are allowed to live there permanently. Many are living in squatter communities, which continue to be bulldozed by the government—even since de Klerk's reforms.

Black workers have tasted what their economic power can bring. And they demand the full political rights now denied them.

The economic sanctions imposed on South Africa by imperialist governments, under pressure by the international anti-apartheid movement, are also having an impact. The foreign trade barriers, combined with the unabated internal resistance of the Black masses, caused the white business community to urge the government to "reform" apartheid several years ago.

As Mandela noted during his recent tour, "The willingness of Mr. de Klerk and his government to talk, which is what we demanded before we went to jail 27 years ago, has come about because of pressure from the youth, workers, and the religious, peasant, and professional communities—supported by the international community."

## Compromises in negotiations?

Mandela's European, North American, and African tour in June and July was a big boon for the fight against the apartheid regime. Mandela demanded stronger sanctions until apartheid is completely eliminated and a transition to a new South Africa is underway.

Speaking at a July 25 news conference in Johannesburg, Mandela suggested that the African National Congress would consider compromises in negotiations with the South African government. But one issue he would refuse to give in on, he insisted, is "one person, one vote."

"That is a demand," Mandela has repeated in his speeches, "for which people have paid with their own lives. And it is a demand over which there can be no compromise."

Unfortunately, he indicated that the ANC could be "flexible" in regard to the timetable by which Black majority rule takes effect.

In meetings with Bush and white South African capitalists, Mandela has also made it clear that the ANC is willing to discuss the demand in its "Freedom Charter" program for the nationalization of the basic wealth of the country.

"The view that the only words in the economic vocabulary that the ANC knows are nationalization and redistribution is mistaken," Mandela told the business meeting in Johannesburg. He likewise assured the U.S. Congress, "we take it as a given that the private sector is an engine of the growth and development which is critical to the success of the mixed economy which we hope to see in the future South Africa."

## Polarization among whites

Meanwhile, the situation continues to sharpen inside South Africa. On the one side, there is a polarization among whites. The ruling National Party continues to lose support among a layer of whites who oppose any moves away from legal apartheid. They argue that whites should protect their privileges by any means necessary.

Support is growing for the official white opposition Conservative Party as well as the extreme right-wing Afrikaner Resistance Movement (ARM), which advocates armed actions against the Black majority.

On June 22, the South African police arrested and later released 11 whites who reportedly planned to kill Nelson Mandela upon his return to South Africa July 18. A news report said the terrorists also planned to assassinate Joe Slovo, head of the South African Communist Party and a leader of the

ANC, as well as prominent government figures.

Furthermore, more South African whites are joining the fight against apartheid, being visible at Mandela rallies and involved in other protests against apartheid.

## Freedom groups discuss strategy

Discussions over future strategy are also intensifying among the Black majority. The ANC is the dominant group but not the only player on the scene.

On the right, the main political force is Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha movement, which is based among the Zulu-speaking Blacks. Inkatha has been indirectly backed by the government and police against the ANC, AZAPO, and other more radical formations in the Black population.

Since 1987, more than 3000 Blacks have

working class and the fact that the unions are defensive organizations of all workers whatever their views, puts them in a strong position to help determine South Africa's future.

Unions such as the mineworkers and the railway workers have already played a big role in forcing the government to grant political as well as economic concessions.

## A combined struggle

The position of working people toward the impending South African revolution is simple: We must accept without reservations the complete and unconditional right of the Black majority to self-determination. This stance is independent of the leadership of the national-liberation fight or the debates taking place within that movement over strategy and perspectives.

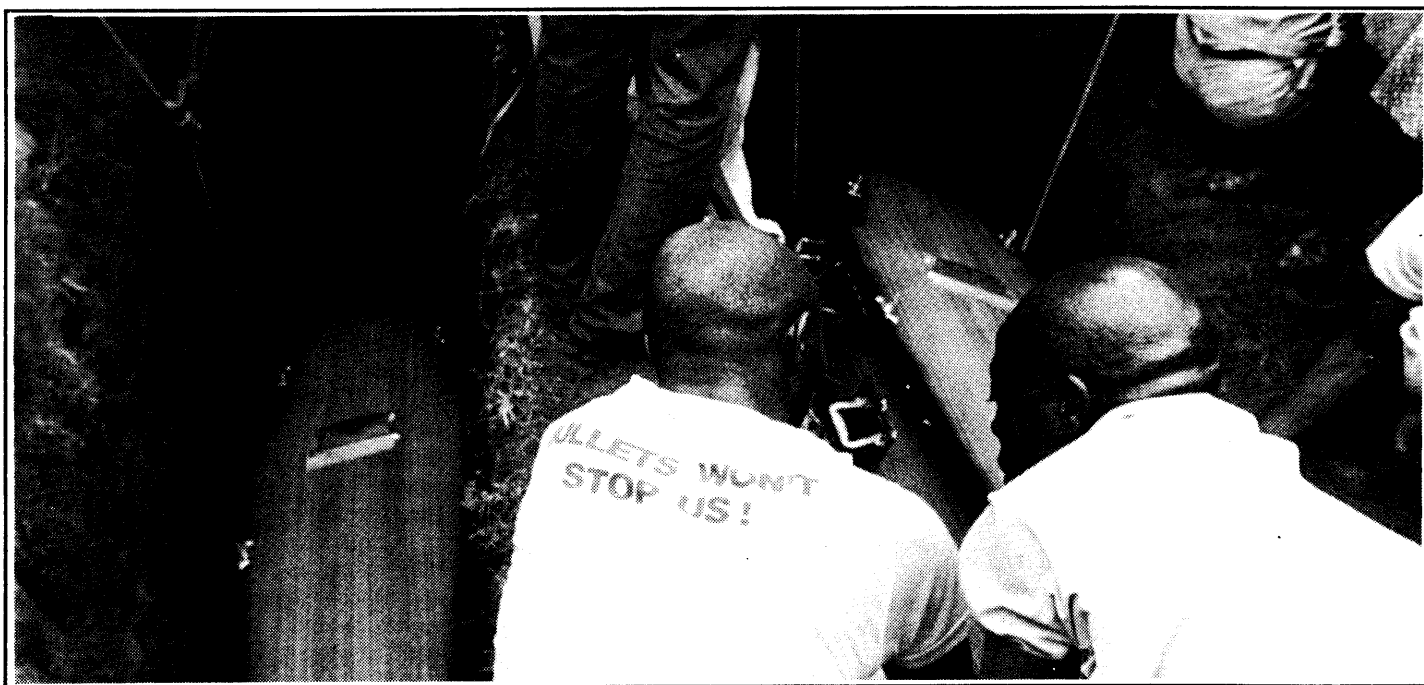
A democratic South Africa will be based

South Africa is possible by carrying out a radical national, democratic revolution. But such a revolution in the imperialist epoch is not possible unless it is carried out by the working class with the support of other toilers, particularly the poorest peasants.

The revolution in South Africa must be a combined struggle—against apartheid and against capitalism—for it to eradicate apartheid root and stem and for the oppressed Black majority to begin to transform society in its interests.

The fight against apartheid is not merely over laws but over who controls the wealth of South Africa. This means a head-on clash with the capitalist rulers. The democratic and anticapitalist struggles are thus interwoven.

What is needed in South Africa today is a genuine Marxist working-class party, a Bolshevik party. Such a party must be built now. It will be a key player in the democratic movement, particularly as the struggle sharpens and the pro-capitalist forces seek to "contain" the struggle within a "mixed-econ-



Gideon Mendel

Black majority is still faced with murderous legal and extra-legal repression from apartheid regime.

died in Natal province, where Inkatha goons have carried out violent attacks on supporters of the United Democratic Front. The ANC and its supporters recently organized a one-day strike demanding the government intervene against Inkatha to stop the fighting.

As the genuine anti-apartheid groups grow, Buthelezi is seeking to broaden his base. Inkatha recently decided to open its membership to whites. De Klerk has also made it clear to the ANC that negotiations must eventually include all political formations in South Africa.

Supporters of the ANC include the South African Communist Party, the United Democratic Front (UDF), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). They stand on the Freedom Charter and its call for a nonracial democratic South African republic.

The ANC and SACP say that the role of different classes in the new South Africa will be decided after the overthrow of apartheid. The Communist Party's strategy is one of two-stages: democratic revolution first; socialist revolution later after the end of apartheid.

The main contender to the ANC on the left is the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and its supporters in the National Forum and the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU). AZAPO leaders originated out of the Black Consciousness Movement that developed in the mid-1970s, particularly after the 1976 uprising.

AZAPO, like the ANC, is for the total dismantling of apartheid but emphasizes that the new South Africa must be led by Blacks and that it must have a pro-socialist orientation. In addition, AZAPO rejects subordinating the struggle of the Black working-class majority to alliances with the white liberal bourgeoisie.

Other formations are smaller. They include the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), formed in 1959. Like other formations in South Africa, the PAC has been growing since it was unbanned and its leaders released. It advocates a Blacks-only republic and currently rejects any leadership role by whites under a new government.

The most important force in the present situation is the trade-union movement. While many unions are affiliated with one or another political tendency in the anti-apartheid movement, the size of the Black

on full equality for all citizens—Black and white. The Black majority, however, liberated from the terror of apartheid, will put its decisive imprint on the new state. The mostly working-class and landless Blacks will demand affirmative action to get their rightful share of the wealth now controlled by whites. This means land to those who want it and a social policy that defends the interests of the working class.

Imperialism and the white rulers seek a "Black-led" South Africa where their privileges are not harmed. They seek a Zimbabwe solution where the former white rulers still dominate the country's economy even with former "revolutionaries" now at the head of the government.

If that comes to pass in South Africa, the enormous victory of overthrowing apartheid will not be consolidated. The Black majority will face the same struggle as their brothers and sisters on the continent: the fight for a workers' and peasants' government and for socialism.

The "two-stage" process advocated by the South African Communist Party (a Stalinist party) and others is not inevitable, however. Full equality for the oppressed Blacks of

omy" capitalist framework.

Without such a party, the Black working-class majority will be in a weaker position to put its imprint on the new South Africa.

## Intensify anti-apartheid struggle!

The people of South Africa will hammer out their future. What opponents of apartheid in the United States, and other countries, must do is to intensify our pressure on the U.S. employers and government to break all ties with South Africa. Working people must intensify our efforts to help abolish apartheid.

In particular, we must urge the trade unions to take the lead in demanding total sanctions until apartheid is eliminated. Mandela gave special praise to the long-shoremen's union in San Francisco for its refusal to unload ships carrying goods to and from South Africa. That example should be emulated.

Intensified international solidarity for the freedom struggle in South Africa is the order of the day. The downfall of apartheid and the creation of a truly free South Africa will be a victory for all of us. Turn up the heat. ■

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# What's behind sham debate over new Civil Rights Bill

By MALIK MIAH

In 1989, the U.S. Supreme Court issued six major rulings that weaken the country's civil rights legislation. These decisions codify steps taken by the government and employers to push back affirmative action gains won over the last 25 years by Blacks and women in particular.

In response to these setbacks, liberals in Congress led by the Congressional Black Caucus and Senator Edward Kennedy drafted a major civil rights bill that would overturn the negative Supreme Court rulings. The bill is backed by the major civil rights and women's rights groups, as well as the AFL-CIO.

On July 19, the Senate adopted such a bill. The House will do the same. And President Bush says he's for it if it is amended to leave out any implication of forcing employers to use quotas to remedy discrimination.

Whatever the outcome, the real issue in dispute has important implications for working people—especially those of us who are Black or women. The means by which we end discrimination in government offices, factories, and educational institutions is extremely serious.

## A false debate

The debate in Congress, however, is a sham. Both liberals and conservatives, including the Bush administration, agree that quotas are bad. They reject any firm proposals to force employers and government to remedy discrimination through use of affirmative action programs with teeth—those with specific number goals to reach in a set time period (that is, quotas).

Under the Senate bill, for exam-

ple, companies could defend themselves against charges of discrimination by showing their practices were necessary to do business. Thus Blacks, other minorities, and women would have to prove conscious intent by the employers to win a discrimination suit. This is exactly the point that Bush agrees with.

What the Senate bill adds is a higher standard of proof than is currently allowed by the Supreme Court for the employer to justify their discriminatory actions.

But "intent" is very hard to prove. All employers allege they don't discriminate on the basis of race or sex. They simply hire "the best person to fit their needs." The "higher standard of proof" line of argument is simply another version of acceptable discrimination. Most employers can get around it. Their opposition to the Senate bill is based on not granting any more concessions to the rights of the most exploited sections of the population.

The employers, at the same time, have no intention of returning to all-white environments. It is not cost-effective. What they want is total control of how they integrate their offices and factories, how they promote, etc.

## The liberals retreat

The fact that liberals in Congress accept the argument that some discrimination is allowable shows the retreat on civil rights. When Congress adopted Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1966, the principal modern federal law against job discrimination, Congress did not spell out what difference, if any, it saw between purposeful and unintentional discrimination.

The result was continuing pres-

## Which Side Are You On?

By  
Malik Miah



sure on the government and employer to disprove real discrimination—not the victim documenting intentional discrimination. This gave Blacks and women a powerful weapon to push for real equality. It was not given to Blacks but taken as a result of the destruction of the Jim Crow segregation system by the massive civil rights movement. It was that historic victory that forever changed race relations in a fundamental way.

All major civil rights legislation of the 1960s and since was a by-product of these victories won on the streets. They codified what was already won. The Supreme Court or Congress were not being more liberal. They simply had to adjust their decisions to that reality.

Their decisions on civil rights, including not challenging affirmative-action programs with goals to begin to remedy past and current discrimination, reflected the gains won by the movement. While few actual quotas were ever established, the concept was not rejected as unrealizable by civil rights groups. Without clearly defined number goals or quotas, real affirmative action over a longterm basis cannot

be achieved.

## Shift in relation of forces

The narrowing of the debate over affirmative action today reflects the setbacks working people have suffered the last 15 years in civil rights and other issues. The shift to the right in capitalist politics and the lack of mobilization by Blacks or the labor movement has led to the retreat on affirmative action.

The 1989 Supreme Court rulings simply codified the shift in relationship of forces. The court registered what has already been pushed back.

The new Supreme Court justice that Bush appoints will not alter these facts. What the court decides can never be too far out of touch from the real situation in the class struggle itself. How much further working people are forced back will be decided by the fightback.

The Black and labor movements today must focus on pressing the government and employers to live up to existing civil rights legislation by demanding full equality, including pushing for affirmative action clauses in union contracts. It means pushing for quotas where the fact of discrimination is obvious.

For example, a smaller percentage of Blacks working at a factory or in better paying jobs than their numbers in the community requires affirmative action. Intent of discrimination is obvious by the numbers. "No higher standard of proof" is needed.

It is by pressing for full equality now—which means using quotas to effectively and rapidly end discrimination—that new and stronger laws will be adopted. It is the most effective way to pressure Congress to shift the debate from how much discrimination is "permissible," to one where the government is forced to move against the most racist employers.

Without mass public pressure this cannot take place.

Moreover, the lesson more and more working people will draw about civil rights and equality under the system of capitalism is that they are incompatible. Race and sex discrimination are cornerstones of a society based on profits first, human needs last. A fight against the system as a whole—that is, for socialism—is also required to protect gains won by the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

## Reba Hansen, 60-year veteran socialist fighter

Reba Hansen, a 60-year veteran of revolutionary struggle, died in Salt Lake City on July 3. She was 80 years old.

In 1931, she and her husband, Joseph Hansen, joined the Communist League of America (later to become the Socialist Workers Party) in Salt Lake City. They moved to San Francisco in 1934 and plunged into the great labor struggles of that period.

Broad experience in the revolu-

tionary movement followed. They joined Leon Trotsky's household in Mexico, where they helped organize the defense of Trotsky against Stalin's assassins. In 1939, Reba moved to New York. She became business manager for *The Militant* newspaper, managed Pioneer publishers, and served as secretary in the SWP national office—which included working closely with National Secretary James P. Cannon.

In 1963, she and Joe were living in Paris, where they put out a new international labor bulletin, *World Outlook* (later renamed *Intercontinental Press*). In 1965, the Hansens returned to New York, and *World Outlook* was published in their apartment.

Even in her seventies, Reba was still active. She organized the library in the new headquarters of the SWP in New York. Her passing diminishes the ranks of that generation of dedicated revolutionists produced by the Great Depression.

—HAYDEN PERRY

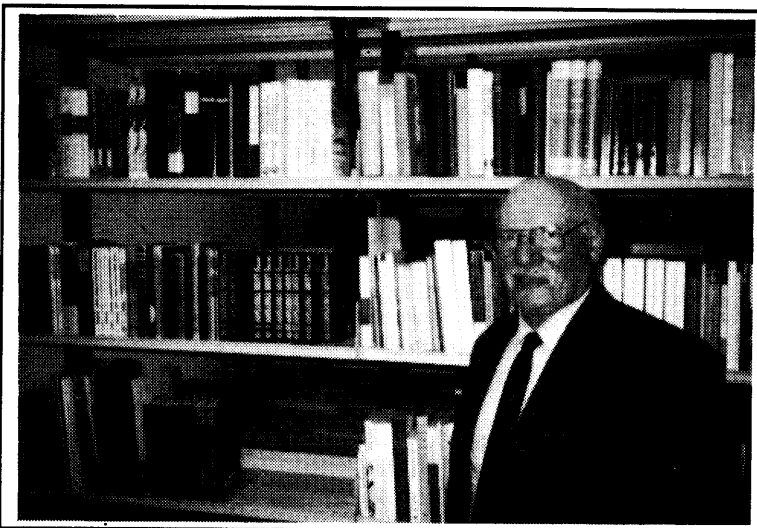
## Louis Sinclair 1909-1990

### Accumulated unrivaled collection of Trotsky's books and writings

The death of Louis Sinclair after a serious illness, on July 7, 1990, has removed from the ranks of the Fourth International one of its outstanding intellects.

Louis entered the Trotskyist movement in 1937 when he joined the Glasgow, Scotland, branch of the Revolutionary Socialist League, an affiliate of the international Left Opposition. For a short time after its founding in 1945, he was a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, then the British Section of the Fourth International.

For the rest of his long life, he was not formally a member of any organization but remained a loyal supporter of the Fourth International, both politically and materially. The greater part of the next 40 years he spent on compiling his massive Trotsky Bibliography.



Sinclair was proud of his extensive Trotsky archives.

In the pursuit of this project, he accumulated an unrivaled collection of Trotsky's writings and books and articles on Trotsky and Trotskyism. This collection is now in the library of Glasgow University and should surely be named "The Louis Sinclair Collection."

This was no easy task. He must have visited every major library in Europe and America in his search for material, ransacking the archives of any Trotskyist or ex-Trotskyist he could get hold of. There can hardly be a second-hand bookshop which he did not enter or write to.

It was quite a revelation, when accompanying him on some of these excursions to see how readily he was recognized by the shopkeeper. As soon as he entered the premises he was recognized and the bookseller would say: "Mr. Sinclair, I have the book you have been looking for," and produce it from under the counter.

He corresponded with people in all parts of the world and nearly every post would bring him something. I remember with what pride

he showed me a copy of Trotsky's "Germany: What Next?" in some obscure Indonesian dialect.

Louis rarely spoke from a public platform. He was most at home speaking to small groups and especially enjoyed talking to young comrades, probing their brains and helping them with their problems. He was always being consulted by students writing theses on Trotskyism and related subjects and by would-be authors, and he was always more than ready with his help and advice.

He took a great interest in recent events in the Soviet Union, always on the alert for new material on Trotsky and the Left Opposition emerging from the archives.

He also compiled an index of pre-war internal bulletins of the Fourth International, which should be a valuable source for research for historians and students of the period.

He will be sorely missed as friend and teacher by all who knew him and learned from him.  
CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN

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# Lessons of protracted battles at Eastern & Greyhound: Union-busting won't be defeated with labor leaders' no-win strategy

By MALIK MIAH

"Employers! We want fair contracts." This is a central demand raised by workers at solidarity rallies and picketlines across the country.

The bosses today are not only seeking to impose concessionary contracts, but also when possible, to destroy the unions. As working people realize the high stakes involved in labor conflicts (whether they are directly affected or not), union-to-union and worker-to-worker solidarity becomes more common.

A typical example of the type of solidarity developing among working people occurred in San Francisco July 19. A spirited picket of several hundred marched in front of the Greyhound Terminal, where members of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) have been on a national strike since March 2, 1990.

Workers from more than a dozen unions joined the picketline. They included department store workers organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union, janitors organized by the Service Employees International Union, longshoremen, Teamsters, typographical workers, teachers, electrical workers, ironworkers, and machinists.

Marching from Greyhound to the *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper building and then to the Emporium and Macy's department stores, demonstrators showed solidarity for workers facing union-weakening contract proposals by their managements.

While the participants were clearly determined to stand up to union-busting, many also realized that the labor battles of today are very tough. Workers at Eastern Airlines, for example, have been on strike 17 months. Those at Greyhound, for five months. In both cases scabs have been brought in to replace strikers, and thus a loud chant began outside Greyhound: "Scabs Got To Go!"

At both Eastern and Greyhound, the rank and file have been firm and are the backbone of the strikes. Few of them have become scabs. Their determination to expose the union-busting tactics of the owners of these two companies now in bankruptcy is why many working people refuse to fly Eastern or ride Greyhound buses.

At the same time, the top leaderships of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) are undermining the membership's ability to win. The top officials believe it is impossible to win a strike through mass picket actions that close a company tight. Their strategy relies on pro-labor lawyers, investment bankers, and "friends" in Congress to get the employer to negotiate.

The ATU leadership has even floated the idea of an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) as a solution—although Greyhound's owners reject it out of hand.

The IAM officials likewise see ESOPs as the most viable way to "save" the airline industry from corporate raiders like Eastern's Frank Lorenzo. The IAM officials are currently leading a buyout effort at United Airlines. They would do the same at Eastern, if they thought it could be arranged.

## The state of Eastern

"Worse in the near term, better in the long term," is the financial forecast for Eastern Airlines. That's what Martin Shugrue, the court-appointed trustee who replaced Eastern boss Frank Lorenzo in April, told a mid-July news conference. Eastern, he said, expects to lose \$500 million in 1990. In 1989, Eastern lost a record \$852 million. That's more than \$2 million a day.

Eastern, however, expects to continue flying this year and next with the aid of creditors' money in an escrow account. Shugrue has told scab replacement workers that they



Greyhound workers on picket duty at Pittsburgh, Pa., bus terminal. They have been out for over five months.

are the key to Eastern's recovery. At the same time, Shugrue is in secret negotiations with the IAM leadership about ending their strike.

Eastern managers are also seeking a pact with the pilots who honored the IAM's picket line until last November when they called off their strike. Few of the union

**'The bosses are willing to use all means to break a strike; including immediately bringing in replacement workers and using the courts and cops to limit pickets and enforce injunctions.'**

pilots, however, have been rehired by Eastern.

Currently, the majority of the Eastern pilots are scabs. They are now in a 30-day cooling-off period that began July 10. Afterwards, they can go on strike, but it's doubtful they will considering they were hired as strike-breakers.

The attempt by Eastern managers to bolster traffic while claiming to "negotiate" with the unions is winning back some travelers. But the rank-and-file campaign of "no peace" until there is a contract, is making it difficult for Eastern to become profitable.

Shugrue is also talking with Northwest Airlines about a buyout of Eastern. Northwest wants Eastern's most lucrative routes, gates, and a maintenance facility without taking back strikers. So far, with the exception of Trump Shuttle, all asset sales by Eastern has excluded retention of former Eastern workers.

Meanwhile, on July 25, a federal grand jury in New York indicted Eastern and nine of its managers for violating safety guide-

lines by falsifying logbooks on alleged maintenance work done before the strike began. This is the first time an airline has ever faced criminal charges.

## Can Greyhound survive?

Greyhound strikers are in a similar situation. The determination of the ranks forced Greyhound into bankruptcy and forced the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to declare that Greyhound "engaged in and is engaging in unfair labor practices affecting commerce." Yet Greyhound managers have been able to replace most strikers with scabs. Load factors are still unprofitable but are climbing.

According to a recent financial study on Greyhound after it filed for bankruptcy, by the end of June the load factor was slightly above 70 percent—similar to a year ago. It has cut unprofitable routes, mainly to rural areas.

Yet Greyhound's debt remains too high to service and operate the carrier profitably. As at Eastern under Lorenzo, most of Greyhound's tickets are being sold at a sharp discount. Thus the high load factors are not generally adequate to cover operating costs.

Can Greyhound survive? The longer it is able to reorganize and win back travelers with fewer buses and routes, that may be possible.

The creditors are not too concerned about the strike except as it affects profits. They will give Greyhound's Fred Currey as much time as they can before pushing for liquidation, in which they would receive very little of their money back.

The NLRB ruling against Greyhound, moreover, will be heard by an administrative judge in mid-September. As is "normal" in NLRB cases, it will likely take months before a final decision is made. The outcome of the strike will be determined way before then.

## Lessons of the struggle

The rank and file at Eastern and Greyhound are discovering what many workers learn when they do battle to protect their jobs today: The bosses are willing to use all means

to break a strike, including immediately bringing in replacement workers and using the courts and cops to limit pickets and enforce injunctions. The so-called friendly Democrats are also quick to back the unjust laws.

In addition, many strikers are learning how the policies of the top officials of the unions tie their hands behind their backs. The strategy of the labor tops is one of no-win. It begins with respecting all antilabor laws even if it means the employer can keep up production.

Once workers are prevented from stopping production (in the case of transportation, grounding the aircraft and buses), they are less able to force a boss to negotiate and accept a decent contract. The rank and file are then put in the position of using a much weaker tactic—organizing a consumer boycott.

Boycott tactics are generally used by labor as an auxiliary to effective picketlines aimed at stopping production. But when boycotts become the strategy to win, workers generally end up in a prolonged tug of war with the employer: a test of which side can outlast the other or win the most public support.

The problem is that this strategy allows the employers time to regroup and attempt to break the strike by scab labor. And if that fails, it gives them time to sell some assets and limit their losses. Lorenzo, for example, suffered the humiliation of losing Eastern to a trustee but nevertheless was able to hold onto his nonunion Continental Airlines.

The Eastern and Greyhound strikers are determined to make their bosses pay a high price if they don't negotiate a contract. Their battle is our battle. The more than 400 people who rallied in San Francisco in July did so knowing that unless workers fight and support others fighting there is no hope of turning back the employers' offensive.

To stand up and battle the bosses' attacks is the first step to winning. It is only then that working people will begin to learn who their friends are and begin to create a new leadership in the trade unions based on class-struggle methods.