

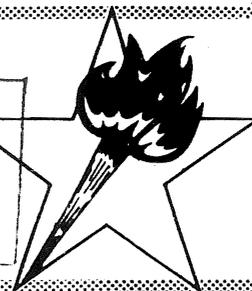
# TORCH

NEWSPAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE

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OCT 21 1982

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF WISCONSIN



OCTOBER 15-NOVEMBER 14, 1982

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 10/25¢

## Jobless Rate Tops 10%— Who Is to Blame?

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## Solidarity Banned; Polish Workers Fight Back

The October 7 banning of Solidarity, the mass workers' union "suspended" last December, has touched off a new round of confrontations between Polish workers and General Wojciech Jaruzelski's martial law regime.

On October 11 thousands of workers at the Lenin shipyards in Gdańsk, considered the birthplace of the Solidarity movement, went on strike to protest the ban. Workers at several other shipyards in Gdańsk quickly joined the protest. Strikes reportedly also occurred in the nearby Baltic coast cities of Gdynia and Sopot, as well as in Szczecin, although details on these events are not available at press time. The martial law regime has cut off telephone and telex communications to all four cities.

When the strikes began in Gdańsk October 11, Polish authorities sent thousands of riot police into the city. After the riot police attacked a workers' rally outside the Lenin shipyards, streetfighting broke out and continued throughout the night.

As the strike continued on October

12, riot police sealed off the shipyards from the rest of Gdańsk, provoking a new series of fierce street battles. At the same time the government militarized the shipyards. This meant that the workers were effectively drafted into the Polish army and could be court-martialed or even shot if they continued to strike.

These repressive measures succeeded in forcing the workers to end their protest on October 13. When they went back to their jobs, each worker was handed a leaflet warning that strikers would face up to two years in jail, while anyone who tried to organize a strike, who refused to obey orders, or who either threatened to attack or attacked a superior could be imprisoned for up to five years. As many as 500 workers have reportedly already been fired for participating in the strike.

But even as the Gdańsk strikers returned to work, protests erupted elsewhere in Poland. In Nowa Huta, a major industrial center just outside Krakow, 3,000 steelworkers went into

the streets and battled police to show their solidarity with the Gdańsk workers. Similar protests broke out in Wroclaw, while in Poznan workers at the gigantic Cegielski locomotive works organized a one-hour sympathy strike.

### Phony unions formed

The banning of Solidarity—and the suppression of the Gdańsk strikers—is part of the Polish state-capitalist rulers' escalating campaign to crush popular opposition to the Jaruzelski regime. When Jaruzelski imposed martial law last December, he claimed he was only temporarily suspending Solidarity. He pledged that once the government's "normalization" program was implemented, it would respect the 1980 Gdańsk accord that promised the workers the right to independent trade unions

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**SECCION  
EN  
ESPAÑOL**

**our  
readers  
write...**

## Commemoration held for victim of Hyde Amendment

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

On October 3, nearly 100 people gathered in New York City to commemorate Rosaura (Rosie) Jimenez, who died five years ago of complications from a back-alley abortion. Just a few months earlier, Congress had passed the Hyde Amendment, which cut off the Medicaid funds for abortions. If those funds had been available, Jimenez—who was on welfare—could have gotten a safe, legal abortion. She was the first known victim of the Hyde Amendment.

Jimenez, 27, the daughter of migrant workers, was a single mother, with a five-year-old daughter. She held a part-time job and was six months away from a bachelors degree in education. She died because she was a poor, working class Chicana.

What was significant about the program about Jimenez in New York was the emphasis on the racist character of anti-abortion legislation and the program of the New Right—both of which contributed to Rosie's death. Also significant was the fact that the program was organized by Black, Latin and white women in a conscious attempt to overcome the racial divisions within the women's movement, especially in the realm of reproductive rights.

Those of us who worked on this event are hopeful that we can continue to work together, especially this coming January which will mark the tenth anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling which made abortion legal.

**Yours for the revolution,  
Pat Nelson  
NY-RSL**

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# The poorest rich city in the country

Dear Torch,

A couple of weeks ago I read in *In These Times* that Chicago is now the first major U.S. city to qualify, in its entirety, as an official poverty area. This is because over 25 percent of Chicago's residents are at or below the poverty line.

A couple of days later I read about a study by the Union Bank of Switzerland. This study compared purchasing power for people living in different cities in the world, and it concluded that Chicago ranked third-highest in the U.S. and fifth highest in the world.

How can this be? How can a

city be so rich and so poor?

The answer is racism. Always fierce, racism in Chicago has grown worse. In the last decade, for instance, median family income for whites in Chicago rose 2 percent (in real terms). For Blacks, it fell by 19 percent. Black people in Chicago have barely over half the income of whites.

The result is something close to two cities: a reasonably well-off white city—though the crisis is hitting here too—and a mostly-poor Black city. It takes fierce segregation to maintain such a gap. Eighty-six percent of Black people in Chicago live

in neighborhoods that are over 90 percent Black. This is up from an already-high 78 percent 10 years ago.

Infant mortality in Chicago is higher than in some Third World countries.

There isn't any other U.S. city with so many Black people—well over a million—so completely dominated by an openly racist local power structure. Revolutionaries have to crack the racial barrier and fight for united struggle by working and oppressed people. It will be a long, hard struggle.

**DC  
Chicago**

## Gun control on California ballot

Dear Torch,

Attacks are coming down from so many sides these days, it's getting hard just to keep informed about them, let alone organize any defense. Here's one more: Proposition 15, on the California state ballot this November, will be the country's strictest gun control law if it is approved. What it proposes is a freeze on the number of handguns allowed in California, the forced registration of all such guns within a year, and increased penalties for owning or carrying an unregistered gun. If this proposition becomes law, it will be illegal to bring handguns into California and after April 1983 residents may not buy new handguns (even within the state) except to replace one turned in to the police or destroyed.

One obvious effect of this will be to create a huge black market in guns at very high prices, making it harder than ever for ordinary working people to get what they need for self-protection. When I heard about this I remembered an editorial on gun control, printed in the *Torch* over a year ago, and I went to re-read it. It's so good, you might want to reprint part of it for newer readers. The part I liked best says:

"...gun control laws will neither control the circulation of handguns, lower the crime rate nor lessen the number of people injured or killed in violent crimes. What they will do is pack the jails with poor and working class people, help beef up the repressive machinery of the state and increase the ruling class's power to attack the working class and radical movements, interfere in

our lives and limit our rights. Gun control laws will also lead to a situation where the enemies of the working class and specially oppressed people, such as the Ku Klux Klan, the Nazis and

other racists, will have guns, while working class people who will need weapons to protect themselves will have trouble getting them..."

A California reader

## EVENTS

### CHICAGO

**OCT. 23—Protest** U.S. intervention in El Salvador! Sat., noon, Great Lakes Naval Training Ctr., Foss Pk., N. Chicago, IL. Sponsor: October 23 Coalition. For more info, (312) 227-2720.

**NOV. 12-15—Reproductive Rights National Network National Conference.** Northwestern Univ., Evanston. For more info, (312) 933-1578.

### DETROIT

**OCT. 16—Rally** in solidarity with the people of El Salvador. Sat., 7:30 pm, Wayne State Univ. Sponsor: Detroit CISPES. For more info, (313) 841-9200.

### LOS ANGELES

**OCT. 21—Meeting** of LA Draft Resistance Support Ctte. to discuss building support for David Wayte, indicted draft resister. First United Meth. Church, 813 S. Hope St., 3rd fl., 7:30 pm.

**OCT. 24—Teach-in** on Central America. Sun., 10 am-5 pm. UTLA Hall, 2511 W. 3rd St. Sponsor: Echo Park CISPES. For more info, (213) 660-4587.

**OCT. 26—David Wayte's trial opens.** Attend the trial and picket outside the courthouse. Fed. courthouse, 312 N. Spring St., 9 am.

### NEW YORK

**OCT. 27—Benefit for Gay Community News.** Camp & Drag Dyke & Faggot Fall Fashion Show & Halloween Party. Wed., 7:30 pm. Pyramid Club, 101 Avenue A. \$5 donation. For childcare, offers to help, or more info, (212) 777-6499. Sponsor: Friends of GCN.

**NOV. 20-21—Conference** in solidarity with the struggle of the Haitian people. Political discussion, workshops, cultural festival & dinner dance held in Brooklyn. The conference will be conducted in the Creole language. For info, (212) 462-8519.

### JACKSON, MS

**OCT. 16—National march** to free Mayor Eddie Carthan and the Tchula Seven. Rally for Black political rights. Sponsor: Tchula Seven Natl. Campaign. For more info, (601) 235-5209 or 834-3080.

# Mexico: Weak Link in Capitalist World Economy Nearly Snaps

By ALBERT LARY

It was a close call for international capitalism.

Mexico—the darling of world bankers, with an 8 percent growth rate, developing industry and a sea of oil—was broke. The crisis hit the headlines August 2, with a sharp devaluation of the Mexican peso. And it stayed in the headlines for six weeks as imperialist bankers fought off a financial panic and the Mexican government staggered from one emergency decree to the next.

By the end of September, some measure of stability had been temporarily restored, thanks to a gigantic international rescue operation, the nationalization of Mexico's private banks, and extremely strict currency controls.

The crisis should have been predicted by the 1,000 international banks whose loan money kept Mexico artificially booming for so long. But blinded by easy investments and greed for profit, they pretended it couldn't happen, until it did.

Poland's bankruptcy earlier this year, which badly frightened world bankers, was mild compared to the Mexican crisis. Mexico's debt is \$85 billion—more than that of all the Eastern European countries combined. Its famous oil income is not enough to even keep up with interest payments on such a debt. **One-quarter of all capital reserves of the world banking system are on loan to Mexico.**

Thirty-four billion dollars of Mexico's debt is owed to U.S. banks alone, including \$3 billion each to BankAmerica and Citibank, and over \$1 billion to Chase Manhattan. Some smaller U.S. banks have as much as 90 percent of their capital on loan to Mexico.

These figures help explain the desperation with which many capitalists tried to shrug off the Mexican crisis as a "simple cash flow problem." To admit the full severity of the crisis could have sparked an uncontrollable panic and financial crash. It didn't happen this time, but it was very close.

## How it happened

How did Mexico get into such a mess?

The country's recent rapid growth was based on the development of its vast oil and gas resources. This coincided with large price increases by other



Mexicans in Juárez try to exchange pesos for dollars after President José López Portillo devalued the peso in August.



oil-producing nations (the so-called OPEC oil crisis of the 1970s), from which Mexico naturally benefited. As a result, Mexico had money to spend, a good credit rating, and a thirst for industrial development. At the same time, international banks were bursting with extra capital reserves accumulated from the newly rich oil-producing nations of the Middle East. Loans flowed freely, creating Mexico's staggering debt.

Rapid growth and billions in loans pumped money into the Mexican economy, but prices rose to absorb it, resulting in sharp inflation. To maintain popular support for its development plans, the Mexican government refused to devalue the peso long after its true value had been eroded by inflation, and government subsidies kept the price of transportation and basic foods artificially low.

It was a gamble from the start. The capitalist planners of Mexico hoped that the combination of rapid development and a contented workforce would raise productivity fast enough to match the growing debt.

But by 1981 the boom was over. World oil prices began to fall while interest rates rose. Prices of other commodities Mexico is rich in, such as silver and coffee, hit a 30-year low. Industrial output fell sharply.

The writing was on the wall, and the more alert capitalists read it. They began moving capital out of Mexico, and international confidence in the Mexican economy hit the skids.

A devaluation of the peso in February managed only to increase unemployment, push inflation up to 100 percent, and alienate the workers, whose

wages never rise fast enough to keep pace with devalued pesos and inflated prices. The economic growth rate fell to zero.

A second devaluation in August left the peso practically worthless and provoked a huge demand for dollars. Who wants to get stuck holding pesos when their value can be cut in half instantly by presidential decree? As a result, the peso's black market value dropped even further (reaching 200 pesos per dollar at one point) while the dollar rose. Those with large dollar accounts started moving them out of Mexico, looking for a more stable economic climate.

At the same time, with their confidence shattered, foreign bankers began refusing more Mexican loans or extensions. Payment was demanded when due, and usually in dollars. Mexico faced the prospect of \$20 billion worth of debt coming due in the next three months, which it couldn't possibly pay. A more immediate threat was the danger of completely running out of dollars to pay its daily bills. In a panic, the Mexican government closed the banks on August 5, froze all foreign currency deposits, and banned the sale of dollars.

## Bankers try to prevent melt-down

Within days a massive international rescue operation was underway. The U.S. government tripled its orders for Mexican oil over the next year (at a discount price) and paid \$1 billion for it in advance. Another \$1.7 billion from the U.S. consists of loan guaran-

tees, which will allow Mexico to buy U.S. farm products on credit.

An international banking group extended another \$1.85 billion in credit and agreed to postpone the payment of \$10 billion in short term debt for 90 days, on condition that Mexico accept supervision from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF, for its part, offered a \$4.4 billion loan if Mexico would agree to limit wage increases to 25 percent, reduce subsidies for food and transport, and limit government spending. So far, Mexico has not accepted these conditions, but most of the money will be provided anyway. Mexico is simply too important to the world capitalist system to be junked.

Coming near the end of the crisis period, President López Portillo's nationalization of Mexico's private banks was surprising, but not nearly as significant as he wanted people to believe. No one could deny that the banks were greatly responsible for Mexico's heavy foreign debt and, more recently, for its capital flight problems. But they were certainly no more guilty than the capitalist government of Mexico itself, which directly controls huge sectors of the economy and whose financial policies the banks were merely imitating.

López Portillo's nationalization decree was a necessary part of the plan to save Mexican capitalism from total collapse. Very few capitalists will suffer from it. They will receive full compensation for the value of their property and may even regain control of the industries they previously operated through bank-owned corporate

stock.

U.S. bankers applauded López Portillo's move, saying it was necessary to save the private sector from bankruptcy. Furthermore, putting the authority of the Mexican government behind all the bad debts of these banks makes it more likely that they will eventually be repaid to foreign banks.

## 'The social fuse is lit'

The human cost of all this has been immense. In a country already poor, where 50 percent of the workforce was underemployed before the August crisis, the following new figures may be added: prices for tortillas and bread are up 100 percent since July; gasoline up 60 percent; milk, eggs and meat up 40 percent. The peso's rapid devaluation this year means everything is now priced at least four times as high as it was in January, yet wages have gone up a maximum of 60 percent in the same period.

The average hourly wage for industrial workers is now well below \$1.00 an hour. One and a half million workers will be laid off during the next year, while 750,000 new workers will enter the workforce in the same period. **"It really puts Mexico right smack on the map in terms of cheap labor,"** observed one U.S. union official. **"It puts them in the same league with Hong Kong, Taiwan and Haiti."**

And how will people survive? Mexico City's pawnshops report the longest lines in memory as those with anything of value pawn it to buy time. Millions will drift away from the crowded cities to try to scratch out a living in the peasant villages where they were born. Millions more will go north to the U.S. Street demonstrations are predicted for the fall and winter as unemployment benefits run out. **"There's no doubt about it,"** says a U.S. businessman in Mexico City, **"the social fuse is lit."**

Mexico's immediate future, however, will probably not see any dramatic upheavals. As the economists keep saying to reassure themselves, **"Mexico is not Poland."** Most of its oil is still in the ground and, barring a complete collapse of the world market, it will steadily tend to increase in value. In addition to oil, Mexico has many other natural resources, access to the U.S. market, a skilled work-

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# Jobless Rate Tops 10%

By WILLIAM FALK

The nation's unemployment rate rose to 10.1 percent last month—a post-World War II record. According to a Department of Labor survey released on October 8, 11.2 million people out of an estimated workforce of 110 million—one out of every 10 workers—are jobless and looking for work. This is the first time the unemployment rate in the U.S. has been above 10 percent since 1940.

In addition to these millions of people who are out of work, there are now 1.6 million people officially classified as "discouraged workers"—people who have given up all hope of finding a job. And the number of people working part-time because they cannot find a full-time job has hit a record high of 6.6 million.

Unemployment among Black people is officially at 20 percent and among Latin people, 15 percent. The jobless rate for women who support families is at an all-time high of 12.4 percent.

**The unemployed workers, discouraged workers and part-timers, taken together, add up to 19.3 million people who cannot find the jobs they need—an outrageous 17 percent of the entire workforce. Moreover, nearly one out of every four workers in the U.S. has been without a job at some point in the last 12 months.**

Not since the Great Depression have so many people in this country come face to face with the prospect of long-term joblessness—and the feeling of hopelessness that comes with it. And for millions of people who still do have jobs, one question looms ever-larger: "Will I have a job tomorrow?"

For working class people the situation is actually far more grim than the total numbers reveal. Unemployment is currently concentrated in the basic manufacturing industries: Unemployment in the construction trades, for example, is 22.6 percent; joblessness for workers in the steel and metals industry is 24.6 percent; in the auto and textile industries, more than 18 percent of the workforce has been laid off; and in lumber and wood products, the figure is 17.1 percent. (By contrast, unemployment among finance, insurance and real estate workers is at 4.7 percent.)

For blue collar workers as a whole, unemployment is 15.6 percent; for white collar workers, the rate is 4.8 percent.

These figures underline the fact that the entire productive apparatus of the country is grinding to a halt. Factory utilization, one important indication, is at a seven-year low—less than 70 percent of the nation's manufacturing capacity is presently being utilized.

Worse still, there is no economic recovery in sight. In September the number of hours in the average work-week dropped, a sign of more layoffs to come. Retail sales are down; 1982 machine tool orders are half of what they were in 1981; and business failures are at their highest level since 1932.

All this points to an unemployment rate likely to stay near or above 10 percent for some time to come.

The new jobless figures have made unemployment the central political question of the day, particularly in the fall



Laid-off steelworkers fill out unemployment compensation forms in Texas. Joblessness in steel and other metals is 24.6 percent.

election campaigns. All signs indicate a sweeping Democratic Party victory in the November elections, as voters show their disillusionment in Reaganomics at the polls.

The Democrats are, of course, wasting little time in making political hay out of the issue. Charging Reagan with having "the worst economic record in

U.S. history" and having brought the country to "the edge of a world crash," various Democratic candidates on the campaign trail are sounding one main theme: Reagan and the Republicans are responsible for record-high unemployment.

Reagan, for his part, is trying to blame the whole mess on the Demo-

crats. He argues that he can't be blamed for the fact that more than 13 million people are out of work, since the Democrats led the nation "down the path of guaranteed economic disaster."

The fact is that both parties are responsible for the mess we are in. Two years of Reaganomics has left the country, as the Democrats charge, with the highest unemployment level in 42 years. Two more years will only mean more of Reagan's "attack the poor to help the rich" policies that are savaging the economy. But Reagan is right when he points out that the economy was seriously ailing long before he took office. The roots of the present crisis go much further back than the election of 1980. The jobless rate had climbed under the Carter administration and had reached 7.4 percent by the time he left office.

The bottom line is that neither the Democrats nor the Republicans has the slightest solution for today's massive joblessness. The real problem is that the capitalist system that both the Democrats and Republicans represent and defend is in a serious crisis. The entire U.S. economy (and, in fact, the world economy) is in disastrous shape and heading for total collapse. This is the real cause of the unemployment, plant shutdowns and business failures. And this is what working people need to start dealing with in the fight against unemployment. □

## Solidarity Banned; Polish Workers Fight Back

(Continued from page 1)

and granted Solidarity a role in Polish society.

But the law passed by the Polish Sejm (parliament) on October 7 outlaws Solidarity altogether and replaces it with powerless puppet "trade unions" under government control. These would operate at the factory level only until at least 1984. The new unions would be allowed to strike "only as a last resort," while many workers would be forbidden to strike at all. No strikes of a "political nature" or sympathy strikes would be allowed whatsoever. Moreover, the courts would have the power to forbid strikes, disband individual unions or order the "re-election" of union officials at any time.

In addition to banning Solidarity the government is cracking down on the underground Solidarity resistance network. After the massive protests in August that broke out in 34 of the country's 49 provinces, thousands of oppositionists were rounded up and thrown into jail. In September the government charged seven members of KOR—the dissident organization that played a major role in the 1980 Polish revolt—with "crimes against the state," in particular with organizing the August 31

protests. And on October 5 authorities finally managed to capture Wladyslaw Frusyniuk, who had led Solidarity's militant Wrocław branch and was one of the five leaders of the underground Solidarity Coordinating Commission set up in April.

The remaining members of the commission have responded to the ban on Solidarity by calling for a nationwide four-hour protest strike to take place on November 10, the second anniversary of Solidarity's registration as a legal trade union. They reaffirmed this call on October 13 despite the defeat of the apparently spontaneous Gdańsk strike. Such a strike would be a major blow to the government's efforts to stabilize its rule.

The call for a nationwide strike represents a significant escalation in tactics by the commission, which has opposed strike action in the past. Until now, commission members have hoped against hope that they would be able to reach some kind of deal with the government, and feared that any efforts to organize strikes would wreck their chance for a compromise.

At the same time, even some of Solidarity's militant supporters have felt that they could not pull off a successful

national strike given the repressive policies of the martial law regime. Coal miners in Silesia, for example, have been working under direct military rule ever since the government's December crackdown. Government spies are present in every major factory in the country. Meanwhile, hundreds of Solidarity leaders remain in jail, while thousands who have been released have been warned they will be imprisoned for years if they organize or even join any future strikes. And despite ingenious efforts to set an up underground network, communication between militants in different cities—and even different factories—remains spotty at best.

But the banning of Solidarity has proven—again—the futility of seeking any compromise with the government. At the same time, the Gdańsk strike and the mass workers' demonstration in August show the emergence of a layer of militants from within the heart of the Polish working class that is ready to take on the Polish rulers despite the increasing difficulties. If the Polish people can withstand the repression and pull off the planned November 10 strike, it could well mark the beginning of a new and far more militant phase of the workers' revolt against state-capitalist rule in Poland. □



Workers at Chrysler's... ingly opposed the pro...

By W.E. SCHWEE

OCTOBER 13—W... the Chrysler Corpora... shot down the tentative settlement negotiated b... of the United Auto union (UAW) in mid... ber. With the voting completed, 22 out of have so far rejected tract, some by 5-1 ma... press time, the total 17,500 opposed to the contract and 11,892 in it. The rejection marks time that a UAW cont... been rejected by the wo...

## Mar

"You don't know w... to bring your husband from the hospital and s... dying every day. He w... pounds. When he died under 100. Couldn't eat. n't swallow. Couldn't swallow a pill. The nurse mash it and feed it to hi... applesauce." —Ro

The disease that killed Suto's husband Steve—a poisoning—threatens th... of literally millions of v... and their families in the States.

Asbestos, a fire-res... mineral widely used in... of industries, is one... deadliest known cancer-c... agents. Prolonged expos... asbestos fiber and dus... result in lung cancer, abd... cancer (mesothelioma) or... tosis, an often fatal lung d...

Experts estimate that where from 11 million to 25 million workers were ex... to asbestos between 194... 1980. According to the Na... Cancer Institute, over... million of these workers w... from asbestos-related dis... For decades the Ma... Corporation, the largest

# Chrysler Workers Say NO!



Workers at Chrysler's Trenton, Michigan, engine plant overwhelmingly opposed the proposed contract.

By W.E. SCHWEIZER

**OCTOBER 13**—Workers at the Chrysler Corporation have shot down the tentative contract settlement negotiated by leaders of the United Auto Workers union (UAW) in mid-September. With the voting still not completed, 22 out of 27 locals have so far rejected the contract, some by 5-1 margins. At press time, the total vote was 17,500 opposed to the proposed contract and 11,892 in favor of it. The rejection marks the first time that a UAW contract has been rejected by the workers at

one of the Big Three auto companies.

Chrysler workers rejected the tentative settlement primarily because it contained no "up-front" money to enable them to begin catching up to the wages received by Ford and General Motors workers. In the 1979 contract round Chrysler workers were forced to take less than what the UAW won from Ford and GM. In 1980 and 1981 the contract was reopened twice to give Chrysler \$1.1 billion more in concessions.

**OVER** the last three years Chrysler workers have given up

wage increases, cost of living allowances (COLA), and 26 paid personal days and holidays. Chrysler workers have not had a pay raise of any kind since March 1981. In addition, 41,000 workers, or 48 percent of the total at Chrysler, have been laid off. By late this summer, production line assemblers at Chrysler were earning \$9.07 per hour, compared with \$11.67 at Ford and \$11.76 at GM.

Going into the final negotiations in mid-September, Chrysler workers thought they might at least partly catch up to Ford and GM workers. Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca has repeatedly boasted that Chrysler had in hand a \$1 billion bundle of cash.

But the agreement that came out contained **nothing** in guaranteed wage increases. Although it did reinstate COLA, all it promised in pay raises were several one-shot "wage bonuses" tied to future company profits. If Chrysler made more than \$20 million in a quarter, the employed workers would divide \$4 million among themselves; if the company made more than \$50 million, the workers would divide \$8 million. Based on the current workforce of 45,300, each worker would **possibly** get either \$88 or \$176. But as the slump in auto sales is expected to continue next year, chances are the

workers would have gotten nothing at all if the contract had passed.

**THE second major weakness** in the contract was its absenteeism clause. Under the proposed new rules, a worker would be counseled after five absences in a six-month period, whether excused or not. He or she would receive a warning after a sixth absence, to be followed by suspensions and dismissal after each of the next four unexcused absences.

By including excused absences, the contract opened the door for Chrysler to sack anyone it wanted to, no matter how solid their reasons for missing work were. This provision caused such an uproar that the UAW Chrysler Council delegates spent 70 percent of their meeting time debating it, and the UAW leadership delayed the contract vote while it tried to persuade Chrysler to change it. (On October 1 the union announced that it had obtained "clarifying" language on the clause from the company, but never revealed what this was.)

The proposed contract also provided no new aid for thousands of unemployed Chrysler workers and contained a stated goal of cutting \$10 million from the workers' health plan through various "cost-saving" formulas. If the savings were

less than \$7 million by the end of next year, the differences would be taken out of the workers' profit-sharing money anyway.

When asked what he thought about the contract, one 14-year Chrysler veteran in Detroit was quoted as saying, "I can see Iacocca laughing all the way to his house. It just irks me that he's laughing because this contract's a joke." Another worker at the Belvidere, Illinois, assembly plant denounced UAW President Doug Fraser, who sits on Chrysler's Board of Directors, as a "double agent" for the company. And three locals demanded that the entire bargaining committee resign.

**IN** the wake of the contract rejection, UAW leaders are moving to reopen contract talks with Chrysler. Fraser is trying to sound a bit more militant this time around, saying that the possibility of a strike is "obviously greater" as a result of the vote. Earlier he raised the possibility of shutting down one plant at a time to put pressure on the company. But it is unlikely that the leaders who have negotiated away billions of dollars of the workers' money and benefits are now going to put up a serious fight. And even many local UAW officials who opposed the settlement are said to be against a companywide walkout. □

## Manville Bankruptcy: Getting Away With Murder

**"You don't know what it is to bring your husband home from the hospital and see him dying every day. He was 200 pounds. When he died he was under 100. Couldn't eat. Couldn't swallow. Couldn't even swallow a pill. The nurse had to mash it and feed it to him with applesauce."**

—Rose Suto

The disease that killed Rose Suto's husband Steve—**asbestos poisoning**—threatens the lives of literally millions of workers and their families in the United States.

Asbestos, a fire-resistant mineral widely used in dozens of industries, is one of the deadliest known cancer-causing agents. Prolonged exposure to asbestos fiber and dust can result in lung cancer, abdominal cancer (mesothelioma) or asbestosis, an often fatal lung disease.

Experts estimate that anywhere from 11 million to over 25 million workers were exposed to asbestos between 1940 and 1980. According to the National Cancer Institute, over one million of these workers will die from asbestos-related diseases.

For decades the Manville Corporation, the largest pro-

ducer of asbestos material in the U.S., deliberately suppressed evidence of the dangers of asbestos poisoning. Meanwhile, according to the *New York Times*, at the company's main plant in Manville, New Jersey, "asbestos flakes covered workers' clothes, settled in their coffee during breaks, drifted onto cars and into sandboxes in town. Children played on piles of asbestos, and wives shook it off their husbands' laundry."

The workers were unaware of the risk because the effects of inhaling asbestos dust usually do not show up for 20 or 30 years. But in the 1960s, Manville workers began to sicken by the thousands. When they found out that they had been systematically poisoned on the job for years, they started filing legal suits demanding compensation. By 1982 Manville workers alone were filing 425 suits a month against the company.

**MANVILLE** is now resorting to legal fraud to avoid paying compensation to the workers it condemned to disease and death. On August 26, Manville attorneys filed for bankruptcy in the federal courts—although the company has \$1.1 billion in assets and earned \$60.3 million



1976 demonstration at Manville's Long Beach, California, plant demanded better safety conditions.

in 1981. Such a bankruptcy petition automatically freezes any lawsuits pending against the company. In other words, Manville effectively prevented the workers from taking any legal action against it until the bankruptcy proceedings are resolved, which could take years.

In explaining Manville's move, company president John A. McKinney told reporters that asbestos disability suits were threatening to bankrupt his company. He claimed a study commissioned by Manville predicted it would face another 32,000 suits and would have to pay over \$2 billion in legal costs and compensation payments

over the next 20 years. Later, on September 15, the company upped its estimates to 120,000 lawsuits that could cost the company up to \$4.8 billion.

Manville is hoping to force the federal government—that is, working class taxpayers—to shoulder the cost of compensating asbestos victims. They argue that the government has an obligation to share the disability payment costs because many workers suffering from asbestosis or related illnesses contracted them while working in government-run Navy shipyards where asbestos was used heavily during World War II.

Manville and other asbestos producers fear passage of a bill currently under discussion in Congress that would compel them to set up a special fund for compensating disabled asbestos workers. They are urging Congress to pass alternative legislation that would split compensation costs between asbestos companies, insuring firms that issued policies covering the companies, and the federal government.

**IN** fact, all the capitalists responsible for poisoning asbestos workers want to pass the disability costs on to someone else. The federal government claims it has "no legal responsibility" for any asbestosis sufferers who worked in Navy shipyards. The insurance companies are suing each other over whose policies cover the asbestos manufacturers' liabilities. Some are also suing the asbestos producers, claiming the companies lied to them as well as to the workers about the dangers of asbestos. And while all these bastards use one legal maneuver after another to protect their pocketbooks, millions of asbestos workers are left empty-handed, with scarred lungs and the prospect of early deaths. □



## Articles expose widespread prison rape

One of the country's leading newspapers recently featured a series of articles on a subject that is a serious concern of prison organizers but is rarely even referred to in the mass media: prison rape. From September 25-28, the *Washington Post* carried articles by staff writer Loretta Tofani focusing on rapes in the Prince George's County (Maryland) Detention Center. Tofani reported that there were about 12 rapes a week occurring in the jail, which was built to house 143 prisoners and currently holds 450. She also interviewed several prison rapists and rape victims and confirmed what anti-rape organizers, both in and out of prison, have long been saying: That rape is not as such a sexual act but a violent, aggressive assertion of power of one person over another.

"It goes back to the mentality of the street, the definition of a man," one rapist told the newspaper. Most of the rapists interviewed "express no guilt over their actions," reported Tofani. "They believe that 'a real man'—their words—would kill rather than get raped. In their view, a man who is raped must be homosexual and therefore should not mind it."

"In fact," Tofani wrote, "most rape victims are not homosexual, according to *The Post* investigation. They are simply not used to defending themselves—particularly against a group. Those who are homosexual deny that they want to be raped."

One rapist interviewed by *The Post*, Francis Harper, says he does "feel a lot of remorse about it. . . . When they cage a person, it makes a person real bitter and angry; you don't know who you're angry at. . . . I feel they create monsters in jail. . . . I wasn't strong enough to withstand the influence of my environment. They helped me be an animal in that jail and I submitted to it."

Since the *Washington Post* ran the series, a grand jury has been convened in Prince George's County to investigate conditions in the local jail.

## Refugees face deportation and death

The Immigration and Naturalization Service announced in late September it would begin paroling the 49 Haitian refugees held in the Brooklyn Detention Center. Previously, the INS had refused to consider their release, belligerently pointing out it was under no obligation to do so. The refugees in Brooklyn were not covered under the June 29 release order issued by Judge Eugene Spellman because a separate lawsuit for their freedom had been entered in a federal court in New York. That suit ultimately lost.

About 1,500 Haitian refugees have now been paroled under Spellman's order and hearings on their requests for political asylum will begin soon. Five of the released refugees, however, were deported in the last month after failing to make their weekly report. Unconfirmed rumors are now circulating in the U.S. that three of the five were killed upon arriving in Haiti.

Meanwhile, four undocumented workers died on October 4 as they were being smuggled into Texas. A group of 50 Salvadoreans who had traveled together through Mexico had paid \$1,500 each to be guided into the U.S. On October 3, they walked across the Rio Grande and got into the back of two tractor-trailers. The trucks set off for Houston but for some reason one of them was abandoned along the way on a road in the south Texas desert. Sixteen of the 26 Salvadoreans were too weak from heat and lack of air to walk and they were left behind. Although the back of the truck was left open, by the time the truck was found, around 10:30 p.m. on October 4, four people, aged 17 to 37, were dead. The others were hospitalized and most have now been released—into the custody of the Border Patrol.

\*\*\*\*\*

Two Black youths, Randy Moore, 17, and Leroy Harris, 18, were killed last month by the warden of the East Carroll Parish (county) Prison in Louisiana. For 15 hours the two were put in a "hot box"—a solid wall cell about three feet by five feet with one small window—as punishment for not giving the warden information. When the hot box was opened, Moore was dead from heat stroke and dehydration and Harris died shortly afterward.

—WF

# Draft Opponent Given 30-Month Jail Term

By JUDY GARSON

**DURING** the last six weeks, the government has continued to attack and prosecute public non-registrants for the draft.

• On September 8, two more young men, Gillam Kerley and Michael McMillan, both of Madison, Wisconsin, were indicted for refusing to register with the Selective Service System.

• **ON October 4, Ben Sasway**, convicted in August and immediately jailed pending sentencing, was sentenced to 30 months in jail. The day before, over 1,000 people had rallied in San Diego in Sasway's defense. This did not stop the judge from giving Sasway such a stiff sentence, but it may have contributed to his decision to allow Sasway out on \$10,000 bail pending appeal of his case. The bail terms, however, are designed to keep Sasway from participating in the anti-draft movement and building support for his case: He must work or go to school full-time to stay out of jail. Sasway's supporters have vowed to continue organizing support for his appeal.

• On October 5, Mark Schmucker, of Alliance, Ohio, became the third public non-registrant to be convicted. Sentencing is set for October 19.

• Also in early October, the

student body president of the University of Northern Iowa, Rusty Martin, was indicted by a grand jury. He is the twelfth person nationally to be accused of failing to sign up. Martin had burned his draft sign-up papers at a Des Moines demonstration in 1980.

**ON a somewhat brighter note**, Russell Ford, of Hartford, Connecticut, is out of jail pending trial. After his arraignment August 10, he was jailed because he refused to post \$10,000 non-surety bond, saying he was not about to flee because he wanted a chance to present his views. However, on September 14, Ford agreed to post bond so he could participate more fully in preparations for his trial.

Lastly, as we go to press, David Wayne, Los Angeles, is in his third week of pretrial hearings. At the first pretrial hearing September 30, Wayne's lawyers argued that he is a victim of selective prosecution: That the government was not pressing charges against Wayne for failing to register but rather for publicly opposing registration and the draft. The judge ruled that Wayne's lawyers had a good legal point (in legal terms, that Wayne's lawyers had made a prima facie case) and ordered the government to respond to the charge. On October 7, the government responded that, so far, it had indeed only indicted

public non-registrants. The main government witness also admitted that a non-registrant who remained quiet had about as much chance of being prosecuted as being hit by lightning. However, the government went on to claim that it was preparing to indict non-public resisters.

Selective prosecution is illegal and therefore grounds for dismissal of the charges against Wayne. Such a dismissal would also help Sasway's appeal because he also tried to raise that issue at his trial but was ruled out of order by the judge. If Wayne's case is dismissed, the government could appeal the ruling to a higher court. The judge has not yet handed down a final ruling on the issue.

**WAYTE'S case is going relatively well** for several reasons. One is that the judge hearing Wayne's case is relatively liberal and allowing Wayne's lawyers to present a political defense.

Second, Wayne has a team of lawyers experienced in dealing with draft and military-related cases. Finally, he has received the support of a national network of individual draft resisters and organizations. In LA, this work is being organized by the LA Draft Resistance Support Committee. The committee is asking for everyone to attend Wayne's trial which is scheduled for October 26. [See Events box on page 2.]□

## Protests Hit Dumping of Toxic Soil in Majority-Black County

A militant struggle by residents of a rural North Carolina county has combined two issues not usually linked: racism and pollution of the environment. The struggle started when North Carolina officials picked a spot in Warren County, near the 50-person town of Afton, as the final resting place for 30,000 cubic yards of soil contaminated by PCB. They claim it is mere chance that the county they picked for this honor is 65 percent Black.

PCB—polychlorinated biphenyl—is a substance once used widely as an insulator in electric transformers. Its manufacture or use has been banned in the U.S. since 1976. PCB and its close chemical cousin, PBB, have been found to cause cancer and birth defects. To make matters worse, they are extremely hard to get rid of. High temperature incineration is the only way to get rid of these poisons.

North Carolina officials found themselves with tons of dangerous contaminated soil on their hands after 30,000 gallons of oil containing PCB was illegally dumped along 210 miles of road in 14 rural North Carolina counties. To avoid having to use the expensive incineration process, they proposed to bury the toxic material near Afton.

Officials claim there is no danger to local residents, that the dump site's plastic and clay liners will hold the PCB. But in a more candid moment an official of the federal Environ-

mental Protection Agency told the *New York Times* that "there could be no such thing as a safe toxic waste landfill because all of them, even those lined with impermeable clay, eventually leaked."

Earlier this year, the local NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and a newly formed group called Warren County Citizens Concerned about PCB charged in a lawsuit that the dump would contaminate the area's water supply and that the decision to locate it in Warren County was racially motivated.

That lawsuit lost on August 4, and on September 15, the first trucks loaded with poisoned dirt arrived. To meet them, the Concerned Citizens, local Black churches and several other groups organized a demonstration of over 100 people who attempted to block the entrance to the dump. Sixty riot-equipped North Carolina highway patrol officers arrested 55 protesters and 10 trucks were able to get through. For the next 10 days residents staged daily protests of up to 300 people, sitting down in front of the incoming trucks.

On September 27, 500 people marched the two and a half miles from Afton to the dump site. Ninety-seven people were arrested. By that time, however, over 1,000 tons of dirt had been dumped.

**'They Were Ready to Kill Somebody'**

# Cops Trash Black Gay Bar in NY

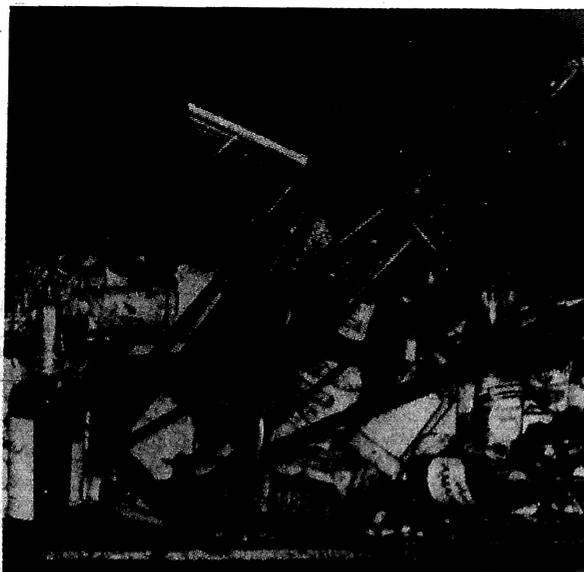
By IAN DANIELS

"Blue's" is a predominantly Black gay bar in New York City's Times Square area. It's not a big place; a long bar takes up most of the first narrow room. Further back is a dance floor—modest, with no fancy lighting and a dirty linoleum floor; beyond that is a dimly lit area with a pool table, a juke box, a video game, and a raised DJ booth. Byron, a young gay Black man who goes regularly to Blue's, told the *Torch* it's a place for people "just to relax, get drunk a little, have a good time."

Thursday morning, September 30, Blue's didn't open for business. The bar area was covered with smashed liquor bottles. Further back, there were spatters of blood on the walls. Dried pools of blood covered parts of the floor. The pool table was turned over, its cash register was smashed—and empty. There were jagged holes in the windows of the DJ booth. Candy, one of the bar's DJs, found a handful of human teeth in a corner.

What happened?

**THE NIGHT before, 20 New York City uniformed police** had met at a straight bar in Times Square called Smith's. They had



Police raid left "Blue's" a shambles.

a few drinks, somehow got a couple of ambulances, and walked over to Blue's. They burst into the bar, waving their guns and nightsticks. The Black men, women and drag queens sitting at the bar were ordered to the back, and told to put their hands against the wall. The cops claimed that two drag queens had assaulted another

policeman, and that they had come to Blue's to find them. When all the police were inside, the curtains were drawn and the door was locked.

**WHAT followed was one of the most brutal attacks** against New York's gay community in years. While hurling racist and anti-gay insults, the cops began to systematically beat the people

in the bar, taking jewelry and money. According to a report in the *New York Native*, a gay paper in NYC, "They beat the weakest the most. They hit the women the hardest, then the drag queens, then the more effeminate men." According to Byron, "they were ready to kill somebody."

The DJ was dragged from the booth and savagely beaten. The sound equipment was smashed. One cop threw six bullets to the floor, saying, "These are fag suppositories. Next time I'll put 'em up your ass the right way."

The attack lasted 30 minutes. The injured, frightened and stunned people went home or to nearby hospitals. Many, though in need of medical treatment, refused to ride in the ambulances so conveniently brought along by the police. There were no arrests.

**IMMEDIATELY, a coverup** began. Police, city officials and the media refused to acknowledge the attack or do anything about it.

The following week, some 40-50 people, representing a broad range of community and political organizations, including the RSL, met in New York's Greenwich Village to discuss a community response. The overwhelming feeling was anger and outrage; the mood was militant.

One participant at the meeting expressed the sentiment well: "If they want a Stonewall back, we'll give them a Stonewall back," referring to the 1969 rebellion against a police attack on a bar in the Village.

Activists at the meeting made the connections between the attack on Blue's and the growing harassment of New York's lesbian and gay community. Two popular lesbian bars, Deja Vu and the Duchess, recently had their liquor licenses taken away by the State Liquor Authority.

**AFTER discussion, the group** decided to call a demonstration for Friday, October 15, in Times Square to protest the attack on Blue's. Plans were also made for a benefit to help raise money for the victims' legal and medical fees, for a press conference, and for some legal action against the police.

Blue's has now been reopened. People there remember what happened and are angry. Eric, another of Blue's DJs, thinks the attack was made simply because "the place is gay, and has a regular Black clientele." But the future is best summed up by Joseph, a Black man with seven stitches over his right eye. "I'm not scared to come back. But they gonna pay for this." □

## Demonstrate November 6 Against the Klan!

Last month we reported that a newly formed confederation of Ku Klux Klan organizations had announced plans to march in Washington, D.C., on November 6. As we go to press, it appears the racists are going ahead with their plans.

Although the National Park Service says the Klan has not yet applied for a march permit, there are signs that KKK organizing efforts are underway for the November 6 date. The Park Service says the Klan has until 48 hours prior to its march to apply for a permit.

The new Klan confederation, formed out of a merger of seven rival Klan factions, claims a membership of 60,000 and says it will march on November 6 in white robes and hoods. If it goes ahead with its plans, it will be the first time the KKK has tried to demonstrate in the nation's capital since 1926.

**A CALL for a counter-demonstration** on November 6 has been issued by the National Anti-Klan Network (NAKN), a coalition of over 100 local and national anti-racist, religious, labor, left and community or-

ganizations. In alliance with several D.C. religious, labor and Black organizations, the NAKN is organizing a "Rally for Human Dignity and Against Klan Racism and Religious Violence."

The NAKN does not plan to demonstrate at the same site as the Klan rally. Instead, it will rally at noon at the Federal District Building and then march to the Justice Department "to demand the immediate prosecution of Klan violence under the existing anti-Klan statutes."

Several other local and national groups and coalitions have also announced plans for November 6 counter-demonstrations. At the time of this writing, discussions are taking place among several of these groups and the NAKN over merging the different protests into a single demonstration. One of the main stumbling blocks to unity is the relatively narrow and conservative approach of the NAKN, particularly its almost exclusive emphasis on calling for governmental action against the Klan, as well as its insistence that no

counter-demonstration be held at the actual site of the Klan rally. Other anti-Klan activists are, to varying degrees, critical of this approach, arguing that the racist U.S. government cannot be relied upon to combat the Klan.

As we go to press, the results of these unity discussions are not yet known.

**WE think it is unfortunate** that the November 6 anti-Klan protest is likely to ignore the actual Klan demonstration, giving the racists a free hand to march, spread their message and claim an important victory. We also believe the strategy of relying on the government to stop the KKK and similar groups is nothing short of suicidal. The U.S. government will never put a stop to Klan violence; quite the contrary, as a reactionary, anti-labor, sexist and racist climate deepens in this country, ever-larger sections of the capitalist class and the government itself will, first covertly, then more openly, lend support to Klan-style terror and intimidation. Even when and where the government is

Cops protect Klan march in Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1979.



pressured to adopt laws against "Klan extremism," history has repeatedly shown that these laws will be used with far more vigor against the left and workers' movement than against the Klan.

**UNFORTUNATELY, the** RSL has neither the resources nor the political influence to organize a meaningful alternative to the NAKN demonstration on such short notice. We therefore urge people to support the

NAKN's demonstration as the best available choice. Within that framework we will devote our energies to explaining as clearly as possible why the Klan is growing today, why it will continue to gain strength as the economic crisis deepens and why working and oppressed people need to rely on their own strength and organization to defeat Klan violence and all anti-working class attacks, whatever their source. □

# Beirut Massacre Challenges Zionist Myth

By PAUL BENJAMIN

"I'm crushed and terrified by the massacre and I think that all of us have bloody hands. It's Babi Yar all over again and this time we're not innocent. We Jews are not innocent. Israel and the Begin government—and I hope it's just the Begin government—they are collaborators with terrorists."

—U.S. Rabbi Arnold Wolf

The Israeli government's complicity in the brutal massacre of over 1,000 Palestinians at the Shatila and Sabra refugee camps in Lebanon has provoked a profound crisis among Jews everywhere. Although some pro-Zionists have tried to excuse Israeli involvement in the killings as nothing more than an "error in judgment," clearly millions of Jewish people both within and outside Israel are horrified by the Israeli government's role in the massacre.

In Israel itself over 350,000 people—more than 10 percent of the entire Jewish population of the country—went into the streets to condemn Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon as butchers. Opposition parties and major newspapers called for the resignation of the government. Hundreds of reservists have refused to serve in Lebanon. Even senior military commanders anxious to avoid blame for the killings have demanded that the government, and Sharon in particular, accept responsibility for the massacre.

Many Israelis sincerely believe that the Begin regime's criminal actions in Lebanon represent a break from what they see as the purely defensive policies of earlier Israeli governments. They are condemning the Begin regime not only because of the Beirut massacre, but because they fear its aggres-

sive policies throughout the Middle East have endangered the credibility of Israel and the long-term existence of the Zionist state.

The widely respected Israeli philosopher, Yeshaiahu Leibowitz, believes the time has come for a "mental account of Israel's role," saying that it can no longer be one "of messianic splendor, which means in reality being a militarist, annexationist, colonialist power, but the modest and nevertheless significant role of being the framework for the national independence of the small Jewish people." U.S. Rabbi Balfour Brickner declared, "I think Begin ought to resign and take Sharon with him. Their leadership has changed the spirit of Israel from state-building to empire building." And one Israeli journalist noted: "Sharon, in order to survive, has to get rid of some generals. Begin, if he wants to survive, has to get rid of Sharon. We, if we want to survive, have to get rid of all of them."

## Palestine: land of the Palestinians

It is of course true that Begin's efforts to wipe out the Palestinian liberation movement and set up a client state in Lebanon led to the massacre. But the slaughter at Shatila and Sabra was not simply the result of Begin's territorial ambitions or moral blindness. On the contrary, it stems from the basic nature of Zionism itself.

Zionism represents the effort to set up a Jewish national state in Palestine despite the fact that another people, the Palestinians, already lived there. To justify the creation of Israel the Zionists denied the existence of the Palestinians as a people with a land and history of their own. And to achieve their conquest of Palestine they committed crime after crime to destroy the Palestinians as a unified people, and waged war upon war to force the Arab nations of the Middle East to accept the existence of Israel.

From the origins of the modern Zionist movement in 1897, Zionist leaders claimed that Palestine was "a land without a people, waiting for a people without a land." Every Zionist government has repeated this claim. In 1969, for example, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir declared: "It was not as though there was a Palestinian people... and we came and threw them out and



Bodies of the dead lay piled in the streets after massacre in Beirut.

took their country away. They did not exist."

In reality the leaders of the Zionist movement knew very well that the Palestinians existed, and determined from the start to expel them from their country in order to establish the state of Israel. Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, noted in his diary that it would be necessary to "spirit" the Palestinians out of their country by denying them work in a Jewish state. And in 1940 Joseph Weitz, a Zionist leader in charge of Jewish emigration to Palestine, noted: "Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country... There is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries; to transfer all of them, not one village, not one tribe should be left."

All elements of the Zionist leadership cooperated to implement this policy. While many early Zionist leaders claimed to be socialists seeking to build an egalitarian, communal society in Palestine, they always excluded the Palestinians from any share in that society. A "Revisionist" faction within the Zionist movement—that included Menachem Begin—openly called for the military conquest of Palestine and the expulsion of the Palestinians, and was often condemned by the Zionist-"socialist" leaders. But ultimately, the major difference between the two was that the Revisionists made no effort to hide the goals of Zionism, while the "socialist" leaders sought to conceal them under diplomatic maneuvers and left-wing slogans.

During the years between World War I and World War II, when Palestine was a British colony, the Zionist strategy was enshrined in three slogans: Con-

quest of the Land; Conquest of Labor; and Produce of the Land. Conquest of the Land meant that Zionist settlers should buy up every inch of Palestinian land they could—mostly from absentee landlords—while refusing to sell land to Palestinian farmers or even to hire Palestinians to work on their land.

Conquest of Labor meant that Zionist employers should refuse to hire Palestinian workers. Indeed, the Zionist labor union, Histadrut, banned Palestinians from membership. And Produce of the Land meant that the settlers should buy and sell only from each other while boycotting all Palestinian-produced goods. To enforce this threefold strategy the Zionists did not hesitate to attack even those Jewish settlers who bought Palestinian goods or hired Palestinian workers.

Such policies naturally provoked the hostility of the Palestinians. In fact, the isolation of the Jewish settlers in Palestine was not primarily the result of anti-Zionism or anti-Semitism among the Palestinians, but the deliberate goal of the Zionists themselves. Through this strategy the Zionist leaders sabotaged any possibility of compromise between the settlers and the Palestinians, and destroyed the economy and culture of the Palestinian population.

## Zionist wars of terror

These early attacks were only the prelude to the full-scale assault on the Palestinian people that accompanied the Zionist conquest of Palestine in 1948. The Zionists unleashed a campaign of terror designed to frighten the masses of Palestin-

ians into abandoning their homes and leaving the country. Israeli troops bombarded Palestinian villages with mortars, rockets and special weapons—the so-called barrel-bombs—designed to wreak havoc in urban areas. At the same time, the Zionist media added to the panic by broadcasting that the Zionists were using poison gas and even atomic bombs, that cholera and typhus epidemics were spreading, giving deadlines for the Palestinians to leave and even pointing out the roads they should take.

The most notorious of these attacks took place in 1948 at Deir Yassin, where over 200 Palestinians—who had enjoyed relatively friendly relations with the Israelis—were slaughtered. The massacre was the work of the Irgun, a right-wing Zionist terrorist group led by Menachem Begin. The official Zionist military organization, the Haganah, denounced the Irgun's action—then signed a formal alliance with the Irgun just three days after the massacre.

To safeguard their conquest of Palestine the Zionists have constantly sought to demoralize and disperse the Palestinian exiles who continued to struggle for the recovery of their homeland. In 1953 the Israeli government secretly set up a special paratroop force, Unit 101, to carry out terrorist raids on the Palestinian refugee camps in neighboring Arab countries. In its first operation on October 14, 1953, Unit 101 killed 66 men, women and children in the Jordanian village of Qibya, driving them into their homes with gunfire and then blowing them up in their houses. At the time, the Israeli government said the raid was the work of "frontier settlers," and denied that the Israeli army had anything to do with it. But less than two

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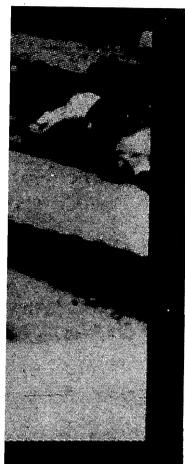
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years later it openly proclaimed a "policy of reprisals" and promoted the members of Unit 101 as national heroes.

In addition, the Zionists launched a series of wars against their Arab neighbors aimed at forcing them to accept the Zionist conquest of Palestine and abandon the Palestinian cause—and to satisfy the Zionists' own expansionist ambitions. In the wars of 1956 and 1967 the Zionist military machine, heavily supplied by the U.S. and Western European imperialists, rolled over its Arab opponents. Through the 1967 "Six-Day War," Zionist territory expanded to include the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and—until the deal between Begin and Egypt's then-president, Anwar el-Sadat—the Sinai peninsula.

## History of oppression used by Zionists

The Zionists have created a series of myths to cover up the reality of their oppressive policies in the Middle East. They insist that Israel is both the rightful home of the Jewish people and an island of democracy and Western culture in the region—what Herzl called

"a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism." Successive Zionist governments have claimed that they want nothing more than to live in peace with their neighbors. But they say the very existence of Israel is threatened by Palestinian "terrorists" and hostile Arab rulers. Consequently, the people of Israel allegedly have had no choice but to fight for their survival and achieve "secure and defensible borders."

Zionist propagandists have been able to perpetuate these myths in part by basing them in the very real history of the Jewish people as victims of persecution and oppression. For centuries the Jews have lived as pariahs. They have been discriminated against, forced to live in ghettos, periodically deprived of their property, driven from one country to another, and subjected to anti-Semitic pogroms. The culmination of this tragic history was the murder of over six million Jews in the Nazi Holocaust.

Given this history, the Zionist rulers have had little difficulty convincing the Israelis, Jews outside Israel and the Western world as a whole that the Jewish people of Israel are the victims, not the aggressors, in the Middle East. Moreover, they argue that

the world that stood by and did nothing while Jews were slaughtered in the Holocaust has no right to criticize any actions an Israeli government takes to defend the Jewish people of Israel. And even those Jews who have misgivings about such actions are reluctant to make them public out of fear that any such criticism only aids the cause of anti-Semites who want to destroy not only the state of Israel, but Jewish people wherever they are found.

The notion that the Jews are the victims in the Middle East is combined with a sense that the Jews have achieved a moral superiority over other peoples precisely because of their historic victimization, and are incapable of acting as oppressors. According to Judaic teachings, the Jewish people were chosen by God to serve as an example of justice and mercy for humanity until such time as God sends a Savior to redeem the Jews and, with them, all humankind. Jewish tradition asserts that by entering into a Covenant with God to observe His laws, and by remaining faithful to this Covenant despite constant oppression, the Jewish people would be a model of righteousness for all the world to follow. While this notion was supposed to engender humility,

among many Zionists it has become a sense of moral superiority over everyone else. As U.S. Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler put it: "What has given us, historically, the strength to stand the attacks of the world? Our sense of rightness. The only thing that enabled us to withstand the torments of the centuries, the martyrdom, was our sense of moral superiority."

## Crisis of conscience for world Jewry

This self-conception initially led many U.S. Jews to reject outright the possibility that an Israeli government—a Jewish government—could have been in any way responsible for the massacre in Lebanon. As one rabbi insisted: "The history of Jewish people is too full of massacres and pogroms, and the injunctions of Jewish law are too powerful a force in Jewish consciousness, to have permitted or even countenanced a Jewish role in this awful incident."

But it is precisely the myth that the victimized Jewish people could never become oppressors that has been so seriously challenged by the massacre. Before the eyes of the entire world an Israeli government not only permitted the massacre to occur, just as non-Jewish regimes permitted the Holocaust, but actually collaborated with the murderers. Today it is the Israeli rulers who are hypocritically claiming that "we are not responsible, we did not know," just as the rest of the world tried to excuse its complicity with the Holocaust.

To be sure, the protesters condemning Begin and Sharon around the world have not yet begun to question the Zionist program itself. But the protests do open the way for the Jewish people of Israel and their supporters to re-examine all the myths the Zionists have created in order to cover up their oppression of the Palestinian people.

The triumph of Zionism was a tragedy not only for the Palestinians, but for the Jewish people as well. By embracing Zionism the Jewish settlers who went to Palestine to escape anti-Semitic oppression became an oppressor nation themselves, treating the Palestinians with the same cruelty that the Jews suffered for centuries. The Zionist state is rapidly developing into the South Africa of the Middle East, a nation in which a small Westernized elite survives only by holding an entire people in bondage. And the Palestinians have become the world's new Jews, an oppressed and increasingly dispersed people without a homeland.

Moreover, despite all the crimes the Zionist rulers of Israel have committed to conquer and hold onto Palestine, they cannot provide the long-term security that the people of Israel desire. For all its bluster the Zionist state is a ghetto with guns, justifiably hated and feared by its neighbors. Despite its military strength, this state ultimately survives only because the U.S. and other Western imperialist powers provide it with arms and economic assistance. But the capitalist rulers of these countries are themselves anti-Semites who will abandon the Zionist state whenever it suits their broader imperialist interests to do so, just as they abandoned the Jews to the Nazis. When that day comes the Jews around the world will pay a terrible price for the Zionist conquest of Palestine.

The Jewish people in Israel and elsewhere must realize that far from providing them with security, the creation of the Zionist state has created the conditions for a new Holocaust. They can escape this trap only by joining with the Palestinians to establish a democratic secular state as part of a socialist federation in the Middle East; and by joining with oppressed people everywhere to fight for freedom and justice against the capitalist system that is the cause of the oppression of Palestinians, Jews and the majority of people of the world. □



## Mexico...

(Continued from page 3)  
force and a state-controlled labor movement.

Furthermore, though the country is clearly bankrupt today, U.S. imperialism can't afford to let it go under. In addition to its long-range military and economic importance to the U.S., the immediate fate of several major U.S. banks hangs in the balance. "It's a dilemma," a U.S. official admits, referring to a bailout,

"but the alternatives are less attractive."

Imperialist leaders know very well that Mexico is only one of a dozen bankrupt national economies today, each posing the threat of world-wide financial chaos. Brazil, for example, is \$80 billion in debt. Argentina owes \$40 billion. And these are just the biggest.

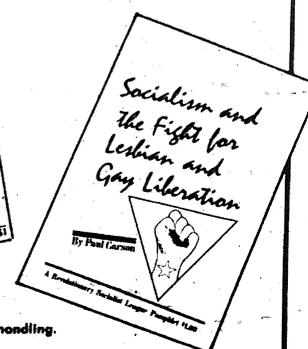
"The Americans have confidence because they have to have confidence," remarks one Bra-

zilian observer. "They have so much money here that they cannot possibly let the word spread that Brazil is not going to pay the debt." But all the confidence in the world won't get the bills paid.

Even though the Mexican system has survived this latest crisis, its long-term prospects are not good. Despite López Portillo's leftist rhetoric, Mexico is actually shifting to the right, and closer ties to the U.S. are certain to follow. Incoming President Miguel de la Madrid is for it, and so is the military. Mexico's new middle class is fighting mad and will turn first to the right—probably to the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN, the National Action Party). But so far neither the right nor the left has any strong popular base, leaving the military, perhaps in alliance with the PAN, as the most likely contender for power when the present system crumbles. Several U.S. government and business sources are certain that it will crumble, maybe even before the end of De la Madrid's six-year term, and they are saying so openly.

While much of the ruling class is privately predicting a Mexican disaster, none of them can propose a serious solution. It's like the joke going around Mexico City these days, delivered in properly rhetorical "López Portillo" style: "The country has been brought to the edge of a great abyss. And now we must take a giant step forward." □

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# DISPUTE IN UNITED SECRETARIAT REVEALS CRISIS OF TROTSKYIST THEORY

By ROD MILLER and RON TABER

This is the fourth part of our series on the political struggle taking place within the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec), the international organization with which the SWP is affiliated.

As we explained previously, the heart of the fight is a proposal by the SWP leadership (headed by Jack Barnes) to abandon the USec's long-standing efforts to build a Trotskyist international party. In its place, the Barnes leadership is arguing for the formation of a new organization, a "mass Leninist international," based primarily on the Cuban Communist Party, the Sandinist government of Nicaragua and the ruling New Jewel Movement of Grenada. The new perspective represents a significant shift toward an open rapprochement with Stalinism and as such requires that the SWP shed what remains of its already heavily diluted Trotskyism. The proposal has provoked considerable opposition both within the SWP and the USec as a whole.

To date, the public manifestation of the faction fight is a debate between Doug Jenness, editor of the SWP's newspaper, the *Militant*, and Ernest Mandel, long-time theoretical spokesperson for the USec, over the relative validity of the theories put forward by Lenin and Trotsky prior to the Russian Revolution concerning the nature and course of that revolution. We believe the Barnes leadership chose this issue as the battleground—it initiated the debate in the pages of *International Socialist Review* last October—to lay the basis for a more complete break with Trotskyism in the future.

In the dispute, Jenness, representing the Barnes leadership of the SWP, has argued that Lenin's theory of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry was correct and that Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution did not prove to be a guide to action during the revolutions of 1917. Mandel, for his part, responded with a defense of the theory of Permanent Revolution and a critical assessment of Lenin's formula. Neither side has openly stated that this historical and theoretical discussion is directly linked to the USec's fight over its fundamental theory and program, much less attempted to show how they are connected.

That is where our articles come in. Originally, this was to be a three-part series: the first, an exposition of our view of the debate within the Russian Marxist movement over the nature of the Russian Revolution. As we wrote at the time: "This is a necessary starting point since the public polemics between the SWP leadership and Mandel have thus far been confined to this question." We went on to say that the second part would "summarize and evaluate the differing views on this question being put forward by the SWP leadership and Ernest Mandel." Finally, we said, "we will attempt to explain what is really going on within the USec, what the possible results of the faction fight will be, and the importance of the dispute to the international left."

Readers who have followed the series may realize that it has strayed from its original outline. Basically, it has become much more elaborate, as we have attempted to sketch as much of the background of the current dispute as we can within the confines of a monthly newspaper format. In our opinion, the theories under discussion and the historical events in which they figured are neither well-known nor well-understood among many on the left today, and we have tried

## Part Four: The Post-War Expansion of Stalinism and the Fourth International

to be as thorough as possible in providing the necessary information and analyses to understand what is happening in the USec. Moreover, we believe that in one form or another the issues being fought over in the USec involve what we see as the most fundamental question facing the Marxist movement today: Namely, what is the left fighting for? Or, posed another way, what should the left be fighting for? These are not easy questions and in this series we are, admittedly, laying the basis for raising our own answers.

The positive response we have received to the first three parts of this series has encouraged us to continue our slower, more careful, and more complete approach. To this end, we discussed last month the so-called Trotsky/Stalin dispute and the way that Stalin distorted Lenin's formula of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry to further the conservative, narrowly nationalistic aims of the emerging bureaucracy in Russia. This fourth part takes up the dilemma faced by the Trotskyist movement as it tried to use Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism to explain its expansion into Eastern Europe in the years immediately following World War II.

Readers who are just now beginning to follow this series are encouraged to read the first three parts, which are available by writing to our offices. For those interested in following the public dispute in the USec itself, the articles by Jenness and Mandel appear in the November 1981 and April and June 1982 issues of *International Socialist Review*, monthly supplement to the *Militant*.



In numerous books and articles written in the 1920s and '30s, Trotsky elaborated his analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the nature of the Stalinist regime. This analysis became a central theoretical underpinning of the Trotskyist movement and provided the frame-



Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin meet to divide spoils of war at Yalta in 1945. Trotsky had believed that both Western capitalism and Stalinist bureaucracy would collapse because of World War II.

work for its struggle against Stalinism both before and following Trotsky's death in 1940.

Trotsky's analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy was put to a severe test, however, in the aftermath of World War II, when the leaders of the Allied powers—Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin—agreed on a division of the spoils that ceded control of Eastern Europe to the Russians. As we shall see later in this article, Stalin used this control to transform the countries of Eastern Europe into societies that were virtually identical to Russia. These events had neither been predicted by Trotsky nor could they easily be explained in the context of Trotsky's theory. Thus the Trotskyist movement was forced to evaluate and explain, as concretely as possible, the transformations that had taken place and their implications for the revolutionary movement.

Unfortunately, Trotsky's theory did not prove sufficient to guide the Trotskyist movement in this period, and the movement underwent a profound political crisis that persists to this day.

To understand the cause and nature of this crisis, we need first look at the political capital Trotsky left the movement on the question of Stalinism.

### Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism

The central thrust of Trotsky's analysis was an attempt to explain how the Stalinist bureaucracy had arisen within the revolutionary regime and had deprived the Russian workers of political power.

Trotsky based his analysis on the Marxist understanding of relative scarcity. He noted how the material poverty of

revolutionary Russia—a semi-developed land devastated by World War I, the imperialists against the Bolsheviks and the 1918-21 civil war—made it impossible to shorten the workday, raise the cultural level of the workers and peasants and carry out the other tasks essential to building a socialist society.

Trotsky argued that such extreme scarcity gave rise to a bureaucracy that sought to secure material comfort and its monopolistic control over the means of production and the state, at the expense of the masses of people. As he put it in *The Revolution and Its Betrayal*, his major work of 1936:

"If the state does not die away, but grows more despotic, if the plenipotentiaries of the state become bureaucratized, and the bureaucracy becomes a new society, this is not for some secondary psychological relics of the past, etc., but is an iron necessity to give birth to and support a new minority so long as it is impossible to guarantee equality." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, Merit Press edition, p. 55.)

In Trotsky's view, the failure of working class revolutions outside Russia was a crucial factor in the degeneration of the post-October regime. Not only had the world revolution in the period from 1917 to 1921 demoralized the Russian workers and weakened their ability to resist the usurping of power by the bureaucracy, but more fundamentally, these defeats had made it impossible for the Soviet government to obtain substantial support from abroad. This meant that revolutionary Russia was unable to overcome relative scarcity, the chief obstacle to building a classless and stateless society.

Trotsky described how the bureaucracy consolidated its position led it to increasingly strip the workers of the rights they had won in the revolution. The bureaucracy had stamped out the last vestiges of democracy, the soviets, trade unions, other mass organizations in the Bolshevik Party itself. It had wiped out the influence of women and youth in the first years of the revolution, stirred up Great Russian chauvinism and oppressed the non-Russian nationalities within the USSR. These policies all served to heighten the exploitation of workers and other oppressed classes. As Trotsky wrote:

"...the new state resorted to the old methods of pressure upon the muscles and nerves of the workers. It grew up a corps of slave drivers. The workers' industry became superbureaucratic. The workers' influence whatever upon the management of the enterprise, the piecework payment, hard conditions of material life, lack of free movement, with terrible police repression of the life of every factory, it is hard for the worker to feel himself a 'free workman.' In this sense he sees the manager, in the state, the employer." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 241.)

Trotsky believed that the bureaucracy would increase its power and privileges, and its attack on the living conditions of the workers and peasants would weaken the workers' state and ultimately lead to the restoration of the nationalized property and the re-establishment of the capitalist system. Thus he branded the bureaucracy the potential agent of capitalist restoration in Russia.

Trotsky did not believe, however, that the bureaucracy was unambiguously counter-revolutionary. Instead, he thought it played a contradictory role: what he considered to be its contradictory role was state property. On the one hand, Trotsky believed the bureaucracy was undermining the nationalized property; he also observed that the bureaucracy derived its power from its control over the state apparatus and the nationalized property; therefore, Trotsky would work to maintain that state property.

The bureaucracy as a whole, he wrote, "is a state property as the source of its power. In this aspect of its activity, it still remains a proletarian dictatorship." (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 249.)

On balance, however, Trotsky believed that the bureaucracy was undermining the social foundations of the workers' state and preparing the way for counter-revolution. Unless the degeneration of the workers' state were reversed, he believed, capitalism as a means of production would triumph. Trotsky thought this would occur through the imperialist conquest of the USSR or a counter-revolution by a right-wing, pro-fascist faction of the bureaucracy, or some combination of the two.

Trotsky emphatically denied that the workers' state could stabilize its rule on the basis of the workers' property. He saw only two possibilities: the restoration of traditional capitalism, or a new proletarian state.

"The political prognosis has an alternative: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will create new forms of property and plunge the country into capitalism; or the working class will crush the



(Continued from previous page)

a matter of months. But the rest of Eastern Europe remained under Russian occupation. (For a detailed discussion of this period see, for example, Hugh Seron-Watson, *The East European Revolution*, Praeger, 1956.)

As the war drew to an end, workers throughout the region had revolted against German occupation, many in the belief that the advancing Russian armies would aid their struggle for liberation and socialism. In the summer of 1944, for example, armed partisans in Warsaw, Poland, and in Slovakia (eastern Czechoslovakia) rose up against the German forces as the Russian armies approached. In September of that same year, when the pro-Nazi puppet government of Bulgaria collapsed, workers in Sofia and other Bulgarian cities formed militias, arrested thousands of fascists and disarmed the police. Bulgarian soldiers elected soldiers' councils, hoisted the Red Flag and refused to obey their officers. In Czechoslovakia, in May 1945, there was a mass uprising in Prague, and workers throughout the country formed workers' councils that took over the management of the factories.

But the Russian military commanders, as well as the Stalinist cadres from the pre-war Eastern European Communist Parties who had returned from Russian exile with the occupying forces, opposed all these struggles. In Poland and Czechoslovakia, the Russian armies refused to aid the partisan uprisings in the summer of 1944, allowing them to be brutally crushed by the Nazis. In Bulgaria, the Russian-



Warsaw residents set up barricades at beginning of 1944 uprising. Stalin betrayed anti-Nazi rebellions in Eastern Europe.

controlled government that took over in September 1944 ordered a return to "normal" military discipline and the reinstatement of dismissed fascist officers; it branded strikers "diversionists," "anarchists" and "enemies of the state," and threw them into jail. Similarly, in Czechoslovakia, the Stalinist-led coalition government (established in Kosice in March 1945) moved, at first cautiously but then decisively, to strip the workers' councils of their control of the factories. In a decree issued in October 1945, control was handed over to appointed managers.

Having suppressed the mass struggles and neutralized or disbanded the workers' and soldiers' councils, the Russians then moved to consolidate their economic and political control over the region. At first, the Russian authorities set up coalition governments that included bourgeois parties and were nominally headed by pre-war bourgeois politicians, including those of the extreme right. (For example, a leader of the pro-Hitler wing of Romania's National Liberal Party before the war, Gheorge Tatarescu, became vice-premier in the Russian-controlled coalition government ruling Romania after March 1945.) Behind the cloak of these "coalitions," however, the Russian Stalinists concentrated real power in their own hands and those of their local henchmen.

Everywhere, the Russians' first objective was to seize control of the state machinery, particularly the army, police and secret police. As the Stalinist leader in Hungary, Matyas Rakosi, would later put it: "There was one position, control of which was claimed by our party from the first minute. One position where the Party was not inclined to consider any distribution of the posts according to the strength of parties in the coalition. This was the State Security Authority . . . We kept this organization in our hands from the first day of its establishment." (Speech of February 29, 1952, cited in *Problems of Communism*, 1952, No. 4, p. 35.)

Once in control of the organs of state repression, the Stalinists, backed up by Russian troops, moved to gain more direct political control over the states in the region. This was often done by engineering fraudulent elections or by insisting on the formation of governments that did not reflect the election results. Bogus conspiracies were "uncovered," opposition newspapers were censored or closed down entirely and activists in the peasant, Social-Democratic and Trotskyist parties were physically attacked, arrested or murdered. (See, for example, the *Militant's* extensive coverage of these events in 1945-47.)

The new Russian-controlled regimes carried out extensive, though incomplete, nationalizations of industry. This process took place at different speeds in different countries; nationalization in Poland and Czechoslovakia was

basically completed by 1946, while elsewhere it took longer. By late 1947/early 1948, under the impact of the heightening Cold War and attempts by U.S. imperialism to intervene politically and economically in Eastern Europe, the Russian authorities and their Stalinist allies had destroyed the remaining independent parties, taken total political power into their own hands, completed the nationalization of industry and significantly intensified the exploitation of the workers in the occupied countries.

Not surprisingly, the workers of Eastern Europe resisted these developments. Wildcat strikes (for example, in the spring of 1946 and in September 1947 in Lodz, Poland; in early 1947 in Czechoslovakia), slowdowns, absenteeism, and other forms of workers' struggles were prevalent throughout this period. The Stalinist regimes responded by jailing the workers, calling them "terrorists," "wage and norm swindlers" and "capitalist agents."

By 1948, Russia had fully consolidated its rule over most of Eastern Europe. The traditional capitalists had been kicked out and industry nationalized and put under a state plan. These countries had been transformed into more or less carbon copies of Russia.

It is crucial to recognize that the transformations in Eastern Europe in no sense were brought about by socialist revolutions. In no country did the working class successfully rise up, smash the ruling class and the old state apparatus, establish organs of its own rule and set up a proletarian dictatorship. Indeed, where the workers did revolt, they were

smashed—either by the Nazis, with the passive consent of the Stalinists, or by the Stalinists themselves.

The initial response of the Fourth International to the Red Army occupation of Eastern Europe was consistent with Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism. At the end of 1944, an SWP convention report stated: "The Red Army, an instrument of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy, is used to prop up capitalism in Romania, Bulgaria, etc."

A few months later, the SWP's magazine elaborated the FI's attitude toward these events:

"The Kremlin ruling caste far from providing a bureaucratic impulse to civil war in Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and other countries under Red Army occupation is brutally stifling every independent effort of the masses to overturn the rule of their capitalist exploiters. . . . The Red Army . . . is now the main prop of capitalism in eastern Europe." ("The USSR and the Struggle Against Stalinism," *Fourth International*, February 1945, p. 60.)

Even when some of the Eastern European regimes began to nationalize industry, the leaders of the FI did not change their view that the Stalinist bureaucracy was acting to protect traditional capitalism in the occupied territories. Early in 1947, for example, Mandel, at the time the Fourth International's main writer on problems of theory, asserted that the nationalizations "in no way change the capitalist character of the 'buffer' nations; they merely express . . . the total incapacity of the native private capital of these countries to develop and even to run industry." ("The Soviet Union After the War," *SWP International Information Bulletin*, March 1947, p. 12.)

The Fourth International maintained this basic perspective on Eastern Europe through its Second World Congress in April-May 1948. The Congress majority resolution, presented by Mandel, held that the Eastern European states were still capitalist. Specifically, the Eastern European countries were said to represent "an extreme form of Bonapartism," that is, dictatorial regimes that defended capitalism independently of the capitalists who had either fled or been expropriated. Mandel argued that the destruction of capitalism was "impossible without a revolutionary mobilization of the masses." ("The USSR and Stalinism," *Resolution of the Second World Congress, Fourth International*, Vol. 9, No. 4, June 1948, p. 119.)

Mandel played down the growing state ownership in Eastern Europe (already very extensive, as we have seen) as purely temporary, merely a "step-by-step limitation of the privately-owned sectors." He argued that the changes could become permanent only if there were mass-based revolutions that overthrew capitalism and ended the exploitation of

Eastern Europe by the Stalinist regime in Russia:

"This situation can only be transitional. It must end either in the bureaucracy's withdrawal from its position, under the pressure of imperialism, or in the real destruction of capitalism, which can take place only as a result of the revolutionary mobilization of the masses, and the elimination of the special forms of exploitation, introduced by the bureaucracy in their countries." ("The USSR and Stalinism.")

By 1948-49, however, this analysis was a good deal out of line with reality. The Stalinists had virtually completed the nationalization of industry and held a monopoly of political power throughout Eastern Europe. It was becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the fact that there was no fundamental difference between the social systems in the so-called "People's Democracies" of Eastern Europe and that in the USSR.

This presented the Trotskyist movement with a serious dilemma: What was the nature of the social system in the Eastern European countries? The traditional capitalists had been expropriated, the major sectors of the economy nationalized. The free market had been eliminated and the economies were now managed through state plans. All the old parties, bourgeois, petty bourgeois and Social-Democratic alike, had either been outlawed or totally subordinated to the Stalinist parties. The region was ruled, economically and politically, by bureaucracies built around state and party apparatuses—backed up by the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy itself.

The working class of Eastern Europe was in shackles. There had been no successful proletarian uprisings, and the current Stalinist rulers had derailed or crushed whatever mass struggle had taken place at the end of the war. Trotskyists, honest Communist Party members who tried to defend the workers' interests and ordinary strikers filled the Stalinists' prisons.

To see in all this a socialist revolution would be to accept ideas that were the antithesis of Marxism. It would open the door to the notion that capitalism could be overthrown, and the dictatorship of the proletariat established, without a working class revolution. It would mean rejecting the key lesson Marx and Engels drew from the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 and that Lenin hammered home in *The State and Revolution*: That to overthrow capitalism and secure their rule, the workers would have to smash the existing capitalist state machinery, not simply take over and reform this same apparatus.

It would mean that capitalism could be destroyed through the crushing of the proletariat and that there could be "workers' states" in which the working class did not control—and had never controlled—the state.

For the FI in particular, it would mean that, contrary to Trotsky's basic view, the Stalinist bureaucracy was not counter-revolutionary but was actually an agent of revolutionary change. Finally, to accept the idea that workers' states had been established in Eastern Europe would call into question the very need for the Fourth International. After all, if the Stalinist bureaucracy was capable of overthrowing capitalism and creating workers' states, what was the need for a distinctly Trotskyist party? Why should one be a Trotskyist at all?

The FI thus faced an agonizing choice: It could consider the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe to be some kind of socialist, workers' states—and thus throw overboard the most fundamental ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Or it could decide that the countries of Eastern Europe remained capitalist and that Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky were indeed correct about the need for working class revolutions to smash the capitalist state.

But the dilemma went even deeper than this. If the FI decided that the states of Eastern Europe were capitalist, it would be forced to consider the possibility that Russia, too, was capitalist. It would require the FI to reassess its view—and Trotsky's—that the Russian state somehow remained proletarian, despite the fact that it was in no way controlled by the workers themselves.

Indeed, major leaders of the Fourth International were aware at the time that their dilemma involved the most fundamental ideas of revolutionary Marxism. At an SWP Political Committee meeting in 1949, James P. Cannon, then the leader of the Socialist Workers Party, argued:

"I don't think that you can change the class character of the state by manipulations at the top. It can only be done by a revolution which is followed by a fundamental change in property relations. . . . If you once begin to play with the idea that the class nature of the state can be changed by manipulations in top circles, you open the door to all kinds of revisions of basic theory." ("Stenogram of Discussion in the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on the Buffer Countries," *SWP Internal Bulletin*, Vol. XI, No. 5, October 1949, pp. 25-27.)

How the Fourth International dealt with this issue will be the subject of our next article.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



1 The REVOLUTIONARY LEAGUE is an organization to the fight for world's people—free from hunger; from racism, national, sexual, age oppression; from priv wars—freedom from

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# WHAT WE STAND FOR

## Program in Brief of the Revolutionary Socialist League

**1** The **REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE** is an organization dedicated to the fight for freedom for all the world's people—freedom from poverty and hunger; from racism and all forms of national, sexual, age and class-related oppression; from privileged rulers and wars—freedom from capitalism.

We believe that this fight is more necessary than ever. Today, the world capitalist system is sliding deeper and deeper into a massive economic, political and social crisis. This crisis is bringing conditions as bad as or worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s. In all countries, the ruling classes are responding to the crisis by bludgeoning down the living standards of the masses of people and curtailing our rights. Unemployment and wage-cutting, cutbacks in social services and a beefing up of the repressive apparatus—the police, military, prisons, etc.—are all part of the capitalist attack. As in the 1930s, the crisis is paving the way for the rise of fascist groups eager to impose their genocidal solution on humanity.

Internationally, the crisis will cause the battles among the different blocs of national capitalists to flare into full-scale wars, as each seeks to defend and increase its power, markets, investment outlets and control of natural resources against the others. Twice already this century the capitalists have fought devastating world wars, in which millions of people died. Now, with the development of huge nuclear arsenals capable of blowing up the planet hundreds of times over, human civilization itself hangs in the balance.

Thus the continued existence of the capitalist system is pushing us closer every day to depression, fascism, world war and possibly total destruction.

**2** We in the RSL believe there is an alternative to all this. That alternative lies in the workers, small farmers, peasants, unemployed, national and other oppressed minorities, youth, women, lesbians and gay men—in sum, the downtrodden and persecuted people of every society—uniting together to overthrow our common enemy, the capitalist system, and establish **SOCIALISM**.

This will require a **REVOLUTION** in which the masses of people fight to seize control of the governments, banks, means of transportation and communication, factories, fields, mills and mines. A revolution would also have to smash the capitalists' state apparatus: their police and armed forces, their courts and prisons, their political bodies (legislatures, congresses, parliaments, etc.) and mammoth bureaucracies, and other institutions of capitalist class rule.

While such revolutions are most likely to develop on a national basis, we believe that to be successful they must become worldwide in scope. Capitalism is an international system, with a world economy and a world market. Only through an international socialist revolution can the workers and their allies eliminate all capitalist oppression and have access to the human, natural and technical resources necessary to solve the problems confronting human society.

**3** In place of the dictatorship of the capitalists, the RSL believes working and oppressed people can build a cooperative, humane world society. Run by workers' councils and other mass organizations of farmers, housewives, soldiers and specially oppressed groups, the new society would provide the fullest democracy for the vast majority of people, while ruthlessly suppressing the capitalists and those who seek to get ahead by stepping on the backs of others.

Although the destructive legacy of capitalism would be severe, a truly democratic, mass-controlled government could begin to reorganize society to fulfill human needs, not provide a privileged existence for tiny elites. Resources currently thrown into the military, for example, could be used to end hunger, build housing, schools, roads, etc. The workweek could be shortened, creating jobs for millions of unemployed people.

In ways such as these, the inequality and scarcity that lie at the heart of capitalism's dog-eat-dog competitiveness could be eliminated. People would increasingly have no reason to get over on others, and the material basis of classes, the state, racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry would disappear. Increasingly, everyone would have the time and opportunity to develop their full human potential; everyone would become truly **FREE**, able to control their own destinies.

This is our vision of **SOCIALISM**. It will not be easy to achieve. And it is not inevitable—people have to want it and fight for it. But we believe it is the only alternative worth fighting for.

**4** Socialism does not exist anywhere in the world today. What is called socialism in countries like Russia, China, Cuba, Albania, Poland, etc., is **state capitalism**, a 20th century variation of traditional, private shareholding capitalism. In the state-capitalist (often called Stalinist) countries, as in the "regular" capitalist nations, a small elite dominates society, making all the decisions and reaping all the benefits. Working and

oppressed people have no more control of the factories and other workplaces, the economy, the government or anything else than do workers in traditional capitalist countries. The state-capitalist ruling class controls the state apparatus and nationalized industry, while the workers are in the position of being wage slaves, chained to a giant capitalist machine.

In these countries—as in all the countries of the world—**REVOLUTION** is the only way to establish real socialism and win freedom for all working and oppressed people.

At a time when the struggle between the world's two main imperialist powers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., is being portrayed wrongly as one between capitalism and socialism, democracy and totalitarianism, the RSL believes it is more important than ever to take a clear stand in opposition to capitalism in all its forms and to fight for a revolutionary, libertarian vision of socialism.

**5** In the coming period, as the capitalist crisis intensifies, we expect mass movements and mass struggles—both of the right and the left—to break out with increasing frequency around the world. The question is: Will these upheavals lead to fascist dictatorships, state-capitalist transformations, a new world war—or an international socialist revolution that puts all the capitalist garbage behind us?

The RSL believes that the last outcome can be brought to pass only with the active intervention and political leadership of a disciplined international revolutionary working class party. This party, and its sections in countries around the world, is needed to educate and organize workers and other oppressed people about the cause of their misery and the solution to it; to work in different movements and struggles to increase the class-consciousness and militancy of their participants; to combat reformist, social-democratic, state-capitalist, fascist and other leaderships that would derail mass, popular struggles and lead them to certain defeat; and to help unite the different forces oppressed by capitalism into a massive assault on the system.

The existence of revolutionary working class parties does not guarantee victory. But without them, the more-organized and powerful enemies of socialist revolution will surely triumph.

The RSL considers the construction of a revolutionary party in the U.S. and around the world to be our main strategic task. In so doing, we reject any and all elitist notions that have come to be associated with such parties: that the party stands separate from and above the working class; that the party may use any method, no matter how base or dishonest, to gain leadership of the masses in struggle; that its goal is to form a one-party state within a supposedly socialist society. Our goal is a society where human beings can consciously shape their own existence; we see a revolutionary party simply as the vehicle through which this can be made possible.

**6** The RSL identifies itself in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, particularly the pioneering theoretical work of Marx and Engels; the conception of the party, the stress on the importance of national liberation struggles and the anti-statism shown in **The State and Revolution** of Lenin; and the fight against Stalinism of Trotsky. But we also identify with the best of anarchism, particularly its libertarian spirit. And we hold in no less regard those leaders throughout the ages who have fought against various forms of exploitation and oppression: from Spartacus to Harriet Tubman, from Emiliano Zapata to Malcolm X.

We believe it is crucial for the left to rid itself of the state-capitalist baggage which it has carried for far too long. To do so requires a careful evaluation of the theoretical underpinnings of the modern left, from Marx to the Russian Revolution to the current day. Only in this way can the best of our heritage—the fight against oppression and for revolutionary socialism—be preserved and the worst of it—an infatuation with technocratic planning and strong states—be discarded. Revolutionaries must be the vanguard in the fight for common decency and true freedom. It is to that fight the RSL is committed, body and soul. Join us!

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