

In Defense of Marxism

\$3.00



Africa: the Suffering Continues

A child collapses along the trail to a feeding center in southern Sudan, as a vulture waits nearby.

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Who We Are

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism is published by an independent collective of U.S. socialists who are in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International, a worldwide organization of revolutionary socialists.

Supporters of this magazine may be involved in different socialist groups and/or in a broad range of working class struggles and protest movements in the U.S. These include unions and other labor organizations, women's rights groups, antiracist organizations, coalitions opposed to U.S. military intervention, gay and lesbian rights campaigns, civil liberties and human rights efforts. We support similar activities in all countries and participate in the global struggle of working people and their allies. Many of our activities are advanced through collaboration with other supporters of the Fourth International in countries around the world.

What we have in common is our commitment to the Fourth International's critical-minded and revolutionary Marxism, which in the twentieth century is represented by such figures as V.I. Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Leon Trotsky. We also identify with the tradition of American Trotskyism represented by James P. Cannon and others. We favor the creation of a revolutionary working-class party, which can only emerge through the conscious efforts of many who are involved in the struggles of working people and the oppressed and who are dedicated to revolutionary socialist perspectives.

Through this magazine we seek to clarify the history, theory and program of the Fourth International and the American Trotskyist tradition, discussing their application to the class struggle internationally and here in the United States. This vital task must be undertaken if we want to forge a political party in this country capable of bringing an end to the domination of the U.S. imperialist ruling class, establishing a working people's democracy and socialist society based on human need instead of private greed, in which the free development of each person becomes possible.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism is independent of any political organization. Not all U.S. revolutionaries who identify with the Fourth International are in a common organization. Not all of them participate in the publication of this journal. Supporters of this magazine are committed to comradely discussion and debate as well as practical political cooperation which can facilitate eventual organizational unity of all Fourth Internationalists in the United States. At the same time, we want to help promote a broad recomposition of a class-conscious working class movement and, within this, a revolutionary socialist regroupment, in which perspectives of revolutionary Marxism, the Fourth International, and American Trotskyism will play a vital role.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism will publish materials generally consistent with these perspectives, although it will seek to offer *discussion articles* providing different points of view within the revolutionary socialist spectrum. Signed articles do not necessarily express the views of anyone other than the author.

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True Lies? Or Just Plain Lies? — What the U.S. Government Says About Cuba

by John Daniel

In early August, U.S. news sources flooded the media with reports that thousands of “anti-Castro” protesters had demonstrated in Havana. This was meant to bolster U.S. government propaganda that the Cuban people hate Castro, “his” government, and the revolution. Not until weeks later did reporters like Maria Newman, writing in the *New York Times*, admit that the real reason for the protest was the growing inequities within Cuba under the U.S. embargo. She reported, from conversations with participants, that “they... hurled rocks at hotels where tourists were staying and at stores that sell goods only for dollars.” Unreported was a subsequent rally of 600,000 in support of the government.

Later Fidel spoke for four hours on national television about the situation: “I understand the frustration of living in these difficult times...” He later went on to imply that those who could not bear up under the current hardships would not be obligated to stay. Over the following days approximately 15,000 people in boats and rafts took to the waters north of Havana. U.S. Coast Guard vessels, waiting a mere 7 miles off Cuban shores, transported them to the illegal U.S. naval base at Guantánamo, Cuba. There they have been waiting ever since and, as of this report, some 255 have asked to be returned.

State Department spokesperson Margrett Tutwiler insists that the “Cuban refugee crisis” is a Cuban political maneuver and that the tightening U.S. trade embargo has nothing to do with people wanting to leave Cuba. However on August 28, Gizelle Fernández, reporting for CBS News made two telling statements, “Castro still has wide support from the people,” and, “most of those leaving are leaving for economic reasons.” Still more telling is the fact that agreements between the U.S. and Cuba, signed under the Bush administration, allow emigration for 28,000 Cubans per year but the U.S. has only granted 2–3,000 visas per year. Even under the Johnson administration, during the war in Vietnam, 200,000 Cubans were granted U.S. visas, proving that it is purely a Clinton administration policy creating the current “crisis.”

The U.S. government wants us to believe that human rights abuses, not the U.S. embargo, are driving thousands of Cubans to leave the island. However, what they tell us and what they tell themselves are two different things. Earlier this year a secret State Department memo was leaked and circulated to members of the United Nations. The memo was sent by Joseph Sullivan, head of the U.S. Interests section in Havana, to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), and the

INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service), and discusses the difficulties encountered in attempting to find legitimate cases of human rights violations in Cuba. The following text was excerpted from *Granma International*, March 16, 1994.

FROM: US INT. SECT. HAVANA
TO: SEC. STATE, WASHINGTON
CIA
INS
DATE: January 94
REFERENCE: H/18422/693-4
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE CUBAN REFUGEE PROGRAM

I. Overview

The processing of refugee applicants continues to show weak cases. Most people apply more because of the deteriorating economic situation than a real fear of persecution. Cases presented by human rights activists proved particularly difficult for USINT [U.S. Interests Section in Havana] officers and INS members. Although we have tried hard to work with those human rights organizations on which we exert greater control to identify activists truly persecuted by the government, human rights cases represent the weakest category of the refugee program.

Applications by human rights groups members are marked by general and imprecise descriptions of alleged human rights activity, lack

Editors' Note: No to U.S. Intervention in Haiti

As we go to press, a U.S.-led “multinational force,” in numbers reported up to 20,000, is entering Haiti. Our next issue will take up this critical development in detail. For now we will make a few essential points.

This intervention is *not* to restore democracy. The top leaders of the Haitian military, who three years ago overthrew and exiled the first democratically elected president in Haiti's history, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, have promised to leave office by mid-October (although such promises have been broken before). After that (if it happens) Aristide is supposed to return to serve as president for a few months, until February 1996.

But Aristide would be a president without power. The military machine that overthrew him would remain intact. The U.S. forces in Haiti have the explicit mission of reorganizing and strengthening the very same Haitian military and police that overthrew Aristide and imposed a reign of terror on the majority of Haitians who voted him into office.

Token representation in the occupation force by 20-odd United Nations countries, including what Clinton called “almost all of the Caribbean community,” is just window dressing. The U.S. imperialist military power is the real force involved, just as it was in the Korean War, the Gulf War, and Somalia.

This intervention will not bring democracy or self-determination to Haiti. It will not benefit the mass of the Haitian people, and their eventual resistance can be expected, leading to loss of life for U.S. soldiers and continued loss of life for the poor of Haiti. Haiti's workers

and peasants are the ones to rid Haiti of the military dictatorship, not Big Brother from the North. This intervention will benefit only the tiny Haitian elite, the less than one percent who own most of Haiti's wealth, who are served by the brutal army and police, and who in turn serve their big business allies in the U.S.

U.S. Marines occupied Haiti for 19 years, from 1915 to 1934, during which time a Haitian army and police were “trained” and payments on Haiti's foreign debt were regularized. The result was a series of military dictatorships that served the interests of U.S. banks and corporations while brutally suppressing the impoverished Haitian people. The end result of Marine occupation was the Duvalier dictatorship, with its death squad gangs, the Tontons Macoutes. The result will not be much different under this new occupation.

Even more dangerously, this intervention is aimed as a precedent against Cuba, and as a warning to insurgent mass movements in Brazil and Mexico. Clinton explicitly named Cuba as the only other “dictatorship” remaining in the Americas, besides Haiti, implying that there too “democracy” must be imposed. The intervention in Haiti follows in the train of earlier ones in Grenada and Panama. If the U.S. military could get away with intervention in those Caribbean nations, to rearrange their governments, why not another? Why not Cuba, if or when an opportunity favorable for U.S. imperialism arises?

We urge our readers wherever possible to join in public opposition to this intervention. Above all, join the National March on Washington November 12 whose demands include “No U.S. invasion of Haiti” as well as “End the economic embargo on Cuba.”

Join the National March
and Rally to:

End the U.S. Economic
Blockade of Cuba!

November 12, Washington, D.C.

Called by: the November 12th
Coalition.

For more information call
202-452-5966.

(proposed march from Malcolm X
Park to White House)

demonstrable evidence of persecution, and do not meet the basic criteria for processing in the program. Common allegations of fraudulent applications by activists and of the sale of testimonials by human rights leaders have continued in recent months. Due to the lack of verifiable documentary evidence, as a rule USINT officers and INS members have regarded human rights cases as the most susceptible to fraud.

II. Assessment

The decrease in the number of political prisoners led the State Department and the INS three years ago to work together in expanding the categories for processing in the Cuban Refugee Program. Professionals dismissed from their jobs, human rights activists, and members of religious faiths suffering persecution were introduced as new categories, with processing guidelines developed for each to ensure a fair consideration of cases.

During later INS visits, USINT made a deliberate effort to include cases from all of the categories. As an average, it included ex-political prisoners, religious members, human rights activists, and other cases.

We continue to select for prescreening only cases of probable INS approval. The approvals reflect the careful analysis of cases and the good understanding between USINT officers and INS visiting members.

Although USINT has tried to cover cases in line with the processing criteria, it has nonetheless preserved its flexibility to present cases that may fall short in some areas but represent an interest to US.

A deteriorating Cuban economy has provided incentive for new economic migrants to seek the refugee program. Additionally, the expansion of the categories has contributed to an increase in the number of applicants.

It is brazenly acknowledged now by some of the reintegrated ex-political prisoners that they apply for refugee status as a means to escape the deteriorating economic situation, and not because of a current fear of persecution or harassment. Others seem to have been pressed to request refugees status by their adult children hoping to leave with their parents. Most of these adult children of elderly, often retired, ex-political prisoners do not meet the criteria for refugee status in their own capacity.

Regrettably, the general quality of many of the applications is poor. Few of the ex-political prisoners accepted now as refugees would have been accorded such a status in previous years. As a rule, they have served much shorter sentences compared to the early entrants in the program. Most played lesser roles in counter-revolutionary groups, accepted political reeducation in order to have their sentences reduced, and later abandoned political activity to reintegrate into Cuban society.

A significant number of applications have also been received from individuals charged with attempting to illegally exit the country. With the depoliticization of "illegal exits" by the Cuban government, sentences for such charges were reduced. INS has generally regarded "illegal exits" as lacking political content.

The generally low quality of the cases, including those in the 1991 new categories, has not kept USINT from continuing to rely on documentary evidence (i.e., legal documents, dismissal notices, prison release letters) to determine the inclusion in the refugee program. Yet, this is not the case with most human rights applicants.

We have recorded an increase in the number of human rights cases since 1992. However, this increase did not stem from a higher level of human rights activity, membership, or government repression. The majority of cases rarely contain any demonstrable evidence of persecution and frequently give only minimal, hardly credible, evidence of participation in human rights activities.

The testimonials of human rights leaders generally carry vague descriptions of human rights activity, such as the moral support of family members of political prisoners. These descriptions accurately show the low-level activity and nonconfrontational attitudes of most human rights groups.

On the other hand, almost none of the cases show proofs of house searches, interrogations, detention, or arrest. The activists usually claim persecution by State Security, but they rarely can provide properly documented evidence of it. In some instances the applicant claims to have been subject to harassment without arrest. Interviewing officers end up having to rely virtually on what activists tell them.

The general trend has been one of lack of evidence to prove that the person is actually an activist, which leaves the category open for virtually everyone. Young men caught in the illegal exit attempts since the economic down-

turn in 1989 have tended to submit applications as human rights activists. Human rights leaders have told USINT officers that they know that most of their members joined only to take advantage of the refugee program.

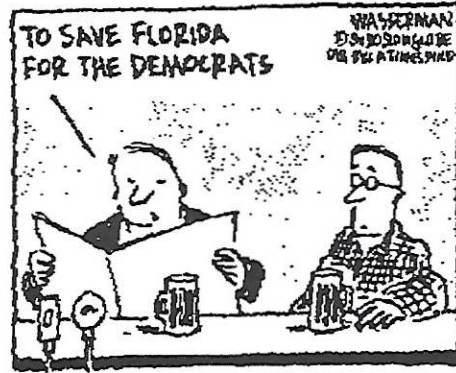
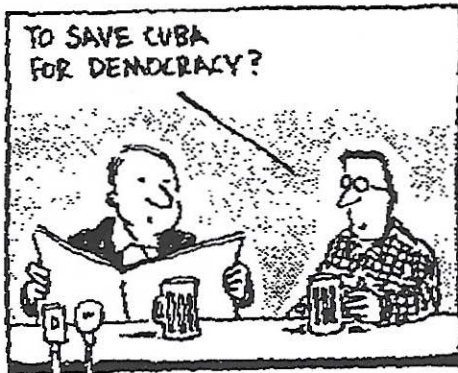
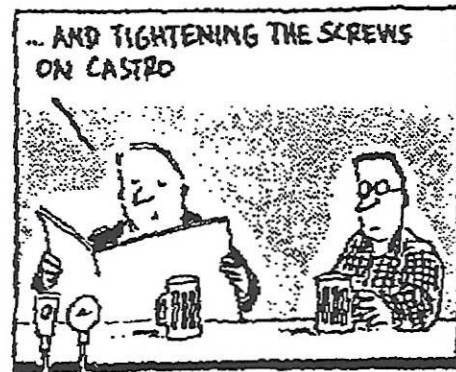
Since the inclusion of human rights activists as another category, we have kept a flexible and responsive approach to them. Human rights leaders such as Paula Valiente, the Aspillaga brothers, and others have received proper and quick consideration. A similar treatment has also been given to simple activists. In cases where the activist's supporting evidence is weak, but commitment to US is otherwise clear, prescreening officers have given the applicant the benefit of the doubt.

The leader of one group said that several people left his organization when they knew that it does not give testimonials to members. He complained of pressures from members to obtain strong testimonials of their human rights activity.

The latest INS visits have witnessed repeated incidences of fraud and allegations of fraud by human rights activists. USINT has attempted to address the problem through a revision of internal procedures to identify strong human rights cases. In addition, it met with heads of human rights organizations to determine the objectives, size and other aspects of the major human rights groups. USINT restricted as well the testimonials accepted from the groups to those from leaders we trust, aware that past divisions within human rights groups have produced allegations of unauthorized and fraudulent issuances of testimonials.

To our regret, not even these steps have prevented allegations of fraud and bitter recriminations among top human rights leaders. Shortly before the INS December visit, Gustavo Arcos and Jesús Yáñez of the Comité Cubano Pro-Derechos Humanos accused Aida Valdés of selling fraudulent avals. She, in turn, accuses Arcos and Yáñez of similar practices for economic profits.

Continued on next page



For Black Control of Black Organizations

The Firing of Ben Chavis: An Attack on African American Self-Determination

Editorial from September 1994 *Justice Speaks*

The firing of Reverend Ben Chavis as executive director of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] resulted from pressures outside of the national African American community. It was not called for by the over 500,000 dues-paying members of the NAACP. They had no vote in this matter. It was decided by a board of directors, whose obligations are more to the corporations, bankers, and other mainly white business interests that they work for and who help to finance the NAACP.

Chavis was beginning to change the direction and priorities of the NAACP, more to reflect the will of the working-class and younger NAACP membership. He was clearly promoting a mass movement in the interest of Black, other oppressed, working-class, and poor people, for women and others who are discriminated against in society.

At the 1993 30th Anniversary March on Washington, Chavis called for Black and poor people to march in the streets to pressure for democracy and progressive change against the racist, exploitive policies and practices of corporate America and the U.S. government. He spoke against U.S. imperialist foreign policy, calling

for mass support of the Freedom movement in South Africa and for democracy in Haiti.

Chavis's call for Black unity in opposition to oppression was consistent with the call for unity among African American youth to end their violent and destructive rivalry. His expressions of unity to Min. [Louis] Farrakhan [of the Nation of Islam] were no different than those made to others, like Jesse Jackson [and Angela Davis].

Chavis's main political weakness has been his emphasis on building an image of national Black unity and leadership *almost exclusively around Black upper middle-class organizations and personalities*. [Emphasis in original.] The African American Summit was an example. The Black upper middle class usually jumps ship when the going gets rough and leaves those most committed to grassroots struggle, like Chavis, to take the brunt of the corporate and government attacks and the media character assassination.

Paying money to discourage allegations of sexual harassment has allowed the media to obscure the racist and reactionary political nature of the attacks on Chavis. The media and the conservative elements in the NAACP have used this issue to question Chavis's integrity and accountability to the NAACP membership in

hopes of isolating him from mass support. This has not happened. But it must serve as a lesson. Chavis should have placed more faith in the masses and openly challenged these allegations.

There is no question, however, that Chavis must be held accountable for any acts of sexual harassment or discrimination against women — if he has committed such. The Black community, led by Black women, must fight uncompromisingly for justice on this issue, regardless of who it is.

They should not allow these charges, nor the Farrakhan issue of "hatred for Jews," as it is being projected by the establishment media, to hide the real political motives and organized conspiracy responsible for the attack on Chavis. Remember the FBI attempted to discredit Dr. King's leadership by painting him as a "womanizer." Let's not underestimate the system.

This drives home the point: Black people must have the right of self-determination to decide all aspects of the political and economic direction of our struggle for liberation. If the masses of Black people can't decide on the direction of our movement and the composition of our Black united front, then we don't have control of our own freedom movement, and thus lack the most basic right of self-determination. □

True Lies? Or Just Plain Lies? — What the U.S. Government Says About Cuba

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This situation increases the general concern regarding the danger of relying on the testimonials. The deep rivalries and infighting among the human rights groups make it simply inevitable [impossible?] for the recurrence of charges of fraud not to prevail.

Prominent activists have confessed their worries that the refugee program is robbing them of the few dedicated members while at the same time it has become a magnet for opportunists. During a meeting with USINT and the INS, Félix Bonne, the head of the group Corriente Cívica, called the refugee program "the primary focus of many human rights leaders and organizations."

The involvement by some of the best-known human rights leaders in Cuba in these serious allegations clearly illustrates that our refugee program has become a divisive and increasingly controversial focus of attention for many human rights groups, whose leaders appear almost obsessed with the program. USINT has even received appeals to give human rights organizations a formal role in the refugee program.

Our of the 225 cases presented by USINT to INS during its December visit, 47 claimed involvement in human rights activity although many fell into other categories, like professionals dismissed from their jobs and persons attempting to commit illegal exits. Although this

was our best effort to work with human rights groups to present the strongest cases, interviews clearly showed the weakness of most cases.

Of all 47 human rights cases, only one claimed a total of more than 30 days detention over the last five years for human rights activity, and even he could not provide evidence of the detentions. The rest, in general, only claimed house searches or a few undocumented summons to police stations. Most activists gave only vague descriptions of their involvement in human rights groups. And only 19 were finally approved.

Despite being only 20 percent of the total, human rights cases represented more than half of the denials. The overall refusal rate for the December visit as a result was 22 percent. This rate, although significantly higher than in past INS visits, has on the sideline the advantage of hopefully resulting in a higher level of activity by the groups.

III. Considerations

In the face of a general decline in the quality of the cases, including those involving ex-political prisoners, USINT will need to work harder in identifying the best cases. With a view to help in this effort, it will introduce additional changes in the processing of cases.

The problems encountered in the processing of the bulk of the human rights cases point to

the need for USINT to continue its close work with the INS to select strong cases.

However, the USINT will maintain the flexibility to present cases that may not meet all of the criteria but that given their nature may prove useful for US interests.

Given CIA's expressed interests in the subject of human rights, and its greater involvement with and better knowledge of the different groups, we suggest a closer cooperation with USINT in line with our common goals.

Sullivan

Obviously you won't find this memo in any U.S. newspaper. Perhaps for the same reason that during the Gulf War, out of 16,050 daily newspapers in the U.S., only one wrote an editorial against the bombing of Iraq — and that editor was subsequently fired (as noted by the media-watch organization, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting [FAIR]). The Cuban Revolution expropriated the capitalist class in Cuba; the news media is owned by the capitalist class in the U.S. The only way to find out the truth hidden from most of us is for us to mobilize in support of our brothers and sisters in Cuba and throughout the world. Our demand should be: End the Embargo of Cuba! □

Sinn Féin's Fundamental Error

by Bernadette McAliskey

Bernadette McAliskey was a key leader of the Northern Irish civil rights movement and of the "Battle of the Bogside" Derry uprising in 1969 which exploded the Irish national question into contemporary politics.

Surviving a brutal Loyalist assassination attack in January 1981 which left her gravely injured with multiple gunshot wounds, she has continued to fight for the nationalist cause from a socialist perspective, despite not being a member of the mainstream nationalist Sinn Féin.

*Her speech, sharply rejecting the "peace process" in its present form, was given at the Briefing AGM in London on July 2 and is reprinted from the July 1994 issue of *Socialist Outlook*, publication of the International Socialist Group, British section of the Fourth International.*

If you look at the parallels between Ireland, Palestine, and South Africa and if we evaluate them politically, those three struggles can politically clarify us on the principles underlying the oppression of those three peoples — and the principles underlying the struggle against that oppression.

Those of us involved in the struggle against imperialism can directly learn from one another. That's why we in Ireland try to get our hands on everything we can about the fight of the PLO and the ANC.

I can tell you that where I live, in a small Irish rural community, watching Yasser Arafat, we felt a profound anxiety about the Oslo talks. When the Oslo accords were signed in Washington, the 16- or 17-year-old Republican kids in Coalisland painted a large slogan on the wall, a very funny pun: "Yasser in the Middle East — No Sir in Coalisland!"

They recognized not only that a mistake of historic proportions had been made by the Palestinians, but they were in imminent danger of a similar mistake being made by their own leadership. Exactly the same mistake.

While we were debating and discussing in the Republican community, it was heartbreaking to me that people who could see quite clearly what was going wrong in Palestine were making the same mistakes in the Six Counties.

I think that the situation in Palestine has parallels with that which the Irish struggle faced in the 1920s. Michael Collins, in the leadership of the movement then, claimed that the partition deal done with the British was "the freedom to win freedom."

The "freedom to win freedom," the division of Ireland into two states, led to a strengthening of British imperialism and a weakening of the Irish national liberation struggle. I think in Palestine it will lead to a strengthening of Israel and a weakening of the Palestinian struggle. It confuses the issue and it divides the people.

What you get as an end result is a Palestinian policeman faced with an unfinished struggle and Palestinian dissidents. What you get is a "Free Stater." That's what we call them. What you get is a Blueshirt. What you get is a right-wing member of the Garda, like we have in the Southern Irish state, who doesn't have to time to deal with drug pushers or rape, because the whole mind-set of his organization is fixed on tracking down Republican activists.

With these kind of deals you end up further complicating the issue, because what you don't

have, whatever the decision is, is a democratic development from the bottom up. And in Ireland we are making exactly the same mistake.

Ireland Divided

The British created a divided Ireland after the war of independence. Having demobilized the struggle and, after the partition of Ireland, having set in train the civil war in the South, the British were very effective in neutralizing the progressive forces in Ireland.

People in Southern Ireland prefer not to tell you that the civil war was lost — or won — depending which side you're on. They will tell you that there was a civil war, it just happened, and then we went on to build the 26-county state.

After the civil war, most of the progressive elements of Irish society had been forced to emigrate, were imprisoned, or were so demoralized that they fled to the mountains, or they fought and died in the Spanish civil war.

That's what happened to the progressive elements in Irish society — except for the nationalist community in the North. The issue was fragmented and we were forgotten about. The British continued to oversee and finance the undemocratic state in the North, and it continued that way until the mass civil rights movement exploded in the Six Counties in the late 1960s.

We have had 25 years of unbroken struggle; and that is represented outside of Ireland as 25 years of "the Troubles." I assure you the trouble has all been ours. We have had 25 years of overt military occupation. Many people who have been to the West Bank, or to South African townships, in this last period of struggle will tell you that the intensity of military occupation is higher in the North of Ireland.

So we have had 25 years of unbroken struggle, but somehow this becomes 25 years of "war," or 25 years of "terrorism" if you believe the British. But what has not been recognized is the breadth of struggle at the base, which is not just the "war."

This has been expressed in community organizations, in women's organizations, in prisoner's welfare organizations, a dense mass of people's self-organization. That has been the base of struggle in the North.

The political leadership and manifestation of that struggle has been Sinn Féin. Without doubt, the biggest and unchallenged leadership of that struggle has been Sinn Féin. And in terms of the

military struggle, the leadership has been in the Irish Republican Army.

It is irrelevant what you think of these forces, those are the three main elements of the struggle — militarily the IRA, politically the Sinn Féin, and a huge network of base organizations, many of these organizations intermeshed with Sinn Féin, but many outside it.

This was the situation of the movement when we started to share the experience of the Palestinians. That's when we discovered the "talks process" — going back to the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985 and then the "constitutional talks," which broke down at this time last year.

The constitutional talks did not break down because of intransigence by the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the only organization based on the Northern nationalist community allowed to take part. They did not break down because of intransigence by the Irish government. Both were prepared to concede Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution, which states that the Northern Six Counties are part of the country of Ireland.

In fact, these articles were not in the gift of the SDLP or the Irish government. They are not a territorial claim, but a statement of fact on behalf of the Irish people, that the future of Ireland is in the hands of the people of Ireland. This is laughed at by Britain, which is so backward that it does not even have a written constitution!

Thus the constitutional talks did not fail because the SDLP and the Irish government were prepared to concede nothing. They were prepared to concede everything. But the Loyalists and the Unionists both walked out. That's where we were 12 months ago — the constitutional talks in ruins, and SDLP leader John Hume sitting with his back to the wall, wondering what to do next.

Fighting For Democracy

We continued demanding the creation of democracy in Ireland. And it has to be understood that when some of us talk about a "united Ireland" we are talking about a democracy — the democracy that was fought for in the war of independence, the democracy that was envisaged in the democratic program of 1918, a democracy first envisaged in the Wolfe Tone uprising of 1798.

We are not talking about extending the equally distorted and undemocratic state of the South. We are talking about the creation of a new democracy where the people of Ireland,

free men and women, can determine for themselves the principles under which we can govern ourselves.

You cannot have that if you are governed by somebody else who refuses to get out of the way — whether it's in Palestine, South Africa, or Ireland.

But our leaders forget that. They forget what we wanted. I have the utmost respect for Gerry Adams, but Gerry Adams made not a tactical error, but a fundamental error of principle, the same one made by Yasser Arafat in Palestine. We do not fight for democracy so that our leaders can engage in secret negotiations with anyone. That is not what democracy is about.

Secret Talks

That was a fundamental error by the leadership of Sinn Féin, an error on the question of democracy. They made a mistake on the basic issue of democracy when they decided to have secret negotiations with John Hume, and then come back and tell the rest of us about it.

Just as happened with the Hunger Strikes, just as happened with Catholic emancipation, just as happened in the 1920s, just as happened with the Land League — secret negotiations with the British lead to disaster. They lead to the British making treaties which are broken as soon as they are signed.

Gerry Adams went to John Hume and made a secret joint proposal, not telling the Irish people what it was. Irish Prime Minister Reynolds agreed with that proposal, but didn't tell anyone what it was.

Well I'll speak for myself. I did not spend the whole of my adult life in this struggle so that someone could come and say, "Here's a secret present from granny, but you're not allowed to see what it is."

We used to play that game when we were kids. Granny held out her closed fist and you had to say whether you wanted it. Only if you said "yes" were you allowed to see what it was. I gave up playing that game when I was five years old.

Downing Street Declaration

We ended up with the Downing Street declaration, which says we can have peace only if the IRA would have a permanent ceasefire.

I say what many people in the broad democratic movement say: if there's a "peace process," then show me the process. Show me the process by which we get from war to peace, justice, and freedom.

But the British say, "Well, if you don't have a ceasefire, then you can't get into talks." That poses the question, "Why are we going into talks? What are we going to talk about?" And the British say, "We can't tell you what we're

going to talk about unless we have a ceasefire. But we can tell you that it is part of the peace process."

In the midst of all that, what have we gained and what have we lost? To see it, you have to look at the Downing Street declaration agreed between the British and Irish governments.

In fact, there's very little in the document, only about 12 lines, which is the joint opinion of the British and Irish governments. One thing that is [in the document] is the guarantee that there will be a decision on Irish unification *held separately within the North and the South, but not in the two together simultaneously*. That just guarantees the Loyalist veto, because they have the majority in the North: it's a reinforcement of partition not an attack on it. The Downing Street declaration is a joint agreement to *rebuild the structure of the Northern state*.

Think what is being asked of the nationalist community in the North. We are being asked not just to demilitarize our struggle but to guarantee that we shall never again lift up arms in struggle, to give up arms forever. But if we were really getting freedom, they wouldn't even have to mention that.

The whole debate is being debased in this "process." It's being reduced to "peace or war." "Do you want more people to die?" The whole issue has been removed from its context, and the villains of the peace are the people who are militarily opposing British military occupation.

There is no mention here of demilitarizing the British army, nor of demilitarizing the Loyalist assassination squads, who are armed and trained by the British. No talk of disarming them. And no talk of dismantling the state's array of repression — the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Emergency Provisions Act, the right to harass and attack kids in the street. That's not even in the discussion.

Is there a commitment in the Downing Street declaration for an end to discrimination, to the end of religion-based apartheid, for the right of the nationalist community to live in dignity? No. And within all this talk of "power sharing" we need to ask, "Who is going to share power with whom? And who going to be left powerless?"

The British government is playing on the political weakness of our own movement. They have under way a process designed to strengthen the structures of the existing Northern state. How do they intend to do it?

Integrating an Elite

What they want to do is integrate an elite into a new political arrangement which doesn't challenge the existence of the Six County state — the Catholic OBE's, the aspiring middle classes,

those people who for 25 years didn't wet their fingers in struggle.

You've got to have a totally blinkered and dogmatic view not to see what the British are up to, and why they're trying to drag Sinn Féin into this "process." They want a minimum of changes, a minimum of concessions, just enough to get a certain proportion of the Catholic community to change their allegiances.

Of course this will not be acceptable to sections of the Protestant community who regard it as "capitulation." And make no mistake, in order to deal with them, the British are preparing an attack on them too. They are demonizing what they call the "Protestant underclass," a disgusting phrase, the poor Loyalists who never got much out of the Six County state, despite their utter and bigoted loyalty to it. The Brits are preparing just to inter them if they resist.

One way of approaching such a deal, which would integrate sections of the Six County Catholic middle classes, is to discuss some form of "joint sovereignty" with the Southern government. The nationalist community should reject this.

Two Undemocratic Governments, North and South

Brendan Behan once said: "There is no condition of human misery which cannot be made infinitely worse by the arrival of a policeman." I want to update that. There is no condition of misery of the Northern Ireland Catholics which cannot be made much worse by the addition of the Southern Ireland government.

But with "joint sovereignty" we would be faced with *two* right-wing, undemocratic governments, limiting our ability to fight for democracy and progress in Ireland.

The internal debate in the Republican movement in which I am involved now is an attempt to make those I love dearly behave in a democratic fashion.

But I have to say: no deal made in secret is binding on me. The struggle to create democracy also means a struggle for democracy in our own ranks.

If rejecting the British attempt to derail our struggle means we have to fight on for another 25 years, then so be it. Let those who are tired rest. Lest those who want to retire, retire.

Right in the middle of O'Connell Street is Parnell's statue, and on it are inscribed the words: "No man has a right to set the boundary of the right of a nation." I say: no organization has a right unilaterally to call the struggle to an end, to set limits on democracy. Over my dead body. □

Outstanding Fight by Soo Line Workers

Clinton Back-to-Work Order Puts Strike on Hold

by David Jones

On August 29 President Clinton signed an Executive Order directing members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) on strike against the Canadian Pacific-owned Soo Line Railroad to return to work. The strike began on July 14 and was the longest U.S. rail strike in 16 years.

Clinton's directive was issued under the authority of the 1926 Railway Labor Act, which allows the president to order the suspension of a railroad strike for a 60-day "cooling-off period." Under the provisions of the act, Clinton appointed a so-called Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) of three rail arbitrators, which has 30 days to investigate the dispute and make nonbinding recommendations for settlement. The parties to the dispute, i.e., the rail carrier and the union, then have 30 days more to consider the recommendations. If the PEB's findings are not accepted by either party, theoretically the railroad can unilaterally implement its last proposal and/or the union is free to strike. Another likely alternative would be for the company and the union to agree to an extension of the cooling-off period. This would avoid the dilemma in which the only alternative to a resumption of the strike would be to call Congress back from recess to legislate a solution.

Another Imposed Contract?

What has happened in the past — notably in the 1988 UTU strike against the Chicago and North Western (C&NW) line, the 1991 national strike by the UTU, and the 1992 national lockout by the rail carriers — is that Congress has imposed the concessionary PEB proposals by enacting them into law, and virtually unanimously at that, with the overwhelming support of both parties.

What will happen this time is not so clear. The Soo Line Railroad, which was acquired by the Canadian Pacific (CP) in 1990, did not participate in national rail negotiations leading up to the 1991 imposed national agreement. Sixteen unions representing CP employees signed system-wide Soo Line agreements that were even worse than the 1991 national settlement. However, the UTU, which is the largest rail union, did not sign an agreement with the Soo Line and continued to work under the provisions of the 1985 national agreement while negotiations on a new contract went on. The CP/Soo demanded concessions that go even farther than those imposed in 1991, and the UTU resisted, holding out for parity with the 1991 national agreement and seeking to get back in step with upcoming national rail negotiations in 1995.

Whether the corporate bosses, who run the U.S. government and the Republican and Democratic parties, have any kind of political consensus on granting concessions to the U.S. subsidiary of a Canadian railroad, going beyond those now in effect on U.S. railroads, remains to be seen. While it is true that a further reduction in wages and worsening of work rules on the CP/Soo would tend to reinforce demands for similar concessions in the rest of the U.S. rail system in 1995, there may be some concern on the part of U.S.-based carriers that this might grant something to their giant competitor north of the border that they are not necessarily assured of getting themselves in 1995.

Rail Workers in No Mood for Concessions

Attempts to promote further concessions on U.S. railroads in 1995 by the president of the UTU at a meeting of top union officers in Denver last spring resulted in a stinging rebuke, with the proposal voted down 92 to 13.

Further, there is deepgoing anger among rail workers at the blatantly pro-carrier actions of Congress in 1991 and 1992, reflected among other things in the decision by the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE), the second largest rail union, to endorse Labor Party Advocates, not to mention instructing its president to defy any future government back-to-work orders. This, and the recent strike on the Long Island Railroad by the UTU, in which the federal government declined to intervene in the face of pleas from the railroad's managers, indicate there may be some reluctance to deepen the alienation and hostility of rail workers toward the politicians in both parties.

Strikebreaking by BLE Top Brass

The immediate impetus for Clinton's back-to-work order seems to have had more than one source. Most dramatic was the announcement on August 19 by Ronald McLaughlin, international president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE), that the BLE Board of Directors had voted to release its members on the Soo Line to cross UTU picket lines and go back to work without sanctions from their union. The UTU responded by threatening an extension of the strike to other railroads.

The BLE acted ostensibly because of some arcane disputes with the UTU over jurisdiction and membership that the BLE felt were affected by UTU demands in negotiations with the Soo Line. While it is true that there are running disputes between the two organizations con-

cerning jurisdiction over the locomotive engineers craft (about 20 percent of engineers belong to the UTU rather than the BLE), these issues are not new, and for the most part are national in scope and will not be resolved one way or the other by any conceivable outcome of the UTU's strike against the Soo Line. Further, McLaughlin had stated after an August 9 meeting of the rail labor chiefs in Minneapolis that he considered these matters resolved insofar as they had anything to do with the strike.

The truth is that the BLE's action was reprehensible strikebreaking, no doubt adroitly stimulated by CP management, playing on the intrabureaucratic wars between the UTU and BLE top dogs. The good news was that out of some 470 BLE members on the Soo Line only about a dozen went back to work, including one in the Twin Cities and none in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Kansas City, major Soo Line terminals. The positive side to this affair was the reaffirmation that intercraft solidarity in rail is not something imposed from the top, but a deeply held principle. Other crafts, such as clerks, car repairers, maintenance of way, and others, who were probably suffering economically from the strike more than the engineers, held the line, and strong statements rejecting the BLE's action were issued by their leading officers.

Nevertheless, on Friday, August 26, the UTU served notice that after 48 hours it would consider itself free to extend the strike to connecting railroads, such as the Burlington Northern and the C&NW, over which the CP/Soo was diverting massive amounts of traffic. Under the Railway Labor Act there is no legal prohibition against taking such action, and the UTU's notice was undoubtedly a major factor in Clinton's intervention.

Harvesttime Transport Crisis

Another factor in prompting Clinton's back-to-work order undoubtedly was the mounting transportation crisis affecting Midwest agribusiness as bumper crops were being harvested but could not be shipped, beginning with the wheat harvest in North Dakota, soon to be followed by the corn and soybean crops in Iowa and Minnesota. Some Iowa newspapers ran editorial calls for government intervention and Iowa Senator Tom Harkin was raising similar concerns. While Iowa agribusiness interests undoubtedly have more in common with the CP bosses in Montreal than with Iowa rail workers, their immediate interests may have diverged

significantly for the moment under the impact of the strike.

At this point, what is most important is that although the strikers were unable to force the CP to capitulate after 45 days on strike, they went back to work undefeated, and with a ringing affirmation of rail labor solidarity, as the BLE ranks rejected the scab-herding efforts of their international officers. This was an especially significant achievement because of the differences between this strike and past rail strikes. In this case Canadian Pacific was free to continue to operate 75 percent of its rail system, located north of the U.S. border. This

giant corporation has large interests in gas, oil, minerals, and timber, as well as transportation. Its transportation section alone generates about \$6 billion a year in revenue, with no more than \$400 million of that from the Soo Line. Canadian law outlaws the kind of solidarity action that U.S. rail unions gave the UTU in the strike. Despite all these formidable obstacles facing the workers, the CP/Soo was unable to produce the result that its labor negotiators had promised management — a major defection across picket lines.

There is no doubt that the CP never expected a strike of more than a week or two. However,

once into it, they adjusted their perspectives and dug in, relying on their enormous financial resources to try to win a war of attrition with the workers. The treachery of the BLE international leaders was just the break they were banking on, but even it failed to produce.

It remains to be seen how this contest, transferred for the moment to the political plane, will proceed from here. One thing is sure: the outstanding fight put up by the Soo Line rail workers over the past weeks will be a major factor in the outcome. □

Toledo Conference to Focus on Labor Action Program and Need for a Labor Party

A labor educational conference to be held in Toledo, Ohio, the weekend of December 10–11, 1994, is drawing broad support from trade unionists in the Midwest and elsewhere.

The conference will focus on two questions: "What Should Labor's Action Program Be Today?" and "Should a Labor Party Be Established Now in the U.S.?"

Keynote speakers will be:

Bob Wages, International President of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers Union, and

Jed Dodd, General Chairman, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, Pennsylvania Federation.

The conference will take place following devastating defeats suffered by the labor movement on three of its top priorities: NAFTA, striker replacement, and national health care. The December gathering will provide a timely opportunity to draw lessons from these defeats, assess the acute problems faced today by the labor movement and the working class as a whole, and discuss a program for dealing with these problems.

Two sets of workshops are scheduled for the first day of the conference. These deal with a labor action program. The titles of the workshops are: Jobs, National Health Care, Privatization, Oppressed Minorities, Independent Labor Candidates, Strike and Lockout Solidarity, Women's Rights, Labor Law Reform, Workers's Compensation, and Foreign Policy.

On the second day of the conference, the workshops will report their recommendations to a plenary session followed by discussion and straw votes.

Panel on "Should a Labor Party Be Formed Now?"

A high point of the conference will be the panel debate on "Should a Labor Party Be Established Now in the U.S.?"

Panelists will include:

Ajamu Dillahunt, President, American Postal Workers Union Local 1078 (Raleigh, NC)

Don Dudley, President, American Flint Glass Workers Local 700 (Toledo, OH)

Marian Kramer, President, National Welfare Rights Union (Detroit, MI)

Joe Lindenmuth, President, Steel Workers Local 2255 (Cleveland, OH)

Jim McNeil, President, United Auto Workers Local 600 (Dearborn, MI)

Greg Somerville, President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 39 (building trades, Cleveland, OH)

Sam Theodus, President, Teamsters Local 407 (Cleveland, OH)

Rosemary Trump, President, Service Employees International Union Local 585 (Pittsburgh, PA)

Baldemar Velasquez, President, Farm Labor Organizing Committee (Toledo, OH)

Dave Watts, President, United Paperworkers International Union Local 7837 (Staley workers, Decatur, IL)

Dave Yurick, President United Rub-

ber Workers Local 7 (Bridgestone/Firestone workers, Akron, OH).

As of September 6, 1994, conference co-sponsors include: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 100; American Flint Glass Workers Local 700; Farm Labor Organizing Committee; Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers Local 7-622; Oil Chemical & Atomic Workers Local 7-9123; United Rubber Workers Local 1014; National Welfare Rights Union; Midwest Labor Party Advocates; and United Catering, Restaurant, Bar and Hotel Workers Local 1064, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

Speakers for the workshops include a range of leaders and activists from the labor movement, social movements, and academia. The conference call, due in October, will provide further details.

Two years ago a labor educational conference held in Detroit sponsored by Labor Party Advocates drew 250 people. This year's conference has the potential to attract a sizable turnout as well.

The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn/Southwyck, in Toledo. It is open to anyone interested in attending.

Registration fee is \$15.00 for employed, \$2.00 for unemployed. The hotel room rate is \$55.00 for up to four people. For further information, write Labor Conference, c/o OCAW Local 7-912, 2910 Consaul St., Toledo, OH 43605 or call 419-698-1757. □

—Jerry Gordon

Conversation with a Staley Worker

by Michael Frank

Recently, at a conference of the socialist organization Solidarity in Cleveland, I had the opportunity to speak with Bill, one of the workers locked out of the A.E. Staley Manufacturing Company in Decatur, Illinois. He was part of a group traveling to Midwestern cities to spread the news of their struggle and raise money for those living on \$60 a week strike pay. We saw a video of a demonstration in which workers were gassed by the police. Participants at the conference contributed over \$1000. The fact that these workers solicited support from a socialist organization and were not afraid of being red-baited is significant in itself.

Some 750 workers have been locked out of the plant for 14 months. Bill explained to me that the plant was making money before the lockout, but management was not satisfied and wanted even higher profits. They began to reorganize the work process in an attempt to increase output. Jobs previously done in the plant were contracted out to nonunion shops, job classifications were not respected, and workers were expected to be "flexible" and perform tasks ordinarily done by other workers. The skilled trades were broken up to create the new classification of "general maintenance workers," 12-hour rotating shifts consisting of three days on and three days off replaced previous work schedules, and management tried to speed up the pace of work.

The workers were proud of the production figures they had achieved in the past and felt that only they knew how to run the plant in a way that would maximize output. From listening to Bill it was clear that these workers identified with the enterprise and wanted to run it efficiently. They believed that management's methods of contracting out and breaking up the trades would, in addition to destroying their jobs, actually reduce production. As they saw it, management's greed was undermining the viability of the plant. In defending their jobs they were also defending the quality of production.

For example, workers were convinced that it was more efficient to do work in the plant than have it contracted out. Bill was a sheet metal mechanic and described how he would first speak to the machine operators to determine exactly what they needed and then custom-make the piece. This pride and precision were sacrificed when jobs were contracted out.

Rotating shifts played havoc with workers' lives, disrupting sleep patterns and family life. As one of them stated in the union's publicity, "You owe your soul to your job; you're either working or you're sleeping and you rarely see your family."

To pressure management to back off from its restructuring plan, the workers initiated a work-to-rule campaign, in which they did only what

management directly ordered them to do and withheld the normal degree of cooperation and independent judgment and decision making essential in making the plant run smoothly. This can make operating a plant very troublesome indeed. Bill gave an example. If someone were asked to wash the floor, he would do it, but then leave the hose on. A manager would scream, and the worker would reply that no one had told him to turn off the hose. Production dropped by one-third.

To counter this offensive, management brought in nonunion workers from other plants to closely monitor and harass other employees. The workers nicknamed these men "nannies." The nannies would watch other workers as they adjusted the dials and tell them they were doing it wrong. On one occasion a nannie started adjusting the dials himself. The worker responded menacingly, "Keep your hands off those dials. That's my job. I'm responsible for that. The next time you touch those dials I'll break your fingers!" A battle with management ensued over who had the right to regulate the dials. Disregarding the legalities of the capital-labor relationship and the management rights clause in their contract, the Staley workers see themselves as having an almost inalienable right to their jobs. "All we want is what we had before," Bill explained.

In order to monitor and control workers' mobility within the plant, management required them to carry two-way radios. This tracking technique was subverted by the workers in various ways. They would rub the radios against their pants to produce static or break into a chorus of "Solidarity Forever."

Management forced workers to attend meetings to listen to its views on the upcoming contract. On cue, workers would turn their backs, slip on Groucho Marx eyeglasses, noses, and mustaches, and turn around to face the speaker. The work-to-rule campaign enraged management and, judging by the relish with which Bill recounted these incidents, was gratifying as well as fun for the workers.

Management locked the workers out when it became obvious that their resistance to further restructuring could not be overcome. By this time the workers had dug in and become resolute in their struggle.

The workers have published a pamphlet about the dangers of working at Staley. Chemical processes are used to extract the corn products — such as corn syrup and corn starch — that this plant produces. Bill described one of the many incidents which had contributed to their determination. A worker inhaled noxious fumes while working in a tank and died. His wife had been informed and was waiting outside the plant. Before she had a chance to see her

husband's body, management asked her to sign papers relieving the company of all responsibility. She took the advice of the workers who were comforting her and refused to sign anything without first seeing a lawyer. This callousness and irresponsible attitude toward the workers, demonstrated in incident after incident, decidedly turned the workers against management.

The company also tried to pit Black workers against white workers. Black workers were told that certain white workers would use racial slurs when speaking about them. Up to this point Black workers had not been involved in the struggle, but they joined in when they discovered what management was doing. Bill, who is white, felt that the involvement of the Black workers is central. About 20 percent of the workers in the plant are Black. They have been able to obtain the support of local Black ministers.

Bill told stories of workers' solidarity and sacrifice that contrasted sharply with management's inhumanity and greed. One man lost his mortgage and house as a result of this long lockout, but he and his family have stayed with the struggle. Finding even part-time work is difficult for Staley workers as management has sent letters to local businesses describing them as wreckers and saboteurs, effectively blacklisting them. Another man, an older worker, was offered early retirement with a supplementary pension if he would abandon the fight. He refused, saying that he could not leave the men he had worked with for so many years to fend for themselves. Bill was clearly moved by these examples.

After locking out the workers, management hired a Louisiana union-busting firm to import scabs. Management claims to be achieving record production with these nonunion workers. But the workers know that management is lying. Moreover there is a rapid turnover of scab labor. The workers are confident that their production levels cannot be equaled, not to mention surpassed, by unskilled, incompetent, transient scabs. As workers picket outside the plant they see steam rising from places it never did before. They think that management is running hoses into these areas to produce the steam in an effort to deceive and demoralize them. In fact the plant is producing more hot air than corn syrup! Listening to Bill, I realized that the term "scab" is still very much a part of the vocabulary of the union worker. It has not been supplanted by "replacement worker," no matter how often this euphemism is repeated by corporations, the media, and union bureaucrats.

The workers have organized numerous demonstrations. During one the police assaulted the participants with pepper gas. One man, already overcome by the gas and disoriented, was

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Speech by a Surviving Strike Leader

The 1934 Strikes and What Needs to Be Done Today

by Jack Maloney

The following are excerpts from the remarks of Shaun ("Jack") Maloney at the July 17 Minneapolis labor picnic commemorating the 60th anniversary of the 1934 Teamster strikes (reported on in last month's BDOM). Maloney was introduced by a key organizer of the picnic, Teamster activist Gillian Furst.

Gillian Furst: The final speaker is Jack Maloney. Jack is the last still-living prominent figure in the 1934 Teamster strikes. Jack was in the thick of it throughout the strikes. He was assaulted by cops during the May portion of the strikes. On July 20, 1934, Bloody Friday, he was wounded when police opened fire on unarmed workers. Jack was a picket captain during the strikes. Farrell Dobbs, in his book *Teamster Rebellion*, refers to Jack Maloney as one of the union's outstanding picket commanders. After the strike leaders were arrested in July, Jack was part of a 3-member committee that met with Governor Floyd B. Olson demanding that the leaders be released. The authorities were hoping they would get a kind of weak rank-and-file committee, but the committee went in and said, "We're not talkin' about *nothin'* until you let our leaders out." Jack is a team player, a fighter, and a friend who remains true to trade union principles to this day

Jack Maloney: Sisters and brothers, this group is here today to listen to and talk about what happened in Minneapolis 60 years ago. It's been largely portrayed and written about, and I here today want to salute some various people who made it possible. The common concept is that Local 574 was born in the coal strike at the fuel distributors' yards in February 1934.

The truth of the matter is that the drivers union movement that created the strikes of '34 and the fight against the established political and constabulary order in this city began in 1930. It was started by two people who I hold in reverence, who had the courage, the knowledge, and the ability to pass on their knowledge to the younger people, of which I was one.

Two Who Made the Strikes Possible

Those two people were, first of all, Ray Dunne — that is, V.R. Dunne, or Vincent Raymond Dunne. He was one of the 16 Dunne brothers; there were 16 of them; they were brought in here in a sack of Irish potatoes. [*Laughter.*] The other one was Carl Skoglund.

Both Carl and Ray had been moved out of the Communist Party because of their disapproval of the way "Joe" [Stalin] was running things and their approval and support of Leon Trotsky.

And I'm not going to back up and say there was any reason to think it was wrong to hold a political belief. In fact, that's what we need today as much as we need labor unions. [*Applause.*]

What brought about the 1934 series of strikes, and there were three, was the understanding of Carl and Ray and their friend Jim Cannon, who later became the national leader of the Socialist Workers Party. And I'm not ashamed and no one else should be ashamed to admit that those people had the knowledge of how to do what needed to be done, and they were able to pass it on.

A Look at What's Ahead

Now I could talk a lot about the atrocities against the Teamsters movement in Minneapolis, and in general against the labor movement in this country in 1934. But I spent many years of my life as a merchant seaman sailing into the world's ports and I came across a myth in Australia. They have a peculiar bird down there they call the whiffle bird. Now, it flies backwards, because it doesn't want to know where it is going; it wants to see where it has been.

So I want to break with tradition here today and talk a little bit about the future as well as some of the past. I want to try and tie it up together in the few minutes that I have, to point out what's ahead of us for the next period. Now, I'm in my middle 80s, so I don't think it's probable that I'll be on this stand talking to you 20 years from now. Or maybe you won't be able to be here — unless something is done in the immediate future. [*Applause.*]

Democratic Party Record on Labor

We don't want to be whiffle birds. I can cite cases and cases and cases. And I'm not here to make a political speech. I just want to bring back the political record. Starting with the "Great Emancipator" whose theme song was "Happy Days Are Here Again," Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who saved this country's capitalist system from a social revolution in 1934. His follow-up guy was Harry Truman, the Democratic president of the United States, who broke more strikes than any other sitting president. He refused to call off World War II because he wanted the dictatorial policy of the War Labor

Board to use against people who were striking in peacetime, to threaten to put them in jail.

This is not the ramblings of an old man. This is the record. He enlisted some of the labor leaders to help him, notably the two Reuther brothers, James Carey of the Electrical Workers, and Sidney Hillman of the Garment Workers. And they did the job right after World War II in hand-braking the labor unions. They put in all sorts of new things.

Unlike them, John L. Lewis told Truman, when Truman was trying to break the mine strike with soldiers during the war, Lewis told him, "You can't dig coal with bayonets." Those words have to be remembered, brothers and sisters.

What we need in this country today is more picnics like this, picnics that are dedicated not only to take back our unions but our political rights in this country. Who did the damage in 1980? It wasn't the Republicans. And I'm not stooping for them, I'm not recruiting for them. But I'm going to tell you what the truth is. The sitting president then was the Goober King, James Carter, and he had a fat-faced fellow running around the country, Ted Kennedy, and they unloaded deregulation. They are the ones who did it. As a matter of fact that will remain, it was they who [through deregulation] destroyed much of the power of the Teamsters union.

In 1938 when I was a member of the first negotiating committee for 11 states on the motor freight agreement, we dealt with 1,700 employers representing 125,000 people — in 11 states in the Midwest. The recent strike of the Teamsters union for the entire nation involved 22 companies and 75,000 people. And that was the net result of — the cause of it was — deregulation.

Quit Believing in Slick Willy

We are going to have to quit believing in people like Slick Willy. [*Applause.*] (He's formally known, for your information, as William Jefferson Clinton.) He's betrayed the people who put him in office on every count. He was going to assure us that he'd break the filibuster [against the bill banning "striker replacements"]. Just a couple of days ago, it went down. There were only 7 senators keeping up the filibuster against the law that gives a person the right to strike [without fear of being replaced].

Somewhere along the line we're going to have to stand up and say that the Democratic Party is not "the friend of labor." We've got to have our own people that represent us and are responsible to us. [*Applause.*]

We sent people to Washington to make sure there would be no NAFTA, that we would get a health care plan, that we would not get involved in the GATT agreement. Now, I submit, I'm not telling lies. What happened to NAFTA? Slick Willy was around giving dams, and special benefits for special constituencies, and all sorts of goodies to get people to vote NAFTA in. And they got it across. Did you see him in recent weeks bending any arms or censuring anybody or getting on their case. He sent some weak telegram when he was over in Europe, saying

that it shouldn't be. But we are stuck; we can't protect our jobs by law against striker replacement.

A Labor Party & Shorter Workweek

What we need in this country is a labor party. And we need a shorter work day. A hundred years ago we were fighting for 8 hours. [*Applause.*] And what have we got today? What do we find the employers doing — if they've got any sense — what are they doing? The existing work force is working overtime and less and less people are being constructively employed. Less and less are long-term employed.

Peter Rachleff in an article just a few weeks ago made the announcement that the fastest growing industry in America is Manpower [a temporary jobs agency]. They've got a combined payroll of 540,000 employees, which is greater than the combined work force of GM and Ford Motor Company put together. These are the kinds of things, sisters and brothers, that we have to be concerned about. What kind of welfare, what kind of pensions, what kind of job security does Manpower give? And do you think that it can't come to you? Well, you damn right it will.

But the unions today are fighting back. And there's life in the labor movement. And don't listen to the Third Reich. That's what I call Robert Reich, Slick Willy's adjutant in charge of the labor board. If you listen to him, you're going to have these ESOPs [employee stock ownership plans]. I'm a young man now, 80 some odd years old, and I didn't go much to school, but when I went to school Aesop had an A in front of it. And it was a fairy tale. And that's what ESOPs are.

For a Single Payer Health Plan

They want you to get into ESOPs. We want to get security. We're not going to get it when Slick Willy is advocating HMOs and 1,500 insurance companies that tell the doctors how to treat you. [*Applause.*] Thirty-seven cents of the [health insurance] premium dollar goes for administration. We need a Canadian-style single-payer health plan. It's on the ballot in California. [*Applause.*]

We need a shorter work week with no cut in pay. If we had a 6-hour day instead of an 8-hour day, roughly speaking that would pick up 25 percent of the unemployed people. And they'd be able to have a home, not a cardboard box under a bridge. You know what it's like to go into a metropolitan center today and watch the homeless people, women and children sleeping in doorways. The little kid at 2 in the morning says, "Momma, I gotta go potty." What happens to her? What happens to the child? We can eliminate that if we have a party of labor that does something about these things.

We watch what happens with these politicians. There's a boy wonder across the river here, as I call him. Wellstone. He's got a health plan going. It's not going to go any place. But he's making a lot of noise. He ought to make noise and apologize for what he did to the

railroad workers a couple of years ago [by voting for the government-imposed settlement of the 1991 rail strike]. He can talk all he wants about his good deeds, but they're for the other side of the aisle, the capitalist side.

What We Did Will Be Done Again

Now I come here today to talk to you in this respect: Our labor history, what we did in 1934, will be done again. You didn't have to have started out in 1910 to be a participant in 1934. And we didn't put the labor movement to rest. Look at the glorious fights that are going on today — the Diamond Walnut workers, the Caterpillar tractor workers, and the Staley corn sugar workers. They've been fighting two years against an infamous out-country management.

I don't want to preach hate against other people, but these are imported firms. And we're just standing by. We don't look in the supermarket to see if it's a Staley product. We don't look to see if it's a Diamond Walnut product. We just pick it up because it's got a sign "On Sale Today." What's on sale today is our conditions, sisters and brothers, our life, our security. And that's what we need to fight for here. [*Applause.*]

And I hope if this picnic does nothing else for us, we will go home with a sense that we have to become involved in some sort of political activity that's like what we are trying to do in the various unions to which we belong.

Equality for All Workers

Now, we in 1934 were fighting the head of the Teamsters union [Daniel Tobin]. He expelled us. We fought our way back. Why did he expel us? Because we wanted to industrialize the union. We wanted to represent inside workers, among which were women. And as Carl Skoglund and Ray Dunne would say, "Both sides of the ship sail together." So the inside workers, the women and the people in the minority groupings, they always had the second or third-rate jobs. If they got a job, they got the crap. And we wanted it equal for all hands. Tobin didn't want that.

His union grew from 75,000 people, in 1933, to nearly 600,000 in five short years, due to the resurgence of labor and to the inspiration of people who saw there was a new day ahead. And it didn't come out of a mouthpiece of junk like Roosevelt, with "Happy Days Are Here Again." It came out of the picket line. And I want to salute the Henry Ness family that's here today, and the John Belor family, because they paid the supreme sacrifice. They lost their fathers, and their sons.

And they were not alone. There were three great strikes in '34 [the teamsters in Minneapolis, the auto workers in Toledo, and the longshore workers in San Francisco]. And there was a fourth one. The textile workers. No one much talks about that one.

We're the 85 Percent

But there was a spirit then, brothers and sisters, that was moving people to action. And we can

generate it again. They say that the labor movement is dead, that we're only 15 percent now. Well, the truth is we're the 85 percent. The Wobblies had a song that used to go:

When the 85 percent
That they call the working gent
Organize in unions of their kind,
Then they will get what they are worth
And it will be the blooming earth,
So organize and help to bring this cause about

[*Applause!*]

Now that was their theme, and it worked. And they wound up in prison, they wound up hung, they wound up mutilated, but they made their sacrifice.

Today, if you notice, on some of these big bakery syndicate trucks they've got a sign on the back: "Drive careful, the LOAF you save may be your own." I want to change the text. [*Laughter.*]

We in the labor movement better start thinking about our jobs. It's our *life* that we might be saving; it might be yours — what with these great mergers, these runaway shops. We can do it. If we want to. And I'm sure we want to. But we've got to have some organization.

A few years ago, there was a lot of talk about Communism and McCarthyism, and most people didn't know them from rheumatism. But we are now faced right with the chopping block.

And the Teamsters today are lucky. They are unloading the corrupt bureaucracy. We had it to do in 1934. And in 1937, when Tobin sent in a general organizer to try and destroy the North Central District Drivers Council which we were trying to set up to surround the baronial empires [of local business associations, as in Omaha, Nebraska].

Now we've got a Teamster president that's agreeable to the ranks. The trouble is, we've got the in-between people. Imagine the working stiff's paying a guy \$326,000 a year, or \$480,000. Arnie Weinmeister [former head of the Western Conference of Teamsters] was getting nearly \$600,000, and he built a big mansion with scab labor in Seattle a couple of years ago. Does that remind you of what we're trying to do?

Action Now, or the Chopping Block

I come from a union — I'm retired — where the average wage for a man working 1,600 hours is \$70,000, under the most ideal of circumstances. And the employers are doing a number on us. I was president of that union for five years. When I left in 1976 there were 1,200 registered workers and 230 B workers. Today there's a total of 442. They're [the only ones still] making that big money. The industry is becoming automated. And that's soon going to make its way into the Teamsters, with this great new intermodal delivery. And if we don't do something, we're going to wind up on the chopping block.

Now I know that some of what I've said here might offend some of you. But I remember what I went through. And I want to tell you that the people who changed my life, who convinced me that we were able to do what we did, were Ray

Dunne, "Mick" [Miles] Dunne, their brother Grant, and Carl Skoglund.

Now, in fairness I want to emphasize that Farrell Dobbs made a great, great contribution. But he came along in 1933. He played a tremendous role in the organization of Local 574, and the reorganization of 544. And I don't want anybody here today to believe that I was favor-

ing the people I mentioned, who I admired and respected, and who laid the groundwork, that I was favoring them over Dobbs. No. I worked very closely with Dobbs for three and a half years with the formation of the 11-state over-the-road negotiating committee. After Tobin broke it up, we went back, we salvaged it, and we started over.

And that's what we can do today. There's a bird called the phoenix and like that bird we're going to rise again. And we're not going to buy this garbage that the labor movement's on the decline. Think of the unions I mentioned and think of the strikes they're putting on. We're going to win, sisters and brothers. Thank you. [Applause.] □

Smear Campaign Against Teamsters' Carey Fails

by Charles Walker

I've been facing a smear campaign from opponents of reform inside the union, from management, and from the Mob. It's something that would face anyone who tries to reform the Teamsters union.

— Ron Carey

Ron Carey declared his candidacy and his intention to clean up the Teamsters union in 1989. From that time to the present, Carey has endured a ceaseless barrage of savage opposition and malicious lying. During the campaign, old-guard opponents falsely accused him of being a scab. Since his 1991 election, Carey's diehard opponents have accused him of ties to organized crime.

On July 11, Carey was cleared of all allegations of Mob associations, "improper receipt of payments from employers," and lesser accusations. The investigation and findings were made by the Independent Review Board (IRB), a court-appointed tripartite body, consisting of two members chosen by the Justice Department and one selected by the Teamsters.

The IRB is mandated to investigate all allegations of wrongdoing by Teamster officials. No exceptions are made. Even allegations by incredible or disreputable sources, such as declared political opponents, felons, and anonymous cranks receive extraordinarily detailed investigation.

For example, George Geller and Richard Leebove, longtime followers of the maniacal reactionary Lyndon LaRouche, claimed that Carey maintained organized crime associations. Geller and Leebove are hirelings of IBT Local 337 in Detroit, and also do public relations work for James P. Hoffa Jr., likely old-guard candidate for Carey's office in 1996. "Since the 1970s Geller and Leebove have specialized in smearing reform candidates in Teamster and United Mine Workers elections" (*Charleston Gazette*).

The IRB found that Carey's local union observed all picket lines as a matter of union principle, not as a cover for collusion in extortion schemes. The IRB found no evidence that Carey associated with "Colombo family" organized crime members; no evidence that Carey received anything of value from vendors who

do business with Teamster benefit funds; and no evidence that Carey's local union had a secret pension account for officers.

One Carey opponent alleged that Carey transferred a union car to Carey's sister. The IRB found that Carey's local union does not own cars, also that Carey does not have a sister.

Enemies in High Places

Some of Carey's enemies have big business connections. *Business Week* sarcastically asked how the Teamsters' "Mr. Clean" financed resort properties on his modest pay — then admitted "the sums are not huge." The IRB reported uncontradicted testimony that Carey bought a retirement home in Florida with a down payment of \$125,000, part of which was a loan of \$68,400 from his brothers and adult children.

Time magazine wrote, "A Mafia turncoat fingers Teamster boss Ron Carey, raising doubts about the union's big cleanup, ...[leaving] observers wondering where his allegiance lies." The IRB concluded there was no evidence to support the turncoat's story.

Just before the IRB made public its finding, California Congressman Don Edwards used his clout with Attorney General Janet Reno, who spurred her New York office to busy itself with another investigation of Carey.

Ironically, Edwards contacted Reno only after he was contacted by Bay Area Teamster official Chuck Mack. Mack's record includes opposition to majority rule on contracts, to direct election of convention delegates, and to decent strike benefits. During the UPS strike, he and his like tried but failed to break the strike. After that Mack repeatedly claimed UPS would prevail in its suit against the Teamsters, who might have to pay UPS as much as \$100 million. In July, the UPS suit was thrown out of court.

Old Guard Regrouping

Mack and other old-guard officers met in Chicago on June 28 to establish the "Teamster Affiliates Defense and Education Fund." They claim the Fund has the support of officials "from 32 Joint Councils. These Joint Councils represent 1.1 million rank-and-file Teamsters, or almost 80% of the union."

Actually, the Fund is just the old-guard leaders regrouping and dressing up their patronage-based political machine, which had operated in the area conferences dissolved by Carey in June. The old-guard leaders' base consists mostly of long-serving, full-time local union officials, who no longer can blame their actions on a corrupt international president, such as Roy Williams or his successor and FBI stoolie, Jackie Presser. These local officials customarily counted on the higher officials to "take the heat" for their sell-out policies.

Since Carey's election, these business unionists have been down on their luck. Most recently they failed to break Carey's strike against UPS, a strike that defied a federal court injunction. They failed to defeat ratification of the national freight contract, passed by a surprising 81 percent margin. The \$14 million golden goose that fattened the area conference bosses is dead. And now their smear and hate campaign against Carey has failed.

The Rank and File

The old guard's smear campaign failed to convince the ordinary member. Carey's opponents are spending thousands for public relations professionals and legal counsel, and are flooding the local unions with anti-Carey flyers, in a propaganda war. Yet Carey's credibility and standing with the ranks has never been higher.

The ordinary member is benefiting by the "Teamster Revolution" and the bosses are finding the deals they could cut in negotiations, at the grievance panels, and in the hallways, hotel bars, and golf courses are no longer available, when Carey is involved. Carey drew a line in the sand over part-time work, in the freight strike; and another, over health and safety, in the UPS strike.

The old-guard supporters are still entrenched in the bulk of local unions. But Carey is making it harder to run a Teamster local as a business devoted to harvesting dues money. So some officials are retiring, perhaps anticipating and fearing the day when officials will have to be fighters, not golfers. They will have to be Teamster leaders. □

July 22, 1994

Spokesman for Labor and the People vs. the Candidate of Big Business

by George Saunders



For a year polls showed that the leading contender in Brazil's presidential election, scheduled for October-November, was Lula, or Luis Ignacio da Silva, candidate of the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores, or Workers Party). In May and June of this year, Lula was polling 40 percent, while his chief rival, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, was polling less than 20 percent.

Cardoso, the former minister of finance, is the candidate of the "Party of Social Democracy of Brazil" (the PSDB, or Partido Da Social Democracia Brasileira), but he is supported by several other conservative and outright reactionary parties, including the party of the former military dictatorship. (In early September, the *New York Times* reported that virtually 100 percent of Brazilian businessmen supported Cardoso.)

The corporate rulers of Brazil were faced with a quandary. How were they to counter the political movement of the great majority behind Lula, the mass of working people, the poor and the oppressed, a movement that aspired to take power and transform the existing system?

For one thing, the wealthy ruling class controlled the media. They instituted a regulation restricting the format of all political campaign messages on television. This was aimed against the PT, whose lively, creative campaign ads in the last presidential campaign, in 1989, helped bring Lula within a few percentage points of defeating the capitalist candidate, Collor. (After winning the presidency as a supposed anti-corruption reform candidate, Collor ended up being impeached for — corruption.)

The ruling class government had another weapon, even more powerful than their control of the media, control over financial and economic policy. In the wake of Brazil's victory in the World Cup soccer competition, with national euphoria at a high, the government began to push its "Real Plan" to combat inflation. The capitalists then used their control of the media to hammer away at the "great success" of this plan. As the September 5 *New York Times* put it, "Inflation was reduced from 50 percent in June to 5 percent in August," providing "credibility" to the campaign of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Cardoso's standing in the polls leaped dramatically. Within weeks he was neck and neck with Lula, and then pulling ahead.

Cardoso is the architect of a series of financial reforms, under way since last year, the third phase of which (a change of currency to combat inflation) the government decided to implement in July, obviously timing it with electoral considerations in mind. The change of currency was called the Real Plan, because it replaced the former *cruzeiro* with a new monetary unit, the *real*, pegged to the U.S. dollar.

Below we reprint several documents from Brazil.

First, an excerpt from the introduction to "Bases for a Program of Government," adopted at the end of April 1994 by the 9th national assembly of the PT. This analyzed and exposed the manipulative character of Cardoso's reforms even before their third phase, the Real Plan, began.

Second, an item from the PT's daily campaign bulletin, *Lula Ja* ("Lula Now"), which gives a first-hand account of the impact on the polls of the ruling class's currency manipulation, whose main purpose was to influence the election results. The long-term results of the Real Plan, after the elections, remained dubious.

Third, excerpts from articles in the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* showing that this latest electoral ruse by Brazil's corporate rulers may have fallen flat on its farce.

Cardoso, the "Bought" Candidate of the Bourgeoisie

from the PT's "Bases for a Program of Government"

The following excerpts from a document adopted at the end of April by the PT's 9th national assembly are reprinted, with minor changes for reasons of style, from the July 1994 issue of International Viewpoint, monthly English-language publication of the Fourth International.

The infatuation of big businessmen and conservatives with Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the former minister of finance and the favorite candidate of big capital, who has followed the economic policies of Collor [the former president, impeached for corruption], is well known. With his left-wing past, his popularity among the middle classes, his aura of honesty... Henri-

que Cardoso has made a coalition with several conservative parties... with the aim of defeating Lula again [i.e., as occurred in 1989].

[The PT went on to contrast its own record to that of this candidate of Social Democracy, behind whom the bourgeoisie have united, and also took note of "the threat of a coup d'état" voiced "by certain layers of the army," concluding:]

Our party must bring out all its forces. For this reason we must reaffirm our commitment to socialism as well as to democratic and popular reforms... [Emphasis added — G.S.]

The monetarist approach taken by Henrique Cardoso, presented as a reliable weapon of struggle against inflation, has fallen into the same trap as its predecessors: it has reduced wage earners' purchasing power, decreased consumption, increased interest rates, and freed prices from all effective controls. As was foreseeable, from the first day of March, the introduction of the "unit of real value" (URV) has aggravated the outward signs of instability while worsening even further the living conditions of most of the population.¹

Inflation... has only accelerated, particularly in relation to basic necessities, and day after day workers have felt the erosion of their purchasing power. A minimum wage has been fixed provocatively by Henrique Cardoso with the lowest value ever in the history of our country. It is even lower than the value of the minimum wage in countries where conditions of development are worse than in Brazil.

Further, the administration of [Cardoso's] economic plan has been disastrous. On the one hand, the government has refused to negotiate or to integrate the criticism and suggestions made by Congress and civil society (notably the union movement) but on the other it has not stopped giving concessions to the monopolies — allowing them complete freedom to fix the prices of their products — and to those of private means, through a policy of absurdly high interest rates.

These concessions constitute attacks upon national dignity and efforts toward sovereign development in the same way as the recent agreement on renegotiation of the foreign debt between the Itamar Franco government and private creditors.

1. The introduction of a new currency, the real, to replace the cruzeiro in July, was prepared for by the establishment of an index linked to the dollar, the "unit of real value" to which the real was to be equal. This is the fifth change in currency in eight years of galloping inflation.

It should be recalled that during the first phase of [Cardoso's] economic plan, at the time of the so-called fiscal adjustment, expenditures on health, education, and transport were slashed by billions of dollars, causing an already precarious social situation to deteriorate still further. At the same time, the government squandered almost \$17 billion in the payment of interest and principal on the internal debt, to the benefit of leaders of the financial markets.

The Henrique Cardoso candidacy is consistent with this background of irresponsibility, social insensitivity, and privatization...As a good adventurer, [Cardoso resigned from his] ministerial responsibilities not long after having launched his economic plan, to put himself at the service of the reactionary forces, with the aim, as in 1989, of avoiding a Lula victory at all costs.

The PT reaffirms that inflation is a serious problem requiring the immediate operation of a stabilization program. Rather than simple fiscal adjustment, this must be a program involving major structural reforms in the national economy, which will lay the basis for a new model of growth and social development, which will begin a new process of redistribution of the wealth and even a new kind of sovereign intervention on the international scene...

The senseless putting into operation of [Cardoso's] economic plan has led to a sharp rise in inflation of the URV... This has caused a conflict between the government and its economic team on the best moment to introduce the real... [which was timed] for July, the latest that the measure could bring forth electoral fruits.

The attitude of the popular and union movements is decisive — not only regarding success of the [Cardoso] plan but also for the putting into place of conditions allowing for the application of a government program after a popular victory. Some strikes have broken out in the ABCD region [the São Paulo industrial belt], but it is still too soon to measure the breadth of the reaction to the erosion of wages. Most likely, social struggles will remain at the present level, and may even increase in severity during the electoral campaign. We now have the heavy responsibility of achieving a national movement for structural reforms.

The consolidation of the workers' political and organizational unity and the strengthening of their representative bodies, in particular, the unions and the CUT [Central Unica dos Trabalhadores, the 15-million-member left-wing union federation], is a task which must be taken up by all who struggle for a Lula government.

The union movement must work to strengthen the workers, by consolidating large, powerful, and deep-rooted unions in the workplaces. In this way they will play an essential role in a national movement of workers' struggles for immediate victories and for the structural reforms which we propose, and also in the struggle for socialism.

Large sections of the population believe that real improvement in their living standards de-

pends on the result of the elections on October 3 [the first round]. Even if that is evidence of support for Lula, a "wait and see" policy would be dangerous. That is why the orientation of our party and of our union and popular leaders must be toward pushing for mass mobilization against the degradation of living standards as a result of Henrique Cardoso's monetarist reforms. It is vital that the PT, its economists, and its parliamentary deputies go on the offensive against the economic plan, not just in relation to its electoral aspects.

Supported by the majority of big business...the candidacy of Fernando Henrique Cardoso is beginning to benefit conspicuously from favors from the government machine...Support by the machinery of state for a candidate is nothing new in Brazil. However, such support will not in itself overturn the relationship of electoral forces, because up until now Henrique Cardoso has clearly appeared as a "bought" candidate, benefiting from government support.

Impact of the Real Plan on the Polls

from *Lula Ja!*

The following article was translated from the July 26 issue of Lula Ja! (Lula Now!), a daily bulletin produced by the Brazil Popular Front for Citizenship, the coalition supporting the presidential candidacy of Luis Inacio Lula da Silva.

The English translation, by Michael Pearlman, was made available by the Brazil Election Information Committee. On the East Coast, the Committee may be reached by mail c/o Brecht Forum, 122 West 27 Street, 10 floor, New York, New York 10001; or by e-mail to bkoehnlein@jgc.apc.org. On the West Coast, it may be reached by mail to PO Box 8402, Berkeley, California 94707; or by e-mail to achis@jgc.apc.org. The translation has been edited slightly for reasons of style or clarity.

Based on a study of all polls released in recent weeks, the next edition of Brasil Agora [Brazil Now, one of several national publications of the PT] carries an interview with Jorge Almeida, our campaign's coordinator for analysis and polling, in which he shows that Lula's fall in the polls has occurred in two stages.

During the first three days after the launching of the [government's new economic] plan, it was clearest among those sections most sensitive to messages from television and the major newspapers, which unanimously supported the "stabilization program." Lula fell significantly among men, members of the economically active population with income greater than ten times the minimum wage, inhabitants of the country's south and southeast and the large cities. A week later, this spread to the rest of the population.

Secondly, the polls showed that the lack of distribution of Lula's government program among his own supporters on the left and the personally positive image of the candidate of the PSDB-PFL-PTB [Fernando Henrique Cardoso] spread by the communications media contributed to Lula's decline. Studies like those of the bulletin "Deadline" have shown that all the newspapers have produced a great number of "positive" or "neutral" reports on Fernando Henrique, while the treatment given to Lula has almost always been "negative."

From this point, emphasizes Jorge Almeida, comes the left's principal weakness. The Front, according to him, has made few efforts to counterpose itself and produce political facts to explain the nature of the Real [the new currency] or, for example, to point out the inconsistency of [the alleged reformer] Cardoso, who is allied with the most retrograde forces in Brazilian politics. "We're letting our opponent run loose," Jorge Almeida sums up.

Finally, the polls being analyzed by the Brazil Popular Front reveal that there is ample political space to reverse the rise of Fernando Henrique. One of the polls, for example, demonstrates that the most expressive group of those interviewed know that the Real was conceived to benefit the electoral pretensions of the Toucan candidate [the toucan bird is the symbol of the PSDB], and not for the interests of the country. The electors also intuit that the plan is electoralist and that inflation is tending to decline now, only to rise again soon after November.

Moreover, the polls show the populace is not accepting the arguments of the communications media, which see the main objective of the country as the "search for stability." A clear majority of those interviewed respond that they are not disposed to accept a reduction of real wages, much less an increase of unemployment, to "aid in the fight against price increases."

Brazil Finance Minister Spills Beans

Excerpts from News Stories

The September 5 *New York Times* ran a story saying, in part:

RIO DE JANEIRO, [Sunday] Sept. 4 — A few minutes of frank chat accidentally relayed to satellite dishes across Brazil has cost the Finance Minister his job, and President Itamar Franco struggled today to contain a scandal only a month before the presidential election here.

The campaign of the leading centrist candidate, a former Finance Minister who has soared in the polls on the success of the Government's anti-inflation program, was shaken by the unvarnished comments made by Rubens Ricupero, who resigned Saturday...

By reducing Brazil's monthly inflation from 50 percent in June to 5 percent in August, Mr. Ricupero gave credibility to the presidential campaign of his predecessor as Finance Minister, Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

Mr. Cardoso, the candidate of the Social Democratic Party, saw his standing in the opinion polls soar over Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, a socialist.

Continued on page 36

The Situation in Rwanda and the Congo

Rooted in the Colonial Past and the Present Policies of Imperialism

an Interview with Serge Mukendi

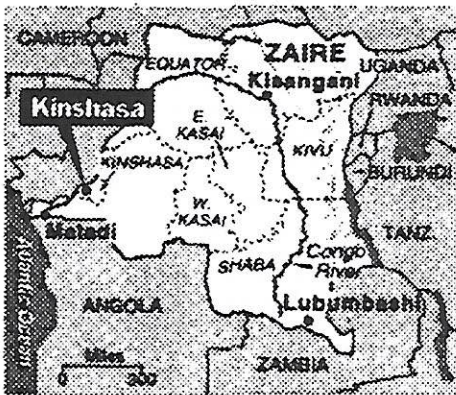
Serge Mukendi is a member of the Workers and Peasants Movement (French initials, MOP) of the Congo, whose struggle against the CIA-imposed Mobutu regime goes back to the early '60s and the armed struggle of the Lumumbist guerrillas. Serge himself began as a guerrilla fighter at the age of twelve. The interview, conducted by Marilyn Vogt-Downey on August 2, 1994, was transcribed for BIDOM by Lee DeNoyer.

Q.: What is the meaning of the events in Rwanda since early April 1994?

A.: To understand the meaning of what is happening in Rwanda, we have to understand where Congo comes from, because the present neocolonial situation in Rwanda is rooted in the colonial past. So we have to understand Rwanda, and all the countries surrounding Rwanda — and Africa itself — from the point of view of the “liberal” (or neoliberal) economic theory and practice of capitalism.

On this basis, of liberal economics, we can understand all the root problems of Africa. They are the same problems that Rwanda has, because throughout Africa you find the same problem of ethnic strife. Not for the sake of ethnic strife, but because of class inequalities, lack of jobs, lack of opportunities, also poverty, misery, repression. All these feed into the situation we have today in Rwanda.

Secondly, the problem in Rwanda is the problem of the control of the people and the country by imperialist powers that are trying to expand their influence, to use African countries as a dumping ground for their material finished products. The problem of their imposition upon the people of policies that reduce the people to subhuman conditions. And when people start to resist, the imperialists come up with an iron fist, and that iron fist takes the form of a repressive regime, a dictatorial regime. A dictatorial regime has to keep the people in their place so it can continue to make a profit for the colonial powers.



Now, the situation of keeping people in their place becomes very untenable as their resistance becomes greater. People understand that they can organize on the basis of common interest, common suffering, common exploitation. They transform their unity under oppression into unity of action against their common enemy, meaning the ruling class in league with the international bourgeoisie. So that was the situation in Rwanda. That is clear-cut. In the case of Rwanda, the imperialist countries, desperate for some way of maintaining their order, resorted to organizing, in league with the local bourgeoisie, a massive genocide.

Q.: Was that the Belgians or the French?

A.: Both the Belgians and the French were there to help the government fight the rebels [of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF)]. The Belgians have been there since World War I, when the Germans were defeated. The French came in the post-independence era [since 1960]. As the rivalry between imperialist powers becomes intensified, they have to redivide the pie, meaning the profit that comes out of the exploitation of the people.

Q.: What are the resources in Rwanda that the imperialists want?

A.: Rwanda has coffee and the land is fertile. Also there is gas in Rwanda. Even though the wells of gas are in the Congo, you can pump the gas only in Rwanda. That's also an arrangement that the Belgian colonialists made. So it's a source of revenue for Rwanda. And also Rwanda produces a lot of cattle. So you see, those are some of the things the French wanted. And there may be some other things of value there.

A more important reason why they are there is to keep an eye on what is happening in the Congo and to prevent an expansion of the struggle from Rwanda to the Congo. Uganda already being there [a guerrilla movement came to power there around 1990,] expanding it to the Congo would cost them greatly. So that's why they are there, because they weigh what it means to maintain Mobutu in place. And you cannot have Mobutu in power and stabilized with the armed resistance movement growing and on top of that having hostile governments in the countries around the Congo. That will

present more danger for the imperialists. The stakes are higher.

Q.: What was the significance of the explosion of the airplane when the president of Rwanda was killed, what role did that play in all of this?

A.: This is what I heard: Mobutu and the two late presidents of Rwanda and Burundi (who happened to be Hutu [and who were killed in the explosion]), were supposed to take a flight together back [from a conference in Tanzania concerning a peace agreement between the RPF and the Rwanda government]. So what happened was that maybe Mobutu got wind of what would happen, since he has been involved in those two countries and in the changing of different governments and supporting every military dictator that came into place. So he got wind and left even earlier, without his colleagues' knowing that he had left. When it was time for the two other presidents to leave, they tried to find out: “Where is Mobutu? So we can leave together. After all, we are friends, colleagues.”

Q.: They were all together at the conference? Mobutu was involved in the negotiations between the Rwanda Patriotic Front and the governments of Rwanda and Burundi?

A.: Yes. Because, when you are in Burundi or Rwanda, if you happen to be a Congolese revolutionary, it's like you are in Zaïre. They will arrest you, but their intelligence service gives you to Mobutu's intelligence service. And they accompany you to the Congo, where you will be killed. So when you are in those two countries, it's like you are in the hands of Mobutu. So those two countries played a negative role as far as the Congolese revolution is concerned.

So to come back to Mobutu's leaving without his colleagues, he understood, he cut out, he went. The others were looking for him; they didn't know when he left. Then they left and we know what happened. There were missiles that destroyed them. And the missiles came from a military base of the Rwanda government soldiers who didn't want a peaceful resolution to take place in the country. It was that faction that refused a peaceful resolution, refused a reconciliation among the people. They wanted to pursue the war, pursue the killing, pursue the repression of the people, to divide the people along ethnic lines, so they could defend their position of domination, power, and privilege.

Q.: So when they shot down the plane, the massacres began?

A.: Yes, after they killed the president. It was a section of the Hutu, not all Hutu, the section that was not willing to build a national reconciliation. The late president was forced to accept a settlement. He was playing a role similar to that of de Klerk in South Africa. Because of the strength of the Patriotic Front. He saw that he could not win, he had to make concessions, and this was the only way.

But the other section of the Rwanda bourgeois class didn't want it. They planned a genocidal war. By killing the president they would

The August issue of *Workers News*, the paper of the newly founded Workers List Party (WLP) in South Africa includes an article "Rwanda — No Capitalist Solution" and features a photo of a mass demonstration of Rwandans against French intervention. (The RPF's defeat of the French-supported terrorist regime clearly made such demonstrations possible in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, and other cities.)

Also received: *The Struggle Continues!*, issue No. 1 of another new publication of the WLP, which contains news of demonstrations in July in Johannesburg and Pretoria by Zaïrean exiles protesting a joint visit to South Africa by none other than — *France's President Mitterrand together with the Zaïrean dictator Mobutu*. A letter by a

Zaïrean exile states: "Mitterrand would like to see the new South Africa line up behind the French and the West, cutting off its close ties with revolutionary bastions like Cuba and Uganda."

The letter writer warned South African President Mandela against Mobutu and his "heavy record of human rights abuses, corruption, [and] mismanagement of the state," asserting that recently Mobutu "sabotaged the democratic process in Zaïre" by preventing Étienne Tshisekedi, the prime minister elected by a national conference, from taking office.

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appeal to the lowest instinct of the people, of the Hutu. They said, "You see, they killed a Hutu president, those Tutsi. They are your enemy. You can't get along with them. We have to finish them off if we are to survive." And they started to organize a coordination between the Hutu militia and the Hutu soldiers of the army of Rwanda. They started to kill not only Tutsi but all Hutu who were sympathetic to the Tutsi, all Hutu who were opposed to the president and to this faction that took over the country after killing the president, all Hutu that were democratic-minded. All were killed by this faction of the Hutu bourgeoisie. And you have Tutsi who were married to Hutu. They were also killed. The same kind of situation that took place in Bosnia.

And France was supporting that, they had a big part in these massacres.

The French fear the weakening of the Francophonic alliance [i.e., with French-speaking African countries]. For them, it is a cultural bulwark against the influence of English-speaking countries — above all, U.S. influence. They feared the RPF, because its leaders grew up in English-speaking Uganda. They speak English — some of them studied in the U.S. — and have given the English language privileged status.

French troops fought against the RPF, along with troops from Zaïre, in 1990 and 1991. They were forced to pull out because of rising casualty rates. Now, the French turn around and send in troops again and say this intervention is "humanitarian."

Q.: The Hutu had been left in a position of privilege as a caretaker government for the French and the Belgians.

A.: Yes, and those people were part of the former government, too. They were a part of the ruling class, of which the former president was also a member.

Q.: The Tutsi had fought them earlier, hadn't they?

A.: Yes, but if we have to go back into history, we have to say that in the colonial era the Tutsi were favored by the Belgians. The Belgian monarchy supported the Tutsi monarchy for many years, and only the children of the Tutsi could go to school, but the others, like the

children of the Hutu, could not. That's a legacy of colonialism, as in other parts of Africa.

In the Congo, for example, the children of the customary chiefs could go to school and that was the embryo of the petty bourgeois class that they were building.

As regards the present situation, the caretaker government that has now been deposed wanted to put an ethnic or a tribal consciousness before class consciousness. But they could not resolve the tribal contradiction unless they resolved the contradiction of capitalism. In a sense they were at the mercy of capitalism. They wanted to maintain capitalism to maintain their privilege, domination, and power, but they couldn't resolve their tribal contradictions. Tribal ideology is very dangerous and an impediment to the unification of the working class. So this is what happened. We know now the masters planned the genocide of the people.

Q.: The French were involved in training the militia?

A.: The French provided more weapons, more guns. The French president, Mitterrand, and the president of Rwanda, Juvenal Habyarimana, were friends. Their sons were friends, too. They used to go to discos together in France. And don't forget that Mitterrand's son was the French presidential adviser for African matters. So you see how far those relationships went, and what they meant to the lives of the people there. They meant repression, because these personal and political relations led to the genocide that we know about.

The Belgians, hypocritically, took some initiatives because they felt that they were the ones who had more to lose. They came up with a resolution that they cannot assist countries at war, cannot supply weapons. So they didn't supply weapons; they knew before leaving that the government had enough weapons, which they had supplied before they left. If they had taken those weapons with them, that would have been another story. We could give them a tip of the hat for doing something good. But these same Belgians, and the French, came back to help the government fight the Rwanda Patriotic Front. At the same time saying, "We cannot be involved in supplying weapons to warring parties." But that doesn't make sense.

Q.: So the French landed and set up the so-called safety zone. What was the purpose of that?

A.: The safety zone was supposedly to protect the Tutsi, who were being killed by the Hutu. They call the Rwanda Patriotic Front a Tutsi-based organization, and the French were supposedly there to protect Tutsi, and so the logic of the situation would be that they would fight side by side with the RPF in destroying the government. But that didn't happen. What happened is that the French set up the security zones to protect the state terrorists, the so-called officials of the caretaker government, and to protect the soldiers and militia men who were doing this killing.

So they set up three bases in Congo-Zaïre where they trained these state terrorists to go back. They are mounting a Contra or UNITA type of operation. And they even allowed them to broadcast into Rwanda. If they wanted to carry on their humanitarian work, what they could do is to prevent that radio from continuing to broadcast, to remove those state terrorists. Why a safety zone when another government is in place? To protect who now? The Hutu or the Tutsi?

Q.: According to recent press reports, sections of the former government's army — which carried out the massacres — are still intact. They were allowed to go into Zaïre with their weapons. They maintain camps there, they're still in their uniforms, and they're still getting paid. Who is paying them?

A.: The money has to come from France and the Western powers.

Q.: They are helping to organize an army like UNITA in Angola or RENAMO in Mozambique to try to overthrow the new coalition government?

A.: Yes, and they want to keep an eye on what is happening in the Congo. Because in the Congo we are developing and getting stronger. The struggle in the Congo is at various levels. There are some civic struggles, religious struggles, armed struggle, labor struggles, so you have struggles at different levels.

But in a short time, let me give you another view of everything that is taking place. I want to divide the struggles into categories. The political and military, even though the military is also political — but just for the sake of discussion. On a political level all the mass struggles taking place are important, but the people who believe only in the mass struggle and forget the armed component are the people who worked for Mobutu for many years. The people who killed together with Mobutu, stole money from the people together with Mobutu, the same people who sold the country together with Mobutu. The prime minister who was elected was the one who wrote the constitution that Mobutu was ruling under, he is the same man — Tshisekedi, of course — who wrote the doctrine called Mobutuism. If he is the creator of Mobutu and Mobutu is the devil, surely he must be a Lucifer, that one.

Those people could not provide an alternative to the war, an alternative to what is happening inside the country itself. They could not provide, let's say, an alternative to Mobutu and Mobutuism, because they themselves are dissident Mobutuists. So the people felt they had "been had" once again. They could not follow these former Mobutu supporters, who have shown their limitations, their inability even to topple Mobutu. Because what they wanted was for Mobutu to leave, but not in a violent manner, because that could undermine their own ascension to power.

Q.: When did Mobutu come to power?

A.: Mobutu has been in power for 34 years unofficially. Officially, 30 years. He has had power really since the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, and even before that, before September 14, 1960.

Q.: Since then, they say Mobutu has not only helped foreign investors get rich. He has also gotten rich himself.

A.: Yes, Mobutu is one of the richest men in the world. He said he's the third richest man in the world. He was bragging about that in an interview in the '70s in a London newspaper. When they said he was the fifth richest man in the world, Mobutu said, "No, I'm the third." With pride. But he was taking pride in the exploitation, misery, and impoverishment of our people.

Q.: Others in his government have also become quite wealthy.

A.: Yes. The nature of his regime is kleptocracy.

Q.: The CIA trained Mobutu's military forces. What did they do? What went on under Mobutu that allowed his regime to maintain its control?

A.: Exactly the same thing that is happening in Rwanda. That is, the premeditated organization of the killing of people. We have been subjected to those conditions to the point that it has become normal to all Congolese anywhere. Killing people, throwing their bodies in the water. Killing people by tying their feet and their hands and putting them in bags and throwing them deep into the sea. Or throwing people without a parachute 1,000 feet from a helicopter.

Q.: Then, the CIA and the Mobutu regime carried out all this brutality to destroy any opposition to the kleptocracy and the prevailing economic system?

A.: Yes, that was even before all the other political parties started to be created. All this was the type of treatment that resulted for us — hanging us in prisons because we are revolutionaries and because we don't want what is happening and we want to end military occupation by the United States, France, Belgium, Israel, Germany. And before Mandela came to power we were occupied by South Africa. Now we have only South African mercenaries.

Q.: What are the main industries and resources of Zaïre?

A.: The main industries are mining. We have all sort of minerals inside the country. In this respect, we are the richest piece of land in Africa, if not the world. We are at the top in minerals.

Q.: Who owns the extractive industries?

A.: They are owned by multinational corporations from the U.S., Japan, and Europe. Sometimes they come even to organize some amalgamations.

Q.: It was through the mining revenues that Mobutu got so rich?

A.: Yes, Mobutu makes money from that because when those revenues come in, usually he used to take 50% for himself and his party. Then out of the remaining 50% that goes to the country, he takes 25% on top of the 50% he took already. And then the 25% that is left is distributed among his cronies, and he gives a little bit to some ministry, like education has 2%, the ministry of health has 1.5%, and so on.

Q.: The vast majority must live in miserable conditions. Describe the ordinary standard of living.

A.: Now people are eating once every 48 hours. Some are going even one week without eating. What you see on the TV from Rwanda has been taking place in the Congo. You can see people walking in the streets, passing on the sidewalk, and somebody falling. You take the person to the hospital. Autopsy: "He was starving." The people are boiling tires just to get iron. It's like the situation in the Soviet Union during the war, when people had to boil their belts, but we are boiling tires.

Let's take just one example — the health care of the people. Since Mobutu came to power, he has never built one single hospital. The hospitals that exist are the hospitals that were built during the colonial period. It's not surprising when you see now on TV, when they show people from Rwanda going to hospitals in Goma, Zaïre, you don't find a bed. People are on the floor, women are delivering on the floor. In all hospitals in the Congo (which is now called Zaïre), you have to bring your own bed sheet, you have to bring your own food. You even have to bring your own medicine.

Q.: Mobutu and his government also protected imperialist interests in other regions of Africa, isn't that so?

A.: The Congo under Mobutu has been used as a springboard to intervene in many countries. You can recall the case when Mobutu, under instructions from the Western powers, at the head of which is the United States, sent his army to prevent the Angolan people from gaining their independence. And then they supported some groups that were financed by the CIA and the Western countries, like the FLNA and UNITA, to fight against the MPLA. Not against the Portuguese colonialists, but against the MPLA. As if the MPLA were the ones that had colonized the country.

Also, Mobutu's army was sent to Chad to prevent the Chadians from freeing themselves from French colonialism. Then the same army

of Mobutu was sent to the Central African Republic, and when they got there they killed children 6 months old; maybe those kids were the ones who were threatening the regime and Emperor Bokassa. The same army was sent many times to Burundi and Rwanda, to prevent the people from taking power.

If you go back in history, you can recall that the same Zaïrian army, which came from the Force Publique, or Public Force, which was a colonial army, was sent to Tabora in Tanzania to fight a colonial war against our people there. At the time it was called Tanganyika.

So the role of that army continues. And what they did with that army is even more interesting. That army has never been united, because if they united that army, many soldiers would start to develop some nationalistic tendencies, so they maintained that army in a state of perpetual training.

Q.: What has been the source of the "ethnic cleansing" that has been reported to have taken place in Zaïre itself?

A.: This was fostered by Mobutu and his backers. For example, you heard about the conflict between people in Shaba and in Kasai. Many people in Kasai were killed. In Shaba they were cut into pieces and thrown in the water, or kicked out of Shaba province and sent back to their original provinces. This is with the help of Mobutu, who has maintained tribalism as the way to maintain himself in power. Dividing the different ethnic groups, so they will be at each other's throats, helps him to stay in power.

Q.: When was the Workers and Peasants Movement of the Congo first organized?

A.: It was a long time ago, after many debacles and failures to liberate the country. We were members of different organizations, and there was a need to build a working class party, so that we can take our struggle to a higher level. We have been functioning for more than ten years now.

Q.: Why do you engage in armed struggle?

A.: Because that is the only way. You cannot appeal to the conscience of Mobutu, because he hasn't any. Second, you cannot dialogue with him. He has told people he took power through the barrel of a gun, and anyone who wants to take that power from him must in the same way use a gun. So from that premise alone, you cannot engage in a dialogue. What he wants is for you to submit to him, not to resist, not even to defend your own interests, let alone the interests of the people.

Q.: What have been some of the gains of the MOP's struggle so far?

A.: We control certain territories. Roughly 20 percent of the territory is under the Movement's control, parts of three provinces in the eastern part of the country, Shaba, Kivu, and Kisangani. We have our own government there. They attack us in the contested zones, not in the liberated zones. And we continued to engage in armed struggle. Despite the coalition of many forces of occupation, they haven't succeeded in

dislodging us. On the contrary, we are gaining strength.

Q.: What has been the source of your strength?

A.: We organize people. Our name says it all. Our support comes from the workers and peasants of the country. They are the majority. When the majority supports you, you don't need any other. And that's why we continue to fight. The poor people are the backbone of the organization.

Q.: How are these territories controlled?

A.: You control them politically and militarily. Militarily you secure a territory. Politically you have to win the hearts and minds of the people. And you have to put institutions in place. You are like a government within a government, or a state within a state. We have to educate the people. We have to win people to our program. We have to win people to our outlook on the world. And Mobutu is the best organizer we have, because he continues to push people into our arms.

Q.: You have said that you are an "anti-systemic" organization, yet you focus your fire on Mobutu. Would you explain this?

A.: Tactically, we fight the Mobutu regime because it is the one directly in front of the people. Strategically, we are fighting imperialism. Mobutu is not the system. He is just the representative. Like I told you before, we are against the existing system. We are not opponents of Mobutu. We are an alternative to Mobutu.

You see, we want to destroy the present system that maintains poverty, that furthers it, that continues to further this inequality between people, and that continues to divide people along sociological lines. We are supported by the workers and peasants of the Congo, so that is why we call ourselves the Workers and Peasants Movement of the Congo. They are the majority, and in the name of those two classes we make a revolution. And we want to place power in the hands of those two classes, the workers and peasants.

Q.: You have also said that you are an internationalist. What does that mean to you?

A.: It means that while we have to be deeply rooted in the reality of our struggle, we also understand how the international class struggle breaks down in that sector. And while fighting there we also have to have an international strategy for the struggle. Because it will be impossible even to win and build a better society, workers democracy, in the Congo without having that international strategy and workers democracy internationally. You can see why they are going into Rwanda, in order to defeat us, to keep an eye on the Congo. They understand that the rule of the domino is in effect.

Q.: What are your overall goals in the Congo?

A.: Materializing workers democracy. Because workers and peasants constitute the ma-

majority of our people. If there is to be democracy, it has to be democracy organized by them, with them and by them. Secondly, we want to eliminate the inequality that exists in our society. We want the majority who are producing the wealth that is misappropriated by the ruling class of our country, and by the international ruling class, to be shared collectively by the direct producers. So that they can eliminate poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and provide housing and a decent life for our people. So our people can have time also to develop themselves spiritually, to engage in whatever activity interests them, whether physical or mental — or just to play basketball if they wish.

Q.: How many workers are organized in unions out of the total population of Congo-Zaire?

A.: The total population is about 40 million. The union movement was about one million, but may be down to as little as 250,000, because when people are eating only once in 48 hours, why should they stay at a job?

Q.: Have a lot of workers been laid off?

A.: Yes, because the IMF programs and other programs that they are imposing on the people, supposedly to "shore up" the economy, have led to layoffs.

Q.: Does that mean the imperialists are no longer investing so much in Zaire?

A.: The investments they make are to improve the capital they had before. The old capital is producing more; when you downsize, you need fewer people to do the work that many people did before. So that the cost of capital takes a form as if it was variable. That has become a serious problem, because they don't invest in anything new, but they want to suck the profits out all the time.

Q.: These are official unions?

A.: Yes, the same unions are there as were there before, and they are controlled by the state. Now with the liberalization, they have kept them in existence too, but the links are not so strong as they were. Under the table they can talk against Mobutu, because now it is easy to some extent to talk against him. There is a limit of course, because they may still kill you. But the state-controlled unions have never defended the interests of workers. Those workers don't have pensions, they don't have medical coverage, so they are nothing.

Q.: What do you expect to be the impact of the Rwanda events on your struggle and on the rest of Central Africa?

A.: The impact is already being felt. You can see the reaction of the enemy. By going there, they have already occupied the Congo militarily. Even before that there were foreign military bases in the Congo. The U.S., France, Belgium, Germany, Israel, mercenaries from South Africa — they all have bases. Now by going to Rwanda, by sending troops there, what they want is to blindfold people. They implant in the minds of people the idea that although they are

sending x number of troops now, they will pull them back later. In this way they focus attention on what they are saying and doing now, not what was there before, and what is still there on the ground. People seem to forget that foreign powers had occupied the Congo. They give the impression that they just went in now, for the first time.

Q.: But the Congo allegedly won its independence in 1960.

A.: That independence lasted about three months, with the advent of Lumumba to power. When Lumumba was assassinated, that was it. Ten days after independence, on July 10, Belgian troops invaded the Congo. And when Lumumba came to the UN, asking the UN to help us get rid of the Belgian troops, the UN also sent in troops, who came and arrested Lumumba. They handed Lumumba over to Mobutu and the CIA. This was how Lumumba was killed. And they dumped the body in sulfuric acid, so the body disappeared.

Q.: Then your movement had its origins in Lumumba's movement?

A.: Yes, our roots are Lumumbist.

Q.: What can we expect from the new government in Rwanda? Is that a government you have confidence in?

A.: The RPF is not the government of Rwanda. There is a government of national unity there. In addition to the RPF, there are other parties in that government. What we expect from them is to do the right thing by improving the living conditions of the Rwandan people?

Q.: Are they "antisystemic" also?

A.: They are a progressive organization. They are fighting against terrible conditions, and we hope they will be successful in improving the living conditions of the people. But since they themselves don't say anything about fighting imperialism, I cannot speculate.

Q.: What do you think people can do internationally to help the struggle in Zaire?

A.: We want people to help us, first of all financially — to buy medicine in Africa. To help our refugees and all our people inside the country, including the organization itself. Because having medicine today becomes very important. You yourself saw what is happening on TV. It shows how Mobutu didn't do anything in the field of health, or food, or safe drinking water. We have thousands of rivers in the Congo. No one should die from not having water. It shows that the guy failed to do anything. So under those conditions, we say that we can do better. First, we want to meet the fundamental needs of the people, and when they develop new needs, to meet them also. Because people are dynamic, not static. So by being people-oriented, we are well suited to take power, because anybody who wants to make a revolution has to fight for the poor, you cannot fight for the rich. □

Imperialism, Russia, and the African Model for “Economic Reform”

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

In March this year the World Bank, hoping to prove that the tough austerity measures it prescribes actually work, released a comprehensive study of 29 African nations south of the Sahara. These countries by 1987 had begun introducing the “economic reforms” prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (whose official name is International Bank for Reconstruction and Development). The study showed that the countries that most strictly imposed the IMF dictates experienced economic growth and had more goods in the stores than those that failed to do so. The best performer — rated as “fair” — was Ghana.

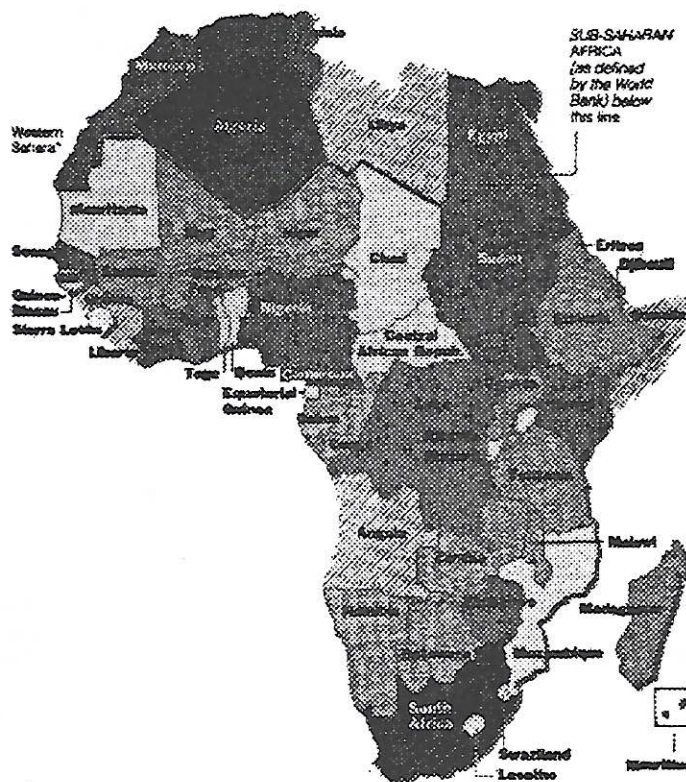
The World Bank presented the Ghana example as an “incentive for governments to continue down this path...from Russia to the new black-led Government in South Africa.” The World Bank’s vice president for Africa, Edward V.K. Jaycox, remarked: “If Russia wants to succeed it is going to have to reform.” The Russians, he said, had been coming to his staff for information about Africa. “Russian economists were here trying to learn about exchange rates, trying to find out what works and what doesn’t, and the only comparable system was Africa” (*New York Times*, May 13, 1994).

Soviet Aid to Africa Dries Up

Ironically, up until a few years ago the Kremlin rulers were providing social, economic, military, and diplomatic aid to Third World countries, including the newly emerging nations in the sub-Sahara region of Africa. Since the late 1950s, many of them, like other neocolonial nations, had turned to the Soviet Union for help to try to break out of the stranglehold of imperialist exploitation inherited from the colonial past. It is because assistance was no longer available from the Soviet Union that so many African states began by 1987 turning to the IMF for help, with all the attendant economic costs.

Despite all the Kremlin’s concessions to the IMF and the human suffering these policies have caused, despite the Moscow rulers’ prostration before the International Monetary Fund and the capitalists’ other lending institutions, the Kremlin bureaucrats — turned aspiring capitalists — have been unable to secure any significant funding. The IMF and the imperialist lenders continue to demand even more concessions and maintain that the bureaucracy has not gone far enough, while the economy continues to collapse under the weight of the reforms implemented so far.

To get a better idea of what was expected of them, “the Russians” are being encouraged to study the IMF/World Bank’s African model, to “find out what works and what doesn’t work,” as “the only comparable example” of what they, and the rest of the former USSR, face. In fact, according to the *New York Times* “a recent confidential World Bank report...concluded that ‘the only other region of the world experiencing an economic decline of comparable magnitude [with that of Africa’s sub-Sahara region] is the former Soviet Union.’” A review of the economic decline in Africa, therefore, is that much more revealing.



The Source of the African Crises

Throughout the 1980s, the economies of sub-Sahara Africa have deteriorated significantly to where Africa’s share in world trade is barely 2 percent; some sources say far less. Since it is an integral part of the capitalist world, this figure speaks volumes about the consequences of 500 years of imperialist plunder. Meanwhile the plunder has not lessened but intensified in recent years. The *New York Times* in mid-June ran a three-part series on sub-Sahara Africa documenting the depth of the crises confronting this region’s populations. In 1983, the Gross National Product of this enormous region with a population of 691 million people was the same as that of Belgium, which has a population of only 10 million. (To further comprehend the scope of this disaster, it may be useful to remember that Angola alone is roughly the size of all of Europe, and Zaïre is as big as the United States east of the Mississippi.)

The catastrophic economic conditions are even less comprehensible because Africa is very rich in oil and other energy sources, diamonds and other minerals, and it has the world’s largest reservoir of arable land. Yet only one-fifth of this land is actually cultivated, famine has stalked the subcontinent causing millions of deaths in recent years, and nearly one-third of the children are severely malnourished.

The statistics reveal even more: 18 of the world's 20 poorest nations are in Africa; one million African children born each year will never reach the age of five. (In fact in one region of Sudan visiting relief workers found no children under the age of five: all had died; in other words, that region has a 100 percent infant mortality rate!) The factors most often cited as responsible for these human catastrophes are drought and civil strife.

Wars and Drought

In fact, wars have racked this region for nearly two decades — particularly in Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan (500,000 killed and 3 million displaced in the war in Sudan now in its 11th year!). Recently, massive upheavals have also raged in Rwanda, where an estimated 500,000 people were killed since early April 1994. They were massacred when militia and soldiers of the French-backed government went on a rampage. (For more on Rwanda, see the interview with Serge Mukendi in this issue and my article in last month's *BIDOM*.)

Much of the famine and malnutrition in Africa is blamed on recurring droughts. A drought is, of course, a natural disaster. However, on a continent as rich as Africa, if a humane system of economic planning were in place, the damage from a drought — even an extensive drought — need not be so devastating. In reality, it is not only droughts that are responsible for the hunger. The hunger is also explained by the vast number of refugees and persons displaced from their land as a result of the civil wars and repression that plague the continent. When farmers are forced to flee their land or when their land is mined by a hostile army, they

are unable to plant and tend crops, which has an obvious effect on the food supply.

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, of the 600 million people who inhabit the sub-Sahara region, at least 6,025,000 were refugees as of May 1994. Over one million have become refugees since then, according to numbers cited for those fleeing Rwanda to Zaire in mid-July. Those in the region listed as “internally displaced” total 16 million, 60 percent of the world's reported total of some 26 million (*New York Times*, May 23, 1994).

Post-Colonial Domination

Behind all these conditions is the state of the African economy. Africa was divided and redivided by imperialism throughout the past five centuries, with each imperialist power holding large regions. But when imperialism was weakened by World War II and forced by anticolonial uprisings and the spread of social revolution to relinquish direct rule, the continent was divided up into dozens of separate states along arbitrary boundaries established by the retreating colonial powers.

For example, the French colonial region was divided up into more than a dozen states, while all the economies and currencies remained dependent on France. This continuing dependence was demonstrated dramatically by the decision of the French government in January 1994 to devalue the African franc (CFA) by 50 percent relative to the French franc. This single decision immediately caused prices to double and real wages to slump, sending millions of workers into poverty.

Ex-USSR and Africa “Comparable”?

Just a few years ago the former Soviet Union was considered one of the world's two superpowers. Its population had free medical care and free education through university level, guaranteed jobs, nominal rents, and many other social benefits. These achievements had been possible because of an economic system based on nationalized means of production and centralized planning brought about by the October Revolution of 1917. And these achievements were possible despite the fact that after Lenin's death the Soviet economy, and government, came to be dominated by a caste of privileged bureaucrats, led by Joseph Stalin.

The Stalinist bureaucracy — a vast million-headed caste — arose as careerists rushed into the Soviet government apparatus after so many of the revolutionary-minded cadre had perished defending the revolution during the Civil War. Such self-seekers formed the social base for Stalinism and began making policy to serve their own narrow interests and not the interests of the broad working masses, whose objections this parasitic social layer could only suppress. The antidemocratic nature of the economic planning that resulted, along with the isolation of the relatively backward Soviet Union as socialist revolution failed to spread to the ad-

vanced capitalist countries (a situation accepted and justified in Stalin's theory of “socialism in one country” and his successors' “peaceful coexistence” policy), were ultimately the sources of most of the Soviet Union's economic and social problems.

By the mid-1980s, when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, bureaucratic planning had produced severe crises. In terms of scientific and industrial technology, the USSR was decades behind imperialism, there was a crying shortage of a multitude of consumer goods, the quality of manufactured goods produced was extremely poor, environmental pollution was reaching catastrophic proportions. Drastic measures were called for, such as redistribution of resources, reorientation of priorities on almost all levels, etc. The solution was not to junk rational centralized planning, however, and to turn the property over to whoever was ruthless enough to take it. What was needed was to democratize the planning process, with the workers themselves taking control of and ultimately managing the economy and reestablishing their own government to meet the needs of the working-class majority.

That was the political task confronting the workers. It had been on the agenda for decades. It was described and pur-

sued, beginning in the 1920s, by the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky. It still needs to be carried out.

The parasitic Soviet bureaucrats, however, were not about to acknowledge this revolutionary socialist solution to the problem and turn power over to the workers. Instead, starting in 1985 under Gorbachev, they began turning to the imperialists to get them out of their dilemma.

They soon learned that the foreign capitalists and their institutional lending agencies — like the IMF and the World Bank — set rigid and ruthless preconditions before funds would be advanced, preconditions that hurt the economy far more than they helped it. Nevertheless, in an effort to get at least some of the funds and technology they needed, the Kremlin bureaucrats made one concession after another to these potential lenders and investors until they ended up dismantling the economic plan — the basis upon which the entire economy had functioned — and cutting allocations to services, industries, mines, and farms. All this sent the economy into a tailspin. Production continues to decline sharply, the quality of life has plummeted, and the population has been plunged into the dog-eat-dog world of “market relations” based on the principle of survival of the fittest.

There have been many studies documenting imperialist exploitation of Africa, which continues into the neocolonial period. Suffice it to say that although the major colonial powers in Africa — Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal — succumbed to the movements for independence, they have never really given up their stranglehold on the African people and their resources.

The African working masses have consistently rebelled against the exploitative conditions, but they have faced formidable obstacles. Not the least of them was the misleaders in the workers movements, particularly the Communist parties.

Official Communist Party Misleadership

The Stalinist two-stage theory of revolution, which insists on separating the bourgeois-democratic revolution by a long period of time before workers are deemed ready to make the socialist revolution, held back the revolution toward socialism and planning of the economy under workers control. The criminal policy flowing from this theory has always led to the defeat of even the bourgeois democratic and nationalist regimes that did manage to come to power for a period. The Kremlin bureaucrats supported bourgeois populist governments in Third World countries, instead of helping the workers there to take power. Content to use such governments as pawns to bolster their bargaining power with the imperialists, the Soviet “leaders” sabotaged genuine revolutionary struggles.

While the imperialist military presence has become less obvious, the former colonial powers have periodically intervened militarily and continued to maintain military bases and an extensive intelligence network in Africa. The United States CIA and the intelligence networks of the white-ruled African nations, along with those of the former colonial powers and the Israeli state, have used a vast hook-up of such bases and facilities throughout the post-World War II period to protect their political and economic interests. They have actively worked to destabilize regimes they could not totally control, or organized coups to overthrow such regimes to establish in their place dictators friendly to imperialist interests.

The Case of the Congo

That is precisely how the notorious regime of Mobutu Sese Seko came to power in the Congo (Zaire). The CIA with its local agents helped organize the assassination of popular revolutionary leader Patrice Lumumba in 1960. Lumumba was the first prime minister in the Congo after the Congolese people under his leadership gained their independence from the bestial Belgian colonialists that year. The CIA and other imperialist intelligence agencies then backed Mobutu both financially and militarily. In the decades since, Mobutu has faithfully devoted himself to the ruthless exploitation of the vast resources of the Congo to fill his pockets and the bank accounts of foreign investors through imposition of a vicious dictatorship.

The imperialists organized and trained mercenary armies to devastate regions dominated by popular governments that leaned toward the Soviet Union for aid and instituted policies that threatened imperialist economic hegemony. (See the study *U.S. Military Involvement in Southern Africa* by the Western Massachusetts Association of Concerned Africa Scholars, Boston: South End Press, 1978, for a description of these activities and references for further research.)

Angola and Mozambique

For example, in 1975, the U.S. government — with the support of the intelligence network of Portugal, the former colonial power —

and the white government of South Africa organized, supplied, and trained the UNITA army against the post-colonial Angolan government that was turning to the Soviet Union for aid. In the “civil war” that ensued in Angola (population nearly 11 million people), 500,000 people have been killed and 70,000 have been maimed. According to the *New York Times* of May 9, 1994, hordes of orphaned children are living in the streets of Luanda, the capital. The army of UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi, has destroyed the Angolan economy and its infrastructure. The war continues with the help of “scores of South African mercenaries.” It has so far lasted 19 years, a generation.

Similar forces were responsible for the creation of the mercenary army RENAMO, led by Afonso Dhlakama, which has devastated Mozambique (population over 16 million), causing 1 million deaths and forcing 4.5 million to flee their homes in the past 16 years. RENAMO was created by the white-minority, British-backed Rhodesian government in 1975. When the white minority was forced to relinquish political power, the South African government on Mozambique’s southern border took over the project and the CIA most certainly lent a hand. (To keep Mozambique civilians from fleeing the RENAMO violence by crossing into South Africa, the South African government set up a high-voltage, razor-wire fence along the border where more than 89 refugees were known to have been electrocuted [*New York Times*, October 8, 1990]).

The UNITA and RENAMO armies function in the same way as the Contra army did against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The Contra army was also organized, trained, and supplied by the United States government. The target of these gangster forces are unarmed civilians — particularly teachers and medical workers — and any economic and social project that might make the government look good. They also terrorize the rural population, forcing farmers to flee their land, leaving it untended. But the African “Contras” have been allowed to continue their criminal activities much longer than their counterparts in Nicaragua.

Even in connection with the current massacres in Rwanda, human rights groups report that the militia forces that initiated and carried out most of the slaughter in the past months were trained by French military officers (*New York Times*, July 11, 1994). These



Angolan Government soldiers near the front line dividing the city of Kuito, 415 miles southeast of Luanda.

officers are based in Rwanda to look after the wealth and interests of the former European colonial powers.

It must be pointed out, of course, that there has been and continues to be a local bourgeoisie and a military and economic elite in each country. They are small and could easily be pushed aside by a mobilized working class which could take leadership in the interests of the downtrodden, the unemployed, workers and peasants. However, although the African bourgeoisie is a small layer, it is supported by the foreign imperialists against the masses and traditionally has had the help of the Stalinists, the Social Democrats, liberals, and other reformists and misleaders of the working class. Never interested in a popular government that would institute measures to undermine their wealth and privileges, this tiny elite is eager to do whatever imperialism demands, even if it takes the most brutal methods to do so.

The IMF's Shining Example

Through "covert" military actions such as these — plus the help of the Stalinist policy insisting on the necessity of a two-stage revolution — the European powers and the U.S. government have been able to prevent any of the newly-emerging nations in Africa from successfully escaping from the imperialist economic stranglehold.

In the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, many of the new nations were able to get some funds, technology, and social-economic assistance from the former Soviet Union. They were able to do this despite all the political obstacles and military intrigues, even if such aid was in uneven quantities and always with strings attached. When the government in the Soviet Union cut off all funds and assistance, these regions — like the rest of the former colonial world — had nowhere to turn but to the IMF for mere survival.

What Is the IMF?

The IMF and the World Bank were set up toward the end of World War II, in 1944, at a meeting organized by the United Nations at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. During World War II, international exchange of currency had been severely restricted. The IMF was set up to try to stabilize exchange rates between currencies, maintain their convertibility, and stabilize markets. Its purpose was and is to preserve and promote market mechanisms and the capitalist system. Therefore, during the Cold War the Soviet Union and other countries where capitalism had been overthrown — whose economies were based not on market mechanisms and private ownership of the means of production but on planned, nationalized economies — had no relations with the IMF (although Yugoslavia first, and then Romania, did become members).

The IMF has grown to have 178 member nations, as of mid-1994. Each country contributes a certain quota to the Fund, based on the country's relative economic significance within the group. This is determined by a number of factors, including the value of its export earnings. Those with the most exports make the largest contribution, have the biggest share in the Fund, and therefore have the most say in determining IMF policy. The most important members of the IMF are the most powerful capitalist powers. Today, these are the G-7 (Group of Seven) industrial powers — the United States, Britain, France, Canada, Germany, Japan, and Italy. It is they who determine IMF policy.

When a country is experiencing a trade deficit — importing more than it is exporting — to keep its currency from losing its relative value, that country (if it is a member of the IMF) can "borrow" money to buy its own currency in order to counteract the deficit and restore its

currency's value. If the amount borrowed is over 25 percent of its quota, in order to have access to further IMF funds — or prove its "creditworthiness" to any other foreign imperialist lender — the borrowing nation's government must enforce a series of austerity measures aimed at "stabilizing" the nation's economy. This means to stabilize currency and restore a "positive" trade balance — that is, see to it that the country exports more than it imports. The measures the IMF imposes are uniform on a world scale; those dictated for Africa are those being dictated to the Russian government, to Latin American governments, and everybody else.

Why? Because the tendency of the rate of profit to fall compels the dominant capitalists in the industrialized countries to increase their export of capital. They seek to export capital to the underdeveloped countries of the world — this is the fate that awaits Russia at the hands of imperialism — in order to raise the rate of profit by taking advantage of the extraordinarily cheap labor costs there. The average per capita income in Zaïre, for example, is \$250 per year! The imperialist powers always strive to maintain this cheap labor pool. Nothing is further from their minds than helping to transform Africa, or mighty Russia, into a highly industrialized competitor on a world scale!

What measures do they dictate through the IMF? (1) Reducing inflation and reducing government deficits (cutting the budget). (2) Making exchange rates "competitive" through devaluations of currencies (meaning that the value of people's money, their wages, sharply decreases overnight). (3) Ending price controls (allegedly to provide "incentives" for capitalists to produce more; this of course means that prices immediately increase dramatically). (4)

Selling off state-owned industries (because they allegedly cost the government too much money and increase budget allocations; the social needs that these industries meet are not only irrelevant to the IMF; they are considered a threat to the free reign of market forces). (5) Reducing subsidies on consumer goods (these are deemed by the IMF to be an "inefficient" expenditure, even though reducing such subsidies also means that necessary food products, consumer goods, and services are no longer affordable to most people; these subsidies, also, are considered a threat to "free" market forces.) (6) Lifting import and export restrictions and tariffs (meaning that infant local industries protected from multinational corporate giants by tariffs may be forced to shut down, causing massive unemployment and still-lower wages; also that goods that served internal needs and were previously kept inside the country by high export fees — like food products — will be drawn to more profitable markets abroad). (7) Lifting controls on business operations (like laws to protect the environment and consumers) that make a country less attractive to investors, who might otherwise be "lured" there to produce exports from that country.

Since all of these measures entail direct attacks on the living standards of the population — causing high prices, increased unemployment, and deepening poverty — it takes a dictatorial government to impose them fully, since naturally such measures are extremely unpopular. Nevertheless, with their economies in desperate need of help and with nowhere else to turn, since 1987 at least 30 of the 38 sub-Saharan nations of Africa have applied for IMF assistance. In fact, all African states are now to one degree or another under the thumb of the IMF.

Why African "Socialism" Became a Thing of the Past

As the June 20 *New York Times* put it:

Gone are the days 10 or 15 years ago when socialism was "on the march" and powerful leaders from the despotic to the high-minded gave it lip service. They embraced it because a controlled economy fit well...because egalitarianism seemed progressive and right for Africa and because only the Communist countries were backing liberation movements in the south.

"Today, you won't find a single African head of state who stands on the podium and declares: 'I'm a Marxist,'" observed Tei Mante, a Ghanaian who heads the African office of the International Finance Corporation, an affiliate of the World Bank. "Instead all the talk is about floating currency, private enterprise, and getting hold of capital."

The decline of this "march toward socialism" is directly the result of (1) the military intervention and intrigues of the United States and European governments and (2) the decision by the Stalinist bureaucrats in the Kremlin that their power and privileges were best served by abandoning one set of faulty policies ("socialism in one country" and "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism), in favor of another set of faulty policies (reinstitution of reliance on market forces and restoration of the capitalist system of ownership). As a result, instead of being directly under the boot of a foreign colonial ruler as they had been for centuries in the past, the "independent" sub-Sahara nations of Africa are now under the collective boot of all the former colonial powers put together, plus the United States and Japan. In fact, the U.S. government, because of its preeminent position, actually has the decisive voice in determining IMF as well as G-7 policy.

At the present time, the IMF controls — "oversees and supervises" — the economies of some 30 countries in sub-Sahara Africa (*New York Times*, June 20, 1994). During the 1980s, as the market price for many of these countries' export commodities plunged, their debts to foreign lenders tripled and now total \$180 billion. This represents 110 percent of the overall GNP in 1991. Just servicing the debt costs \$10 billion dollars annually, more than all these countries spend on health and education. During this same period, the population became ever more impoverished. Throughout the 1980s, the per capita GNP declined by 2 percent per year.

The Ghana "Success Story"

The model of success in Africa that the IMF holds up is Ghana. The mass movement in Ghana was the first in Africa to win independence, from Britain in 1957. A prominent leader of the struggle was Kwame Nkrumah, a Pan-Africanist who played an important role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. He was an outspoken critic of neocolonial intrigues elsewhere in Africa, and supported the Algerian and central and southern African liberation movements, including the revolutionary struggle in the Congo (Zaire). Nkrumah, a populist leader, with aid from the Soviet Union and elsewhere, initiated a number of public works projects providing jobs and considerable construction of schools, homes, and medical clinics.

With CIA funding and assistance, Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966. Since then there have been five more coups, all leaving power in the hands of sections of the local military and economic elite, whose interests are intertwined with those of the former colonial exploiters. The state of the economy progressively worsened as the new governments progressively halted all the public works projects. One of the military officers, Jerry J. Rawlings, managed to stage an election that he easily won. With the mass movements consistently repressed and undermined, Rawlings was

able, beginning in 1983, to put into effect an IMF "structural adjustment plan."

These are some of the measures his government had to impose: currency devaluation; privatization of most of the 300 state-owned industries; lifting of import restrictions, such as licenses; abolishing the board that set agricultural prices, allowing them to increase sharply; large-scale layoffs of state employees, "including 45,000 from the Civil Service lists alone."

According to the IMF, Ghana's government stuck pretty closely to these prescriptions and from 1988 to 1992 its economy grew between 4 and 5 percent annually. (The *New York Times* explains that the World Bank did hold up aid in 1982, an election year, when to get elected Rawlings had to throw some money toward services for the people, thus increasing the budget deficit, something the IMF does not allow. Once the government was elected, it again cut back such spending and foreign bank loans were resumed.)

Here is how the June 20 *New York Times* described the Ghana success story:

Now, signs of activity are perking up. There are traffic jams on the dusty streets, crowds around the ubiquitous red, green, and yellow lottery shacks, vendors everywhere hawking magazines and carrying trays of bananas, cigarettes, matches, and pirated tape cassettes on their heads.

Farmers are growing more cocoa. Supermarkets are stocked with goods. Electronic stores have appliances, video cameras, and computers in the windows, though not many consumers can afford to buy them. The per capita income, about \$450, is still among the continent's lowest.

These are precisely the type of conditions that foreign investors consider "favorable," especially the low standard of living, which for them means low labor costs.

After all these measures, "there is a slight stirring of interest among foreign companies," the *Times* reports. These include Lonrho, the London-based conglomerate with "extensive holdings in mining, agriculture and hotels throughout Africa." It recently bought 55 percent ownership in the 100-year-old Ashanti Goldfields.

These gold mines had been retooled and refurbished by the government, and gold production has tripled since 1988, with exports of gold surpassing cocoa as Ghana's chief export earner. It was then — just when export earnings could have been conceivably applied to help finance a general "refurbishing" of the people's lives — that the government was forced by IMF dictates to sell controlling interest to the Lonrho conglomerate, which will take the handsome profits out of Ghana to corporate headquarters in London and the wealthy stockholders.

Poverty for Another 50 Years

The gold miners have not yet prospered, of course. Despite the "signs of progress," many miners say they skip lunch below ground because they cannot afford the meal. Like many Ghanaians, they have been hurt because the spending power of the cedi, the nation's currency, has not really improved. The per capita income "stubbornly remains among the lowest in Africa," the counterpart of the increased rate of profit. In fact, as far as the masses are concerned, the program is not a success at all, nor is it intended to be. The World Bank itself, according to the June 20 *New York Times*, while holding Ghana up as an example, cautions that "even if Ghana manages to keep going at the current rate...the average Ghanaian will not cross the poverty line for another 50 years."

"In more general terms," the *Times* went on, "if the most optimistic growth forecasts prove accurate, it will take 40 years

South African WLP on Nigeria Strikes

The Workers List Party (WLP), in issue No. 1 of its new paper Workers News (August 1994) carried an article on Nigeria that included the following excerpts.

For the last 24 years Nigeria has been under military rule. Now Nigerian workers are saying enough is enough! And they are using their strongest weapon — the mass strike. Strikers are calling for the instatement of Moshood Abiola as president and a return to democracy. [The wealthy businessman] Abiola won Nigeria's elections in June last year...

The workers have pulled behind them millions of students, unemployed, and street sellers.

The strike has united people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. It has shown them that class is what counts.

"We have drawn a line between those who want democracy and progress and those who want to cling on to the old regime. The line is between the rich and the poor, the military and the workers," said one striker.

Nigerian workers are showing us the way to deal with anti-worker governments. But if they succeed in removing the pro-capitalist military regime, then what would be the point of replacing it with Abiola's capitalist rule? Nigerian workers need a workers government which will get rid of capitalism along with the military and replace it with a socialist state. Only a socialist party can lead this fight.

for the African countries to regain the per capita income level they reached in the mid-1970s."

The Class-Struggle Alternative

The masses, as we have said, have not been out of the picture in the post-World War II period. Far from it. It is fear of them that even today has kept most of the African governments from diligently following the IMF prescriptions. The problem is that the masses' repeated efforts to resist and even their temporary victories have been stymied and suppressed by the combined military might and intelligence networks of the imperial forces and their local collaborators, including the Stalinists and other misleaders in the working class. Many thousands of mass leaders and revolutionary-minded fighters have been arrested, tortured, killed.

The recent case of Rwanda, which is rated as a "poor" implementer of IMF/World Bank prescriptions, shows not only how a government fearful of mass resistance can (with foreign military assistance and insidious rumors) foment massive inter-ethnic slaughter to try to get the upper hand against opponents. It also shows that a multi-ethnic popular liberation movement, with mass support — which the Rwanda Patriotic Front appears to be — can defeat such forces, even if the former colonial powers militarily intervene on the side of the government.

The Case of Nigeria

Nigeria offers another powerful example of resistance. Because the U.S.-backed military government in Nigeria consistently refused to admit it lost the 1993 elections, the oil and gas industry workers went out on strike July 4, 1994, demanding democratic reform and the resignation of the government. The strike soon spread to other industries and to the public services, with millions of workers taking part in the strike actions that shut down the major cities. These workers mobilized despite the declaration by the government that disruption of the economy, i.e., participation in the strike, is considered treason and is punishable by death.

The fact that there is mass resistance of this type, led by organized labor, against a brutal military government after decades of repression shows how vulnerable these governments really are. Despite dictatorial powers, the Nigerian military governments have received only an "adequate" rating from the IMF in terms of progress in implementing IMF reforms. Mass resistance and fear of it are holding back even repressive regimes.

Marx Was Right...

If "the Russians" continue trying to implement the IMF's prescriptions — and the current rulers in the Kremlin and in the other republics of the former USSR give every indication of doing so — the former Soviet Union could soon be characterized by widespread hunger and poverty; recent data indicate that this is already beginning to happen.

According to an ITAR/TASS report from Kazakhstan in April this year, food shortages in the republic and particularly in the forced labor camps were so severe that prisoners in one camp near Semipalatinsk resorted to cannibalism to survive, killing another inmate and eating his parts. Workers are desperate and hungry, jobs are getting fewer and fewer, and employers can drive wages lower and lower. Such are the results of abiding by IMF prescriptions. As Marx explained, the continuation of capitalism means the increased impoverishment of the majority.

However, history has shown that resistance in the weakest links in the imperialist chain, the underdeveloped countries, can spark revolutionary movements throughout the world capitalist system. What will it take for such rebellions and revolutions to succeed in overthrowing the rule of capital? The developments in sub-Saharan Africa described above point to the indispensability of an internationalist and socialist perspective within the workers and revolutionary movements. Moreover, the role of the workers movements in the G-7 nations — above all, in the United States — is particularly critical. The U.S. government, after all, plays the most important role in determining IMF dictates, and overthrowing U.S. imperialist rule, or even organizing movements that can progressively reduce its ability to carry out its policies, would be decisive on a world scale.

In this regard, it is important to realize that the imperialists no longer need to dispatch large military contingents in order to impose their economic hegemony on the neocolonial world, although they are still forced to do so from time to time.

To organize to defend the worker and peasant movements in the neocolonial world, it is not sufficient, therefore, to orient ourselves solely toward organizing movements against large-scale military intervention, although that is needed. The case of the war against Iraq and the invasions of Panama and Somalia were recent examples. After all, between the Vietnam war and the U.S. invasion of Somalia — or even the U.S. war against Iraq — U.S. imperialism, with its allies, had successfully pushed back the African revolution without dispatching huge contingents of troops.

To put it another way, it is vital to realize that U.S. and other imperialist "interventions" are carried out not only through massive invasion of troops and military might. The imperialists look after their interests and impose their economic and political hegemony through a variety of channels, including but not only by means of covert police and military actions; but it is "intervention" nonetheless and must be stopped. Through the IMF and the capitalist lending agencies, the world's corporate elites and their local agents are now in a better position than ever to impose their program because the dramatic shifts in Kremlin policy have resulted in depriving these countries of any aid in their confrontations with imperialism; "developing" nations have nowhere but

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Taiwanese Opposition Party Delegation Visits South Africa

by Linda Gail Arrigo

Linda Gail Arrigo is the American-born wife of Shih Ming-teh, who served 25 years in prison for his work for Taiwanese independence; he is currently the chairman of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the opposition party to the ruling Guomindang. Arrigo, who has been working for human rights and economic justice in Taiwan since the late 1970s, currently works with the DPP's department of foreign affairs.

The May 1994 formation of a new interim government in the Republic of South Africa (RSA), with former political prisoner Nelson Mandela as president, followed on elections in which the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies, the South Africa Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), took 63 percent of the national popular vote. This sea change also promises massive changes in the foreign relations of the RSA, previously ostracized by world opinion due to the apartheid policies of its white minority regime, and thus one of the "pariah" states that have long stood together in mutual consolation and military assistance — South Africa, Israel, South Korea, and the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan.

In 1991 the Taiwan Embassy in South Africa, finally perceiving this change approaching, began desperately wooing important figures of the African National Congress with fully-paid trips to Taiwan, in hopes of maintaining this last important contact in its dwindling official international relations. Most recently, Taiwan television made much of a ten-minute visit of Taiwan's president, Lee Teng-hui, with President Mandela at the inauguration in May 1994. In June 1990 the ROC Foreign Ministry blocked a visa for the ANC's Japan representative, Jerry Matsila, who had been invited to Taiwan by the Democratic Progressive Party. The pretext was that Jerry was a "terrorist." Since then the ROC Foreign Ministry has encouraged trips to South Africa by the DPP, Taiwan's major opposition party (recently polling 41 percent of the popular vote), as if to demonstrate Taiwan's own democratic progress.

The first delegation of the DPP to South Africa, in January 1991, followed an itinerary of sightseeing designed by the ROC Embassy and the RSA, and failed to make contact with the ANC. Later the DPP sent a special representative to the ANC's first national convention, June 1992. The second major DPP delegation was planned for July 20-27, 1994, with hopes that the new chairman of the DPP, Shih Ming-teh — with over 25 years imprisonment behind him, often known as "Taiwan's

Mandela" — would likewise meet with President Mandela.

The following is a report on that trip and related preparations for it, after occasional contacts with the ANC from 1989 on. I have participated as a long-time activist and English/Chinese translator in opposition party foreign public relations and as titular wife of the present DPP chairman.

Conflicts Faced by New South Africa Government

Although the interactions between Taiwan and South Africa may seem to be a narrow topic, they illustrate the central contradictions that must be faced by the new mass-based government — seeking both to chart a path toward greater economic equality and to maintain economic stability. Taiwan is a major investor in labor-intensive industry, and it is South Africa's fifth-largest trading partner.

The six-member National Legislators of the Democratic Progressive Party delegation, all except one elected in the first full popular election of that body in December 1992, included:

- Shih Ming-teh, two-term political prisoner for 25 years total, famous for 1980 trial statement, "Taiwan has been independent for thirty years"; chairman of the DPP since December 1993, current term until May 1996.
- Hsieh Tsung-ming (Roger), two-term political prisoner for a total of 12 years, imprisoned due to 1964 "statement of Taiwan independence" case. Currently concerned with restitution for political victims, including return of confiscated property and reparations.
- Chang Hsu-cheng (Parris), National Legislator representing overseas populations, also Professor of Political Science at Pennsylvania State University. Currently a member of National Legislature Foreign Affairs Committee.

The Hope for Transformation in South Africa

At this point the interim Government of National Unity dominated by the ANC but com-

mitted to governing in consensus with the Nationalist Party (previously white supremacist) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (Zulu autonomist), is faced mainly with the task of stabilizing the economy while showing real commitment to the moderate but still difficult-to-attain goals on which it campaigned, basic social and economic uplifting for the Black majority. This includes predominantly jobs, schools, health, and in particular housing. In principle, land "restitution" is to restore to Blacks the lands and homes they occupied in 1913 — which still leaves whites with the lion's share of land.

Following the peaceful conclusion of the elections, white flight has been stemmed (the government seems quite concerned not to scare away white and Asian professionals), but a series of strikes in June and July have put in question the stability of jobs and future foreign investment. Not surprisingly, the union representatives of Black workers seem determined to affirm their political gains from the election, and to respond to the expectations of their constituencies. In particular, labor disturbances in the Taiwanese-owned knitting and garment factories endanger a great many jobs, given that the owners claim they are quite capable of moving out to low-wage Southeast Asian countries like Burma.

South Africa has the look of Los Angeles laid on top of a primitive nomadic society. Women carrying eight-foot-long bundles of firewood on their heads may be seen walking parallel to the approaches of a freeway cloverleaf. Ten years ago it was probably possible to fly through all the airports of the country, drive on the freeways and through palm-fringed white suburbs, watch television, stay at the five-star tourist hotels, swim at the garden-lined beach front in Durban, drink South African wine and eat wild game at a restaurant, and leave the country without realizing that the majority of the populace is Black, lives in tin shacks on rocky ground or in small stucco houses, eats a monotonous diet of maize meal, and is 70 percent functionally illiterate.

As a white or a Taiwanese, it is still difficult to see that other side close up, because of pervasive fear of being the object of attack and because the settlements of squatter shacks that have grown up around cities in the last five years, often without piped water or electricity, are shielded from the highways by high concrete walls. Even though the downtown of Johannesburg has now been taken over by well-dressed Black office workers, there seems to be little casual mixing of the races. Although shabeens, pubs set up in homes, are scattered among Black housing, it seems nearly impossible to find Black restaurants or other establishments of Black middle-class entertainment and consumption.

This condition of polarization is the legacy of apartheid. Decades of institutionalized racial inequality — in infrastructure and human services as well as in personal civil rights — have created the greatest economic disparity in the world: an average standard of living compara-

ble about to Spain for whites, and comparable to the Congo for Blacks.

The white standard of living would be considered moderate in cost in U.S. dollars, but it is far beyond the means of most Blacks. Only in recent years have a few of the white population begun to experience unemployment, and to take to the streets vending newspapers, oranges, or handicrafts. But previously white wages were about three times those of Blacks, in general. A Black live-in maid makes 300 Rand (US\$82) a month plus room and board. A Black office worker, perhaps US\$200. More seriously, up to half of the Black population is unemployed, and lives off pittances spread around from relatives. What amazed a visiting Taiwanese legislator was that at noontime in a squatter camp no sign of cooking or eating could be seen; in the evening knots of people clustered around smoky braziers in front of the tin shacks, and ate with their fingers.

Given this obvious disparity, the ebullient cheer and optimism of the ANC officials who have newly taken office — men who have suffered long exile, imprisonment, and torture — was amazing. It was clear in this visit that the new government is still in the honeymoon phase. Although scattered violence, in particular crimes of Black gangs brutally plundering and murdering white households, has been featured in the news, in general political peace followed the elections.

To the obvious question of how the new government could meet the rising expectations of the majority, an ANC official replied, "Our people are very patient. They have lived through decades of apartheid and years of negotiation that brought the current advance. They will be patient for gradual improvement." Consonant with this, the Reconstruction and Development Plan on which the ANC campaigned is a very moderate and gradualist one, except for the goal of accelerated construction of low-cost housing. According to an officer of the South African Development Bank, long a white institution, the Plan can be financed merely by redirecting subsidies from the white to the Black sectors. Only an increase in business taxation is planned at present. The intent is to raise the living of the Black majority without pulling down the white minority.

The historical question is of course why the ANC was able to negotiate its way to elections at all, and I asked it several times of different people. The detailed account in the April ___?? 1994 *New Yorker* of Nelson Mandela's contacts and negotiations with Botha and de Klerk from 1988 on suggest a purposeful grooming of a moderate, although heroic leader. This is not to suggest, however, that the then-ruling Nationalist Party was able to control the outcome to its satisfaction. In the larger picture, obviously the various armed groups and popular mobilizations of the Black majority held the specter of continued revolutionary violence, even a holocaust; in addition, the random diffusion of weapons, even automatic assault rifles, led to an

increase in economic marauding that is now still difficult to control.

Perhaps of equal importance, the international sanctions were taking an increasing toll on the South African economy. For example, although gasoline was never in shortage, South Africa had to pay three times the world market price, I was told, to buy it through intermediaries. Finally, it was obvious that there was a barrier to industrial development in a shortage of skilled and educated labor, and a surfeit of uneducated and restive Black labor. And true to Marxist theory, it was Soweto, with a population of two million just outside Johannesburg and a concentration of the oldest Black proletariat largely removed from the tribal past, that was the cradle of Black resistance.

Overall the answers I received were consonant with Martin Murray's 1987 book, that the largest English- and international-invested capital in South Africa found apartheid an impediment to further capitalist development. However, this relatively peaceful transition should also be seen in the context of the current world conjuncture, that "socialism" has fallen in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, and so that revolutionary option was no longer available to the Black majority; and that, as analyzed from the world systems perspective, in the phase of transfer of hegemony from the United States to Europe and Japan, there is a concomitant transfer of neo-colonial economic ties. According to a 1990 analysis by Tebogo Mafole, then head of the ANC Observer Mission in the UN, the European Community championed anti-apartheid sanctions in the early 1980s, while Washington continued to ban the ANC as a terrorist organization until early 1990; and now large European and Japanese development loans are pending.

One aspect of the transition has been somewhat contentious. In mid-July a Truth Commission was being convened to investigate all political crimes, both state terrorism and revolutionary terrorism, since the 1960s. While the ANC and Lawyers for Human Rights, a 160-member human rights organization active since the early 1980s, insisted that the past could not be laid to rest and reconciliation achieved until all was laid open to the light of day, other parties, and in particular the Inkatha Freedom Party, insisted that this process would show the ugly side of the ANC as much as anyone else's, and could tear apart the government of national unity. Amnesty for political crimes, and whether those found to have committed or directed atrocities would be allowed to serve in public office, were related issues. Brian Currin, national director of Lawyers for Human Rights, was slated to advise the Commission, whose mandate passed the parliament in August.

The issue of political violence is not entirely past, although the results of the election showed very few of the electorate supporting either Black extremists (Pan-African Congress, which previously did not accept the right of whites to live in South Africa) or white extremists (e.g. those insisting on a white homeland, by force if necessary). As laid out in a briefing by ANC

Secretary for International Affairs Welile Nhlapo, the former ministries of defense, police, etc., were riddled with renegades who had no accountability to civilian authorities, and who operated state terrorism with impunity.

Given recent bomb attacks by white extremists, the inordinate amount of security precautions at both ANC and COSATU headquarters is understandable. There are double systems of controlled doors, metal detectors, briefcase inspections, etc. All visitors have to be accompanied to their destinations by an escort, and all visitors' cars parked in the adjacent parking lot. ANC employees are likewise subject to discipline. Though some are provided with vehicles, the vehicles are inspected before departure from the basement garage, to make sure no equipment is removed from the premises.

The issue of political crimes was very much alive in Natal Province. The DPP delegation had an official dinner there on July 26 with Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, president of the Inkatha Freedom Party and now minister of home affairs in the Government of National Unity. This was a colorful event that merits some recounting. I sat next to Chief Buthelezi so as to translate for the DPP chairman and others; his short scepter in modern shining Lucite striped with the colors of his party lay on the table beside his hand. In a specially prepared speech, also printed for distribution, Buthelezi praised Taiwan for helping to develop rural industry and for being a friend of South Africa while the rest of the world shunned it.

Buthelezi emphasized that Inkatha had received a significant part of the vote (50.3 percent in Natal, 10.5 percent nationwide) even without campaign canvassing, and predicted that they would achieve much more in the future. He presented the chairman of the DPP with an intricate cast statue of his great-grandfather, sitting on an ox-horn throne, presiding over a struggling mass of heroic Zulu warriors and British soldiers, commemorating the Zulu victory of 1877. (Buthelezi played his great-grandfather in the 1970s movie "Zulu" based on these events.) The chief bristled when I inquired as to whether Inkatha intended to become a national organization; however, he also denied that the Zulus intended separatism.

The issue of political crimes was elucidated later in a long discussion with one of Buthelezi's associates, a middle-aged lawyer. He suspected the ANC of continuing assassinations of Inkatha activists in Natal. Only a week or so before a family of eight had been murdered, and a minivan had been ambushed. However, he opposed the Truth Commission project, saying the ANC would investigate selectively. He said the ANC had successfully marshalled public opinion and even church sentiment to justify "revolutionary" violence on its own part, while condemning any persons suspected of opposing the ANC. He claimed he had once personally heard a high-ranking church official justify "necklacing," burning suspected informers alive with tires over their shoulders, in terms of

God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son, and the burning bush.

This view of ANC influence over public opinion was more or less confirmed in a book published in 1993 by the South Africa Institute of Race Relations, *Political Violence in South Africa* by John Kane-Berman, which dealt in detail with events in 1992-93. While not exonerating possible collusion between Inkatha and security agency-directed terrorism, the book stated that the ANC had also been implicated in acts of violence against Inkatha, but had finally acknowledged some excesses, and the ANC leadership had called for an end to violence on all fronts. All the same, Inkatha and its affiliated organizations did not look good in events occurring about the end of this trip. A TV dramatization of massacres, machine-gunnings of commuters on trains in 1993, was aired for three consecutive nights on the weekend of July 29-31. Inkatha disclaimed this as calumny, and the head of the association of hostel dwellers (usually Inkatha strongholds) was even filmed stating to reporters that if the rest of the movie were aired, the producer and the actors would be "wiped from the face of the earth."

Despite these elements of tension, the mood of the populace seemed conciliatory. In one long stretch sitting late at night in the lobby of the Cape Sun Hotel where the DPP delegation was staying, I chanced upon two remarkable discussions. The first was with a light-skinned mixed-race lobby attendant, about 24 years old, named Ricky Van der Burg. He had participated in Cape Town township uprisings in 1985-86, and rebutted accusations that the Cape Town coloreds were complacent under apartheid. On one occasion Ricky threw stones at a government patrol. The soldier told him and the other teenage boys to be out of the area by the count of 10. They ran, but the soldier started firing rubber bullets at count 3. His friend looked back, caught a bullet in the eye, and died instantly. Ricky was knocked cold by a ricocheted rubber bullet that caught him at the base of the skull. When he came to he pulled out the bullet embedded in his skin and fled.

The second discussion was with a dark-haired Afrikaner/German security guard in his late twenties, named Neil Muller; he was part of a professional security contingent hired to guard a Jewish function going on in the ballroom. "Yes, it's been a big change. But we have to accept it; the past was wrong. Look at me, I grew up with a Black mammy and the Blacks at my daddy's factory called me 'baas' (boss)... When I was eighteen I had to go to the home guard; it was that or go to jail. What could I do? So we got all trained..."

Then he gave a chilling description:

What do you do when you have a few hundred Blacks coming at you, and supposedly they're unarmed, but they have traditional weapons like machetes, and there are so many of them? You can't blame the boys if they shoot.... We had to go patrol the townships during the disturbances. Once we were ambushed by snipers, and they got five of us, including the chap who was always arguing for the ANC. Killed them. I

chased one sniper, and he ran through the shacks and I ran after him, not knowing whether I would be surrounded at any moment. I was almost on him, and he flopped to the ground and started to swing around his weapon to aim. In that second I had to decide. I blasted him with automatic fire until he was a bloody pulp and I couldn't recognize him. I could see he was small, but I didn't know till I saw the picture in the paper that he was fourteen years old.... And now I have to live with that image that I killed him, sometimes in my dreams, for the rest of my life."

Ironically, this bodyguard is now often contracted to protect ANC officials, because the ANC does not yet have enough personnel with professional training. Stories like both of these were no doubt common in the past decade. Both speakers had Afrikaner accents. But what impressed me was that when both Ricky and Neil were talking, one on my right and one on my left, looking across at each other, they still spoke with such gentle earnestness, and no rancor, that I could hardly imagine the scene in an analogous American context. Perhaps there really is hope for a transformation.

Labor Disputes in Taiwanese-Owned Factories

The significant presence of Taiwanese investment in South Africa has a particular geopolitical origin. The Republic of China on Taiwan lost the China seat in the United Nations to the People's Republic of China in 1971. Although previously in the UN it voted to censure apartheid, in 1976 it established diplomatic relations with the Republic of South Africa. In the early 1980s, as both nations were increasingly isolated in world relations, they engaged in a more intense exchange of visits of ranking officials as a means of bolstering internal appearances.

In particular, while international sanctions against South Africa tightened, Taiwan cooperated with the homelands industrial development program of the South Africa regime. This was a strategy to stave off burgeoning Black migration to the cities and to give some content to the fiction of separate racial and national development by creating employment in homelands industrial parks. This program provided generous subsidies and infrastructure for companies that would set up production in designated homelands locations, paying as much as 90 percent of wage costs and providing ready-made factory buildings for rental. A much more advantageous exchange rate was provided for capital investment. By 1990 there were about 250 Taiwan-invested companies in RSA, according to the ROC ambassador, a rough guess at their number of employees might be 50,000. These were mainly labor-intensive export industries like shoe and garment factories, and part of the motivation by Taiwanese investors was to get around U.S. import quotas according to country of origin.

South Africa soon dropped the homelands subsidies in favor of an income tax credit applicable throughout South Africa, and the U.S. put other caps on import quotas (Jeff Woods, per-

sonal communications, August 1994). Nevertheless, Taiwanese factories seem to have continued to set up shop in South Africa, and there has been further migration of Taiwanese who provide services to the Taiwanese community (Chinese food and medicine) and even retirees who find the price of housing and servants amenable. Taiwan's new civilian airlines, EVA, flies to Johannesburg. Since the mid-1980s about 10,000 Taiwanese — who had also been designated honorary whites — have taken up residence in South Africa. Taiwan is now South Africa's fifth largest trading partner, with the balance of payments in favor of South Africa.

This discussion leads to the matter of the strike against the Taiwanese knitting and garment factories in Kimberly. Before leaving for South Africa, I had addressed letters to many organizations, among them COSATU, requesting briefings for the DPP delegation. COSATU responded to a call from my advance man by a decided rejection, that it was "unnecessary to meet with Taiwan." I did not know then that a strike was in progress and that the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SAC-TWU) would on July 19 lodge a strong protest against a statement by the ROC consul for the Cape region that the workers' demands were "unreasonable."

Upon arrival, I explained clearly that the DPP delegation represented the opposition party in Taiwan, a party which included political prisoners and a strong labor component; the international relations officer of COSATU, Mr. Bangumzi Sifingo, reluctantly agreed to a meeting. On Tuesday July 19, his first statement to me and the local Taiwanese (Dr. & Mrs. Liao Chang-li) who accompanied me was that he had been jailed three times for his labor activism at Mdantsang Prison in the Ciskei, a few miles northeast from New London, that had been built with the assistance of the Taiwan government. Although during this trip we were not able to verify this ROC role in prisons, and it was vehemently denied by the ROC Ambassador, we found this same impression among ANC and COSATU activists three or four more times (the location was also cited as next to Fort Hare University in Dimbaza).

Mr. Sifingo, one of the vice presidents of COSATU, and four other of their officers attended a lunch sponsored by the DPP on Friday, July 22, and there met with Mr. Hou Chuan-jung, owner of Kimberly Diamond Knitting Factory, who had especially driven to Johannesburg, six hours' drive, for the meeting. The COSATU officers' attitude seemed to be part conciliatory, part dismissive, and part wheedling. The Taiwanese poured wine freely; the COSATU people dumped it and called for varieties more to their taste. But the issues were serious. Legal action by the unions against seven factory owners, for firing union organizers and locking out the workers, as well as miscellaneous accusations of mistreatment, was pending on July 28. While the dispute remained unresolved, hundreds of workers were unem-

ployed; and the longer it continued the more likely the factories would close up and pull out.

As scheduled, during the luncheon on July 26 Mr. Hou and other factory owners met especially with COSATU, and four owners signed a contract assuring the right of the workers to union representation, with further wage increases over the current minimum wage (about US\$22/week, which the owners had already met) to be negotiated in January 1995. It seems likely that the COSATU headquarters had to calm the tempers of local SACTWU organizers to reach this agreement.

Meanwhile, tempers on the side of Kimberly Taiwanese factory owners still flared. During my visit to Kimberly on Saturday, July 30, several of the factory owners who had refused to settle shouted in my face even while they accompanied me to an elegant dinner. Why did they have to get entangled with the opposition party in order to settle their internal affairs? (They seemed to fear offending the ROC Consul; Mr. Hou asserted that the DPP involvement was incidental and took responsibility for the content of the contract.) Why should they agree to take back workers who had caused trouble? Some tried to get common agreement among those present on delaying reopening the factories for a week or two, as if to teach the workers a lesson. (It should be noted here that workers require a month or two of training to operate the knitting machines skillfully, and the owners would also lose out if their trained workers dispersed back to their homelands.) Although the owners wept crocodile tears over rising wages and losses due to work stoppages, they also asserted that if wages rose they would "use a few months' profits" to invest in further capital equipment, rather than hire more workers for expansion. The major issue here and in other Taiwanese-owned factories at this time seemed to be rights of control over the workers, rather than wages specifically. But after venting a great deal of steam those who had not yet signed seemed to relent and agree to do so.

The next morning Mr. Hou visited a dozen of his skilled women workers, not from the area, who lived in a house he had bought for their use in a multiracial area a few blocks from the factory, and told them in his broken English that work would resume in a few days. The house seemed rather bare but decent, with several women per room, and with running water, kitchen, toilet, and yard, much better than the tin shacks so much of the population lived in. Only the fumes of kerosene heaters made the interior oppressive, even while they took the edge off the winter morning chill. Likewise lacking all but a few words of English, the women rubbed their stomachs angrily as if complaining of hunger, but otherwise seemed relieved. Mr. Hou said he had just the week before given them two weeks' severance pay, 200 Rand (US\$75), and was also providing 5 Rand (US\$1.40) a day to them each for basic subsistence while the work stoppage continued. But he seemed to be the more generous of the own-

ers, believing that higher wages would also result in a better internal market in South Africa.

Producing for the internal market of South Africa does seem to be quite profitable for the Taiwanese factories, as I understood more clearly after factory visits. The owners and their managers, a few of whom originate from mainland China, live in prosperous white neighborhoods with their walled gardens and dogs, like the whites, and many drive Mercedes Benz cars. They must, however, maintain vigilant oversight of the business and the workers. This seems to have been successful.

Due to their more efficient management and links with Taiwanese factories in acrylic yarn and other production, the previous largest producers of knit products, owned by South African Jewish families, were close to going under, a Taiwanese owner said. The manual knitting machines for the factories (small hand-powered units, without electric motors) could be bought for about US\$100 each, plus import taxes, since they were being retired after five or six years' use in Taiwan. But Taiwanese owners uniformly complained that the African workers had low productivity and attention to work, only about a fifth of the productivity of Taiwanese workers. Moreover, up to 20 percent of production was irregular or was pilfered by the workers. The Taiwanese factories generally had small retail counters for sale to workers and neighborhood residents, with prices in the range of US\$10-20 for an acrylic or artificial-mohair sweater.

The issue of low labor productivity in South Africa was recognized by ANC officials who had visited Taiwan and had been much impressed by the tremendous work intensity and attention to economy in small enterprises there. They hoped that Taiwanese factories would both impart the work ethic and a spirit of entrepreneurship, so that South Africa could develop a thriving Black-owned small business sector like Taiwan's.



Initial meeting of Taiwanese factory owner and COSATU officials, July 22, 1994, at a Taiwanese-owned restaurant in Johannesburg. The author is standing at left.

On the side of labor, a former COSATU activist who is now a provincial minister of the Orange Free State accused the Taiwanese factory owners of "fascist" methods of control that were more stringent than those of white bosses, and of paying wages that put the products entirely out of reach of the workers themselves. At a settlement about 30 km. from Bloemfontein, Botshabelo, where the previous white government had forcibly resettled a population of about 300,000 in the last decade (some removed from squatter townships around the city, others seemingly migrant from homelands), nearby Taiwanese factories used to hire this captive labor force for 40 Rand a week (US\$11), a very low wage even if the workers did not have to pay the usual US\$5 or so a week for transportation in private minivans. In fact, about half of the employment in Botshabelo is in Taiwanese-owned factories. Residents of a shantytown in Bloemfontein told us that 120 Rand a week (US\$33) was an acceptable wage.

An hour's drive east of Bloemfontein is Ladybrand, on the border with Lesotho, where a community of Taiwanese industrialists live. They reportedly employ as many as 30,000 workers at factories within Lesotho — the labor there was said to be cheaper and also superior in work discipline and skill — but after labor riots a few years previous in which lives had been lost, the owners retreated to their residences across the border each evening.

Overall, the Taiwanese industrialists seemed rather innocent of understanding in regard to the major political and social juncture at which South Africa stands; in lifestyle and mentality they remain within the orbit of Taiwan society. Profits and personal security were their immediate focus. They did show some concern, however, to improve the image of Taiwanese within South Africa, with a sense that this was best for their own long-term preservation. □

The Working People Have to Continue the Struggle Against Capitalism in South Africa

by Neville Alexander

The following is the text of an address to the national conference launching the Workers List Party (WLP) held in Cape Town, South Africa, in April this year. Neville Alexander is vice-chairperson of the WLP. We reprint his speech, with minor corrections for reasons of style, from a pamphlet with the proceedings of the conference published by the WLP.

Comrades! Friends!

This is not an occasion for long and difficult speeches. We meet here in conference at a time of great troubles and great expectations in our country. The particularly violent events in Natal and in the Transvaal during the past few days have served to bury once and for all the illusion of those among us who believed that a peaceful — or even “relatively” peaceful — transition from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa is possible. In the past few years when we have often stood quite alone in our view that we should prepare for war if we want peace and in warning against the dangers of civil war and military rule, we were regularly ignored or jeered at as though we were mad people. Today, everyone who writes about these things pretends that he or she had always thought things would turn out this way. But in fact, very few people are prepared for the terrible times ahead of us.

The proclamation of 11 municipalities in the PWV metropolitan area [which includes Johannesburg and Pretoria] as “unrest areas” and the declaration of a state of emergency in KwaZulu-Natal have placed more than one-half of the country’s population under martial law (mili-

tary rule). The “destabilization” of the self-governing and independent homelands (as the right-wing calls it) has placed all these territories under the effective control of the apartheid state’s security forces (SADF and SAP). The TEC [Transitional Executive Committee] and some of the ANC leadership fondly believe that they are in control of the situation. It is a sad, and frankly, disgraceful spectacle. The sacrifices of the workers of these Bantustans in pulling the rug from under the feet of “their” respective dictators by strike action and other forms of mass action are wasted by virtue of the fact that not they themselves but the hated SADF and SAP [South African Defense Forces and South African Police] end up controlling these ruined fragments of South Africa. In this, we see but the continuation and the concrete realization of the strategy of negotiations for power-sharing.

The ANC and its allies take office (TEC, homelands administrators, etc.), but the SADF-SAP-NP [National Party] and the capitalist bosses for whom they work maintain real power. This is not surprising, of course. After all, even ANC and SACP leaders admit that this is the reality. What we have to understand,

however, is that they also believe — sincerely in most cases — that there is no alternative strategy. Many of the leaders of the Tripartite Alliance and even in organizations such as the PAC believe genuinely that it is better to compromise now and “slowly to improve the lot of the people” than run after “dreams” and “visions” that, as they see it, cannot be realized.

On the surface, this looks like a very persuasive argument. It is the reason why the vast majority of our people support the black nationalist organizations, specifically the ANC and the PAC. And, of course, it is perfectly understandable that when people who have been oppressed for more than 300 years suddenly see on the horizon the shining star that heralds liberty, equality, and solidarity, in short, *democracy*, they will support those who maintain that this is the only path to freedom.

It is, therefore, necessary on this occasion to remind ourselves of a few important features that define the political landscape of South Africa in the last decade of the 20th century. In particular, we have to understand that the ruling capitalist class in South Africa, since the early 1970s, has had to change the Verwoerdian apartheid system (imposed since 1948) because it had become literally unprofitable. They arrived eventually at the last resort of negotiations with the authentic leadership of the national liberation movement after trying various detours via an assortment of black collaborators in the Bantustans, in the Black Local Authorities, and in the Tricameral Parliament. This was because they realized in 1985, approximately, that the national liberation movement could not be stopped and that revolution was inevitable if they didn’t sit down to talk. They were emboldened to do this because of the collapse (in 1989) of the Soviet bulwark to the Congress Movement, which had become indisputably the most important current in the great flood of the national liberation struggle. Many of the subsequent developments are now well known, and I need not go over them here.

More important is the fact that the decision of the rulers to negotiate with the ANC and other liberation forces was welcomed by these forces, generally speaking, because the end of the Soviet Union and of Eastern European “real socialism” had placed them in a very defensive and vulnerable position. The revolutionary anti-racist and anti-capitalist or socialist dynamic that had been building up in the liberation movement in South Africa throughout the

WLP on First 100 Days of ANC Government

[The Workers List Party (WLP) newspaper *Workers News*, in its issue No. 1, August 1994, carried the following editorial about the new South African government led by the African National Congress (ANC).]

Before the election many people hoped that an ANC-led government of national unity (GNU) would bring liberation for the mass of South Africans. We said that a cross-class alliance such as the ANC would only serve the middle class and the capitalists. We said that through compromise the ANC would tie itself up in the arms of the capitalists and surround itself with apartheid’s prison warders. We said that with high salaries the MPs would no longer be part of the working class. We stood in the elections to put this message across and to argue for a MASS WORKERS PARTY instead.

The first hundred days of the ANC-led GNU have given a clear indication that

we were right. The strikes by thousands of workers show that they too do not believe that with the GNU and the RDP [Reconstruction and Development Program] we are now one big happy family. They showed that they know that we can only be free through our own mass actions.

But these struggles need to be organized. We must organize groups in every factory and every township, linked to the WLP. We must also prepare through political discussion and education. The election has also shown that we need our own newspaper. *Workers News* has been launched to give a voice to this growing movement, to your demands and for your struggles. The WLP has also started a Right to Work [jobs for all] campaign. We are calling on all workers to support this campaign and to start building the Mass Workers Party right now.

1980s was suddenly halted or deflected. (In this, South Africa was not alone — revolutionary movements in most parts of the world were placed on the defensive after the Gorbachev debacle.)

The ANC's decision to enter into negotiations meant that all the power apparatuses of the apartheid state, including the army, police, prisons, law courts, and civil service, remained intact, more or less. There was no overthrow of the apartheid state, no military defeat of the apartheid army or of the hated SAP. In short, there was no social revolution and not yet much of a political revolution either.

This had a few important consequences. It meant, first of all, that the strategic initiative remained in the hands of the ruling class as long as the ANC and its allies were prepared to work within the limits of a slightly altered capitalist system, i.e., inside a *multi-racial* rather than simply a *racial* capitalist system. From that point of view, the shadow boxing between the departing National Party managers of the capitalist system and the new (ANC) managers of the system is of secondary interest, as are in fact the "free and fair" elections at the end of April. Once the ANC and its allies had "taken their stand on capitalism," in Rosa Luxemburg's unforgettable words, everything we have experienced in the last three years became completely predictable.

All the policy somersaults, the backtracking and rewinding, the tipp-exxing of inconvenient historical details, all these things and more, simply punctuated the process of the co-optation of the ex-liberation movement by the international and domestic capitalist classes.

Again, the details are all too well known, and I need not spell them out here — suffice it to say that today the ANC (via the TEC) has become "the party of law and order" (against so-called "looters" in Bophuthatswana as well as against very real warlords in KwaZulu).

The question that stares one in the face, though, is whether these wonderful exploits of "revolutionary warfare" are also putting an end or even a limit to the profits of casino capitalists such as Sol Kerzner. Or are they going to be allowed to cash in on the "freedom" of post-apartheid South Africa after having cashed in on apartheid in their Bantustan "paradises." These are questions that working people, employed and unemployed, urban and rural, are asking loudly and clearly.

I have drawn your attention to these well-known facts simply to underline our view that the struggle continues. We have stated repeatedly that these negotiations for "power-sharing" will result only in more benefit for middle-class or skilled black people.

The overwhelming majority of our people, the workers in town and country, more than half of whom are unemployed, will get little more than the right to vote every five years or so for parliamentary representatives who will do the bidding of the capitalist bosses. They will be able to consider themselves lucky if they get so much as a regular report back from their repre-

sentatives between elections. As in so many other capitalist democracies, getting the right to vote — usually after titanic struggles for "freedom" — paradoxically represents the final disempowerment of "the common people." This is especially so in South Africa where — during the 1970s and 1980s — a genuine and militant grassroots tradition of direct democracy had become established in the mass organizations of the workers, especially in the trade unions, the civic associations, and other community organizations, as well as among students.

For socio-economic reasons, it is completely predictable that the Reconstruction and Development Program of the Tripartite Alliance, just like the Normative Economic Growth Model of Derek Keys and all the other interesting blueprints for "growth and development" that are being debated in South Africa's numerous think-tanks, will remain a dead letter for the most part. I shall not refer to the details here because we make this analysis in our literature which is available at this conference. Suffice it to say that unless something like the Marshall Plan, which the USA used to rebuild post-World War II Europe, is implemented in South Africa, there is simply no way that the capitalist system can deliver the goods.

Everything that has happened in post-colonial Africa, including the much-discussed attempts of the IMF and World Bank to "rescue" the independent African states from economic disaster, demonstrates that — under capitalism — we will go the way of all neo-colonial Third World flesh, i.e., in the direction of a one-third/two-thirds society in which the majority of the people live on the edges of "society," marginalized, unnecessary, dehumanized, and desperate. Already, we see the first signs of this at every street corner in every city and town of the beloved country.

However genuine the intentions of the negotiators and however popular the coming "uhuru" elections will be, the simple fact of the matter is that what the people are about to receive is not enough by far. The beginning of the end of white minority rule in South Africa is certainly of great historic significance, not only for our own people but for the oppressed and exploited non-European world as a whole.

But, as we have to stress more and more openly, *people cannot eat the vote*. If the franchise is not the key to getting the basic necessities of life at least, it is no more than a mockery. Or, to put it differently, if capitalism (racial or multi-racial) cannot deliver the goods, what is the alternative? The WLP says loudly and clearly, *there is an alternative!*

The name of that alternative is well known among us. It is called socialism. What does this mean in South Africa in the 1990s? Is it at all realistic to speak about socialism after the collapse of the Soviet system?

We in the WLP want today to stress only a few important points so that we can clear up some of the confusion that is deliberately sown by the ruling-class media (newspapers, radio,

and television) and by those former radicals who have lost their way.

Firstly, what has disappeared in the ex-Soviet Union and its allied states was not socialism. It was a system of bureaucratic nationalized economy and totalitarian political repression for which we use the shorthand term of Stalinism. In spite of the many important achievements of that system and in spite of the light it threw on what a post-capitalist society might look like and what it should *not* look like, it would be as false to believe that that system represented what socialists since before Karl Marx have struggled for as it would be to accept that the atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition represented the full realization of Christianity.

Secondly, even if for most people in the world the Stalinism of the Soviet Bloc represented "real socialism," this does not imply that its collapse means that capitalism is good and socialism is bad. Far from it! Our critique and our rejection of the capitalist system remain valid. The reality of capitalism as a world system is one of mass unemployment, dire poverty, malnutrition, plague, and bloody warfare for the vast majority of the human species. In the so-called Third World, and especially in Africa, "real capitalism" remains the enemy. Far from the triumph of the so-called free-enterprise system of markets and democracy, we are about to witness once again one of the most profound crises of that system. It is a crisis that goes so deep that it could turn humanity into an endangered species. It is the hope of all socialists that the working people of the world will unite to put an end to the capitalist system before it blows up our life-giving planet in some nuclear or other ecological disaster. Already one-third of humanity lives in conditions that are more primitive than any of our ancestors had to endure.

Thirdly, in South Africa, too, "the promise of unbridled capitalism" is no more than the empty sound and fury of electioneering, vote-seeking elites. As against that, the WLP states clearly that we are not interested in serving in any government that accepts the framework of the world capitalist system as something that cannot be changed. In particular, we reject the monster of a so-called Government of National Unity. This represents for us the crown of thorns of the process of negotiations for power-sharing through which we have been dragged during the past four years. And if there is going to be a resurrection and even an ascension into heaven, those wonderful events will come only through the organized protests and mass actions of the working class in the cities and in the countryside. This is the reason

why we say that the center of gravity of the WLP's activities will remain outside parliament in the streets, on the shop floor, in the mines, on the farms, and in the townships. Only through mass action will the workers be able to push the capitalist system to its limits and force the bosses to bring about reforms that will improve the conditions of life of the people.

In the end, of course, the capitalist system of production for profits instead of for human needs will not be able to deliver. It is at such times when the system is cornered that it becomes most dangerous. Then wars and economic crises (inflation, depression, unemployment) suddenly break out, and the workers' movement, if it is organized and ready, can take a great leap forward or, if it is weak and divided, will suffer another great defeat, as has happened during the past five years or so.

Let us say it very clearly: we see it as our immediate task to continue the class struggle, to mobilize the urban and the rural workers to put

pressure on the capitalist class and all its agents in order to improve the conditions of life of the people. In the process of that struggle in the economic, political, and cultural spheres, socialism is developing both as a growth of self-consciousness among the working people and as a set of grassroots democratic practices and institutions at all levels of society. Wherever we can, we shall support all attempts to gain real power for the working people so that they can increasingly decide for themselves what it is that they want and how they want to shape their lives. In this regard, we might be able to learn many important lessons from discussions and practices that are now taking place in a country such as Brazil.

At the end of the day, socialism is no more than all the ordinary things that most people want but which the capitalist system cannot give them because of its profit-seeking basis. In the sobering words of Ernest Mandel:

...Socialism means neither an earthly paradise...nor the establishment of a perfect har-

mony between the individual and society or between man and nature... The aim pursued by the supporters of socialism is more modest: to resolve six or seven contradictions which have for centuries caused human suffering on a mass scale. There must be an end to man's exploitation and oppression of man [sic] and to wars and large-scale violence between human beings. Hunger and inequality must be banished forever. There must be an end to institutionalized and systematic discrimination against women and against races, ethnic groups, and national or religious minorities, which are regarded as being "inferior." There must be no more economic or ecological crises.

Whatever else we do not know, we know that the capitalist system as we know it will not bring about any of these things. This is the reason for the manifesto of the Workers' List Party. This is why we have chosen to continue the struggle against apartheid-capitalism and for a new socialist world order. □

April 2, 1994

Imperialism, Russia, and the African Model for "Economic Reform"

Continued from page 23

the IMF to turn to for help. Any state that hopes to receive foreign loans must impose on its population the IMF policies described above. If such governments do not, they don't get the loans and their people will starve. If they do get the loans, they become even more indebted, the population becomes more impoverished, and the people starve anyway.

In light of all this, any assumption that "developing nations," by relying on capitalist economic relations and institutions, will be able to "develop" in any meaningful way that provides for the needs of the masses of workers and peasants is a deadly illusion. This lesson has been revealed time and again during this century at great human cost and is currently being repeated in South Africa.

In fact, just the opposite is true: humane development requires a total break from the stranglehold of imperialism and its institutions. The only alternative, of course, is the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of capital, country by country, on a world scale.

But it remains true that until these overthrows occur in the advanced capitalist states, revolutionary movements and revolutionary overthrows in the Third World may succeed in gaining power for a time, but they will face a united, determined, and ruthless enemy which they alone cannot ultimately stop. They must have the backing of powerful working-class forces internationally. In the United States, where the revolutionary movement is barely embryonic and the organized workers movement is

shrinking, it may seem that little can be done. Actually, a great deal is possible.

- We can work to inform radicalizing youth and workers why the conditions of suffering in Africa and elsewhere in the "developing" world are the direct consequence of deliberate colonial and post-colonial policies of imperialism — the multinational corporations, their governments, and their lending agencies, all of which are united as a class against us.
- We can explain what these policies are calculated to do to the economies and peoples of Russia, the former Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe.
- We can demonstrate how such policies are responsible for the continuing decline in the standard of living in the industrialized capitalist world — cuts in all public services from education to transportation to housing and health care, not to mention attacks on wages and the rising level of unemployment here and abroad. (Worth

examining are reports that the AFL-CIO bureaucracy is cooperating with the CIA and other U.S. government agencies in Africa, as it has elsewhere, to undermine local attempts by workers to organize in their own defense. Such collaboration by the U.S. labor bureaucrats has been critical throughout the post-World War II period in protecting and advancing imperialist interests abroad and raising the rate of profit for the imperialist investors.)

Such activities would help explain why the global nature of capitalist exploitation necessitates the organization of mass workers parties internationally to overthrow the rule of capital on a global scale.

... And So Were Lenin and Trotsky

However, before we can have the kind of mass workers parties and worker-peasant alliances that can challenge the rule of capital internationally, we need to consolidate a revolutionary core of disciplined and class-conscious cadre in

every country, organized around a Marxist program, a transitional program that can lead the struggles here and abroad through mass actions and united fronts to progressively undermine imperialism's power. Such organization is indispensable.

Without such organizations — and the absence of them over the past decades has helped imperialism prolong its life — there can be no lasting gains for the workers.

Marxism is alive more than ever. The thing is to use it. □

August 5, 1994



The Labor Notes Team Concept School

by Michael Frank

In November 1993 I participated in the four-day Labor Notes Team Concept School in Detroit. About 70 labor activists attended, representing 16 unions from 25 states and Canada. Thirty percent of the activists were women and about 10 percent were African Americans. The majority of the participants were between 35 and 55 years of age, and were lower-level officials in their unions — shop stewards and local officers. The unions included United Auto Workers (UAW), Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), United Electrical Workers (UE), Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU), The Newspaper Guild (TNG), American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Twenty of the 70 participants were from OCAW.

Labor-Management Cooperation Schemes

I will use the currently popular term “TQM” (Total Quality Management) to refer to the labor-management cooperation programs that go by a variety of names: for example, Team Concept, Total Quality Production (TQP), Continuous Improvement Process (CIP), Excellence!, Synchronous Manufacturing, and Total Production Maintenance (TPM). (The list of abbreviations and acronyms could go on and on: PMT, C2Q, MCOT, EIM, CTM, PRIDE, etc.) Because of the high rate of failure of these schemes earlier terms such as Quality of Work Life (QWL) are no longer used.

TQM has two basic components: an ideology or philosophy on the nature of work relations under capitalism and on the interests of workers and managers; and a set of practices for reorganizing the production process.

The fundamental premise of TQM is that workers and management have a shared interest in the economic survival and profitability of the individual firm. According to TQM, the adversarial dynamic which has characterized labor-management relations in the past has its roots in miscommunication, the distorted images each side has of the other, the fears and distrust generated by these images, poor management techniques, etc. This dynamic results from interpersonal or psychological problems which can and must be overcome. If American companies are to flourish in today’s highly competitive environment, workers’ initiative, creativity, and knowledge must be tapped. But in order for this to happen, the workplace must become more participatory and democratic, and workers must be empowered to take on and share some

of the responsibilities that have traditionally been the domain of management.

Specifically, workers must be allowed to make decisions about the production process. It is they who have the most intimate and detailed knowledge of production, not managers or engineers. This sharing of responsibility will result in a more efficient, productive workplace and improved product quality. The firm will increase its market share and profits, and increased profits will save jobs. Bargaining over the division between wages and profits has a place — here some conflict of interest is acknowledged — but only after a large enough pool of profits has been generated. In an almost inspirational way TQM is presented as holding the keys to American economic recovery, and it is said to be in the interest of both workers and managers to adopt TQM programs.

In some firms this “democratization of the workplace” is symbolized by an egalitarian exterior: managers wearing the same uniforms as workers and distinguishable only by the title on their name tag, everyone eating in the same cafeteria, allowing for informal mingling of workers and managers, including the CEO, no separate parking lots for managers, etc.

The most important TQM innovation is the organization of production by work teams which include both workers and managerial personnel. Teams are assigned goals and are responsible for figuring out how they can best be met; they are expected to make recommendations to upper management. Workers are expected to cooperate with management in streamlining work processes and procedures. Improvement is incremental and continuous, and includes rotating assignments, combining jobs, recombining tasks, and “multi-skilling,” a euphemism for workers performing a series of simple, mindless tasks instead of just one. Workers are expected to make suggestions for removing “wasteful, unnecessary, non-value-adding” steps in the labor process. For example, in an auto plant, installing a bumper is value-added labor, whereas walking to pick up the bumper is not.

This continuous restructuring of work processes undermines the system of job classification and seniority, an outcome of the post-World War II labor settlement, which, despite its problems and limitations, gave workers a measure of shop floor power and control. The continual change, in addition to the placement of workers’ knowledge in the hands of management, eliminates the possibility of working-to-rule, of workers exercising their power and putting pressure on management by withholding their full cooperation.

In addition, the issues dealt with by teams — work procedures, productivity, health and safety,

and so forth — undermine the contract and circumvent the collective bargaining process.

Each team is considered to be both the “customer” and “supplier” of the products of other teams. Teams can evaluate the quality of the products they receive and be criticized for the quality of the products they supply. Enterprise-wide solidarity is broken down and the basis of unionism undermined by having workers identify exclusively with their team and treating other workers as suppliers and customers rather than coworkers.

Workers are expected to adapt and apply to themselves the time-saving, labor-saving, value-maximizing point of view of management. They are expected to take on the monitoring and control functions previously exercised by lower-level management, to adopt a supervisory attitude toward their own work, and apply peer pressure to team members. This lateral control system of peer pressure supplements the hierarchical controls and reduces the need for extensive and expensive supervisory personnel. As a result, lower-level management is often threatened by, and hostile to, the introduction of TQM. The macro decisions about investment, plant location, the introduction of new technology, product line, and marketing remain firmly in the hands of upper management.

TQM projects a new vision of how production should be organized, which it falsely represents as a democratization of the workplace, and which would do away with unionism as we know it.

Andon and JIT

TQM-type programs often have a component called Andon which is used in assembly operations. This is a system where different colored lights over work stations indicate whether or not the workers are keeping pace and meeting production norms. Mike Parker and Jane Slaughter, the two main instructors at the Team Concept School, describe the system in the following way in their book, *Choosing Sides: Unions and the Team Concept*. A green light indicates that the worker is meeting the norm, a yellow light that he or she has fallen somewhat behind, and a red light that he or she is seriously behind and that the line must be stopped. One might think that managers would like to see all green lights, but this is not the case, as the goal is continuous improvement. If all workers can meet the norm all of the time, then either the norm is too low or work stations have too many human or material resources. In short, there is waste in the system. Speeding up the line or removing resources will stress the system and smoke out those areas that need improvement. If this is done, there will be some yellow and some red lights. Now management or the team

leader can focus on the "problem" area and make the necessary adjustments. Stations that continue to have green lights are also seen as problem areas since they show where there is excess or slack in the system. The ideal situation in a TQM enterprise is where the lights are oscillating between green and yellow.

A video about the TQM program at the NUMMI (New United Motor Manufacturing) plant in Fremont, California, was shown at the school. This is a General Motors-Toyota joint venture. The workers are organized into teams and there is an Andon system in place. One of the team leaders, interviewed about the new methods of organizing production, said they worked well, but the short interview was interrupted several times as he jogged to work stations where buzzers were sounding to indicate problems. The team leader was heavy and appeared to have some difficulty running. I mused, in a TQM frame of mind, that leaders should never be heavy, as this lengthens response time. To shave off additional seconds they could be trained to use rollerblades. A new acronym could be added to the litany of TQM jargon: "RRR," for Rollerblade Rapid Response. Considering the dozens of team leaders in the plant and the number of problem-solving interventions per day, this would significantly cut down on non-value-added activity. In all seriousness, this is exactly the kind of thinking management wants from employees in TQM programs. Workers should think like industrial engineers. In fact, in some auto plants the industrial engineering department has been eliminated as workers have taken on those tasks. In other plants the logic of cost cutting is not masked, and workers are told point blank that it is their responsibility to save their own jobs by figuring out how other jobs can be eliminated!

Another feature of TQM used in assembly operations is called JIT (just-in-time production). With this system there is no inventory of raw materials or stockpiling of partially assembled parts. A department produces only on demand from another department. The absence of inventory saves storage and labor costs. The removal of surplus parts from work stations means that a problem in any area threatens to disrupt the entire production process. Attention is focused on this area, and team leaders and workers are under enormous pressure to quickly solve the problem. As with Andon, areas that never have problems are considered to have too many resources or not enough work and in need of streamlining. With just-in-time (or lean production, as it is sometimes called) management, rather than relying on its own directives, relies on the pressure on the workers and the stress they experience as the main problem-solving mechanism.

Parker and Slaughter call this "management-by-stress." Since it is impossible to eliminate problems in the production process no matter how much fine-tuning there is, there will always be a need for backup. In this system, with the removal of material buffers, workers themselves become the buffers. From management's

point of view a system that is self-regulating by means of stress is economical and efficient. From the workers' point of view stress is a killer. Sustained stress is associated with heart disease. Job-related stress is correlated with a high level of responsibility and a low level of control, or workers' power. This is precisely the situation of workers in organizations that have adopted TQM. On the other hand, the removal of material buffers increases workers' potential power. Under these conditions just a few workers can disrupt the entire production process.

The Social Context of TQM

TQM is one prong of management's response to the structural crisis of capitalism, to the falling rate of profit and the intensified competition that it generates. The other prong is the offensive against workers' standard of living through layoffs, concessions, replacing strikers, union-busting, attacks on social services, etc. TQM is being introduced in an environment in which the labor movement is battered and on the defensive.

It is instructive to look at the circumstances under which labor-management cooperation schemes were introduced in Japan, the country which is used as a model by TQM advocates. Donald Wells describes the situation in his book, *Empty Promises*.

After the Japanese military was crushed in 1945, there was a subsequent, lesser known defeat, this time of organized labor. In the wake of prolonged, failed strikes, independent unions and the left wing of the Japanese labor movement were all but completely finished. With much of the Japanese working class demoralized and disorganized, legislation was introduced which engineered a fragmented, decentralized union structure focused at the level of the individual firm. The consequence was a new industrial relations system based on company unions headed by management-sponsored labor "racketeers." These company unions have endured as a pillar of the Japanese industrial relations system, although aside from systematically colluding with management they have hardly any role to play. A second pillar...was erected after Japanese managers visited the United States...they came upon the employee-team concept and took it home... Given the weakness and disorganization of the Japanese labor movement and the presence of company unions...the environment was highly receptive and the transplant took firm root.

By the 1960s "quality control circles" had been set up in thousands of workplaces and by 1976, 70 percent of all Japanese companies were organized in this manner. The current U.S. situation is characterized by weakened unions, a very low rate of unionization of the workforce, and working people fearful of losing their jobs. All this is fertile ground for TQM. Furthermore, TQM does have an appeal to workers, in addition to the assurance that it will save jobs. This is well described by Staughton Lynd.

QWL (Quality of Working Life) is attractive to workers because it holds out the promise that they will be treated with dignity, that their ideas will be valued, that they can be part of a group

of equals working toward a common goal. This experience is presently denied to workers both by companies and by unions.

In promising power and democracy, TQM tries to coopt goals that workers have traditionally pursued and that a robust unionism would be championing. Bureaucratically run unions help create the vacuum that TQM tries to fill.

The Low Success Rate of TQM

TQM practices intensify and speed up the work process. They attempt to squeeze more value out of workers and increase the rate of exploitation. The ideological component of TQM tries to reshape the way workers see themselves, to eradicate any consciousness of their having fundamental interests separate and distinct from those of management. The hope is that workers will no longer see themselves as workers but as partners in the enterprise, as mini-entrepreneurs, or, in the jargon of TQM, as "production associates." The goal of this ideological campaign is to increase exploitation without generating worker resistance, and indeed to do so with the collaboration of the workers.

TQM programs want to tap into the creativity of workers that management control has traditionally suppressed and wasted without in any way reducing that control, but in fact increasing it, and at the same time disguising it, by having workers internalize management values and interests. The elimination of visible management perks, such as separate parking lots and cafeterias, is intended to mask the fault line between management and workers and encourage and facilitate this internalization.

The high rate of failure of labor-management cooperation schemes is, according to the consultants, due to their incomplete and improper implementation. The real reason, of course, is that the basic premise of TQM — that the interests of management and workers are in harmony — does not correspond to reality. Workers are compelled to assert their own interests against the speed-up and intensification of the work process that are inherent in TQM. What is waste and non-value-added activity from management's viewpoint is precisely what makes jobs bearable for workers: variety, rest, diversion, etc. Things that from management's perspective are costs — for example, genuine skills training — from the workers' perspective are benefits, and vice versa. The stress of JIT, which is economical and efficient from management's point of view, shortens the life of the worker. Labor-management cooperation schemes frequently break up on these shoals, which are invisible to the gurus and consultants.

TQM and the Labor Bureaucracy

Despite the fact that TQM attempts to pull the rug out from under genuine unionism, the labor bureaucracy is buying into it in a big way in the vain hope of securing a place for itself, stopping the onslaught against unions, and creating the conditions for an economic upturn. The United Auto Workers is heavily involved in labor-management cooperation. The Steel Workers and

Rubber Workers are also participating, and the AFL-CIO leadership appears to be on the verge of endorsing it. At a recent labor history conference in Detroit the head of the AFL-CIO research department spoke approvingly of labor-management cooperation as something that will save both the economy and the unions. The Reich Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations, whose charge is to make recommendations on how to increase workplace productivity through labor-management cooperation, includes former UAW President Douglas Fraser.

All the unions represented at the school have had experience with TQM. It has been implemented in manufacturing, the social services, and government. My union, the American Federation of Teachers, recently ran an article in its newspaper entitled "TQM — Coming to a Campus Near You," as if this were an unstoppable natural force. At the college where I work there was a TQM conference which featured a speaker from the New York State AFL-CIO. The New York City Central Labor Council sent out 1,500 leaflets to union officials announcing this conference.

Organization of the School

The Labor Notes people see labor-management cooperation schemes as a point around which the class struggle is engaged and as a strategic point of intervention where the radical/labor left can educate and arm union activists.

The school consisted of classes and small group sessions where participants worked on tasks, discussed material that had been presented in the classes, developed strategies, and prepared presentations. Parker and Slaughter provided a thorough education on TQM and on various strategies unions can use to fight it. There were enlightening classes by Ellis Boal on TQM and labor law and by Mary Hollens on TQM and people of color. Ben Watanabe's talk about work organization and labor-management cooperation in Japan exposed the underside of Japanese "efficiency" through a graphic description of the oppressive situation of Japanese workers. The last session, "What's Wrong With Competitiveness?," led by Kim Moody, took a broad view and examined the different interests and economic logics of employers and workers. In addition to two books by Parker and Slaughter, students received a thick looseleaf binder with materials keyed to each of the sessions.

A Crucial Layer

Unlike the biannual Labor Notes Conference, where there are two distinct layers of participants who have the opportunity to mix and exchange ideas and experiences — working-class people who have become union activists, and radicals who have identified with and rooted themselves in the labor movement — the overwhelming majority of people at the Team Concept School were workers who became union militants as a result of their experiences on the job. At the school one is able to get a clear, unalloyed sense of the thinking and mood of this

crucial layer of the working class; and their thinking and consciousness is contradictory. On the one hand, having all had experience with TQM, they understand that it is not in the interest of working people and want to fight it. They understand that workers have interests different from management and they recognize that union leaderships have either bought into or not effectively challenged TQM. In some cases they are ready to challenge their leaders.

But coexisting with their trade union consciousness is an acceptance of management's arguments that companies must compete and make profits if they are to survive, and that this is the only way to save jobs. The existence and the logic of capitalism and of the market are taken for granted and seen as unchangeable and insurmountable.

These militants tend to see workers as dependent on the company, and not see the employers as dependent on them. They cannot adequately deal with management's arguments and therefore oscillate from a labor to a management point of view. They are trying to grapple with this dilemma and are stymied. I am reminded of Marx's observation in *Capital*: "The advance of capitalist production develops a working class which by education, tradition, and habit looks upon the requirements of that mode as self-evident natural laws." If even this layer of union activists feels dependent on the companies, sees the logic of competition and profit as inescapable, and is weighed down by the reality of capitalism, how much more is this pressure felt by the rank and file and how much weaker is the trade union component of their consciousness? Although the militants want to organize a fightback, they cannot provide answers to management's arguments, and often referred to their isolation from the less conscious rank and file.

Labor Notes and the Union Militants

The Labor Notes School does not directly confront this contradiction in the militants' consciousness. It certainly bolsters the trade union component of their consciousness by addressing the following topics: the opposing "economic imperatives" of employers and workers; the application of cost-benefit analysis from the workers' perspective; the logic of competition and where it leads; solidarity vs. competition; the necessity for workers to assert their own values and interests against those of the employers; pattern bargaining and the removal of wages from competition; the point that the gains of working people require limiting the field of operation of the market; and that challenging TQM requires the labor movement to articulate and project its own vision and goals.

In addition, school participants are supplied with excellent written material from the Canadian Auto Workers. The following quotes are from a pamphlet on lean production.

We also understand that improved productivity — when it is really productivity not just speedup, and when it is actually shared with

workers — is a basic part of a growing standard of living. We have not rejected new technology but insisted that we get advance notice, proper training, a more meaningful input into the process of tech change and a share in the benefits of the greater output per worker.

New technology and new work processes, we recognize, include the potential for creating a more prosperous society, more leisure time, and improvements in our standard of living. But this potential was, and is not today, automatic. It is conditional on the ability of working people, through their unions, negotiating how these changes are implemented and how they shape our lives.

But competitiveness is something quite different: workers can produce high quality products, can be very productive, and can even show restraint in their wage demands — yet their competitiveness can be declining. The reason is that "competitiveness" is a relative concept: no matter how well we do, if others do it still cheaper...then Canadian workers will be less competitive no matter what else we reasonably do. Accepting "competitiveness" puts us on a treadmill, a rat-race we can't win. It means trying to undermine fellow workers in other Canadian facilities and workers in other developed countries. It forces us to compete with countries whose living standards remain below where we were decades ago and it leads towards comparisons with regimes that keep standards low by denying basic human and trade union rights. It means concessions today and more concessions tomorrow as workers feel forced to join the downward spiral. Unlike quality and productivity, the logic of competitiveness adds a dimension that threatens all our achievements.

This reeducation in trade union fundamentals provided by the Labor Notes School is crucial, given the abandonment of those fundamentals by the U.S. labor bureaucracy. The importance of classwide and international solidarity is stressed. But this reeducation is not sufficient to overcome the effect of the reality and ideology of capitalism on this layer of workers.

Some critics of the Labor Notes project say that it is solely about trade unionism and that politics and socialism are left out. However, consistent trade unionism — the necessity to struggle to defend past gains, the widest possible solidarity, a struggle for an increased share of the wealth that is produced, organizing the unorganized, taking wages out of competition, etc. — would have a certain revolutionary dynamic in this period of long-term stagnation where the ruling class is very reluctant to grant major concessions. The problem is that such unionism is not possible unless a significant layer of workers have an alternative vision of society, a society organized and controlled by the workers themselves. That vision can only come from radicals within the labor movement and that vision is not provided by the Team Concept School (or by the Labor Notes Conference).

A strong case can be made that it is inappropriate to demand that Labor Notes play this role, and that it cannot be a socialist operation at this time because there is no significant layer of socialist union militants who would be receptive to this message. My sense is that this is the

thinking of the Labor Notes organizers, who feel that they go as far as they safely can without losing access to this layer altogether, and that a red-baiting campaign against the organization at this juncture would destroy the entire project.

But, as was evident at the school, there are certainly union militants who are struggling with dilemmas the answers to which can only be found beyond the parameters of capitalism. At the very least, there is a need for conscious socialists to openly participate in Labor Notes and, when appropriate, explain their views within the framework of supporting the trade union work of this project.

Staughton Lynd, writing on the role of radicals in the labor movement, strikes a proper balance: "Intellectuals allied to the labor movement should at least perform the minimal function of contributing to intellectual clarity. In the case of QWL, this means exposing the empty promises of QWL and instead projecting the first sketches of what a genuine economic democracy might look like."

Conclusion

The Team Concept School provides the best education on TQM from a labor perspective. This is the opinion of activists at the school who

had attended many union-sponsored seminars on labor-management cooperation. Educating these union militants and arming them against the cutting edge of the employers' offensive represent an important intervention by radicals in the labor movement, as is the Labor Notes Conference, which in 1993 brought together more than 1,000 labor activists. Yet the larger task of regrouping the radical movement, linking it with this layer of militant workers, and educating and winning them over to a socialist vision of society is still before us. □

An Appreciation of a Revolutionary Companion

Esther Waller Perry (1916–1994)

by Hayden Perry

When I first met Esther in Chicago in 1946 she was already a 12-year veteran of the Trotskyist movement. She went to high school in the 1930s, when socialist ideas permeated the corridors and seeped into the classrooms.

Tuley High was known as the Red School House, where Stalinists and Trotskyists contended for influence. When the valedictorian used the graduation ceremony to make a recruiting speech for Trotskyism, the Stalinists were dismayed, and Esther was elated. Her boyfriend, Sam Langer, was an active young Trotskyist.

Graduating in 1935 into a world without jobs, Esther and Sam found non-paying but highly rewarding work in the Socialist Workers Party. Here Esther continued her political education.

She once observed that making a revolution involved a lot of sitting and standing — standing on freezing street corners selling the paper and sitting through interminable meetings in drafty halls.

There was more than sitting and standing when 16 party leaders were imprisoned and most of the men were drafted in World War II. Rank-and-file women in Chicago had to lead and sustain the branch.

Esther and every woman in the branch had to play a highly political role, opposing the imperialist war while the country was engulfed in waves of patriotism and chauvinism. Esther learned the power of Marxist convictions.

She also learned the strength of racial prejudice when she joined me in 1947 in reinforcing our SWP branch in Akron, Ohio. This factory

town, center of the rubber industry, was populated by recent migrants from the South. A racist landlady made it clear she would not tolerate "Negroes" on her premises. (She lived in the flat below us: a situation to be avoided wherever possible.)

This was 1947, when Jim Crow still ruled. Apartments were very hard to find, but Esther agreed we had to defy this racist and invite our Black contacts to dinner. Sure enough we were evicted on grounds we could not fight in court and wound up in a crummy place.

Esther never set much store by possessions, houses, and other appurtenances of "success," which was fortunate when we went to New York to set up a party print shop. We lived in a loft with printing equipment, no proper bathroom, and no heating except a kitchen oven. Esther did not complain. She was too busy working with the Rosenberg-Sobel defense committee.

Esther deeply regretted that the only other radical in her family would not talk to us because we were Trotskyists. He was her nephew, Dr. James Waller. He was a remarkable man who was prepared for a lucrative medical career but threw it all away to become a factory worker in a textile mill in Greensboro, North Carolina.

He and three other physicians joined a Maoist group that emulated the Russian Narodniks in "going to the people." In this case it was the workers of North Carolina in 1979. By actually joining the workers in the textile mill these intellectuals hoped to identify with the proletariat of the rural South.

The project ended in tragedy when they challenged the local Ku Klux Klan. The revolutionists had not mobilized the forces needed to challenge these armed killers when the confrontation took place on November 3, 1979. The Klan drove into town, grabbed their guns, and shot down Jim Waller and four of his comrades.

If only we could have discussed politics as fellow socialists and close relatives! The tragedy may have been averted. The bitter hostility between socialists who are all on the same side of the barricades is a poisonous legacy of Stalinism that must be overcome. Ironically, Esther was warmly received by Jim's widow and other members of the group when she went to Greensboro for the funerals.

This experience convinced Esther that an incorrect program can have fatal consequences. When she saw Jack Barnes betraying Trotskyism, she realized the SWP was no longer the organization she had supported for forty years. Expelled by Barnes, she joined Socialist Action and fought on.

It was only some years later that she became disheartened by all the splits and hostility among well-meaning socialists. Suffering failing health, she resigned from the party. But she did not abandon her socialist convictions. She died on August 22 at the age of 78.

Esther's life was enriched by her experience in the socialist movement, and the movement gained by Esther's half century of active support. Now we have to recruit a new generation to carry on the fight that Esther and others took up so many years ago. □

Discussion

The Mexican Elections and the PRI Dictatorship

by Manuel Aguilar Mora

Manuel Aguilar Mora is a leader of the PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, or Revolutionary Workers Party, the Mexican section of the Fourth International). Following is the text of a speech he gave August 19 to the national convention of the U.S. socialist organization Solidarity in Cleveland, Ohio, on the eve of the elections in Mexico. The speaker expressed one point of view among revolutionaries in Mexico today. In future issues we expect to present other views, as well as further information on the situation in Mexico in the aftermath of the elections.

Compañeras y compañeros:

To talk on Mexico on the eve of the national elections of next Sunday is a difficult task in the analytical field. It's very difficult because everything is possible in this country since the first day of this year, when the Indian and peasant rebellion in Chiapas erupted.

I'll outline for you what we think is the right strategy to favor the interests of our current in this crisis, the interests of the toiling masses, and of revolutionary socialism.

First of all, you have to consider that we face the agony of the longest, the most nefarious and opportunistic, dictatorship in this century, a century not exactly lacking in models of dictatorships. The dictatorship of the PRI [in power since 1929] is not perfect, for this reason it has been more treacherous and effective than a classical military or fascist dictatorship. It has covered itself with periodic national elections, with a phony multiparty system, and with a multimillionaire public relations apparatus that includes a powerful lobby in Washington.

The PRI dictatorship is in agony after suffering a long process of decay that was accelerated six years ago, when in the elections of 1988 Cárdenas, the opposition candidate who came out of a split in the PRI, defeated the official candidate Salinas de Gortari, and the system stole the victory from him.

The last six years have been a protracted period of continuous democratic struggles, in the electoral arena, but not only there. This year the explosive convergence of two democratic and rebellious processes put the PRI-ista system on the defensive.

First, a powerful, massive democratic movement has rallied again around the Cárdenas candidacy. This democratic movement includes, of course, Cárdenas's party, the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD), but goes beyond it more clearly than six years ago. It includes independent movements of citizens, students, peasants, and some workers' currents not affiliated to any party. It includes, too, besides the PRD, several other political formations, among them the split from the PAN called El Foro Democrático, and ourselves [the PRT].

Second, of course, the other process that put the Salinas government on the defensive was the Zapatista rebellion.

These two massive processes have produced an explosive situation in the Mexican ruling circles of the state, including the PRI. The assassination of the PRI presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, last March, was the most

notorious and terrible proof of the disarray in these circles, because all the evidence in the murder leads to them.

What is our perspective?

We converge naturally with the more advanced layers of the democratic movement, which includes, of course, the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN). The Convención Nacional Democrática that took place last week in the middle of the *selva* [the Lacandón rain forest], in territory occupied by the rebels, was the scene of a political pact among these tendencies, which include important currents of the PRD. Of the more than 6,000 persons that participated in the Convention, half of them were members and leaders of the PRD.

The Convention put itself, with the accord of its overwhelming majority, above the parties and the candidates, including the PRD and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. But at the same time, by the interventions of numerous participants, including Subcomandante Marcos, the spokesperson of the EZLN, the convention called on

the Mexican people to express themselves explicitly and forthrightly against the PRI in next Sunday's elections.

Comrades, these elections will not be business as usual. They have been prepared dramatically by all the participants. The PRI and the government — in reality the same thing — have moved to a position in which they have accepted several important reforms, but they kept the key: control over the electoral apparatus.

The democratic opposition, represented by the coalition that supports Cárdenas, has prepared as never before a participation that promises millions and millions of votes that will overwhelm the official candidate.

I am not going to get into the operation very much in fashion this moment in Mexico and elsewhere of delineating possible scenarios. It's clear that there are several scenarios through which the dictatorship would try to preserve its domination. For Salinas even to accept a victory of the PAN is possible — anything to put an absolute obstacle to a Cárdenas presidency,

Protests and Tension in Wake of Mexican Elections

Note from the Editors: According to Mexico's semi-official Federal Electoral Institute, which announced a final vote count in early September, the result of the August 21 elections was that Ernesto Zedillo, the candidate of the ruling party, the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or Institutional Revolutionary Party), won with 50.18 percent of the vote. The right-wing National Action Party (PAN) was credited with 26 percent of the vote. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, candidate of the bourgeois reformist PRD (Partido Revolucionario Democrático, or Revolutionary Democratic Party), was given slightly more than 16 percent.

There was no significant working class or socialist candidate this time, as there had been in the 1988 election, in which Rosario Ibarra de Piedra of the PRT presented a clear-cut anti-capitalist program defending the interests of the working class and the oppressed and stating the need for the class independence of the workers as opposed to the political structures and representatives of the propertied classes.

From the day after the elections, when Zedillo claimed victory with a plurality (the figure for him then was 48 percent), protests and allegations of voting irregularities and

fraud were widespread. The largest protest, reported at 50-70,000, was led by Cárdenas on August 27 in Mexico City's *zocolo*, or central square. He called for "a great mobilization" by groups all over the country to gather proof of massive electoral fraud.

In Chiapas, the only state in Mexico that had an election for governor, the PRD candidate claimed victory, although the PRI candidate was officially declared the winner (with 50.4 percent of the vote). In several parts of Chiapas, protesting peasants blocked highways or took over government buildings. In Chiapas the property-owning elements and the PRI authorities practice a particularly violent form of capitalist class rule. The September 7 *Los Angeles Times* reported that a local PRD leader in the Chiapas town of Jaltenango de la Paz was assassinated while bicycling to his job as a schoolteacher. As we go to press, the EZLN issued a protest through Rosario Ibarra, president of the Convención Nacional Democrática, that the Mexican army had increased its numbers in Chiapas to 50,000, was violating the terms of the cease-fire, and was encroaching on rebel-held territory (*NY Times*, September 18).

which would mean, in the concrete conjuncture we live in right now in Mexico, a tremendous popular victory.

What I want to give you are two really important [possible] courses [of events] in the long and even the medium term.

1. If the dictatorship resists and imposes another six-year term of a PRI-ista president, Mexico would enter into a turbulent and unstable period that could even deepen into a protracted civil war.

2. The opposite alternative is the opening of a democratic transition based on the PRI's rupture, not necessarily its complete liquidation, but this can occur.

This [second possible] perspective is favorable for the liberation of popular energies, controlled during decades by the bureaucratic grip directly linked to the state. This would be the case especially for the working class. The labor bureaucracy, corrupt and antidemocratic to the core, will not [be able to] resist a really democratic transition without the assistance of the state PRI-ista machine. The appearance of the

Mexican working class, the most important numerically of Latin America after the Brazilian, will change dramatically the whole body of the country's politics. And with the extension of the Zapatista rebellion to other states in which the situation of the Indians and peasants is very similar to the situation in Chiapas, we could enter into a very favorable conjuncture.

The students, teachers, and other impoverished urban masses are mobilizing, too, and their movements will add strength and confidence to this popular awakening.

In the middle of this upsurge we plan to join forces with the more radical sectors to launch the initiative of building a new front, party, or whatever organizational form it takes, that will regroup the socialist currents in Mexico. This project will integrate, we are sure, even important sectors of the PRD.

Internationally, what will happen in Mexico is directly connected with the new formation of the revolutionary and democratic movement in Latin America. The reinforcement of the revolutionary movement in Mexico is coinciding

with the strengthening of the PT in Brazil and with the emerging of new forces in all Latin America. It will have important consequences in the Caribbean, helping the Cuban state to come out of its isolation and giving a boost to the Haitian liberation movement.

For the victory of this struggle the Mexican masses have to depend above all on the solidarity of the people of the powerful northern neighbor. The Mexican American masses and the Latin American workers living in the USA are, of course, the first that will respond to this call of solidarity. But behind them, the key to the next Mexican struggle is the solidarity of the great majority of the Black and white working masses of the USA.

As you see, the Mexican situation is full of promises that we expect will be fulfilled. To this purpose we dedicate the efforts of our party, the PRT, and we are sure we can count on your solidarity.

¡Viva Zapata!

¡Viva México Libre y Democrático!

¡Venceremos!

□

Conversation with a Staley Worker

Continued from page 8

dragged behind police lines, turned over on his back, and sprayed again in the face. Women, children, and babies were also sprayed. Bill was shocked by the behavior of the police. He compared it to the police brutality in other countries that he had seen on the TV news, and said that he never expected it to happen here.

The workers have conducted a door-to-door campaign in an effort to engage the community. Many families agreed to put posters in their windows, but it was difficult to move them to a more active solidarity. Decatur is a conservative Midwestern community and participating in public protest is not an easy step for most people to take. One can imagine how hard this would be for those who associate social protest with radicals, hippies, ghetto riots, etc. Having recently taken this step, Bill was conscious of the difficulties involved. The degree of community

solidarity that was realized in the P-9 strike in Austin, Minnesota, has yet to be achieved in Decatur.

The workers have actually been more successful in obtaining the support of small business owners who are losing business because of the lockout and the strikes at Caterpillar and Firestone.

The Staley workers are also active in local politics. The mayor, who owns stock in Decatur corporations, is unsympathetic to their cause. However, in response to pressure from the workers, anti-lockout legislation has been discussed in the city council.

"I didn't pay much attention to union matters before things started happening at Staley," Bill explained. He ignored a fellow worker who warned him not to perform an aspect of another craft worker's job, even on an occasional basis, as this would set a precedent and pave the way for management to eliminate classifications.

Bill's concerns now reach far beyond the union to include the police, politicians, management, the media, and the fact that all these forces are lined up against the interests of working people. His experience has shown him the kind of sacrifice and solidarity that working people are capable of and why that is necessary if they are to defend and advance their interests.

What is significant about the Staley lockout and similar struggles in Decatur, such as the Caterpillar strike and the rubber workers strike at Bridgestone/Firestone, not to mention related struggles in other parts of the Midwest and elsewhere, is not only their outcome in terms of victories and defeats but also the fact that the bosses' offensive is giving rise to people like Bill, who will be the basis of a new, class conscious, vanguard layer of the working class.

□

Spokesman for Labor and the People vs. the Candidate of Big Business

Continued from page 13

On Thursday night, between television taping sessions, Mr. Ricupero thought he could unwind off the record with a Globo television interviewer.

"Listen, just between us, it might seem presumptuous, but the Government needs me a lot more than I need it," Mr. Ricupero said, unaware that viewers all over the country could hear him.

"You know, I never say this, but there are innumerable people who write me to say they are only voting for him [Cardoso] because of me," Mr. Ricupero continued... "I'm his biggest vote-getter."

"I have no scruples," the minister confided over open microphones about [manipulating] economic indicators. "What is good, we take advantage of. What is bad, we hide."

From the September 4 *Los Angeles Times*:

Ricupero added that he was a perfect tool to mask government and media efforts to support Cardoso "because...instead of having to support Cardoso openly, they put me on the air and nobody can say anything."

He said Lula's campaign was trying to counter his efforts, "but it can't, because I'm on the air all the time, and nobody can say anything. Isn't that right? This is the solution, indirect, right?"

The *New York Times* story ended this way:

Asked why he spoke last week of lowering gasoline prices, the Minister explained his strategy: "Every once in a while, you have to create confusion. There is no doubt about it — this

isn't a rational country." [How could it be, with such men running it?]

After 15 minutes of relaxed chat, a technician informed the men that they were on the air. "So, they got it," the Finance Minister said, perhaps seeing his career sink before his eyes.

Today, at a teary press conference, Mr. Ricupero said that he was a "victim of an electronic defect" and that his statements had been "taken out of context."

At Mr. da Silva's Workers Party, plans were being made to distribute 30,000 copies of a videocassette showing the remarks. [Said Lula:] "God is truly Brazilian because the people have [been shown] the Big Lie 30 days before the elections."

□

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The Manifesto of the Fourth International

Socialism or Barbarism on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century

This document was adopted by a meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (FI) in 1992. It is the product of months of discussion within that world organization and an extensive process of rewriting and revision from an original draft proposed before the FI's World Congress in 1991.

The FI is an international organization of revolutionary Marxist parties and groups from dozens of countries throughout the world. It was founded in 1938 under the leadership of Leon Trotsky, dedicated to a consistent and forthright struggle for the common interests of working people and the oppressed in all nations — to their mobilization in struggle against capitalist exploitation, colonialism, and bureaucratic dictatorship, and against all forms of racial and sexual discrimination.

It should be clear, from the perspectives presented here, that the FI remains true to that purpose today. This, in itself, stands as a major accomplishment in a world where many former leftists and radical activists are rushing to embrace the "new realism" of a capitalism that has supposedly "triumphed over socialism" during the cold war.

But reality is a far cry from the "new world order" proclaimed by U.S. President George Bush after his victory against Iraq in 1991. It is, as the Manifesto points out, a world of increasing disorder — of insecurity, crisis, preventable hunger, poverty, and disease. These things are more the rule than the exception for most of the billions of people on this planet.

In short, we are living in a world that cries out for a renewed commitment to the fight for social change, for a more just and humane political and economic system. Just such a commitment, and a perspective on how those needed changes can be brought about, will be found in the pages of this pamphlet.

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