

Growing Confrontation in USSR

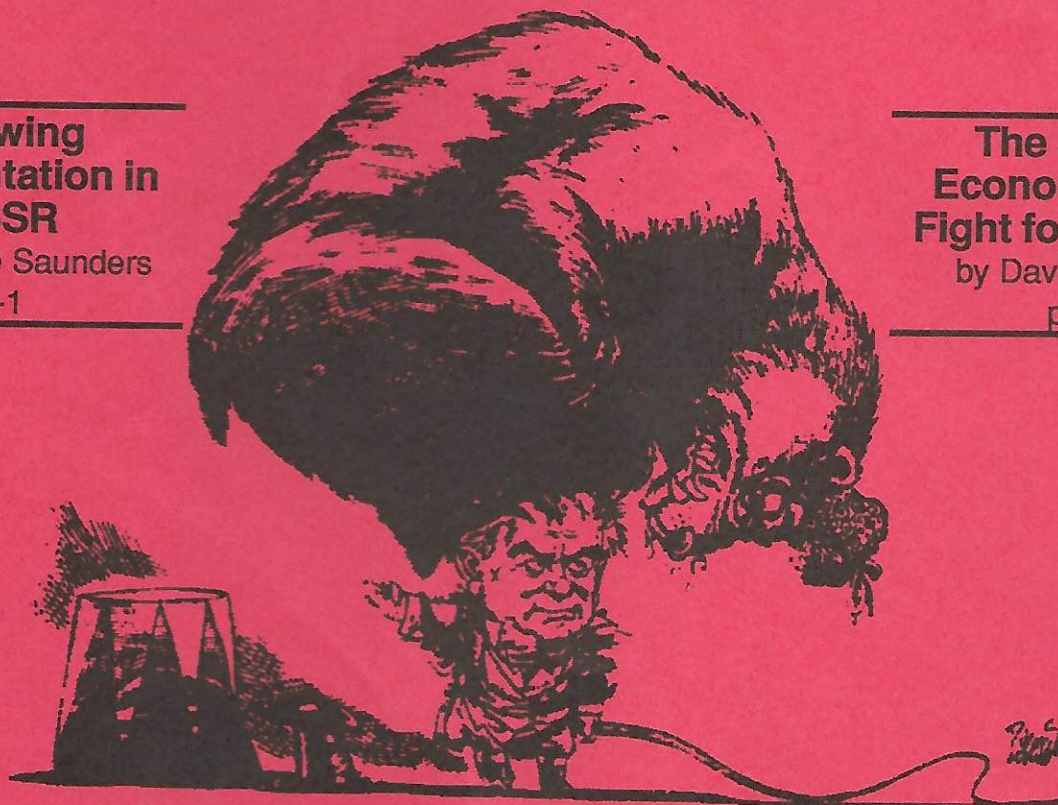
by George Saunders

p-1

The Soviet Economy: The Fight for Control

by David Seppo

p-5



Editorial

Bush's Hypocrisy on Parade.....1

Focus on Native Americans

Leonard Peltier Defense22

Report from East Germany

Mounting Problems for the Bourgeoisie9

by Björn Krüger

The American Indian Struggle . . . Then and Now23

by Jack Bresee

For Direct Democracy

Interview with Peter Uhl11

Appeal for Aid

Rail Union Local Writes Solidarnosc25

FSLN Debates Future of Revolution

by Cecilia Garmendia13

Women and the Persian Gulf War26

by Sarah M. Springer

Going to the Root of Things.....14

by Guadalupe Lopez

Antiwar Activists Speak Out:

A View of the Persian Gulf War and a Proposal for the Antiwar Movement.....28

by Jerry Gordon

"The Front is Going Through a Crisis"15

by Dora Maria Tellez

Contradictions of the Imperialist Victory

in the Gulf30

by Keith Mann

Police Beating in Los Angeles Has National Impact17

by Evelyn Sell

Review

Cleveland Labor and the Vietnam War33

Black Workers For Justice—Unionizing the South19

by Mary Scully

African-Americans: No Guilt in Opposing War.....20

Notebooks for the Grandchildren.....34

45. Even Those in Exile Voted

46. Joseph 'Rakhmetov'

by Mikhail Baitalsky

Progress for Black Women Will Advance the Whole African-American People21

Who We Are

The *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* is published monthly (except for a combined July-August issue) by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. We have dedicated this journal to the process of clarifying the program and theory of revolutionary Marxism—of discussing its application to the class struggle both 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 and of establishing a socialist society based on human need instead of private greed.

FIT members and supporters are involved in a broad range of working class struggles and protest movements in the U.S. We are activists in unions, women's rights groups, antiracist organizations, coalitions opposed to U.S. intervention, student formations, and lesbian and gay rights campaigns. We help organize support for oppressed groups here and abroad—such as those challenging apartheid in South Africa and bureaucratic rule in China, Eastern Europe, and the USSR. We participate in the global struggle of working people and their allies through our ties with the world organization of revolutionary socialists—the Fourth International.

The FIT was created in the winter of 1984 by members expelled from the Socialist Workers Party because they opposed abandoning the Trotskyist principles and methods on which the SWP was founded and built for more than half a century. We tried to win the SWP back to a revolutionary Marxist perspective, and called for the reunification of Fourth Internationalists in the U.S. through readmission to the party of all who had been expelled in the anti-Trotskyist purge. The SWP formally severed fraternal relations with the Fourth International in June of 1990. Our central task now is to reconstitute a united U.S. sympathizing section of the Fourth International from among all those in this country who remain loyal to the FI's program and organization as well as through the recruitment of workers, students, Blacks, women, and other activists who can be won to a revolutionary internationalist outlook.

Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, No. 85, May 1991

Closing date May 6, 1991

Send correspondence and subscriptions to BULLETIN IDOM, P.O. Box 1317, New York, NY 10009.

EDITORIAL BOARD: Steve Bloom, R. L. Huebner, Paul Le Blanc, Sarah Lovell, Bill Onasch, George Saunders, Evelyn Sell, Rita Shaw, Jean Tussey.

INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Göte Kilden, Sweden; Daniel Libreros, Colombia; Ernest Mandel, Belgium; Manuel Aguilar Mora, Mexico; Steve Roberts, Britain; Barry Weisleder, Canada.

To subscribe to *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, send \$24 for 12 monthly issues or \$15 for 6 issues to Bulletin IDOM, P.O. Box 1317, New York, NY 10009. Back issues are \$3.00 each.

Growing Confrontation in USSR

by George Saunders

A major confrontation is shaping up in the Soviet Union. The central government headed by President Gorbachev and backed by the army, police, and party/government bureaucracy, including economic managers, is trying to use the vote in the March 17 referendum to reaffirm and in some ways increase its powers.

Opposing the central party/government bureaucracy are a wide array of forces calling for greater democratic rights, greater rights for the working class, greater rights for non-Russian nationalities, and greater rights for the governments of the fifteen republics making up the USSR.

On both sides, for now, advocates of "transition to a market economy" are in the leadership.

Despite the violent attacks and occupations of key installations by central government troops in Lithuania and Latvia in mid-January, killing more than twenty persons and injuring many more, the Baltic independence movements held firm. In three separate referenda in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, huge popular majorities affirmed the right of independence (including a large percentage of the Russian-speaking populations in those republics). The vote in Lithuania was held on February 9, producing a 91 percent majority for independence. But in Latvia and Estonia, which held referenda on March 3, smaller majorities were expected because the native populations con-

stituted a smaller percentage than in Lithuania. In Latvia only 54 percent of the 2.7 million people are ethnic Latvians, and in Estonia 65 percent out of the 1.5 million are ethnic Estonians. In Latvia, 77 percent of those voting favored independence, according to nearly complete results reported on March 4; the results reported the same day from Estonia showed 90 percent of rural voters and 77.8 percent of urban voters favoring independence. Even in ethnically Russian or Polish areas of the Baltic republics a majority still favored independence.

In the drive of the centralist bureaucracy against the mass movements in the non-Russian republics, one element has stuck like a bone in the bureaucrats' throat. That is, the forces that have been fighting for greater democracy within the Russian republic itself. Gorbachev had to abandon his economic blockade of Lithuania in 1990, after five months, in part because of the mass demonstrations demanding an end to the constitutionally enshrined monopoly on power by the Soviet Communist Party. (The party bureaucracy had monopolized political activity, and governmental power, since the 1920s.)

Another obstacle to a successful economic blockade was the support for Lithuania inside the USSR. A conference of independent workers' organizations in May 1990 called for workers to establish independent ties, enterprise to enterprise, with their Lithuanian counterparts. The pro-independence government of

Editorial

Bush's Hypocrisy on Parade

As we go to press stories are appearing daily about the plight of Kurdish refugees—fleeing oppression by Saddam Hussein's forces in Iraq, denied entry into Turkey, suffering on the border without food, shelter, medicines, and other vital necessities. This throws into sharp relief the total hypocrisy of the Persian Gulf war just waged by George Bush and the U.S. ruling class.

That war was launched, supposedly, in the name of defending national self-determination. Of course, Kuwait was a "nation" created by the imperialists themselves. Defending its "sovereignty" was a way to protect the interests of the U.S. and other imperialist powers in the oil wealth of the Mideast. That is

reasonable grounds for a war, they would say.

But the Kurds? No imperialist power has ever recognized them. Kurdistan is only a nation by rights of language, culture, a common historical territory, and decades of active struggle for independence—first from the Ottoman Empire, and later against the rulers of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and (since glasnost) even the USSR. These are the factors which define real nationhood—far more than any charter granted by those who divide up the world for profit. But that is of no concern to the U.S. ruling class.

So Bush, after initially urging the Iraqi people to rebellion when that served his propaganda interests, calmly turned his

back on the Kurds when their revolt was crushed by troops loyal to Saddam Hussein. The "man who is worse than Hitler" got a green light from Washington for his savagery. That fact says more about the real aims and objectives of the allies in the gulf war than all the pious proclamations made by Bush, the Pentagon, and members of Congress added together.

To add insult (to our intelligence) to injury, Bush claims that his UN mandate only called for driving Iraq out of Kuwait. He was powerless to aid those fighting against Hussein, he says, because he is prohibited from intervening in the internal affairs of Iraq.

(Continued on page 4)

Moldova (formerly Moldavia) also voted to send aid to Lithuania, in defiance of the economic blockade. But perhaps most significant was the action of the Russian republic under Boris Yeltsin to establish separate republic-to-republic ties with Lithuania.

Similarly in mid-January this year, when it looked like a central government putsch aimed at ousting the pro-independence governments in Lithuania and Latvia had begun, Yeltsin stood in solidarity with the Baltic governments and urged troops from the Russian republic not to fire on civilians. The fury of the bureaucratic centralists against this obstruction to their plans took the form of a concerted drive to remove Yeltsin from office. A legal case was instituted against one of his free-enterprise supporters. The centrally dominated television system and press was used to repeatedly lambast Yeltsin. Former Soviet premier Ryzhkov was trotted out with an article in *Pravda* telling what a heavy-handed bureaucrat Yeltsin had been when he had headed the Communist Party apparatus in Sverdlovsk and Ryzhkov had headed the major machine construction complex in that region.

Yeltsin counterattacked by calling for Gorbachev's resignation and then, at a conference on March 9, urged that a new political party, Democratic Russia, serve as the vehicle for taking power from the CPSU. Mass demonstrations were held

in numerous cities on March 10 demanding Gorbachev's resignation and a No vote in the March 17 referendum. The demonstration in Moscow was particularly large—with estimates as high as 500,000—and although Yeltsin did not appear, his March 9 speech was played to the crowds over the public address system. (During the campaign for the March 17 referendum Yeltsin criticized its wording but did not himself call for a no vote. Within the framework of the USSR, he argued, power should be transferred from the office of president of the USSR to the Council of the Federation, that is, the heads of the fifteen constituent republics. This kind of "collective presidency" does exist in Yugoslavia.)

In the midst of this mounting confrontation, beginning March 1, Soviet miners in most of the coal-producing regions of the country went on strike again. Their main grievance was that after nearly two years the Gorbachev government had failed to carry out half the commitments it made in the agreements that ended the miners' strike in summer 1989. The strike areas, after a month's shutdown, included the Kuznetsk Basin (Kuzbass), the Donetsk Basin (Donbass), Vorkuta in the north of European Russia, and the western Ukraine near the border with Poland. More than one-third of Soviet coal mines were affected. [On April 4, Kuzbass strike leaders said that a total of 84 mines were on strike, including 46 of the 76 mines in the Kuzbass region.] The miners' strikes of summer 1989 had marked the first major revival of independent working class action in the Soviet Union since the 1920s. Now with their own union, independent of control by the bureaucracy, they are raising their demands once again. This time the demands are political as well as economic. Among their demands are the dissolving of the bureaucratically rigged Congress of People's Deputies and the resignation of Gorbachev.

Results of the March 17 Referendum

The central government claimed a victory in the 76 percent yes vote for "preserving the USSR as a renewed federation." Gorbachev interpreted this as a mandate for his union treaty. Matters are not so simple, however.

In the Ukraine voters gave majority support to a second question on the referendum, stating that the Ukraine should remain part of the union only on the basis of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet's declaration of sovereignty, adopted in the summer of 1990. This would give the republic powers far beyond those envisioned in the "union treaty." The yes vote in Kazakhstan was similarly colored by a change in wording that emphasized the sovereignty of the republic.

According to preliminary reports, the two largest Soviet cities (Moscow, the present capital, and Leningrad, the former one) gave a no vote of nearly 50 percent. In the third largest city, Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, only 44 percent voted for preserving the union. (In the western Ukraine a majority voted for the position that Ukraine should be totally independent.)

In the Russian republic, along with a majority yes vote for preserving the union, an approximately equal majority favored popular election of a president of the RSFSR, an indication of support for Yeltsin rather than Gorbachev. (In Sverdlovsk, Yeltsin's former political base, it was reported that only 34 percent favored preserving the union, while 90 percent were for a popularly elected president.)

Raising Money for Work in the USSR

Ernest Mandel Tours U.S.

On April 3, the noted Marxist economist and leader of the Fourth International, Ernest Mandel, began a five-city tour of the United States. The tour is sponsored by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action, and Solidarity.

On April 6 and 7 Mandel appeared on panels at the Socialist Scholars Conference in New York City, and on the 8th he spoke at a public meeting called to discuss "The Future of Socialism." Between 200 and 300 people attended at each of these appearances. Mandel will also be speaking on campuses and at public meetings in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

One of the purposes of Mandel's tour is to help raise money for work being carried out by the Fourth International in the USSR. A Russian language edition of *Inprecor*, the FI's journal, is scheduled to appear shortly. Given the rebirth of interest in the ideas of Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition within the Soviet Union today, there is a tremendous need for funds to cover the cost of this publication, of books and pamphlets, and of general organizing efforts. At a fund-raising meeting in Manhattan on April 4, supporters of this effort contributed or pledged over \$37,000. Similar efforts to raise money are planned for the other stops on Mandel's itinerary.

Any readers of the *Bulletin In Defense of Marxism* who would like to make a contribution can make their check payable to: "International Fund" and mail it c/o P.O. Box 1317, New York, NY 10009.

And of course six republics out of fifteen boycotted the referendum—the three Baltic republics, and Georgia, Armenia, and Moldova. Georgia held its own referendum on March 31, reporting a 90 percent vote for independence. Armenia is planning a referendum on independence September 21, and Moldova will have one too, but the exact form and timing has not yet been decided.

To sum up, of the nine republics where voting was held, results in the three largest are ambiguous to say the least (as much, if not more, support for sovereignty, independence, and a popularly elected president as for “preserving the union”). In Byelorussia and the four Central Asian republics (Uzbekistan, Kirgizia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) it is said that the local bureaucratic machines have kept a tight hold and were therefore able to deliver a large yes vote. But beneath that surface the national demands of the Soviet Muslim peoples and those of the Byelorussians are sure to assert themselves as time goes on.

Since March 17

In the aftermath of the March 17 referendum the conflict between the forces behind Gorbachev and those behind Yeltsin intensified. A special session of the Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian republic was convened on March 28 to consider the question of removing Yeltsin as president of that body on the grounds that his actions were destabilizing the USSR. The Democratic Russia forces called for a mass demonstration in Moscow on March 28 to show support for Yeltsin and oppose any move by the centralist bureaucratic forces to remove him from office. Gorbachev countered by banning all public demonstrations for a period of twenty days (up to April 15).

The central government justified its ban on demonstrations by citing the threat of “mob rule” and complaints by some legislators that they felt pressured by demonstrators. When the Moscow City Soviet (controlled by the democratic opposition) refused to enforce the ban the police of Moscow were placed under the orders of the Interior Ministry (MVD) headed by Gorbachev's recent hard-line appointee Boris Pugo. The central government also called in the KGB and armed forces to enforce the ban on demonstrations. At the same time the government decreed that the mine strikes had to end for a 60-day period. Nevertheless, the strikes continued. (The bureaucracy seemed to be taking a page from the book of the U.S. capitalist rulers, with the 60-day “cooling off” periods of their rail labor act.)

On March 28 50,000 police, KGB, Interior Ministry, and army troops sealed off central Moscow around the Kremlin, where the special session of the RSFSR Congress of Deputies was held. Despite this intimidating presence, an estimated 100,000 defied the ban, marched and rallied. Gorbachev's inclination to resort to force again backfired, as it had in Lithuania and Latvia in January. The Russian Congress voted by a large majority to condemn the ban on demonstrations and the show of force. The troops were removed the next day. Far from being able to win a majority to remove Yeltsin as president, the centralist elements of the Communist Party suffered a split themselves. A new group calling themselves Com-

munist for Democracy was formed, clearly reflecting popular disapproval of the central government's heavy-handedness.

By the time the Congress was over Yeltsin had won new and enlarged powers as Russian president, aping the special powers Gorbachev obtained in 1990. Like Gorbachev, Yeltsin voiced the intention of using these powers to push for a more rapid move toward privatization and a market economy. He was also empowered to “avert, limit, and halt strikes.” A popular election for the Russian presidency was scheduled for June 12. Significantly, Yeltsin ended the Russian Congress by making conciliatory overtures to Gorbachev. The Communists for Democracy group and others in the so-called “radical democratic” camp also urged cooperation between the two presidents—both of whom advocate market reforms but by different methods and at a different pace. But the striking miners continued to demand Gorbachev's resignation.

The central bureaucracy is clearly having second thoughts about “democratization,” which until recently was one of the watchwords of perestroika. Glasnost has also fallen victim to resurgent authoritarianism. The Gorbachev government complains that the right to assemble is being “abused,” that in the first three months of 1991 more people had demonstrated in Moscow than in all of 1990. Therefore out with the right to assemble! Why the centralist bureaucrats themselves are unable to mobilize popular forces is a question they prefer not to address.

Not only the drive against Yeltsin is behind the attempt to end “democratization.” The ban on demonstrations and the introduction of joint army-police patrols was also a preventive measure—to forestall protests over the price rises that went into effect on April 2. Numerous essential goods rose 250 percent. Some increases went as high as 1,000 percent. The central government argues that subsidies on basic goods must be ended in order to move to a market economy. In Lithuania in early January similar price rises led to massive protests. The price increases there were quickly dropped, and the prime minister, Prunskiene, who had implemented them was removed.

The striking miners have established a Moscow office for information and coordination. A spokesperson for that office was asked how the miners would respond to the price increases. (The government had announced well in advance that the increases were coming.) The miners' representative said that the approach of the price increases was one reason they had begun their strikes. (In the Donbass, striking miners were demanding a 250 percent wage hike for those working down in the mines, and 200 percent for surface workers.) An interesting question was presented to the Moscow miners' representative, after he affirmed that the miners supported Yeltsin. Would they stop the strike if Yeltsin asked them to? He replied: “It would not be to Yeltsin's political advantage to ask that.”

This is an indication that the workers are keeping an eye out for their own interests at the same time that they take sides in the Gorbachev-Yeltsin conflict. That rivalry is essentially a struggle between sections of the bureaucratic ruling caste, and it involves all the more privileged strata of Soviet society, the intelligentsia among them, in particular those in scientific and technical fields. Neither the promarket forces behind Gorbachev nor the promarket forces behind Yeltsin (with Gorbachev leaning more toward authoritarian methods and

Yeltsin, for now, more toward democratic ones) represent a solution for the working class or for society as a whole.

Rather than privatization or denationalization, even under workers' control—a demand Soviet miners have raised—the workers need to take control of the publicly owned mines, factories, mills, and economic entities of every sort, and begin to manage them themselves, on the principle of production for use, to meet the needs of society, rather than production for “the market,” which in the long run means to be enslaved to the capitalist-dominated world market. Economic decisions need to be made, not by the bureaucrats of the central ministries or the bureaucratized ruling party, and not by the market, but on a democratic basis by committees of producers and consumers. As these lines are being written, there are reports that the Soviet miners rejected an offer made on April 3 by Gorbachev at a conference of several hundred representatives of the coal industry (mostly bureaucrats) to double miners' pay over the course of the coming year. The striking miners, as they continued to demand Gorbachev's resignation, appealed to the rest of the Soviet working class to join them (some metallurgy plants in the Urals region had already declared support for the miners' strike).

On April 4 the miners gained new allies in the form of a spontaneous mass walkout—protesting the April 2 price rises. Tens of thousands of auto and tractor factory workers in Minsk, capital of the until now quiescent republic of Byelorussia, occupied the city's central square, demanding pay increases to offset the price rises. They also demanded Gorbachev's resig-

nation, the resignation of the Byelorussian leadership, and new general elections. They formed a strike committee and succeeded in winning television time to broadcast their demands. Unless their demands were met by April 10, the strike committee said, they would call a general strike. One commentator likened the situation in the USSR to the one in Poland in 1981 on the eve of martial law.

[Late News at Press Time:]

As of April 14, a two-day general strike was held in Minsk, with mass demonstrations attended by a delegation of striking miners from the Donbass. The strike was suspended for negotiations with Byelorussian government leaders, with a clear commitment to call a political general strike for April 23 if the negotiations failed. Meanwhile, a rail strike began in Georgia, demanding withdrawal of central government troops from the Ossetian part of the republic. And metallurgy workers in Chelyabinsk gave a deadline of April 20, declaring they would join the miners' strike if their demands had not been met by then. In response to a call by Gorbachev on April 8 for a one-year moratorium on all strikes and demonstrations, a leader of the coal strike, Vyacheslav Golikov, declared: “Gorbachev is not going to intimidate anyone.” If the government were to use troops, Golikov said, “Our brothers in the oil industry will simply turn off the taps and leave the [army's] tanks without fuel.” The international workers' day, May 1, promises to be a hot one in the USSR this year. □

Editorial (Continued from page 1)

Poor Bush: his hands are tied. Yet they were not tied when the U.S. government bribed and threatened enough governments to achieve a vote of support for its war against Iraq. His hands were not tied when he ordered the invasion of Panama and established a puppet government in December 1989. Washington did not hesitate to intervene in the internal affairs of Nicaragua by organizing and supplying the Contra mercenary army for a decade, devastating that country's economy and murdering tens of thousands of its people. In that particular instance, even the decision of the World Court—which ruled that the U.S. government should stop its aggressions and pay for the vast damage caused by its contra war—did not stop U.S. intervention. Nor did the U.S. government have any qualms about spending billions to aid the right-wing rebels in Afghanistan and terrorist mercenary armies in Angola and Mozambique or funding death squad governments in El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Philippines or invad-

ing Grenada (to name just a few obvious instances).

Whence the U.S. government's sudden concern that it “not intervene in the internal affairs” of another country and its strict observance of international law?

The truth is, of course, that as far as the rulers of this country are concerned, Saddam Hussein's continued reign over Iraq is a far lesser evil than an independent government in Iraqi Kurdistan—which would threaten the “stability” of the entire region—or another government for Iraq itself created in the process of a mass rebellion against Hussein. Bush does not want Hussein to be replaced from that quarter. His hope is for a more tractable and compliant figure to emerge from within the present Iraqi ruling clique, someone Washington can rely on as it once relied on Hussein himself—before he got “too big for his britches”—to do its bidding and not threaten U.S. interests in the region.

Reestablishing that relationship between Washington and Baghdad was a

real motivation for the Persian Gulf war. And Bush is well aware that even if Hussein remains in power it will be very difficult for him, ever again, to pretend that he can become an independent force. The Kurds and the Iraqi masses are small change in this equation (as were the lives of U.S. soldiers in the gulf), and Bush has no qualms in simply leaving them to their fate.

Those who, unlike George Bush, are truly fighting for freedom, democracy, and peace throughout the world must:

- Support the Kurdish people's struggle for independence!

We must demand that:

- Iraq end its persecution of the Kurds now!
- Turkey open its border with Iraq!
- All the world's governments—especially the U.S. and other “allied powers” in the war—send massive donations of food and supplies for the Kurdish refugees!

The Soviet economy: the fight for control

"IT IS NOW OUR TURN to reject that which has not withstood the test of history.¹ They often try to frighten us that the market is exploitation, the restoration of capitalism, the rule of the shadow economy. In reality, we are talking about the transition to a civilized, cultured market, open to all honest and industrious people." (from the appeal of the Russian parliament to the population to support the "500-day Plan for the Transition to the Market)."²

"I recently read in your paper:.... 'Employees of the state sector are prepared to become hired workers only on condition that their wages rise significantly.'I don't know of any workers in the state sector who would be prepared to become hired slaves. And what can a 'significant' increase, say a doubling, of wages give them if prices rise 5-10 times and if mass unemployment sets in? Criminals, who have amassed capital, are becoming a class of owners and rulers of the destiny of the state." (from the letter of a worker of Kharkov region).³

Published below is the first part of a long article dealing with the current economic situation and the workers response. The second part will appear in the next issue of *IV*.

DAVID SEPPO

IN EARLY DECEMBER 1990, a journalist at the liberal daily *Komsomol'skaya pravda* purchased a pig from a farmer and brought it to the kolkhoz (private market) to sell. The market price of meat had doubled over the last half year to 30-35 rubles a kilo⁴ (with a 33-66% rise over the past few months alone), and he wanted to understand why. He made the rounds of 16 of Moscow's 33 markets but everywhere was refused access to the counters where he would have been able to offer his meat for sale to the public.

Finally, at the Riga market, Moscow's largest, after paying a "crazy" bribe to the butcher and inspector, he was given a counter among the egg dealers. He posted a sign "Cheapest Meat at the Market" and started to sell at five times below the going price. The reaction was swift. A man purchased a very large piece of meat only to run back a few minutes later shouting that the meat was infected. When this false accusation failed to deter the other clients, our journalist was denied access to the scales, under the pretext that his meat was dirty. He then began to sell the meat unweighed, upon which four large men attempted to drag

him away. "The markets of the capital", he concluded, "where, in principle free economic laws hold sway, are today completely monopolized....The mafia structure of a single market takes in several tens of thousands of rubles a day. The whole path is thickly paved with bribes."⁵

No power to the Soviets

Some 75% of the respondents in a survey conducted in the Soviet Union in the summer of 1990 stated that their ability to influence political life had not increased over the past two years.⁶ In another survey in Moscow in the fall, 60% claimed that "power in the localities belongs not to the soviets but to the chiefs of the mafia."⁷

In the sixth year of *perestroika*, people are waking up to the realization that despite the increased freedom of speech, the competitive elections and the removal of the party apparatus from the levers of political power, they themselves remain almost as powerless as ever. People who only a year ago were fervent supporters of the schemes of the radical marketeers, now typically express fear

that the elimination of state control over the economy means that "it will fall into the hands of the mafia." The term "mafia" reflects the popular perception of a growing fusion of the bureaucracy, especially the economic administrators, with the "affairistes" of the private sector.⁸ These are the people who hold power in the economy and so also in society.

Any Soviet citizen can readily offer a list of examples drawn from personal experience to support this view. The "mafia" has lately also become a major theme of the press, liberal as well as conservative (there is no mass socialist press). As a social phenomenon its contours are illusive and fluctuating — its shadowy character is in the nature of the beast.

But the term most often refers to the principal kinds of related activity: the creation and maintenance of shortages by monopoly structures⁹ and the illicit transfer of state resources and funds into private hands. Both involve the collusion of administrators in the state sector with the "shadow" [tenevaya] economy, itself often indistinguishable from the legitimate private sector.

The mafia was not of course born under Gorbachev, as the trials at the start of *perestroika* surrounding Rashidov's reign in Kazakhstan amply showed. But with the further weakening of central control and the legalization of the private sector, the "Rashidovschina" has become much more generalized. The following are a few examples of "mafia" activity that could easily be multiplied.

Watermelons — the missing millions

In September 1990 a deputy of the Moscow Soviet travelled Astrakhan to find out why tomatoes and watermelons were arriving from the southern region in such small quantities. The local authorities showed him a pile of telegrams from administrators of Moscow's wholesale-retail produce network instructing them to

1. The author would like to thank Allen Fenichel, Andrea Levy, Dave Melnychuk and Leo Panitch for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

2. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, October 10, 1990.

3. *Rabochaya tribuna*, September 4, 1990.

4. The average industrial wage is about 260 rubles a month.

5. *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, December 12, 1990.

6. *Trud*, July 11, 1990.

7. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, September 30, 1990.

8. A related term, less frequently used, is "bandokratiya" (from the word "banda" — gang) which one economist has defined as "organized crime that has grown up on the basis of bureaucratism and merged with it economically, socially, and even politically." A Buzgalin: "est' li na eto korrumpatsiya?" — *Sovetskoe Profsoyuzy*, no. 17-18, 1990, p. 26.

9. Many factors, of course, contribute to the shortages, but among these monopoly behaviour occupies a special place. For an analysis of the role of monopoly in the Soviet economy, see V. Bogachev, "Monopoliya v sovetskoi ekonomike," *Ekonomicheskie nauki*, no. 6, 1990, pp. 11-22.

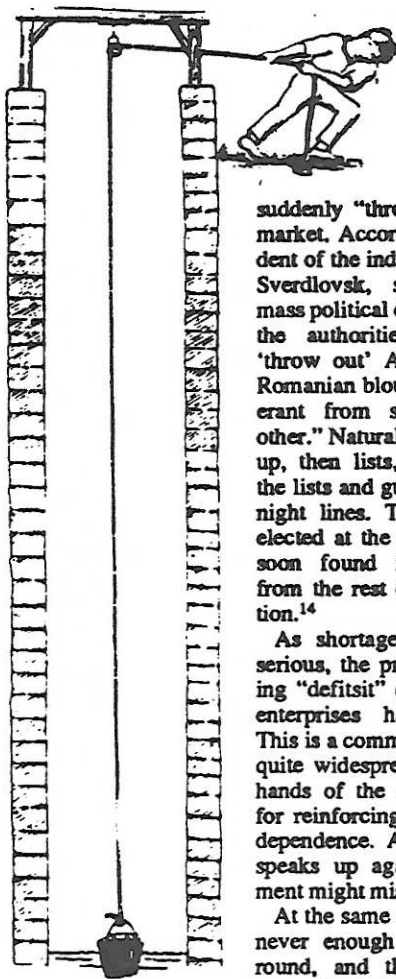
stop shipment because of an over-supply in Moscow, which, of course, did not exist. "Prices are now mostly 'by agreement'", explained the deputy. "The less goods, the higher the prices can soar. Who profits from the reduced supply of vegetables? Those who sell them. I consider that mafia links along the lines warehouse-shop-speculator are real!"¹⁰ As for dry goods, the director of a Moscow department store chain estimates that only 18% of the goods in high demand that are produced and imported actually reach the ordinary consumer.¹¹ Enormous lines stretch around state shops, while at the private markets — and sometimes only a few yards from the door of the state shop itself — one can purchase the same goods without any wait for several times the state price.

The Soviet Union has imported hundreds of millions of dollars worth of medicine over the past two years. Yet even simply aspirin has become a rare find in the pharmacies. According to the director of a Moscow pharmaceutical trading firm, most of the imported drugs are not those that are in most demand and no one consulted her about this.¹²

But someone surely made a bundle in payoffs from the exporters. Anyone with enough money can obtain needed drugs by bribing the pharmacy or warehouse manager on the black market or at Moscow's little-known but now quite legal foreign currency drug store. According to one report, the volume of illegal trade in medicine is already approaching that of the state pharmacies.¹³

Shortages act as political tranquilliser

Besides economic gain, shortages also play a useful political role for those interested in maintaining popular quiescence. People are so preoccupied with the material struggle for survival that they have little time or energy for sustained political activity (this is not, of course, to claim that the shortages are the result of a political conspiracy, though in some cases, even this hypothesis should not be dismissed. In any case, one can argue with confidence that, were it not for the political role played by the shortages, efforts to deal with them would be more intense and successful.)



And when political tensions rise dangerously, "defitsit" (a collective term for scarce goods) is

suddenly "thrown" onto the market. According to a resident of the industrial town of Sverdlovsk, soon after a mass political demonstration, the authorities "began to 'throw out' Austrian boots, Romanian blouses and deodorant from somewhere or other." Naturally lines spring up, then lists, guardians of the lists and guardians of the night lines. The committee elected at the demonstration soon found itself isolated from the rest of the population.¹⁴

As shortages grow more serious, the practice of selling "defitsit" directly in the enterprises has expanded. This is a commonly used and quite widespread tool in the hands of the administration for reinforcing the workers' dependence. A worker who speaks up against management might miss out.

At the same time, there are never enough goods to go round, and the squabbling over who is to receive what can seriously undermine solidarity within the collective.

This practice also has a deeply corrupting influence on workers, since the goods that are sold are often not scarce basic consumer goods but items such as cars, electronic equipment, video cassettes and French perfumes, which the workers then resell at a large profit. Management is, of course, perfectly aware of this.

Shortages also serve as a political football for conservatives and liberals who want to discredit each other. With the potato crop rotting in the fields, party officials accused the "democrats" elected to the soviets in the spring of 1990 of doing nothing to mobilize their constituents for the harvest (this used to be the role of the party apparatus until it was stripped of its administrative functions in the economy). The liberal press, in its turn, blamed the

conservatives for sowing panic in order to discredit the "democrats". These latter pointed their finger at the central economic apparatus for failing to take measures in time, when the problem was foreseeable even a year ago. Indeed, the first reaction of Gavril Popov, Moscow's liberal mayor, was to refuse to mobilize his constituents, suggesting instead that the incompetent ministerial apparatus be sent to the fields.

Leonid Sukhov, a taxi driver from Khar'kov and member of the USSR parliament expressed a widespread view when he suggested that "someone" is consciously creating a desperate situation with the aim of preparing the workers psychologically to accept any reform, including the market.¹⁵ The "democrats" argue that they lack real power to change the situation. And while there is much truth to this claim, they have done little to mobilize the population in order to change the correlation of forces.

Mafia — vanguard of capitalist civilization

There is a general reluctance on the part of the liberals, stemming from their ideological orientation, as well from more concrete political considerations, to apply "administrative methods" — the only ones that could be effective against monopoly — to rein in the mafia. For, as the Russian-born American economist Vasily Leontieff has argued, today's mafia is tomorrow's class of "civilized" capitalists.

Direct robbery of the consumer is only one source of "mafia" profits. Parallel to this, and sometimes overlapping, is theft from the state. Workers tell of the "pocket" cooperatives¹⁶ and joint ventures set up by enterprise management for the illicit sale abroad or to the private sector of raw materials and semi-manufactured goods. In a typical case, the director of the state research and manufacturing association Gidrolizprom authorized the creation of the cooperative Khimtekhnika and transferred to it — free of charge — the association's large store of defective titanium hydrolysis apparatuses.

Khimtekhnika traded these for from six to nine million rubles worth of computers and video players, of which Gidrolizprom had none. After several narrow escapes from the economic police and tax inspectors, Khimtekhnika's directors transferred these assets to a joint Soviet-Swiss venture, Intercomplex, created specially for that purpose (joint ventures enjoy a two-year tax holiday).

10. *Kuranty* (Moscow), October 4, 1990.

11. *Rabochaya tribuna*, October 9, 1990.

12. *Vechernaya Moskva*, September 27, 1990.

13. "Apteka gde est' vse", *Nedelya*, no. 41, October 8, 1990, p.5.

14. G. Gorman, "Ochered", *Rabochii vestnik* (Perm'), no. 5, May 1990, p.3.

15. Central Soviet television, September 21, 1990. At the same session, Sukhov also called on the leadership to be honest enough to admit that the better life they are proposing is one that will take place under capital-

ism. In that case, he suggested, the Communist Party's name should be changed to the Capitalist Party.

16. Soviet cooperatives are often ordinary private enterprises that employ hired labour. Asked in September 1990 what would happen if the state legalized private property, Artem Tarasov, vice-president of the Union of Cooperators, answered: "Nothing. We would simply get rid of the camouflage and call things by their names...[My cooperative would become] a company with private capital." *Rabochaya tribuna*, September 4, 1990.

Since then, the Gidrolizprom association has been disbanded. Its former institutes and factory, now independent, face large debts and bleak futures. Not so the former director of Gidrolizprom, who now stands at the helm of Intercomplex.¹⁷

Sub-contracting work to cooperatives is a common way of turning non-cash credits into cash. In the Soviet economy monetary exchanges between state enterprises take the form of bookkeeping transactions between the State Bank accounts of the different enterprises. In such exchanges, no cash changes hands.

Big profits in computer imports

On the other hand, in transactions between state enterprises and cooperatives, which are non-state enterprises, cash is paid out of these accounts, allowing state managers to receive kickbacks or salaries as members or employees of the cooperative. There are also fortunes to be made in foreign dealings. Most of Moscow's joint venture construction companies are too busy importing and selling computers to put up any buildings. And why should they, when their profits can reach 4000%?¹⁸

As a minister in the Latvian government put it, "cooperatives and joint enterprises are often oriented not towards the production of consumer goods but towards their redistribution. From the state's pockets into their own. If we are to call things by their name, they are involved in speculation on a very large scale."¹⁹ Under Brezhnev, a "gift" of jeans or whisky helped to seal foreign export deals to the Soviet Union. Under *perestroika*, when foreign currency dealings have been decentralized, large cash sums of foreign currency have become the norm.²⁰

Mention must also be made of the party apparatus, many of whose former and current members are using their connections and illegally accumulated wealth to go into business. In Leningrad, for example, the once mighty regional party apparatus has been reduced to 37 people. But they keep busy renting out offices to cooperatives, private banks and foreign companies in the Smolny Institute, a historic landmark and prime piece of real estate that rightfully belongs to the people. They have also turned one of the committee's hotels into a joint venture.²¹

But it is not only members and former members of the bureaucratic clans who are involved in these activities. A scandal broke out in the Moscow Soviet when a deputies' club by the name of Stolitsa (capital) tried to oust the local temperance society from its premises on Chekhov St. It was discovered that this club's goals are "production and commercial activities." Further inquiry revealed that its founders work in the Soviets' Commission on Economic Policy and Entrepreneurship. *Komsomol'skaya pravda* remarked: "The

example of Stolitsa, unfortunately, is not unique, but is even typical of the existing structure of society: different commissions of local soviets often create various commercial organizations and pay part of their profits, not to the local budget, but directly to their founders. And the founders, of course, repay the kindness."²²

In December 1990, 35 members of the Oktyabr'skii District Soviet in Moscow publicly accused its chairman, Ilya Zaslavskii, a liberal luminary, of "organizing monopoly structures, as similar to classic 'shadow' formations as two peas in a pod.... Judge for yourselves: the chairman of the District Soviet, the chairman of its executive committee, and almost all his deputies, having become heads of the district's political structures, are at the same time directors of cooperatives, commercial banks and firms. [There follows a long list of these firms] Exceptionally favourable conditions are created for the activity of all these firms, and tens of thousands of rubles are being pumped at an intensive rate into their financial accounts from the basic budgetary funds of the district executive committee, that is, they are openly robbing you and me of funds intended for the socio-economic development of the district."

Vegetable harvest sabotaged

The deputies went on to accuse the executive, busy with realizing Zaslavskii's conception of the "market economy and financial independence of the district" of sabotaging the district's vegetable harvests campaign. The housing programme, they argued, was also failing: while the executive was selling state apartments primarily to occupants who openly stated their intention of leaving the country and reselling the apartments for foreign currency or renting them out to foreign companies, 60,000 people in the district still lived in communal apartments.²³

These developments — the "transition to the market" as the uncontrolled sway of monopoly formations and the illicit transfer of public wealth into private hands, popularly termed the "mafia-ization" of the economy, do not come as a surprise to Soviet Marxists, who are the only ones even to attempt a serious analysis of the underlying causes of the "com-

mand" system's failure.²⁴ They have always insisted that the basic issue in economic reform is power, that is a social issue, and that the market-versus-plan debate is about mechanisms of regulation that in and of themselves do not determine the nature of a social system.

No more "one big factory"

The failure of the "command" system cannot be explained by simply citing the allegedly "utopian nature of a planned economy," though the Marxists themselves call for a revision of the old model of "one big factory", including a significant expansion of the role of market relations in the Soviet economy. But this task, however important, cannot be resolved successfully in the interests of the great majority without directly confronting the issue of power.

For the Marxists, the underlying social cause of the crisis of the old system is the absence of control over the economy's administrators, who after the revolution usurped the power of the economy's official owner, the people, without becoming full owners themselves.

Under Stalin, at the origins of the "command" economy, some control from above did exist. A manager who failed to carry out assigned tasks knew that he or she would be sanctioned, often in a drastic manner. Khrushchev eliminated the terror but did not replace it with democratic control from below. He merely played with democracy.

But even his timid reforms provoked the opposition of the bureaucracy that was able to find allies in the majority of the political leadership. Brezhnev thus came to power as the candidate of the bureaucracy. What Soviets today call "the period of stagnation" was probably the purest expression of the rule of the bureaucracy increasingly free of outside political control. During this period administrators, especially at the top and middle levels, did not need particularly to fear punishment for failing to carry out official duties. Real sanctions were reserved for those who violated the informal rules, the *esprit de corps*, of the bureaucratic caste mired in corruption.

From this point of view, Gorbachev, though himself a reformer, has favoured the process that he inherited from Brezh-

17. T. Bogacheva, "Razgodarstvovanie — na razgrablenie." *Pravda! svennyi vestnik*, no. 50, December 1990, p.6.

18. Such is the finding of a Moscow research institute. Personal communication by M. Malyutin, director of the sociological service of the Moscow Soviet.

19. I. Litvinova, "Zalozhnye spekulyatsii", *Nedelnya*, no. 42, October 15, 1990, p.4.

20. Private communications from German and Italian businessmen.

21. From Leningrad TV, November 5, 1990. Smolnyi, once a school for girls of the nobility, was seized by the Bolshevik and other revolutionary organisations in 1917.

22. *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, October 3, 1990.

23. *Rabochaya tribuna*, December 9, 1990.

24. Non-Russian readers will find Soviet analyses that share this basic framework in D. Mandel (ed): *La perestroika: économie et société*, Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1990 (articles by V. Bogachev, V. Demomov, Yu. Sukhotin) as well as in the review *Alternatives* (Montreal and Moscow) No. 1, forthcoming, spring 1991 (articles by V. Buzgalin, B. Kagarlitukii, A. Kolganov, Yu. Sukhotin, G. Rakitskaya, B. Rakitskii). For an attempt to briefly summarize the position common to many of the Soviet socialists see D. Mandel, "A market without thorns: the ideological struggle for the Soviet working class", *Studies in Political Economy*, Ottawa, no. 38, autumn 1990, pp. 30-36.

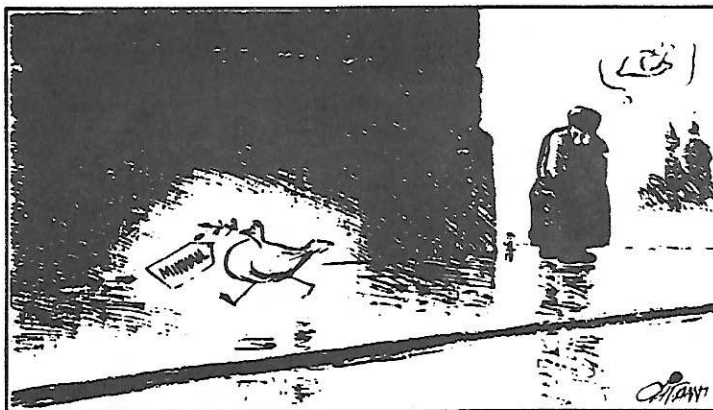
nev: today the centre has become almost as powerless as the people themselves against the economic bureaucracy, which is free to exploit its monopoly positions in perfectly predictable ways; restricting the volume of goods put on the market, cutting quality and raising prices. This is the inevitable consequence of an attempted "revolution from above" which has entrusted the economic reform to the bureaucracy itself. Its aim is to preserve the power and privilege of at least a part of the bureaucracy by transforming the mode of domination and exploitation. This requires bringing new elements into the ruling class and sacrificing some of the old.

The developments in the Soviet economy described above are forcing the liberals to come to terms with the unpleasant reality. Their standard argument that the deepening economic crisis and the "debauch of the mafia" are due to the absence of "real" reform has lost much of its force, since ordinary citizens have already experienced enough of the market to form a quite clear picture of what a "real" transition to the market holds in store for them.

In the words of the USSR Minister of Finance: "One can argue whether we are prepared or not for the transition to the market, if competition has been established among producers or if that still remains a very distant goal, but the reality is such that the market is already imperiously intruding into our lives. Over 60% of prices are not under control of the state. That means that they are rising, and very significantly.... Monopolism in industry, agriculture and transport has very strong positions."²⁵ This is quite an admission in view of the fact that there has been no official price reform. In the spring of 1990, Gorbachev solemnly promised that there would be no price reform without first consulting the population, itself overwhelmingly opposed to price rises.

Lumpen-bourgeois ethic

Liberal sociologist Leonid Razikhovskii argues that the Soviet economy is dominated by a "lumpen-bourgeois" ethic: the desire to increase one's own property at the expense of state property, which is "no one's property." This has yielded "a unique, historically unprecedented monster — a completely mafia-ized economy." All this, he attributes, of course, to the socialist revolution itself. But he is not far from the Marxists' analysis when he describes *perestroika* as "the privatization of the bureaucratic-mafia structure: the



ministry becomes a monopolist concern and the city trade administration — an association of private shops." Nevertheless, he warns that it would be silly to believe that anything is possible, since the "mafia-nomenklatura" is where the power is.

Ethics by the millimeter

And so, however distasteful, one must hold the course since "only in conditions of open private property will it be possible to begin, drop by drop, to crush monopoly and the mafia.... millimeter by millimeter to restore the common human ethic"²⁶ and to get rid of the lumpen bourgeoisie."²⁷ In essence, Radzhikovskii is proposing to hold one's nose and support the revolution from above. He does not even mention the possibility of a popular revolution as an alternative. For the wresting of power from the "mafia-nomenklatura" by the people itself might jeopardize his goal of a capitalist restoration.

Leningrad's social democrats, advocates of a "mixed" (but predominantly capitalist) economy, have also recently come to the realization that "privatization will mean the transfer of property into the hands of the directors; and the introduction of a market economy — their freedom from any limitation whatsoever." The following are only the most striking of the developments along these lines in their city:

"The 26 largest enterprises, having formed the 'Association of Industrial Enterprises' have now founded the bank 'Rossiya', in which they are investing millions of rubles. They have also creat-

ed the firm 'Novakaya perspektiva', through which they will buy up...the consumer goods and food industry of the city along with the trade network — all this, naturally, to help the citizens and Leningrad Soviet. At the conclusion of these operations, the city will still be run by the same old administrative structure, only its elements will enjoy new opportunities, which hitherto were considered criminal."²⁸

While this in itself is worrying to the social democrats, who want a "normal"

Western-style economy for the Soviet Union, they clearly fear even more that "political instability" and "social unrest" will result. "People in the factories will not wait for long when they discover that society is being ruled by the same actors, leading the same kind of life, along with all their relatives and friends and with a part of the most amenable democrats, the only difference being that they will have exchanged their black Volgas for black Mercedes."

The Leningrad social democrats are fervent partisans of what they call the "parliamentary path". "There are two alternatives: try to use the extreme instability of the situation to destroy the remaining structures and on the wave of mass actions hope to become political leaders "expressing the interests of the people"; or try to prevent the social explosion by any methods available, preserving the parliamentary path of development of events. The Bolsheviks of 1917 were the most consistent partisans of the first option..... We know the consequences of trying to make a social revolution."

Inevitable move to Mercedes

Consequently the social democrats see the bureaucrats' move from Volgas to Mercedes as virtually inevitable. All they can think to propose is to invite Western capitalists in the hope that they will introduce a "civilizing" element into Soviet business. Another proposal is for the Leningrad Soviet itself to go into business, as a counterweight to the mafia. But, they sadly note, in that case there would be no guarantee against the Soviet itself becoming "mafia-ized".²⁹ ★

25. *Trud*, December 30, 1990.

26. Soviet liberals oppose "common human values", that supposedly predominate in "normal" (capitalist) societies to the "class values" which allegedly inspired Stalinism.

This has prompted one Leningrad socialist to quip that the "common human values" of the liberals must surely be dollars.

27. L. Radzhikovskii, "Kapitalizm v otdel'no vzyatoi kvartire", *Nedelya*, no. 48, November 25, 1990, p. 7.

28. V. Dudchenko and A. Karpov "O vozmozhnykh posledstviyakh naiboles ochividnogo i prymogo puti

k privatizatsii", September 2, 1990 (unpublished document). The authors are leaders of the Leningrad social democrats. Karpov is a delegate to the Leningrad soviet and a member of its economic reform commission.

29. O. Savel'ev, "Politicheskaya situatsiya v Leningrade," August 25, 1990 (unpublished document); O. Savel'ev, "Obeluzhivanie demokrati," *Informatsionnyi byulleten' Sotsial-demokraticheskoi assotsiatsii* (Leningrad), no. 24, September 1990. This account is also partly based on conversations with social democratic leaders.

Mounting Problems for the Bourgeoisie

by Björn Krüger

Björn Krüger is a political activist in East Germany and a member of the Fourth International. This article was requested by us, written specifically for readers of the Bulletin In Defense of Marxism.

Helmut Kohl played a leading role in pushing forward the fast annexation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) for solely party-politics reasons. He did this against the will of more farsighted bourgeois leaders like Alfred Herrhausen, then president of the Deutsche Bank, or Karl Otto Pöhl, chief of the central bank, both of whom spoke out for a slower tempo. Because of his promise to bring quick social prosperity by means of "unification," Kohl, hardly the most intelligent choice available to the German bourgeoisie, was enthusiastically welcomed by East Germans, especially by blue-collar workers. During the whole of 1990 he made numerous triumphant trips to the GDR, addressing hundreds of thousands of citizens. Immediately after the annexation he ceased traveling to the newly conquered territories. Now, three months and one million unemployed later, the "chancellor who managed German unity" is again vehemently asked by workers to repeat his trips. But this time the mood of the audience would be slightly different.

By accepting the implementation of the "currency union"¹ on July 1, 1990, the GDR government not only ceased to exercise any influence on the amount, price, and velocity of its domestic currency but also paved the way for the most brutal "liberalization" program ever applied to an East European country.

The effects on productivity and employment have been dramatic. While unemployment was something unknown in the former "workers' state," now of the former 9 million workers 3.7 million are already affected by layoffs. Every third child is growing up in a family with at least one parent unemployed. And there is more to come. Labor Minister Norbert Blüm estimates that during the course of this year there will be some additional 550,000 layoffs in the electronics and metal industry, about 600,000 in the administrative apparatus, 160,000 in the chemical and paper industry, 220,000 in mining, 160,000 in textiles, and 400,000 in agriculture.² This would mean an unemployment rate of nearly 50 percent, higher than at the time of the Weimar Republic, during the grave world economic crisis which in Germany led to the rise of Adolph Hitler.³

Communities Bankrupt

When the then East German Social Democratic finance minister Walter Romberg predicted in the summer of 1990 that in the following year the GDR would have a deficit of 20 billion DM, he was immediately fired by de Maizière for expressing such a gloomy outlook in public.

Today, even conservative politicians would be happy if Romberg's forecast were to be confirmed. For this year, the deficit of the "five new states" is planned to increase to 50 billion DM. But the Brandenburg minister of economics has already estimated that for his region alone 50 billion are necessary.⁴

The West German bourgeoisie has done everything to help East Germans become dissatisfied with it. Firstly, in their greed for extra revenues the Western Länder (states) managed to get their Eastern counterparts to agree to take only 55 percent of their proper

share of VAT [Value Added Tax] revenues. Thus, while the Eastern Länder are rather poor, "the Länder (West) even made money out of German unity," as an internal working paper of the finance ministry concluded.

Secondly, Bonn refused to pay the subsidies for housing, electricity, and public transport, paid for by the GDR government in the past,⁵ thereby leaving this burden on the shoulders of the East German Länder.

Soon the latter discovered that they did not have enough money to maintain existing standards. Cities like Erfurt, Gera, Halle, Magdeburg, and Leipzig were declared by their mayors to be on the verge of bankruptcy. Some even had to cease paying wages to local civil servants. Sensational measures, with hardly any parallel in history, were organized, for instance demonstrations by some hundreds of mayors.

Thus, by its very politics, the West German bourgeoisie forced its Eastern hangers-on to protest, formally at least, against this kind of mistreatment. After all, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) won the elections in East Germany because citizens thought it would be the party best suited to facilitate contacts with and investments by big capital. Quick disappointment was to follow automatically. It might not be impossible that in the near future a "pro-Eastern wing" will emerge in the now overall-CDU, pretending to defend the special interests of East German citizens. However, given the total lack of an East German bourgeoisie and the resulting subordination of East Germans inside the CDU, it would not have much room to maneuver, as long as it was not indirectly supported by strong outside social pressure.⁶

Very quickly after the annexation, the Bonn government found itself on the defensive. Confronted with mounting criticism it was only able to react a posteriori, behaving like the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in its last days before losing power. After some harsh disputes behind the scenes, fueled by public criticism of its East German Länder prime ministers,⁷ the CDU finally decided to go on the offensive. At the beginning of March, it passed the so-called Common Project Upturn East (Gemeinschaftswerk Aufschwung Ost), delivering 24 billion DM to the newly acquired territories during the next two years to expand public demand and boost private enterprise. Given the seriousness of the crisis however, that will hardly do.⁸ Moreover, a significant part of the money will not find its way into the pockets of East German enterprises but without doubt into the pockets of their Western competitors.

Via the Fiduciary Company the vast majority of the means of production is in the hands of the state and is managed in a capitalist manner. East Germany is a state capitalist enclave inside a capitalist society.

Of course, the bourgeoisie intends to change this as quickly as possible. As soon as an enterprise is profitable it is sold, i.e., privatized. Nonprofitable assets on the other hand remain in the hands of the state, which has to maintain them with public funds. Thus profits are privatized while losses are socialized.⁹

State Machinery Not Yet Consolidated Totally

Juridically, East Germany is part of a capitalist country but socially it desperately lacks significant elements of a stable capitalist society: the bourgeoisie and its consolidated political and state power machinery.

Of course, unlike all the other former "socialist" countries, the tasks of a home-grown bourgeoisie can be simply fulfilled by the West German one. Nevertheless, difficulties remain. In East Germany there is no mechanism of political parties deeply rooted in the different layers of the bourgeoisie, pursuing different priorities. Instead, the political regime is based to a high degree on pure ideological loyalty, not on direct material interests. Great swings in public opinion were inevitable; in fact they are already happening on a massive scale.

The Eastern administrative apparatus is not yet a structure the bourgeoisie can rely on completely. In the past it was the most privileged and ideologically safeguarded bastion of the Stalinist regime. It is true that most of the former Stalinists have no actual problems in being loyal to the new masters, their old "class enemies," except for a defiant minority which is persecuted in a massive witch-hunt. But their financial positions as well as their uncertain career (700,000 civil servants are planned to be dismissed this year) make them a not very reliable tool for the bourgeoisie. Since the latter has not enough personnel and money to renew the whole old apparatus with its own people, it has to be content with replacing only the top positions.

But at the bottom uncertainties remain. When, at the beginning of March, 700 Potsdam police went on a several-day warning strike, demanding higher wages and better working conditions, they were watched with sympathy by their colleagues throughout the ex-GDR.

Also the buildup of a new secret police is difficult. Only one and a half years after the collapse of the former secret police, the State Security (Staatssicherheit), which was on the verge of triggering off a bloodbath in Leipzig on October 7, 1989, memories are still fresh. So far, the buildup meets a massive (though also passive) wave of public mistrust, because, as people correctly fear, it could be maintained only by former State Security members. While exact figures are of course not available, it is clear however that until now only minor structures have been consolidated.

Political Passivity

To manage its newly conquered territories the bourgeoisie has delivered only second-rate personnel at best.¹⁰ Preparing for East German elections last year, lots of Western politicians came to the country's villages and cities, campaigning for political and state management jobs. Happy to obtain people educated in market economy and supposedly possessed with good connections to much-needed capital, people often voted for the new imports. The mayors of important cities like Dresden, Erfurt, and Leipzig all come from West Germany. But in the meantime it turned out that a high percentage of the imported staff were politicians who had failed in their Western regions because of political and economic scandals. Such kind of precedents will hardly sponsor trust in bourgeois-style politics.

Already, there has been a massive drop in membership figures in the CDU and Free Democratic Party (FDP). Up to now the political parties have been unable to attract members. While CDU and FDP simply relied on the already existing, former "socialist" GDR sister parties, their functionaries, structures, and memberships, the Social Democrats had to build up from scratch (their party being forcibly integrated into the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1945). Today they claim 60,000 members in East Ger-

many but even that is probably exaggerated. Thus, like all the other East European countries, in East Germany political parties and organized political activity are reduced to small core groups or networks of full-timers.

This is not only true for the bourgeois parties but also for citizens' movements and socialist forces. Coming at a time of brutal austerity attacks, this expresses a deep mistrust against explicitly ideological-based organisms *tout court* [brusquely] and, after the collapse of "socialism" and the fresh capitalist disaster, a profound demoralization.

Looking at the political map of East Germany, one finds a bourgeoisie—to some degree still "foreign"—in charge of the country, a bourgeoisie which conquered, by means of the annexation of the GDR, a not-so-small additional geographic and economic potential. At the same time it has got as "bonus" lots of serious problems, like a population in the process of pauperization and therefore also not very predictable in its behavior.

On the other hand there is a working class which, after a 40-year absence of self-organizing and self-consciousness, does not feel itself as really being one. It is only now, under the immense threat of austerity attacks, that it is making a few steps forward in this direction. However, given the bad experience of the "socialist" heritage, it remains to be seen how many such steps forward it will go. □

Notes

1. That is, the East German currency, the mark, was abolished in favor of the West German Deutschmark.

2. Women are more and more becoming the group most under attack. While in January 1990 about 11 percent of all unemployed were women, only eight months later it was 55 percent plus a high unknown figure. Paradoxically this increase of female unemployment in East Germany is in contrast to a decrease in the western part of the country where the service sector is about to expand.

3. However, one has to add that today the social security network is more highly developed.

4. Kurt Biedenkopf, conservative prime minister of Saxony, estimates that between 80 and 100 billion DM a year are necessary. International Monetary Fund experts put it at double that amount.

5. Of the 37 billion DM subsidies it pays only 2 billion.

6. At the same time the lack of an experienced and self-conscious working class explains why there is no place for an authoritarian and right-wing personality using working class rhetoric like Walesa in Poland.

7. As a public demonstration of their concern, the conservative and Social Democratic prime ministers of the "new states" came together on February 12/13 in an "emergency meeting" to discuss how to overcome "the grave financial crisis of the communities."

8. Of the total 24 billion DM, 5 billion are supposed to be invested in municipal projects like public buildings, schools, hospitals, etc., 5.5 billion for "job-creating measures," 5.6 billion for transport, 2.2 billion for housing, and so on. Enterprises investing in the Eastern part of Germany will get up to 49 percent of their investment repaid by the state. Given the lack of even basic means of transport and communication it is however hardly believable that this will work.

9. In an open letter to Chancellor Kohl the mayors of nine big East German cities wrote that the Fiduciary Company wants to give to the communities only deficit enterprises like housing agencies and public transport facilities but not profitable assets: "whatever makes money goes to the private sector."

10. Of course, there are a handful of exceptions. The most prominent one, Kurt Biedenkopf, was some years ago the general secretary of the West German CDU and enjoyed a reputation as a skilled and intelligent conservative politician. Because he played a too independent role within the party and even criticized Chancellor Kohl, though never going beyond the limits of bourgeois conservatism, he was fired as general secretary and given secondary party jobs. Now, as prime minister of Saxony, he is trying to reconquer former party posts by giving himself a profile as staunch defender of East Germans, using them for his inner-party struggle. The Social Democrats as well have some similar examples to offer.

The following interview appeared in the February 22 issue of La Breche, newspaper of the Parti Socialiste Ouvrier, Swiss section of the Fourth International. Translation for the Bulletin In Defense of Marxism is by Keith Mann.

For Direct Democracy

In December 1990, Petr Uhl, a 49-year-old mechanical engineer and deputy in the Czechoslovak Parliament elected on the ticket of Civic Forum, was interviewed by Eric Toussaint. Petr Uhl spent four years in prison between 1969-1973 for his resistance to the Soviet invasion in 1968. Cofounder in 1976 of Charter 77, he was imprisoned again for five years from 1979-1984. Within Civic Forum he represents the Left Alternative group, one of a number of groupings in that organization. He has been a member of the Fourth International since 1984.

With a distance of a year how would you assess what happened in Czechoslovakia?

Petr Uhl: My opinion has not changed; what happened was the *beginning* of an antibureaucratic political revolution. Of course each political revolution has its own cultural and social characteristics. From this point of view as well as in its anti-bureaucratic content, we are not yet sure of its real results. But one thing is sure: Stalinism, even in its "social democratic" Gorbachevite form, is disappearing.

Can you tell us who the actors are in this revolution?

Uhl: The great tragedy of our revolution is that it has no "vanguard." More precisely, Civic Forum was founded two days after the large demonstrations on November 17, 1989. It was made up of two large currents: militants from independent groups, especially from Charter 77, and from intellectuals who, out of solidarity with political prisoners like Vaclav Havel, built independent groups within the official structures where they worked. Civic Forum was above all the work of intellectuals. Workers played a marginal role. But Civic Forum spoke to the entire population, especially to workers. It won the support of workers—notably the strike committees which were founded as committees to organize new unions, because public opinion unanimously wanted to get rid of the Communist Party and the old political system. But it was clear that the influence of workers and their interests were minimal in Civic Forum. It has since shrunk even further. For the time being it can be said that the workers are absent from Civic Forum.

Two years ago you debated a group around Havel who advocated the self-limitation of democratic demands and a diversity of property forms. Is this debate an obsolete one that has been overtaken by events?

Uhl: The debate on the first point is obsolete. For the rest, my criticisms remain valid, and the debate continues on another level, within Parliament. Civic Forum came out for the plurality of property forms of the means of production without saying anything more precise than that. But, in reality, over the last few months the majority of the leadership orients more and more towards a sole form of property—private property. Support for the possibility of undertaking measures to aid the towns and cities has been forgotten; support to workers becoming "stockholders" in their factories has been forgotten; support for

the otherwise vague slogan of the necessary participation of the workers in management has been forgotten. Yet all of this had been well expressed in the June 1990 electoral campaign, though the idea of economic self-management, as a clear counterweight to the privatization program, had been abandoned at the beginning of the year. Differences within society on this have appeared and a certain number of people—I wouldn't say a majority—are for the restoration of capitalism without stating it openly. The person who represents this line the clearest is Vaclav Klaus, the minister of finance, who was elected as the head of Civic Forum three months ago.

What are the roots of the popularity of the unilateral privatization proposals?

Uhl: There are many reasons why ordinary people are partisans of capitalist methods: impatience with the fact that the structures of the old regime have not been all destroyed; the attempts of the old bureaucrats to reappear in new companies or cooperatives; the fact that political democracy has not really been developed; the fact that the laws on "small-scale privatization" and on communal and town property, which guaranty a certain economic liberty for the people, are not always enforced. So, some say: we must go faster, a system must be created like the one that seems so efficient in the West. At the same time there are social fears as to the future: fear of unemployment and especially of inflation. There are criticisms of the shortage of goods in the stores. These were well-stocked under the old regime. This is no longer true, because those who work there want to buy the stores at auctions which are held in the context of the "small-scale privatization." The reserves are therefore reduced and they no longer accept purchases because they want to artificially lower the prices of "their" shops.

Are there legal means to prevent foreign capital from acquiring this sector and profiting from restoration?

Uhl: The small-scale privatization plan involves the auctioning off of everything that is not transportation, industry, agriculture, public health, etc. Eighty percent of the businesses involved are restaurants or small businesses. The small-scale privatization involves only state property, not those confiscated from communes or private persons. In these cases the property is returned. If ownership has changed, the former owner does not receive the property, but money at 1964 prices. Only

Czechoslovakians can bid in the auctions in the first round. If the property is not sold, foreigners can take part in the second round of bidding. I don't see any danger in this. The problems would arise with large-scale privatization. It can't be said if this will happen because the proposed law has not yet been presented to the Federal Assembly. There would be limitations on the penetration of foreign capital, but I don't know which. The law is called the "law on the transfer of state property to the hands of physical and juridical persons." Privatization is only one of the possible methods of this transfer. There are others. For example, if a company is created with shares held by its workers. These are not my own opinions on this, but current possibilities. Vaclav Klaus is a big supporter of his coupon scheme. Coupons representing 80 percent of the property of the large factories would be distributed amongst the population. Everyone would pay 1,500 crowns—the median salary for two weeks. With the coupons one could buy stocks, which is already happening on the free market. The factory would decide what percentage of the property would be distributed in this way. And stocks could be sold to foreigners.

What type of political work are you involved with at this time?

Uhl: As a parliamentary deputy representing Civic Forum and at the same time a member of the Left Alternative I do all I can to defend the principles of Civic Forum on the basis upon

which I was elected by more than a million voters. I stress the left principles that are included in its program. On the political plane, I defend the possibility of organizing political life not on the basis of Western political parties as they function in bourgeois democratic systems, but on the basis of a pluralistic civic movement that allows groupings to be built around a problem, then to dissolve, and offering regular citizens the chance to participate in political debate. Such a system does not exclude political parties. It permits the enrichment of indirect representative democracy with elements of direct democracy. I have in mind the Swiss example, why not? Or, to refer to other actual experiences in human history: 1917, 1918, and 1919 in Russia; Czechoslovakia after the Second World War; Poland in the '80s, etc. We in the Left Alternative were against the system of indirect democracy but that was the system that was adopted. On the economic plane, it was a question of finding a suitable solution to the triangular problem of state-market-workers' rights, the possibilities for the workers to decide the conditions of labor, the products of their labor, their role on the economic plane as producers and citizen-consumers. The liberty of the market can be the freedom of the artisan or the cooperator to sell what they produce, but also the freedom of an owner to exploit a labor force. I obviously don't agree with the second, but nothing of the sort has yet been put into practice. All the big debates on this point are ahead of us. □

Statement by Moscow Trials Campaign Committee

The Moscow Trials Campaign Committee was started in 1987, acting on the initiative of some Labor members of Parliament in Great Britain. The British Labor MPs thought the time was ripe for a campaign to seek the exoneration and rehabilitation of the victims of the Moscow trials. Very early, the Fourth International endorsed their efforts. From the beginning we were in touch with the British movement trying to find out how we could help in this campaign.

In the U.S. we gained the endorsements of about 150 prominent public figures, including Egbal Ahmed, Noam Chomsky, Morris Slavin, Michael Goldfield, George Wald, Walter Cohen, Grace Paley, Bertell Ollman, Mary McCarthy, Norman Mailer, Pete Seeger, Studs Terkel, Rev. Philip Berigan, Ed Asner, and many others.

In New York the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee conducted three public rallies in three years, with an average attendance of about 150. In addition, a substantial amount of money was raised. Among our other activities, this permitted the committee to make a \$500 donation to the Memorial

society in Moscow, which is working for the restoration of historic truth about the victims of Stalin's crimes in the Soviet Union.

The original mission of the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee has now been largely accomplished. Virtually all of the victims of the Moscow trials have been legally rehabilitated, with the notable exception of Leon Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov. There is no doubt that these rehabilitations will be forthcoming, but the people of the Soviet Union themselves will resolve that issue.

Therefore, it is hereby resolved that the U.S. Moscow Trials Campaign Committee be dissolved. It is further resolved that the surplus money remaining in the committee's bank account, amounting to \$900, be turned over to organizations which are actively working for the publication of Trotsky's works and continuing to work for Trotsky's legal and political rehabilitation in the USSR. □

March 6, 1991

FSLN debates future of revolution

THE first congress of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) will take place July 19-21, 1991. The congress was initially scheduled for February 1990, but the FSLN leadership decided to postpone it, on the grounds that the social situation in the country demanded all the energies of Sandinista militants. Meanwhile, a frequently violent public debate is continuing in the press, with members of the national leadership and well known cadres of the FSLN putting forward a wide variety of positions, whilst the former middle cadres (now often unemployed and left to fend for themselves) and the rank and file grumble

CECILIA GARMENDIA

SINCE the electoral defeat of the FSLN in February 1990, the discussion has centered on the causes (economic and military choices, alliances, the policy of the FSLN in relation to the mass movement and the population in general); on the "social partnership" with certain sectors of the bourgeoisie and the attitude to take towards the measures undertaken by the government (confrontation or negotiations); on the current role of the Sandinista People's Army (EPS); and on the kind of party to build (internal functioning, elected or nominated leadership, and so on).

Social mobilization attenuated

The signing of the social partnership accords in October 1990 has attenuated the social mobilization which reached its high point during the general strike of July 1990; but these agreements have not checked, far from it, the persistent degradation of the standard of living of Nicaraguans and the deterioration of the economic situation. Dismissals continue, (24,000 public employees will be sacked between now and April — 33% of current employees in administration, health and education — as well as 10,000 workers in the nationalized sector); a new privatization plan, worked out with the International Development Association (IDA, controlled by the United States) will be implemented and will affect 350 enterprises.

New privatization laws will soon be proposed to Parliament; these attacks are currently creating a renewal of social tension (a strike of health personnel para-

lyzed the hospitals in February 1991), but the mass movement seems disoriented by the zig-zags of the Sandinista leadership. Nicaragua's debt will be settled in the "Latin American" manner; half will be paid over 40 years and the rest converted into shares in the productive nationalized sector, the target of different measures taken by the government of the National Union of the Opposition (UNO) since February 1990.

Under the social partnership accords, the government succeeded in imposing an eventual privatization of banks; the state monopoly of foreign trade also seems threatened (it was one of the first measures taken by the revolutionary government in July 1979). Agrarian reform is frozen (despite the supplementary pressure exercised by the demobilized former Contras of peasant origin); the raising of interest rates has tightened the noose around peasants who had received land during the revolution. Whereas the accords envisaged the freezing of redundancies, the growing autonomy of local governments and administrations (a sign also of the divergences inside the UNO which reached their apogee in the so-called "revolt of the mayors"²) has meant that this measure has not been observed in many areas.

Incessant decline in purchasing power

Purchasing power declines incessantly; inflation has reached 10,000% for 1990; the cordoba-oro — the new currency which should be in parity with the US dollar — already exchanges at a rate of 7 to 1

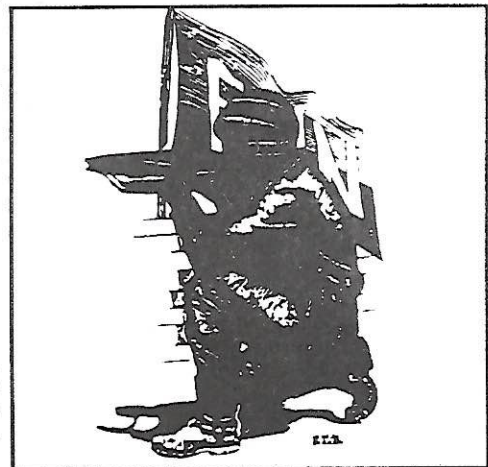
against it; productivity has fallen by 5%. Public service workers, for example, have lost 50% of their purchasing power. This has obviously led to a spectacular lowering of the living conditions of the masses, aggravated by the reduction of social services (growth of infant mortality, reappearance of a series of diseases banished since 1979 — fatal epidemics of measles, chickenpox and so on).

The EPS has fallen in size from 90,000 at the beginning of 1990 to 28,000 (the smallest army in Central America); it has also been shaken by a series of debates and incidents which have been terminated in a more than authoritarian fashion. Colonel Picardo, chief of the air force, was dismissed with his closest collaborators in August 1990, accused of indiscipline for having defied, indeed criticized, the authority of the commander of the EPS (general Humberto Ortega)³; these events concealed a more profound debate on the current role of this institution, the "rebels" being suspected of interfering in politics, whereas some now want the EPS to be no more than the guarantor of the Constitution.

At the end of 1990, four Sandinista (as well as Salvadoran) officers were imprisoned, accused of having sent missiles to the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador. Commandante Luis Carrion, a member of the national leadership of the FSLN, spoke, with regard to the FMLN, of a "disloyal attitude which does not correspond to the quality of the political relations and the solidarity of the FSLN"⁴.

FMLN forced to return missiles

The leadership of the FMLN, under the threat of the expulsion of the Salvadoran refugees based in Nicaragua, was forced to send back 8 Sam-7 missiles and 14 Sam-14 missiles to the EPS. The Sandinista Youth, qualifying the act of the accused officers as "heroic", indeed as a sign of a "revolutionary morality", rebelled; "the FSLN is not the party in power and it cannot then feel itself offend-



ed, or betrayed". The National Workers' Front (FNT, which brings together the whole of the Sandinista trade unions) has also criticized the attitude of the EPS leadership.

The 4 officers launched a hunger strike, supported by the association of dismissed former soldiers, after their condemnation to three and a half years imprisonment on February 14 — they finally stopped on the announcement of an eventual pardon. The response of certain top Sandinista leaders to this act has been shocking (see the interview with Dora Maria Tellez, p. 12). If prudence is understandable in such an affair, the FSLN, as a party which is no longer in government, and no longer officially leading the EPS (a minister of state is responsible for it) had plenty of room to take an independent position.

To qualify the efforts of the FMLN to protect a civilian population faced with the bombardment of the Salvadoran army as a "disloyal" act reveals a double morality and a certain historic amnesia (the attitude of the Sandinista government in December 1989, in the San Isidro accords, condemning "the armed actions and terrorist acts" hardly a month after the offensive launched by the FMLN, had already shaken the Sandinista ranks and shown the impasse into which the FSLN was drawn through its instinct for self-preservation)⁵.

Unjustified excess of zeal

Thus the attempts of the government to "depoliticize and professionalize" the EPS are fully underway, with the active aid of an important part of the Sandinista leadership.

It is true that the transition accords, signed during the handover of government⁶, limited the Sandinista leadership's margin of manoeuvre, if it wished to keep control of the army — but this does not justify such excesses of zeal.

The measures taken since April 1990 by the UNO government have been made against the principal gains of the revolution (nationalized sector, Sandinista army and police, social gains — free health and education, right to work, agrarian reform, and so on).

If it hopes to regain the majority and continue to represent the interests of the masses, the FSLN must effectively advance in its definition as a party. This is what is at stake in its congress. ★

1. See IV 187.

2. UNO mayors close to vice-president Virgilio Godoy stirred up some confrontations at the end of 1990 between supposedly demobilized Contras and the Sandinista army and police. They demanded in particular the resignation of Humberto Ortega.

3. Rumours accuse him of having had contacts with the right and its journal, *La Prensa*, of wishing to make the air force an "autonomous" institution, and of wanting to repress the July strikers. Officially, he has been accused only of having a "particular conception" of the army.

4. *El Nuevo Diario*, January 30, 1991.

5. See IV 176 and 178.

6. See IV 184.

Going to the root of things

IN THE context of the preparation of the FSLN congress, a debate has opened in the columns of the Nicaraguan press. As part of this discussion, a farmer in region IV (the departments of Masaya and Carazo, to the south of Managua) sent an open letter, in the name of a group of peasants, to the daily *Barricada*, which we reproduce virtually in its entirety.

GUADALUPE LOPEZ

THE peasants of region IV have had a good deal of discussion on what the revolution has bought them, and what they have gained during all these years of sacrifice.

In that which concerns us, if we think about it, we see that the rain still falls on us (our cabins fall down); the more fortunate have learned to read and write, even if they hardly remember it; we have neither horse, nor beef meat; at best, we possess three *manzanas*¹ in a cooperative.

But all this is not very important for we are agreed that the revolution has given us something better; consciousness. This, we will never sell on any market.

A comrade said to us "there is something which is better than being a Sandinista, that is to be a revolutionary". We began to understand what he meant.

We have travelled, and travel broadens the mind. We have seen many peasants in Nicaragua and also very much land. Good land for agriculture and for livestock, but the cake is unfairly divided; on the one hand, there is an enormous share for some and on the other, there are the crumbs for the poor.

Some say that there has already been an agrarian reform and that land can no longer be distributed. Others claim even that there have been very many injustices and it is necessary to go backwards; but so long as there remain so many empty bellies and such a big share of the cake for some, the agrarian reform must continue.

There are peasants without land who live close to a big estate; for our part, we would already have occupied it. In time, if this was done, the expert from the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (MIDINRA) would come along with his great speeches: "You should not be extremist, the big landowner has said that he has no more land, wait, I will find you some elsewhere". And the people stay there on the road. Obviously, you will often see the expert coming out of the estate, with his

jeep full of milk and cheese.

It is true that it was necessary to take account of the war and be patient. It was necessary in the first place to put an end to this savage aggression, the sovereignty of Nicaragua was at stake. But now we are going to concentrate our attention on the second priority; the agrarian question.

We are going to give those who have more than 100 *manzanas* of cultivable or cultivated land what they deserve; it is necessary to expropriate it, confiscate the land and give it back to the peasants, to the agricultural workers, to those without land and to the unemployed who are ready to work. And to pay no attention to his livestock or his beautiful speeches.

Big landowners waste money

1. There exist numerous farms, of 4 to 5 thousand *manzanas*, with 300 beasts, and 7 or 8 families which work there for the proprietor or for the state. The proprietor fills his pockets; he sends his money to the United States or wastes it, buying imported products which are no good to him. To increase production, it is necessary to redistribute this property to 500 peasant families.

2. These families will no longer live in a situation of "hidden" unemployment and will no longer sell grain or milk or cheese or meat. The price of alimentary products will fall, which will suit the workers in the towns who, immediately, will modify their demand for wage increases.

3. The peasant needs a Sunday suit, schoolbooks for his kids, nails and tools, zinc to repair his roof, rum or refreshments; he will have his pennies. You will see; the industrial middle class and the traders will be happy; they will do good business with the peasants — for the middle class, good business is the best poli-

1. A *manzana* is an agricultural unit of measure employed in Nicaragua. One *manzana* is equivalent to 0.7 hectare.

tics.

4. The land owner has only to change his trade and become bourgeois, to devote himself to industry or to commerce. The land is for those who work it.

5. The technicians, the functionaries and the secretaries will also come out winners, it will be necessary that they work hard and live as the middle class of the underdeveloped countries must; but they will eat more, and for less cost.

6. The state must change its policy in relation to the peasantry. The loans for sowing and the MIDINRA experts who come to see what we have sown and that there is no disease, are not enough. What are we going to do with our tractors, given the price of fuel and spare parts? The intellectuals and the technicians must rather find us better techniques, midway between the wooden plough and the Belarus 80 tractor; the government could install some schools so that the young peasants can learn a little of accounting and administration.

7. The intelligent and wealthy governments which, some say, exist in Europe, can help us.

8. It is evident that a true agrarian reform is the best way to improve the economy and that the modern bourgeois will obtain thus a good part of the cake; now we are going to deal with the political questions. As long as there are peasants who dream of their little piece of land, what you call social and political stability will not exist in this country.

Land reform brings peace

This way of settling the problems of the countryside, with machetes, and those of the nation, with rifles, is the fruit of the backwardness of these big landowners and of those governments who transform the workers into soldiers. The agricultural worker and the poor peasant will become soldiers if their boss orders them to; but if they possess their ten *manzanas*, there will no longer be wars, for lack of soldiers, and the people will learn to no longer put their lives in danger for nothing. See then how agrarian reform can lead to peace and social stability.

9. You have perhaps noticed that we are a little Sandinista and a little revolutionary. Sometimes, pressed to resolve our problems, we function by ourselves, and before receiving an order from above, we occupy a farm.

As the laws change every day, we no longer ask questions, we steer towards that which is just and we fight. In order for the revolutionary forces to triumph, it is necessary to win the big battle of the countryside.

10. It is obviously not a matter of taking up Kalishnikovs and attacking the big estates. This struggle takes place in the plain and it is an affair of cunning (this is what they call "politics"). What is necessary is; a peasant organization which is

disposed to mobilize itself and to fight; the constitution and a handful of laws; a lawyer who knows his paperwork and does not sell himself for a piece of bread; the radio, and everything that can serve propaganda; and a lot of imagination.

Consciousness is needed; you will see how much the struggle will grow and how much it will reinforce itself. If someone tells you that it is illegal or unjust, it is necessary to tell him that nobody knows how the big landowners have succeeded in dispossessing us of our lands and throwing us on the roadside.

11. If property belongs to the state, don't pay attention to that. Respect only the farms which are conducting advanced research (new seeds, inseminations, and so on). The rest, privatize it. What is necessary is that the workers be conscious and disposed to steer the plough; to milk a cow or sow coffee, it is not necessary to have studied in Michigan. Moreover, who has milked the cows for all these years?

Advance by other roads

It is necessary to say that sometimes we have received orders seeking to stop us from occupying this or that farm. If somebody says to us that it is so that cooperatives can be installed there, we follow the orders; but if it is for the state, we turn a deaf ear and look elsewhere. We have never seen the advantages of that [the nationalized sector]. It is undoubtedly an improvement, but, in the countryside, we want to advance by other roads.

12. The big landowners come to us with their stories. They tell us that we are loafers, that we don't know how to work, that we are backward and that we have no "civilization". But who looks after their lands while they party and run after women?

There was never enough space to build schools or cemeteries on their land, they said; there could be 500 literacy campaigns, that will be no use as long as we don't have enough to eat. From where can we get the money to buy a newspaper or a book? If they wish to modernize this country, and introduce what they call "civilization", they can begin by having their feet on the land.

13. We don't like to mince words; if they [the readers] are intelligent, they will see that we are speaking about the very root of popular power in the countryside. If it is necessary to discuss [in the FSLN] how to hasten the end of the regime currently in government [the UNO] or how to be a party, it is necessary to go to the root of things. Afterwards, according to the task, we will see at what time we work and with what.

First, we must know where we are, what we want and what we can do.

Then, we can speak of strategy and tactics, of forms of organization and of who can help us. But this will be for another time, if we have the chance. ★

"The Front is going through a crisis"

DORA MARIA TELLEZ
Joined the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in 1974; she led, with Edén Pastora, the commando unit which occupied the national palace, where the Somozaist deputies met, on August 22, 1978, obtaining the liberation of numerous political prisoners, among them Tomas Borge. After having participated in the liberation of the second biggest town in the country, Leon, Dora Maria Tellez was named "commandante guerrillera"; she is a member of the Sandinista assembly and a deputy in parliament. During the Sandinista government, she was minister of health. In an interview in the new Independent Nicaraguan weekly *El Semanario*, from which we reproduce large extracts, Dora Maria Tellez spoke in particular of the coming FSLN congress.

HOW do you analyze the contradiction which persists between those Sandinistas who advocate a substantial modification of the political propositions or tactics of the FSLN and others who criticize this attitude?

All this is going through a crisis. A party which loses an election and does not enter into crisis is a dead party, it is obvious.

This crisis stems from first the fact of the electoral defeat, and then the exhaustion of the political programme of Sandin-

ism (I am referring to Sandinism since the epoch of Sandino).

This, for example, spoke of agrarian reform; but in Nicaragua there is a historic lag such that it is only 60 years later that we have succeeded in doing it.

Today, we experience a crisis of programme because reality has changed and the country has changed.

The question of knowing what the political programme of the FSLN is is still not resolved.

And you do not overcome it through desires — it is necessary to reconcile what we want with what is possible, the rest is just demagoguery.

To do this, a minimal consensus is needed between all Sandinistas, and today we are faced with a diversity of positions and propositions....

For me, consensus is built starting from an analysis of reality.

It is necessary that the FSLN discuss the road which the Nicaraguan revolution must take, starting from today.

It is necessary to look to the year 2000 and not to return to 1979, 1984 or 1989.

There are different interpretations of national reality amongst FSLN militants. Some think that the current government is a dictatorship which must be overthrown by force; they start from the fact that the people owe us something and that it is necessary that they repay us, and so on.

I am trying to understand current Nicaraguan reality, which is nuanced.

The government of the National Union of the Opposition (UNO) does not seem to me to be a dictatorship.

Then, I do not consider that the revolutionary process is finished; I conceive it as a staircase, it has continuity, reverses, throwbacks, a process of new accumulation of forces, but this happens in a continuous fashion.

Facing us, we have a government of the bourgeoisie; it makes no attempt to conceal this.

But we must determine where Nicaragua is going; what is possible and desirable to do, and what is to be the role of the FSLN — which moreover must build its identity, learn to be a political opposition, establish a framework of alliances like any organization (it has moreover always done this), obviously, as a function of popular interests.

It is necessary, beyond this, to work in the direction of national stability which depends on social and political stability.

I think that the Front must change, adapt itself and modify some of its ideas.

■ For this re-adaptation, do you think that the current internal democratic mechanisms are sufficient?

No. Democracy does not consist solely in elections, it must stimulate a political debate without phoney procedures, or polarizations, without disqualifying this or that position and with everybody accepting the nature of the Front.

Democracy in the FSLN is closely linked to the relations we have with the people. If, even inside the Front, we are not capable of learning to listen, to conceive that different appreciations exist, while continuously seeking a political consensus, we will never succeed in drawing closer again to the people.

If we are not capable of tolerating a different position, when it comes from a Sandinista militant, how are we going to approach the population which is not Sandinista?

We are not obliged to all have the same opinion on this or that question; that is internal democracy.

It is not an end in itself, nor an enjoyable game, nor in the style of *perestroika*; it is a political necessity that the FSLN rebuilds its links with the population.

If Sandinista militants are capable of learning to listen, to discuss, to persuade, to search for consensus inside the FSLN, they will be capable of doing it as much outside our ranks, with the people.

■ The positions expressed publicly by some leaders of the FSLN seem sometimes to contradict the actions of the organization, for example, in relation to alliances inside Parliament.

There, it seems that there have been numerous convergences between the Sandinista deputies and those linked to Alfredo Cesar¹, whereas the speeches of some FSLN leaders seem to indicate the contrary....

We had approved this strategy in the document of El Crucero²; it is very clearly indicated there that, in this way, the FSLN seeks to neutralize the most reactionary positions.

If the Front developed simply a policy of negotiations, it would be liquidated, for this is only a part of a political project. The schema of alliances is part of this project, of which the essential goal is to win back the lost majority.

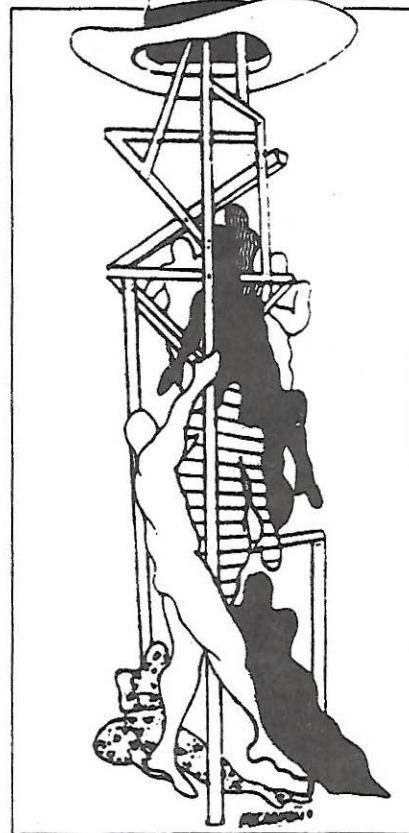
One way of doing this is the policy of alliances, because the country needs peace and economic improvements. Then comes our work, with the peasants, the workers, the producers, the inhabitants of the popular neighbourhoods, women, youth, and so on, so as to win back the social base of Sandinism.

If the Front limits itself to negotiating at the summit, that would be the end of it as a party, in any case in its current form.

If it limited itself to reestablishing its social base, without building alliances with other political forces, which are close to it, and this with very precise goals, it would make another error.

The revolution passes by different roads and necessitates diverse means.

■ In relation to the missiles affair³, two sectors close to Sandinism (the National Workers' Front — the FNT — and the Sandinista Youth) have



come out in favour of the accused EPS (Sandinista People's Army) soldiers.

Have there been debates inside the Front on the decision taken by the EPS to punish these soldiers?

In this affair there are two problems. First, that of the state of law, of legislation and of judicial order. If somebody steals a missile or a packet of cigarettes it is an offence, full stop.

Intentions are another affair, whether good or bad, one cannot introduce them into a trial.

The law does not ask what was the intention of the authors of an offence, it condemns, that is all.

But the evaluation of the acts of the EPS or its head is the affair of the government. It seems to me that the army has an important role to play in national stability and that, from a professional point of view, it adapts itself to the necessities of the country.

But it has obviously had to pay a certain political price because of the reduction of its numbers. ★

1. Alfredo Cesar, who had participated in the Contra leadership, is close to president Violeta Chamorro. He was party to the so-called appeal of "the Los Palmas group". During the renewal of the presidency of the national assembly, the FSLN deputies voted for his candidature, on the grounds of barring the road to "the reactionary extreme right".

2. After the electoral defeat, the FSLN held an assembly of cadres at El Crucero, from which emerged a balance sheet document, which also drew the outlines of work in the current phase.

3. See introduction, p.10, for details of this affair.

Police Beating in Los Angeles Has National Impact

by Evelyn Sell

The March 3 police beating of an African-American was not an unusual event in the Los Angeles area. The report filed by the cops was typical: 25-year-old Rodney King was stopped for speeding; the use of force was justified by claims that King "attacked officers" and "continued some resistance"; King's injuries were described as "contusions and abrasions." But something unexpected happened that night. A local resident tested out his new camcorder by video filming the scene. This two-minute film, broadcast repeatedly over all national television news programs as well as overseas, showed several officers from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) beating King with batons and kicking him as he kneeled and lay on the ground. The film also shows about a dozen officers, several from the California Highway Patrol, and others from the LAPD, standing in a circle watching this vicious attack—and doing nothing to stop it.

As a result of his being shot twice with a laser gun and being struck 56 times, Rodney King suffered a shattered eye socket, nine skull fractures, brain damage, a broken cheek bone, partial facial paralysis, a broken leg, burns, and other injuries. Nurses at the hospital where King was taken told a grand jury that the LAPD officers made fun of what they had done. When King said that he had worked in the local baseball stadium, the cops joked that "we hit quite a few home runs" on his body. Other grand jury documents revealed that moments before these officers assaulted King they made racist remarks in a call-in report about a domestic problem involving a Black family. Three LAPD officers and the sergeant in charge have been indicted on charges of excessive force. The other 17 cops who were on the scene are being investigated for possible legal action.

On March 26 King's attorneys filed an \$83-million claim with the city. The attorneys plan to file a civil suit seeking \$56 million—a million for each blow King received from the police. In 1990 the city of Los Angeles paid \$11.3 million to resolve law suits involving charges of police misconduct. This was more than any other major city except Detroit.

Worldwide, National, and Local Reactions

The King beating has received wide attention. Protests have come from Australia, Japan, and Hong Kong. FBI agents questioned LAPD officers to determine if there was a pattern of civil rights abuses, and the U.S. Justice Department is examining about one hundred civil suits charging mistreatment of suspects in LAPD custody. Under pressure from Black congressional leaders, Attorney General Thornburgh announced a review of almost 15,000 complaints of police

brutality across the U.S. filed with the federal government during the last six years.

The attack on King and the attempted police cover-up provoked a power struggle between Los Angeles political leaders and city government bodies. The focal point of this fight is Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates. He initially dismissed the assault as "an aberration." Public outrage forced him to have the LAPD Internal Affairs Division examine the conduct of the officers involved in the King case, and to set up a five-member civilian panel to examine incidents of excessive force and to recommend reforms of LAPD policies.

On April 1, Mayor Tom Bradley formed a civilian commission to carry out a broad investigation into LAPD practices and procedures. On April 4 the city's Police Commission placed Chief Gates on paid leave for 60 days while this investigation was being conducted. The next day the City Council voted to overturn the Police Commission and reinstated Chief Gates. The city charter prevents a mayor from taking direct action against a police chief so Bradley has not been legally able to fire Gates but, reacting to mounting protest demonstrations and political pressures, Mayor Bradley publicly called on Chief Gates to resign. Pro-Gates forces then threatened to organize a recall election to throw Mayor Bradley out of office.

The spotlight thrown on police racism aroused intense reactions throughout the Los Angeles area. The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor adopted a resolution demanding that Chief Gates resign. The United Neighborhood Organizations (UNO) called for the resignation of Gates with the explanation, "we want to show our African-American brothers and sisters that we stand with them." The American Civil Liberties Union quickly gathered 20,000 signatures on petitions demanding Gates's resignation. The Urban League has pressed for the removal of the police chief.

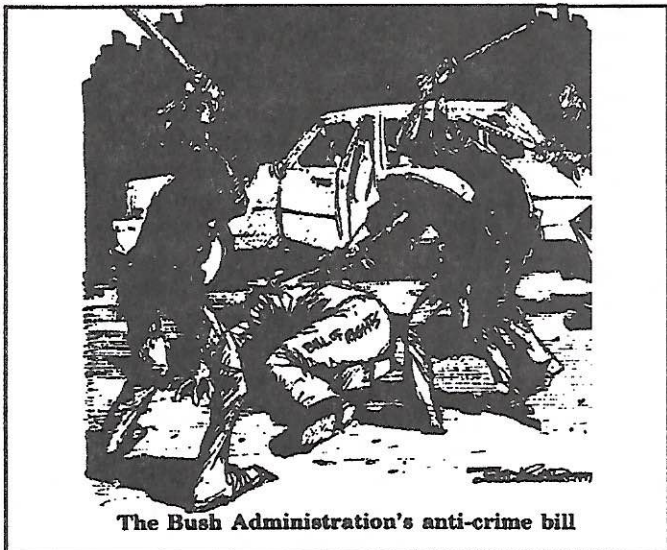
The Black Community Forum announced that Gates would no longer be invited to attend its meetings. The group (which currently includes 25 representatives of African-American organizations, businesses, and churches) was originally established at the initiative of Gates to help improve relations between police and the Black community. Mark Ridley-Thomas, executive director of the local chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, explained, "for two years we have been telling him [Gates] about case after case of police harassment. We have criticized him for the outrageous statements he makes, making it clear that they were not appropriate for someone in a position of leadership. . . . We hadn't gotten through to the guy in the two years we had been talking to him about the gravity of the problems facing the African-American community."

Street Demonstrations Demand Changes

An April 6 march through downtown Los Angeles followed by a rally in front of the main police headquarters marked a high point in the series of protests sparked by the beating of Rodney King. Banners, signs, and chants focused on Police Chief Daryl Gates. The marchers massed behind a 30-foot yellow and black banner demanding, "Gates Must Go. Stop Police Brutality." One of the most spirited chants along the march route was: "Hey, hey! Ho, ho! Daryl Gates has got to go!"

The composition of the demonstrators reflected the diversity of police targets. Almost half of the 5,000 demonstrators were African-Americans. Other marchers included large numbers of Latinos, Asians, and Anglos. Banners and signs identified organizations from various racial and ethnic communities, trade unions, social protest movements, religious organizations, and civil libertarian groups.

The issue of police brutality has forged the most significant combination of forces to appear in Los Angeles in many, many years. It is very unusual to see such a large proportion of



The Bush Administration's anti-crime bill

African-Americans in a common action with other groups. In light of the growing multiracial and multicultural character of Los Angeles, this coming together around a common concern holds great promise for future united mobilizations.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Brotherhood Crusade, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and Malcolm X Grassroots Movement were endorsers of and participants in the march and rally. Congresswoman Maxine Waters, who has waged a ten-year fight against police abuse, played a key role in initiating the April 6 action. She was joined on the rally platform by other leading African-American political figures, including California assemblywoman Teresa Hughes. Reverend Jesse Jackson was a featured speaker at the rally.

The Chicano Moratorium, Mexican American Political Association, and the Central American Refugee Center represented some of the participating Latino organizations. The Coalition for Immigrants Rights carried a banner inscribed: "To Serve, Protect and Break a Brother's Neck." Hand-lettered signs demanded, "Alto al Terror Policia!"

The growing activism of the Asian and South Pacific populations in Los Angeles was evident throughout the organization and holding of the April 6 action. Koreans, in particular, were involved. A group marched behind the banner of the Alliance for Philippine Concerns.

Signs reading "Asian Pacific Islanders Against Police Brutality" were carried by a contingent of Samoans. About a week after the March 3 beating of King, a police officer in nearby Compton shot two Samoan brothers in the back, killing them as they lay on the ground. The coroner reported that the unarmed men were struck by 20 bullets. On March 12, hundreds of Samoans marched and rallied in Compton's civic center to demand a criminal investigation of the officer.

"Justice for Janitors—SEIU Local 399" was on the banner identifying a contingent of about 30 unionists with red T-shirts imprinted with their logo and name. The large companies offering janitorial services have tried to stifle labor organizing and to cut wages by hiring increasing numbers of Central Americans. Over the past four years, these refugees of violence in Central America have carried out militant struggles which have won them union recognition, better wages, and improved working conditions. During their 1990 union organizing campaign, 400 janitors and their supporters were attacked by police when they marched into the Century City complex. About 90 marchers were injured by police batons, and 19 of them were seriously hurt. Two pregnant women were beaten (leading one to miscarry), two people required stitches in their heads, one person's face was fractured, and another person's skull and jaw were split.

Activists in the antiwar movement played a vital role in helping to organize and publicize the April 6 march and rally. The Los Angeles Coalition Against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East was featured prominently in the leaflet, shared responsibility with the NAACP for security, and provided the rally platform and other logistical support. Many demonstrators carried bright yellow Coalition signs stating: "Money for Human Needs Not for the Military" and "Bush+Gates=Racist Violence at Home & Abroad." Antiwar groups participating in the event included Veterans for Peace and Military Family Support Group.

Lesbians and gays, harassed and abused by police for many years, carried signs and banners identifying Act Up and Queer Nation. Other contingents were from: Ward AME Church (one of the largest African-American congregations in Los Angeles), Southern California American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and Los Angeles Student Coalition.

Thousands of downtown shoppers stood along the curb watching the march. Many raised their fists in solidarity, and some joined the demonstration. Most bus drivers and many motorists honked their horns and waved to show their support.

Leaflets were distributed for the next major march and rally. Endorsed by the same organizations and individuals as the April 6 event, another downtown march and rally at Parker Center (the main police headquarters) will take place on May 11. The leaflet calls for "Community Control of the Police." Vigils will take place at Parker Center every Saturday from 9 a.m. until noon. □

April 8, 1991

Black Workers for Justice Northeast Tour

It is a sore point with American workers that industry is migrating to the South in pursuit of low wages, the open shop, and the protection of openly anti-union state and municipal governments. Hundreds of thousands of union jobs have been lost in this way. That this competition between northern and southern workers has given the capitalists the upper hand against the unions need hardly be said. It is a supremacy based on the lack of unionization in the South.

The bold campaign of Black Workers for Justice (BWFJ) to convince the AFL-CIO to organize the South challenges the complacency and conservatism of the labor movement. Many union members have grown accustomed to the labor bureaucracy's failure to organize the South and respond effectively to the dramatic

decline in union membership in the U.S. as a whole. This failure has not until now been effectively challenged and has begun to be accepted by many workers as an unalterable fact of life, even reason for disillusionment with unions altogether.

However, it should not escape notice that the proposal to organize the South, while still bold, is not a new idea but the revival of an old one. That's what is so striking about it. It's obvious and basic. It's so basic that we have to ask why it hasn't dawned on our labor leaders already, why hasn't organizing the South been a priority of the American trade union movement? Why the AFL-CIO leadership's continued resistance to such a program? Why does something so obvious seem so bold?

In fact the unions have in the past recognized the problem. Back in 1920 the AFL announced and promptly abandoned a campaign to organize the South; in 1941 the CIO initiated a drive which they abandoned during the war, and in 1946 the CIO launched Operation Dixie which they abandoned two years later.

Although a start has been made the organization of the South remains unachieved. It is not only the chief haven for runaway plants from the North but the most formidable citadel of anti-Black and anti-union elements in the country.

The problem of unionizing the South is one of the most important organizational problems confronting the labor

movement. But the implications go far beyond any ordinary organizational campaign. In the South the issues of civil rights and labor rights are fused. Racist oppression and violence are central to the absence of unions in the South, reflecting not just the racism of the labor movement but also the political alliance of the labor bureaucrats with the white supremacists and advocates of the employers' causes in the Democratic Party.

When faced with a choice of successfully organizing the South or breaking with that alliance the labor bureaucrats chose to retreat. There is much unfinished business here, some long-standing betrayals of the working class in general and Black workers in particular.

In politics chickens always come home to roost. The campaign to organize the South will spotlight many of the problems

that have long paralyzed labor, including civil rights and the divisions created within the working class by racism, the character of trade unions, the labor bureaucracies' ties to the Democratic Party, the competition between union and non-union workers, and labor solidarity.

Black Workers for Justice, based in North Carolina, are taking the lead now, tapping the combined energy of Black nationalism and class consciousness. They are initiating a movement of the greatest promise and if they are successful they will help transform the whole character of the trade union movement, not just in the South but nationally.

In a successful tour of the Midwest last year several members of Black Workers for Justice spoke to hundreds of northern workers about organizing the South and about the links to union-building in the North. They are attempting to build a national coalition to support their work in the South. As a result local solidarity committees have been established in some cities, such as Cleveland and Detroit. Now they are expanding their outreach to the northeast.

During the first week of July a panel of workers who support BWFJ will be touring cities including Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New York City, Providence, and Boston. Solidarity committees are forming in those cities and anyone interested should contact Organize the South Committee, 2710 Broadway, New York, NY 10025, (212) 662-2302.

Among the speakers will be Ina Mae Best, a member of BWFJ who was fired last year for her outspoken role in a union organizing drive in a North Carolina plant (see *Bulletin In Defense of Marxism*, No. 81). Ina Best has been called the Rosa Parks of the Organize the South campaign. Participation in this campaign to get her rehired will not only save her job but is a critical part of winning the right of union members and supporters to exercise their basic democratic rights in the South without fear of reprisal.

To help organize a speaking engagement or fundraiser, or circulate a petition to the governor of North Carolina demanding Ina Mae Best be rehired, contact BWFJ, P.O. Box 1863, Rocky Mount, NC 27801, (919) 977-8162. □

Unionizing the South

by Mary Scully

Malcolm X: Teacher and Organizer

by Claire Cohen, Steve Bloom,
and Evelyn Sell

\$1.00

Order from: FIT, P.O. Box 1947,
New York, NY 10009

The following two articles have been reprinted from the March 1991 issue of *Justice Speaks*, the monthly newspaper of the Black Workers for Justice.

African-Americans: No Guilt in Opposing War

Rocky Mount, NC: As *Justice Speaks* goes to press, U.S. political and military rulers are lavishing themselves in praise for their "success" in the gulf war. But for all of the oppressed people of the world, those who believe in and fight for peace, justice, and freedom, and certainly for the oppressed Arab peoples themselves, there is no glory in this so-called military victory. If this is a victory, it is a shameful and hollow victory fought to establish the U.S. as the world's ultimately powerful bully as it continues its course of humiliation and intimidation toward Iraq.

When we look for the greatest casualties of this war, we must look at them from the standpoint of its long-term effect on the U.S. economy. So now that the U.S. has supposedly liberated Kuwait, we must see what the U.S. has done about our liberation.

Despite the racist lynchings and terrorism, the economic discrimination and system of legal segregation, and the brutal attacks against union organizing in the South, which denied African-Americans and workers basic civil and human rights, it took nearly 90 years, from the end of Reconstruction in 1877 until the early 1960s, before the U.S. government sent federal troops into the South. During this period, African-American U.S. troops stationed in the South were not protected from the racist discrimination or violence.

Yet, at the bat of an eye, the Bush administration sent U.S. troops into the Persian Gulf, in the name of defending the liberation and human rights of Kuwait. And to show the U.S. government's real contempt for African-American civil rights, Bush vetoed the 1991 Civil Rights bill, which included among other things affirmative action educational provisions for African-Americans and other oppressed people of color. To make this contempt crystal clear, Bush declared war with Iraq on Dr. King's birthday, which

was reluctantly passed by his administration as an official U.S. holiday.

African-Americans have been told time and again that by fighting in U.S. wars they are helping to make conditions better for themselves within the U.S. African-Americans have fought and died in all of the U.S. wars: the War of Independence in 1776, the War of 1812, the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam war, and in all of the mini invasions against small countries in Central America and the Middle East. Now, it is estimated that 30 percent of all U.S. troops in the gulf are African-American.

Up through the post-Korean War period, African-American soldiers killed in U.S. wars could not be buried in "white" cemeteries; and African-Americans were systematically denied the right to vote following these wars (with the exception of a brief period following the Civil War). If there is anyone in this country who should not be guilt tripped into supporting the unjust U.S. war in the gulf, it is African-Americans.

Because of the low wages in the largely nonunion South, workers, especially African-Americans, often join the military reserves as a way of supplementing their meager incomes. Now, many of these workers are fighting and dying in the Persian Gulf. Despite what the law supposedly says about the right of troops to return to their jobs if they make it back from the war, the South's history of violating federal laws, particularly civil rights and labor law, strongly suggests that many workers returning home may not have jobs, because their workplaces lack unions and contracts guarantying their basic rights.

The negative economic effects of this war are already being felt in the South. Families who depended on at least two low-wage incomes to barely make ends meet are now trying to survive on one and

a half because an income earner is serving in the war. This is made worse by the huge military bureaucracy's payroll delays. Utility cutoffs, late fees, repossessions, and evictions are becoming the order of the day for many of the working class families in the South. With the massive cutbacks in social programs which supposedly serve as a "safety-net," many military families of working class reservists could find themselves homeless.

Having the largest number of military bases than any region, the South has become the site of massive prowar mobilizations. The military families living on and in the area of the bases are the main targets of Bush's call for blind patriotism. Many of the demonstrations are being led by racist elements who promote slogans such as, "Arabs go home" and "kill Saddam Hussein." These are the same elements who promote the anti-unionism and anti-affirmative action at the workplace. The hostile nature of the prowar activities in the South is creating major tensions within the working class, which are being exploited by the employers.

Without unions, workers dare even to express their antiwar sentiments at the workplace. Wearing buttons or being heard making antiwar statements may lead to the loss of employment. The powerlessness which exists among many workers in the South because they lack unions or effective workplace organizations essentially denies their democratic right to participate in the public debate around this war.

This is a dangerous and politically unhealthy climate for African-Americans and workers in general. It is only a matter of time before the employers will use the war as a way of increasing their profits. Workers will be asked to take concessions, forgo raises and benefits, and to vote against unions who only "want to tie the hands of the employers," in the name of patriotism.

How much are working people expected to sacrifice and die for the rich? American taxpayers are expected to bail out the rich heads of the savings and loan companies to the tune of \$450 billion. On top of which there is another \$1 billion a day for the war.

African-American workers have every reason to oppose this war. In the South, in particular, African-American workers must show how their underdeveloped communities, very low wages, and low percentage of unionization are examples of the

failure of the U.S. government to make war on poverty and to solve its own problems.

There must be a strong movement built in the South, led by African-Americans, which breaks the climate of fear and challenges the employers' efforts to further divide and weaken the workers. □

Progress for Black Women Will Advance the Whole African-American People

Rocky Mount, NC: The social, political, and economic status of Black women is one of the fundamental problems of the African-American people in the Blackbelt South. The identity of the true nature of the oppression of Black women and the historically correct solution to that oppression may be as complex and as volatile as the struggle of the entire African-American people for liberation, justice, and social progress.

Triple Oppression No Myth

There is an old saying, advanced in the early 70s, that Black women suffer a "triple oppression," that is, oppression as Black people, as workers, and as women. This saying reflects an important truth. Its verification can be found in the daily lives of Black women, both historically and in present times, throughout the Blackbelt South.

In the South, while some 70 percent of all Black workers in service-type jobs are still Black women, a steadily growing percentage of Black women have reentered the production and labor workforce as industrial or manufacturing workers in the last 20 years. About 30 percent of the Black production and general labor workers in the South are Black women as compared to about 40 percent of these workers being Black women in states like North Carolina.

Black women in the industrial and manufacturing workforce are concentrated in the low-wage industries like apparel and clothing manufacturing. In the food processing industry, analysts believe, Black women comprise a majority of the

workforce, in poultry for example, and sometimes comprise more than 90 percent of the workforce in certain poultry plants.

Still, median income for Black women in the South is less than \$6,700 per year, while only \$3,997 in North Carolina. The combination of race, class, and sex in the South portrays the utter devastation, exploitation, and poverty that is the true life picture of being a Black woman. The picture becomes even more chronic when the fact that 68.4 percent of all female-headed households are shown to fall into the below poverty standards for the South.

A Part of the Historical Context

Does the oppression of African-American women actually exist within the Black community—the Black nation? Or is women's oppression only a factor of our oppression as African-American people generally within U.S. society?

When the first Black "freeholds" or territories were established in the Blackbelt immediately following the Civil War, the Black community made a number of crucial decisions about the character of Black life. We established a sexual division of labor within the Black family and within the Black community. There was to be definite women's work (washing, cooking, cleaning, and caring for the home and the young), and definite men's work (farming and negotiating sales of farm-produced goods and other work with former plantation masters) and to care for the entire family. Women out of necessity could (and in fact had to) do both "women's" and "men's" work—but men could not and in fact did not do both.

It was also true that women were to take no direct, formal, or responsible roles in the political life of the community. Men were to be the final decision makers both within the family (except in care for the children) and within the community as a whole. This virtually locked Black women out of any organized political centers of Black life as leaders. This included the church and any other forms of political decision making (such as the Negro Convention Movement meetings organized throughout the South during Reconstruction). It must also be said that domestic violence or abuse against Black women within the home was a prevalent characteristic of the time. These patterns of organization of family and community life continued into the 20th century and found renewed expression during the civil rights/Black power movements of the 1960s and '70s.

These historical facts raise clear questions within the Black community about the role of women and men in family life and the role of women as leaders within the various community and political organizations of the Black freedom struggle.

The oppression of women, issues of male supremacy, and the economic exploitation of Black women as workers and as women are factors shaping the life of Black women both in the larger U.S. society and within the Black community itself.

The struggle against the oppression of women will surely mean progress for all African-Americans. We must, together as one people, take up the fight. Black women take the lead. □

Focus on Native Americans

The following two articles have been reprinted from the March/April issue of the *Spirit of Crazy Horse*, newsletter of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee.

On December 18, 1991, the Public Broadcasting Service aired a one-hour documentary entitled *The Spirit of Crazy Horse*. Assembled primarily by independent filmmaker Michel DuBois and incorporating considerable material filmed by DuBois's former partner, Kevin Barry McKiernan, the short feature was in some ways a milestone in terms of clarifying the nature of the government's secret war against the American Indian Movement [AIM] during the mid-1970s. On other levels, it was grossly misleading and reflective of a near-total absence of journalistic integrity and even elementary conscience on the part of the film's main mover.

The "up side" of things centers upon the inclusion of extensive excerpts from an interview with Duane Brewer, a ranking leader of the Guardians of the Oglala Nation (GOONs), a paramilitary entity operating under the auspices of tribal president Dick Wilson on the Pine Ridge Lakota Reservation during the period in question. Close observers have long contended that the GOONs were used by the FBI as a surrogate force to terrorize traditional Oglala Lakotas resisting the Wilson regime's plan to illegally transfer about one-eighth of their reservation to the U.S. National Forest Service, and to engage in the outright liquidation of AIM members who came to the reservation to support the traditionals' struggle. The bureau and its apologists have always denied this, countering that there is no "hard proof" of such claims.

Brewer cuts through the "controversy" on this matter once and for all, stating unequivocally that the FBI provided the GOONs with automatic weapons, armor-piercing ammunition, dynamite and plastic explosives, communications gear, field intelligence, and what amounted to immunity from prosecution. The GOON leader is also quite candid with regard to the fact that his men were responsible for certain murders—such as that of activist Jeanette Bissonette in 1975—the FBI attempted to attribute to "AIM violence," and that the bureau was aware of this all along. In effect,

Brewer makes it clear that the GOONs functioned as an outright death squad in service to federal "law enforcement." This is the first time a major perpetrator has openly admitted how things worked during what the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights described as the "reign of terror" on Pine Ridge.

On the down side, DuBois elects to accompany his undeniably useful exposition with the sort of "objective" observations which defy both the facts he presents and simple logic. For instance, in his conclusion he arbitrarily suggests that peace has been restored to Pine Ridge, not only because the GOONs were finally disbanded, but because AIM itself was destroyed along the way. This sly insinuation that both sides were somehow "equally responsible" for the lethal violence on Pine Ridge is utterly untenable, a matter to which a minimum of 69 dead AIM people—versus one dead GOON, and two dead FBI agents—might eloquently testify. Such servile genuflection to the needs and sensibilities of the status quo mars *The Spirit of Crazy Horse* almost beyond redemption, placing it squarely within the tradition of "responsible reporting" which has rendered the expression "American jour-

nalism" oxymoronic.

Worse, DuBois has been in possession of the Brewer material for nearly a decade. Despite the obvious and dire need for such crucial information to come out long ago—not in the least in connection with the case of Leonard Peltier—DuBois opted to sit on it, keeping it his own little secret until such time as he might personally benefit from its belated release. Much of the material deployed in his film was initially obtained by Michel DuBois posturing as "a friend of the Indian." The conduct and character he has subsequently displayed, however, leaves no doubt that he's the friend of nothing and no one . . . except perhaps some overinflated estimation of his own "artistic rights" and sense of self-importance. □

A Goon's Tale

by Ward Churchill

Leonard Peltier Attends Hearing in Topeka

For the first time in five years Leonard was able to see the world outside the prison walls on a drive of 70 miles, from Leavenworth prison to the Topeka Federal Courthouse where over 100 supporters filled the courtroom awaiting his arrival.

On the 4th of February, 1991, a bright sunny day, Leonard was transported to Topeka, where Kansas Judge Rogers conducted a hearing to determine where the merits of the Writ of Habeas Corpus would be heard. Leonard was allowed to present his impressions and recollections of the

bias that Judge Benson exhibited during his trial in 1977.

Leonard's attorneys then presented oral argument and documentation that, in my opinion, clearly showed that the FBI and prosecutors manufactured a climate of fear and terror around Judge Benson and the jury. This prevented them from objectively reviewing the evidence pertaining to the FBI's paramilitary campaign on the Pine Ridge reservation which led to the agents' deaths and the killing of Joe Stuntz. The FBI and prosecutors accomplished this by falsely convincing the

jury that their lives were in danger from Leonard's family and friends.

Despite the evidence, Judge Rogers granted the government's motion to transfer Leonard's Writ back to Judge Benson in Fargo, North Dakota. Judge Rogers asserted in his seven-page decision that there was "no indication of any personal bias on the part of the trial judge." Basically, he adopted the government's position. We feel that Judge Rogers could have kept the case in Kansas simply on the basis that we intend to call Judge Benson as a witness to the merits of Leonard's Writ of Habeas

Corpus. Yet he, like so many other judges before him, only played the game of appearing fair and impartial.

Although this case is back before Judge Benson we are confident that he will have no choice but to remove himself as judge in this matter. It is difficult to anticipate a date for a hearing on the new issues that Leonard raises in the Writ, but we will be filing a refusal motion (February 20, 1991) which, by law, must be filed before a judge can take up the merits of the Writ.

We are not discouraged by Judge Rogers' adverse ruling. The fifteen years of history that Leonard's struggle represents has taught us patience and forbearing. The new revelations that have come our



way recently regarding FBI and GOON complicity in the terror that swept Pine Ridge in the 1970s is encouraging and demonstrative to the work still being carried out to search for the truth.

The case of Leonard Peltier cries out for justice, yet, it becomes apparent that the US government has taken a relatively fair and impartial judicial system and transformed it into a tool of political repression against those who raise fundamental criticism against the domestic and/or foreign policies of the United States. These decisions continue to give license to agencies such as the FBI to carry on repressive activities such as what occurred at Pine Ridge in the 1970s.

Review and Commentary:

The American Indian Struggle . . . Then and Now

by Jack Bresee

Jack Bresee is one-quarter Pottowatomi/Ojibwa of Southern Canada/North-Central USA. He is affiliated with the Southwest Missouri Indian Center in Springfield and is a supporter of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee in Lawrence, Kansas.

The success of Kevin Costner's film, *Dances with Wolves*, raises once again in popular consciousness the question of what happened to the American Indian, and why. That is not unimportant. But something else is also important: for people to begin thinking about the continued oppression of the American Indian and what can be done about it. Yet this problem will not even begin to enter into the consciousness of the overwhelming majority of those who see and are moved by Costner's film. That is not a knock on the movie, but a commentary on our racist society. Even when old stereotypes start to break down, the modern-day institutions which are based on those stereotypes remain firmly in place.

Some critics have written that *Dances* is one-sided. Surely historical fact speaks for itself. Native cultures, entire tribes, the vast herds of bison, much of the original natural environment of this continent didn't simply disappear spontaneously; *someone killed them off*.

Costner does not present natives as pure and innocent creatures. They showed savagery toward each other, and a warrior spirit. But their warmaking had nothing in common with the mercenary slaughter of the buffalo for their fur, or that mindless and oft-repeated aphorism of General Sheridan (hero of the Union cavalry in the Civil War): "the only good Indian is a dead Indian." The natives were simply human beings, uncorrupted by the dog-eat-dog mentality which permeated everything in the lives of their European conquerors.

The existence of the native peoples was not always idyllic. Often it was hard. But they enjoyed a strong cooperative spirit, and lived in harmony with their natural environment—as this movie illustrates. This remains the image that most non-Indians have about Native Americans, and up to a point it is true. "But that was then, this is now," as Indians today will say so often to each other.

Native culture, native spirituality, native autonomy, as represented so well in *Dances*, is no more. Some remnants remain here and there, of course—as many attempt to hold onto as much of the old tradition as they can, or just try to make a few dollars from the tourist trade. But the culture itself can never be revived. It has been eradicated forever, gone the way of the passenger pigeon, gone for no reason other than the need to take the land on which these peoples lived and turn it into more money in the pockets of Europeans. If people could really comprehend the scope of that obscenity, viewing *Dances* would be unbearable. It is America's holocaust, and in a certain sense an even more profound holocaust than Hitler's slaughter of the Jews precisely because the culture of the native peoples was destroyed forever.

Yet Native Americans remain. And they are not living happily ever after. They are the "people next door," whose "church of their choice" happens to have feathers and a sweat lodge. But they are terribly poor and disenfranchised and devastated by health problems. Nevertheless, a new native culture can become a reality, based on the remnants of the old cultures, which can help restore the spirit of environmental concern, mutual respect for differences in life, and spiritual values based on the natural instead of the supernatural.

The first thing to understand about this is that the struggle never paused, even after the physical slaughter was brought to an end. Indians have been in court every year since the final disarming of their warriors at Wounded Knee. And they have even had a few small victories in forcing the U.S. government to carry out its treaty obligations. The reservation system of the Bureau of Indian Affairs has kept a nationalist spirit alive, even while it destroys much of the self-respect and individual liberty of those who live on the reservations.

The human cost has been and continues to be high. The oppression of Native Americans creates the same kinds of conditions—

efforts at escape or to find individual solutions (really not solutions at all, of course)—as we see among other oppressed peoples in the U.S. Substance abuse, for example, is a serious crisis among Native Americans. And then there are the tribal officials who steal government money intended for their own people—“Apples” they are called (red on the outside, white on the inside; like the “oreo cookie” made famous in the Black community).

But the struggle continues. The high point of 1990 for Indians was the publication of a front page newspaper photo of a Mohawk

warrior, standing on top of a wrecked police car with an AK-47 thrust into the air—the traditional defiant Indian gesture. No matter the legitimate questions one might raise about the leadership of the Mohawk rebellion: its involvement in gambling, smuggling, and extortion. This event signaled a new militancy. The Mohawks got support from Native Americans all across Canada and the U.S. And their rebellion also brings to an end the period when non-Indians could imagine that Native Americans had become pacifists. The warrior spirit never died, it was simply on reserve—like the Indians themselves.

The Indians of today and tomorrow must not go back to the status of an “invisible minority” which they have had for so long. When George Bush’s assistant secretary of education in the civil rights department, Michael Williams, announced that special scholarships earmarked for students of minority groups were henceforward illegal, a reporter asked him if that applied to Indians on reservations.

Williams explained that he hadn’t even considered Indians, only Blacks and Hispanics. Indians need to make American society conscious of their existence once again, to reach the point where they can recall such a story and say, “That was then, this is now.”

Such a change in consciousness on the part of the American public won’t be brought about by simply selling Indian arts and crafts. It will not happen through magic, nor shamanism, nor the medicine men and women who are currently popular on college campus lecture tours. It won’t even happen through an increased environmental consciousness—though the experience of Indian cultures has much that is relevant to today’s environmental problems. It will come as a result of political organization and a conscious struggle for power.

Indians are a small minority. This means that they cannot accomplish their goals by themselves. They must find allies among other oppressed nations, among feminists, and among working people in general. They must form links with revolutionary-minded currents in the U.S. and internationally. The Indian struggle is not the same as the fights being waged by any of these groups. It must maintain its independence. But without forging links there are severe limits as to what can be accomplished.

This idea may seem obvious at first, but it will have its practical difficulties. Indians remember, for example, that Blacks of the U.S. 10th Cavalry—for whatever reason—killed Indians with as much fervor as their white counterparts. They have good reason to look at all people in the Western Hemisphere except for the natives (Indians, Polynesians, Eskimos, and the original residents of U.S. Samoa) as invaders. This is their historical and political reality, not a prejudice.

No one can change that past. But American Indians can come

to understand that other people who are themselves oppressed by the greed of this country’s rulers can be their allies today, can identify with their suffering and oppose their continued oppression. And these other groups, fighting for their own liberation—or even for the liberation of the entire planet in the case of conscious socialists—can help the process by putting a concern about the struggles of native peoples prominently on their own agendas.

The goals of the Indian movement are not hard to state: self-determination—that is, a measure of control over their lives and futures and sovereignty over their own lands—and reparations for past crimes. The world must acknowledge that the wealth of those who presently rule over North America, South America, and the Pacific Islands was gained at the expense of the native peoples, and that it is only right that a substantial portion of that stolen wealth be returned to the survivors

of those original natives. This demand is not negotiable.

Dances with Wolves must become more than just another “feel good” experience which gets tucked away in our memories. It must become a starting point for raising awareness of the present-day Indian struggle. The facts of Native American life are too real, and too bitter, for any other course.

I don’t know if it was my subconscious at work, but I went to see a matinee of *Dances* on December 29, 1990—Wounded Knee massacre plus 100 years. I had been thinking about that anniversary for a long time, but it almost passed by, or so it seemed. Walking from the theater, however, it hit me. In 1890 my full-blood grandmother was 12 years old, only one state removed from the slaughter. When she heard about it, it must have been terrifyingly real to her. Then, on the streets of Santa Fe, I saw some Pueblo Indians—drunk and strangers in their own land. Is there any doubt that Wounded Knee remains real for them too?

My thoughts passed to 1992, the 500th anniversary of the coming of Columbus and the other thieves. Maybe the Indian movement can start to make the real meaning of that event at least a little bit clearer for the many descendants of those invaders who are still around. □



“The warrior spirit never died, it was simply on reserve—like the Indians themselves.”

Rail Union Local Writes Solidarnosc

*We reprint the following from **Straight Track**, publication of Intercraft Association of Minnesota (ICAM), 3948 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55421. ICAM seeks to unite the ten craft unions in the rail industry that are endangered by federal anti-strike controls and rail management's reorganization of the industry (see April Bulletin In Defense of Marxism #84, "Rail Workers Under Fire"). This appeal from a local of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) is an example of working class resourcefulness and solidarity, sadly absent in the bureaucratic officialdom of these unions.*

To: Solidarnosc
From: BMWE Lodge 144, Minneapolis

Brothers and Sisters of Solidarnosc: We appeal to you as fellow trade unionists for your aid in securing decent wages and working conditions for ourselves and our families.

In 1980 when the Polish Communist government tried to impose wage cuts and intolerable working conditions on Polish working people, the people cried "Enough!" In the shipyards of Gdansk and throughout Poland, working people rose up as Solidarnosc, seeking a voice in controlling their own working lives.

American working people strongly supported Solidarnosc in spirit, in the press, and in political action. Our hearts and minds were with you at Gdansk and through the decade of repression which followed. Our own U.S. government praised Solidarnosc from its birth, recognized its goals as just, and strongly condemned the Polish Communist government's efforts to crush Solidarnosc as the democratic voice of the Polish working people in the 1980s.

In 1989, President Bush and the U.S. Congress cheered with us as Solidarnosc with the Polish people achieved their democratic goals and Polish working people gained a voice in managing their working lives.

Today, this same U.S. government, that in the 1980s strongly supported Solidarnosc's efforts to improve working people's lives, is threatening to force wage cuts and intolerable working conditions on 250,000 American railroad workers.

The same U.S. Congress which cheered your victory may impose 30 percent cuts in our real wages and significant reductions in our health care. This same U.S. Congress may force us to abandon our homes and families to wander an area the size of Europe—Moscow to Madrid, Oslo to Istanbul—simply to work at our trade.

This same U.S. Congress which praised your progress now contemplates returning us to the archaic and unsafe working conditions of the past, destroying in a single act the results of struggle by American railroad workers. Worst of all, the same U.S. Congress which praised Solidarnosc's efforts to deal with the Polish Communist government now considers eliminating the right of American railroad workers to negotiate concerning their working lives.

The very tool by which Solidarnosc was born at Gdansk may be denied us by the very U.S. Congress which supported you. Like the Polish Communist government in 1980, the U.S. Congress in 1991 is contemplating using force—legislation and subsequent threat of dismissal, arrest and imprisonment—

to deny American railroad workers the use of the most basic, the most powerful working person's tool—the strike.

Without the right to strike—our right to peacefully deny our employers our vital skills—neither we nor any working person can hope to obtain an adequate wage or safe, humane working conditions.

Brothers and sisters of Solidarnosc, we plead with you to intercede on our behalf with the U.S. Congress. Please, use your influence to remind them of their support for you and for free trade unions in the past. Tell them of the frustration, hopelessness, and despair that come from being crushed by an unfeeling, unseeing, overwhelming power. Enlighten them that the Polish Communist government's repression of Solidarnosc in 1980 differs little from the U.S. Congress's contemplated repression of American railroad workers in 1991. Help us gain our freedom. Help us gain the most basic tool of working people—the right to strike.

Brothers and sisters of Solidarnosc: our lives, our families, our futures may depend on your aid. We appeal to you now for your help in our hour of need! □

"THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM"

National Educational Conference
Pittsburgh July 11-14, 1991

Designed for labor, community,
and student activists

Speakers, Panels, Workshops, Films, Videos, Music,
Parties, Literature, Discussion

Sessions include: War and Imperialism in a Changing
World; Current Realities in the USSR and Eastern Europe;
Women's Liberation; African-American Struggles; U.S.
Working Class; Students and Youth; Marxist Philosophy;
Ecology; Developments in the World Economy; Marxist
Economics; Strategies for Socialism; Trade Union Work; the
National Question; Revolutionary Internationalism.

Tentative Cost: \$94 (includes \$10 registration, lodging for
three nights and meals)

Sponsored by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency

For more information contact: FIT National Office,
27 Union Square West, Room 208,
New York, NY 10003, (212) 633-2007

Women and the Persian Gulf War

by Sarah M. Springer

Over the past months, antiwar activists across the U.S. organized actions to show their opposition to U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf. These included teach-ins, designed to educate people on a broad range of issues relating to the war. Recurring themes included the media's cheerleading response to Bush administration aggression, the history of U.S. intervention around the world, the history of the Persian Gulf, the reason why the U.S. government has such a great stake in the region, who is fighting the war and in whose interest it is being fought, and the unsound energy policy of the Bush administration. These were all very important.

But women's perspective on the war was not as prominently heard at teach-ins as it should have been. Before the gulf war began, polls showed significant differences in how women and men in the U.S. viewed the use of force against Iraq. A *Los Angeles Times* poll found women rejected war by a 2:1 ratio; 73 percent of women (as compared to 48 percent of men) said they opposed a war with Iraq, according to a Harris poll, November 1990. Immediately after the war began, polls showed increased support for the administration's actions. However, women remained substantially less supportive than men. A January 16, 1991, *USA Today* poll showed that 83 percent of men and 67 percent of women supported the attack on Iraq.

After the war began, the board of directors of the National Organization for Women went on record as "opposing this U.S. military involvement in the Middle East." The first national Young Feminist Conference passed a resolution calling for "the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Saudi Arabia." Numerous other women's organizations issued similar statements condemning the war.

Women in the U.S. clearly showed more opposition to the war than men in the polls, and yet this segment of the population was not heard in the mass media in proportion to their numbers, either in analyzing or reporting events. In a recent issue of *Extra!* (March/April 1991), entitled *Missing Voices: Women and the Media*, Susan J. Douglas points out that women "'experts' are interviewed for the nightly news when the topic is abortion, childcare, or affirmative action; but when the topic is war, foreign policy, or national purpose, female voices are ignored."

Sexism has, by the very nature of women's oppression, relegated the concerns of women to the back burner. This needs to be combated, in part through education. Women's perspectives on most issues are blatantly lacking in the U.S. mass media. Unfortunately, they have also been missing to a large degree from the antiwar movement, except in those organizations specifically concerned with women's issues and opposed to the war. Feminists have an obligation to educate others in the antiwar movement on the cost of the U.S. government's interventionist foreign policy to women here and abroad. Im-

portant ties can be made between the government's war on women's rights in the U.S. (in terms of restrictions on government funding of practically every social program that affects mainly women and children) and the government's eagerness to spend obscene amounts of money on weapons to destroy an entire country halfway around the world.

Women In the U.S. Military

Women make up nearly 11 percent of the U.S. military and 6 percent of the total U.S. forces deployed in the gulf. Martha Grevatt explains the reasons behind the "poverty draft" in *Riveting News*, the newsletter of Cleveland Hard Hatted Women (Jan./Feb. 1991). "Economics is the reason. Women work in low-wage jobs without health insurance, if they can find work at all. Every day the newspapers announce more layoffs, and it is common knowledge that women are the last hired, first fired. Clearly the 'feminization of poverty' has driven women into the deathtrap of military servitude. This is especially true for African-American, Latino, Asian, and Native women. In 1990, for example, 45 percent of all army rank and file women were African-American."

Women do not enjoy equality in the military in terms of training, job assignments, or benefits. In a 1990 NOW leaflet entitled "Women in the Military," Emily Becker and Nancy Buermeyer clearly show that being a woman in the military is a nightmare in terms of personal choice. "Enlisted members who become pregnant during basic training are discharged." "The military funds only those abortions necessary to save the mother's life. No elective abortions are performed at military hospitals, even in the cases of rape or incest." "Single parents are not allowed to enlist, and cannot be commissioned as officers unless they surrender custody of their children." "Less than 1/2 of all U.S. bases have childcare facilities, and those that do only meet 60% of the demand." "Although female service members are only allowed 6 weeks of maternity leave, 1/3 of childcare centers do not admit babies under 6 months." "Department of Defense policy states that 'Homosexuality is incompatible with military service.' Between 1000-2000 women and men are discharged annually from the military as a result of charges of homosexuality; from 1974-1983, 14,311 individuals were discharged."

Women currently serving in Saudi Arabia are restricted by U.S. government policy designed to acquiesce to the Saudi government's oppressive and reactionary "cultural customs" regarding women. U.S. military women must follow separate rules imposed on women soldiers only. For example, male soldiers can work in their T-shirts; women soldiers must wear heavy fatigue jackets, buttoned up, with T-shirts underneath, despite the heat. Women soldiers are not allowed to drive when off duty, unless accompanied by a man. *Time* (Jan. 21, 1991)

reported that a U.S. Navy lieutenant was accosted and prodded with a stick by *mutawa*, vigilantes that enforce women's dress codes, because although she had put on an *abaya* (the "head-to-toe, long-sleeved robe that Saudi women usually wear in public"), she had forgotten to veil her face.

It seems ironic that women in the U.S. military are being told to protect and defend governments that subjugate women. And, while "defending" these governments, U.S. military women are being forced by their own government to suspend their rights, which represent the gains of many years of struggle for equality.

How Women Will Pay for This War

This was (and still remains) an expensive war. Women, as a whole, will be asked to pay the economic and emotional cost of U.S. intervention. The cost of maintaining the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia through January 16, 1991, was estimated at \$11.4 billion. That rose to a projected \$500 million per day, once the air war began. The price of the ground war was estimated at \$2 billion per day. The cost is probably back down to the prewar spending of under \$500 million a day, since U.S. troops are still occupying their positions in Saudi Arabia and, now, Iraq.

Weapons alone represent a giant chunk of the cost. An F-15 plane is worth \$40 million, and one cruise missile costs \$1 million. Every minute of shelling from a single artillery unit costs \$36,000. The cost is almost too astonishing to believe. Even more astonishing is the fact that U.S. government-sponsored maternal and child health programs were funded with \$587 million for 1991, or one day's spending on the air war. Head Start costs \$1.9 billion a year, or 3.8 days of the air war. The U.S. government is willing to spend \$200 million a year on emergency food and shelter for homeless people. It sounds like a lot of money, until one realizes that the same amount was spent in 9.6 hours of the air war.

Yet, poor women and children (four out of five—80 percent—of the poor), the homeless, and women without health insurance (14 million women of childbearing age) are constantly told by the Bush administration that social problems cannot be solved by throwing money at them. Obviously, this is not true, since the government has just thrown more money to solve its "problem" in Iraq than the cost of all these social programs combined, and has claimed a great victory. Women's interests do not lie in dumping huge piles of money into the military to buy weapons to fight a war. This recent war was more costly than years of federally funded social programs—programs the Bush administration claims are just too expensive to maintain. How can a program like Head Start, whose yearly allotment of government funds only amounts to 3.8 days' spending on the air war in the Persian Gulf, be too expensive?

The U.S. economy isn't looking too good right now. Banks are failing at the fastest rate in the country's history. The deficit is growing. Unemployment is escalating. Workers are being



laid off from what were traditionally thought of as "secure" industrial jobs. Most of this government mismanagement, along with the cost of military involvement in Iraq, is being paid for by taxpayers.

Throughout the buildup of U.S. troops in the gulf, the ensuing war, and the lingering aftermath of occupation, women are forced to maintain their families without the incomes of their husbands, boyfriends, companions, brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers. This financial burden is complicated by the fact that the government is cutting back on vital social programs, like funded medical care, housing, nutrition, and education, claiming they are too costly to be fully funded in times of financial crisis. Women have to cope not only with the low pay of their relatives in the military, but also with the loss of adequately funded social programs.

The majority of U.S. soldiers in the gulf are men, and women will be claiming the bodies of those who died (and the dying isn't over yet) and bearing the emotional loss of loved ones. At the same time, they will be expected to single-handedly provide for their broken families, unassisted by the government or any of the social agencies that no longer exist to any meaningful degree.

What could this astronomically high-priced war buy at home? A lot. All the money being spent in the gulf to fight this war could better be spent on improving human needs right here in the U.S. These needs acutely affect women because of the economic disparity that exists between men and women, and the social role that women are still relegated to in this society.

Women are, instead, being asked to turn their backs on reality and support the government's destructive policies. Women are supposed to ignore their needs and the needs of their families. Women are being asked to do all this for a government which is systematically eroding women's right to control their bodies and lives, and in whose constitution they are not mentioned. □

A View of the Persian Gulf War and a Proposal for the Antiwar Movement

by Jerry Gordon

The following is an edited version of the talk given by Jerry Gordon on March 16, 1991, to an antiwar meeting attended by 100 people in Cleveland, Ohio, cosponsored by the Cleveland Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, and the Committee Against U.S. War in the Persian Gulf.

On the one hand there is the slaughter of 100,000 or perhaps 200,000 Arabs, no one knows how many. The utter devastation of Iraq. The destruction of that country's infrastructure, including its water purification plants, raising the specter of a cholera epidemic and the spread of other life-threatening diseases.

On the other hand there is George Bush, the man who gave the orders for all this, being lionized as some kind of national hero for what he has achieved.

It is a sordid and disgusting spectacle. But we are not here tonight to lament what has happened. Rather, we are here to try to understand it and determine its results, which are still unfolding.

Toward that end, I'll be spending my time examining the reasons Bush gave in an attempt to justify the U.S. war in the Persian Gulf. Then I'd like to offer some suggestions for what we in the antiwar movement do next.

The Iraqi Invasion

Bush advanced three reasons to support his decision to go to war:

1. Iraq invaded Kuwait and wouldn't get out.
2. The UN authorized military force.
3. Congress authorized military force.

Regarding Iraq's going into Kuwait, the evidence is not only clear, it is irrefutable that the invasion was designed, provoked, and engineered by the U.S. government as part of a grand strategy for it to establish unchallenged control of the oil riches of the Persian Gulf, domination of the region, and an opportunity to demonstrate its military power so that it can act as the world's policeman. The U.S.'s intervention was planned a long time ago.

Look at the facts and the background. In 1973, at the time of the oil shock, when prices were artificially raised and people had to wait in line for gas, Henry Kissinger

called for direct seizure of the oil fields in the Persian Gulf.

Following up on this theme, articles appeared in August 1975, in *Harper's* and *Commentary*, titled "Seizing Arab Oil" and "Oil: The Issue of American Intervention." These articles argued that the U.S. *must* in its own interests intervene directly to grab control of Persian Gulf oil. One author detailed a military strategy for doing this down to the naming of the units to be sent to Saudi Arabia. He specifically urged that the preliminary airlift wave include the combat echelons of the 82nd Airborne Division, which is just the way it worked out for Desert Storm. The other author explained how a rationale could be developed to overcome resistance at home to U.S. intervention in the Middle East; i.e., how the "Vietnam syndrome" could be effectively neutralized. Both writers were influential in U.S. government circles.

In 1977, then President Carter issued a presidential directive ordering military units be assembled capable of "rapid intervention in the Middle East, especially in the oil producing areas of the Gulf."

So the plans were laid. But they weren't carried out in the 1970s or the 1980s for fear of a Soviet response. By 1990, with the Bush-Gorbachev relationship flowering and the changes in Soviet foreign policy, this ceased to be a problem.

To move forward, Washington needed a specific target and a provocation. The target chosen was Iraq and Saddam Hussein. At the February 1990 Amman summit, Hussein warned of the U.S.'s growing drive for power to decide how much oil the Persian Gulf countries would produce and how much they would be paid for it. Within days of these remarks, the Western press began demonizing Hussein, citing the alleged threat of his missiles, chemical weapons, nuclear potential, and human rights abuses. (These abuses were, of course, well known — Hussein is a brutal dictator. But this was of no consequence to U.S. policy makers when they armed,

funded, and otherwise supported Iraq in its war against Iran.)

Some people think the process of demonizing Hussein did not begin until after Iraq's August 2, 1990, invasion of Kuwait. But it actually started six months earlier. And it continued nonstop. For example, the June 4, 1990, issue of *U.S. News & World Report* has a picture of Hussein on the cover and describes him as "The Most Dangerous Man in the World."

Two months before the Kuwaiti invasion and Hussein was already the most dangerous man in the world?

So Washington had its target. Now they needed the provocation. Here's where the Kuwaiti government came in. Webster, the head of the CIA, met with the Kuwaitis and it was agreed that Kuwait would launch an economic war against Iraq. There were several elements to this war, but the central one was for Kuwait, together with the United Arab Emirates, to produce an excessive amount of oil, which would drive down the price of oil, and thereby destabilize and destroy Iraq's economy.

It worked. Oil went down from \$24 to \$14 a barrel. Iraq's economy was in crisis. Things could not continue as they were. Hussein attempted to negotiate relief with Kuwait, but the royal family refused to give an inch. They were absolutely intransigent.

So Iraq turned to the U.S. and complained bitterly about Kuwait's anti-Iraqi economic war. The U.S.'s position was basically, "Do what you have to do." I'm not just talking here about what Ambassador April Glaspie told Hussein: The U.S. "had no opinion on inter-Arab disputes, such as your border disagreement with Kuwait." Or the fact that she invoked both Baker and Bush as the authorities for the position she was taking. I'm also talking about other statements to the same effect by John Kelly, assistant secretary of state, and Margaret Tutweiler, Baker's spokesperson at the State Department. Both Kelly and Tutweiler joined in em-

phasizing that the Iraq-Kuwait dispute was not a concern of the U.S.

So the trap was set. Hussein was practically invited to go into Kuwait. And when he did so, the trap was sprung. And there was no way out, short of total, complete, and abject humiliation.

By the way, from the beginning the Pentagon regarded the possibility of Hussein's swallowing his pride and taking the humiliation by pulling out under Bush's conditions as the "nightmare scenario." It would have made it harder to clobber Iraq militarily. That ought to tell us something about the U.S. government's real intentions from the beginning.

When Hussein realized what was happening, he made efforts to extricate Iraq from Kuwait. In early August and continuing for the succeeding months, Hussein made one offer after the other—his rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding—to withdraw. But each offer was contemptuously brushed aside. Bush demanded unconditional withdrawal—"no face savers." After Iraq's military situation had severely deteriorated, Hussein offered unconditional withdrawal. Bush scornfully rejected it. Finally, in desperation, all else having failed, Iraq simply ordered a withdrawal of all of its military forces from Kuwait.

For months this was what Bush had been demanding. But when it was actually happening, when Iraq's disorganized and demoralized army was fleeing Kuwait, U.S. military forces massacred them. It was like shooting people in the back, by the tens of thousands. The *New York Times* described it this way: "Burned out, bombed out vehicles littered the highway with charred Iraqi bodies everywhere."

This was the bloody climax of a brutal U.S. military and intelligence operation carefully programmed to allow destruction of Iraq's military capability while hypocritically selling it to the American people and people throughout the world as a noble cause to curb aggression. The truth, of course, is that from the beginning the U.S. government's propaganda machine sought to conceal the real nature of the Persian Gulf war: an unjust war of plunder and aggrandizement for Big Oil and a demonstration of U.S. military might designed to intimidate any government or social movement that dares to defy it.

The United Nations Vote

So much for Bush's attempt to justify the war as a crusade against aggression. But he sought to fortify this by invoking the UN's resolutions and especially its November 29 vote authorizing the use of force. Bush repeatedly trumpeted this vote as proving that "the whole world" was against Iraq.

People throughout the world registered their sentiments about the war out in the streets, not in the august chambers of the United Nations. They demonstrated by the millions, not against Iraq's going into Kuwait, but against the U.S.'s imperialist war against Iraq. And the numbers who demonstrated would have surely increased if the war had continued. Indeed, the demonstrations were spreading even to countries like Egypt, considered a bedrock partner in the U.S.'s coalition, where students mounted demonstrations which grew larger and larger.

As for the UN vote, this is not the first time that body has voted for war (the first was against Korea in the 1950s, resulting in three million Koreans and 38,000 U.S. troops killed). Supposedly conceived as a peace-keeping organization, the UN has become a war-making organization instead.

Of course, the Soviet Union was seen by many as the country that would block U.S. war moves in the UN. But the Soviets were boycotting the Security Council when the Korean War was approved. In the case of the Persian Gulf, they were not only present and voting, they cosponsored the resolution authorizing force against Iraq. Thus, Gorbachev gave Bush the green light for the genocidal bombing and the mass murder that followed. And when, at the end, Gorbachev tried to rein in Bush a bit, it was too little and too late. Bush just pushed him aside.

The UN cannot be reformed, not with the imperialist and colonial governments part of it, with all the power they've been given. We do need an international antiwar center, but it is certainly not the United Nations.

And such a center should be built now, without delay. Washington has had a list of target countries, which included Grenada, Nicaragua, Panama, Iraq, and Cuba. They've got check marks by the first four and now they'll focus more and more on Cuba. Imperialism is already subjecting Cuba to an embargo, espionage, sabotage, ideological warfare, and political and economic pressures. So an antiwar coalition is needed on a world scale made up of workers' organizations and the oppressed, students, and all the other antiwar forces, to demand: "U.S.: HANDS OFF CUBA!"

Congress's Vote

Bush also tries to legitimize the war by pointing to Congress's vote in January, in effect declaring war on Iraq. But all this proves is that Congress is Bush's willing partner in carrying out a foreign policy in the interests of big business.

Contrary to the myth about how "our democratic system" works, Congress does

not represent the American people. Take the Senate. Out of 100 members, 96 are white males, the majority of whom are multimillionaires. Naturally, they could be counted on to commit U.S. military forces to serve the banks and the oil companies.

Congress was united in its backing of the war. They proved this after the war began, when the Senate voted unanimously to support the conflict. Out of 465 members in the House of Representatives, only six voted "No."

To be sure, there was a congressional debate before the shooting began. But it was not a debate between war and peace. Rather, the issue was which kind of war to wage: military or economic. Bush and nearly all of the Republicans wanted to get on with the killing. A majority of the Democrats favored continuing the economic war, i.e., sanctions, with the military option to be used later if needed. But both parties had the same objective: crush Iraq and enable the U.S. to exercise undeterred hegemony in the Middle East.

This experience with Congress proves two things. First, it was correct for the antiwar movement to organize independently of the two major parties and not to rely on them in any way; and, second, we need a new party in the U.S. based on the working class and its allies: oppressed nationalities, the women's movement, students, working farmers, environmentalists, all the have-nots, a party that will genuinely stand for peace and social justice.

As for the war in the Persian Gulf, there is no way Bush can justify it. It was (and is) an unjust war, the latest in a series of unjust wars waged by U.S. imperialism. The Iraqi masses lost the war. So did workers in the U.S. The winners—at least in the short run—are the super-rich owners of the banks and corporations.

Where Do We Go From Here?

The antiwar movement has unfinished business. U.S. military forces are still very much in the Middle East and Bush gives every evidence of keeping them there indefinitely. This comes as no surprise. After all, World War II ended more than 45 years ago and U.S. troops are still in Germany. The Korean War ended nearly 40 years ago and U.S. troops are still in Korea.

So we are dealing with an occupying army. And Bush is still dictating developments in the Middle East, trying to tell people what kind of system they shall live under and who their government shall be. Our demand to bring all the troops home must still be fought for. And while we may not be able to mobilize large numbers of people as we did last January, we can still be heard—certainly in meetings like we're holding tonight, teach-ins, forums, etc.

We also have a responsibility to build a solidarity movement here in support of the Palestinians, who are under relentless attack in Kuwait as well as in Israel. It is critical now more than ever to speak up loudly and demand that Israel withdraw from the West Bank, Gaza, and southern Lebanon.

The fight against U.S. interventionism may also erupt on other fronts. I mentioned Cuba earlier. There's also Central America. And who knows where else.

One thing it seems to me that we absolutely must do is plan a public meeting in Cleveland to protest the trampling on our democratic rights and civil liberties. I'm referring especially to the censorship we saw during the war and the harassment of Arab-Americans. I hope we can all join in organizing such a meeting.

One of the demands of the antiwar movement has been, "Money for Human Needs, Not for War!" This demand has to be emphasized far more than it has been. Just consider what's been going on: a federal budget running at a deficit of more than \$300 billion a year, which is about the amount appropriated annually for the Pen-

tagon; new taxes of \$134 billion, mostly of a regressive nature to feed the military complex; \$119 billion cuts in social programs; 30 states facing bankruptcy; aid to cities cut by 75 percent over the past 10 years; 700,000 jobs lost since Desert Storm began; sharp cuts in welfare payments in several states, making an impossible situation for poverty stricken people even worse; meanwhile, another \$78 billion being approved in Congress for the savings and loan bailout, even as the commercial banking system is threatened with collapse; and so on.

All of this describes a system deep in crisis and with screwed-up priorities. To top it all off, the politicians were telling us just last year that the country was broke and that funding for social programs had to be cut. Yet, when it came time to pay for U.S. imperialism's war in the Persian Gulf, they had all the billions of dollars they needed to pay for it. No problem!

So what we say now is there is plenty of money available for human needs. Our job now is to help build a powerful movement to see to it that it gets spent for that purpose.

And that means counterposing spending for domestic needs to spending for war.

Finally, we have to do more to link wars abroad with the war against racism at home. African-Americans, a majority of whom opposed the Persian Gulf war, are the victims of stepped-up assaults at home. Look at what the cops did to Rodney King in Los Angeles. That was no "aberration," as police chief Gates said. That was part of a longstanding practice of police brutality against Blacks that is getting worse. Antiwar activists must be part of the developing movement to demand a halt to it and to put an end to the entire system of racist oppression.

We'll be discussing some of these things plus any ideas anyone else has at the meeting this Friday night of the Committee Against U.S. War in the Persian Gulf. I want to extend to each of you a warm invitation to attend and participate. We need your input.

After all, there is work to be done. A setback has been suffered in the Persian Gulf, to be sure. But that was yesterday. Today is a new day. The struggle continues. □

Contradictions of the Imperialist Victory in the Gulf

by Keith Mann

The following is a slightly edited version of a talk given at a forum of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency in New York City on March 22.

I want to begin on a very sober and realistic note by saying that the outcome of the gulf war is nothing short of a major victory for imperialism, a defeat not only for the Arab masses, but for those around the world oppressed by imperialism.

But this imperialist victory is not without contradictions both in the Middle East and here at home. The brutal character of this war has unleashed powerful forces that threaten to undermine imperialism's victory.

The best way to understand these contradictions is by being clear on the real war aims of the United States.

Once we understand the war aims of the U.S. and what Bush means when he crows about a new world order, we understand easily why civilian casualties were not merely "collateral" damage—the unfortunate byproduct of war—but a deliberate policy of terror against unarmed people—their cities, schools, roads, bridges, and

water supplies. Even now, hospitals are only at 5-10 percent of their capacity. The UN report in the *New York Times* characterizes the destruction of Iraq as reducing it "to a pre-industrial age but with all the disabilities of post-industrial dependency on an intensive use of energy and technology."

A clear understanding of the U.S. war aims also allows us to understand why the largest tank battle since World War II was fought against an army that had begun to retreat. These poorly equipped, starving soldiers were murdered in cold blood. They were prevented from retreating. The allies had literally blocked the road out of Kuwait. There is a tendency to consider the deaths of uniformed soldiers as somehow less tragic—more legitimate—than civilian deaths. We need to move beyond this. There is a seven-mile road north of Basra in southern Iraq that is littered with the limbs of Iraqi soldiers. You won't see

much of that on the news—but it's there nonetheless. The war crimes of Bush, Baker, Cheney, Powell, and Schwarzkopf include the murders of these workers and peasants in uniform as well as the civilians murdered in the bunkers during the bombing raids on Baghdad.

It's pretty clear now that the gulf war was no more waged to defend the sanctity of international borders, the territorial integrity of Kuwait, than World War I was fought because of the assassination of the archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in July 1914.

The war had nothing to do with a crusade to uphold international law. The biggest fear of the imperialists was that Iraq would in fact comply with the UN diktat and deprive them of an opportunity to destroy Iraq—both as an example to the rest of the world and because they wanted to rid themselves of a former ally and client they feared they could no longer

control. In Bush administration circles the eventuality of an Iraqi withdrawal was considered as the "nightmare scenario."

Before I discuss the war aims of the U.S. in any detail I'd like to make a few comments about the overall character of the war which we have characterized as an imperialist war.

Generally speaking, this century has known at least two types of imperialist wars: The first were interimperialist wars fought between rival bourgeois governments over control, access, and ownership of markets, cheap sources of labor, and raw materials. Wars of this type dominated the world until 1945. WW I and II were wars of this type. But with the rise of postcapitalist societies outside of the direct orbit of capitalist markets in one-third of the world following WW II, interimperialist wars became a dangerous prospect for the imperialists themselves. Who could tell what class would pick up the pieces after such a war. Didn't the Russian Revolution issue directly out of the First World War?

Since 1945 we have seen a number of imperialist wars of a second type. These are wars aimed at maintaining or extending the rule of the imperialists over smaller, weaker countries, which were in many cases former colonies. The Vietnamese, Algerian, and Central American wars are classic examples of this.

The recent war in the gulf was decidedly of the second type. But as is so often the case, reality rarely fits neatly into categories. Unlike the Vietnamese, Algerian, or Central American cases, the war against Iraq was not a war by imperialism against an insurgent revolutionary liberation movement or against a revolutionary government.

But what was classic about it was that it represented a classic case of old-fashioned war-making for regional domination and naked profits.

Marxists have specific attitudes to both types of war. In both cases we explain that workers and the oppressed have no stake in supporting their governments in these wars. Quite the contrary. In the first case, as Lenin explained, the interests of the working class are best served by working for the defeat of all the belligerent governments, towards the end of turning an imperialist war into a revolutionary war. Lenin called this revolutionary defeatism.

In the case of wars of the second type, we stand on the side of the oppressed country against the oppressor country. That is why we in the Fourth International were for the defeat of the U.S. and the victory of Iraq, without offering the slightest support to Saddam Hussein's bourgeois government.

Imperialist War Aims

As we all know the war was fought to defend the profits of Western oil companies. Not that the supply of oil was ever in danger of being cut off. At no point did the actions of Iraq threaten the availability of gas at the pump for American workers. Oil is worthless if it can't be sold and the U.S. wasn't getting free oil before August 2 anyhow.

Rather, what was at stake was the control imperialism enjoys in this oil-rich region by its support to certain proxies threatened by Iraq—a former ally and client of imperialism that had begun to act in an independent fashion.

More generally, the war was waged to take advantage of changes in the Soviet Union and to flex U.S. military muscle as a display to the rest of the world.

It was waged to dissuade dominated peoples around the world from resistance at a time when they cannot even hope for limited support from the Soviet Union. Over the last several years the limited aid that the Soviet bureaucracy provided to liberation movements and governments in conflict with imperialism has been replaced by an even more open collusion of the bureaucracy with imperialism. The Middle East was one of the last regions where they maintained any authority. Their support to the imperialists' war plans has certainly cost them most if not all of that authority. Their last minute peace proposal was 1) an effort to recoup some of that lost authority in the eyes of the Arab masses, and 2) a reflection of the balance of forces within the Soviet bureaucracy—especially the anti-Gorbachev wing of the military which for its own reasons opposes such blatant capitulation to imperialism—at least where military force is involved. In any event, the ease with which the U.S. brushed off this threat to its war plans further revealed the bankruptcy of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Gorbachev's collusion with the U.S. in the war is analogous to the period between 1939-1945. Then, as now, the Soviet Union faced a severe crisis. Then, as now, the bureaucracy was willing to sacrifice any struggle and any principle in exchange for short-term aid from imperialism.

The war was also a message to other imperialist powers that U.S imperialism is still the top dog. The imperialist front mustn't lead us to overlook the significant inter-imperialist rivalry that exists today. At a time when Japanese and German imperialism pose sharp economic threats to the U.S. capitalists, the massive show of U.S. military might was intended to reaffirm U.S. hegemony in the only area where it is still ahead of its rivals.

The European Economic Community's projected unified act for 1992 is a direct

expression of the sharp competition between West European and U.S. capital. The overall agreement amongst imperialist forces to follow the lead of the U.S. has now given way to a number of open squabbles between them. These other countries are apparently dragging their feet in coming up with their agreed-upon share of the cost of the war. Some congressmen and conservative political analysts are outraged by this. They are calling for measures to be taken against these countries.

Furthermore, U.S. corporations are gobbling up most of the contracts being handed out to rebuild Kuwait. The Bechtel Corporation of former secretary of state George Schultz is a big winner in this respect. This is widely resented by other imperialist powers who would like a piece of the action. The French prime minister Michel Rocard publicly complained about this the other day. He was especially miffed over the fact that French corporations have received very few contracts while they and only they, he claims, are digging out the land mines left by the Iraqis.

So in spite of an overwhelming military victory, U.S. imperialism is now faced with a number of unwelcome developments. What are these contradictions?

Middle East

The swift imperialist victory—in fact the very presence of half a million mostly Western soldiers in Saudi Arabia—was justly considered a major humiliation by the overwhelming majority of the region's 200 million Arabs. Past wars between Arab regimes and the West in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 led to sharp upsurges.

This experience will certainly lead to a discussion about how the Arab working masses can remove the imperialist boot from their throats. Saddam Hussein's narrow bourgeois nationalism has been discredited. The failure of the Iraqis to put up a better fight was not only the result of the technological superiority of the allies and the unprecedented bombing—as important as this was. It was also a reflection of Hussein's regime. Unlike the Vietnamese people or the Nicaraguan workers and peasants faced against the contras, Hussein's soldiers did not at all believe that the struggle was worth waging. Hussein knew this quite well. He had total contempt for his soldiers. Elaborate measures were taken to prevent his frontline troops from retreating or surrendering. The brutality of the Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait were not the actions of a liberating army, but those of a conquering one.

Stalinist campist theories, which hold that the Soviet Union and its allies are reliable defenders of the oppressed against im-

perialism, have once again been exposed as totally worthless.

While Islamic fundamentalism will appear as an attractive option to many, this situation should allow Marxists an opening to advance revolutionary perspectives. This discussion will certainly take place within the Palestinian movement as well. The plight of the oppressed Kurdish nationality has now been spotlighted, but faced with the opposition of not only Hussein's government but that of Iran and Turkey, and the lack of any visible support from the Iraqi toilers not to mention the cynicism of the imperialist allies, their short-term prospects for self-determination are rather bleak. Things won't be the same in a number of countries.

The incompetency and contempt for their own people of the ruling Al-Sabah family in Kuwait has been revealed for all the world to see. It took the emir 17 days after the ouster of the Iraqi army to return to his country. Top members of the government—most of whom are part of the royal family—are practically the only people with electricity in their homes these days. I don't want to get into the arcane debate over whether the emir is a feudal or a capitalist ruler except to say that while their involvement in high finance belongs very much to late capitalist society, their absolute inability to run public affairs belongs far more to the prebourgeois society of fixed orders than to bourgeois society where—at least in theory—careers are open to talent. The emir and other sheiks are talentless, reactionary parasites, and their days are numbered.

Women in many of these countries have begun to challenge the sexist practices so deeply woven into the fabric of Arab society. The country where women's resistance is the most publicized is Saudi Arabia but similar developments are occurring in a number of countries.

The presence of a large U.S. armed force in the Middle East has been sought by the U.S. for a long time. But it's not without problems. In addition to the anti-imperialist resentment it will continue to inspire, it is extremely expensive. This is why the Bush administration resists any attempts at limiting arms sales to Saudi Arabia, Israel, or Egypt. They want to keep open the option of

intervening in the region either directly or through a proxy.

U.S. Society

The contradictions of the gulf war are as profound here in the U.S. as they are in the Middle East.

Bush's approval rating reached 91 percent in the wake of the military victory. American flags, yellow ribbons, and jingoist and anti-Arab T-shirts have sprung up like poisonous mushrooms after a storm. Even the Empire State Building is bathed in yellow these days. While the right wing and reactionary forces have been strengthened much of this support is quite thin. Even the yellow ribbons are no doubt in most cases an expression of relief that few U.S. soldiers lost their lives.

Is the Vietnam syndrome dead? If the Vietnam syndrome refers to 1) the tendency of the American people to oppose what it considers unjust wars waged by their own government and 2) their willingness to do something about it, that syndrome is far from dead. A very substantial movement developed against this war in a very short time. Tens of thousands marched before a shot was fired or a bomb dropped, and on January 19 and 26 one million people took to the streets in Washington and San Francisco.

Overcoming the Vietnam syndrome was one of the war aims of the U.S. rulers. They did not succeed.

The war took place in the context of a severe economic crisis. Wars, by stimulating the economy and providing jobs in war industries, have traditionally led to the end of recessions. Many credit World War II with finally bringing about the end of the Great Depression. But for the first time in 200 years war and recession are occurring at the same time. In fact, the war has exacerbated the crisis by among other things fuelling the budget deficit. Consumer confidence has been supposedly restored, but interest rates remain high. This means that certain industries like the building trades cannot look forward to recovery any time soon. Industrial production is down. Unemployment has recently reached an official 6.8 percent—the highest rate in years. At the same time that tens of billions of dollars were

spent to wage war against a third world country, an unprecedented austerity drive against social spending here continues to take place.

Brutal U.S. aggression against foreign populations are not new. Neither are austerity drives. But what makes this situation somewhat novel is the occurrence of these things *at the same time*. That's one of the biggest problems for the capitalist rulers today. You don't have to be a sophisticated Marxist analyst to make the connections between the two. And many people, especially young people and African-Americans, have made those connections. That's bad news for the ruling class.

That is why in spite of the jingoist attitude prevailing today and the highest unemployment rate in years—hardly the type of environment conducive to fightbacks—a militant attitude is brewing in communities of the oppressed. We saw this when up to 50,000 workers and students marched on the New York State capital protesting state budget cuts and tuition hikes. I don't believe that without the war as many people would have mobilized to march on Albany. There is a very contradictory climate at the present time.

For many people—especially young people—this war has been an eye-opener. Their own experiences—the open hypocrisy of the government—the senselessness of the war, has gone a long way towards exposing this lousy, antihuman capitalist system for what it is.

The ideas of revolutionary Marxism will be welcomed and understood to a much greater degree than has been the case for a long time.

Many working people will realize that the most consistent antiwar fighters are those who oppose the war at home, and the system responsible for war.

Many will sympathize with our vision of a different world order where war and the system responsible for it are replaced by a system where there are no borders, where society is organized by the immense majority for the immense majority—a socialist society.

That's the type of world order we in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency are fighting for. We hope you'll join us. □

Cleveland Labor and the Vietnam War

Cleveland Labor and the Vietnam War, by Jerry Gordon, 1990. The Greater Cleveland Labor History Society, 1800 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115. 12pp., \$1.50.

Reviewed by Jeff Hagan

Auda Romine admits to having been "a bit of a rebel" when she first came out against the war in Vietnam. "I've always been against war," she now says, "it wasn't just this war." But Romine says she saw the Vietnam war "as totally ridiculous." But the rebel didn't just keep her opposition to herself. "I think if you believe in something, you take it to the people you're closest with," she said recently. At the time of the war, the people with whom Romine was closest were her fellow members of Local 500 of the Butcher Workmen, the union for which the former packinghouse worker served as secretary treasurer. "It would be like talking to people in my church."

In 1965, George Meany, the president of the AFL-CIO, laid out his position on the war in a speech to the union's Building and Construction Trades Department.

He said, "It is up to all of us, on affairs outside the boundaries of this nation, to have one policy. We can disagree in here, but we cannot disagree outside the boundaries of the nation, and have an effective foreign policy."

"So I urge you in your own communities to follow the AFL-CIO position, to back up the commander-in-chief. There is no other way for freedom to survive."

Under Meany's leadership, the AFL-CIO continued to pass prowar resolutions throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.

But in Cleveland in the mid-'60s, many local leaders and rank-and-file members went on record in opposition to the war.

Auda Romine was one of them.

In 1967, Romine and Local 500's president, Floyd Smith, cosponsored a "Resolution to end the Vietnam war." The resolution began "WHEREAS, The present course of American intervention in Vietnam is resulting in the senseless slaughter of American GIs as well as of the Vietnamese people . . ." and it ended with the resolution "that Butcher Workmen, Local Union 500, urge that American troops be withdrawn from Vietnam and that our boys be brought home now," and a further resolution in support of a "Spring

Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam," taking place in April of 1967 in New York.

Local 500 adopted the resolution.

Romine took her antiwar position to another meat cutters local, as well as the Ohio State Council of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, where she met with strong and vocal opposition. Despite this early resistance, the meat cutters eventually played a leading role in advancing an antiwar position within the state AFL-CIO.

Romine's story is just one of many Cleveland labor leaders who had opposed the war in Vietnam, and it's one of a handful that found their way into a new booklet, published by the Greater Cleveland Labor History Society, called *Cleveland Labor and the Vietnam War*. Although it was written a couple of years ago and presented at the Vietnam Antiwar Movement Conference at the University of Toledo on May 4, 1990, its publication and release at the end of last month is both timely and potentially prophetic. Despite apparently widespread support for the Vietnam war and the ability by those in favor of the war to paint those opposed to it as disloyal Americans, these Cleveland labor leaders pioneered labor's opposition to the war and helped to turn the tide and end the U.S. involvement.

Cleveland Labor and the Vietnam War was written by Jerry Gordon, an international representative of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. During the Vietnam war, Gordon was active in both the Cleveland Area Peace Action Coalition and the National Peace Action Coalition, as chair and national coordinator, respectively. His paper tells the story of several local leaders like Romine, as well as a chronological presentation of key points in the formation of a labor-based antiwar position.

Gordon sees 1969, when Cleveland hosted a national conference of the country's antiwar groups that had the secretary of the UAW District Auto Council, Leo Fenster, as the keynote speaker, as a turning point in labor antiwar sentiment. During that keynote address, according to Gordon, Fenster brought the audience to its feet when he told the delegates that the antiwar position was the majority viewpoint, and the movement ought to act that way. Fenster told the peace activists that, if

the "right approach" to labor was taken, union members could be persuaded to oppose the war. Auda Romine also spoke to this conference.

Another turning point, according to Gordon, was the shooting of protesters at Kent State and Jackson State. The surge in student activism that saw students take over Case Western Reserve University and turn it into an antiwar organizing center after the killings resulted in the formation of a "CWRU Labor Action Committee," which attempted to solicit labor support for a public antiwar statement. Forty-two Cleveland union leaders signed a statement reprinted in the June 3, 1970, *Plain Dealer* under the heading "Walter Reuther—In Memoriam," which endorsed a letter written by the late labor leader to President Richard Nixon, opposing the invasion of Cambodia, the crackdown on college campuses, and the entire U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. According to Gordon, this statement "was a major breakthrough for the local antiwar movement."

The national antiwar movement also got a boost in Cleveland, when the city hosted the founding conference that June of the National Peace Action Coalition, a conference that included 200 unionists among the 1,500 people registered to attend. The NPAC adopted a resolution designed to create as broad a peace movement as possible. The resolution asked that "whatever tactic is used, the movement must function in a peaceful, organized, and disciplined fashion." "Confrontational adventures," it continued, "hurt the movement by alienating otherwise sympathetic sections of the population, particularly labor and Black and Brown peoples."

Several Cleveland area unionists were elected to NPAC's national steering committee, including Auda Romine.

Gordon's paper goes on to chart the continued growth of antiwar sentiments within the labor movement, including a resolution by the Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation of Labor "objecting to the continuous waste of American lives and billions of dollars of tax money in senseless and idiotic warfare in Southeast Asia."

Gordon's well written and fascinating article would be of interest at any time, but its poignancy right now, as the U.S. enters another muddled conflict overseas, makes it an even more worthwhile read. □

Notebooks for the Grandchildren

by Mikhail Baitalsky

45. Even Those in Exile Voted

I am devoting this section to a boy who was the only one to survive of ninety Crimean Tatars thrown into the penal labor Special Camp Point of Mine Administration No. 1.

When telling about my arrest in April 1950, I left out the elections to the Supreme Soviet that took place that winter. I had managed before my arrest to drop into the election box my two ballots, each of which bore the name of one candidate: one had Stalin's name on it and the other the name of the writer Pavlenko. I did not know of him then—I read his book *Happiness* later.

In 1950, the camps were crammed full. Everyone Stalin had wanted to kill had been killed and those in exile had grown accustomed to the new cemeteries for their innumerable corpses. All the Crimean Tatars who had been sent to Vorkuta had died except for one boy. Having never in their lives experienced a snowstorm, they turned blue from the cold. They had no strength left to work and, therefore, they were given only punishment rations causing them to grow still weaker, more emaciated and bluer. The penal rations were used to punish those who failed to fulfill the work norm; but they meant a death sentence. Shivering in their rags, they rummaged in the garbage behind the camp kitchen. These walking corpses were no longer even capable of standing up on their own, but for the camp to have made an effort to save them would have meant to show overindulgence toward those who refuse to work; and this was ruled out by the camp's entire program of functioning. A rule of the camp, unwritten but nonetheless unquestioned and developed as a direct consequence of all its written rules, says: those who are near death must die!

As a result, all the Crimean Tatars perished from pellagra in one winter—89 of the 90 who had been brought to this section of Mine Administration No. 1 at Vorkuta. In the spring, their corpses floated in the thawed muddy clay of the camp cemetery. How many citizens of our country were, like the Crimean Tatars or the Balkars from Belaya Rechka, at one time rudely awakened at dawn [to be deported]?

Judging by the data from the recent census (1959), it was around three million. However, the Crimean Tatars are not included in that figure, nor were those who died such a premature death. That means more than three million people were forcibly exiled. Eight minority nationalities were torn from their native soil overnight because they were supposedly dissatisfied with Stalin. On that night, this supposition became a reality.

Of course, everyone knew that their expulsion was on Stalin's orders. What hypocrisy was required to assert that for the millions of people living in exile the reelection of Stalin to the Supreme Soviet in 1950 as before was an "All-People's Holiday"! This is the formula for summing up the election results that had been adopted since 1937, when it was first advanced after the first elections under the new constitution. "This was not simply an election but a great national holiday," said the "Short Course" and all the newspapers. That time, the candidates on the ballot received 98.6 percent of the vote.

If all those people who consciously applauded Stalin's reprisals against the people (or were they clapping their hands without thinking?) found that the Kalmyks and Chechins were secret enemies, then it is natural to ask: Were they enemies for five or six years before the war or did they become hostile suddenly on the day of the [German] occupation? And what made them become hostile? Many infidel betrayers of the war years were people who were ill-disposed toward Soviet power in 1937 and perhaps even in 1930. The hatred of those who became Hitler's police, punitive squads, and village heads did not develop overnight. Voronov, Gnatyuk, and Shudro did not fall from the sky. However, one cannot possibly claim that they were all kulaks. During the liquidation of the peasantry, many thousands of middle-layer peasant families were expelled from their land. An enormous number of the enemies were not innately opposed to Soviet power but were made enemies by Stalin, who harmed them unjustly and persecuted them when they didn't deserve it. Then, all those who had been offended, including those who were embittered, malicious, and implacable—they all, upon receiving the right to vote under the new constitution, amicably filed to the polls, immediately forgetting their grievances and anger in order to give Stalin 98.6 percent of their votes. What made them do that?

Stalin transformed a normal, routine election of competent state workers into a universal test of each citizen's loyalty; and no one wants to appear disloyal even if one is clutching a stone in one's pocket. However, the results of such a test succeed in verifying nothing.

When, during secret balloting, a most careful register is being kept of the names of those who did not appear at the polls, and someone goes with the ballot box to the homes of those who did not appear, thereby forcing them to explain why they did not appear—in such a case, a simple—and it would appear purely

In 1977, a manuscript totalling hundreds of pages arrived in this country from the Soviet Union—the memoirs of Mikhail Baitalsky, who was in his middle 70s at the time and living in Moscow. His work consists of a series of nine "notebooks" which describe his life as a Ukrainian Jewish revolutionary militant. He narrates how, as a teenager inspired by the October revolution, he joined the Communist Youth, tells about his participation in the Red Army during the Civil War years that followed 1917, his disenchantment with the developing bureaucracy under Stalin, and his subsequent experiences in Stalin's prison camps. To the very end of his life Baitalsky remained devoted to the ideals of the October revolution. He says that he is writing "for the grandchildren" so that they can know the truth of the revolution's early years.

formal—symbol of democracy becomes a command performance and definitely gives the feeling that someone is checking up. The electors are afraid, no matter how much might be said about an all-people's holiday. Democracy and fear are incompatible.

For thirty years now the main preelection slogan has been not "Elect to the Soviet the most competent and progressive candidate!" but "All out for the elections!" The essence of democracy is the delegation of popular power for a specific term to a deputy to whom the people entrust their power. However, 100 percent appearance at the polls indicates the performance of a formality, carried out on command.

The commentary in the "Short Course" on the 1937 elections, which was repeated in thousands of articles, announced: "Thus, 90 million people affirmed by their unanimous vote the victory of socialism in the USSR." What victory are they talking about? If it is the victory of socialism in the sense of a socialist revolution, this occurred back in 1917. If it means the victory of socialism as an economic system such a victory cannot be confirmed by a vote. The victory of socialism as a social system, based on an economy that is on a higher level than capitalism, is confirmed not by the numbers who turn out for an election but by other figures, like labor productivity. This is a fundamental problem of declaring a victory when doing things for show will not work.

But if you verify the attitude of people by placing a check opposite the name of each one who has not shown up to convey their holiday spirit, can't you predict how each one will respond? And isn't it obvious that some who answer "yes" are lying? Isn't it well known that Stalin himself did not at all believe the 90 million who had confirmed this victory?

Stalinism does not need genuine and effective two-way links between the people and the state. This represents a mortal danger to Stalinism, which erects showpieces instead. Stalinism does not want to understand that the absence of such links is ultimately even more dangerous than the links themselves. To have a 100 percent turnout is the least effective of all the possible means for links to the people.

In the interest of a 100 percent turnout, even those in exile were forced to pretend they were voting enthusiastically for Stalin's election. Stalin could brazenly announce that the Chechins who showed up at the polls by unanimous vote confirmed the correctness of his order for their expulsion; and that the Crimean Tatars just as unanimously aspired to lie in a common grave in the Vorkuta camp cemetery with wooden name tags tied to their feet.

Very likely, in addition to the 89 Crimean Tatars who perished at Mine Administration No. 1, many thousands more were buried in common graves elsewhere. According to the calculations of the Crimean Tatars themselves, during the first years of exile more than half of their people perished. Now, they say, they number around 300,000, although no precise statistics exist and we do not really need them. They all live in Uzbekistan. Five minority nationalities expelled by Stalin—the Chechins, the Kalmyks, the Balkars, the Ingush, and the Karachayev—have been given the right and opportunity to return to their native land. But not the Crimean Tatars. They are not allowed to go to Crimea. Furthermore, there is, of course, no need to issue an official decree in this regard. Why? Because the passport system is a convenient tool: the officials simply refuse to stamp their passports. Unless your passport is stamped no one will hire you.

The Crimean Tatars to this day remain refugees for whom it is impossible to return home. However, we do not raise their problem at the United Nations. No one is spending millions to feed them. They take exceptional care of themselves on their collective farms in Uzbekistan—which are model farms. They are exceptional among most refugees also because none of them left their homeland on their own accord; they were all forcibly expelled. They have been very well received in Uzbekistan. They were not locked up in camps as has been done with other refugees in other countries. However, the main point is really not this, but the right to return to their homeland. How can we express indignation with others if we have not to this day returned this right to the Crimean Tatars?

46. Joseph 'Rakhmetov'

"Victor was one of those people who always sided with the oppressed and never with the oppressor, with the persecuted and never with the persecutors." These words were uttered over the grave of Victor Zurabov, a fellow who since his years as a Young Communist had been shifted from one Stalinist prison, place of exile or camp to another, a man of high moral standards and genuine communist honesty. He died in Moscow in 1964. I could only hope to deserve the same to be said of me when I die. I do not know if that will happen. I can only say: I am deeply biased in favor of people with such qualities. The judges who sent him to prison and camp considered him an enemy of the people, and they considered themselves the people's friends.

They transferred a medical assistant to our camp who had been at Mine No. 8, and we became friends. He did not live in the barracks but in a closet-sized room attached to the infirmary at the hospital and there I often passed an hour or two in the evenings. Of course, the usual searches were conducted there, but the place was not bugged or under surveillance. The walls there did not have ears; happiness is living inside walls without ears.

The hospital was never without patients; it had about 20 cots. The doctor paid a visit but the rest of the time—twenty-four hours a day—Joseph worked there alone. He slept on a trestlebed with a thin mattress (so he wouldn't oversleep, he joked) and he woke up at the slightest moan from the ward.

But the main feature about Joseph was not his devotion to the sick but his love for his people. I saw in him features of Campanella, Jan Hus, Ovid.¹ People who knew him earlier and longer than I did called him Rakhmetov. He was different from Rakhmetov in his appearance: hollow cheeks, pursed lips with a thin, ascetic, angular figure. Perhaps his appearance and his total indifference to material goods somehow magnified the power of his words—he spoke very simply and in a measured way but listening to his speech, one felt the heat coming from coals, covered with ashes.

His clear speech was a result of his clear thinking. It was a pleasure to listen to Joseph. Joseph was born in Poland and knew of our country only the deportation prisons and camps where he had spent time. He had spent time in many of them because he was moved from one to another so as to keep him from staying too long in one. A godfather's pencil was always checking off his name.

He had learned Russian and read many books. He had a refined appreciation of poetry and loved Lermontov. At the beginning of 1955, they took him away from us and dragged him for a long time around to various camps. Then he was sent back to Poland where he was rehabilitated.

Many things about Joseph reminded me of the Young Communists of my generation, although he did not belong to that generation and was a fervent Zionist. Perhaps it was the Calvinist bent to his thinking, his unbending rigor, and his single-minded-

ness that reminded me of my friends from youth. Like Marya Yelko, he held property in contempt. The prisoners in the camps had no property but they could become consumed with personal possessions. Joseph shared everything with his friends and would have easily given you the shirt off his back. However, he rarely shared his feelings.

There was a loudspeaker hanging in his cubbyhole room near the infirmary, but Joseph didn't turn it on for very long at a time. Our educators could not falsely charge him with agitation for not listening to their eulogies. After all, this was a hospital and needed to be quiet.

Have you forgotten about the duty of the official in charge to maintain the regime's order? His job was to watch to make sure that the ZK's and KTR's were observing the prohibitions.² However, because officials even higher-up also looked after this—otherwise they were threatened with death from boredom—the official in charge of maintaining order had nothing left to do but make sure that camp officials were properly addressed by inmates: Have we forgotten to remove our hat? Every guardian of our souls wanted us to call him by his title. Even the lowest-ranking official, every investigator, insisted on being properly greeted even though they couldn't add two numbers together—28 prisoners in one section of the barracks plus 87 in another—without making a mistake. (Because of their errors in addition, we often had to get up two or three times an evening to be counted.) Being forced to render the proper greetings was supposed to develop in the prisoners qualities that would be extremely necessary upon release from confinement. Even if it were the tenth time that he saw you that day, our regime official, a zealous young lieutenant, upon meeting you shouted: "Prisoner, where's your proper greeting?"

"Good day, Citizen Lieutenant!"

"That's better!" he answered. To say "Good day" to a ZK was not considered necessary. Rather they would answer with some sort of question.

"Prisoner, why is your hair so long?"

"Prisoner, why aren't you looking at me?"

Pay attention, ZK, and address officials with the proper title. One time Joseph and I were reading the newspaper he had taken from the woman who was head of the infirmary. He pointed silently to a line where it said "Comrade Stalin," with the word comrade written in full while on another line we saw "Com. Sidorov," with the word abbreviated. Thus, even this marvelous word of the revolution was turned by the lackies into a title.

* * *

Humanity's wisdom was vulgarized by decades of bombastic eulogizing, which is how it emerged among the expressions of my investigator—from shimmering heights to "beloved mother." Human virtue seemed almost to vanish for a time.

It first began to show itself again, I believe, in a deep sympathy for the pain of others. A warm, big-hearted person, who has not forgotten the past, still loves the people. Joseph loved the persecuted and oppressed. He could not by nature be an oppressor.

With cunning alien to it, wisdom seeks no rewards
nor lies, nor vanity, nor poisonous servility.

These pierce the soul like the plough of the honest toiler

overturns the layers of soil and churning weeds.

Happiness that comes through wisdom, without pomp or celebration, is quiet, concentrated within oneself. Ecclesiastes, written by an unknown Jewish author 2,000 years ago, passed on to us this sad joy when saying: "He who increases wisdom increases sorrow."

I cannot finish my story about Joseph without mentioning the virtue in a person under whom he once worked and who did all he could to defend Joseph from the godfather. A young woman from Leningrad, she had arrived with her husband, who was a military doctor assigned to Vorkuta. They could find no other vacancy for her except as the doctor in our OLP (special camp point). She then found out what the camps were like.

Joseph told me that he saw tears in her eyes when she had to carry out someone's idiotic and malicious order. There were limits for doctors as to how many prisoners were allowed sick leave from work each day. Influenza was not recognized as an epidemic disease and could not be the basis for raising the limit since there were no epidemics in our country. And a disease like pellagra had been eliminated altogether under socialism. Those near death did not perish from it but simply died. Write what you want on the death certificate but not pellagra. Suicide also appeared in these reports as some fictional disease. Pursuing their task of doing things for show, the officials forced the doctors to lie.

In addition to the pressure from the camp officials, the doctors were also subject to pressure from the prisoners who wanted by hook or by crook, by wits or by pull, to get the letter "s" (sick) next to their name on the day's work slate. The camp aphorism, "The second joy is pull," was well known.

Some prisoners did not request but threatened. Somebody tried to rape the sister who was on duty at the mine's medical station and the medical station had to assign a guard to protect her there.

Joseph helped our doctor in this struggle against brute force. But there was no one to protect her from officialdom. The Banderaites knew that if they used the word "Yid" in front of Joseph, they would get slugged in the face. (Both the insulter and the insulted paid the same price for this—around three days in the special punishment cell.) But the doctor could not behave the same way when the violators were the regime's officials.

When I went to the medical center to see Joseph, I now and then saw her. On her long face, her enormous grief-filled eyes stood out. She could not bear these falsified death certificates for those who did not need to die, the limits on the numbers who could receive sick leave, the loutishness and cruelty, the hypocrisy at every turn, the billboards saying "Life has become happier"—all this in such a concentrated form was simply unbearable to her. Outside the camps the contrasts were not so striking.

Soon after Joseph was taken away, she went home to Leningrad. [Next month: "A Period of Camp Liberalization"]

Notes

1. Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC-AD 18), John Hus (1369-1415), and Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) all suffered at the hands of the authorities of their day for their visionary ideas and writings.

2. ZK and KTR are abbreviations for types of political prisoners, ordinary ones and those called "Trotskyist counterrevolutionaries."

Information, Education, Discussion Bulletin

In Defense of Marxism

Subscribe: [] 1 year—\$24 [] 6 months—\$15 [] 3-month introductory—\$5

Name (Please Print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mall and make checks payable to: IDOM, P.O. Box 1317, New York, NY 10009

- With a 6-month or 1-year subscription, receive a free copy of *A Year of Decision for U.S. Labor—The Hormel Strike and Beyond*, by Dave Riehle and Frank Lovell (a \$2.50 value).

International Viewpoint

A unique fortnightly magazine with news and analysis of the international class struggle from a revolutionary Marxist perspective, published in Europe.

___ 1 year: \$47 ___ 6 months: \$25

- With a 6-month or 1-year subscription, receive a free copy of *A Tribute to George Breitman—Writer, Organizer, Revolutionary*, edited by Naomi Allen and Sarah Lovell (a \$5.00 value).

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Write *International Viewpoint*, P.O. Box 1824, New York, NY 10009

FIT DIRECTORY

- FIT National Office/National Coordinators: 27 Union Square W., 2nd floor, Rm. 208, New York, NY 10003
- Bay Area: P.O. Box 971, Berkeley, CA 94701
- Baltimore: Sarah Springer, 3203 N. Charles St. #203, Baltimore, MD 21218
- Boston: Mary Scully, 4 Michelangelo St., Apt. 3, Boston, MA 02113
- Cincinnati: Kate Curry, 1136 Franklin Ave., Apt 1, Cincinnati, OH 45237
- Cleveland: P.O. Box 18874, Cleveland, OH 44118-0874
- Dallas-Fort Worth: P.O. Box 556, Lancaster, TX 75146
- Kansas City: P.O. Box 30127 Plaza Station, Kansas City, MO 64112
- Los Angeles: P.O. Box 480410, Los Angeles, CA 90048
- New York: P.O. Box 1947, New York, NY 10009
- Pacific Northwest: P.O. Box 17512, Seattle, WA 98107-1212
- Philadelphia: P.O. Box 28838, Philadelphia, PA 19151
- Pittsburgh: Paul Le Blanc, 357 Gross St., Pittsburgh, PA 15224
- Twin Cities: P.O. Box 14444, University Station, Minneapolis, MN 55414

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS FROM THE FIT

NEW: *In Defense of American Trotskyism—Rebuilding the Revolutionary Party*, Documentation of the struggle for revolutionary Marxism against the SWP leadership, Edited by Paul Le Blanc \$9.00

\$1.00 PAMPHLETS:

Malcolm X: Teacher and Organizer, by Claire Cohen, Steve Bloom, and Evelyn Sell

Our Bodies! Our Choice! The Fight for Reproductive Rights, by Evelyn Sell

Fighting for Women's Rights in the 1990s, by Claire Cohen, Carol McAllister, Gayle Swann, and Evelyn Sell

Upheaval in China! by Tom Barrett and Xiao Dian

OTHER PAMPHLETS:

Permanent Revolution, Combined Revolution, and Black Liberation in the United States, by Larry Stewart \$1.25

Don't Strangle the Party, by James P. Cannon \$1.25

The Trenton Siege by the Army of Unoccupation, by George Breitman \$1.75

MATERIALS FOR A HISTORY OF TROTSKYISM IN THE UNITED STATES:

Trotskyism in America, the First Fifty Years, by Paul Le Blanc \$3.50

Organizational Principles and Practices, Edited with an introduction by Evelyn Sell \$3.50

Revolutionary Traditions of American Trotskyism, Edited with an introduction by Paul Le Blanc \$5.00

BOOKS AND OTHER LITERATURE:

Fifty Years of the Fourth International, Talks given at the New York City celebration, October 1988, plus other relevant contributions \$10.00

A Tribute to George Breitman: Writer, Organizer, Revolutionary, Edited by Naomi Allen and Sarah Lovell \$5.00

Trends in the Economy—Marxist Analyses of Capitalism in the Late 1980s, by Carol McAllister, Steve Bloom, and Ernest Mandel \$3.00

American Elections and the Issues Facing Working People, by Paul Le Blanc, Bill Onasch, Tom Barrett, and Evelyn Sell \$5.00

Leon Trotsky and the Organizational Principles of the Revolutionary Party, by Paul Le Blanc, Dianne Feeley, and Tom Twiss \$5.00

Permanent Revolution in Nicaragua, by Paul Le Blanc \$3.00

A Year of Decision for U.S. Labor—The Hormel Strike and Beyond, by Dave Riehle and Frank Lovell \$2.50

The Transitional Program—Forging a Revolutionary Agenda for the United States, by Evelyn Sell, Steve Bloom, and Frank Lovell, Introduction by Paul Le Blanc \$4.00

Order from FIT, P.O. Box 1947, New York, NY 10009

Lenin and the Revolutionary Party by Paul Le Blanc \$44.00

Regular price (hardcover only) \$55.00; Special 20 percent reduction
for readers of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*

Order from: FIT, PO Box 1947, New York, NY 10009