

'We Won't Go Back!'

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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 former 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.

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Feminists Challenge Court Decision on Abortion

by Evelyn Sell

The U.S. Supreme Court's June 29 ruling on Pennsylvania's 1989 Abortion Control Act added new fuel to the battle over women's right to choose. The decision upheld the power of a state to restrict abortion rights by requiring unmarried teenaged females to get the consent of their parents or a judge, establishing a 24-hour waiting period for adult women, and mandating doctors to keep detailed records of each abortion—information which will be subject to public disclosure. In addition, the Court approved the requirement that, before the waiting period, women must be given state-produced anti-abortion information which includes pictures of fetuses taken at two-week gestational intervals, and a description of alternatives to abortion. The only substantial provision rejected by the Court was the requirement that a woman must notify her husband of an intention to obtain an abortion.

By a 5-4 majority, the justices utilized the approach that states can impose regulations which do not constitute an "undue burden" on a woman's right to end an early pregnancy.

In fact, each of the approved provisions *do* inflict such a burden on women—resulting in the gutting of the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision which established legal abortions.

- What happened to 17-year-old Becky Bell in 1988 is the best-known example of the "undue burden" on young women. Bell could not obtain a legal abortion in Indiana because of a state law requiring parental consent. Feeling she could not tell her parents about her pregnancy, she suffered a botched illegal abortion and died. Bell's death is memorialized at rallies and public meetings, and is the focus of the widely shown film "Abortion Denied: Shattering Young Women's Lives." Many young women, especially those from poor and working class families, do not know that they can bypass parents by seeking a judge's approval for an abortion. Even if they have that knowledge, many are afraid or too embarrassed to go through a court proceeding. This is particularly true for women of color who are alienated by the racism pervading the U.S. legal system. As of the fall of 1991, 41 states had passed parental consent or parental notification laws. The U.S. Supreme Court has now given every state encouragement to enact this life-and-death "undue burden" on young women.
- A waiting period for adult women is, in fact, an "undue burden" on poor women and those without easy access to medical facilities offering abortion services. A waiting period means that women are forced to pay for extra travel, housing, and other costs connected with a delay. There is also the problem of losing wages and explaining absences to bosses.

The "undue burden" of a mandated waiting period is best understood in the context of the growing scarcity of abortion services in the United States. There are presently no clinics or hospitals willing to perform abortions in 83 percent of America's counties. The number of hospitals offering abortion procedures dropped 50 percent between 1977-1988. The shortage of facilities

is especially severe in Midwestern and Southern states where the few clinics which do exist are mostly clustered in urban centers.

There is only one abortion facility in North Dakota—and many patients must travel from six to ten hours to get to it. Where facilities do function, women often have to wait three-four days due to scheduling problems at understaffed clinics. Women's health clinics have been bombed, set on fire, vandalized, and ringed with anti-abortion forces attempting to block entrances. This has resulted in the closing of some facilities and a reluctance to open new ones.

Accessibility is further limited by the lack of trained personnel. Only 13 percent of U.S. medical residency programs currently educate young doctors in first-trimester abortions.

Under these multiple conditions of shrinking accessibility, a waiting period takes on enormous importance in preventing women from exercising control over their lives.

The threat of *public disclosure* of detailed information about abortions performed is another "undue burden" on women. This regulation is obviously designed to frighten women into continuing a pregnancy or risking possible public embarrassment—with negative consequences to their job situations, personal relationships, and other aspects of their lives. It is also designed to discourage doctors from providing abortion services by publicizing their names and leaving them open to harassment and victimization. The Court has now added a judicial sanction to the extra-legal pressures already exerted against doctors.

Operation Rescue (OR) founder Randall Terry described how his group was going to force doctors to stop performing abortions: "We're going to shame them, humiliate them, embarrass them, disgrace them and expose them." Doctors receive threatening phone calls, their offices are vandalized, and their homes picketed. In one Florida city, four physicians quit their abortion practices due to actions by a tiny offshoot of OR. One doctor in the city continues to provide abortion services—although barbecue sauce was poured over his car, the tires were punctured, his home was picketed, his girlfriend's car windows were smashed, and his 80-year-old mother was called and told her son was a murderer. The director of a Minneapolis clinic regularly gets threatening phone calls, and her home has been picketed repeatedly. Bullets have been fired through the office windows of a Colorado doctor. Only one doctor in South Dakota performs abortions—and he works in a cinder block office protected by bulletproof windows and alarms. Physicians in Southern California were recently confronted with anti-abortion pickets outside of their offices, and their photographs appeared on leaflets announcing, "WANTED! For killing unborn babies in the South Bay!"

Attacking the Most Vulnerable Women

Poor females, women of color, and teenaged women were the first to be denied abortion rights. As early as 1977, Congress passed the Hyde Amendment ending federal Medicaid funding for low income women seeking abortions. Challenged with lawsuits filed by pro-choice forces, governmental restrictions on federally financed health services were upheld by judges. In 1991, by a 5-4 vote on *Rust v. Sullivan*, the U.S. Supreme Court approved a regulation prohibiting health care workers in federally funded clinics from telling women that abortion is a medical option. This "gag rule" had an immediate impact on about 4,000 clinics serving about five million teenaged and poor women a year.

The decision was a particularly hard blow against women of color who made up over 30 percent of patients using family planning clinics dependent partially or completely on federal monies. A month after this disaster hit domestic facilities, the Supreme Court upheld the government's right to deny foreign aid funds to overseas health care groups providing abortion counseling and procedures.

The National Black Women's Health Project, describing the catastrophic impact of the "gag rule," pointed out that "the majority of women seeking services from public hospitals are women of color." Rosie Jimenez, a Latina mother who died from a 1977 illegal abortion in Texas, remains a potent symbol for pro-choice activists today. Jimenez was not able to pay for a safe and legal operation after federal Medicaid funding for abortions was cut off by the government. The director of the National Latina Health Organization stated in 1991, "Even though we are only eight percent of the population, we get 13 percent of all abortions. This is proof that despite any moral, cultural, or religious teachings, we will do what our realities dictate."

The June 29 ruling by the Supreme Court poses heightened dangers to youths, poor females, and especially to African American, Latina and Chicana, Native American, Asian, and Pacific Islander women in the U.S. and its territories.

The Supreme Court's Continuing Attacks on Abortion Rights

The U.S. mass media emphasized the fact that the legal right to abortion was affirmed by the Supreme Court. In fact, the Court majority transformed the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision into a hollow shell by limiting women's right to choose during the period before fetal viability, and by deepening and expanding a state's power to regulate abortions at any point during the pregnancy.

In 1989, the Supreme Court opened the door to a state's authority to impose restrictions on women's abortion rights in the case of *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, a Missouri state law. Exactly what states could or could not restrict was not defined but in 1990 the Court ruled that states can require minors to notify one or more parents or receive a judge's permission before obtaining an abortion. Over the past two years, more than 800 bills limiting abortion rights have been introduced in 40 different state legislatures. With this latest decision, the Supreme Court has added new measures to the approved list of restrictions. The present bare majority of five who did not completely overturn *Roe v. Wade* can be suddenly turned into a minority. Four justices wrote a dissenting statement declaring themselves ready to strike down *Roe v. Wade* and to permit states to outlaw abortion. This leaves women teetering on the brink of total disaster.

Anti-Abortion 'Missionaries' Stopped in Milwaukee, but What Next?

by Mike McCallister

Fresh on the heels of a massive defeat in Buffalo, anti-abortion fanatics were again crushed by countermobilizations to defend Milwaukee's six abortion clinics this summer.

Promising six weeks of terror against Milwaukee women seeking to exercise their right to choose, "Missionaries to the Preborn" were only able to turn out a few hundred picketers each Saturday for the first two weeks of the demonstrations. Even fewer tried to breach the solid lines of defenders that massed in front of the clinics each morning at 5:00 a.m.

The city's pro-choice community came together last winter, when rumors began to float that Operation Rescue might try to duplicate their Wichita success in the land of beer 'n brats. The Milwaukee chapters of Planned Parenthood, the National Organization for Women and National Abortion Rights Action League organized the Milwaukee Clinic Protection Coalition.

The coalition, which also includes the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights and several local Jewish groups, began training escorts in February. By the time the Missionaries arrived on June 15, Milwaukee was ready.

Monday was marked by training on both sides for the battles to come. A 24-hour

hotline was in place to advise defenders which clinics would be open the following morning, and site leaders armed with walkie-talkies and cellular phones monitored the movement of the Missionaries to the targeted clinics.

Tuesday, 578 pro-choice activists turned out to defend Wisconsin Women's Health Care Center in suburban Brown Deer against about 200 "missionaries." Police moved defenders away from the clinic doors into the perimeter of the parking lot, allowing 99 anti-choicers to dash for the door. They were arrested before reaching the clinic, but coalition lawyer Stephen Glynn noted "If they had let us do our job, this wouldn't have happened."

By Saturday, June 20, hundreds became thousands as nearly 2,000 pro-choice defenders turned out in front of Summit Women's Health Organization in downtown Milwaukee. They easily turned away and dominated the 300 or so Missionaries who prayed and sang hymns on the other side of the street.

Again, 144 arrests were made, the peak of the protests to date. One pro-choice activist was also arrested at Wisconsin Women's Health for blowing up condoms and throwing them at the right-wingers.

The Clinic Protection Coalition maintained discipline by asking defenders to sign a non-violence pledge before joining the line. Clinic defenders agreed "not (to) engage in any physical or verbal assault or engage in any conduct which will escalate the potential for violence on site."

While this pledge served to keep the focus on protecting the clinics and their patients, some marshals used the "verbal assault" clause to stop chants viewed as "provocative." Thus, "We asked God and she's pro-choice" was approved (and popular!), while "Racist, sexist, anti-gay—born again bigots go away" and "Pray, you'll need it—your cause has been defeated" was deemed too harsh.

One of the reasons Milwaukee was targeted for invasion by these hate groups is the relative ease with which "rescuers" have been treated by local law enforcement.

Democratic Party District Attorney E. Michael McCann claims these attacks on abortion rights are no different than acts of civil disobedience protesting U.S. policy in Central America. So these folks are not charged with violating state law, but are just given a municipal fine.

One week before the invasion began, a united group of embarrassed Democratic

The 1992 Election Campaign

Anti-choice politicians quickly asserted that the Court's decision removed the abortion question as a hot issue during the current election campaign. That is wishful thinking. The majority of the U.S. population continues to support basic abortion rights, and the feminist movement has engaged in a persistent struggle to safeguard and expand women's right to choose. The issue has proven to be so powerful that it has driven a wedge in the major capitalist party with the strongest official anti-abortion position. The National Republican Coalition for Choice has lined up state delegations for a floor fight over abortion at the national convention in August, and has sent out a strongly worded letter across the country to organize pro-choice activities within the party and to "fight for a national party platform that reflects the pro-choice views of the majority of Republicans."

In order to capitalize on women's rights sentiments, the Democratic Party's national convention in July highlighted a formal pro-choice stance, spotlighted its women candidates, and orchestrated a special "women's night" for prime-time television coverage. Writing about the convention, *Newsweek* noted, "Women are now center stage in American politics. . . . EMILY's List (Early Money Is Like Yeast), which funds pro-choice Democratic women candidates, will have raised \$5 million by November, making it the largest single funder of political campaigns in the country. . . . The picture of the all-male Senate judiciary panel

grilling Anita Hill has proved to be a lucrative direct-mail fundraiser for women candidates. Women believe that if they can get to Washington in sufficient numbers, they can change the governing dynamic. They cite specific issues like reproductive choice, a family-leave policy and more money for breast-cancer research." [July 27, 1992]

The *Newsweek* article concluded with: "The publicity generated by history-making women candidates could benefit Clinton. This 'bottom-up strategy' relies on women turning out in greater numbers in the battleground states of California, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and possibly New York, where women are contesting Senate seats. California alone could double the number of women in the Senate (currently two) if Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer are elected. Women are also the Democratic standard-bearers in 16 of the state's 52 districts. Clinton's realization that he could get elected on women's coattails was evident in his acceptance speech when he spoke of the next generation with a 'she.' In this political year, a pronoun that once connoted the weaker sex has become a symbol of force."

Feminist activists have been heavily involved in lobbying state legislators and members of the U.S. Congress, and are currently campaigning for pro-choice candidates. In very important respects, this dependency on major capitalist party politicians has been strengthened by the Court's ruling on the Pennsylvania law. Electoralist activities on behalf of pro-choice candidates are being

Party officials ranging from State Attorney General James Doyle to Mayor John Norquist pledged to seek an injunction against the Missionaries and their leaders, preventing them from appearing within 25 feet of any clinic door.

Since the injunction was granted June 15, only two antis have been prosecuted under the injunction.

Joining the Missionaries in Milwaukee was a group called "Youth for America." Based in Marietta, Georgia, these folks organize the children of proto-fascists to invade clinics.

A letter to parents considering sacrificing their children for the cause from Bryan Longworth, national director of YFA, notes "One of the greatest things about Youth Rescue is the cost of rescuing is substantially lower for minors than it is for adults. Juvenile authorities usually release minor rescuers into the custody of an adult from the rescue group." Children as young as seven years old have been used as cannon fodder in this war against women's rights. Youths under the age of 14 are released immediately, while older minors got disorderly conduct tickets.

After the first week of the protests, some adults started getting \$139 tickets for contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Since the Missionaries, local or otherwise, have not paid fines (some with figures totaling thousands of dollars) and have not been jailed, it is not clear what deterrent additional fines present.

The second week of the protests was quieter, as pro-choicers regularly outnumbered the antis by at least 2-1. Failing to close a single clinic, or even turn a single woman away from her appointment, the Missionaries turned their attention to picketing two doctors' homes on Wednesday night.

While the antis' numbers increased for this nonconfrontational demonstration, it marked only a one-time diversion.

By the second Saturday, June 27, the clinic defense reached its high water mark. At least 1,200 people turned out to defend four area clinics. The Missionaries had promised to bring in busloads of Illinois antis to Milwaukee, but only about 600 turned out at Summit and Wisconsin Women's Health. Arrests totaled 80, including 15 children.

Both sides then seemed to relax in anticipation of the Supreme Court's decision in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the Pennsylvania case. When the court further gutted women's right to choose, hundreds turned out to a NARAL-sponsored rally at Juneau Park on the shores of Lake Michigan.

Speakers seemed divided on the decision's significance. Some held out the symbolic reaffirmation of the principle of *Roe v. Wade* as a victory, while others focused on the further attacks on abortion rights.

Nonetheless, the sole solution presented by all rally speakers was the passage of the Freedom of Choice Act in Congress and election of "pro-choice" candidates this fall. "We will decide November 3" read the

signs handed out by NARAL to demonstrators.

Unfortunately, two weeks of intense activity took its toll on the enthusiasm of the supporters of women's rights. While clinics were closed on the Fourth of July, by the next Saturday, July 11, the crowds of defenders shrunk dramatically. The Missionaries took advantage.

For the first time, antis outnumbered defenders. While there were more than enough defenders at Affiliated Medical Services on the city's East Side to insure that patients could get through, the fight for hearts and minds then became joined.

Fewer antis were arrested than on any other Saturday, but local fundamentalist churches were able to turn out more God-fearing Christians to support the "rescuers." Local people who hadn't participated in the past began appearing at the clinics later in the morning, once the leaders knew the relationship of forces had tipped to their side.

MCPC had no ability to call in additional forces like the antis could through the fundamentalist church network.

This success prompted local Missionary leader Rev. Matthew Trehwella to announce an extension of the right-wing campaign to August 8. He promised that 10,000 Christians would rally the night before a massive invasion on August 8.

Once this campaign ends, women's rights supporters must decide how to regain momentum, and reenergize the masses of women and men brought into the movement in June. This is the real question facing the MCPC. □

pushed by all major feminist organizations. At the same time, there are two countervailing trends: the success of mass mobilizations and the development of independent political action.

The Ongoing Struggle for Abortion Rights

The entire nation was impressed by the largest-ever mobilization which involved 750,000 abortion rights demonstrators in Washington, D.C., on April 5 of this year. In addition, the pro-choice movement has consistently outnumbered and outorganized Operation Rescue in highly successful, well-prepared defense actions at women's clinics. These public expressions by abortion rights advocates promoted a pro-choice climate—and may have helped persuade the Supreme Court justices to go out of their way to include a formal statement upholding *Roe v. Wade* (weak as that reaffirmation was!).

The already mobilized pro-choice movement responded to the Supreme Court's June 29 decision with immediate street demonstrations. In many cities, feminist groups had organized beforehand to hold street actions the day the Supreme Court decision was announced. In other places, "day after" actions took place. For example, the Los Angeles, California, branch of the National Organization for Women telephoned members and supporters in mid-June to alert them to demonstrate in front of the downtown Federal Building the evening of the decision. In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 700 marched to the Federal Building and held a rally on the day following the ruling. The Campaign for Abortion Rights, a coalition of 20 Pittsburgh area organizations, distributed and mailed a leaflet to prepare pro-choice forces for this vigorous protest action.

Women's rights groups, prepared for the abolition of legal abortions or the weakening of *Roe v. Wade*, had already organized projects to make sure women could obtain abortions, and had already planned to intensify their efforts to fight for abortion rights in a variety of ways. For example, one group provides transportation, housing, and escorts for poor women who need to travel to states where legal abortions can be obtained. Organized three years ago by Philadelphia Quakers, the group calls itself the Overground Railroad, a reference to the Underground Railroad which helped Black slaves escape to the North and to Canada during the 19th century. The parallel is appropriate: compulsory pregnancy is, indeed, a form of involuntary servitude.

Clinic defense actions are a continuing and powerful expression of the determination and strength of abortion rights forces. In city after city, feminists and their allies have countered the efforts of Operation Rescue and similar groups who have tried to close down facilities, frighten women patients, and force clinics to suspend their services. About two weeks after the Supreme Court ruling on the Pennsylvania statutes, Operation Rescue descended on the Delta Women's Clinic in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Abortion opponents threw themselves against the line of clinic defenders—and were unable to break through the chain of interlocked arms. OR jammed the clinic's telephone lines as a disruption tactic. Clinic operators reported that patients were able to keep their appointments. Having failed in their physical attacks, OR capped their Baton Rouge campaign by staging a prayer and song demonstration outside the clinic. Two clinics were under siege in Milwaukee during July—with similar failures for OR and another well-organized defense by pro-choice forces. In Southern California, Cardinal Roger Mahoney participated in a rally kicking off a week-long series of anti-abortion demonstrations and prayer vigils in front of clinics and city halls.

On July 1, Customs Service agents confiscated the RU-486 pills brought into this country by a U.S. citizen returning from France where the abortifacient drug is produced. This resulted in a series

of legal challenges which ended with the Supreme Court refusing to allow the return of the pills to the San Francisco woman who was six weeks pregnant. The woman's trip, the alerting of the Customs Service, and the court cases were part of a campaign by Abortion Rights Mobilization (ARM) to challenge the current ban on importation and research on this pill in the U.S. A great deal of publicity was evoked by these events, and this aspect of the abortion issue will continue to receive public attention because the California woman and the newly formed Center for Reproductive Law and Policy are co-plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed in the U.S. Court in Brooklyn. The suit charges that the Food and Drug Administration's ban violates a woman's right to privacy, imposes a substantial barrier to women who wish to obtain a non-surgical abortion, and prevents U. S. doctors from offering treatment they feel is in the best interests of their patients.

Independent Political Action

The independent organization of women expressed through clinic defense actions, demonstrations, marches, and rallies is a significant form of political action. The electoral aspect of political action is, also, taking on an increasingly independent character. Feminists' disgust with the betrayals by their supposed "friends" in the Democratic Party surfaced at the 1989 National NOW Conference, and resulted in the adoption of a resolution on independent political action, and an "Expanded Bill of Rights for the 21st Century." NOW created the Commission for Responsive Democracy which conducted hearings in 1990-91, and projected the formation of a new party, independent from both the Democratic and Republican parties, and based on a broad program to meet the needs of women, workers, people of color, and other oppressed and disenfranchised groupings in U.S. society. The 1992 National NOW Conference overwhelmingly voted to support a new party formation called the 21st Century Party—the Nation's Equality Party. This expression of political independence by feminists is interrelated with two other significant developments: Labor Party Advocates and the independent presidential campaign of Ron Daniels, a longtime African American activist.

Independent political action—in the streets and in the electoral arena—is becoming the preferred strategy among growing numbers of those fighting to win back and extend abortion rights. This promising trend needs to be encouraged at the local and national levels, and through forging interconnections between feminists, the labor movement, and people of color. There is a basis for revolutionary optimism about the struggle for women's rights. Membership in feminist organizations has swollen since the Supreme Court's 1989 decision established a state's power to limit abortion rights. Student feminist groups have sprung up on campuses across the country. A new generation of young women and men have joined with veteran feminists to fight for reproductive rights. Each national mass mobilization has been larger than the preceding one. Previously inactive allies have been drawn into public demonstrations, clinic defense actions, and support activities. The movement has combined a nationally coordinated strategy with intensive efforts at the state and local levels. There has been no backing down from the battle cry, "Never again!" No return to back-alley abortions! Women will control their own bodies!

Women and their allies are prepared to march and rally and take political action to gain *safe, fully legal, accessible, and affordable* abortions regardless of residence, age, and financial condition. □

July 23, 1992

NOW Lays Plans to Safeguard Women's Rights

by Lisa Landphair

On June 26, 1992, as the Supreme Court was deliberating over the latest in a series of rollbacks of women's reproductive rights, nearly two thousand feminists assembled in Chicago for the national convention of the National Organization for Women. Women and men from all parts of the U.S. arrived prepared not only to discuss common concerns, set goals, and develop action strategies for the near and longer term, but also to take to the streets in vigorous protest of the expected decision by the high court to uphold the restrictive Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act targeted at young, married, low income, and rural women.

Given the present national climate of steadily worsening economic and social conditions for the majority of people, and the corresponding increase in struggle, it is not ironic that these two events would coincide. It is also not coincidental that in the face of stepped-up attacks on basic human rights, NOW in its 25th year, the country's largest women's organization, held its first Global Feminist Conference and in April mobilized the biggest demonstration in U.S. history of pro-choice forces in Washington, D.C. The agenda of NOW's three-day conference reflected the immediacy, scope, and gravity of the situation confronting women, not only nationally but internationally, as the state incrementally takes away the right to control their bodies and their lives.

Consciousness of strength through solidarity was a central theme of the conference and is a stated objective of the organization. For example, in a workshop addressing the absence of reproductive rights in Ireland, the atmosphere was educational and informative with an emphasis on discussion and creativity in developing strategies to use organizational power to politically influence the policies of anti-choice governments abroad. For example, one suggestion was to apply economic pressure through the use of product boycotts. The result of the session was the formation of a subcommittee to author a resolution proposing that NOW's national board "study the feasibility" of such measures in an effort to solidarize with and aid the struggle of sisters in other countries. Additionally, this resolution illustrates that NOW "recognizes that the struggle for reproductive freedom is a global issue" and must be fought on an international scale.

While the membership of NOW is still predominately white and middle income, its leadership is making diversification a national priority. Thirty-three percent of the leadership now represents racial and ethnic minorities. New York City NOW has recently conducted seminars on racism and held meetings to discuss the goal of greater diversity in membership. Moreover, NOW is diverse in terms of sexual orientation. Banners announcing "Strength in Diversity" and workshops

and special issues hearings entitled "Building Racial and Cultural Bridges in the Lesbian Community," "Race, Class, Cultural Conflict," and "Racial and Ethnic Diversity" point out NOW's awareness of the need to advance the fundamental issue of all women—her right to choose; whether the choice is one of privacy, sexual preference, or having a child or an abortion.

In an "Action Strategies for the '90s" workshop, experienced activists spoke of the importance of making links with organized labor and students on campuses and in high schools. A union activist in the field of health care called the present state of 40 million medically uninsured people, mostly women and children, a "national emergency" and urged NOW to forge connections with the labor movement, to engage in union organizing, and to get involved in demanding a national health care solution from the government and corporations. An Oak Park, Illinois, activist reiterated the need to work with organized labor in addition to the Black movement. She wryly cautioned that "this may cause revolution, but that's what we need!" A seasoned abortion clinic defender from Wichita, Kansas, impatient with talk, stated that "we've been through hell" and emphasized the power and effectiveness of direct mass action. Marquita Sykes, NOW's Racial and Ethnic Diversity Program director and one of the workshop presenters, clarified the relationship between class, poverty, and frustration and violence in light of recent events such as the Los Angeles rebellions. Sykes also noted that diversity is necessary not only for NOW to grow but merely for it to survive, and further stated that if NOW takes up the issues of people of color and the working poor and unemployed, it will diversify naturally.

Other workshops and resolutions highlighted NOW's commitment to solidarizing with women who suffer double oppression and from specific forms of discrimination: there was a resolution in support of indigenous peoples; another calling for a 1993 march of "Women of All Colors"; and another resolving that NOW create a broadly diverse commission to study ways to increase diversification of the organization. The final resolution of the conference came out of the special issues hearing on racism. It mandates Local NOW chapters in regional and state NOW organizations to create and follow through on affirmative action plans including educational programs around the issue of racism. There were calls for more attention and resources to be directed to women with disabilities, AIDS, and breast cancer, for economic justice for low income women and their families, and for an end to violence against and sexual harassment of women (specifically the Tailhook incident in which women visiting a naval base were molested).

The conference further proposed to sponsor a second Young Feminists Conference in 1993 and at intervals of no more than two years thereafter. A special issues hearing on the Equal Rights Amendment mandated the formation of a Woman's Equality Amendment Committee by August 26, 1992, as well as a proposal for Women's Equality Day, which will be directed to launch a new ERA campaign.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this year's conference was the overwhelming support for the 21st Century Party—the Nation's Equality Party. Conveners of the new party, Dolores Huerta, co-founder and vice president of the United Farm Workers, and Ellie Smeal, president of the Fund for the Feminist Majority, made a convincing case for the creation of a party of and by the underrepresented. Using recent poll data which indicate that the majority of Americans want a new party, Smeal warned that the "Perot phenomenon" proves that a political vacuum has been created by the public's move away from the twin parties and that it will be filled by "rich, white men" if we don't act first. At the same time the discussions about the new party reveal the uneven political development of the rank and file as well as the leadership of NOW. On the one hand there is the understanding, gained through hard

knocks experience, that to continue to affiliate with the Democratic and Republican parties is tantamount to "staying in an abusive relationship." On the other hand, especially in an election year in which women see opportunities to win at various levels, there is the tendency to stay with what is familiar (namely the two major parties) and effect small changes now.

It is difficult to know exactly where the NOW leadership stands on "inside-outside" strategy. For example, although there was almost unanimous support of the 21st Century Party resolution, it was qualified and greatly compromised by an amendment allowing work inside the Democratic Party to continue. It seems that part of the NOW leadership thought this amendment was considered necessary to obtain the 60 percent majority vote required for the resolution's passage. Moreover, the theme of one of the plenaries was "Elect Women for a Change." At least a dozen, mostly Democratic, female candidates running for nearly all levels of government were introduced to rally support and raise money for their campaigns. Twenty-six thousand dollars was raised in this auction-like event. In addition, in what appears to be an attempt to use independent politics in order to pressure the two major parties, a resolution was passed to run pro-choice independent women candidates in areas where the only options are anti-choice Republicans and Democrats.

In spite of these existing and possibly deep divisions in NOW concerning the need to break from its past tradition of supporting "friends" in the two ruling class parties, there is no denying the historical importance of what this already vast, activist, multi-issue organization of women is setting out to do. In Washington, D.C., on August 29-30, the culmination of three years of research, planning, and discussion takes form in the founding convention for the 21st Century Party. It is vital that the organized left actively participate in, help build, and try to influence the direction it will take. Moreover, NOW has the strength of numbers and commitment and recognizes the necessity of broadening its ranks in the areas of racial, class, and economic representation. Its leadership is now talking about "class struggle" and the important role of the labor and social movements in these struggles. All of these progressive developments together strongly point toward the leftward evolution of NOW's politics as a result of the escalating assaults on women's lives and rights. Revolutionary socialists can make an important contribution to encourage this process.

Whereas the weekend commenced in the ominous shadow of the pending Supreme Court decision, which underscored the importance of being organized and combative in these decisive times, it concluded with the celebration of National Gay Pride Day, which symbolizes the potential for victory when we solidarize with sisters and brothers in defending our individuality and basic rights. □



The following is a press release from the Ron Daniels for President campaign, the Campaign for a New Tomorrow.

Asiba Tupahache for Vice President

A highly respected Native writer, publisher, educator, and activist, Asiba Tupahache, from Great Neck, New York, has agreed to be Ron Daniels co-partner in the drive to utilize the '92 presidential campaign as a vehicle to forge a mass-based, independent, progressive political movement.

Tupahache, a member of the Matinecok Nation, accepted the challenge to stand for the vice presidency because she feels that the people of this country are in a state of emergency.

As an answer to the state of emergency, Tupahache is joining Daniels in building strategic alliances between oppressed people in this country and the progressive movement, who will link their struggle with those of women, youth, lesbians and gays, labor, farmers, environmentalists, peace activists, and the poor.

Tupahache, who is the founder and publisher of The Spirit of January, a publishing company specializing in information on the dysfunctional condition, feels that neither the two establishment parties nor the candidacy of the billionaire businessman from Texas can mount a fundamental challenge to the rule of the rich and the super-rich in this nation.

She agrees with Daniels that they must be partners with the people in running this country and that their campaign would help empower people to confront oppression here and abroad.

Statement by Asiba Tupahache

I have accepted the challenge to stand for the vice presidency with presidential can-

didate Ron Daniels because we are in a state of emergency.

It would have never occurred to me to run for any office in a society such as this. I am not a politician. I have never felt that this was my country, but rather, that my country was occupied by a foreign government. I am indigenous to the Matinecok Nation which is viewed by this society as extinct.

I have worked many years developing an understanding of the pathology of American oppression and its related dependency issues. The continuing process of American oppression is rooted in the psychosis of land seizure. My resolve comes from the reality that we are here in 1992 in this situation together. None of us were around for the invasions hundreds of years ago; however, we are responsible for what we have become in the continuing dysfunctional American process.

American dependency issues are evidenced in the rampant addictions, compulsive disorders, and morbid behavior throughout this society. This continues to elude America's futile efforts to end the conflicts and tragedies that result from symptomatic behavior. America fails to end its condition because it is incapacitated by its pathological state.

America has changed law after law but has repeatedly failed to change its mind. Many are confused as to why all the legislation and money spent on civil rights did not end the condition. The reason is because *America never changed its dysfunctional mind*. As a result, the behavior didn't change either.

Confronting oppression is incomprehensible to America. For this reason it is never taken into account whenever conflict explodes time and again. The morbidity of this situation impacts on all of us, even those of us who appear to "profit" from it. Loss and/or denial of personhood is the ultimate loss to all human beings who are forced to suffer and endure masks of superior/inferior identity products.

Police brutality always remains to be an untouchable phenomenon because America cannot confront racialized aggression. Because America can't do it in its present state of mind, this does not mean police brutality cannot be approached and resolved at all. The causal issues are as specific as diagnosis and treatment and *must be resolved*.

My work has been centered around empowering people to confront the American condition by being able to identify oppression and clarifying related dependency issues with regard to self, each other, and the environment.

The goals and objectives proposed by Mr. Daniels reflect what a dependency-free societal mind-set would require. It's one thing to intellectualize about making change. However, being able to make change requires the psychological ability to make the commitment for change while withstanding the challenges of transitions for change.

We are conditioned to perceive ourselves through white male dominance as an identity product. The conflicts we experience as a result of enduring such a dominant esteem can only be resolved by confronting and treating the psychosis that keeps us in the same cycle one generation after another. Superiority is mythical. Domination is unnatural and perverse.

Mr. Daniels proposes a partnership presidency, which in its very concept is in conflict with this society's present perception of a presidency of unaccountable white male privilege. Mr. Daniels requires that we be partners in the running of this country recognizing that he, as president, would reflect the power and respect of a highly trusted public servant receiving a welfare check from the constituency like the American ideal can only now pretend. Mr. Daniels's campaign is the only one that specifically includes the unresolved issues between America and the dispossessed indigenous peoples. It is only a candidacy such as this that I would have any part. □

News update:

**Ron Daniels wins Peace and Freedom nomination in California
Look for coverage in our next issue**

**Also next issue: Report on the founding convention of the 21st Century Party—
the Nation's Equality Party**

Bloody Face of Reform

The carnage on the reef has reached new levels of terror and brutality. Already in the first four months of this year 923 have been killed. Every day, hundreds of people are terrorized, coming from work in the trains and taxis and attacked in their homes by armed mobs intent on wiping out all those identified as being outside of their groups.

We, in WOSA, reject the notion put forward by the ruling class that what is taking place is a tribal war of Xhosas against Zulus, ANC against Inkatha, black on black violence or any other simple explanation that leaves the racist state out of the picture. It is true that so-called Zulu speaking people have killed Xhosa speaking people and vice versa, ANC supporters have been killed by Inkatha supporters and vice versa. However, what is taking place is far more complex and at the same time far more sinister.

While communal violence is taking place, while pogroms are the order of the day, while ethnic antagonisms have reached explosion point, and while organizational intolerance has reached new heights there is a force that has, and continues, to carefully orchestrate what is taking place.

Although Nelson Mandela calls it a sinister third force, and even De Klerk admits readily that there may be a third force at work, we don't believe that one has to go very far to uncover who is responsible for the carnage taking place. By asking the question "who benefits from what is taking place?", the sinister force responsible, begins to emerge from the confusion of the situation.

The Transvaal and the East and West Rand in particular is one of the main centres of the industrial working class. Over the last years the working class and behind it the radical youth

have won the reputation of being the most militant and potent force in the struggle against oppression and exploitation. The level of organisation in the form of trade unions, industrial locals, youth organizations and civic associations has been remarkable. In every major struggle since the student uprising of 1976 the oppressed have looked to Soweto and the Reef for a lead.

Although the state of emergency took its toll and weakened organization and the militancy of the working masses, the state was unable to inflict a decisive defeat on the black working class. As soon as a political opening appeared the exploited masses seized the opportunity to stamp their class demands on the political scene through mass strikes, protest demonstrations, rent and consumer boycotts and mass marches.

This level of mobilisation and general combativity of the working class has clearly threatened the negotiating process. It makes it extremely difficult for the ruling class to impose a deal on the mass movement which will effectively leave wealth and power in the hands of the minority. Calls made by the government for peace and an end to strikes and mass action have gone unheeded.

It has become clear to the state that the working class must be weakened, its combativity smashed and its unity broken. We in WOSA believe that it is these objectives that lie behind the current brutal violence sweeping the Reef townships.

A low intensity war has begun in which the state is exploiting existing divisions within the black community and using as its agents any social force that allows itself to be manipulated. It is the same policy that has been used so successfully by Latin American dictatorships in Colombia,

El Salvador and in Peru. By promoting organisations based on declassed social layers, by arming them and through the systematic use of death squads and far right-wing groups, the most active sections of the organised working class have been brought to their knees.

We now have growing proof which demonstrates that state violence has been used against the mass movement. The killing of Matthew Goniwe and his comrades ordered at the highest levels of state i.e. the State Security Council in 1985 is one of the early precedents of this strategy. Inkathagate, the Trust Feed Massacres, the hundreds of sworn affidavits made to the Goldstone Commission is part of the growing proof that a systematic operation is in progress.

The advantage of this strategy is that the state does not appear as directly involved. It is able to present itself as neutral in the conflict and as the only force capable of bringing order to the chaos. At the same time the bitterness generated by the brutal massacres and the shattering of the lives of the people involved, takes many years to overcome. Where there were artificial divisions before, which were being overcome in the process of struggle, real divisions are created.

We do not believe that this type of violence will restrict itself to the Transvaal and Natal, where it has been taking place for some time now.

We warn that in every area where the black working class stands as an obstacle to negotiations, the fragile situation in already tense townships will be blown apart by the deliberately orchestrated provocations. Whereas the state used on the Reef migrant hostel dwellers, Inkatha supporters and squatters as their agents, any sectarian and politically backward

force will be exploited to sow division and destruction.

The Way Forward

The workers in the Reef townships are in a desperate situation. They are generally unarmed and no force in the Liberation movement has the means by itself to arm and defend the masses. To call on the South African government and the security forces to "crush the violence" is to further disarm the working masses politically by sowing the illusion that the security forces are willing to act against the perpetrators of the violence. Calling on the state to intervene in effect puts our people at the mercy of the SAP and the SADF who stand accused of killing our people.

Using a political sleight of hand, the state is using the chaos, for which they are responsible, to lay siege to the townships and in the process smash the democratic movement.

National Peace Accord

The National Peace Accord has been a total failure. While it curbed the militancy, and thus the effective capacity of the mass movement to defend itself against vigilante and state violence, it was incapable of bringing the violence to an end. In fact since the Peace Accord was signed the violence has increased.

We call on the mass movement and the liberation organisations who have signed this Accord not only to withdraw from it but to once and for all make a break with the class collaborationist politics on which it is based. Our movement will gain nothing from trying to work with forces which seek our destruction! We make strong and urgent pleas to all forces of the liberation movement, the trade union movement, to stand united at this crucial moment. Any posturing, any gamesmanship where one organisation seeks to use the tragedy, that is unfolding, for narrow party ends, is playing into the hands of the state. There can be no delay in bringing together the broadest possible range of forces in the liberation struggle to defend our communities.

We therefore call on the ANC, PAC, AZAPO, the SACP, the NUM and together with COSATU, NACTU and the independent trade unions, to jointly convene a crisis meeting to



plan a programme of action to deal with the situation.

As proposed by WOSA, this means setting up ad-hoc regional committees to pool resources and to address this crisis in the most concrete way possible. I.E. to:

- organise joint self-defence
- organise relief aid such as food, shelter etc.
- organise united mass action aimed at defending the masses and strengthening them in the face of this onslaught. At the same time mass action must pressurise capital and the government to meet a number of short term demands that can alleviate the situation.

Since we do not believe that the violence can be reduced to an ANC-Inkatha conflict we do not believe that a call to meet with Buthelezi is relevant. In fact this would only strengthen the hand of the state and of Inkatha in this whole process.

More important in our view is for our comrades in the ANC to break off talks with the government until at the very least the situation has normalised. The National Party government must pay the price for their role in this outrage. A firm message must be delivered to the state that we the

oppressed and exploited masses are not going to stand by while our people are murdered.

Conclusion

There is a tremendous amount at stake. Having weakened the mass movement through the state of emergency, the state wishes to deal with the threat posed by the black working class to their reform project. It is not good enough to bring the ANC and other organisations to the negotiating table. Any settlement reached must not be destabilised by continued mass struggle. In an effort to disunite, defeat, exhaust and terrorise the working masses into submission the state has unleashed this low intensity war under the guise of ethnic conflict.

WOSA believes to blame the conflict on tribalism, on political intolerance is to miss the sinister role played by the state and the clear objectives that the state security institutions wish to realize.

We call on all organisations in the liberation struggle no matter what their ideological differences to unite to defend the working class and the communities under threat. Decisive and immediate action taken jointly by all sectors of the mass movement can stop the state and their agents and even reverse the tables!

On April 16, 1992, the curtain fell on one of the most tragic dramas of the post-World War II era, the Afghan civil war and the Soviet intervention in it. Though the Soviet Union withdrew the last of its forces in February 1989, it was too late: its intervention in Afghanistan had helped to spark a political crisis whose end result was the collapse of the Soviet workers' state itself. Ironically, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA, the Afghan Stalinist party) remained in power after the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had fallen.

Even at this writing, some three months following the fall of President Najibullah, it is unclear what political force, if any, holds decisive power in Afghanistan. Throughout the nearly thirteen years of civil war, the anticommunist guerrilla organizations had almost as much hostility to each other as to the Soviets and their

chagrin. Historically Afghan towns prospered from commerce along the Silk Road, which connected China with the Mediterranean; however, those fabled overland trade routes lost their importance 400 years ago. Since then Afghanistan, along with the rest of Central Asia, has languished in poverty and isolation.

At the time the PDPA came to power (1978) Afghanistan had one of the lowest living standards in the world. The chances that a child would survive to adulthood were only 50-50, and for those who did survive childhood, life expectancy averaged about 50 years. Annual per capita income was estimated at \$168. It was estimated at that time that half of all Afghans were afflicted with tuberculosis and a quarter with malaria. Only about one Afghan in ten could read and write. Afghanistan to this day has no railroads and few paved highways.

War and Tragedy in Afghanistan

by Tom Barrett

client government in Kabul. All that is known for sure is that Islamic fundamentalists will either hold power or be a force to be reckoned with for whoever *does* hold power. It is likely, at least for the present, that attempts to bring this backward impoverished country into the industrial age will not be resumed in the near future.

The Afghan civil war was and remains a theoretical challenge to assumptions that Marxists have held for many decades. In spite of its attempts to improve the masses' living standards and cultural level, the overwhelming majority of Afghans rejected the PDPA's leadership and turned to leaders with a precapitalist and in most respects thoroughly reactionary ideology. The Soviet Union, which had good reason to fear a militant anticommunist regime on its southern border, intervened militarily. The end result, however, was not the *defense* of the Soviet workers' state but a Vietnam-like quagmire, which actually strengthened reactionary forces on a world scale as well as in Afghanistan. The Afghan war's expense was a horrific drain on the Soviet economy, and the Soviet forces' failure to defeat the ragtag *mujahedeens* (an Arabic word, meaning participants in a *jihad*, or holy war) destroyed what little confidence the Soviet bureaucracy had left in itself as a ruling force in society, leading to Mikhail Gorbachev's attempts at "restructuring." Ultimately, the bureaucracy's last crisis resulted not in "restructuring" of the existing system of bureaucratic rule, but in the openly procapitalist regime of Boris Yeltsin. Revolutionaries cannot wish these realities away, nor can they be understood by repeating simple formulas learned in the past.

War, Poverty, and the 'Great Game'

Afghanistan is one of the most geographically inhospitable countries on earth. It is dry, mountainous, and subject to extremes of both heat and cold. It is poor in natural resources and arable land. Tribespeople herd their sheep and goats much as they have done for centuries, despite massive invasions from both east and west, including Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, and many others. Afghanistan's mountain passes have for generations sheltered bandits, smugglers, and guerrilla fighters, as Persian, Indian, Turkish, British, and Russian invaders have learned to their

Like most Central Asian countries, Afghanistan is not a nation-state in the European sense. Several different nationalities are grouped together within its arbitrarily determined borders. The largest group are the Pushtuns (also known as Pathans), whose language is Pashto. The Pushtuns are also prevalent in Pakistan, another artificial nation. The official Afghan language, however, is Dari, a Persian dialect. Other important national groupings within Afghanistan include Tajiks (the Dari-speaking people) and Uzbeks, peoples who live on both sides of the Amu Darya River (also known by its Greek name, the Oxus), which separates Afghanistan from what was once the Soviet Union.

Historical Background

The expansion of the tsarist Russian Empire coincided with the British conquest of India. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Russia's drive for a warm water port and access to the Indian Ocean led them into more or less permanent conflict with Britain. The Iranian plateau and Afghanistan's rugged mountain ranges formed a natural defense of the British Empire's Crown Jewel from Russian conquest. Rudyard Kipling, whose poetry and fiction are a lasting monument to British imperialism, called the conflict between Britain and Russia the "Great Game."

In 1839 Dost Mohammad Khan, a local chieftain who ruled over the Kabul and Qandahar regions, appealed to Russia for help in recapturing Peshawar from the Sikhs. Though the tsar did not respond favorably at that time, Britain sent its army of the Indus into Afghan territory in case he did. In 1842 a decimated British force retreated ignominiously back into India, the victim of fierce mountain guerrilla warfare.

Russia considered the Pushtun regions as fair game for expansion just as it had the Tajik, Uzbek, Kirghiz, and Turkmen territories. In 1864, the Russian foreign minister, Prince Alexander Gorchakov, argued:

The interests of security on the frontier, and of commercial relations, compel the more civilized state to exercise a certain ascendancy over neighbors whose turbulence and nomadic instincts render them difficult to live with....The state...must

abandon the incessant struggle and deliver its frontier over to disorder, which renders property, security and civilization impossible; or it must plunge into the depths of savage countries, where the difficulties and sacrifices to which it is exposed increase with each step in advance....The greatest difficulty is in knowing where to stop. [Quoted in Henry S. Bradsher: *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, Duke Press Policy Studies, Durham, NC]

In 1878 Britain again invaded Afghanistan. Again, the local chiefs appealed for Russian aid, and again, the tsar begged off, since his armies would have had to cross the Hindu Kush mountain range in midwinter. This time the British invasion was successful, beginning a period of more or less direct colonial rule which lasted until the end of World War I. During this period Anglo-Russian negotiations determined (more or less) the borders of modern Afghanistan, separated from the Russian Empire by the Amu Darya River and from British India (today Pakistan) by a 1,500-mile boundary known as the Durand Line, which winds through mountains and deserts from China to the Iranian province of Sistan-Baluchistan. The western border with Iran was fixed in the 1850s, when Nasr-ed-Din Shah renounced Iran's historic claim to Afghanistan.

These borders were determined by military considerations with no thought given to the people actually living within the enclosed territory. They left Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Turkmens living on both sides of the Afghan-Russian border. The Durand Line virtually bisected the Pushtun nationality, leaving about two-thirds in Afghanistan and one-third in India. Baluchis were divided into three countries—India, Afghanistan, and Iran. Attempts by the different national groupings to achieve unity and self-determination has been a consistent cause of tension and violence in the decades since.

Thus, Afghanistan was virtually defined as a country by the clash between British and Russian imperial interests, as a buffer between British expansion from the Indian subcontinent and Russian expansion through the Central Asian steppes. Prince Gorchakov observed that the greatest difficulty was "knowing where to stop." Afghanistan was the place. From the time that Russia began its emergence as a world power under Peter the Great, the territory today known as Afghanistan has been inseparably connected with the Central Asian regions under Russian domination. That factor more than any other determined the Soviet course of action in 1979.

Afghanistan and Central Asia During the Russian Revolution and Civil War

The Bolshevik revolution of 1917 guaranteed to all non-Russian peoples within the former tsarist empire the right to self-determination, up to and including the right to secession. The Muslims of Central Asia were prepared to exercise that right to the fullest extent. It is sometimes overlooked that the Russian monarchy and bourgeoisie justified its participation in World War I partly as a crusade against Islam. Even after the February revolution, Pavel Miliukov, the leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party (the "Cadets," the most important liberal bourgeois party in the Russian parliament), spoke fanatically about recapturing Constantinople from the "infidel" Turks and restoring the St. Sophia cathedral as the center of Greek Orthodox Christianity. For their part, the Uzbeks, Tajiks, and other Islamic peoples, led by village khans and local mullahs, tended to see their struggle as less against Russian domination than against non-Islamic domination. During World War I there were bloody uprisings in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which tsarist forces brutally suppressed.

The actual course of events in Central Asia during the Russian Revolution and civil war has provided ammunition for anticommunists of all types who have argued that the Bolshevik pledge of

self-determination was a fake and a fraud. The forcible incorporation of the Transcaucasian regions into the Soviet Union was a significant factor in the intensity of the Afghan resistance to the Soviet invasion some 60 years later; conversely, Soviet fear of a repeat performance of an anticommunist Islamic uprising within their borders was the primary motivation for their taking military action in 1979. Indeed, some of the Afghan resistance fighters were either actual veterans of the Islamic guerrilla war against the Soviet Union in the early 1920s or their direct descendants.

After the October revolution the only authority in the region was the Tashkent Soviet, composed predominantly of Russian settlers—soldiers, railway workers, etc. In December 1917 a group of Islamic leaders, drawn mainly from the aristocracy and mullahs, proclaimed an "autonomous government" at Kokand in the Fergana Valley. Two months later, forces led by the Tashkent Soviet swept into the Fergana Valley, smashed the Kokand Autonomous Government, and established its control at the cost of between 5,000 and 10,000 lives.

During the civil war and for some years afterwards the Red Army in Central Asia fought against Islamic guerrillas known as *basmachi*, who numbered up to 20,000. Though they fought on horseback with antiquated weapons, the *basmachi*, like the Afghan *mujahedeen* seventy years later, were a formidable enemy. They were able to strike quickly and then disappear without a trace into the mountain passes. They had no respect for the artificial borders drawn by British and Russian diplomats, and they passed freely from Soviet territory into Afghanistan and back. Like the Afghan *mujahedeen*, the different *basmachi* groups had as much hostility to each other as they had to the Red Army. Ethnic and family rivalries proved their undoing, and by the mid-1920s the Red Army was able to secure the region. Many *basmachi* fled to Afghanistan and remained there.

The Islamic guerrillas made no distinction between tsarist Russians and Bolshevik Russians—all were enemies, whether infidel Christians or godless Communists. Their leaders were not only opposed to domination from outside: they were also opposed to the social changes which the Soviets hoped to bring to the region, including secular education, advancement of women, modern agriculture, and industrialization. For them, national self-determination meant maintaining the precapitalist power structure and social relations which had existed for five centuries.

Ironically, however, in other Islamic countries serious attempts at modernization were under way. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and Reza Shah in Iran were dragging their countries by the hair into the twentieth century. A similar process was occurring in Afghanistan at the same time.

In 1919 the Afghan Emir Habibullah Khan was mysteriously murdered. In the turmoil which followed, his son Amanullah Khan came to power and declared himself king (with the title "Shah" instead of "Khan"). Amanullah Shah's aspiration was to modernize the Afghan economy and society and to free Afghanistan from imperialist domination. He considered himself a revolutionary, and shortly after his ascension to power he wrote a letter to the "High-Born President of the Great Russian Republic," V.I. Lenin, proposing diplomatic relations between their two countries. Lenin promptly replied, recognizing Amanullah's government and Afghan "independence and autonomy." However, Afghanistan's foreign affairs were under direct control of the British Foreign Office. Amanullah Shah launched a military offensive against the British in order to establish complete Afghan independence. Though victorious militarily, the war-weary British agreed to relinquish their control over Afghanistan's foreign policy.

Amanullah Shah's short reign was in many respects an earlier parallel to the period between the overthrow of the monarchy in 1973 and the Soviet invasion in late 1979. The attempts to impose modernization met stiff resistance throughout the country, especially outside the major cities. The lack of efficient means of

communication and transportation put the central government at a disadvantage against the local religious and tribal authorities. Though Amanullah was friendly to the Soviet Union and considered himself a kindred revolutionary he was in no way a Soviet client. In fact, he was appalled by the Soviet annexation of the Central Asian emirates and allowed the *basmachi* freedom of movement within Afghanistan to regroup and reequip their forces.

In spite of Amanullah's sympathy for the anticommunist guerrillas, and in spite of the fledgling Soviet Union's economic and military difficulties, the Soviets provided generous foreign and military aid to Afghanistan during the 1920s. When a regional rebellion broke out in Khost (southeast of Kabul) in 1924, Amanullah accused the British of instigating it and appealed for Soviet support. The Soviets built up their military advisory personnel to 120 and, according to British intelligence reports at that time, the "so-called Afghan air force [was] to all intents and purposes a Russian service and [was] indeed [to] be regarded as a Russian advanced base" (quoted in Bradsher, *op. cit.*, p. 15).

Unlike Atatürk and his successors and Reza Shah and his son Mohammad Reza Shahanshah (the last shah of Iran), Amanullah was unable to make any lasting economic and social reforms in Afghanistan. His luck ran out in late 1928. While he was out of the country a rebellion erupted, led by an illiterate Tajik bandit named Habibullah but better known as Bacha-i-Saqao ("Son of a Water-Carrier"). The rebellion's aims were to put a stop to modernization and collaboration with atheists and "infidels." Though Bacha-i-Saqao's movement had considerable support among the poor masses, the Soviet Union, by now under Stalin's control, intervened to aid Amanullah. The Afghan ambassador to Moscow led a force of 1,000 Soviet Central Asians into Afghanistan but gave up the fight in April 1929 on word that Amanullah had gone into exile in Italy. Bacha-i-Saqao's reign was shortlived, and when the turmoil ended a member of the traditional royal family, Mohammad Zaher Shah, held the throne. His reign lasted from 1932 until 1973, during which time British influence was reestablished. Zaher Shah was basically a figurehead king, however. Most power was exercised by his first cousin, Mohammad Daoud Khan, who served as both war minister and prime minister. It was Daoud who would overthrow Zaher Shah in 1973 and establish the Afghan Republic.

Thus, the 1979 Soviet invasion had strong historical precedent. Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union took an active interest in Afghan internal affairs, and indeed the tsarist empire played a significant role in determining modern Afghanistan's borders. Long before the Bolshevik revolution Afghan leaders looked to their northern neighbor for assistance against British imperialist domination. Conversely, however, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and other Islamic Central Asians fighting Moscow's domination, both before and after the October revolution, were able to find safe haven for regroupment and resupply on the Afghan side of the Amu Darya.

Soviet intervention in Central Asia—in direct contradiction to the guarantee of national self-determination—was not simply a Stalinist policy, even though Stalin was commissar of nationalities during the early postrevolutionary period. It was a Bolshevik policy. However, it was dictated by real political and military concerns and was in no way a result of Bolshevik "dishonesty," "power hunger," or a drive for "Communist world domination," regardless of the slanders leveled by anti-communists or their attorneys within the workers' movement. The *basmachi* were allies of the counterrevolutionary White Army and a genuine threat to the fledgling Soviet Republic. Moreover, they were led by social forces who were reactionary to the core and completely hostile to the aims of the Russian Revolution. Nevertheless, forcibly incorporating the Central Asian regions into the Soviet Union had negative consequences as well, and historians may argue interminably whether they were outweighed by the military concerns of a new state facing invasion from fourteen countries. The only

certainty is that the ascension to power of the Stalinist bureaucracy ended any chance of rectifying the situation in the Transcaucasian republics, and so the negative consequences of Soviet Central Asian policy came back to haunt them 60 years later.

The Reestablishment of Soviet Influence

Anglo-American policies in the post-World War II period caused the Afghan government again to look to the USSR for military and economic aid. The biggest single change in the region was the end of British rule in India in 1947 and along with it the formation of the republic of Pakistan. Pakistan, like Afghanistan, held within its borders Muslims of different ethnic and linguistic groups, including a large Pushtun population. With the end of the "Great Game," the artificial division of the Pushtuns by the Durand Line lost all justification in the eyes of Pushtun political leaders like Daoud Khan, who was promoted from minister of war to prime minister in 1953. Daoud, like Amanullah Shah in the 1920s, wanted to modernize the Afghan economy, and he sought international support for the formation of an independent "Pushtunistan" carved from Pakistani territory. It was generally believed in the diplomatic community that if a new Pushtun state were formed it would quickly be annexed to Afghanistan. Daoud's scheme found little support in Washington or London.

The United States began providing military aid to Pakistan in 1951, and in 1955 Pakistan closed its border with Afghanistan. All Afghan foreign trade had to go through the USSR, where a railroad extended nearly to the northern bank of the Amu Darya (it was not practical to attempt to ship across the Iranian border and attempt to haul freight overland through the wild country east of the Salt Desert). Daoud appealed to the Soviets for military and economic aid, which Nikita S. Khrushchev was happy to provide. The Soviet Union provided more foreign aid to Afghanistan than to any other country during the 1950s. In addition, it provided military training—including political training—to Afghan army officers, which proved decisive in 1978. Fearing too close a dependence on the Soviets and looking for a way out of the standoff with Pakistan, Zaher Shah dismissed Daoud in 1963. During the next decade, Afghanistan retreated from its agitation for an independent Pushtunistan and developed a friendlier relationship with Iran, which was closely allied with the United States at that time.

On January 1, 1965, a group of intellectuals and left-wing politicians founded the PDPA. It unanimously elected Nur Mohammad Taraki, a 47-year-old self-educated man of peasant background, as its general secretary. Also elected to its Central Committee was Babrak Karmal, a 35-year-old lawyer, the son of a prominent Afghan army general closely associated with Daoud Khan. By 1967 the PDPA had split into two virulently hostile factions, the Khalq ("People") faction, led by Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, and the Parcham ("Banner") faction, led by Karmal. The political differences basically were that the Khalqis favored carrying out mass struggle with little regard to appropriate strategy and tactics, whereas the Parchamis favored the classic Stalinist People's Front strategy of collaboration with the liberal bourgeoisie. Karmal was clearly in closer touch with the Soviet embassy personnel and with the Moscow bureaucracy, though the Kremlin maintained contact with both factions through other Middle Eastern Communist parties, such as the Iranian Tudeh Party.

The Fall of the Monarchy; the Rise of the PDPA

In July 1973 Daoud Khan took advantage of the Zaher Shah's absence from the country to carry out a coup d'état. Zaher Shah abdicated and remained in exile, and Daoud declared Afghanistan a republic with himself as both president and prime minister.

Though both PDPA factions supported Daoud's coup, they played no role in bringing it about, and Daoud owed them nothing. Nevertheless, Daoud included some prominent leftist politicians

in his early cabinets and tilted his foreign policy back towards friendship with the USSR.

Within a few years, however, Daoud himself was carrying out policies similar to those of Zaher Shah's prime ministers during the 1963–73 period. He transferred leftist ministers to unimportant posts and remote embassies. A number of Parchamis who had been given jobs in the Kabul bureaucracy were sent out to work among the peasants and nomads—where they found that the oppressed masses did not conform to their theoretical preconceptions. He also responded positively to the shah of Iran's overtures of friendship and began distancing himself from the Soviets. He also imitated the shah's internal security policies, ordering his secret police to arrest, torture, and execute scores of political opponents.

The minutes of the Soviet Politburo from that period have not as yet been made public, so we can only speculate as to how they assessed Daoud's policies. However, Thomas Hammond, in *Red Flag Over Afghanistan* (Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1984), writes:

One story about Daoud and the Soviets has been reported by so many well-informed people that one is inclined to accept it as true. According to the account, when Daoud made his final trip to Moscow in April 1977, Brezhnev addressed him in a rude manner and presented a long list of complaints about Daoud's policies. After taking this for a while, Daoud reportedly rose to his feet and said in effect: "I want to remind you that you are speaking to the President of an independent country, not one of your East European satellites. You are trying to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and this I will not permit." Whereupon Daoud and his entourage marched out of the room. One associate said to Daoud, "Did you see the look on Brezhnev's face when you said that? Mr. President, you are a dead man."

In March of 1977 the Parcham and Khalq factions were temporarily reunited under the leadership of Nur Mohammad Taraki. The total PDPA membership numbered about 5,000, with the Khalqis holding about a 5–3 majority. Khalq had done considerable recruiting within the army during 1977. In July the united party held a conference which openly discussed the necessity of overthrowing the Daoud regime, though no one in the party seriously considered the PDPA strong enough to take power. The course of events dictated a different scenario, however.

On April 17, 1978, the central Parchami theoretician, Mir Akbar Khyber, was mysteriously murdered. The PDPA leadership blamed the Daoud regime, though there is some evidence that Khalq leader Hafizullah Amin may have been responsible. Two days later, the PDPA organized a mass funeral. The attendance surpassed even PDPA expectations (estimates ranged from 10,000 to 30,000—a very large number by Afghan standards), and alarmed Daoud, who had consistently underestimated PDPA strength. On April 26, Daoud ordered the arrest of the PDPA leadership, charging an "anti-Islamic plot." On the morning of April 27, pro-PDPA army units rose up in rebellion; by the afternoon they had freed the imprisoned PDPA leaders. Before dawn on April 28, the presidential palace had been captured, and Daoud and his entire family were dead. This event is known as the "Saur Revolution" because of the name of the month in the Afghan calendar.

In spite of the apocryphal story about Brezhnev's dirty look at Daoud at their April 1977 meeting, there is no evidence to support the accusation that the Saur Revolution was directed from Moscow. Moreover, it is questionable whether the military officers who staged the coup of April 27 were even in direct contact with the PDPA. Whatever disagreements Brezhnev and Daoud may have had, the Soviets did not consider him a military threat, and even if they did, he was far less significant than the much better armed anticommunist regimes in Turkey and Iran, not to mention

China. The USSR did not attempt to overthrow Anwar el-Sadat when he expelled Soviet troops and advisers from Egypt in 1972, and the Soviets did not lift a finger to help the People's Front regime of Salvador Allende when Stalinist–Social Democratic class-collaborationist policies led to his overthrow in 1973. Brezhnev was willing to provide limited aid to anti-imperialist struggles, such as the Arab struggle against Zionism and the defense of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola regime against South African-backed counterrevolutionaries. However, the Soviets had long ago abandoned the idea of extending their proletarian revolution and instead continued to pursue Joseph Stalin's goal of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. The USSR had no problem working with capitalist dictators like Daoud; even if he did talk back to Brezhnev he was no threat to bureaucratic rule within the USSR itself.

Within two months of the PDPA's seizure of power, the unity between the Khalq and Parcham factions broke down, and the Khalqis seized unilateral power. They proceeded to carry out policies which the Parchamis would most certainly have characterized as ultraleft—a rapid forced march out of underdevelopment, but decreed from above and instituted without the least shred of popular participation. Their social reforms were accompanied with preemptive repression—the arrest, imprisonment, and in many cases torture and execution, of not only those who opposed the Khalqis, but those who *might* oppose the regime in the future. In May the Taraki government set up revolutionary military courts to dispense summary justice for "any behavior running contrary to the interests of the people and the state," and established a secret police force known as AGSA (a Dari acronym for "Organization for the Protection of the Interests of Afghanistan"). AGSA was headed by Hafizullah Amin, who began gradually usurping power to himself, rising to the post of prime minister.

Prominent Parchami leaders were eased out of the way by posting them to foreign embassies. Secondary leaders were not so lucky. Many fell victim to Amin's AGSA. By July Taraki could announce that "There was no such thing as a Parcham party in Afghanistan, and there is no such thing now."

The reforms instituted by the Khalq regime appear to be positive changes—in the abstract. However, they were thought up within the PDPA leadership bodies by urban intellectuals who had little or no understanding of the realities of village and tribal society. That problem could have been overcome if democratic structures had been set up through which representatives from the rural areas, as well as representatives of the urban poor, could have expressed their aspirations and concerns. For example, the government decreed cancellation of debts and mortgages owed by peasants, freeing them from the village usurers. However, there was no action to make the Agricultural Development Bank accessible to the peasants as the landlords and bazaar moneylenders had been. As a consequence, many peasants were unable to borrow money to buy seed and tools for spring planting. As another example, the Taraki government attempted to improve the status of women by outlawing arranged marriages, raising the marriage age limit, and lowering bride prices. They did not consider, however, the economic consequences of their actions. Islamic law allows men to divorce their wives at will—the bride price is actually a form of economic security for women against divorce. Such seemingly restrictive traditions were actually protective mechanisms for women in a society whose male supremacy could not be broken down by a few decrees. By decreeing coeducation at all levels and sending schoolteachers from the cities to the rural areas, the Khalqis aroused resistance to their entire literacy campaign. Though Afghanistan has few paved roads, the Khalqis' good intentions assured that the best-paved highway in the country was the road to hell.

The failure of the PDPA's social policies to benefit the Afghan people gave the mullahs, village khans, and *bazari* the opportunity

to organize an armed rebellion among the peasants and tribespeople who had time on their hands after the harvests. The mullahs declared a *jihad* against the government and proclaimed it every devout Muslim's religious duty to fight against the PDPA. The Afghan army began to experience a serious problem with desertions. The Soviets sent in more weapons and advisers, and the government responded by bombing and strafing rebellious villages. In March an uprising in Herat resulted in wholesale massacre of Khalqis and Soviet citizens—men, women, and children. The situation was clearly becoming intolerable.

The Soviets recognized that the Khalqis' ultraleft policies were counterproductive. They felt that they could trust Taraki to carry out their wishes and that if Amin were removed from power there was a chance of salvaging the situation. Soviet officials discussed the problem with Taraki in Havana and Moscow during the summer of 1979, and he agreed to remove Amin from his posts. The attempt was botched, however. Amin was tipped off, and in September he staged his own coup. Three weeks later he had Taraki killed.

The Soviets were faced with a serious problem indeed. They were stuck with advising and arming a regime whose tyranny differed only quantitatively from that of Pol Pot in Cambodia. A rebellion had broken out which had the potential of spilling over the Amu Darya into Soviet territory, and there was clearly no chance of defeating it if the policies which initially caused it were continued. If Taraki had remained in power, Moscow could have aided the Afghan government in putting down the rebellion—and getting rid of Amin—with the cover of an invitation by the recognized government of an independent country. That opportunity had been lost, however.

The Soviet Invasion and Defeat

On December 24, 1979, massive numbers of Soviet troops began crossing the Amu Darya. At first it was claimed that Amin requested them, but that pretense could not be maintained after December 27, when Amin was executed and replaced in power by the Parchami leader Babrak Karmal, who had been living in hiding in Czechoslovakia. Karmal shortly thereafter accused Amin of being a CIA agent.

The Parchamis retreated from the Khalqis' ultraleft policies, but it was a case of too little, too late. Karmal was perceived as a Soviet puppet, and what had been a civil war was transformed into a war of national defense against the traditional Russian enemy. More and more often, a parallel was drawn between Afghanistan and Vietnam, with the Soviets in the same unenviable role that the United States had played in Vietnam.

When one considers the close relationship between the Vietnamese Stalinist leaders and the Soviets, it is remarkable how little the Soviet political and military leaders learned from the Vietnam war. They went into Afghanistan with the kind of heavy weaponry which would have been appropriate against NATO forces in Germany but which were useless against lightly armed guerrillas. Their armored vehicles were incapable of pursuing the *mujahedeen* into the mountain passes. Once the Soviet troops left an area it almost immediately reverted to rebel control. The guerrillas were fighting in their own territory, supplied by a network of villagers and nomads in the same way that the Vietnamese peasants had supplied the National Liberation Front forces fighting the Americans.

More serious than the problem of purely military tactics were the political factors, both among the Afghan people and within the Soviet military forces—and ultimately within Soviet society. The people, not only in the countryside but in the cities as well, became active participants in the war against the Soviets and their Parchami clients. Even the urban students, who had been the primary source of cadre for the PDPA, turned to Islamic nationalism and supported the *jihad* against the government and USSR. It became

unsafe for a Russian—or anyone *thought* to be a Russian—to travel alone in the *bazaars* or in poor quarters of the cities. PDPA members, schoolteachers (and literacy campaign volunteers), and anyone else thought to collaborate with the government was fair game for terrorist attack.

In retaliation for attacks on its own soldiers, the Soviet army turned to terror tactics against the Afghan people, including chemical warfare, cluster bombing, and napalm. Instead of intimidating the Afghans into submission, however, the Soviets' terror tactics only succeeded in stiffening their resistance. Enduring hardship while fighting against superior invading forces is nothing new for the Afghan people; it is passed on from generation to generation as family tradition. It is estimated that a quarter of the Afghan population fled the country, mostly to refugee camps in Pakistan, where, in the tradition of the *basmachi*, the guerrilla fighters were able to regroup, rearm, and carry out their diplomacy through a number of different organizations.

One unexpected effect was that the Soviet Union experienced a level of diplomatic isolation which it had not known since before World War II. The third world voting bloc in the United Nations, which had consistently voted with the USSR for some twenty years, turned almost instantly against the Soviets. Resolutions condemning the Soviet invasion were adopted in the General Assembly by overwhelming majorities. U.S. President Jimmy Carter was able to make diplomatic gains in Middle Eastern countries which had up to that time been hostile to the U.S. because of American support of Zionism. Worst of all, it became impossible for the Soviets to hide from their own people the fact that in spite of claims that they were fighting for the liberation of an oppressed people, those oppressed people were in fact the enemy—an enemy who could not easily be defeated.

The demoralization which began among the senior officers directly responsible for the Afghan war inevitably spread through the Soviet bureaucracy as a whole. Combined with the stagnant economy and the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, it was a significant factor in causing the bureaucracy to lose confidence in its ability to rule Soviet society. The hollow claims that the USSR was winning the war in Afghanistan as the war was dragging on (comparable to Gen. William Westmoreland's claim to see the "light at the end of the tunnel" in Vietnam) was one of the reasons for Mikhail Gorbachev's call in 1985 for "openness" (in Russian, *glasnost*) in discussion of public affairs. Shortly after taking the posts of CP general secretary and Soviet prime minister, Gorbachev began taking steps to extricate the USSR from the Afghan quagmire.

In May 1986 Najibullah, who had headed the internal security forces, replaced Karmal as president, in the hope that he would be able either to defeat the rebels or negotiate a settlement. Gorbachev recognized the necessity of cutting his losses and getting out. The Afghan war had done enough damage. In April 1988 Afghanistan signed an agreement with Pakistan insuring Afghanistan's territorial integrity. This allowed the Soviets to withdraw with a "settlement," which supported their claim that they were only intervening to defend Afghanistan from outside aggression. By February 1989 the last Soviet divisions headed north across the Amu Darya. The Najibullah regime was able to hold out for another three years, mainly because of the inability of the *mujahedeen* to unite and take power. It fell on April 16, 1992. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union had fallen eight months earlier.

What Conclusions Can Be Drawn?

The political lessons of the Afghan war will be debated among revolutionists for some time in the future. One conclusion which the facts prove decisively is this: the Soviet Union never had any intention of "taking over" Afghanistan. It was drawn into a conflict which was not of its creation. The Stalinist bureaucracy was guilty

of many crimes, but the brazen conquest of Afghanistan was not one of them. The PDPA's decision to take power was its own, and the policies it carried out as the ruling party were—if not completely home grown—not dictated by any outside forces. Once Moscow took responsibility for helping the PDPA run the Afghan state, it found itself on a slippery slope to war and the victim of political dynamics which were beyond its control.

The prospect of an Islamic government in Afghanistan giving aid and support to militant anticommunist forces within the Soviet Transcaucasian republics was seen as a threat to the USSR's security—with some justification. To be sure, if the Stalinists had not reneged on the pledge of national self-determination to the Central Asian peoples, especially once the *basmachi* had been defeated, the problem would never have been so serious. But, even if the Soviet leaders had recognized the need to allow self-determination of the Uzbek, Tajik, and other Central Asian nationalities—which they did not—they were still faced with a grave problem. Most of the Afghan *mujahedeen* groups were not only anticommunist (in a period of increasing militarism on the part of the U.S. and Britain) but thoroughly reactionary at every level, and their tactics included the most brutal forms of terrorism. Their intent was to return economic power to the landowning *khans* and legal and ideological power to the Islamic clergy, and to put a stop to secular education, the advancement of women, and the transition from a nomadic, pastoral society to an industrial one. Not only PDPA officials but literacy and medical volunteers were the targets of their terrorist attacks.

In the event that the Islamic rebels were able to overthrow the PDPA government in Afghanistan, the concern was that, even if they were unable to win significant popular support with Soviet Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and other republics, they would still be able to inflict significant destruction. Real people would die, even if the Islamic fundamentalists had no chance of winning, and the Soviet government was absolutely justified in considering that a threat to its security.

Revolutionary Marxists recalled Trotsky's defense of the USSR's invasion of Finland in 1940, and initially the SWP newspaper the *Militant* supported the military action which Moscow took in 1979. Unfortunately, the *Militant's* writers were insufficiently informed about the actual course of events occurring within Afghanistan. They equated the Khalqis' well-intentioned attempts to institute social reforms with a social revolution on the part of the Afghan masses. The reality was that the people themselves were never consulted, and no political formation was set up through which the people's opinions could be expressed. Of course, by the time of the invasion, the failure of the Khalqis' policies had already been acknowledged, and the Parchamis had come to power with a pledge of more realistic government.

Within a matter of months, it became clear that military action was not having the effect of defending a social revolution in Afghanistan or even the USSR's security. The presence of Soviet troops was actually *strengthening* the reactionary forces in Afghanistan and anticommunism on a world scale. The war was causing untold suffering of the Afghan people—for which they

blamed the USSR and "communism." The *Militant* reversed itself, and the entire Fourth International called for withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

Could socialist revolution have been possible in Afghanistan? It depends on what is meant. Afghan society was in fact far less advanced even than its Middle Eastern neighbors. A half century of Pahlavi rule in oil-rich Iran had created a substantial industrial base. It is estimated that in 1979 the proletariat comprised about 40 percent of Iran's population. During the years of the British *Raj* modern methods of production, transportation, and communication were introduced into India, including into those regions which would later comprise Pakistan. None of that happened in Afghanistan. Foreign visitors to both Iran and Afghanistan remarked at the differences, how none of the changes which had taken place in Iran since the development of its oil industry had affected Afghanistan. Clearly, the material basis for socialist society did not exist within Afghanistan's artificially determined borders.

However, in a backward society—even one in which the industrial working class numbered only 40,000 out of a population of about 15 million—a proletarian party can strive for power and, if successful, lead the population out of underdevelopment at a pace which is consistent with their consciousness and with methods which actually benefit the masses of people. This was very much within the realm of possibility in Afghanistan in the 1970s and 1980s. However, it could only have worked if the political leadership had been inseparably connected with the workers, peasants, and—as much as possible—with the nomadic tribespeople. That was not the case.

The PDPA factions represented opposite sides of the same fundamentally elitist coin. In contrast to the Khalqis' paternalistic program of imposing a modern society on the Afghan people, whether they wanted it or not, whether they were ready for it or not, the Parchamis had nothing to offer but continuing collaboration with bourgeois, precapitalist, and even imperialist forces. Neither faction offered any political role to the people whose interests they were supposed to represent. The mullahs and even the landlords and village chiefs, whose roots in the local areas were deep, were able to capitalize on the PDPA's decisive failure.

The Afghan experience of the 1970s and 1980s ended tragically. The people have little to show for the past two decades but death and social disintegration—and the fighting continues. The different *mujahedeen* organizations have nearly as much hostility to each other as they did to the PDPA and Soviets. They represent different class forces as well as ethnic and religious groupings. It remains to be seen if the new government, headed by Sibghatullah Mojadeddi, will be able to survive for long. His National Liberation Front favors a constitutional monarchist form of government; Zaher Shah has expressed a willingness to resume his throne. One thing is certain: the real problems of poverty, violence, and ignorance will be beyond solution by any pro-imperialist government. A socialist solution to those problems depends on soberly drawing the lessons from the tragic Afghan war. □

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The Workers Party and the Rio-92 Conference

The following article is taken from the July 1992 issue of Inprecor for Latin America. It is a statement by the Brazilian Workers Party (Partido de los Trabajadores—PT) on the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, June 3-13, and on the “parallel” alternative environmental conference, the Global Forum, of Non-Governmental Organizations. Brazil’s massive union confederation CUT was one of the organizers of the latter conference. Despite all the publicity and preparations for the UN conference, little was accomplished. Principal villain of the show was the United States, which voted against a proposal for specific goals on carbon dioxide emission and a biodiversity treaty, among other failings. Translation for Bulletin In Defense of Marxism is by Sarah Lovell.

1. The World Conference on the Environment and Development is taking place in Rio de Janeiro, attended by more than a hundred heads of state and government, hundreds of ministers, parliamentarians, scientists, and experts. The Global Forum, sponsored by Non-Governmental Organizations, is holding a parallel conference in the same city.

While waiting for the official delegations to be equal to their historic responsibilities, the Workers Party welcomes the thousands of militant ecologists from around the world who are meeting in the forum to discuss and debate alternatives and to influence the decisions of the official conference. Recognizing the limits of the official meeting, the Workers Party confers enormous importance upon the Global Forum as a democratic thrust, on an international scale, for new directions in the debate and the politics of economic and social development of humankind.

The discussion that is occurring today in Rio should be the point of departure for a great ecological movement on a world scale capable of projecting new and consistent alternatives for human development.

2. The Rio-92 Conference is taking place under conditions quite different from those of 1987, when it was summoned. Not only have there been radical geopolitical changes in the world, with the end of the regimes of “real existing socialism” in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the USSR, but also the breach between the “North” and the “South” of the planet has deepened profoundly.

Along with the economic restructuring of the world—expressed in the consolidation of new economic blocs—the United States is attempting, especially since the gulf war, to assert itself as the sole political-military power, despite the economic and social difficulties it confronts. Consequently, the U.S. policy of the blockade of

Cuba and occupation of Panama remains in effect.

The major part of Latin America, all of Africa, and significant parts of Asia today face a grave economic and social crisis. Although with less intensity, this crisis reaches the countries of the North as well, where unemployment, pauperization, and marginalization are growing, as dramatically shown by the recent events in Los Angeles.

Neo-liberal policies, which shape the actions of the great powers in their relations with the South, are responsible for acute recessions. These precipitate a process of deindustrialization in several countries that had experienced considerable development in the past, leaving behind a trail of unprecedented social misery.

At the same time that the North protects its products, it imposes free trade on the South and uses its monopoly power to degrade the terms of trade, confining the South to a subordinate position in the international division of labor. By a policy of accelerated privatization, it tries to restrict state regulation of economic and social development, which now proceeds by the “law of the market.”

The attempt to construct this “new world order” imposes a growing infringement on the right to self-determination of the people and their national sovereignty. It imposes greater sacrifices on the working class, who see their conditions of life worsen and their modest conquests menaced. It involves a growing attack on democratic politics, as witnessed recently in Venezuela and Peru. This is not only the result of an imposition “from outside,” but has viability because of the active support of the ruling local elites.

Adding to all these difficulties that plague the South, particularly Latin America, is the problem of the foreign debt that afflicts our economy and increases social misery and deterioration of the environment.

3. The deterioration of the environment that endangers the planet today is an expression of the values of a society that commercializes relations between men and women, resulting in social injustice and destruction of our natural and historical heritage.

We live in a society where the idea of progress is measured by the rise of the Gross National Product, where ethnocentric concepts denigrate other peoples and cultures, where women are denied their rights, reducing them to their reproductive functions and subjecting them to a policy of birth control, in particular, sterilization.

We face great challenges: any economic, social, political transformation requires a cultural and ethnic revolution as well, which aims for a more just, cooperative, ecologically responsible, and radically democratic society.

The environmental crisis that faces humanity today and endangers its future is the result of economic and productive conceptions which are shared as much by state bureaucratic socialism as by capitalism. The Workers Party, since its formation, has opposed these values, developing its anti-capitalist conception starting from an eco-socialist perspective.

4. The Collor government intends to use Rio-92 and the growing interest that ecological questions arouse in the population in order to secure its secondary aims.

The fact that environmental problems are of international scope does not exempt the government from proposing a national development program, sovereign and democratic, that includes the environmental factor. The creation of indigenous reservations, extractive reserves, and units of conservation are not enough without a policy of democratization of land ownership—an authentic agrarian reform—and public policies that effectively support the traditional population of these areas. The neo-

liberal policy of free trade, that the Collor government is slavishly adopting, is, to cite only one example, a severe blow to the rubber producers of the Amazon who are obliged to abandon their homes in order to survive.

The government offers nothing by mouthing expressions such as "substantial development" if the people of the Amazon and other regions of the country are abandoned in areas where environmental conditions place them in constant danger.

There is no possibility of development if, in order to pay the foreign debt and economic adjustment fees imposed by international organizations, the government destroys its housing and health programs and curbs public services, in particular, the control of the environment. Added to this is the fact that the government frequently is linked to corruption scandals, which flared up with denunciations relating to the preparations for Rio-92 and the indulgence of government functionaries toward the lumber interests.

Government rhetoric and contractors' "market" ecology won't do if the working people in the factories and fields live in a hell produced by industrial pollution and agrotoxics, when products harmful to health are released into the atmosphere and the waters, and, above all, without the democratic control of society over these activities.

5. The Brazilian government can't be complacent before the arrogance of some countries—especially the United States—that refuse to assume their responsibility as the principal agents of the degradation of the ozone layer, that refuse to impose their authority on the capitalists to make the necessary changes in industry and products to conform with basic ecological requirements.

The Brazilian government can't be complacent before the attempts to delay the agreements and treaties relating to physical genetics, biodiversity, and forests. The tactic of the great powers is to remove these themes from the debate—now that the eyes of the world turn to Rio and the pressure of the ecologists becomes stronger—in order to promote private solutions, through their governments, utilizing the foreign debt as their principal pressure mechanism.

6. Brazilians, who share the same life in a tropical ecosystem and culture, who know how to respect an exuberant genetic diversity, should be capable of vindicating their claim for the means and technology necessary to advance a new model of development that combines social justice and life in harmonious accord with nature.

One can only denounce the great powers for their refusal to provide additional resources to make possible authentic preservation of the environment on an international scale.

The transferring of technology and its adaptation can't be accomplished by centralized groups of technocrats; it has to be subject to social control. The imperatives of harmonious ecological development demand a deepening of democracy and expansion of social control over the state.

7. We cannot yield to pressure to make concessions in ecological matters in order to alter the foreign debt. This can only facilitate foreign intervention in the country by way of unilateral "warning" proposals by the International Monetary Fund. The debt is the expression of the "old international order" whose demise is more evident each day.

An alternative that allows linking the crucial problem of the foreign debt to environmental preservation is one that converts the current debts of the South into a fund for economic, social, and technological development in which environmental preservation is a fundamental value. This fund should be administered by the developing countries, guaranteeing mechanisms of social control and management. Without confronting this decisive problem of who will and how to finance the costly projects of environmental preservation, any decision adopted will be no more than sterile rhetoric.

Nor can we accept the plans for control of the birth rate—whose most cruel aspect is sterilization of many of our women, above all of the poor and Black population, based on the argument that there is no way to supply the needed food. The realization of a program of economic, political, and social transformation in our country and in the great majority of the countries of the South will demonstrate the enormous potential capacity to resolve the problems of hunger and underdevelopment.

8. The Workers Party has a tradition of struggle in defense of the aims of a radical social and political transformation which incorporates ecology as an essential element. This has been our orientation in social struggles during the 13 years of our existence. This has also been a basic dimension of the work of our members in Parliament. This has been a constant preoccupation of our militants.

The Workers Party is a socialist and ecological party that has within its ranks thousands of activists in the struggle for the preservation of the environment and has the privilege and the honor of having had

among its militants and leaders one who is a symbol of this new political direction and whose example illuminates the debate of Rio-92: our comrade Chico Mendes.*

9. The Workers Party believes that the Rio-92 debate, especially that of the parallel forum, comes at a decisive moment for strengthening a universal consciousness in favor of a new model of development for humanity.

We cannot compromise with official government policies or with complacency of governments toward those who destroy the soil of the planet, who contaminate the air, who endanger scarce resources, drastically altering the conditions of life for millions of people.

The challenge placed before all ecologists and authentic socialists isn't simply to formulate a policy of preservation—an enormous task in itself—but to lay the basis for a new model of economic development that radically alters the present productive structure and to make it compatible with growth, social justice, and environmental protection.

This new model demands a radical change in world policy, a genuine democratization of international organizations—the United Nations in the first place—and an end to the tutelage that the IMF, World Bank, the Group of Seven (G-7), and similar organizations exercise over humanity.

It is of fundamental importance to pursue a policy of peace, of disarmament and demilitarization of the world, which can only be achieved by a growing intervention of men and women in daily struggles.

The presence of thousands of ecologists from the whole world in Rio de Janeiro should be understood as the bearer of good tidings that a new era is on the horizon in which the citizens, the men and women of the planet, take their destiny and future into their own hands. □

*Francisco "Chico" Mendes Filho was the leader of a union of rubber tappers and workers who harvested resins, nuts, and other resources from the Amazon rain forests. His union carried on a struggle against the ranchers, who were destroying the forests to secure cattle grazing and crop land. Mendes became an environmental martyr after he was killed by a shotgun blast in 1988. Two ranchers, father and son, Alves da Silva, were convicted of his murder in 1990, receiving reduced sentences of 19 years in prison. This was reported to be the first time Brazilian ranchers, frequently accused of murdering rubber tappers, environmental and labor leaders, had actually stood trial for such a crime.

Introduction to article by Nikolai Preobrazhensky

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

Caught in a trap of their own making, the Kremlin's criminal ruling apparatus and their marketeer advisers are sending the economy of the ex-USSR careening into unspeakable disasters. The economic collapse which bourgeois commentators see on the horizon has already occurred: there is no relief in sight.

After first groveling for imperialist aid, they ultimately found themselves boxed into implementing the dreaded "shock therapy" (austerity) measures at the behest of gigantic imperialist creditors—chiefly the International Monetary Fund—without even getting the new gigantic capital injections they sought so desperately in return. Instead all they have accomplished is to win delays on demands to repay foreign creditors for past debts.

Meanwhile, as a result of these measures—with subsidies to basic industries and enterprises eliminated, allocations to basic social services slashed, economic planning of any sort virtually abolished, and price controls eliminated—industrial and agricultural production has plummeted to a fraction of previous figures, increasing shortages. The resulting inflation has driven the basic cost of surviving from several hundred to tens of thousands of rubles per month, depending on where one lives.

Not only is there a shortage of basic food and consumer items, but what is available is priced out of the reach of most working people. There are increasing reports of rising malnutrition and associated nutritional diseases. Meanwhile, the medical service sectors are in deep crisis for lack of basic supplies such as surgical tools, anesthetics, and medications.

Although the government continues to print money, ever higher prices mean that there continues to be a money shortage, and some workers go for months without receiving any pay at all.

For example, according to the *Washington Post* of July 26, workers at the giant Uralmash plant had not been paid since May.

Cash-short enterprises cannot even pay for the supplies they need from other enterprises to keep production going. Estimates of the accumulated unpaid debt between domestic enterprises range from 500 billion rubles (nearly the amount of the USSR's total projected national budget for 1991) to three trillion rubles, according to a Reuters release of August 14. Russian industrial production was down at least 13 percent in the first five months of 1992, mostly in the critical oil production industry, where, according to Deputy Minister Sergei Roginko, 85 percent of the drilled oil wells in Russia are now idle.

Although the IMF is holding out the promise of some \$24 billion in credits to the Commonwealth of Independent States, the aid has been slow in coming. In any case, while this amount could conceivably have made a difference two or three years ago, it is now a drop in the bucket. Tens of billions are needed immediately to simply restore a basic level of economic functioning. And this does not include cleaning up the vast areas afflicted with nuclear and toxic contamination; dismantling, eliminating, or replacing the sources of this contamination and resettling those who currently live in these areas; clean-

Document: Perspectives for the Russian Workers Movement

The Disarray of Social Forces and Political Perspectives for the Workers Movement

by Nikolai Preobrazhensky

We live in a period of economic crisis and political upheavals. Moreover, the objective course of events and the policies of the grouping that came to power after the August [1991] events inevitably usher in new political, and possibly social conflicts. The more forcefully they extend their "reforms," the sharper the situation and the closer a new social-political crisis. There is no reason to think that the social-political waves that washed away the country's previous leaders will spare the current ones. But will this mean a victory for the workers?

A number of conjunctural developments (i.e., a Western aid package or another of Yeltsin's political tricks) could postpone new conflicts, but they can do no more than that. From the very beginning this was clear to many, including many in govern-

ment circles. It is no accident that the vice premier, long before his appointment, liked to repeat: the first post-Communist government is always doomed.

No matter how the next crisis is resolved (whether that crisis be a social explosion from below or simply a "reshuffling" of those on top—which for those on top is, of course, the preferable option), no matter which new groupings take their place at the helm, no matter what beautiful promises they make, one thing is certain: *the interests of the workers will not be among their priorities.*

Why is that so? It is not only because our workers movement is extremely weak, but also because it is poorly organized and has no firm structure. Should there be a social explosion, it could only act as a ramrod, crashing the gates for others, or a rocket launcher propelling other forces to great heights. The old trade unions enjoy no confidence by and large; the new ones, with the exception of those in the mining regions, are very

ing up badly polluted rivers, lakes, and streams and installing needed water purification systems; providing much needed medical and pharmaceutical supplies to save the collapsing health-care system; and meeting the basic housing needs for tens of millions who live either in cramped, crowded quarters or—like the demobilized soldiers and tens of thousands of refugees—live in makeshift dwellings or worse.

Because currency is either unavailable or considered worthless, the country has been reduced to barter not only internally, but on the international market in order to dispose of its products and obtain what is needed.

A linoleum factory exchanges its output for eggs from a local farm. The workers in both enterprises then, it appears, have the task of exchanging the unused portion of the eggs or linoleum for something else they need. (*WP*, July 26, 1992) Such barter also takes place on a larger scale involving products not so easily consumable or usable by ordinary workers.

“London metal traders said a cobalt factory in the Urals recently swapped cobalt for turnips with a local farm which in turn exchanged the metal for used tractors from a Lithuanian middleman. The cobalt was finally smug-

gled [!] out to Helsinki.” (Reuters, August 7, 1992)

A Japanese firm reported in July that it was trading \$500,000 worth of personal computers with an unnamed Siberian mining firm for 20,000 tons of aluminum. (With the world price of aluminum at roughly \$.60 per pound on July 30, the dollar value of this aluminum received by the Japanese firm was \$24 million!)

A South Korean firm is getting \$30 million in wood pulp for \$2 million in home appliances and shoes!

In the midst of these catastrophic human calamities and rape of resources, there are some who are getting very rich—among the ruling bureaucrats, their marketeer advisers, and middlemen who are wallowing in the legalized theft of state property and widespread graft—in fact, in the whole alphabet of corruption.

For example: “In May, one official said, there were \$80 billion in exports, but nobody can say where the money went.” (*New York Times*, August 2, 1992)

Meanwhile, since January 1992 when the austerity program was implemented with full force, it has been primarily workers in the service sector—health care, education, and transportation—who have organized strikes and

protests. There has been no massive response reported from workers in heavy industry and mining sectors nor in the vast network of industries linked with military production, hit hard by cuts in the military budget and where large-scale layoffs will be concentrated.

What role have workers played in the events to date? What can they do? What do they need to do to begin to address these attacks on their very existence? How can they transform the situation and make the economy work for them?

The article below considers these issues, along with the policies of the “democrats” and the marketeers and what they represent; it explains where their policies and the perestroika reforms have led and why; and it offers a revolutionary perspective for the workers movements.

The author of the article, Nikolai Preobrazhensky, is a Leningrad-Petersburg Marxist. He has been involved with political and trade union activities since the new independent movements began in the mid-1980s. He has participated in numerous initiatives, including the Leningrad Popular Front in its early phases, the Socialist Party of Russia, and *Rubicon*—a journal of the independent trade union movement. He is now a supporter of the Initiative for a Party of Labor in Petersburg.

weak. There are no serious political organizations expressing the interests of the workers movement nor parties which the masses of workers would consider their own, their reliability to be counted on without fear of betrayal or deception.

We remember what happened a year ago in Minsk [capital of Byelorussia]. There was a powerful strike wave which forced the authorities to accede to many demands. But the wave subsided, and it subsided without leaving anything behind. (Groups claiming to be the city strike committee but representing no one do not count.) As a result, the workers movement, as before, has no influence on policy decisions, great or small, general or specific, at the top or on a local level.

The Government and Social Interests

Whose interests do the current Russian authorities represent? Obviously, not the interests of the workers, engineers, teachers, in a word not the interests of those who labor. The issue is not only the falling living standard that results when the size of the common pie diminishes: inevitably the individual portions get smaller too. (Although, it should be noted that the portions received by members of the new bourgeoisie are, in fact, getting bigger without any corresponding increase in their contribution to the economy—if they can be said to make any contribution at all.)

The problem is deeper. It involves the *direction* of policy. When the government’s privatization program (in violation of the law) sharply restricts the options open to the workers while simultaneously expanding options for the rich, this cannot be explained by economic collapse and a decline in production! We are not facing the consequences of bitter necessity but of a particular *approach* to the problem.

It was known in advance that when prices were increased several times over, there would not be enough money to pay wages and pensions. People would sit for weeks and sometimes for months without money. But the government, they said, would find a way out, print money and coupons, think of something, even stand on its head in order to guarantee to workers their vital necessities.

When this happened the first time, in January, it could have been explained by bungling or objective difficulties. When, however, it happened two quarters in a row, it became clear that it was a consequence of a conscious *policy* in which the interests of the workers, to put it mildly, are not a priority. Or, as the deputy minister of labor delicately formulated it: “The vice-premier’s thinking totally lacks a social component.” By the way, even the Shatalin Fund, which on the whole supports [acting Prime Minister Yegor] Gaidar’s course of action, demanded an end to the policy of artificially limiting the money

supply by withholding wages and pensions. (See *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 29/2/92) But his demand had no effect.

With mass unemployment on the horizon—again despite the law—unemployment benefits are set at 3/4 the minimum wage (in the first quarter the official minimum wage was 342 rubles per month); this again is not the result of budget restrictions but of a definite policy *decision*. This calls to mind the maxim of our most outstanding economist (after two years in the administration, he was able to become one of the five richest people in the country), G. Kh. Popov in his *What Is To Be Done?* (December 1990): “The school of unemployment is a ruthless course for learning the importance of efficient labor.”

One of the ministers of the “Gaidar government” (the premier of which, by the way, is not Gaidar but B. Yeltsin), said with a totally legitimate pride: “We have in our government the best and favorite students of our most learned marketeers: Gaidar and Shokhin of Shatalin, Vavilov of Petrakov, Nechayev of Yaremenko, etc.” (*NG*, 27/2/92)

Here is how a group of the teachers, headed by Petrakov, evaluated the policy of the students (we note that these are not some “neo-bolsheviks,” but recognized advocates of market mechanisms): “The course of the economic policy now being implemented . . . is socially speaking an orientation toward intermediary-layer capital, ignoring the creative potential and interests of the majority of the population. . . . The government’s program for privatization is a program for the expropriation of the workers. . . . This program can only be implemented in spite of the resistance of the people.” (*NG* March 6, 1992, emphasis added-NP)

“Such a course is only good for those who possess ‘shadow’ money and for it (the State Committee on Property) and for officials in other departments.” (*Izvestiya*, March 19, 1992) And, as one of the authors of the collective appeal of the “teachers” summed it up, the neo-liberal policy is being implemented “for the benefit of a handful of businessmen and new bureaucrats who are administering this process.” (*Pravda* February 14, 1992)

All this does not in any way mean that the “Gaidar Team” has consciously set out to enrich the middlemen or, still worse, that the “team” has sold out to the stockbrokers or any other capitalist sharks. Of course not. But even despite the isolated blows at the parasitic middlemen—such as the December revocation of licenses to sell oil, after which a number of government officials had to get guns to protect themselves; high taxes on stock operations, etc.—of all the layers and social groups that exist, general government policy *objectively* favors precisely the large merchants, the “shadow” dealers, and corrupt officialdom.

However, in all fairness it should also be noted that the flourishing of these layers owes much to the past cabinets of Pavlov and particularly Silayev who were still operating according to the command system of administration. Furthermore, power by no means emerges only from the Gaidar team but also from an enormous machine of hundreds of thousands of officials at all levels who “look after” the necessary people. Sometimes this is done quite openly.

Thus, the head of the Russian Commodity-Raw Materials Exchange, the widely renowned Constantine Borovoy, becomes the chief adviser to Yegor Yakovlyev, the head of *state*

television. (As to how Borovoy is financing his political parties, see the Appendix.)

The minister of foreign affairs Kozyrev at the opening of the “Foreign Policy Fund” announced: the MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] wants to and will take into account the interests of the class of entrepreneurs (*NG*, February 22, 1992) and remarked transparently: I do not plan to be minister forever. (*Pravda*, February 24, 1992) By the way, among the founders of this fund are the largest commercial structures. (See *NG*, February 22, 1992) Naturally, they did not include the trade unions or the unions of STKs [Councils of Labor Collectives], or the organizations of small property holders, or even the alliance of factory directors. It turns out that the orientation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the same as that of the economic ministries.

In March, a small but significant event occurred. One of the founders and leaders of the finance group “Menatep,” Mikhail Borisovich Khodorkovsky, was appointed deputy minister of fuel and energy on issues of privatization and attracting capital investment. It is well known that Menatep intends to invest in oil extraction. Of course, the new appointment could create panic among this group’s competitors. However, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* sets their minds at rest by saying “Khodorkovsky is considered a reliable person who will not hog the blanket.” (March 11, 1992) That is, “Don’t get excited, gentlemen: you will all get your share.” This brings to mind a Polish story: In 1976, the Kovalchik brothers were arrested while preparing to blow up the assembly hall of the State Security agency school during its graduation ceremony. In the summer of 1981, before the ninth congress of the PUWP [Polish United Workers Party] they were released ahead of schedule—as the joke went—to better prepare the hall for the party congress. One could say that the appointment of this new deputy minister was made in order to better look after the state’s interests in the fuel industry.

Infected by the contagious atmosphere in Moscow, several weeks later, [Leningrad mayor] Sobchak named the new head of the Committee on Food and Trade: it is Savenkov, president of the trading company “Alice.” (March 26, 1992)

The Captains of Industry

As a result of their shock therapy, the Yeltsin camp has ended up in the position of partisans at the enemy’s rear: the ranks of their supporters are melting away and no new supporters are coming forth. Hurt the most by this was a force very critical for our country: the corps of factory directors. Our directors are now making their entrance into the political arena—with all their experience, connections, and real economic power; well informed; with their new, considerable freedom to do what they want; no longer subject to party tutelage; ever more distinctly grouped into their various organizations; and able to count on the support of at least a part of the work collectives. It is they—not the workers movement (except for the miners) who have the best chance to influence real policy.

Undoubtedly they will make attempts at friendly negotiations with the authorities and their “brothers” in commerce. The much talked about banquet of 90 of the most powerful entrepreneurs in Petersburg—from the shadow economy to the VPK [All-Union Party of Communists]—and organized by a group of “democrats,” helped reveal the lay of the land. (See *Chas Pik*, Nos. 11 and 12, 1992.) Those in attendance do have

some common interests. For example, in recent years, in the heat of the various maneuvers and unfettered privatization, the Departments of Inspection were eliminated “for some reason” in enterprises and organizations. In the entire city, there are now only 18 left. (See *Izvestiya* March 4, 1992.) This is good for all of them.

However, their opposing interests, it seems, are far greater than what they have in common. The commercial structures in league with the corrupt apparatus often plunder the state sector. The largest enterprise in Omsk—the cotton combine “Vostok”—is barely functioning: there is no cotton. Meanwhile, for almost six months one could see, on the outskirts of the city, freight cars loaded with cotton purchased by a commercial company set up by the firm Pilot and the city authorities. The paradox is this: Pilot is near bankruptcy and who is paying the storage costs for the idle freight cars? The city budget. (*Izvestiya*, March 18, 1992) Also near the “red line” of bankruptcy is Moscow’s famous Dementyev Combine (MAPO), producer of MIGs. Fifty fully built and tested export model MIG-29’s valued at \$1 billion are “collecting dust” because MAPO “for some reason” cannot get an export license. Meanwhile, commercial representatives are besieging the combine offering their “services” in exporting military hardware. (*Izvestiya*, March 25, 1992)

When in January [Akardy] Volsky organized a congress of directors and merchants the groups nearly came to blows. (See *NG*, January 13, 1992) And the continuation of the present policy holds out nothing good for the state sector. A government “Memorandum to the International Monetary Fund” says that the state sector would be the object of open discrimination benefiting the private sector (as a result of the proposed taxes and wage restrictions). (See *NG*, March 3, 1992)

According to the leadership of the Supreme Soviet’s industrial group, Yeltsin gave his word in the fall that Skokov, one of the key leaders of the factory directors’ corps, would get a government post. (*Sovietskaya Rossiya*, April 4, 1992) But, as is often the case, the president did not keep his word and instead of appointing state industry directors like Skokov, Yeltsin appointed merchants like Khodorkovsky.

Given this specific situation, a “government of enterprise directors” could come to power only if they were to take the offensive or be called into the government to save the day. Various farsighted director “generals” and “marshalls” are pondering how to use the labor collectives and the workers movement to their own advantage. This is how Y.I. Sevenard, a man well known to all Leningraders as the builder of the dam, put it: One of the two forces (the second is the army) that can keep the economy from collapsing is “experienced economic leaders, united with their labor collectives. The director—the heart and soul of his enterprise—knows the psychology of his work collective through and through. This unity of directors with their work collectives also promotes the common aspiration to protect their enterprises from rogues with fat wallets.” (emphasis added—NP) (*Narodnaya Pravda*, No. 10 [12], March 1992) Generally speaking, this classic paternalism (“there are no conflicts between the workers and the bosses; they are all one happy family”) is actually being advanced to justify a bid for leadership of the workers movement.

We must not forget that in our country we have accumulated three years’ experience with “director-initiated” strikes, par-

ticularly strike calls and pre-strike situations: in the Donbass, Tyumen, on the railroads, in Estonia. Undoubtedly, the directors and the workers often share common interests, even if these only relate to keeping the enterprise operating, insuring that raw materials continue to arrive, and getting taxes lowered.

However, the majority of the factory directors—even those who are concerned about the welfare of the collective as a whole, raise wages and organize barter arrangements to insure delivery of produce and consumer goods—are at the same time against the independence and self-activity of the labor collectives. They strangle the STKs [Councils of Labor Collectives], restrict the activists of the independent trade unions, control the official “trade unions” and not only find ways to line their pockets at the expense of their enterprise, but also use the privatization process to their own benefit.

In addition, whereas earlier there was at least the illusion that some possibility existed to protest arbitrary decisions by appealing to the party committee, the regional committee, or a ministry (it hardly ever helped but at least someone was obliged to listen to you) activists today do not have even that. They have ended up in the situation of Marmeladov: with nowhere to turn. The enterprise directors have a free hand, which is even worse during times of mass layoffs.

The workers movement can form a united front with the directors around a few common causes. But it is of utmost importance that while doing so they tune their independence. They must not dance to another’s tune or pull the chestnuts from the fire for some “sugar daddy.”

The Need for Political Organization

Even with a strong militant trade union organization, only a small share of the problems that concern workers can be resolved at the enterprise level. The key to solving the majority of difficulties lies at a higher level of power. The resolution of these often turns on the solution of global issues, that is, political problems. Moreover many matters cannot be resolved in favor of workers at the local level and even higher—not only because the absolute majority of today’s trade unions and workers organizations are fictitious and weak. The problem is that “by definition” one trade union, strike committee, or workers’ committee by itself is limited in what it can achieve—without political support, without political parties directly, immediately and reliably (without ulterior motives) expressing the will of the workers.

The trade union and the political elements are, in fact, two natural and necessary branches of any developed workers movement. People don’t just worry about what happens to them on the job. They are also concerned over prices, new laws, what the local authorities are up to, and the functioning of communal services. People are also interested in making sure that the state implements a policy for the creation of new work places so that necessary goods in short supply can become accessible at affordable prices. Before our eyes, our systems of free medical care and free universal education are being dismantled without our permission, with no legal basis. The inequality of opportunities for education for the son of a worker as opposed to the son of a merchant is growing and the state is silently washing its hands of the matter. These and other social problems can be effectively resolved only if we have our own representatives in the organs of power: from the summits of parliament to the

local councils. It is impermissible to have any particular confidence in the representatives of the parties of others, no matter how beautiful their words or the promises they make. It is sufficient to recall the promises made by those currently in power during parliamentary, presidential, and local election campaigns—and even after the elections—and to compare this with reality.

Boris Napoleonovich, you will recall, publicly promised to lie on the railroad tracks if reforms were accompanied by price increases and a lowering of living standards. (There may have been some naive individuals who, in order to save his life, voted against him as a candidate for president.) Since that time, prices have risen not by several percentage points but several times over; however, for some reason we have seen no reenactment of Anna Karenina's tragic act. Before the first Congress of Peoples' Deputies of Russia, Sergei Shakhrai spoke out in the press against the amendments which the CPSU was dragging into the Russian constitution and which gave too much power to the chairman of the Supreme Soviet: this was undemocratic! (*Izvestiya*, May 14, 1990) Less than two years had passed before this same Shakhrai at the Sixth Congress was himself writing the constitutional amendments granting enormous powers to the heads of state. A 180-degree turn! What is going on? The truth is that earlier while in the opposition they could say what they liked; but now they are in power!

They babbled on about democracy, retired to a "house in the woods," and the three of them (!) declared a country of 300 million people dissolved. Moreover, in a democratic Russia they never even got around to convening the congress for a discussion of such a "petty" issue.

They babbled on about social protection, and yet go for a month without paying pensions.

They babbled on about power to the people ("A Chance for Continuing Stability—Full Power to the Local Councils," Sergei Stankevich, *Dialog*, No. 2, 1990) and now cancel elections, appoint local officials, and demand that all local councils be dissolved.

They scream about the privileges of the nomenklatura and, upon coming to power, establish benefits for themselves that surpass any of their predecessors'.

They scream about the struggle against the mafia, about the corruption of the party apparatus, and have themselves become more self-serving than anyone who came before them! ("From the point of view of corruption, what is happening in our country can compare with no other period in history that I know of," said the architect of perestroika Aleksandr Yakovlev in *Curranty*, December 11, 1991.) Obviously, the solutions to our problems cannot be reliably entrusted to some far off benefactor. He will make promises and then betray you. In addition, the majority of the existing parties are firmly linked with their sponsors—various financial-commercial structures (See Appendix.) What we need is not to ask someone to intercede on our behalf but to have our own deputies. To be sure, there are the sad experiences of Vorkuta, the Kuzbass—and in Leningrad, also, by the way—when some deputies from the workers movement, upon winning elections in 1990 and taking office, cut their ties with the workers' organizations and only looked after their own careers and business interests. Precisely, what we need is a party which not only helps get candidates elected, but can also use every possible means to control the

candidates' activity and help in the work of safeguarding their links with the base, with those who pushed them forward.

For Defense of Today's Interests, Not Arguments About Yesterday's Godfathers

This party must unite workers on a very broad basis. If you are a worker on the shop floor, an engineer using a slide rule, a scholar at a computer, a doctor by a sickbed or a teacher at a blackboard, this is *your* party.

If you are against the policy plundering the broad masses and causing rapid social stratification (this policy did not begin with the "Gaidar government" and will not end when he falls)—this is *your* party.

If you want to make your case known, if you want to produce the goods people need but at every step in the official ladder another 10,000 rubles is demanded of you, this party must defend your interests.

The political organizations of the workers must in no case become narrow ideological sects of fanatics of any "one and only true" idea. There must be room for people with varying views, except for racists and opponents of democratic freedoms.

It does not matter which god you believe in or even if you believe in a god at all.

It does not matter who you consider your national hero: Lenin, Makhno, Kolchak, or the leaders of the Kronstadt rebellion.

It does not matter whether you appreciate Comrade Stalin or consider him the greatest criminal of all time and of all peoples or whether you applauded Nina Andreyevna or were crazy about Mikhail Sergeevich. It does not matter whether you voted for Yeltsin or against him.

A political organization of the workers must unite people on the basis of defense of their genuine, real, vital interests, and not on the basis of their attitudes toward the events of the distant or not-so distant past. Arguments about the past have their proper place and time. But for workers parties, the priority is the struggle today for the rights and interests of workers.

'Your rights will not be given to you —you will have to take them.'

The workers movements in our country are still very weak. The administration of shock therapy itself was possible precisely because of this weakness (Gaidar referred to this fact in a recent interview in *Chas Pik*.) It was not because the people believe Yeltsin's stories ("hold out until the autumn") that the sharp decline in living standards failed to provoke an adequate social resistance. Rather it was because the people were not united in independent organizations and had no experience in collective struggle, a common reference point for action.

All the government orders, laws, and edicts make sense only as long as "the people keep silent." The present-day rash of parties and politicians can present themselves as anything, puff themselves up, and wield the levers of power only as long as the masses are passive. A two or three-day general strike would expose the majority of them as nonentities and sweep two-thirds of them away like a fallen house of cards, of no political use and destined to have a place only in some future textbooks.

If one were to describe the perestroika and post-perestroika periods in one sentence, it would be that this was a time when

the wealth of the people was redistributed for the benefit of a narrow layer through the impoverishment of the majority. It was a classic example of "primitive accumulation" of capital. There was not then nor is there now a power capable of resisting this. Only a strong workers movement can defend the interests of the workers regardless of what changes may take place in the political situation. Like the hero of Gorky's play said: "Your rights will not be given to you, you will have to take them."

Appendix: The Hand That Feeds

Napoleon loved to repeat the idea that to conduct war you need three things: money, money, and more money. The same applies to politics. An election campaign, propaganda, press coverage, congresses—it all requires financial resources. No matter how much today's parties talk about their independence, it is clear that they are looking after the interests of their sponsors. The one who plays the piper calls the tune.

The financial feed-bag is more often than not a secret behind seven seals. In their propaganda materials, articles, and interviews, they keep silent; information about this only rarely filters out. At the beginning of last year in Moscow, an extraordinary congress of entrepreneurs was held. At it, the boss of the Moscow militia Arkady Murashev (who won fame on February 23) spoke out and on behalf of the "democrats" thanked the native merchants for their support (see *Pravda*, February 12, 1991). The congress established a centralized fund to support "necessary" parties (*Izvestiya*, February 12, 1991). As *Izvestiya* remarked, the representatives of public organizations participating in the congress "not only were not embarrassed by the material support promised to them but were virtually competing with one another to see who could get the most." (Ibid.) We will recall, by the way, that two years ago, the noted millionaire Artem Tarasok—who is now on the run—called upon the commercial entrepreneurs to finance the opposition of that period (*Pravda*, December 12, 1991). It would be interesting to know in which foreign capital this father-sponsor of Russian democracy in white trousers is now strolling.

No less resourceful than the democrats are the oppositionists in the CPSU. In May 1991, at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, Central Committee member and leader of the group "Communists for Democracy," Colonel Rutskoï, informed his comrades in the party: "Now, the group is holding a Russian congress of entrepreneurs" (*Sovietskaya Rossiya*, May 15, 1991). The congress of Russian business circles, in the organization of which Rutskoï was an active participant, and the Fund for the Revival of Russia finance his party—NPSP [Popular Party for a Free Russia] (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, January 18, 1992).

The leadership of the Nizhegorod Commodity Exchange was the initiator and one of the sponsors of the "Russian National Assembly" (*Sovietskaya Rossiya*, February 20, 1992). The Merchants' Alliance, the Moscow Convention of Entrepreneurs, and the Russian Commodities-Raw Materials Exchange [RCRME] keep the Cadets and Christian Democrats alive (*NG*, January 18, 1992 and February 13, 1992).

The main competitor of the RCRME—the Moscow Commodities-Raw Materials Exchange Alliance—helps the DPR [Democratic Party of Russia]—(*NG*, January 18, 1992).

However, the DPR is also benefiting from the RCRME's generosity: thus, precisely with money from the RCRME "a system of on-going instruction" of regional party functionaries has been set up (*NG*, February 13, 1992). In general, in the words of the chief administrator of the RCRME K.N. Borovoy, his exchange is supporting "all normal parties" (Ibid). The RCRME is the largest exchange in the country (*Argumenti i Fakti*, No. 13, 1992). So why wouldn't it get what it wants? It has to mark off its sphere of influence everywhere and safeguard its interests in any political situation that may develop.

It is doubtful that any party speaking out, for example, for the nationalization of Mr. Borovoy's wealth could fit his definition of "normal" (and wouldn't get a kopeck from him). Nor can there be any doubt that any "normal" party deciding suddenly—not in words but in deeds—to take action against the interests of their sponsor would immediately fall out of favor. If that party should encroach upon the private interests of a specific sponsor it would have to sell itself to another competitor. But if it raises issues against the common, class interests of the bosses of the business world (for example, to open the books, or stricter customs controls, or to limit operations of the exchanges), this party risks financial collapse—its party machine skidding to a halt for lack of its monetary lubricant. Therefore, no matter what eloquent words about serving the people they may utter, the foremost and sacred task of any "normal party" is to look after the interests of those who fill its coffers.

On the other hand, those parties which do "behave properly" receive abundant gifts. Thus, after August the free trade unions and other workers organizations received practically none of the requisitioned property of the CPSU. But the mayor of Moscow, Popov, handed over the good-sized building (that could accommodate 2,500 students) of the Moscow Higher Party School as a gift to the political council of the DDP [Movement for Democratic Reforms] of which (the political council) Mr. Popov was himself a member. (*Pravda*, October 9, 1991) "How could we not look after our own?" especially if it is yourself.

As to who our bosses presently feel well disposed toward, this was demonstrated rather obviously by two events in March.

Pravda went bankrupt and ceased publication. During that same period, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* [The Independent] arranged a grandiose banquet for 1,000 guests (the guiding lights of politics and business including the Shaposhnikovs, the vice premiers, and the Gorbachevs) with guest artists performing, and good food and drink, including oysters straight from Paris. This took place while ordinary people were standing in queues for hours for the most basic food items. The Democratic press, making a racket about the CPSU's money, for some reason never asked where *NG* got the means for this and just how "independent" *The Independent* could really be. The purchase of the necessary political organizations is occurring at all levels "from Moscow to all edges of the land." And as a result, the necessary decisions are being made by the deputy factions, the necessary people are being appointed to the proper posts, the necessary slogans are being advanced by eloquent spokesmen, the necessary articles are appearing in the press, and those articles not considered necessary are left out altogether. □

April 4-5, 1992

Fight Concessions! Build Workers Solidarity!

by Barry Weisleder

The following article was written prior to the Canadian Labor Congress Convention in June 1992.

Employers and the state are using double-digit unemployment like a sledgehammer to drive workers into acceptance of frozen wages, rollbacks, loss of job security, and erosion of social benefits.

Fear and loathing is the rule in almost every workplace. Workers are under the gun as bosses turn up the pressure for contract concessions, compulsory overtime, speedup, and "sacrifice"—while the giant banks and corporations rake in billions in untaxed profits.

"Consider yourself lucky if you have a job," threaten the voices of big business. And if you're one of the over two million unemployed, well... "blame the unions for pricing Canada out of the world market" say the so-called free traders.

Against a backdrop of daily plant closures, bankruptcies, and failures the big owners grab their multimillion dollar government grants and consciously cut corners on health and safety. The families of 26 miners who died in the explosive, dust-choked coal tunnels of Westray, at Plymouth, Nova Scotia, are now left to reflect on the consequences.

To a drumbeat of rising racial tensions and police violence the demagogues of the far right are playing their cards. Stop third world immigration, chimes the racist Reform Party; put Francophones in their place.

Ironically or not, depression is a gold mine for capitalism. Its rulers are past masters at utilizing economic terror tactics to "discipline" workers, to lower our expectations, and whenever possible, to destroy our unions. The lockout of CUPE Local 4031 at Nationair is only the latest and most visible attempt.¹

The other dimension of this very conscious rulers' offensive is the frontal assault on the social safety net. That which took several generations of class struggle to construct may be dismantled in less than one. The federal government cut billions of dollars in transfer payments, and the provinces (NDP provincial governments are no exception) are dancing to the same corporate agenda minuet.

By actually reducing welfare rates, relative to the cost of living, governments are

making starvation the only alternative to low-wage, service-sector part-time jobs. (McDonald's says "thank you" and makes another generous donation to the campaign to block labor law reform in Ontario.) We know exactly where this leaves women, visible minorities, and immigrant workers.

Last Line of Defense

In the face of this brutal offensive the labor movement represents for the working class and the poor a last line of defense.

But it's been a very weak, poorly defended barricade at that. Individual unions fend for themselves, reduced to tactics that might have been effective 20 years ago.

But in today's world capitalism is in deeper global crisis with far less capacity to make concessions to workers. Capitalism seeks to renew itself in the only way it can—by raising the rate of exploitation, conquering new markets (especially in the post-Stalinist East), and inter-imperialist rivalry and war (for which the Persian Gulf slaughter was but a tuneup).

Without an effective fightback strategy workers and the dispossessed will be the ones making all the concessions.

So how do we explain the absence of an effective fightback? Is it due to deep-seated worker passivity? Is it the result of mass intimidation in the face of economic crisis? Only in part.

The federal public service and the postal workers strikes in the fall of 1991 showed that workers are prepared to battle wage controls, cutbacks, and privatizations with mass job actions.

The pulp and paper workers at Stone Consolidated in Bathurst, New Brunswick, demonstrated that workers are willing to stand up to wage concession demands even in the face of a threatened plant closure.

University of British Columbia workers (CUPE locals 2950 and 116) successfully struck in March against employer concession demands and for progress towards pay equity.

In April, over 50,000 public sector workers demonstrated in Montreal, serving notice that they will not permit the Quebec

government to reopen their collective agreements and roll back their gains.

And as angry, unemployed Toronto youth of all races seized Yonge Street on May 4, they revealed that open rebellion against capitalist authority, privilege, and wealth is boiling just beneath the thin blue surface of Tory Canada.²

Missing Ingredients

But what's really missing across this social landscape of discontent is effective coordination and leadership.

The labor leadership has been particularly at fault in this regard. Instead of generalizing the struggle against the Goods and Services Tax, instead of organizing solidarity strikes that could have joined with federal workers' disputes to paralyze the Tory government and force an early election, most labor leaders contented themselves with pious news releases and routine photo opportunities.

Worse than that we notice a growing tendency among union officials to accept capitalist "competitiveness" and "global restructuring" arguments, as do their siblings in the NDP hierarchy, and to act accordingly. Their response to runaway plants is worker investment buyouts fueled by wage and benefit concessions and government giveaways. They talk of "partnership" with business. Or in a more sober mood they beg for minor improvements in severance pay and aimless job retraining schemes. Their response to NDP provincial government cutbacks is a deafening silence.

The Nature of the Beast

The failure of the labor leadership is not the fault of any individual, or group of union officials. It flows from the very nature of the labor bureaucracy—a conservative and privileged social layer of the workers' movement. The privileges of the labor bureaucracy (with officials and staff receiving salaries two, three, even four times as much as the earnings of the workers they purport to represent) do not incline them to challenge the system.

The bureaucracy seeks to mediate the struggle between workers and bosses; to reconcile antagonistic and irreconcilable class interests. The confidence of the labor bureaucracy is not in the membership rank and file, it is in the supposed stability and permanence of the capitalist order, combined with an abiding faith in the neutrality of the capitalist state.

What attitude should class-conscious workers take towards the existing labor leadership? Never let them off the hook. Demand action. In short, we demand that they advance the struggle against the bosses by every means necessary; economically, socially, and politically.

We say to the labor leadership: "Lead, follow, or get out of the way!"

By putting the leadership to the test we assist our coworkers in more rapidly discovering for themselves the inadequacy of the present leadership and the need for a radical alternative.

Build Workers Solidarity

But an alternative working class leadership will not develop spontaneously. It

must be consciously organized—based on a clear class-struggle program of action.

Such an endeavor is particularly difficult to achieve across the Canadian state given national divisions, regional fragmentation, and local isolation of class struggle militants.

But the process must begin somewhere, somehow.

We believe that the Toronto-based Workers Solidarity Coalition represents a modest, though important, start.

Founded in June 1991, to build solidarity with the federal public sector workers, Workers Solidarity is a multiunion formation which includes feminist, immigrant workers, and anti-poverty organizations. It is dedicated to the construction of an autonomous rank-and-file movement to democratize, activate, and unite our unions and social movements from the bottom up.

Since rallying hundreds to CUPW and PSAC picket lines last fall, Workers Solidarity has: campaigned against the prosecution and jailing of Toronto CUPW leaders by the Ontario NDP attorney general; bolstered picket lines at Nationair;

held public forums at the conventions of the Ontario Federation of Labor and the Ontario Public Services Employees Union, as well as at a downtown Toronto hostel to address the need for unity between unionists and the unemployed.³

Workers Solidarity is currently planning a rally to be held in front of the site of the Ontario NDP convention, June 19-21, in Hamilton, to protest provincial cutbacks, continuing tax breaks for the rich, and the party's general betrayal of workers, women, minorities, and the poor.

As Workers Solidarity makes its debut at the Canadian Labor Congress convention at Vancouver, progressive delegates and movement activists from across the country should seize the opportunity to forge stronger links and discuss ways we can work together in an ongoing way between labor conventions, to fight concessions, and to build democratic class-struggle unions.

(Barry Weisleder is an executive board member of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, president of OPSEU Local 595, and a member of the International Affairs Committee of the Labor Council of Metro Toronto.) □

Notes

1. CUPE—Canadian Union of Public Employees, the largest union in Canada with over 400,000 members, mostly in the public sector at the federal and municipal levels of government. The 450 Montreal and Toronto-based flight attendants (80 percent female, earning less than \$15,000/year) of Local 4031 were locked out by Nationair management on Nov. 19, 1991, after rejecting by 91 percent vote a contract offer full of rollbacks. The union is promoting a boycott of Nationair, and the local has organized some mass picketing at airports.

2. In the wake of the Rodney King decision, hundreds of youths broke away from a peaceful protest march and rally to march up and down Yonge Street, Toronto's busiest and best-known commercial downtown avenue. Windows were smashed and goods seized by the angry, multiracial crowd of mostly unemployed youths.

3. CUPW—Canadian Union of Postal Workers, with about 42,000 members, is widely regarded as Canada's most militant union, having waged several major cross-country strikes in the past 20 years, and the first significant public sector union to win maternity benefits. PSAC—Public Service Alliance of Canada, with over 160,000 members working for the federal government, was the labor sleeping giant which awoke last September to wage a big two-week strike battle against the Mulroney government and its cutbacks to jobs and services, before PSAC was legislated back to work by Parliament.

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The Labor Party Experience in Canada and What It Can Mean for the United States Today

by Elaine Bernard

The following is the edited transcript of a presentation given by Elaine Bernard at the final plenary session of the tenth annual Socialist Scholars Conference, April 26, 1992, held at the Borough of Manhattan Community College in New York City. Bernard was representing the New Democratic Party of Canada. She is a longtime activist in the NDP and past president of the British Columbia wing of the party. She now lives in Boston and is executive director of the Harvard University Trade Union Program.

Canada today is a country in crisis. This is clearly the case, as it's even been commented on by the newspapers in the United States. So, we know it's true! Canada is facing a neo-liberal agenda, which consists of four parts. The first, and most important part, is the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Now, I know that when we talk of free trade most Americans think of the North American Free Trade Agreement, but for Canadians the free trade debate started long before the approval of the U.S.-Canada pact over three years ago. Also related to the area of restructuring is a constitutional crisis in Canada, most often referred to in U.S. newspapers as the "Meech Lake Accord." In addition, we have the right's economic agenda of privatization and deregulation—which I'm sure you are all familiar with.

In spite of the crisis that this business/Tory offensive has provoked, the right in Canada has had a hard time in selling its neo-liberal agenda. Part of the reason for this is that Canadians view their society as more compassionate than the United States. In fact, a popular joke in Canada is that when President Bush said he wanted a kinder, gentler nation, Canadians thought he meant Canada. While one should not exaggerate the compassionate image, there is some fact to it. Canada's social safety net, for example, is more generous than the U.S. While U.S. social programs lift only one in five families above the poverty line, Canadian programs lift one in two.

Because Canadians have historically seen the role of the state as more than

simply an instrument of big business, the right's discrediting of the economic role of government and the attack on public enterprise has been more difficult in Canada. There is a general acceptance of the need for an interventionist state that provides universal social programs, such as our health care program, equalization programs among provinces and regions, and agricultural supply marketing boards to preserve the family and small farm.

A further significant factor in the resistance to the neo-liberal program has been the strength and mobilization of the Canadian labor movement. While only 16 percent of the U.S. labor force is organized, the rate is 38 percent in Canada. The New Democratic Party (NDP), which was co-founded by the Canadian Labor Congress, has given organized labor a powerful voice in politics. It has played a role in legitimating left ideas and in broadening the political spectrum. It has helped the labor movement reach out to other social movements and it has provided a common political arena for labor and progressive groups to contest political power and work together in an ongoing way. For Canadian labor, the link to the NDP has played an important role in legitimating a working class perspective in Canadian society.

Crucial to understanding the crisis in Canada has been the role of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. By removing tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade with the United States, the FTA gave U.S. capital and business the same rights as Canadians to invest, divest, and receive

government subsidies. It has limited Canada's ability to promote social equity through government programs, since such initiatives could be declared "unfair subsidies" for Canadian business.

The free trade deal is essentially a charter of rights for business. It has further restricted the already limited economic decision-making power of people through their governments—raising the issue of the nature of sovereignty in face of multinational corporations. Historically, Canadians have readily accepted using the power of government to promote public enterprise and social equality and to try and limit the immense power of capital. Because Canadians have seen the role of the state as more than simply an instrument of big business, the right's discrediting of the economic role of government and the attack on public enterprise has been more difficult in Canada. As I have said, there's a tradition of an interventionist state that provides universal social programs, such as our health care program.

The Tories, not wanting to suffer the political consequences and a possible defeat in a direct attack on Canada's social programs and movements, chose instead to force the business agenda via free trade. Today, they are telling Canadians that we must "harmonize" our social programs downward—first with the U.S. and possibly later with Mexico. The Free Trade Agreement ties the hands of not only the current Canadian government, but future governments at all levels.

The crisis brought on by the Free Trade Agreement and neo-liberal economic agenda has forced Canadians into a far-ranging discussion about the nature of our society, social programs, constitution, economic treaties, and indeed, the social contract that underlies our society. This is a very exciting process. It has brought women, workers, indigenous people, and Quebecois who have questioned the social contract of Canada which was built on sexist oppression and built on genocide against the indigenous people, to begin to discuss the forging of a new society, not built on exploitation and oppression. Fundamental to this discussion is what type of economy we will have. Were we put on this earth to serve the economy? Or is the economy supposed to be about human relations in productive activity, built by humans to serve our needs? As Canadian economist Mel Watkin humorously put it, "How come we can have seventeen types of light beer but only one type of economy?"

So there is a potential for some fairly fundamental questioning of capitalism and some questioning about how we govern ourselves. And that means in Canada a recognition of the rights of indigenous

people to self-government. Similarly, it means recognizing that the Quebecois are a nation; and they have the right to self-government up to and including independence. Interestingly, for the last few years, polls have consistently shown that a majority of Canadians support the indigenous peoples' right of self-government.

Not surprisingly, with such political questioning going on in the country, many Canadians have been drawn to the NDP. Today, 52 percent of Canadians are governed by NDP provincial governments including: Ontario, our industrial heartland and most populous province; British Columbia, in the far west; Saskatchewan, the historic home province of our party; and the far north, the Yukon.

In spite of the fact that I am here representing the party, I would be remiss if I did not point out that we in the NDP are not without our problems. And on this point, I would like to share some of my observations with you. I fear that we in the NDP, like social democratic parties everywhere, have been too caught up in what I call the "McDonald" tradition. By that I don't mean the historic betrayal of the British Labor Party by its leader Ramsay MacDonald, but rather a more banal variety of misdirection—Ronald McDonald socialism, where "we do it all for you." By that I mean, it is the job of socialists not to simply work within parliament or the legislature and mobilize supporters and the electorate at election time and then once elected to tell our supporters to sit back and "we'll do it for you." Rather, our job is to create a social and economic environment in our society within which people can "do things for themselves and each other." This means that we need to build an organization that doesn't simply seek to win power, but one that seeks to transform power—and that means continuing to mobilize our support in struggle even after we have won an election.

In Ontario today, the NDP government is facing a massively well-funded, anti-NDP government campaign. It started before the NDP won the election and it hasn't slowed down one bit. To the extent that we try and bring about any significant change, we should expect such an onslaught. In fact, in today's environment, whether we attempt to bring about significant change or not, capital will mobilize against NDP governments. In this environment, we need to mobilize a countervailing

power to the power of business. That means mobilizing the social movements, the labor movement, and the party's base.

Let me give you an example of how I think this could work. Remember the Free Trade Agreement? Well, one of the reforms that the NDP has introduced in the provinces where we've been the government is universal, public auto insurance. In Ontario, an important plank in the NDP program was public auto insurance. But the Ontario government has been forced to put this reform on the back burner. One of the contributing factors is a report by the insurance industry that predicted that it would cost two billion dollars in compensation to insurance companies (required under the FTA) for loss of business. Can you believe it? You can see why we call this free trade deal a business charter of rights. The government of the most powerful province in Canada now finds it can't proceed with a rather tepid reform under the threat of massive compensation costs under the FTA.

Rather than abandon the reform, however, I think it might be an ideal time to challenge the free trade deal—and make concrete the seemingly nebulous issue of sovereignty. It is an opportunity to give leadership and show why we are not against the trade deal on narrow nationalist or protectionist grounds, but rather, on the grounds that it's an issue of sovereignty. It is about whether we have the right as a sovereign people to elect a government on a program, and whether they have the power to implement that program. But that means mobilizing and building social power much broader than we've ever conceived of it before. It means that a progressive government must confront the rule of business and demand the primacy of the rule of democratically elected government.

In another area, on a more positive note, I think the Ontario government is providing very exciting leadership. They are leading the discussion in Canada on a social charter as part of the current round of constitutional debate. Rather like an economic bill of rights, a social charter would enshrine our commitment to universal social programs as a right of all Canadians. While there are many difficulties in adopting a social charter, the idea of enshrining economic and social rights is an important concept for socialists to advocate.

While I know that I was invited here to speak about the NDP and Canada, I would like to end with some observations about

politics here in the U.S. Now that I live in the U.S., I guess I feel that I can speak as a fellow activist and participant, not just as a foreign guest. One of the problems I've observed at these socialist scholars conferences is that we tend to look at other countries, and other peoples' struggles, and dissect and evaluate their tactics and strategies endlessly. While I of course agree with the overall internationalist orientation of this conference, I find it somewhat puzzling that we do not look at the relevance of something like the NDP for U.S. leftists. This is, after all, a conference of mostly U.S. socialists, taking place in New York City. Specifically, we do not devote much attention to working class politics in the U.S. and the need in this country for a party independent of business and based on organized labor. It means taking up the words of the great American socialist Eugene V. Debs, that "it is better to vote for something you want and not get it than vote for something you don't want and get it."

One of the most important things we can do in the U.S. for socialists in other countries is build a strong, united working class movement in the U.S. We need to start to talk again about working class politics in this country. We need to talk about breaking from the parties of big business. Let's start talking about doing what we did 30 years ago in Canada and saying that we need a party of our own. You know, in spite of the fact that 52 percent of Canadians are governed by NDP provincial governments, we still garner only 20 percent of the popular vote federally. However, with our national presence we have changed politics in Canada. We have legitimated working class ideas and working class politics in our country.

And we did that in my lifetime. It's not something that we inherited from any other country. It's something that we did ourselves. We're not genetically predisposed to collectivism in Canada—we're just ordinary folks, just like you, only with socialized medicine, because we bit the bullet and we created our own party and worked within it for progressive policies. Today, in the U.S., I think there is tremendous opportunity to forge a new political party with new politics—and within our lifetime. Rather than trying to predict the future, I would suggest that we begin to create it. □

Federal Judges Can Stack Deck Against Workers, Unions

by Dave Riehle

Dave Riehle has an avid interest in labor history. He currently is chairman of United Transportation Union Local 650, representing workers on the Chicago Northwestern Railroad, and is sergeant-at-arms of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly.

This article has been reprinted from the Union Advocate, June 8, 1992.

The recent death of senior Federal Judge Edward Devitt was given the treatment by the news media normally reserved for a head of state. The St. Paul *Pioneer Press* ran a three-column obituary taking up nearly half of the front page.

In Devitt's 57 years of government service he was only elected to two offices, municipal judge in East Grand Forks in 1935, and U.S. congressman from St. Paul's Fourth District, serving from 1946-1948, but the perception by the media that this man exerted power and influence equivalent to, if not greater than, an elected head of state was undoubtedly correct.

Although it was not mentioned in the *Pioneer Press* account, Devitt's career was intimately connected with the union movement and the struggles of working people at some crucial junctures. An examination of his life can shed some light on the practice of judicial intervention in labor struggles and why it's nearly always on the side of the employers.

At the time of the 1985 strike by UFCW Local P-9 against the George A. Hormel Co., Edward Devitt was the senior judge in the 8th District Federal Court, located in St. Paul, where he served until his death. Appointed to the federal bench in 1954 and chief judge since 1957, Devitt was in essence commander in chief of all the forces directed against Local P-9, and authority for all action taken against the local derived from his almost unlimited power as a federal judge. Injunctions and orders flowed from his pen expropriating union buildings and bank accounts, outlawing leaflets, boycotts, picketing, and ultimately, the strike itself. Devitt's order issued April 23, 1986, directed P-9 and "its officers, servants, representatives, agents, employees, and all members and all persons acting in concert or participation with them" to cease all activities aimed at preventing persons from crossing their picket lines.

Judiciary Takes Precedence

Although it was DFL Governor Rudy Perpich who called out the Minnesota National Guard and sent them to Austin in January 1986, when the strikers successfully closed the plant for two days, it was well established in Minnesota labor history that the federal judiciary took precedence over mere governors in labor disputes.

In 1959, DFL Governor Orville Freeman called out the Minnesota National Guard and sent them to Albert Lea, the site of a strike by the United Packinghouse Workers of America.

Mass picketing by the union had successfully shut down the Wilson Co. meatpacking plant there.

Under pressure from a powerful and united labor movement, Freeman had ordered the Guard to keep the plant closed. But within seven days, a three-judge panel of the U.S. 8th District Court ordered the plant reopened, explicitly affirming that, as Freeman later said, "property and its sanctity in private use must stand above the emergency action which I directed to protect human lives."

The three federal judges who issued the order to reopen the plant were John H. Sanborn, Gunnar Nordbye—and Edward Devitt, the youngest of the three, but appointed only two years earlier as chief judge.

Only once before had a Minnesota governor ordered out the National Guard during a strike and directed them to keep the struck plant closed. In 1935, Farmer Labor Party Governor Floyd B. Olson had done so at a strike at the Strutwear Knitting plant in Minneapolis. That order was promptly overturned by a panel of three federal judges. Two of the judges were Gunnar Nordbye and John H. Sanborn.

As industry and labor developed in the 19th century so did struggles by workers and the employers used their control of state government to create new means of defeating strikes and unions. They turned to the judiciary, anti-strike injunctions, federal troops and the National Guard, an organized, massive military force that could be brought into local situations where union power was too strong for local authorities.

The president appoints federal judges and the governor, ex officio commander in chief of the Guard, appoints an adjutant general as commander. A federal judge and an adjutant general, who can then be removed only for cause, are in effect appointed for life. When a crisis arises, such as a strike, this continuity and overlap of leadership assures top officers and judges who know how to handle strikes and have longstanding relationships with other key political, judicial, and corporate figures.

Edward Devitt's career demonstrates this continuity and shows how carefully, and early, the establishment selects its key personnel and grooms them for their tasks. Although Devitt came from modest circumstances on St. Paul's Dayton's Bluff, where he attended Van Buren grade school with future Supreme Court Justices Warren Burger and Harry Blackmun, he caught the eye of the decision-makers early on.

In 1939 he was appointed, at the age of 29, an assistant attorney general in the administration of Republican Governor

Harold Stassen. Stassen himself had been a lawyer in a South St. Paul law firm with close ties to the town's meatpacking corporations. In 1933, as a young county attorney in Dakota County, Stassen had prosecuted leaders of a failed strike at the Armour plant.

The Stassen administration, as a first order of business upon assuming office in 1939, passed a sweeping anti-labor law which was in many ways an anticipation of the 1947 Taft Hartley Act. The Stassen anti-labor law was utilized in 1941 in the attack on the militant leadership of Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544, and the leaders of that union were tried and convicted under the anti-radical Smith Act in 1941 in federal court in Minneapolis.

Network Aids Employers

Devitt's appointment as an assistant attorney general was made by the new Republican attorney general, none other than J.A.A. Burnquist. In 1917, the Minnesota Home Guard, a businessman's militia, was called to the Twin Cities by Republican Governor J.A.A. Burnquist to be used against a streetcar strike.

Burnquist also headed the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety set up during World War I with semidictatorial powers, ostensibly to aid the war effort but in reality to carry out repression against labor and farmer radicals, foreign-born Minnesotans, the IWW, and the Non-Partisan League, a militant farmers' organization.

Burnquist was followed by a series of National Guard adjutant generals—W.A. Rhinow, E.A. Walsh, and Joseph E. Nelson—who played key roles in intervening in packinghouse strikes, the 1934 Minneapolis Teamster strikes, and other struggles.

When Devitt returned from WWII, where he had served in Naval Intelligence, he resumed his position as assistant attorney general briefly. Then he entered into one of the oldest corporate law firms in St. Paul—Morgan, Chase, Headley and Hoshour (now Briggs, Morgan), a law firm which earlier had sent partner Cushman Davis on to become governor in 1874 and later U.S. senator, and sent Frank Kellogg on to be U.S. senator and later U.S. secretary of state in President Herbert Hoover's cabinet.

Cleon Headley, a senior partner in the firm, represented the Armour Company, playing a key role as a management representative during the 1948 South St. Paul packinghouse strike.

From the prestigious position in the Morgan, Chase, Headley law firm, Devitt was selected by the Republican Party to run for U.S. Congress in St. Paul in 1946, and elected. He was singled out by *Look* magazine, in a five-page spread in January 1947, as a young man who was "going places."

Devitt lost a bid for reelection to Eugene McCarthy in a wave of reaction against members of Congress who had voted for the anti-labor Taft Hartley law. He returned to private law practice and in 1950 was appointed a county probate judge. In 1954, President Eisenhower appointed Devitt to the U.S. Eighth District Circuit Court and in 1957, chief judge of the court.

The authority of a federal judge, backed up by armed force, is immense, arbitrary, and immediate. In periods of social crisis and labor struggle, when the prerogatives of the employers are challenged, time-consuming constitutional processes are shunted aside, and often a federal judge assumes more or less direct rule over the citizens of entire communities, as in Austin in 1986.

Devitt's authority in the Hormel strike extended even to overruling the First Amendment rights of free speech. He issued an order that hindered Local P-9's corporate campaign by banning the local from distributing any literature explaining the Hormel-First Bank connection *within 20 miles* of any First Bank office.

Since the legal right to organize and strike is already established, when a mass strike occurs and unions gain the upper hand, the problem is presented for the employers of conceding the legality of trade unionism while at the same time outlawing its actual substance. This has been accomplished in part through the use of judicial injunctions. Anti-labor injunctions were first used extensively in the 1890s, notably in the 1894 Pullman strike.

The injunction issued against Eugene Debs and the American Railway Union outlawed: "any person whomsoever from compelling or inducing or attempting to compel or induce by threats, intimidation, persuasion, force or violence, any of the employees" of the railroads to refuse to perform any of their duties as employees. The strike was broken by federal troops and Debs was sent to prison for six months.

Not so different were the felony riot charges brought against Jim Guyette and Ray Rogers in April 1986 where they were charged with, among other things, "holding news conferences and making speeches urging people to come to Austin to demonstrate against the Hormel Co."

In effect the intervention by injunction, especially with the power of the federal judiciary, backed up by the full force of the state, suspends all constitutional rights in that time and place. These judicial coup d'états give some indication of the real commitment of the judiciary, public officials, and the rich and powerful who select them, to democratic processes when their basic economic interests are challenged.

According to a 1989 United Press International survey, the majority of America's federal judges have six-figure investment portfolios and many make more off the bench than on. All but 15 of the 935 judges had outside income.

At least 555 judges had investment assets worth more than \$100,000 after all their debts have been subtracted. So it is not surprising that they identify with the interests of the rich and powerful, whether they come originally from modest backgrounds or are born wealthy.

If labor is to rebuild itself after the adversity of the 1980s, it is going to have to know who its friends and enemies are. Illusions that the courts will act in labor disputes as neutral, value-free bodies can only disarm labor in advance. □

Panther fights for justice

FORMER Black Panther leader Dhoruba Bin Wahad, a victim of the US government's counterintelligence program, (COINTELPRO) in the 1970s, was released from prison in New York state on March 22, 1990 after having spent 19 years in maximum security prisons on trumped-up attempted murder charges. However, the courts have recently reinstated his conviction. Dhoruba spoke on June 4, 1992 at a meeting in Paris organized by the Committee in Support of US Political Prisoners as part of a European tour to build support for his case and those of other US political prisoners.

COULD you update us on developments in your case since you were last here in Paris?

The last time I was here was in December of 1991. It was a very difficult time for me politically. At that time, I was waiting for a decision in my case which would determine whether I would remain free or go back to prison.

In December of last year, the courts in the United States reinstated my conviction and I went to Africa in order to await the outcome. I had to make a political decision whether I would go back to the United States or become exiled as a consequence of the

court's actions.

I spent 19 years in prison so it is difficult for me to even envision going back to prison voluntarily. But, it was very important to me and to our movement that the victory that my case represented should not be snatched away from Black people. So I decided to go back to the United States and face whatever awaited me there. When I arrived in the United States in February and walked into the court room there were over 400 people present.

The people who came to court represented a broad spectrum of progressive people in New York City. There were Black people, there were Latin Americans, there were white progressive people, there were people from the gay and lesbian movement, there were representatives of various Black political figures.

I believe that it was their presence in court that prevented me from being sent back to prison. People came to court from Washington D.C., Boston, Vermont, and from New Jersey. They rented cars and vans to come to court. These were Black students, Black activists and in some cases just ordinary families.

This shocked the DA and the judge. Indeed when I walked into the courtroom the DA turned white as a sheet! He fully expected me to stay in Africa and never return to the US. He wanted to declare me a fugitive, dismiss my claims, and say to the press and to the public that I was a common criminal who fled justice.

My return thwarted that strategy. As for the judge, he wanted to get rid of the whole matter, and the easiest way of course was for me not to come back. This made it all the more important for me to continue.

Now when I go to court on June 23, I do not know whether I will go back to prison or whether the judge will dismiss the case.¹ In many ways I am in the same position I was in February. But I believe that as a consequence of our efforts we have the upper hand, in spite of the fact that my conviction was reinstated.

So when I go to court on June 23 it would be with the expectation that perhaps this ordeal would come to an end. If it does not we expect to have a date set for the hearings.

■ **Your case is one of several important cases concerning Black political prisoners that is currently pending. Could you tell us a bit about some of these other cases?**

This month alone there are three political cases that are going to the courts. On June 15 the Queens Two will appear in court. The Queens two are two former members of the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Black Liberation Army (BLA) who were imprisoned as a consequence of a gun fight with NYC policemen.

They have been in prison for about twelve years. They have been granted a limited hearing on the issues of their case. Another case that is appearing on June 26 is the case of the NY 3. These were three former members of the BPP and BLA who have been imprisoned for 21 years. This is the first time that they have been granted a hearing in Federal court².

Geronimo Pratt is one of the longest held political prisoners in the US. He has been in prison for 22 years. There is ample documentation in Geronimo's case that he was framed by the FBI and the California police authorities. Senators and movie stars have come forward and called for the freedom of Geronimo Pratt. Amnesty International has recognized Geronimo Pratt as a political prisoner.

We need to get the word out to progressive people in Europe that Black people in the US are an oppressed nation. And that there are political prisoners and prisoners of war from this oppressed nation in the US. I think that this is so important at this juncture that I cannot overemphasize it. In the case of Mumia Abu Jamal, it's a matter of life and death³. In the cases of some of the political prisoners coming up for parole it's a matter of freedom or continuing imprisonment. And in the cases of the political prisoners who have cases pending, it's a matter of whether they will get a fair hearing or whether their cases will be pushed aside once more.

Therefore we intend to mobilize as many people as possible to support these cases. In my case I appear in court on June 23. So as you can see June promises to be a particularly significant month for Black political prisoners.

We have also a situation in the US that I would like to bring to your attention. As you well know, there are a number of political prisoners, Puerto Rican, Black and white in the US who are in the federal penitentiary at Marion Illinois.

Marion federal penitentiary is one of the most notorious prisons in the world. Amnesty International has qualified it as inhuman. We would like people to demand that the federal

government transfer political prisoners to better facilities.

The federal government is building a new prison in Colorado that they intend to replace Marion with. Words to describe this prison are lost on me.

We are talking about a place where prisoners will have absolutely no human contact, where everything is automated, where the prisoner does not even come into contact with the prison guard, where they are locked in their prison cell 23 hours a day, where their every action including their bowel movements are photographed on close circuit television.

When they leave their cell, the cell doors open by remote control. They are moved through the facility by a series of opening doors and voices on close circuit radio. They are fed by remote control robots and they live in sterile environments completely devoid of any humanity or any sensitivity.

This prison is almost complete. You can believe that federal political prisoners and prisoners of war will be sent to this prison. We must raise our voices in protest over the construction of this prison. We must demand that political prisoners are not sent to this prison.

This prison will be a model for the maximum, maximum security prison. We can expect that every major nation will send their prison officials to the US to study this prison. It will represent the state of the art in prison technology. I urge you to write to the federal bureau of prisons and protest the construction of this prison and demand that political prisoners not be sent there.

We cannot wait for the prison to come on line and wait for the political prisoners to be transferred there. There are things that you can do. The committee here in France for instance, sent a letter to the ambassador of the US and to the governor of the state of Pennsylvania demanding that Mumia Abu Jamal be released from death row. This must be done again and again and the letters must be compiled and sent to the UN commission on human rights which should be requested to look into this matter and that of other political prisoners.

■ In what ways will the current political situation in the U.S. as you see it affect these cases?

The riots in LA subsequent to the Rodney King case have created a climate which will affect the outcome of these hearings. Whether it effects the outcome positively or negatively is up

to us. By that I mean it is up to us to mobilize people.

I emphasize this because I want you to understand that the work you do here in France and elsewhere is very important and is going to be increasingly important over the next period. Given the events in LA, it would be very difficult for the judge to send me back to prison, especially given the fact that I have become more or less a spokesperson around a number of issues for young Black people.

The US government intends to carry out a comprehensive reconstruction of its criminal code. The bill that would permit this has already worked its way through the US Senate. It permits the death penalty for certain terrorist attacks. It sanctions preventive detention on a much more intensive scale than already exists. We too have to begin to focus in on this type of repressive activity on the part of the US government.

The US Supreme court has struck down almost every progressive law that has been passed over the last twenty years. In regards to prisoners' rights and the rights of the accused in criminal proceedings. They have struck down the rights of common citizens to be safe and secure in their own homes. They have increased police surveillance powers, they have endorsed preventive detention.

All these things mean that even given our ability to mobilize people, there is a likelihood that the forces that control the state judiciary are arrogant enough to believe that they are impervious to the people's response to their racism. So we have our work cut out for us.

■ How would you characterize the state of the Black liberation movement in the wake of the Los Angeles events?

The Rodney King verdict has awakened a number of Black youth to the idea of anti-racist struggle. We believe that an entire generation of Black activists is being developed right now in the United States. In the ghettos of America there is an increasing call for the establishment of a new Black Panther Party. Young Black people who are the victims of these attacks want to fight back. So they have rediscovered Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party and the philosophy of Black nationalism.

The state, in order to counteract this, is promoting certain Black leaders and Black cultural figures as Black leaders. Black activists and Black people in general are beginning to realize that

there are Black enemies of Black people.

They are beginning to realize that Clarence Thomas and Colin Powell and Jesse Jackson can be enemies of Black people, and that the reason why they can be enemies of Black people is because they identify with the system of oppression that oppresses their people, and they refuse to lead their people out of that system.

You know perhaps about Jesse Jackson in regards to the LA riots. Of course he flew to LA to cool out everything and nobody listened to him. That is because the Black youth in the streets of LA don't relate to Jesse Jackson. So if we build a strong movement in the US it will push people such as Jesse Jackson further and further to the left.

David Dinkins will run again for mayor of New York city next year and he will expect to get the Black vote but Mayor Dinkins has not paid any attention to the Black community in the three years he has been in office. The next city election in NY promises to be an arena of class struggle.

When Black people ask why there is no unity in the Black community, it is the issue of class that comes up. When Black people ask where is the movement that will liberate us, it is the issue of class that comes up.

This is increasingly becoming an issue across the US, the issue of class. This issue of class in the Black community is important because until it is tackled head on, Black people will be unable to tackle militant leadership and project that militant leadership into the political arena.

My trip to Africa was both personal and political. It was personal because as an African in diaspora it is very important for us to establish a link with our brothers and sisters in the Motherland and build an international pan-African movement that is revolutionary and anti-imperialist. ★

1. The Judge presiding over this case cancelled the June 23 court date and rescheduled Dhoruba's hearing for next September 3.

2. No definitive ruling on the New York 3 or the Queens 2 came out of the June hearings. New trial dates for the defendants in these two case were set for next October and August 3, respectively.

3. Mumia Abu Jamal, an outspoken Black journalist, has spent ten years on death row.

Jesse Jackson Sings the Praises of Zionism

by Steve Bloom and Claire Cohen

We've come a long way since Jesse Jackson's 1984 campaign for president of the United States. Eight years ago the ex-civil rights leader and current Black Democrat was being roundly denounced by American Jewish leaders and others for alleged anti-Semitism as a result of his reference to New York City as "Hymietown." Today, by contrast, Jackson has become a great statesman of Black-Jewish relations with his July 7 speech in Brussels to the World Jewish Congress. There he characterized Zionism as a "liberation movement," and went further than ever before in recognizing the legitimacy of the Israeli state.

"Leaders of Jewish groups said later that the speech could lead to a rejuvenation of political cooperation between Black Americans and American Jews," announced the *New York Times* in a front-page article on July 8. Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, was quoted directly. Referring to what the *Times* described as the "Jewish-Black civil rights coalition of the 1960s," Schindler said, "We will be overjoyed to revive that coalition."

This incident is revealing—not only for what it confirms about Jesse Jackson's overall political perspectives, but also, and perhaps more importantly, for the light it sheds on all of the recent talk in the establishment press about the "crisis in Black-Jewish relations."

To anyone who has been watching Jackson's evolution over recent years, his July 7 speech should come as no surprise. In 1984, and even 1988, some had illusions that his campaigns in the Democratic Party presidential primary might merely be the prelude to a break with that party and establishment of the Rainbow Coalition as an independent political force.

Today, no one can still believe that this is what Jackson has in mind. He is clearly, and seemingly irrevocably, committed to carving out a personal career as a Democratic Party politician.

And there is no way for any politician—Black or white—to advance within the Democratic Party without being at least tacitly complicit with Zionism and the State of Israel. But Jackson apparently felt that he has to go one step further. Given his past as a maverick he wants to prove that he can be relied on to toe the line on questions of Middle Eastern politics. So he is now on record as an active supporter of Zionism and Israel. That is quite a switch. But Jackson's speech is, in a deeper sense, merely one more step in the process through which, he hopes, he can become part of the inner circle of ruling class politics in America.

It is also not hard to understand why the major organizations that claim to speak in the name of American Jewry should hail what Jackson had to say. This U.S. Jewish establishment—which in fact enjoys the support of a small minority of the Jewish population but which nevertheless presents itself, and is quoted in the press, as if it represented all—consists of some dozens of groups which belong to the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. Its most important components are the American Jewish Committee (AJ Committee) which published *Commentary* magazine, the American Jewish Congress (AJ Congress), and the Anti-Defamation League. It is represented on campus by the Hillel clubs. The American-Israel Public Affairs Committee is a major mover in Democratic Party politics.

Such forces do sincerely want to lay the basis for a new era of cooperation between Blacks and Jews. But this has nothing whatsoever to do with any "Jewish-Black civil rights coalition." That's pure ideological camouflage. If groups such as the AJ Congress and the AJ Committee were actually interested in a coalition which could help defend the rights of Black people, they could have revived it long ago simply, for example, by taking a clear stand in support of affirmative action.

Instead they have been among the most consistent fighters *against* such programs. Both the AJ Congress and the AJ Commit-

tee filed Amicus Curiae briefs *opposing* quotas in lawsuits such as that of Alan Bakke, who successfully sued the University of California to overturn its affirmative action program during the 1970s.

For these forces the prerequisite for any "Black-Jewish alliance" is *support by Blacks* for Israel and Zionism. It was Jackson's willingness to take that step that opened a new potential for cooperation. The "Black-Jewish alliance" they want to strengthen (indeed, the only kind that actually exists today) is an alliance inside the Democratic Party. The lack of any commitment whatsoever by this Democratic Party "alliance" to a defense of Black political, economic, civil, or human rights, however, has been more than amply demonstrated in recent years.

Forging an alliance with the American Jewish establishment based on his newfound support to Zionism may help Jesse Jackson's career and his usefulness as far as the U.S. ruling class and pro-Zionist forces are concerned. But he will just as surely alienate an additional layer of Blacks and others who are looking for real answers to real social and economic problems in their communities and, increasingly, for an alternative to ruling-class electoral politics as usual.

Many are turning to the independent campaign of Ron Daniels for president and Asiba Tupahache for vice president in 1992. Others are working to build choices for the future through such vehicles as Labor Party Advocates and the 21st Century Party—The Nation's Equality Party (initiated and supported by the National Organization for Women.)

Many writers have used the old metaphor about rats leaving a sinking ship. But if the trends that have begun to reveal themselves in this election year grow stronger (and conditions for such growth are certainly ripe) Jesse Jackson may find that he has reversed the usual process—not only climbing onto the sinking ship, but even going so far as to throw away his life jacket in order to demonstrate to the vessel's crew how loyal he can be. □

There are three things I want to discuss in the fifteen minutes allotted to me. Three things that I think labor has to take off the back burner. Three fundamentals which have been part of labor programs to combat recessions, depressions, panics, and economic crises in the past, and that are increasingly recognized as essential to any rational program to defend workers from the impact of the depression today:

1) A massive public works program to employ the unemployed, on a non-profit basis, in necessary labor, at union wages.

2) Top priority to an educational, organizational, negotiating, and political action campaign for a drastic cut in the workday—shorter hours—with no reduction in pay.

3) An independent labor party based on the unions, to lead the fight for labor's program.

A hundred years ago a national congress of trade unionists met here in Ohio and debated some of the same issues we are discussing at this conference. The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada, the forerunner and nucleus of the American Federation of Labor, convened in Cleveland on November 21, 1882.

One of the most historically significant things the delegates did at that convention was adopt the Eight-Hour Day declaration of the Chicago Trades Assembly. It stimulated a national campaign for a shorter workday at a time when unregulated industry was forcing most workers to work ten, twelve, and even longer, hours.

In the decade of the 1880s the struggle for the eight-hour day proved to be the main *unifying force* and *organizing axis* for labor. Local unions that had been wiped out in the long depression of 1873 to 1878 were revived and many new ones were organized.

By the 1890s, stepped-up mechanization was increasing productivity and profits, and displacing workers. In the economic crisis of 1893, the worst America had experienced up to that time, at least three million of a total workforce of five million were unemployed, with another two to five million dependent on them.

The fight for shorter hours became an integral part of labor's program for jobs for workers replaced by machines. And public works programs were demanded at giant demonstrations of the unemployed mobilized by the labor movement.

For example, more than 6,000 persons packed an unemployment demonstration organized by the Central Labor Union at Cleveland Public Square in August 1893. They demanded "that provision be made at once to furnish work for the unemployed on public works of permanent utility, and that such work be undertaken without the intervention of contractors." The Republican and Democratic parties were roundly denounced and

a local political convention was organized by the Central Labor Union the following month to nominate independent labor candidates for local office.

Similar actions were taken by local groups in communities across the country.

The *Cleveland Citizen*, then the official organ of the Central Labor Union and the Ohio State Trades and Labor Assembly, in dealing with the problem of unemployment, constantly explained that "unless the labor-saving machinery is utilized for the benefit of all men, it will enslave, pauperize, degrade, and make outcasts of the great majority. There can be no other result. . . .

"If this tendency of invention is allowed to go on indefinitely without any effort being made to reduce hours in proportion as labor is displaced, it is only a question of time when labor may be displaced altogether."

How has this prediction withstood the test of time? How applicable are the central features of the 1893 labor program for us today?

On the question of shorter hours with no reduction in pay: The staid old *Scientific American* (a magazine established in 1845) devotes its entire September 1982 issue to a series of well-documented articles on the sub-

ject, "The Mechanization of Work."

They note that in the course of the continuing industrial revolution, two centuries after it began, in the United States it has now displaced two-thirds of the labor force from the production of goods.

The *Scientific American* series ends with an article on the distribution of work and income that says what labor has been arguing for a hundred years, that when workers are displaced by machines, the economy can suffer from the loss of their purchasing power.

"Historically" they add, "the problem has been eased by shortening the work week, a trend currently at a standstill."

"If an economy is to function, work not done by machines must be shared and so must income." To accomplish that, some societies have changed their economic institutions and values for more efficient use of changing technology for the benefit of all. Those that failed to change "have succumbed to economic stagnation and increasing social disorder," the *Scientific American* concludes.

Well, we certainly have arrived at economic stagnation. Maybe it's time to start some social disorder.

On the question of a massive public works program, everybody agrees we need one. But we're not all talking about the same thing. Some unions, like the machinists, have called for a public works program financed by money allocated for armaments. That's the direction for a labor program.

A Labor Program to Combat the Recession

by Jean Tussey

Jean Tussey is the president of the Greater Cleveland Labor History Society. The following was a talk at an Ohio Labor Conference on Full Employment, Safe Energy, and Military Spending, in Toledo, Ohio—almost ten years ago, October 29, 1982.

I'm sure that in the workshop on labor and the unemployed [at the conference], there will be plenty of discussion of why Reagan's workfare program is not what we need. I hope there will be some frank discussion by some of you Democrats about the total inadequacy of the token public works program the Democratic Party adopted at its midterm convention this year—\$7.5 billion (only \$5 billion more than the Cleveland Central Labor Union demanded 90 years ago). And the Democrats propose to raise it by closing loopholes.

I hope there will also be some discussion of the article by Timothy Noah in the September issue of *The Washington Monthly*, entitled "Bring Back the WPA: How we can pay for it, and why we can't afford not to."

Although the author outlines a massive program of public work that needs to be done and that can employ millions of people full time for decades, he proposes we pay for it through compulsory labor at minimum wages for "welfare mothers" and certain categories of unemployed workers, minor cuts in the military budget, and elimination of cost-of-living raises to federal employees and retirees, civilian and military.

We need to bring back the WPA, he tells conservative industrialists who may have reservations, because "the roads, bridges, subways, ports . . . built during the depression were a major cause of the nation's post-World War boom. . . . To compete in today's increasingly competitive international economy" he says, "the nation cannot afford not to rebuild its infrastructure."

The real purpose, then, of the so-called return to the WPA is to find a way to rebuild the infrastructure at cut-rate wages to give American private industry an advantage in the international trade wars.

A labor program of public works today must provide useful jobs without cutting wages, living standards, and social services: And, yes, at the expense of profits and the military budget.

Timothy Noah and all the others who want to bring back the WPA forget that it was the war, not the WPA, that provided full employment for a while and ended the cyclical depression—by wiping out surplus products and surplus labor on a world scale.

Unless the labor movement begins soon to mount an independent, united campaign against the military solution to depression and unemployment, 'sure as shooting,' they'll do it again.

A labor program for massive public works projects and a serious national campaign for a 30-hour week at 40 hours' pay are not the only planks in a labor platform to combat the recession. They are not panaceas. They are no substitute for organizing the unorganized, educating, rationalizing our union structures to better serve the needs of the changing workforce—and doing all the other things necessary to strengthen the labor movement.

But such labor programs for public works and shorter hours are essential immediate demands for creating jobs, as well as a first step in the transition to the redistribution of work and income that is the only scientific solution to the problems of both cyclical and technological unemployment. And toward the conversion of military production to civilian production that Brother [William] Winpisinger referred to, of turning guns into plowshares.

Moreover, the struggle for shorter hours and public works has the potential for becoming the unifying force and organizing axis for labor in the 1980s that the struggle for the 8-hour-day was in the 1880s. It is this kind of fight for jobs for all, led by the labor movement, that can unite all workers rather than pit them against each other in fratricidal warfare as private industry is doing in the *holocaust of concessions* today.

I'll tell you, I've been an organizer—in the early '40s and early '70s—and I don't envy some of you organizers and union representatives out there in the jungle today without a labor program to provide answers, in particular, an answer to massive unemployment.

There are workers in the Harvester plant at Springfield, Ohio winning a temporary reprieve at the cost of the jobs of workers in Fort Wayne. Cleveland Clevite workers threatened with immediate layoffs unless they accept drastic pay cuts . . . and promised the 125 jobs of the workers in the Bridgeport, Ohio, plant if they grant the concessions.

Workers in different cities, different states, or different countries pitted against each other. Workers in different unions, or even in the same union. Back to the old divisive use of race, sex, religion, age, or national origin to atomize labor. And to the most effective one for keeping unions powerless, the two-party shell game.

Which brings me back to the third point that is essential to provide clout for a labor party to fight the recession—a labor party to lead the fight.

We need an independent labor party to lead the fight for labor's program because nobody else can or will. Friends in the Democratic or Republican party can't do it because those parties are programmed and structured to represent the needs of private industry, to keep it profitable.

The labor movement—and a labor party—must serve the interests of workers, or it has no reason for existence. No function. No future.

I realize this is a few days before election, and the pressures of lesser-evil politics are very strong at this time, even on those of you who know we need a labor party. But the election will be over next week. Then what's the excuse?

That independent political action is impractical in this country? That previous attempts to form a labor party have been unsuccessful or that "the time is not yet ripe"?— Look where we are after a hundred years of attempting to pressure or capture the Democratic Party!

Organizing a labor party would not be as difficult today as organizing unions. Most unions already have a political action structure and many of you are more involved in political activity than union organizing. If the political action committees haven't been successful in getting out the labor vote, it just might be that the members are not inspired by the choice of programs and parties you give them.

Last Sunday there was a demonstration of 70,000 workers in San Francisco, organized by labor and headed by Kirkland of the National and Henning of the California State, AFL-CIO. It was against Reaganomics . . . and you can bet most of those 70,000 are against Reaganomics and any other kind of economics—trickle down or trickle up—that protects profits at the expense of workers' jobs, health, wages, and rights.

(Continued on page 40)

A Major Split-off from the CPUSA:

Committees of Correspondence Hold National Conference

by Paul Le Blanc

About 1,200 people from around the country gathered at the Berkeley campus of the University of California July 17-19 for a national conference on "Perspectives for Democracy and Socialism in the '90s," sponsored by the Committees of Correspondence. While a majority of those present were former members of the Communist Party, recently forced out of the organization in the midst of a crisis over the collapse of the USSR, a broad range of left-wing activists and organizations also participated in the conference.

The breadth of support for the conference is indicated by the endorsers, among whom were: African American scholar Manning Marable, Leslie Cagan of the Cuba Information Project, former Socialist Workers Party leader Peter Camejo, presidential candidate Ron Daniels, pacifist and Socialist Party leader David McReynolds, various writers and staff members of the independent radical publications the *Guardian* and *CrossRoads*, folksinger Pete Seeger, former Berkeley mayor Gus Newport, and prominent left-wing activists in the labor and social movements.

A majority of conference participants were over thirty years of age—and, in fact, had committed from two to seven decades of their lives to activity on the left. There was also a comparatively thin yet quite visible layer of participants in their teens and twenties. A significant proportion of participants were also people of color. Another distinguishing characteristic of the conference was a high tolerance for and openness to political diversity, particularly in the numerous discussion workshops organized around a variety of topics (labor, struggles against racism, the women's movement, the youth movement, the crisis of socialism, gay/lesbian struggles, the environment, left unity, the economic crisis, culture, electoral activity, religion, etc.). The fact that long-held beliefs of many veteran Communist Party members have been shattered with the final collapse of the world Stalinist movement undoubtedly contributed to a desire for more open and searching discussions than are usual at many left-wing gatherings.

The Friday night rally and Saturday plenary sessions were also interesting. An international solidarity evening on Friday provided informative and often thought-provoking presentations by guests from Canada (a feminist from the New Democratic Party), El Salvador (a representative of the FMLN and Salvadoran Communist Party), Germany (a young woman who is a parliamentary representative of the Party of Socialist Democracy), South Africa (a spokesman for the African National Congress), and Vietnam (a founder of a U.S. Association of Vietnamese, with obvious ideological ties to the Vietnamese Communist Party), plus some fine musical entertainment. Warm greetings were also read from the Communist parties of Canada, Austria, Britain, South Africa, the Socialist Workers Party of Hungary, and the Russian Party of Labor.

The plenary sessions were addressed by: Jose La Luz, a trade union organizer and chair of the Latino Commission of Democratic Socialists of America, who eloquently explained the practical meaning of working class internationalism; Manning Marable, who argued for building a revitalized left-wing movement, in part through a "flexible" electoral strategy "inside/outside" of the Democratic Party, that would culminate in a new mass party of the left; Elizabeth Martinez, an independent activist and author who called for leaving behind traditional left-wing conceptions and vocabularies; former CP theoretician and famed historian Herbert Aptheker, who once again offered dramatic testimony against the crimes of Stalinism; Carl Bloice,

former editor of the *Peoples World*; Leslie Cagan, longtime independent radical activist; Ying Lee Kelly, legislative aide to Congressman Ron Dellums; and Mark Solomon, a professor of history at Simmons College who suggested the continued relevance of Marxism.

There were significant tensions and divergences among the members of Committees of Correspondence. Some rank-and-file members expressed disgust with stultifying dogmas and with overcentralized and restrictive organizational norms, which they identified with "Marxism-Leninism" as such and even with some of the present leaders of the new organization—Charlene Mitchell, Carl Bloice, Kendra Alexander, Michael Myerson, and others—who were prominent in the apparatus of the old Communist Party. Others were concerned that the new organization, including its leadership, is moving toward an outright liquidation of Marxist perspectives in order to dissolve into the Social Democracy (perhaps a merger with DSA) and/or into the broader social movements.

A onetime outspoken apologist for the Soviet Union, William Mandel, probably expressed the views of many when he repudiated what he called "the socialism of Marx" and proclaimed he was "now a Social Democrat," which he believed should also be the trajectory of the organization as a whole. Among the frank defenders of "Marxism," however, are some who undoubtedly see it as defined by the perspectives of the late U.S. "hardliner" William Z. Foster and the architect of "Popular Frontism" Georgi Dimitrov; others may be drawn to the more revolutionary perspectives of Eugene V. Debs, Rosa Luxemburg, and Antonio Gramsci. (For someone to proclaim an allegiance to the ideas of Lenin—not to mention Trotsky!—was unusual at this gathering, but even those who did so were encouraged to speak and were sometimes even listened to.) What is clear is that this self-defined Marxist current was in a distinct minority at the conference.

While some leaders of the new organization such as Mitchell and Bloice frankly acknowledged that they will be supporting Democratic candidate Bill Clinton in the U.S. presidential race, there was an obvious lack of enthusiasm for mainstream politics. On the other hand, minimal attention was given to independent political action—Labor Party Advocates, the Ron Daniels Campaign for a New Tomorrow, the 21st Century Party—the Nation's Equality Party initiated by the National Organization for Women, the Bernie Sanders socialist electoral efforts in Vermont, etc.

Significantly, the Committees of Correspondence will not be holding a founding convention before the late winter of 1993, and it has invited all interested people to join its ranks (it costs \$10 to join), helping to shape what the new organization will be by participating in its discussions and activities. Before the conference it had over 1,000 members, which could well double before 1993. The organization puts out two thick newsletters—the informational *Corresponder* and an open discussion bulletin, *Dialogue & Initiative* (subscriptions are \$10 each)—which reflect a remarkable openness and seriousness about discussing politics which was also one of the most positive features of the national conference.

The fact remains that openness and seriousness, in and of themselves, do not make an organization coherent or revolutionary. It remains to be seen whether or not the internally diverse, and clearly divergent, forces within the Committees of Correspondence will be able to transform the organization into something durable. Regardless of the outcome, the process itself opens up a significant opportunity for serious political discussion and clarification among revolutionaries and radical activists. Many on the U.S. left who were never involved in the Communist Party have chosen to become part of this impressive discussion process.

For more information write: Committees of Correspondence, 11 John Street, Room 506, New York, NY 10003. □

Building International Solidarity

Unions and Free Trade: Solidarity vs Competition, by Kim Moody and Mary McGinn, Detroit: Labor Notes Book. 84 pages, \$7.00.

Reviewed by Frank Lovell

This little book is a useful corrective to misinformation and false arguments floated these days about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Like legendary lightweight boxers it packs a powerful punch. And it doesn't waste time getting to the business at hand. First off it asserts unequivocally: "The North American Free Trade Agreement is not about the commerce of nations. This treaty that binds the United States, Canada, and Mexico in economic union is more about corporate profits than about trade. It is about letting private business reorganize the North American economy without the checks and balances once provided by unions, social movements, or governments. The NAFTA would roll back a hundred years of controls and restrictions that were placed on private business in the interests of the majority of people."

Having declared itself and its position on these matters, it then proceeds to establish its authority on all counts. It knocks down the false claim that government regulation of "free enterprise" is antisocial. To the contrary, "working people have fought long and hard to force governments to tame destructive business competition and limit the exploitation of labor," it says, citing examples of successful strike actions, social legislation, and government-imposed environmental standards from the late 19th century to the mid-1970s. Then came the campaign of the U.S. ruling class to deregulate industry, deindustrialize the U.S. and Canada, destroy the industrial unions, and downgrade social entitlements for working people and the poor.

The NAFTA is the extension of this reckless campaign to all corners of the continent, insuring free rein to capitalist exploitation of the people and natural resources. One motive that is suggested is fear among U.S. and Canadian capitalists that goods produced in North America cannot compete in the world market against German and Japanese industry, unless low-wage Mexican labor can be made readily available to North American corporate enterprise. According to this theory the world is rapidly dividing into three major

sectors of economic control: Europe, Asia, and North America. Some economists have endorsed this theory, adding to the unease in U.S. ruling circles.

Without contributing to the credence of this impressionistic notion authors Moody and McGinn remind readers that NAFTA is in line with corporate interests in a competitive world. They point out that "the governments of the United States, Canada, and Mexico have deregulated important industries in the belief that this would make their economies more efficient. They have lifted restrictions on pricing, on entry to certain industries (garment, auto, electrical equipment, etc), and on banking and financial practices; relaxed health and safety and environmental controls; and privatized government services. Freed of government interference, the theory goes, the market will set everything right and make the country competitive once again."

This pattern is already in place before ratification of NAFTA (as included data tables show), but if the treaties are signed the unfettered exploitation process will be speeded up and intensified.

One purpose of this book is to show how these plans of corporate enterprise can be thwarted. "As bad as it sounds," the authors say, "workers and unions are not helpless in the face of these changes. In fact, economic integration creates some new opportunities for building and exercising union power." One chapter is devoted entirely to examples of collaboration among Canadian, Mexican, and U.S. unions, called "solidarity strategies."

In agriculture U.S. farm workers' organizations (Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)), based in Ohio, and the California-based United Farm Workers) have sought to coordinate bargaining demands and other objectives with the official farm laborers union in Mexico, SNTOAC. Their hope is that all unions can present similar demands in negotiations with Campbell Soup Company which operates with tomato growers in both countries. Another common objective is protection of migrant workers under their limited legal rights and enforcement of minimal health standards. This is complicated, as explained by Moody and McGinn: "FLOC and SNTOAC want to take advantage of provision H2A of the (U.S.) 1986 Immigration Act which requires legal 'guest workers' (temporary workers) from

Mexico to have a sponsor. FLOC would like to be this sponsor for SNTOAC's members when they come to the Midwest. Direct contact between SNTOAC and FLOC would then allow FLOC to anticipate the flow of SNTOAC members into the U.S. Such an agreement would recognize the interests of each union: SNTOAC's interest in having its members sponsored and protected by a union, and FLOC's interest in controlling the use of guest workers by making them union members working under the union contract."

A very high degree of organization and class consciousness is necessary for a plan of this kind to work, especially when opposed and sabotaged by growers and governments in both countries. Leaders of FLOC have declared, "We are not citizens of two countries; we are citizens of one giant company. We must struggle together." This helps to educate and develop class consciousness. But the mass of farm workers have not yet reached this level of consciousness and do not share this sense of international solidarity. The struggle for these goals improves the workers' conditions of life and advances their understanding.

Another effort to develop international solidarity was initiated by Teamster Local 912. After winning a bitter strike at a frozen vegetable packing plant in Watsonville, California, the mostly Mexican women workforce learned that their employer was Green Giant, a subsidiary of the British-owned conglomerate Grand Metropolitan, owners of Burger King, Haagen Dazs, and Pillsbury. In May 1990 Green Giant's Watsonville plant closed, 382 workers lost their jobs, and packing of Green Giant frozen vegetables moved to the company's plant in Irapuato, Mexico. Wages in Watsonville were \$7.61 per hour, 50 cents in Irapuato where there is no union.

Teamster Local 912 appealed to a Mexican women's organization that represents laid-off women workers, Trabajadores Desplazados (Displaced Workers). With their help Local 912 produced a video, *Dirty Business*, which is used to scandalize Grand Met and has been shown in London and throughout the U.S. Consumers are urged to boycott Green Giant and other Grand Met products. This helps spread the word about the real meaning of the so-called free trade treaties (NAFTA). The boycott and information

campaign has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO through its Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras and Free Trade. The maquiladoras stretch the full length of the U.S./Mexican border from California to Texas, consisting mostly of huge industrial plants on the Mexican side which pay substandard wages, provide subhuman living conditions, and pollute the Rio Grande and adjacent land on both banks beyond ecologic tolerance. The union information campaign, joined by the environmentalist lobby, has had no effect on the U.S. Congress. The trade treaties will be ratified after the general election this year, unless the worst fears of most members of Congress are realized. And in that event the new Congress and new president can be expected to push for enactment of these treaties, perhaps in some slightly amended form.

One of the most ambitious efforts to establish international working class solidarity has been undertaken by the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), Local 879 of the U.S. United Auto Workers (UAW) in St. Paul, Minnesota, and beleaguered auto workers at Ford's plant in Cuautitlan, a town outside Mexico City. The Mexican Ford workers have been fighting for several years to win local bargaining rights and control of their union which is riddled with corruption and dominated by the government. Ford management has repeatedly forced the workforce to take strike action and regularly victimized the local leaders, using state and private police. Many Ford workers at this location have been shot. One was killed. His name is Cleto Nigmo. This book is dedicated to him. The authors relate most succinctly how the movement for international solidarity of auto workers has grown: (edited slightly)

Workers at Ford's St. Paul truck plant had their first encounter with the Mexican labor movement when Marco Antonio Jimenez visited St. Paul in April 1990. He was a member of the elected negotiating committee at the Ford Cuautitlan plant. He, like the rest of the committee, had been fired for resisting wage cuts and trying to change the leadership of their union.

Jimenez made an impression on the members of UAW Local 879. In October, Tom Laney, the local's recording secretary, and Jose Quintana, a worker in the trim department, attended a trilateral conference in Mexico. When they returned to St. Paul, they wrote the first in a series of articles for the Local 879 newspaper, talking about the conditions in Mexico. They wrote, "After 10 years of immersion in Ford's programs which have turned U.S. workers against U.S. workers, we should agree that it's time

to try the Union solution of international solidarity as a reasonable alternative for job security."

Local 879's executive board endorsed the formation of a MEXUSCAN Solidarity Task Force. It helped organize the trinational Ford Workers Justice Day on January 8, 1991. On this day workers in some Ford plants in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico wore black ribbons commemorating Cleto Nigmo's death.

Local 879 Task Force helped organize a two-day educational conference on the NAFTA, open to union and community activists. It went on to help organize the Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition. The local sent Tom Laney to the Ford stockholders meeting where he confronted Chairman Harold Poling on the company's complicity in the armed attacks on Mexican auto workers.

Local 879 members can be found at conferences and actions promoting international solidarity all across North America. Two representatives attended the first trinational auto workers conference, held in Mexico.

In November 1991, Local 879 got a strong indication that its solidarity work was irritating the powers-that-be. The fired Cuautitlan leaders were negotiating with Ford over severance pay, with the involvement of the Mexican government. President Salinas's office demanded that the workers drop all contact with Local 879. The workers refused.

The above description of incipient international working class solidarity in the North American auto industry anticipates what is possible. The leadership of UAW Local 879 may contribute to a change in the national UAW leadership, bringing into play the full force of organized labor in this industry against the auto barons. This will improve wages and working conditions in all countries. It is a movement presently at the "grass roots," as described by Moody and McGinn. But, as they make clear, it could not be otherwise because the task is to educate, organize, and mobilize the great mass of working people and their allies. This book is conceived as a contribution to the eventual fulfillment of that task.

The construction of the book indicates that it is intended as a handbook for union organizers, community activists, and political agitators. It is packed with useful facts on relative wage scales and comparable conditions of work in U.S.-Mexico-Canada. For example it lists hourly wage rates of Ford workers in the U.S. (\$16.50 per hour); in Cuautitlan, Mexico (\$1.25 per hour); and AT&T production workers in Radford, Virginia,

before the plant closed and moved to Mexico (\$14.84 per hour); and for the same work in Matamoros, Mexico (\$1.15). Average hourly pay scales in U.S. and Mexico in 1990 compared as follows: \$16.50 in the U.S. and \$1.85 in Mexico; along the border in maquiladora plants the pay is 50 cents per hour.

The following quote from the 1991 Economic Report of the President (Bush) is included as evidence of how NAFTA is viewed by U.S. employers and the benefits they expect: "A free-trade agreement would boost the international competitiveness of both the U.S. and Mexican firms. To reduce costs, companies often allocate phases of a manufacturing process among a number of nations. A free-trade agreement with Mexico would further encourage this natural international division of labor."

A somewhat innovative (and useful) device in the book's construction is boxed inserts cutting across the running text. Samples of headlines in these boxes run like this: Fruits of Deregulation; Mexico Is Only the Beginning; MBS (management by stress) in Mexico; No Love for Free Trade; Who Benefits; Make Consumers Pay; Impact on Union Towns; etc. Altogether there are 16 of these boxed inserts of a paragraph or two up to a couple pages. A brief one—Make Consumers Pay—sends a sharp message: "As tariffs have been dropped at the border, the Canadian government has lost \$2 billion a year. This shortage was passed on to consumers in the early stages of FTA (Free Trade Agreement) when the Conservatives pushed through a 7 percent federal sales tax, the Goods and Services Tax (GST)—while polls registered opposition from 80 percent of Canadians. The Action Canada Network calls the GST the 'free trade tax.'"

Other inserts are data charts or, in some instances, argumentation supported by references (statistics and other data) on such topics as "competitiveness skills," "how restricting immigration hurts all workers," or "a shorter work week."

The book's graphics—photos, cartoons, illustrations—are well suited to the text and are the type that can be used by organizers in the field.

What are the recommended organizational goals? The chapter on "solidarity strategies" lists five long-term goals, the most basic being "upward harmonization." This is explained as "the eventual convergence of wages, benefits, working conditions for workers in all three countries (Mexico-U.S.-Canada) . . . based on the tendency of workers wages to rise in developing nations when the economy as a whole expands, if labor is able to organize." In support of this idea, the authors cite case histories, "in Mexico prior to the 1980s."

They also say, "It is the case today in South Korea and Taiwan where, from 1982 to 1990, hourly wages and benefits rose 381.2 percent and 228.3 percent respectively, under the pressure of new militant unions." This implies that "new militant unions" in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico may solve the economic and social problems of the working class in North America, a possibility only if this working class is organized politically to take control of government in these three countries. Work-

ers in Canada and Mexico have taken steps in this direction with the NDP (New Democratic Party) in Canada and PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party) in Mexico. A labor party based on the union movement is sadly absent from the U.S. political scene. An effort is being made to correct this deficiency though an organization within existing unions, Labor Party Advocates. That this fact is not mentioned is a shortcoming of this otherwise very informative and practical handbook.

In the short term the authors suggest in each of the three targeted NAFTA countries organizing campaigns for a shorter workweek, national health care, rising minimum wages.

The book's closing chapter—chapter 12, titled Resource—is a directory of organizing aids, readings, publishing houses, computer networks, and contacts in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Activists should appreciate this service too. □

Low Wages on the High Seas

Trouble On Board: The Plight of International Seafarers, by Paul K. Chapman, ILR Press, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. \$14.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Michael Smith

American seafarers have been put out of business. There's not much left of the American merchant marine either. In a generation it's disappeared while American capital has gone out and hired third world sailors at a fraction of the old U.S. union wages. These companies have also stopped flying the U.S. flag. They have "flagged out" to get around U.S. labor, safety, and tax laws.

In maritime law, the law of the flag state is generally the law governing a ship and to get away from this American capital has fled like a runaway shop to such "flag of convenience" registries as Panama and Liberia and to even more exotic flag states like Vanuatu (the former New Hebrides) and even the Kergalen Islands, a French outpost in the Antarctic Ocean with no port and a population of more penguins than humans.

What about the wages and working conditions for the sailors from such places as the Philippines, Korea, Honduras, and Ceylon? History is relative, of course, but there has been a backsliding to the days when Richard Dana wrote *Two Years Before the Mast*. No one knows more about this and the subject of seafarers' rights than Paul Chapman. He tells the story of today's sailors, understatedly, but passionately, in his just published *Trouble On Board: The Plight of International Seafarers*.

Jim Lafferty (director of the Los Angeles Guild chapter) and I both worked with Chapman at the New York based Center for Seafarers' Rights, which Chapman headed. He comes from the church side of the civil rights movement, having worked

with Martin Luther King. He started in New York City as a ship visitor and eventually put together a worldwide network of port chaplains and lay ship visitors, persons in daily contact with the seafarers. It was from the experiences of the Center for Seafarers' Rights and its network that the situations described in *Trouble On Board* were documented.

These seafarers are truly vulnerable and exploited. Wages are low, down to \$50.00 a month for Chinese seafarers. The job is dangerous, nine times more so than mining. Sailors work killer hours, sometimes a hundred a week, for only a pittance in overtime. Since the workplace is also home they never get away from their job. Separated for months from family and society, sacrificing for their wives and children, the men live forever alienated and estranged, even when they are old and finished and retired shoreside.

Yet most of the world's commerce (90 percent) moves by sea. Sailors truly support our material culture. But legally they have fallen through the cracks and work in a conflict of law nightmare. For instance, what law covers a Filipino seaman aboard a Japanese owned freighter flying the Vanuatu flag whose back was broken in an accident in the Bering Sea and who has been systematically cheated on his wages? I got such a call from a sailor in a hospital in Anchorage, Alaska.

This case had a happy ending. It turned out the whole crew had been cheated. The Japanese owners kept double books, one set to show the union, and another which was real. Attorney Jerry Dodson, perhaps the finest plaintiff's maritime lawyer in America, handled the case for the crew. A fair-minded federal judge in Seattle handed down the largest award in a wage case in American history—thirty-three million dollars. The case is on appeal. But in a

similar case involving the same company a Reagan appointee in Portland could not find it in his tight Republican heart to penalize the Japanese owners, would not apply American law, and in an act of international capitalist class solidarity he awarded a cheated crew a mere one-hundredth of the sum won in the first case. The matter is headed for the Supreme Court.

What has happened to American seafarers and the wages and working conditions afforded third world sailors shows in one industry the effects of the globalization of the world economy. Chapman points the way to a partial solution for seafarers. He concludes that unions are essential, that sailors should have a right to join them and to get permanent contracts with pension and social security benefits. He thinks the length of time they work at sea should be reduced to two months on and two months off so they can participate in the life of the community and be with their families. Overtime hours should be reduced. Shipowners should provide for participation by seafarers in the decisions that affect their lives.

Chapman concludes, "Seafaring is a proud profession with a glorious tradition. Some of the most sublime literature has been inspired by life at sea. The unpredictable oceans and the dauntless courage of those who cross them are sources of continuous inspiration and excitement. It is neither right nor necessary that any seafarer today should have to work under conditions reminiscent of those in the days when pirates roamed the seas. □

Michael Steven Smith is an editor of Guild Notes. He directed Seafarers' Legal Services in New York City from 1985 to 1992.

An Idealist with Limited Vision: Dorothy Healey and American Communism

Dorothy Healey Remembers a Life in the American Communist Party, by Dorothy Healey and Maurice Isserman. Oxford University Press, New York, 1990. 263 pages.

Reviewed by Morris Slavin

Thirty-five years after the Moscow frame-up trials of the Old Bolsheviks the author of these memoirs was still a loyal, though somewhat critical, member of the American Communist Party. Every criticism or exposure from the left of Stalinism, to say nothing of the daily disclosures by the "bourgeois press," was dismissed by her as the slanders of "the class enemy." In April 1956, Healey attended an unexpected meeting of Communist leaders in New York to hear Khrushchev's shocking report on Stalin's crimes. After a half hour she was "convulsed with tears." A decade and a half later she was still an active member of the Communist Party despite the crushing of the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian revolutions by Russian tanks.

A politically aware person might ask why after Khrushchev's report she did not examine any one of hundreds of articles by Trotsky or his comrades on the meaning of Stalinism. Healey writes that her party had believed in "the purity of the Soviet Union," and had "read so many lies about [her] own party" that she dismissed this criticism as mere propaganda. "The Trotskyists and others who attacked the Soviet Union from the left had their own ideological fish to fry, so we could dismiss them just as easily," she continues. Did she ever read any of this criticism from the left? There is no indication of such an effort. Nor does she explain to the reader the nature of this Trotskyist "ideological fish." Now that Khrushchev himself had admitted that the stench of this "fish" was Stalinist she still remained loyal to her party.

In signing the Stalin-Hitler Pact the Communist Party leaders of Mother Russia only "erred." Healey admits that this agreement was "indefensible," as was the surrender of German Communists (many of them Jewish) to the Nazis. It was all a result of "real-politik." That it was a betrayal of the most elementary international obligations, a crime against socialism and humanity—Healey is unable or unwilling to acknowledge it even today.

After resigning from the party in 1973 and joining the "new-leftist" New American Movement (NAM) that eventually merged with the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee to form the present social-democratic Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), she still fought against the concept that the Soviet Union was not socialist. Nowhere in her memoirs does she place quotation marks around the word socialism when referring to the socio-political system of Mother Russia. Healey is of Jewish descent, but she never mentions the murderous anti-Semitic policy of the Stalinist state; more vicious than that of the tsars. Only in late 1967, on a trip to Moscow, does she reveal that Jack Kling, a Yiddish-speaking member of her group, divulged the terrible experience of several Jews he was able to interview clandestinely. Upon returning to the United States he never revealed what he had learned, however. Instead, he spoke "in terms reminiscent of Suslov's position." (Suslov was the Stalinist commissar of culture.)

Criticism of Stalinism was heresy in the CP, and brought immediate expulsion from the party.

The well-known verse of the *International*, "We want no condescending saviors to rule us from their judgment hall," was perverted by the party bureaucrats. Healey reveals that when she paid tribute to the rank and file for helping overturn the McCarran Act, the national leadership excoriated her delegation asking: "How dare you start off a report acclaiming the heroism of the membership and make no mention of the leadership of Gus Hall during this period?" Whatever criticism may be brought against Marx and Lenin no one can accuse them of immodesty. The Communist parties, however, taking their cue from the Russians, always began by praising "the brilliant and inspired leadership" of the little Stalins at their head. No "bourgeois" government officials, intent on enforcing the most rigid rules of diplomatic protocol, could have competed with the formalities followed by the Communist governments of the Soviet Union or of East Germany. Only the chairman of the delegation (and I do not mean "chairperson") was addressed, or was expected to speak, while the rest of the delegates kept silent.

How is it possible to account for her political astigmatism? Healey admits that her party discouraged a study of the great Marxist thinkers and suppressed any critical discussion of policies adopted by a small coterie of leaders behind closed doors. Since the Soviet Union was "pure," and its leading sycophants abroad enjoyed "the genial Leader's" confidence, it followed that they knew what they were about. A questioning, not to mention a skeptical attitude, was ipso facto suspect. If, in addition, one were a true believer and had been a member for years, it took unusual courage to challenge a leader or a policy.

Even after the crushing of "the Prague spring," Healey remained in the party. She admits that she could not initiate the break, that she "had been in the party too long, put too much into it, and gained too much from [her] association just to hand it over to Gus [Hall] and his cronies." Moreover, she is mistaken in thinking that "The party belonged to me as much as it did to them" [the Stalinist leaders]. Whatever opposition she manifested to this or that policy it could never shake off the bureaucratic control that Moscow and its American sycophants exercised over the membership.

Despite this critique few readers of Healey's memoirs would deny that she was a consecrated, self-sacrificing activist, an activist who showed great courage under fire against the McCarthyites, the FBI, the reactionary press, and the greedy employers. There is no question that she was devoted to the oppressed and the downtrodden sharecroppers, agricultural workers, African Americans, and Chicanos. Time and again she defied the authorities at great personal risk as she sought to organize the unorganized. Even her personal relationships were subordinated to her political goals. Needless to say, her goals differed from those of the Communist Party leadership. It is tragic that like so many idealistic men and women she gave so much to a totalitarian monstrosity in the name of socialism. □

Hoover Institute Gets Trotsky Archives

by Bill Workman

The following article is reprinted from the San Francisco Chronicle, July 16, 1992.

Researchers at the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University were enthusiastic yesterday about the scholarly opportunities created by the acquisition of the main archives of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, including a massive collection of letters, notes, and manuscripts of Leon Trotsky, the exiled Bolshevik revolutionary slain by agents of Josef Stalin in 1940.

The holdings include more than 300 boxes of the party's internal records documenting its international relations and links to other Trotskyist parties around the world, as well as what is believed to be the most complete collection of the annotated speeches of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, long a hero of the far left in the United States.

Hoover was already one of the three most important repositories of Trotsky's papers, along with Harvard University's Houghton Library and the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam.

However, researchers said yesterday that the recently acquired materials are likely to make Hoover even more popular among Russian scholars probing the unwritten history of the Stalinist era, as well as others interested in the international socialist movements of the 20th century.

Negotiations for shipment of the collections to Hoover were initiated four years ago by the party, according to William Ratliff,

Hoover senior research fellow and specialist in U.S.-Latin American relations who represented the think tank in the archival transfer.

"I guess they were running out of space. . ." said Ratliff. "But more important, they realized that Hoover—which is not exactly militantly Trotskyist"—and the party "have a common interest in maintaining the political record of what has happened in the national political movements of the 20th century."

Beyond the continuing interest in Trotsky, Ratliff said, the most important feature of the new collections is that Trotskyist analyses of international affairs have long drawn the interest of scholars for their depth and detail.

Trotskyist ideologues "must have an IQ at least 50 points above the typical communist," Ratliff quipped. "They're usually very smart people."

Many of the party documents, said Ratliff, "will likely shed new light" on what went on for the past 30 or so years within the Latin American and European left. He predicted that there will be "substantive changes and supplements" made to established views of recent political developments in Latin America and Central America.

Included among the documents are the original drafts of Trotsky's biographies of Stalin and Lenin and a lengthy personal account by Trotsky's second wife of the events leading up to his slaying. Documents also include the complete papers of two of the party's early leaders, Joseph Hansen, once a prominent figure on the San Francisco waterfront who was serving as one of Trotsky's secretaries at the time he was killed, and John G. Wright, the principal early translator of Trotsky's works into English.

The shipment also included the papers of Peng Shu-tse, a founding member of the Chinese Communist Party and later the leader of Chinese Trotskyism. His works are regarded as the only reliable scholarly source on the early history of Chinese communism. □

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George Novack

Longtime leader of the
Socialist Workers Party,
George Novack,
died in New York City July 30.
Our next month's issue will feature
his obituary.

Labor Program (Continued from page 34)

Yesterday, driving to this conference, I heard the Ohio gubernatorial candidates in the Cleveland City Club forum program. Except for Kurt Landefeld, the central concern of every one of them was how to make Ohio attractive and profitable to business, with jobs as a by-product, not top priority.

Regardless of which Democrats or Republicans are elected Tuesday, friends or enemies, when we sober up November 3rd,

we'll still have a recession, we'll still have unemployment, we'll still have a union-busting campaign and concession cannibalism to deal with.

We'll still need a *labor* program for a massive public works project, a campaign for shorter hours, and a labor party to lead the fight. □

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