

A Socialist ACTION

Jay
paperworkers
organize for
Solidarity
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Palestinian revolt grows; defies Israeli terror drive



Palestinian women, defiantly displaying their national flag, protest against Israeli army brutality on the West Bank and Gaza.

By RALPH SCHOENMAN

The rebellion of the Palestinian people of the West Bank and Gaza has engulfed every village, town, and refugee camp. Children as young as eight and old people in their seventies and eighties defy the Israeli army daily. Entire village populations waving makeshift Palestinian flags of bedsheets and cloth mass defiantly, singing and chanting and hurling stones at soldiers firing automatic weapons.

The Great Uprising—the "Intifadeh"—has become a symbol of Palestinian nationhood as the brutal repression that once filled the people with despair now fuels their determination and will, which encompasses the readiness to die.

The Israeli reprisals have been barbarous. The repression has been unleashed with particular savagery against the refugee camps and the old quarters of the cities inhabited by the impoverished.

Over 150 have died. The wounded number in the many thousands. Kidnappings of youths by the army occur daily. The injured are taken from their hospital beds and from their homes by special army units, and disappear.

In the Balata camp outside Nablus, and in the Casbah—the old quarter—1000 people were arrested in a period of 48 hours. The discovery of people in ditches in the fields—shot in the back or with their heads caved in—has been reported from villages throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

Report from Nablus

Nablus Mayor Bassam Shaka'a described on the telephone the rampage of the Israeli armed units:

"No matter which house one calls, the anguished accounts of family members wounded or arrested pour forth. Convoys of buses cruise the streets of Nablus followed by vans of the Mossad, Israel's secret police. Army units go from house to house pulling youths from their beds at 3 a.m. As the buses fill, the soldiers beat the youths viciously around the head, shins, groin, and back. Shrieks fill the air.

"As the army makes its rounds kidnapping the young from their homes, people gather at their windows and on the roofs of houses
(continued on page 11)

Democrats push contra aid; mass protests are needed

On Feb. 23, House Speaker Jim Wright and other House Democrats unveiled a \$25 million plan to provide "humanitarian" aid to the Nicaraguan contras over the next four months. The aid is to be disbursed by the Pentagon.

One provision of the plan would permit the possibility of a vote on military aid to the U.S.-backed mercenaries if the Nicaraguan government is deemed to be the obstacle to a cease-fire accord.

House Democrats who had opposed Reagan's request have endorsed this plan enthusiastically. One example is Representative Michael Lowry (D.-Wash.), who called it a "positive package that really helps the peace process."

The New York Times, in a Feb. 25 editorial titled "Why contra aid promotes peace," likewise argued that Wright's plan should be supported as the only way to "strengthen President Arias [of Costa Rica] and Cardinal Obando y Bravo in their struggle to keep diplomacy alive."

The purpose of this "diplomacy," as Jim Wright and Costa Rican President Arias openly avow, is to press the Sandinista

government to make further concessions to the contras and their allies inside Nicaragua. [See article on the role of Oscar Arias on page 13.]

With this new contra-aid package—whatever modifications or delays it may encounter in the coming weeks—it is clear
(continued on page 13)

End U.S. support to apartheid!

South African troops have pushed forward into southern Angola in the largest invasion in eight years. At the same time, almost all legal opposition to white-minority rule in South Africa has been eliminated.

On Feb. 24, the South African government banned the activities of 17 anti-apartheid groups. In addition, the country's largest union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, was barred from conducting any "political" activities. In a news conference on the same day, President Reagan downplayed any U.S. response to the crackdown. He dismissed South Africa's racist measures as stemming from a "tribal policy."

The demand "End U.S. support to South African apartheid" has become ever more urgent and should be taken up this spring in mass protests across the country.

—The editors

South Africa: The fight for Black majority rule

See Special Supplement,
Pages 7 - 10.

Footing the bill for mass murder



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

Last month, a Democratic Party task force in the House of Representatives proposed a \$25 million aid package for the Nicaraguan rebels. This was to be an alternative to the \$36.3 million package that the Reagan administration proposed in January.

The Democrats made loud noises about how they supported the "peace effort" in Nicaragua and did not want to supply the contras with "military" aid. But all that was a bunch of hog-wash. The Democrats, like the Repub-

licans, knew that there was already enough military supplies in "the contra pipeline" to last a year.

The contras have enough missiles, fire bombs, machine guns, rocket launchers, land mines, and other instruments of death—already paid for with our money—to continue blowing up children, mothers, farms, schools, and hospitals in Nicaragua for a long time to come.

The least the Democrats could have done is call their proposed \$25 million giveaway what it is—not humanitarian aid, but anti-humanitarian aid.

Full steam ahead!

In the meantime, the private "Friends of the Contra" are going full steam ahead to set up their tax-free foundations to collect funds for more military supplies for the contras.

Those Ollie North-buddies made out like bandits on the Iran-Contra gig, so they immediately set out to swell their private Swiss bank accounts with more of the same. Perhaps their bank accounts have suffered due to the economic "earthquake"

which hit the stockmarket last October.

It is very expensive to hire and supply a bunch of die-hard mercenaries such as the contras. This is true even when the U.S. government tries to keep costs down by supplying a "McDrug Franchise" to its hired hoods, so that they can sell cocaine and heroin to Americans, among others.

I have come up with a solution. Why not offer "humanitarian" aid to former Nazi S.S. butchers?

The final solution?

Even though the U.S. government protected many of Hitler's best S.S. men and concealed their records from the world in order to give them another start in life, some of the

former stormtroopers still did not do so well. They were forced to flee to Brazil, Australia, Colombia—and even Detroit, Mich. (And you know what the winters in Michigan are like!)

Among the retired Nazi elite, you will find people with even more experience than the contras in the art of repression, bone-crushing, and mass murder. They would fit right in with the international death squads systematically trained in Florida by the U.S. imperialist leader of the "free world."

Meanwhile, the Zionists, who set up the state of Israel following the holocaust in Europe, have adopted the methods of the German fascists to subjugate the people of Palestine. Since the U.S. government provides the major source of support for the Israeli government, perhaps it can send along some former S.S. guards to help "solve the Palestinian question."

Does anyone have a contribution for humanitarian aid for elderly S.S. troops? If not, then perhaps the Democratic Party congressional task force will help out. ■



Fighting for socialist ideas on the campus

Cincinnati

Students for Socialist Action at the University of Cincinnati have triggered off an extensive discussion on socialism and free speech this semester.

On Feb. 1, the campus paper, *The News Record*, published a long interview with Students for Socialist Action activists Bill O'Kain and Margaret Kelly on the meaning of Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union.

On Feb. 10, a letter appeared in the campus paper written by a student who objected to *The News Record* providing a forum for socialist ideas. The letter was written in a vicious manner, equating "the philosophy of Students for Socialist Action" with "the philosophy of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot."

Margaret Kelly responded with a letter defending socialist ideas and the right to free speech on campus. Other students began sending in letters defending the right of socialists to present their ideas to UC students.

One concerned student wrote, "Members of Socialist Action are not mini-Stalinists,

nor are they conspiring for a dictatorship. They are dissatisfied with the abuses and excesses of modern society, and would like to see a more humane political and economic structure in society."

The debate in *The News Record* has touched on many issues which affect students' access to new ideas and points of view. It also helped to build two Students for Socialist Action events on the campus during the last week of February.

On Feb. 23, Students for Socialist Action sponsored a film showing on Malcolm X. The event was endorsed as part of the campus's official Black History Month program and attracted 40 students.

On Feb. 25, Students for Socialist Action held a forum titled "Free Speech at the University of Cincinnati." Rick Mitts spoke for Socialist Action and an A.C.L.U. speaker spoke on the issue of student rights.

Some of the most politically active students on campus were in the audience, and *The News Record* carried a front-page article on the forum the following day. Excerpts from this forum will appear in upcoming issues of *Socialist Action*.

—MARGARET KELLY

Santa Barbara

Eighty-five people attending a Feb. 8 Students for Socialist Action forum at the University of California campus here heard activist Ralph Schoenman describe the current revolt in Palestine and detail the hidden history of Zionism. A lively question and answer period followed.

Schoenman and Students for Socialist Action urged the formation of a committee calling for an end to all aid to Israel. Half the audience signed up in support.

Ralph Schoenman's recently published pamphlet "The Hidden History of Zionism" sold out, and many ordered copies.

One woman in the audience identified herself as a Palestinian Jew who had left Palestine after the Israeli state was decreed. She joined in the applause upon the announcement of a committee to end aid to Israel.

A small group of Zionists, about five, also attended the meeting and attempted to shout down the speaker from the floor. The audience was unresponsive to these tactics, and the Zionists were asked to refrain from breaking up the meeting.

The Feb. 11 issue of the campus paper, *Daily Nexus*, however, inflated the Zionists' impact at the meeting. A front-page article claimed that the Zionists were asked to leave and also failed to report key aspects of Schoenman's lecture.

Students for Socialist Action responded immediately with a contribution to the *Daily Nexus* Opinion page. The article, which was published in the Feb. 18 issue, clarified the role of the Zionists at the meeting and accurately reported the contents of Schoenman's lecture.

The Opinion-page article won more support for Students for Socialist Action. The following day, Ralph Schoenman was praised on the campus by U.C. students who admired his defense of the Palestinian struggle and wanted information on Students for Socialist Action.

Students for Socialist Action at U.C.S.B. is encouraged by the response to our first event. We will continue to discuss revolutionary struggles for justice in future forums.

—BRAD WIEDMAIER

Twin Cities

Socialist Action has developed a real presence on Macalester College campus in St. Paul, Minn. Over the past few months, socialist classes and forums have attracted

large audiences of students interested in building a new society.

Forums on Contragate and the stock market crash, and classes on Marxist economics featuring Socialist Action speakers have been some of the most successful events on the entire campus. Since last November, 80 students have signed up for more socialist classes and activities.

Socialist Action kicked off the spring semester on Feb. 10 with a forum titled "Prospects for Socialism in America" featuring Adam Wood. Thirty students attended. Eighteen students indicated they were interested in a socialist discussion group on the campus. *The Mac Weekly* covered the event with a good article in its Feb. 12 issue.

Socialist Action members have met with students interested in continuing classes and events and have planned activities to win official recognition for a socialist discussion group on the campus.

A meeting planned for early March will begin planning upcoming events on the campus.—ADAM WOOD



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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialist Action*. These are expressed in editorials.

Important events this month:

Detroit Socialist Action

"Nicaragua, the Arias Peace Plan, and the U.S. Elections." Speaker: Carl Finamore. Tues., March 22, Wayne State University. (Time and place to be announced).

Grand Rapids Socialist Action

"Nicaragua, the Arias Peace Plan, and the U.S. Elections." Speaker: Carl Finamore. Sat., March 19. Public Library, Zonta Room. 2 p.m.

New York City

"Rally to Free Moses Mayekiso." Speakers: Representatives UAW, COSATU. Fri., March 25, 7 p.m., District 65 UAW, Sponsored by Labor Committee Against Apartheid.



San Francisco Socialist Action

"Revolt in Palestine." Speakers: Ralph Schoenman, author "Hidden History of Zionism," and a representative of the Palestine Solidarity Committee. Fri., March 18, 8 p.m., 3435 Army St., Rm. 308. For more information, call (415) 821-0458.

Letter from Nicaragua

We are printing below excerpts from a letter to U.S. antiwar activists sent by the Committee of U.S. Citizens Living in Nicaragua (CUSCLIN). The letter, dated Dec. 15, 1987, is a call to action on or about April 28, 1988, the anniversary of Benjamin Linder's death.

In the wake of recent contra efforts to present a political "solution" in Nicaragua which proposes an essential dismantling of the Sandinista government, and due to the Senate approval of \$9 million to the contras, the Committee of U.S. Citizens Living in Nicaragua (CUSCLIN) reaffirms our support for the people and government of Nicaragua and denounces Washington's continuous efforts to overthrow the Sandinista government.

From our experience in Nicaragua, we have seen the progress of the revolution as well as the destruction and death caused by the U.S.-backed military, political, and diplomatic war...

The assassination of Benjamin Linder, on April 28, 1987, by the contras brought the war home to the U.S. solidarity movement. The response in the United States shows broad support for the Nicaraguan Revolution and opposition to the U.S. government's policy.

As a show of mass opposition to the contra war and in memory of Benjamin Linder, CUSCLIN calls on all solidarity groups to demonstrate on or about April 28, 1988, the first anniversary of Ben's death.

By acting on our opposition to the war, we can stop it.



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

Support grows for April 30 antiwar demonstration

By AMANDA CHAPMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—The country's largest demonstration this year against U.S. intervention in Central America will be held here on April 30. The demonstration is being organized by the Northern California Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice around the demands: No U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, End

U.S. Support to South African Apartheid, Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race, and Jobs and Justice Not War.

The Mobilization is a broad coalition of labor, religious, community, and peace groups that has organized demonstrations of up to 80,000 people every spring since 1985.

This year's demonstration comes at a particularly important moment. The U.S. Congress's commitment to renewed contra aid, the recent banning of virtually all political opposition organizations in South Africa, and the continuing savage repression of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza show the extent to which the U.S. government and its puppet regimes are willing to go to impede the struggle for self-determination of the oppressed peoples of the world.

The April 30 demonstration will take place in Dolores Park after a march through the predominantly Hispanic Mission District. Organizers are seeking to actively involve groups from the Hispanic community in the march and rally. A Hispanic cultural contingent will help lead off the demonstration.

Over 50,000 Mobilization leaflets have already been distributed. A leaflet focusing on the "Jobs and Justice" demand, a Spanish-language leaflet, T-shirts, buttons, and posters have also been produced and widely distributed.

The Mobilization has been holding regular working-committee meetings to organize leafleting and fund-raising and to monitor recruitment and other aspects of the coalition's work. The first combined working-committees meeting was attended by over 60 people.

Speakers at the April 30 rally include the following: Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers; Robert Demmons, president of the Black Firefighters Association; James Zogby, of the Arab-American Institute; and Daniel Ellsberg.

The hundreds of endorsers of this year's demonstration include the San Francisco Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO; Gray Panthers of Berkeley; California Northcoast CISPES; Christic Institute; Rainbow Coalition; Alameda County SANE/Freeze; S. Brian Willson; Earth Island Institute; Casa Puerto Rico; and the Northern California Ecumenical Council. ■



The following is the call for the April 30 antiwar demonstration sponsored by the Northern California Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice.

Give Peace a Chance. The Whole World is Watching.

As the United Nations prepares for its Third Special Session on disarmament in June, the U.S. government remains committed to funding its war in Central America and Star Wars; it maintains its ties to South African apartheid; and it continues to spend billions for war while our people's needs for jobs and justice are unmet.

Give Peace a Chance in Central America: Stop the U.S. war against Nicaragua. End all contra aid. End U.S. aid to the war in El Salvador. End military and police aid to Guatemala. Support the right of self-determination.

Give Peace a Chance in Our World: Freeze and reverse the nuclear arms race. Abolish all nuclear weapons. End nuclear testing. No weapons in space.

Give Peace a Chance in South Africa: End the terror against the Black majority. Stop jailing children. End apartheid now. Independence for Namibia. Stop U.S. aid to apartheid.

Give Peace a Chance in Our Communities: Jobs for the jobless; shelter for the homeless. Restore trade union rights to organize, to enforce negotiated agreements, and to strike without fear of replacement and union-busting. Funding for a crash program to stop AIDS now. Fight racism and resegregation. Protect the democratic rights of all, regardless of race, national origin, immigrant status, age, sex, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs. Respect American Indian rights. Restore services for seniors and the disabled. Protect and restore our environment.

Give Peace a Chance in the Middle East: Stop the killings and beatings in the occupied territories. Support the human and political rights of the Palestinian people. Stop the detentions and deportations. Lift the siege of the refugee camps.

On April 30, we will march for Peace, Jobs, and Justice; on June 11, as the U.N. Special Session on Disarmament meets, we will rally and celebrate Peace Day with music and speakers.

The Whole World Will Be Watching.
Join Us and Give Peace a Chance.

**No U.S. Intervention in Central America & the Caribbean
End U.S. Support for South African Apartheid
Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race
Jobs and Justice, Not War**

Canada antiwar protests

By BARRY WEISLEDER

TORONTO—Over 200 Central America solidarity and anti-intervention activists gathered here Feb. 5-7 to share information about the U.S.-backed war in Central America and to discuss ways to pressure the Canadian and American governments to end U.S. intervention in the region.

Sponsored by the Ontario Central America Solidarity Network, the Toronto Anti-intervention Coalition, Tools for Peace, and 20 other groups, the conference attracted activists from 27 communities—mainly from across southern Ontario, but also from Montreal, New York state, and British Columbia.

The opening event, on Friday evening, was a public meeting that drew nearly 400 people to hear exceptionally informative and personally moving presentations by the widow of Herbert Anaya Sanabria, the recently assassinated president of the Non-governmental Human Rights Commission of El Salvador, and Rigoberta Menchu, author and star of the video "When the Mountains Tremble" from Guatemala.

Plenary registers progress

A highlight of the weekend was the Sunday morning plenary discussion of proposals for action from the Saturday workshops.

Recommendations adopted, with near-unanimous approval, included the following:

1) participation in mass Central America

anti-intervention protests at the World Economic Summit scheduled for Toronto, June 19-21.

2) participation in similar protests on or around April 30, in conjunction with anti-intervention actions expected to occur in the United States.

3) agreement that there be another Ontario-wide Central America solidarity conference in the summer or fall with a dual emphasis on "popular education" and the development of strategies for the Ontario movement. Such a conference may create the organizational framework for an Ontario anti-intervention coalition.

No contra aid!

In a related story, over 300 people picketed in front of the U.S. Consulate in Toronto in opposition to President Reagan's request to Congress for an additional \$36.2 million in contra aid.

The need for similar protests against the continuing war throughout the region and against renewed attempts for contra aid will grow over the coming months. The April 30 anti-intervention actions in the United States should become an international day of protest.

Protests in Canada should demand that Ottawa end its silent complicity and fake "neutrality" on Central America.

No more Canadian "peace-keeping troops"—which will side with reactionary forces—but rather peace-making policies that denounce imperialist aggression at its source. ■

Racism in the S.F. Fire Dept:

Black firefighters fight for affirmative action

By JOE RYAN

"A fire department completely out of control with respect to its treatment of minority members."

This was how a federal judge branded the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) after a wave of racist attacks against Black firefighters came to light in recent months.

These attacks included:

- A fist fight between a white firefighter and a Black firefighter when the word "nigger" was used. The Black firefighter was injured, and the incident was subsequently covered up by the SFFD.
- The scratching out of a Black firefighter's face in a group photograph published in the firefighters Local 798 union newspaper.
- Discovery of a giant cardboard swastika in a station house where Black, Asian, and Jewish fire inspectors worked.
- Disclosure of a long history of harassment of Black firefighters which included "practical jokes," racist epithets, and physical threats.

These revelations generated so much political heat, the Fire Department chief was forced to resign.

Long history of racism

In a city where minorities are the majority of the population, there are only 91 Black firefighters in a workforce of 1345. Furthermore, there are only 93 Latinos, 14 Filipinos, and 27 Asians in the department. Until recently, no women were hired.

Through court cases, the Black firefighters proved that a pattern of institutionalized racism in both hiring and promotion existed in the SFFD. A "white job trust" had been maintained by both the fire department and, unfortunately, by Local 798 of the firefighters union.

The leadership of the local consistently fought against affirmative-action hiring and promotion programs by filing friend-of-the-court briefs to protect the city from civil suits.

Seeing no recourse, the Black firefighters formed their own union—the Black Firefighters Association (BFA)—in 1972. As Bob Demmons, president of the BFA says, "I wanted Local 798 to stop using my dues to fight affirmative-action programs. I believe in labor, but I also believe in people's civil rights and human rights."

The racist attacks in the fire department come as a result of suits filed by the BFA to throw out promotion tests for lieutenant and captain that automatically favored the white firefighters. Both the 1978 and 1984



tests were ruled unfair by the courts, and the fire department was ordered to promote 18 Black firefighters.

Black firefighters speak

The furor and controversy of all these revelations provided the backdrop to a Socialist Action forum on Feb. 5 at which BFA president Bob Demmons spoke. Speaking for Socialist Action was Roland Sheppard, a member of Local 4 of the Painter's Union and an elected delegate to the San Francisco Central Labor Council.

Bob Demmons covered the history of racism in the fire department. "In 1955, the first Black was hired in a fire department with 1800 positions," he stated. Demmons told how this firefighter was harassed and ostracized by the white firefighters. "He had feces put into his boots, his firecoat soaked in oil, and the white firefighters refused to eat with him."

Demmons chronicled the slow pace of hiring for Blacks. "In 1967, the second and third Blacks were hired; in '68, the fourth—and the second Asian; in '72 the fifth. In 1974, the courts ordered the department to hire one minority for every white."

He stated his own experience when he was hired in 1974: "We were welcomed at the fire college with the statement from the captain that 'the courts got you here, but they won't get you through fire college.'"

Demmons told of the selective enforcement of rules against Black firefighters and the racist atmosphere in the station houses: "One station house had a

poster of a Black South African with his head blown off and a confederate flag hanging up."

He explained how the promotion tests were unfair because they contained so many repeat questions from previous tests—tests that white firefighters were familiar with after taking them so many times. In addition, points were added to the test score based on seniority—a situation exclusively to the advantage of the white firefighters.

In conclusion, Demmons asked the audience to support a consent decree filed by the BFA to enforce affirmative-action programs: "The Fire Department should mirror the racial and ethnic makeup of the city it serves. And I ask you to support us in raising the consciousness level of the brothers in Local 798."

Divide and conquer

Roland Sheppard geared his talk to lessons of history. "Karl Marx wrote," he said, "Labor in a white skin cannot be free as long as labor in a Black skin is branded." American labor had to learn this lesson the hard way. It was only in the 1930s that they learned they had to defend the interests of all workers, and the interests of Blacks."

Sheppard stated how the labor aristocracy in the building trades, firefighters, and other craft unions "fronted" for the employers by opposing the fight for affirmative action in the 1960s and '70s. "They became a transmission belt for the ideology of the employer to maintain the racism and, at the same time, maintain the exploitation of all workers."

All that this accomplished, Sheppard stated, was to isolate these unions from their natural allies in the community, making them vulnerable to attacks from the employer. "This was the main reason why the firefighters were defeated in their 1976 strike."

"The firefighters union should be in the forefront of defending all workers—and especially Black workers. A wage cut any place increases pressure for a wage cut everywhere."

Local 798 representative

During the forum's discussion period a pleasant surprise came when an executive board member of Local 798 spoke up. While trying to defend his union's opposition to the consent decree, the 798 firefighter denied that there was institutional racism in the SFFD. He said he was sure there were individuals who were racist, but insisted that everything else was nothing but allegations.

The ensuing discussion graphically illustrated the pitfalls of racism within the labor movement.

Demmons responded by saying: "There is



Roland Sheppard



Lt. Robert Demmons

institutionalized racism in the fire department."

"That means you are calling me a racist!" responded the 798 representative.

"I'm calling the fire department racist," Demmons retorted. "But during the period of 1978 when Local 798 was fighting to keep minorities out of the fire department, the city—through the mayor—eliminated over 300 positions. Had all the minorities that tried to gain entry gotten into the fire department, they would have taken up only half of those 300 positions. The other 150 would have gone to white males."

Roland Sheppard also directed his response directly to the Local 798 spokesperson: "The brother [Demmons] said the fire department was racist—and the Local 798 brother says: 'You called me a racist!' He thinks the role of the union is to defend the fire department. The firefighters union has no interest in defending the racism of the fire department..."

"Let the head of the fire department defend himself! Why should the union put itself in the position—like you just did—of standing in front, when Brother Demmons was talking about the fire department behind you."

With an incredulous irony in his voice, Sheppard asked the 798 board member, "Do you realize what you just said?"

The 798 representative responded almost humbly: "I do—and I see your point."

Meanwhile, the city has been ordered to implement a consent decree that has a goal of making the fire department workforce 40 percent minority.

On the other hand, faced with a \$150-million budget deficit, the mayor's office has announced that there will be layoffs of city workers. Included among these will be firefighters. This only underscores what Sheppard said to the 798 member: "Fronting for the fire department's racism is suicidal with all these attacks going on." ■

FSP fights court harassment

By HAYDEN PERRY

The Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) has been fighting for five years to preserve its constitutional right to privacy. In the latest turn of this extended persecution of the party, three leaders have been sentenced to jail and their lawyer has been threatened by a receivership. This would put all the proceeds of her law practice in the hands of court-appointed officials.

Although the motion for receivership against lawyer Valerie Carlson has been denied by a Superior Court ruling, she is under sentence of imprisonment for refusing to disclose her assets. Also facing imprisonment are co-counsel Frederick Hyde and FSP National Chairperson Clara Fraser.

This case originated in 1984 when Richard Snedigar, a former member of FSP, sued for the return of \$22,500 he freely donated for the purchase of a headquarters building. Although a building has been purchased with Snedigar's donation and other funds, he wants his

money back.

In the course of pressing his claim, Snedigar demanded that minutes of internal FSP meetings be opened to court inspection. FSP refused, citing the illegal invasion of privacy. In response the court awarded the case to Snedigar by default. The judgment is for \$42,139, far more than the \$22,500 Snedigar donated.

In trying to collect on this judgment, Snedigar dragged Clara Kaye and her lawyers into court to disclose their assets. They refused on First Amendment grounds. All three were sentenced to jail for contempt. Sentence has been stayed pending appeal. Putting Carlson's law practice in receivership was another ploy to seize assets.

Since the judgment for Snedigar was based on an unconstitutional invasion of a political party's civil rights, the FSP is resisting at every stage. It is being supported by many unions and other organizations concerned with our civil rights. ■

BATH, Maine—Chanting "Scabs out, union in!" over 1000 public-school students were bused to safety from a spill of over 100,000 gallons of chlorine-dioxide liquid at the struck International Paper Mill in Jay, Maine, on Feb. 5.

Coming just eight days after a release of deadly hydrogen-sulphide gas in which eight scab workers were hospitalized, concern for the safety and health of the people of Jay has again been brought to the fore. Running the mill with scabs, International Paper has again shown its total disdain for the workers on strike, the people of Jay and the surrounding area, and even their own scab labor force.

These accidents come after an OSHA inspection cited the company for 34 willful and three serious violations last October and fined them \$240,000. Republican Governor McKernan of Maine sent in a state team of investigators and said OSHA would also begin an investigation on Feb. 22.

United Paperworkers Local 14 responded by calling for a total shutdown of mill operations and firing of the scab labor force.

An eight-month strike

Local 14 of the UPIU, with over 1200 members, and Local 246 of the Firemen and Oilers Union, with about 50 members, struck the International Paper Company's Jay mill on June 16, 1987. The strike began when workers rejected the company's final proposal, which included the loss of hundreds of jobs and the takeback of overtime pay for Saturday and Sunday work.

Since then, the striking unions have responded to the company's challenge with unusual enthusiasm. They have held weekly meetings with attendance consistently over 1000. These meetings have kept members informed of strike activities and provided a forum for discussion. The unions have also sponsored three major solidarity rallies, the largest drawing almost 10,000 supporters.

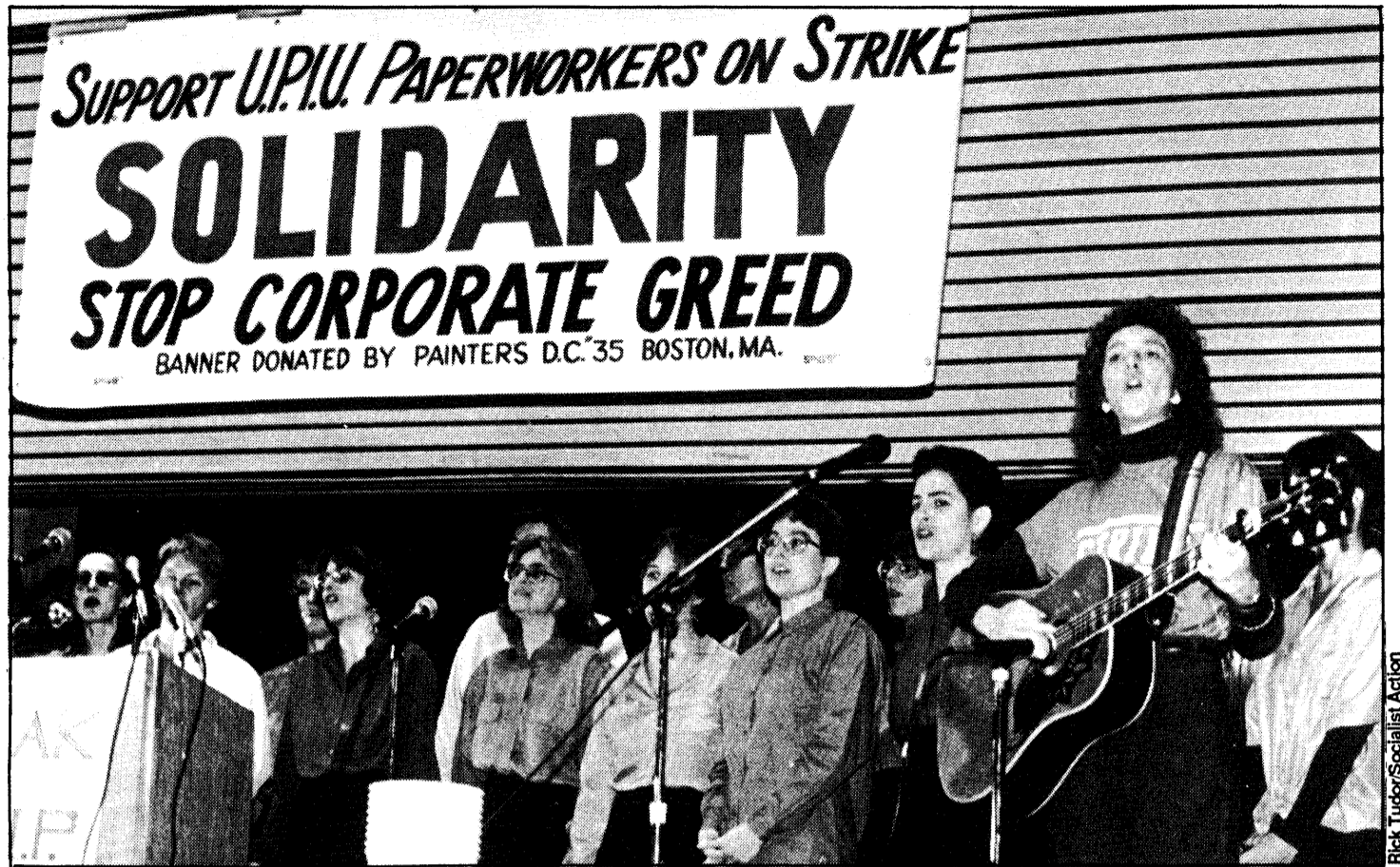
The town of Jay demonstrated the local support that exists by passing laws that bar the use of professional strikebreakers, limit temporary housing on IP property, and order town officials to strengthen enforcement of environmental rules.

Unfortunately, these laws have not been enforced because of the lack of funds by the town and especially because of the inability of the union leadership to tie the new laws in with a more militant strategy that could confront IP with the real power of the union.

In a related development, just days before the chemical spill, the town of Jay, supported by union officials, repealed the anti-IP laws. IP's immediate response was they would sue the town for the cost of their attorney's fees in fighting the laws. After the spill drew state-wide attention, IP quickly rescinded their threat.

Strike strategy

The paperworkers' strike has provided much-needed experience for workers everywhere. Their use of mass meetings and



The "On the Line Labor Chorus" sings at the Feb. 19 Boston rally in support of striking paperworkers. See story below.

Jay paperworkers gain solidarity for IP battle

rallies has shown the potential for strike solidarity that exists. The laws passed by the town of Jay had the potential to severely restrict IP and to protect actions by the union.

But the lack of experience and lack of a class-struggle perspective by the union leadership never allowed the full weight of the strikers and their supporters to come to the fore. They felt obliged to honor injunctions handed down by the courts restricting picketing.

This automatically allowed IP to maintain control of the plant gate and continue production with scabs recruited nationwide. Lawyers for the union and state and national representatives for the AFL-CIO counseled "non-violence" in the face of economic and political violence by the company.

Continued reliance on the Democratic Party has been pushed by both local, state, and national labor leaders. Prominent Maine Democrats have been featured speakers at strike rallies and meetings. Many times during the strike, labor officials have told the workers that their salvation can be found in this or that legislator or this or that proposed bill. This, of course, has led to a lack of reliance by the workers on their own strength and has limited the choices for militant action on their part.

Because of the lack of success in

bringing IP back to the bargaining table, the UPIU, spearheaded by Local 14, hired Ray Rogers and his Corporate Campaign organization last December. Rogers got his start in the labor movement by leading the successful J.P. Stevens boycott, later forming Corporate Campaign. He was also hired by Local P-9 of the UFCW during their strike against Hormel in Austin, Minn., which ended last year.

Role of corporate campaign

The basis of the Corporate Campaign strategy is the belief that you can embarrass the corporations into dealing with you by publicizing their attacks and making life difficult for the individual directors. If we can tell everyone who the nasty corporate directors are then the good directors will be shamed into fighting for you.

The information that Corporate Campaign digs up on interlocking directorates in American business, and the role individual directors have played in labor disputes in the past, is very educational and certainly can play a role in any strike. However, the information itself becomes the "magic wand" of the campaign and organizers believe that if they can only tell enough people about these corporate misdeeds, they can be forced to respond to the workers' legitimate demands.

In the case of the Jay paperworkers' strike, the addition of the Corporate Cam-

paign has certainly broadened out the geographical area where the strike is being publicized.

For instance, throughout the month of January, Local 14 ran a strike caravan through most populated areas of Maine, stopping at mill towns and major cities. There they leafleted factories and mills and held public rallies. They were able to generate many news stories on their behalf. This outreach campaign is being continued into the Boston area and further into other industrial areas of New England.

Unfortunately, a publicity campaign cannot take the place of worker action, especially in the case of Jay, where it was clear that there was overwhelming public support for the strikers. It would have been easy to call on supporters to help in whatever militant action the union might have chosen.

The lack of experience in confronting the newly aggressive American corporations has hampered today's labor leaders. Some of the older generations have been raised in an era of relative labor peace. And many of them have become part of the system which is hammering away at the standard of living of the American worker.

It is up to the newer leaders of our unions to look beyond that limited experience of their predecessors and begin to organize the workers to use their own power.

By ALEXEI FOLGER

BOSTON—On Feb. 19 a caravan of 25 striking paperworkers from Jay, Maine, arrived in Boston for a rally hosted by Local 103 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). They were greeted by 500 cheering supporters from Boston-area unions.

As the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU), Local 14, strike against the International Paper Company enters its eighth month, the strikers have embarked on a major campaign to publicize their struggle against I.P. and to raise much-needed funds. In the past month alone, there have been 11 rallies held all over Massachusetts.

The rally, held in the IBEW's Freeport Hall, was co-chaired by Rand Wilson, New England coordinator of the UPIU Corporate Campaign, and Robert Haines, secretary-treasurer of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. A number of labor officials addressed the gathering.

500 cheer Jay strikers at Boston labor rally

The highpoint of the rally came when the caravan of strikers entered the hall and the audience responded by erupting with a chant, "Scabs out, union in!"

Three members of the caravan described the situation in Jay. Armand Metivier told of several chlorine-dioxide leaks which have recently occurred at the plant while it was being operated by company management and scab workers.

Chlorine dioxide is twice as toxic as the gas that leaked out of a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India—killing thousands.

Speaking for the strikers and other residents of Jay, Metivier declared, "We will not pay for the price of mismanagement, let them [IP] pay for it."

Shirley Couture introduced herself by saying, "I'm a mother, a union person, and the wife of a union person." The audience cheered when she added, "and I'm damn proud of it."

Striking paperworker Sandra Robinson reminded the audience that a struggle by any single union is also a struggle for the labor movement as a whole when she said, "I would like to say to you, don't give in, don't let them take from your children, don't let them take from your family."

Alluding to the gas leaks, Robinson said, "They are not going to kill our children and our children's children." Referring to the chain-link and barbed-wire barricade which surrounds the Jay papermill, she ended by

adding, "and I will bust that fence down myself!"

The broad support for the strike was evident by the variety of speakers. These included Hank Sanders, a Black state senator from Alabama and one of 14 state legislators arrested for attempting to remove a Confederate flag flying over the capitol; a representative of local student groups doing strike-support work on Boston-area college campuses; and a garment worker from the Chinese Progressive Association, whose greetings were translated into English.

Jack Taylor of the IBEW Local 103 announced the results of a collection that had been taken earlier in the evening and presented UPIU Local 14 President Bill Meserve with a gigantic "solidarity check" for \$11,541. A number of unions and community groups had sent representatives to present checks on their behalf.

Bill Meserve encouraged everyone to attend a rally set for the following Friday at the Bank of Boston, saying, "We cannot let this fight die, cannot, cannot!"

Meetings pay tribute to Alice Snipper

Alice Snipper, a veteran socialist activist, died on Dec. 31, 1987, at the age of 73.

Two meetings were held to pay tribute to Alice's life and revolutionary contributions. The first, held in Los Angeles on Jan. 10, was attended by 32 comrades, friends, and family. The second, held in San Francisco on Feb. 28, was attended by 72 people.

We are printing below excerpts from a few of the messages sent to the meetings as well as statements by some of the participants. Others whose statements are not printed here for reasons of space include Julie Rosen, Jean Tussey, Tybie Genevin, Minnie Wyman, Charles Percely, Kwame Somburu, and Hayden Perry.

F.I.T.: The Fourth Internationalist Tendency, meeting in conference in Cleveland, Ohio, Feb. 13-15, salutes the memory of Alice Snipper. We share the pain of her loss with you, her comrades, friends, and loved ones...

Alice was our comrade, too, an indispensable part of the backbone of the Socialist Workers Party during her 44 years of membership.

Along with scores of others, including the founding members of our organization, Alice was shamefully cast out of the party she had nurtured and built, for the crime of upholding the same Trotskyist principles she had fought for all her adult life...

Alice Snipper's life...was a model of revolutionary integrity. She will be missed by everyone who knew her. We extend our condolences to her comrades in Socialist Action and to her family.—Delegates to the F.I.T.'s Fourth National Conference

Jeff Mackler: Alice had absorbed and lived in the great

forest of our revolutionary heritage. She lived a full life of a revolutionary. For Alice, "Permanent Revolution," the simple idea that only working people in their overwhelming numbers are capable of bringing about the socialist future was ingrained in her being.

And when the Socialist Workers Party—to which she had dedicated almost 50 years of her life—abandoned central political principles and expelled her along with a small band of comrades committed to the Trotskyist program, Alice remained unshaken. She pitched in with her full energies to rebuilding the party by building Socialist Action.

We have lost a selfless comrade and revolutionary fighter whose example will help us all remember that our cause is just and that we must strive to live it everyday.

Dave Cooper: Alice Snipper was the living expression of the social revolt generated by oppression, discrimination, and war. She was always there, working. She realized herself in the struggle. Alice's life was a testimony to her



faith in people and in their socialist future.

Minnie Wyman: I knew Alice for 63 or 64 years. We went to school together. I remember how she first got involved in the socialist movement. We were walking to high-school one day and a friend invited us to a party of the YPSLs [Young People's Socialist League]. We decided we'd go. Alice became active with the YPSLs, and that's where, I think, she met Henry [her companion of many years].

Theodore Edwards: My memories go back to 1947 when Alice was working in the fish canneries. She helped recruit me. I had just come out of the army, and I was dead set on preventing another war. Alice worked in the fish canneries and she smelled

like it. Alice was in all the party work, always there. Alice was the kind of person you could walk up to and talk about anything, freely and openly.

Myra Tanner Weiss: Alice enriched the lives of all of us, and did so gently, quietly, and lovingly. We are in her debt and in our sorrow can only pledge anew to continue the struggle, sharing her confidence in our ultimate socialistic victory.

Charles Curtiss: My memories have become a legacy...very precious memories of Alice and Henry Snipper. We went through the years together. She was a wonderful, kind, and loving woman.

Jan Snipper: I got involved in the antiwar movement in the late 1960s. As a new activist I always had lots of questions, and Alice had the answers. We looked forward to talking to each other. Probably the most important lesson she taught me was at the very beginning. She welcomed me into the family and made me feel that, as an ordinary worker, I was the salt of the earth, I was very important. She turned the values of bourgeois society upside down and put the working class on top.

Carl Finamore: Alice smiled when there was a victory for the working class. She was upset when the boss slapped us around a little bit and we got bloodied.

Even in her last days, her last moments, what cheered her was a note about the gains of Socialist Action, the gains of the working class. That put a smile on her face in her last hours. That for me said everything about the depth of Alice's revolutionary commitment.

Zakiya Somburu: Alice was always warm and giving. She was always there when I first came around the movement over a decade ago in Oakland. She never made me feel like I was not wanted or didn't know as much as others. Alice would help me and answer my questions. She was a treasure in my life.

Carole Selligman: Alice retained with full force her loyalty to the ideas of her youth—that is, to a future where peace and human dignity are secure because the working people will take charge of society.

Alice retained her absolute identification with the oppressed of the world and the need for the oppressed—the workers—to act as their own masters and in their own name. That is why she threw in her lot with Socialist Action.

Dave Snipper: To sum it, my mother left a great gift behind. One thing she left me was her vision of the future. Everything that she did, everything that she passed on to me and to all of you carried that vision of the future, whether it was political or personal.

UAW local leaders fight Chrysler plant closing

By DAVID MARK

DETROIT—In response to Chrysler's announcement that it was talking to interested buyers for its \$3 billion Acustar parts-making subsidiary, leaders of UAW Chrysler locals gathered here called for nationally coordinated local strikes to stop Chrysler from selling Acustar.

The call came from a meeting of presidents and chairmen of 49 Chrysler locals held at Local 212 in Detroit. "We're going to war," declared Don Lingar, president of UAW local 372, which represents workers at Chrysler's Trenton Chemical plant.

Marc Stepp, a UAW vice-president and head of the UAW's Chrysler Department, said the UAW international leadership would stand with the Chrysler locals. According to news reports, the UAW's Chrysler Council, which met the last week of February, voted to oppose the Acustar sale.

At a demonstration in front of Chrysler's Highland Park headquarters on Feb. 25, Stepp said, "I know what it's like to be bitten by a snake. You can't trust this corporation." The demonstration, which drew close to 2000 workers despite the bitter cold, was scheduled to coincide with the UAW's Chrysler Council meeting.

A nationwide strike of locals against the proposed sale of Acustar would technically be illegal, but unionists here said that all locals have sufficient number of grievances piled up to justify a strike. Stepp said that the grievance process required to call local strikes would begin immediately.

Reorganization = Union-busting

In a major reorganization, Chrysler put much of its parts-making operations into a subsidiary called Acustar. It employs 28,000 workers—more than 11,000 of whom are workers covered by the UAW.

The sale of Acustar, to be followed by

attempts to bust the UAW at these plants, means a potential loss of 15 percent of all UAW organized Chrysler workers in one sweep—only six months before the contract round opens.

The attack by Chrysler to sell Acustar comes on the heels of massive plant closings announced by General Motors. Plant closings and layoffs have already begun, and their effects are already being felt in this auto-producing region of the

Midwest. January's figure for unemployment in Michigan rose from 8.7 percent in December to 10.2 percent according to government statistics.

The national contract covering 68,000 Chrysler workers expires next September. The drive for concessions from autoworkers began at Chrysler with the closing of the Dodge Main assembly plant, which had a long history of union militancy in the UAW.

Many of those workers have seen concessions drive their wages to the lowest of all Big Three autoworkers. They surely recognize the attempt by Chrysler to pit locals against each other and workers at parts operations against other autoworkers.

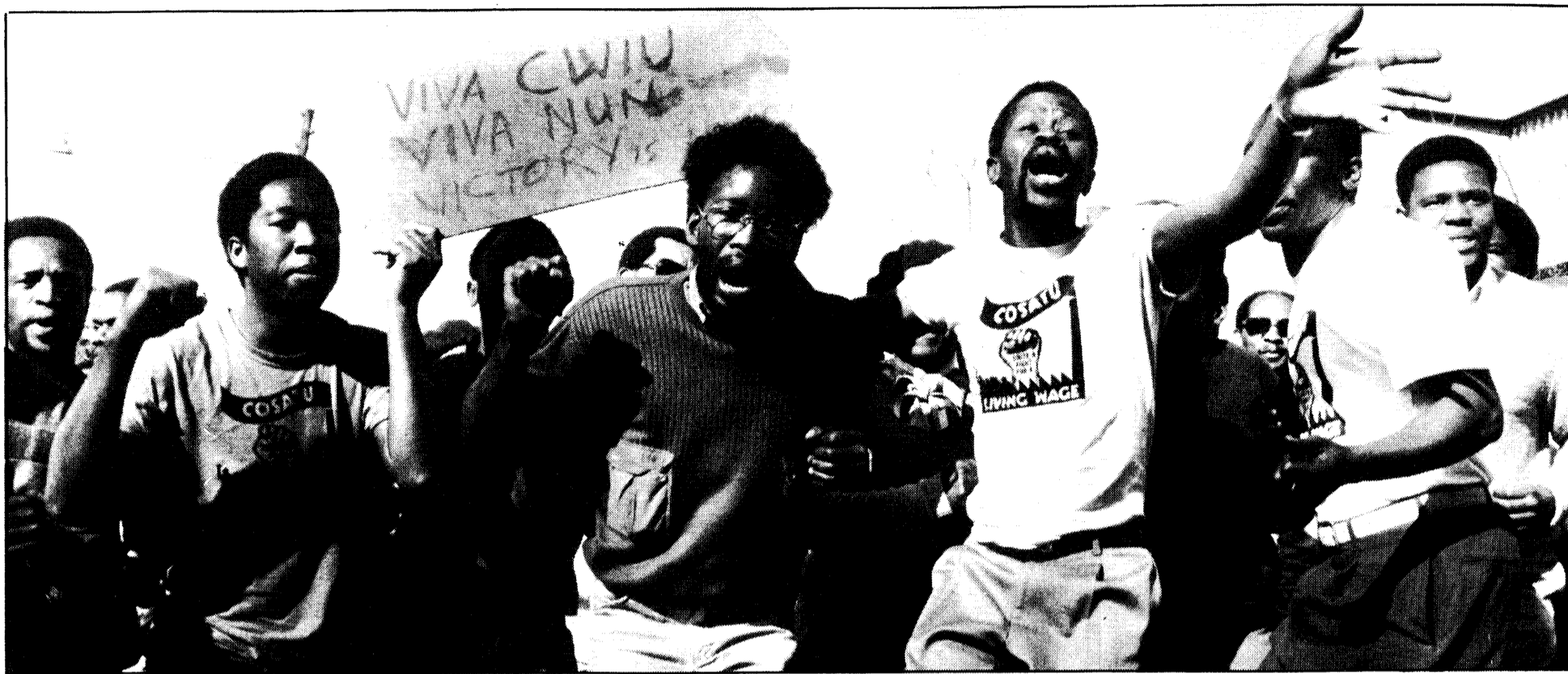
The UAW international leadership's support for these local actions should be taken for all its worth by autoworkers, but in truth, the Acustar deal has been in the works for more than a year and only now—after local leaders took some initiative—has Stepp reacted.

Chrysler workers have nothing to lose by taking the initiative against Chrysler now. Building real solidarity with the workers at Acustar by turning back Chrysler's whipsawing tactics is the way to prepare for the expiration of the national Chrysler contract in September. ■



The sale of Acustar would mean that the UAW could lose 15 percent of its Chrysler worker membership.

South Africa: The fight for Black majority rule



Eric Miller/Impact Visuals

By ALAN BENJAMIN

In April 1978, shortly after the wholesale banning of all Black Consciousness organizations by the South African apartheid state, the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) was founded.

AZAPO was basically a continuation of the Black Consciousness movement, which had arisen in the late 1960s in the heat of the struggles of the Black students.

The Black Consciousness movement was spearheaded by Black students who had grown tired of the "paternalism" of the dominant liberal white student organizations and had decided to take matters into their own hands. As one Black student leader put it: "It does not help us to see several quiet Black faces in a multi-racial gathering which ultimately concentrates on what the white students believe are the needs of Black students."

Black Consciousness held that only the Blacks could liberate the nation's Black majority through the harnessing of their collective energies in "solidarity in action." In 1976, this movement led the uprising in Soweto. In 1977, one of its most prominent leaders, Steve Biko, was killed by the government while in police custody.

Important advances

At its founding conference, and subsequently, AZAPO was able to make some important political advances over the current from which it had emerged. One leader of AZAPO put it this way:

"From the previous Black Consciousness position—which at times could have been characterized as narrowly nationalistic, where race seemed to be all in the analysis of the political situation—AZAPO moved further to include the very real element of class in its analysis and strategic orientation."

The AZAPO leader continued, "One of the significant differences with the Black Consciousness current is that AZAPO's orientation is specifically socialist. Its program and strategy flow from a combined class-race analysis of the South African situation."

A brochure containing the basic positions of AZAPO explains this concept in greater detail: "AZAPO has identified the racist and capitalist system of the country as working against the interests and aspirations of the Black people. The

liberation of the Black majority can only be realized in an egalitarian collectivized state which breaks with capitalism and colonialism."

Flowing from this understanding of the interrelationship between the apartheid state and the capitalist system of production, AZAPO has taken a clear stand in favor of Black majority rule and against a policy of alliances that would subordinate the interests of the Black majority to the so-called "liberal" wing of the white ruling class.

"The white liberals and their supporters are opposed to self-determination for the Black majority," said another leader of AZAPO in a speech on the meaning of AZAPO's Fourth Congress of January 1984. "Instead, what they propose is a 'multi-racial' unity and state."

The AZAPO leader explained that his organization advocates the "policy of the united front" and rejects "the policy of the popular front." He stated:

"In this period of sustained attacks by the state and imperialism, we must seek to bring together all organizations based on the working class and the oppressed, even the most moderate ones or those with the most opportunistic and revisionist leaderships. Our only condition is that we reject all alliances between the workers' movement and the liberal bourgeoisie..."

"The fundamental characteristic of this united front is that, through its logic of pitting class against class, it sets off a dynamic that drives forward the struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeois order and capitalist property relations."

"The popular front, on the other hand, because of its logic of class collaboration [with the 'liberal' bourgeoisie], sets off a dynamic that restrains and derails the struggles of the workers and the oppressed. Such a front is explicitly based on the respect of the established order and capitalist property relations."

AZAPO's attitude toward whites

One of the main criticisms leveled against AZAPO by other currents in the South African liberation struggle concerns AZAPO's attitude toward the white minority. AZAPO is often denounced as "ultraleft" or "racist" because of its

exclusion of whites from its ranks and because of its assessment of the "limited role that whites can play in the struggle for Black liberation."

These charges are unfounded.

Under the system of apartheid, being white is automatically a passport for all privileges. Whites are the only recognized "citizens" with the right to vote. Their incomes derive from the institutionalization of racist discrimination and oppression.

White workers in South Africa, whose incomes are over 40 times greater than those of Black workers on the average, cannot even be compared to the "aristocracy of labor" that Lenin described in reference to the privileged layer of workers in the advanced capitalist countries.

In South Africa, the extreme social stratification is imposed by racial barriers established by a particular form of capitalist exploitation: apartheid. White trade unions, for example, have always oriented their activities around the defense of their privileges—in violent opposition to the rights and interests of Black workers.

The South African government only allowed the Black trade unions to legally organize and negotiate contracts in 1979 after the massive outburst of spontaneous strikes in the early and mid 1970s. This legal recognition—which is still limited by the state—was won through bitter struggle and organization independent of the white workers and their unions.

AZAPO's view of the role of whites is spelled out in the organization's brochure: "The role of whites in the liberation struggle cannot be considered a right. Their role should be rejected where it is an obstacle to the initiative, leadership, and organization of the Black majority in its struggle to remove the yoke of political and economic oppression by the white minority."

AZAPO and the Freedom Charter

One of the documents that has caused the most controversy and division among the liberation forces in South Africa is the Freedom Charter, which was adopted by the African National Congress (ANC) in 1955.

The Freedom Charter puts forward a series of necessary and legitimate demands. But it does not call for socialism, outlining instead the perspective of an anti-apartheid settlement to establish a democratic-

capitalist state.

A major underpinning of the Charter is the existence in South Africa of various different nationalities whose rights must be guaranteed within the framework of a multi-racial state. The Charter is in line with the South African Communist Party's strategy of a "popular front," which seeks to unite the working-class and sectors of the "liberal" white bourgeoisie around a common program.

A leading member of AZAPO characterized the Freedom Charter in the following terms:

"There are many aspects of the Charter which nobody could have any difficulty with: education, housing, healthcare—which are basic human demands that need to be met. But, in its essence, the Freedom Charter is an attempt to seek accommodation with the status quo. It is an attempt to appease the ruling class and seek integration within that ruling class."

The AZAPO leader continued, "There is no talk of Black majority rule explicitly in the Charter. There is no indication of the type of economic, political, and social future that the majority of citizens are going to have. Merely talking of nationalizing certain industries is not synonymous with socialization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange."

In opposition to the ANC's Freedom Charter, AZAPO calls for support to the Manifesto of the Azanian People, which was adopted in 1983. This document summarizes the overall strategic goals of this extremely significant component of the South African liberation struggle. It states:

"The Black working class, inspired by revolutionary consciousness, is the driving force of our struggle for national self-determination in a unitary Azania. They alone can end the system as it stands because they alone have nothing to lose."

"They have a world to gain in a democratic, anti-racist and socialist Azania, where the interests of the workers shall be paramount through worker control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange..."

"It is the historic task of the Black working class and its organizations to mobilize the oppressed people in order to put an end to the system of oppression and exploitation by the white ruling class." ■

SOCIALIST ACTION SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Discussion reveals heated debates in Black unions

The following is a discussion between Socialist Action editor Alan Benjamin and a leading member of the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) of South Africa, whose name has been withheld for reasons of security.

Question: In recent months, the mainstream press has prominently featured statements by leading Soviet officials to the effect that the ANC should rapidly move toward a political settlement that would "provide comprehensive guarantees for the white population."

One such article from the Feb. 5, 1988, *Los Angeles Times* describes the pressures the Soviet Union is placing on the ANC.

According to the *Times*, Soviet officials interviewed at the ANC-sponsored conference in Arusha, Tanzania, last December said that "the ANC should expect to be part of a coalition government in the future and should not seek to dominate it if that would deepen political divisions... The country's present capitalist system should be modified only with great care...even though this means the continuation of 'monopoly capital' for many years."

One Soviet official at the Arusha conference is quoted as warning the ANC to move slowly on nationalizations. "If a post-apartheid government, for example, took over the big mining companies, as the ANC proposes, who would manage them?" the Soviet official stated. "Would these people have enough experience? But, if this is just something for far in the future, why insist on it now when it only alarms businessmen and other whites who might join a united front against apartheid."

The *Times* article quotes Gleb Starushenko, the deputy director of the Africa Institute in Moscow, who went so far as to suggest a federal system made up of "autonomous components" and a "bi-cameral parliament that would give the white minority an effective veto within a majority-rule government."

The *Times* concludes that these views are not simply the personal opinions of a few maverick Soviet officials, but rather "reflect broader trends in Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev."

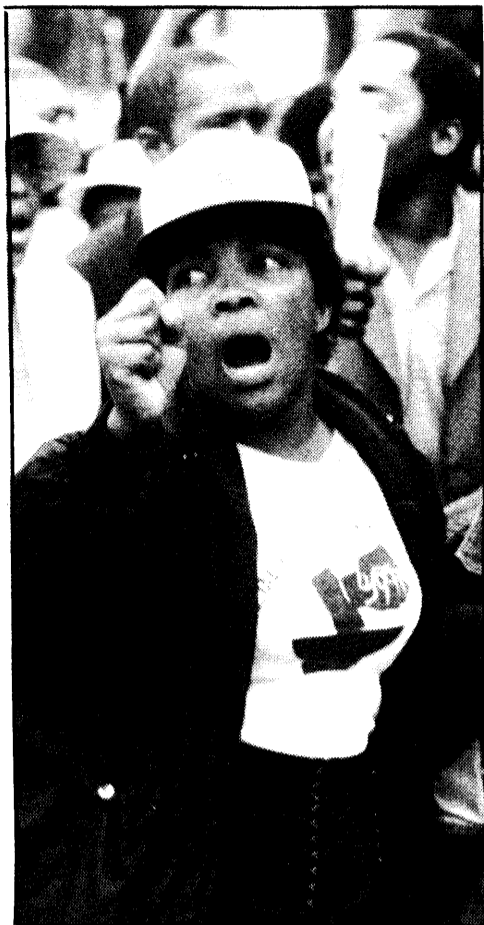
What is your assessment of the foreign policy of the Soviet leadership, and is there a danger that it will exert its pressure to attempt to derail the revolutionary struggle in South Africa?

Answer: I think this must be understood in terms of the various pronouncements the Soviet Union has made from time to time on the struggle in South Africa.

The Soviet Union has never significantly moved from "socialism in one country," a policy which was so dangerously put forward by Stalin so many decades ago. And today when Gorbachev has taken over and has introduced his new perestroika policies, Soviet leaders have made many significant "holy pronouncements" about the character of the revolution in South Africa.

A conference was held not long ago in the Soviet Union where top government officials and party leaders discussed "the problems of the South African revolution." They talked about giving the white minority certain guarantees. This notion could have only come from the Reagan administration, with which Gorbachev is hoping to achieve a *detente*. The Reagan government is particularly concerned about what would happen to the position of the white ruling class and the basic system of capitalism in a post-apartheid South Africa. Would they be guaranteed?

In my view the Soviet Union is moving hastily to seek further rapprochement and agreement with the U.S. government in South Africa and other regions of the world



where revolutionary struggles are unfolding.

Question: But does the Soviet leadership have sufficient influence in the ANC to be able to push through these policies of accommodation? Will there be resistance in the ANC to these pressures? What is the role of the South African Communist Party (SACP)?

Answer: Joe Slovo [general secretary of the SACP] in an interview he gave early last year to the *London Observer* said he was ashamed of his Stalinist past. But when he was asked to elaborate or give examples of when he would have disagreed with positions taken by the Soviet Union, he could not give any examples.

What Slovo really finds embarrassing is that Stalinism has been denounced to a limited extent by Gorbachev, and therefore it would not be wise for people like him to say that Stalinism is relevant. But the SACP has not broken with Stalinism.

Nonetheless, I cannot really say that the ANC would be overwhelmingly influenced by the positions of the Soviet Union. I see a lot of debate that will go on within the ANC because while too many of the comrades within the ANC have great respect for the Soviet Union, they will begin to reassess this respect if such revisionist demands are in fact implemented in order to divert the struggle. At that point, the ANC will face a real revolution within its ranks.

Question: So despite the ANC's misguided strategic framework resulting from its support to the Freedom Charter, you think there will nonetheless be resistance by a membership which is revolutionary-minded...

Answer: Oh yes, I think that a significant percentage of their membership abroad and in the country will resist these pressures. Already many ANC members are questioning their leadership's decision to meet with sectors of the ruling-class oppressors, particularly the mine bosses, who at home were at that very moment responding to the mineworkers' strike with such violence. They are asking why Oliver Tambo [president of the ANC] can meet with George Shultz at a time when inside the country no credible leader would dare to meet with an American official.

They are also beginning to question whether it was right for the ANC to have given a lot of backing to the creation of Buthelezi's Inkatha—the ANC blessed that creature at a certain point in its history.

The same Buthelezi and his Inkatha are now murdering many of the ANC comrades in different parts of the country.

On the split in COSATU

Question: A big struggle is now underway in the South African trade unions over the Freedom Charter. At its second

conference in July 1987, the 750,000-member COSATU [Congress of South African Trade Unions] adopted the Freedom Charter of the ANC as a document that "encompasses the minimum demands of the democratic majority which lays the basis for the building of a non-exploitative society."

But not all the unions affiliated to COSATU endorsed the Freedom Charter. This was the case of the catering and commercial union, CCAWUSA, the third largest union in the federation, which voted by over two-thirds of its membership at its congress in June 1987 against having the trade-union movement endorse a political

AZAPO leader's assessment of Black miners' strike

Question: I was impressed during the three-month miners' strike last year that the Black Miners, Construction and Allied Workers Union (BAMCWU), a NACTU affiliate, honored the NUM strike and actively supported it. BAMCWU, if I'm not mistaken, claims a membership of 175,000 workers.

But I was also interested by the fact that the BAMCWU did not countersign the appeal by the NUM at the beginning of the strike for workers to leave their work place and return to their homes—for most of them the distant homelands. If I'm not mistaken, the BAMCWU explained the the NUM appeal meant that the mineworkers wouldn't be present to make the decisions about how the strike should be run. I think the mineworkers were, in fact, only consulted once during the entire strike.

Answer: I think that BAMCWU's criticisms of the NUM leadership were justified. It was a miscalculation on their part. But in another sense it was a calculation, because in the previous strike that took place in 1985, many of the workers, when they got thrown out of the mine premises, camped out at the union headquarters.

At one point there was a palace revolt by the mineworkers against the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa and others. So the union leadership calculated that they

didn't want disgruntled workers who were thrown off the premises to camp on their doorstep this time. That's one factor.

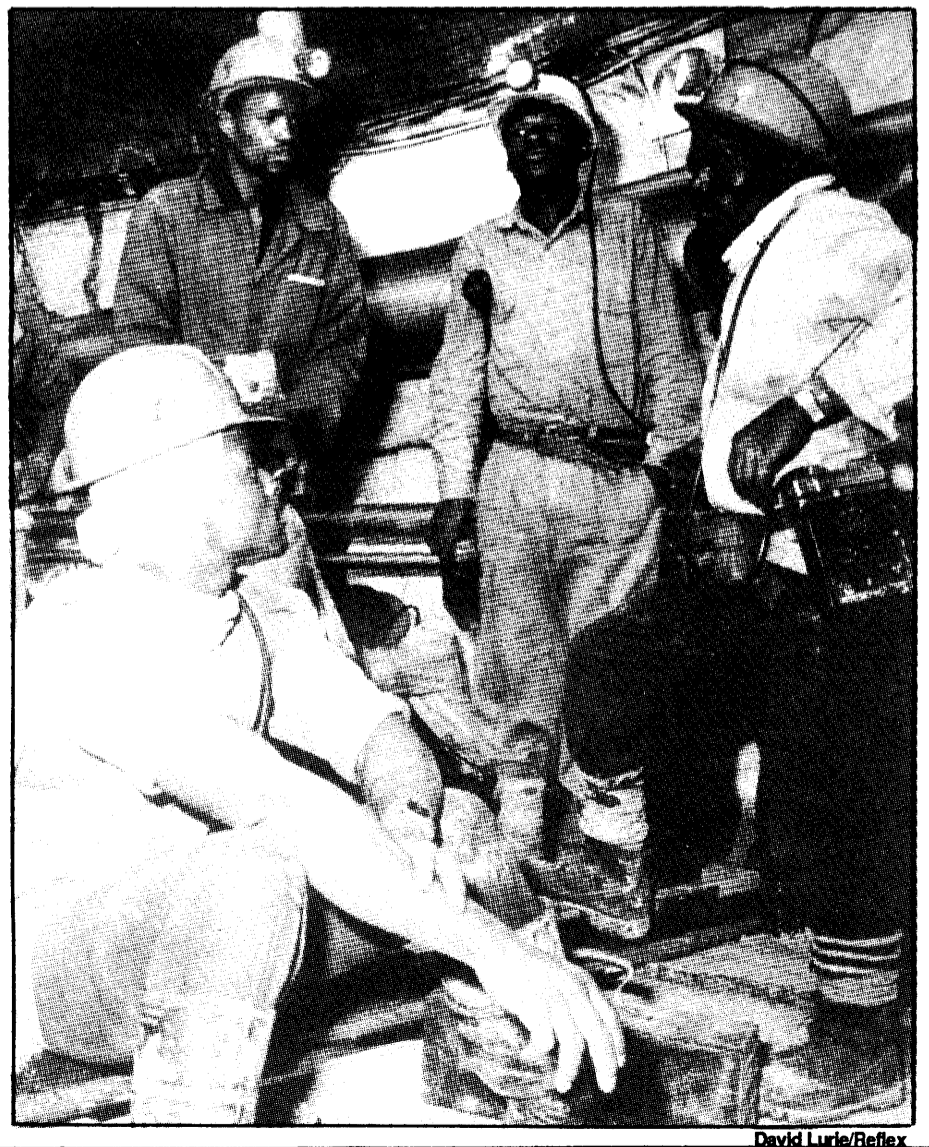
Second, they said they wanted to create an impression of discipline and so on. But that is hogwash. The truth is that they simply didn't want the workers to be faulted by management for blocking minerals from leaving the mines or for confrontations. They wanted to prevent the source of confrontation. But what is a strike if it is not a picketline that manages to stop production.

The NUM leadership just simply didn't take into account that there is a huge problem of unemployment, that many tens of thousands of workers were able and willing to be recruited as scabs in the mines. This permitted the mine bosses to bring on their premises these new recruits when everybody else had gone back home. So that in effect there was no defense of their jobs at the mine gates.

And that is why even the president of the mineworkers is out of his job. And so are some 30,000-plus workers.

Question: Did the NUM issue an appeal to the entire labor movement to come to the aid of mineworkers?

Answer: No. The leadership of the



David Lurie/Reflex

Deals heated Black unions



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But not all the unions affiliated to COSATU endorsed the Freedom Charter. This was the case of the catering and commercial union, CCAWUSA, the third largest union in the federation, which voted by over two-thirds of its membership at its congress in June 1987 against having the trade-union movement endorse a political

programmatic document.

The CCAWUSA leadership argued that adoption of the Freedom Charter would only divide the membership. CCAWUSA leaders pointed to the fact that some of its members support the Charter while others support the Azanian Manifesto [the basic strategic document of the National Forum and of AZAPO].

In addition, a number of other unions that endorsed the Freedom Charter qualified their support considerably. Many of them referred to the Charter simply as a "good foundation stone on which to start building our working-class program." These unions also stressed their commitment to "building

socialism" and to struggle "to uphold and advance the leadership of the working class in all spheres of society."

In recent months, however, a split occurred in CCAWUSA over the Freedom Charter, with the pro-Freedom Charter minority forming a separate union which has, unfortunately, received the support of the ANC. This is the case of the new COSATU leadership.

Question: What is your assessment of the discussion within COSATU and how do you view the recent split with CCAWUSA?

Answer: It is very unfortunate that the Freedom Charter has caused further disunity within the united trade-union movement. This makes trade-union solidarity so much more difficult to achieve.

The leadership of the ANC is making the same mistake it made in the late 1970s when it sought to dilute SACTU at a time when SACTU was beginning to make a real impact in the struggle. The Freedom Charter adoption is now really tearing COSATU asunder.

Question: So you think it is wrong to force within the COSATU to seek to impose a political programmatic document on the union?

Answer: Yes. Any political program would be a mistake, not just the Freedom Charter. If they pushed the Azanian People's manifesto that would also be wrong because this is a document that represents some of the membership of COSATU, but not all.

For a wing of the COSATU leadership to push the Freedom Charter is really to push it into the hands of the system because we are not playing games. These questions are a matter of life and death. We are pitted against the state in deadly combat. And this comes the provocation of removing the fire from the state and turning it in on ourselves.

The quest for hegemony among the working class is paramount in various political groupings, but doing it in this fashion merely plays into the hands of the enemy and allows for a lot of division to be sown at a time when solidarity and unity are an absolute prerequisite.

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The COSATU leadership also accuses CCAWUSA leaders of having attended shop-steward seminars addressed to NACTU officials or by "people like Neville Alexander," a leading member of the National Forum with strong Trotskyist sympathies.

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You know it is ironic that whenever we have a problem at COSATU House, we use NACTU's facilities. So who are we collaborating with whom when

AZAPO leader's assessment of Black miners strike

Question: I was impressed during the three-month miners' strike last year that the Black Miners, Construction and Allied Workers Union (BAMCWU), a NACTU affiliate, honored the NUM strike and actively supported it. BAMCWU, if I'm not mistaken, claims a membership of 175,000 workers.

But I was also interested by the fact that the BAMCWU did not countersign the appeal by the NUM at the beginning of the strike for workers to leave their work place and return to their homes—for most of them the distant homelands. If I'm not mistaken, the BAMCWU explained the the NUM appeal meant that the mineworkers wouldn't be present to make the decisions about how the strike should be run. I think the mineworkers were, in fact, only consulted once during the entire strike.

Answer: I think that BAMCWU's criticisms of the NUM leadership were justified. It was a miscalculation on their part. But in another sense it was a miscalculation, because in the previous strike that took place in 1985, many of the workers, when they got thrown out of the mine premises, camped out at the union headquarters.

At one point there was a palace revolt by the mineworkers against the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa and others. So the union leadership calculated that they

didn't want disgruntled workers who were thrown off the premises to camp on their doorstep this time. That's one factor.

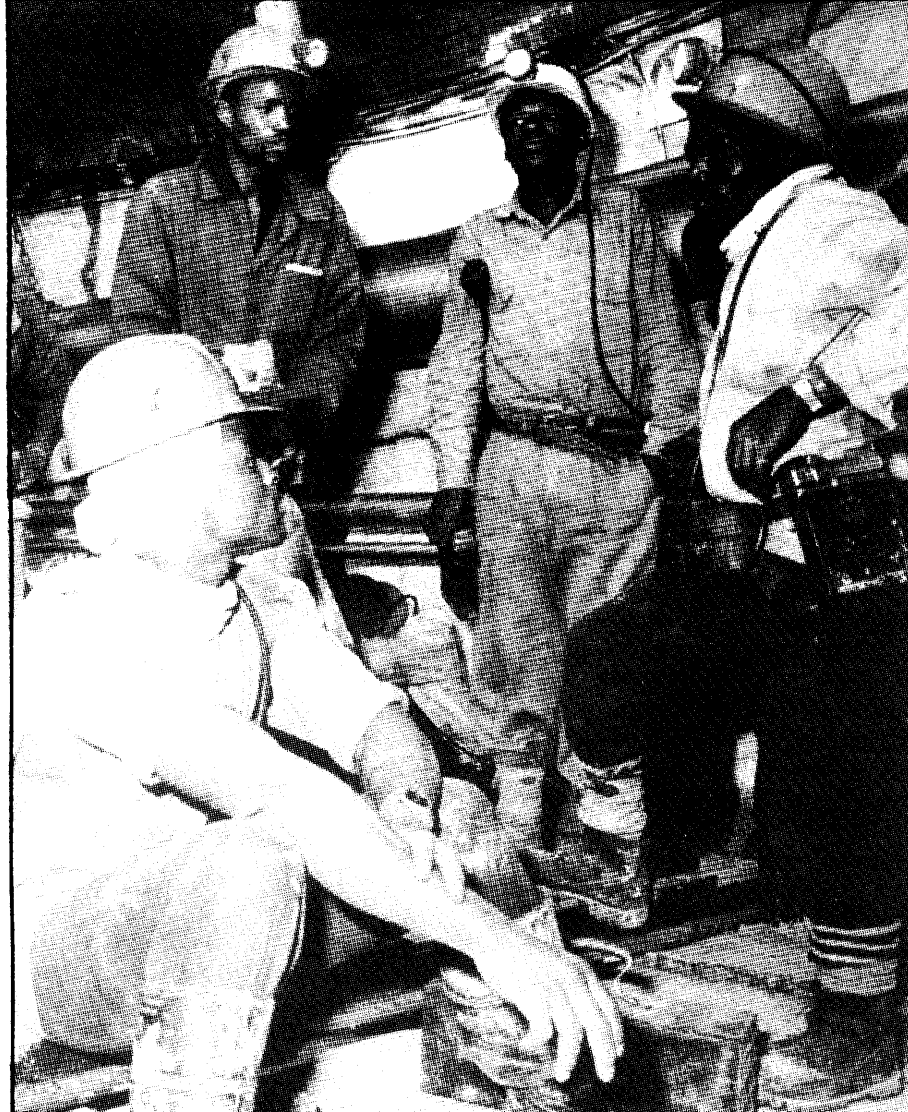
Second, they said they wanted to create an impression of discipline and so on. But that is hogwash. The truth is that they simply didn't want the workers to be faulted by management for blocking minerals from leaving the mines or for confrontations. They wanted to prevent the source of confrontation. But what is a strike if it is not a picketline that manages to stop production.

The NUM leadership just simply didn't take into account that there is a huge problem of unemployment, that many tens of thousands of workers were able and willing to be recruited as scabs in the mines. This permitted the mine bosses to bring on their premises these new recruits when everybody else had gone back home. So that in effect there was no defense of their jobs at the mine gates.

And that is why even the president of the mineworkers is out of his job. And so are some 30,000-plus workers.

Question: Did the NUM issue an appeal to the entire labor movement to come to the aid of mineworkers?

Answer: No. The leadership of the



David Lurie/Reflex

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programmatic document.

The CCAWUSA leadership argued that adoption of the Freedom Charter would only divide the membership. CCAWUSA leaders pointed to the fact that some of its members support the Charter while others support the Azanian Manifesto [the basic strategic document of the National Forum and of AZAPO].

In addition, a number of other unions that endorsed the Freedom Charter qualified their support considerably. Many of them referred to the Charter simply as a "good foundation stone on which to start building our working-class program." These unions also stressed their commitment to "building

Assessment strike

NUM—Cyril Ramaphosa in particular—was very zealous about not wanting interference from anybody else in the strike.

Even when they threatened at the outset of the strike that they had solidarity offers, and when COSATU itself offered solidarity, Ramaphosa and the union executives kept everybody away. They feared at a political level that the moment they allowed other sections of the union movement to go into solidarity action, it would become a political matter, and that political matter would excite the interests of the state, and they themselves would be in serious trouble.

As it was, the NUM leadership played the strike purely at a management-worker level, at an economic level. But for the strike to have succeeded in these political conditions, it was necessary to have the courage to call an action that assumed a total political dimension. It was necessary to have the vision to challenge the very foundations of the racist-capitalist state. The community and the rest of the trade-union movement were ready for this. Unfortunately, this was not undertaken.

Question: So you think there was a conscious decision to avoid taking the miners' strike to a higher political plane; that is, of preventing an entire social movement to come into play in support of the strike?

Answer: That's right. In fact, more of a social movement developed during the 1985 strike than during the 1987 strike.

Still, for a correct balance sheet of the strike, we must understand the significance of a long strike which, all things considered, had a degree of discipline and control to it, which the mine bosses were compelled to refer to with great admiration.

At a political level, one can speak of a stand-off in the relationship of forces between the classes. But in very real terms there has been a setback in terms of layoffs and the weakening of the mineworkers' unions.

A lot of miners' jobs have been lost. It may take a long time before the membership and strength of the mineworkers' unions are regained. When the iron was hot at a political level, the leadership was unable to take the necessary step to thrust the ruling class into the crisis it should have been thrust in.

You must also bear in mind that the international capitalist economy had been experiencing a deepening crisis at the time of the strike. In these conditions, with a sustained and combative strike, it is most likely that the major international capitalist centers would have pressured the mine bosses into reaching a political settlement with the mineworkers. The major capitalist economies are tied to the flow of gold and other precious minerals. ■

socialism" and to struggle "to uphold and advance the leadership of the working class in all spheres of society."

In recent months, however, a split has occurred in CCAWUSA over the Freedom Charter, with the pro-Freedom Charter minority forming a separate union which has, unfortunately, received the support and now the recognition of the COSATU leadership.

What is your assessment of this discussion within COSATU and how do you view the recent split within CCAWUSA?

Answer: It is very unfortunate that the Freedom Charter has caused further disruption within the united trade-union movement. This makes trade-union solidarity so much more difficult to achieve.

The leadership of the ANC is making the same mistake it made in the late 1950s when it sought to dilute SACTU at a time when SACTU was beginning to make a real impact in the struggle. The Freedom Charter adoption is now really tearing COSATU asunder.

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Answer: I am wondering what is wrong with collaborating with NACTU. NACTU doesn't represent management. It doesn't represent the Chamber of Mines. It doesn't represent the system. I should imagine that any collaboration with NACTU would be good in order to bring those forces into one big merger. This, in our view, is clearly what should be happening.

You know it is ironic that whenever they have a problem at COSATU House, they use NACTU's facilities. So who is collaborating with whom when that



Anna Zieminski/Impact Visuals

happens? What is the problem with collaborating with another progressive force in the country around our common interests?

Question: Exactly. This is the basis to a united-front approach. This is in fact how the CCAWUSA leadership responded to the charges. In a leaflet addressed to all COSATU members last year they wrote:

"We believe it is our duty to unite workers wherever we are. Any contact that we have had with the workers of NACTU is in the interest of building worker unity. This is not against COSATU policy. We must work toward unity between COSATU and NACTU."

But why is the specter of NACTU raised?

Answer: I think it is merely a red herring. It is typical of people who don't have a leg to stand on. NACTU has not done anything to foment the current problems. These have been created entirely by undemocratic sections of the leadership of COSATU.

Question: But what is NACTU? What defines it as a separate federation? Why did NACTU, or rather the unions identified with it, not participate in the unification in December 1985 which gave rise to COSATU?

Answer: I think it is important to recall the actual chronology and content of what happened in the run-up to the creation of COSATU.

FOSATU [today in COSATU] and CUSA [today in NACTU] had been engaged in talks about creating a new, major trade-union federation. Everything had gone along very, very smoothly until the last couple of meetings that were held in 1985 when onto the scene stepped the General and Allied Workers Union (GAWU), which is a United Democratic Front (UDF) affiliate, and SAAWU (the South African Allied Workers Union), which is also a UDF affiliate. [The UDF is an umbrella coalition identified with the political views of the ANC.]

Those two unions and other such smaller unions, not based on firm democratic structures but very strong vocally at a political shibboleth slogan level, entered the conference and began to agitate against the FOSATU position, which, you must remember, had consistently advocated steering clear of party political programs.

The agreement reached between the conference organizers and the UDF unions was that they should exclude AZACTU [the

Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions] and invite everybody else. And that is exactly what happened. Cyril Ramaphosa [general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers and convener of the COSATU inaugural congress] went ahead and invited everybody else but did not invite AZACTU.

Question: How about CUSA?

Answer: CUSA was invited. I think CUSA made a colossal mistake by not going to the conference. They didn't attend in protest over AZACTU's exclusion.

This as far as I am concerned was a mistake on CUSA's part, because what we are seeing now in COSATU would not have come to pass. Very clearly some of the leadership in COSATU may not have been there if CUSA had been part of the merger.

Question: So AZACTU's position was that it was for the merger without any exclusions?

Answer: Right. The only point which was a point of difference involved certain ideological conceptions and political positions. AZACTU's position was that the new federation should have a clear anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-imperialist position and that the leadership of the union movement could only be in the hands of the Black working class.

Others in what became COSATU felt that this was going too far, that this was really a Black Consciousness position and therefore shouldn't be accepted—and so the whole exclusion.

Question: But was AZACTU in favor of participating in the merger even if its position on the question of leadership was not adopted by the fused federation?

Answer: I think that most sections of AZACTU would have gone along with the fusion even if their position had not been adopted at the December 1985 merger conference. I think that only a few narrow nationalist elements would have stayed away.

Had there been no exclusion, the fusion with AZACTU would have taken place. The large bulk of AZACTU unions and unionists would have agreed to fuse but would have continued to fight for their views within the new federation.

Question: In your opinion, had there not been an exclusion, should AZACTU have joined COSATU?

Answer: Yes. But you must understand

(continued on page 10)

'Free Moses Mayekiso' campaign under attack



Moses Mayekiso

By ALAN BENJAMIN

Moses Mayekiso, a leading South African trade unionist, is on trial for his life. He and four others have been charged with high treason and sedition—charges that could bring the death penalty. [See December 1987 and February 1988 issues of *Socialist Action*.]

Mayekiso is the general secretary of one of the largest Black unions in South Africa, the 150,000-strong National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA). He is also an executive board member of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

An international campaign to free Mayekiso and the four other Black workers was launched by NUMSA shortly after Mayekiso's arrest in 1986. The Inter-

national Metalworkers Federation, to which NUMSA is affiliated, has endorsed and actively supported this campaign.

In this country, defense activities have been spearheaded by the United Auto Workers union. The UAW has called on unionists and all supporters of democratic rights to send postcards demanding Mayekiso's release to the Embassy of South Africa, 3051 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. [Postcards can be obtained from the UAW International Affairs Department, 1757 N St., N.W., Washington D.C. 20036.]

Height of sectarianism

Shocking though this may seem, an attack on the international effort to secure Mayekiso's freedom has been launched by the leadership of the South African

Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), which is closely affiliated to the African National Congress (ANC).

On Aug. 28, 1987, the London office of SACTU sent out a letter to all British trade unionists and anti-apartheid activists urging them not to support the broadly endorsed Friends of Moses Mayekiso Campaign and not to single out Mayekiso in any defense effort. The letter was signed by Zola Zembe, SACTU's European coordinator.

The first reason given by SACTU for this scandalous position reveals the SACTU and ANC leadership's bitter opposition to any anti-apartheid effort conducted independently of the ANC and its

"sectarian." Worse still, they are not even part of the "Liberation Movement." This is the height of sectarianism!

Release all detainees!

A second reason given by the SACTU leadership for attacking the Free Moses Mayekiso campaign is its alleged opposition to singling out individuals for defense efforts. The SACTU letter states:

"The reason for discouraging the adoption of individual trade unionists is because it is difficult to know what criteria are being used in selecting an individual detainee over and above the thousands of other detained unionists, workers, and activists."

This pretext defies all logic. Moses Mayekiso has international name recognition. His defense campaign can bring world attention to the plight of *all* detained trade unionists. SACTU, moreover, has been a leading proponent of the Free Nelson Mandela Campaign. Isn't a double standard being applied here?

A leading member of the Azanian

'International class solidarity isn't reserved for those who agree with just one wing of the Black South African liberation movement.'

close associate—the South African Communist Party. The letter states:

"Firstly, the Friends of Moses Mayekiso Campaign was launched without any prior or subsequent consultation with the ANC, SACTU, or AAM [Anti-Apartheid Movement, which is led by the ANC.]

"Secondly, it is a fact that the FFMC is being used by sectarian groupings in this country, and our movement does not endorse any such sectarian groups. Historically, these sectarians have and continue to hold a position critical of our Congress Alliance [formed by ANC, SACTU, and other groups in 1955 to support the Freedom Charter]. In addition, their attitude toward the broadly based Anti-Apartheid Movement of Britain has been one of non-cooperation.

"We emphasize that in all the work carried out in relation to South Africa there has to be utmost discipline, and there should always be consultation with the Liberation Movement [sic]."

Hence, according to SACTU, all tendencies in the workers' movement that don't support the Freedom Charter are

People's Organization (AZAPO) was asked why the SACTU leadership has been so vehement in its attacks against Mayekiso. His answer was revealing:

"Comrade Mayekiso has been the only trade union leader to be absolutely outspoken in his rejection of the Freedom Charter from the early 1980s. He has held open debates with proponents of the Charter inside the country during which he has dismissed the Charter as a document that does not meet the workers' interests."

Moses Mayekiso is a genuine leader of the South African trade-union movement and liberation struggle. All efforts to prevent his release must be rejected and condemned because they cut across one of the basic tenets of workers' solidarity—"An Injury to One is an Injury to All!"

Just as we must renew our pledge to free Nelson Mandela and the other detained political prisoners, we must urgently campaign to save Mayekiso from the apartheid state's gallows. International class solidarity isn't reserved for those who agree with just one wing of the Black South African liberation movement. ■

... Discussion on unions

(continued from page 9)

that the reason for the exclusion was that AZACTU's participation in the merger would not have suited the Stalinist people who sought to direct things from behind the scenes. AZACTU was perceived as a real political threat to their own quest for hegemony in the new federation. This element is behind the attack on CCAWUSA now.

Question: One of the major federations that formed COSATU is the National Union of Mineworkers. The NUM seems to have taken more radical positions on many things. Are they lined up with the

UDF unions?

Answer: Well, let me say that the NUM was the first union after the formation of COSATU to adopt the Freedom Charter. And Cyril Ramaphosa pushed for this resolution, which was very crafty. It said that by not giving clear political direction, the leadership of COSATU would only be adding to the confusion, and that therefore it was necessary to have a clear political statement—which meant that the Charter should be adopted.

When workers and shop stewards at the NUM national conference asked their

leadership, "What is this Freedom Charter anyway?" the president of the union had the nerve to reply that the education department would tell them what the Charter stood for after they adopted it.

Question: NACTU was born as a result of a fusion between AZACTU and CUSA. Is its position today to fight for the unification of all trade unions?

Answer: Yes. When CUSA and AZACTU merged in October 1986 they made a declaration where they announced that they seek unification of all the democratic trade-union forces in the country.

It is also important to note that NACTU believes in the leadership of the working class. This was a departure from the previous AZACTU insistence of Black leadership. It is the most significant position on leadership and on the form and content of the trade-union struggle to have emerged.

On the Workers Party

Question: One more question on a somewhat different note. The FOSATU federation a number of years ago raised the need for a Workers Party emanating from the trade unions; something like that which occurred in Brazil in 1980 with the formation of the Workers Party led by "Lula." That party is based on the militant CUT union federation.

Do you think this perspective is in the cards in South Africa, or that it is even worth pursuing?

Answer: I think that the formation of a Workers Party is realizable. But I think that

numerous political interests and organizations will make it difficult for it to be realized. I am talking of the ruling class and of people who support, at a fanatical level, the Freedom Charter and narrow nationalist positions. Those elements will tend to immediately attack the creation of such a party, which would pose a real threat to their quest for political hegemony.

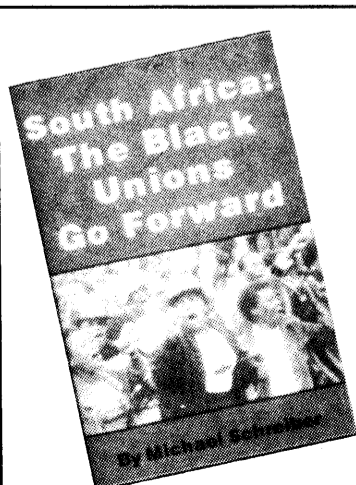
Question: Would the formation of such a Workers Party represent a step forward for the workers' movement in South Africa?

Answer: If it is done on a principled basis, it will be really difficult for people to really assail it successfully. It could be a very important development and could help take us out of the impasse we face right now. But if it is merely translating unionism onto another plane, I think that would be ill-advised and short-lived.

I think the people in NUMSA and various other groupings in the National Forum who have been supporters of the need for a Workers Party have had a good conceptualization of it.

Question: What, in the view of AZAPO, are the tasks in the months ahead?

Answer: I think we need a mature leadership with sufficient vision to realize that people have different conceptions of the struggle and that we have a single enemy. The enemy, apartheid capitalism, is united even though from time to time it may show signs of having severe tensions within its ranks. We need that principled unity as a prerequisite in order to successfully wage a struggle against the regime and its imperialist supporters. ■



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... Palestinians

(continued from page 1)

shouting in unison, "Falistin Arabia, Thawra Hatta al Nas'r, Allahu Akhbar" [Arab Palestine, Revolution Until Victory, God is Great].

Bassam Shaka'a described the attempts by the Israeli army to spread panic and terror in Nablus and outlying villages:

"Fleets of helicopters fly over Nablus at night dropping a dense, green toxic gas over the city. The smell pervades every house. Armed units fire canisters of the substance into houses at random. Doctors at Ittihad Hospital reported several deaths and severe lung injuries from this as-yet unidentified asphyxiating chemical, totally distinct from tear gas."

Despite repeated accounts in Nablus and Jerusalem of the effects of the green gas, newspapers in the United States have not carried the story.

The Israeli army has targeted the hospitals. Army trucks ram ambulances and block them from reaching the homes of those overcome by the gas. Soldiers have entered the Ittihad Hospital in Nablus numerous times, arresting the wounded and those waiting to give blood to family members. Even the operating theater has been invaded while surgeons were operating on patients.

Doctors have been beaten and equipment smashed. Family members have been prevented from entering the hospital. The cars of the doctors and nurses have all been smashed by the soldiers.

Over half of the 100,000 inhabitants of Nablus live in the Casbah, which has been sealed off by concrete barricades and iron gates. The gas attacks have been particularly intense. Among the victims were the grandmother of the Da'as family and the 100-year-old father of noted Nablus attorney Mohammad Irshaid. Soldiers entered the house at 2 a.m., smashing furniture and firing a canister of the dreaded green gas.

Two of the children, age 9 and 11, were taken by the soldiers in their night clothes, frog-marched in the streets, and beaten as they were forced by the jeering soldiers to clear debris.

Meanwhile, all of Nablus maintains a total strike. All the streets in every quarter of the city are without open shops or business activity. As gas permeates the city, cries and chants fill the night.

A glimpse of the savagery

One of the most vicious incidents occurred in the city of Qalqiya. Soldiers entered the house of workers and poured gasoline over them, setting them alight. Six workers were covered in flames. Four of the victims managed to rush out of the building and rolled on the ground, ripping off their clothes. Two were severely burned and are in serious condition.

On Feb. 20, two youths were arrested in Khan Yunis, beaten savagely and taken to the beach where they were buried alive under the sand. After the soldiers left, villagers managed to dig them out.

Reports in the establishment press give a

glimpse of the scale of Israeli brutality. The Hebrew-language newspaper Hadashot was cited in *Newsweek*:

"We got orders to knock on every door, enter, and take out all the males. The younger ones we lined up with their faces against the wall, and soldiers beat them with billy-clubs. This was no private initiative. These were the orders from our company commander." ("A Soldier's Account," cited Feb. 8, 1988)

The accounts make clear that Israeli protestations about excesses of individual soldiers are transparently false. *Newsweek* reported:

"Armed with 30-inch wooden clubs and urged by their prime minister to 'put the fear back into the Arabs,' Israeli soldiers have methodically beaten up Palestinians since



Shomo Arad for Newsweek

early January, deliberately breaking bones and beating prisoners into unconsciousness. Casualties included not only young men...but also women. Most of the injured shunned hospitals for fear of arrest."

The avoidance of hospitals by the injured has prevented accurate reporting of the vast scale of the savage beatings and of the deaths of those who endured them. But an indication was provided in the reports of the medical team inspecting the wounded in the hospitals.

Medical team's account

Dr. Jennifer Leaning, a faculty member of Harvard Medical School and a trauma specialist, reported her findings:

"There is a systematic pattern of limb injury that is clearly organized to cause fracture...a consistent pattern of bone breaks across the back of the hand and in the middle of the fore-arm that...come from holding the hand or arm in place and applying a strong blow to the bone." (*New*

York Times, Feb. 14, 1988)

Dr. Leaning and the team of Physicians for Human Rights traveled throughout the West Bank and Gaza. They concluded, "It is a pattern that is controlled. A systematic pattern over a wide geographical area. It is as if they have been instructed." (*Ibid.*)

Dr. Leaning's account of the new patients brought to Shifa Hospital in Gaza is compelling:

"They looked like they had been mauled. What is impressive is the number of fractures per patient. These patients look as if they had been put through a washing-machine wringer. They would have had to hold them down and just keep beating them." (*Ibid.*)

Even as the medical team was recounting their observations, new accounts were appearing in the press indicating that the policy of beatings unto death had replaced

jeep filled with soldiers. "An 80-year-old woman, Lulu Mahmoud, who had been sitting in the alleyway, said she saw the killing, 'I saw him fall, the blood and brain coming out of his head. I was terrified.'" (John Kifner, *New York Times*, Feb. 21)

The army raided the hospitals in the villages to kidnap the bodies so that claims of deaths could be discounted and so burials would not take place, with mourning leading to new demonstrations. But the people surrounded the area and carried off the bodies of the dead. "By the time the soldiers stormed the hospitals and declared the area a closed military zone, the body was gone." (*Ibid.*)

The army, cheated of their trophy, took reprisals:

"Tear-gas canisters were fired by soldiers into the hospitals, maternity ward doctors said. Five women and their babies had been evacuated earlier because of gas from canisters fired outside." (*Ibid.*)

The meaning of Shultz's visit

Recounting the atrocities which are daily occurrences in the West Bank and Gaza, Bassam Shak'a was scathing in his remarks about the attempts by some Palestinians to meet George Shultz during his planned visit to Jerusalem. Bassam Shak'a said:

"Shultz is coming with a clear mandate against us. He closed the P.L.O. office in Washington. He closed it at the United Nations. He vetoed a United Nations resolution calling on Israel to abide by the Geneva Convention.

"In Finland he announced that if the Soviet Union wants to be in an international conference, it must press us to recognize Israel. It must allow Israelis to organize Jews in the Soviet Union to go to Israel, no doubt to settle in the West Bank.

"After all his support and that of his government for the state of Israel, he now wants to come to Palestine. Perhaps he wants to determine the effectiveness of the toxic gas, the white phosphorus, the explosives, and the automatic weapons he supplies to Israel. Perhaps he wants to be certain they are efficient in their use against our children, in the crimes against our people and our uprising."

Bassam Shak'a was asked by journalists about the talks with Shultz and the willingness of some Palestinians such as Hanna Siniora, editor of the Jerusalem weekly *Al Fajr*, to meet with Shultz. He told me of his replies:

"Everyone knows clearly that the 'Intifadeh' [Great Uprising] will continue, will deepen, will grow. Our entire people have risen up. The Israelis have been surprised that we can continue with our total strike, but everyone is helping everyone. Food is shared and passed from house to house.

"Our spirits have never been higher. It is the greatest moment in our history, greater than the uprising from 1936 to 1939 [against the British]. Siniora and the others who want to talk to Shultz are being used for a dirty game, dirty schemes, crimes against our people and their resistance. Shultz's visit is against our rights and against our future."

The Israeli army has found that the more the repression is intensified, the more the spirit of revolution spreads and deepens among the people of the West Bank and Gaza. ■

New Socialist Action pamphlet!



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by Ralph Schoenman

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Abortion victory in Canada: A triumph for all women

By ANNE MACLELLAN BRUNELLE

TORONTO—"The most important victory for women's rights in Canada since we won the vote." That is how the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) has described the Jan. 28, 1988, Supreme Court decision declaring Canada's abortion law unconstitutional.

The day of the decision was bitterly cold but pro-choice supporters waited in front of the Morgentaler Clinic from 7 a.m. to hear the announcement. Chants of "We won!" and "The people have spoken, the clinics will stay open!" could be heard blocks away. The activists were aware that this decision was imposed on the court by mass pressure. The ruling was not given lightly; it was wrested from them.

The legislation in force prior to January's decision was passed by Trudeau liberals in 1969. That law declared that abortions were legal *only* if done in a hospital and if a Therapeutic Abortion Committee (TAC) deemed that the life or health of the woman was at risk.

The TACs were made up of three doctors who met in secret and had no direct contact with the women whose lives they were affecting. The decision of the TAC could not be appealed. This law was called an "historic compromise" between the demands of the anti-choice forces, who called for all abortions to be illegal, and the pro-choice forces, who were calling for full access to free abortion.

For a time the different Federal and Provincial governments were able to win the battle for public opinion by presenting themselves as the sane middle ground between two fanatical groups at opposite poles. As time passed, however, the message of OCAC and other pro-choice groups across the country got through: It is not fanatical to demand that a woman have the right to control her own body, her own reproductive capacity, and the right to decide when and if to have children. And that must include the right to terminate a pregnancy.

Obstacles still remain

While this Supreme Court decision, analogous to the Roe vs. Wade decision in the United States, has given the women of Canada the right to make their own choices on abortion, it does not guarantee access in terms of funding or location.

Several provincial governments have already moved to limit access. In Alberta and Nova Scotia the governments have stated that they will only fund abortions that are done in hospitals that have functioning Therapeutic Abortion Committees, even though they face court challenges as to the legality of this regulation in the face of the Supreme Court decision.

In British Columbia, the right-wing Social Credit Premier, VanderZalm, has gone one step further. He has declared B.C. Medicare will not fund *any* abortions unless the woman faces death and she demonstrates a need for financing. He flatly refuses to see that this is a return to the two-tiered health-care system wherein women with money are able to get safe medical



abortions, and working women and poor women end up at an over-crowded emergency room or forced to have babies they do not want and cannot feed.

In Prince Edward Island the problem is somewhat different. The Provincial Government has accepted that abortions can be performed, but hospitals in the province have refused to do them. To date no doctor has offered to set up a free-standing clinic.

In Ontario, Health Minister Eleanor Caplan has announced that Ontario Medicare (The Ontario Health Insurance Plan—OHIP) will pay for abortions done in

hospitals and free-standing clinics, like the one run by Doctors Henry Morgentaler and Robert Scott. Unfortunately the OHIP payment will only cover the doctors' services. It will not cover counseling, nursing care, etc., which are covered by the regular funding of a hospital.

On the federal level, right-wing lobbyists and politicians have been calling for new legislation to restrict abortion. This has taken several different routes. One is a call for a limit on the number of weeks of pregnancy during which an abortion can be performed. The biggest threat, however, is the demand to enshrine in the constitution the "rights of the fetus" which will subordinate the rights of women to the rights of the "pre-born."

Mass-action strategy

The women's movement in Canada has always called for fully funded, community-based women's clinics where a wide range of health-care needs can be met—including abortion. There have been many debates, however, on how to go about winning abortion rights.

Many different strategies and tactics have been put forward in the movement. Some groups have favored lobbying and writing letters to politicians. There were groups that recognized that both politicians and judges can and must be *forced* to make reforms that are advantageous to the working class. These are the women who have advocated the strategy that was used in Quebec in the 1970s and again in Toronto in the last five years: *mass action*.

Without minimizing the importance of Dr. Morgentaler's heroic contribution, (he challenged the law by opening up his "illegal" clinics, first in Montreal, and more recently in Toronto; all charges against him and other doctors and staff people have been dropped) that battle too was won by getting as many working people into the streets as possible for rallies, demonstrations, and pickets.

This strategy has taken the abortion rights movement into the Ontario Labour Federation and the Canadian Labour Congress, into the anti-racist movement and into the women-of-color groups, into groups of disabled women, and the women's health-care movement. It has shown the movement's ability to find and win allies in all sectors of the workers' and women's movements.

With the pro-choice struggle entering a new phase, it is now essential that the lessons of the recent past not be forgotten. Free-choice forces must go back into the streets to demand full access and full funding from the provincial governments and demand that federal government keep its laws off women's bodies.

Victories for the women's movement and workers' movement may be few and far between these days, but a victory for one is still a victory for all. ■

Anne MacLellan Brunelle is a member of the coordinating Committee of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics and the National Committee of the Alliance for Socialist Action.

... comparable worth

(continued from page 16)

study to compare state wages with similar pay rates in the private sector. Although Governor Dixy Lee Ray, who had promised support for comparable worth during her election campaign, used the results of this study to raise the pay for top management personnel, she derided the results when it came to state workers. She said attempts to evaluate the comparable worth of jobs were "like comparing apples to pumpkins to cans of worms."

After years of unsuccessful attempts to force the state to implement the study, AFSCME brought suit in 1981. The state legislature responded by amending the Civil Service Act to require implementation of comparable worth by 1993. However, the amount of money appropriated was so small that it would have taken 104 years—with no inflation—to achieve the recommended pay levels.

On Dec. 15, 1983, Judge Jack Tanner ruled, "After careful review of the record herein this court cannot reach any conclusion other than the state of Washington has, and is continuing to

maintain a compensation system which discriminates on the basis of sex.

"The state of Washington has failed to rectify an acknowledged discriminatory disparity in compensation. The state has and is continuing to treat some employees less favorably than others because of their sex, and this treatment is intentional."

Although the Federal Appeals Court later overturned this decision on technicalities, it is still viewed as an important victory for the concept of pay equity. In fact, in order to present themselves in a better light in the courts, the legislature felt forced to appropriate more money for comparable-worth settlements, and the state eventually felt compelled to reach an agreement with AFSCME.

Complementary demands

Comparable worth has become a major issue in successful union organizing drives in many predominantly female settings. In 1985, the AFL-CIO unanimously adopted a resolution supporting comparable worth.

As AFSCME attorney Winn Newman explained during the Washington state case, favorable court rulings do not take place in

a vacuum. Just as the passage of the Equal Pay and Civil Rights Acts resulted from the mobilization of hundreds of thousands demanding an end to the Jim Crow system of legalized discrimination, comparable-worth gains in the courts are a result of activity on the part of the labor, civil rights, and women's movements.

Both the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) have made comparable worth a major focus of their activity. This demand goes hand in hand with support for affirmative-action programs allowing women to enter traditionally male jobs.

The simple logic of this demand can be expected to strengthen ties between organized labor and feminist groups, winning additional supporters for women's rights. It can also help expose the capitalist candidates who profess their support to such proposals at campaign time but serve as strike-breakers when elected.

Despite some opponents' claims that comparable worth is a white middle-class issue aimed primarily at bettering the lives of a few professional women, the victories which have been won show that strikes, supported by the community, can raise the wages of some of the most underpaid

workers.

Just as discrimination against Blacks, Hispanics, and undocumented workers serves as a brake on the wages of all workers, low-wage female job ghettos are harmful to men as well as women. Equal pay for jobs of comparable worth then becomes a demand which can unite male and female workers increasing their confidence in their ability to effect a change through their unions and help strengthen both the labor and women's movements. ■

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Arias's real plan



By ALAN BENJAMIN

"The only way to kill Dracula is with a crucifix." This is how Costa Rican President Oscar Arias described his role in the Central American "peace process" in an interview with *The Washington Post* (Feb. 7, 1986).

To quote Arias, who received the Nobel Peace Prize last year, Dracula is the "despotic, Marxist government of Nicaragua;" the crucifix is the Central American peace plan; and the killing is the pressure on Nicaragua to implement "cease-fires, a general amnesty, and democratic reforms."

Arias said one reform by Nicaragua should be the abolition of the Sandinista government's "control over the armed forces, as demanded by its civilian opponents."

With this statement, Arias has now openly endorsed the key demand of the internal front of the U.S.-backed contras, the Democratic Coordinating Council, which is pushing for "constitutional reforms" aimed at undoing and ultimately destroying the Nicaraguan Revolution.

Yet, while he lambasts the Nicaraguan government for "failing to comply" with the peace plan, Arias has been all too

Activists discuss 'Oil for Nicaragua' campaign

By CARLENE SANCHEZ

MEXICALI, Mexico—On Feb. 20-21, a Mexico-U.S. Conference in Solidarity with Nicaragua was held here with representatives from 12 organizations from both sides of the border.

Due to false illusions in the Arias Central American peace plan and the misguided euphoria over the Feb. 3 rejection of Reagan's contra-aid request, the conference was much smaller than expected.

Three resolutions were drawn up at the conference with the goal of strengthening binational solidarity and promoting the campaign, "Oil, Solidarity, and Peace for Nicaragua."

This campaign, designed to pressure the Mexican government to make oil available to Nicaragua at low or no cost, was of great significance for the majority of the activists at the conference.

They explained that a national campaign of "Oil for Nicaragua" would have a great effect in stimulating the Mexican people to action. (Mexico, one of the major oil producers in the world, has withheld oil shipments in response to pressures from the U.S. government.)

Bipartisan war condemned

The general resolution approved by the conference states:

"World peace continues to be menaced. The U.S. government is allocating an increasing proportion of its budget to stockpiling nuclear weapons and to promoting regional wars that could lead humanity to its destruction..."

"Democrats and Republicans in the United States are about to approve more than \$1 million a month in 'humanitarian' aid to the contras...The U.S. war on Nicaragua has not abated. On the contrary, it increases day by day, and the threat of direct U.S. military intervention cannot be excluded..."

"Nicaragua's resources have been depleted. It faces the risk of paralysis. It no longer has any foreign currency. There are shortages of everything. Gasoline and electricity are rationed, with the situation having become critical after Mexico and Venezuela cut off oil shipments [in 1985] when Nicaragua, for obvious reasons, was no longer able to pay its bills..."

"Mexico's oil production in two days

would meet Nicaragua's oil needs for an entire year. The Nicaraguan Minister of Finances declared that the severe shortage of oil has made it virtually impossible to plan economic production. Shortages have paralyzed the productive and transportation sectors of the economy, which depend on fuel oil to generate electrical power..."

"We call on Mexico to renew oil shipments to Nicaragua."

Campaign focus diluted

Unfortunately, despite the widespread support for the "Oil for Nicaragua" campaign, the final resolution dropped the call for free or lost-cost oil. It also failed to demand that oil be sent—even if Nicaragua is unable to meet its payments.

The reason for this shift was the role played by representatives from the Mexico-Nicaragua Solidarity Committee in Guadalajara, Mexico's second-largest city, who opposed placing any pressure on the Mexican government. They characterized the "Oil for Nicaragua" campaign as "naive" and "misguided" and claimed it would obstruct the material-aid campaign set forth by the Nicaraguan government.

After an intense political discussion and temporary walk-out by the Guadalajara representatives, a resolution was passed which met the concerns of the Guadalajara activists but did not remove the demand for oil altogether, as they had demanded.

The final resolution was politically significant. But its failure to make a clear, unconditional demand on the Mexican government represents a setback for the efforts of the conference organizers.

The conference was nonetheless important in helping to strengthen collaboration between the Mexicali Nicaragua Solidarity Committee, which organized the conference, and anti-intervention and political organizations in the United States.

One resolution, urging support for the April 30 demonstration in San Francisco, reveals the understanding by a majority of the conference participants of the need to maintain a mass-action strategy against the U.S. warmakers.

Carlene Sanchez represented Socialist Action at the Mexicali conference, where she presented greetings and gave an interview to a local radio station on the state of the U.S. antiwar movement.

sympathetic to the U.S. government, which continues to bankroll the contras—in open violation of the peace plan.

Last December, for example, Arias said Daniel Ortega was "violating the Guatemala accord" when he said that Nicaragua would need a reserve army of 600,000 people to avert a possible U.S. invasion. (Even *The New York Times* was forced to admit that "the pact makes no explicit reference to limiting the size of armies.")

But concerning contra aid, Arias told the *Times* that "humanitarian aid is not against the spirit or the letter of the Guatemala accord." Arias pretends not to know what everyone else in the world knows, i.e., that humanitarian aid is just a euphemism for continued military aid to the contras.

And when the Democrats and Republicans voted \$8.1 million in aid to the contras last Dec. 20—\$4.5 million explicitly for anti-aircraft electronic devices—Arias said that "ultimately the issue of new contra aid is a decision to be made by a sovereign Congress, and I will respect whatever decision they make."

"Not against the plan"

On Feb. 23, the House Democrats disclosed their \$25 million package of "non-military" aid to the contras. The next day, Oscar Arias announced through his foreign minister, Rodrigo Mariscal-Nieto, that this aid "is not in essence against the [peace] plan."

Arias also said that open U.S. military aid to the contras would be renewed if "the Sandinistas do not advance toward full compliance with the [peace] accord."

Arias's role could not be more transparent. It is to maintain pressure on the Sandinista government to make one concession after another to the contras—concessions which the contras were unable to win on the battlefield for lack of support among the Nicaraguan people.

If the U.S. imperialists—Democrats and Republicans—need a signed certificate that the Sandinistas have not implemented the "democratic reforms," they know they can always count on Oscar Arias.

Straight from the horse's mouth

The following are excerpts from a revealing article titled "What Moscow hopes to gain by easing away from Managua" by Joseph C. Harsch. It was published in the Feb. 6, 1988, issue of The Christian Science Monitor.

One of the more interesting facts on the world scene now is that Moscow is not saving Daniel Ortega Saavedra.

Mr. Ortega, the president of Nicaragua, is in political retreat under the pressures that forced him to lift his "state of emergency," permit opposition political rallies, release some of his political prisoners.

None of this would have happened had Moscow given him the economic and military support for which he has repeatedly asked. The Soviets' biggest omission has been in the supply of oil.

His [Ortega's] economy is starving for want of oil. The Soviets are one of the world's three largest oil producers. If they had wanted to help him quickly, they could have put up the money to pay for Mexican oil. The Mexicans have plenty of oil and would be happy to sell it to Mr. Ortega for cash.

Soviet oil or Soviet money for oil would make it possible for Mr. Ortega to defy his neighbors and the Arias peace plan that he has been forced to accept. He has not been able to defy them.

His [Ortega's] weakness is not military. He could beat off the contra rebels indefi-

... Editorial

(continued from page 1)

that the U.S. government is dead set in its objective of destroying the Nicaraguan Revolution.

But the warmakers can be made to pull back—just as they were forced to withdraw from the Vietnam War. A majority of the American people oppose contra aid and support the right of the Nicaraguan people to self-determination.

That sentiment must be mobilized in mass protest actions this spring.

No aid to the contras!

Hands off Nicaragua!

No U.S. intervention in Central America!



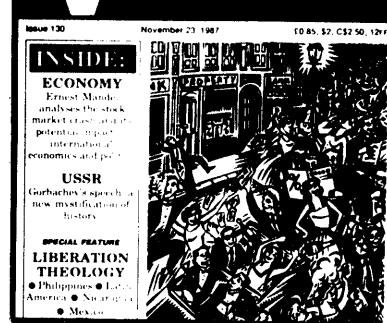
Sandinista soldier: 'Peace Plan' will bring no peace to Nicaraguan fighters.

nately, if his home front were not crumbling from virtual economic collapse...

Moscow is doing nothing anywhere to increase East-West tensions. It is doing many things that tend to relax East-West tensions. It is no longer possible to doubt that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is pursuing a deliberate, broad, and consistent policy of trying to be a "good neighbor" in the world.

Clearly they [Moscow] feel no...sense of obligation to Mr. Ortega. The Soviets must have concluded that he is not worth greater funding. This, of course, eases their relations with Washington.

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Why Gorbachev rehabilitated executed Bolshevik leaders

The following is an interview with Pierre Broue, a leading French historian and currently the director of the Leon Trotsky Institute in Paris.

Socialist Action: How do you explain the recent rehabilitations by the Soviet bureaucracy of Bukharin, Rykov, Rakovsky, and the other Bolshevik Party leaders who were sentenced to death by Stalin during the Third Moscow Trial in 1938?

Pierre Broue: It is important to place these rehabilitations in the context of the unfolding events in the Soviet Union today.

Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* is in a sense a policy of openness and truthfulness, although its real objective is economic austerity and restructuring. The essence of this policy is the introduction of capitalist market mechanisms which will inevitably result in massive layoffs and unemployment.

But it is not possible to apply a policy of "openness" in the economic sphere while, at the same time, continuing to stifle all political expression and to hide the truth about the history of the Soviet Union. Soviet historians themselves have had to admit that the Soviet people do not believe the official version of their history.

In the Soviet Union, a series of articles on Trotsky, written by prominent pro-*glasnost* historians, began to appear last summer. This is extremely significant. It is a reflection of the depth of the movement throughout Soviet society which is demanding that the truth be told.

Socialist Action: But hasn't there been a strong backlash against historians like Afanasiev who were demanding greater historical accuracy? Aren't they now being accused of sympathizing with "Trotskyism?"

Broue: Yes, of course. There was, in particular, an extremely violent and stupid article by a certain Ivanov in a leading party journal only a few weeks ago. Yes, Afanasiev and others have lost their posts in the party, but they have maintained their principled positions and have continued to express themselves. I think this is very positive.

I think that the struggle for the truth about the past is one of the motor forces of the political revolution in the Soviet Union, as Trotsky himself pointed out.

Socialist Action: But how do you explain the rehabilitation of Khristian Rakovksy, who was one of the leaders of the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky.

Broue: Rakovsky, I think, is being rehabilitated because he was in the same trial as Bukharin. In fact, of all those who were tried along with Bukharin, only



Khristian Rakovsky

Yagoda [previously head of Stalin's secret police] has not been rehabilitated. The bureaucracy would have had a tremendous credibility problem had it not rehabilitated Rakovsky along with Bukharin.

It is obvious that the rehabilitation of Bukharin and Rykov is very worthwhile for Gorbachev because it is the rehabilitation of the Right Oppositionists in the Bolshevik Party; that is, of party leaders who were more or less partisans of opening up the country to the laws of the market economy and private property.

Socialist Action: So you think that Gorbachev is seeking to legitimize his current policies by appealing to the authority of some of the early leaders of the Bolshevik Party...

Broue: This is part of it. But it doesn't explain it all. The other reason is that there is tremendous pressure from the Soviet people themselves—particularly the youth—for the truth.

Socialist Action: Do you think that Trotsky can be rehabilitated? Already his photographs have been

placed alongside those of Lenin in the Leningrad Museum.

Broue: I don't think he will be rehabilitated under Gorbachev, though I am convinced that in the long run he will be. For me, the rehabilitation of Trotsky will only occur when his articles and books are widely published in the Soviet Union and his ideas are free to be discussed and disseminated. I don't think this can happen under Gorbachev.

I think what you are seeing today is a move toward recognizing the historical figure of Leon Trotsky. But this is the kind of "recognition" that Stalin offered Trotsky in 1926. A clear example of this was Gorbachev's speech to the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, where all the slanders and lies about Trotsky were once again raised. This "recognition" has nothing to do with Trotsky's real role in Soviet history.

I think that any genuine rehabilitation of Trotsky will only occur as a result of a political revolution that will remove the bureaucracy as a whole.

Socialist Action: This appears to be the case of Rakovksy as well. He has been "rehabilitated," but will the bureaucracy allow his works to be published? The manuscript of his "Memoirs," for example, was confiscated by Stalin's secret police in 1930.

Broue: That is correct. Everything that Rakovsky wrote while in exile—his history of the civil war in the Ukraine, his account of the internal struggles in the Bolshevik Party, and, most important, his articles on the rise of the bureaucracy under Stalin—were all confiscated. A major demand that should be raised in the Soviet Union and internationally is for Rakovsky's "Memoirs" and writings to be made public. ■

Rehabilitate the victims of the Moscow Trials!

Speakers:

Esteban Volkov, Leon Trotsky's grandson	Paul Siegel, author "The Meek and the Militant"
Conrad Lynn, Lawyer for NAACP	George Saunders, Translator <i>Samizdat</i>
Morris Schappes, Editor, <i>Jewish Currents</i>	Juliet Ucelll, N.Y. Marxist School

New School, New York, March 19, 7:30 p.m.
Sponsored by: Moscow Trials Campaign Cttee.

Perestroika: Revealing peek at Soviet bureaucrats' goals

By BILL O'KAIN

Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World, by Mikhail Gorbachev, Harper and Row Publishers, 1987, \$19.95.

A useful way to make sense of Gorbachev's far-reaching changes in the Soviet Union is to look at how he presents them to Western readers in his new book,

BOOK REVIEW

"Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country in the World."

A review of two aspects from his book—his attitude toward the Soviet workers and his attitude toward women—will help shed light on the direction of his reform program.

That Gorbachev knew there were deep problems in the Soviet Union, and that something had to be done to prevent a social upheaval that would challenge the privileges of the entire bureaucracy, is quite evident in his book.

Gorbachev writes, "Any delay in beginning *perestroika* could have led to an exacerbated internal situation in the near future which, to put it bluntly, would have been fraught with serious social, economic,

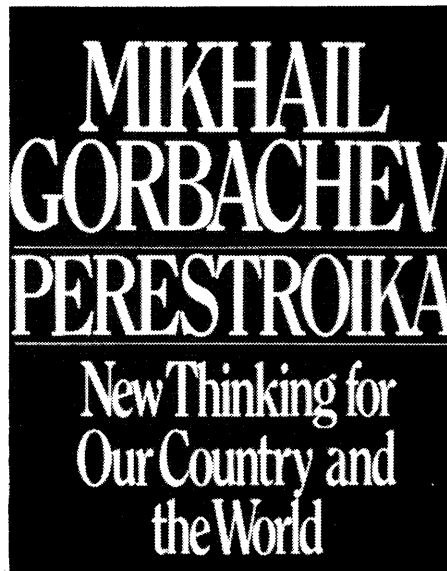


and political crises."

Gorbachev's main solution to the mounting problems has been to increase economic production. But those who will be asked to bear all the sacrifices to make *perestroika* work will be the Soviet workers.

Gorbachev, for example, is opposed to what he calls "equalizing" incomes. In an interview with the liberal newspaper *La Stampa* of Turin, Italy, one of Gorbachev's top economic advisers made this point in a different way. He said, in words not unlike those used by Reagan:

"Under the current Soviet reforms, our social guarantees will be preserved but a



welfare mentality will be discouraged...The welfare mentality impedes the growth of society's wealth. We are trying hard to combat egalitarianism. The principle is: Those who work harder should earn more."

With the introduction of the limited capitalist market mechanisms contained in *perestroika*, problems that never existed before will begin to arise. Unemployment is now seen as an inevitable necessary evil by top Soviet economists. Social stratification will increase. Shortages will increase. Plant closures will increase. And,

as government subsidies are phased out, retail prices on food, clothing, and housing will begin to rise.

Gorbachev on the role of women

In his book, Gorbachev also gives us his ideas on the relationship of *perestroika* to other social issues. Changes in economic relations also bring about changes in social and personal relations. When he speaks of the new status of women that is evolving, he begins to sound more like an arch-conservative than a so-called socialist.

"But over the years of our difficult and heroic history, we failed to pay attention to women's specific rights and needs arising from their role as mother and home-maker, and their indispensable educational function as regards children.

"Engaged in scientific research, working on construction sites, in production and in the services, and involved in creative activities, women no longer have enough time to perform their everyday duties at home—housework, the upbringing of children, and the creation of a good family atmosphere.

"Now, in the course of *perestroika*, we have begun to overcome this shortcoming. That is why we are now holding heated debates in the press, in the public organizations, at work and at home, about the questions of what we should do to make it possible for women to return to their purely womanly role."

Under the guise of reform, the Soviet bureaucracy is seeking to buy time to defuse public anger and preserve its rule. But the measures it adopts can only exacerbate the very conditions which have given rise to widespread disaffection in the first place. ■

In upcoming issues of *Socialist Action* the 20th anniversary of events in 1968 will be highlighted in special articles.

1968 was one of the most tumultuous years of the 20th century, with such events as the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the "Prague Spring" of Czechoslovakia, the May-June upsurge in France, and the student protests in Mexico.

The first installment in this series is an acknowledgement of the 20th anniversary of the launching of the Tet offensive by the Vietnamese liberation fighters—an event that conclusively sealed the fate of the U.S. war in Vietnam.

By JOE RYAN

In the early morning hours of Jan. 31, 1968, the U.S. military command in South Vietnam was awakened by a totally unexpected shock. In a move that was as bold as it was surprising, Vietnamese liberation forces launched coordinated attacks on over a hundred cities, provincial capitals, and military installations throughout the length and breadth of the country.

From the densely populated Mekong Delta to isolated U.S. outposts near the demilitarized zone, these audacious, synchronized assaults knocked the U.S. and South Vietnamese government forces back on their heels.

The U.S. High Command was completely bewildered. They believed that the brutal "search and destroy" operations conducted by U.S. forces during the preceding two years had decisively weakened the revolutionary forces. Consequently, they never knew what hit them.

Even the U.S. Embassy in Saigon came under attack, its grounds occupied by a handful of liberation fighters for over 24 hours before they were wiped out.

In the northern provincial capital of Hue, a city considered to be the cultural center of South Vietnam, liberation fighters were welcomed and assisted by the local population as government troops melted away in retreat. The flag of the National Liberation Front (NLF) waved over Hue for nearly a month before the liberation forces pulled out, but not without tenaciously contesting each block and house as U.S. forces counterattacked.

In the ensuing battles to retake lost territory, U.S. and South Vietnamese government forces spared no effort in terms of armaments and firepower. Virtually every city occupied by the NLF, including large parts of Saigon, was destroyed by the indiscriminate use of American firepower.

Over 14,000 civilians were killed and 200,000 people left homeless. The most damning epitaph that came out of the Tet offensive was the remark of an anonymous

Tet Offensive: Turning point of the Vietnam War

John Olson



4000 GIs died in Tet Offensive. Only weeks earlier, the U.S. government told the American public the war was 'winding down.'

U.S. Army major during the battle to retake the town of Ban Tre: "We had to destroy the town in order to save it."

But in the end what was also totally destroyed by the Tet Offensive was the illusion peddled to the American people that the United States could militarily win the war. The Tet Offensive was the decisive turning point in the Vietnam War. It was a crushing political defeat for U.S. imperialism. It ensured eventual victory for the liberation forces.

"Light at the end of the tunnel"

Twenty years after this momentous battle, debate still rages among the apologists for the U.S. intervention in Vietnam.

Gen. William C. Westmoreland, who was commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, blames faulty U.S. intelligence and the deceitfulness of the liberation forces for the total surprise of the attack. In truth, Westmoreland was a victim of his own deceitfulness.

All through the preceding year of 1967, Westmoreland told the American people the war in Vietnam was being won. At press conferences and interviews, he produced reams of documentation to prove that the

Vietnamese liberation fighters were on the run.

Using the grisly statistics of "body counts," Westmoreland stated that he could see the "light at the end of the tunnel" with regard to an eventual American pull-out. What Westmoreland didn't realize was that the "light at the end of the tunnel" was, in fact, a freight train headed his way.

As a spokesperson for Democratic Party President Lyndon Johnson and a brass-plated mouthpiece for the bipartisan effort to continue the war, Westmoreland's goal was simple. He had to convince an increasingly war-weary American public that the war was "winnable." Constantly looking back over their shoulders, the Democratic and Republican parties could feel the hot breath of a continually growing antiwar movement on their necks.

Antiwar movement strengthened

The Tet offensive had a devastating impact on American public opinion. On the eve of Tet a large plurality—even a slim majority—of the American people still supported the Vietnam War. But this relationship of forces never existed again after Tet.

Every night during February and March

1968, millions of Americans watched as the evening TV news flashed bloody images of savage fighting in the streets of Saigon, Hue, and other cities that were supposed to be immune from attack. Over 4000 American GIs died and thousands more were wounded in the fighting.

The American people realized they had been deceived all along by President Johnson, Westmoreland, and the government in general. An "enemy" that was on the verge of defeat could never pull off the kind of country-wide offensive that the liberation forces did.

A crushed, demoralized, and isolated "enemy" could never have coordinated such audacious and sophisticated attacks—many of which were dependent on secrecy and infiltration into the cities—if they didn't already enjoy the support and collaboration of the vast majority of the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

As American casualties mounted in those first bloody months of 1968, it became clear that the Vietnamese liberation fighters weren't going to lie down and die. It was obvious they would make any sacrifice to win the right to self-determination and liberation from foreign domination.

Furthermore, the images of American firepower destroying whole cities and killing thousands of innocent civilians, convinced the majority of the American public that the U.S. government was conducting an unjust, immoral, and criminal war against the Vietnamese people. Many American working people asked themselves: Do I want my son or daughter to die in a war to protect somebody else's profits and privileges?

After the Tet offensive, newspaper polls gave unimpeachable evidence that the majority of the American people were now against the U.S. war in Vietnam. The antiwar movement grew by leaps and bounds. The movement's slogans of "Bring the Troops Home" and "U.S. Out Now!" galvanized increasing millions of Americans to demonstrate in the streets. It was the warmakers who were now in the minority.

Proof of this came on March 31, 1968, when President Johnson announced that he would not seek reelection in the upcoming presidential election. He didn't want to face an organized, mobilized, and outraged American public wherever he campaigned. ■

Our readers speak out

Israel

Dear editor,

The article about Palestinians and Israel in January's issue had the usual distortion and gross bias one comes to expect from left-wing periodicals. If the situation there were not so serious, your simplification of it would be laughable.

"Genocide" is used in a typically glib way which trivializes the most significant and unique one: the holocaust. But then, perhaps that is the author's intention. No doubt, many Palestinians are treated unfairly and the entire situation seems unjust, but you never show the other side.

If the situation were reversed and the Palestinians had their own state instead, they'd be carrying out a systematic war of extermination against Jews and Israel. Some leaders of the P.L.O. have said or implied as much, and that is why Israeli leaders continue their aggressive policy.

One of the biggest shames, though, is that many Jewish

leftists side with the Palestinians. In doing so, they betray their own people in an especially insidious way. I think you should print Israel's side or else apologize for hateful bias against Israel.

Robert Silvers,
River Forest, IL

Ireland

Dear editor,

In the aftermath of the Nov. 8, 1987, bomb explosion in Enniskillen, Ireland, a huge military and political police operation was mounted jointly throughout the 32 counties by the British and Dublin governments, allegedly in search of Irish Republican Army (IRA) arms dumps.

An *Phoblacht*, the most-read newsweekly of the Irish Republican movement, reported that "for over a week the gardai raided over 50,000 homes, targeting not only republicans but community and cultural activists, trade unionists and ordinary citizens in a massive political information-gathering and intimidation

exercise."

On Jan. 21, according to *International Viewpoint* magazine, a united-front meeting to denounce the raids was held in Dublin at the hall of the Irish Distributive and Allied Trades

Union (IDATU). The rally was chaired by Ann Conway of People's Democracy, the Irish section of the Fourth International, whose home was hit in the November raids. The platform included numerous prominent

political activists.

This meeting marked an important step forward in organizing a fightback against the ever-increasing level of repression.

Alexei Folger,
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The history behind women's fight for comparable worth

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

U.S. Civil Rights Commission Chair Clarence Pendleton stated, "This is probably the looniest idea since Looney Tunes came on the screen." White House economist William Niskanen called it "a truly crazy proposal." Former Equal Employment Opportunities Commission head Eleanor Holmes Norton named it "the issue of the '80s." Labor attorney Winn Newman described it as "along with the Equal Rights Amendment, the litmus test of where people stand on women's rights."

What is this issue which has stirred such heated reactions? It's comparable worth—the theory that jobs of equivalent overall value to the employer or to society ought to be compensated equally even if the jobs are dissimilar in content.

Supporters and opponents of comparable worth agree on the statistics. Approximately 80% of all women workers are employed in 25 of the 450 occupational categories listed by the Department of Labor. The average wage of predominantly female occupations is lower than that of predominantly male occupations.

Gross average earnings of those women who work in predominantly male occupations are lower than those of men in these same occupations. Almost 25 years after passage of major federal legislation prohibiting sex and race discrimination, the pay gap between men and women remains.

Today women still earn approximately 64% of the wages of their male counterparts. The increase from the oft-quoted 59-cent figure does not represent real gains on the part of women. Rather, it reflects the loss of better-paying predominantly male factory jobs through plant closings and massive layoffs and wage concessions wrested from many male workers.

Part of this wage gap can be explained by average hours worked, education, and seniority. However, researchers agree that even with all such mitigating circumstances considered, 20% to 40% of the wage gap can only be attributed to sexual discrimination.

Produce less surplus value?

Neoclassical economists argue that women earn less because their work is worth less. Margaret Jayko, a columnist for *The Militant*, a weekly newspaper published by the Socialist Workers Party, reaches a similar conclusion when she states that Marxist economics provides an explanation for the lower pay of these jobs (March 20, 1987).

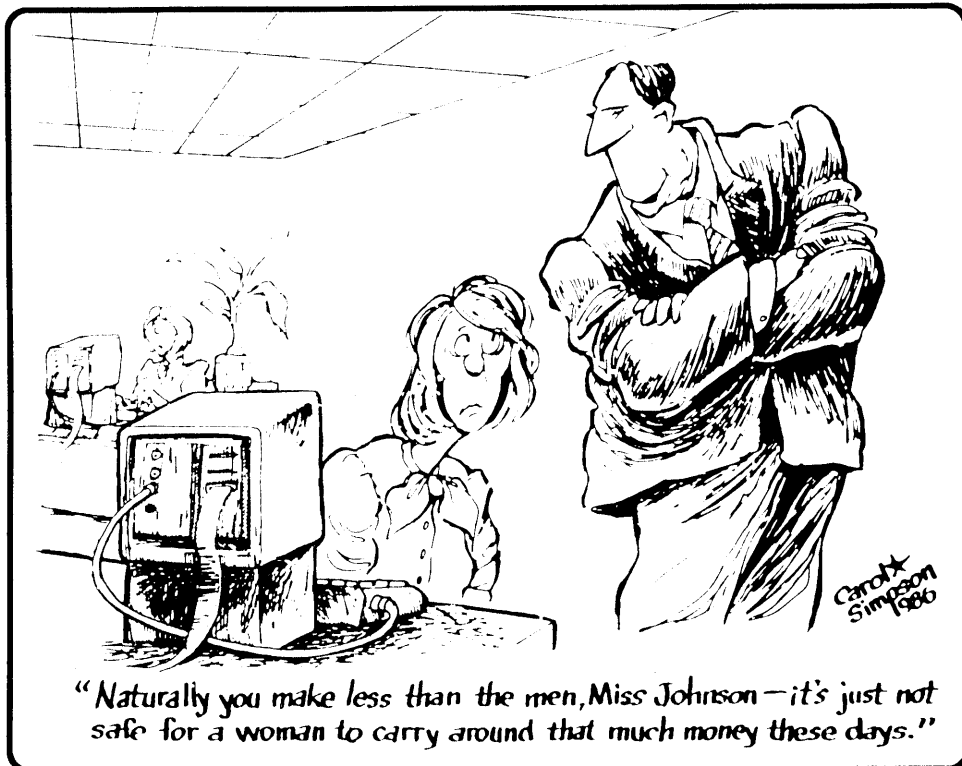
Jayko claims that women are paid less because they produce less surplus value. She concludes that rather than calling for comparable worth, women's rights advocates should concentrate on demanding affirmative action.

Spokespersons for the Chamber of Commerce and other business groups add that women freely choose to work in lower wage occupations because of the "desirability" of the jobs.

The argument that certain jobs—coincidentally those with a large percentage of women workers—fall on the low end of the pay scale because they're worth less ignores the fact that historically, as women have gained access to a particular job in large numbers, their pay rate has declined.

Between 1880 and 1910 clerical work went from a predominantly male to a predominantly female occupation. At the same time, relative pay rates plummeted.

Prior to World War II almost all bank tellers were white men. At that time this job served as a training ground for higher-paid banking jobs. Beginning with World War II, as more women became bank



tellers, the job changed into the low-paid, dead-end one it is today.

Recent studies show a decline in the average earnings of veterinarians and certain types of lawyers as more women enter these fields.

Although feminists use the terms "pay equity" and "comparable worth" interchangeably, some economists try to make a big distinction between these terms arguing that comparable worth is a bogus concept which goes against the market economy while pay equity, or equal pay for equal work, is something they support.

However, it wasn't that long ago that equal pay was regarded with the same disdain comparable worth is today. The arguments were similar. Women's work was somehow inherently worth less than men's. If women were willing to work for less, it would upset the balance of supply and demand to hire them for a better rate of pay.

Landmark suit

In 1975, the International Union of Electricians (IUE) brought suit on behalf of a group of Westinghouse workers claiming that their wages were determined by sex

rather than skill.

The union showed that such discrimination went back at least to the 1930s by producing a 1939 manual which explained that each job would be evaluated by skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions. Then, women's jobs with the same point ratings and labor grade would be assigned a lower wage rate.

A 1945 investigation by the War Labor Board found that after this job evaluation, Westinghouse reduced female job rates by 18% to 20%.

The only change since the 1930s which the IUE discovered took place in 1965, when the company stopped categorizing jobs by sex and added four labor grades. However, this change was pretty transparent since almost all women's jobs were then assigned to the lower four labor grades.

Other companies tried to disguise their sex discrimination by using different job titles. Men were janitors; women were housekeepers or maids. Men were physicians' assistants or orderlies; women were nurses' aides. Men were warehousemen; women were shipping clerks.

It wasn't until the 1963 Equal Pay Act

and the 1964 Civil Rights Act that such transparently discriminatory practices were outlawed. Even then, as the IUE case against Westinghouse shows, many major employers looked for ways to sidestep the law.

Job evaluation systems

Opponents of comparable worth argue that it's impossible to scientifically categorize jobs, that all attempts to determine which jobs are comparable are seriously flawed by personal bias.

However, such job evaluations aren't a new idea thought up by proponents of comparable worth. Evaluations based on such factors as skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions are the standard method of determining relative job rates utilized by most large employers. The U.S. Civil Service Commission first set up a job evaluation system in 1871. By World War II such systems were widespread in private industry.

As shown by the Westinghouse and GE examples, it's not these systems which determined that women's work should be paid less. Rather, it was a conscious manipulation of the results which kept women's wages down.

Most office jobs in basic steel mills are held by men. These male office jobs are evaluated on the same point system as other steel mill jobs and consequently pay much higher than similar women's office work in other industries.

In fact, recognizing that employers commonly compare jobs with one another, early attempts to pass equal-pay laws contained comparable-worth language. This was deleted from the 1963 federal legislation in a last-minute compromise to assure its passage. Many states, however, beginning with Alaska in 1949, have passed legislation calling for equal pay for jobs of comparable value.

Successful San Jose strike

In 1981, the Supreme Court set the basis for comparable-worth suits when it ruled 5-4 in *Gunther vs. the County of Washington* that claims of work discrimination and compensation under the Equal Pay and Civil Rights Acts are not limited to equal-work situations.

Two of the best known comparable-worth cases—the City of San Jose and the State of Washington—didn't arise from efforts to pay women workers fairly. Instead, they began over administrators' concerns that certain management personnel were underpaid.

In San Jose, after the city commissioned a study to determine whether management employees were being properly compensated, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) requested that a similar study be conducted for non-management personnel.

In 1980, the city implemented the management study, but refused to do so with the city worker study. In 1981, AFSCME made implementation of this study a key issue in contract negotiations. The union successfully countered the city's efforts to divide the work force by offering to pay for such comparable worth pay increases by denying general wage increases.

In July 1981, AFSCME conducted what's generally regarded as the first successful strike to force a city government to implement the results of its study.

Important victory

In Washington state, comparable-worth statistics were an outgrowth of a 1973

