



Is South Africa headed for Black majority rule?



The diplomatic maneuvers of the South African government is no guarantee of Black majority rule.

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Has South Africa become a "kinder, gentler" nation? Many political leaders—from Washington to Paris to Moscow—want us to believe it.

The Bush administration has heaped praise on South African President F.W. De Klerk, who presents himself as a champion of reform. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen, speaking in Johannesburg on Jan. 24, declared that De Klerk has "a commitment to fundamental change" in South Africa.

De Klerk's white-minority regime won

Malcolm X

See story back page.

even more applause from Washington when it announced last month that African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela would soon be released from jail. This follows the release of seven other ANC leaders in October and is seen as a key step toward producing a "negotiated settlement" with Black liberation forces.

As proof of De Klerk's willingness to negotiate, U.S. leaders point to his recent announcements that some forms of racial segregation will be abolished.

But the Bush administration neglects to point out that De Klerk's promises of reform have only been made under the pressure of a deteriorating economy (resulting in part from international sanctions) and a heightened struggle by Black workers and students.

Police violence continues

Despite his alleged "commitment to fundamental change," De Klerk has not hesitated to call in police and troops to break up protest demonstrations and strikes.

Anti-apartheid groups and Black trade unions launched a militant "defiance campaign" last summer to counter government bans on their activity. Rallies and sit-ins against apartheid segregation were attacked by police with attack dogs.

In September, widespread opposition was mobilized against the racist elections for the tricameral parliament. About 3 million workers stayed away from work. Again the government clamped down. On the night of the election, 23 people were killed in police attacks in the Capetown area alone.

Several militant strikes have also shaken the De Klerk regime. Police were sent in to break strikes in the steel mills, hospitals, breweries, food markets, and railways. In one confrontation, nine rail workers were killed. Over 3000 political prisoners remain in jail under the state of emergency. Some, like the Uppington 14, face death sentences.

Finally, De Klerk has done nothing to abolish the fundamental laws of apartheid, which regulate where people can live, job opportunities, schools, land ownership, and voting rights. Of course, according to the more "liberal" representatives of apartheid-capitalism, all these regulations are "negotiable."

Since police violence has failed to halt the South African freedom movement, De Klerk's government (and its mentors in

(continued on page 16)

Eastern Airlines militant assesses effectiveness of strike tactics

By DAVID WALSH and ROGER SHEPPARD

BOSTON—After 11 months of bitter struggle against Frank Lorenzo, many Eastern Airlines workers are beginning to assess how their strike has been conducted. We talked to Bill Conley, chief shop steward of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local Lodge 1726 at Logan Airport here.

Conley reviewed the early weeks of the strike, when strike morale was at its highest, solidarity from other unions was strongest, and public support was widespread.

"What we had to do," he said, "was to educate the public through civil disobedience. In our case, we had a perfect right to shut down the railroads and we didn't do it."

[At the outset of the Eastern strike, IAM leaders discussed setting up secondary pickets at the passenger railroads, but decided against it.—ed.]

"The public was for us.... If we had shut down the railroads, the public would have put pressure where it belonged ... and we wouldn't be sitting here. The railroad people would have a contract and we'd have a contract."

"But we didn't take that tack. We were going to be kinder, gentler. We weren't going to disrupt the rail, we didn't want to do civil disobedience, because it's not the thing to

do. But the civil rights workers do it, everybody that gets attention does civil disobedience—and it works."

"Courts are killing us"

Conley expressed regrets that the union did not take a more militant stance against injunctions.

"It had already been decided by the Supreme Court earlier that we could shut down

the railroads," he said. "If we have an airline strike, are we going to shut down the airlines? If we have a railroad strike, are we going to shut down the railroads? Or are we going to let this thing get into court?"

"Our case went into the courts and it's been killing us. My airline is virtually shelled today because the bankruptcy court let Lorenzo do exactly what he wanted to do

(continued on page 8)



SPECIAL:
Eyewitness to Revolution in Romania,

See pp. 9 - 12.

The big social security 'rip-off'



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

Senator Moynihan (D-N.Y.) has proposed to cut Social Security taxes by \$55 billion. *The New York Times* editorial of Jan. 24 calls this scheme "Senator Moynihan's hand grenade."

What makes Moynihan's proposal a "hand grenade" is that it has revealed that the government has been ripping off working people for years and using their money to buy Latin American dictators, protect fraudulent bankers, cut taxes for the rich, and purchase billion-dollar Stealth Bombers.

In other words, the Social Security tax is not used for Social Security but to steadily shift the tax burden to working people. To put it simply: the Social Security tax, which taxes workers at an outrageously higher rate than the rich, has nothing whatever to do with Social Security for anyone but the biggest capitalists!

Moynihan, being the good Democrat that he is, blames the theft of Social Security funds on the Republicans. But the truth is that since the first year of Social Security, the government has

been using it to rip off working people in order to cut taxes on the rich.

Every worker knows, when they look at their pay check, that they are paying a continual increase in Social Security tax. In fact, nearly three-quarters of all Americans are paying more in Social Security taxes than they do in income taxes.

"Read my lips?"

The burden of taxation has been shifted from income tax to Social Security tax. This is why Bush can say "Read my lips" as he promises no new income taxes and more cuts in the capital-gains tax and other taxes on the rich. At the same time, Social Security taxes are climbing ever higher!

Surplus revenues from Social Security allows the government to mask the real deficit. For instance, corporate taxes fell by 23 percent since the 1980s, but the share of federal revenue from Social Security taxes rose 23 percent in that same time.

As of Jan. 1, workers and their employers each pay 7.65 percent on payroll for Social Security and

Medicare. The tax is paid on the first \$51,300 of wages. That means that a big business executive, or any other high-roller on salary, pays no Social Security tax on all income above that amount.

Worse yet, all capitalists pay no Social Security tax whatsoever on dividends, profits, and interest. Of course, they will argue that they match the payments made by workers—but that is a legal fiction. The matching payments are really deferred wages.

Crocodile tears

Most of us remember when those who are already retired were threatened with a cut in their Social Security income. The news media portrayed outraged senior citizens as a "greedy and powerful" political force. They cried crocodile tears, claiming that demands for more by our older folks were driving up the Social Security tax on the rest of us.

The fact is that Social Security taxes amount to \$65 billion more than what is paid out, this year alone. And by the turn of the century, the surplus ripped off to

compensate for steady reductions in taxes paid by the rich will amount to \$200 billion.

Most workers believe that Social Security is being saved for them when they retire. Forget that, when it comes time for the rest of us to retire, the mouth-pieces of the capitalist class will continue to deceitfully argue that "America can't afford it."

Unfortunately, so long as this country remains in the hands of the capitalists, their economic system will continue to force them to drive living standards lower and lower. Already this government is up to its neck in debt because it must subsidize the capitalists and the profit system as a whole. It is a government in crisis.

The increasing rip-off of the poor and elderly reveals just how deep the crisis of capitalism really is. When *The New York Times* editors call Senator Moynihan's revelations on Social Security a "hand grenade," they mean that any hint of the truth reaching the ears of the working class will create repercussions for the ruling rich. ■

When they're retreating, hit 'em harder

By JONI JACOBS

With public opinion polls indicating growing support for the pro-choice position since the *Webster* decision, the Republicans are scrambling to dissociate themselves from their longstanding anti-choice platform. Meanwhile, the Democrats are playing up their pro-choice rhetoric and licking their chops at the prospect of a successful 1990 election year.

After losing two gubernatorial elections which focused on the candidates' stand on abortion, the Republican Party—whose previous platforms included a demand for a constitutional ban on abortion—is struggling to "accommodate" a diversity of opinion on the issue.

"We are not going to be a party that excludes," claimed Vice President Quayle in an interview with Boston station WBZ-TV. "We are going to be a party that includes, and therefore the Republican Party is open to both pro-life and pro-choice Republicans."

"Long-time anti-choice supporters expressed anger and betrayal at the party that was once their bastion. "Right now we've got people caving in left and right," complained Randall Terry of Operation Rescue (O.R.) to the *San Francisco Examiner*.

Terry's organization itself is on the skids. Last month, federal authorities seized O.R.'s hefty bank accounts to pay off mounting fines assessed against it for its illegal blockades. O.R.'s national lobbying office in Washington, D.C.—opened just last November—has already closed due to lack of funds.

Hit 'em harder

In a Dec. 15, 1989, letter to O.R. members, leader John Forman admits that O.R.'s situation is bleak. "While the organization may well be over," he says, "we'll still be there in spirit." And Randall Terry, jailed since last September for refusing to pay his fines, is no longer vowing to stay in jail until the fines are withdrawn. Now he is



Over 350 pro-choice supporters attended a meeting at Laney College in Oakland, Calif., on Jan 21 to celebrate the 17th anniversary of the historic *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion. Appropriately, the featured speaker was Norma McCorvey (shown here), the real *Jane Roe*.

pleading to be paroled, presumably so he can shore up his waning power base.

The troubles of the anti-choice movement, however, shouldn't distract pro-choice activists from continuing to organize in their own name to secure abortion rights. To paraphrase Clausewitz (the pre-eminent Prussian authority on war), when the enemy is in retreat, hit 'em harder.

It's too early to tell just how far the anti-choice movement has retreated, or whether they're just regrouping for another frontal assault on women's rights. For example, while the national organization of O.R. is unstable, local chapters of O.R. continue to blockade family-planning clinics across the nation.

In the Boston area, O.R. has begun staging major "hits" again after a long period of small-scale

picketing at local clinics. Last December, a Boston-area judge threw out an injunction against O.R.'s blockades, claiming that O.R. had a "demonstrated purpose" to be at the clinics. This represented an invitation for O.R. to deny women access to reproductive health care by blockading clinics.

O.R. quickly accepted the judge's invitation, staging vicious blockades in December and January. While O.R.'s numbers are decreasing, their violence is increasing, despite often being outnumbered by pro-choice activists by three-to-one ratios.

Search for "new tactics"

Alexei Folger, a Boston NOW member and clinic defense organizer, speculates that O.R.'s increased viciousness indicates "a sense of frustration and a search

for new tactics." Folger notes that O.R. has begun organizing "Minuteman" attacks, which is new to the Boston area.

Unsuccessful in their efforts to shut down clinics on Saturdays, small groups of O.R. are now staging surprise blockades on weekdays. These attacks are almost impossible to defend against, as they come without warning and would require a daily pro-choice presence at the clinics.

O.R. has also not relented in the Los Angeles area. On Jan. 20, about 800 pro-choice activists mobilized against a blockade attempt staged by approximately 150 O.R. fanatics. Finding themselves heavily outnumbered at every clinic they attempted to blockade, O.R. finally "attacked" a clinic that wasn't even scheduled to be open. Los Angeles pro-choice activists are gearing up for another assault on Feb. 17.

While groups like NARAL and Planned Parenthood have argued that the fight for abortion rights is not in the streets but at the ballot box, O.R. continues to threaten the accessibility to abortion services—with the tacit approval of the ruling class in this country.

Public funding of abortion is still not available in 37 states and minors' access to abortion is being debated by the U.S. Supreme Court this term. The Pennsylvania legislature—spurred by the *Webster* decision—imposed the strictest restrictions on abortion since 1973. Much work remains to make abortion truly safe, legal and accessible to low income and teen-aged women.

Rather than working to elect so-called pro-choice politicians—who switch their positions with each opinion poll—the women's movement must continue its winning strategy of independent mass action. Activists must also continue to organize mass clinic defense against O.R. These anti-choice thugs must be defeated whenever they attempt to close a clinic.

There are those who say that the task of the movement now is not to march, but to lobby. I say that the best lobbying the women's movement ever did was when it marched 630,000 strong on April 9, 1989, and again on Nov. 12, 1989. That's what caused the Republicans to flip-flop and the Democrats to scramble for votes.

And that's the kind of lobbying that will win. ■

Socialist ACTION

Closing date:
Jan. 30, 1990

Editor: ALAN BENJAMIN
Asst. Editors: MICHAEL SCHREIBER
JOSEPH RYAN

Staff: Paul Colvin, May May Gong, Hayden Perry, Kwame M.A. Somburu, Sylvia Weinstein.

Business Manager: DAVID KIRSCHNER

Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly for \$8 per year by Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Second-class postage is paid at San Francisco, Calif.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Socialist Action*, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

RATES: For one year (12 issues)—U.S. 2nd Class: \$8, 1st Class: \$16; Canada and Mexico 2nd Class: \$12, 1st Class: \$16; All other countries 2nd Class: \$15, 1st Class: \$30. (Money orders, checks should be in U.S. dollars.)

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

Turmoil in Azerbaijan: Legacy of Stalinist oppression of nationalities

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

"We shall demonstrate in the East what we have been able to demonstrate in the West: when Soviet power is in, national oppression is out."—V.I. Lenin, writing in 1921 after fighting broke out between Armenia and Georgia

When political leaders in the republic of Lithuania began to speak of independence recently, Mikhail Gorbachev lashed out at them. Such talk, he warned, could lead to "discord, bloodshed, and death."

That was a couple of months ago. Now, in Azerbaijan, Gorbachev's horrible warning has come to pass. At midnight on Jan. 20, thousands of Soviet troops moved into the capital city of Baku. Hundreds of civilians were left dead in the streets.

Some reporters described a blitzkrieg. "They shot at everything that was moving, even people on their balconies," one witness said.

"A shower of stones came from the crowd onto the soldiers. In response, there was the sound of automatic weapons fire," a correspondent for *Komskolskaya Pravda* reported in a dispatch that his editors refused to print. He added, "There's no doubt that this was an organized shooting of peaceful people." (*The New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1990)

A report by Bernard Guetta in *Le Monde* (Jan. 21, 1990) stated: "In only one of the city's hospitals, a hundred deaths and many casualties were reported. They keep coming. What is happening here is horrible," a clerk said in tears. For the first time, blood has flowed as a result of an order by Gorbachev."

The entire area was placed under martial law. Strikes, public meetings and rallies, and even theatrical performances and sports events were banned. But the Kremlin's call for "order" met defiant resistance.

Two weeks after the troops were sent in, industry in the region remained at a standstill as the workers stayed out in a general strike. Tens of thousands of people burned their Communist Party membership cards at public rallies.

Azeri Popular Front leaders claimed that the Soviet troops were met with a general insurrection. A spokesperson of the Azeri Council of National Defense told reporters: "We control the situation all over the republic. Our checkpoints are on duty on all roads. The absolute majority of the people follow the orders of the Popular Front." (*International Herald Tribune*, Jan. 20, 1990)

Why did Gorbachev send troops?

At first, the occupation forces were said to be "peacekeepers," sent in to quell a series of pogroms against the Armenian minority in the republic of Azerbaijan.

Yet witnesses in Baku have reported that on Jan. 13, when mobs of unemployed young Azeris (mainly refugees from Armenia) began to beat up and murder Armenians, Soviet soldiers simply stood by without intervening. It was left to the Azeri Popular Front to organize patrols to protect and evacuate Armenians. (*The New York Times*, Jan. 29, 1990)

By the time of the Jan. 20 invasion, said Baku residents, "most Armenians had been evacuated and full-scale violence had ended." (*ibid.*, Jan. 27, 1990)

Soon an alternative explanation came to light. Some Soviet authorities alleged that a full rebellion against Soviet rule had been in progress. The night after Soviet troops stormed Baku, Gorbachev himself appeared on television to say that the military had intervened to prevent an attempted coup by the Azeri Popular Front.

A week later, Yuri Afanasyev, a member of the opposition in parliament in Moscow, spoke more frankly when he said that the military was sent primarily to prop up a discredited Communist Party that was in danger of falling to popular pressure. (*The New York Times*, Jan. 27, 1990)

According to some accounts, by Jan. 20 when the troops moved in, the Stalinist Communist Party had already disintegrated and fallen from power in many areas of



Over one million Azerbaijanis demonstrate in the shadow of Lenin.

Azerbaijan.

Guetta wrote in *Le Monde*, "As in Lenkoran, another city of the republic whose authorities were thrown out pure and simple by the local section of the Front on Jan. 11, Baku was led by the nationalists, by the various tendencies of the Front—including liberals, fundamentalists, Westernized intellectuals, and fanaticized unemployed."

A harsh lesson

Thus, the armed conflict between the Azeris and the Armenians—of which the Armenians were the main victims—provided a ready excuse for Gorbachev to impose the full force of the central government in the region. Azerbaijan is to be used as a harsh lesson for the people of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, or any other region that might hope for more freedom from Moscow—or from their local Stalinist bureaucrats, for that matter.

Indeed, political leaders on both the Azeri and the Armenian sides of the conflict have charged that Moscow hoped to fan the flames of discord between them. As long ago as last September, Arkadi Volsky, head of the special committee set up to run the territory of Nagorno Karabakh, told the Soviet Communist Party plenum that the region was on the verge of civil war.

Levon Ter Petrossian, a leader of the [Armenian] Karabakh Committee commented on Volsky's statement in an interview in *Liberation* (Oct. 3, 1989): "In talking about an 'imminent civil war,' dramatizing things this way, Moscow is pursuing quite specific political aims that have nothing to do with Azerbaijan. It's trying once again to get Armenia to give up the conception of perestroika that the Armenians were the first to express in the USSR—democratization from below and not from above."

The Gorbachevites fear "democratization from below" like the plague. As in Stalin's time, they will take any measures, regardless

of the casualties, against popular movements that appear to threaten the privileged bureaucratic caste that rules the Soviet Union.

Stalin versus Lenin

Stalin was a master at the strategy of "divide and conquer," stirring up ancient rivalries among oppressed nationalities, and even moving different nationalities into the traditional homelands of other peoples. It was Stalin who in 1923 personally arranged the attachment of the territory of Nagorno Karabakh (80 percent populated by Armenians) to the republic of Azerbaijan.

Stalin's centralized bureaucratic rule required subordinating the rights, language, culture, and economic well-being of national minorities to those of the relatively privileged Great Russian people.

When V.I. Lenin, in the final years of his life, undertook a campaign against the growing bureaucracy, he repeatedly had to confront the lingering problem of Great Russian chauvinism—on which the bureaucracy was able to feed.

In 1922, Lenin said that Stalin bore responsibility for forcibly trampling on the national rights of Georgia, which borders Azerbaijan on the north. This was "a truly Great Russian nationalist campaign," he said.

Lenin believed that the non-Russian nationalities and republics of the USSR had to be offered more than mere "formal equality." Instead, he explained, "by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the 'dominant' nation subjected them in the past." (Collected works, Vol. 36, pp. 605-611)

Above all, Lenin said on numerous occasions, oppressed nationalities have the unconditional right to self-determination. This must mean, he emphasized, granting the right to set up an independent state if the

oppressed nationalities should so choose.

Accordingly, the fledgling USSR—once known as the "prisonhouse of nations"—was now seen as a voluntary federation of nations. The Bolshevik government quickly granted independence to Poland. In Finland and the Baltic states, the situation was slightly different, since revolutionary governments that were pro-Soviet had been set up. Within months, however, these workers' governments were crushed by German, British, and Polish troops.

In 1918, the Soviet government signed a treaty recognizing the independence of the bourgeois government in Finland. Meanwhile, the Red Army helped drive the foreign troops out of the Baltic states. In 1920, Moscow signed treaties respecting the independence of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania.

Gorbachev gets a lesson

Lithuanian television recently showed an incident in which Gorbachev displayed how much he has "forgotten" Lenin's views on the national question. When Gorbachev saw an elderly worker carrying a sign calling for "total independence for Lithuania," he burst out: "Who told you to prepare that sign?" The worker replied, "Nobody. I wrote it myself."

"And who are you?" the Kremlin head demanded, "Where do you work and how do you imagine total independence?" The worker answered, "I imagine it like during the 1920s, when Lenin recognized the sovereignty of Lithuania—because no nation has the right to attack another nation."

Gorbachev retorted, "I know perfectly well that Lithuania was quite provincial then. Nowadays, Russia has sold it gold, metals, and fossil fuels at a low price. Within the large family, Lithuania has become a developed country..."

The worker interrupted him: "Do you know how many Lithuanians were sent to Siberia during the 1940s and how many died?"

"I don't want to speak any more with this old man," Gorbachev then declared. "If such an attitude and such slogans exist in Lithuania—then it can expect hard times."

"Hard times" on the model of Azerbaijan? Rather than promising "hard times" to the oppressed nationalities of the Soviet Union, the leaders of the Soviet Union should respect their right to self-determination, including the right to independence.

As Lenin pointed out, the distrust that the Soviet bureaucracy has sowed in these regions can be overcome only through "concessions." In the first place, the Soviet occupation forces—seen as "executioners" and "murderers" by people throughout the region—must be withdrawn immediately.

There will be no easy solution to the problem in Azerbaijan and Armenia. The ethnic violence must stop. But any real solution can only be worked out by the Azeris and the Armenians themselves—without interference from Moscow. ■

Sympathy from the devil

Officials in the Bush administration were quick to support Gorbachev's crackdown in Azerbaijan. The action, said President Bush, was necessary to avoid threats to perestroika. White House spokesperson Marlin Fitzwater elaborated: "We understand the need to restore order where order has broken down."

The administration's concern for "law and order" can be truly appreciated, coming just weeks after its bloody invasion of Panama. At that time, in fact, the White House gave its approval to the Kremlin if it should wish to send troops into Romania. The message was clear: In the spirit of "detente," both governments agree to use military force to maintain "order" within their own "spheres of influence."—M.S.



Dinkins mayoral victory won't stop setbacks for workers and minorities

By CHRIS BIELER

NEW YORK—As America lurches into the 1990s, the ruling class is looking to Democratic Party politicians to institute a new series of attacks on the working class, necessitated by capitalism's deepening economic crisis. Black Democrats are increasingly included among these politicians.

One test case widely looked to is that of New York City. The victory of David Dinkins as mayor in November is being hailed in many quarters as a "success story" for minorities in America and as the "dawn of a new era" for Blacks in New York City.

Dinkins' promise to "heal the wounds" of the city through the "politics of inclusion" and his stated commitment to address the crises of homelessness, healthcare, and other issues has led some to conclude there is a "rebirth" of a "liberal wing" in the Democratic Party.

Nevertheless, while many trade unionists and anti-racist, pro-choice, and housing activists worked to elect Dinkins, his campaign was hardly the grassroots effort it was sometimes portrayed as. Even as Dinkins faced the racist demagoguery of Republican challenger Rudolph Giuliani, New York's leading big-business newspapers were moving to endorse Dinkins.

After all, Dinkins' general campaign fund was the heftiest of the major candidates, reflecting backing from key real estate and business figures. As the Black weekly *City Sun* noted, despite Dinkins' stated commitment to "community empowerment," his transition team consisted of a striking amount of Koch holdovers and other bureaucrats.

Dinkins announces budget cuts

It is true that Dinkins took positions on some questions that could be considered radical within the spectrum of New York City Democratic Party politics. These included his opposition to the use of Staten Island as a port for U.S. nuclear warships, criticism of police brutality, and support to a city council bill to exclude all companies that do business in South Africa from doing business with the city government.

But the real cutting edge of his campaign was outreach to white potential "crossover" voters, particularly through a series of Giuliani-like TV commercials trumpeting his support to Israel, the "need" to double the police on the beat, and the need for mandatory drug testing for parolees.

Dinkins' inauguration speech on Jan. 1 spoke in "Great Society" tones about the

gorgeous mosaic of races and nations that make up New York City. But the real message was conveyed three days later when Dinkins announced over \$200 million in budget cuts in all departments, including schools and hospitals. This was on top of \$640 million in cutbacks instituted by Mayor Koch since last summer.

Experts predict the deficit could balloon to as much as \$1 billion in the next fiscal year without further cutbacks and tax increases. As usual, the cuts will fall disproportionately on the city's poor and minorities.

A contracting economy

Dinkins had attracted support during his campaign on the basis of his opposition to Koch's "mean-spirited" approach to homelessness, racism, and the healthcare crisis. When asked if the cuts would affect the ambitious promises and programs he had campaigned around, he said, "At this point our dreams exceed our budget."

The explanation for this "mysterious"

metamorphosis can be located in the deepening crisis of capitalism, and in its reliance on the Democratic Party in times of crisis to draw new layers into support of the system.

Since the stock market crash of October 1987, the New York City economy has contracted. Twenty-two thousand jobs have been lost on Wall Street alone. This is particularly devastating since the city has lost over 72,000 manufacturing jobs since 1981.

Similar contractions have led to similar budget crises in all the nation's cities, due to diminished tax revenues. Someone must pay; it won't be the rich. They contribute to Democratic and Republican Party campaigns precisely so they can count on favorable tax breaks. It will fall on working people and the poor to pay.

Felix Rohatyn, Dinkins' chief financial advisor and the man who presided over New York's budget crisis of the mid-1970s, predicts that the earlier crisis "will appear benign compared to what New York City is likely to face in the years 1990-1995."

Asian youths killed by Minnesota cops

By RUBY WATERS

ST. PAUL, Minn.—About 500 people gathered at the state capitol on Dec. 28 to protest the shooting of two 13-year-old Hmong boys. The Hmong are a people from the mountains of Laos who were displaced from their ancestral homes during the U.S. imperialist war there. During the last 10 years, they have built a community here.

On Nov. 15 in Inver Grove Heights, a suburb of St. Paul, Thai Yang and Ba See Lor were shot in the back by Officer Kenneth E. Murphy of the Rosemount police department. According to the police version, the two boys and a 14-year-old friend had fled from a stolen car after a high-speed chase. As the boys ran through a berry patch, Murphy fired at them with a shotgun. The 14-year-old escaped but Yang and Lor were both killed.

The police "excuse" is that Murphy thought he saw Yang turn and point a gun at him—which later turned out to be a screwdriver. But this story still does not explain why two small boys were shot in the back.

Local minority rights groups, including the Southeast Asian Advisory Coalition and

local branches of the NAACP, immediately demanded an investigation of the incident. Despite the many unanswered questions, on Dec. 7, 1989, a Dakota County grand jury failed to indict Murphy. At this point, the Dec. 28 demonstration was called.

Meanwhile, the local big-business media have spent great effort showing what a nice, family man Murphy is and how aggrieved he is over the incident. The media also exploits the grief of the boys' relatives in order to present this as an isolated tragedy rather than another display of the racism and violence that result from the role of the police force in class society.

After the demonstration at the state capitol, State Attorney General Hubert H. Humphrey III met with the families of the victims and other community leaders. They called on Humphrey to use his powers to reopen the investigation or to prosecute Murphy. This he refuses to do.

Undaunted by the solid wall of official support for Murphy, the movement has decided to continue pressing for justice through large protest meetings, which will demand that the government do its duty and enforce the law.

Working people are still trying to catch up from cutbacks, layoffs, and lousy contracts foisted on them the last time around.

New York City may be the nerve center of world financial capital, but it still pays one-fifth of its budget to the banks for debt service—like any Latin American country.

This is where Dinkins comes in. Rohatyn revealingly stated in a recent *New York Times* Op-Ed column that Dinkins is needed so that "the people who are going to be asked to sacrifice feel they are being treated fairly."

At a meeting of Wall Street contributors just days before the election, Dinkins admitted as much. When asked how he will handle the upcoming municipal contract talks, he said, "It may well be that I'll have to tell some of my friends they cannot have the things they want. But they'll take it from me."

City officials recently reported that the budget can only afford pay increases of 1.5 percent to municipal workers, whose contract expires this summer. Inflation is 5 percent and rising.

Racism continues to operate

During the election—even as the candidates of both major parties tacitly agreed on the need to carry out the budget cuts on the backs of poor and working people—the racism that is such an integral part of capitalist society continued to operate *within* the mayoral campaign.

In a city where registered Democratic voters outnumber registered Republican voters by a ratio of 5 to 1, Black Democratic standard bearer Dinkins narrowly beat white Republican Giuliani by a 51 percent to 48 percent margin. The only explanation can be that many white Democrats would vote for anyone rather than vote for a Black man as mayor.

The same racism that functioned within the campaign will continue against minorities afterwards. But the morning after the next act of racist violence, New Yorkers won't have Koch on the news, denouncing Black "extremists." Instead, they'll have David Dinkins, "the healer," balancing between his campaign pledge for a civilian review board and his pledge to double the police force.

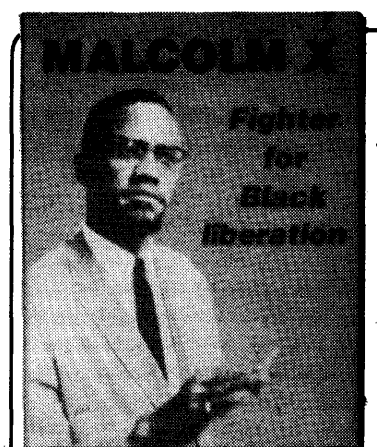
After all, the same racist cops, courts and big business media continue to exist. Dinkins was elected based on a campaign that never fundamentally challenged these institutions' policies.

Support for Dinkins, whether as a "stand against racism" or otherwise, is no more justified after the election than it was before the election. On the contrary, what is needed is a political party independent of the Democrats and the Republicans that fights for the interests of the anti-racist and labor movements 365 days of the year.

As the economic crisis deepens, many will search for a way to fight back. The fight against racist violence, the fight for a decent contract for municipal workers, the fight to keep hospitals and clinics open—these and other issues will lead to mass-action united fronts.

As New York's first Black mayor assumes the reins, there is no "new dawn" of the Democratic Party on the horizon. It is the twilight instead. Nor is there any future for Jesse Jackson's stillborn Rainbow Coalition, pledged as it is to a strategy of organizing within that same Democratic Party.

There is a tremendous future for a *real* rainbow coalition, glimmers of which could be seen in Jackson's electoral vehicle. But a real rainbow coalition will be sustained only through struggles in the factories and the streets against the attacks implemented by Democratic and Republican politicians—white or Black. In order to be effective, such a coalition must be organized independently of both capitalist parties. ■



Key
for
fight-
back

\$2.

Buy
one
now!

'Glory:' A glorious movie which depicts Black self-emancipation

By MARK SCHNEIDER

Glory, directed by Ed Zwick. Starring Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington, Cary Elwes, Morgan Freeman, Jhimi Kennedy, Andre Braugher.

Two Civil War statues grace the streets of downtown Boston. In Park Square, a beneficent President Lincoln stands over a kneeling slave, bidding him to rise. It is the image of Lincoln freeing the slaves. Historians now understand that it didn't happen that way.

The other sculpture, across from the State House, is the famous Augustus Saint-Gaudens monument to the 54th Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, the first Northern all African American combat regiment in U.S. history.

The statue depicts a regiment of Black Union troops—armed, grim-faced, and determined—marching, perhaps, to battle. That image gives a better idea of what did happen. Fittingly, the new Civil War movie "Glory" concludes with an image of that sculpture.

"Glory" tells a magnificent story simply yet subtly. It shows us the best, most important, and most transforming moment in American history. That was the time during which African American free men, freed men, and runaway slaves appeared before the slavemasters as antagonists and before the slaves as liberators—truly turning the world upside down.

The heroism of the Black troops played a central role in shifting the attitudes of whites North and South toward Blacks, and thus advancing the battle for equality. The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution probably owe more to these troops than to anyone else.

The 54th Massachusetts was not the first Black infantry unit to fight in the Civil War. When the war broke out and slaveowners abandoned their plantations, slaves ran away in huge numbers toward the Union Army. In most areas, these runaway slaves were initially rebuffed. In a few cases, however, the former slaves were allowed to fight.

By 1862, more Blacks had been organized into labor-support units. Only after the Emancipation Proclamation of Jan. 1, 1863, did the demand grow to give African Americans a combat role. Finally, when war casualties had mounted to vast, unanticipated numbers, Lincoln gave in to the promptings of the abolitionists Frederick Douglass, Wendell Phillips, and William Lloyd Garrison.

Black soldiers ridiculed

Many whites ridiculed the idea, holding the racist prejudice that the Blacks would run away. The Massachusetts 54th changed that notion decisively. By the end of the Civil War, 178,975 Blacks had served in the Union Army, 37,638 had lost their lives, and 16 had won the Medal of Honor for



bravery.

"Glory" tells the story of four African American soldiers and the unit's white commander, Robert Gould Shaw. The balance is well struck between these characters, and the interplay is subtle and moving.

Matthew Broderick, as Shaw, is a young and sensitive son of abolitionist parents who has already proven himself in battle when he accepts the leadership of the new regiment. Among his friends is a young Black intellectual, played by Andre Braugher, who enlists as a private. These two must learn a new set of human relations in the army.

Denzel Washington plays an embittered runaway slave who is suspicious of all whites and contemptuous of Blacks, like the young intellectual, who have accommodated to the white world.

In one powerful scene, the ex-slave runs away to get some shoes, which have been denied to the Blacks by a racist quartermaster. After the Black soldier is captured, Shaw must decide what to do. He orders the man whipped, and when his shirt is removed, the scars of slavery are already on his back. Shaw seems horrified, and the ex-slave bears the torture defiantly, refusing to cry out.

Later, after Denzel Washington's character has proven himself in battle, Shaw asks him to carry the company colors, and he declines. A climactic moment occurs, naturally, when the flag falls in battle near the soldier, and he must decide whether to carry the colors.

Morgan Freeman's character is the most mature. As an older man and a capable soldier, he is the first Black to be awarded non-commissioned officer's stripes. Finally, Jhimi Kennedy plays a shy, religious soldier who seems to typify the Everyman private.

One curious problem with the movie is

that the Black characters are not based upon real historical figures, as Shaw is. Yet the 54th produced the first Black Medal of Honor winner, William H. Carney, a sergeant from New Bedford. Descendants of the 54th urged the filmmakers to use their ancestors as models, but the writers decided, perhaps to avoid the problem of leaving some people out, to leave the Black characters wholly fictional.

Racism Northern-style

Before fighting Confederate troops, the 54th had to learn to deal with racism in the Northern army. Shaw reluctantly announces that the Black troops will receive only \$10 a month, while the whites receive \$13. The Blacks refuse to accept any pay rather than take less than their rightful share. Although the movie does not show it, the Army rebelled much later.

In its first battle—at Sea Island, S.C.—the 54th fights valiantly. Although it's not shown in the film, they fought off five Confederate regiments and saved a white Connecticut regiment in this engagement. Later they were awarded an official commendation.

The 54th marches to "Glory" in the assault on Fort Wagner along the beach at Charleston, S.C. The fort was armed with heavy artillery and had high sloping parapets which made it nearly impregnable. Only one regiment could spearhead the attack, and Shaw volunteered the 54th.

In this heroic battle, the 54th managed to storm the parapet, but was driven off. Half the regiment was killed. The bravery and determination of the soldiers are vividly portrayed, and the cinematic images linger with the viewer long after the film is over. The

assault on Fort Wagner became a deep source of pride to Blacks and the film suggests its powerful effect on white troops.

Overcoming racist mythology

"Glory" should bury "Gone With the Wind" and "Birth of a Nation" as films of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. While these last two films dominated our images of the Civil War for decades, they are based on lies. They recreate the racist mythology that regained ascendancy with the collapse of Reconstruction in 1877.

It was not until the 1960s that historians again captured the reality of the period, which historians like W.E.B. Du Bois had recorded earlier. Du Bois' interpretation was ignored in an avalanche of racist historical re-writing. "Glory" thus comes very late. Many more such films could be made, showing the role Blacks played in their liberation.

It is interesting, also, to compare "Glory" with Spike Lee's recent "Do the Right Thing," which also sets a white man in the middle of a Black community, but in our modern world. "Glory" is a hopeful movie which shows the promise of what America might have become. It portrays the opening moments of African American freedom, dignity, and pride.

As we all know, the promise was betrayed, and Blacks were cast down into a new hell, a "freedom" circumscribed by terror. Spike Lee's movie shows accurately how far we still have to go, and how little whites understand about the Black experience.

While the dream is still deferred, "Glory" gives us a view of an awakening, a great getting-up morning, that can only be called glorious. ■

... Boston

(continued from page 20)

nally the reply that they got from the police was this: Bennett serves our purposes. That's a quote, unquote."

If the truth hadn't come to light, Bennett would be facing life imprisonment for a crime he didn't commit.

These offenses were committed by a police department, district attorney's office, and city administration under increasing fire for racist maneuvering in criminal cases.

The District Attorney "has always played this role of railroading people for the sake of a conviction, even if they're innocent," said Ellis-Hagler.

The Stuart murder-case fraud has revealed the extent of officially-sanctioned and inspired frame-ups of the Black community in Boston. Evidence of police and city administration misconduct in other cases has now become public.

The partner of a murdered cop testified that he was told by the D.A.'s office to falsify an

affidavit. And new information is coming to light in the case of a young Black girl murdered as an innocent bystander in a gang shooting. It appears that the young man convicted of the crime was railroaded into prison because of pressure on the D.A. to "get someone" for the crime.

A lot of anger

After the truth came out about the Stuart murder, Mayor Flynn tried to quell the intense anger in the Black community by staging a "healing service" at a local church. Meanwhile he continued to defend his response on the night of the crime.

Furthermore, the undeniable racism that pervades the police department and mayor's office is evident in Flynn's other actions.

He refuses to accede to demands that he apologize to the city's Black community for the actions of the police department. In his "State of the City" address last month, he compared the bad press that Mission Hill got after the Stuart murder to what his home neighborhood of South Boston received 15 years ago when white residents violently resisted court-ordered school busing to

implement school desegregation.

The mood in the Black community is one of "a lot of anger," says Ellis-Hagler. "And they're not taken in by Flynn's gestures of reconciliation."

"No one went to the [healing] service from the [Mission Hill] housing project, which was the community that was rough-riden through. That was a very artificial thing to help the mayor say something politically."

Organized opposition is strong in the Black community. Ellis-Hagler, Minister Don Muhammad of the Nation of Islam, other Black clergy, Black elected officials, and community activists have called for a commission of inquiry to look into police misconduct. Ellis-Hagler and others have demanded the resignation of the mayor and police commissioner.

Police terror in the Black community has left deep scars. One mother told of how, for one month, she kept her son from wearing his black jogging suit out of fear that he would be picked up for murder. *The Boston Globe* reported how another mother "makes sure her son ... wears clean underwear in case

he's strip-searched by police."

Black youth tell of constant police harassment. The *Globe* reported that "young people are liable to be stopped at any time and in almost any situation."

Flynn's attitude toward the Black community, stated Ellis-Hagler, is that "you can be harassed, your constitutional rights can be violated, the cops can act illegally in your life, and no one owes you an apology..."

The result: a Black man faced a life sentence in prison until a cruel hoax that played on racism came apart. But the revelation that Stuart was lying has produced no change in how Blacks in this city are treated by cops and city officials.

The only change is that the Black community's anger is deeper, and the cops must tread more lightly until, they hope, the media attention all blows over. That deeper anger promises to evolve into an organized movement by the Black community against this continued repression.

And how many other William Bennetts are out there, perhaps facing the death penalty, for crimes they did not commit, only because they are Black? ■

Health hazards for U.S. workers: A growing plague

By LINDA THOMPSON

Third part of a four-part series.

"Each day millions of workers in America enter a battlefield," wrote Jeanne M. Stellman and Susan M. Daum in "Work is Dangerous to Your Health." "The battlefield is the American workplace, and the casualties of this war are higher than those of any other in the nation's history."

Every year, according to official estimates, over 13,000 American workers die and 2 million are disabled in industrial jobs. The actual figures could be twice that. In addition, reports the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), 100,000 men and women die from occupational illnesses and almost 400,000 new cases of occupational diseases are recognized each year.

A 1979 Surgeon General's report asserted that the actual extent of occupational disease is probably far greater due to lack of reporting or recognition by doctors. The statistics also do not include the spread of disease to the family of workers. Mercury, lead, and asbestos contamination can be contracted at home from a worker's clothes or from exposures experienced near the plants.

Widespread industrial illnesses

U.S. Public Health Studies show that 65 per cent of industrial workers are exposed regularly to toxic and/or unhealthy working conditions. Black lung afflicts about 100,000 miners, and 4000 workers die of it each year. About 17,000 cotton workers have brown lung.

Construction workers have the most dangerous jobs. In 1979, about 16 percent of occupational injuries and illnesses were in the construction industry, 13 percent were in manufacturing, and 11 percent were in mining.

One of the most hazardous materials that workers face is asbestos. Of about 500,000 asbestos workers, estimates are that 170,000 will die of cancers—or almost two-fifths of all asbestos workers.

Worse yet, is the fact that the public is daily exposed to asbestos contamination in the streets, in water supplies, and in homes, offices, and school. Over the next 30 years, approximately 1000 to 7000 premature deaths are expected to occur as a result of exposure to friable asbestos materials in the schools alone, and 90 percent of these will be people who were exposed as children.

Nine out of every 10 industrial workers are not adequately protected from exposure to at least one of the 163 most common hazardous industrial chemicals, according to a 1979 Surgeon General's Report.

Studies of cancer incidences prove that the rates for both sexes are highest in the most heavily industrialized areas. Toxic exposures to mercury, lead, vinyl chloride, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, benzene and PCBs all produce effects, from fatigue and headache, to inflammation, damage to the liver and central nervous system, and death.

Although PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) were banned in 1979, it is estimated by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) that over 103 million small and large capacitors—such as those in TVs, fluorescent lights, and air conditioners—were made before the ban and may still be in use.

Indoor air pollution

Illness caused by indoor air pollution received wide coverage during the last year. It was discovered that occupational illness, long thought of as an industrial problem, has spread to the modern office or institution and is caused by a long list of indoor pollutants.

The syndrome is an outgrowth of the so-called "energy-crisis" of the 1970s, when buildings began to be built with sealed windows and insulation designed to cut back energy costs for employers. It came to public attention in 1976 with an outbreak of Le-



gionnaire's Disease at an American Legion convention in Philadelphia, as bacteria in a hotel's cooling tower spread through the ventilating system, killing 29 people.

The dangers of vapors from photocopy machines, cleaning fluids and solvents, and regular pesticide spraying are just beginning to be acknowledged by the medical establishment. A growing number of indoor workers are experiencing symptoms ranging from headaches, rashes, nausea, blurred vision, and disorientation, to respiratory problems, chronic fatigue, and pain.

The Environmental Protection agency has its own indoor-air problem in its Waterside Mall headquarters in Washington, D.C. One hundred workers complained of severe reactions, and over 1000 of the 5000 employees there were found to have serious health complaints when surveyed.

"Sick Building Syndrome"

In November 1988, Dr. Sherri Rogers spoke at a local hospital outside Washington, D.C., on the topic, "Environmental Illness, An Epidemic in Disguise." In her talk she described to the audience a fairly new phenomenon that has the medical profession baffled. She attributed the syndrome to toxicity from the environment.

Sick Building Syndrome occurs at work. When the worker leaves the building, the symptoms are usually alleviated. It appears, however, that long exposures to toxic indoor pollutants can initiate a disease process where the immune system breaks down (not to be confused with AIDS) and the worker begins to react to all chemicals or becomes sensitive to multiple chemicals even while away from the initial environment that initiated the disease.

Thus it has been called the 20th-century disease, as its victims are truly allergic to our modern toxic environment. Given the fact that the office workforce is predominantly female, approximately 70 percent of those with this illness are women.

In Silicon Valley, Calif., where 70 percent of the assemblers and operatives are female (60 percent of these are minorities), women with this syndrome have sued the Signetics Corporation for chemical exposure. The

company's reaction was typical; they tried to fire the women and contested their claims for workers' compensation. They even hired detectives to follow the women and spy on them in an attempt to discredit their case.

Cancer—a social problem

Average Americans now have more than a 31 percent chance of developing cancer. Cancer deaths for one year (1979) were five times higher than the total U.S. military deaths in the Vietnam and the Korean wars combined.

Samuel Epstein makes the point in "The Politics of Cancer" that if 1000 people died every day of cholera, swine flu, or food poisoning, society would recognize that a major epidemic was at hand and would demand that there be a mobilization against it.

However, there is a sinister myth promoted by the government, the medical profession, and the American Cancer Society that cancer is somehow a part of life. This has led the population to view it as a personal tragedy and not a social problem.

Epstein delineates three very important findings: (1) The great majority of cancer cases are caused by exposure to chemical or physical agents in the environment. (2) Cancer is caused by carcinogens and the chance of developing the disease is related to the length and extent of the exposures. (3) There is no known method for developing or predicting a "safe" level of exposure to any carcinogen and there is no basis to government claims that exposures below certain levels are safe.

Industry and the American Cancer Society have minimized the cancer risk and attempt to link its cause to people's personal habits and diet. They also exaggerate the difficulties and costs of control and attempt to obscure the environmental cause of the disease.

Worse is the fact that the governmental agencies who are supposed to regulate and protect public health are usually sympathetic to the military-industrial complex and are loath to oppose them in any serious manner except in the most extreme cases of negligence or under massive public pressure like that which surrounded the use of alar on apples.

NIOSH estimates that 880,000 workers

(continued on next page)

You are what you eat

At almost every meal, we swallow traces of the 815 million pounds of pesticides used annually in this country. They are dusted on crops to kill pests, sprayed on stored food to retard fungi, and sprinkled on animal feed to avoid rot.

Each year 500,000 people worldwide are poisoned by chemicals in their food and 10,000 people die (not counting those affected by long-term illnesses such as cancer). In the United States alone, 45,000 are poisoned and 200 die annually.

Dr. Stephen Collins, a biology professor, claims that "using pesticides is like becoming an addict—we kill all the natural predators and then we can't do without the pesticides."

In addition, the modern food supply is contaminated with dangerous food additives. Over 3000 food additives are in use by the food industry. More than 90 percent of them have no food value at all.

Since World War II, a massive high-tech food processing industry has been developed. After a slow start, there was a swift transition to a man-made diet, as the demand for fast foods escalated.

James Bellini indicates in "High Tech Holocaust" that 75 percent of the average daily food intake in the developed world today is of processed foods that have been chemically treated and altered. Meat products are widely adulterated and made palatable by the addition of monosodium

glutamate, which can cause serious health problems. Workers in the food industry face risks from handling these chemicals and additives in a more concentrated form.

The goal of the food industry is profit. It is not in their interest to inform people of suspected risks that food additives may cause. Just as in the manufacturing industry, there is heavy competition and a drive to capture markets with new food products before their health risks are known.

The market is dominated by a small number of immense corporations and retailing chains who depend on high-tech processing to substitute inferior food products for high quality ones and to disguise this change with additives to make them more attractive.

As in every other aspect of the environmental crisis, low-income groups suffer the most from cheap packaged food products. As big business seeks to produce food products with longer shelf lives, many dangerous practices such as the irradiation of food are being experimented with.

Pollutants increase nutrient needs greatly. Thus, at a time when a healthy body is necessary to withstand toxic insults in the environment, the American diet is slowly eroding the body's defenses.—L.T.

(continued from preceding page)

are regularly exposed to known carcinogens. Communities surrounding the plants are exposed as well, as are those communities near waste sites. With the growth of the nuclear-power industry, the increased use of food additives, and the long-term legacy from radioactive fallout there is virtually *nowhere* to run.

Cancer is not only a medical problem as they would have us believe. It is essentially a political and a social problem and prevention must be its cure.

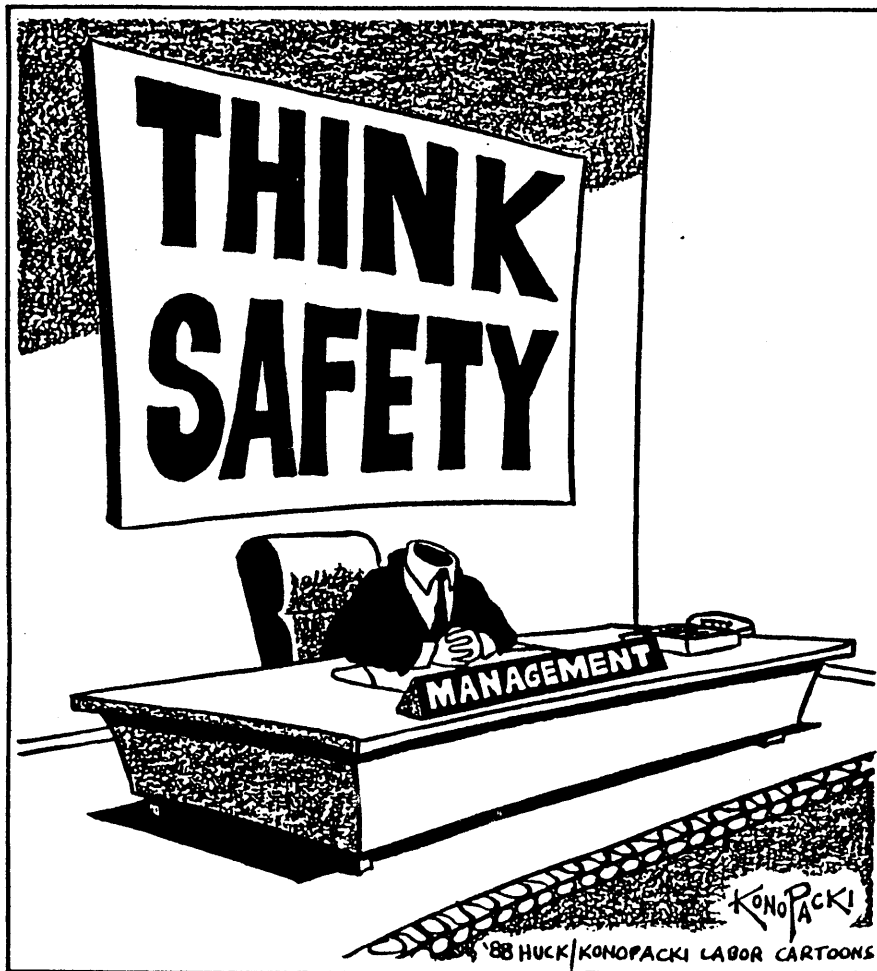
Who pays the bill?

The modern "private enterprise" system could not survive if it had to pay not only the social costs of cleaning up the environment but the medical costs as well. Given the size of the modern-day epidemic of diseases, industry is seeking to assure that it won't be held responsible.

This is the reason that a national health system, to be financed by the taxpayer, is being discussed. It's also the reason that industry went along with a publicly administered workers' compensation system that limits workers to recovering lost wages and renders the corporations immune from liability suits.

Even so, employers routinely fight almost all occupational illness claims; they know that the burden of proof is on the victim. Given the fact that big business has fostered a medical profession that is unconcerned with causes and prevention, it becomes very difficult for a worker to find a doctor who will clearly link the cause of a medical condition to industry.

Under capitalism the working class pays the bill for environmental illness. Not only do workers get ill more often than the wealthy, but they also get the worst medical care. Nevertheless, the working class foots the bill for industry and the wealthy.



In the United States, healthcare costs have soared, increasing much faster than the inflation rate. Healthcare expenditures are now approaching 15 percent of the Gross National Product.

Medical care is usually paid for in one of three ways: (1) Twenty-nine percent of all bills are paid for out of the personal income of patients. (2) Thirty-one percent are paid by private insurers. (3) Thirty-nine percent are paid by the federal government through

Medicare, Medicaid, and military and veteran healthcare.

Thus employees and taxpayers pay either directly, through taxes, or through insurance premiums for the bulk of the illness caused by the giant corporations. Most at risk are the 37 million Americans who have no health insurance or the one out of six who constitute the working poor and cannot afford escalating insurance premiums.

The Federal Occupational Safety and

Health Administration (OSHA) was almost dismantled by President Reagan, and its power has been severely limited by federal court decisions. But there is no other agency monitoring or regulating workplace hazards.

Prevention of hazards in the workplace is expensive, and a cost that industry has refused to assume. However, the cost of treating work-related disabilities is even more expensive, and industry has fought to pass this cost onto the taxpayer.

For example, hundreds of thousands of employees who have been denied workers' compensation wind up applying for disability, which is roughly one-half to two-thirds less than what they would get in compensation funds.

Beginning in 1979, the Social Security Administration began a scandalous policy of denying and cutting benefits to the disabled that resulted in untold suffering and more suicides. There was a huge public outcry and the most obvious excesses were stopped. But still today, an overwhelming number of the American disabled are denied benefits and wind up on welfare assistance—which is one-half to one-third what disability payments would have been.

In spite of the fact that life expectancy has increased more than 25 years since 1900, disease and chronic ailments are on the rise for all age categories. The quality of life for millions of Americans has declined. The high-tech holocaust continues to rob people of their most basic right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

There is no more damaging indictment of the capitalist system than the vicious way it treats the workers it has maimed. There is no more pressing need than for the government to institute a program of free medical care paid for by taxing the giant corporations who contaminate the earth.

The next article will examine the political process that gives free rein to the polluters. The way to solve the environmental crisis will be discussed.

Modern medicine has increased the human lifespan, eliminated many contagious diseases, and produced the technology to save many millions of lives. The possibilities for improved health are endless, it seems.

However, under capitalism, medicine has become a giant industry. As such, it is governed by an overriding concern with profit. This has led to a huge confidence gap between doctor and patient.

Time magazine featured the problem in an article last July entitled, "Doctors and Patients, Image versus Reality." The article pointed out that public confidence in the medical profession has never been lower.

With the rise of the medical-industrial complex, instead of seeing a doctor in a private office, most encounters are within a vast corporate hierarchy which is marketing medicine. Last year, hospitals spent more than \$1.3 billion on marketing and advertising in order to sustain support from government and private funds.

A problem with modern medical training and delivery is that it never has been concerned with the causes and prevention of disease but has been obsessed with profits. This is one reason why the escalating epidemic of environmental illness remains unacknowledged.

More important is the fact that industry has spent billions on influencing the medical profession through grants and research funds to finance the kind of research that will obscure the true causes of disease.

For instance, funds are being made available by the chemical industry for studies exploring the "psychological" origins of environmental illness. And donations to the American Cancer Society are forthcoming as long as its research focuses on "cures," abstracted from the causes of cancer.

In his book, "The Diseases of Civilization," Brian Inglis indicts the medical profession. He states, "If nominations were called for to select the disease of our civilization, the one with the most familiar symptoms in our time ... it would be the one which has come to be called iatrogenic: illness caused by medical treatment."

Modern doctors are currently armed with a seemingly endless array of new

Rise of the medical-industrial complex

drugs provided by a rich and powerful drug industry, many of which are inadequately tested and dangerous.

Brave New World

Like its counterpart in pesticides, this massive worldwide industry has emerged almost entirely since World War II. In the 1930s, there were hardly more than three widely used synthetic drugs on the market. Now there are 25,000. Two billion prescriptions were written in the United States in the mid-1970s, a 50 percent increase in 10 years.

A survey in Britain revealed that one-half the adult population and over one-third of its children were taking some kind of medication every day. A good third of the medications were for the treatment of emotional or nervous conditions.

Instead of campaigning to remove the causes of modern stress and anxiety, the medical profession is creating a Brave New World where a good section of the population is heavily sedated or addicted either legally or illegally.

As the external environment becomes increasingly polluted, our inner biochemistry is becoming disrupted as well.



Drugs are creating a battery of new diseases such as aplastic anaemia, a potentially fatal disease of the bone marrow that is caused by a leading antibiotic.

The thalidomide used between 1956 and 1961 had been tested as rigorously as most drugs released on the market, yet this did not prevent the tragedy it produced for thousands of mothers who gave birth to horribly deformed babies. Since that time two other drugs, Bendectin and Debendox, have been known to cause birth defects.

The patient population has unwittingly become human guinea pigs for the modern drug industry. Most at risk are

females, who make the majority of doctor visits, and the elderly, who often take lethal combinations of drugs by mistake.

As in the cases of asbestos contamination, giant drug firms like Ciba-Geigy and Lilly have been caught concealing important information from the public about their products. International drug firms often test out their products in underdeveloped countries before moving them into the market of the advanced capitalist countries. In some instances (like the case of the contraceptive Depo-Provera) they have even sold them in Europe after knowing they caused serious side effects.

Drugs have served as a mixed blessing for modern humanity. There is no need to dispense with the development and use of drugs. What is needed is to remove the profit motive from the production and marketing of them. The same is true of modern medical technology.

There has never existed a more crying need for the institution of socialized medicine than now!—L.T.

The ozone layer

When the medical risks of the depletion of the ozone layer began to be acknowledged in the scientific community, international conferences were held worldwide. This led to the signing of the Montreal Protocol by the major nations, which limits the production of chlorofluorocarbons used in aerosol sprays and insulation and sets guidelines to phase them out.

Even with these regulations in effect (which are voluntary) the Environmental Protection Agency predicts there will be an increase of 9.5 million cases of skin cancer and a huge rise in immune-system diseases caused by the increase in ultraviolet light that has already occurred.

More ultraviolet light is reaching the earth than at any time in human history. For every 1 percent loss in ozone, there

is a 2 percent increase in ultraviolet light. A 2.5 percent loss in ozone, which has already been detected over areas of the Northern Hemisphere, could lead to a 10 percent increase in skin cancer.

Less discussed is the damage that ozone depletion causes to the immune system. One immunologist, Margaret Kripke, stated: "We know there are immunological changes that occur in humans exposed to ultraviolet light. What is important about that is the potential for that to influence the incidence of certain infectious diseases."

It is estimated that 10 to 12 million people in the United States suffer from auto-immune diseases. Is it too extreme to suggest that the epidemic of this type of disease may be environmentally related?—L.T.

EARTH DAY
20th Anniversary Rally

April 21, 1990

Mall, RFK Stadium

Washington, D.C.

For more info, (202) 547-1990

Amtrak workers face dilemma of strategy in possible strike

By MARK SCHNEIDER

BOSTON—Close to 25,000 Amtrak employees are facing a strike for the first time in the history of the national passenger rail system. After 18 months of negotiations, every sign indicates that the employers are pressing to impose a major defeat on the rail union.

Such a defeat would then serve as the model for a master agreement with other railworkers. A few years ago, the same tactic was tried on Guilford Industries' Maine Central Railroad, owned by Timothy Mellon. It was thwarted when the solidarity of railworkers along the line forced the employers to back off, at least temporarily.

"If there's no contract by April 1," said a national spokesperson for the union, "I

Mark Schneider is an Amtrak employee and member of TCU 1089 in Boston.

would say we'll call for a strike vote of the membership. After that, the president [Bush] would probably order a 90-day cooling-off period—[under the Railway Labor Act] after which time a shutdown would begin." Despite federal mediation last year, no progress has been reached on a contract.

A major issue in dispute is an attempt to impose huge cutbacks in healthcare coverage. According to the December 1989 issue of *Interchange*, journal of the Transportation Communication International Union (largest of the railroad unions), "The settlement [wanted by management] would come directly from members' pockets."

Another unresolved issue is the five-tier entry wage instituted in the last contract. New hires begin at 75 percent of the full wage scale and take five years to catch up, at 5 percent annual increments. This has naturally led to a high turnover among junior employees in what was once a more stable

workforce. The union seeks to recover past losses suffered under "concession bargaining" policies.

Amtrak workers have traditionally negotiated their contract as part of a master agreement between most of the companies and the numerous railroad unions. Two contracts back, Amtrak workers "deferred" a 12 percent pay hike granted to other railworkers during the inflationary 1970s. Amtrak, as a passenger carrier, said it did not have the money.

When negotiations in the most recent contract failed to recover the 12 percent, Amtrak workers indicated in a poll that they preferred to conduct a separate negotiation this time around.

While this policy allows union negotiators to focus on the specific issues important to Amtrak workers, it gives the false impression that real victories can be won by Amtrak workers in isolation from their fellow workers on the freight lines and on

those big city commuter lines not run by Amtrak.

A separate strike by Amtrak workers, while the remaining rail and passenger lines continue to operate, would provide the employers with a tremendous advantage.

Sensing the potential isolation of the Amtrak workers, company negotiators have called for major wage and benefit takebacks. In addition, they are maneuvering in Congress to exempt the railroad's employees from the Federal Employers' Liability Act and the Railroad Retirement System.

Amtrak is a privately owned company, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation. Supervised and mandated by the federal government, it has shown remarkable profits. Its subsidy from Congress is down from \$683 million a year to a current level of \$500 million a year. The \$183 million difference has been generated in wage and benefit concessions and increased productivity.

The attacks on railworkers have proceeded steadily, with employers constantly seeking to free themselves from the constraints of union contracts which were the product of bitter struggles of railworkers in past decades. As in the past, the power of the rail unions stems from their capacity to act with unity and solidarity in the face of employer attempts to return the industry to the dark days of the U.S. labor movement.

... Eastern

(continued from page 1)

when he got us out on strike—downsize the airline. That's exactly what we went on strike to stop. We wanted it to stop and save the airline.

"[Lorenzo] was stripping Eastern. We lost 14,000 jobs in three years. And they were selling airplanes, selling routes, selling gates. So, everybody went on strike to keep this from happening, and it was a united front. And it still is. Even though the pilots and the flight attendants by law can't picket, they're still out there supporting us. Since they've taken down their picket lines, not one pilot has come back to work for Eastern.

"So what happens? We go out there, we stop them, we knock them cold. In fact, this is probably the most successful strike there has been in the airline industry. The man is losing \$3 million a day. And we still have him basically shut down. But, through the bankruptcy court, through a friendly judge in the bankruptcy court, he has done exactly what he wanted to do. He has made my airline just a shell.

"What we have gained? We can't afford to have many more strikes like these. Right now, there are three contracts up in the airline industry. Do you think those people are going to go on strike after this? No way. And the industry knows that.

"[The airlines] say, 'Hey, I can do what Lorenzo did. The Machinists haven't done anything. I'm gonna push it like Lorenzo did.' Pretty soon your average wage comes down, your benefits are lost, the whole thing.

"I don't know what's going to happen from this point on. But I think that if we had been more aggressive early on, we could have stopped a lot of this."

Recalling a meeting between Eastern strikers and Boston-area rail workers during the early days of the strike, Conley remarked:

"I left that meeting, I was so full of fight. I just wanted to shut down the rail. I knew how determined you guys were, and I knew what was happening to me—I'd just given up a 27-year career. I went to you guys for help, and the enthusiasm was overwhelming. In that context, I want to shut down the railroads. I did then; I do now."

Lorenzo has found real friends in the courts, Conley pointed out. "Basically, the bankruptcy court is controlling this strike. We got completely stripped of most of our rights. And when the company found this out, they would hold it over your head.

"I don't how many calls I got [from the company], 'If you don't do this, we're going to take you right back into court.' And, of course, they know and I know that if it goes back to the court, we lose. In the 11 months that we've been out, we have not won one

David Walsh is the past president of District 1089, Transportation Communications Union (on Amtrak). Roger Sheppard is a member of IBEW Local 103.



Eastern machinists have now been on strike for over 11 months.

decision in that court. There have been 50 or 60 decisions coming out of that court, and we have not gotten one.

"Every time Frank Lorenzo has gone into that court, for an extension or selling assets, he's got everything he wanted. Now, you tell

me, do union people belong in courts—whether it's a bankruptcy court or anything?"

"Hit'em hard"

Conley agreed that Eastern workers would have been very successful in making a call

to the entire labor movement to come out and engage in mass, peaceful picketing at the airports. "From the day you go on strike you should be planning these things—cooperation from other unions, doing what you have to do. Hit 'em hard, hit 'em quick.

"First you've got to do it yourself, then any help you get from fellow trade unionists. The last thing you want to count on is the politicians."

United action on the part of labor is needed to win strikes today, Conley stated.

"Don't you think the companies know that they have the advantage," he said. "Until we can cure that—and that's not a strike, it has to be a labor movement. We have to see what's happening to organized labor, what's happening when they close a plant and get rid of you, and they're allowed to do it—even if they just move the plant to another town.

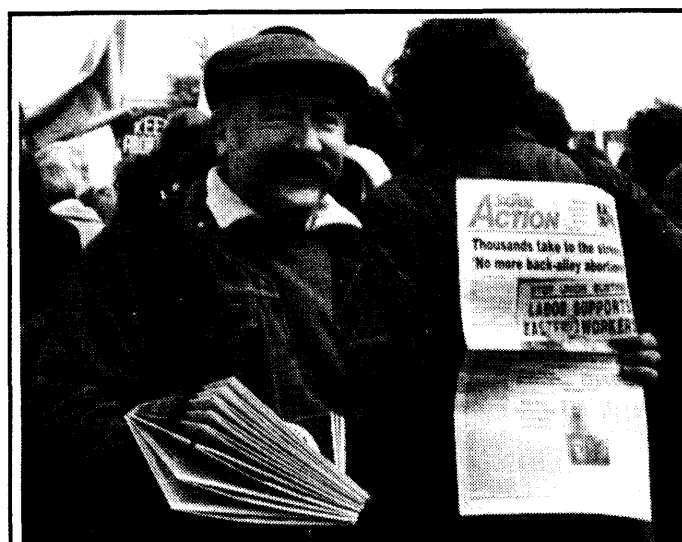
"Even some of the retail stores, they close down here and open in another town, open non-union, and pay the people less money. The rules that we operate by in organized labor have got to be changed. We've got to get a level playing field, or every strike we fight is going to be a tough strike."

"Priority must be picket line"

Commenting on the use of Ray Roger's Corporate Campaign organization in the Eastern strike, Conley pointed out that "the people at corporate headquarters will listen to you if you're doing what you're supposed to be doing on the picket line, halting their operation, shutting it down....

"Your primary thrust should be the strikers and organized labor on that picket line, protecting their rights, whether it's shutting down a railroad, or whatever it takes. Disrupting, letting people know where you're at. If that's working, and you've got enough people, and you want to do a corporate campaign where you can get pressure on the corporate people, that's fine. But your priority has to be that picket line.

"I think that it would have been a lot quicker to get the corporate managers' attention had we shut down Amtrak than it would have been to ring all the buildings in Boston."



Subscribe today!

[] 6 months for \$4, [] 1 year for \$8

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Tel. _____

Send to: 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Fran, CA 94110

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Eyewitness to the unfolding political revolution in Romania

By LYNN HENDERSON

BUCHAREST—I arrived in Romania on Jan. 5, on the first commercial flight into Bucharest's Otopeni airport since the revolutionary upheaval that swept away the Stalinist Ceausescu regime. From my first hours in Bucharest it became apparent that much more than the Ceausescu regime was swept away when the government fell on Dec. 22.

While the upheaval in Romania is part of the continuing anti-Stalinist revolt that is shaking all of Eastern Europe, events here have gone significantly further than in any of the other so-called "socialist" countries.

Throughout the rest of Eastern Europe the hopelessly discredited Stalinist heads-of-state and/or heads-of-party were ignominiously but peacefully pushed aside and new governments organized, consisting of some form of coalition with the "reformed" Communist parties.

In Romania, literally overnight, the Communist Party ceased to function or even exist; and the head-of-state, head-of-party was captured, tried, and executed. An armed uprising of the population took place in which the chief repressive instrument of the state, the Securitate, was physically crushed. The only institution of state power remaining intact is the army, and its hold is partial and tenuous.

At Otopeni airport, customs and passport control was being handled not by government officials but by young army draftees ranging in age from 18 to 22. They were supervised by newly mobilized reserve army officers in their mid-twenties.

In Bucharest itself, police were nowhere to be found. Romanians explained to me that on the first day of the uprising the people in the streets, later joined by the army, disarmed and removed the police. In some cities outside Bucharest police officials were lynched.

Armed worker self-defense guards

One of my major goals while in Romania was to interview workers involved in organizing the new free trade unions that were spontaneously springing up throughout the country. [A series of these interviews will appear in next month's issue of *Socialist Action*.—ed.]

As I visited factories, first in the Bucharest area and later in Brasov, the largest industrial city in Romania, I found that the factories were being defended by armed worker self-defense guards organized out of the factories themselves. In small and middle-size plants, such as the 2000 employee Feber computer factory outside Bucharest, these defense guards appeared to be operating completely independently.

In the largest plants, such as the Red Flag Truck factory and the Tractor Enterprise Works outside Brasov, each with 20,000 workers, the self-defense guard had been at least nominally placed under the "command" of senior army officers. But the arms remained in the hands of the workers.

This was the situation despite an official decree by the National Salvation Front demanding that all arms must be turned back over to the army.

Universal distrust of ruling Front

The National Salvation Front itself, which is operating as the self-appointed provisional government, is viewed with almost universal skepticism by both students and workers.

When asked about the Salvation Front, a common response from representatives of the newly forming trade union units is a long pause followed by the simple statement that, "We support the program of the National Salvation Front, but we are independent of the Front and in no way connected with it."

They go on to explain that the Front is a



A first-hand account of the new situation in the only Eastern European country to experience a mass armed uprising

temporary formation and its primary function should be to organize elections as early as possible—and then go out of existence.

Individual workers and students are much more blunt. They openly question who chose the members of the Front. While they were fighting in the streets against Ceausescu's Securitate, how is it that the Front became the provisional government? Why do so many leading figures in the Front have ties to the old Ceausescu government?

Many of the Front's actions are also viewed with open suspicion. These include the decree demanding all arms be turned over to the army, the speedy outlawing of the death penalty before those who have ordered and carried out the most terrible atrocities have even been tried, and the Front's constant wavering on popular demands calling for outlawing the Stalinized Communist Party.

Setting up new unions

In every factory I visited, workers were deeply involved in the first steps of setting up new democratic unions. Initially this was happening on a very local level, in individual departments and work sections. There was intense interest in the question of democracy and how democratic control over the new unions could be assured.

During my interviews I made the point that the Western press and Western govern-

ments all drew a virtual equal sign between "democracy" and private ownership of the factories. I asked them what they thought of that, and if they thought this was the direction in which Romania would or should go.

The idea that democracy meant privatization of their factory was overwhelmingly re-

jected everywhere I went. While you could find workers who thought that they could do better under a system of private ownership, the large majority of workers felt that the demise of the Communist Party opened up for the first time the opportunity for workers to control their own work place and operate the plant cooperatively.

It should hardly be surprising that some Romanian workers might think they could do better under a capitalist market economy. They probably concluded that they could hardly do worse than they've done in the past few years under so-called socialism.

Stagnating economy

The economy in Romania, like in the rest of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, has been essentially stagnant for the entire decade of the 1980s.

Despite the dead weight of a parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, Romania had a respectable, while not spectacular, rate of growth in the 1960s and 1970s, averaging around 5.2 percent yearly. This was a higher rate of growth in GNP than the United States has achieved since 1839.

But in the 1980s, Romania's rate of growth stagnated at zero, and during the first half of the decade Romania even experienced an absolute fall in GNP, largely due to bureaucratic mismanagement and widespread corruption by the ruling Stalinist party.

The parasitic character of Stalinist bureaucracy was dramatically exposed when public pressure forced the National Salvation Front to announce on Jan. 18 the confiscation of all property and assets privately held by the defunct Communist Party.

Included among these were 21 large palaces used by Ceausescu and his wife. Silviu Brucan, a member of the Front's executive committee, also revealed that the assets included huge business enterprises directly held by the party—for the party. "The business of the Romanian Communist Party was business," commented Mr. Brucan.

Altogether, 60 industrial enterprises were run directly by the party under a holding company called Carpati, the Romanian word for the Carpathian Mountains. Annual output totaled 60 billion leu and profits amounted to 2 billion leu. The leu is officially traded at 9 to the dollar.

In addition, the Communist Party under Ceausescu directly owned 123,500 acres of agricultural land on which 45 agro-industrial enterprises, employing 18,000 workers, produced an annual total of 40,000 tons of meat, 20,000 tons of milk and 40 million eggs. These agricultural goods were apparently distributed almost exclusively to party members.

Besides the 21 palaces, Mr. Brucan re-

(continued on page 10)

INSIDE:

- Interview with Romanian students
- Rail workers set up independent unions
- Student rally underscores suspicion of new gov't

...political revolution in Romania

Lynn Henderson/Socialist Action



(continued from page 9)

vealed that Ceausescu also maintained "41 residential villas" and 20 hunting lodges for himself. These, too, were confiscated and are now "the property of the Romanian people and state," he said.

Meanwhile the standard of living of most Romanians has been ruthlessly driven down over the last 10 years by Ceausescu's drastic

austerity program. Wages, medical care, and social programs were severely cut. Even the consumption of basic foods was severely reduced through Ceausescu's euphemistically entitled "Scientific Feeding Program."

Paying back the IMF

The purpose of Ceausescu's austerity program was to generate hard currency with which to continue payment on Romania's

\$11 billion debt to the imperialist-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other such lending institutions.

Ceausescu's austerity program won him praise and support throughout the West. President Richard Nixon courted him as a mediator. Queen Elizabeth II awarded him an honorary Knighthood and put him up in Buckingham Palace. Rosalyn and President Carter entertained him, and Romania was

granted "most favored nation" trade status by the United States, the only Warsaw Pact country to be so treated.

Indeed, up until just recently, Ceausescu was portrayed throughout the West as a "reformer," a kind of early Gorbachev. And his austerity program is strikingly similar to the austerity programs being projected throughout Eastern Europe by the newly formed coalition governments which include "reformed" Communist Parties.

In Poland and Hungary these austerity programs have actually begun to be implemented, with the resulting appearance of unemployment and Depression-style soup kitchens in Warsaw and Budapest.

However, in Romania today, the situation is qualitatively different. The revolutionary explosion that occurred there contains elements that frighten both the Gorbachev Stalinists and Western imperialism.

The complete sweeping away of the Communist Party apparatus in an armed revolutionary uprising, the inability of the Gorbachev "reformers" to quickly re-establish control over the situation, and the unlikelihood that Romanian workers—arms in hand—will peacefully submit to further austerity measures are not examples that either Western imperialism or the new "reformed" Gorbachev Stalinists want to see spread.

At one point, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker even went so far as to publicly suggest to Gorbachev that the Soviet Union consider sending troops in to aid the provisional government of still-tainted Stalinists.

Neighboring Yugoslavian Stalinists also got the message quickly. After watching round-the-clock TV broadcasts from Romania in which a formerly docile working class rose up, executed a dictator, and jailed other top communist leaders, a high party official was moved to say in the *New York Times*: "Romania was the turning point

Rail workers set up independent unions

The following is an interview with Ionel Chiru, the chief editor of the newspaper *Railway Struggle*.

The interview was conducted Jan. 8, 1990, in Bucharest by Lynn Henderson, a railroad switchman/brakeman and member of the United Transportation Union. Henderson is also on the editorial board of the newspaper *Straight Track*, which is published by a coalition of railroad union members across the country.

Also participating in the interview is Christian Mokanu, a Romanian railroad worker who acted as the translator.

Railway Struggle is the largest newspaper aimed at railroad workers in Romania with a circulation of 150,000. It first began publishing in 1932 and played a significant part in the 1933 Romanian general strike in which railroad workers played a leading role.

After the general strike was crushed by the government and the fascist Iron Guard, *Railway Struggle* was outlawed until 1945. However, even under the fascist government, the paper continued to appear as an illegal underground publication.

In the post-war period, it was one of the few publications in Romania that was able to maintain a degree of integrity with workers during the rule of the Stalinized Communist Party. The day after the Ceausescu government fell, every newspaper in Romania changed its name. The exception was *Railway Struggle*, whose reputation allowed it to continue publishing under the same name and masthead.

Socialist Action: How did the railroad unions function during Ceausescu's regime, and how are they functioning now since the

revolutionary uprising that swept Ceausescu away?

Ionel Chiru: During Ceausescu's rule the railroad unions and all trade unions in Romania were like the fifth wheel on a car. They were irrelevant. Because of the terror policies of the state they had no real rights and no real power to defend the interests of their members.

I will give you an example. One day a telephone call comes from the Ministry of Work: "This week everyone will report to work on Sunday." The union representative says this is unconstitutional, this violates the law limiting the work week to six days, every worker is entitled to one day of rest per week.

After an hour he returns, apologizes for saying we have a legal right *not* to work on Sunday, and says, "I have been ordered to convince everyone to report to work this Sunday."

Perhaps you don't know this, but under Ceausescu the Minister of Work was also president of the Romanian Labor Federation. The unions were not unions, they were phantom unions. They had no real right to negotiate for their members, and certainly no right to strike. To strike was a criminal act, an act of treason.

Despite this, there were many small, unauthorized strikes, and also some very large ones, for example in Brasov [the largest industrial city in Romania.—ed.] in 1987, at the August 23 Industrial Complex here in Bucharest, in Constanta on the Black Sea, and others.

But these were quickly crushed by the Securitate and knowledge of them was suppressed. Only now are we finding out about

many of these struggles.

S.A.: I understand that new free unions are now being formed throughout Romania. How is this being accomplished?

Chiru: Yes, this process is just beginning and it is taking place on the local level. The free unions are being formed in individual work places, departments, and institutions. Later, I think, if they decide to, they will affiliate together in more general unions.

Here on the railroad, the initiating committee first proposed forming a general union for all railroad workers. But other workers said this is not correct, we cannot force everyone to join us; first let everyone form their own units in their own work places and departments—then we can affiliate into a general union.

S.A.: What is the relationship of the new unions to the old union structure? Are they growing out of the old union structure or are they a completely new development?

Chiru: They have absolutely no relationship to the old unions. On the day the Ceausescu government fell the old union structure disappeared. The old union structure was completely an instrument of the Ceausescu government; there was no question of superimposing the new unions on it. Officially the old unions have not been dissolved, but they have disappeared.

S.A.: You mentioned an "initiating committee." How was this formed?

Christian Mokanu: Yes, I'm curious, too, because I don't know. I was on the barricades and while we were fighting and the bullets were flying somebody had the power to stay in their homes and make programs.

But for sure, they are not our people. They

are old people with old conceptions. We are fighting now to throw out every kind of old thinker. The dictator could not have been what he was if he was not served with great fidelity by many friends.

Chiru: When Ceausescu was thrown out, everyone's mind was blown, everyone was delirious with joy and disbelief. All the structures of the state disappeared in the same day, everything collapsed like a castle of cards. This included the phantom unions.

In this revolutionary turmoil and political vacuum, there came forward, spontaneously, individuals with different kinds of qualities and non-qualities—some good, some bad—all of which have yet to be judged by events and the people.

They took power by forming initiative committees: in the government (the National Salvation Front) and in the universities and every sphere of political and social life, including the unions.

Here in the rail center in Bucharest, the most active people—it remains to be seen if they are the most correct—formed themselves into an initiating committee and, taking the communications and proposals that were coming from rail workers across the country, drew up the proposed free union platform that is printed in this week's issue of *Railway Struggle*.

In the process they also drew on the memory and experience of the free trade unions that existed in Romania before World War II.

S.A.: Then what has yet to happen is meetings of rail workers where they have elected delegates to represent them?

Chiru: No, that's just beginning to happen. The railroad is very important in Romania. It is seen as the "Second Army of the Nation." From the first day of the uprising, everyone felt it was of prime importance to keep the transportation system operating.

There was no time for meetings; everyone was at his duty. That doesn't mean there wasn't discussion. In every railway station, in every office, in every switching yard, proposed programs and ideas concerning the new free union were being discussed and being sent into the center.

S.A.: The new unions that are beginning

here. Now there is a sense of panic. Romania suddenly made the possibility of violence and revenge very real."

Imperialist transmission belt

The economic crisis in the so-called "socialist" states is deepening. The bureaucracy's rule is a prime factor in this process. Centralized planning without democracy is leading to ever-greater bureaucratic inefficiencies and stagnation.

As the economic crisis in these states deepens, the bureaucracy's primary concern is to save itself and preserve its privileges. Either directly, or where necessary in collaboration with other forces, it is prepared to maintain its privileges by imposing brutal austerity programs on the working class.

But increasingly the bureaucracy sees that its only long-term option is to allow the penetration of world capitalism directly into these states and allow market relations to develop without the check of workers' democracy.

It is the bureaucracy itself that represents the growing danger for the restoration of capitalism. It is the bureaucracy that functions ever-more openly as a transmission belt for the introduction of bourgeois ideology and practice into these states.

But how can democratic workers' control be established in these so-called socialist states? Can the bureaucratic caste, in whose hands the power and wealth are now concentrated, be peacefully reformed out of existence? There is no evidence to indicate that this is a realistic possibility.

These entrenched bureaucracies cannot be reformed—they will be removed only by a revolutionary force. Their removal will require a political revolution that will completely sweep away the Stalinized bureaucracy and create a new government based on democratic workers' control. And, as always, there will be fewer victims the more bold and decisive is the attack.

Need for revolutionary party

But boldness and decisiveness in and of itself are not sufficient; preparation and organization are required. Only through the cre-

ation of new revolutionary Marxist parties will workers in these states have the necessary tools for carrying such political revolutions through to a successful end.

What are the prospects for successful political revolution in Romania? The armed uprising, the crushing of the Securitate, the disintegration of the Communist Party, and the emergence of armed self-defense committees have taken the Romanian workers further down the road toward political revolution than anywhere else in Eastern Europe. But the question is far from decided.

While the Communist Party has disintegrated, the Stalinist bureaucracy is still in place throughout Romania. We can be assured that it is desperately maneuvering to re-establish its control. And it is not without powerful allies both in Gorbachev and Western imperialism.

The use of the army officer corps to declare a Polish-style martial law, under which the bureaucracy could reassert its control, must be an alternative that is seriously being considered.

While the emergence of the new free trade-union movement represents a giant step forward for the Romanian workers, Solidarity in Poland is a clear example that the simple organization of independent trade unions, however necessary, is insufficient for carrying through the political revolution. A revolutionary Marxist party is required.

As of yet Romanian workers have little consciousness of this necessity. Today a very contradictory situation prevails. Romanian workers are discussing and debating politics as never before in their history, yet they also commonly express the opinion that they want nothing to do with politics.

Workers in the new independent trade-union committees invariably express the opinion that the unions should have nothing to do with politics. They are still reacting to a period when factory directors, raises, new apartments, and even decent food was determined by ties with the Communist Party. For Romanian workers this is what politics means.

A universal characteristic of Stalinist rule is that everything is politicized—except pol-



Romanian youth look on the new government with a healthy distrust.

itics which is utterly depoliticized.

It is this disorienting and demoralizing heritage that Romanian workers and workers

of all Eastern Europe must surmount in the road to political revolution and real workers' democracy. ■

to emerge, what is their relationship to the National Salvation Front?

Chiru: The program of the Salvation Front has been accepted by the new unions. In union problems, politics and economics are always closely intertwined. I think the unions accept the general program of the Front at this time out of necessity.

You have to realize that for 40 years we have been a non-political people, a non-political nation. The Russians determined our politics. They imposed here a so-called socialist party, a so-called communist party that was our government.

We are now learning what politics means. We are now learning what unions mean, what democracy means. We are students in a new university, the university of democracy and freedom, and it takes time.

In my opinion the movement for the new free unions, like the national struggle for freedom and human rights, is like a newborn child who is trying to learn to walk. It is difficult at first, but once we learn we will take giant strides.

S.A.: Have rail workers begun to use their new unions to raise grievances and demands for changes in their wages and working conditions?

Chiru: Yes, and next week's issue of *Railway Struggle* will devote considerable space to printing demands received from railroad workers around the country. We think it is important to print these in order to break down remaining fears and reservations about making demands and raising grievances.

Many of the grievances being raised are concerned with rights and conditions which we supposedly already have on paper, but which have been consistently ignored and violated.

S.A.: Can you give me some concrete examples of the things that are most frequently raised?

Chiru: The most frequent demands center around wages and hours of work. Constitutionally we are supposed to have an eight-hour workday. But normally under Ceausescu's regime we've been working 10 and even 12-hour days.

Originally we were paid overtime for this.

But under Ceausescu it was cut and cut until all overtime pay disappeared.

Then they even refused to pay us full wages for the total hours we worked. The Ministry of Work would announce that over the last six months the railroad industry only fulfilled 70 percent of the plan, so railroad workers will only be paid 70 percent of their wages.

Originally, safety clothes, shoes, and equipment were purchased by the enterprise. Now the worker is forced to pay for it.

Railroad workers have a railroad pass which lets them ride the railroad system without cost, but this was cut to the point where now the pass is worthless.

Many of the letters and complaints concern the question of medical leave. If you were injured or became ill and couldn't work you were entitled to paid medical leave. But in the last three years this was discontinued.

In 1977, Ceausescu passed a forced-work law in which everyone was forced to donate a week of their vacation to work free for the state. Just like a slave. If you did not want to give up this week you could pay a tax instead of working, but the tax was 270 leu per day, which is more than any worker makes in a day; more than even a government minister officially makes per day.

S.A.: How did press censorship work under the Ceausescu regime. Was it formal or informal?

Chiru: It was an officially constituted censorship. Every week the text of the articles was put in an envelope and taken to the propaganda department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party where a so-called specialist would check it over.

At the 10th Congress of the Communist Party 12 years ago, Ceausescu announced the end of censorship, but it was a lie. If anything, censorship became tighter.

Even though it was difficult, we were able to raise questions of workers' rights and conditions by quoting the text of the constitution and laws and contrasting them with the practice and reality.

We had a column in the paper that was protesting the cuts in pensions and medical benefits that Ceausescu was imposing on re-

tired railroad workers.

After a while, the censor became frustrated and we were forbidden to write about retired workers. So we changed the title of the column to "Homage for Work" and continued to raise the same questions.

S.A.: Could you expand on some of these cuts that were being imposed on retired rail workers. In the United States lately, there have growing attempts to cut the pension and medical benefits of rail workers.

Chiru: This is a very interesting question you've raised. Railroad workers had a very good medical plan here. Normally each major industry had its own medical plan, which is usually better than the national health plan.

We also had a system of vacation cabins on the Black Sea for railroad workers and they [the government] took it away.

You see this building across the way [he gets up and points to a large hotel across the square near the main Bucharest passenger station]. It is now called the Astoria Hotel. This was our hotel built with our money—railroad workers' money. Not one leu of state money was used to build it. It was used by out-of-town train crews on layovers. Ceausescu took it away from us.

We had four big hospitals for railroad workers. Now we have only two, even though we still have the same number of workers—600,000—working on the railroad. They told the retired workers they could no longer use the free railroad medical plan but had to now use the national medical plan where they had to pay a portion of the bill.

But this led to one of the few victories by workers during the Ceausescu years. The retired workers flooded the system with many, many claims day by day and month by month until after two years the government, in exasperation, let them return to the railroad medical plan.

In Romania, railroad workers have a long history as the most revolutionary sector of the population. Railroad workers in 1933 led the general strike against the government and the fascist Iron Guard.

Ceausescu hated the railroad workers. He tried to eliminate from Romanian history

any mention of the role of railroad workers in strikes and struggles for human rights.

He hated us, but he was also afraid of us because railways have their own communication systems and phone system, which the Securitate didn't have complete control over.

Also, railroad workers, by the nature of their jobs have to travel from city to city. They made it harder for Ceausescu to suppress the knowledge of the strikes and struggles that were occurring in various cities around Romania.

S.A.: As you explained, under Ceausescu the unions didn't have any independence from the government. Is there a recognition now that it is important for the unions to be independent, even if the government is not a Ceausescu government? Is there a consciousness that the unions have to be independent of the National Salvation Front?

Chiru: The new unions will be completely separated from the state power. They will be completely independent. They will not have any connection with the political structure, including the National Salvation Front. That is one of the points in the proposed platform.

S.A.: Let me observe that this is not easy, especially for railroad workers. Governments often raise the claim that the railroads are strategic—as you say here "the second army of the nation." And the government says railroad workers cannot be allowed to strike or disrupt this strategic service.

In the United States, the right of rail unions to strike is severely restricted by the government. Historically we have defended our rights and working conditions only by coming into direct conflict with the government.

Chiru: The principle has to be that this union is not in any way under the control of the government. Of course—knock on wood—if there was a war, we would have to carry guns, and troops and supplies without disruption. That is our duty. But in time of peace we must resist any attempt to erode our rights as workers and we solidarize with you in the United States in defending your rights against government actions. ■

Interview with Romanian students: 'Ceausescu's execution greeted with joyful demonstrations'

The following is a Jan. 6, 1990, interview with two students, Danilscu Calin, 21, and Jeannette Tare, 22, at the University of Bucharest. While the campus was officially on break, many students were present organizing for a rally the following day to launch the new Independent Romanian Student Union.

Socialist Action: I understand that the action which initiated the revolutionary events that swept Ceausescu out of power was a demonstration on Dec. 17 in Timisoara. Was this demonstration spontaneous and what provoked it?

Danilscu: Yes, it was an entirely spontaneous demonstration. It occurred when the authorities tried to force a Protestant priest to move to another town. He was a priest of the Hungarian minority here and had spoken out against Ceausescu.

On Saturday the 17th, there was a peaceful and calm demonstration against this persecution. But the Securitate fired into the demonstration, killing many, many women and children because they were in the front ranks of the demonstration.

Elena Ceausescu gave the order to fire, because Ceausescu was out of the country in Iran.... But in the following days the people of Timisoara continued to demonstrate in even larger numbers, and the Securitate continued to shoot into the crowds.

S.A.: What occurred next?

Danilscu: On Dec. 21 Ceausescu returned from Iran and ordered a demonstration in Bucharest against the demonstrations in Timisoara. He forced the assembling of a crowd of 100,000 in the Palace Square in front of the Communist Party headquarters.

He was so self-deceived as to assemble such a crowd at this time. It was a real reflection of his megalomania.

He began his speech by telling us that the people demonstrating in Timisoara were terrorists and loafers and were organized from the outside by enemies of Romania.

S.A.: How did the crowd react to his speech?

Danilscu: At first a lot of people started to cry. Then people started to shout "Down with Ceausescu!" And more people joined in shouting "Down with Ceausescu, Down with his lies!"

And people got angry and began chanting in unison, "Ceausescu, don't forget we want shoes made of your skin!" [Ceausescu traces his supposed proletarian roots to his claim that he worked as a shoemaker in his youth.—ed.] And the crowd chanted this over and over. In Romanian the chant rhymes and has a very distinctive rhythm.

Ceausescu was completely stunned by the crowd's defiance and ran away. He left the balcony and the next day as demonstrations continued he fled the capital by helicopter.

Immediately demonstrations broke out in towns and cities all across Romania. In my home town of Ploiesti my brother called me and told us of a demonstration of 50,000! Mostly workers from the petro-chemical industry.

Almost all these demonstrations outside Bucharest were peaceful but in Bucharest, almost from the moment Ceausescu left the balcony, the Securitate began shooting into the crowds, killing many people. But the people were not afraid any longer and we fought back and the soldiers, who refused Ceausescu's orders to fire on the crowds, joined with us against the Securitate.

The terrorist actions of the Securitate continued right up until the time Ceausescu was finally caught hiding in a little town about 100 kilometers from Bucharest and executed on Christmas Day.

Ceausescu's execution was greeted with joyful demonstrations. These demonstrations also were characterized by very creative slogans that rhyme in Romanian. "Today is the Christmas the crazy man died!" "Ceausescu and his wife, they destroyed our childhood!"

S.A.: How many people were killed by the Securitate in this fighting?

Danilscu: On Dec. 21, the day of Ceausescu's speech, I think over 1000 were killed in Bucharest.

S.A.: But what is the figure for the entire week throughout the country? In some news accounts I've seen figures as high as 60,000 mentioned.

Danilscu: No. The 60,000 figure would be for the entire 25-year length of Ceausescu's regime. But in the fighting to overthrow Ceausescu I think the figure must be close to 10,000 killed.

S.A.: What is your opinion of the National Salvation Front? People seem very suspicious of the Front. There is even a dispute in the press as to when it came into existence; spontaneously during the uprising against Ceausescu, or secretly as long as six months ago.

Danilscu: Yes, we are very suspicious of the Salvation Front. Who chose them? How is it that while some people were fighting the Securitate in the streets, other people had the time to set this front up? I don't like it that Iliescu [President of the National Salvation Front] is an old schoolmate of Gorbachev. I suspect it's true that the front was set up six months ago.

Why is it that they have not put more food into the stores? Romania is a very rich agricultural country. Why do the shops still not have sufficient bread and potatoes, meat and butter and milk?

I think we must unite with the workers to demand that this food be brought into the

shops. The Salvation Front thinks the revolution is finished now. I think it is just beginning.

The Salvation Front has also done some positive things. They have cancelled a number of the laws and decrees proclaimed under Ceausescu, including rescinding all of Ceausescu's honors, titles, and medals.

The Front has abrogated Ceausescu's Scientific Feeding Program. Ceausescu wanted to export most of Romania's agricultural production to make payments on the debt to foreign banks, so he told us that eating too much would make us ill and under the Scientific Feeding Program we were limited to 2000 calories per day.

S.A.: How was this limit enforced?

Danilscu: All the basic foods were rationed. One kilo of sugar per month, one half kilo of flour, 750 grams of edible oil, one kilo of popcorn, 200 grams of rice. These were monthly amounts! It was incredible.

Jeannette: Ceausescu had two dogs, and now we discover that he was feeding them more meat in one day than was allotted a person for two days under his so-called Scientific Feeding Program.

Danilscu: And of course black market prices were incredible; the official price for a kilo of coffee was 100 leu, the black market price 1500 leu; one kilo butter, official 50, black market 150; one kilo meat, official 30, black market 100. On average the black market price was 300 percent more. And the average worker's wage is only 2500 leu per month. [\$277 dollars at the official exchange rate of 9 leu to \$1.]

S.A.: Was anything else beside basic food rationed?

Danilscu: Yes, petrol. We were rationed to 25 liters per month. Of course there was a black market; an official price of 9 leu per liter and a black market price of 25.

Also, only half the cars were allowed to be used on Sundays and legal holidays, determined by whether the last number on your license plate was even or odd. [Romania has a six-day work week. Sunday is the only day off.]

Jeannette: And we were not allowed to use cars during certain weeks in the winter, regardless of whether the winter was harsh or not. We were cynically told this was to protect us from injuring ourselves in accidents (much laughter), but everyone knew it was to restrict petrol and travel.

Ceausescu's law making abortions illegal has also been rescinded. Ceausescu made abortions illegal in 1966. I am 22 and the result of that first year of the anti-abortion law. Many of the young people that shouted down Ceausescu in the square on the 21st were the product of the first, second, third, and fourth year of that law.

The generation that Ceausescu so desperately wanted didn't want him. Oh yes, they wanted him—to be judged. To be done away with.

Before Ceausescu's anti-abortion law, abortions cost 30 leu [a little over \$3]. Now you can again have a legal abortion for 30 leu.

S.A.: Under Ceausescu were there a lot of illegal abortions?

Jeannette: Of course. I had someone in my own family die as the result of a bad illegal abortion. I heard a doctor on the TV just in the last few days explain that Romanian medicine has become expert in treating bad and dangerous abortions as the result of the last 20 years.

Also, women were subjected to regular gynecological examinations at their workplace, and if they became pregnant were monitored to prevent them from having an abortion. This law was criminal, more than criminal.

S.A.: Did Ceausescu pass this law to try to increase the population?

Jeannette: I do not think that was the main reason. We have heard that many abandoned children were sold abroad for dollars. Also the orphanages were used as training grounds for the Securitate. They were taught to look to Ceausescu and his wife as their mother and father.

Jeannette: There was also a law requiring that all typewriters had to be registered and a sample of their type face was taken so anything typed with them could be identified. This law was abrogated.

Danilscu: The TV broadcasted for only two hours a day (more laughter). Now it broadcasts continuously. ■

Student rally underscores suspicion of new gov't



Lynn Henderson/Socialist Action

On Sunday, Jan. 7, over 3000 students rallied at the Bucharest Polytechnical Institute and proclaimed a new Independent Romanian Student Union.

The student-organized rally also gave clear indications of growing friction between the students and the National Salvation Front. A speaker representing the Front was given a less than warm reception by the assembled students.

The rally, originally scheduled to be held in Victoriei [Victory] Plaza in downtown Bucharest, had to be shifted at the last minute to the Polytechnical Institute on the outskirts of town because authorities refused to issue a permit.

Although the National Salvation Front rescinded Ceausescu's decree prohibiting demonstrations, they instituted a new regulation requiring a three-day notice to obtain a permit to demonstrate.

Using Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's visit to Bucharest that day as an excuse, they denied the students the use of Victoriei Plaza one day before the rally. For a while, the angered students debated among themselves whether to go

ahead with an illegal rally or change the site.

The young people were also angry because an official in the new government—who had been sympathetic to them and arranged for a student spokesperson to appear on TV—had suddenly been shifted from his position without explanation. Some students had even heard a rumor that he had been charged with counter-revolutionary activities.

Demands at the rally included a call for an "End to the bribery system," where some professors demanded money payments for passing grades. Students also demanded an end to the required purchase of meal cards for meals that were inedible. Another popular demand was the right to choose optional courses rather than being restricted entirely to required courses, especially required ideological courses.

A few ex-members of the apparently disbanded Communist Student Union also spoke and got a generally cool reception. Showing their solidarity, members of the Independent Polish Student Union were present with a large banner reading "We Are With You." ■

For a united socialist Germany!

By ALAIN MATHIEU, GERARD FILOCHE and DAVID CAMERON

The Berlin Wall has fallen. Millions of working people, in joy, crossed the collapsed wall, sending an unmistakable signal that on both sides of this artificial border there is one people, one German nation.

The German working class knocked down the wall. The deep reason for their mobilization was clear—to put an end to the division of Germany perpetrated in Yalta between U.S. imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy at the end of World War II.

In this sense, the political revolution under way in East Germany is not simply an additional stage in the unfolding crisis of Stalinism. It is a revolution that strikes at the entire counterrevolutionary order established at Yalta, a key component of which was the division of Germany and of the German working class.

Germany was divided in 1945 not only to weaken German imperialism, but above all to divide the German working class, the most concentrated and powerful working class in all of Europe, and to fend off the rising specter of the German and European anti-capitalist revolution following the war.

Today the collapse of the Stalinist regime in East Germany places the issue of German unity once again on the agenda. Already hundreds of thousands of marchers in East Germany have issued the call for German reunification.

"Free elections in all of Germany!" — "Neither Communists [i.e., the Stalinist bureaucracy] nor Fascists!" — "Twelve years of Nazis and 40 years of Stasis [East German secret police] is enough!" — these have been the main demands of the weekly mass demonstrations in Leipzig.

"Stability comes first"

But it is precisely at the very moment the masses are raising this call for reunification that the imperialist nations and their Stalinist cohorts are reminding them that such a demand is "not realistic at this point," that "stability" in Europe comes first, and that the German people don't have the right to reunify without the agreement of the Soviet Union, France, the United States, and Great Britain.

Even West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, under pressure from the Soviet Union and the United States, has retreated from his 10-point reunification plan. Neither the imperialists nor the bureaucrats are for German reunification—at least not under today's current conditions.

Rather, they are firmly united around the need to push back the revolutionary tide that has swept Germany and the rest of Eastern Europe. Their goal is to defend the stability of their respective camps along with the stability of the entire counterrevolutionary equilibrium established at Yalta.

librium established at Yalta.

The most lucid representatives of imperialism—especially German imperialism—continue to give lip service to the call for German unification, however. By demagogically appealing to the deep aspiration for unity among the German people, these imperialists seek to place themselves in the leadership of the German mass movement in order to subordinate it to their reactionary objectives.

But, to preserve their own interests, the imperialists must avoid unification taking place in the heat of the mobilizations of the German working class. They are for unification on the condition that it be carried out in a tightly controlled manner some time in the future—when the German and Eastern European workers have been fully demobilized.

Specific form of oppression

From the point of view of the class struggle in Europe, what is happening in Germany is of central importance.

The national question—the question of German reunification—is inextricably bound up with the anti-bureaucratic struggles of the East German workers and the anti-capitalist struggles of the West German workers. And this is so because the German working class has never accepted the violence that was imposed on it in 1945.

It is therefore essential for revolutionary Marxists to take a position, without any ambiguity, for the right to self-determination and for the reunification of the German nation. No conditions. No preconditions. This is a fundamental democratic right.

The scholastic arguments of the type, "Germany is not an oppressed nation" are beside the point. East Germany is certainly an oppressed country. It is oppressed by the Soviet Union, which denies it the right to self-determination, maintaining in power for 40 years a regime with no legitimacy and stationing 180,000 troops within its borders.

West Germany is, of course, an imperialist power, not a country dominated by imperialism. It is nonetheless the only imperialist country which is subjected to the massive presence of hundreds of thousands of occupying troops within its territory—troops which are not welcomed by the German people.

The German people's right to self-determination is violated. They are prevented from reconstituting their political unity without the agreement of World War II's four victorious powers.

Working-class leadership

That revolutionary socialists recognize the right to self-determination of the German people does not mean, however, that we favor reunification in a political void. Reunification will be carried out under the leadership of one of the two fundamental classes in



society: the bourgeoisie or the proletariat.

We are clearly for reunification to take place under the leadership of the working class. We are for socialist reunification. But the recognition of the right to self-determination is the condition for being able to wage a serious fight for a united, socialist Germany.

Kohl claims to be for German unity, but on the condition that capitalism is safeguarded. The people in East Germany are not about to oust the bureaucrats just to replace them with capitalist bosses. What they are fighting for is their emancipation, not a change of masters.

To Kohl's capitalist "reunification" plan, we must counterpose a plan for the unification of Germany based on the mobilization of the workers in the East against bureaucratic oppression, and in the West against capitalist exploitation.

It is the task of the German working class to place itself in the leadership of the fight for German reunification—to achieve its own unity as a class and to give this unification its proletarian class content.

This perspective is diametrically opposed to the objectives of imperialists and Stalin-

ists alike. For them, this approach, which could provide a formidable example for the working class throughout Europe, is profoundly destabilizing.

Some specific tasks

On the basis of this perspective, the East German workers can address the workers in the West and propose common, unified actions around a joint fight for a 35-hour workweek, an end to unemployment, the resolution of housing shortages, for democratic rights, against austerity measures, for workers' control—and, eventually, for the establishment of genuine institutions of workers' democracy—that is, soviets (or workers' councils).

Common initiatives around these issues will prepare the conditions for genuine, working-class reunification.

Another important step in this direction would be to allow full self-determination for the German people: The occupying forces of the Soviet Union, Britain, France, and the United States must withdraw from German soil!

Many on the left who oppose the reunification of Germany argue that the only kind of reunification possible today is capitalist reunification.

"In the current context," writes West German socialist Winfried Wolf, "calling into question the borders of East Germany can only mean opening the way to the absorption of East Germany by West Germany. ... The German 'national question' is but an instrument of imperialism against the post-capitalist countries." (*Inprecor*, Oct. 30, 1989)

Is this really the case? Are reunification and capitalist restoration synonymous? Hardly.

Imperialists for reunification?

The imperialists do not need German reunification to recolonize East Germany. Nor are they, in fact, pushing for German reunification. Their major spokespersons are clear about this:

• U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall: "German reunification is not on the order of the day."

• The European Economic Community, in a Nov. 28 statement: "This process [of German reunification] must take place within the full respect of the Helsinki Treaty, which calls for the respect of territorial integrity and the inviolability of the existing borders. It must be situated

Does German reunification equal capitalist restoration?

within the perspective of the integration of the EEC nations and in the context of East-West dialogue and cooperation."

• French President François Mitterand: "The will of the German people cannot override agreements among nation states which stipulate that the existence of two German states represents the best guarantee for safeguarding German interests."

• Former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt: "The German people are not the only ones who should decide the manner in which they are to live together. ... Germany is not the only nation concerned in this affair. We must not forget the four Allied powers (United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union) who are still the guarantors of Germany and who have thousands of troops stationed on German soil."

• Zbigniew Brzezinski, former President Carter's National Security Adviser: "I do not favor the termination of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which I believe would contribute to anarchy. Both alliances, as two pillars of a larger European security system, could help to preserve geopolitical

and territorial stability. Any new arrangement between the two Germans—including confederation—must be viewed in this context."

Could it be any clearer? While the imperialists give lip service to the German people's right to self-determination, they are in fact opposed to it. For them, this "right" is predicated on the maintenance of the post-war military and economic alliances and on the agreement of the four occupying powers—all of whom are concerned that the post-war counterrevolutionary order must not be disrupted.

For the imperialist powers, the German working class's deep aspiration for unity represents a serious threat—particularly in the current context of revolutionary upheaval.

Imperialism's best allies

The imperialist powers are also fully conscious that the East German Stalinist bureaucracy is affording them the best vehicle today for the gradual restoration of capitalism. This explains why the imperialists are moving fast to assist the East

German Stalinists.

During his recent visit to East Germany, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker declared: "I expressed to Mr. Modrow [the current East German prime minister] our desire to see this reform process carried out peacefully and in the most stable manner possible, and told him he could count on our assistance."

The French daily *Le Monde* summed up the meaning of Baker's East German visit: "The U.S. Secretary of State went as far as he could in supporting the East German prime minister, Mr. Hans Modrow, on whom he counts to stabilize the situation in East Germany."

The objective of the imperialists is clearly to recolonize the Eastern European workers' states, that is, to overturn the planned economies in those countries. Their best allies in this undertaking are the Stalinist bureaucrats—not the German workers who are fighting for their unity, combining in this manner the struggle against bureaucratic oppression and capitalist exploitation.

Establishing the unity of the German working class in this struggle for a government without bosses or bureaucrats poses the need to build a revolutionary party throughout Germany that can raise high the banner of socialist democracy.

— ALAN BENJAMIN

In defense of the Cuban Revolution

Dangers posed to Cuba by the Gorbachev-Bush accords



Sign reads: 'The external debt of Latin America is unpayable and should be erased.' Such slogans make Cuba dangerous to U.S.

By ALAN BENJAMIN and NAT WEINSTEIN

The U.S. invasion of Panama last December sent a signal throughout the world that the U.S. government is now willing to intervene directly with U.S. troops against any and all oppressed people fighting for their self-determination.

Seizing upon what they believed would be a popular issue at home—the war on drugs—U.S. policymakers sent in 24,000 combat troops to capture former CIA operative Gen. Manuel Noriega. In the process they leveled the working-class neighborhoods of San Miguelito and Chorrillo, killing as many as 3,000 Panamanian citizens, according to estimates in the Mexican press.

The night of the invasion, a series of U.S. administration officials and leading Congressional Democrats and Republicans were paraded across national TV to hail the invasion. One of them, Rep. Charles Hayes (D-Ill.), candidly spelled out one of the main reasons for the invasion in an interview with CNN News.

"I think the main objective of the President," Hayes stated, "was to warn Daniel Ortega and Fidel Castro that we will no longer tolerate Communist dictatorships [sic] in the region. ... The President was telling them, 'I hope you don't sleep well tonight.'"

In other words, Cuba and Nicaragua could be the next targets of a U.S. invasion.

In the case of Nicaragua, the U.S. State Department is already waging a large-scale campaign through the media to try to convince the American public that the Feb. 25 elections will be undemocratic. (According to all the polls, the Sandinistas are expected to win by a large majority.)

The United States is preparing the stage to be able to claim that the Sandinistas did not really win the elections. This could justify possible U.S. military action to install the "rightfully elected" U.S.-backed candidate Violeta Chamorro.

Fidel denounces invasion

The meaning of the U.S. invasion of Panama wasn't missed by Cuban President Fidel Castro. In a speech delivered Dec. 21, in which he denounced the invasion as a "savagely act of genocide against the people of

Panama," Castro stated that the Cuban people were fully prepared to confront and repel a U.S. invasion of Cuba.

"If they dare to invade our homeland," he stated, "they know very well what will happen. We have confronted this empire for 30 years, and the more aggressive it becomes the more we prepare ourselves to confront it with our own forces, which are sufficient to defend our homeland. ...

"One single municipality, even the smallest in our country," Castro continued, "could wage a long war against the same number of troops the imperialists have employed in Panama. So we are prepared and we are trained. ... Let the imperialists do what they will. They will never force Cuba to surrender!"

Castro was not grandstanding. The Cuban people are well armed and well trained. The Cuban revolutionary government has shown great confidence in its people, arming them thoroughly and, through mass mobilizations and rallies, informing them of the stakes involved in the ongoing struggle against U.S. imperialism.

On Jan. 30, 1990, CNN television showed millions of Cubans, "in cities across the island," demonstrating in defense of their socialist revolution and in determined opposition to American imperialist saber rattling. The significance of this is underscored, by contrast, with the millions in East Europe who have brought Stalinism to its knees. The cost to the U.S. government of an invasion of Cuba would be enormous.

"Made in Malta" agreement

But the danger to Cuba does not stem solely from U.S. imperialism. Prior to the Malta summit last December, President George Bush appealed to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to put pressure on Fidel Castro to stop arms shipments to Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Bush was essentially demanding that Gorbachev rein in the Cuban leadership in exchange for increased U.S. aid to the Soviet leader's perestroika reforms at home.

At a press conference following the Malta summit, both Gorbachev and Bush told reporters that they had seen "eye to eye" on events in Central America and were both committed to "resolving the conflict in the region."

Gorbachev, in fact, showed his commitment to Bush three days later by dispatching Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Yuri Nosenko to Central America to put the screws on Fidel Castro and Daniel Ortega.

According to the Costa Rican daily *La Nación* (Dec. 11, 1989), Nosenko explicitly threatened to withhold vitally needed economic and military aid to Cuba and Nicaragua if (1) all arms shipments to El Salvador were not halted, and (2) Ortega did not agree to a peace proposal that Costa Rican President Oscar Arias was going to present to a Dec. 12 summit of the five Central American presidents.

Arias's plan—which was later signed by the five presidents, including Ortega—called for political support to Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani. It equated the FMLN combatants with the contras, calling for their prompt demobilization.

The plan did not, however, stipulate any measures or deadlines for disarming the contras. The Nicaraguan president came away empty handed. It was a "Made in Malta" agreement that could not have made the warmakers in Washington more happy.

Cuba: A bargaining chip?

Fidel Castro responded with great anger to the "peace" initiatives agreed to by Gorbachev and Bush at the Malta summit. In a major speech delivered Dec. 7 to a ceremony honoring the Cuban internationalists who died in combat, Castro said:

"They speak of peace, but what kind of peace? Of peace between the major powers, while imperialism reserves the right to overtly intervene in and attack the Third World countries. There are many examples of this:

"The imperialist government of the United States demands that no one help the Salvadoran revolutionaries and tries to blackmail the USSR into ending its economic and military assistance to Nicaragua and Cuba because we express solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionaries....

"Meanwhile, that same imperialist government which is demanding an end to solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionaries is helping the genocidal Salvadoran government and sending special combat units to El Salvador, supporting the counterrevolution in Nicaragua, organizing coups d'etat in

Panama...."

In his speech, Castro also revealed his deep fear that the Soviet Union might cut off vital aid to Cuba and use the Cuban Revolution as a bargaining chip in its negotiations with U.S. imperialism.

Castro pointed to a number of Soviet magazines—including *Glasnost*, *Sputnik*, and *Moscow News*—that were "full of poison against socialism" and were "calling for an end to the fair and equitable trade relations that were established between the USSR and Cuba during the Cuban revolutionary process." Castro argued that these magazines were undermining the Cuban Revolution and therefore had to be banned in Cuba. (We will return to this question later on.)

Castro's fear is fully justified. An article in the *New York Times* reported that "the Soviet Union may be less willing to bolster the struggling Cuban economy.... Moscow's diplomats say that a decline in aid and trade is likely as Soviet industry becomes more profit-oriented and more cash is required for domestic development." (Jan. 28, 1990)

Seventy-five percent of Cuban trade is with the Soviet Union. It is estimated that the Soviet Union provides up to \$5 billion in annual subsidies to Cuba through the purchase of Cuban sugar at prices above market levels and the sale at bargain rates of Soviet petroleum, much of which Cuba then resells at a profit.

"From the crisis that has emerged in the socialist camp," Castro said referring to the Stalinized workers' states, "we can only expect negative consequences for our country."

Rejecting perestroika reforms

At the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in 1986, Fidel Castro and the Cuban leadership launched a "rectification" campaign in response to perestroika-type economic measures introduced in Cuba in the late 1970s.

Those measures had allowed the introduction of free farmers' markets and other limited forms of material incentives to enhance production. The result, however, was the proliferation of middlemen who, through speculation and price gouging, made small fortunes.

Seeing the dangers to the revolution posed by the development of this privileged and parasitic social layer, the Cuban Communist Party (CP) slammed on the brakes and returned to the campaign of moral and ideological incentives characteristic of the early years of the Cuban Revolution.

Fidel Castro and the Cuban CP also began to use extremely harsh language to condemn the pro-capitalist perestroika reforms pursued in the Soviet Union by Mikhail Gorbachev.

In his annual July 26 rally in 1988, for example, Castro warned that "Cuba will never adopt methods of capitalism.... It has never occurred to us to think that we have to copy what the Soviets do. Socialism and capitalism are diametrically different by definition and essence."

Castro went on to reject the introduction of unemployment in a "socialist" society, arguing that, "We don't want anyone jobless on the streets."

In his Dec. 7, 1989, speech, Castro reiterated these denunciations of perestroika:

"People in most of those ['socialist'] countries aren't talking about the anti-imperialist struggle or the principles of internationalism. Those words aren't even mentioned in their press.... Meanwhile, capitalist values are gaining unheard-of strength in those societies.

"Capitalism means ... prostitution, drugs, gambling, begging, unemployment, abysmal inequalities among citizens, the depletion of natural resources, the poisoning of the air, seas, rivers, and forests, and especially the plundering of the underdeveloped nations by the industrialized capitalist countries....

"Capitalism, its market economy, its values, its categories, and its methods can never pull socialism out of its present difficulties."

Incorrect response to events

Castro's strong stance against the introduction of pro-capitalist reforms in the workers' states represents a breath of fresh air. Today virtually every leader in the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe is hailing the

(continued on next page)

(continued from preceding page)

virtues of the "market economy" and the advantages of "peaceful coexistence." Castro stands alone among the recognized leaders of the international revolutionary movement in defending the need for socialism.

But Castro's response to the big events in the world today—principally in Eastern Europe—and his proposed solutions are plagued by severe shortcomings which, if not corrected in time, could prove to be fatal to the Cuban Revolution itself.

These shortcomings center around two themes: (1) the lack of an internationalist perspective to defend and extend the Cuban Revolution, and (2) the lack of institutions of workers' democracy in Cuba.

By far the most serious mistake concerns the unfolding political revolution against Stalinism in Eastern Europe. Instead of hailing these earth-shaking events, Castro has denounced them as "undermining actions by imperialism" that have "accelerated the destabilizing process in the European socialist countries."

Castro recognizes the "undeniable errors" made in the so-called socialist countries and calls for their "rectification." He nonetheless deplores the revolutionary mobilizations of millions of people against the Stalinist bureaucracies—and against the policies of the International Monetary Fund promoted by the bureaucracies.

On these questions, Castro could not be further from the truth.

The Stalinist bureaucracies in Eastern Europe cannot be "rectified," nor do their crimes and brutal oppression of the working class in the name of "socialism" amount to "errors." These bureaucrats must be swept from power and replaced with real institutions of workers' democracy such as the soviets that emerged in the course of the triumphant 1917 Russian Revolution.

It is the Jaruzelskis, Ceauescus, and Gorbachevs who have opened up the workers' states to imperialist plunder and who have paved the way for the restoration of capitalism—not the Vorkuta miners who have formed their independent union to defend their conquests or the Romanian workers who have formed factory committees and armed self-defense guards in the course of their uprising.

The Eastern European workers who have resisted—and will continue to resist—the introduction of capitalist market mechanisms are the best allies of the Cuban Revolution. Castro should embrace their revolutionary struggles and appeal to them for support in a common fight for socialism.

Were Castro to do this, he would become a source of inspiration and leadership for millions of oppressed people throughout the world who are looking for an alternative to capitalism and Stalinism.

Latin American revolution

The Cuban Revolution has been successful in resisting the imperialist blockade and siege. But it cannot ultimately survive or deepen the gains it has made unless it breaks out of its isolation in the Western hemisphere. For this to happen, the Cuban example has to be extended throughout the rest of Latin America as the road to national independence.

The situation in Latin America today is rotten ripe for socialist revolution. The IMF-imposed austerity programs adopted by every national government have created semi-insurrectional riots in Venezuela, Argentina, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. They have also fueled the development of powerful mass mobilizations (demonstrations, strikes, factory takeovers, and land occupations) in Brazil, Mexico, and Peru.

Were Castro to champion a continental campaign to cancel the imperialist debt—as he began to do in mid-1985, but then abandoned—he would give impetus to revolutionary movements that could effectively challenge the native capitalists for power and pose the need for governments based on the workers and peasants.

For Castro to do this, however, would require breaking with an incorrect strategic framework that has underlied the Cuban CP's approach to revolution in Latin America. This view was best expressed by Castro in a Dec. 24, 1984, interview with *The Guardian* newspaper. Castro stated:

"In Latin America, socialism is not the question.... Proposing socialism would not only clash with objective economic realities, it would also create obstacles to the revolutionary movement in the rest of Latin America.... I do not believe socialism is on

the agenda. What is on the agenda is national liberation."

Given that socialism is "not on the agenda," the Cuban strategy has been to look to the Latin American "anti-imperialist" capitalist factions as allies against U.S. imperialism rather than to the Latin American working class. This has led the Cuban CP to politically support such capitalist governments as that of Alan García in Peru or that of Carlos Salinas de Gotari in Mexico.

Cuba and Nicaragua

In his Dec. 7, 1989, speech, Castro emphasized the lessons of the socialist revolution in Cuba:

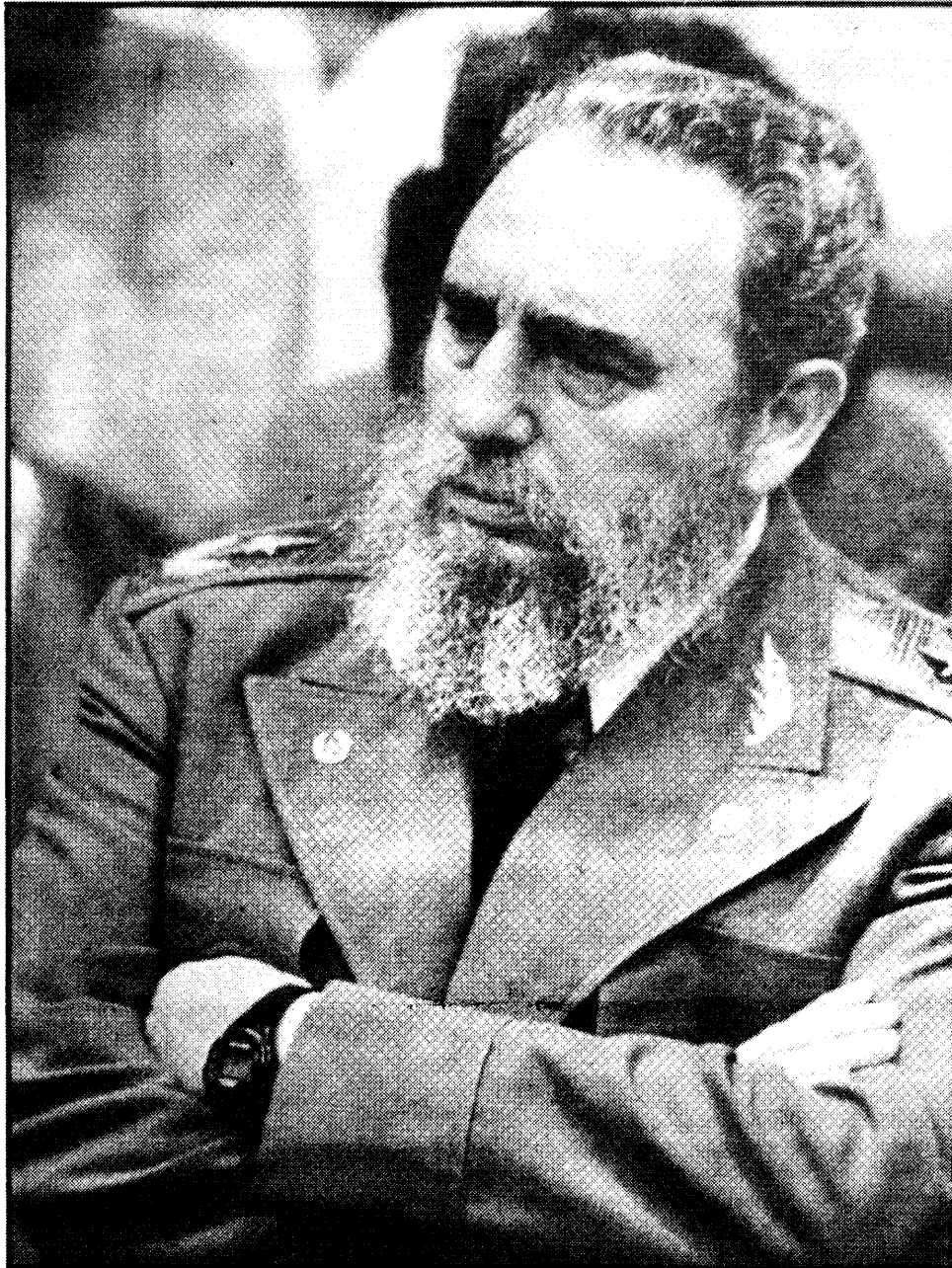
"In Cuba, our people created our socialist society in the course of a legitimate heroic

ists—a policy known as *concertación*. Uhlig writes:

"The Nicaraguan economy, despite impassioned pleas from Castro, has also been placed on a track that diverges widely from the strict Communist model. After intense debate in the ruling Sandinista Directorate last January [1989], Nicaraguan leaders rejected the near-total government control advocated by Castro and sought instead to revive their battered economy with an austerity program so conventional and market-oriented that it has been compared to the methods of the International Monetary Fund." (*New York Times*, Jan. 21)

In the past, Castro and the leadership of the Cuban CP have shown a capacity to go beyond their mistaken strategic outlook in

Peter Turnley/Black Star



'If Castro has now reached the conclusion that Nicaragua must follow the example of Cuba, this would mark an extremely important development for the Latin American revolution.'

struggle.... In Cuba, the revolution, socialism, and independence are indissolubly linked."

Fifteen years earlier, Castro had made this same point in a speech to the First National Congress of the Cuban CP. "Our national and our social liberation," Castro said, "were inextricably bound up. Moving forward [toward socialism] became a historic necessity. Standing still would have been an act of treason and cowardice that would have transformed us once again into a Yankee colony and wage slaves."

Unfortunately, Castro and the Cuban CP have been unwilling to apply the lessons of the Cuban Revolution to the rest of Latin America and the other countries of the semi-colonial world. For the past 10 years, for example, Castro has strongly defended the Sandinista government's commitment to a capitalist mixed economy.

Numerous reports have appeared in the mainstream press in recent weeks indicating that Castro may have changed his view on the Nicaraguan mixed economy. According to *New York Times* reporter Mark Uhlig, Castro has strongly objected to the Sandinista government's latest economic program of concessions to the native capital-

their genuine commitment to advance the interests and well-being of the masses. If Castro has now reached the conclusion that Nicaragua must follow the example of Cuba, this would mark an extremely important development for the Latin American revolution.

Yet Castro has not publicly stated his change of position. It is not sufficient to speak privately to the nine Sandinista commanders. Castro must address the Nicaraguan workers and peasants directly, explaining that genuine national liberation in Nicaragua requires breaking with the capitalist mixed economy and embarking on the road to socialism. Such an address, moreover, would provide much-needed direction to the ongoing struggles in the rest of Central America.

Lack of socialist democracy

Unlike the Stalinist bureaucracies in Eastern Europe and Asia, the Cuban leadership rules with the highest degree of consent and support from Cuban workers and peasants. They systematically mobilize their people by the millions in enthusiastic defense of the considerable material gains of the Cuban Revolution.

Unfortunately, however, direct forms of

workers' rule that would permit Cuban workers to decide domestic and international policy have not been institutionalized in Cuba.

While repression of worker dissidents is rare in Cuba, the workers still do not have the right to politically organize independently of the Cuban Communist Party, the only legal party in the country. Neither do they have the right to organize themselves into a tendency or current within the Cuban CP to put forward and argue for a point of view that may be at variance with the official one.

This right, including the right to elect and recall the delegates to the highest decision-making bodies of the state, is still denied the Cuban workers. The denial of institutionalized forms of workers' democratic control over all aspects of economic, political, and social life in Cuba is a serious shortcoming that weakens the Cuban revolution and the workers' state on which it rests.

Glasnost-type pressures for greater political democracy will inevitably filter into the Cuban population. Banning *Moscow News* and other Soviet publications could prove counterproductive. The Cuban leadership need not fear these or any other ideas. They should allow these publications to circulate in Cuba, but at the same time answer every charge and claim made by the Gorbachevites.

The existence of organized channels for genuine discussion, participation, and debate are not a liability or danger to the Cuban Revolution, as Castro has continuously stressed. Nor do they represent a "luxury" the Cuban Revolution could do without, as others argue.

In the face of the growing isolation of the revolution, institutionalizing direct forms of workers' democracy has become a life-or-death necessity. Workers' democracy is the best guarantee for defending the revolution and for advancing it and the world socialist revolution.

Rare historic position

The Cuban revolutionists are in a rare historic position to give a major impetus to the concept of world socialist revolution as the Bolsheviks did at the time of the October 1917 revolution.

The Bolsheviks saw their own revolution as both an end and a means to the higher goal of a worldwide proletarian victory over capitalism—the only real consolidation of their national victory.

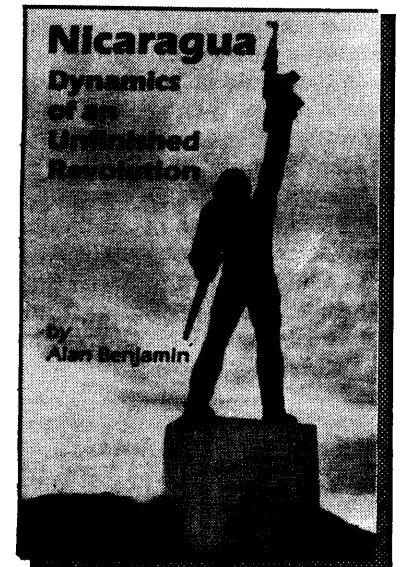
In the words of Lenin, the Bolsheviks saw their victorious workers' state as the "advanced outpost of the world socialist revolution."

The Bolsheviks understood that the workers' conquest over Russian territory must be subordinate to the extension of the revolution, particularly to the developed countries of the world. Were they alive today, the Bolsheviks would unquestionably embrace and seek to advance the unfolding political revolution in Eastern Europe.

The Communist International formed by Lenin and Trotsky in 1919 fought to construct sections of the world party of the working class in every land, fighting to overthrow capitalism.

This is the road that should be followed by Castro and the leadership of the Cuban Revolution. ■

Essential reading



Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution, by Alan Benjamin. To order, send \$8.95 (includes postage) to 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, 94110. Make checks payable to Walnut Publishing.

Mexican workers struggle at Ford plant

By JEFF MACKLER

On Jan. 22, 2500 Mexican police mobilized to remove 1500 striking autoworkers from a Ford plant on the outskirts of Mexico City, thus ending a two-week sit-in. The workers, who are now engaged in a "sit-out" adjacent to the plant, plan to continue their struggle in the face of company efforts to break their contract and decertify their union.

The plant had been occupied since Jan. 5, when 150 hired thugs joined Mexican state and judicial police in a murderous attack on a plant-gate rally of 2000 autoworkers. Armed with steel pipes and machine guns, the thugs clubbed 21 workers, sending two to a local hospital. The workers responded by occupying the plant, which is located in the industrial town of Cuautitlan.

The rally was called at 6 a.m. to protest moves by the U.S./Mexican-owned Ford Motor Company of Mexico to fire the local union executive board and eliminate a Christmas bonus. In collusion with the company and the Mexican government, Hector Uriarte, a national official of the

United Ford Workers Union (Sindicato Unico) agreed to the bonus cut by accepting a scheme to impose a special tax on the workers.

On Jan. 8 at 4:30 a.m., with only a few workers remaining in the plant, the company sent in 200 armed thugs dressed in company uniforms and carrying company identification papers. Their goal was to restore company control of the plant and prevent the local union leadership from entering.

The workers responded by organizing a union defense of their sit-in. When 2000 workers joined the effort, the retreating thugs opened fire, shooting eight and beating several others. Two days later, autoworker Cleta Nigmo Urbini died from gunshot wounds inflicted in the battle.

Three captured thugs confessed to the strikers (before being turned over to police) that they had been hired by Hector Uriarte and Guadalupe Uribe. Uribe is a representative of Mexico's largest trade-union body, the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM).

Most of Mexico's trade unions are for-

mally affiliated with Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). While they function as real trade unions in many respects, their central leaders are closely associated with the government and its anti-worker policies.

With the strike extending to other auto plants and with the workers electing rank-and-file commissions to lead their struggle, CTM head Fidel Velasquez was pressed to agree to the formation of a tripartite commission of the CTM, the National Ford Union, and the newly formed workers' commissions. This body was to reopen negotiations with the company.

Velasquez also agreed to a plant-wide referendum on whether Uriarte should be removed from his post. If he is removed, he will be replaced in a new election to the union's national executive committee.

The striking autoworkers, with the solidarity of the associated warehouse local of the Ford Motor Company, declared an indefinite occupation of the plant pending the implementation of their agreement with Velas-

quez. Terms of this agreement include a plant-wide referendum, the restoration of their bonus, the rehiring of the fired union leaders, and the bringing to justice of those responsible for the armed attacks and killing.

The company responded by initiating proceedings through the government labor ministry to break its contract with the union.

A round-the-clock plant occupation was conducted in two shifts by 5000 workers. With the exception of a handful of unarmed company security police who were allowed in the plant to observe that no machinery was being harmed, the plant was under the complete control of the workers.

The strikers are urging that messages protesting the brutal attacks on their union be sent to: Ford Motor Company, Paseo de Reforma 33, Mexico, D.F., CP 06500, Mexico. Send copies to: Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of Mexico, Los Pinos, Mexico, D.F., Mexico.

Letters of solidarity can be sent to: Democratic Movement of Ford Workers, Doctor Lucio 103, Edificio Orion A-4, Desp. 103, Mexico, D.F., Mexico. ■

... South Africa

(continued from page 1)

Washington and other imperialist capitals) now offers the possibility of "reforms" to lure Black leaders into a series of never-ending talks. Ultimately, the ruling class hopes that the Black struggle will be pushed "out of the streets and into the closet" of backroom deals.

A glimpse of what the South African government might put on the negotiating table can be seen in the "working document" drafted last year by the Broederbund, a semi-secret group of wealthy Afrikaners of which F.W. De Klerk is a member.

The document concedes that Blacks might take part in a future parliament—and even assume the presidency on a rotating basis—as long as each racial group (whites, Blacks, and mixed-race) is able to approve decisions before they become law.

These Afrikaner capitalists, of course, preferred to remain silent on the possibility of the Black majority actually ruling the country. Nevertheless, the Broederbund and other representatives of South African capitalism have had several closed-door meetings with leaders of the ANC. They seem to have found a certain meeting of minds.

Nelson Mandela agreed (in a letter to former president P.W. Botha, published in *South* in January) that negotiations would have to "reconcile" the demand for Black majority rule with "the insistence of whites that majority rule will not mean domination of the white minority by Blacks."

"Civilized" forms of capitalism?

The Broederbund's document meshes nicely with views expressed by the governments of the United States and Western Europe. It also complements the Soviet bureaucracy's "new thinking."

Over three years ago, Gleb Starushenko, a member of the Soviet Union's Africa Institute, advised the ANC to provide "elaborate comprehensive guarantees for the white population that could be enforced after the suppression" of apartheid. These guarantees would give the white minority veto power over the Black majority.

More recently, Soviet diplomats have recommended that the Black liberation movement stop talking about socialism. The movement should counter apartheid, say the Gorbachevites, with the prospect of developing a "more civilized" form of capitalism.



Blacks in South Africa still face the terrorism of apartheid's state power.

Unfortunately, this proposal has had an echo inside South Africa itself.

In its new constitutional guidelines supplanting the old Freedom Charter, the ANC indicated that it is willing to give large concessions to the South African capitalist class. In its meetings with ruling-class representatives, the ANC has put forward proposals for a "post-apartheid" government, stressing that the bosses "have nothing to fear."

In Paris last December, ANC leaders sat down for some "honest thinking" with representatives of South African capitalism. The conference was sponsored by Daniele Mitterand (the wife of the French president).

"Considerable, common ground on a pragmatic, post-apartheid economy for South Africa was found at the Paris Conference," reported the Dec. 4 *Business Day* newspaper. "It was agreed that such an approach should accommodate the need for a free-market system."

"We have gone beyond the simplistic clichés of socialism versus capitalism," declared the satisfied president of the JCI Trust, Murray Hofmeyr, who attended the Paris meeting. Naturally, nothing was said at the conference about the fundamental demand of "Black majority rule."

Conference for Democratic Future

To sit down with the capitalists in Paris is one thing, but to convince Black workers to ally with their bosses will prove more difficult. Even within the ranks of the ANC (including some leadership circles) there seems to be considerable uneasiness with proposals to "accommodate" the leaders of apartheid capitalism.

Hours after the issue of *South* containing Mandela's letter went on sale, for example, the United Democratic Front (UDF), a mass coalition allied to the ANC issued another handwritten statement by Mandela. In it, he said it was "inconceivable" that the ANC would modify its policy advocating "the na-

tionalization of the mines, banks, and monopoly industries."

The *New York Times* (Jan. 26, 1990) commented that Mandela "may have wanted to reassure Blacks that he was not about to sacrifice their interests in his talks with the government, which have been conducted in an atmosphere of secrecy that has worried some Black leaders."

Opposition also flared at the Conference for a Democratic Future, an unprecedented meeting in December in which 4462 delegates from various tendencies of the Black

liberation movement gathered together to promote unified strategy and action.

The conference was backed primarily by the ANC and other groups that have signed the "Freedom Charter," such as those in the UDF. The PAM (Pan Africanist Movement, a successor to the Pan Africanist Congress) was one group that refused to attend the conference, saying that it opposed a "negotiated settlement" and "collaboration with white liberals and employers."

The conference endorsed, by majority vote, the Harare Declaration adopted by the Organization of African Unity on Aug. 21, which put forward a series of conditions to be met in order to negotiate a "transition toward democracy." These conditions included freedom for political prisoners, legalization of anti-apartheid organizations, and an end of the state of emergency.

Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, a member of the Black Consciousness Movement, was one of the delegates who opposed adopting the declaration. "If you impose the vote of a 'negotiation' with the oppressor," he said, "you will divide the ranks of the oppressed."

And Nkosi Molala, president of AZAPO (the Azanian Peoples Organization), which had close to one-third of the delegates, told the conference: "We will be happy to be able to realize unity against the apartheid regime. But unity on what basis? What is the OAU declaration proposing to us? First of all, a transitory government, a common government with the oppressors."

"We exploited and oppressed people cannot accept that," Molala said. "We oppose to that the demand of one person, one vote, for a single constituent assembly for all the country, elected by universal vote." ■

Gorbachev's USSR: Is Stalinism Dead?



A collection of essays in defense of socialist democracy

Edited by Carl Finamore

Essays by Esteban Volkov, Pierre Broué, Susan Weissman, Nat Weinstein, Paul Siegel, Ralph Schoenman, Zbigniew Kowalewski, Gerry Foley, Hayden Perry, and Carl Finamore

Walnut Publishing's new book "Gorbachev's USSR: Is Stalinism Dead" (208 pages with photos) analyzes current events in the Soviet Union against the backdrop of the struggle for socialist democracy waged by Leon Trotsky and his supporters against Josef Stalin in the 1920s and '30s.

To order, send \$9.95 (includes \$1 for postage and handling) to Walnut Publishing Co., 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

International VIEWPOINT

A biweekly magazine published by the Fourth International. One year: \$47. Write to: 2, rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

The following interview with Jozef Pinior, a leader of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution (PPS-RD), was conducted on Dec. 10, 1989, in Wroclaw, Poland, at the time of the PPS-RD's First National Congress. The PPS-RD is a multi-tendency socialist party that was formed two years ago.

The interview was conducted by a reporter from *International Tribune*, a socialist monthly published in Paris, and is being reprinted from that magazine's January 1990 issue in an abridged and edited form.

International Tribune: Could you sum up the essential decisions of this congress?

Jozef Pinior: This was our first national congress. We adopted a political program and democratic statutes for our party and elected a new national council. Our program calls for the self-government of the workers and for democratic revolution against capitalist restoration and against all forms of Stalinist systems.

We want to be an alternative to the capitalist system and to the Stalinists. We call for mass democracy from below and for workers' self-government as an alternative to a society controlled by the market—which is what is happening now with the Jaruzelski-Mazowiecki government.

I.T.: Do you believe there is a danger of capitalist restoration, and if so, how is this being done?

Pinior: The head of the International Monetary Fund, Michel Camdessus, just visited Poland, where he outlined the economic austerity program the *nomenklatura* [Stalinist bureaucracy] and the Mazowiecki government are to carry out in Poland.

[The new program, which went into effect Jan. 1, calls for increases in prices of 200% to 500%, wage freezes, and layoffs of up to 3 million workers this year in the steel industry, shipyards, and mines.—ed.]

We oppose these measures and seek to organize the workers to defend themselves against all the attacks. At our congress, we declared that we are an opposition party to the Jaruzelski-Mazowiecki government.

Our congress adopted a resolution calling for a policy of full employment and modernization, not liquidation. We stated that the loss of important sectors of the nationalized economy would only lead to a greater economic recession.

I.T.: How are the workers reacting to the new government and to the economic situation?

Pinior: With the deepening austerity program, workers are becoming more and more pauperized. But there are still widespread illusions in the Mazowiecki government and in the free market reforms. This is because most of society doesn't really know what the free market is, what capitalism is.

Solidarity's Josef Pinior: 'People are frustrated and angry about their economic situation'



Moni Nordman/CONTACT

Most people think that a free market in Poland will produce a situation like you have in West Germany or Sweden. In my opinion, this will be impossible. A free market in Poland will be closer to a free market in Brazil or Argentina.

On the other hand, people are very frustrated and angry about their economic situation. The basic conditions of life are deteriorating with each passing day. They are looking for alternatives.

Take the case of Solidarity: We have a reformist, bureaucratic leadership, on the one hand, but we also have rank-and-file members who represent Solidarity structures in the factories.

They too have illusions in Mazowiecki, but they are looking for alternatives. They are in direct contact with the workers who confront them, asking: "What are we to do? Our material situation is bad and getting

worse."

I.T.: The new Polish minister of industry announced during a recent visit to France that within two years one-third of the Polish workforce might be unemployed. Is this possible?

Pinior: I think the working class will defend itself against unemployment and plant closures. If the government wants to impose this type of program, it will have to impose martial law and destroy the Solidarity movement. You must remember that despite their illusions in the free market, workers in Poland have a natural consciousness that the factories belong to them.

I.T.: Do you believe workers are becoming more receptive to your ideas?

Pinior: The process is just beginning. People no longer have illusions in any of the Stalinists. Now they have illusions in the free market. As these reforms start to hit

home, people will be open to other alternatives and to political discussions with us.

I.T.: What is the PPS-RD's assessment of the overall situation in Eastern Europe?

Pinior: In our opinion, there is a very deep crisis of the Stalinist system. We have a revolutionary situation in the general sense of the word. We have a situation where we can organize and coordinate our struggle throughout Eastern Europe, not just in one country. We don't believe in the possibility of socialism in one country.

I.T.: Specifically, what do Polish socialists think about the question of Germany?

Pinior: Of course, we think that Germany, as every nation, has the right to self-determination. In our opinion, as classical Marxists, the German working class is key to the advance of the revolution, and we want this movement to be socialist in character. The German working class will perhaps change the entire situation in Europe.

Former SWP leader joins Socialist Action

We are printing below a letter to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) by Caroline Lund, a former leader of the SWP who has now joined Socialist Action.

Lund joined the SWP in the early 1960s and served on its National Committee from 1973 to 1985. She wrote for *The Militant* newspaper and was assigned by the SWP to international work with the Fourth International in Paris and Brussels in the 1960s and 1970s. She worked in the women's rights movement and wrote numerous articles and pamphlets on the topic.

Socialist Action is pleased to welcome Caroline Lund, a dedicated and talented comrade, to our ranks. She joins us in general agreement with our program for world socialist revolution. This is the very same program the SWP had before it began to compromise its revolutionary cause and to turn against its own members, virtually outlawing disagreements.—Carole Seligman

Jan. 14, 1990

Pittsburgh Branch,
Political Committee,
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

Since I resigned from the party 1-1/2 years ago, I have attempted to function as an active supporter of the SWP. I have main-

tained a \$50-a-week pledge and given hundreds of dollars each to the Mark Curtis defense and Pathfinder Mural, and \$500 to each of the two Publications Funds.

I have repeatedly volunteered to help the branch in any way I can, such as painting signs, staffing the bookstore, sending out mailings, putting up out-of-town guests, etc. I have defended the party and *The Militant* at work and am known as a *Militant* supporter on the job.

I have attended forums and invited co-workers to forums, although none have been able to come. I have tried to feed information to, and work with our fraction at the mill where I work.

With the exception of two comrades (Mike and Louise), the branch has chosen to simply ignore me (while cashing my checks).

My attitude up until now has been: (1) The party is still on basically the correct political line. (2) The party's sectarian attitude toward me and Barry [Sheppard] has got to be put in a secondary position. (3) Time, and hopefully a new radicalization, will shake up the party so that it will again have the confidence to use human material like myself and Barry instead of being so paranoid and rigid.

Now something new has happened which has led me to change my thinking. I have heard that the PC [Political Committee] has in essence expelled National Committee

member Malik M. (subject to approval by the NC and convention). The expulsion was basically for raising a disagreement with a *Militant* article inside his local IAM [International Association of Machinists] fraction.

Whatever the details about this case, I am convinced from my acquaintance with Malik as a person and from my knowledge of party leadership functioning, that this suspension/expulsion is a travesty of justice and a big blow to the party.

My resignation from the party had to do with how I was treated and how Barry was treated whenever we would raise questions or differences with the "leadership" position. I was too weak then to stay and fight for more democratic modes of functioning.

Now I see that even someone of Malik's stature and contributions to the party is being cut down for simply standing up for a different political position than that of "the leadership."

I now feel that it would be stupid of me to keep trying to relate to a party that apparently sees me only as a problem that it wishes would go away. To do so would only be an excuse for prolonged inactivity.

What happened to Comrade Malik has jolted me out of my relative inactivity to want to do something to try to save the human cadres of the SWP and help actively

build the nucleus of a revolutionary party in this country.

I still feel the SWP, for all its problems, is a revolutionary party. I would apply to rejoin the SWP, and fight for my ideas as a member and builder of the party, except that I think my letter would go unanswered and unacknowledged, as past letters have.

I have decided to apply to join Socialist Action, on the basis of my general agreement with Barry Sheppard's statement "Why I Joined Socialist Action," printed in the January 1990 issue of *Socialist Action*. I was not convinced to take this step until I heard what had happened to Comrade Malik.

I urge comrades and friends of the SWP to protest the suspension/expulsion of Comrade Malik, and to do what they can to stop the drift of the SWP toward functioning as a rigid sect, by promoting a fusion of revolutionary forces in this country.

Comradely,
Caroline Lund

— SANE FREEZE —
CAMPAIGN FOR GLOBAL SECURITY

International Peace Conference:
New Politics for a New World

Feb. 15-18, 1990
Oakland Center/Hyatt Regency

Speakers: William Sloan Coffin, Jim
Hightower, Dolores Huerta, Daniel
Ellsberg, Jean Ishibashi, Rev. Jesse Jackson

For info. call (202) 546-7100

Coalition calls for national antiwar actions on March 24



On Jan. 20, over 2500 antiwar protestors demonstrated in San Francisco against U.S. intervention in Central America and, specifically, against the U.S. invasion of Panama. The action is seen as a building tool for March 24 demonstrations.

By JIM HENLE

Led by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), 70 antiwar activists representing a number of solidarity and peace organizations set March 24 for national demonstrations in Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Los Angeles; and Austin, Texas.

The call for nationally coordinated mass demonstrations against the mounting threat of U.S. intervention in Central America will be welcomed by antiwar activists from coast to coast. The actions will take place on the 10th anniversary of the assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero.

Meeting in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 15, representatives of Quest for Peace, Sane/Freeze, the Nicaraguan and Guatemalan Networks, Pax Christi, the Rainbow Coalition, Jobs with Peace, and others formally issued the call which was first approved a few days earlier at the 3rd National CISPES Convention in the same city.

The "March to End the U.S. War in Central America" has four central themes:

(1) End All U.S. Aid to El Salvador, (2) End the U.S. War Against Nicaragua, (3) No Invasions—End the U.S. Occupation of Panama, (4) Cut Military Spending—Fund Human Needs.

Other demands express clear opposition to U.S. interference in the Nicaraguan elections, U.S. funding of the contra war, and the repression in El Salvador. The call also demands the removal of all U.S. troops and bases from Central America and an end to U.S. military aid to Guatemala.

The "negotiations" demand

CISPES and the coalition calling the March 24 protests also approved a demand for a "political negotiated settlement" in El Salvador. CISPES national director Angela Sombrano and FMLN spokeswoman Gladys Sibrián both focused on this demand in presentations to the 350 CISPES activists attending the national convention.

In motivating this demand, Sibrián argued that "there is no other way out" for the Salvadoran people. In reality, however, the demand neither serves the interests of the

Salvadoran people nor does it aid in building a mass independent movement in the United States.

In the United States, the negotiations demand is usually directed to the Democratic Party, the party which many in the solidarity movement incorrectly see as a lesser evil to the Republican Party.

However, a review of the record of both parties in relation to Central America—as well as to every other war waged by the U.S. ruling class—demonstrates that the Democrats and Republicans agree when it comes to "protecting U.S. interests" abroad.

In the same vein, the argument that the call for a political negotiated solution is directed only to the combatants in El Salvador—the Cristiani government and the FMLN—ignores the fact that the Cristiani government is totally dependent on U.S. military and economic aid and therefore dances to the U.S. tune.

No nation, especially the most powerful military force on earth, has the right to determine another nation's future. Respect for the right of oppressed nations to self-deter-

mination requires that U.S. antiwar activists reject the demand for negotiations.

The most powerful demand to press on the U.S. government is for an end to all U.S. intervention in Central America and the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. "advisers" and troops. This is the central thrust of the call for the March 24 actions.

In the course of building these demonstrations in local coalitions, it is entirely appropriate for antiwar activists to seek to remove the negotiations demand.

The increasing difficulties faced by the antiwar movement were noted in a videotape message to the CISPES convention from Salvador Samayoa, coordinator of the political diplomatic commission of the FMLN. Samayoa stated, "The change in policy of the Soviet Union has given a free hand to the U.S. to use force—as demonstrated by the U.S. invasion of Panama."

Continuing subordination by the Soviet bureaucracy of the struggles of the oppressed to "peaceful coexistence" agreements with the United States has dealt a hard blow to the Central American revolution. Even the minimal aid previously doled out by the USSR to various national-liberation struggles in order to negotiate a better deal for the Soviet bureaucrats has all but ceased.

The Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe, which are crumbling in the face of mass working-class rebellion, have sought the direct assistance of the United States to save their privileges. In return, they have pledged to open the door to capitalist investment and shut it to any oppressed people seeking their aid—hence, the Soviet condemnation of Nicaragua for its alleged assistance to El Salvador's rebels.

The difficulties faced by the anti-intervention movement are not limited to the international arena. Over the past several months, CISPES has gone to great lengths to enlist the active support of trade unions and religious organizations in calling the March 24 actions.

However, in the case of the U.S. labor movement—including the 20 international unions which issued the call for the mass actions of April 25, 1987—there has been a major default. Most of the labor officialdom stand mute while the U.S. capitalists hone their war machine abroad and deepen their attacks on workers at home.

Despite the significant protests launched by church-based activists following the murder of the six Salvadoran priests, religious leaders opposing U.S. policy in El Salvador have decided to focus on ecumenical services on March 24 in commemoration of the murder of Archbishop Romero and the recently slain Salvadoran priests and religious workers. In most cases these will not be associated with the CISPES-initiated actions of March 24.

The possibility of matching the size of the previous huge protests against U.S. war policy in Central America has thus been considerably reduced. Nevertheless, CISPES and thousands of anti-intervention activists across the country can be expected to mount an important effort which should be supported by all those who seek to stay the hand of the U.S. warmakers.

CIA exposed in La Penca murders

By JEFF MACKLER

The Central Intelligence Agency is responsible for the 1984 bombing of an Eden Pastora press conference in La Penca, Nicaragua, according to a 54-page report released by Costa Rican authorities.

The report was compiled by a special prosecutor and approved by Dr. Jose Marina Tijerina, Costa Rica's equivalent of an attorney general. Based on the testimony of 50 witnesses and the transcripts of the U.S. Iran-Contra hearings, the report details how the CIA took control of Costa Rica's Directorate of Intelligence and Security by creating a special 15-member unit responsible to the U.S. Embassy.

According to the report, the unit took orders directly from a CIA agent, Dimitrius Papa. A panel of Costa Rican judges will now decide whether to formulate charges against Papa and the secret group known as the "Babies," which he directed.

Three journalists were killed in the bomb-

ing and two dozen others seriously injured. Among them was Tony Avirgan, who—along with Martha Honey and the Washington-based Christic Institute—initiated a lawsuit against those involved in the bombing.

A 1985 report written by Avirgan and Honey titled "La Penca—Report of an Investigation" argues that the bombing was designed to spark anti-Sandinista sentiment in the United States and thereby foster a climate favorable to a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua.

The bombing was also aimed at murdering Pastora, who planned to use the press conference to announce a break with the CIA-controlled contras because of their involvement in drug running and their association with the National Guard troops of deposed Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza.

The Costa Rican report recommends that murder charges be filed against CIA-linked John Hull, a Christic Institute lawsuit defendant who used his Costa Rican ranch

for the transfer of drugs and guns from Colombia to Miami. Manuel Noriega is alleged to have supplied the pilots for these operations.

The report clearly validates the Christic Institute lawsuit, now on appeal. It provides strong support in the Institute's fight against

the \$1.2 million U.S. court-imposed sanctions. [See January 1990 *Socialist Action*.]

Both the Avirgan/Honey report and the latest Costa Rican government report can be purchased from the Christic Institute at: 1324 North Capitol Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20002. Phone: (202) 797-8106.

Socialist Action Forums:

Eyewitness Report: "Revolution in Romania"

Speaker: Lynn Henderson, National Committee, Socialist Action

Twin Cities:

Feb. 21, 7: 30 p.m.
Macalester College Chapel, St. Paul

Boston:

Feb. 7, 7: 30 p.m.
Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St.

New York:

Feb. 8, Call (415) 821-0458

San Francisco:

March 8, 8 p.m.
3435 Army St., Rm. 308 (at Valencia)

Boston:

"The Legacy of Malcolm X"
Speaker: Rev. Graylan Ellis-Hagler, Church of United Cmty.; Jeane-Claude Martineau, Haitian playwright, and Kwame M.A. Somburu, founding member of Malcolm's Organization for Afro American Unity
Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St.

San Francisco:

Feb. 9, 8 p.m.
"Malcolm X: The man and his ideas"
Speaker: Kwame M.A. Somburu
March 2, 8 p.m.
"Assessment of Nicaraguan elections:
Speaker: Alan Benjamin, National Committee Socialist Action.
3435 Army St., Rm. 308, SF

Reactions mixed to Moore's 'Roger & Me'

Moore talks about his movie

By HAL VERB

Two views of Michael Moore's controversial film about the impact of plant closings in Flint, Mich.

'Your heart will fill with compassion'

By ALEX CHIS

Imagine a movie that shows the devastating effects of layoffs on a working-class town and the unsuccessful attempts of local government to alleviate the situation, and you might decide to see something that sounds more cheerful after a week at work. Resist that urge. While it's not "I Love Lucy," "Roger & Me" is a funny movie about a sad but, unfortunately, too-common situation.

Michael Moore, a Flint native, three generations of whose family has worked for GM (a great uncle participated in the sit-down strikes that led to the founding of the UAW), documents what happens when GM starts closing plants.

While touring you through the town, interviewing

workers and watching families being evicted from their homes, Moore continually cuts back to both his attempt to interview GM Chairman Roger Smith and bring him to Flint and the attempts by the local Flint power structure to "solve" the situation.

These juxtapositions lead to some of the funniest scenes in the movie. The officials seem to have watched GM commercials all their lives and to have believed that they truly represented America. The air of unreality they operate in is astounding; their idea of making Flint a tourist attraction reveals their distance from the planet Earth.

But, of course, the movie is not all funny. Your heart will fill with compassion for the people left stranded by GM's callousness, and you will walk out at the end wondering what can be done. That is the great strength of the movie.

The film doesn't give any easy answers because there were none, and this is real life. But it tells the truth about a serious problem and shows how the powers-that-be have offered no solution. And it tells that truth in a way that is accessible to anyone. I hope everyone sees this movie—if they all walk out *thinking*, that would be a great start. ■

"It's very important to me to point out that the problem isn't Roger Smith. The problem isn't even General Motors. The problem is an economic system that is unfair and unjust. It's non-democratic. It hurts a lot of people. It creates a lot of economic violence. The problem is that we have to change this economic system we live in. We have to have a say. We have to think about these things."

—Michael Moore, (*Premiere*, Jan. 1990)

SAN FRANCISCO—First-time filmmaker Michael Moore premiered his film, "Roger & Me," in a benefit for the "Plant Closures Project" at the Kabuki Theater on Jan. 10.

The film was originally scheduled to open at the Galaxy Theater. When Moore learned that janitors there were on strike, he pressed Warner Bros. to open at the Kabuki. Moore said that if the film had premiered at the Galaxy, he would have publicly declared that no one should see it. He is determined to have his way with the film.

Emphasizing this point, Moore related the conditions he insisted on before agreeing to have Warner Bros. distribute the film. The agreement stipulated that the four persons from Flint making the 60-city U.S. tour with Moore be allowed to have the film shown at union halls, that no film be shown where a picket line would be crossed, and that Warner Bros. and the director agree to buy homes for the four families shown evicted in the film.

Afterwards, I went up to Moore and asked if he would "internationalize" his film by seeing that it be shown in countries like El Salvador, Chile, and Peru. He said he intended to, and a spokesperson for the "Plant Closures Project" said they were also eager to have the film seen in Eastern Bloc countries. They didn't share the mainstream press view that these countries were seeking a "capitalist solution" that would lead to Flint-like "solutions." ■

'Revealing but frustrating'

By JOHN HALABI and ELIZABETH CAMPBELL

"Roger & Me" is revealing, but frustrating. A documentary about the GM plant closings in Flint, Mich., it depicts the new reality GM has imposed on its workers, far harsher than conditions on the line.

Unemployment, as well as crime and drug use, have shot up. A sheriff serving evictions (a former auto worker) is one of the few with plenty of work. Rows of abandoned houses—and the fact that the rat population exceeds the

human population—show the devastation facing Flint and its working class.

The movie shows how people try to cope—from selling blood to working at Taco Bell or as prison guards (seeing former co-workers enter the cells).

But the rich in Flint are doing fine, as they say themselves at the golf courses and country clubs. Pat Boone, long connected to GM advertising, advises workers to sell Amway, but the film makes it obvious that none of this is a real solution.

Yet "Roger & Me" stumbles badly in providing answers. From the mining villages of northern England to the steel towns of Allentown and Lackawanna, towns and people are being ruined by closures. It's not just GM and Flint, and it's not just Roger's fault—the whole capitalist system is to blame.

Moore is unable to provide a positive solution to the problem. Most working people probably leave the theater

with a sense of frustration, thinking that things in Flint are terrible, and that there's no way out.

"Roger & Me" presents the devastating effects of capitalism; but if you want to know how to fight back, Socialist Action's pamphlets "How Labor Can Fight Back" and "Lessons of the P-9 Strike" are a good place to start. ■

Our readers speak out

Feminism

Dear editor,

As I stood with 100 other men and women in the pouring rain at 6 a.m. one recent Saturday to protect the doors of a clinic that anti-abortionists wanted to close, I thought, "Where is *Time* magazine now?"

You know the publication, the one that in December published a front-cover story saying feminism—once glorious, once effective, once the greatest equal rights movement of all time—was dead. *Time* magazine, I concluded, ought to get out more often.

Never in my life have I seen or heard of a greater, more vibrant, more multi-issue, more multi-racial feminist movement than what is taking place today.

No wonder *Time* magazine came to the conclusion it did. They overwhelmingly quoted professional women, students from expensive

colleges, a housewife, mainstream feminist leaders and a smattering of non-professional working women.

What is wrong with this picture *Time* magazine paints? Where are the views of the most oppressed?

I'll tell you where they are. They are on the streets, defending abortion clinics, marching against poverty, racism, U.S. imperialism, AIDS, discrimination, and fascism. They are in the canneries, the factories, the sweatshops—and they are on the picket lines waging courageous battles against wage exploitation. *Time* magazine ought to go there more often.

As the feminist movement rolls into the 1990s, I see a very different picture than *Time* magazine. I see a multi-issue movement with a socialist perspective that demands permanent political and economic change, not just temporary reforms so often embraced by the white, middle-class feminists *Time* magazine talks to.

Julie Russie,
Lodi, Calif.

A crime

Dear editor,

Sandy Doyle-O'Neil's two-part series on attacks on abortion rights and the forced sterilization of poor, Black, and Latina women was very informative, but I wish there were a third part dealing with corporate crime against women.

The A.H. Robins Co. of Richmond, Va., distributed an estimated 4.5 million Dalkon shields (a birth control device) in 80 countries. The shields injured thousands of women, impairing or destroying their ability to bear children.

They killed at least 18 women in the United States alone. An estimated 66,000 women miscarried. Hundreds gave birth prematurely to still-born children or to children with birth defects.

The first Dalkon Shields were tested by Dr. Hugh J. Davis, assistant professor of gynecology at John Hopkins University, in 1968. He tested the shield on Blacks and Chicanas living in the poor neighborhood around his clinic in Baltimore.

Nowhere did Davis mention that he owned 35 percent of the Dalkon Shield stock. It was proven later that Davis had falsified the effectiveness of the shield, but the company marketed it anyway with only minor alterations.

Within a few years, 2.2 million women were wearing Dalkon Shields. They were sold to doctors for \$4.35 each, although they cost only a few cents each to manufacture.

Thousands of lawsuits have been filed against the manufacturer. The majority were settled out of court for amounts as low as \$250. In October 1987, a federal court found two officers of the company in criminal con-

tempt of court and fined the multimillionaire, A.H. Robins, \$10,000.

Before this court action, Robins had dumped thousands of suspect shields in 42 countries. He persuaded the U.S. Agency for International Development to spend \$125 million on the shields. By 1974, publicity had forced Robins to announce the withdrawal of the shield from the world market. But 44,000 dangerous shields had already been implanted in Third World women.

As long as large private corporations such as A.H. Robins are allowed to exist, no woman will have the right to choose abortion, sterilization, or childbirth. The women's liberation movement must fight against the private ownership of any corporation in the business of public health.

Victor Saxe,
Berkeley, Calif.

Eastern

Dear editor,

Writing to say I've been reading your paper for some months and I like what you have to say. It's good to see that socialism ain't dead in this country and there's still people not afraid to speak out.

However, I think you guys are making a big mistake in not talking too much about the strikes at Eastern Airlines and Pittston Coal. These are the biggest fights the workers of this country have put up since the miners stood off Carter in 1977, but I haven't seen much in SA about them.

In the January issue, Joe Ryan even seems to imply that the battle's over at Eastern. As a long-time airline worker, I can tell you that no way is that true. I see Eastern strikers

all the time who work at other airlines but are still at the pickets every week (that's the real strikers, the IAM) and they all say the same thing—they know they ain't getting their jobs back, but they are going to stay out till they take Lorenzo down.

This has had a real big effect on the workers in the other airlines. We all know that we could be next. The airline bosses all want to turn us into Continentals, no union, no nothing. A lot of guys where I work are saying that if the strikers at Eastern can make Lorenzo go bust, then we can do the same if the owners try anything against us. Nobody said that in 1983 when Continental happened, so the strike is making people think things through.

Anyway, my advice to you is to get your people out to the picket lines and really get into the fight, and the same for Pittston.

Les Moore,
Queens, N.Y.

Error

Dear editor,

In the process of editing my letter on clinic defense in Washington, D.C. [January 1990 *Socialist Action*], a factual error was introduced. The clinic at which the two women were blocked from having the necessary follow-up care is the same clinic referred to in the preceding paragraphs: the Hillview Clinic in Suitland, Md.

This clinic is nearby the Hillcrest Clinic in Washington, which had been attacked by OR the previous week (Nov. 11).

Julia Steinberg,
Baltimore, Md.

Where To Find Us

Baltimore
P.O. Box 16005
Baltimore, MD 21218

Boston
P.O. Box 1046 GMF
Boston, MA 02205
(617) 497-0230

Chicago
P.O. Box 267848
Chicago, IL 60626
(312) 327-5752

Cincinnati
P.O. Box 21015
Cincinnati, OH 45219
(513) 272-2596

Cleveland
P.O. Box 6151
Cleveland, OH 44101
(216) 429-2167

Detroit
P.O. Box 32546
Detroit, MI 48232

Los Angeles
P.O. Box 60605
Terminal Annex
Los Angeles, CA 90060
(213) 660-2891

Minneapolis
P.O. Box 14087
Dinkytown Station
Minneapolis, MN 55414

New York
P.O. Box 20209 Ca. Finance
693 Columbus Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10025

Pittsburgh
1625 Pillow Ave.
Harwick, PA 15049

San Francisco
3435 Army St., Suite 308
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 821-0458

Santa Barbara
P.O. Box 90644
Santa Barbara, CA 93190
(805) 962-4011

Boston murder hoax exposes racist city officials and police

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

BOSTON—The unraveling of the Stuart murder case has graphically exposed the racist character of this city's political administration and police department.

The case, publicized nationally in sensational headlines that would make the *National Enquirer* envious, was a vivid demonstration of the double standard faced by the Black community in murder cases. Only this time, it backfired.

On Oct. 23, 1989, Charles Stuart and his pregnant wife, Carol, a white couple from the suburbs, were returning home from a childbirth class. Charles Stuart phoned police from his car and described how a Black man in the Mission Hill section had shot his wife in the head, shot him in the abdomen, robbed them and fled.

A recording of the call was played on news programs around the country. Carol Stuart died within hours, and the child, Christopher, born through emergency Caesarean, died 17 days later.

Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn, describing the attacker as an "animal," attributed the incident to the proliferation of drugs and guns in minority neighborhoods, and set off what he termed "an aggressive police response" that turned Mission Hill into a police occupation zone. Eager to jump on the racist bandwagon, some members of the Massachusetts legislature called for reinstating the death penalty.

Grisly hoax

But Stuart's story was a hoax—one he was almost able to pull off because he understood how easy it would be for white cops, the media, and a public fearful of urban violence to buy his story. The race issue would make good copy, and politicians would have a field day with it, just as George Bush exploited Willie Horton during the 1988 elections.

It all backfired, however, when evidence came to light in early January that it was Stuart who killed his wife in order to collect insurance money to open a restaurant, and who shot himself to avoid suspicion. Stuart committed suicide when he was found out.

For the Black community here, Stuart's hoax turned into a nightmare. The murder became an excuse for intensifying an illegal "stop and search" policy employed by the Boston Police Department. Young Black men are routinely stopped at random, searched for weapons and drugs, and in many instances forced to lower their pants in broad daylight.

A Boston judge ruled last summer that the policy must be discontinued. He wrote that police had issued "a proclamation of martial law ... for a narrow class of people, young Blacks especially." Mayor Flynn and the cops chose to disregard this ruling. And they saw the Stuart murder as an opportunity to step up their attacks against the Black community in Boston.

Gestapo tactics

According to the Reverend Graylan Ellis-Hagler, a leader in Boston's Black community and the pastor at the Church of the United Community in Roxbury, the police wasted no time unleashing their assault right after the murder.

"When police arrived, they moved all the Black police officers from the immediate investigation at the scene. [Black Deputy Superintendent] Willie Saunders arrived and was told to take a hike. So, the racist scenario unfolded right from the beginning."

Ellis-Hagler described the Panama-like occupation of the Mission Hill Housing Projects. "The next days, there were house-to-house searches that took place. ... I don't mean knocking on the door and having conversations with people. I mean house-to-house searches, without warrants."

The police, determined to pin this murder



Residents of Mission Hill demonstrate against police assault on their community.

on a Black man, ignored the fact that Stuart's story contained many contradictions and inconsistencies. After Stuart's story began to fall apart in early January, a pattern of illegal police activity—amounting to an attempted legal lynching—was uncovered.

The first suspect arrested in the Stuart

murder, Al Swanson, is a homeless man who was squatting in a vacant apartment. The police falsified information on a search-warrant request to pin the murder on Swanson. Stuart had described the assailant as wearing a black jogging suit with a red stripe. When the police found Swanson's

suit with a white stripe, they altered Stuart's statement.

"If it wasn't for an aggressive [defense] attorney from the beginning," said Ellis-Hagler, the crime "may have been hung on Al Swanson. It turns out the police went to the judge to get a search warrant," with an informant's statement "that there was this running suit in this apartment, there was the gun in this apartment, and they were going to find it all. So they went barging in" and "found none of those things. They locked him up anyway. His lawyer came out right off the bat and got some publicity which ... made them back down."

Then, "the Gestapo tactics spread far beyond Mission Hill. [The cops] thought they had *carte blanche* ..."

Leaked information

The cops leaked information that they had apprehended a new chief suspect, William Bennett. They coached Stuart to identify him in a line-up. Black teenagers were intimidated by cops into producing stories that linked him to the murder. One was threatened with a 20-year prison sentence and a beating. When he tried to recant, he was threatened again.

The cops put words into the mouths of witnesses who testified before a grand jury. One cop coached a "witness" before he was interviewed by homicide detectives.

Ellis-Hagler told of people with information that exonerated Bennett. "They went to the police six times with the information they had, while Bennett was being held. Fi-

(continued on page 5)

What would Malcolm X do?

By ROLAND SHEPPARD

"The political philosophy of Black nationalism means that the Black man should control the politics and the politicians in his own community; no more."

— Malcolm X speech: "The Ballot or the Bullet" (1964)

Malcolm X was assassinated 25 years ago on Feb. 21, 1965. If he were alive today, how would Malcolm X have responded to the police onslaught against the Black community in Boston?

In my youth, I helped to organize meetings for Malcolm X in New York City. At the time, I was a member of the Socialist Workers Party and I sold the newspaper, *The Militant*, at all of his meetings in Harlem.

With the exception of the first organized public meeting after his split from the Nation of Islam, I attended and heard all of Malcolm X's public speeches in New York City, including the meeting at which he was assassinated.

During the last year of his life, Malcolm X was openly partisan to the ideas of socialism. He knew that there was no contradiction between his outlook, which advocated the Black population controlling their own destiny, and the anticapitalist evolution of his thinking.

Malcolm X saw the need for Black unity before there could ever be any genuine Black/white workers' unity. He also developed the concept of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

He saw the Black population as a colony of American imperialism and supported struggles around the world which were opposing U.S. imperialism and fighting to win freedom. He was the first Black leader to oppose the U.S. war in Vietnam.

His uncompromising opposition to

U.S. military interventions around the world set him apart from other Black leaders. For these reasons his assassination served the interests of the U.S. government.

Malcolm X spoke frequently on the subject of police brutality and terror in the Black community. He lambasted New York City cops for their assault on the Black community during the "Harlem riots" in the summer of 1964. He correctly characterized this attack as a "police riot." To protect themselves, he explained, Blacks needed to have control of their own community and their own police.

No stranger to drug problem

Malcolm X was also no stranger to the drug problem. He described how drugs were introduced into the Black community from the outside and were part of the oppression and subjugation of Black people by the "white power structure." [That is, the capitalist class.—R.S.]

From his own experience, Malcolm X knew that drugs were part of organized crime and that organized crime was too large to escape detection. For organized crime to continue to peddle drugs, he would state, they needed the collaboration and assistance of the police. Organized crime and organized police go hand in hand.

His conclusion was that a war against drugs in the Black community required a war against both organized crime and police complicity. The only solution he saw was for Black control of the Black community. For these reasons, his assassination served the interests of the New York City Police Department.

Malcolm X was for Black self-organization. He was opposed to the Black community giving up their votes to Democratic and Republican party politicians. He advocated independent Black political ac-



tion, which is why he formed the Organization for Afro-American Unity (OAAU).

He also predicted in his last speeches that the ruling powers would make "respectable politicians" out of certain Black leaders who were considered to be safe and reliable.

Malcolm X said these "leaders" would be smoking big cigars while thinking they were helping the Black community. They would look like "cigars walking down the street—fire on one end—fool on the other."

Malcolm X would have advocated Black control of the Black community whether the city was controlled by a Black or a white Democratic Party liberal mayor.

In Boston, and other cities across the nation where the civil rights of Blacks are being blatantly abused by the police, Malcolm X's ideas are as appropriate now as they were 25 years ago. ■