



## Labor needs fightback strategy to defeat union-busting attacks



By JOSEPH RYAN

When 9300 Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) bus drivers, mechanics, and service workers walked out on March 2 in a national strike against the Greyhound Corp., they knew it would be a tough fight. In 1983 and 1987, they were forced to make concessions that amounted to 30 percent of their wages and benefits.

In 1990, Greyhound—under the ownership of Fred Curry, who purchased the financially ailing company for \$387 million in March

### How UMWA won at Pittston

See page 5.

1987—made an offer to workers that would still leave them below the wages and benefits they received before concessions in 1983.

Greyhound's offer of limited wage increases was pegged on the drivers' performance and production, as opposed to covering all employees equally. Knowing that the union would never accept such an agreement, the company's offer was nothing more than a provocation to force a strike and break the union.

When the workers walked out, Greyhound immediately went on a campaign to hire replacement drivers and bragged about restoring 40 percent of service. All the elements were in place for a bitter strike.

Two days later, Robert Waterhouse, a 30-year-veteran Greyhound driver, was crushed to death by a scab bus driver while on picket duty in Redding, Calif. The scab kept on driving for 13 miles before turning himself into the California Highway Patrol. He has yet to be charged with any crime.

Meanwhile, the capitalist-owned media has been highlighting isolated incidents of sniping at Greyhound buses. The culprits, of course, are allegedly the striking workers, whom the media portray as increasingly frustrated by the union-busting tactics of Greyhound. They neglect to make the point, however, that the only fatality has been a striking worker.

For the Greyhound workers, the logic of concession bargaining has come full circle. A company that lost money for over eight years is now making money, with a large part of the profit based on reductions that workers agreed to in 1983 and 1987. Justifiably, the workers believe they are now entitled to restoration of the wage cuts.

The Greyhound workers are now faced with a situation—reinforced by the government and police—where the company is in dead earnest about breaking the union. This strike is important for the entire labor movement because Greyhound is "walking point" for the attacks that will come down on other unions in the future.

#### Defeatism of labor bureaucracy

Unfortunately, the Greyhound workers are saddled with a labor bureaucracy that is sympathetic to the profit needs of U.S. corpora-

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## Lithuanians confront an escalating war of nerves

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

VILNIUS, Lithuania—At first glance, there are few signs that this is a country in revolution. No political banners hang from the windows. In general, the people of this capital city go about their daily work, swarming onto the trolley buses or lining up to purchase necessities in the shops.

But beneath the surface, a jittery war of nerves is taking place. The Soviet leadership is determined to thwart the desires of the large majority of the population for independence. And people here are angry.

When Moscow sent elite military units to occupy several public buildings, thousands of people massed in front of the parliament hall. They set up barricades, determined to block any attempt by Moscow to depose the Lithuanian government.

In some districts, a single slogan is scrawled on the walls in English: "Red Army Get Out!"

Lithuanians want more goods in the

shops—but more than that, they want to rule their own lives without interference from corrupt Russian-speaking officials and the threat of military repression.

"We are through with all that now," people told me. "We are an independent country. Moscow may send troops, but we won't back down."

#### Columns of tanks

I came to Lithuania by train from Poland. The republic had declared its independence less than two weeks earlier, on March 11. Soviet military aircraft were making runs over Vilnius, and tension was high.

As we approached the Lithuanian border, one of the people sharing my compartment announced, "There's the Soviet army!" Looking out of the window, I saw that we were passing columns of troop carriers and tanks.

If the military had meant to impress us, they certainly succeeded. Two days later, in fact, more than 100 of these vehicles,

carrying hundreds of soldiers, drove past the Lithuanian parliament building in a massive show of force.

My companions on the train wanted to know what Americans think of the situation in Lithuania. In my opinion, I replied, most Americans think they have a right to settle their own affairs—including the right to independence. That met with approval all around.

Several told me, however, that as members of the Polish minority they are apprehensive about the future. Even now, people of Polish descent are often relegated to the lowest jobs. Recently, the people of the Polish-speaking region outside Vilnius declared themselves an "autonomous region" in an attempt to secure their civil rights. Nevertheless, my companions supported independence.

I soon became aware that I had been on "the last train to Vilnius," since permission for Westerners to enter Lithuania was re-

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# Our children must come first



## Fightback

By  
Sylvia Weinstein

Recently, I spent several days with friends of mine, a young couple who are, like me, ardent supporters of a woman's right to choose. They have two children—a daughter, aged nine, and a son who is five years old.

The husband is unemployed. He is in construction, and it is expected of many construction workers to suffer unemployment during the winter season. The wife is a teacher, who loves her job but works because both she and her husband's income are necessary for family survival.

It was amazing to watch the whole family on a typical weekday morning, getting ready for work and school. Mother has to get to work before the children leave home. Each child leaves at a different time—one to elementary school and the other to childcare.

The nine-year-old daughter needs the help of her mother to dress in just the exact outfit. The son is involved in fixing his legos toys and seems unconcerned about getting dressed or eating. Father is running around the kitchen making lunches and snacks for both children.

Each child sits down at a breakfast of cereal, juice, and toast. Daughter is now ready for school, her books in her back-pack.

One out, one more to go: Son is to be picked up for childcare in a few more hectic minutes by another mother whose child attends the same center. Father gets him dressed, shoes tied, jacket on; hands him his snacks, and he is out the door. All of this whirlwind activity is carried out with love and tenderness by mother and father.

When my children were going to school I used to threaten to throw away all of their clothes if they didn't get dressed immediately. Of course, they didn't believe me because I made this threat too often (and they knew that I couldn't afford to do it, anyway). But in this family, there was no yelling, and every question or statement the children asked or made was treated with interest and answered by the parents.

I thought of the millions of

working-class parents, from sea to shining sea, who are involved in this morning ritual. I thought also about the many single mothers who have to do it all by themselves.

If only those parents were raising cotton, peanuts, or tobacco instead of children, they would receive massive subsidies from the federal government to help them out. If the father had headed up a bankrupt savings and loan bank instead of being an unemployed construction worker, the government would pour money on his head.

If both mother and father were in the business of making a useless Stealth Bomber, they would be wallowing in luxury. The government loves bombs, poison gas, toxic waste, and other profitable military nonsense. But when it comes to children, its wallet is shut tight.

Working-class families are generally held together by love and concern for their children and each

other. They cannot hire servants to oversee the care, feeding, and education of their children. Rearing children is a sacrifice—a loving sacrifice to be sure—for a good part of their lives.

### Accident of birth

Capitalist society takes almost no responsibility for our children. The perilous fate of each child is left to the accident of birth.

In primitive societies, on the other hand, children were considered the concern of everyone. Each and

every adult was responsible for each and every child.

Primitive communism was a social system based on a hunting and gathering economy. The highest degree of cooperation was necessary for the survival of the human species. This resulted in the highest levels of equality and democracy ever achieved on this planet.

In the last 5000 years, class society—based on exploitation by slave-owners, feudal lords, and then capitalists—nevertheless permitted a tremendous expansion of human-

ity's productive forces. But class society has outlived its progressive function and now blocks further development. It is reversing the film of historical progress, threatening to send the human race back to barbarism and even to destroy life on earth.

Under a democratic socialist society, organized by working people and based on the highest levels of scientific and technological achievement, human needs—especially the care of our children—would again come first. ■



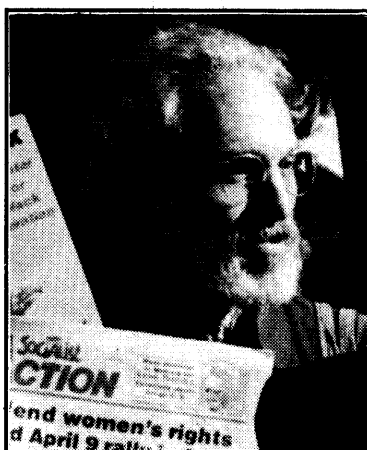
## Soviet Jews face renewed anti-Semitism

LENINGRAD—My grandmother used to tell me stories about the pogroms in Russia. As a young girl, she would hide in the hay loft while the cossacks thundered through her village, raping and murdering the Jews.

How quickly some people forget. I met one man here who insisted that violence against the Jews "rarely" happened under the Tsar. The Jews were "happy," he said.

In reality, most pogroms were organized by the Tsarist government. As strikes and peasant rebellions multiplied beginning in 1903, the Tsar's minister of the interior called for a wave of pogroms as "a short vicious war that would stem the tide of revolution."

Bloodthirsty articles were printed in the newspapers about alleged atrocities by Jews and non-Jewish socialists alike. Mobs were recruited and fitted out with flags, vodka, and a portrait of the Tsar. Their leaders were generally po-



## Behind the Lines

By  
Michael Schreiber

licemen. If resistance was offered, army troops and mounted cossacks came to their rescue.

One of the bloodiest episodes took place in August and September 1903 in the city of Gomel, where my grandfather and other family members lived. Troops were used there.

Two years later, the workers were in full-scale revolt. Again, the Tsarist government scapegoated the Jews. In October 1905, about 100 towns were attacked; as many as 4000 people were killed. In fact, the anti-Jewish pogrom was employed by the Russian government right up until the 1917 Revolution.

### Increased attacks

Now, people in the Soviet Union are asking if the pogroms will return. Anti-Semitic leaflets have been widely circulated by Pamyat and other right-wing groups. They blame the Jews for the economic crisis in the country and even for the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

The right-wing forces are threatening to organize a large pogrom on May 5, the birthday of Karl Marx. So far, the Gorbachev government has done nothing to counter the threat.

There have been increased reports

of organized attacks on Jews. An engineer here in Leningrad described an attack on his family in a letter to the London-based Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry:

"We opened the door and in our apartment run in three strangers armed by machine guns, knives, and brass knuckles, wearing white Ku Klux Klan masks," Yuri Mezhibursky wrote in broken English.

"In process of this battle, my wife received deep wound by knife in the stomach," he continued. "After 20 minutes, militia [police officers] came to us, but bandits-pogromers disappeared, and nobody look for them."

### "Go to Israel!"

I spoke to several Jews living in Leningrad about the terror campaign against them. "Men often taunt us in the street," I was told by one woman, Masha. "Hey, Jew! they yell. 'What are you doing in our country? Why don't you go to Israel!'"

Even so simple an act as buying goods in a shop can cause a confrontation. Soviet citizens are required to show their passports when making purchases. And people con-

sidered part of the Jewish "nationality" are identified as such in their passports. Thus, they become the target of bigoted shopkeepers.

Such discrimination has been abetted by the Stalinist government. As a youth, Masha was unable to attend the university because of the quota system that restricts the entrance of Jews. When looking for a job, she was repeatedly told that "the position is filled."

"I'm afraid for my children. We must leave," Masha concluded. She would like to emigrate to the United States or Canada, where she has friends and family. But U.S. and Canadian immigration restrictions make that virtually impossible.

Her only opportunity would be to become one of the hundreds of thousands preparing to go to Israel. Masha knows that Israel's land was stolen from the Palestinians. Yet, she asks, what else can she do?

Masha's parents are similarly torn. They were born here and lived through the blockade of Leningrad by the Nazis. They lovingly showed me books and photographs of their beautiful city. "But if our daughter goes," they told me sadly, "We must go too."

Some of my own relatives, in the city of Gomel, have also been forced to flee—this after surviving the Nazi invasion and decades of discrimination under the Stalinists. But anti-Semitism, plus the effects of the Chernobyl disaster (65 miles away), has finally caused them to emigrate.

My cousin Alexei, a journalist, was a member of the Communist Party. "When I apply to leave," he said to me recently, "they will put me on trial in the party. And I will tell them that my whole life has been a lie. I will speak out so that the young people will learn. Hopefully, the young people will change the country." ■

# Socialist ACTION

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# Women's right to choose assaulted in Idaho & Guam

By JONI JACOBS

Less than one year after the United States Supreme Court's *Webster* decision gave states the right to restrict abortion, several state legislatures have enacted laws infringing upon abortion rights. Last month, the most restrictive abortion legislation to date was passed in Idaho and Guam.

Both bills explicitly challenge *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. That case recognized a constitutional right to privacy in making reproductive choices that states could not interfere with.

These new bills, however, did more than interfere with the right to privacy—they outright denied women the right to make choices concerning reproduction.

## Guam law

On March 19, Governor Joseph Ada of Guam signed into law the most restrictive abortion legislation in the United States. The law will not take effect for some time, however. U.S. District Judge Alex Munson issued a temporary restraining order which blocks enforcement of the new law until its constitutionality can be decided in court. There is little doubt that it will eventually be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.

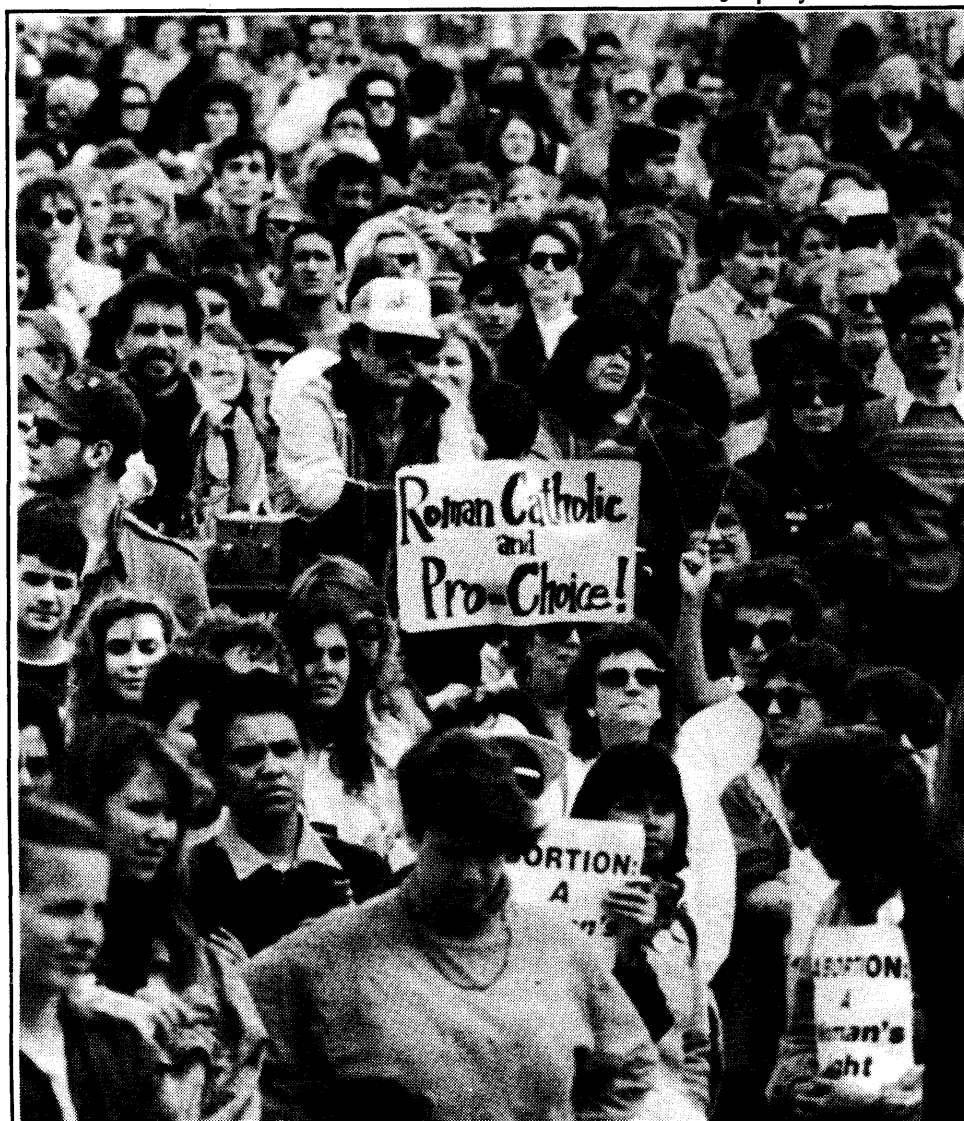
The Guam law outlaws abortions in all but the rarest of instances and sets criminal penalties for those seeking, performing, or providing information about abortions.

Under the new law, all abortions are illegal—including those for rape, incest and fetal abnormality—except when the life and health of the mother is endangered or "gravely impaired." Even then, the abortion must be approved by two independent physicians, whose decision is then reviewed by the Guam Medical Licensure Board.

The law also makes it a felony to perform abortions or aid in the procedure. Women who solicit or have abortions would be charged with a misdemeanor, as would a person who solicits a woman to have an abortion.

Already misdemeanor charges were filed against a pro-choice activist who, in a speech at the Guam Press Club, urged women needing abortions to travel to Honolulu for the procedure. Janet Benshoof, director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Reproductive Freedom Project in New York, faces up to a year in prison and a \$1000 fine if convicted.

The Idaho bill, which was vetoed by Governor Cecil Andrus in the face of mass



Pro-choice demonstration of 60,000 on Oct. 15, 1989, in San Francisco.

pro-choice pressure, was not quite as restrictive as the Guam law. But it also outlawed abortions in as many as 95 percent of all cases and set criminal and civil penalties for violating the law.

Exceptions to the law were made for victims of rape or incest, women whose lives or health were endangered by the pregnancy, and cases of fetal abnormality. Yet the regulations for the exceptions were so strict as to make them all but meaningless.

The law even provided that the father of the fetus, or anyone else with legal standing, such as a parent of a minor, could sue a doctor who performed an abortion. Under these provisions, a man who committed

"date rape" (sexual assault by an acquaintance) could conceivably have forced the woman to carry the pregnancy to term.

The Idaho law was drafted by the National Right to Life Committee, which considered it "model" anti-choice legislation. By placing the criminal penalties for abortion on the doctor, rather than the woman, the group had hoped to appease U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's major objections to overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

But pro-choice activists did not give the anti-choice forces their day in court on this bill. They threatened a national boycott of Idaho's major crop—potatoes—and flooded the statehouse with 20,000 phone calls to demand that Gov. Andrus veto the bill.

The governor, an avowed "pro-lifer," said the bill was "drawn so narrowly that it would punitively and without compassion further harm an Idaho woman who may find herself in the horrible, unthinkable position of confronting a pregnancy that resulted from rape or incest."

He criticized the National Right to Life Committee for drafting the bill "outside of our state for the sole purpose of getting this issue back before the Supreme Court." He also denied that the threatened boycott and mass pressure had anything to do with his decision.

In Maryland, voters will also decide on the fate of abortion rights in their state this fall. An abortion rights bill permitting unrestricted abortions during the early stages of pregnancy will become law unless voters reject it. Anti-choice organizations are gathering signatures to put the issue on the ballot.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court's ruling on parental consent laws is expected this spring. The Court could further restrict abortion by denying teen-aged women the right to seek abortion without receiving permission from one—or both—parents.

## How to fight back

An independent, nationally coordinated, mass women's movement is needed now, more than ever, to fight the growing attacks on women's right to choose.

The *Webster* decision helped to divide the women's movement by focusing the fight in the state legislatures, rather than at the nation's capital. The result is that in states and territories where the women's movement is weakest, the anti-choice movement is winning their biggest victories.

The women's movement must pay attention to what's happening in state capitals around the country. But the most effective response to these local attempts to restrict rights must be national.

Nationally coordinated rallies at state houses on the same day would remind legislatures that Americans are pro-choice.

Moreover, the most effective pressure the women's movement has to influence state legislators is its independence and its numbers. Instead of working to elect "pro-choice" candidates, the women's movement must organize mass rallies, demonstrations, and teach-ins to demand full reproductive rights for all women.

Emergency response demonstrations to the expected court decisions on parental consent and the constitutionality of the Guam law are essential. The women's movement must build these emergency response rallies by reaching out to students, labor unions, civil rights organizations, and the vast majority of people who support the right to choose.

It is clear that the anti-choice movement is not in retreat. But to beat them, the women's movement must also not retreat into the ballot box. Instead, we must remain visible, independent, and in the streets. ■

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

Demonstrations celebrating International Women's Day took place in all major cities in English Canada and Quebec. In Toronto, 5000 spirited marchers rallied on March 3 to demand "Fight the Attacks—No Going Back."

The Toronto demonstration was organized around four major demands: (1) No to racism and police violence; (2) No new abortion law; (3) No to the GST [goods and services sales tax] and social cutbacks; and (4) No to violence against women.

The Toronto Labor Council set up a soup line outside a major restaurant on the march route to dramatize the negative impact the proposed goods and services tax will have on the standard of living of working people.

A large, vocal pro-choice contingent participated in the march, which ended at the Campaign Life office as demonstrators presented those anti-choice goons with a coffin and 1000 coat hangers to show how a new abortion law will affect women.

Toronto pro-choice activists continue to answer Operation Rescue's attempts to close down abortion clinics by mobilizing large numbers of pro-choice supporters to ensure the clinics remain open.

Whenever Operation Rescue threatens a clinic, the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics organizes to get as many people as possible to the clinic early enough to secure the door and physically maintain access to the clinic.

## International Women's Day celebrated in Canada

The clinic managers welcome pro-choice activists, recognizing that their presence helps demonstrate the majority support for abortion rights and pressure the police to arrest the Operation Rescue thugs.

Failing to attract public sympathy, Operation Rescue's clinic attacks have become smaller and smaller. Realizing they

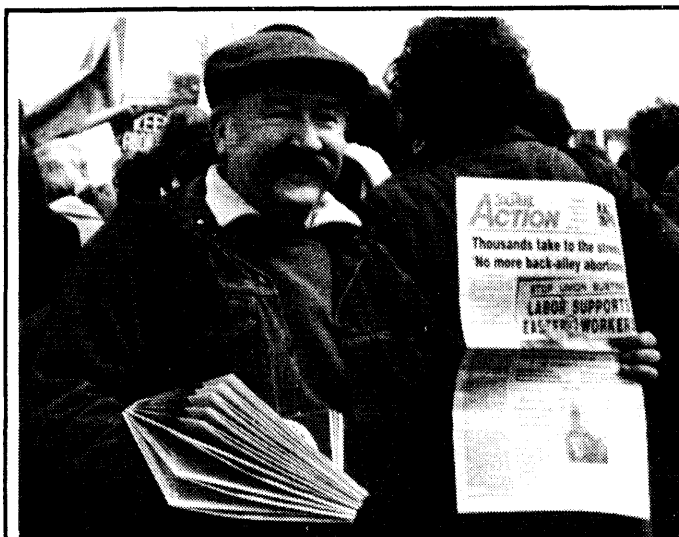
can't outmobilize pro-choice supporters at the clinics on Saturdays, the anti-choice bigots have begun small attacks at unusual times.

While expecting more large Operation Rescue hits with warmer spring weather, pro-choice activists are also discussing how to effectively counter Operation Rescue's

small, frequently violent, surprise attacks.

The Pro Choice Action Network, the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women have called for a cross country day of action, Saturday, May 12. Demonstrations are planned in all major cities and a number of smaller towns.

May 12 marks the 20th anniversary of the arrival of the Abortion Caravan in Ottawa. This date was chosen to show that as the Parliamentary debate on a new abortion law continues, women face the same dangers as 20 years ago. ■



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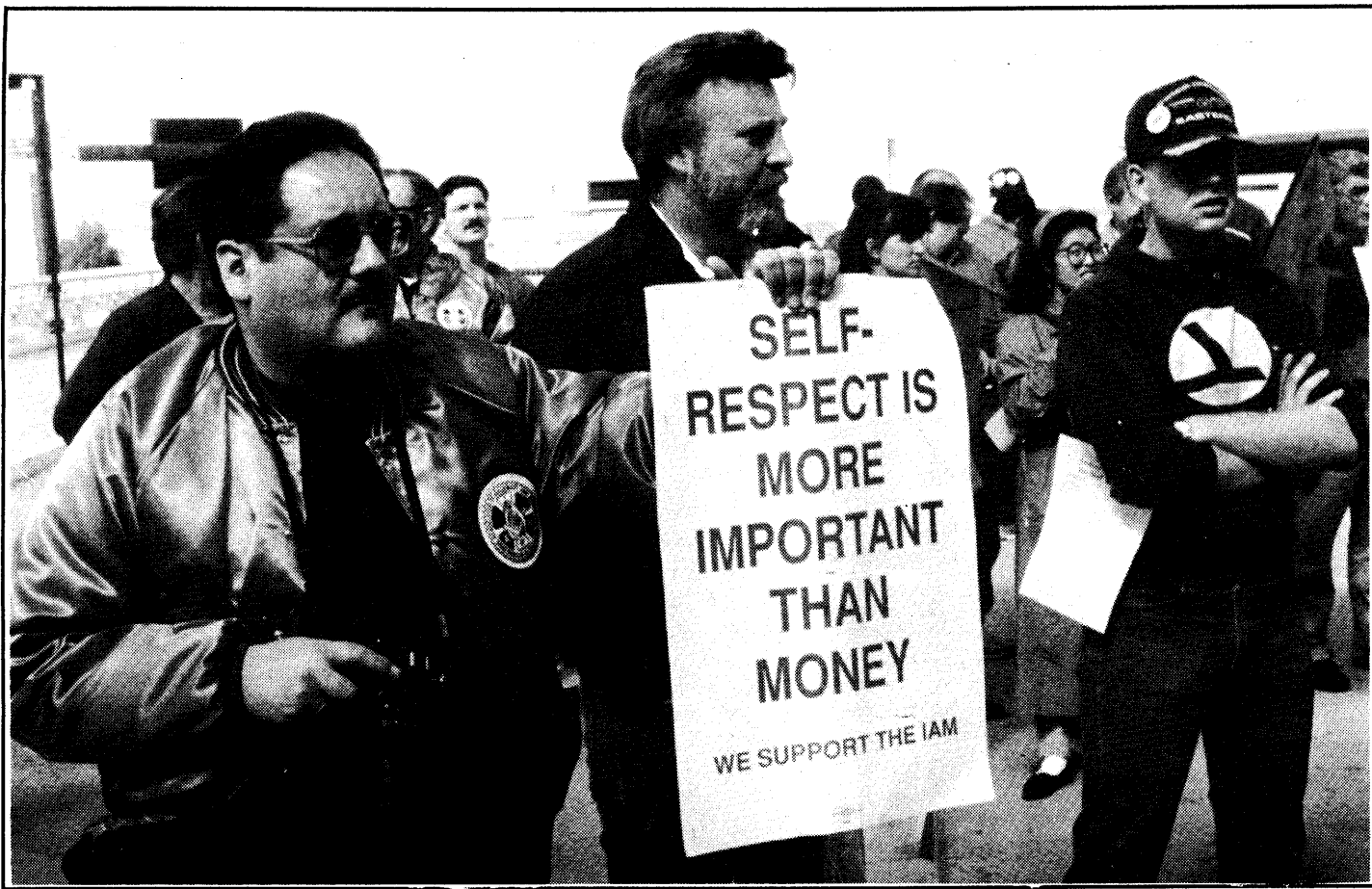
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Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

Supporters of Eastern Airlines machinists at San Francisco airport rally on March 3 to mark one year of strike. "If you had closed the airport for one week—that's how long the strike would have lasted."

## ... Labor mov't.

(continued from page 1)

tions and incapable of organizing an effective fightback. The union officialdom, bereft of any fightback strategy and ensured of six figure salaries, has openly collaborated with the employers and the government in attacking the living standards of workers.

Conceding defeat before they've even made an effort to fight back, the current misleaders of the labor movement reject the proven tactic of mass picketlines to prevent scabs from taking strikers' jobs. Many of them question the effectiveness of any strike action at all.

They use the defeats of the 1980s—PATCO, TWA, Phelps-Dodge, Boise Cascade, Hormel, International Paper, and many others—as a justification for their inaction in the face of company assaults. One labor official even told *Time* magazine, "Labor has an empty gun."

Greyhound, of course, is pegging its anti-union campaign around such expressions of defeatism. But the striking workers, small in numbers when compared to the organized labor movement as a whole, are receiving a groundswell of support from rank-and-file

unionists around the country.

In Boston, the AFL-CIO organized a demonstration on March 30 to close down the local bus terminal. In a call for labor solidarity, Local 6 Shipyard Workers in Bath, Maine, sent a telegram to International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 1305 in San Francisco requesting that they honor the picket line of ATU Local 1225 strikers at the S.F. Greyhound bus maintenance center.

(In San Francisco and Los Angeles, Greyhound bus mechanics, who are organized by the IAM, had been crossing the picket lines. Ironically, the IAM has been on strike for over a year against union-busting at Eastern Airlines).

But it will take more than well-meaning

gestures of solidarity to reverse the decades-long retreat of the American labor movement.

**Labor must reconquer traditions.**

In 1945, more than 35 percent of the non-agricultural work force was organized in unions. In 1980, it was 22 percent, and has fallen dramatically since. Many of the 19 million new jobs created during the 1980s are non-union and pay the minimum wage. At the same time, the restructuring of U.S. industry, the maneuvers of leveraged buy-outs, and the monopolization process endemic to capitalism, has lowered wages by an average of 15 percent.

The Greyhound strike is both symptomatic and symbolic of what workers can expect in the future. No amount of concessions will stay the hand of the capitalists. They have no choice—if they want to remain competitive—but to continue busting unions and driving down the living standards of workers.

Despite the setbacks of the last decade, the union movement still enjoys tremendous support in this country. In a recent *Time* magazine/CNN poll, 73 percent of those interviewed believed that American workers need unions.

If the Greyhound workers are to win their fight, and the American labor movement is to survive, the union movement will have to fight back the way it did in the 1930s. It will have to become a social movement. And it will have to have its own political agenda. In the 1930s, if the Greyhound workers went on strike—everybody would go on strike.

A winning strategy for today requires that the entire union movement organize its ranks to help the striking Greyhound workers shut down this union-busting company. Daily mass picket lines will be necessary to assure that not one scab bus is allowed to leave the terminals.

As a United Mineworkers of America representative told supporters of the Eastern Airlines strike at a San Francisco airport rally recently: "If you had closed this airport down for a week at the beginning of the strike—that's how long the strike would have lasted." That's the sentiment—and the strategy—that is needed to win the Greyhound strike. ■

# Chevron oil workers win better contract due to organizing drive

By DAVID CAMPBELL

A new three-year contract between the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) at Chevron in El Segundo, Calif., reflects both the success of an organizing campaign and the limits of a leadership without a clear class struggle perspective.

Through an internal organizing campaign in this open-shop that was begun in the fall of 1987, union membership rose from 42% to 97%. With this increased membership, we were able to gain a contract even better than the national one in some areas. We got the national wage increase of 80 cents-per-hour in the first year (about 5.3%), 5% in the second year, and 4.5% in the final year. Medical contributions from employers are to increase about \$50 each year of the three-year contract.

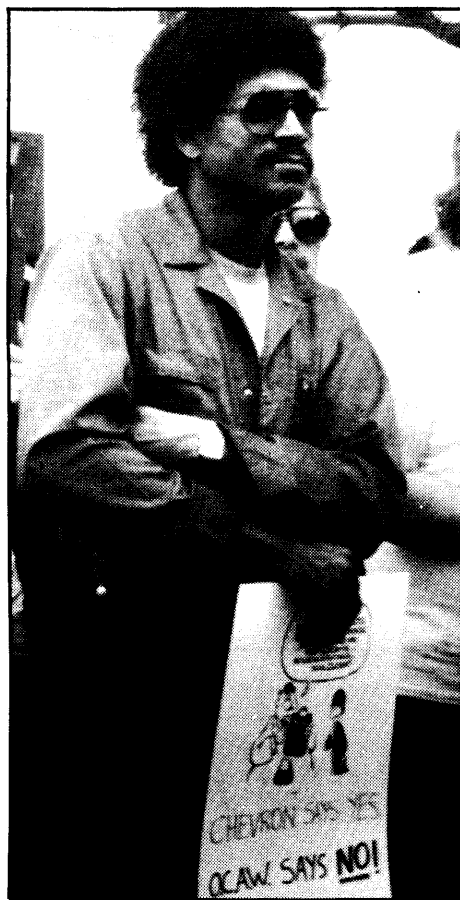
In addition to sharing these national gains, some El Segundo classifications secured major wage adjustments, winning gains averaging 10% more than workers in those classifications elsewhere.

### Misleading portrayal

Although this achievement was one which the members and their leaders can be proud of, the negotiating committee, in making their recommendation for a "yes" ratification vote, erroneously portrayed the outcome as "breaking" the national pattern.

This was misleading for two reasons. First, a large number of workers, including trainees and marketing, only got the general increase of the national pattern. Second, it misled the membership on the correla-

*Dave Campbell is an executive board member of OCAW Local 1-547 at Chevron in El Segundo, Calif.*



Kathleen O'Nan/Socialist Action

tion of forces involved in determining the national pattern.

The National Petroleum Refiners Association, the oil industry association, sets the negotiating stance with OCAW. The individual companies, in return for agreeing not to break ranks on the national pattern, are promised aid from other companies in meeting commitments to their customers in

case of a strike.

Under this set-up, individual wage-classification adjustments, depending on local needs, are permissible, but a general increase in either wages or benefits that would exceed the national pattern is not.

Thus, the organizing campaign begun at El Segundo, accompanied by the rise in militancy and self-confidence, has to be extended throughout the international union in order to truly "break" the pattern and give all workers the kind of general increase that only some El Segundo workers got.

On the down side, the new contract contains concessions which could have been fought off by the rank and file if the leadership had had a class-struggle perspective.

Over the last decade, the OCAW maintenance force has dwindled through attrition, and the jobs have been given to contractors who either have no union or a do-nothing union with a sweetheart contract.

The contract also calls for new classifications of dual- and multi-craft mechanics, not just the traditional single-craft mechanics. This was agreed to by the leadership in exchange for a verbal agreement from the bosses to "back out" contractors and hire more OCAW mechanics.

One major problem with this, aside from the failure to get any promises in writing, is that it plays into the bosses' strategy of dividing the work force—be it OCAW or contractor. The union strategy should be based on uniting all sectors of the work force in a fight with the true opponents—the bosses.

### Workers inspired

The OCAW gains inspired the workers in one of these contract organizations. Drivers at El Segundo's Motor Transport put so

much heat on their phony union that it was happy to get rid of them, letting them sign OCAW cards. Chevron then recognized OCAW as the bargaining agent of these workers without a fight, for fear of upsetting its own OCAW workers.

After the startling success of the internal campaign, which called for utilizing the workers' control of production to fight the bosses, Chevron instituted a new policy throughout the company. Dropping their open anti-worker stance, they adopted a form of quality of work life (QWL) as a way of diverting the increasing "radical" ideas at El Segundo and preventing the extension of those ideas to other Chevron plants.

But in a complete 180 degree turn from what forced the bosses into a better contract, the union leadership dropped their previous "wait-and-see" policy on QWL and agreed to participate.

As an example of this complete change, the contract has a new preamble which states, "Both parties recognize that we are entering into an historic endeavor in the field of labor relations and that we are undertaking this new proposed relationship with the full intention of fostering an innovative labor relations structure, minimizing the traditional adversarial roles, and emphasizing mutual trust and good faith."

While the average worker does indeed want cooperation in the work place, the relationship of bosses and workers, as was stated in the organizing campaign, is inevitably adversarial because the bosses' constant drive for increased profit causes them to try to drive down labor costs, including wages, benefits, and safety devices.

Until production for profit is eliminated, there can be no other way than struggle to defend workers' interests.

However on the economic gains, the contract is having an impact at other refineries in the area and other Chevron facilities. Calls have even come in to the El Segundo plant from Chevron's large, non-union refinery in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The successful organizing campaign of El Segundo should be extended to other locations. ■

# How UMWA won Pittston strike



Donna Binder/Impact Visuals

Roger Nelson, a representative of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), toured the Los Angeles area on March 1-12. The tour was arranged by, among others, Jack Foley, director of OCAW District 1, and Dave Campbell, executive board member of OCAW Local 1-547.

Nelson was an underground miner for 18 years until he was laid off in 1986. When the Pittston strike began in 1989, he went on staff for the UMWA international. He was the coordinator of Camp Solidarity in West Virginia and was also the site coordinator for both the Pittston Coal Sales strike and the Rum Creek Coal Sales strike.

Nelson now faces 21 contempt charges for violations of Federal Court orders to stop mass picketing at the mines. He gave the following interview to *Socialist Action*.—KATHLEEN O'NAN

**Socialist Action:** After an 11-month struggle, the Pittston strike is now over. How do you view the settlement?

**Roger Nelson:** We definitely call it a victory for the union. About a year ago, Pittston cut off 1500 retired pensioners and took their healthcare from them. At the end of the strike this was put back in. The pensioners are now covered by the Pittston Coal Group. It was a hard battle—almost 11 months long.

**S.A.:** It's not easy to win strikes these days. What was it about your strike that allowed you to win.

**Nelson:** Through most of the mine wars, the miners have always taken the battle into their own hands. This is what happened with

this strike. Our tactics of civil disobedience and non-violent protest proved effective.

Nearly 4000 people were arrested in southwestern Virginia. The people who were arrested had to put up a \$25,000 bond. Do you know that people who sell dope and rapists get off with about a \$2000 bond.

**S.A.:** By civil disobedience, do you mean mass picketlines?

**Nelson:** Exactly. This civil disobedience was our main tactic—and it paid off greatly. Not only did the miners in southwestern Virginia participate, but among the 4000 who were arrested I'd say that maybe a third of them were from other labor organizations in this country. Without them backing us in this Pittston battle, I don't believe we'd be where we're at today.

**S.A.:** While in Los Angeles, you walked picketlines and spoke at rallies for the Eastern Airlines strikers (IAM), the Greyhound strikers (ATU), the LaMode strikers (ILGWU). What was your message to them—particularly to the Eastern strikers?

**Nelson:** I told the Eastern workers that I was glad to see that they were as determined to fight these big corporate baron companies as we were. But my message was also directed at workers at the other airlines who failed to back Eastern.

The way I look at it, workers at TWA, United, and all the other airlines let their brothers at Eastern down. I think that if every one of them had stood together and showed their unity and solidarity, the Eastern workers would have had a contract in about a week. You shut down one of these big major airports, such as the LAX [Los Angeles

International Airport], let me tell you, that's letting them know, "You're gonna get smashed."

The guys at the other airlines who didn't come out and support their Eastern brothers remind me of the situation we were all put in back in 1981, when Reagan fired the PATCO workers.

We all let those people down, you know. I'm the first one to admit it. That is why I'm telling people all across this country that the companies, the government, and the courts are working against the working man. Strikes in this country are no longer short strikes. They're long-term strikes that are after busting unions.

That's what they're trying to do at Eastern; the strike is over a year old right now. My message in Los Angeles was that if every labor organization in this country joined together as one, the longest strike would be one week.

**S.A.:** The courts have \$64.5 million in fines hanging over your heads. What are you going to do about this?

**Nelson:** We haven't paid any of this fine—and we don't intend to pay any.

**S.A.:** Workers at some of the smaller "truck" mines that leased out to Pittston are still out on strike. The owners of these mines refuse to sign the agreement in an attempt to bust the union. What is their status?

**Nelson:** One company that was tied in behind the scenes to the Pittston Coal Group was Rum Creek Coal Sales. Right now they've moved the replacement workers into the plant. We've had picketlines set up for

the last five months, and we are maintaining them.

They moved some coal from one place into the operation but the coal that they moved in was coal that had been sitting for long periods of time and the BTU was low. They're not making any money off it. The only way to break these companies is to keep them from making money.

**S.A.:** What is the status of the miners who face charges for their strike-related activities?

**Nelson:** Eleven miners were framed on charges at the Milburn Colliery coal processing plant in Fayette County, West Virginia. The trials are now over; they face 33 months in a federal penitentiary. For us, they are heroes.

The courts always rule against the workers. Seven miners were killed at four mines in Virginia in 1983. We had a mine explosion, and the company was found guilty on violations that caused the mine explosion—but the company was only fined \$47,000 by the federal government.

During our Pittston strike last summer we held a memorial service for those seven guys who had given their lives. The service was held at the entrance of the McClure mine. We had a prayer service, a gentleman placed a flag at the gate to the McClure mine—and our union was fined \$1 million for these actions. We even had kids who were arrested for riding bicycles by the picketlines.

I'm a representative with the United Mine Workers, but the courts not only work against the United Mine Workers, they work against every labor organization in this country.

**S.A.:** Tell us about yourself. You were the coordinator of Camp Solidarity in West Virginia.

**Nelson:** That's right. Camp Solidarity—particularly the one in Virginia—was probably the most important tool in the Pittston fight. We had preachers, pastors, people from as far away as England, Finland, Wales, Germany, the Soviet Union, and Poland who spent the night there. We brought in about 50,000 supporters.

**S.A.:** You're also facing legal charges....

**Nelson:** I'm up on several contempt charges for violating a Federal Court order. I told the people at the Nelson Mandela rally at the Los Angeles Coliseum that I had to explain to my 11-year-old girl that there's nothing wrong with somebody going to jail for what they believe in.

I wanted to educate her as well as everybody in this country who needs educating. I tried to tell her that if I go to jail, I'm in good company because people like Martin Luther King went to jail for what they believed in. Nelson Mandela and Gandhi went to jail—and I even told the people that Jesus of Nazareth went to jail for what he believed in. They got the point.

**S.A.:** What can our readers do to help?

**Nelson:** Defense funds and family-support donations can be sent to: Fair Deal for Pittston Workers, c/o UMWA Southeast Regional Office, 4500 MacCorkle Ave. SE, Charleston, WV 25304. ■

By STEVEN JOHNSON and HAYDEN PERRY

After an unprecedented statewide strike, 22,000 teachers in West Virginia voted March 18 to go back to work. The teachers, responding to a combination of threats and promises, ended the strike after 12 days.

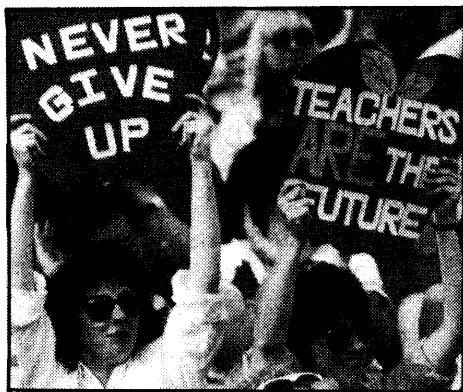
It was the first time that West Virginia teachers went out on strike across the state. They had good cause. They rate 49th in the national pay scale, earning less than \$22,000 a year. The national average is \$30,000. The teachers are represented by the West Virginia National Education Association (WVNEA) with 16,000 members and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) with 3,000 members. The AFT negotiated separately from the larger WVNEA.

The teachers' salary is set by the state government, which has been pleading poverty for years. Since West Virginia has been losing population, its tax base has been eroding. But 10 percent to 20 percent of the coal production, the state's largest industry, has escaped taxation. This costs the state an estimated \$60 million a year in revenue.

Instead of raising revenue, West Virginia governors have been robbing the schools, despite the fact that the last three governors were strongly supported by the teachers.

Current governor, Gaston Caperton, has styled himself the "education governor."

## W.Va. teachers learn lessons



This has not prevented him and his predecessors from underfunding the Teachers Retirement Plan, raising teacher-paid premiums on health plans, and cutting out periods for teacher preparation at school (they now have to do lesson planning on their own time). Caperton also cut a promised 5 percent pay raise to 2.5 percent.

Months of fruitless negotiations were

brought to a head Feb. 14 when 5000 members of the West Virginia Education Association marched on the state legislature. The lawmakers offered to levy a special real-estate tax for the schools—but only if the teachers promised not to strike.

The teachers did not trust the lawmakers. They refused to give up their only effective weapon. Then the offer was withdrawn.

On March 7 the call for a strike went out. Each county had to call its teachers out separately, but one by one the counties joined the strike until almost all schools in the state (47 counties out of 55) were closed. Gov. Caperton then began making promises and then withdrawing his promises.

He promised to call a special session of the legislature to vote more money for the teachers. He promised the retirement fund would be fully funded. He would also equalize the pay scales in all counties.

The teachers voted to accept these promises as good coin. But after the vote, Caperton denied he had ever promised to call

a special session. The enraged teachers returned to the picketline.

Now Caperton took the offensive. He instructed the county Boards of Education to start hiring scabs to replace the striking teachers. A county court issued an injunction declaring the strike illegal. The state court extended the injunction to the entire state. This was very intimidating to teachers who were engaged in their first strike.

Meanwhile the state legislature tried to break the stalemate by saying they would ask the governor to call a special session after the teachers were back on the job. The governor also put money into the Teachers Retirement Plan, and took steps to equalize pay in all counties.

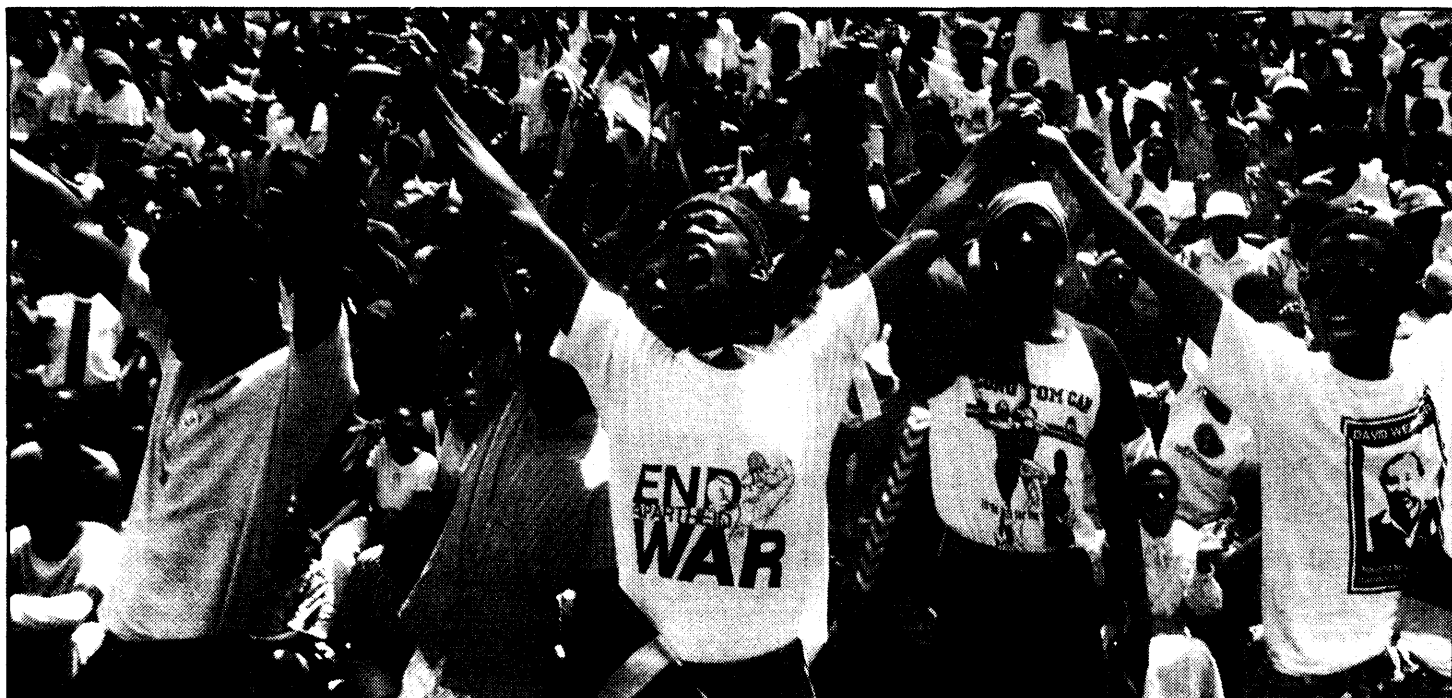
Their much needed pay raise is still in limbo. If the special session is called, it may concentrate on "reforms" in the school system that squeeze the teachers further. The coal and land interests will resist any new taxes that will be needed to give the teachers a living wage.

However, the fact that 22,000 "conservative" West Virginia teachers went out on strike for 12 days cannot be ignored by the governor and legislature. The teachers grievances are not going to disappear. ■

*This article, based on reports submitted from West Virginia by Steven Johnson, was compiled by Socialist Action staffwriter Hayden Perry.*

## Black Consciousness Movement supporter:

# 'The struggle in South Africa is against racial capitalism'



Soweto youth demonstrating after Mandela's release.

William Campbell

Chris Nteta is a supporter of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa and a professor at the University of Mass.-Boston. He spoke at a Boston Socialist Action Forum on March 17, 1990. The following are excerpts from his talk.

As we enter the last decade of this century, we are witnessing the extinction of one of the last states in Africa under white hegemony and control and supremacy—Namibia. With that, we enter probably into the last phase, and that is South Africa.

We are witnessing the regime in South Africa beginning to loosen, to let go. If Namibia can be free, then the question is, can South Africa be much further behind? I think we are poised to see those changes that will—probably by the end of this century—bring about in South Africa itself, that heartland of racism and economic exploitation of the people—freedom, equality, decency, and humanity, after years and years of suffering pain, death, ignorance, poverty.

People [in the United States] have been exposed, almost on a daily basis, to a one-sided, distorted view of exactly what's going on in South Africa. The attention has been given to one organization, and the impression is being created in the international community that only its leadership is going to carry the peoples of South Africa into freedom.

That distorted picture that has no relationship whatsoever with what is going on in South Africa. And I think that not only the international press but what I refer to as the "anti-apartheid industry" is solidly behind perpetuating this myth.

[They say] that the African National Congress [ANC] of South Africa, the oldest, most prestigious, and strongest of all the liberation movements, the one with the most international support and solidarity, is the sole, legitimate, exclusive agent for the



Nelson Mandela: What kind of an agreement will he negotiate?

liberation of the peoples of South Africa.

South Africa has a population in excess of 30 million people. To expect that the people would support and follow the dictates and the direction of one organization is a little mind-boggling.

### Many viable tendencies exist

In South Africa there are a number of political tendencies that have emerged over time, that are viable, are doing progressive work, and have to be recognized. They've made an impact in the struggle of the people of South Africa. And not only do they exist and cannot be wished away even by the mighty "anti-apartheid industry," but most

of those organizations have brought forth positions that are clearly on the left of the ANC.

The international community will be doing us a service if they begin the task of making available forums where the organizations in South Africa can come together on a principled unity to oppose what I believe is still going to be a very, very hard and arduous struggle that lies ahead.

[A number of issues have] become prominent since the release of Mandela. There's an [ANC] delegation that is preparing to meet with de Klerk—led by Mandela. These questions [will] then come to the forefront, because they're unresolved.

And as long as they are unresolved it is going to be difficult for the ANC alone to attempt to broker a negotiated settlement. It's not going to work. It is going to be resisted by those who disagree with the ANC on some very fundamental questions.

### What will be negotiated?

When Mandela came out he was confronted with [three particular issues]. One has been the concern of whites about their status should Blacks come into power—the whole question of what kind of constitution, of the franchise, of one person, one vote. Many whites wanted Mandela to address this.

[Some in the regime] are trying to put into place a constitutional arrangement that would provide for the security of "minorities," for "group rights." Read group rights as "white rights."

The second has to do with "economic arrangements." What kind of economic system does the ANC hope to put into place? Mandela made very clear that they are prepared to nationalize mines and industries and

some of the large monopoly concerns, but stopped there.

That limited [approach], inadequate as it is, sent shivers down the spines of many businessmen. [But what] has not been adequately addressed by the ANC is whether [the new] state is going to continue as a capitalist country, or are they going to look, as a model, to other forms of economic arrangement.

Mandela and the ANC have not spelled out in clear, explicit terms that the society is going to be a socialist society. That's one area that, on the Black side, is causing quite a lot of concern.

Third was the question of [renouncing] armed struggle. On that point Mandela made very clear that he wasn't going to. He disappointed many of the whites who'd hoped he'd come in with more moderate views.

A main thing that you see now is the attempt to sponsor some "moderates" to be the people who will negotiate and work with the government. The danger there—and these are the issues being debated—is what kind of arrangements are being discussed and what accommodations are being arrived at. Those on the left are very leery of these discussions. When you listen closely, they make you very nervous.

The danger in South Africa is a bourgeois-democratic kind of settlement. That may settle the national question, national oppression, and apartheid, but that's just one part of the solution in South Africa, because the struggle in South Africa is [against] racial capitalism.

### Class exploitation

There's national oppression, and there's class exploitation. The whole debate that has been ensuing has been that the ANC, aligned with the [South African] Communist Party, conforms to the two-stage revolution theory. "Let's have the democratic revolution, and then later we'll attend to the socialist." And others say, wait a minute, you can't do that. And that is one of the fundamental questions.

When you listen to some of the statements made by prominent ANC people, they are promoting the national democratic revolution. Great. That's part of it. But what is not being said is the other side of this class emancipation, the socialist part of it.

Very little has been said beyond nationalizing certain industries, mines, banks, and so on. But then, they don't proceed beyond that. They talk about how "the wealth in South Africa shall be owned by all." That is what the [ANC's] Freedom Charter says. But they don't spell it out.

The impoverished masses of South Africa are not going to settle for some little Swedish model. They want real, fundamental, far-going transformation of society, that will bring people out of poverty and ignorance and suffering.

My hope is that Mandela can give the kind of leadership that will pull forces together. I was disappointed when in his opening speech [after his release] he paid respect to all kinds of people and organizations . . . [but] nowhere did he say one tiny word about the fact that the Pan-Africanist Congress has been involved in the struggle. He said nothing about the Black Consciousness Movement.

Later, in an hour-long interview, somebody posed the question, "What do you see in terms of a unity movement between the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress?" He said, "That has to be addressed." [That is] language that the ANC has not spoken in more than 25 years. They don't even recognize the Pan-Africanist Congress. Mandela at least began to address this.

My hope, and I hope it is realistic, is that Mandela will—before he gets too far—begin to address people on the left of the ANC and bring them into the struggle. ■

## Support striking hospital workers in South Africa

Organized by the Health Care Workers Union, the workers are demanding: (1) a substantial wage increase, (2) six months paid maternity leave, (3) job security, (4) a 40-hour week, (5) recognition of the union, and (6) an end to the privatization of the state hospitals.

The Health Care Workers Union was formed in 1987. It is an independent union outside the two main union federations, COSATU and NACTU. The union advocates workers' control and working-class leadership of the struggle

for economic justice.

A strike fund has been started to sustain the costs of the strike, including production of pamphlets and other literature. We call on our readers to support them through publicizing their struggle and through monetary contributions.

Support the Health Care Workers Union's strike. Send donations to: Health Care Workers Union, Room 501, Atlantic House, Corporation Street, Capetown, South Africa 8001.

—BARBARA PUTNAM

**International  
VIEWPOINT**

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Following are excerpts from remarks by Jean-Claude Martineau, a well-known Haitian author and activist, at a Boston Socialist Action forum on Feb. 23. [See *Socialist Action*, March 1990.] The forum was titled, "The Legacy of Malcolm X: 25 Years After his Assassination."

# 'Malcolm X taught us to open our eyes and think for ourselves'

I am not a scholar on Malcolm X. I cannot say that I've carefully studied his work, his life. When Malcolm X was alive I was already in the United States, but I didn't speak English, so I couldn't understand all that he was talking about.

But fortunately, I was not completely unaware of what was going on because I came from a struggle myself ... with the bloodiest dictatorship this hemisphere has ever known. So, I could understand what was going on here, even if I couldn't understand the words spoken by leaders.

What I'm going to talk to you about tonight is exactly this—leaders. That's what I learned from Malcolm X.

What is a leader? Where does a leader come from? First, a leader doesn't have to come from a well-known establishment of higher learning. He or she can come from anywhere. Nobody "learns" to be a leader. You feel it, and one day you say things and people agree, and follow.

There is no school for leadership.... A leader is not somebody who comes before the people, behind a microphone, and tries to get everybody excited. It is a little bit more difficult than that. A leader has to give you homework.

That means that every time he or she talks, you feel that you have something to think about, something to do. You have homework. It's not just coming and telling you things, and you feel like you are in "7th Heaven." You have work to do. Little by little, a leader starts changing the way that you have accepted a few things.

In the world there are a lot of injustices that people live with, because they have seen it since the day they were born. A lot of lies—that's what [the rulers] call values.

For instance, here in the United States Black kids grow up thinking that George Washington is that great guy who gave us the republic and freedom and everything, forgetting that in the equation he was a slave owner.

We speak about Christopher Columbus. He has a day here, a country with his name and everything, and we seem to forget that he was the first one after slavery was completely abolished in Europe to re-establish it. We don't even figure it into the equation, because it is not part of the "value" system.

## "Think for yourself"

Malcolm X, more or less, came to teach: Think about the world for yourself, through your own eyes, and for your own interest. Don't let people tell you who to admire, what to think is great or not. Think for yourself. So a leader is not a shepherd, with a lot of sheep going "ba-a-a, ba-a-a" following behind. A leader opens your eyes and makes you think for yourself.

Malcolm was a leader. What happened to his legacy? Right now, a new interest in Malcolm is starting to emerge. That's very positive, very hopeful. But we have to understand that this guy was not only assassinated by bullets; he was assassinated almost every day of his public life.

We were scared of him at a certain time;



Jean-Claude Martineau

we thought that he would bring death to all of us, that he questioned values that we had accepted. And after his death, a lot of Black people, although unhappy about the event, were more or less comfortable to forget that moment in our history. But fortunately, you cannot bury an idea. You cannot put an idea in jail. You cannot handcuff an idea.

So, Malcolm is coming back. He is in movies now, a lot of people are talking about him.

But what legacy do we have for him? A leader doesn't come from above, but from the suffering of his or her own people. That's where a leader is formed.

They cannot give you leaders—but we

know that the American press has given us a lot of leaders. From time to time, this guy's a "leader of the Black community," this guy's a "leader of the Haitian community," this guy's a leader of this or that. But that constituency has never said anything about it.

## Being able to change and grow

It is not by jumping in front of the lime-light that you become a leader. It is by working, day to day, on the problems facing your community and your constituency. That's how you learn to be a leader. To be speaking for them, but also speaking to them, because they have from time to time to give you new guidance.

To be a leader is to be able to change and grow, to abandon an idea that you find out in practice is wrong. So Malcolm started by thinking that every white person was an enemy. But even then, he knew that every Black cannot be a brother.

Then he started understanding that it is not a question of color. And when he started understanding that, and since he knew how to express himself to the Black community, he became extremely dangerous. And no matter who pulled the trigger, we know who killed Malcolm X.

I have a son who is 20. He has in his room a [table-size] picture of Malcolm X. I didn't ask him to put it there, but it is right there. I think that my duty is for that poster not to remain a picture on the wall, but to come out and be alive again.

## Morgan State U. students protest, win concessions

By DAVID SCHUBERT

BALTIMORE—Protesting Morgan State University students, angered by a deteriorating campus, escalating tuition, and low pay for teachers, won concessions from the school administration and the state of Maryland by occupying the administration office and boycotting classes from March 6-12.

Morgan State, a 123-year old predominantly Black college located in Baltimore, has historically been underfunded by the state of Maryland. Morgan State received only \$753,500 in aid from 1950 through 1979. In comparison to other schools in the area, Maryland College Park received \$17.6 million and Towson State received \$11.2 million.

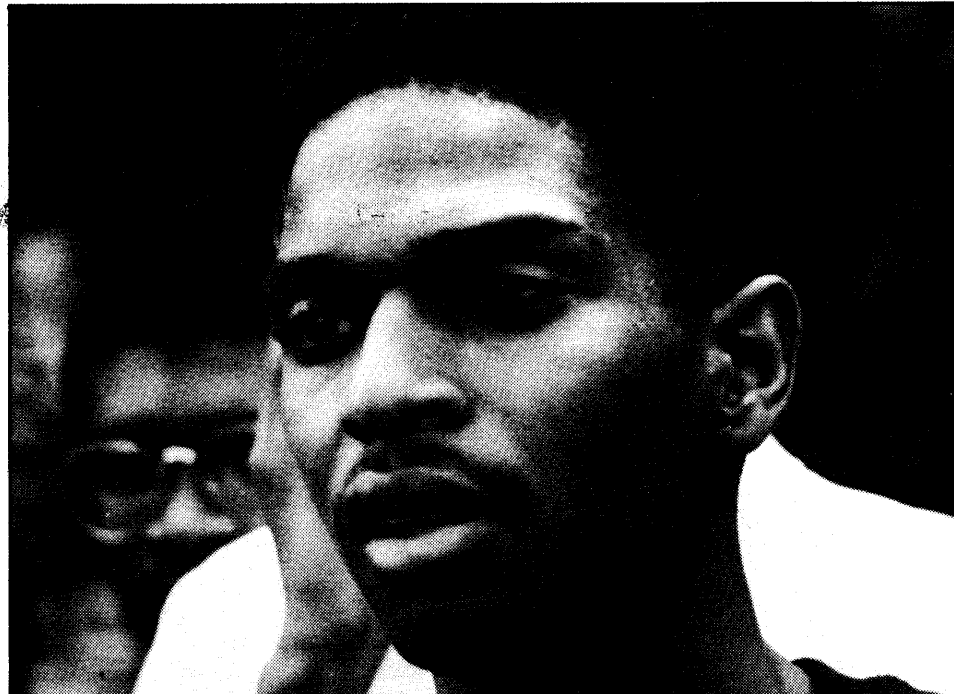
As a result, student dorms are in deplorable condition—broken fire alarms, peeling paint, rat holes, broken plumbing, outdated heating systems, missing ceiling tiles, and broken door locks. Several of the campus buildings are closed because of asbestos. None of these conditions exist in the predominantly white colleges of Maryland.

The students, by undertaking their protest, forced college President Earl Richardson to sign a 17-point plan that outlines changes his administration will institute immediately.

The plan, which was a result of negotiations between administrators and a 14-member student task force, includes increased campus security, improved health care, rodent extermination, one-year notice of tuition increases, and the creation of three committees—each made up of four students and three administrators—to oversee many of the school's affairs.

"People's conscience levels are high," said Travis Mitchell, the student's spokesperson. "We [the students] love Morgan State, but we're tired of Blacks being treated as second-class citizens. And we're sick of our instructors getting paid less than aides. The lesson we've learned is that if people stick together you can get something accomplished."

The students rejected attempts by the state and the school's administration to demobilize their struggle. The school's athletic director informed athletes that scholarships were in jeopardy for any students boycotting



Travis Mitchell: "...tired of Blacks being treated like second-class citizens."

classes—but several athletes still participated in the protest.

At one point Richardson announced that Spring break would be cancelled unless students returned to class. Said one student, "We don't care about losing Spring break, what we care about is the survival of Morgan State. Hell, they don't even want us to come down to Daytona Beach anyway."

If their demands are not followed through,

the students have promised to resume the occupation and boycott.

The actions taken by the Morgan State students provide important lessons for all people who are fighting for their rights—in the labor movement, the antiwar movement, and the women's rights movement.

Only by uniting and taking control of the school were the students able to realize their demands.

By STEEVE COUPEAU

ELMHURST, N.Y.—Since Jan. 30, all 450 workers at the Domsey Trading Co. have been on strike to defend a fundamental right: the right to choose their union.

This company, located in Brooklyn, specializes in selling new and used clothes. According to the workers, the discriminatory behavior of the boss and his supervisors, as well as the terrible conditions of work at this company, are the primary reasons for the strike.

The current union, Local 113, is strongly contested by the workers, who view it as always giving priority to the interests of the bosses. "Why bother paying the \$14 monthly union fee. We want to elect our own union or there will not be a union at all," argued a worker.

The decision to strike was taken after the boss fired for union activities three of the six elected workers who were mandated by their

## Haitian workers on strike in N.Y.C.

comrades to represent them before the ILGWU (International Ladies Garment Workers Union). The workers believe this union is more capable of defending their rights than Local 113.

Workers at Domsey have additional reasons for going on strike:

- 1) They receive \$3.65 per hour for a 10-hour work day.
- 2) They are not paid for overtime and holidays.
- 3) They do not have access to any health and insurance benefits.
- 4) The use of the bathroom is severely restricted by the boss.
- 5) Workers are depersonalized. They are assigned arbitrary numbers which are used instead of their names.

6) All workers receive a card. If for any reason they leave their card at home they are not allowed to work for the day.

7) Haitian women represent a majority of the workers at Domsey. They are often propositioned or otherwise sexually harassed by macho Haitian supervisors. If the women refuse to comply with the latter's sexual demands, or if they openly denounce advances, they are often transferred or simply fired.

8) Any worker, male or female, who denounces the crude exploitation existing in the workplace is summarily fired.

9) Because of the low salaries and the high unemployment rate in Haiti, the bosses at Domsey feel that they are justified and treat Haitian workers badly.

One important aspect of this strike is the amount of solidarity it has attracted. By

inviting community groups, as well as those supporting the popular movement in Haiti, to join them in their picketline, and by participating in large numbers at the first anniversary of the strike of 8000 Eastern Airline machinists on March 4 at LaGuardia Airport, workers at Domsey have proven their political maturity.

Their strike deserves to be supported by all sections of the U.S. working class.

The success of the Domsey strikers depends on the solidarity of all workers. No community by itself can protect its members from discrimination either on the job or in the whole society. It takes the combined force of all workers to win respect for workers' rights to a better life and a strong organization to defend these rights.

# Thousands protest U.S. role in Central America on March 24



Over 8000 demonstrated in San Francisco, Calif., on March 24 to demand: "End the U.S. War in Central America!"

By CLAUDETTE BEGIN

Up to 40,000 people commemorated the 10-year anniversary of Archbishop Oscar Romero's assassination by marching in cities across the United States on March 24 to protest U.S. intervention in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama.

Outrage against the U.S. government's continued deadly attacks against the people of Central America inspired many young people to join these marches. Built by coalitions representing a wide range of organizations, the actions were especially important following the U.S. government's invasion of Panama and its recent aggressive posture toward Cuba. Coalition sponsors included church groups, refugees, labor unions, students, CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), and other community groups.

The largest protest was in Washington, D.C., where 15,000 demonstrated in spite of a blizzard, many buses having been turned back on the way. A civil disobedience action which erected a mock Salvadoran shantytown on Pennsylvania Ave. resulted in 612 arrests.

In San Francisco, 8,000 to 10,000 people participated. Along the march route, demonstrators stopped in front of the Federal Building, and laid down coffins, flowers, and crosses to commemorate the 300,000 killed in Central America.

The Seattle and Los Angeles marches both drew 5,000; in Austin, 1,000 rallied. There

By JEFF MACKLER

A Costa Rican court has "provisionally" charged CIA collaborator and contra supporter John Hull with aggravated and attempted murder. The charges, initiated by the Fourth Court of Instruction in San José, Costa Rica, stem from Hull's alleged role in the 1984 bombing of a La Penca, Nicaragua press conference called by contra leader Edén Pastora.

Three journalists were killed in the bombing and several others wounded, including Tony Avirgan, whose Christic Institute-sponsored lawsuit against Hull and 28 other Contragate defendants is expected to be resolved this summer when a U.S. appeals court releases its decision.

Hull was originally arrested on Jan. 13, 1989, by Costa Rican authorities and charged with "hostile acts" for violating Costa Rica's neutrality by supporting the Nicaraguan contras. Released on \$37,500 bail, he fled the country and is now a fugitive in his hometown of Vincennes, Ind.

Costa Rica's Foreign Ministry is preparing documentation to seek Hull's extradition. Although Hull holds dual citizenship, his attorneys are counting on U.S. courts to pre-



Photos by Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

were also actions in many other cities, including Denver and Cleveland.

The tenor of the marches was spirited everywhere. Banners and props were clear in their statements to end the U.S. War in Central America. Special interfaith ceremonies preceded the marches and rallies in many areas.

In addition, celebrated entertainers showed

their support. Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne, and Kris Kristofferson appeared in San Francisco. Raul Julia, who played Romero in the film of that name, and Ed Asner were both featured in Washington, D.C.

In San Francisco, the vice president of the ATU local, representing the Greyhound strikers, addressed the rally.

## CIA collaborator indicted for murder

### Costa Rican gov't charges John Hull

vent his extradition.

The murder charges filed against Hull stem from a January report filed by Costa Rican prosecutor Jorge Chavarría which confirm key charges against Hull and 28 other defendants in the historic Christic Institute lawsuit filed under the Racketeering and Corrupt Influence Organization act (RICO) in 1986.

Tony Avirgan will be speaking in the San Francisco Bay Area during the last week of April. He will be joined by co-plaintiff and Christic Institute chief counsel Daniel Sheehan and by the Institute's Western

Regional Director Rev. Bill Davis in a series of Bay Area meetings as follows:

- Tony Avirgan: April 25, 7:30 p.m., Montclair Presbyterian Church, 5701 Thornhill Dr., Oakland. April 26, 7:30 p.m., First Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin St. at Geary, San Francisco.

- Daniel Sheehan: April 26 and 27, San Francisco: Glide Foundation-sponsored conference. Phone (415) 653-8576 for information.

- Rev. Bill Davis: April 27, 6:00 p.m. Panelist at Whole Life Expo, Room 2. Phone: (415) 333-4373 for information.

For information about special receptions for Avirgan, Sheehan, and Davis call The Christic Institute at (415) 788-0475 or write to the Institute's Washington, D.C., office at: 1324 North Capitol Street N.W., Washington D.C. 20002.

## 7000 brave state of siege in El Salvador

Salvadorans took to the streets March 24 for the first time since last fall to honor the memory of Oscar Romero and to call an end to the repression by the death-squad government of Alfredo Cristiani.

Over 100 visitors from Europe and the United States, including bishops from the Vatican and many other countries, traveled to El Salvador to accompany the Salvadorans.

The march, officially a "pilgrimage," was authorized by the government despite a five-month old state of siege that forbids public demonstrations.



## Victory for privacy rights

By BARBARA PUTNAM

On Feb. 27, 1990, in a landmark decision, the Washington State Supreme Court unanimously overturned a 1987 order from a lower court against the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP). Now the minutes of membership organizations falls within the range of constitutionally protected information.

Seven years ago, Richard Snedigar, a former member of FSP, filed suit in the King County Superior Court to try to force the FSP to give him back \$22,500 he contributed to help the organization relocate to a new office after they had received an eviction notice from their old building at Freedom Hall. Thus the "Freedom Hall Case" was born. Snedigar wanted to make the FSP give him the minutes of meetings to prove that he was unfairly persuaded to part with the \$22,500.

The late Leonard Boudin, an internationally respected civil rights attorney, defended the FSP's right to keep their meeting minutes confidential in the Freedom Hall case until his death Nov. 24, 1989.

Thanks to his persistence and to all the men and women who contributed to this struggle, a victory has been scored for privacy and free speech for unions and for civil rights and other political organizations.



# Now-more than ever-Cuba needs defense of its revolution

By JOSEPH RYAN

The Feb. 25 defeat of the Sandinistas in the Nicaraguan elections is a brutal blow to the Cuban Revolution.

Spokespersons for U.S. imperialism—Democrats and Republicans alike—are all openly bragging that Cuba will be the next "domino" to fall.

As Julie Sommer states in her letter [see box], the Cuban Revolution is in mortal danger today. Socialist Action agrees 100 percent with her call for making the defense of the Cuban Revolution against imperialism and Stalinism a major campaign.

No revolution is more hated—and feared—by the U.S. capitalist class than the Cuban Revolution—which 30 years ago established a workers' state just 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

As Castro often points out, Cuba was the last colony to win independence from Spain, but the first to win independence from U.S. imperialist domination in the Western hemisphere.

But U.S. imperialism has not abandoned its goal of overthrowing the gains of the Cuban Revolution. Lately, military threats and provocations against the Cubans have been escalated.

On Dec. 7, 1989—two weeks before the U.S. invasion of Panama—shots were fired from the U.S. Navy's Guantanamo Bay base at two Cuban sentry posts (fortunately, no one was killed). In early January, the battleship *U.S.S. Wisconsin* was dispatched to the base, located on the eastern coast of Cuba, as aircraft carriers steamed nearby.

On Jan. 31, the U.S. Coast Guard fired on a Cuban merchant ship in international waters under the pretext of searching for drugs. And in March, *TV Marti*, based in Miami, began broadcasting its propaganda of lies and distortions—a clear violation of Cuba's sovereignty over its own air waves.

This is certainly not a new situation for Cuba. The Cuban Revolution has faced off and beaten back numerous threats to its existence in the past—the 1961 CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion, the 1962 Cuban "missile crisis," a 30-year-long U.S. economic embargo, and an atmosphere of constant U.S. sabre-rattling punctuated by the October 1983 invasion of Grenada and the December 1989 invasion of Panama.

But today, the U.S. offensive against the Cuban Revolution has a new and powerful ally—the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

## Gorbachev pressures the Cubans

One ominous outcome of the Bush-Gorbachev "accords" at the Malta summit meeting last December was the agreement of the Soviet bureaucracy to put pressure on the unsubmitive Cubans.

This is because Castro and the Cuban leadership have continued supporting the freedom fighters in El Salvador and strongly oppose Gorbachev's *perestroika* "reforms" in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev, on the other hand, is committed to help U.S. imperialism resolve "regional conflicts," which means ensuring capitalist stability in Central America.

Unfortunately, the Soviet bureaucracy, ever-eager to carry out its part of the Bush-Gorbachev "accords," is in a strategic position to economically blackmail Cuba. And Cuba is already feeling the squeeze.

## Pay in hard currency

At the Jan. 10, 1990, meeting of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in Sofia, Bulgaria, a majority of delegates favored a move toward instituting a trade system based on the capitalist market system, using hard currency as a means of exchange.

[COMECON is an economic union of Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam.]

Such a move would have a severe effect on the economy of Cuba (as well as Mongolia and Vietnam). In the past, trade was coordinated among COMECON coun-



Daniel Caselli/Impact Visuals

## Defend the Cuban Revolution!

Dear editor,

Your article on the Cuban Revolution (February *Socialist Action*) was probably the best analysis I've seen in years on this subject. It very effectively dealt with the contradictory nature of the pragmatic Castro leadership and spelled out clearly what steps they will need to take to avoid being swamped by the *perestroika*-mania that is sweeping the "socialist camp."

I think that in light of the defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the "We Won the Cold War" propaganda of the imperialists, Cuba will be under increasing fire as the last bastion of "outdated" socialism.

Because of this, I think that *Socialist Action* should make the defense of the Cuban Revolution against imperialism and Stalinism a major part of its activities.

Julie Sommer,  
Long Island, N.Y.

tries to compensate for the underdevelopment of countries like Cuba, Vietnam, and Mongolia. These countries would get favorable prices (above the world market prices) for their products.

For example, Cuba would get a higher price for its sugar from the Soviet Union and be paid in kind with oil, credits and technological assistance.

If the new COMECON proposals were adopted, Cuba's exports—such as sugar, fruit, and minerals—would be thrown on what Castro correctly calls "the garbage-heap of world prices" which are controlled by world imperialism.

Over 80 percent of Cuba's trade is with the countries of COMECON. Virtually all of Cuba's oil comes from the Soviet Union. And now the Cuban workers and peasants are being told that they will have to pay for these vital products in hard currency or payment in kind based on prices set by imperialist markets.

But Gorbachev's new "capitalist-style" bookkeeping methods entail, first of all, abandonment of international solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. The favorable trade agreements the Cubans previously enjoyed are now being called "too expensive" and a drain on the Stalinist bureaucracy's "market reform" projects.

The Cubans aggressively intervened at the

Jan. 10 COMECON meeting, and believed that their position of maintaining the old agreements won the day. But two weeks later, on Jan. 22, they were forced to take hitherto unheard of economic measures.

For the first time in 20 years, Cuba announced a raise in prices on basic food staples like bread, eggs, and meat—along with measures to ration consumption. These measures came as a consequence of delays in Soviet grain and flour shipments.

The Cuban government accepted the Soviet explanation that the delay was caused by dislocations in the Soviet economy, but Castro could see the handwriting on the wall.

The Cuban leaders can no longer take for granted the economic and military support the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries provided in the past. This support was crucial for Cuba's survival. It decisively helped to offset the effects of a 30-year U.S. trade embargo.

Today, however, Cuba is being economically starved from the rear by the Soviet bureaucracy while it is being militarily harassed from the front by the U.S. imperialists.

## Preparing the Cuban masses

Castro is now campaigning to prepare the Cuban masses for the hard times ahead. In a

dramatic speech at the closing session of the 16th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions, held in Havana on Jan. 28, Castro laid out the challenges—and the stakes involved.

"We hope that in 1990," Castro explained to the thousands of assembled trade-union delegates, "some of the trade agreements will still be honored, signed by virtue of earlier plans. But we don't have any certainty that this will be so, nor can we have any...."

"This is as far as 1990 is concerned. What about 1991? Can you imagine the 1991-1995 five-year plan? On what basis, with whom are we going to sign those plans? What products can be guaranteed; what markets will there be for our products?"

Castro realizes that the future is fraught with danger and uncertainty. He told the union delegates that the government is planning for all eventualities, for what he called "a special period in peacetime" or, in the case of a U.S. blockade, "a special period in time of war."

"What does a special period in peacetime mean?" Castro asked. "It means that because of our relations with the Eastern European countries or because of certain processes or factors in the Soviet Union, we would have such grave economic problems that we would be faced with an extremely serious lack of supplies."

"Keep in mind that all our fuel comes from the Soviet Union. And it might be reduced by a third or a half because of problems in the USSR. Or it could be cut completely, which would be equivalent to the situation we call a special period in time of war."

Furthermore, Castro stressed that Cuba will increasingly have to depend on its internal resources to face the problems ahead.

"We don't even know what problems may confront us in 1990. We're trying to anticipate them, but some things are beyond our control, out of our hands."

"Looking a little farther ahead, nobody knows what problems may develop after 1990, yet we must be resolutely determined to confront whatever they may be."

"The food programs mustn't be halted; they are strategic. We're also working to promote water conservation, find new sources of water, dig canals, and create irrigation systems. And this shouldn't be halted, no matter what."

## War for survival

Revolutionary Cuba, its back to the wall, is now waging a fight for its survival on three interconnected fronts: military, economic, and political (ideological).

On the military front, it faces the colossus of U.S. imperialism. Here the Cuban Revolution is probably strongest. The whole population is armed; and should the United States attempt an invasion they'll be confronted with 10 million heavily armed and trained workers and peasants.

"We have organized the country in defense zones," Castro stated in his Jan. 28 speech. "Men, women, and children—young and old—are organized. The whole country is organized to make the price of aggression too high for the aggressors to pay; to do them so much damage and cause them so many casualties that they will be forced to withdraw. It will take as many U.S. troops as it did to invade Panama to hold onto just one Cuban province."

On the economic front, however, Cuba is vulnerable. And the goal of U.S. imperialism, with Gorbachev's decisive assistance, is to slowly starve the Cubans into submission.

But the Cuban Revolution has a decisive political and economic advantage that the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, unfortunately, consciously rejected.

The Cubans carried their revolution to its logical end by expropriating the property of the capitalists and big landowners and established the *dictatorship of the proletariat* in 1961. The basic conquests of the revolution—a planned economy, monopoly of foreign trade, and nationalization of industry—

(continued on page 12)

By ALAN BENJAMIN

"If Daniel Ortega wants me to give back my rifle and allow the Sandinista army and police to be placed under the authority of [President-elect Violeta] Chamorro, he will personally have to come and take it out of my hands."

These words were spoken by a member of the Sandinista militia at a spontaneous gathering of Sandinista supporters in Managua's Blandón neighborhood two days after the Feb. 25 elections.

Informal gatherings such as this one were commonplace throughout Nicaragua in the immediate aftermath of the elections that brought Chamorro, the U.S.-backed candidate of the UNO coalition, to power.

Those who had taken arms up against Somoza and courageously defended the revolution for more than 10 years could not believe that the candidate of the contras would soon be sworn into office. They assembled at all hours of the day in the factories, neighborhoods and farms, desperately seeking to understand what had gone wrong and what could be done to defend the revolution.

"Wherever you go, you can feel the deep sense of resentment and outrage among the footsoldiers of the revolution," Francisco Samper, vice presidential candidate of the Movement for Revolutionary Unity (MUR), told *Socialist Action*.

"Sandinista members and supporters are not satisfied with the answers and perspectives offered by the FSLN leadership," Samper continued. "They are openly voicing their criticisms of Ortega's election campaign and of Sandinista policy in general. Never has there been this much discussion about the problems of the revolution. Even we have been taken by surprise."

[The MUR, a party that includes Trotskyists and former Sandinistas, put forward a program that called for defending, deepening, and extending the revolution. Its presidential candidate, former Sandinista leader Moisés Hassan, obtained 16,850 votes (or 1.3 percent)—which won him a seat in the 94-person National Assembly, the only seat won by a left party other than the FSLN.]

#### "Grew apart from the people"

Similar reactions of popular disbelief and anger were reported by journalists covering the elections. *Boston Globe* reporter Philip Bennett, for example, quoted a bitter FSLN member who placed part of the blame for Ortega's defeat on the Sandinista leadership.

"The Front [FSLN] grew apart from the people," she said, "and for a revolutionary movement that is suicide."

By way of example, she described a post-defeat Sandinista rally in Managua that was addressed by the top Sandinista commanders. "We were standing there in the sun after days of crying to show our determination to move ahead, and I saw all these leaders with long, serious faces. They took a look at the crowd, but instead of joining us, they got into their air-conditioned luxury jeeps and went home. This is why we lost." (March 3)

Argentina's daily newspaper *Sur* quoted a leader of the Sandinista Youth, Patricia López, who said: "It was not they [Chamorro's UNO coalition] who won, but we who lost." (Feb. 27)

López explained that under the Sandinistas, "the rich remained as rich as they were under Somoza while the poor, who sacrificed the most for the revolution, got poorer." She said the poor simply lost confidence in the Sandinistas' ability and willingness to respond to the people's needs.

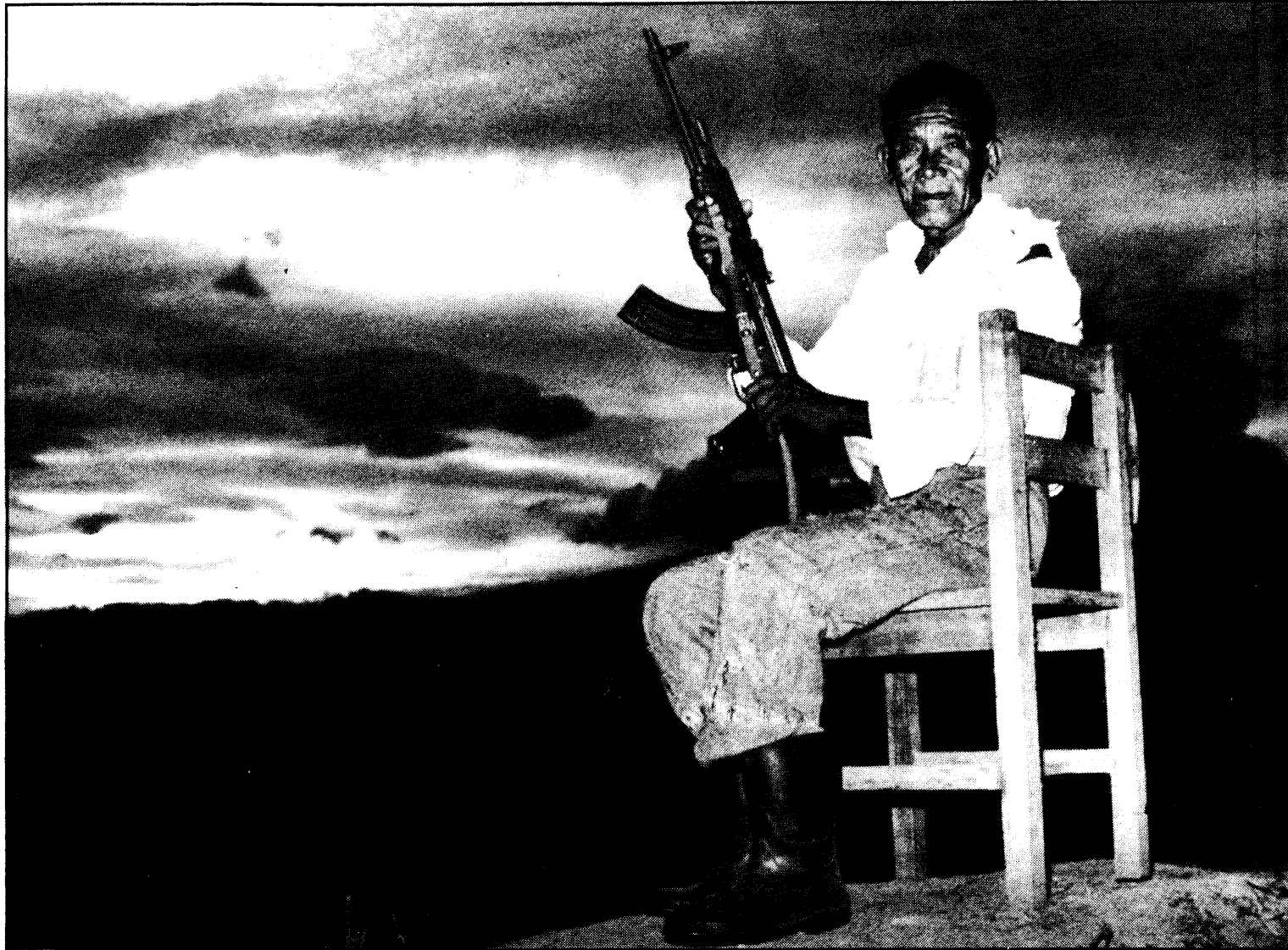
*Globe* reporter Bennett was told by members of peasant cooperatives that they had voted for Chamorro because of her promise of individual titles to the land.

"Daniel [Ortega] promised us titles, but we never got them. So we were angry," Diego Oliver, a peasant at the Naranjito cooperative told Bennett. (March 4)

But Oliver added that if the titles were not forthcoming from Chamorro, or if land was taken away from those who had benefited from the agrarian reform program, the peasants would rise up against the new government.

Similarly, pro-Sandinista factory workers told reporters that they would wage crippling strikes if the new government did not improve the economy within its first 100 days. They would also strike, they said, if the

# The Essential Lesson the Nicaraguan Revolu



*'... the rich remained as rich as they were under Somoza while the poor, who sacrificed the most for the revolution, got poorer.'*

—Patricia López, leader, Sandinista Youth

Chamorro government attempted to privatize businesses nationalized by the Sandinistas.

#### Accepting a "smooth" transition

In the wake of their electoral defeat, Sandinista leaders publicly pledged to defend the gains of the revolution by "governing from below," as Daniel Ortega put it.

Defense Minister Humberto Ortega, repeating a pre-election promise, said he would never accept placing the army and police under the authority of the new Chamorro government. Other Sandinista leaders said they would wage a relentless fight to ensure that the agrarian reform law and other social programs enacted over the past 10 years would be "irreversible."

Within a few weeks, however, top Sandinista leaders began to change their tune.

At a meeting with U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle in Santiago, Chile, on March 13, Daniel Ortega said the Sandinistas had dropped all pre-conditions for a "smooth" transfer of power. This was a retreat. Ortega and Interior Minister Tomás Borge had earlier threatened to arm the entire population if the contra army was not dismantled before the new government took office on April 25.

In addition, Ortega, undermining the sovereignty of the Sandinista army and revolution, gave his support to United Nations "peacekeeping" troops to ensure the transfer of power. These UN troops would have the authority, among other things, to put down protests of Sandinista supporters against the new government.

Nicaraguan Vice President Sergio Ramírez

told the press, moreover, that the Sandinistas had now agreed to place the Sandinista army and police under the control of the Chamorro government. Ramírez's pledge was confirmed by Antonio Lacayo Oyanguren, Chamorro's chief negotiator with the Sandinistas. (*New York Times*, March 22)

By acquiescing to this transfer of power, the leadership of the Sandinista Front signaled its willingness to become a loyal opposition to Chamorro. Along this path, it is impossible to prevent Chamorro and her U.S. backers from dismantling, little by little, every gain of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

#### Along the concessionary path

The course followed by the Sandinista leadership is not altogether surprising. During the FSLN election campaign, Ortega and other top government officials clearly revealed their willingness to make substantial political concessions to U.S. imperialism and its local puppets in Nicaragua.

Nicaraguan Vice President Sergio Ramírez, in an interview with the weekly *La Crónica* in late January, said that the FSLN had adopted an approach that is "more political and less ideological" than in the past. One aspect of this approach, he said, was the FSLN's decision to include capitalist farmers on its slates for the National Assembly and for municipal posts.

"These people have access to specific social sectors that the Sandinista Front as a party in the strict sense" cannot reach. The FSLN, Ramírez continued, is now making

"real alliances with different social political sectors of the country and is determined to give these alliances a strategic character aimed at contributing to a national consensus." (quoted in *The Militant*, Feb. 2)

Ramírez's statement was universally interpreted as a pledge to include capitalist representatives in a new post-election government. This was the condition the Nicaraguan capitalists had long demanded as the basis for accepting the FSLN leadership's social pact known as *concertación* (or collaboration).

The Nicaraguan capitalists explained that as long as the FSLN retained its monopoly on political power, they would refuse to invest productively in the economy—no matter how many dollar subsidies and other incentives were provided by the Sandinistas' policy of *concertación*.

[None of the 11 cattle producers and agro-export capitalists was among the 39 FSLN candidates elected to the National Assembly, having been ranked relatively low on the FSLN's 94-person list of candidates. Dozens of capitalists were elected to local office on the FSLN slate, however.]

The U.S. State Department had also insisted that power-sharing be instituted before the United States would lift economic sanctions and normalize relations with Nicaragua.

MUR Vice Presidential candidate Francisco Samper told *Socialist Action* that the Sandinista leadership had in fact, agreed to a "secret 9-point pact" with the COSEP (Superior Council of Private Enterprise), the

# The Essential Lessons of the Nicaraguan Revolution



Marvin Collins/Impact Visuals

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major organization of the Nicaraguan capitalists.

"At receptions at foreign embassies shortly before the election," Samper said, "COSEP leaders openly boasted of this pact, which, they said, included a Sandinista pledge to abolish the draft, include opposition leaders in top cabinet posts, nominate an independent magistrate, and reprivatize sectors of industrial and agricultural production."

#### "Less ideological" campaign

Another illustration of the FSLN's "less ideological" approach during the elections was the character of the campaign itself.

Rather than rely on the Sandinista Defense Committees and mass organizations to mobilize support for the Sandinistas on the basis of a program calling for the defense and the deepening of the revolution, the FSLN leadership separated itself from the masses and their aspirations.

A parallel structure involving 70,000 paid staff members was established throughout the country to promote the main Sandinista slogan—"Everything will get better." Estimated to have cost close to \$40 million, the Sandinistas' campaign had all the markings of a typical U.S. election campaign. There were T-shirts galore, photo opportunities with the candidates, even a new *macho* image for Ortega, who was renamed *El Gallo* (The Rooster). It was vintage Madison Avenue.

But, as MUR leader Rodrigo Ibarra explained to *Socialist Action*, "The Sandinista rank and file and the people in general resented this waste of money at a time when most Nicaraguans have to get by with one meal a day. Under their breaths, everyone was saying that if the commanders knew what it felt to go hungry, they would not throw away the people's money."

Ibarra continued: "The break with the revolutionary image and traditions of the FSLN was so sharp that even the Sandinista hymn was barred from all election rallies and events. After all, you can't tell people that a

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# Sons of Revolution



Marvin Collins/Impact Visuals

deal with the U.S. government is what's required to make everything better while at the same time denouncing the United States as the enemy of humanity."

[The Sandinista hymn states in part, "We fight against the Yankee, enemy of humanity."]

One week before the elections, in fact, the Sandinista Front formally applied for membership in the Second (or Socialist) International. This is the loose alliance of parties that includes the European social democratic parties (French and Spanish SPs for example) and the populist capitalist ruling parties in Mexico (PRI), Peru (APRA), and Venezuela (AP), among others.

The Second International long ago went over to the side of counterrevolution, to the side of U.S. imperialism. The FSLN leadership's decision to join this international party is perhaps the best indication of its break with its revolutionary past.

*Newsweek* magazine noted the shift in Sandinista policy in its Feb. 26 issue, published just prior to the elections:

"The revolution in Nicaragua may be over no matter who wins.... If the Sandinistas win—and the election is certified by the more than 600 international observers—Ortega is likely to seek peace with both the United States and his internal opposition....

"The Sandinistas took power promising to create a new society. Now, external pressures, internal resistance, their own blunders and the inevitable accommodations of 10 years in power have left them behaving much like the traditional pols they once sought to transcend."

### Hailing Chamorro's victory

Following the Feb. 25 elections, all the enemies of the Nicaraguan Revolution rejoiced that "democracy" had triumphed in Nicaragua—that is, that the revolutionary upsurge of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants had been dealt a devastating blow.

Democrats and Republicans mutually praised each other for keeping the pressure of the contra war on the Sandinistas and for forcing them to comply with the so-called Central American peace plan.

Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, the vehemently anti-Sandinista Nobel laureate after whom the "peace" plan was named, was the first to salute the Chamorro victory. No longer concerned about the need to pose as a neutral and independent statesman, Arias lavished praise on Chamorro and the contras. He insisted that he was one of the few who hadn't lost confidence in the UNO coalition's ability to win the elections, all opinion polls notwithstanding.

This is the same Oscar Arias who was repeatedly hailed by the Sandinista leadership (and by many in the U.S. anti-intervention movement) for his alleged support to peace and democracy in the region!

Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, as well as Spain's Felipe Gonzalez and France's François Mitterand, also tried to outdo one another in heaping praise upon Chamorro. All of them had feigned friendship for the Sandinistas while actually stabbing the revolution in the back.

### "The first large payoff"

But the political force which outdid them all in jumping to Chamorro's support was the Soviet bureaucracy led by Mikhail Gorbachev.

On Feb. 26, the day after the election, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ion Boursai said that Moscow was willing to provide large sums of economic aid—and even military aid—to the Chamorro government. "We are willing to discuss the question of cooperation in the military field with the new government if the necessity arises," Boursai stated. (*Washington Post*, Feb. 27)

It wasn't long ago that Reagan and Bush were justifying the need for aid to the contras on the never-proven grounds that Nicaragua was becoming a Soviet military beachhead in the Americas. But now with the Sandinistas driven from office, the truth about the Soviet bureaucracy's real counter-revolutionary role could finally be told. No longer was it necessary to whip up support for the contras by pushing the "Communist bogey-man" propaganda blitz.

An editorial in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 8) told it the best:

"But why, actually, did Ortega and the

other Sandinista *comandantes* finally consent to the elections in compliance with a five-nation peace plan?

"It seems certain now that Soviet President Gorbachev pressured him hard to hold the fair elections the plan called for, implicitly using the leverage of continued Soviet aid to help Ortega make up his mind. And Gorbachev had been pressured hard by President Bush to bring Moscow's influence to bear on the Sandinistas in just this way. The Sandinistas perceive in any case that Moscow's aid to revolutions may be drying up under Gorbachev's policies.

"And so we see here, almost certainly, the first large payoff in this hemisphere from the warming in U.S.-Soviet relations.... The new tone comes through stunningly in a remark by a high Soviet Foreign Ministry official the other day, 'The Third World suffers not so much from capitalism as from a lack of it.'"

Two days after the Nicaraguan elections, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker contacted Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to thank him and the Soviet leadership for their help in getting the Sandinistas to accept a peace process whose terms were close to those that Washington had long sought.

And on Feb. 28, George Bush held a 40-minute phone conversation with Gorbachev during which he praised the Soviet leader's "constructive role" in Nicaragua and appealed to him again "to use his influence to get the Sandinistas to agree to cooperate with the incoming government and not to resist it." (*Los Angeles Times*, March 1)

### Was there another course?

One of the central questions currently discussed in Nicaragua and among the international supporters of the Nicaraguan Revolution is whether the Sandinistas could have followed a different course that would not have led to their handing over power to the contra-led opposition.

This question gets at the heart of the strategy of "mixed economy and political pluralism" pursued by the Sandinistas throughout the course of the revolution.

The Sandinista leadership has always

prided itself on the unique and original—in a word "Sandinista"—character of their revolutionary strategy. Tomás Borge summarized this view in a Sept. 24, 1989, speech launching the FSLN's 1990 election campaign. He said:

"We are original. We have charted our own course.... Without shunning other experiences, we have chosen a singular path, which through its creativity and independence is a hope for other peoples." (*The Militant*, Oct. 20, 1989)

There can be no doubt that the Sandinistas waged a relentless battle for freedom against the most powerful imperialist colossus the world has ever known—enduring a protracted contra war and economic embargo. The agrarian reform, albeit incomplete; the nationalization of certain sectors of the economy, and the arming of the masses represent important gains for the Nicaraguan people; gains that must be defended against the Chamorro government and all its supporters.

But the Sandinista revolution went only half way; it failed to follow the example of the Cuban Revolution, which showed that to achieve genuine national independence it was necessary to go all the way—that is, to combine the revolution of national liberation against imperialism with the social revolution against capitalism.

The Cuban Revolution had shown that (1) it was impossible to satisfy the demands of the workers and peasants and those of the capitalists at the same time, and (2) it was impossible to develop the economy in any meaningful way within the framework of capitalist property relations.

### Subordinated class struggle

The Sandinistas maintained a policy of "national unity" with the capitalists of Nicaragua (the "strategy of the mixed economy") and an alliance with the so-called anti-imperialist capitalists in Latin America and Western Europe. This policy dictated subordinating the class conflict inside Nicaragua to the needs of national defense against the U.S.-backed contras.

Concretely, this meant giving the Nicaraguan capitalists major concessions in

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major organization of the Nicaraguan capitalists.

"At receptions at foreign embassies shortly before the election," Samper said, "COSEP leaders openly boasted of this pact, which, they said, included a Sandinista pledge to abolish the draft, include opposition leaders in top cabinet posts, nominate an independent magistrate, and reprivatize sectors of industrial and agricultural production."

### "Less ideological" campaign

Another illustration of the FSLN's "less ideological" approach during the elections was the character of the campaign itself.

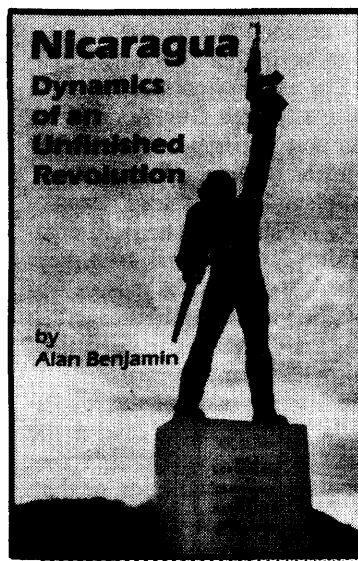
Rather than rely on the Sandinista Defense Committees and mass organizations to mobilize support for the Sandinistas on the basis of a program calling for the defense and the deepening of the revolution, the FSLN leadership separated itself from the masses and their aspirations.

A parallel structure involving 70,000 paid staff members was established throughout the country to promote the main Sandinista slogan—"Everything will get better." Estimated to have cost close to \$40 million, the Sandinistas' campaign had all the markings of a typical U.S. election campaign. There were T-shirts galore, photo opportunities with the candidates, even a new *macho* image for Ortega, who was renamed *El Gallo* (The Rooster). It was vintage Madison Avenue.

But, as MUR leader Rodrigo Ibarra explained to *Socialist Action*, "The Sandinista rank and file and the people in general resented this waste of money at a time when most Nicaraguans have to get by with one meal a day. Under their breaths, everyone was saying that if the commanders knew what it felt to go hungry, they would not throw away the people's money."

Ibarra continued: "The break with the revolutionary image and traditions of the FSLN was so sharp that even the Sandinista hymn was barred from all election rallies and events. After all, you can't tell people that a

## A critical assessment of the Sandinista Revolution



• **Moisés Hassan** (former Sandinista leader and ex-mayor of Managua):

"In a short space, Alan Benjamin has selected the essential issues facing the Nicaraguan Revolution and presented a coherent analysis of the social forces in contention over the past decade.

"Foreign observers who support the revolution tend to uncritically echo the policy positions of the Sandinista leadership, thereby doing a disservice to the revolution itself. Benjamin has avoided this pitfall. He is not afraid to approach the problems confronting the revolution and to offer an alternative solution to the crisis facing Nicaragua."

• **John Weeks**, Professor of International Economics, Middlebury College:

"For those who look for new thinking on Nicaragua, 'Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution' is necessary reading. Alan Benjamin offers a well-argued answer to the question, where does the revolution go from here?"

• **Joe Ricciardi**, Economist, academic visitor, Central Bank of Nicaragua:

"A useful treatment of Nicaragua's mixed economy."

• **Professor James Rhodes**, Luther College (*Library Journal*):

"Benjamin provides a tightly argued and carefully documented case for what he terms 'an incomplete revolution.' This book is unique in that it assesses the impact of U.S. policy within the Nicaraguan political system."

### "Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution"

by Alan Benjamin, editor of *Socialist Action* newspaper, in collaboration with researchers at Managua's ITZTANI Institute, 186 pp. Introduction by Rod Holt and Jeff Mackler. To order, send \$8.95 (includes \$1 postage) to:

Walnut Publishing Co., 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

# ... Threat to Cuba

(continued from page 9)

make the country organically stronger.

But if Castro believes that he can "build socialism in one country"—isolated from the world market and based on scarcity—he must know that this would only amount to a caricature of "barracks socialism."

The result would be increasing social discontent and the inevitable formation of a crystallized Stalinist caste whose interests are inimical to the interests of the Cuban people.

It would only be a matter of time before the social infrastructure would break down and hostile class social forces would rear their ugly heads. This is when the U.S. imperialists would strike—just like they did in Grenada.

## Extend socialist revolution

The key to Cuba's survival, therefore, is on the political front. The precondition for this is the extension of the socialist revolution to Latin America. But unfortunately, Castro's approach here will continue to be fatally flawed if he doesn't settle accounts with Stalinism.

While the Cubans have consciously prevented the rise of a Stalinist bureaucratic caste in Cuba, in the process of defending their national independence and refusing to become a "bargaining chip" for Gorbachev, their pragmatic approach to politics has left them in a contradictory position.

The Cubans have had to depend for their survival on the "good will" of the Moscow Stalinists. The Stalinists, on the other hand, benefited politically from this relationship because they looked "revolutionary" when they aided the heroic and besieged revolutionary island.

This situation has forced Castro to walk a political tightrope, which is perfectly permissible for a revolution trying to survive.

But Castro's mistaken opposition to the nascent political revolution in Eastern Europe has put him in a situation where the Gorbachevites now portray him in the Soviet press as an "old-line Stalinist" of the Ligachev type.

This portrayal dovetails quite well with the U.S. propaganda slander that Castro is a "despot" with no popular support.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Unlike the hated Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, whose rule was associated with po-

litical repression and economic mismanagement, the Castro leadership enjoys more popular support than any other government in the world.

But Cuba has to link up with—not oppose—the workers' and farmers' movement for democratic rights in Eastern Europe. They are not the ones responsible for late grain shipments to Cuba. The Stalinist leaderships in these countries are the ones who want to restore "market capitalism" and strike a deal with U.S. imperialism.

Castro drew some similar conclusions while speaking to the Federation of Cuban Women's fifth congress in Havana, on March 7. He denounced the fact that Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria supported and voted for a U.S.-sponsored U.N. resolution which accused Cuba of human rights violations.

Speaking about the danger of a U.S. invasion, Castro said: "If one day that takes place, the responsibility for the bloodshed will also fall on those countries, those governments of countries that until yesterday were part of the socialist camp.

"The blood will also be on Poland, on Czechoslovakia.... They will be responsible to a great extent for any crime that is committed against Cuba, and responsibility will fall equally on Hungary and on Bulgaria. I will not say it will fall on confused peoples, but on the leaders, on the governments that have dared to write such an infamous page in



history."

For Castro to successfully defeat this political and economic blackmail he has to reach out to the workers and farmers of those countries, support their struggle for socialist democracy, and attract them with an alternative revolutionary program.

## Build parties in Latin America

Similarly, extending the socialist revolution to Latin America is crucial for Cuba's survival. In the past, however, Castro has subordinated the building of independent revolutionary movements to political alliances with the so-called progressive native capitalist classes in these countries. This is the result of tail-ending the Stalinist communist parties in Latin America, who are not in the least interested in making socialist revolution.

Furthermore, because of pressure from the Soviet Union, these parties will now play a treacherous role in relation to Cuba. The Castro leadership is on a collision course with Stalinism in Latin America.

The necessity of organizing and building revolutionary Marxist parties, which will genuinely defend the interests of the workers and peasants in Latin America, is a vital prerequisite for breaking Cuba out of its current isolation.

Cuba's "fair-weather" friends in Latin America, like President Collor de Mello in Brazil or President Salinas de Gortari in Mexico, will be the first to abandon the besieged island. These native capitalists fear their own workers and peasants a thousand times more than they fear the arrogance of a triumphant U.S. imperialism should Cuba succumb.

Cuba's only reliable allies in Latin America are the millions of workers and peasants who see the Cuban Revolution as one of their conquests.

## Institute workers' democracy

Most importantly, Castro needs to institute direct forms of workers' rule in Cuba based on soviets (councils) of workers and peasants.

The current *absence* of institutionalized forms of workers' democratic control over all aspects of economic, political, and social life in Cuba will, in the long term, pose a fatal danger to the Cuban Revolution.

Soviets of workers and peasants would *exclude* capitalist parties. They would be made up of delegates from various soviet parties elected by the masses themselves and subject to immediate recall. Direct democratic control of Cuban society by the

workers and peasants would put the revolution in the strongest position to defend itself.

Undoubtedly, the Castro leadership, based on the 30-year mandate they've already enjoyed would prevail in these soviets.

Most importantly, this example of soviet democracy would undercut Gorbachev's demagogic call for "parliamentary democracy."

Unfortunately, in his Jan. 28 speech to trade-union delegates, Castro indicated that, if anything, there should be a tightening up of the Cuban Communist Party. He indicated that genuine discussion, participation, and debate is a "luxury" the revolution cannot afford; that the Cuban Communist Party must have monolithic unity in the face of adversity.

But despite Castro's well-intentioned desire to maintain equilibrium, such measures will not suppress *Glasnost*-type pressures or debates. On the contrary, a Gorbachev wing will develop inside the Cuban CP behind the back of Castro—and behind the backs of the masses—if these discussions are not in the open with full democratic participation by the workers. An approach of open, democratic discussion will, furthermore, deny Gorbachev the "high ground" of "democracy-mongering."

Worker and peasant soviets are the only institutions that will effectively combat the Stalinist virus that is incubating and poised to undermine and weaken the Cuban Revolution.

Such an example of full-fledged workers' democracy would be an inspiration to the workers and farmers of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Central and South America and, most importantly, the United States. Such an approach would immediately propel the Cuban Revolution into the leadership of the world's workers and farmers.

In the United States, the task of solidarity, peace, antiwar, civil rights, and trade-union activists is to unconditionally defend revolutionary Cuba from U.S. aggression, irrespective of what measures the Castro leadership may take. A defeat of Cuba would be an historic blow to working people everywhere.

Demonstrations, rallies, and teach-ins need to be organized to make it perfectly clear to Washington that the U.S. warmakers will pay as much a domestic political price as they will a military price should they escalate their war moves against Cuba.

No U.S. Intervention in Cuba!

U.S. Hands Off Cuba!

U.S. Out of Guantanamo Naval Base!

# ... Nicaragua

(continued from page 11)

an attempt to gain their support: Over 60 percent of the economy remained in private hands, and the government provided millions of dollars yearly in subsidies, incentives, and tax breaks to the capitalists.

This also meant providing political support to so-called anti-imperialist and social-democratic regimes throughout the world.

The FSLN leadership, for example, consistently gave political support to the pro-imperialist ruling PRI party in Mexico, praising Mexico as a "model of true socialist democracy."

But the Mexican regime cut off oil to Nicaragua under pressure from the U.S. State Department and vehemently supported the *contras*' demand for "democratization." Friends like this the Nicaraguan Revolution did not need. It would have found much more reliable allies among Mexico's workers and peasants.

## No easy solution

Obviously, there was no easy solution to the plight of the weak and distorted Nicaraguan economy. But deepening the revolution by proceeding on international revolutionary-socialist course—based on the mobilization of the workers and peasants against the capitalists and big landlords—was a vital necessity for defending the revolution.

To prevent the dynamism of the revolution from being continually eroded, the Nicaraguan Revolution had to break out of the bonds of the "mixed economy" and take the path the Cuban Revolution took in 1961. Such a decision would have been enthusiastically supported by the majority of Nicaraguan workers and peasants, a large proportion of whom deeply resented the large handouts given to the capitalists as well as

the unequal share of the hardships imposed on them by the *contra* war.

In order to move in this direction, an extensive system of workers' control had to be instituted in order to both prevent capitalist destabilization and to begin to involve the masses themselves in democratic decision-making. Sandinista "participatory" democracy was a poor substitute for actively organizing and training the masses to govern themselves. Participation of the masses was also stifled by the vertical and bureaucratic control over the mass organizations exercised by the Sandinista leadership.

Many of the burning tasks of the revolution, such as the distribution of land to the peasants, remained unresolved. Distributing the land to the tens of thousands peasant families who had not benefited from the agrarian reform program was essential. It required making deep inroads into the property rights of the agro-export capitalists.

This would have ensured the support of the land-hungry peasants for the revolution and cemented their alliance with the workers, who would have become the new ruling class.

## Extending the revolution

But even if the Sandinistas had broken with the mixed capitalist economy, the dependent and backward character of the Nicaraguan economy underscores the fact that, by itself, Nicaragua could not break out of the straitjacket of underdevelopment imposed on it by the international capitalist system.

Extending the revolution throughout Central America was both necessary and possible. The fate of the Nicaraguan Revolution was inextricably tied to the outcome of the struggles in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Instead, however, the Sandinistas gave political support to the pro-capitalist "program of broad participation" adopted in the early

1980s by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador. And later, under the pressure of the Arias plan, the Sandinista Front even turned its back on the Salvadoran struggle itself.

In December 1989, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega signed the San Isidro Accords, which legitimized the Salvadoran death-squad regime of Alfredo Cristiani and urged the demobilization of the FMLN combatants. The FMLN itself strongly denounced the declaration of the five Central American presidents, stating:

"This declaration unconditionally supports the principal violator of human rights of the region: a government which has assassinated and persecuted the religious community and bombed its civilian population.

"This support only encourages those who have unleashed this irrational violence, and permits the slaughter that is now taking place in El Salvador to worsen....

"The FMLN cannot be demobilized by virtue of agreements among governments because the FMLN constitutes a legitimate force, rooted in the population all over the country."

## The situation today

The Central American revolution is at its most difficult point in decades. Following the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas, prospects for revolutionary victories are dim in the immediate future.

It is not just imperialist wishful thinking when the *New York Times* (Feb. 27) writes: "In Central America, the Sandinista defeat anchors the ideological balance of power firmly on the right. That promises to deal a sharp political and military blow to leftist guerrillas in El Salvador and Guatemala."

Less than one month after the Nicaraguan elections, top leaders of the Salvadoran FMLN guerrilla forces were reported by the *New York Times* (March 22) to have agreed "to make more concessions and were close to

completing arrangements for negotiations."

The *Times* reported that the FMLN and the Cristiani government had agreed to negotiate a treaty whereby "the rebels [would] put down their arms and agree to take part in municipal and legislative elections next March."

In Nicaragua, while there is widespread anger and frustration among wide layers of the population who want to fight to defend the gains of the revolution, the majority who voted for Chamorro is bound to give her a "honeymoon" period to improve their desperate economic situation.

Without revolutionary leadership from the Sandinista Front—which has embarked on the path of becoming a loyal opposition to Chamorro—demoralization is bound to set in.

Still, Chamorro's political alliance is quite fragile, and, moreover, it does not appear that the imperialists are in a position to provide the kind of economic aid Chamorro needs to forestall new class conflicts in the period ahead.

"Look at Panama," MUR leader Rodrigo Ibarra told *Socialist Action*. "So little U.S. economic aid has been sent there that even the puppet president, Guillermo Endara, has had to wage a hunger strike to demand more aid. And in El Salvador, where the U.S. government has pumped in billions of dollars, the economy is still about to collapse."

Ibarra continued, "Despite the grave setback suffered with the FSLN's electoral defeat, there is an urgent sense that it is necessary to mobilize to defend the gains of the revolution. People aren't ready to sit back and say the revolution is over."

"But it will take a new leadership to lead this fight," Ibarra concluded, "and that is what we in the MUR are hoping to build alongside all those Sandinistas and revolutionary minded people who are looking for a class-struggle perspective." ■

# England's poll tax revolt threatens Thatcher gov't

By HAYDEN PERRY

A wave of protest is sweeping Britain as the most regressive tax code in modern history goes into effect. In villages, small towns, and cities residents are rallying in protest. They are shouting, "We can't pay! We won't pay!"

Cause of the outcry is Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's "community charge." This is a scheme to make the working people bear the financial burden of local government. Up to now municipal governments have depended on property taxes for much of their revenue. Known as "rates," these taxes take more money from residents of stately mansions than from workers in their modest cottages.

About three years ago Mrs. Thatcher decided to ease this burden on the wealthy. The tax on property would be abolished, to be replaced by a "community charge." The system works this way: The city council estimates the annual cost of police, local schools, and all the other services the community provides. They subtract the grants supplied by the national government. The balance left, the community charge, is divided evenly among all the residents of the town.

Every person over 18, rich or poor, pays the same tax. This has properly been called a poll tax, similar to the poll tax formerly levied against voters in the South. The British poll tax is collected whether a resident votes or not.

## The Scottish example

Fearing considerable opposition, Thatcher first introduced the poll tax into Scotland a year ago. She hoped it would gradually gain acceptance there, so it could be introduced painlessly into the rest of the United Kingdom.



But the poll tax has not gained acceptance in Scotland. Its unfairness has become more and more obvious. When a city council sends out a typical tax bill of over £300 (\$500), it means each member of the household over 18 must pay £300. Often the 18-year-old is still at school, earning nothing. Only old-age pensioners and a few others are excused from paying the full amount.

Faced with these exorbitant charges, a million and a half Scots have cried, "I can't pay! I won't pay!" Thousands of "final" notices have been sent out—without effect. The law says that ultimately a delinquent's household goods may be sold to collect the taxes, but hundreds of protesters have appeared when such sales have been attempted.

The Scottish experience has not made life easier for Margaret Thatcher. It has intensified the outrage of the voters, and given time for opposition tactics and strategy to be worked out. Unfortunately Labour Party leaders have opposed effective tactics, such as a tax strike, and offered little else. But the firestorm of revolt that is sweeping Britain is putting pressure on them.

## More disastrous effects

Experience in England and Wales has been even more disastrous for Thatcher and the Tories. Municipal councils are now adopting their budgets and sending out tax bills to be paid after April 1.

The Tories had claimed the community charge would be less than the previous prop-

erty tax, especially in Tory-run boroughs. They unwisely published the estimated tax for the major towns and counties. The actual tax has proven to be from £50 to £100 higher than promised. So now Tory taxpayers are also up in arms.

The indignation of the British people has been expressed at mass rallies in even conservative villages and rural counties. Londoners in working-class boroughs have invaded city halls and tried to stop the municipal machinery.

The timidity of Neil Kinnock and other Labour Party leaders has opened the way for ultralefts to take the lead. They are inclined to favor stunts, such as throwing bags of flour at unpopular councillors, instead of drawing in the broadest layers of the population possible.

The slogan "Don't pay. Don't collect. Don't implement!" adopted by many anti-poll tax groups effectively draws in the labor movement. It involves unionized city hall employees who are refusing to send out tax bills, and others who fail to enforce the law.

The spirit of non-compliance has reached Parliament. Twenty-eight Labour MP's have publicly declared they will not pay. This revolt has engendered panic in Tory ranks. Members see that their Parliamentary careers are in danger. Some suggest that Mrs. Thatcher resign before an election must be called by June 1992.

## Damage control difficult

Damage control is difficult, even though the Tories have a 100 vote majority. Parliament has power to take over some of the financial burdens of local governments—the cost of local schools for instance. But that would lead to higher income tax, while the hated poll tax was still in place. The national sales tax is 15 percent. How much higher can it be pushed?

The tax revolt presents the Labour Party with the prospect for returning to power. Unfortunately the vote today would not reflect enthusiasm for Labour, but revolt against the Tories. The timid policies espoused by Labour leader Neil Kinnock is no answer to the crisis facing the British people. But the tide of protest is reawakening the British workers, reinvigorating the Left, and opening serious ideological struggle in the ranks of the Labour Party.

# ... Lithuania

(continued from page 1)

voked that evening. A U.S. reporter pointed out to me that the ban was motivated in part by the fact that young Lithuanian-Americans had been coming into the country and getting involved in the independence movement.

The next morning, I made my way to the parliament building. As with most public buildings, the hammer and sickle symbol had been pulled down and replaced by the gold, green, and red Lithuanian flag.

I entered and sat in on a briefing for members of the press corps. A member of the Lithuanian parliament, Algimantas Chekolis, referred to the fact that the Soviet government had just asked Lithuanians to turn in their hunting rifles. "It shows that Gorbachev is afraid," he said. "There is a war of nerves, and he is losing."

Chekolis said that he looked to North America and Western Europe for support. "International pressure will stop the killers from Moscow," he concluded.

But his trust that the capitalist world would rush to aid Lithuania proved to be an illusion. Even after Soviet troops stormed two hospitals in Vilnius in order to round up 23 Lithuanian army "deserters," all remained quiet on the front of Western diplomacy.

The Bush administration, while mildly urging Moscow to use "restraint," refused to recognize Lithuanian independence. "The general feeling is that the Lithuanians have pushed a little too hard, too fast," said one



U.S. official. "They've been forcing a confrontation that no one—not in Moscow or here—wants right now."

The United States is only too happy to grant the Soviet Union the right to "keep order" in this part of the world. At the time of the uprising in Romania, for example, the Bush administration said it would "understand" if Moscow sent in troops. In exchange, of course, the United States claims the right to invade Panama or other countries within its alleged "sphere of influence."

## Independence leaders compromise

As we go to press, the Lithuanian government has made several conciliatory moves in the face of escalating military threats.

Plans to set up its own border patrols and customs service have been put off. In addition, the parliament has urged all citizens to turn over their weapons to the interior ministry.

In fact, throughout the crisis, the pro-capitalist leadership of the independence movement (which now rules the republic) has been reluctant to ask the Lithuanian people to mobilize in the streets to defend their rights. Instead, the leaders have sought to dicker with Gorbachev behind closed doors.

The Soviet foreign ministry frequently repeats that "Lithuania cannot stand on its own feet." It is true that Lithuania depends on fuel, fertilizer, and other capital goods that it receives from the other republics at low subsidized prices.

In some ways, however, integration into the Stalinist-ruled Soviet Union has served to impede development in Lithuania. As a sovereign state, Lithuania would no longer be tied into the bureaucratic labyrinth that passes for "state planning" in the USSR.

In fact, in recent years—despite the bureaucracy—Lithuania has surpassed the Soviet Union as a whole in its rate of increase of general production in industry and agriculture, labor productivity, and national income.

One thing is certain. An independent Lithuania would require a massive infusion of investment from abroad to rebuild its economy. As it is, industrial production consumes 1.5 to 2 times as much energy and metals as in Sweden or Finland.

Most organized political parties here, including the majority Sajudis independence movement, speak vaguely of constructing an economy on "the Swedish model" of welfare-state capitalism. First, agriculture and then, most industry will be reprivatized.

Few government leaders are bold enough, however, to admit to the problems of unemployment, factory shutdowns, and an erosion of social-welfare programs that are common in capitalist countries.

The working class has not been fully heard from yet, with its own demands and an independent organization. For now, most

working people are backing the Sajudis independence leaders—determined to keep the Lithuanian flag flying over the buildings of government.

## St. Paul cop attacks Socialist Action table

The First Amendment rights of all Minnesotans were attacked on March 21 when an officer of the St. Paul Police Department flipped over a Socialist Action literature table on the public sidewalk outside Hamline University, damaging books and pamphlets as horrified students looked on.

Socialist Action members Steve Argue and Brian Schwartz had been peacefully displaying their literature to interested students for over an hour when the police officer approached their table accompanied by a member of the university security. After asking who was in charge, the officer told the two socialists that campus security had already told them to leave. Argue tried to explain that no one had asked them to leave and that they believed they had a democratic right to be there.

In response the cop said, "There's your democratic rights!" and flipped the table over. He told the two that he would be back in a few minutes and if they were still there they would be "taken downtown."

Plans are underway for a campaign to demand that the police make restitution for the damaged property and that the officer be punished. Protest letters can be sent to St. Paul Mayor James Scheibel, Room 347 City Hall, St. Paul, MN 55102 or call (612) 298-4323. Tentative plans include organizing a protest meeting at Hamline University on Wednesday, April 4 at 11:00 a.m. For more information call (612) 430-1476.

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By ALEX CHIS

# Soviet bureaucracy is sitting on a time bomb

On March 13, the Soviet parliament, presided over by Mikhail Gorbachev, voted to establish a new, strong, executive presidency.

Gorbachev was "elected" to the new post in a hotly disputed race— against no one else—by a vote of 1329 for, 495 against, 54 invalid, with 122 ballots not being cast, as a protest. Thus in a country of 289 million people, 2000 people participated in "electing" a new "super" president to a five-year term.

To fully appreciate the undemocratic nature of this "election," remember that the members of this new parliament were themselves "elected" in a highly restrictive process set up and controlled by the ruling bureaucracy.

To justify both the new super-presidency and the lack of a direct election, the parliamentarians were subjected to dire predictions. "Our country is swept by emotion. Under the circumstances, a direct election of the president will lead straight to civil war. Please believe me and respect my experience," pleaded Dmitri S. Likhachev to the assembled deputies (*New York Times*, March 14). Likhachev, an 85-year-old Russian history expert, went on to compare the present situation in the Soviet Union to the period following the February 1917 revolution.

Vadim Medvedev, Gorbachev's ideologist, linked the abolition of Article 6, the constitutional guarantee of the leading role of the Communist party, with the new presidency. He said: "Indeed, without a strong presidential power capable of action, the party's abandonment of its present functions could lead to anarchy." (*Pravda*, March 13).

Whenever a ruling group starts talking of anarchy and civil war, it usually means they're getting hysterical because the people they rule over are starting to fight for some rights of their own. That's the situation in the Soviet Union today; it's the reason that Gorbachev and the ruling bureaucracy are scrambling to find new ways to keep their privileges intact.

## Soviet miners in motion

The crisis of the Soviet economy, caused by the decades-long mismanagement of the Stalinist bureaucracy, has propelled the Soviet working class into action.

In the summer of 1989, a massive strike wave, centered on the miners, shook the Soviet Union with the largest work stoppages in its history. It started with the Mezhdurechensk miners, spread throughout the whole Kuznetsk coal basin, and continued spreading.

Strike committees were formed that became the centers for local power. Workers remained in the streets for days, discussing all aspects of political life, including the need to form new, independent unions. [For



Mikhail Gorbachev during a recent trip to rebellious Lithuania.

a fuller assessment of the miners' strike, see accompanying report by Soviet oppositionist Boris Kagarlitsky.]

These strikes are a signpost to the future. While this time there was no coordination between various regions, the workers learn fast. Many of the strike committees stayed in existence, thus forming both embryos of new trade unions, and embryos of workers' power. Some, such as the Vorkuta Strike Committee, became more political in nature.

[See adjoining box with excerpts from the Nov. 3, 1989, declaration of the Vorkuta Strike Committee.]

## Revolt of the nationalities

The bureaucrats are worried and are desperately looking for new ways to control the population. The Soviet working class is potentially the most powerful working class on earth and is many times larger than it was in 1917 when, under the leadership of the

Bolshevik Party, it seized power in its own name.

The other major force at work in the Soviet Union today that must limit the peaceful sleep of the ruling caste is the revolt of the nationalities.

Tsarist Russia was known as the prison-house of nations, for both the number of subject nationalities in its empire and the way it oppressed them. The October Revolution of 1917 held out to these oppressed peoples the possibility of growth within a democratic, socialist union of nations, and guaranteed them the right to secede from that union if they saw fit.

Stalin broke that promise and found ways to repress nations that were not possible to the Tsars, including wholesale removal of entire peoples from their traditional homelands. Today, emboldened by and in turn contributing to the crisis of Stalinism, these subject peoples are on the move.

Lithuania has become the first republic to act on Lenin's promise of self-determination, declaring independence from the Soviet Union—and Gorbachev has tried to deny that right. [See separate story on Lithuania in this issue.]

The other Baltic states may not be far behind. And then there are Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, the Ukraine, and perhaps even Mongolia (which must also be very worrying to the Chinese bureaucracy) waiting in the wings. The combined total of the non-Russian nationalities is almost 50 percent of the population of the USSR.

The response of the working class and the nationalities to the crisis is to struggle. What is the bureaucracy attempting to do to ensure its continued privileged position on top of a Soviet society that is slowly transforming into a volcano under it?

## Bureaucrats look to West

The underlying cause of all the motion is the crisis in the Soviet economy. The bureaucracy, after over six decades of trying, has finally realized that it can't successfully manage the economy. It is aware that the degree of accumulated mismanagement has put it in danger of losing its job. So it has been looking around to get ideas.

Because it sees only a threat to its own power whenever it looks at the Soviet working class, the bureaucracy is compelled to

(continued on next page)

The following are excerpts from the Nov. 3, 1989, declaration of the Vorkuta Strike Committee:

The experience of economic strikes has shown that putting forward economic demands gets nowhere unless the existing totalitarian bureaucratic system is broken.

That is why the miners are proclaiming a state of preparation for political strike and putting forward the following demands:

1. The statutes of the workers' committees should be confirmed as permanent organs of social defense of workers' interests, with the right to publish their own printed literature. A radical reform of the structure of the existing unions, from top to bottom, should be undertaken immediately. The right of all categories of workers to unite in independent unions of their choice should be ratified.

2. To support the great role played in the process of economic and political democratization by the wing of the CPSU which favors the remolding of society, we demand the following questions be included on the agenda of the Supreme Soviet.

a) The repeal of Article 6 of the Constitution of the USSR. The recognition of the right of all citizens to unite in associations, groups, and political parties on platforms of non-violent ac-

## Vorkuta miners speak

tion. The CPSU, purging itself of its Stalino-bureaucratic elements, should demonstrate its right to lead the country in reality, through the free expression of the people's will.

b) The direct election of the president of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, of the president of the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republic and autonomous regions, and of the presidents of the soviets of towns, regions, territories, boroughs, and villages. The appointment of deputies to the Supreme Soviet by the social organizations should be abolished.... It should be forbidden to combine the positions of general secretary of the CPSU and president of the Supreme Soviet.

c) In the press law, the right should be guaranteed for every citizen of the USSR to express their opinions freely and publish whatever they like within the framework of the law.

3. We consider that the adoption of the law on the state of emergency and the law on the solution of labor conflicts, as presently drafted, amount to depriving the workers of their right to resort to the ultimate means of defending their interests, the strike; excluding the workers' movement from the process

of democratization and liquidating it in practice.

4. ... Real information should be guaranteed on the working and living conditions of the miners, and our political and economic demands.

5. The workers' movement declares that economic and political liberty is a natural human right from birth, and that the legal provisions that we have demanded are only the realization of that right.

6. We address ourselves to the population of the Soviet Union, to all workers, to all democratic forces, and we call on them to support, extend, and develop these demands in meetings and demonstrations.

Comrades,  
The miners of arctic Vorkuta address themselves to you to ask you to support our political demands. At arctic Vorkuta, where tens of thousands of detainees died from cold and hunger, cursing Stalin and the regime he created, there has been born a workers' movement whose aim is to destroy that system of administrative command. Those men did not die for nothing in the Stalinist camps!

If the past is not to repeat itself, the cohesion of the workers and the unity of



their demands constitute our only weapon against the bureaucrats, the functionaries, and the whole administrative system which hangs over our heads and is ready to strike us down so that it can continue to live and command as before.

Meetings, demonstrations, and telegrams to the Supreme Soviet, to Gorbachev and to Ryzhkov, insisting that the demands of the miners of the Arctic Circle be met, will show your real support and express the strength and cohesion of the workers of the Soviet Union, who will not let the strike be dissolved into idle chatter and a plaything of the bureaucrats!

(continued from preceding page)

look elsewhere for support. And it has found in the West what it sees as a stable form of political and economic control that has managed to sustain a ruling group in a relatively secure privileged position—capitalism.

It also sees here a source of money—namely credits from imperialist powers—with which to hold together the economy in the short run, while its longer-term "reforms," moving in the direction of restoring capitalism, are carried out.

In order to get these credits, and to thus shore up their rule, the bureaucrats are ready to make almost any concession.

The possibility that all the Soviet people might not share in the "benefits" of capitalism, and that there will be heightened social inequalities and impoverishment, the bureaucrats take as a matter of course. Being on top of the heap comes naturally to them, and for them the whole point of these "reforms" is to stay there.

These bureaucrats, with Gorbachev leading them, are the legitimate heirs of Stalin. They look to securing their own privileges first. Gorbachev himself came to power exactly as did Andropov, Chernenko, Brezhnev and all the others—in an inter-bureaucratic struggle within the Central Committee of the CPSU, eventually winning the support of the ruling bureaucracy.

As the votes on major changes in the Soviet Constitution proposed to the parliament indicate, Gorbachev is overwhelmingly supported by the Soviet bureaucracy which, other than turnover due to age, is basically unchanged since Stalin's time.

The March 6 vote allowing citizens to own small factories and businesses for the first time since the 1920s, for example, was 350-3—or 99 percent in favor. The vote on the strong presidency itself was 1817 to 133, with 61 abstentions—or 90 percent in favor.

Gorbachev enjoys the overwhelming support of the bureaucracy because his policies are aimed at ensuring their (and his) continued privileged position.

The reports that Gorbachev has to constantly maneuver with "hard-liners" are belied by these votes on major issues. This is not to say that there may not be differences within the bureaucracy; there are. But the differences occur within a shared political outlook—and many of them appear to be more smoke than substance.

Though Gorbachev may act differently than the traditional Stalinists, it is not from his choice, but because of the severe crisis of the Soviet economy and Stalinism. He is confronted with new problems and must try different methods to preserve the rule of the bureaucracy.

#### Channel and contain struggles

The setting up of the new Soviet parliament itself—as well as the establishment of the super-presidency—is a way by which the ruling bureaucrats hope to control the new levels of mass struggle confronting them.

On the one hand they hope to mobilize a greater level of support from the large Soviet intelligentsia, allowing them more freedom of expression, and tempting them with visions of capitalist entrepreneurship. On the other hand, they are trying to legitimize new forms of authoritarian rule that can be used to control strikes and unruly nationalities.

Gorbachev's agreement to drop the leading role of the Communist Party, only months after he had reaffirmed it, undoubtedly owed a lot to the events in Eastern Europe—especially Romania. Unless he adapts, he risks losing all control. But Gorbachev made sure to have an alternative form of rule ready before dropping the CP's leading role.

Even before attaining his super-presidency, one of Gorbachev's first legislative proposals to the new parliament was a law banning strikes. His subsequent use of troops in Azerbaijan speaks for itself.

The new super-presidency tries to legitimize and streamline his ability to put down trouble for the bureaucracy, allowing him, for example, to declare a state of emergency or martial law after a warning to the area concerned.

Gorbachev can now veto laws passed by the Supreme Soviet (which then needs a two-thirds majority to override), propose legislation, negotiate treaties, and overrule decisions of the Council of Ministers and other state bodies.

Vitaly A. Korotich, a deputy in the parliament and a magazine editor, noted that Gorbachev has now become a "dictator officially." "Gorbachev is closer to full control in a country that never was democratic,"



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

*Boris Kagarlitsky, a leader of the opposition Moscow People's Front and of the new All Russian Committee for the Socialist Party, toured the United States in March to describe the current political situation in the USSR and to bring attention to the pro-socialist current developing there.*

*Here he is shown speaking at the March 24 Socialist Action forum in San Francisco.*

*Below, he describes the 1989 Soviet miners' strikes. These excerpts are reprinted from Across Frontiers (Vol. 5, No. 3).*

"No sooner were negotiations concluded in Prokopyevsk, where a regional strike committee had formed, than miners were striking in the Siberian cities of Donetsk and Karaganda, then in the Western Ukraine and Vorkuta. After

work stopped in the Donbass, the official press conceded the strike was 'snowballing.'...

"The strikes were carried out in a surprisingly organized fashion. As during the Polish strikes of 1980, the sale of alcohol had been halted by order of the strike committee, and the workers themselves were keeping order on the streets. A huge placard had been placed at the railway entrance to the city: 'Prokopyevsk is on strike.'

"People were gathering on Lenin Square, where there was a near-continuous meeting; many of them remained there for days. And it was there that the strike committee convened....

"According to local newspapers the strike committees became 'the actual center of popular power.' 'Life in the city under strike conditions demands great organizational efforts,' reported the

newspaper *Kuzbass* on July 20, 'the resolution of hundreds of large and small questions. The provisioning of the city. The delivery of available food products. Aid to the community. Keeping the mines ready for the resumption of work. Committee members have taken all this upon themselves, and they are coping with it rather well.'

"By decision of the strike committee, several enterprises did not stop work, so long as their normal functioning was necessary for maintaining the normal life pace of the city. Transportation continued to function. The pharmaceutical plant also continued to operate, although its workforce expressed support for the strike. The strike committees also mounted anti-corruption campaigns....

"As a whole, the movement was becoming more political in nature. The miners of Vorkuta and the Western Ukraine, the last to join the strike, were openly discussing the possibility of free trade unions. For their part, the authorities insisted that political demands would not even be considered.

"Paradoxically, the government pushed itself into a trap: If political demands were 'inadmissible,' then the economic ones remained largely unrealizable. There was no way to satisfy fully the numerous demands of the coal miners. Meanwhile, the threat of a railway strike forced the commencement of negotiations on salary raises in this sector.

"But it was not only the threat of inflation that restricted authorities' opportunities to make concessions. People were demanding real products, like food and soap, but there were no products to be found. They could only be transferred from one region to another, continually destabilizing new regions of the country!

"Both progressive party functionaries and the Moscow liberals had hoped for a peaceful, parliamentary and evolutionary path of moderate reforms, but the strikes showed definitively that such hopes are untenable. Events have gathered speed...." ■

Korotich said. (*New York Times*, March 14).

Another major justification for the new dictator presidency was the stated need to proceed more rapidly with economic "reform."

Gorbachev made this point explicitly in his acceptance speech. The *New York Times* (March 16) highlights the fact that Gorbachev pledged "to speed the move toward a market economy," with priorities including "liberalized pricing, breaking up state monopolies, free trade in surplus commodities, and the creation of stock markets."

The *Times* article goes on to report that, "Aides said [Gorbachev] would begin using his new power of presidential decree almost immediately to force through changes that have been stalled by bureaucratic resistance, including leasing of factories and farmland, new forms of ownership, reining in the state role in pricing and marketing, and strengthening private enterprise."

Gorbachev's actions toward Lithuania and Azerbaijan, his new dictatorial presidency, and his speeding toward capitalist property relations in the Soviet Union can leave no doubt that he is trying by any means at hand to save the bureaucracy—even at the risk of overturning the Soviet workers' state.

#### Where socialists stand

Revolutionary socialists defend socialist property relations against the bureaucracy. We defend socialist democracy against the strong presidency. We defend the right of the Soviet republics to self-determination, including independence, against the bureaucracy in all its guises.

The Soviet workers have already started to move, and the bureaucracy hasn't even started to introduce the array of market "reforms" it has projected. Big confrontations between the workers and the bureaucrats lie ahead.

Experts in the Soviet Union estimate that it will take 25 percent to 30 percent unemployment to carry out the streamlining of the economy they consider necessary. It's hard to believe that a powerful working class, just beginning to feel its power again after decades of quiescence, will stand by easily for that.

The many nationalities in the Soviet

Union are also on an upward curve of mobilizations that will be hard to stop. In addition, Gorbachev's ability to intervene militarily is weakened. There is a popular distaste, especially after Afghanistan, for intervention.

The army is even less likely to find it easy to intervene within the borders of the Soviet Union itself. In Lithuania, many young soldiers are deserting the Soviet Army, an example which may spread to soldiers of the other republics. Thus the Soviet bureaucracy will pay a high price for any intervention.

During the invasion of Azerbaijan, there were demonstrations in the Northern Caucasus against the intervention, and army reservists widely resented being called up. Soviet troops were fired on by Armenians and Azerbaijanis alike. An embattled republic may get political support from other republics.

Possible interventions against striking workers, as happened in the 1960s, would have even more serious consequences. While none of this precludes intervention—since if truly threatened the bureaucracy will stop at nothing to protect its power—it limits its use and makes the costs very high.

The Soviet working class is re-emerging onto the stage of world history. As they did in 1917, they will again shake the world. ■



Courtesy of Boris Kagarlitsky

Moscow demonstration. Sign reads: "Socialism without democracy equals sausage without meat."

#### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

that will lead to finding works by Leon Trotsky in the following languages: Russian, Polish, Romanian, Czech, Hungarian, Slovak, Lithuanian, Turkish, Armenian, Latvian, Estonian, Ukrainian, Croatian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Chinese, Georgian, and any others you may have. We would like to assemble a collection of books and pamphlets for possible republication and distribution. We know that during his lifetime, Trotsky was published in many languages, but for obvious reasons has not been published recently in certain languages, and is totally unavailable in many countries. We would like to help change that situation and would greatly appreciate any copies you may have of Trotsky's works in these languages. You may sell them to us, loan them to us (we'll take very good care of them), donate them, or let us know where we can find them. We would also like to get in touch with translators willing to help us in these languages. Please contact Alex Chis, c/o Walnut Publishing, 3435 Army St., #308, San Francisco, CA 94110.



# Campaign for 're-appearance' of José Ramón García steps up

By RALPH SCHOENMAN

MEXICO CITY—The international campaign for the re-appearance of José Ramón García, the first prominent political activist to "disappear" in Mexico under newly elected President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, continues unabated.

José Ramón disappeared on Dec. 16, 1988, in the city of Cuautla in the state of Morelos. He was last seen "entering" a white unmarked car with several men, the by-now typical vehicle of the notorious White Hand death squads of Mexico. His "disappearance" was immediately perceived as an act of terror against the workers and peasants movement of Mexico.

Salinas de Gortari took office Dec. 1, 1988, amidst widespread charges of fraud emanating from the entire opposition—from right to left. As a member of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), José Ramón had led the struggle in the state of Morelos to declare the government illegitimate.

Conscious of the wave of repression of which the disappearance of José Ramón was a clear harbinger, all the organizations participating in the defense of the vote convoked meetings and mobilizations throughout Mexico to demand the re-appearance of José Ramón.

## Mounting pressure on regime

Under increasing pressure from a national and international campaign—including efforts by Amnesty International and delegations to the Mexican Embassy in many countries—the Mexican government created a Presidential Commission to investigate José Ramón's disappearance. Ana Santander, wife of José Ramón; Edgard Sanchez, a leader of the PRT, and Rosario Ibarra, the PRT's 1988 presidential candidate, were integrated into the Presidential Commission.

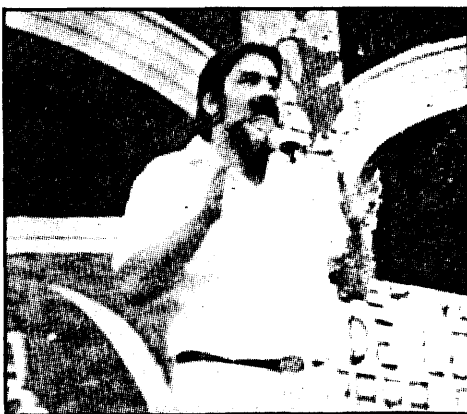
In September 1989, several of the leaders of the International Tribunal Against the Debt held in Lima, Peru, joined Ana Santander in a meeting with the Mexican ambassador to Peru. They proposed that an international delegation meet President Salinas—and the Mexican ambassador agreed to request it.

After the President's office informed Ana Santander that President Salinas was in agreement, the meeting date of Feb. 22, 1990, was proposed. Accordingly, Ralph Schoenman and Victoria Melgar, both of whom had met with the Mexican ambassador, traveled to Mexico City to join with Ana Santander and trade-union activists in demanding the re-appearance of José Ramón.

At a press conference held Feb. 21, representatives of the teachers' union, militants from peasant organizations, and human



Demonstration at National Palace demands 'reappearance' of García (below).



rights activists joined Edgard Sanchez, a leader of the PRT, and the delegation.

The meeting at the Presidential Palace took place not with the President, but with his first secretary, Jorge Valdez.

Valdez indicated the President had given the Minister of Interior the urgent task of finding the whereabouts of José Ramón García and said that the Commission would be meeting imminently with results. (Earlier, the head of the government's Human Rights Commission had told the delegation that the President could now guarantee "good news" within a very short time—a clear signal that José Ramón was alive.)

Ana Santander observed that this had been said for over a year. The union representatives noted that in the time the government took to shed light on the fate of José Ramón, popular leaders throughout Mexico had been murdered or kidnapped. Ralph Schoenman commented that the international campaign would not disappear.

While the meeting was taking place, a large demonstration was unfolding outside of the Palace, and the slogans echoed through the huge Palace with its army units lined up in the courtyard: "The disappeared belong to us." — "We shall continue to defend them like lions!" — "Present José Ramón alive!" — "Salinas, the people have judged you!"

The demonstration continued into the night. The many rally speakers included Rosario Ibarra, representing the Eureka Committee of the Disappeared; trade-union representatives, spokespersons for the disappeared from the states of Chiapas, Guerrero, and Puebla; Edgard Sanchez, for the Coordinating Commission on Human Rights and the PRT, Victoria Megar, for the International Federation on Human Rights; Ralph Schoenman, and Ana Santander.

Press coverage included principal Mexico City dailies: *Excelsior*, *La Jornada*, and *El Universal*. The stories gave particular attention to the support for José Ramón from the striking Ford workers and railroad workers, whose struggles had been met by police attacks. The participants in the rally had come from the shantytowns and from the countryside. Many of the peasants carried photographs of José Ramón and Emiliano Zapata, a peasant leader during the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

## Morelos police chief indicted

Not long after the Feb. 22 meeting and rally, the Government Commission met and the Special Prosecutor indicated that the Federal authorities had decided "to investigate the local police [of the state of Morelos]."

In a meeting March 16 with Mexico's

## Emergency Appeal!

Noted attorney and journalist Daniel Libreros was arrested by Colombian police at the Cali airport on March 27. Charged with "subversion," a term frequently applied to political opponents of the Colombian ruling party, Libreros and several other political activists are in grave danger.

According to friends allowed to visit the prison, authorities have already used brutal methods against several of those arrested. Government-condoned torture, disappearance, and repression are an everyday feature of Colombian political life.

Libreros is the chief attorney for the left political alliance "A Luchar." Prominent supporters of democratic rights in the United States, including Nobel Laureates Linus Pauling and Owen Chamberlain, have already demanded his immediate release and full respect for his democratic and human rights.

Telegrams to this effect should be sent immediately to: Comandante de la Tercera Brigada General Bonnet, Avenida 4 N. Calles 18-19, Cali, Colombia (Tel.: 57-23-613041), and to: Embassy of Colombia, 2118 Leroy Place N.W. Washington, D.C. 20008.

Attorney General, PRT leader Edgard Sanchez learned that Antonio Noguera, Chief of Police in Morelos, had been removed from the Presidential Commission on José Ramón García. While on the Commission, Noguera had blocked all attempts to investigate José Ramón's disappearance.

The Federal District police had caught the perpetrators of another widely publicized kidnapping, who turned out to be police officials from the state of Morelos.

As the official murder apparatus of Morelos comes to light, the problems of the Presidential Commission multiply. Can the government limit culpability to state and local police and officials? Will live scapegoats remain silent long?

Meanwhile, the mass movement has intensified the pressure. Edgard Sanchez reports that the Coordinating Commission on Human Rights (the "Coordinadora") has held forums on the violence against women and the rampages of "anti-narcotic" police in Mexico City. At the inaugural meeting of the Coordinadora, where Victoria Melgar and Ralph Schoenman spoke, witness after witness described the growing repression.

The fight to defend José Ramón García and the international campaign on his behalf have heightened the struggle in Mexico and may yet result in the long awaited re-appearance of the man whose fate has become a symbol of the real choice facing the Mexican people—political emancipation or rule by terror. ■

By HAYDEN PERRY

The campaign to free Mark Curtis has been carried to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland. Mark Curtis is the unionist and socialist sentenced to 25 years in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Curtis has been recognized as a political prisoner by labor unions, civil rights groups, and thousands of individuals throughout the United States, Canada, and several European countries.

A delegation of the Curtis Defense Committee has brought the case to the United Nations (U.N.). The U.N. maintains the Centre for Human Rights, which has the power to investigate violations of human rights throughout the world.

Through meeting delegates and winning new support, the Curtis defenders were able to get the case raised formally before the Commission. Pedro Custodia Lopez, president of the Central American Commission, raised the question of the Curtis case.

"I include here," Lopez said in a formal address, "the case of Mark Curtis ... his conviction assuredly has its origin in his active solidarity against the attempted firing and deportation of 17 Latin American workers from his place of work."

Delegates of the Curtis Defense Committee made gains through meetings with

# Mark Curtis case goes to U.N. commission

other organizations in Geneva. Leaders of the World Council of Churches, the International Association Against Torture, the Indian Treaty Council, and the delegate of the American Jurists Association either publicized or endorsed the case.

Application was made to Amnesty International to adopt Mark Curtis as a "Prisoner of Conscience." U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar assigned a Human Rights Officer to meet the delegation. She requested that all violations of Curtis' rights in prison be reported to her.

## Harassment of Curtis continues

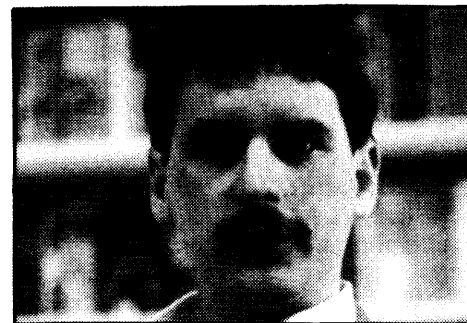
Meanwhile back at Iowa State Men's Reformatory, where Curtis is incarcerated, he is forced to defend his rights and those of other prisoners. Authorities would not let him view a video tape, "The Frame-up of Mark Curtis." Only when his defense team pointed out it was essential to Curtis' appeal was he allowed to see the tape.

Curtis was also denied periodicals and other material in Spanish. A number of books ordered by prisoners in the Martin Luther King Organization were held up for six months.

Warden John A. Thalacker disputed an article in the Socialist Workers Party newspaper, *The Militant*. He denied allegations about conditions in the Reformatory. Curtis defended the articles in a letter to the warden.

This challenge to authority must have displeased the warden. Guards looked for the tiniest violations of prison rules. He was charged with spitting at a basketball game and penalized. Later Curtis was charged with gambling, for allegedly dropping a slip of paper marked "Super Bowl," and his privileges were taken away.

No doubt these harassments will ultimately be brought to the attention of the Centre for Human Rights. By its trip to Geneva, the Defense Committee has advanced the campaign to free Mark Curtis, the



Mark Curtis

American class-war prisoner.

*Socialist Action* readers are urged to write to: John A. Thalacker, Warden, Iowa State Men's Reformatory, Anamosa, IA, 52205 and demand that he 1) Immediately remove the gambling conviction from Curtis' record; and 2) Restore all of his rights and privileges, including the 2 good-conduct days taken away from him. ■

# Science, technology and the growing environmental crisis

By LINDA THOMPSON

The previous article in this series on the environment (February 1990) reviewed the death and disease that the high-tech capitalist holocaust has already caused on the earth. Part IV in the series examines the role of science and technology in addressing the crisis of the environment.

The depth of the environmental crisis has led to a search for answers among millions of people worldwide. One expression of this has been the sharp rise of environmentalist groups.

In the United States, environmental groups have experienced a big surge in membership, particularly after the Valdez Oil spill in the spring of 1989. The Wilderness Society alone has doubled its membership in the past two years to 335,000 members.

A recent national poll showed that over 75 percent of Americans think that preserving the environment is a key issue and would even be willing to pay higher prices for safe products.

A National Earth Day 1990 Coalition, with centers on the East and West coasts, has been formed to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the first Earth Day. Coalition leaders are calling for a week of education and action culminating in a large rally on the Mall in Washington, D.C., on April 22. [See box for details.]

All the politicians are jumping on the environmentalist bandwagon. Even Margaret Thatcher plunged into environmentalism and hosted a conference on ozone depletion last May. George Bush ran as an environmentalist and said that he is committed to tackling the global warming issue.

But as people are beginning to see, these ruling-class politicians are only paying lip service to the environment. Both the United States and Britain, for example, blocked with Japan last fall in defeating an attempt to convene an international conference in the Netherlands to set a date to enact curbs on carbon dioxide emissions worldwide.

## Role of 'Big Oil'

Humanity has passed through the epochs of primitive communism, the rise of agriculture, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and the advent of socialism. Technologically, it has passed through the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age.

Barry Commoner, in his book "The Poverty of Power" reports that the petrochemical industry has made a semi-official bid to designate our own as the "Synthetic Age."

In an article in *Modern Plastics*, it was reported that the use of synthetic petrochemicals was growing so fast that it would overtake iron as the most common material by the mid-1990s.

This industry has enjoyed overwhelming success in taking over traditional markets such as textiles, furniture, home furnishings, paints, and building materials. This fact enables Big Oil to wield incredible power.

Together these industries are dominated by 20 major corporations that are worth a total of \$181 billion and produce 18 percent of the nation's Gross National Product in sales.

These corporations have flooded the market with synthetic products that are dangerous to produce and dangerous to use. Big Oil's power has also diverted capital investment and Department of Transportation funds into petroleum-consuming and polluting auto, truck, and bus transportation—away from non-highway and non-petroleum using transportation systems that are energy conserving and non-polluting.

Barry Commoner relates how a nationwide electric trolley system comprised of 40,000 streetcars in 1936 provided a clean, cheap, and efficient web of inner city and intra-city transportation in the United States. This system was dismantled and reduced to 5000 streetcars by 1955 by corporations established by the General Motors Corp. in order to create a market for its new line of buses.

These GM subsidiaries bought up trolley lines in collaboration with Standard Oil of



Events like Exxon Valdez oil spill have spurred growth of environmental groups—who now have over 10 million members.

## Earth Day actions—Global in scope

On Sunday, April 22, people in over 100 countries will mark the 20th anniversary of the first Earth Day in 1970. On that date, more than 20 million Americans, many of them students, organized rallies, teach-ins, and protests on environmental issues.

The central event of the U.S. protest will take place on the Mall in Washington, D.C. The Sunday rally will be preceded by a concert organized by Farm Aid on Saturday evening, April 21, in RFK Stadium.

Local actions, religious services, and mass rallies are planned in many big ci-

ties, including New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

The National Earth Day 1990 Coalition represents over 100 organizations. Six international unions have already sponsored the event. Owen Bieber, president of the United Auto Workers, is on the national board of directors.

For more information contact the national office at Earth Day 1990, Stanford University, P.O. Box AA, Palo Alto, CA 94309. Phone: (415) 321-1990. On the East Coast, contact Earth Day 1990, 424 C Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. Phone: (202) 547-1990.

California and Firestone Tire Co. and replaced these lines in over 45 major cities, including New York, Los Angeles, and Baltimore.

In Los Angeles, the buses replaced a trolley system which could have formed the basis of a highly efficient rapid-transit system and would have prevented the current traffic and smog problems which are choking the city.

Needless to say, no one got to vote on this issue. Indeed, most American people were not even informed by the politicians and industry of what was going on. This is only one small example of how, behind our backs, corporate America dominates the key decisions that affect the quality of life on this planet.

## The energy confrontation

Big Oil has advocated the development and growth of the nuclear power industry, which generates ever-increasing wastes that must be isolated from people and the environment for an average of 200,000 years.

It is these same profit-hungry corporate barons that influenced federal policies which devote 14 times more research and development funds to nuclear fusion than to solar energy—in spite of the tremendous potential that this abundant, cheap, and pollution-free energy resource presents.

The February 1990 issue of *Nation's Business* has a cover story called "A New Energy Crisis" written by Donald C. Bacon. In it he outlines Big Business' belief that environmental restrictions will seriously inhibit its rights to energy expansion.

Bacon states, "Even now, powerful forces are lining up for a high-stakes confrontation later this year over energy strategy proposals that the Department of Energy (DOE) was

assigned to draft by December 1990 by President Bush."

The clash Bacon refers to is between the goals of industry for energy expansion and the demands of environmentalists for global conservation of energy resources. The confrontation is shaping up along class lines, with the needs of the multinational corporations pitted against the environmental concerns of the masses.

## A necessary balance sheet

After 20 years of reform efforts on the part of the environmental movement, some activists have stepped back and are attempting to draw a balance sheet of their successes and failures.

Most notable in this on-going assessment is an article printed in October 1989 issue of the *Greenpeace* bimonthly magazine by Barry Commoner. In it Commoner discusses the fact that after 20 years of organizing, environmental quality has only slightly improved, with the rate of improvement slowing down in the past few years. He attributes failures to the strategy of pollution control and successes to pollution prevention.

"Only where production technology has been changed to eliminate the pollutant has the environment been substantially improved. Where it remains unchanged, where an attempt is made to trap the pollutant in an appended control device—the automobile's catalytic converter or the power plant's scrubber—environmental improvement is modest or nil. When a pollutant is attacked at the point of origin, it can be eliminated. But once it is produced it is too late."

Most environmental laws do not address the technological origin of pollutants and therefore deal only with the subsequent prob-

lems, "in effect defining the disease as a collection of symptoms." In order to accomplish prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would have to wage a head-on confrontation against interests such as the auto industry, the petrochemical industry, and agribusiness, forcing them to introduce major, costly, technological changes that would cut deep into their bloated profits.

How will industry respond to such a proposal? We already have the example set by DuPont, the major producers of freon, whose chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) has contributed to the destruction of the ozone layer.

DuPont fought efforts to stop CFC production for 15 years in spite of the fact that freon accounted for a small share of this giant corporation's assets. DuPont endangered the life of the planet for less than 2 percent of its total earnings and sales!

## New strategy needed

The technological means could be at hand to resolve the problems of the ecosystem. But capitalism—its governments, politicians, and corporate bosses—have blocked all solutions to the problems.

The unprecedented development of science and technology over the past decades has brought with it the promise of radical improvements in the standard of living for people throughout the globe. But this promise has not been fulfilled. On the contrary, for most inhabitants of this planet, hunger and deprivation are the order of the day.

In the epoch of imperialism, science and technology are not geared to meeting human needs, but to preserving and perpetuating a system of production—capitalism—that has outlived its usefulness and is in fact taking the world to the brink of the abyss. The large bulk of scientific research today is conducted for military purposes; that is, for the purpose of destruction.

But ecological survival of the earth does not require an abandonment of technology. On the contrary, it requires the full flourishing of science and technology aimed at meeting human needs. But as long as science and technology are developed within a system of production based on private profit (and war), they will be part of the problem, not the solution.

The scope of the environmental crisis is worldwide. From all the information available to us from the environmentally minded scientific community, it is clear that the human race is an endangered species and the planet Earth is an endangered planet.

If a way out of this impasse is not found in time, it will mean the extinction of all life as we know it. Which political forces and what strategy will be needed to resolve this crisis will be the topic of the fifth and final article of this series. ■

# Which way for Blacks in South Africa?

The release in mid-February of Nelson Mandela from 27 years of imprisonment and the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and other Black nationalist organizations symbolize the opening of a new phase of the South African revolution. The unremitting and irrepressible struggle for social and economic justice by South Africa's overwhelming Black majority has forced the ruling white capitalists to initiate a major political retreat.

The Black revolution has been steadily making apartheid more costly than it's worth. Capitalists worldwide have been losing confidence in the continued profitability of investments in South Africa. The ruling classes feared that a momentum was building up that would not stop with the abolition

political relaxation will only whet the appetites of the masses and encourage them to follow the logic of their impending victory over apartheid to the end. Their fears are well-founded. But the grand revolutionary opportunities opening up for Black South Africa cannot be exploited to a successful conclusion without a conscious leadership.

The program of the ANC leadership and the South African Communist Party cannot lead the masses to liberation. Despite their avowals of socialism and nationalization of basic industry, their strategic orientation goes in an opposite direction. They are committed to a policy based on two distinct stages in the South African revolution.

(It must be noted that nationalization in and of itself is not revolutionary. South Africa under white capitalist rule has one of the highest proportions of its economy under state ownership. But this kind of nationalization, practiced widely by all capitalist countries to a greater or lesser degree, has nothing in common with socialism. Its exclusive function is to supplement and fill in economic gaps to serve the profitability of private industry.)

The first stage of the revolution, according to the stagist conception, must be restricted to the abolition of apartheid and the institution of a "non-racial" democracy. The "socialist stage" is to be put off to the distant future. In the meantime the rights of the white (capitalist) minority are to be protected against inroads by the Black majority. This means that the pressing social and economic needs of the overwhelming majority of South Africa must be subordinated to capitalist profits.

On the basis of this concept there can be no democratic revolution, much less a socialist future. Nelson Mandela and the ANC, even granting the best intentions in the world, cannot lead the Black masses to genuine democracy and true freedom so long as they constrict the revolution within the confines of capitalism.

There are, however, many Black revolutionaries in South Africa who have come to a much higher understanding. It is primarily from this quarter, from the Black Consciousness Movement, that effective revolutionary leadership will first evolve. This movement is already distinguished by its demands for Black majority rule and for a socialized economic system based on workers' democratic control.

However, this outlook is shared by millions of supporters of the ANC, who will be won over to the strategy of a combined struggle against apartheid and capitalism.

The general outline of the revolutionary-socialist program required by these forces to carry their struggle through to a successful conclusion already exists. It is called the Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution. We can be sure that South African fighters will find their way to this program which is based on lessons drawn from over 150 years of workers' struggles.

In Revolutionary Cuba, which has nowhere near the resources and riches of a Brazil or an Argentina, life is hard but much more equitable. All Cubans have access to free medical care, education and housing. Everyone has the right to a job, and anyone who tries to practice racial discrimination goes to jail. In a country that once had a 70 percent illiteracy rate, this scourge of ignorance has been virtually wiped out.

These are the conquests—the social gains—that are a "problem" for U.S. imperialism.

Cuba's international prestige is also a "problem" for U.S. imperialism. While the U.S. has more soldiers stationed around the world than any other country, Cuba has more *doctors* stationed around the world than any other country. While the U.S. lends support to the apartheid regime in South Africa, Cuba sent fighters to beat back the South African army in Namibia and Angola.

But today Cuba is in mortal danger. And as the U.S. capitalists wax euphoric over their recent victory in Nicaragua, the antiwar movement in this country must gear up to organize demonstrations and rallies to defend the Cuban Revolution.

One important example—which should be emulated around the country—is a march and rally organized for April 7 in New York City around the demand: "U.S. Hands Off Cuba!"

Sponsored by the U.S. Hands Off Cuba Coalition, this demonstration is the first response to the American ruling class campaign to isolate and threaten the Cuban Revolution. In cities all across the country, similar coalitions should be organized by solidarity, antiwar, and labor activists. Now is the time to intensify efforts to defend the first socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere.

## Our readers speak out

### Class war

Dear editor,

There is a war going on today against workers. On March 9, a scab bus was stopped leaving the bus station here. Around 100 supporters of the strikers surrounded the bus. In front of the bus was a union leader with a bull horn pleading with the workers who had stopped the bus to let the bus pass.

Another union leader said listen to your leaders—but the supporters would not listen and made the bus back up into the station where it remained for two hours until the crowd went home. Then, with a police escort, the bus went on its way.

Across the street behind police fences the crowd of supporters was called away from the main bus gate for a labor solidarity rally to listen to leaders and sing songs of Solidarity Forever. When it was over, they went home.

No buses would have left the station if the workers and supporters had been given the proper leadership.

This is not just a strike. This is Chairman Fred Currey's, Frank Lorenzo's, and TWA Carl Icahn's carefully prepared plans for wiping out the union. We want to support the union, but they need to give us leadership.

Joe Stack,  
San Francisco, Calif.

### Prisoner

Dear editor,

Hello, I am a 33-year-old socialist prisoner! I would really like a sub to *Socialist Action*. Would you please send me a free Indigent Prisoner sub to *Socialist Action*? I will share the paper with other socialist prisoners here. Please send reply to this letter.

Emmette Mitchell,  
Vacaville, Calif.

*Socialist Action* has started a special prisoner fund to make it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners. To help us with this effort, send contributions to *Socialist Action Prisoner Subscription Fund*, 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

### No surprise

Dear editor,

Your lead article on the Nicaraguan elections in the March 1990 issue was without doubt the best-informed piece of journalism yet on the subject. The results came as no surprise to those of us familiar with Alan Benjamin's new book, "Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution."

I shared my copy of the paper with a friend and had a most en-

lightened political discussion with him. Enclosed you will find a donation.

Sean Padilla,  
El Paso, Texas

### Nicaragua

Dear editor,

San Francisco Bay Area reaction by activist and solidarity groups to the election setback in Nicaragua was swift and firm. On March 3, 1200 watched a live satellite transmission from Nicaragua. In this broadcast, heard in 125 cities, President Daniel Ortega declared that the election was held "under the gun" of American imperialism.

If the mainstream media were chortling with glee and exultant in the victory by Chamorro, the alternative media was expressing a completely different view. The *San Francisco Weekly* headlined its story of the election: "The Big Stick Triumphs Again."

The editorial notes that instead of direct U.S. intervention as in Grenada or Panama, or widespread election fraud as in Mexico, the Bush plan represents a third course: "A calculated and unwavering campaign of military, economic, and political destabilization" which made Nicaragua cry "Uncle."

The Nicaraguan Center for Community Action (NICCA) offered a program of priorities for the Nicaraguan people: disarm the contras, defend the campesino's right to land, stop the formation of any U.S. supported security force, and maintain the right to travel to and from Nicaragua.

Hal Verb,  
San Francisco, Calif.

### Malcolm X

Dear editor,

Twenty-five years after Malcolm X was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in upper Manhattan, over 400 people gathered there to demand that it be preserved as a memorial to him.

Columbia University, one of the biggest landlords in Harlem and Washington Heights, is trying to build a bio-technology research center on the site, which is across from Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital.

Rally speakers connected the struggle in the United States with the fight against apartheid in South Africa, saying Mandela's release meant that anti-racist activists here have to fight all the harder.

The demonstrators, chanting "Whose streets? Our streets!" and "Black power now!"—some of them holding up books of Malcolm's speeches—were not just remembering a fallen hero, but made it clear that the fight against racism is not yet won.

Liz Campbell,  
New York, N.Y.

## Editorial

of apartheid, but would bring capitalism itself down along with it. That's the real reason for the sanctions imposed by imperialism and their withdrawal of capital from the land of apartheid.

President F.W. de Klerk's steps toward political reform are intended first and foremost to restore the confidence of imperialist capital in South African investments and create the conditions for a renewed economic expansion and new levels of profitability. Intimately connected with this goal is de Klerk's hope that by instituting a less oppressive and more flexible form of capitalist dictatorship his class will be better able to withstand the next waves of Black revolt.

A key element in de Klerk's plans to restabilize the tottering South African economy requires the opening up of opportunities for some segment of Black leaders to gain a major share of political power, but not an ounce of social and economic power. Their political role, of course, will entitle them to a very small share of the super-profits extracted from the South African toilers.

This is the central lesson of Black African "independence." Black governments have remained subjected to colonial domination and super-exploitation throughout Africa despite their nominal independence.

The gang headed by de Klerk must also be prepared to pay the price of somewhat improved living standards, at least for the most powerful sectors of the Black working class. No regime in history has been able to hold on to power for very long by exclusively repressive means. The only hope for South African capitalism is to find some points of support within the Black population.

But South African society is too volatile to allay fears by sections of the white ruling class that any

## U.S. Hands Off Cuba!

"As I see it it's two down, Panama and Nicaragua, and one to go—Cuba."

These were the words of Senator Robert Dole (R-Kansas) as he spoke to the U.S. Senate a couple of days after the defeat of the Sandinistas in the Nicaraguan elections.

The U.S. rulers are rubbing their palms in eager anticipation of dealing a blow to a revolution they consider—in the words of Vice President Dan Quayle—to be "the last serious problem on the continent." But Cuba is not Nicaragua or Panama—or Grenada.

Furthermore, unlike the decaying Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China, the Castro leadership enjoys immense popular support from the vast majority of Cuban workers and peasants.

Castro, and the team around him, were leaders of the first non-Stalinist socialist revolution since the 1917 Russian Revolution (led by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky). And ever since 1961, when Castro openly declared the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution, Cuba's struggle against U.S. imperialism has been intimately linked to the struggle for democracy and national independence.

Cuba is a problem for the U.S. capitalist class. For 30 years the Cuban Revolution has been a beacon for the underdeveloped countries of the world which are still super-exploited and dominated by world imperialism.

While the workers and peasants in the rest of Latin America are wracked with poverty, disease, starvation and repression, Cuba has built a society where these evils are virtually extinct—and has done so in the face of a U.S. imposed 30-year trade embargo.

#### Calendar Announcement

#### U.S. Hands Off Cuba!

Sat. April 7, 1990

1 P.M.

Assemble/Protest Rally

Times Square

3 P.M.

March-Cuban Mission to the United Nations

Phone info: (212) 246-3811, ext. 890

Sponsor: U.S. Hands Off Cuba Coalition

#### 'Why the Sandinistas lost the elections in Nicaragua'

Speaker: Alan Benjamin, editor *Socialist Action*

Boston: April 18-20—call (617) 497-0230

New York: April 21-22

# Are labor strikes obsolete?

"The balance has shifted," said Mark de Bernado, director of the Labor Law Action Center at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "Labor's trump card in a dispute, the strike, is no longer trump."

Robert Baptiste, a Washington, D.C., attorney for labor unions, said that in a strike "there was always a sense that people would eventually say, 'Enough, let's sit down and get serious.'" But he added, "Now, companies just want to get rid of unions."

"One reason that companies now think that goal is possible," reports Peter Kilborn in the March 13 *New York Times*, "is the lesson they drew from the illegal strike of 11,500 Federal air-traffic controllers [PATCO] in August 1981, seven months into Ronald Reagan's first term as President. After the striking controllers defied a back-to-work order, Mr. Reagan dismissed them, filled their ranks with permanent replacements and the union collapsed."

Reagan's success, Baptiste said, "made it respectable to bust unions."

Since the busting of PATCO, the employers, backed by the government and courts, have accelerated their attacks on organized labor. The number of strikes involving 1000 employees or more continues to decline. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in the 1970s there was an average of 289 strikes a year involving 1000 or more workers. In the last five years the average is down to 52.

Trade-union membership continues to drop. Only 16.4 percent of the national work force are in unions.

And strikes that have occurred are in general met with fierce employer attack. In most cases the employers respond by hiring "replacement workers"—scabs.

Eastern Airline workers, for example, have been out on strike for more than 13 months. They were replaced by Frank Lorenzo's scabs as rapidly as he could hire them. With the exception of qualified mechanics, Eastern has hired a full load of scabs to fly its aircraft. But the strikers' boycott of the airline is making it difficult for Lorenzo to fly profitably.

Greyhound workers went on strike at the beginning of March. Immediately Greyhound's Lorenzo, Fred Curry, hired replacement workers to drive the buses. The workers there are standing firm against Curry's union-busting attempt.

## Defeats fuel hesitation

Since 1981 employers have openly challenged union power with scabs. The workers at Hormel, in Austin, Minn., lost their strike after the company brought in replacement workers and the International union refused to continue the fight.

Replacement workers broke strikes at International Paper Co., the Boise Cascade Corp., the Phelps Dodge Corp., and Continental Airlines. In the case of

## Which Side Are You On?

By  
Malik Miah



Continental the unions were routed.

These defeats and the failure of the top union leaderships to effectively respond to the combined anti-labor power of the employers and government is behind the hesitation of workers to go on strike.

In fact all the strikes cited were imposed on the workers by the employers. The workers only fought back after facing no choice—except to accept union-gutting contracts. Correctly, they decided to stand and fight in these defensive battles.

## Where our strength lies

But the response of the top union officials to this decade of setbacks and defeats is to continue the same old policies: push for a change in law, find friendly capitalist politicians, and "good" investment advisers or lawyers to

"fight" the bosses. Use the membership's potential power? No chance.

Yet a mobilized membership is where the strength lies to break union-busting employers like Lorenzo and Curry. It is the only power to defend our unions and win strikes. Other tactics, including boycotts, can only complement the necessary picket lines to stop production. In the transportation industry, for example, it means grounding aircraft, buses, trains, and trucks.

For many workers who live the illusion that we can't be replaced because of our skills, the busting of unions of skilled mechanics, pilots, and paper workers shows otherwise. "If you can replace air-traffic controllers you can certainly replace bus drivers," said Gary Burtless, a labor economist at the Brookings Institute.

The challenge facing labor in the 1990s is to go back to the tactics that won our unions in the 1930s: unity of all of labor on the picket line to stop production. It is when the boss is unable to sell his product that the employer and his backers in Washington and in the courts will be forced to come to the negotiating table. That's what ultimately happened in the successful Pittston strike.

As the U.S. and world economies move toward an international recession, the employers will push their attacks even more. Workers who have been in battle will be an important reservoir of lessons wherever they may be working, and will be in the vanguard of fighting these attacks. The key lesson to draw from the current situation is that rank-and-file leadership will be key to advance and win coming battles. ■

## Life under the 'Moral Majority'

By MILLIE GONZALEZ

*The Handmaid's Tale*, a movie directed by Volker Schlöndorff, screenplay by Harold Pinter.

Four years after its publication, Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, has been made into a movie.

Set in the not-so-distant future, Atwood intelligently and effectively takes the political rhetoric of the anti-choice movement and translates it to its logical conclusion. The Republic of Gilead, (formerly the United States) comes about through a coup d'état by the right wing. The President of the United States is assassinated, and the Constitution

is banned.

For various reasons, the birthrate and fertility rate of women are very low in this new society. Fertile women are relegated to the role of handmaidens, ensconced in the ruling

## MOVIE REVIEW

elite's homes. Offred (Kate) is a patronymic, composed of the possessive preposition and the first name of the man in question—of Fred.

The wives of the ruling elite who cannot conceive have handmaidens who, during the most fertile time of the month, must engage in a ritualized rape with the commander in

the presence of the wife. Women who cannot conceive are either sent to the colonies to clean up radioactive waste or become servants if they are past the age of having children.

Brief mention is made regarding the rest of society. Blacks and other "undesirables" are sent to the colonies or massacred. In Atwood's future society, a woman's sole worth is measured by her ability to conceive children.

## Not always effective

Atwood's novel doesn't always effectively translate onto the screen due to the subjective narrative of the novel. Viewers who haven't read the novel may have questions concerning the characters' motivations—questions which are answered in her novel.

Despite the artistic limitations imposed upon him by the form of the novel, British playwright Harold Pinter, (*Betrayal*, *The Birthday Party*) does a good job of translating internal thoughts of the protagonist, Offred (Kate), into dialogue and action.

Directed by Volker Schlöndorff (*Tin Drum*, *Lost Honor of Katarina Blum*, *Circle of Deceit*), the chilling effect of the novel comes through by his use of the camera, the costumes, and the contrast between beautiful peaceful scenery and the film's grim reality.

Atwood, a Canadian, is a feminist and active in Canada's women's movement. When her novel was first published in 1986, she noted how her ideas came from extrapolating on current events and pushing them to their extreme.

For example, in Canada around 1986, legislation was pending that would authorize the husband or next male kin the sole right of granting women an abortion. Atwood also drew upon Romania's ban on abortion and contraceptives.

What makes the film's message especially chilling is Atwood's ability to make the present-day erosion of women's rights into a convincing nightmare. The film's message is a cautionary tale of what could happen if we do not continue to fight for our rights. ■

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## What would Mother Jones say?

By FRANCIS MURPHY

*The Final Mission of Mother Jones*, a new one-woman, two-act play by Frank G. Greenwood.

"The Final Mission of Mother Jones" is a sorely needed play for our times.

Greenwood answers the following question with this play: What if the fiery revolutionary Mother Jones came back and spoke to us about today's pressing social and political questions? What would she bid us do?

Before posing and answering that question, Greenwood tells the dramatic story of why Mother Jones became a revolutionary and earned the titles of the "most dangerous woman in America" and "the greatest union organizer in American

history."

Ms. Ernée Simpson, a multi-talented Black actress, makes the audience forget that the original Mary Harris Jones (Mother Jones) was a blue-eyed, blonde, white Irish woman, as she gets inside of the complex "Mother Jones" character. Simpson's work is believable and moving and marks the arrival of a vital mature artist.

Greenwood's Touring Artists Group (T.A.G.) premiered "Jones" on Jan. 12-13, 1990, at the home of the Gospel Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles' Black community. Despite performing in a building with poor acoustics, no curtain, poor sight lines, and only fair lighting, the play was brought alive by the dynamic acting of Ms. Ernée Simpson, an artist who will soon be heard from in communities around the nation because T.A.G. intends to perform "Jones" nationally.

The play is now available to groups and organizations by "The Theater that Comes to the Audience." Groups interested in booking "Jones" may call (213) 231-0038 or (213) 732-1754. ■

# Haiti in turmoil as masses protest austerity and terror

By MYA SHONE

On March 12, Haiti's military ruler, Lieutenant General Prosper Avril, boarded a military cargo plane bound for the U.S. Air Force Base in Homestead, Fla. His flight from Haiti followed a late night "heart-to-heart" talk with U.S. Ambassador Alvin Adams.

Immediately, preparations were made for the installation on the following morning of Supreme Court Justice Ertha Pascal-Trouillot as "Provisional President." Her task was to organize presidential elections within three to six months.

Pascal-Trouillot had been pre-selected by the "Group of Twelve," which is composed of the nation's 12 largest traditional political parties, representing different sectors of Haiti's bourgeoisie. Any decision of the provisional president is subject to the veto of a 19-member Council of State, itself chosen by the Group of Twelve.

The husband of Pascal-Trouillot, Ernst Trouillot, had been her political mentor. He was the chief counsel of the National Bank of Haiti under Duvalier. Trouillot oversaw the funds on deposit of Haiti's rulers, sums involving hundreds of millions of dollars stolen and extorted by Haiti's tiny elite.

Ex-ruler Prosper Avril, as chief of the Presidential Guard, had himself carried out the ouster of civilian President Leslie Manigat on Sept. 17, 1988. Avril was a long-time Duvalierist who had been trained at the U.S. Special Forces military facilities in Quantico, Va., before going to Vietnam, where he worked with current U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Alvin Adams.

In 1988, Haiti was facing a mounting popular uprising which was fostering a rebellion among the army's rank-and-file soldiers. Avril staged a pre-emptive coup, installing himself in power. He elevated himself to the rank of lieutenant general and declared himself president.

Eighteen months after his coup, Avril received his marching orders from U.S. Ambassador Alvin Adams. How can this be explained?

## 1989 mass upsurge

It was the events of 1989 which brought Adams to Haiti and required the removal of Avril. A new mass upsurge rocked Haiti, prompted by the struggle against the imperialist debt and the austerity imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

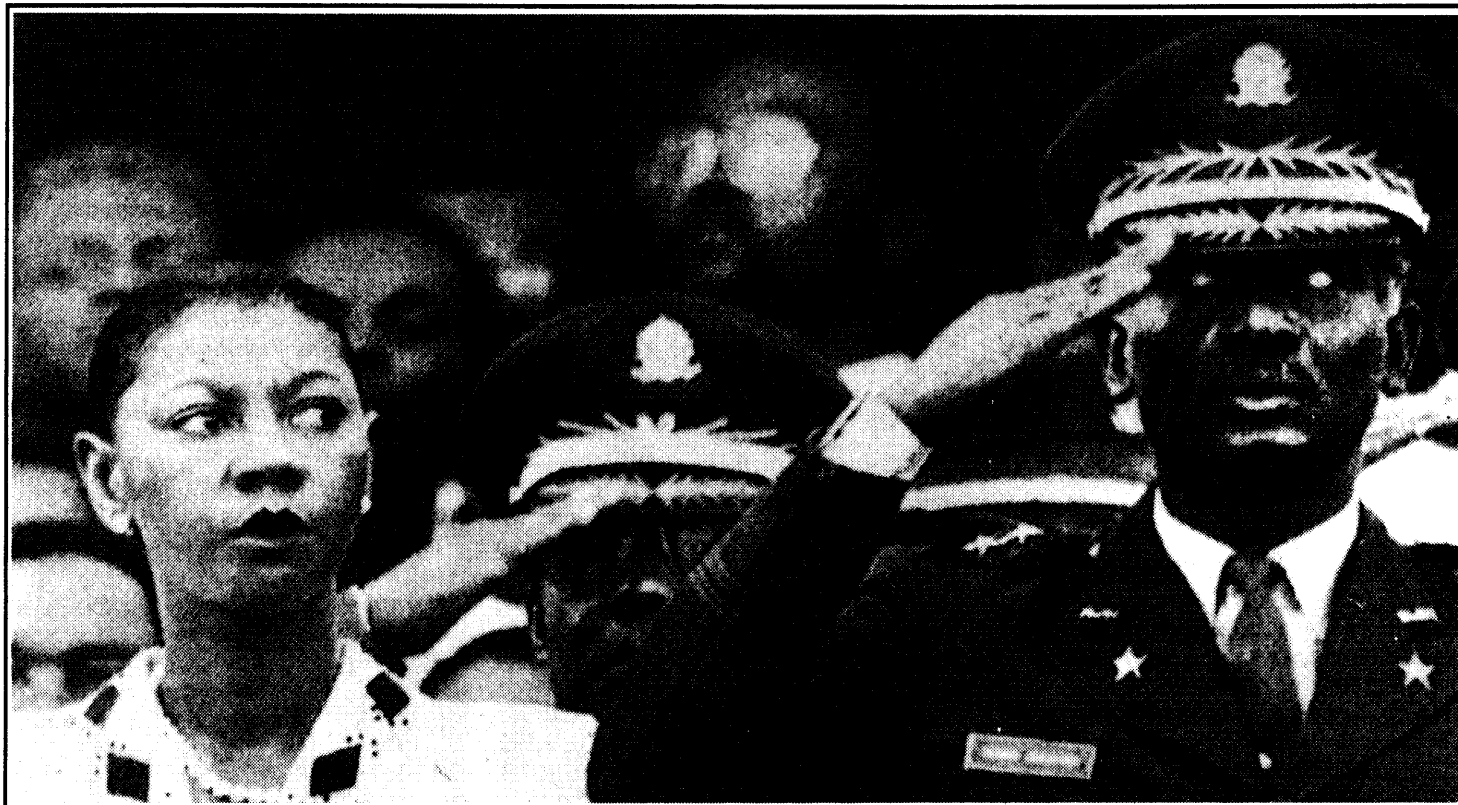
The call for mass mobilizations issued by the Haitian Initiating Committee Against the Debt produced an unprecedented response. Two general strikes paralyzed the country. The huge support for the general strikes posed a direct threat to the regime and to the U.S. agenda for Haiti.

The U.S. rulers had urged a "transition" to elections, grooming such bourgeois aspirants as Marc Bazin, a World Bank economist and defender of the IMF schemes for Haiti.

On Nov. 1, 1989, prominent members of the Initiating Committee Against the Debt called a press conference in Port-au-Prince. Three of the committee's leaders—Jean-August Mesyeux, Evans Paul, and Etienne Marino—announced a call for a vast national mobilization against the military regime of Prosper Avril on Nov. 29.

Immediately after the press conference, the three leaders were kidnapped and detained, to be produced days later and displayed on Haitian television. They had been savagely tortured and their appearance was shocking—a crude warning intended to intimidate the population and thwart the scheduled Nov. 29 mobilization.

But the tactic backfired. The people, undeterred, erupted in rage. Spontaneous rallies took place everywhere in the country with



Newly installed Provisional President Ertha Pascal-Trouillot and Maj. Gen. Herard Abraham during swearing-in ceremonies. They have good reason to be eyeing each other warily.

impromptu strikes paralyzing an economy already in ruin.

By January 1990, the mass demonstrations and street barricades had become a constant and permanent feature of Haitian life. (So too, however, had the arrest and disappearance of trade-union leaders and the drive-by machine gun shootings of children, schools, and churches by the Tonton Macoutes, the 50,000-strong death-squad force that continues to permeate all institutions of the Haitian state.)

On Jan. 20, 1990, the day after unidentified gunmen killed Colonel Paul, his wife, and housemaid, Avril declared a state of siege and sent seven opposition leaders into exile. The fact that Colonel Paul was a rival of Avril caused most Haitians to believe that in killing Paul, Avril sought to achieve two objectives simultaneously: remove a competitor and crack down on the politicians demanding elections.

Avril later arrested scores of opponents and imposed total censorship on the press.

## Writing on the wall

The writing was on the wall for Avril. His U.S. sponsors immediately saw that his usefulness was exhausted. They gave him a brief respite to calm things down. Avril lifted the state of siege, released a few of those recently detained, and promised, once again, to hold elections.

But the mass movement could not be deceived. On Feb. 6, the National Front Against Repression launched a nationwide call for the ouster of Avril. Huge demonstrations took place on Feb. 10 and were met by brutal police attack. Popular militancy increased, and the now unified call for the elimination of the Avril government and the Macoute terror machine caused panic in Washington.

Alvin Adams, described by the U.S. State Department as a "terrorism specialist," came to Haiti with a blueprint. He set out to urgently form a coalition of bourgeois forces that could provide a façade of civilian rule, prepare elections without diminishing the power of the Tonton Macoutes, and impose austerity measures outlined by the IMF.

The Committee Against Repression in Haiti described Alvin's role: "In the weeks preceding Avril's ouster, U.S. Ambassador Alvin Adams traversed the country meeting with leaders and groups, attempting to engineer a smooth transition from Avril."

By March 5, Radio Metropole announced:

"All the political parties agree on this point: the removal of General Avril." Events were moving swiftly, as Adams sought frantically to position the bourgeois leaders so they could head off a popular explosion.

By March 10, after daily meetings with the ambassadors of the United States, France, and the Vatican, a deal was struck.

Avril agreed to step down but maintain his position in the army. By March 12, Avril was gone and the interim president was installed. The Group of Twelve hastily assembled by Adams now attempted to take the initiative, calling for a demonstration in support of the new government.

## Population not fooled

But the population was not fooled. François Pierre-Louis, a leader of the National Popular Assembly (APN), told *Socialist Action* over the telephone what happened at the demonstration. Only 3000 people showed up. The predominant mood, in fact, was expressed by the slogans shouted by the crowd over and over: "Dirty deal, more old tricks."

Since the installation of Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, leaders of the mass movement have braced themselves for savage attacks by the Tonton Macoutes and the "attaches," a new para-military terrorist group.

François Pierre-Louis recounted a series of savage killings of nuns and children. But the groundswell of mass demonstrations and strikes which have engulfed Haiti continue—despite the terror of disappearances, the public display of tortured leaders, and the murder of children deliberately targeted and gunned down by army and Macoute death squads.

The potential of the Haitian people to move beyond rage to organized political expression and for revolutionary power was articulated March 13 by Father Aristide, a popular opposition leader, on Radio Metropole:

"The chauffeur has left but the car has stayed behind with all the passengers armed in order to continue the repression and the blood bath.... If the people demobilize, we are lost."

Popular vigilance committees emerged throughout Haiti in the days after Avril's resignation. Some were organized by the popular organizations, but many were spontaneous groupings of neighbors who had erected barricades and gathered whatever arms and implements could be used for self-de-

fense against the rampage by the Macoutes and army units.

Within one week of the new government, over 30 people had been killed and 100 people injured in Port-au-Prince alone. The doctors, horrified by the nature of the injuries and the carnage, called a general strike to protest the slaughter.

The bourgeois politicians, including newly installed President Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, initially paid lip-service to the call for popular self-defense, but soon retreated from this position as the army reasserted its power.

On March 16, the army issued a communiqué outlawing the vigilance committees. This was only three days after acting Army Chief of Staff Major General Herard Abraham had vowed that the army would remain in the background and support the policies of the new president.

"Her [Pascal-Trouillot] role as a Duvalierist and army figure became clear in only a matter of days," reports François Pierre-Louis, "and she abandoned the very bourgeois figures who had put her in power."

## U.S. troops could be sent in

The response of the bourgeois politicians has been to look to direct U.S. intervention to resolve the mounting crisis. "All the bourgeois politicians want U.S. troops to come to control the Macoutes and guarantee the election outcome, as in Panama," François Pierre-Louis told *Socialist Action*.

It is not the first time the Bush administration would have intervened directly with troop support in Haiti.

U.S. soldiers were brought from Guantanamo just one year ago, April 1989, during a power struggle between Prosper Avril and a sector of the army which was about to erupt into armed conflict. The U.S. forces sent a clear signal to the rebellious Haitian units while instructing Avril and his Presidential Guard in methods of control.

As the invasion of Panama clearly demonstrates, the U.S. rulers are willing to send troops to replace a regime that is no longer useful containing the mass upsurge.

In the coming confrontations, the fate of Haiti will be charted. The U.S. antiwar movement must be prepared to defend the Haitian people against the continuing reign of terror and to mobilize against the projected occupation of Haiti. ■