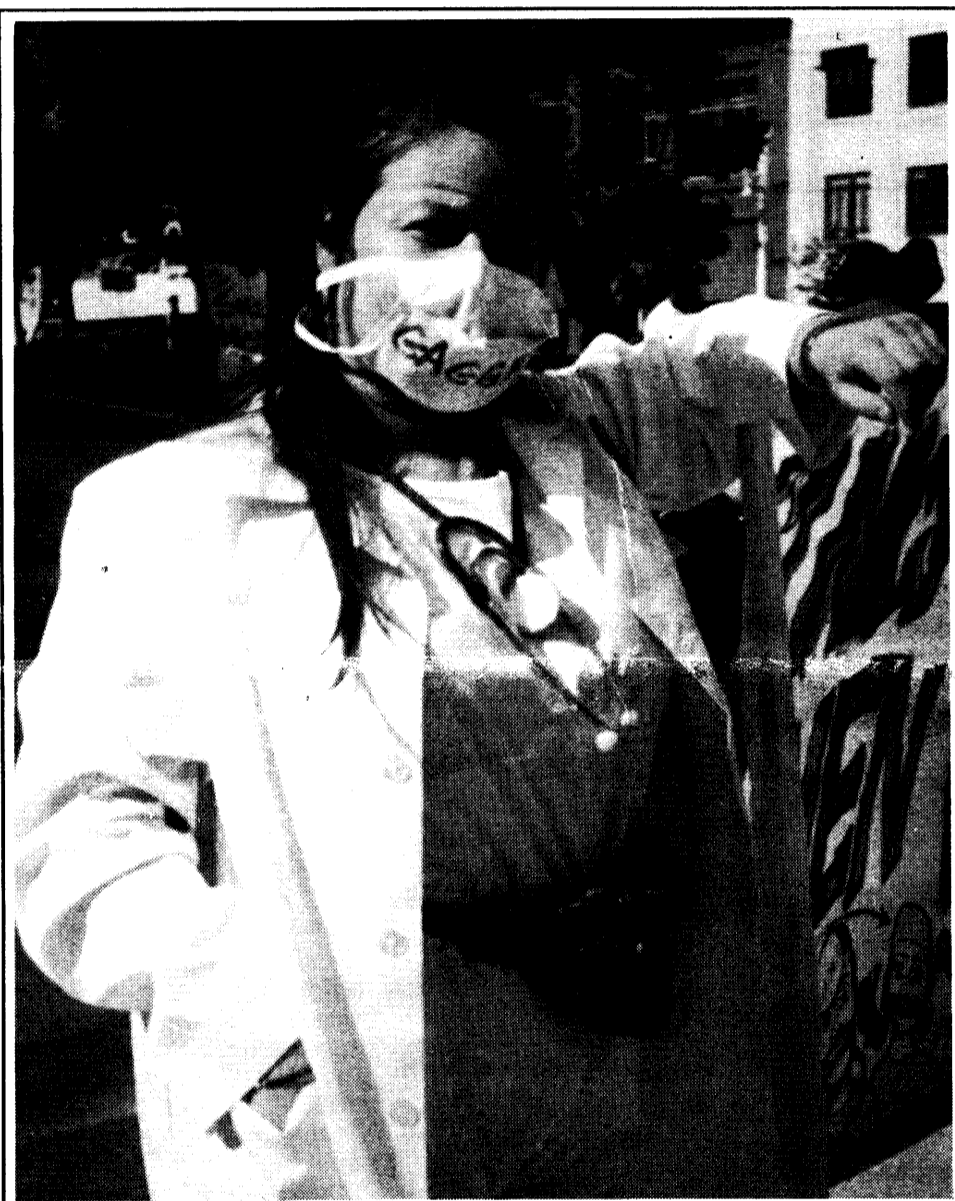




Supreme Court puts gag on right to choose



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

Pro-choice supporters protested Supreme Court ruling at the California State Building in San Francisco, Calif., on May 25.

Defend Reproductive rights!

By JONI JACOBS

On May 24, women's right to abortion—and free speech rights of all Americans—suffered a devastating blow. In a 5-4 decision, the United States Supreme Court upheld federal regulations prohibiting healthcare workers at federally funded, low-cost family-planning clinics from counseling women on the option of abortion.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who wrote the majority decision, said it is not a violation of the Constitution for the government to selectively fund programs based on what it believes to be in the public interest.

"In so doing, the government has not discriminated on the basis of viewpoint; it has merely chosen to fund one activity to the exclusion of the other," Rehnquist wrote. He added that the regulations do not infringe on either the free-speech rights of healthcare workers or the still-legal right of women to abortion.

"Government manipulation"

But in a dissenting opinion, Justice Harry A. Blackman called the decision a "deliberate

manipulation by the government of the dialogue between a woman and her physician."

"In its haste further to restrict the right of every woman to control her reproductive freedom and bodily integrity, the majority disregards established principles of law and contorts this court's decided cases to arrive at this preordained result," Blackman wrote.

The controversy stems from the 1970 Title X Public Health Services Act, Section 1008 of which states, "None of the funds appropriated under this title shall be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning." In 1988, the Reagan administration interpreted the law to include counseling and advice on abortion.

According to the revised regulations, healthcare workers in federally funded family-planning projects must tell women who ask about abortion that "the project does not consider abortion an appropriate method of family planning and therefore does not counsel or refer for abortion."

The ruling affects 4000 clinics nationwide, which serve the medical needs for 4.5 million women. Most clinics are in areas with

(continued on page 5)

Israel after the Gulf war.



See pages 12-13.

Blacks protest stalling by apartheid regime

By MALIK MIAH

The white minority regime in South Africa continues to stall, as pressure mounts for it to make major concessions to the oppressed Black majority. As a result, the African National Congress (ANC), which had been pursuing a process of negotiations with the government, has been forced to take a more confrontational stance.

On May 18, the ANC announced it would refuse to discuss a new constitution with the regime until progress was achieved on its demand that the government put a stop to the violence in the Black townships, which has claimed at least 1000 lives so far this year.

The ANC and other groups supporting a democratic South Africa have announced plans for a consumer boycott, demonstrations, and strikes—focusing on protest rallies on June 15-16, the anniversary of the massacre of Black demonstrators during the 1976 Soweto uprising.

Anti-apartheid groups charge that the white regime is responsible for the township violence—which the local and international press falsely call "Black-on-Black" violence. For that reason, when the regime called a conference on May 24-25 to discuss the violence, the anti-apartheid groups refused to participate.

Government security forces, in fact, have abetted attacks by the right-wing Inkatha Freedom Party, which is based among a section of the Zulu population. It is common for Inkatha members and supporters to go on the rampage without any police interference. But as soon as the community defends itself, the police suddenly materialize to arrest and beat up the victims.

After criticizing the ANC for its call for

self-defense units, President F.W. de Klerk announced that traditional weapons (spears and battle axes) used by Black vigilantes would be made illegal in the Johannesburg area. But he did not prohibit the weapons in Natal province, where Inkatha is primarily based.

It is noteworthy that the so-called traditional weapons used by Inkatha supporters had been banned by the white regime for one century until September 1990—that is, after the national liberation groups became legal and active again in South African politics. Most of the deaths, as well, have been a result of gunfire—thus pointing to police and army complicity in the violence.

Winnie Mandela convicted

Meanwhile, on May 13, the white justice system convicted Winnie Mandela, wife of ANC leader Nelson Mandela, of kidnapping four youths who were taken to her home in 1988 and severely beaten.

Mandela was acquitted of the more serious charge of assault to intent commit grievous bodily harm. Instead, she was convicted of the charge of "accessory after the fact." Mandela said she was not present at the time of the beatings, but 200 miles away.

There are no juries under South African law. All white juries were abolished in 1969. The white judge hears the case and decides the verdict.

Mandela was sentenced to six years in prison, which she is appealing. "As long as you know that I did not assault any child," she said afterwards, "that's all that matters to me."

Whatever the facts, it is total hypocrisy for the white regime and its friends abroad to talk of "justice" being possible in the

(continued on page 4)

Supreme Court outlaws Hippocratic oath



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

The U.S. Supreme Court's May 24 decision has made medical ethics illegal. The El Supremo Court has ruled that any family-planning clinic that accepts federal funds cannot reveal that abortion does exist, even though it is vitally necessary to save the life of the pregnant woman.

Even if a woman is 12 years old, diabetic, AIDS positive, with a serious heart disease, or a hard drug

user—and even if the fetus is so deformed it is unlikely to survive outside the womb, she cannot be told about the option of abortion. Clinics that receive any federal funds have had their lips sealed when it applies to poor women.

This decision makes an executive ruling by President Reagan in 1988 the law of the land. This is not something that was passed by Congress, although those gutless

wonders in Congress could have gotten rid of this neanderthal ruling when it was first initiated by Ronnie Reagan.

Now the Democrats on Capital Hill are strutting around saying that they are going to pass a bill to abolish the regulations which were first adopted in 1988 by the Dept. of Health and Human Services.

Actually, federal funds have not been used for abortion since 1970. What makes the Supreme Court ruling even more evil is that it says that any clinic which receives any federal funding cannot even mention the word abortion.

For 20 years, the Democrats in Washington have had the opportunity to pass a bill which would have restored federal funds for abortions for poor women. They have not done this, even though the Democrats have been the majority in Congress for all of those years. This proves the futility of trying to rely on so-called friends of a wo-

man's right to choose.

Why is it in the interests of the capitalist rulers to make forced pregnancy the law—as it was in Rumania under Ceaucescu, or as the Pope is trying to impose on Poland? Could it be that Bush is really pro-life and wants to save little children? It is estimated that 400,000 children in Iraq will die this year if that country does not receive aid to save them. Has Bush made even the slightest effort to save these children?

Most important to the capitalist class is to continue receiving massive tax-breaks at the expense of the poor and working class. That means cutting healthcare for all workers and poor people, cutting social services down to the bone, cuts threatening the very existence of public education, cuts in the pitiful allotments for nutrition provided children in the poorest families, and so on. Why?

All of these anti-human measures are designed to decrease taxes for the

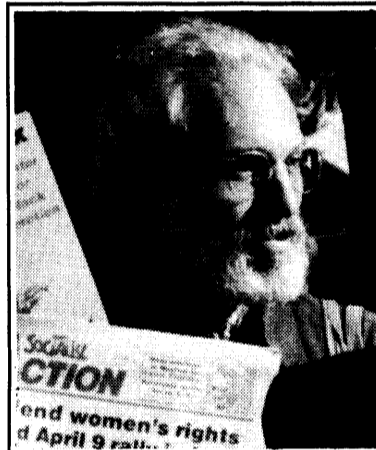
wealthy rulers of this country. At the same time, taxes are raised on the middle class and working class to pay for more savings-and-loan, bank, and airline bailouts.

It is necessary to provide phony "moral issues" like the "right to life" and "freedom of speech" for racist and sexist assaults on Blacks, women, gays and others branded by capitalist society.

It is all designed to provide a "moral" cover for the fascist defenders of capitalism who will be set loose by panicked capitalists when the working people and their allies inevitably begin to fight back. That's what the anti-choice zealots are—the social breeding ground for incipient fascism.

Our class must organize, massively, independently, and in the streets to regain our rights—if we are not to be pushed down even further. We have to mobilize as we have before, independently of the two political parties in power, to fight for our human rights. ■

Alcohol, tobacco ads target minorities



Behind the Lines

By
Michael Schreiber

Do you remember the flick in which man-about-town Claude Rains has fallen for wealthy spinster Bette Davis 'way down in Rio?

The music rises, if I recall, the moment that Claude Rains stuffs two cigarettes in his mouth, lights them both with one giant inhalation, and then hands one of them (oh, so suavely) to his paramour. And then, with a cigarette in one hand and a highball in the other, our hero confesses his love.

Nowadays (I have it on good authority) cigarettes and alcohol are less accepted as accessories to courtship. In fact, cigarette consumption has been declining overall, dropping 11 percent between 1980 and 1988, according to the Department of Agriculture. And trade publications report that consumption of liquor and wine fell 9 percent from 1980 to 1987.

The tobacco and alcohol corporations are quite alarmed at the threat to their profits. And so, they're keeping their advertising bureaus busy finding new gimmicks and new areas for sales. The tobacco companies alone spend some \$2.5 billion a year on their ad campaigns.

Recently, an ever larger amount of the advertising has been directed at the poorer working-class communities—especially Black neighborhoods. Alcoholism is often widespread in the inner cities, and tobacco sales continue to flourish (44 percent of Black adults smoke).

A study released last month by Oakland, Calif., Supervisor Dan Perata found that 60 percent of the billboards in Oakland's minority neighborhoods advertise alcohol and cigarettes. In contrast, only 11 percent of the billboards on upscale

Piedmont Avenue advertise the products.

One survey in Baltimore determined that 70 percent of the city's billboards were located in poor, inner city neighborhoods. Of those billboards, 76 percent advertised liquor and cigarettes. Researchers in Detroit, Saint Louis, and other cities have found similar results.

Dr. Harold P. Freeman, a Harlem surgeon and president of the American Cancer Society, points out, "The cigarette industry just wants to make money because they know that poor and uneducated people are their main customers. And Black people are disproportionately poor and uneducated."

The result? During the last 30 years, mainly because of smoking, the lung cancer rate has increased four times faster among Blacks than among whites.

At the same time, alcoholism has been identified as the greatest single health threat to Black people and a growing menace to Hispanics, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. A 1987 study found that Black men had a 70 percent higher death rate from cirrhosis of the liver than whites.

Grassroots activists

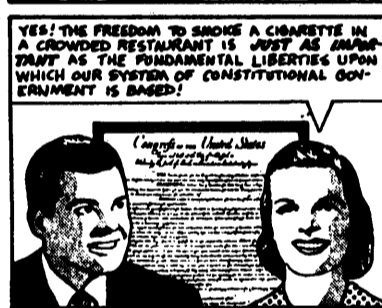
But people are fighting back. Last year in Philadelphia, for instance, Black activists spearheaded a successful campaign to stop the R.J. Reynolds company from test-marketing its new Uptown brand of cigarettes in their community.

This year's Cinco de Mayo (May 5) parade through San Francisco's Hispanic district had an anti-smoking theme. Bystanders in the crowd were handed brochures describing the dangers of tobacco.

The parade organizers refused all donations for the event from the tobacco companies (who are generally among the most prominent corporate sponsors of events in the community).

And in Harlem, the Rev. Calvin Butts of the Abyssinian Baptist Church has organized a group of parishioners into mobile whitewash brigades. Every Saturday, they use the paint to cover up alcohol and tobacco advertisements on billboards within five blocks of any church, school, or playground.

As a result, one liquor firm withdrew its advertising from the area, and a billboard owner agreed to display less offensive posters. Other



local fightback campaigns have had similar small successes.

"Pro-choice" corporations?

A broad national campaign against the tobacco and liquor advertisements has yet to take shape. But the death merchants are clearly worried. After California voters authorized a \$29 million dollar campaign to place anti-smoking warnings on billboards and in television spots, one corporation—Phillip Morris—decided to strike back.

In a statement that was printed on the editorial pages of Black community newspapers, Phillip Morris charged that the antismoking campaign had surrendered to "racist stereotypes." The proof? The California campaign sought to target African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans—impugning the right of those peoples to freely "choose" whether to smoke or not without having to listen to government health recommendations.

The death merchants have thus "come a long way, baby" from the days of Claude Rains and Bette Davis. Now, they claim, their message is "pro-choice" and "pro-individual liberties."

Furthermore, as if we've haven't gotten the point, Phillip Morris has organized a lavish national tour featuring a copy of the U.S. Bill of Rights. This exhibition will instruct us on the importance of maintaining our "right" to be subjected to tobacco company propaganda without having anything to say about it.

But what about our right to

health and safety? What about our right to protect our children from the tobacco and alcohol profiteers? These rights must be protected as well.

Cigarette and liquor advertising must be banned from our city streets by law. The big corporations, through a compulsory tax on their profits, must be forced to pay for clinics to treat people suffering from the effects of their products.

The corporations must also pay for a thoroughgoing educational campaign so that people, beginning in grade school, will be informed about the dangers of smoking and excessive alcohol use. Only then, can the tobacco and alcohol manufacturers claim the right to talk about our rights. ■

Socialist ACTION

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Editors: MICHAEL SCHREIBER
JOSEPH RYAN

Staff: Alex Chis, Paul Colvin, Gerry Foley, Suzanne Forsyth, Malik Miah, Hayden Perry, Barbara Putnam, Kwame M.A. Somburu, Sylvia Weinstein.

Business Manager: MAY MAY GONG

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Antiwar GIs Erik Larsen and Tahan Jones confront Marine Corps 'kangaroo court'

By JEFF MACKLER

Corporal Tahan Jones, one of the nation's most outspoken GI resisters, turned himself in to the Marine Corps at Treasure Island, San Francisco, on May 15. This time, the handcuffs and restraining belts used the month before on his Marine comrade and fellow conscientious objector, Erik Larsen, were forsaken.

The national outcry against Larsen's treatment might have convinced the Marines to act with a modicum of restraint toward Jones—at least when the cameras were on. Recent protests included a letter to President Bush signed by 33 Catholic bishops, which supported not only "religious," but "selective" conscientious objectors (that is, those opposed to only "unjust wars").

The Marine Corps didn't bother to inform Jones that he had been charged—that same day—with "desertion in time of war." Jones thus faces the death penalty for exercising his constitutional right to speak out against the slaughter of the people of the Middle East.

Within 24 hours of reporting to the Marines, and in blatant disregard for court motions filed on his behalf, Jones was shipped to Camp LeJeune, N.C., 3000 miles away from his legal advisers.

Five days after Jones reported to the Marines, his attorney, John Murko, appeared in court to request a writ of *habeus corpus* to prevent his client from being separated from his defense supporters. It was only then that government lawyers blithely informed him that Jones had been charged with a capital offense.

Kangaroo court

Of the 24 initial GI resisters who were sent to Camp LeJeune, 18 are now imprisoned there with plea-bargained sentences of up to two years. Most became victims of what Erik Larsen's attorney, Robert Rivkin, describes as the Marines' "three-pronged strategy of isolation, intimidation, and incarceration." The remainder of the Camp LeJeune detainees await court-martial trials.

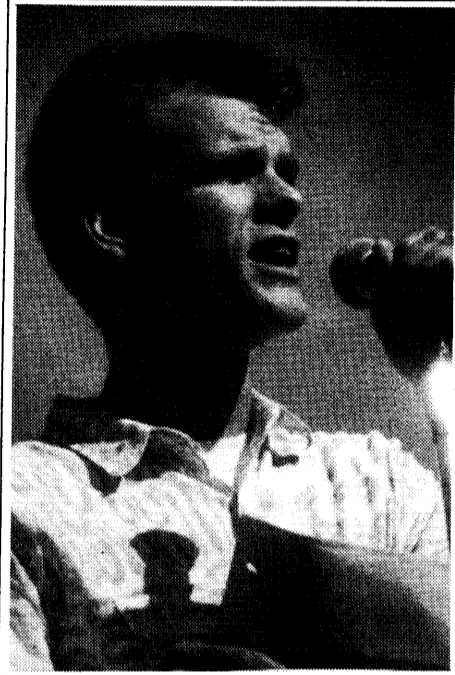
Rivkin, among the nation's most prominent military legal authorities, describes the

Marines' Kangaroo Court conduct as "unprecedented."

He told *Socialist Action* that there has never been a case where all soldiers charged with the same offense were isolated and sent to the same military facility for trial, thus denying them reasonable access to attorneys, witnesses, financial resources, and families.

Rivkin stated that GIs have been thrown into county jails, where ruthless officials shaved their heads to the point of drawing blood. Others have received anonymous death threats.

A recent proceeding at Camp LeJeune against resister Sam Lwin shocked many in attendance. The overt prejudice of government witnesses and other excesses apparently



Erik Larsen

embarrassed authorities and resulted in what is considered, under the circumstances, to be a light sentence.

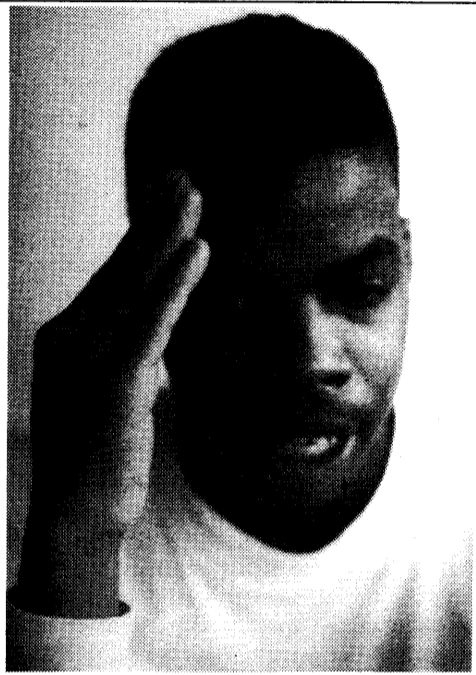
Lwin received a dishonorable discharge and four months in the brig. This sentence was further reduced by 36 days because of Lwin's previous illegal imprisonment.

Lwin's fight for freedom was aided by the

lawyers and supporters of the New York-based GI defense committee, Out Now. His sentence was a far cry from the multi-year plea-bargained terms received by many other conscientious objectors, whose only crime was to say "no" to what is now considered by many to have been a war of genocide against a virtually defenseless population. The 1000 to 1 kill ratio is unprecedented in modern warfare.

Amnesty International has indicated that imprisoned conscientious objectors will be considered "prisoners of conscience."

Of the estimated 2500 GIs who resisted participation in Operation Desert Storm, only three have been threatened with the death penalty—Jones, Larsen, and Kevin



Tahan Jones

Sparrock. Sparrock's "crime" is having reported for duty eight hours late!

Gov't stacks the deck

Riding high on government-orchestrated, media-induced patriotic fervor, the bipartisan warmakers are proceeding as if GI rights did not exist.

In violation of all regulations, the Marines have held two Article 32 (preliminary) hearings in the case of Erik Larsen without Larsen's attorneys even being present. Another hearing has been set without Larsen's agreement for June 4.

In a May 23 letter to the assigned Investigating Officer, Major J.F. Blanche, Larsen's lawyer protested the above violations and Major Blanche's "capricious" rejection of a defense request for a continuance until June 17.

Major Blanche rejected the June 17 date because he stated he was leaving Camp LeJeune on the following day.

"What you seem to have overlooked," Rivkin wrote, "is that Pfc. Larsen is facing charges that could result in very severe consequences, even a death sentence, and that his due process rights take precedence over your convenience. If it is inconvenient for you to hear this case, the appropriate action is for convening authority to appoint a different Article 32 investigating officer."

Rivkin pointed out that Blanche proceeded to deny all 24 witnesses requested by the defense "before having heard any arguments by the defense and even before Pfc. Larsen's civilian attorney had had a chance to appear for his client! ... A non-Article 32 investigating officer might have issued such a ruling out of ignorance. For a military judge to have issued such a ruling where the accused faces a possible death sentence is an outrage almost beyond belief."

Rivkin reminded Major Blanche that Larsen had secured a Federal District Court order on May 2 holding that the Marine Corps had violated his client's due process rights. The Marines were given 60 days to hold a new hearing on Larsen's application for CO status. Apparently, the Marines want to ram through the required Article 32 hearing and the actual court martial trial before this time.

Rivkin is calling on the Marines to "relieve the current Investigating Officer of his duties and appoint someone who is fair and impartial," not to mention accessible.

The families of Tahan Jones and Erik Larsen have formed a joint defense committee which is preparing for a long and costly legal and political battle. Estimated legal expenses are \$60,000. Contributions are urgently requested.

Checks should be made payable to the "Jones/Larsen Defense Committee," Box 225, 1678 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709. Phone (415) 655-1201. ■

By SUZANNE FORSYTH

SAN FRANCISCO—On May 17, a rally was held to announce Socialist Action candidate Joni Jacobs's campaign for mayor. Sixty people attended the spirited gathering at the Socialist Action headquarters.

Jacobs began her speech by explaining the need for a political alternative to the Democrats and Republicans: "Why do people feel the electoral choices are meaningless? I think it's because we know the candidates of either of the two parties don't represent our interests."

"We have candidates," she pointed out, "from all areas of the political spectrum—conservatives, moderates, liberals, progressives—who are vying for the right to represent us, the working people. But who do they really represent? They represent [those] who want to keep this class system in place."

Jacobs went on to detail the objectives of "friends of labor" candidates, such as current mayor Art Agnos. "This year again," she said, "Agnos has frozen the wages of city workers, claiming that they must bear their 'fair share' of the budget crisis. The wage freeze will save 70 percent of the budget deficit. ... Wouldn't it be more fair if those who made 70 percent of the money in San Francisco, who benefited from 70 percent of the tax loopholes, shouldered 70 percent of the burden?"

Jacobs explained Socialist Action's alternative, "Our campaign is a campaign of ideas. We think that society and government should be reorganized to benefit the vast majority of people. This is not only possible, it's affordable, it's preferable—and most of all, it's necessary to save our planet and all its people from the destruction capitalism wreaks."

"That's what socialism is all about—wisely using our resources, both natural and industrial, for the benefit of the vast majority. ... We must build a movement which

S.F. socialists kick off election campaign

will eventually lead to an uprising against the capitalist order of government and put in its place a system that puts human needs before profits."

The program also included comments by supporters of Jacobs's campaign. Lisa Kutler told the meeting she had "big shoes to fill" succeeding Joni as chair of the San Francisco NOW Reproductive Rights Task Force.

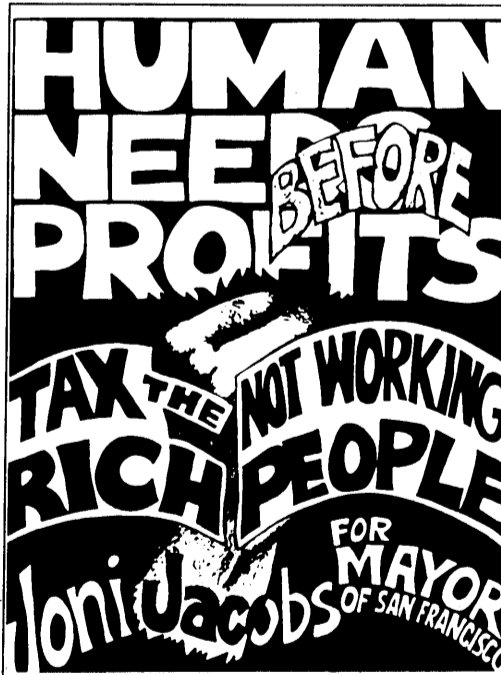
Two students who met Jacobs through clinic defense activities spoke. "Joni is for the working people of San Francisco, the blood and muscle of this city," declared City College student Christina Dahlin. Mary Doran, a San Francisco State University student, said she supported the campaign based on her belief that "Joni will fight not only for women's rights, but for all human rights."

Another supporter to address the rally was Hilary Diamond, staff director of the Mobilization to Bring the Troops Home Now, which organized demonstrations against the Gulf War. She is now working to free conscientious objectors Tahan Jones and Erik Larsen.

Diamond criticized the actions of both Democrats and Republicans in support of the war, including current Mayor Art Agnos's veto of a resolution declaring San Francisco a sanctuary for conscientious objectors.

She contrasted this to the "political leadership" and rank-and-file support Socialist Action provided both for the anti-war movement and for the current C.O. defense cases. She declared that if the two major political parties "can't even defend our basic rights, it's time to support one that will."

Jacobs urged all fighters against injustice to join the campaign. "We're [asking] students, anti-war activists, feminists, ethnic minorities, and working people to endorse our campaign," she said. "You don't have to



'That's what socialism is all about—wisely using our resources, both natural and industrial—for the benefit of the vast majority.'

—Joni Jacobs

be a socialist to support our campaign. You just have to believe that human needs must be placed before profits. We need you to act on that belief now and join with us to begin building a better world."

Throughout June, supporters will be out

on city street corners petitioning to get Joni Jacobs on the ballot and distributing campaign literature. Join the campaign committee and help us reach as many people as possible with Socialist Action's political alternative. Call (415) 821-0458 to get involved!

Boston forum highlights S. African and U.S. struggles

'Racism is the common experience of these two societies'



Dave Hartman

By JIM HENLE

"A Bantustan is the same thing as a ghetto. Police running wild and amok or pass-book laws [are] like stop-and-search [in Boston]. Anyone can walk up to you because of how you look and demand that you go up against a wall and be searched. ... There are so many parallels."

These words of the Rev. Graylan Ellis-Hagler captured the thinking of all the participants in the May 2 Boston Socialist Action forum, "The Transformation of South Africa into a New Society."

Held at the Rev. Hagler's Church of the United Community, the forum brought together leaders of the South African movement for liberation and leaders of Boston's Black community.

Dr. Neville Alexander, Chairperson of WOSA (the Workers' Organization for Socialist Action, in South Africa) was the keynote speaker. He shared the podium with the Rev. Ellis-Hagler, who is an independent candidate for Boston mayor; Minister Rodney X, assistant minister of Muhammed's Mosque #11; and Prof. Chris Nteta, a supporter of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa. New Nation, a Boston-area Black youth organization, gave greetings. Roger Sheppard chaired for Socialist Action.

Dr. Alexander was imprisoned on Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was held, for 11 years. His appearance in the United States was a unique opportunity to hear a veteran anti-apartheid activist and partisan of the South African workers' movement.

While noting the new opportunities in South Africa today, Alexander spoke of the

current situation as a difficult passage. He said that the white rulers' strategy is to divide the forces of change through fragmentation along ethnic lines, and also to try to develop a sell-out layer of leaders who will accept minor changes that leave the fundamental power relations intact.

Promoting workers' interests

The recent founding of WOSA [see *Socialist Action*, March 1991] represents a potentially important counter-weight to the maneuvers of the ruling class. WOSA, while still modest in forces, was founded to give a political expression to the workers' movement.

Prof. Nteta remarked that among the many political groups in South Africa, "what WOSA is doing is coming out very clearly that South Africa has to be a socialist state."

For Dr. Alexander, the current changes must be part of a strategy to form a united front and to gain power for the workers' movement: "We support and will mobilize support for those aspects of negotiations [with the racist government] as a political strategy which will promote the interests of the working class."

In regard to the idea of a democratically elected constituent assembly, he pointed out: "We support it in the most consistent and radical way—more than any other group in the country, in fact. But the alternative [to negotiations alone] is to continue the class struggle for fundamental social reforms such that in the balance of forces, the *working class* in South Africa is strengthened all the time."

Racism, as Dr. Alexander stated, "is the common experience of these two societies,

the United States and South Africa." All of the speakers saw the closeness of the oppression of Black people in the United States and in South Africa. The absence of formal apartheid laws in the United States does not prevent segregation.

The ruling powers of South Africa and the United States, who are very friendly to each other, use common methods to keep Black people oppressed. They encourage "Black on Black" violence to divide and drugs to destroy. They selectively attack leaders—from the FBI harassment of Black elected officials to the trial of Winnie Mandela.

As the Rev. Hagler said: "There are so many parallels. Economic segregation: ... Some people have the benefit and the privilege of that economic system and some people are closed out of that economic system. That is what goes on in South Africa, and that is what goes on in the United States—particularly when it comes to Latinos and Blacks and other people of color."

Dr. Alexander explained, "Although the demographic relationships are very different, the power relationships in these two societies are very similar."

"The white minority owns virtually the entire country. The future of South Africa could look like the present of this country 30 years after the civil rights movement thought it had succeeded in freeing the Black people."

For this reason, the struggle to end apartheid must be connected to the kinds of democratic and social struggles Blacks in the United States must wage.

Bringing forces together

In their struggles, the South African and U.S. anti-racist movements can take inspira-

Rodney X speaks

Rodney X, assistant minister of Muhammed's Mosque #11, was among the speakers at the May 2 forum on South Africa sponsored by Boston Socialist Action. Below are excerpts from his talk.

In the name of Allah and his messenger, the Honorable Elijah Mohammed, A Salaam Alaikum. For those of you not familiar with that greeting, it means simply "peace." ...

Our sojourn in America is appalling. We act as if nothing ever happened to us—as if we're free as free can be. We're more enslaved now than we ever were. Because the chains are now in the minds of the masses of people—even white people.

The government plays too many tricks. And when you look at the situation in South Africa, there's a serious similarity. You have 30 million Blacks who are under the control of a little more than 5 million whites. In the land that belongs to them. All you need is one man, one vote and its over—good night!

What does the oppressor fear? He fears the rise of a people who have been oppressed for thousands of years. For there's a code in the universe that there's a specific time when people rise up and leaders come from the bosom of the masses of the people. And they produce a change—regardless of how many guns you have. ...

So it's best for us to gird up our loins and really get in this movement—of making a change in the world. Because South Africa will change. Make no mistake about it!

tion from each other.

The Rev. Hagler noted that "understanding the international struggle only helps to clarify what our agenda should be at home." He pointed out that the struggles of people in Africa and Asia were "one of the things that Dr. Martin Luther King talked about" and which helped prepare his movement in the 1960s.

The Rev. Hagler's mayoral campaign is centered in Boston's Black community. It is projected as a "crusade for work, hope and dignity." He has been in the forefront of labor and Black community struggles in Boston—opposing stop-and-frisk policies, supporting the Greyhound strike, picketing construction sites that do not hire Black workers, and working for many other causes.

In closing, Dr. Alexander noted the developing dialogue and common concerns of anti-racist activists in the United States and South Africa: "We can learn from one another, we can teach one another, we can act jointly in many ways."

He pointed out that racism "is a basic issue that affects both these societies and on which we can act together, not simply as solidarity movements (we are that in any case) but movements that have similar interests and therefore similar goals to struggle for—and particularly because of the connections between the governments and the ruling classes of these two societies."

Dr. Alexander concluded that this forum could be one activity "upon which we can build."

... Apartheid regime stalls

(continued from page 1)

Mandela case. What right does a white judiciary have to try a victim of apartheid? Only the Black majority could do so in a fair manner. Only in a democratic and nonracial South Africa is that possible.

For 27 years, Nelson Mandela and thousands of others were political prisoners held by an immoral regime. Many exiles are still not allowed permanent residency in the country of their birth.

Thousands of Black South Africans have been or are still prisoners of the state. Since May, some 200 political prisoners have been on a hunger strike to protest their incarceration. Meanwhile, the white and Black vigilante gangs—who terrorize the Black population at will and assassinate anti-apartheid ac-

tivists—get off scot free.

The white regime is under pressure to pardon Mandela because of its bloodstained hands. Will it? De Klerk says justice is in the hands of the courts.

Land claims

De Klerk's regime is maneuvering on the land question as well. It put out a carrot in March when it announced plans to abolish the hated racial restrictions on land ownership. Whites (less than 13 percent of the population) control over 86 percent of South African land and property. Blacks will soon be able to legally buy land, if they can afford it.

But the new provisions do not compensate Blacks for land stolen from them by the apartheid system. In addition, white neighborhoods can still set their own norms and

standards after residential segregation is legally ended. In other words, few if any Blacks will be let in.

After protests, De Klerk announced on May 20 that an advisory commission would be established to review land claims by Blacks. They could appeal to the commission to get their land returned. But H.J. Kriel (the Minister of Planning, Provincial Affairs, and Housing) made it clear that the government would not encourage land returns or compensation. "The government," Kriel said, "is still of the opinion that a program of restitution is not practical or financially viable."

Racist white farmers in the Western Transvaal took the law in their own hands on May 11. They used arms to try and drive a group of Black landless squatters off disused farmland. For the first time since 1922,

the security forces shot at the armed white thugs.

All over South Africa, squatters are taking over disused farmland to live on and build huts. The government now recognizes the existence of almost 900 squatter camps, with more than 2 million residents, in the country. That number is expected to sharply increase with the repeal of the "influx control" laws allowing Blacks to freely move around the country. There is high unemployment and lack of homes.

It is in this context that the ANC's first national conference in South Africa since it was banned in 1960 takes place in July in Durban. The youth wing of the organization especially wants more radical action to win a democratic South Africa. The new National Executive will likely be increased from 55 to 109 to accommodate the new generation of leaders.

NOW holds hearings on third party idea

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

The crisis in American politics has sparked a debate among those who work for social change.

Organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW) have worked for years within the Democratic Party. But they can no longer ignore the growing sentiment among their own members that the Democratic Party bears equal responsibility with the Republicans for the growing homelessness, education cutbacks, and other social crises—as well as for the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, affirmative action policies, and abortion rights.

In response, NOW established a Commission on Responsive Democracy at its last national conference. The conference mandated the commission to hold a series of hearings around the country to assess the two-party system and explore whether or not a new party should be established. The commission will propose a resolution for the July national NOW conference.

Commission members include well-known feminists and liberals. Many members have long histories in the Democratic Party. Participants in the May 4 hearing in San Francisco included NOW President Molly Yard, United Farm Workers Union Vice President Delores Huerta, Boston Rainbow Coalition politician Mel King, former California Supreme Court Chief Justice Rose Bird, and others.

For the past two years, the NOW leadership has abandoned organizing a women's rights movement independent of the capitalist government. It turned away from the strategy of mobilizing hundreds of thousands of pro-choice supporters in demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and locally, and focused on pressuring legislators and the courts.

The NOW leadership consistently urged members and supporters to elect Democratic Party "pro-choice" politicians. The May 24 U.S. Supreme Court decision banning federally-funded clinics from mentioning abortion underscores how this strategy has failed.

It appears that NOW, through the Commission, may propose a new party. "Nothing will put more feminists on the ballot quicker—and push the Democrats and Republicans harder," according to Ellie Smeal, leader of the Fund for the Feminist Majority and NOW.

In the meantime, however, the NOW leadership is not going to cut ties with the Dem-

ocrats. During the San Francisco hearing, Democratic Party Central Committee member Maria Martinez urged support for a Sacramento Democrat, Patty Mattingly, a candidate for the state legislature. Molly Yard and Linda Joplin, president of

California NOW, both assured Martinez that NOW was doing everything possible to elect Mattingly to office.

By contrast, Joni Jacobs, Socialist Action candidate for mayor of San Francisco, proposed the adoption of a policy of no support to any Democrat or Republican. (See her statement on this page.) Her proposal was not well received by the NOW leadership, which indicated privately that it would support Richard Hongisto—a rich, long-time Democrat—for mayor of San Francisco.

Socialist Action's candidate advocated a complete break with the Democratic and Re-

publican parties. What's required, she said, is the formation of a party that represents all those whose interests are opposed to the capitalist profit system—in other words, a labor party.

Such a party, which would be the feminist party some NOW members are seeking, would also represent the majority in the United States—those who work for a living instead of profiting off the work of others. Such a party, based on the unions, would be active 365 days a year and would actively organize to defend and extend the rights of women, oppressed minorities, and working people. ■

'We must break all ties with the Democratic and Republican parties'



The following presentation was given by Joni Jacobs at a commission hearing sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW) in San Francisco on May 4.

My name is Joni Jacobs. I am Socialist Action's candidate for mayor of San Francisco, an eight-year-long member of NOW, and one of the leading organizers for NOW in San Francisco for clinic defense the past two years.

I hope that this obsolete belief that it's possible to reform the Democratic Party will not be a barrier for NOW to endorse my candidacy. Our campaign is reaching out to students, feminists, people of color, antiwar activists, and working people.

I don't claim to speak for anyone or to represent anyone or anything other than my ideas. But I think those ideas are shared by

the vast majority of people in this country.

Those ideas are that we can build a better world if we put human needs before profits. We think that healthcare, housing, education, and jobs should be the priorities for San Francisco's City Hall. And we think these basic human needs are affordable if we stop taxing working people and start taxing those who benefit from the "welfare for the rich" system we have now.

The Democratic Party won't offer this perspective because they're responsible for the transfer of wealth away from working people and into the hands of the idle rich.

People talk about the devastating effects of Reaganomics. It should more accurately be called "Democrat-nomics" because the Democratic Party-controlled Congress passed every budget and tax restructuring program Reagan asked for.

The Democratic Party gives lip service to being the party for women, people of color, labor, etc., until those interests collide with the interests of big business. And then even the lip service stops.

Think about the gains working people have won in this country. Everything that's ever been won has been through independent action, by not relying on either of the two capitalist parties. The suffrage movement, the labor movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement all show this. But when these movements have relied on the Democratic Party, they have bogged down.

The history of the women's movement's fight for the ERA proved that the notion of reforming the Democratic Party is obsolete. Remember the Nevada 10? We wined and cheered ourselves to death to elect these supposedly pro-ERA state legislators, not one of whom voted for the ERA once in office.

In fact, the majority of speakers here today have pointed out the treachery of the Democratic Party, but they fail to draw the only logical conclusion.

If NOW wants to make real change happen, it must break all ties with the Democratic and Republican parties. It must challenge the economic interests which those two parties represent.

I would like the Commission to take seriously the proposal that whether or not the Commission advocates forming a third party, it advise the National NOW Convention this July to not endorse, fund, or work for any candidates from either the Democratic or Republican parties, and to endorse only those candidates who truly represent the interests of women.

Luckily for the local chapter of NOW, there is such a candidate for mayor this November—me. I'll be seeking NOW's endorsement, and I'll need your help to get on the ballot.

You know, people talk about my campaign and my socialist ideas as being utopian. But the idea that you can reform the Democratic Party—that's utopian. Of course we need a new party. What we should be talking about is the nature and character of that party. Thank you. ■

... Supreme Court

(continued from page 1)

high rates of infant mortality, teen-age pregnancies, and sexually transmitted disease.

Nina Robbins, director of San Francisco Planned Parenthood, said 40 percent of the women served by Planned Parenthood receive their only healthcare there. "If they can't come to a family-planning clinic for their reproductive healthcare, then they won't get any healthcare."

Directors at some clinics said they would defy the regulations. Others said they would forego federal funding rather than abide by the regulations.

Title X funding is the largest source of federal funds for family planning, providing about \$200 million each year. Many clinics receive 50 percent or more of their funding from Title X. These clinics will be forced to set up completely separate facilities and staff for birth-control services and abortion counseling.

Roe v. Wade in danger

The ruling leaves little doubt that the court is set to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion for American women. No other interpretation can be given to this far-reaching, unprecedented setback.

The ruling also raises questions for other federally funded programs, including the National Endowment for the Arts, public defenders' programs, and schools. The decision gives free reign to the government to fund

only those programs it deems beneficial to the "public interest."

Perhaps more disturbing than the decision itself is the response of the leadership of the pro-choice and women's movements. Beth Davenport, executive director of the California Abortion Rights Action League, said the ruling proved women "can't count on the Supreme Court anymore to protect us."

Instead, she advocated electing pro-choice Democrats to office and lobbying Congress to pass freedom of choice legislation. "The only thing we can rely on is the power of our votes," she said.

But that power is extremely limited when it begins and ends at the voting booth. The women's movement is replete with examples of supposedly pro-ERA and pro-choice Democrats who, once elected to office, turned their backs on women's rights.

The strategy of electing "good" politicians and lobbying "bad" ones has been used by the women's movement for the past 15 years. And it has failed. How many more setbacks must women endure before the leadership of the movement recognizes that working within the Democratic Party is a dead end in protecting our rights?

During the 1930s, when the labor movement was struggling to gain decent living standards, Congress passed and courts upheld many laws infringing on the rights of workers to form unions and to strike. The leadership of the labor movement defied the laws and mobilized workers in massive demonstrations of solidarity and independent political action.

Today that strategy—which is the only strategy that can win—must be employed by



April 2, 1989, demonstration of 60,000 in San Francisco, Calif. NOW should organize another mass action to protest court ruling.

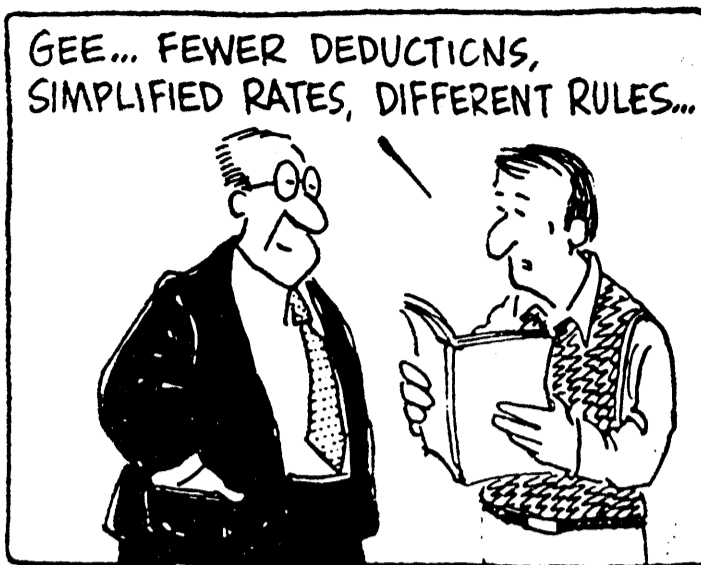
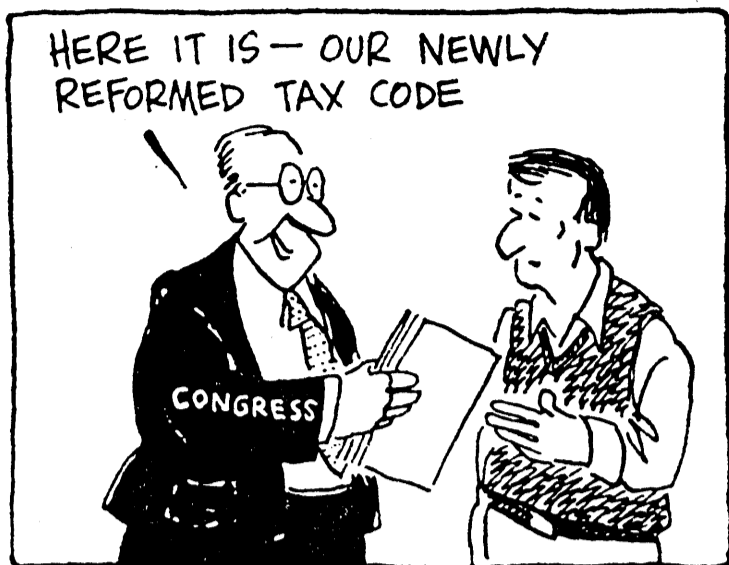
the leadership of the pro-choice and women's movements. The pro-choice and women's movement should use the May 24 decision to galvanize the overwhelmingly pro-choice sentiment in this country into a politically independent, mass movement.

For openers, the National Organization for Women, which is holding its national con-

ference in New York this July, should issue a call for another huge mobilization in the streets of Washington, D.C.

Mass action is necessary to defend the right to reproductive choice and to demand federal funding for all healthcare programs, including family-planning clinics that perform abortions. ■

How U.S. tax code robs from the poor to reward the rich



By HAYDEN PERRY

"Rape of the Taxpayer" by Philip M. Stern. Random House, New York, 1973. 483 pages.

After running as an anti-tax candidate for governor of California in 1967, Ronald Reagan promptly raised taxes upon assuming office. When citizens complained at the pain these new taxes were inflicting, Reagan declared: "Taxes are supposed to hurt."

Reagan spoke as one who was supposedly suffering the pain along with all the other Californians. Then an enterprising graduate student checked the public records and found that the Reagans had paid no income tax the previous year. Their income ran into six figures.

Embarrassed by the disclosure, Reagan mumbled something about "suffering some business losses." But he did not explain how a wealthy man could escape the tax that almost every wage earner had to pay.

Maybe Reagan read "Rape of the Taxpayer" before filing his return. It can be used by the wealthy as a "how to" book describing intricate schemes for keeping millions of dollars out of the reach of the tax collector.

But this was not the intent of the author, Philip Stern. High-priced tax advisors already know all this, and are probably offering additional tax avoidance scams to their millionaire clients.

"Rape of the Taxpayer" is aimed at the American public, who have to pay the taxes the millionaires escape. Philip Stern is a supporter of free enterprise, but he is outraged at a tax code that robs the poor to reward the rich. He believes it weakens people's faith in the system.

This book was published in 1973. Since then, several tax loopholes have been closed. But tax favors for the rich have continued through both Democratic and Republican party administrations.

The income tax rate for the higher income brackets has been lowered from 70 percent in 1973 to 28 percent in 1989. Despite much-heralded "tax reforms," numerous tax shelters remain to preserve the millionaires' capital and make tax accountants rich.

Municipal bonds for the wealthy

Perhaps the simplest tax avoidance plan was followed by the late Mrs. Horace Dodge,

who inherited \$100 million from her auto tycoon husband. She and her tax advisers put the entire bundle in state and municipal bonds paying an average interest rate of five percent.

This gave Mrs. Dodge an income of \$5 million a year for the rest of her life. On all these millions she did not pay a penny of income tax. She had been careful to invest in municipal bonds that were exempt from federal taxes.

The right of states and municipalities to issue such bonds was decreed by Congress in 1913 when the first federal income-tax law was passed. It was intended to soften the states' opposition and enable them to sell their bonds at lower interest rates.

Only the wealthy buy these bonds. Although municipal bonds pay relatively low dividends, a person in a high tax bracket will come out ahead when the tax saving is factored in.

Corporations can also escape taxes this way. In 1971, the Bank of America owned \$3 billion worth of municipals and enjoyed a tax-free income of \$150 million. In that year, the government lost \$2.5 billion in potential revenue.

The capital gains trick

Probably the favorite tax-avoidance scam has been the capital gains tax. Capital gains are the profit investors make when they sell stocks or other property at a higher price than they paid. Income from this source is taxed at a lower rate than ordinary income.

At the time this book was written, the highest rate on ordinary income was 70 percent. The profit gained from the increased value of real estate or stocks was taxed a maximum of 50 percent. The first \$50,000 of profit was tax-free.

Naturally, the wealthy try to convert most of their income into capital gains. Top executives prefer an option to buy company stock at a set price, rather than getting a salary increase or cash bonus. When the stock rises in price, the executive makes a substantial profit that is taxed at the lower capital gains rate.

There are plenty of sharp operators ready to steer the wealthy into lucrative tax shelters developed under the capital gains law. One offered tax avoiders a chance to "rent a cow." These cows are in herds roaming the western ranges. When the creatures are fattened up and sold, the profit is treated as cap-

ital gains rather than ordinary income.

Inventive tax consultants have found ways to make timber, apartment buildings, and oil wells yield capital gains. The ruling rich flock into these shelters, often seriously dis-

Putting company headquarters in foreign countries with lenient tax laws can save multi-nationals millions in American taxes.

torting the economy. They put up large office buildings simply to profit from depreciation tax allowances, not because more office space is needed. Many of these buildings stand vacant.

Government's sympathy for the rich

President Bush is much in favor of the capital gains loophole. It encourages new investment, he says. But even many conservative economists dispute this.

Bush is also in favor of lowering the maximum income tax rate, which also affects the tax saving through capital gains. When Congress set the maximum income tax at 28 percent, they also pegged the capital gains tax at 28 percent. This effectively wipes out the capital gains loophole.

Bush, however, will not let the issue die. He is pressuring Congress to lower the rate to 19 percent. Bush's intense concentration on restoring the capital gains tax advantage has been headlined as "Bush's Tax Fetish" in the magazine, *U.S. News and World Report*.

The editors say they don't understand why an issue with so little economic effect has "hung around so long and bothered everybody so much." The editors should understand that the super-rich are hurting and their man in the White House is striving to ease their pain.

This is not the only tax loophole available to millionaires and corporations. The worldwide nature of modern business presents many ways to shelter income overseas. Putting company headquarters in foreign countries with lenient tax laws can save multi-nationals millions in American taxes.

Poor countries welcome the revenue such corporate "guests" produce. They don't even question why the Caribbean headquarters of a giant multi-national corporation may consist of little more than a mail box and a part-time employee to collect the mail.

U.S. tax authorities have been snooping around the better known tax havens, such as the Cayman Islands. Consequently, some corporate giants have moved their overseas "headquarters" to more remote locations. The jungle island of New Hebrides, in the South Pacific, has become a favorite venue for some large tax avoiders recently.

Stern says, "When you enter the realm of international tax manipulation, you step into a realm that is about as real as a Hollywood movie set." Corporations that exist only on paper will sell assets they possess for only a few minutes to a company that will pay inflated prices to establish a tax loss.

But the loss exists only in the papers submitted to the tax collector. All these entities are part of a single multi-national, and the "sales" are internal paper shuffles.

Stern cites an extreme case of this nature in which a Canadian mine, operated by U.S. Gypsum Canadian, loaded gypsum rock into a ship. As the rock fell from the conveyor, it left Canadian jurisdiction. At that instant it was bought by a paper corporation, U.S. Gypsum Export. Finally, as it landed in the hold of the vessel, it was sold to a third business, U.S. Gypsum, Inc.

Thanks to arcane international tax laws passed by Congress, this fleeting purchase and sale of the rock—while it was in mid-air—enabled all three "corporations," (really one multi-national), to escape \$300,000 in taxes in one year.

Special laws for "special" people

Wealthy tax avoiders can only admire the financial gymnastics U.S. Gypsum performed, but many would prefer to be granted a personal exemption by Congress. This has been done frequently through special clauses in tax bills.

Movie Mogul Louis B. Mayer saved \$2 million in taxes through such a clause that never mentioned his name. It granted tax exemptions to anyone who engaged in a certain industry in a certain period, and made certain investments, in a certain manner, etc. It happened that only Louis B. Mayer met all these qualifications and enjoyed the tax breaks.

Fourteen such clauses were inserted in a tax bill in 1969. While naming no one, the clauses saved Lockheed \$14 million and McDonnell Douglas \$6.5 million.

Of course, these corporations and individuals have to make an investment to get these tax breaks. Many thousands of dollars are invested in greedy and venal Congressmen and Senators.

Stern asks a cogent question: "Why do the wealthy few win out over the un-rich many?" Among the reasons he lists are the millions it takes to get elected. Only the wealthy can finance, and thus buy, members of Congress.

Stern also notes that the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee write all tax bills. Reform-minded Congressmen are screened off these committees.

This means only a score of people have to be reached to influence tax legislation. The ultra-secrecy under which these committees operate makes it easy to slip in special clauses for favored clients. The arcane legal language in which tax laws are written make it easy for an outrageous injustice to pass unnoticed.

But the most fundamental reason for tax rip-offs of working people is the absence of any labor representatives in the halls of Congress. This leaves all legislation in the hands of men and women committed to the continuation of an exploitative society.

So long as this situation prevails, the wealthy will never tax themselves—however loudly they cry for sacrifices by other Americans.

The more thoughtful among the ruling rich should ponder European history. It was the refusal of the French nobility to submit to taxation that led to the French revolution. This resulted in the guillotine and all kinds of other "unpleasantness" for the tax avoiders of that day.

Teamsters tops face strong challenge from reform forces

By HAL MERCER

On June 24-28, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) will hold its convention at a non-union hotel in Orlando, Fla. But this convention, unlike the rubber-stamp affairs in the past, promises to be indicative of a new relationship of forces in the 1.6 million-member union.

What is new is that the bureaucracy is losing its stranglehold on the union. Reform forces are gathering steam in the run-up to the convention, which will nominate candidates for the first-ever general election of the union's top officers in December 1991.

The convention will also consider amendments to the union's constitution, in particular, a provision to institutionalize the membership's right to vote for international officers and convention delegates.

In March 1989, top officials agreed to a U.S. Justice Department consent order to get the government to drop criminal charges, as well as its plans to use the Racketeer-Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) to place the entire union under a trusteeship.

This deal provided for limited government intervention to rid the union of mob influence and to organize the first direct membership elections of both convention delegates and International officers.

Since that agreement, the IBT has spent

\$12 million to fight the consent order, especially the right-to-vote provision, but has lost all 42 cases. Many officials have been charged with corruption by a government investigations officer, and have been removed or forced to resign.

The Ron Carey campaign

In September 1989, Ron Carey (Local 804 president for 23 years) announced his candidacy for the IBT presidency. He was endorsed that November by the 10,000-member rank-and-file group, Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU).

Carey is opposed to government involvement in the union. But he is taking advantage of the consent order's democratic opening, which has made his campaign possible.

The Carey/TDU forces have done remarkably well. In a national effort, Carey has secured 100,000 signatures on nominating petitions, and contested 152 (out of a possible 638) elections for convention delegates. As of April 20, he had 242 (or 12 percent) of the delegates pledged to his slate.

Nearly all of the remaining delegates claim to be uncommitted. Only the support of five percent of the delegates is required for nomination. It is estimated that more Teamsters know Carey's name than know those of R.V. Durham and Walter Shea, the major candidates of the bureaucracy.

Moreover, the bureaucracy is in disarray.

The discredited incumbent president, McCarthy, is retiring. His hand-picked successor, R.V. Durham, has been distancing himself from McCarthy in order to pose as a reformer. But he has his own sell-out record. As Freight Director, he negotiated the National Master Freight Agreement (NMFA), which deepens the concessions made over the last three contracts.

Working Teamsters were clearly unhappy with Durham's proposal to vote for the Master Freight Agreement. But it passed, because the members did not see a way forward and (given their current leadership) feared strike action.

The Carey slate is offering a fighting alternative to the conservative business unionism that has dominated the IBT. It includes working Teamsters and TDU members on the slate—including Diana Kilmury, a Canadian and the first woman ever to run for the Executive Board (in a union with 300,000 women members!).

The slate has a record of mobilizing the ranks against concessionary bargaining, against corruption, and of working for the members—and it favors aggressive organizing. But it is less than clear on political action.

The Teamsters are facing an economic crisis in trucking and other industries together with a long-term decline in real wages and

healthcare benefits. The national master agreements are unraveling. Multi-tiered wage structures divide the ranks. The bosses are pleading poverty, demanding more concessions and diverting work to non-union divisions.

A new leadership is needed

There is increased competition from the expanding non-union sector. The union has already lost 600,000 members in recent years. A new leadership is needed that is willing to organize the ranks to confront these challenges.

There is also the difficult problem of government intervention, especially in the absence of a mobilized membership. TDU and Carey have the ability and the moral authority to fight against government anti-union actions, but this may be a difficult question for this broad rank-and-file movement to act decisively on.

However, there is understanding that government intervention is dangerous and never impartial.

The government has demonstrated its anti-labor aims many times—from smashing the militant democratic Minneapolis Teamsters in 1942 to collaborating with the most corrupt mob-influenced elements (including Teamster presidents from Frank Fitzsimmons to Jackie Presser).

For example, the government official supervising the December elections recently ruled that Carey and TDU violated campaign contribution rules. He ordered the reform movement to repay \$9000 of what he considered to be improper contributions.

While taking advantage of every democratic opening to mobilize the ranks, the reform movement needs to be wary of the bosses' government.

GE, Westinghouse workers discuss negotiations strategy

The following excerpts are reprinted from the May 1991 issue of *Our Voice*, the newsletter of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 565 at Westinghouse in San Jose, Calif.

Bill Lamer, president of the local, and Jesse Wallace, chairman of the executive board, wrote the article. They attended the Erie, Pa., meeting as representatives of their local. The high point of the meeting was a rally attended by over 2000 workers and their supporters.

Contracts covering General Electric and Westinghouse workers in more than two dozen plants in the United States expire at the end of June through August.

The discussion among GE and Westinghouse workers are a reflection of broader sentiments among working people today, as expressed in the recent one-day strike by rail workers and the ferment among airline and other workers opposed to concessions.

The editors of *Socialist Action* believe that the events reported below reflect a growing consciousness that official union policy has failed and that a return to the class-struggle methods of the 1930s is necessary to halt and reverse labor's retreat.

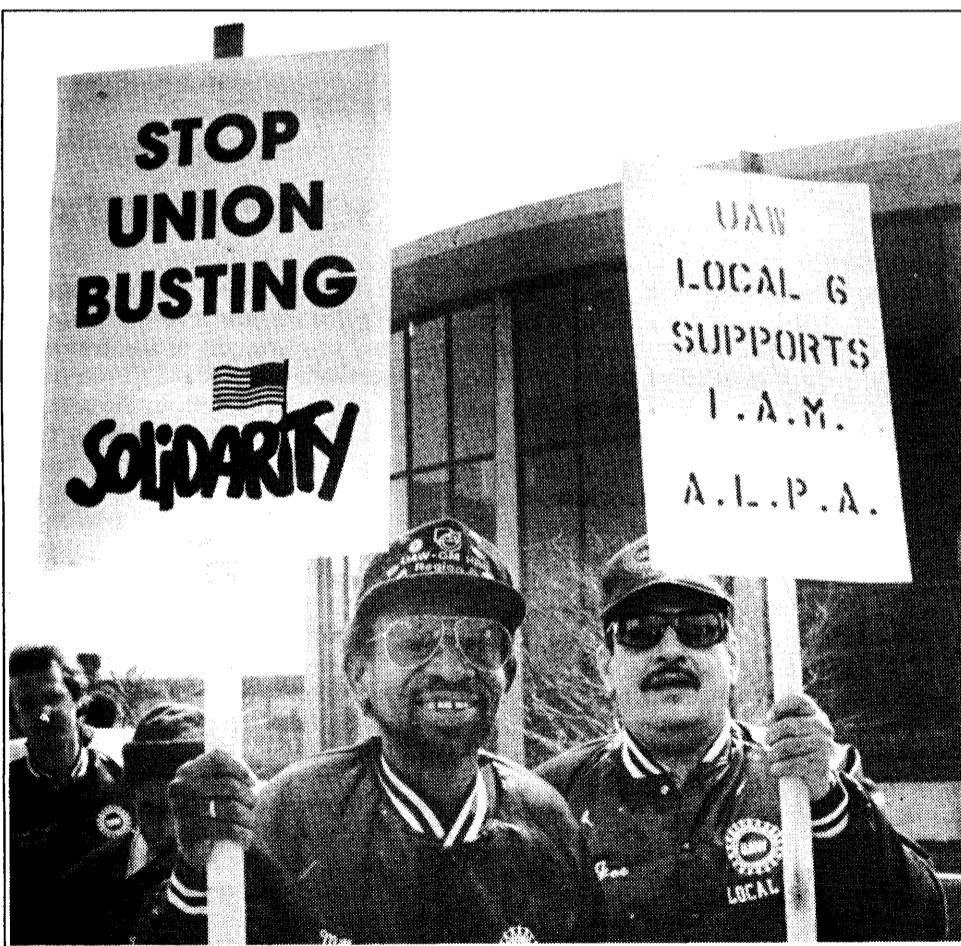
Copies of this issue of *Our Voice* can be obtained by writing to Local 565, 2101 Almaden Road, San Jose, CA 95125.—the editors.

On Saturday, April 20, in Erie, Pa., another step was taken on the national level to unify and strengthen the local unions at GE and Westinghouse in preparation for this year's, as well as future, contract negotiations. The host local was United Electrical Workers (UE) 506.

This gathering was marked by the attendance of locals that had not attended previous meetings, and most significantly the participation of International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) president and chairman of the Coordinating Bargaining Committee (CBC), Bill Bywater. In addition, two national figures from the UE were present, General Secretary-Treasurer Amy Newell and Steve Tormey, who heads UE's Conference Board. All three spoke at the rally.

The meaning of the locally organized unity movement is in the fact that over the past three contracts the CBC members have suffered a steady decline in their living standards while profits went up and up. It was obvious to local leaders as well as to the members that an alternative was necessary to the concession orientation that the employers were successfully imposing on union members.

What was needed to overcome this situation was the solidarity of the local unions



Machinists & Electrical workers will present united front to bosses.

and the involvement of the membership—nationwide—in the attempt to pressure the employers to provide a decent contract, one that increases our standard of living. The local leaders from different parts of the country embarked on a course of action that led to the formation of this historic unity movement, which is still growing.

New policy required

With the building of solidarity and the mobilization of the members came the recognition that the policy of viewing the union and the corporations as "partners" had to be scrapped if any progress was to be made at all.

The degree to which the companies were successful in propagating the myth of a

"partnership" between the workers and themselves facilitated lowering our living standard and dividing and demoralizing our respective memberships.

It was further recognized that in order to restore our memberships confidence in their unions and make solidarity real, not a hollow slogan, an alternative policy was needed—one that takes the interests of the members as the union's only concern plus the mobilization of the members as our most effective weapon in our defense.

After all, the employers have no illusion that we are in a partnership. Their only concern is higher profits at our expense.

It was correctly understood that once the leadership refused to subordinate the members interests to those of the employer, we

advance and make the gains our members need and deserve. More organizing is needed to involve all of the unions from bottom to top in our common struggle. We have a way to go yet but we are on the right track...

We think that what really brought Brother Bywater out was the fact that we have begun organizing with some effect. This put pressure on the CBC leaders to respond to our repeated invitations. But let's not forget it will take a whole lot more organizing before we are all together. We can not stop here! We can be sure the employers will not stop in their efforts to reduce our living standard and maximize profits...

More needs to be done

What we need to do from now on is educate and explain to our members that our time is coming and we need to be prepared...

There will be a fight back. Just as we are organizing ourselves now, more workers will turn to their unions as the only means for an organized and militant defense of our living standard. More and more people are saying, "Enough is enough!" And they are right. We have to be organized to defend ourselves—no one else will do it for us.

What we can do now is form something like committees of correspondence between Westinghouse and GE locals. This could take the form of a national CBC (inter-union) newspaper where we can maintain regular contact. Or we could open the pages of our respective papers to each other to have a dialogue on how to better organize ourselves.

The historic goal of the union movement is simple and clear: a higher standard of living, better working conditions, a COLA that keeps us ahead of inflation, no-cost healthcare and a secure future in our retirement of all workers, whether organized in unions or not.

None of this will come about by thinking that we are just not strong enough to defend ourselves and therefore we must rely on friendly politicians for our salvation. What a cruel joke! With a fighting and determined union leadership and membership we can stand up to the bosses and win. And that is just what we intend to do.

Castro calls on Cuban youth to defend socialism:

'We are a satellite to principles, a satellite to ideas, a satellite to an ideal'



Pedro Beruvides/GRANMA

The following speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro was delivered on April 4, 1991, at a celebration of the 29th anniversary of the Cuban Young Communist League (UJC) and the 30th anniversary of the Jose Marti Pioneer Organization. Some 400,000 young people filled Revolution Square in Havana for the occasion.

The speech, reprinted from the April 14 issue of the English-language *Granma International*, has been slightly edited for reasons of space.

Those meeting here are following in the footsteps of those who in 1868 made up the ranks of our Liberation Army, initiating our struggles for independence; those who, in 1895, under Marti's leadership, continued the battle; those who throughout the life of the subjugated republic fought in the streets together with Mella, Trejo, and so many of our young heroes.

You are like those who fought against Machado's tyranny, those who fought against Batista's tyranny, those who swelled the ranks of our Rebel Army.

You are like those who, when most of you were not even born yet, joined the Revolutionary National Militia, joined the ranks of our Revolutionary Armed Forces and fought at the Bay of Pigs—the 30th anniversary of which we are celebrating this month.

You are following in the footsteps of those who fought [the counterrevolutionary bands] in the Escambray Mountains, of those who lived through those terrible, difficult days of the Missile Crisis with an unsurpassable fortitude.

You are like those who accompanied Che in his liberation struggles and in his death, like those who performed extraordinary feats of internationalism, you are like those—some of you are those—who fought over an almost 15-year period in the People's Republic of Angola; those in Cuito Cuanavale who said that it would never fall into enemy hands, those who advanced toward the southwest, those who defeated the invading forces, those who, on the battlefield, wrote glorious pages that can never be erased.

You are the ones who have known how to keep the flag of the Revolution flying high, the ones who have known how to maintain the nation's security and independence. You are the ones who today are accomplishing great feats in the construction and agriculture contingents, and in the factories, creating, innovating, faced with the material difficulties which we are suffering from today.

You are the ones who, in any field, in those of culture and of art, enrich the spiritual life of our people. You are the ones in the research centers who startle our friends

and enemies with the extraordinary successes being achieved.

Socialism's swan song?

But if I'm going to say something about this generation of young people, about this generation of students, it is that at perhaps the most difficult moment in the history of the Cuban Revolution, at the most difficult moment in our nation's history, at the most difficult moment for the international revolutionary movement, at the most difficult moment for socialism, when imperialism is drunk with euphoria, when capitalism is congratulating itself, when the triumphalism of the reactionaries is everywhere, when many who used to defend the ideas of socialism have collapsed, when today there is so much talk about the market economy (and many don't even know what a market economy is, that it is none other than capitalism), when many people don't even want to hear the word "socialism," when we are not just the only socialist country in a good part of the world, when some people think that we are listening to socialism's swan song, our people, our workers, our young people and our students raise the ideas of revolution and socialism up higher than ever and with greater morale than ever.

Many wonder why the Revolution is so strong, why there is such a close relationship between the Party and the people, why there is such a strong affinity between the socialist system and young people, why there is such a strong affinity between the Revolution and young people, between the Revolution and students—the enemy would give so much to be able to confuse our people, to confuse our workers, to confuse our young people and our students.

The reason is quite simple: this Revolution is the Revolution of our people; it is the Revolution of our young people; it is the Revolution of our students. We made it together. We defend it together. We are one and the same and we will never stop being so.

For this reason, in recent days, we have been tossing around an idea for every citizen, for every combatant, for every young person, for every student, when we exhort them to think that they are the Revolution, they are the nation, they are the honor and dignity of the nation, that they are nation's soldiers.

The Revolution has never betrayed its flag, has never betrayed its ideals, has never betrayed its principles, the Revolution has never betrayed itself. This is the secret of our unity, of the total identification of the Revolution with the people, and especially with young people and students.

Cuba said "No!"

We have to add some additional concepts to this idea. We have just gone through the

experience of the Persian Gulf War; we have just seen the use of sophisticated weapons, the most modern armaments used by the United States against any country. As I have explained before, that country's leaders made enormous mistakes, it's not necessary to repeat that again, but a solution could have been found to the conflict without resorting to war.

However, the United States wanted to impose a war, it wanted to use its new weapons, to try them out, it wanted to sow terror throughout the world, it wanted to show that it owns the world, to act like the masters of the world.

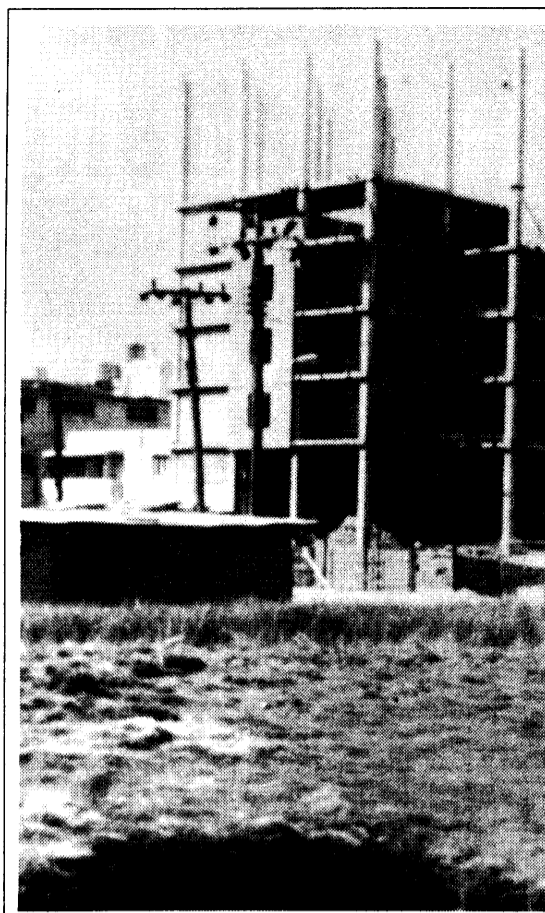
Just today another resolution was approved in the UN Security Council, a monstrous, unfair resolution which violates the Security Council's own rules, violates the principles of the UN as a whole, although, to tell the truth, the UN Security Council has become a double instrument of U.S. policy.

Naturally, there was one country that said "No," as it has done many times in the Security Council. This country said "No" to the resolution, as it said "No" to the war declared on Jan. 15 of this year.

We have witnessed the phenomenon of an institution created for peace authorizing war, and authorizing the most powerful imperialist country on earth to wage war. For this reason, Cuba today said "No". Two other countries abstained.

We have been consistent right to the end in our conduct in the UN, although we didn't hesitate to condemn the invasion and annexation of Kuwait, the taking of hostages, and all those other things which are, in our judgment, immoral and incompatible with international law. However, within that forum we knew how to maintain an attitude unprecedented for its honor, dignity, and spirit of consistency.

We witnessed that war. In that war, everything that we knew would happen happened;



we had even warned the Iraqi leaders about that.

The United States had no interest in peace, because it wanted to try out its weapons, it wanted to sow terror throughout the world, it wanted to frighten everybody. I don't know how many people it did frighten, but I do know that it didn't frighten any of us, I know that it didn't frighten nor could it ever frighten Cuban revolutionaries.

"The Revolution is the people"

Because of this, I said to the students on March 13 that the Revolution is not any single one of us, the Revolution is not me, the Revolution is not the members of the Political Bureau, the Revolution is not the members of the UJC National Committee, the Revolution is not the leaders. The Revolution is the people, the Revolution is each one of us. I wanted to say and I hope many of you have understood me—now I'm saying it more clearly—that any one of us

Some questions cannot be avoided

Castro's speech was addressed particularly to the new generation of revolutionary youth coming of age in an especially difficult time for the Cuban revolution. Fidel alluded both to the arrogance of U.S. imperialism in the wake of its victory in the Gulf war and to grave problems of supply created by the crises of the East European and Soviet regimes.

In the face of the collapse of the "socialist camp," Fidel stressed that the Cuban regime's independent devotion to its principles was proved by its determination to continue to strive for socialism and stand up to the pressures of seemingly triumphant capitalism and imperialism.

This courageous stance highlights the difference of the Cuban revolution from the other states that belonged to the so-called socialist bloc. The regime in Cuba is based on a genuine revolution, led by sincere revolutionists. It has a perspective of worldwide struggle against imperialism.

The bureaucratic leaderships of the other Stalinized "socialist" states are a result of a partial counterrevolution in the Soviet Union fostered by the economic difficulties of an isolated revolution. As the masses were crushed by deprivation, they managed to usurp power in the name of defending the revolution. Mainly interested in exploiting their usurped positions, they always have aimed for a deal with the imperialists. This fundamental reality has been made absolutely clear in the present circumstances, and the Cubans have to confront the consequences of it.

Because the Stalinists ruled as usurpers of anticapitalist revolution, the Eastern

Bloc bureaucrats have had to defend their base against the imperialists, sometimes being carried further than they intended. Such conflicts made it possible for the Cuban Revolution to receive material aid from the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc nations.

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Indeed, answers to these questions—in particular, how to build workers' democracy—are essential to solving the increasing difficulties revolutionary Cuba faces.—the editors

Socialism: principles, elite to an ideal'

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could die a natural death or in war.

Now that we're talking about war, now that the United States has used its sophisticated weapons, I would like to say that in the case of aggression against our country, the Political Bureau could disappear, and I ask you: if the Political Bureau disappeared, would the Revolution disappear? (Shouts of "No!")

A command post could disappear, the General Staff of the army or of the armed forces could disappear in a war, but does this mean that the soldiers would stop fighting? (Shouts of "No!")

Any command post, any leadership, any leader or group of leaders could disappear in a war, but what couldn't disappear is the Revolution. As long as one combatant remains and resists, the Revolution will continue to exist.

When a people is imbued with these ideas, when a people is convinced of these ideas, that people is invincible, and no weapons, no matter how sophisticated, can conquer them. If that principle is inculcated in the heart of each and every person, every man and woman, every compatriot, every soldier, every militia member, every worker, every young person, every student, the Revolution is invincible. The Revolution is invincible!

For this reason, these concepts are necessary as part of our people's political and ideological preparation. We have already said "Patria o Muerte!" and we have to be consistent with this idea, which wasn't conceived by us. It was conceived by our first freedom fighters and has been the essence of our patriotic spirit, the spirit of struggle that our nation has had throughout its history. The United States has good reason to fear such a people.

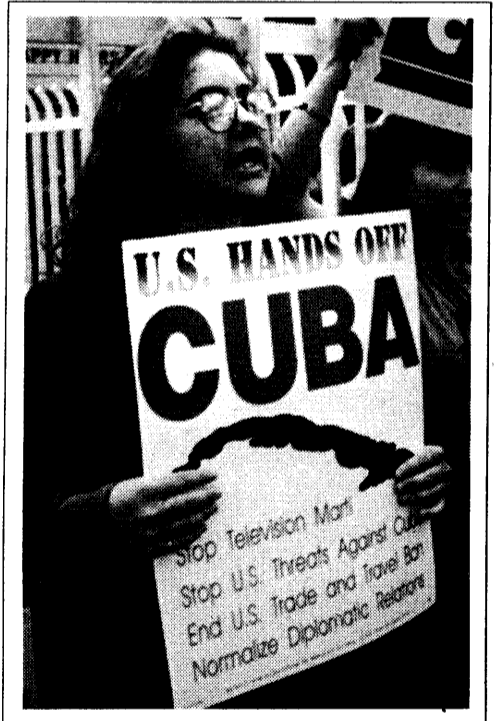
"We won't return to the past!"

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The United States is dreaming that these problems will bring back capitalism to Cuba; it is dreaming that all our land will again become private property, that our factories will become private property, that our means of production will become private property.

It is dreaming that perhaps our capital and our cities will once again be teeming with brothels, gambling dens, casinos, barefoot children, beggars. It dreams that perhaps the nation can grow used to having thousands or millions of jobless people. It can see the

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Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

country filled again with illiterates, without schools, without technological institutes, without the health system which is now considered one of the best in the world.

It has the absurd and crazy idea that our country will return to the past—to a past of injustice, inequality, racial and sexual discrimination. It dreams that women can again become a sort of property in the heart of a society of classes. It is dreaming about these absurd things which perhaps the overwhelming majority of you never knew but nevertheless understand, sense, see.

In the rest of the capitalist world, it tries to seduce the peoples with its absurd consumer societies, in places where the riches stolen for centuries from the Third World accumulated. Capitalism hasn't created anything but sterile luxury and an incredible waste of the earth's natural resources, in order to create super-rich societies where, incidentally, not everybody is rich and there are many homeless people, beggars, and a lot of other evils.

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What capitalism has brought into the

world during centuries of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and exploitation are four billion human beings living in poverty—four billion human beings! Every day, 40,000 children die who could have been saved.

The worst kind of atrocities, the worst kind of humiliations, the worst kind of injustices, the worst kind of abuses, unhappiness, suffering, that's what capitalism has brought into the world. In addition, it has poisoned the seas, the rivers, the atmosphere.

I don't know what kind of capitalist or socialist experiences some people not precisely from the Third World lived through, but a Third World country like Cuba, which lived through all that, a country like ours which lived through centuries of colonialism, which lived through decades of U.S. domination, during which they committed in our country all sorts of abuses—once some U.S. sailors even desecrated the sacred statue of Jose Marti in Havana's Central Park, in what was one more expression of their insolence and arrogance and at a time when they weren't as unilaterally powerful as they are today; a country like ours, which lived through so much horror, will never resign itself to that past, a people like ours, who learned the meaning of freedom, who for the first time in history learned the meaning of independence, who for the first time in history knew the meaning of national dignity and will never go back to capitalism, will never go back to being a U.S. possession and colony.

Preparing for difficulties ahead

That's what you are expressing on a day like today in a rally like this—that idea that there won't be a return to the past, that idea that the United States will never again become the master of our sacred nation. That's why we must be ready to meet all the difficulties and make all the sacrifices.

No one can imagine the difficulties we must confront and how the country has managed to get around those difficulties so that no one is thrown into the street, so that no one is left without an income, so that no child is left without a school, so that not a sick man or woman is left without a doctor.

I'm absolutely certain that no other coun-

try in the world could have confronted the difficulties as we are confronting them but, we must be prepared to confront even greater difficulties. Yes!

And we ought to tell the United States: stop your illusions, stop day-dreaming, for if we are brave enough to die and shed our blood we'll also have the courage to endure all the material suffering that may be necessary to save the Revolution, we'll have the courage to endure the shortages that may be necessary to save the Revolution.

Capitalism and imperialism have nothing to offer to revolutionary peoples.

You are already witnessing what those countries which used to call themselves socialist are now going through—millions of unemployed, inequality, injustice. They were offered miracles and thought that by the next day they would be living better than the bourgeoisie in Paris, and what they got instead is the other side of the coin.

Capitalism and imperialism have nothing to offer the peoples but humiliation, inequality, exploitation, the law of the jungle. And we don't want inequality, we don't want exploitation, we don't want the law of the jungle, we want man to be the brother of man rather than the predator of man.

That is why our fighting spirit, our willingness to sacrifice our heroism must be an integral one.

Today we still have many things available and we're making big efforts, getting ready for the moment when more things may be in short supply, what to do if we should have less fuel. And we're training hundreds of thousands of oxen, in case it should become necessary to plow the land and prepare the land with oxen if we don't have enough fuel for the tractors. We're distributing hundreds of thousands of bicycles among the population and if we have time, we'll distribute millions, so that people can ride to work on a bike. In other words, we're getting ready for greater difficulties.

That's why the principle of "I am the nation, I am the Revolution, I am the dignity of the country, I am the honor of the country, I am the army of the country," must be applied in all aspects, including economic aspects. We have a very great responsibility

(continued on page 11)

U.S. Hands Off Cuba!

In a May 20 radio address marking the 89th anniversary of Cuban independence, President Bush restated some of imperialism's conditions for "improved relations with Cuba."

Bush declared: "Ninety-nine percent of the people of this hemisphere live either in a democracy or a country that is on the road to democracy, [but] one percent live under the hemisphere's last dictator, Fidel Castro." He went on to demand, among other things, that Cuba hold "free and fair elections under international supervision."

The hypocrisy of this spurious portrayal of democracy in this hemisphere is contradicted by a mountain of facts. Among them is the practical inability of the American people to see and hear the point of view of socialists and other opponents of capitalist race, sex, and class injustice right here in the United States.

It is an open secret that even so much as getting a place on the ballot for socialists to challenge Mr. Bush and his Democratic counterpart in a "free and fair election" is practically impossible.

Perhaps Bush might appear more sincere if he called for the abolition of these profoundly undemocratic requirements for gaining a place on the ballot and tore down the impenetrable wall blocking access by socialists to American radio, television, and printed media.

Coming in the aftermath of the arrogant demonstration of American military power in the Persian Gulf, Bush's cynical demand for Castro to reinstitute the system of capitalist "democracy" that guaranteed rule by the capitalist minority in pre-revolutionary Cuba, has ominous implications.

The Cuban Revolution has from the beginning been directed in the first place against American imperialist domination and in the second place against Cuban cap-

italism.

On Jan. 1, 1959, the Cuban economy was intimately linked with that of the United States. Trade relations between the two countries was unilaterally severed by the U.S. government when the revolutionary Castroist leadership refused to continue to kowtow to American dictates.

The Stalinist Soviet government, for its own reasons, stepped in to fill the breach. The Soviet bloc and Cuba thereafter developed equitable trade relations. Without this aid, the obstacles to Cuba's efforts to overcome its imperialist-imposed economic backwardness might have been insurmountable.

Now, with the decision of the Stalinist rulers of the Eastern bloc to attempt to restore capitalism and integrate their economies into the world capitalist market, cooperative trade relations with Cuba is being pushed into last place.

But the determination of the Cuban people to maintain their course toward socialism—in the face of these new imperialist-inspired hardships—constitutes a disturbing "fly in the ointment" for U.S. and world capitalism.

Castro's speech on this page is a remarkable declaration of confidence in the future of world socialism. It presents, by the same token, a potentially grave threat to the future of President Bush's New World Order. This threat will assume mammoth proportions when the impending economic crisis of world capitalism breaks out of control.

Bush's speech should not be seen as a ritualistic observation of an historic event, but as a signal of unremitting and increasing hostility to the Cuban working people and their revolution. True democrats must be on guard against new violations of this island nation's democratic rights. Hands off Cuba!—the editors

Western capitalists back Gorbachev against workers



Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev—an alliance against strikers.

By GERRY FOLEY

As the crisis of bureaucratic rule in the USSR deepens, Western capitalist intervention in it is becoming more evident. After hailing the April 23 deal between Gorbachev and Yeltsin ("the first hopeful sign in months that radical reform can be revived"), *The New York Times* editors saw Gorbachev's late May appeal for massive Western aid as still more encouraging.

In an editorial on May 24, they wrote: "The fierce Soviet struggle over reform presents a precious opportunity for President Bush. As Moscow teeters on the verge of transformation, concerted Western action might be enough to tip the political balance toward the reformers."

The New York Times, which reflects the views of the U.S. foreign policy establishment, cited a series of conditions for bailing out perestroika. The first was the window dressing—"progress toward pluralism ... based on the rule of law and fundamental freedoms." Then it got down to the nitty-gritty—"slashing subsidies for inefficient enterprises," "quick decontrol of prices," "a convertible ruble, allowing enterprises engaged in trade to buy and sell foreign exchange at fair market value," and "private property" of factories and stores.

Capitalists back Gorbachev

One of these points, "quick decontrol of prices," touched off a snowballing workers' rebellion in April that badly frightened the Soviet rulers. The Soviet CP organ *Pravda* warned of the growth of "unconstitutional bodies," that is, strike committees assuming governmental functions. For the first time, there was a development toward a general strike throughout the Soviet Union.

The Gorbachev-Yeltsin accord was a desperate move to defuse this process. *The New York Times* editors, and thus the more enlightened section of U.S. capital at least, came out clearly behind the deal, which notably included the threat of anti-strike measures. Thus, the communiqué issued by the parties to the agreement stipulated:

"In order to stabilize the situation in the country's economy, the participants in the meeting declared their support for a special work regime in the basic industries, in the enterprises producing necessities, and in rail transport.

"If need be, the governmental bodies of the republics will take additional measures assuring the normal working of the national economy."

It is also notable that the conditions stipulated by *The New York Times* included nothing about respecting the aspirations of the oppressed nationalities in the USSR. Western credits were blocked at the time of the Moscow-sponsored attempted *coup d'état* in Lithuania.

In the May 24 *Times*, there also was an article reporting on the preparations for the summit of industrialized nations in July. It cited British officials organizing the event to the effect that the restoration of the credits frozen in January was now dependent on Gorbachev "making a breakthrough on economic transformation."

It seemed that Lithuania, which still faces all sorts of threats from Moscow, was quite forgotten, to say nothing of Armenia, where there has recently been very grave

intervention by Soviet forces. That is the index of the Western authorities' concern about national rights, and also of democratic rights in general, of which the former are an essential aspect.

Furthermore, the British officials said that an unblocking of these credits ("only a few billion dollars in agricultural loan guarantees and credits") was all Gorbachev could expect. "They said," the *Times* reported, "the summit participants and the international financial institutions they control showed little

Lithuania), in reality, the April workers' rebellion forced him to retreat somewhat from the economic policies the Western capitalists are urging on him.

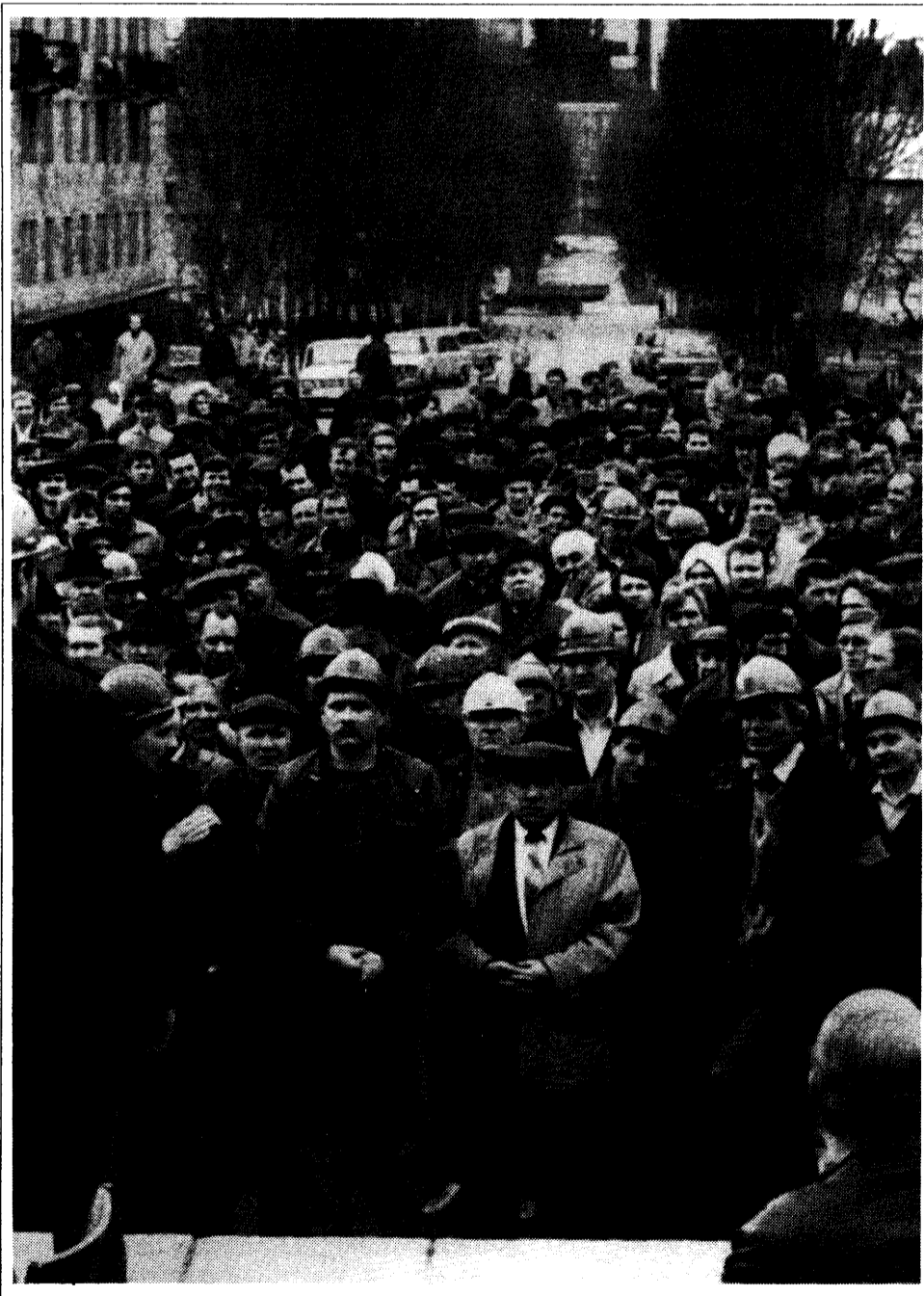
Workers push back market reform

The April 23 agreement thus pledged review of the price rises, compensation for price rises in some sensitive areas (such as children's goods and student cafeterias), and even promised cost-of-living raises and other forms of "compensation"—that is, subsidies.

The obstacle, therefore, to the marriage between Western capitalism and the bureaucracy represented by Gorbachev, which both so ardently desire, is the workers' protests against the capitalist restorationist measures that strike at their standard of living. The April rebellion and Western capitalist support for the Gorbachev-Yeltsin deal have helped to clarify what the actual lines of battle are in the Soviet Union.

In the May 3 issue of the Paris Russian-language weekly *Russkaya Mysl'*, the historian Aleksandr Nekrich noted:

"On April 19, in the discussion of the program for getting out of the crisis, the government's line was supported by the Union of Lease Holders and Entrepreneurs of the USSR, the Scientific-Industrial Union, the Association of Compatible Enterprises, the Association of Managers of Enterprises,



Soviet coal miners rally in Donetsk.

Der Spiegel

inclination to pledge large new amounts of aid."

Gorbachev badly needs Western credits to stave off rebellion against the effects of his economic policies. As *The New York Times* editorial noted, the Soviet GNP is expected to decline by a staggering 14.4 percent next year. Even larger declines in Poland, which has carried market reforms further, presage still worse to come.

Although the Western capitalist press sees Gorbachev now moving back to the path of reform (after a dalliance with neo-Stalinist reactionaries marked by the January events in

the Union of United Cooperatives and the Union of Small Enterprises."

One of the main demands of the miners in their first strike in 1989 was aimed against the cooperatives (which are really private businesses).

Yeltsin divides miners

Reportedly, Yeltsin has been able to convince the majority of the striking miners in the Russian republic to go back to work. That is not a surprise, since they had no alternative political leadership. This is the area also where the miners have the biggest illu-

sions about the advantages of the market. Even there, according to reports, Yeltsin was opposed by a minority.

There is a notable lack of information in the capitalist press about the situation in the coal fields after the April 23 deal. It will take some time to get a clear picture of what is happening there.

The Don basin, the other center of the strikes, is a more complex problem than the Russian republic fields. There the miners' movement has had less illusions about privatization, because the industry is less favorably placed to compete on the international market than the Russian republic mines. It is also developing in a more political atmosphere, among other things, because of the role of the Ukrainian national democratic movement.

The German magazine *Der Spiegel*, in its April 22 issue, reported a "revolutionary spirit" in the Don basin. It also reported the effect of the price rises on the local women: "The latest price rises gave many women the final push to join the miners. Women came from a window factory. They earn an average of 170 rubles a month. 'Now I have to pay 70 rubles for kid's shoes. That's crazy.' They rail against everyone—Communists, democrats, and nationalists. 'We don't need any of them. We need lower prices.'"

Opposition leaders fear masses

In this period, veteran dissident Vladimir Bukovsky was allowed to visit the Soviet Union. While anti-Communist, Bukovsky came from the working class. In the USSR, he was a fighter, speaking out early in defense of the oppressed nationalities. Some statements also show that he has read Marxist literature and learned from it, at least about the dynamics of revolution.

What struck Bukovsky was the gap between the attitude of the leaders of the "democratic opposition" and the ranks involved in the struggles. He was quoted as follows in the April 26 issue of *Russkaya Mysl'*:

"I went to the Moscow City Council [controlled by the democratic opposition]. It was amusing. I got an impression like John Reed [writer of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, a classic account of the October Revolution]. ... They were running around from Smolny to the Winter Palace, from one palace to another in Petrograd, and everywhere there was chatter, everywhere people were tired of fruitless debates, which in general had no relationship to the events."

Further on, he said: "What I felt was that our Moscow intelligentsia and all those parliamentarians are one thing, and the deeper layers are another. The latter have become heated to a white-hot intensity. You feel the heat, that a Chernobyl-like explosion is coming. And you can't understand why our intellectuals who have become deputies, don't have contact with those layers, do not understand them, fear them. And so, having to choose between these inflamed masses and the vestiges of the regime, they cling to the regime. Indeed, it's no accident that they keep talking about some 'iron hand.'"

Bukovsky went on to say that from the standpoint of Western experience he could not understand why an iron hand, or an undemocratic government, was needed to carry through harsh reforms. He pointed to what Margaret Thatcher could do in a parliamentary system.

In the first place, Bukovsky's hatred of Stalinism blinded him to the the social power workers hold in the USSR. Secondly, he failed to appreciate the extent of the sacrifices being demanded of the Soviet and East European peoples in the name of market reform. Cuts of up to 30 percent in the standard of living of workers have not been achieved anywhere without the threat of social explosion.

Anti-Communists like Bukovsky are probably misled also by the fact that the more the mass struggles grow and radicalizes in the Soviet Union, the greater the rejection of the idea of socialism is shown in the opinion polls.

This paradox is very revealing. The real obstacles to the capitalist restorationist policies of the bureaucracy are growing in tandem with an ideological rejection of socialism, which is identified with the bureaucracy's system. This is a glaring and therefore volatile contradiction. The Western powers' openly intervening to buttress Gorbachev will surely help to explode it. ■

Polish socialists launch newspaper, attack Walesa's reprivatization policy

The article reprinted below is an English-language version of the lead article from the first issue of *Dalej!* (*Forward!*), a monthly newspaper published in Poland. The editors explain that the paper is socialist, in the sense that "we see the possibility of solving the economic and social crisis through a struggle for a new order, one based on direct democracy and ongoing social control over the state and the economy."

"Our socialism," they write, "has nothing in common with the monstrous Stalinist caricature represented by 'actually existing socialism' under the rule of the Communist Party. It has nothing in common with the program of the Social Democrats, who accept capitalist exploitation and the market system, in which the economy is governed by the law of profit and not human need. "We are profoundly convinced that the interests of working people cannot be reconciled

with the previous Stalinist system or the capitalism that is threatening us. Recognition of this fact will enable working people to win in the struggles with the nomenklatura [bureaucracy] and the capitalists that are being waged today and that will sharpen tomorrow.

"An essential element in this," they continue, "is the political rebirth of the workers movement. Only an organized workers movement has the power to overthrow the rule of the nomenklatura and capital. The first step in this will be a return to the ideals of August 1980 [the emergence of Solidarnosc and the general strike to gain recognition of an independent union movement], and to the conception of a workers movement politically and organizationally independent from the government, from the nomenklatura, from the employers, from the Church, and all other forces outside the

workers movement..."

The editors state that they would also like their paper to take up causes that have not been given sufficient attention by the workers' movement. One of these is the situation of women.

"Women today," they write, "are the first victims of the belt tightening, of unemployment, of cutbacks in social services. They are being subjected to scandalous attempts to deprive them of fundamental rights and freedoms—above all the right of choice.

"The struggle against the oppression of women is becoming a fundamental part of the struggle for a just social order. *Dalej!* will therefore be a feminist publication."

"A second such cause," the editors state, "is the struggle of working people in other countries in the East and West, North, and South. ... So *Dalej!* will be an internationalist publication."

Capitalist restorationist policies have been carried further in Poland than in the other East European countries or the Soviet Union and to a considerable extent have been a model for such policies now favored by the bureaucratic rulers of all these countries.

In Poland, these policies are most identified with Balcerowicz. He was the economic czar of the first non-Communist government, which was headed by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and again is the economic czar of the government headed by Lech Walesa, who overwhelmed Mazowiecki in the recent presidential elections.

The unpopularity of the Mazowiecki government was underlined by the fact that a populist adventurer—Stanislaw Tyminski, who criticized the government's economic decisions—got a higher vote than its chief, Mazowiecki. Tyminski even took a lot of the working-class vote away from Walesa, the most prominent leader of the first independent working-class movement since the imposition of Stalinism.

The following article calls for a conscious political rejection of Balcerowicz and his policies and, by extension, other such policies in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The translation is by Socialist Action.

—the editors

We have a year of the Balcerowicz plan behind us. Its effects have been tragic. Balcerowicz has led our economy to ruin. Production has fallen about 30 percent. State factories have been closing or laying off workers. The productivity of labor has fallen drastically—about 20 percent.

The Balcerowicz plan has become a program for destroying our industry. And not just our industry. Agriculture has become unprofitable.

More private production and service enterprises are going bankrupt than new ones are being founded. All areas of the social infrastructure are drastically reducing the scope and quality of their services—education, health-care, social welfare. Virtually no municipal or cooperative housing is being built.

Every day our standard of living declines further. A few months ago, Balcerowicz bragged that inflation had been overcome. How does that look today? Everyone can see that inflation is raging again. Big price rises are coming one after the other, and wage increases are by no means keeping up with them. In recent months, many workers have seen a drop in their wages. And what are pensioners, single mothers, youth, and students supposed to do?

Balcerowicz's answer is, "You have to tighten your belts more." How much more? It can't be done! For more than a year, we have been the victims of his crazy plans for "marketization" and "privatization." These plans have brought us only destitution.

Profits before human needs

Through lowering the standard of living of the workers, through mass layoffs, the Polish enterprises are supposed to become more profitable. The share of wages in production costs are falling more and more, and unemployment is creating strong competition for jobs, so as to keep wages at a low level. If you don't like it, there is a line of people at the factory gate hoping to get your job.

The Balcerowicz plan represents a conscious plan for pauperizing the society. Its aim is clear—to increase the profitability of the enterprises (in other words, increase the exploitation of the workers). Then they can privatize the "reflated" profitable enterprises. Profits will be assured—not for us but for the new private owners recruited from the ranks of the *nomenklatura* and the layers of speculative business sharks, as well as for Western investors.



Polish auto workers protesting policies of Mazowiecki government.

'The Balcerowicz plan represents a conscious plan for pauperizing the society. Its aim is clear—to increase the profitability of the enterprises (in other words, increase the exploitation of the workers).'

The statements by ministers and their journalist stooges that the worsening of our standard of living is the result of objective causes, which cannot be avoided, is a total lie. The most demonstrative proof of these lies is the celebrated *popiwiek* [a punitive tax on enterprises that increase workers' wages]. This tax has been increased still more this year, and it does not at all arise from those "objective causes." It is the expression of an entire policy designed to keep wages down, to cut the real buying power of our wages.

Need workers' control

It is true that to a large extent we have a backward and inefficient economy, and that it needs restructuring. The question, however,

is how to accomplish that and at whose cost. For more than a year, Balcerowicz has been doing it at the expense of labor.

The necessary means for restructuring the Polish economy, however, can be found elsewhere—by trimming the state and economic bureaucracy; by taking money from the *nomenklatura* and the new-rich elite; by recovering the wealth that they have stolen from the society; by liquidating the bureaucrats' companies, which are parasites on our economy; by reducing arms spending; by doing away with the secret political police; by turning over the factories to self-management bodies and thereby increasing their efficiency; by eliminating the enormous waste of resources and labor caused by the present combination of bureaucratic planning and

free-market anarchy and by establishing a rational plan of economic development drawn up by a national council of workers' self-management; by defending Polish industry and agriculture through state control of foreign trade against the aggressive economic policy of the West; by stopping payments on the Polish [foreign] debt.

We can be sure that Balcerowicz will not take any of the steps mentioned above. He is simply blinded by his dogmatic vision of private capitalist property.

Balcerowicz must go!

We cannot suffer patiently any longer because the Polish economy is being run by a deluded fanatic, and moreover, a fanatic who three months ago lost any social mandate. The fact that only 18 percent of the voters—that is, barely 10 percent of the electorate—voted for Mazowiecki in the first round of the presidential elections means that the policy of the previous government was *rejected* by the society. The voters rejected its economic policy, and thereby the Balcerowicz plan.

Balcerowicz is back in government solely because of the pressure of the World Bank and the United States, as well as the arrogant stand of Walesa, who cynically ignored the will of those who voted for him.

Balcerowicz must go! And his economic plan must go with him. No more belt tightening! The Polish economy has to be restructured in the interests of the majority of society, above all so that *the economy serves people and not people serve the economy*.

In the longer term, this means socializing the economy, putting it under social control. The economy will serve us when we can decide ourselves, democratically, about the allocation of resources, the establishment of developmental priorities, about means for protecting the weaker and eliminating social inequalities.

Today, immediate demands are in the forefront. We have to protect ourselves against further pauperization. In the first instance, the trade-union movement, the workers' self-management councils, and all of labor have to fight for:

- eliminating the punitive tax on wage increases
- full, automatic cost-of-living increases
- an end to layoffs and a guarantee of the right to work

NO MORE BELT TIGHTENING!

... Castro's speech

(continued from page 9)

resting on our shoulders, we have a very important page of history to write, and that page can only be written with the will to fight and the will to win.

The most just ideas in the history of mankind are today flown on our banners. Our position is the most dignified that can be taken at this moment in the world.

The difficult times will pass! Truth will win out! The peoples will fight! The billions of human beings leading increasingly worse lives will become increasingly more aware and will fight increasingly harder! The

peoples are our main allies nowadays.

Occasionally, we have been asked by visiting journalists whether we are alone. I explain to them that we've never seen so much solidarity from the peoples, that we've never seen so much admiration from the peoples.

The fact that our small country resisted the U.S. blockade, resisted U.S. threats when the USSR didn't have any problems and when the socialist camp existed in Europe, was quite a feat; but the fact that our country exists, that our Revolution continues at a time when the socialist camp in Eastern Europe has collapsed and when the USSR has enormous problems, this is indeed an unparalleled page in the history of mankind, this is indeed the proof of a revolutionary people, of a courageous people!

And the peoples of Latin America, the peoples all over the world admire such courage, admire the greatness of the Cuban people. And we'll not only endure the special period but will also develop and move ahead.

Is Cuba "alone?"

Now we are indeed showing the world the stuff Cubans are made of! For quite a long time we were slandered, they claimed we weren't even independent but rather a satellite of the Soviet Union and now they have come to realize, without any doubt, that we're a satellite to principles, a satellite to ideas, a satellite to an ideal which is like a sun of justice around which we are revolving and will always revolve.

History has given us the chance to prove how independent we are, history has given us the right to proclaim we are today the most independent country on earth. If you don't think so, look at what is going on in the United Nations, how big and small powers are reacting to the manipulations of the government of the United States and how there is one country which knows how to say, "No!" and saying "No!" to the empire today is one of the most glorious actions ever carried out.

Because all of that, my answer to some journalist who asked me if we were alone was: "yes, we are alone, but at the top!"

I congratulate our young people for making the call to their congress, and I congratulate them for their 29th anniversary.



Zionists used pretext of Gulf War to attempt suppression of the Intifida.

Der Spiegel

Israel stepped up repression of Palestinians during Gulf War

By MICHEL WARSHAWSKY

Michel Warshawsky, a leader of the Israeli section of the Fourth International (the world revolutionary organization founded by Leon Trotsky) spoke in Paris on March 19, 1991, along with a Palestinian intellectual, Elias Sanbar, on the situation of the Palestinian struggle after the Gulf War. The following are extensive excerpts from *Rouge*, the paper of the French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by Socialist Action.

People say that Israel did not take any part in the Gulf War. The Israeli government is even thanked for its restraint in the face of the Scud [missile] attacks.

This is false. Israel was a participant in the war, [involved] in a very precise division of labor. Bush assigned the Israeli state and army a very well defined front—the Palestinian front. The latter, moreover, was divided into three zones—the Palestinians in southern Lebanon, the Palestinians in Israel, and above all the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

In southern Lebanon, the war created a smokescreen that enabled Israel to resume its criminal bombings of the the refugee camps. With regard to the Palestinians who are citizens of Israel in Galilee, the Triangle, and the Negev, this was a chance for an offensive unparalleled since 1976. It involved land confiscations, a plan for building new Jewish colonies in Arab-majority areas, and unprecedented repression on the pretext of dealing with espionage.

"Spies" were uncovered everywhere. People were afraid of using the telephone, of being arrested for spying. People were afraid of saying where they were, of confirming rumors about missiles landing in Israel for fear of being charged with spying.

The mass terror was such that for three weeks it kept 50,000 Palestinian "citizens" of Israel, who were not under curfew, from going to work and in fear of pogroms.

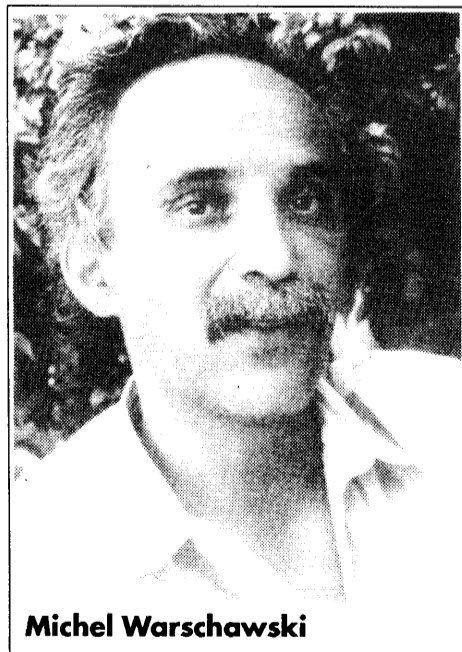
The result was that for the first time since 1976 there was no Day of the Land. For the first time since 1976, the national leadership of the Palestinians in Israel, the coordinating committee of mayors, the Day of the Land Committee, decided not to call a general strike and to change the name of the event to the Day of Peace. This was after they were threatened by the ministers and the general commissioner of police that they would see blood flow. The Palestinians had to under-

stand that everything had changed, including for them.

The third area of this [Israeli] front is the occupied territories. Since the beginning of the occupation there has never been such a long and strict curfew for a million-and-a-half people. For the first time since 1968, the Palestinians in Gaza, and to a lesser extent on the West Bank, were threatened with hunger. People did not have anything to eat. Tens of thousands of Palestinians were thrown into unemployment.

Border sealed

The war first of all made it possible to hermetically seal the border with the occupied territories, that is, to cut off the means



Michel Warshawski

of existence for 150,000 Palestinians and their families. One of the most optimistic projections today is that 50 percent of them will never get their jobs back. There is talk about "refugees" from the Gaza strip, who don't have any little plot of land that they could use to compensate a bit for their lost wages. This is a tragic situation.

However, this is not simply a problem of human rights, of the livelihood of the Palestinians; it is a very effective attempt to destroy the entire infrastructure of the Palestinian economy. Agriculture won't recover. And the small industry that existed and was beginning to grow in the framework of the Intifada is in dire straits.

In order to wage this battle, this war, the Israeli government had to wage another struggle, one that began before the fighting started on Jan. 17, 1991—the battle for a national consensus. It had to put an end to what had deeply divided Israeli society, first during the Lebanon war, and then, with the appearance and spectacular growth of the uprising in the occupied territories, [the Intifada].

Israeli peace movement betrays

It had to win the battle for national unity. And unfortunately, it did so. There was national unity against the Arabs, and we could hear Israeli "progressives"—intellectuals such as the writer Yehoshua—calling for using atomic weapons (tactical of course) against Baghdad, because "when you're fighting a Hitler, anything goes."

The well-known "progressive" writer, Dan Merion, accused Shamir of tying the Israeli army's hands and called on him to "save our honor and end the restraint policy." Yossi Sarid, the most brilliant and best known spokesperson of the Israeli left, announced in September [to his Palestinian interlocutors]: "If you're interested, you can call me, but for the moment I really have nothing more to say to you." A month later, he said: "There is no point on calling me, I really have nothing more to say to you."

This was a proclamation of divorce by the great majority of the peace movement, of the Israeli left, from the partners that they themselves called "the moderate Palestinians," with whom they had been engaging in dialogue (often not a very honest dialogue). I will come back to this.

I can cite the example of a very courageous [Israeli] woman who over the last years has several times met with PLO delegations inside and outside the country and who, despite the fact that she was a member of the Central Committee of the [Israeli] Labour Party, headed the women's movement against the occupation. She provoked a split of part of the movement when she refused to publish an ad denouncing the fact that Palestinian children had no gas masks. She said: "This is war, and gas masks for Palestinian children is not my problem."

Yael Dayan had a protest letter published in all the press because another Dayan (this name is a very common one) signed a petition that said "No to hunger in the occupied territories." Yael Dayan responded, "I never signed such a petition and never would."

Facing this new national unity, the

Palestinians have been left tragically isolated. You can understand their bitter reaction, their deep disillusionment with those in whom they had placed great hopes (I would even say, sometimes a little excessive hope).

A leader of the Palestinians in the occupied territories had proclaimed 1988 the year for dialogue and winning over Israeli public opinion. And he waged a fight for that—not an easy one when the Islamic fundamentalist currents were raising their heads and saying that there were no good Jews, that there were no good Israelis.

With great patience, the United National Leadership of the Intifada, including all tendencies within it, said: "We could see during the Lebanon war that there were cracks, that the national unity could be breached. We have to be patient. We have to win over Israeli public opinion."

"Where are your friends now?"

Today, the Islamic fundamentalist currents are saying: "Where were your Jewish friends during the month-and-a-half long curfew? When the children were dying because they wouldn't even let them go to the hospital? Where are your interlocutors who say that the PLO is finished?"

Those of who you read *Politis* [Parisian commercial left magazine] have seen that one of the best known nationalist leaders in the Gaza Strip, Mary Khas, announced in very violent terms that she had nothing more to say to Israelis, that the dialogue was finished. Since I know her, I can say that she will resume the dialogue. Perhaps it will be a bit better one.

Despite this isolation, despite the restrictions and despite the hunger, the battle that Israel waged in the occupied territories has not been won. Far from it. Among other reasons, it has to be said, this is because of the Scuds that landed in Israel.

The descriptions of Palestinians dancing on the roofs are not Israeli or Western propaganda. The Iraqi attack on Israel represented a hope. In the tragic conditions they faced, the Palestinians drew encouragement from it. When there was nothing to eat, they dreamed of Scuds, they dreamed of blows dealt to Israel.

Unfortunately, this hope was accompanied by a mass of illusions about the capabilities of the Iraqi regime, about the capacities of the Arab front that formed, for countering the Western offensive and using this fight-back to begin to bring about a solution of the Palestinian question.

After the end of these illusions, today we see anger and frustration—but not demoralization. We have to be very clear about this. In Gaza, in the refugee camps, on the West Bank, in Jerusalem, what you feel is very great anger. Anger first of all against the West, especially against France. France betrayed. The Americans did not betray; they played their role.

There is anger against Israelis of course, especially against the Israeli left. There is also a beginning of, if not anger, questioning of, a more critical attitude toward the local leadership.

We saw this last week, when a delegation of Palestinian leaders, with the agreement of the PLO, met Baker. There was indignation in the whole society along the lines of, "This is no time to be shaking the hand of someone responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of Arabs."

Nonetheless, Baker is seeking dialogue with Palestinians, in the hope of finding an alternative to the PLO. Let let no one make a mistake. I don't have a shadow of a doubt that Faisal Husseini, Elias Frej, and Janan Ashrawi (who met Baker last week) told him unambiguously that there is no one worth talking to outside the PLO, that at best, they might offer an intermediary, but that there is no chance of finding an alternative leadership.

Two weeks ago, I did a tour of the occupied territories. And nowhere was there any questioning of the PLO's role as the sole representative of the Palestinians.

Peace movement still exists

Wars, and especially this war, have an atrocious aspect. But there is always something positive, even in a tragic political development such as the Gulf War. What the Gulf War has made possible in Israeli society and Palestinian society is to put an end, or at least to push into the background, certain illusions, certain misunderstandings.

There was, and there still is, a peace
(continued on next page)

What's behind U.S.-Israeli discord?

By NAT WEINSTEIN

The sparks flying between the governments of the United States and Israel reflect a divergence of interests between the imperialist master and one of its puppet states in the Middle East.

The tactical division derives from U.S. imperialism's need to broaden its base of support among the Arab states. To gain their cooperation for establishing a pro-imperialist bloc which includes Israel, the U.S. government must provide Arab governments with at least some political cover against the expected outcry of the Arab masses.

Secretary of State James A. Baker III undoubtedly used a combination of threats and promises to win support from imperialism's Arab allies in preparation for its assault on Iraq.

Both the Bush Administration and its Arab puppets well knew they were risking an uncontrollable uprising throughout the Arab world. To minimize this threat, Baker flitted from capital to capital in a desperate effort to gain the complicity of most Arab states before launching the crushing military offensive against the leader of Iraqi capitalism and Arab nationalism.

Even though U.S. imperialism's military success exceeded all its expectations, it is still not out of the woods. It must continue its efforts to reconstruct a stable Middle Eastern component of President Bush's New World Order. This is not feasible without diminishing somewhat the central role previously occupied by Israeli capitalism in the U.S. imperialist line-up of puppet states there.

Handwriting on the wall

The Zionist Israeli government could see the handwriting on the wall in the early stages of the American build-up, before the latter launched its air and sea assault on Iraq. The Zionists, from the first, howled in protest when Baker first suggested Israel might have to give up direct control over some of the territory it stole from Palestinians in order to restructure a stable pro-imperialist Middle East alliance.

Hard on the heels of the imperialist military victory, Israeli Prime Minister Yitshak Shamir's government took steps to strengthen its hand in the "peace process" promoted by the U.S. Secretary of State. Each time

Baker went near Israel in his efforts to get a "peace" conference going, the Israeli Zionists gave the signal for launching new waves of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—making Baker's task more difficult.

There are about 1.7 million Arabs in the occupied territories. It has been reported that in the last several months, alone, Israel has seized 7500 acres of Arab land in the West Bank and has begun action to take another 10,000 acres.

The Israeli government is basing its land

the territory in the West Bank utilizing this and similar pretexts.

Aside from the obvious aim of the Zionists—to take land from Arabs and give it to Israeli citizens—the purpose is also to establish settlements as points of military support for further oppression and exploitation of Palestinians.

Poor Jewish settlers, like their white counterparts in South Africa, have been allowed to share in the loot ripped off by Israeli capitalists. This gives them a direct material interest in defending Zionist and



Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

Der Spiegel

ripoff on Turkish laws established during the Ottoman empire's 19th-century occupation of the area.

One of these "laws" allows the Israeli settler state to seize land for which Arab peasants do not have clear title. Unfortunately for the Arabs, most do not have land titles like those in Western countries. Land ownership in this part of the world is sufficiently proven by generations of family occupancy.

The Turkish statute allows confiscation of such untitled land from poor peasants if it has not been cultivated for one year. And because many Palestinians had stopped cultivation of their land years before when offered higher paying jobs in Israel, their land is subject to Israeli confiscation. So far, the Zionist occupiers have seized more than half

imperialist interests.

The waves of invading settlers serve a third purpose. The Zionists know that a new *quid pro quo* between them and the other vassal states in the region is unavoidable—if the boss insists. They are grabbing more now so that they will have to give back less later.

Seeds of future anti-Semitism

Many Jewish workers in Israel and the United States do a grave disservice to Jews everywhere by giving support to Zionist crimes. Zionism's argumentation is not significantly different from the Nazi rationalization for its oppression of Jews.

Hitler justified his crimes by interweaving the myth of "Jewish bankers and Jewish

Communists" with reference to the Versailles peace treaty, whose terms compelled the defeated German nation to pay heavy "reparations" to the Anglo/French-led victors at the end of World War I.

Now the Zionists play a similar game, justifying their crimes against Palestinians by the terrible holocaust the Jewish people suffered in Nazi concentration camps. And while the beneficiary of Nazi policies was German capitalism, the beneficiaries of Zionist policies are Western imperialism in the first place and Israeli capitalism in the second.

It is not a coincidence that here in the United States the most reactionary, venomous anti-Semites are among the loudest cheer-leaders for Zionism. Virtually the entire American capitalist class—which, of course, includes a Jewish minority—is pro-Zionist.

This has resulted in a rise of anti-Semitism among the gullible who are led to believe that this policy is imposed on the U.S. government by "powerful Jews."

Nor is this a coincidence. Tomorrow, when the economy slips out of control, social crises erupt, and workers are forced into sharpened class struggle, the Jewish people will again be scapegoated to cover up an anti-working class counter-offensive.

Then, when pressed against the wall by the rising tide of revolution, the American ruling class will attempt to drive the wedge of anti-Semitism into the workers' movement to augment their strategy of divide and conquer. "The Jews" will then be declared to be responsible for U.S. capitalism's criminal Zionist policy—and other "crimes," we can be sure, for which they will be entirely innocent.

The great majority of Jewish people, having suffered more than their share of persecution, had an honorable history of identifying with the working class and the oppressed nationalities of the world before imperialism deceitfully carved "a homeland for the Jews" out of the Arab nation. Many, unfortunately, have been suckered into the camp of imperialism by the false and reactionary solution of a Jewish clerical state.

This was a profound break from their proud past, which must be corrected. The only way forward for all those truly opposed to all forms of racial, national, and sexist bigotry is to support the demand of the indigenous peoples of the area for a Democratic Secular Palestine, wherein all who live there—irrespective of religion or nationality—will enjoy equal rights. ■

... Zionist repression

(continued from preceding page)

movement in Israel, a movement opposed to the occupation and one that wants a compromise solution recognizing the rights (or at least some rights) of the Palestinian people. And there has been a beginning of a dialogue, a dialogue that no longer concerned the radical far left but that went very deep into the society. This is a dialogue on various levels—meetings, common actions, an expression of solidarity. This was perhaps one of the most promising elements in these last three years.

However, this dialogue was very often based on misunderstandings. For a great many Israelis, and especially for the notables of the Israeli left and the Israeli peace movement, their Palestinian interlocutors were supposed to be the Palestinian allies of Peace Now. Perhaps these interlocutors did not always dot the "i's", because they were too happy to see cracks in Israeli society.

However, a war forces people to take a position. And the position that the Palestinian people took, along with their national leadership in the occupied territories, was unequivocal. They lined up behind Iraq—without thereby supporting the invasion of Kuwait, against the American and European offensive. A lot of their Israeli interlocutors felt duped.

On the Palestinian side, there also was a surprise. They didn't expect such violent reactions as Yossi Sarid's "don't call me," such as the often rude refusal of Israeli interlocutors to answer phone calls from their friends, from those Palestinians who thought they were their friends. They did not understand, because they had certain illusions that the concern of the Israeli peace movement was for recognition of the Palestinian rights. But that is still a long way away.

The primary concern of the Israeli peace movement is the interests of the state of

Israel. If they are against the occupation, it is not because the Palestinians have rights; it is above all because the occupation "is degrading the moral quality of Israel."

The minute it had to choose its camp, the great majority of the Israeli peace movement and [political] left chose the camp of imperialist aggression. And the Palestinians unambiguously chose the camp of Iraq, the victim of aggression.

There is an advantage to this clarification because I think that the dialogue is going to resume. Unlike some of my friends, I don't think that the break in national unity, the emergence of a peace movement in Israel, was a passing thing, and that now everything has returned to normal.

The proof of this is that even before the end of the fighting, after a very difficult period, the movement resumed. Three weeks ago, the Women in Black resumed their weekly demonstrations. Before, they demonstrated at 30-some points. Now, demonstrations have resumed in about 20 places. In Jerusalem, which I know best, about 25 women usually came. Last week, there were already a hundred.

There is a second element that makes for optimism—the number of soldiers who refused to serve in the occupied territories, even during the war, has not declined. What has declined is the number of soldiers sent to prison, because there were orders that this was not the time to make a fuss about this, and the soldiers who refused to go were sent home.

Israel's vulnerability exposed

This is reinforced by an element that was brought on by the war and which can serve as an impetus in a new mobilization. The Gulf War showed Israeli society as a whole how vulnerable it was. For the first time in a long time, Israelis also experienced fear.

Fear is something Palestinians have experienced for three years, or even for more

than twenty. People fled Tel Aviv—40 percent of the population fled. There were a lot of myths about this. There was a lot of false fear. But the fear was a reality, even if it was provoked artificially by a stupid campaign that the Israeli authorities themselves reject today.

All of a sudden, there was a feeling that the security of Israel, of the Israeli people, depended on the good will of the Americans. Never, since 1973, has this been so clear.

Israel's vulnerability is a basis for the peace movement resuming a campaign and explaining that taking on 150 million Arabs is not necessarily the best way to assure Israel's security, even if the Americans and 23 or 25 countries of the world are on its side.

On several occasions in these last days, people have asked me what the perspectives are—what can be expected from this war and its aftermath in terms of Israeli-Palestinian relations? Personally, I don't think that an imperialist war will produce anything but an imperialist peace. I don't think, as a lot of my friends on the Israeli left do, that this war holds the potential of a progressive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

Some have justified their support for the war by saying that this war is going to produce, if not an Israeli-Palestinian peace, at least the beginning of a grand march that will lead to such a peace. But we should not fall into any kind of fatalism. Even if it is true that an imperialist war produces an imperialist peace and a new imperial order, I think that the peace that is taking form in the Middle East will bring as much of a fight as the war.

Palestinians not defeated

Not only is the outcome not predetermined but we have a big ace in this battle that is going to have to be fought to determine what kind of peace—what kind of order—

this war is going to lead to. This ace is the *Inifada*.

The Palestinians on the West Bank and in Gaza have not been defeated in this war. If their situation today is difficult—I would even say tragic—there is no reason to think that the young people in Nablus, the young people in Gaza, have given up, as some write in the Israeli press.

In this battle that has to be waged now to determine what kind of new order is going to be created in the Middle East, you in Europe have a central role to play. For us, you have been a hope, and when I say "us," I mean both Israelis and Palestinians.

You have been the opposite of the picture they tried to present of a war between West and East. You have been the bearers of a hope, of a possibility, that can represent something else, a front of what is good in both the East and the West against this imperialist order that threatens us.

The battle that you have fought in your hundreds of thousands must be continued.

The fight for self-determination, for democracy, for human rights, for respect for all the articles of the Geneva Convention which have been trampled on—these are the focuses, in my opinion, of the fight that will determine not only the fate of the Palestinian people but also of the new order that the allied powers want to impose on us in the region. (That is also the order they want to impose on the entire world.)

A campaign for Palestine today is not only just. It was just a year ago, it was just 10 years ago.

A campaign for Palestine and the Palestinians' rights is possible today. This is why a movement around these axes—the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the defense of the human rights in the occupied territories—emerged before the Gulf War and continued during it despite an extraordinary press campaign. Today, it must get a second wind. ■

Labor mov't holds key to solving NYC budget crisis

By CHRIS BUTTERS

Perhaps no place better than New York captures the state of capitalism in the world today. Side by side with the most fantastic concentration of wealth, you can see poverty, homelessness, and a destitution more commonly associated with that of a Third World country.

Parts of Harlem have higher infant mortality rates than Bangla Desh, according to a study printed in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The drop-out rate for minority youth in the school system is 60 percent.

In any rational economic system, top priority in allotting society's energy, money, and talent would be given to ending these conditions forever. But capitalism created these hideous conditions at the same time that it created the rich in their office towers.

In the latest chapter of New York City's unfolding budget crisis, on May 8, Mayor David Dinkins presented his proposed budget cuts for the 1991-1992 fiscal year. The announcement was presaged by months of propaganda by the big business media. This included numerous orchestrated reports by supposedly independent "citizens commissions" on the need for "leaner city services" in the 1990s.

Dinkins proposed a staggering cut of over \$1.5 billion in city services to alleviate a looming \$3.5 billion deficit. These include chopping educational programs for disadvantaged youth, the abolishment of drug treatment and infant mortality programs, and butchering libraries, park maintenance, women's health clinics.

Dinkins also called for layoffs of 22,000 full-time city employees, including 3000 teachers. Many labor activists believe these layoffs, if approved, will take place during summer vacations in August—in an effort to forestall a united labor-community response.

Couching his budget proposal in the rhetoric of "sacrifice" and "fiscal responsibility," Dinkins appealed to the "family of New York" to tighten their belts.

But despite the mayor's appeals for "sacrifice," some areas were strikingly exempt. One was the addition of 4000 new police to the city payroll to fight "violence, lawlessness, and drugs." Also exempted was a whopping increase of \$800 million in debt service to the banks for the coming year.

Working people should not be fooled. The additional cops have nothing to do with any serious "war on drugs." How could they possibly, since in the same speech Dinkins abolished every city drug treatment program?

Nor will these police have anything to do with any "war on crime." How could they possibly, when in the same breath Dinkins slashed funds for schools, housing, health care, parks, and libraries? This virtually writes off another generation of minority youth to New York's only growth industry—the prisons.

Protests are planned

But the working people of New York City—and especially their children—are not taking these cutbacks sitting down.

Clearly inspired by the recent student occupations of 12 City College Campuses, the Save Our Schools Coalitions is calling for a one-day boycott by parents, teachers, and students in District 15 in Brooklyn.

Healthcare coalitions in neighborhoods throughout the city are protesting the closing of the city-funded outpatient pharmacies. It was there that those without health insurance—usually the working poor—could count on filling their prescriptions.

With its usual panache, the Aids coalition, ACT UP, has called for a demonstration at the United Nations. They are appealing to that body for relief, on the grounds that New York City should be considered a disaster area.

Many projected demonstrations will target City Hall, where budget hearings will be held by the City Council in the last week of May. It is important for the anti-cutback and anti-layoff movement to be there in force.

It is unlikely, however, that demonstrations alone will stop the cuts and layoffs.

After all, the decision was made long before, in the boardrooms of Wall Street. Given the powerful forces behind the cutbacks, supporters of this or that program demonstrating at the budget hearings are relatively powerless if they remain isolated.

But there is a power that can stop the cutbacks, especially if it unites with the anti-cutback movement. It was present in force when 60,000 trade-unionists marched in Manhattan on April 30 to demand no cutbacks and no layoffs.

The April 30 labor march

Marching down Broadway, one could feel the potential power of the labor movement—however lacking it is at this time in leadership and direction. Black, white, Latino, Asian—the labor movement on April 30 was as interracial and multinational as the city itself.

A large spirited contingent from the Public Employees Federation marched. They stand to lose 50 percent of their members if Cuomo's proposed 100,000 layoffs of state workers are enacted. "Tax the rich!" they chanted.

AFSCME District Council 37 members

added their voices as well. They had a giveback contract foisted upon them in January—only to have that same contract held up by the Dinkins administration in an effort to get even more givebacks.

Particularly significant was a contingent from Local 100 of the Transit Workers Union (TWU), who have been working without a contract since April 31. TWU President Sonny Hall has stated that there will be strike action if his union does not get a decent contract and improved health and safety conditions on the job. This reflects pressures from the membership.

"I've got a weapon," said Hall. "We always have a weapon. The one thing we won't do is allow transit workers to be taken advantage of. Way before we will let that happen, we will forget about whatever the Taylor Law says." (*Newsday*, May 12.)

The Taylor Law prohibits strikes by city and state employees. It has long been used by City Hall and Wall Street to keep the union movement weak and divided. But as a labor leader once said, "the only illegal strike is a losing one."

And how about taxing the rich to pay for

the budget crisis? The slogan "Tax the rich!" can be a springboard for workers to begin to discuss all the other institutions through which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

In the May 7 *Village Voice*, Doug Henwood revealed that the dominant elements in the labor bureaucracy opposed the demand of "Tax the rich!" as the main slogan of the April 30 demonstration. Instead, it adopted the watered-down call, "For a fair tax system!"

According to Henwood, Barry Feinstein of Local 237 of the Teamsters Union argued that "labor can never support a tax-the-rich platform." Sandra Feldman, president of the United Federation of Teachers, fought it on the ground that "Tax the rich!" would not be an "effective" slogan for the rally's "real audience." Feldman thought that this "real audience" was the mayor and the governor.

Behind this decision lies the same strategy of business trade-unionism that led to the defeat of the anti-cutback movement in 1975.

The labor tops' strategy is to get on the "good side" of management and Democratic Party politicians behind closed doors, rather than to build alliances with other unions, the poor, and the oppressed minorities.

Labor must not be fooled. There is nothing inevitable or necessary about this crisis. Nor is there anything inevitable about working people having to take these cuts. It is we who create the wealth of this city every day, in the garment shops, in the transit barns, in the offices and factories.

If we create the wealth in this country, we also have the power to shut it down. ■

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action



S.F. STUDENTS PROTEST SCHOOL CUTBACKS: Over 500 students, teachers and parents demonstrated in San Francisco, Calif., on May 15, to protest lay-offs of teachers and elimination of sports, art and other programs from the city's school system. As in New York, San Francisco workers are bearing the brunt of a so-called 'budget crisis.'



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Gandhi's assassination and India's 'democracy'

The May 21 assassination of India's former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has shaken that country's people and the world of politics. Gandhi was assassinated on the campaign trail while seeking to regain the prime minister job he lost 18 months earlier.

With Gandhi's death, the political dynasty that ruled India for all but six of 44 years appears to have come to an end. Hoping to capture the sympathy vote, the Congress Party's top leadership immediately chose Gandhi's Italian-born wife, Sonia Gandhi, as party president. But she declined.

Erosion of "democracy"

No individual or organization claimed responsibility for the assassination. But many possibilities have been mentioned: Sri Lankan Tamil separatists, Sikh militants, Hindu fundamentalists, and even the CIA. No one, however, believes it was the act of a madman. Gandhi and the Congress Party and India's ruling class have too many enemies.

Gandhi's assassination reflects more than the end of an era. It is the continued erosion of India's capitalist democracy—one based on impoverishment of its people, attacks on ethnic rights, and deepening exploitation of its farm and working population. It explains why Sikhs in New York City cheered the news while President Bush and British Prime Minister John Major expressed deep concern about India's stability.

India is a country of 850 million people, second in world population only to China. It is multilingual, multi-ethnic, and includes most major religions of the world, with Hinduism being dominant.

At the time of its independence in 1947, India was presented by imperialism as the largest secular democracy in the world. After the Chinese revolution in 1949, India was presented to other Third World underdeveloped countries as the viable capitalist alternative to communism.

Yet India never lived up to its billing. Its birth was violent. The British rulers had played a game of

divide and rule, and by the mid-1940s the independence movement was fractured down the middle. There were the secular but Hindu-dominated Congress Party and the Muslim League. Sectarian violence between Hindus and Muslims at independence left one million dead, and millions more crossing borders to the newly independent Islamic Pakistan.

In 1948, a Hindu fundamentalist assassinated Mohandas Gandhi, the central driving force of the Congress Party, in New Delhi.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi's grandfather, became India's first prime minister. He died in 1964.

Less than two years later, in 1966, his daughter (Indira Gandhi) became prime minister. She ruled India with an iron hand, including a period of emergency rule in the mid-1970s. She was assassinated in 1984 by her Sikh bodyguards after the army brutally attacked Sikh militants in their holy shrine, the Golden Temple, in Amristar, Punjab.

Two months later, Rajiv Gandhi led the Congress Party to a landslide election victory. He served as prime minister until 1989.

Behind downfall and crisis

Rajiv Gandhi's downfall, and the growing instability in India, is tied to a number of factors. One was government corruption, symbolized by a crooked arms deal with the Swedish company Bofors. A layer of the government bureaucracy and a new middle class were getting fat—as the people suffered. Gandhi also took steps to open up the Indian market to foreign interests in this period.

Others include the rise of sectarian violence and struggles for national rights by many of India's ethnic minorities. Hindu fundamentalism is on the rise. Some 80 percent of all Indians are Hindus. They demand that Hindu culture be protected and that India become a Hindu state. Muslims have been violently attacked.

Sikhs, a very small religious group but a majority in the rich agricultural state of Punjab, are

Which Side Are You On?

By
Malik Miah



pushing for more control of that state. Sikh separatists have been active since the early 1980s pressing for an independent country for Sikhs.

The Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir is in open rebellion against the central government. Its state government was dismissed in 1990, and the region has been under virtual martial law since early 1991.

In one of the poorest states, Assam, a number of ethnic and linguistic separatist movements exist. That state government was also ousted in November 1990.

The state government of Tamil Nadu, where Gandhi was killed, was dismissed by the central government in January 1991. Tamils are sympathetic to the plight of their cousins in neighboring Sri Lanka.

Initially, the press speculated that the bomb which killed Gandhi was placed by the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka (they later denied the charge). Gandhi had sent troops to Sri Lanka in 1987 to help end a civil war there between the Tamils and the majority Sinhala-dominated regime. The Tamil rebels initially backed the India's intervention but later fought the Indian troops. The Indian army was finally forced out of Sri Lanka 30 months later.

More than 150 people died in election violence the week before Gandhi's assassination. The elections so far have been India's bloodiest, with hundreds of deaths reported during the polling that began May 20.

The schism between haves and have-nots is widening. In 1985, the most recent year for which numbers are available, the World Bank reported 420 million Indians, 55 percent of the population, as "poor" (that is, having an income of less than \$30 a month) and 250 million, 33 percent, as "extremely poor" (with an income of less than \$23 a month).

This compares to China's 20 percent as "poor" and 8 percent as "extremely poor." India's literacy rate is 36 percent; China's 77 percent.

It is capitalism's failure in India that lies behind its social and political crisis today. Gandhi's assassination thus was a byproduct of that reality.

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LAPD onlookers to King beating escape prosecution

By KATHLEEN O'NAN

LOS ANGELES—While four of the 21 police officers involved in the March 3 Rodney King beating case have been indicted by the Grand Jury, charges have been dismissed against the other 17 officers implicated.

The videotaped beating showed that all 21 officers were present, and that not one officer attempted to stop the brutal beating. Some eyewitnesses state that blows and kicks were delivered by several of the officers not indicted.

As we go to press, LA Police Department Board of Rights hearings are about to get underway on the status of the four indicted officers. Three of them have been suspended without pay pending these hearings. The fourth officer was fired, not because of his actions, but simply because he was a rookie who therefore had less rights under the contract that governs disciplinary actions against police officers.

While the media focus has been on police chief Darryl F. Gates and the four LAPD officers implicated, to ignore the role of all of the police is a mistake. All 21 should be indicted and prosecuted to the full extent of the law. And Gates, as head of a police department notorious for racism and brutality, should be removed.

The frequently used tactic of turning the victim into the criminal has reached new

heights in the "City of the Angels." At a May 22 city council committee hearing on "improving" police training in relation to the King beating, police chief Gates endorsed the idea of a video program for the public on how to be taken into custody.

"There is a need for teaching people not so much how to prevent crime, but how police-citizen contacts can be made less frightening," Gates said.

Ironically, just a few blocks from the city council hearing, Latino groups were holding a rally to protest the death of 18-year-old Eduardo Hernandez, who had been shot by an off-duty agent of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. It is impossible to believe that if Hernandez had seen the video on "how to be arrested," he would be alive today.

Support continues to grow for the removal of Chief Gates. One such effort is a recall measure to be put on the November ballot. For this, 6300 signatures are needed. Backers of this initiative include the National Association of Colored People (NAACP), the LA National Organization for Women (NOW), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the LA Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center, the National Lawyers Guild, the LA Student Coalition, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and the Mexican American Legal

Defense Fund (MALDEF).

Weekly demonstrations calling for an end to police brutality and community control of the police are being held every Saturday in

front of the LA police headquarters at First and Los Angeles Streets from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. For more information, call the NAACP at (213) 296-2630.

Activist wins suit against LAPD

A three-week-long civil rights lawsuit ended on May 14 with an unprecedented victory for the Black community and for all social activists. A Los Angeles Superior Court ordered the city of Los Angeles to pay \$3.83 million in compensatory damages to Black activist Michael Zinzun.

The case is the result of LA police assistant chief Robert Vernon's having used a police department computer to release a 156-page report on Zinzun in an attempt to smear and disrupt his 1989 campaign for the Pasadena City Council. Vernon himself was ordered to pay personally an additional \$10,000 in punitive damages.

Zinzun, a long-time community activist, is no stranger to dealings with the LA Police Department. He has headed the activist Committee Against Police Abuse (CAPA) for 15 years, and was a

major figure in the 1983 \$1.8 million lawsuit resulting in the dismantling of the notorious LAPD Public Disorder Intelligence Division, also known as the "Red Squad."

Zinzun also had previously won a \$1.2 million lawsuit against the Pasadena Police Department over a brutal beating he suffered, which resulted in the permanent loss of vision in one eye.

The jury that voted in favor of Zinzun could tell a cover-up when they saw one. The police defendants, Chief Gates and Vernon, claimed that the report Vernon had issued was all public information. But one juror said, "I felt they [Gates and Vernon] had blatant disregard for the truth."

Zinzun viewed this victory as a victory for all activists fighting police abuse. The jury "sent a message to the city," he said, "that enough is enough and they won't be a part to the antics of the LAPD."—K.O.

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Tragedy in Bangla Desh: Who's to blame for death toll?

By MALIK MIAH

The major cyclone that devastated Bangladesh on April 29, followed by massive flooding and an earthquake, has brought some 125,000 deaths. The death toll is expected to climb as flood waters recede. Entire villages were wiped out by waves 20 feet high driven by 145 mph winds.

Government officials estimate that more than 30,000 of the 264,000 farmers and fishermen who lived on the Bay of Bengal coastal area perished. Deaths from cholera and other diseases are also anticipated.

The recently elected Prime Minister Khaleda Zia estimates damage at \$1.42 billion.

Relief efforts have been slow. The U.S. government initially only gave \$7 million for cyclone relief and 67,000 tons of food. Later, Washington sent 8000 troops (on their way home from the Persian Gulf) to aid the effort. The eight-ship task force includes 30 helicopters and 4 Hovercraft. They will be used to transport food and supplies, not to build embankments and shelters.

Overall, the international aid has been shameful. Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world. Some 120 million people live on 55,000 square miles. The per capita income is \$180. For much of the year Bangladesh is under water. Yet the country had only 302 cyclone shelters, while 5000 to 10,000 are needed. A single shelter costs \$50,000—a drop in the bucket for the rich industrialized countries.

Not surprisingly, many people in the United States and other industrialized countries are numb to the disaster. First the Kurds, the African famine, and now Bangladesh!

There is sympathy especially among working people. But many believe Third World disasters reflect the situation of the people themselves. "Maybe it is their fault. There are floods and cyclones all the time, why didn't the people there prepare?" is not an uncommon comment.

The most cynical say that Bangladesh is growing by 2.4 million people each year; it will take only two to three weeks to make up for the loss of 125,000 or more people.

Nicholas Kristof of the *New York Times* wrote, for example, "It is not so much weather that is killing people as it is poverty." He notes that "about 870,000 Bangladeshi children under the age of five die routinely, a third of them from nothing more than diarrhea caused by impure water."

Behind underdevelopment

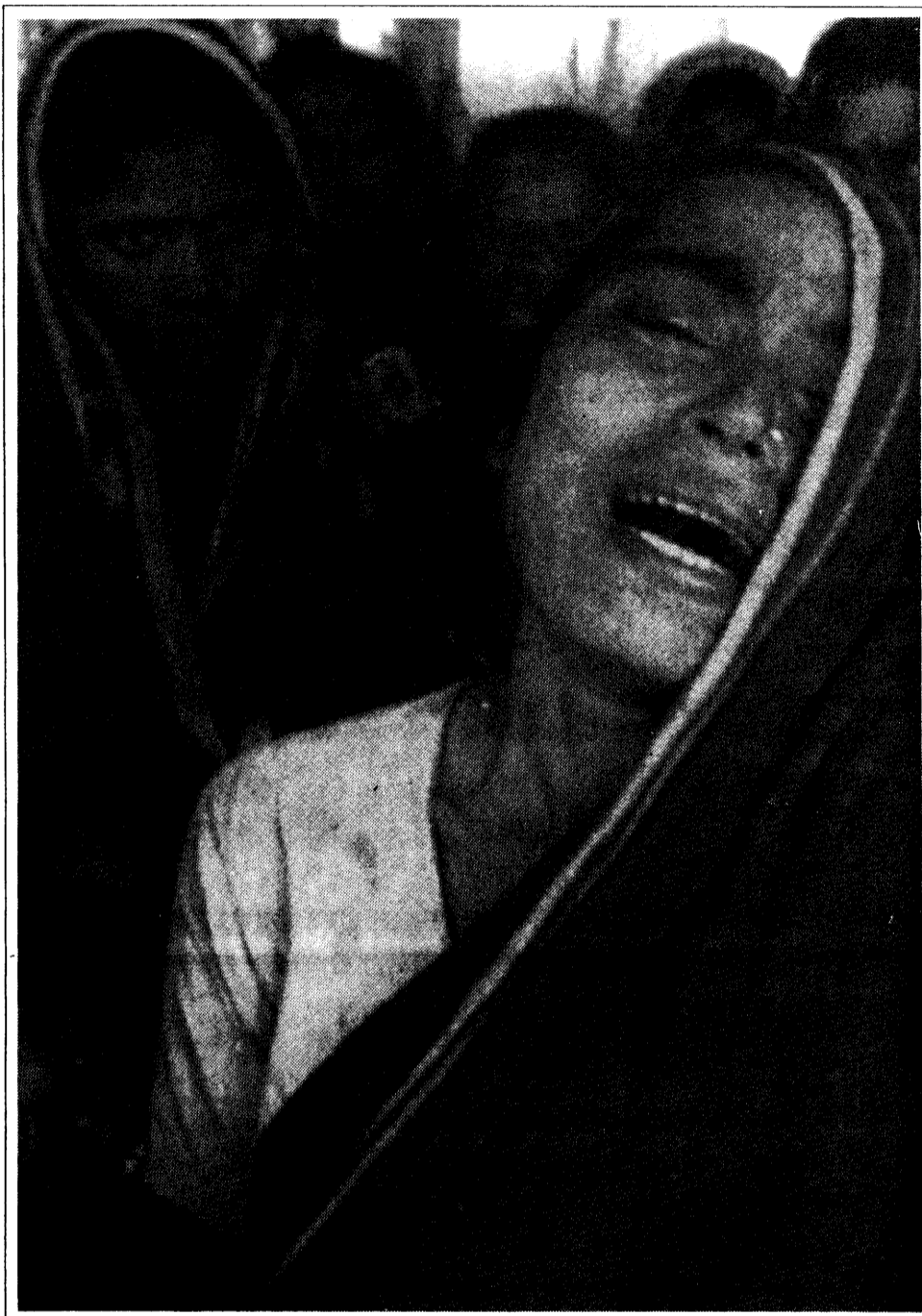
It is true that Bangladesh is a very poor country. It is also true that millions die each year because of annual flood waters and disease. But is it inevitable?

No. Bangladesh is similar in land size to Europe's Holland. Holland, too, would face massive flooding if it were uncontrolled. Yet Holland is never in the newspaper each year suffering from overflowing rivers and massive disasters caused by nature. Why?

Holland is an advanced industrial country that has been able to minimize the impact of nature to prevent major disasters. They have built dikes to prevent flooding. The last major storm to cause significant flooding deaths occurred in 1953, when 1850 died in southern Holland. The first dikes were built 700 years earlier.

Bangladesh won its independence in 1971 after a national liberation war. But from 1947 to 1971, for 24 years, Bangladesh was known as East Pakistan and treated as a semicolonial outpost for West Pakistan, 1100 miles away. Prior to 1947, the region was known as East Bengal, as part of British India.

The British imperialists, unlike the Dutch,



A woman mourns for relatives lost in the cyclone.

Udo Wetz/AP

did not build dikes to control the great rivers—the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna. So year after year in "normal" rainfalls, the rivers overflowed and killed the mostly agricultural people—landholders and those without land. Since 1857, Bangladesh has been hit by some 50 major cyclones, and far more lesser ones. The latest one even gave notice four days before it struck.

But there was little the people could do because they have no dikes, no shelters or places to live. "Where would I go?" asked Aminsharif, a 27-year-old Gomatali Island resident in the Bay of Bengal who lost his entire family to the cyclone. "I have land here, and it's all I have. I have no choice but to stay."

Since over 50 percent of Bangladesh becomes inundated by annual rains—made worse by cyclones—the real issue is how to limit the damage, since most of the country, with the possible exception of Dhaka, the capital, is harshly impacted.

The British magazine, *The Economist*, makes a telling point in its May 11 issue:

"Floods and earthquakes are pure disasters. It seems that only nature is to blame. Yet competent governments, given foresight and funds, can build defenses against them. In June 1990 an earthquake struck the sparse villages of northern Iran, killing more than 40,000 people. The previous year an equally fierce tremor, striking the packed city of San Francisco, killed fewer than 100 people. Public investment and public compulsion saved the Californians. Tax payers paid for their reinforced highways, regulators ordered that their high-rise buildings might twist but

would not collapse. Rich and powerful states can defend their people, in peace as in war."

Bangladeshis, however, have suffered from super-exploitation. Their rich farm land was used to service the British rulers for decades. Then, after Pakistan was formed in 1947, large plantations and jute mills were built to service the Pakistani rulers. Funds were not available for local development.

No shelters

Proof that the "natural disaster" on April 29 could have been less devastating if flood development had been done is seen in one small example provided by a reporter for *The Economist*:

"On some islands the people survived. The 650 people on the island of Sonadia climbed on to a 12 feet high cyclone shelter, the island's only solid building, and all were saved. When a cyclone struck the island in 1970, all its people were drowned."

Many Bengali fishermen and farmers live on these small islands in the Bay of Bengal. But they are not really islands. They are banks of silt composed of deposits brought down the rivers. As soon as they are formed, they are taken over by farmers who grow rice on the rich soil. Because land is scarce in Bangladesh, the farmers stay despite the cyclones. Yet if brick shelters had been built, most would be still alive today.

How much would it cost to build the additional shelters? Some \$66 million. That's less than one new Boeing 747 aircraft.

The crime of imperialism is that it refuses to help countries like Bangladesh to build the dams necessary to prevent "natural disas-

ters." In 1989, the World Bank held a conference in London to discuss an "action plan" to protect Bangladesh from flooding. It included proposals to build vast embankments along the coast and the river banks. Old embankments are 12 to 15 feet high; they should be 18 to 25 feet to provide protection from major cyclones. Drains would be dug to divert flood water to areas where it could do no harm.

Yet the "countries expected to foot the bill jibbed at the astronomical sums being talked about," reports *The Economist*. "Promises to start work on the plan in 1990 were clearly unrealistic. It is still in what is described as the 'assessment' stage." So much for Bangladeshi lives.

Government corruption

Imperialism is not totally to blame for the current devastation. Corrupt and inefficient capitalist governments have played their part too. After independence in 1947, the new Pakistani government refused to give East Pakistan (Bangladesh) fair economic treatment. It developed the jute industry for export earnings with little being reinvested into East Pakistan, the most populated region of the country.

This exploitive relationship between West and East Pakistan fueled the independence movement. Pakistan also refused to develop flood controls. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the independence movement and first prime minister of Bangladesh, made the issue of lack of flood control one of the reasons for nationhood. Water, if properly controlled, would free Bangladesh from its severe underdevelopment.

After independence in 1971, however, the new Rahman government took steps to rebuild the Bangladeshi capitalist merchant and landholding classes at the expense of the landless peasants and poor working class. He used the government civil service to build up a base of power. Corruption and inefficiency became the norm. No steps were taken to prepare the people for the annual floods or the cyclones. Relief aid was pocketed.

Rahman's corruption led to a growing left-wing movement and divisions in the military. Finally, a military coup was organized in August 1975, and Rahman was assassinated. From that year until December 1990, the military directly ran the country. The military rulers spent very little of its foreign aid on development or shelter protection.

In the four years from 1986-89, some \$5.9 billion was granted or loaned to the government. Shelters weren't built; and few stocks of emergency food and medical supplies were bought.

A mass popular movement emerged in the late 1980s, and forced the army out of direct power. Elections were held this past February. The new regime blames the past government for the current problems in relief efforts. Yet the new prime minister's husband was a former military ruler killed in a coup in 1981.

Poverty is a big problem for Bangladesh. Cancellation of the foreign debt would help. Massive economic aid from Washington, London, and other imperialist countries is also needed. The World Bank plan, as a start, must be implemented and paid for by the rich countries.

The merchants and others now becoming rich off the people's suffering must be put out of business. Reports indicate that well-stocked merchants are profiting from rice (a basic staple) and building materials. In some cases, they are charging 10 times the normal price.

Pressure is mounting on the new regime to meet the needs of the people. If reports of corruption are not met firmly, the government can expect to face not only homeless and starving people, but rebellion. ■