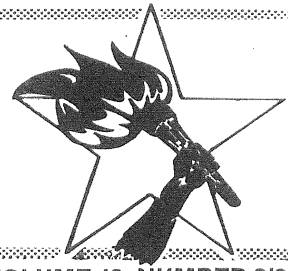


STACK 3 OVERSIZE

TORCH

NEWSPAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE

SEPTEMBER 15-NOVEMBER 14, 1983



VOLUME 10, NUMBER 9/25¢

Korean Air Lines Incident

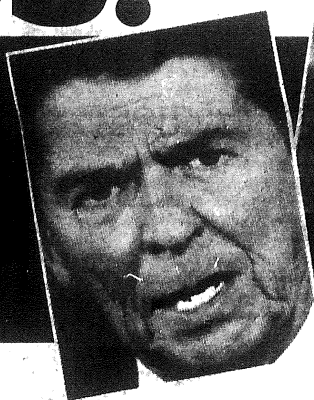
SUPERPOWER RIVALRY THREATENS ALL OF US!

PER SE
FEB 24 1984
NYPL

EDITORIAL

World tensions have sharply escalated in the wake of the August 31 shooting down of an unarmed civilian airplane by the Soviet Union. The governments of both superpowers—the U.S. and Russia—have wasted no time in hurling cynical charges and counter-charges at each other, underlining once again the growing danger that these two global rivals will plunge the world into a new war.

Millions of people throughout the world were shocked and angered by Moscow's decision to shoot down
(cont'd on page 6)



Reagan & Andropov

Reagan Steps Up U.S. Military Intervention in Lebanon

The Reagan administration is stumbling toward full-scale military intervention in Lebanon. In recent weeks, the shaky "peace settlement" worked out after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last year has all but collapsed. Heavy fighting has broken out in the Shuf mountain region, east of Beirut, between Druse Muslims who have lived there for centuries and ultra-rightist Phalangist gangs, backed by Lebanese army troops, that are trying to gain control of the region. In the course of these battles, four U.S. Marines participating in a multinational "peacekeeping force" around Beirut were killed and 28 others wounded. Other contingents in the 5,400-member force have also suffered casualties.

The Reagan administration has responded to the crisis in Lebanon by significantly escalating the U.S. military presence in the region. The administration has sent another 1,900 Marines to reinforce the 2,000 U.S. troops already in the multinational force. It has also ordered the battleship New Jersey, the aircraft carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower, the assault ship Tarawa and other ships into position off Beirut. And it has authorized Marine commanders to order naval air and artillery strikes against the Druse forces, not only for "self-defense," but also in support of Lebanese army operations against the Druse.

The deteriorating situation in Lebanon stems directly from the Israeli invasion, and demon-

strates the failure of the Zionist government to achieve its aims in Lebanon. The immediate goal of the invasion was to wipe out the bases of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and thus to destroy its credibility as an independent military and political force in the Middle East. Then-prime minister Menachem Begin's regime also wanted to secure Israeli control over Lebanon itself by setting up a pro-Western government led by the Phalangists.

The Zionist war machine was able to defeat the PLO and its Lebanese allies and install Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel in power. (The current Lebanese president, Amin Gemayel, took power after his brother was
(Continued on page 5)

Black People's Fight for Freedom
See page 9

SECCION EN ESPAÑOL

Stalin's genocide against the Ukrainian nation

Dear Torch,

This year the Ukrainian communities of the USA and Canada are commemorating the 1932-33 artificial famine in the Ukraine. Fifty years ago, the imperialist state of "Communist" Russia, ruled by Joseph Stalin, committed genocide against the Ukrainian nation.

The Ukraine is a large country to the south of Russia with a population today of 49 million. Officially it is a "republic" in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but actually the USSR is an empire dominated by the Russian state.

In the early '30s, Stalin decided to attack the Ukrainian people for several reasons. They were mostly peasants and were not cooperating with his drive to force them into collective farms. Also their Ukrainian nationalism resisted his building a centralized Russian-run state capitalism. (In this, Stalin was reversing Lenin's policy of encouraging Ukrainian national consciousness.) Finally, he needed grain to trade with the Western capitalists.

The Stalinist state banned all sales of food on the open market in the Ukraine. It provided rations at starvation levels—and those only for members of collective farms—and set unrealistically high quotas for the collective farms to produce. When they couldn't meet their quotas, all their food was taken from the peasants, including seeds for future planting. Those who resisted were sent to concentration camps.

The result was a human-made famine, including cannibalism. Some seven million peasants died. Furthermore, the policies of forced collectivization of peasants and the suppression of

non-Russian peoples were not limited to the Ukraine. The reliable historian Robert Conquest believes that, from 1929 to 1937, the total death toll throughout the Soviet Union "... must have been around 14 million, including several million children. This figure used to be considered (even by myself) a 'high' one, but the evidence seems irresistible." ("Progress Report," *Ukrainian Weekly*, 3/20/83.)

It is unfortunate, but not surprising, that most of the North American Ukrainian community has rejected socialism in favor of Western capitalism. It will be impossible to persuade Ukrainians, or any other working people in the U.S., of socialism, unless the revolutionary left completely opposes Russian state capitalism.

Wayne Gordon
New York

On Harold Washington

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

I am writing to you to express my feelings about Harold Washington's recent election to the mayor of Chicago.

I don't think that his victory is going to mean one damn difference in the lives of ordinary people, poor, Black and white working class people as William Falk said in a recent *Torch/La Antorcha* article.

I do think that revolutionary socialists should solidarize ourselves with why Black and white

people feel that by voting for him he will somehow make their lives better.

The racist outburst by some white people during the campaign was met with increased determination by Black and white people to elect Harold Washington but more importantly was met with the desire to end racist oppression.

Revolutionaries should say that Harold Washington will not end racist oppression, that Black and white people must organize a strong, united militant and revolutionary movement that can take on racist white people, the Klan and the Nazis and begin to build a world that doesn't allow racist, sexist or any other kind of oppression.

LM
Ohio

Anti-gay raid in Mexico

Dear Comrades:

The purpose of this letter is to protest police assaults against gay people in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

On the night of July 23, a private party held in the gay community of Guadalajara was invaded by dozens of policemen, some in a state of drunkenness. Very violent and brandishing machine guns, they carried out one of the biggest raids in recent years. First they demanded 1,000 pesos per

person from all those present at the party "to withdraw." Then, in spite of having collected a large sum by their blackmail, they decided to take more than 250 lesbians and gay men to jail on various phony charges. In addition, some people were stripped of valuable objects, and the cars of those at the party were impounded. Some people stayed in jail up to three days, since a fine of 2,000 pesos per person had to be paid to be released. Another 2,000 pesos was demanded from the car owners to get their vehicles back.

The government functionaries, not content with having permanently closed all gay bars in Guadalajara, have now lined their pockets with about one million pesos by persecuting homosexuals.

It makes us angry to see that such repression still happens in this day and age. In Mexico there is a long history of this type of police violence against gay people.

I (one of those writing) remember some events of 20 years ago in Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico, which make me ashamed and angry just to speak of them. When the police used to see a transvestite or drag queen walking in the street wearing makeup, they would entrap her and throw her in jail for the simple fact of being a "rare type." Later the police would collect a big fine to let her go free, and "too bad for them" if they didn't have it to pay. Because after a few days they would be taken out in the early morning hours to "work," sweeping the streets and picking up garbage, still dressed and made up, so that everyone, including their fami-

lies and friends, could see them and make fun of them.

I, as a gay person, personally suffered such repression. Once, when I was 19 years old, I was in a bar in Torreón called "Mi Ranchito," when four cops came in and, very violent and arrogant, demanded money from the owner of the establishment in order to give "protection" to his customers. And when this was refused, they blocked the door, letting no one out. Then they brought the paddy wagon and began to mistreat everyone who was in the bar and took us to jail, treating us like criminals for the simple fact of being homosexuals. This was 20 years ago, and to this day things continue the same way. That's what makes us angry. And it also gives us the strength to continue fighting for our liberation.

For those who read this, we urge you to join the struggle if you have not yet done so. Organize yourselves, for "you may be next." Please send letters of protest to: **Gobernador Enrique Alvarez del Castillo, Palacio de Gobierno Estatal, Guadalajara, Jal., Mexico.** And letters of solidarity to: **GOHL (Grupo Orgullo Homosexuales de Liberación - Gay Pride Liberation Group), Apdo. Postal 1-1693, Guadalajara, Jal., Mexico.**

The specifics of the Guadalajara raid were taken from a letter that appeared in the bulletin *¿Y QUE?*, #2, of the Grupo Liberalista (gay men and lesbians) of Tijuana, B.C.

Adán Luna
Jessi Harp
Los Angeles

—Translated from the Spanish by AL

IN THIS ISSUE

SEPTEMBER 15-NOVEMBER 14, 1983

- 1 Superpower rivalry threatens all of us
Reagan steps up U.S. military intervention in Lebanon
- 3 Arizona miners battle copper bosses
- 4 Mexicana Airlines halts death flights
- 7 The economic crisis in the Soviet Union—Part Two
- 8 August 27 March on Washington—An assessment
- 9 Black people in the U.S.: The fight for freedom—Conclusion

FEATURES

- 2 Letters
- RSL Convention
- 4 Briefs
 - Food production cut... Poor are Reagan's victims...
 - Brink's trials... Famine in Ethiopia... Mexico: general strike planned
- 12 RSL Program in Brief

©1983 Revolutionary Socialist League

Editorial Board: Paul Benjamin, Susan Edmunds, William Falk, Rod Miller, Ron Taber; Circulation Manager: Wayne Pierce; Production Manager: Ian Daniels; Production Staff: M. Evers, Pat Nelson.

Address all correspondence to:

Torch/La Antorcha
PO Box 1288
New York, NY 10116

For subscription rates and information, see subscription blank in this issue.

RSL to Hold Tenth Anniversary Convention

On the weekend of September 30-October 2, 1983, the RSL will be holding its 10th Anniversary Convention at a retreat in New Jersey.

Our convention agenda includes four main sessions. On Saturday morning, we will be discussing a resolution on RSL Tasks and Perspectives for the coming period. This agenda item will include a discussion of the international economic and political situation, the U.S. political/economic scene, the state of various social movements and the organized left and the tasks of the RSL in this context.

On Saturday afternoon, we will be discussing a resolution on the character of the current revolts against U.S. imperialism and for national liberation taking place in Central America. Sunday morning's convention session will take up "Theses on the Russian Revolution, State Capitalism, Trotskyism and the Fourth International." This document is a summarization of

the major political points included in our forthcoming book on this topic. Finally, we will conclude on Sunday afternoon with an educational talk on the history and character of anarchism as a political trend.

In addition to the political discussions, we will be having a party on Saturday night. On Friday night, we will be having an evening of international solidarity, which will include a short talk and a question and answer session led by a delegation from the RSL's sister organization, the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica, West Indies.

Readers of the *Torch* who are interested in attending should contact the RSL National Office or their local RSL branch for further details.

Due to the convention, we will not be publishing the October 15-November 14 issue of the *Torch/La Antorcha*. Normal publication will resume with the November 15 issue.

them

per-
pres-
years
reón
when
very
nded
f the
give
ners.
they
one
the
s to
s in
jail,
r the
sex-
and
the
akes
s us
ting

we
le if
so.
you
end
na-
sti-
sta-
ico.
to:
no-
day
do.
ira,

ala-
a
the
the
ind

ina
rp
les

the
AL



Arizona Miners Battle Copper Bosses

By PAUL BENJAMIN

Several small copper mining towns in southern Arizona have become battlefields in one of the most militant union struggles to take place in this country in several years. Since July 1, over 2,300 workers from 13 different unions have been on strike against the Phelps Dodge Corporation, the second largest copper producer in the U.S.

The Phelps Dodge Corporation has a long and often-brutal history of union-busting campaigns. In July 1917, armed vigilantes organized by the company forcibly transported over 1,200 strikers into the desert and abandoned them there without food or water in what became known as the "Bisbee Deportation."

In the 1920s, Phelps Dodge and other mining companies clamped what one historian called a "copper collar" over the political and economic life of Arizona, gaining domination of both major political parties and ensuring that state and local governments and courts

But when copper prices—and industry profits—plunged in 1982, Phelps Dodge's company towns became company prisons. Phelps Dodge shut down operations for over six months in 1982, putting two-thirds of Morenci's workers on the streets. When the mines were reopened this year, the workforce was reduced by 30 percent, while those workers who were called back were often forced to work 16-hour days. Meanwhile, the hundreds of workers who remained on layoff were denied credit for food and other essentials at the company store.

These actions were only the beginning of the company's offensive. Last spring a coalition of unions that represent Phelps Dodge workers, including the United Steelworkers of America and the International Association of Machinists, signed a new contract with Kennecott, the industry's largest company, that included a wage freeze and other concessions. The Kennecott contract usually sets the pattern for the entire industry. But this year, the givebacks exacted by

them out of their jobs for good, they went to war. On August 7 and 8, hundreds of workers massed outside the Morenci mine entrance, forcing the company to hire helicopters to bring food and bedding to the scabs barricaded inside. Workers used the same tactics at the company's employment office, forcing it to close after a few hours. And on August 9, over 1,000 strikers, armed with bats, clubs and rocks, massed outside the Morenci mine gates vowing to crash through and occupy the site. Similar actions, on smaller scales, also took place at other company sites around Douglas and Ajo.

Faced with the prospect of full-scale war in Morenci, Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt (Dem.) went into a huddle with company and union officials. Just 35 minutes before the noon deadline set by the strikers, Phelps Dodge representatives agreed to shut down the mine—for the first time since the strike began—for a 10-day "cooling off period."

However, during this "cooling off period," union leaders did nothing to

over how to stop any effort by strikers to take over the mines.

By the time Phelps Dodge resumed operations on August 20, an army of over 700 state police and National Guardsmen were deployed at Morenci to protect "law and order," scabs and company property. Sharpshooters were posted on hillsides above the plant entrance, while helicopters patrolled overhead.

Confronted by this show of force, the strikers could do little to prevent scabs from crossing their picket lines. Babbitt's intervention had enabled Phelps Dodge to regain the initiative.

Since August 20, the company and the state government have been carrying out a campaign of intimidation against the strikers. At least 170 workers have been fired for "misconduct on the picket line." On September 3, Phelps Dodge announced it planned to evict all the strikers from their homes—over 100 have already been evicted. Sheriff's deputies, armed with shotguns, have rounded up at least 35 strikers, with more arrests expected. Children returning to school in Morenci—where a company foreman heads the school board—have been warned that any student who uses the word "scab," or even talks about the strike, will be suspended.

While these events have admittedly demoralized some workers, the great majority are determined to continue their struggle. Workers around the state have begun to rally behind the strikers. On Labor Day—September 5—2,500 workers marched in solidarity with the Phelps Dodge workers in Tucson. Workers have also donated thousands of dollars for an emergency strike fund.



In Ajo, Arizona, striking Phelps Dodge workers and their children confront scabs crossing their picket line.

were loyal to their interests. It was not until 1946—after a 107-day strike—that Phelps Dodge workers were finally able to win their first union contract. Since then, nearly every contract round has been a major battle, with strikes taking place every three years since 1968.

Although their unions give Phelps Dodge workers some protection at the workplace, the company maintains absolute control over small mining towns such as Morenci, Douglas and Ajo, where most of its employees live. In Morenci, for example, Phelps Dodge owns most of the houses and provides the town's electricity and water. It also controls the local banks. As one newspaper reporter put it, "Phelps Dodge owns everything in Morenci but the highway."

The company has tried to use its control over Morenci and other towns to buy the loyalty of its workers. It provided cheap rents, easy credit, and even free home repairs. All these services were intended to convince workers that they had nothing to fear from a company that was "one big happy family."

Kennecott weren't enough for Phelps Dodge. Instead, the company demanded actual wage cuts, elimination of COLA payments and other takeaways.

The strike that followed has been one of the bitterest conflicts in the state's history. Instead of shutting down operations when the strike began, as it had done in the past, Phelps Dodge sought to break the strike by keeping its mines and smelters open and operating them with supervisors, non-union workers and imported scabs.

On July 5, the company got the first of a series of court injunctions limiting union picketing, and threatened to cut off water and electricity to strikers' homes. That night a railroad bridge partially owned by Phelps Dodge was set afire. Then on July 9, the company announced it would begin calling back laid-off union workers to replace the strikers. Two days later a second bridge went up in flames.

On August 5, Phelps Dodge announced it would begin hiring non-union workers as permanent replacements for the strikers. When workers found out that the company was trying to kick

press the initiative handed to them by the militancy of the strikers, while the company and its allies in the business community and the government regrouped their forces and worked out plans to keep the mines open when the truce expired.

Following the August 9 confrontation, major state newspapers began a campaign to turn public opinion against the strikers by letting out a collective howl against "mob rule" in Morenci. The National Right-to-Work Committee even bused hundreds of scabs to Phoenix, the state capital, to demand that Governor Babbitt mobilize the National Guard against the workers.

Babbitt himself needed no such urging. After arranging the "cooling off period," he declared a secret "state of emergency"—allowing him to lay hold of a \$250,000 strike-breaking bankroll. Undercover agents from the state's Criminal Intelligence Systems Agency were ordered into Morenci, Ajo and Douglas to seek out evidence of a "deep-rooted criminal conspiracy." The governor also consulted with law enforcement officials from all over the state

Lessons of the Phelps Dodge struggle

The courage and determination the Phelps Dodge strikers have shown has been inspiring. Unfortunately, however, the events of the strike to date also reflect many of the problems that workers will face as they begin to resist the takeback demands of their own employers.

On the most general level, the strike shows that the corporate/government offensive against working people is continuing despite the shallow, limited economic recovery that is currently taking place. Many industries—like the copper industry—remain mired in economic recession. The solution to these woes, from the capitalists' point of view, is to cut workers' wages and weaken their unions so that even harsher attacks can be carried out in the future.

Workers cannot defeat these attacks by relying only on the strike tactics unions have generally used since the 1950s. As long as the U.S. economy prospered, most strikes were relatively

(Continued on page 13)

Billions spent to cut food production

The U.S. government is paying over \$12 billion this fall to farmers and large landowners who agreed not to grow food this past summer. As a result of the Payment-in-Kind (PIK) program, over 82 million acres, or 128,000 square miles, is barren this harvest. This includes 19 million acres of winter wheat that was in the ground and growing when the PIK program was made law and then destroyed so that the owners could collect payments. It also includes 39 million acres of corn and grain sorghum and 1.7 million acres of rice.

The total area not planted is roughly equivalent to the combined areas of Iowa, Illinois and half of Indiana, or one and a half times the area of Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico combined!

In another farm program, the government buys milk to keep the price up—which of course limits the amount of milk products people can buy and perpetuates the surplus. The government is currently storing 473 million pounds of butter and 876 million pounds of cheese. Earlier this year, the Department of Agriculture distributed 60 million pounds of cheese a month to needy persons, but it is now distributing only 30 million pounds a month because sales of American cheese dropped 15 percent in the first quarter of 1983. Meanwhile, millions of people, in the U.S. and around the world, go hungry.

Gov't study confirms poor are Reagan's victims

A recent government study confirmed what many people had already concluded: The budget cuts proposed by Reagan and passed by Congress in the last two years have hurt the poor more than they hurt the wealthy. The study, by the



AS WE GO TO PRESS—A major victory has been won in the six-month campaign against Mexicana Airlines' participation in the deportation of Salvadorean refugees by the U.S. government. On September 16, Ruth Shari, the public relations director for the airline, announced that Mexicana would no longer carry the refugees—who face almost certain arrest, torture and even death at the hands of El Salvador's right-

wing military government. Notification of the airline's decision came to the Echo Park (Los Angeles) chapter of CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), the group that initiated the nationwide campaign against Mexicana. The announcement was made the day before a large protest against Mexicana had been scheduled to take place in Los Angeles. It also came shortly after Uno Más Uno, a

major Mexico City daily, had indicated that it was planning a feature article on Mexicana Airlines' role in the deportation death flights.

The successful campaign against Mexicana followed a similarly successful effort against Western Airlines. Last September, Western—then the sole carrier of deported Salvadorean refugees—halted its death flights after nine months of protest by CISPES activists. A month later, on October 1, Pan American World Airways announced that it was following Western's lead and would refuse INS requests to carry deported Salvadoreans.

According to Franz Martin, an organizer for the Echo Park CISPES chapter, there is good reason to believe that Taca, the Salvadorean national airline, may become the new carrier for the deportation flights. The Echo Park chapter has been monitoring Taca's activities and is prepared to launch a protest campaign against Taca, should it become the new death flight carrier. □

white people working in alliance with like-minded Black and Latin organizations and anti-imperialist forces abroad.

None of the defendants have drawn any direct connection between the attempted robbery of the Brink's truck carrying \$1.6 million and their political program, saying only that "expropriation is a necessary and legitimate target for oppressed people." They have, however, correctly pointed to the hypocrisy of the U.S. government in labeling them dangerous terrorists while routinely committing far worse atrocities every day in this country, in Central America and around the world.

The RSL believes in defending the members of the BLA/Weather Underground against the U.S. government. The BLA/Weather Underground are members of the U.S. and international movement fighting against U.S. imperialism. As such, they should be defended against the U.S. imperialist state. At the same time, we believe that the BLA/Weather Underground strategy and tactics do more harm than good to the struggle for freedom. Their isolated military actions by small groups do not serve to organize and unite workers and other oppressed people against their common enemy; instead, they remain passive on-lookers to actions they do not understand. Moreover, a revolution that occurs against the wishes of the majority of people can only result in a totalitarian hell, not a free and democratic society.

Finally, the BLA/Weather Underground strategy and tactics help to discredit the very idea of socialism and aid the ruling class in its attempt to paint revolutionaries as arrogant power-seekers who have no regard for human life or humane values.

Sentencing of Balagoon, Gilbert, and Clark has been set for October 14. This is two days after a third trial in the Brink's case is scheduled to open, a state trial in which two defendants, Kathy Boudin and Samuel Brown, face similar charges to those Balagoon, Gilbert and Clark were convicted of.

—WF

Two Brink's trials end

As we go to press, two trials stemming from the October 1981 attempt to capture a Brink's armored truck in Rockland County, New York, have just ended. Eleven people, members of the Black Liberation Army or of white support groups with origins in the student movement of the 1960s, were charged with being a part of the robbery and the subsequent getaway attempt. During the incident, one Brink's guard and two Nyack, NY, policemen were killed.

In the first trial, before a U.S. District Court, six persons were accused of violating federal racketeering laws in planning and carrying out the Brink's holdup, several other robberies, and the 1979 escape from jail of BLA leader Assata Shakur. A defense that combined attacking the credibility of the prosecution's case (which featured the testimony of several former close comrades-in-arms of the defendants) and presenting the political views and motivations of the accused succeeded in winning a partial victory in court.

On September 3, the jury returned guilty verdicts on only eight of the 30 charges against the six defendants. Two of the

accused, Bilal Sunni-Ali and Iliana Robinson, were acquitted on all counts. Sekou Odinga and Silvia Baraldini were convicted of conspiracy and racketeering and face maximum sentences of 20 years. And Cecil Chui Ferguson-El and Edward Jamal Joseph were found guilty as accessories after the fact for hiding a suspect after the Brink's robbery.

The second trial in the case was the New York state trial of Kuwasi Balagoon, David J. Gilbert and Judith A. Clark. Each was charged with seven counts of murder and robbery. On September 14, the jury deliberated for four hours and returned verdicts of guilty on all counts against all the defendants.

The three defendants stayed away from the courtroom during nearly all the proceedings. Instead of presenting a legal defense, they used the opening and closing argument periods and the testimony of the single defense witness to put forward the view that they are soldiers in the "just struggle for new African national liberation from U.S. imperialism" and, as soldiers who engaged in combat with other soldiers, should be treated as prisoners of war.

Defendant Kuwasi Balagoon is a member of the Black Liberation Army. This is a group which grew out of the Black Panther Party in New York and now believes in clandestine military organizing to achieve the goal of a Black nation on the land now occupied by five southern states. Gilbert and Clark come out of the Weather Underground. This group of former student radicals believes that, although revolution in the U.S. is necessary, the majority of people (especially whites in this country) can never be organized to achieve it. Instead, they believe, revolution can only be achieved by an elite underground military force of

Famine in Ethiopia

In 1973-74, a famine caused by severe drought took the lives of over 200,000 peasants in the northern provinces of Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa. Currently, a drought is raging in the same region that is believed to be at least as severe. Hundreds of thousands of people will die.

The responsibility for loss of life in 1973-74 lay in large part with the incompetence and corruption of the semi-feudal government of Emperor Haile Selassie, who in fact came to be overthrown as his role was exposed. Now there is a new problem. The current govern-

Congressional Budget Office (CBO), compares the government benefits that households with various incomes will receive now and in the next few years with the benefits these same households would have received if the laws and regulations in force in 1980 had remained unchanged.

The CBO calculated that in households with less than \$10,000 in income, benefits are being cut by \$240 in 1983 and will be cut by \$430 and \$470 in 1984 and 1985. For households with incomes between \$10,000 and \$20,000, the average cut is \$110 this year and \$300 and \$360 in the next two years. In contrast, for households with incomes between \$20,000 and \$40,000, the cuts are only \$40 this year and \$170 and \$180 in '84 and '85. And for households with incomes between \$40,000 and \$80,000, the cuts are only \$40 in '83, \$140 in '84 and \$160 in '85.

A spokesman for the Office of Management and the Budget, an agency that does much of the same work as the CBO but reports to the president instead of Congress, said it "had no reason to dispute the CBO figures."

Overall, the CBO said, the Reagan-inspired cutbacks in spending on domestic programs will total \$110 billion in the years 1982-85, while military spending in the same period will increase by \$90 billion. —WF

EVENTS

LOS ANGELES

September 17—Commemorate the Beirut Massacre! Demonstrate and rally in support of the Palestinian people. 6380 Wilshire Blvd. 4:00pm. For info, call (213) 384-1500 or (213) 385-6029.

November 12—Stop U.S. Intervention in Central

America! For more info on this demonstration being planned, call (213) 385-6029.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

November 12—East Coast Mobilization to Stop the U.S. War Against Central America. Demands: Stop U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean!

No More Vietnam Wars! Jobs, Peace and Justice! Stop the Nuclear and Conventional Arms Build-up! For more info call: November 12 Coalition (in Washington), (202) 347-5516; or New York RSL, (212) 695-6802.

October 8—National AIDS Vigil. 5:00 pm. For more info, call (212) 695-6802.

ment of Ethiopia is closely allied with the Soviet Union. The drought-afflicted regions are largely controlled by forces hostile to that government.

The rural areas of the province of Tigray, among the hardest hit by the drought, are controlled by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which has been fighting the government since 1975. Eritrea, which has been ruled as a colony by the various central Ethiopian governments for some 30 years, is the base for the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). The EPLF has been fighting for independence for over 20 years, and has some amount of control over most of Eritrea's rural regime.

Various international agencies, including the United Nations, have been attempting to organize broad relief efforts to aid the starving peasants of the region. But most governmental agencies refuse to give aid to "unofficial" groups. This means that the vast

majority of food sent by various countries does not go to the Relief Society of Tigray (REST—organized by the TPLF) or the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA—organized by the EPLF). In turn, this means the vast majority of food does not reach the starving peasants, but is given to the Ethiopian military government to distribute as it sees fit.

What does the Ethiopian military government do with the food? This is the subject of some controversy. According to at least one report, much of the food is traded to the Soviet Union along with Ethiopian food products in return for military and other aid. An independent European fact-finding commission reported that large amounts of the food relief were used by the Ethiopian army to pay its troops and militias, and that stockpiles of food were often kept in military installations, and then abandoned as the army retreated from advances by the liberation fronts. In other situations, as in

Tigray, the food is transported in armed government convoys to towns in the afflicted region still controlled by the government. The government then uses the food to attempt to gain political support from the peasants; if there is a possibility that the TPLF might attack and capture the food, the food distribution center is closed and distribution halted. The government, meanwhile, continues to maintain that it has access to 90 percent of the drought victims, and that there are no irregularities in distribution of relief. And the government denies reports that thousands of refugees from the drought are fleeing into neighboring Sudan.

The United States government has been quick to point out the diversion of relief by the Soviet-supported Ethiopians to the military effort. Predictably, though, this has meant that the U.S. gives less food than it could, and has refused to give such things as trucks for food transport. And of course the U.S. has not seen

fit to send aid to REST or ERA.

As a result of all this, relief intended for peasants goes to support the Ethiopian government's attempt to subjugate those peasants and becomes a cruel bargaining chip. The end result will unfortunately be a repeat of the tragedy of 1973-74: Thousands will die. That famine also ended in the fall of a government. Let us hope that that event will be repeated as well.

—Ian Daniels

Mexico: General strike planned

On Saturday, August 27, 1983, more than 5,000 demonstrators marched through the streets of Mexico City, shout-

ing slogans such as "Esta marcha va a llegar a la huelga nacional" ("This march will take us to a national strike"). Following the march, a rally took place to announce the date of a national work stoppage which is planned for October 18.

This march is the most recent action of a national period of struggle against austerity, the anti-people policies of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional regime, and imperialist intervention in Mexico. Previously, there had been two national assemblies, each attended by more than 1,000 representatives of opposition organizations and unions, including delegates from each state.

The national period of struggle, which includes another march in the capital city October 3, will culminate in the national work stoppage on October 13, which must also be a day of mass protests by all the oppressed sectors of society.

—JH

U.S. Intervention in Lebanon...

(Continued from page 1)

assassinated.) But confronted with world opposition to a bloodbath in Beirut—and fears of heavy Israeli casualties in an all-out battle for the city—the Begin government was unable to consolidate its victory by exterminating the PLO and its allies. As a result, Israeli aggression in Lebanon resulted only in shattering the balance between all the rival forces in Lebanon that had existed since 1976, but failed to eliminate forces that could effectively challenge the Gemayel regime.

rulers led to some tensions with the Begin regime, both the administration and the Israeli government shared the same overall goals—the destruction of the PLO, the creation of a pro-Western puppet Lebanese government, and the gaining of Arab recognition of the Israeli conquest of Palestine.

But all of the administration's dreams of a dazzling triumph in the Middle East have come tumbling down one after another. Reagan's highly-touted "peace plan" was all but forgotten after the various forces in the Middle East, for varying reasons, refused to support it. The administration's plans for building a stable right-wing Lebanese regime collapsed when the Syrian government—an occupier of parts of Lebanon since 1976—refused to bow to U.S. pressure and withdraw its troops.

These failures, in turn, doomed the efforts of the Gemayel regime and the multinational force to maintain order in Lebanon itself. The various Muslim/leftist leaders in Lebanon abandoned the PLO to save themselves from the Israeli invaders—indeed, Druse warlord Walid Jumblat ordered his supporters not to join the PLO forces resisting the invaders. But they had no intention of giving control over their traditional fiefdoms to the Gemayel government. Moreover, the Druse and other Muslim/leftist groups were not about to let the Phalangists move into their territories and slaughter them, just as they massacred hundreds of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

Consequently, skirmishing between the Phalangists and Druse and other Muslim militias resumed before the ink was dry on the agreements that supposedly brought "peace" to Lebanon last summer. Israeli



U.S. Marine sniper in action at Beirut airport.

troops occupying the Shuf region suffered a steady stream of casualties over the past year, which provoked growing demands within Israel itself to withdraw Israeli forces from Lebanon. Finally, on September 4, the Israeli forces evacuated the Shuf and took up more secure—and possibly permanent—positions in southern Lebanon.

Once the Israeli troops left, Druse militias were able to relatively easily drive out the Phalangist bands that had moved into the area under Israeli protection. They also defeated Lebanese army troops who were sent into the Shuf to "restore order." As we go to press, the Druse forces, supported by other Muslim militias, PLO contingents and the Syrian government, have advanced to within a few miles of Beirut. In doing so, they have demonstrated to the world, and to the Lebanese people themselves, the weakness of the Gemayel regime.

In the wake of these gains, Druse leader Jumblat is demanding the complete withdrawal of Phalangist and Le-

banese army forces from the Shuf as his price for peace. He is also joining with other Muslim leaders to demand a political settlement that will give them a share of political power and finish off U.S. hopes of creating a centralized, pro-Western government at their expense.

Trouble ahead for U.S. imperialism

The U.S. government's recent show of firepower may bring a temporary halt to the military operations of the Druse and their allies. But it will not solve the political dilemma facing the Reagan administration and, indeed, the entire U.S. ruling class.

Despite the Israeli military victories last year, despite months of diplomacy and the escalating U.S. military presence, the Muslim/leftist alliance and the Syrian government have regained the initiative in Lebanon. U.S. imperialism cannot crush the anti-Gemayel coalition without a vast military escalation that

would provoke a political crisis at home, divert badly-needed resources from Reagan's anti-communist crusade in Central America—and possibly touch off an all-out Mideast war. It cannot really tolerate a return to conditions as they existed before the Israeli invasion—a weak central government in which local warlords have all the real power—without risking an endless crisis in Lebanon and an endless, politically devastating series of U.S. military casualties that produce no noticeable gains for U.S. imperialism. Finally, the Reagan administration cannot afford to simply pull out of Lebanon without appearing to suffer a humiliating defeat that would undercut the credibility of its commitment to other U.S. client regimes in the Mideast and around the world.

Given these choices, it is hardly surprising that Reagan and his advisers are desperately pretending that U.S. troops really aren't involved in "hostilities" in Lebanon, in order to head off any Congressional—or public—discussion of U.S. policies in Lebanon and throughout the Middle East. □

Reagan's 'peace' plan collapses

The Reagan administration intervened in Lebanon—after some initial hesitation over how to react to the Israeli invasion—in order to secure a lasting imperialist "peace" that Zionist arms and diplomacy were unable to achieve. Its strategy included three closely related elements: 1) an overall Mideast "peace plan," centered on gaining diplomatic recognition for Israel from the Arab rulers in return for a vaguely defined Palestinian "homeland" in association with Jordan on the Israeli-occupied West Bank; 2) a proposal for the withdrawal of "all foreign forces" from Lebanon, coupled with plans to support the Gemayel government with massive military and economic aid; and 3) the establishment of a multinational "peacekeeping force" to supervise the withdrawal of the PLO from Beirut and maintain order around Beirut until a permanent settlement was achieved.

While Reagan's effort to pose as an "honest broker" between the Zionist state and the Arab

THE THREAT OF WAR...

(Continued from page 1)

Korean Air Lines Flight 007—and its 269 passengers—while it flew over Soviet airspace. With the exception of the Kremlin's most loyal apologists, the Russian government's action has been almost universally condemned as a barbaric and inexcusable crime. Moreover, the various statements emanating from Moscow in the aftermath of the downing of Flight 007—an initial denial that the plane had been shot at, a refusal to take any responsibility for the killing of 269 people, a foisting of the blame on other parties, and an insistence on its "right" to shoot down civilian aircraft in the future—have only compounded the Soviet government's guilt in this incident.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

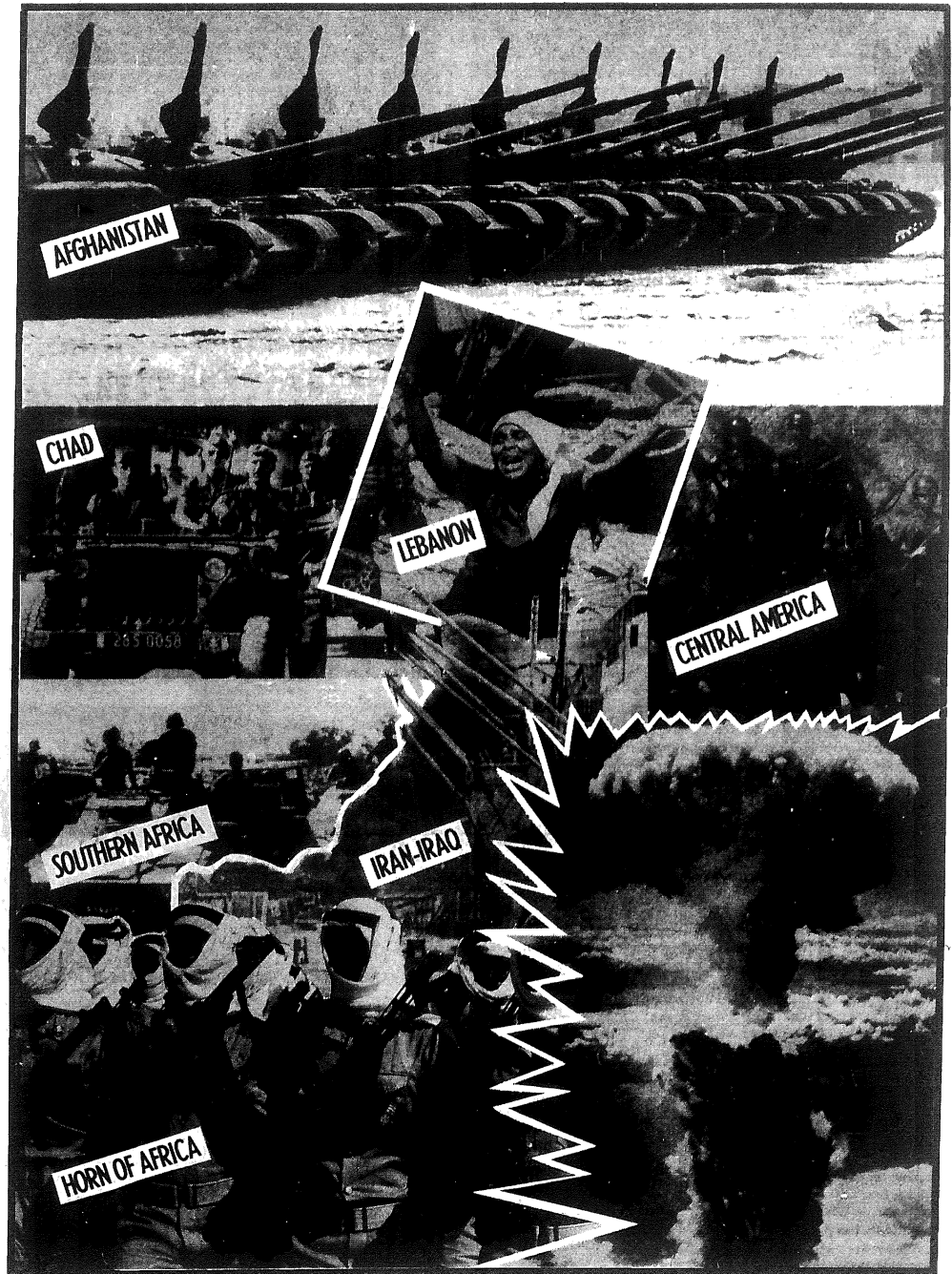
But the Russians aren't the only ones at fault in the affair. The Reagan administration has made every effort to exploit the downing of Flight 007 to further the reactionary interests of the U.S. ruling class. Reagan and other top government officials are using this tragedy to score propaganda points in their new Cold War with the Russian government, and to build domestic and international support for their militaristic policies. Immediately, Reagan linked the incident to his request for new congressional funding for the MX missile and his escalation of U.S. military intervention in Central America and the Middle East. For a government that doesn't blink an eye at the assassination of innocent people in the streets of San Salvador or in the refugee camps of Lebanon by its own allies (and that itself rained bombs and napalm for years on civilians in Southeast Asia), it is the height of hypocrisy to parade as the defender of "human values" against the "barbarism" of its Russian rival.

In addition, many unanswered questions remain about just what did happen to Flight 007, questions which raise the possibility that the U.S. government and its South Korean allies do not have clean hands in this affair. Why, for instance, did Flight 007 go so far off course and fly in and out of Russian territory for two and a half hours? Why didn't U.S. or Japanese air controllers warn the plane's pilot that he was off course? Why didn't the pilot respond to the warnings from Russian fighter pilots? And, was it sheer coincidence that a U.S. reconnaissance plane was flying close to Flight 007 just before it departed from its normal route?

The Russian government has offered a simple and categorical answer to these questions. It insists that Flight 007 deliberately flew into Soviet territory to carry out a spy mission over an area known to be crammed with military installations. Yet it has failed to produce a shred of concrete evidence for this. Whether Flight 007 was on a spy mission either on its own, or in collaboration with other reconnaissance aircraft, may never be known. But whatever it was doing, there was no excuse for shooting it down rather than taking more restrained action.

PAWNS IN SUPERPOWER RIVALRY

The real horror of the destruction of Flight 007 goes beyond the deaths of the 269 people aboard, terrible as those deaths are. The affair is a grim reminder that all of us are pawns in the big-power rivalry between the U.S. and the USSR



for world domination. The propaganda barrages hurled by each side against the other are only meant to cloak their thirst for world conquest and their oppression of innocent people. The U.S. rulers preach "democracy," while backing brutal, authoritarian military dictatorships. Their Russian rivals claim to champion "world peace," "national liberation" and even "socialist revolution," while they engage in a massive military buildup, invade Afghanistan and crush the struggle of Polish workers.

This superpower rivalry is bringing us ever closer to a third world war and a nuclear holocaust. The world economy is on the edge of collapse. Both the U.S. and the Russian economies are staggering. In less developed areas of the world, such as Latin America, Asia and Africa, governments confront mountains of foreign debts, while millions of people face starvation.

In this crisis, both the Eastern and

Western bloc powers are losing control over the actions of their own allies and the various "non-aligned" rulers who play both sides against the middle to increase their own political clout. Wars and social conflicts are breaking out everywhere: Central America, northern Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. To increase their influence and to try to cut down the power of their rivals, the U.S. and the USSR are increasingly openly taking sides in these local conflicts. As a result, the power struggles between tribal leaders in Chad, or sectarian warlords in Lebanon, threaten to explode into superpower confrontations. Under such conditions any incident—like the shooting down of a civilian airliner—could be the spark that sets off World War III.

The growing danger of war does not spring simply from advanced technology, or from the good and bad intentions of individual politicians or governments. It comes from the very nature of

the capitalist system itself. Capitalism, whether in its traditional form in the U.S. or its statist form in Russia, is based on accumulating wealth by exploiting others. Individual capitalists, and entire national ruling classes, survive in this system only by competing with each other for markets and natural resources. When world capitalism is in crisis, this conflict intensifies and takes on more militaristic and violent forms.

There is no way to impose "rules" on this dog-eat-dog system. The only way to eliminate the danger of nuclear war is to overthrow the system that causes war. The survival of all of us hinges on joining with workers and other poor and oppressed people all over the world to fight for an international socialist revolution that can finish off the capitalists, Western-style and Russian-style, and lay the basis for a free, democratic and cooperative society that can eliminate once and for all poverty, oppression and war. □

Late last spring both the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Line of March (LOM) printed long articles claiming that the Russian economy is sound, and that whatever problems it may have are caused by purely external factors, such as poor weather, Western imperialist competition, and the effects of the world recession. These organizations, both of which believe Russia to be some form of socialism or workers' state, published their articles to try to prove the superiority of socialism over crisis-stricken capitalism.

But, as we showed in our previous article (Torch/La Antorcha, Vol. 10, No. 7), the contentions of the SWP and LOM are false. Rather than being healthy, the Russian economy is in a severe crisis, having virtually stagnated for the past few years. Moreover, the causes of this crisis are by no means simply external; they are rooted in the very structure of the economic system in Russia. This assessment is no mere assertion on our part or phony propaganda from the CIA and other imperialist agencies. Confirmation of the crisis in the Russian economy comes from the leaders of Russia itself.

Soviet economists confirm crisis

In April a group of economists from the Siberian Division of the Academy of Sciences prepared a confidential memorandum on the state of the Russian economy. This memorandum affirmed that, indeed, the economy of Russia is in a crisis. Equally important, it explicitly rejected the idea that the crisis is caused by external factors such as bad weather. The memorandum reads:

"All these factors do indeed play their part, but the effect of each is generally limited. . . . The deteriorating indicators, however, beset most of the branches of the economy. . . . Therefore, there must be a common cause underlying these phenomena.

"In our view, it lies in the outdated nature of the system of industrial organization and economic management or simply the inability of the system to insure complete and efficient utilization of the working and intellectual potential of society."

The Siberian economists were at least partly supported by Soviet President and Russian Communist Party Chief Yuri Andropov. Andropov, who has been trying for months to get the economy into gear, told high-level Communist Party officials on August 15 that the time for "half-measures" was over in getting the Russian economy moving.

"Now we must make up for what we have lost," Andropov said. "This will demand changes in planning, management and the economic mechanism." Whether Andropov can make the changes needed to solve Russia's economic problems remains to be seen.

One of the most important assets of the Russian economic system, groups like the SWP and LOM argue, is the system of central planning. This is supposed to allocate resources efficiently, spur economic growth, and prevent the periodic recessions which in the West throw millions out of work. However, LOM and the SWP, as well as other apologists for Russian state capitalism, misunderstand (or misrepresent) what economic planning in Russia really is. Economic planning in Russia and in other so-called socialist countries does not actually determine what is produced, where, etc. It is primarily a statement of the intentions of the planners and their political bosses, that is, their desires about what will be produced. Drawing up a plan is one thing, and making sure it is carried out successfully is something else entirely. In fact, in Russia the gap between the plan and the real functioning of the economy is very wide. This can be seen in a number of ways.

First, no economic plan in the Soviet Union has ever been fulfilled! In 1980, for example, at the end of the last plan for which figures are available, steel production fell 12 percent below target, coal production 10 percent, and grain 13 percent. In the Ninth Five Year Plan, 1971-75, consumer goods grew at only 6.5 percent per year, far below the projected growth rate of 8.3 percent. This entire article could be filled with figures of this kind.

Second, the economic plans are never completed and published at the onset of the periods for which they are supposed to apply. In fact, no plan has ever been prepared on time; most have never even been



A reply to the SWP and Line of March — Part 2

The Economic Crisis in the Soviet Union



published in full, and most have been drastically revised part way through their period. These examples at least suggest that despite the existence of central planning, the Russian economy runs according to something else. To understand how the Russian economy actually works, we have to look at economic "planning" in Russia more closely. It is first necessary to see what Russian planning is not.

The myth of 'socialist planning'

By no stretch of the imagination can the economic planning in Russia be considered "socialist." Genuine socialist planning is the collective effort of the producers—primarily workers and farmers—to decide what and how much to produce, how to do it, and how to distribute the product. True socialist planning, therefore, requires broad democracy. The producers must be able to meet, study, discuss and freely decide economic, political and social questions without being watched over by political authorities who clap people in jail for saying the "wrong" things. And they must have the mass, democratic institutions, such as independent unions, cooperatives or workers' councils, to wield the power necessary to carry out the plan.

In the USSR, as shown in Part 1, such workers' democracy does not exist. The workers and farmers cannot speak freely, meet independently, or organize for their points of view. They cannot even legally strike or organize on the factory floor. Moreover, they do not have truly independent and democratic institutions through which they can draw up the plan (or elect those who do), implement the plan, or even defend themselves from abuses by the engineers and

managers or errors in the plan, etc. True, there are unions, councils and cooperatives in Russia, but rather than being instruments of the workers to run the economy and society, they are political and economic levers (conveyor belts is the term the bureaucrats use) for the self-selecting party and state bureaucracy to control the people and maintain their power. Finally, even if the workers and farmers did have the organizational means to plan the Russian economy, they do not have the time to do so; the workweek is no shorter than in the West, and workers have to stand on line many hours each day to buy food, clothing and other items they need. The result is that in Russia the bureaucracy determines the plan and the plan reflects its interests, not those of the workers and peasants. Thus, economic planning in Russia is not socialist planning, but bureaucratic planning.

The bureaucratic nature of the Russian economy greatly undermines its effectiveness. For example, the information necessary for effective planning is impossible to obtain. With bureaucratic control, fear of punishment for making errors or saying the wrong thing to the wrong person, and no open discussion, everyone lies. Factory managers and other functionaries hide problems from their superiors, while they distort vital economic information, for example by understating the productive capacity of their factories to obtain smaller production quotas. The workers do likewise to protect themselves from speedups.

Moreover, even if the information were accurate, it would get lost in the mind-boggling Russian bureaucracy. The Russian National Institute on Documentation and Archives estimates that the economy cranks out 800 billion documents a year, or 7,000 for every worker in the country. Put another way, if each of Russia's 114 million workers did nothing but write documents, each

person would have to turn out 28 of them every working day. And this in a country with almost no computers!

Planning in the Soviet Union begins when the state planning agency, Gosplan, starts to set production goals for tens of thousands of goods over the next five-year period. This sets off a virtual orgy of in-fighting in the bureaucracy as each section (region, industry or factory) seeks to get itself assigned the greatest resources and the highest input-lowest output quotas. (This is a struggle which in fact never ends; and it is one of the direct causes of the long delays in finishing the plans.)

For those parts of the plan which are completed, the basic directive for each factory manager is the *Tekhpromfinplan*, which itself takes more than six months to finish. This document lays out in great detail for the manager the volume and assortment of his output, methods of production, quantities of inputs, financial goals, etc. Yet, as one observer has noted: "This most important planning document does not perform the role assigned to it. Instead of serving the purposes of day-to-day operational guidance, it is filed away . . ."

Yet, the managers do not ignore the plan entirely. Since they are rewarded if they fulfill or over-fulfill their output quotas, the plan becomes a narrow goal to be met, or gotten around. For example, the manager of a blouse factory may have his quota set in terms of numbers of blouses produced. Since it's in his interest to produce as many blouses as possible, he will tend to overproduce a few sizes where he can get long (and hence more efficient) production runs, and underproduce everything else. It will also be in his interest to skimp on cloth, thread, buttons, etc., in order to turn out even greater volumes. Multiplied many times over for every firm and every product, these methods result in massive disproportionalities in the economy as needed goods of all kinds fall into short supply, while unneeded ones pile up and rot.

These shortages and gluts cause other distortions. In an economy plagued by shortages, each plant manager tries to make his factory a self-contained economy. This happens even though everyone realizes the advantages of specialization. Rather than be dependent on uncertain supplies from outside, the blouse factory manager will not only have his factory make the blouses, he will also try to have it manufacture the buttons, zippers and even the cloth and sewing machinery. In 1957, as a result of this industrial autarky, less than one-third of the plants specializing in making machine tools were in the appropriate ministry. The rest operated under ministries which should have been users of such tools.

Bureaucratic inefficiency

The bureaucratic nature of planning in Russia also results in a long-standing shortage of labor-saving technology. The Soviet Union has few computers, robots, or other kinds of modern industrial equipment; partly as a result, annual growth in productivity has slowed from 2.0 percent to 1.2 percent in the 1970s. There are several reasons for this, but one of the most important is simply that Russian managers have little incentive to innovate. In fact, it is usually in their interest not to introduce new techniques, since to do so means having their assigned quotas increased and running the risk of failing to meet them. This summer Andropov himself discussed this problem. He complained that the manager who risks introducing new technology "often turns out to be the loser, while the one who keeps away from innovation loses nothing."

Moreover, the large pool of low-paid Russian workers further hinders innovation. Russian workers receive very low wages, and since they cannot organize independent unions or strike, they have no way to increase them. Moreover, each factory will tend to hoard workers for overcoming production bottlenecks and "storming the plan," that is, working at a breakneck pace at the end of each month in order to fulfill the month's quota. (At other times, the excess workers do make work or don't work at all.) With bodies of surplus labor available, why should a manager introduce efficient, labor-saving techniques?

All these problems, resulting from the bureaucratic nature of planning in Russia, come crashing down particularly on the production of food and consumer goods. Especially outside the cities of European

(Continued on page 13)

August 27 March on Washington — An Assessment

By WILLIAM FALK

Over 300,000 people made their way to D.C. on August 27 for the 20 Anniversary Mobilization for Jobs, Peace and Freedom, filling the highways, the subways and the mall that stretches through central Washington.

"I knew it would be big, but I didn't know it would look like this," a member of the Pineville, Kentucky, NAACP told a Torch supporter. "All these people walking all over the grass of the 'important buildings' you see on television. Tramping down their lawns. And they can't move us off. They won't be able to keep us off the news now—won't be able to say we're not important."

The demonstration took the same basic form as the 1963 civil rights march it commemorated: a gathering on the mall east of the Washington Monument and then a short march to the main event, a rally at the Lincoln Memorial. The unifying theme of the day was clear and simple: Get rid of Ronald Reagan. "Reagan no more in 1984," the crowd near the speakers' stand chanted at the prompting of Benjamin Hooks of the NAACP. There were signs and banners proclaiming nearly all the demands of the march; thousands of people carried signs with a picture of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or wore his picture on a button or a T-shirt. "We still have a dream," hundreds of thousands proclaimed.

A mass, multi-issue protest

The August 27 demonstration reflected the strengths and weaknesses of the forces for progressive social change in the U.S. today. The march's greatest strength was its size. Although smaller than what the organizers had hoped for, the mobilization was comparable in size to the largest anti-war and civil rights demonstrations of the past.

The march also demonstrated the unity of the Black community in opposition to Reagan. Over half the marchers were Black, representing nearly every type of church, mosque, political group, social club and community organization around. Of the national Black organizations, only the corporation-funded and oriented Urban League refused to endorse the march.

The mobilization also showed that despite the steady rightward shift of U.S. politics in the last 10 years, there are still a lot of people who identify their heritage as the struggles against the system of the 1960s and '70s.

In fact, in at least one way this march took a significant step beyond the other half-dozen rallies of over 100,000 that have been held in Washington over the past 20 years: It combined a protest against the U.S. war machine and arms buildup with the call for justice at home and freedom for all.

Both the peace/anti-nuke organizations and groups organizing against the U.S. war against Central America were a major part of August 27. The Mobilization for Survival, for instance, acted as the official march transportation committee in several cities. Thousands of the marchers came because of their involvement with peace groups. And a representative of the anti-U.S. forces in El Salvador spoke at the gathering site rally Saturday morning.



Nearly 300,000 protesters joined the August 27 March on Washington for Jobs, Peace and Freedom.

The role of the peace groups and the inclusion of "peace" as one of the march demands, along with some extremely mild, indirect criticism of U.S. army shipments to Israel and Central America, caused a layer of groups who otherwise might have supported the march to either hang back or oppose the mobilization. This included the AFL-CIO Executive Board, several Jewish organizations and, more quietly, people associated with presidential candidate Walter Mondale. In fact, however, it was the alliance of the civil rights organizations with the peace movement that made the march a reality.

In addition to Black and peace organizations, dozens of groups from the many movements that grew up under the inspiration of the Black liberation movement took part in the march. This included women's rights organizations, gay rights groups, environmental groups, disabled peoples' rights organizations, the Gray Panthers and others. Although organizers had not originally scheduled a gay speaker as part of the program, the several gay groups who endorsed and built the march were able to exert enough pressure to reverse that decision.

Heavy union support and involve-

ment was another strength of the mobilization. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Postal Workers, the Communication Workers of America, the National Education Association, the Food and Commercial Workers, the United Auto Workers, and other unions supported the mobilization with money and buses for their members. Over 50,000 people came to Washington in union contingents.

Organizers aren't building a fighting movement

Despite the success of the mobilization, something was missing from the event. There was a lack of intensity, a lack of purposefulness. There was no fight, anger, or even energy to the crowd. It was, as the mass media have said over and over again, diffuse. In the area of the reflecting pool close enough to the stage to hear, most people listened together to the speeches and responded together, but there was little other intense unity or interaction. A little

distance from the Lincoln Memorial, people were largely relating to the groups they had come to Washington with, picnicking or talking or whatever.

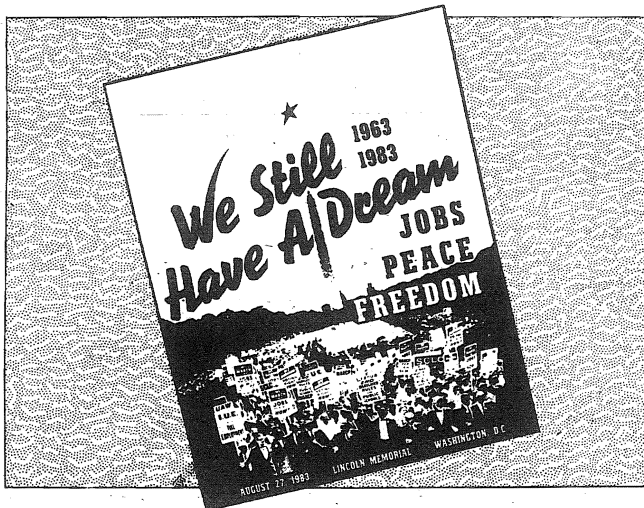
While there are incidental causes for this—the heat of the day, a certain amount of disorganization to the march—the basic reason is political.

The 20th Anniversary Mobilization was not a call to action. The organizers are not attempting to build an angry, fighting movement. There was no plan to go back to our towns and cities and fight—even fight for some new law, some new program. The NAACP had a follow-up action to August 27 that would be ludicrous if it were not so pathetic: Black people should go to banks and get \$2 bills and Susan B. Anthony dollars and spend them on Labor Day to show that Black people have significant buying power.

Instead, the march organizers' program comes down to two things: register to vote and vote Democratic. In one way or another this is what virtually every speaker on Saturday afternoon said.

While most of the people at the march, at least those who vote at all, will indeed vote Democratic in 1984, it is out of cynicism and despair that they do it: Most people now believe that nothing better than the "lesser evil" is possible. Few people in the August 27 crowd or elsewhere can get enthusiastic about the prospect of voting for such men as Walter Mondale, John Glenn, or Alan Cranston. (Jesse Jackson proposes to get around this problem by creating excitement about his own candidacy and then turning the votes over to a white Democrat.)

But the biggest problem about "vote Democratic" is that it won't work. As we discussed in the last issue of the Torch/La Antorcha, the organizers of the August 27, 1983, march are using a myth about the march 20 years ago to justify their current political strategy. The truth about 20 years ago is that the Democrats reluctantly gave concessions to the Black movement because the Black movement at the time was growing more militant every hour and threatened the very stability of U.S. society. To stop the current attacks and begin to win jobs, peace and freedom, we must threaten the stability of society once more. □





Black People in the US: The Fight for Freedom PERSPECTIVES FOR THE COMING PERIOD



The article below is the concluding part of a resolution on the struggle of Black people in the U.S., adopted by the RSL at our 1981 National Convention. For a copy of the complete resolution, send \$1 to the RSL National Office.

As we have discussed in numerous documents and *Torch/La Antorchas* articles, the post-World War II boom in the U.S. and other advanced capitalist countries is definitively over. After years of relative economic stability and prosperity, the international capitalist system is approaching a catastrophic crisis. Looking past all the relatively minor ups and downs (the recession of 1974-75, the upturn of 1976-79, and the 1980-81 recession), we can see that the overall direction of the system is down, toward a generalized economic crisis of the breadth and depth of the depression of the 1930s (whether or not it develops as abruptly as that crisis). Just as world capitalism then required a major depression and world war to re-establish the conditions for profitable production, today, the system will require comparably cataclysmic events in order to create the conditions for the rapid accumulation of capital. The crisis will be total—economic, social, political and cultural—and will create the opportunity for a worldwide socialist revolution.

Today, the world crisis is having a three-fold impact on the system. First, the competition among the capitalist powers and within the capitalist class of each country is increasing, leading to a fragmentation of the power blocs, stepped-up military spending and a drive toward war, including preparing the people of different countries for such a war. Second, the competition among the classes—that is, the class struggle—is intensifying, as each capitalist class tries to restore the conditions for profitable production and capital accumulation by increasing the rate of exploitation of the working class—that is, to pump more surplus value out of the workers. Finally, the competition among the working classes of different countries and within each country is heightening, further exacerbating already existing national/racial/regional/sexual, etc., divisions within the class.

This general dynamic helps to explain what is happening in the U.S. today in regard to Black people. The present attacks on Black people's rights and living standards—the cuts in social services, the increase in racist violence and unemployment, and so forth—are the direct result of the ruling class campaign to increase their profits, modernize and rationalize industry, etc., by attacking the entire working class. Even if it weren't planned, this campaign would hit the most oppressed workers first and hardest, those at the bottom of society, the unemployed, the unorganized and unskilled, those who because of previous discrimination have the least seniority.

But in addition to this more-or-less automatic reason why Black people are getting hit the hardest there is a more conscious political dynamic at work. If the ruling class were to attack the entire working class across the board, all sections at the same time, it would risk provoking a mass movement or even a mass united uprising in response. In order to avoid this, the capitalists are attacking those who are least able to defend themselves, that is, the people who have the least organized power with which to fight back, little or no political clout, etc. This includes the unemployed, people in unorganized industries, unskilled workers who may be in unions but who are treated as second class citizens in those organizations, undocumented workers, and so forth. And even more concretely, the capitalists are going after those who can be or are already somewhat isolated from other sectors of the working class. This way the capitalists can actually get support from some workers in carrying out these attacks. For a variety of obvious reasons, this means an attack on Black people.*

The idea behind this approach is: If the ruling class can get away with attacks on the most vulnerable sections of the working class, it can soften up other

sectors of the working class for additional attacks when the time comes. By attacking one sector at a time, starting with the most vulnerable, in an application of "salami" tactics, the ruling class hopes eventually to be able to lower the wages and living conditions and weaken the organizations of the entire working class without causing itself too much political trouble.

The logic of this approach is to increase racism in the society and to use it to keep the working class confused and divided. To a degree, the rise of bigotry among whites, including white workers, is a "natural" or "automatic" result of the crisis. Already infected by a racist view of the world and racist attitudes, many white people are prone to see Black people as the cause of the crisis. They believe that the problem is that Blacks want too much, that they're getting all the benefits, cheating on welfare, etc. And they think that if they are to protect themselves, all white people should stick together, which in practice means to organize against Blacks.

Given the history of this society and the structure of the economy, many white workers would have this kind of response even if the ruling class were not actively trying to foment racism. As it happens, however, more and more sectors of the ruling class, through their own racist inclinations and from a conscious desire to prevent working class unity, actively encourage racist sentiment among white people and aid and abet racist organizations, including the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazis. It is to the ruling class's advantage to turn the frustration of white workers and middle class people against Black people rather than against the capitalists, and to utilize whites as a political club to keep Black people "in line."

At the same time, the ruling class is helping to shift the general social climate

*It also means attacking Latinos and other specially oppressed sections of the working class, but for the purposes of this discussion, we will be referring simply to Black people.

toward social conservatism as a means to control the entire working class; a re-emphasis on "traditional values," including patriotism, the (white middle class) family as the model, obedience to authority, religion, puritanism, etc., serves the ruling class to keep the workers under its control, accepting its values and authority, unthinking, ignorant of enemies and incapable of fighting back effectively. This increased social conservatism is also heightening the special oppression of Black people, since most Blacks have never fit the "model" held up by the ruling class; the degree to which Black people's culture is distinct from mainstream, white, "American" culture is the degree to which, by definition, it has not conformed to the model. As the ruling class tries to enforce a stricter, more conservative social, cultural and moral code, Black people will find themselves increasingly under attack for violating this code. Whereas in the recent past, Black culture may have been considered merely different from mainstream, white, middle class culture, increasingly Black culture and hence Black people as a whole will be considered culturally and morally inferior—sinful. This development can be seen in the not-so-embryonic moral totalitarianism of the New Right religious groups, such as Moral Majority. While this primitive, puritanical, authoritarian morality serves to reinforce the oppression of women and gays of all races and classes, it also serves to increase the special oppression of all Black people, including straight males.

We can expect the conservative social climate to add to the oppression of Black people in still other ways. As the economic crisis grinds down whole sections of the Black communities, there will be a concomitant increase in crime in those communities. In fact this is a classwide phenomenon: The degree to which all sections of the working class are pushed down, is the degree to which crime, drugs, etc., will become more prevalent in general. Yet, since Blacks will be hit proportionately harder, and

(Continued on following page)

(Continued from previous page)

since the media and racism in the society incline most white people to look at things in a racist way, the increase in crime and drug abuse will be seen as a particularly "Black thing." Meanwhile, since the ruling class is committed to cutting social programs, not expanding them, its only answer to rising crime is to beef up the police force and their equipment, throw more and more people into jail for longer periods of time, restore the death penalty as a supposed deterrent, fan the social climate for an ever-greater crackdown, etc. In short, there is and will be an increase in across-the-board repression. This will also hit Black people the hardest, because, among other things, they will suffer the highest unemployment and worst social services, and hence will experience a high "desperation rate" within the community, particularly among the young people. Equally, the capitalists' "justice system" will particularly discriminate against Black people, arresting, convicting and jailing Blacks proportionately more than whites, convicting the victims of crimes as perpetrators, throwing the book at Blacks accused of victimless crimes, while being relatively more lenient toward whites.

Politically, the ruling class will systematically try to lessen the political power of Black people, the logical goal (not necessarily reached or fully intended) being to restore Jim Crow, depriving Blacks of political rights and power altogether. This flows out of the ruling class strategy of hitting Blacks first and hardest, heightening their social isolation and fomenting racism as a means to prevent a joint working class response to their offensive. This effort to decrease the political power of Blacks will take a number of forms, such as undercounting Black people in the census (willful, or merely the result of the racism of the census takers who find it frightening or distasteful to do what is necessary to get an accurate count of Black people); redrawing election districts as well as moving to at-large districting, both of which would submerge the Black population within the larger white population; and other more direct means, like outright intimidation to prevent Black people from voting in particularly racist areas.

In addition to these direct political attacks on Black people, we can expect a cultural attack on the whole idea of Black pride and dignity. We can expect an attempt to promote the ideal of WASP culture and family. (This of course also involves an attack on women's and gay rights, etc.) Part of this will be an effort to denigrate Black culture, to recreate the idea that Black people (or a narrow portion of Black people) can only succeed in society by becoming more white.

The increasingly right-wing and racist climate will also decrease the portion of the white population, particularly the white middle class, that in the past might have supported liberal causes. This too will heighten the political isolation of Black people. Since Blacks have always been a relatively small minority in U.S. society (today 11.7 percent officially), such isolation can relatively quickly lead to total political powerlessness.

The other side of the ruling class's effort to decrease the political weight of Black people will be to rely more and more on the racist right-wing movements as a voting base and as the mobilizers and organizers for their candidates and programs. This role of the right-wing movements was clearly visible in the 1980 presidential election campaign, in which the various New Right organizations played a crucial role in mobilizing support for Ronald Reagan and other right-wing candidates and mobilizing opposition to various liberals. These organizations are likely to become more powerful politically in the coming period, both as their mass

base grows and as the ruling class seeks to utilize them as political ballast in its attacks on Blacks, Latins, other oppressed people, the unions and the working class as a whole. Needless to say, the augmented political weight of the organized right wing can only intensify the attacks on Black people and worsen their position in society.

In all this, the political goal of the ruling class is the maintenance and strengthening of the political alliance of the white middle class, and as many white workers as possible, with the ruling class. In this way, the capitalists hope to bribe and/or fool whole sections of the white population into thinking that since they are white, they have a real stake in the system and should defend it from attack. And through this they hope to isolate, render powerless and beat down other, "non-white" people, that is, especially Black and Latin people.

State of the Black movement

In the face of these current and coming attacks, Black people as a whole are not well-prepared to wage an organized fightback. In particular, the Black Movement has been in a state of disarray and retreat for some time. Compared to the 1960s and early '70s, when the Civil Rights and Black Liberation Movements encompassed hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of activists and supporters, the Black Movement of today is quite small. (This is not to say that most Black people do not agree with the broad aims of the Black Movement, but they are not prepared to get directly involved in anti-racist activities at this time.)

Moreover, during the 1960s, the Black Movement underwent a thoroughgoing ideological struggle, especially over the question of integrationism vs. nationalism. This struggle helped train and shape a whole generation of Black activists. In comparison, the ideological struggle in the Black Movement today, specifically an attempt to evaluate past strategies and develop new ones, is at a low ebb and appears to be taking place largely among a section of Black academics and professionals. Meanwhile, rank and file activists, and Black people in general, appear to be mostly outside the arenas of debate.

While a full discussion of why the Black Movement is in such a weakened state is beyond the scope of this resolution, we would like to note one major contributory factor. That is the fact that the ruling class strategy to deal with the Black struggle of the 1960s-70s was to a great degree successful. This was a two-pronged approach. On the one side, the government launched a campaign of brutal repression against the more militant Black leaders and organizations, such as the Black Panther Party (BPP). This campaign included everything from the infiltration and subversion of Black organizations, to frame-ups that resulted in lengthy and costly court battles (and, occasionally, jail terms for the government's targets), to outright murder. BPP leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, prison activist George Jackson and others were killed during this period.

But this was only the half of it. The other side of the ruling class strategy of repression was to grant a number of concessions that appeared to answer Black people's demands for decent jobs, schools, housing, etc., but in reality only created substantial openings for a relatively small number of Black people.* This side of the strategy centered on cementing an alliance between the liberal capitalists and sections of the Black middle class (and often integrationist) leaderships to fight for affirmative action, busing and other measures. But these measures represented, at best,

only very limited and partial solutions to the problems the majority of Black people face. At worst, and this was a crucial part of the strategy, they served to pit Black people against poor and working class whites in a struggle over the available (and not enough) jobs, schools, housing, etc.

With the movement in retreat under the gun of repression, and with the Black middle class leadership channeling activity into increasingly narrow demands (including building support for the Democratic Party), many Black people dropped out of the movement altogether during the 1970s. Meanwhile, the movement as a whole fragmented. Most of the more militant organizations, which tended to be quite young and have less of an apparatus than the more moderate organizations, shattered. Militants went in a number of different directions. Some, despairing of the possibility of organizing large numbers of Black people in a struggle against their oppression, turned to terrorist-style activity, a la the Black Liberation Army. Others joined one of the many smallish nationalist groupings that sprung up during the '70s, such as the African People's Socialist Party. These groupings often incorporated a level of Third Worldist/Maoist or Mao-oid politics that captured so many radicalizing

layer of activist ministers, lost much of the mass base and political clout they had had. In particular, their failure to fight for the needs of the most oppressed Black people, such as unemployed Black youth, hurt their credibility among these people to a considerable degree. In fact, by the mid-'70s, middle class liberals, Black and white alike, were bemoaning how alienated young Black people had become, and how few ties they had to the "respectable" elements of the Black community. This was graphically demonstrated during the May 1980 Miami rebellion when Jesse Jackson, Andrew Young and other prominent leaders were practically driven out of Miami when they tried to cool things down.

The more reformist Black organizations have suffered an additional blow lately with the defeat of Carter, the election of Ronald Reagan as president, and the general turn to the right on the part of the ruling class. This has undercut, at least temporarily, one of the main sources of political clout the reformist Black leaders had. Moreover, since in the past these leaders' approach was to build an alliance with liberal politicians and the liberal sections of the middle and ruling classes, the present discrediting and weakening of liberalism has left them directionless. This is so much the case that some leaders of the milieu, such as Ralph Abernathy (who had been

long-term pro-reformist ap... (It is worth... Black Indep... made up o... currents, ov... the BUF's... more tepid... more militar... therefore, th... in the upcom... that in fact... somewhere... ism and nati... own variati... possibility t... ist groupings... a layer of... ment. Howev... this current... that there... nationalism... country, suc... prisons (the... prisoners an... Black peopl... unfortunate... these group... To summ... Movement... retreat, and... perspective/... by any large... On the other

"Increased social conservatism is heightening the special oppression of Black people, since most Blacks have never fit the 'model' held up by the ruling class."



people from the social movements of the '60s. Still others joined left groups, particularly the emerging Maoist organizations. The October League (later the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist, now near extinction), the Workers Viewpoint Organization (later the Communist Workers Party) and the Communist Labor Party (which was probably the first Maoist group to move away from a pro-China line toward a pro-Moscow line) all drew substantial numbers of Black cadre from the more militant wing of the Black Movement during its decline.

The more moderate wing of the Black Movement tended to weather the decline of the movement better than the more militant organizations did, but only relatively. The mainstream, reformist Black organizations, such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and others, as well as a

colleague of Martin Luther King Jr., and a former head of SCLC), actually supported Reagan in the presidential election in the hopes of gaining some influence in the White House. Given Reagan's right-wing political views, however, combined with the lack of any serious orientation to Black people on the part of the Republican Party, this approach is likely to accomplish little, even in the short-term and individual sense.

Today, with the attacks that are coming down, the basis exists for a revitalization of the Black Movement. It is very hard to say, however, given how weak the movement currently is and our lack of in-depth knowledge of the existing Black organizations, what political and organizational forms the movement will take, and the pace at which it will develop. It is likely that, as the liberals regroup their forces and the movements emerge on a fairly low political level, the more moderate wing of the Black Movement will pick up steam.

However, there are indicators that point in a somewhat different direction. In particular, the Black United Front (BUF), which started in New York City but had a national convention in 1980, has a somewhat more militant, nationalist program. But even this is mixed: Its politics appear to be a combination of nationalist rhetoric and

of a revitaliz... ment, though... stating or o... same time, ... mixing a cert... with nationa... Whether this... in the Black M... is hard to sa

Main the RSL stro

In this cont... major them... emphasize th... direction we... Black Libera... underlying co... build a strong... that unites an... sectors of the... oppressed, an... the capitalist... Given the fa... on the offens... particularly B... the first them... need to defend... the economic... won by the Bla... and '60s. We... rights, needs... tions of Black

it much of
clout they
failure to
oppressed
yed Black
mong these
e. In fact,
s liberals,
emoaning
people had
ey had to
the Black
ally dem-
80 Miami
, Andrew
iders were
ami when
n.
organiza-
ional blow
arter, the
resident,
ht on the
as under-
the main
reformist
since in
ch was to
politicians
e middle
discredit-
n has left
much the
e milieu,
had been

long-term program with a basically quite reformist approach in the here-and-now. (It is worth noting that the National Black Independent Political Party, while made-up of many different political currents, overall seems to share some of the BUF's fence-straddling between a more tepid reformism and a somewhat more militant nationalism.) It is possible, therefore, that what we will see emerge in the upcoming period will be a current that in fact occupies a political space somewhere in between the integrationism and nationalism of the '60s, with its own variations peculiar to the '80s.

We also should not rule out the possibility that more militant nationalist groupings will gain hegemony among a layer of people in the Black Movement. However, we are least familiar with this current at this time. We do know that there are pockets of strong nationalism in certain parts of the country, such as Chicago, and in the prisons (though not among all Black prisoners and, obviously, not among all Black people in Chicago). But, again, we unfortunately know too little about these groupings.

To summarize: Overall, the Black Movement is disorganized, still in retreat, and lacks any unifying, viable perspective/strategy that is agreed upon by any large numbers of Black activists. On the other hand, there have been signs

under attack. This includes busing and affirmative action programs which we have been critical of in the past. We should support all concrete struggles of Blacks where they are fighting to defend past gains or win new ones. A central core of this is the need to fight within the workers' movement as a whole, the labor unions, other organizations and within the left for such a policy. We need to explain why what appear to be specifically "Black" demands are, or should be, the demands of the entire movement, not merely something "good" for Black people. Essential to this is the notion that the attack on Black people is the leading edge of the attack on the entire working class and all oppressed people. We should ruthlessly expose any notions that by allowing Blacks to get attacked white workers can get a larger piece of the cake that remains.

The second major broad theme we should emphasize in our propaganda and agitation is the need for Unity. All movements and organizations of workers and other oppressed people should support the demands of the others. Where differences arise, for example, between Blacks and Latins over the issues of busing and bilingual education, these differences should be worked out within the movement, through negotiations, conferences, etc., without appealing to the government, the liberals or other non-working class elements, organizations or institutions. It is crucial that the organizations of Latins, women, gays, white workers, etc., defend and take up each other's demands as if they were their own and not merely as part of a quid pro quo (a deal), a favor or a "good thing." Concretely, we should strenuously advocate a consistent united front policy among all the movements and organizations within the movements of workers and oppressed people. We should clearly understand that educational work, propaganda and agitation cannot, by themselves, bring about the unity that the movement requires, but that such unity can only be built in practice and over time, through joint struggle on the part of the different sectors, layers and organizations of the working class. The chief way such unity, even on a temporary, limited and partial basis, will be achieved is through concrete united fronts of the distinct organizations, whose mutual distrust and even hostility will be broken down through concrete experience in struggle.

An additional component of such a policy of unity is a struggle against all forms of racism, chauvinism, sexism and other forms of bourgeois ideology among the individuals, organizations and movements. By struggle, we mean educational work designed to explain what these various "isms" are, how they arise historically/socially and their role in dividing the working class and preventing it from achieving an actual class consciousness. Such work needs to be carried out among all groups since the weakness of the working class movement in this country and the pervasive influence of the bourgeoisie, its agents and its ideologies mean that there is no section of the population that is free from one form or another of prejudice, such as racism among whites, male, female, gay and straight; sexism among males, Black and white; anti-gay sexism among straight whites, Blacks, Latins, males and females, etc.

The third major broad theme for our propaganda and agitation should be the need for **independence from the capitalist class**. Today, no actual classwide movement yet exists. Each group of workers and especially oppressed people still struggles by and large on its own, for its own perceived needs and, in fact if not consciously, in competition with the needs of other workers. The same applies to the trade unions, which no more represent the class interests of the

"Our underlying conception of the struggle for Black liberation is the need to build a strong, working class movement that unites and fights for the needs of all sectors of the working class and specially oppressed, and that is independent of the capitalist class and its parties."



working class than does the NAACP; they represent a small and relatively privileged section of the working class and are led by sections of the middle class. As a result, the struggle for class independence must be put forward in as concrete a manner as possible in any given time and place. We do not have any specific demands which by themselves, at all times, present and advocate the independence of the working class from the capitalist class. For this reason, we generally support the call for, and steps toward the formation of, a Black party independent of the capitalist class.

While this is not per se a class party, if such a party were formed and were actually independent of the Democratic and Republican parties, it would represent motion toward the formation of a class party. Of course, we have the duty to expose attempts to use the slogan of an independent party, and even the formation of a supposedly independent party, as a means of actually tying Black people to the Democratic Party in a new, hidden way. Hence, our attitude toward any given organization or movement should be concrete and flexible. However, our starting point in this regard is a positive attitude toward the call for, and any concrete motion toward, the formation of an independent Black party.

Consistent with this, we reject any notion that the call for, steps in the direction of and an actual labor party is necessarily more of a class slogan than the comparable slogans, etc., of an independent Black party. While a labor party, that is, a party based on the trade unions, may have more of a class character than say an independent Black party, insofar as it will include and address itself at least formally to the needs of workers of all races, this does not mean it will not in fact have a sectoral character, that is, represent, defend and fight for the needs of a particular sector of the working class as opposed to the working class as a whole. On the contrary, given the small sector of the working class that is actually in unions, the white and skilled character of much of the union membership, the fact that such white skilled workers constitute the active base of the unions, that the unions are run primarily by white former skilled workers and white middle class professionals, and consider-

ing what the actual attitudes and policies of these bureaucrats are today, any movement for a labor party or even a labor party itself will in fact represent only a section of the working class. In other words, a labor party would most likely be just as sectoral and partial and led by middle class forces as a Black party.

We certainly should support calls for, steps toward and the actual formation of a labor party. However, we should have no illusions about the actual nature of such a formation, or about its claims to speak for the entire working class. We would fight within it for it to actually represent and fight for the interests of the entire working class, including and especially its most oppressed sectors, such as Blacks. Similarly, we would organize and fight within any Black party for it to adopt a program and fight to represent, in fact, the interests of the entire working class. This does not mean that we would fight against its Black character, to make it open to whites, etc. It does mean that we would fight to have the party and its rank and file see themselves as an integral part of a class movement of the working class; to organize its working class base to struggle against the narrow parochial orientation of the middle class elements and leaders within the Black party; and to have the party adopt a program that stands for and actually fights for the interests of the entire working class.

A step toward the formation of a truly working class party and through this, further motion toward class unity, would be an actual united front between the movements for a labor party and a Black party at both the official formal level and at the base. In other words, here as elsewhere, we see a process of building unity through struggle, through concrete united fronts in action as the way to build an actual united class movement. We should be clear, moreover, that we do not see such parties, independent Black party or labor party, as being the actual movements of the various sectors of the working class; they are structures/leaderships of these sectors of the workers and do not actually represent the thinking or interests of the rank and file of these movements, let alone the entire working class. □



ing Jr.,
actually
idental
ing some
. Given
views,
k of any
ople on
ty, this
h little,
dividual

of a revitalization of the Black Movement, though we should avoid overstating or overblowing them. At the same time, a new political current mixing a certain kind of integrationism with nationalism seems to be emerging. Whether this current will gain hegemony in the Black Movement over the long run is hard to say at this point.

Main themes of RSL strategy

In this context, there are a number of major themes/slogans we should emphasize that indicate the overall strategic direction we believe the struggle for Black Liberation should take. This underlying conception is the need to build a strong, working class movement that unites and fights for the needs of all sectors of the working class and specially oppressed, and that is independent of the capitalist class and its parties.

Given the fact that the ruling class is on the offensive and the working class, particularly Black people, is in retreat, the first theme is **Defense**—that is, the need to defend, to the degree possible, the economic, social and political gains won by the Black Movement in the 1950s and '60s. We are for defending all rights, needs, programs and organizations of Black people that are presently



WHAT WE STAND FOR

Program in Brief of the Revolutionary Socialist League

1 The **REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE** is an organization dedicated to the fight for freedom for all the world's people—freedom from poverty and hunger; from racism and all forms of national, sexual, age and class-related oppression; from privileged rulers and wars—freedom from capitalism.

We believe that this fight is more necessary than ever. Today, the world capitalist system is sliding deeper and deeper into a massive economic, political and social crisis. This crisis is bringing conditions as bad as or worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s. In all countries, the ruling classes are responding to the crisis by bludgeoning down the living standards of the masses of people and curtailing our rights. Unemployment and wage-cutting, cutbacks in social services and a beefing up of the repressive apparatus—the police, military, prisons, etc.—are all part of the capitalist attack. As in the 1930s, the crisis is paving the way for the rise of fascist groups eager to impose their genocidal solution on humanity.

Internationally, the crisis will cause the battles among the different blocs of national capitalists to flare into full-scale wars, as each seeks to defend and increase its power, markets, investment outlets and control of natural resources against the others. Twice already this century the capitalists have fought devastating world wars, in which millions of people died. Now, with the development of huge nuclear arsenals capable of blowing up the planet hundreds of times over, human civilization itself hangs in the balance.

Thus the continued existence of the capitalist system is pushing us closer every day to depression, fascism, world war and possibly total destruction.

2 We in the RSL believe there is an alternative to all this. That alternative lies in the workers, small farmers, peasants, unemployed, national and other oppressed minorities, youth, women, lesbians and gay men—in sum, the downtrodden and persecuted people of every society—uniting together to overthrow our common enemy, the capitalist system, and establish **SOCIALISM**.

This will require a **REVOLUTION** in which the masses of people fight to seize control of the governments, banks, means of transportation and communication, factories, fields, mills and mines. A revolution would also have to smash the capitalists' state apparatus: their police and armed forces, their courts and prisons, their political bodies (legislatures, congresses, parliaments, etc.) and mammoth bureaucracies, and other institutions of capitalist class rule.

While such revolutions are most likely to develop on a national basis, we believe that to be successful they must become worldwide in scope. Capitalism is

an international system, with a world economy and a world market. Only through an international socialist revolution can the workers and their allies eliminate all capitalist oppression and have access to the human, natural and technical resources necessary to solve the problems confronting human society.

3 In place of the dictatorship of the capitalists, the RSL believes working and oppressed people can build a cooperative, humane world society. Run by workers' councils and other mass organizations of farmers, housewives, soldiers and specially oppressed groups, the new society would provide the fullest democracy for the vast majority of people, while ruthlessly suppressing the capitalists and those who seek to get ahead by stepping on the backs of others.

Although the destructive legacy of capitalism would be severe, a truly democratic, mass-controlled government could begin to reorganize society to fulfill human needs, not provide a privileged existence for tiny elites. Resources currently thrown into the military, for example, could be used to end hunger, build housing, schools, roads, etc. The workweek could be shortened, creating jobs for millions of unemployed people.

In ways such as these, the inequality and scarcity that lie at the heart of capitalism's dog-eat-dog competitiveness could be eliminated. People would increasingly have no reason to get over on others, and the material basis of classes, the state, racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry would disappear. Increasingly, everyone would have the time and opportunity to develop their full human potential; everyone would become truly **FREE**, able to control their own destinies.

This is our vision of **SOCIALISM**. It will not be easy to achieve. And it is not inevitable—people have to want it and fight for it. But we believe it is the only alternative worth fighting for.

4 Socialism does not exist anywhere in the world today. What is called socialism in countries like Russia, China, Cuba, Albania, Poland, etc., is state capitalism, a 20th century variation of traditional, private shareholding capitalism. In the state-capitalist (often called Stalinist) countries, as in the "regular" capitalist nations, a small elite dominates society, making all the decisions and reaping all the benefits. Working and oppressed people have no more control of the factories and other workplaces, the economy, the government or anything else than do workers in traditional capitalist countries. The state-capitalist ruling class controls the state apparatus and nationalized industry, while the workers are in the position of being wage slaves, chained to a giant capitalist machine.

In these countries—as in all the countries of the world—**REVOLUTION** is the only way to establish real socialism and win freedom for all working and oppressed people.

At a time when the struggle between the world's two main imperialist powers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., is being portrayed wrongly as one between capitalism and socialism, democracy and totalitarianism, the RSL believes it is more important than ever to take a clear stand in opposition to capitalism in all its forms and to fight for a revolutionary, libertarian vision of socialism.

5 In the coming period, as the capitalist crisis intensifies, we expect mass movements and mass struggles—both of the right and the left—to break out with increasing frequency around the world. The question is: Will these upheavals lead to fascist dictatorships, state-capitalist transformations, a new world war—or an international socialist revolution that puts all the capitalist garbage behind us?

The RSL believes that the last outcome can be brought to pass only with the active intervention and political leadership of a disciplined international revolutionary working class party. This party, and its sections in countries around the world, is needed to educate and organize workers and other oppressed people about the cause of their misery and the solution to it; to work in different movements and struggles to increase the class-consciousness and militancy of their participants; to combat reformist, social-democratic, state-capitalist, fascist and other leaderships that would derail mass, popular struggles and lead them to certain defeat; and to help unite the different forces oppressed by capitalism into a massive assault on the system.

The existence of revolutionary working class parties does not guarantee victory. But without them, the more-organized and powerful enemies of

socialist revolution will surely triumph.

The RSL considers the construction of a revolutionary party in the U.S. and around the world to be our main strategic task. In so doing, we reject any and all elitist notions that have come to be associated with such parties: that the party stands separate from and above the working class; that the party may use any method, no matter how base or dishonest, to gain leadership of the masses in struggle; that its goal is to form a one-party state within a supposedly socialist society. Our goal is a society where human beings can consciously shape their own existence; we see a revolutionary party simply as the vehicle through which this can be made possible.

6 The RSL identifies itself in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, particularly the pioneering theoretical work of Marx and Engels; the conception of the party, the stress on the importance of national liberation struggles and the anti-statism shown in *The State and Revolution* of Lenin; and the fight against Stalinism of Trotsky. But we also identify with the best of anarchism, particularly its libertarian spirit. And we hold in no less regard those leaders throughout the ages who have fought against various forms of exploitation and oppression: from Spartacus to Harriet Tubman, from Emiliano Zapata to Malcolm X.

We believe it is crucial for the left to rid itself of the state-capitalist baggage which it has carried for far too long. To do so requires a careful evaluation of the theoretical underpinnings of the modern left, from Marx to the Russian Revolution to the current day. Only in this way can the best of our heritage—the fight against oppression and for revolutionary socialism—be preserved and the worst of it—an infatuation with technocratic planning and strong states—be discarded.

Revolutionaries must be the vanguard in the fight for common decency and true freedom. It is to that fight the RSL is committed, body and soul. Join us!

Where to find us:

RSL National Office
PO Box 1288, GPO
New York, NY 10116
(212) 695-6802

Chicago
PO Box 6022
Chicago, IL 60680
(312) 334-5335

Cincinnati
PO Box 46623
Cincinnati, OH 45246
(513) 874-3755

Detroit
PO Box 8373
Detroit, MI 48213
(313) 331-7757

Los Angeles
PO Box 17241
Foy Station
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 385-6029

New York
PO Box 1288, GPO
New York, NY 10116
(212) 695-6802

New Orleans
PO Box 70831
New Orleans, LA 70172

San Francisco
495 Ellis St., #190
San Francisco, CA 94102

Revolutionary Marxist League

of Jamaica
PO Box 27
Kingston 7
Jamaica, West Indies

RSL PAMPHLETS

Capitalism in Crisis.....	\$.50
Socialism vs. State Capitalism: Polish Workers Fight for Freedom.....	\$1.00
Socialism and the Fight for Lesbian and Gay Liberation.....	\$1.00
Mexicans and Chicanos in the Southwest and the Struggle for Socialism.....	\$1.00
The Rise of State Capitalism (How the Russian Revolution Was Smashed).....	\$.50
The Russian Revolution (Revolutionary Socialist Educational Series, No. 1).....	\$1.00
Imperialism, National Liberation and Socialist Revolution (Educational Series, No. 2).....	\$1.00
Marxism and the Soviet Union.....	\$.95
Basic Analysis of State Capitalism (Document of Struggle of the Revolutionary Tendency of the Red Flag Union).....	\$.60
Gay Liberation Through Socialist Revolution (Document of Struggle of the Revolutionary Tendency of the Red Flag Union).....	\$.50
South Africa: Victory to the Black Workers' Revolution.....	\$.50
Chile: Never Again!.....	\$.50
Programme of the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica.....	\$.25

Order from: RSL, PO Box 1288, GPO, New York, NY 10116

Subscribe to the TORCH

- Introductory—3 issues—\$1.00 Prisoners—FREE, donations appreciated
 One year—12 issues—\$5.00 Overseas Airmail—12 issues—\$12.00
 Recession Special—12 issues (slow mail)—\$2.50

I would like more information about the Revolutionary Socialist League.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Send this blank and check to: TORCH, PO Box 1288, New York, NY 10116

Copper Miners

(Continued from page 3)

"gentlemanly" affairs. Companies shut down when a strike was announced, union leaders organized token picketing at plant gates, and both sides waited for negotiators to work out a deal. The companies were willing to share a small part of their prosperity with the workers in order to maintain production for a world and domestic market dominated by U.S. industry. And union leaders felt no need to demand any more than that as long as they could win respectable-looking wage gains year after year.

But today, the U.S. economy is in a prolonged slump, and profits are declining. As a result, the capitalists are increasingly hiring union-busting specialists, using scabs to maintain production during strikes and calling in the cops or the National Guard to provide extra muscle whenever necessary to break a strike. In response, workers will have to change their approach to future contract struggles and union organizing drives if they are to meet this challenge.

The Phelps Dodge strikers understood the need to keep scabs out at any cost and they used militant, mass picket lines to try to do this. They realized that the only way to force the company into negotiating a decent contract was to shut it down—and they were ready to take over and occupy the mines and other company facilities to keep it closed. These kinds of militant tactics will increasingly be necessary to win major labor battles in the coming period.

But even these militant trade union tactics may not be enough to win victories. Small groups of strikers, such as those in Arizona's copper mining towns, can all too easily be isolated and defeated. But if other unions—beginning with those in the mining industry and extending to the entire labor movement—took up the struggle as their own, Phelps Dodge could be brought to its knees.

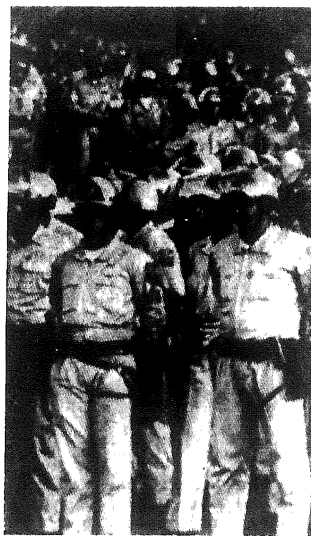
Even such elementary trade union solidarity, though an important advance, will not in itself be sufficient to win the battles that lie ahead. Today, less than 20 percent of the country's workforce has union protection. Many workers

view the established unions with suspicion and even hostility—and with some reason. For the better part of the last four decades, the major industrial unions have been content to seek improvements for a tiny minority of workers while ignoring the needs and aspirations of the overwhelming majority. It is not surprising that many workers—and often those in the lower-paying and more exploitive industries—see little reason to rally behind the labor movement and can often be used as strikebreakers and scabs. No effective movement against the capitalist attacks will be built unless it includes non-union workers, unemployed workers, undocumented workers and Blacks, Latins, women and gay people who are also under attack from the capitalists. To build this kind of unity, union members cannot simply call on other workers for support; instead, the unions themselves must take the lead in building a mass fightback by defending the interests of all working and oppressed people. Only if the unions begin to champion the struggles of those who are today outside the ranks of the labor movement will the union movement create any significant support for its struggles.

Workers need own political party

Unfortunately, the only "mass movement" most union leaders want anything to do with is one limited to taking people to the voting booths in 1984 to vote for the Democratic Party. Their constant refrain is that only a Democratic Party victory can save workers' jobs and living standards. This is the song they have been singing everywhere in recent months, including at the Solidarity Day III rallies, the August 27th March on Washington and in countless national and local union publications and events.

It is only natural that many workers driven to the wall by the combination of government cutbacks and company attacks are looking to the Democrats for



Hundreds of police and National Guardsmen protected scabs when Phelps Dodge reopened its Morenci mine.

relief. But as the Phelps Dodge strike and other recent struggles demonstrate, workers who count on the Democrats are putting their heads in a trap.

Workers helped elect Babbitt as governor of Arizona. But once in office, he unleashed the National Guard against striking workers and sent his hired dogs in to spy on the strikers. Over the summer other Democratic governors in Montana and Michigan ordered state police to suppress militant actions by striking construction workers. The Democrats will make all kinds of promises to get workers to turn out and vote for them. But whenever working people begin fighting for themselves, the Democrats will lock arms with the capitalists on the other side of the barricades.

The one kernel of truth in all the talk about the Democrats is that politics does really matter, that our problems can't be solved simply on the trade union or community level, but require a national political solution. In the Phelps Dodge strike, for example, the workers found themselves on the defensive because they

had no political power and therefore could not prevent the company from mobilizing the enormous resources of the state against them.

To defeat the deepening capitalist offensive, workers will need to combine their economic struggles against individual companies with struggles against the political monopoly of the capitalist class as a whole. First and foremost, the U.S. working class needs to establish its own political party—a labor party, built on the unions and the mass organizations of women, gays, Latins, Blacks and other oppressed people. Such a party, made up of all working people, could be a powerful force. After all, the capitalists have their own political parties—the Democrats and the Republicans—and these parties, whatever their differences, can be counted on to defend the fundamental interests of the ruling, capitalist class. Working people need a party committed to defending the interests of the working class. Such a party would not merely run its own candidates in elections (though it would do this), but could also organize support for local strikes through nationwide demonstrations, militant mass picket lines, sympathy strikes, and other similar actions. In other words, such a party could be the skeleton for a nationwide movement of working people that fights in the streets, on the picket lines and at the ballot box.

Clearly, such a party, as important as it would be, cannot be built in a few months. It will take years of organizing and struggle. But, the building of such a party can, and must, begin now if workers are to have half a chance of successfully resisting the capitalist attack on their living standards, organizations and political rights. A place to start would be for the more militant and radical unions, Black and Latin organizations, women's groups, gay groups, etc., to organize a series of regional conferences. These conferences would be forums for activists to discuss the present state of the struggle and ways to deepen and broaden the popular movement. They could also begin the planning of a national conference of the same kind. Conceivably, if this conference were large enough and involved a sufficiently broad array of organizations, it could map out plans to begin organizing the national working class party that is sorely needed. □

Russian Economy

(Continued from page 7)

Russia, some areas go months at a time without such necessities as meat, toothpaste and toilet paper.

This isn't planned. At the beginning of each plan, quotas are set to provide for ample consumer goods as well as military hardware and producer goods like machine tools. But with the plan itself founded on misinformation, and given the bureaucratic in-fighting, subterfuge, inefficiency and conservatism, what happens really isn't surprising. All these factors waste scarce resources and lower productivity. The result is that part way through the planning period, the original plan (if it was ever finished) has to be scrapped. When it is redrawn, the planners ensure that the military and heavy industry get the resources they need, and the production of consumer goods goes out the window. In the Ninth Five Year Plan, for example, the production of heavy industry came out only 1 percent below target; consumer goods lagged 22 percent.

All this (a tiny portion of the available information) should be enough to demonstrate that economic planning in Russia, far from being an efficient economic mechanism through which resources are allocated beforehand rather than in the after-the-fact manner of capitalist market economies, is actually highly inefficient. Nothing comes out the way it is supposed to, and billions of dollars of resources are wasted every year. But there is more to this inefficiency than meets the eye. The inefficiency reflects the fact that, contrary to the claims of groups like the SWP and LOM, market forces and markets have not been abolished in Russia.

Even officially there are free markets in Russia. There are, for example, the farmers' markets, in which peasants sell the produce produced on their tiny private plots (which are much more productive and produce goods of higher quality, by the way, than the large bureaucratic state and collective farms). These plots produce as much as 60 percent of Russia's potato crop, 40 percent of its fruits and eggs, and 30 percent of its meat, milk and vegetables. While unplanned, this free-market production and distribution is officially tolerated, and sometimes encouraged, because it is vital to the country's food supply.

Russia's underground economy

But beyond this, there is another much larger market that is not legal, but is essential to the functioning of the Russian economy. This is the vast semi-legal "second economy," which accounts, according to some, for up to 25 percent of the Russian gross national product. That is, one-quarter of all goods and services are produced outside the guidelines laid down by the plan.

This "second," or "parallel," economy works on several levels. Almost all Russian enterprises employ *tolkach*, or expeditors, whose job it is to procure scarce materials outside official channels. The *tolkach* are illegal: Officially, they work as clerks, supervisors, or in other legitimate jobs. But in reality they deal on the black market, barter,

use bribery or whatever else is necessary to get the supplies needed to keep their firms running.

In addition, the Russian economy is peppered with thousands of illegal traders, workshops and service establishments. These produce, trade, and/or embezzle state property solely for the underground market. (They no doubt fill much of the demand of the *tolkach*.) Recently, the Minister of the Interior and his First Deputy, the late president Brezhnev's son-in-law, were dismissed from their posts after being implicated in a smuggling ring. A little earlier, two officers in the Administration for Combatting Embezzlement of Socialist Property and Speculation in southern Russia were themselves convicted of taking bribes to overlook a ring of local restaurant officials who stole food and sold it on the black market. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Embezzlement and corruption of all kinds are rife throughout the Russian economy, and Andropov has targeted it as a major economic (and social) problem.

All this dealing in fact constitutes a market not too different from many found in the West. Because of the bottlenecks inherent in the bureaucracy's planning, factories are forced to trade in the second economy to get supplies. As a result, the plan works at all only because of this market, yet at the same time its unplanned nature further undermines whatever goals the bureaucracy tried to impose with its plan in the first place.

As the above discussion shows, the Russian economy is not really planned at all. Beneath the superficial appearances of planning, it is a chaotic, free-wheeling affair. Rather than the market and the resultant anarchy of production being abolished, they remain, although in a new form. The bureaucracy's planning is actually an attempt to plan the economy to serve its interests, but

it is a pretty feeble one. The central plan not only doesn't work, it can't work, because the economy can only function as a market economy in combination with, and distorted by, the bureaucracy's efforts to plan it. Contrary to what the SWP, LOM and other apologists of Russian state capitalism contend, commodity production has not been abolished in Russia. Instead, it is generalized, but caught in a web of bureaucratic interference. Generalized commodity production is characteristic of capitalism, not of a workers' state or socialism. As a form of capitalism, the Russian economy is subject to the same laws as traditional Western capitalism, such as the declining rate of profit (in which increasing amounts of physical inputs relative to total capital depress the rate of return on total capital—raw materials, machinery and labor—and necessitate finding ways for the ruling class to increase the surplus value squeezed out of the workers). And it is this tendency of the rate of profit to fall that explains the current stagnation of the Russian economy, just as it is the cause of the crisis of world capitalism in general.

The crisis in the USSR is a crisis of capitalism. At bottom the failure of planning is caused by the fact that antagonistic classes—the bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the workers and farmers, on the other—cannot cooperate with each other to plan production.

"Thus we believe that the most important source of social tension in the economy is not just a lack of harmony," say the Siberian economists, "but an actual contradiction of interests among vertically dependent groups, workers and team leaders, team leaders and managers, managers and ministers." The crisis of Russian state capitalism, in other words, is caused by the class struggle.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]