



Thousands take to the streets: 'No more back-alley abortions!'

By JONI JACOBS

Molly Yard, president of the National Organization for Women, predicted last year that President Bush's efforts to make abortion illegal again would "awaken a sleeping giant."

If the April 9 March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives in Washington, D.C., is any indication, those predictions are

**Operation Rescue routed
in Los Angeles,
See page 7.**

coming true. Tens of thousands will march for women's rights.

But more threats from the government are on their way. The most serious challenge to legal abortion begins on April 26 when the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*. The case involves a Missouri law which states that "the life of each human begins at conception" and applies strict limits to abortion.

Granting legal protection to fetuses threatens more than the right to choose abortion. It opens the door to other intrusions into women's lives. By claiming an interest in fetal protection, states could force pregnant women into Caesarian births or fetal surgery, incarcerate them for substance abuse or deny them jobs which might "endanger" pregnancy.

Even if the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion is not overturned outright, access to abortion services could be severely restricted. The Missouri statute prohibits public facilities and employees from performing abortions, even if the woman pays with her own money. It also mandates testing for fetal viability for all abortions performed after 19 weeks.

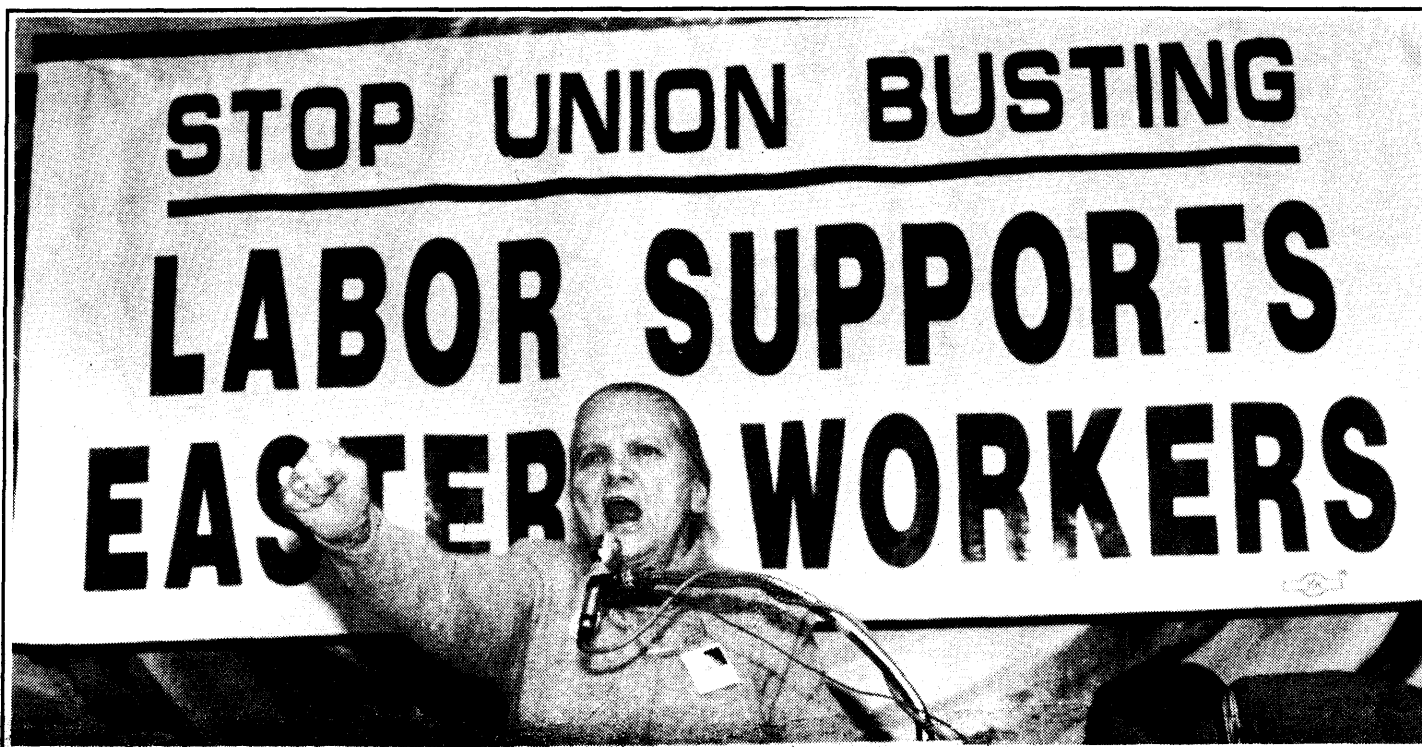
By upholding any part of the Missouri statute, the Supreme Court would deal a serious blow to the women's rights movement. Those hardest hit by an adverse decision would be those most vulnerable—poor and young women—who haven't the money or the time to plow through burdensome legal restrictions on their right to control their own bodies.

Pro-choice sentiment grows

But pro-choice supporters aren't waiting until April 26 to express their outrage. The "sleeping giant" is stirring awake and into action now. In the face of intensified attacks not only by the government but by right-wing terrorists at abortion clinics, pro-choice sentiment is sweeping the country.

By mid-March, over 400 national organizations added their names to the list of supporters of the Washington march. The United Mine Workers of America, the Association of Flight Attendants, and the International Association of Machinists—among other unions—endorsed. For some it's the first time they've endorsed a women's rights demonstration.

Pro-choice activists at more than 400 college campuses organized Washington-bound contingents. For most of the young women involved, abortion has been legal all of their lives. They don't know what it was
(continued on page 10)



N.O.W. President Molly Yard solidarizes with striking Eastern Airlines workers at March 14 rally in Boston.

Speeches and interviews with leaders of women's movement

- N.O.W. Pres. Molly Yard
- Bernadette Devlin McAliskey
- Boston N.O.W. Pres. Ellen Convisser
- Cinti N.O.W. Pres. Shirley Rosser
- S.F. N.O.W. Exec. Dir. Helen Grieco
- NARAL Ohio Pres. Paula Mindes

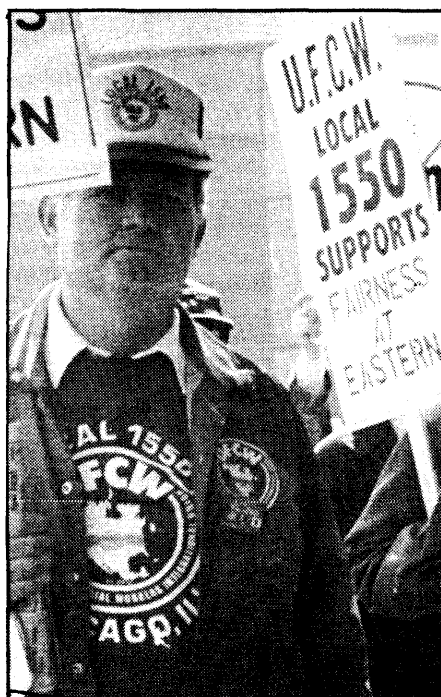
See pages 7-10.

Courts hamstring Eastern strikers

The historic strike of 8500 machinists at Eastern Airlines has aroused the sympathy of working people around the country. Tens of thousands of trade unionists—who are angry about attacks on their own living standards—have turned out for rallies and mass picket lines on behalf of the Eastern strikers.

Frank Lorenzo—chairman of Eastern's parent company, Texas Air Corp.—asked members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM, which includes mechanics, clerks, cleaners, and ramp-service workers) to make substantial concessions. He demanded pay cuts as high as 56 percent, cuts in pension benefits, and work-rule changes.

Following a government-ordered 30-day "cooling-off" period, the machinists walked out on March 4. Immediately, the Eastern pilots and flight attendants refused to cross the machinists' picket lines. Their solidarity—unprecedented in recent years—



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

made it possible to cut down the airline's operations by over 90 percent.

Since that time, the pilots have remained undaunted in their support of the machinists, in spite of the company's announcement that scab pilots will be trained.

Bosses look to the courts

From the beginning, the specter of a

sympathy strike at other airlines and the railroads sent the employers, governmental agencies, and the daily press into a frenzy. "Metro area transit snarl looms!" screamed the *New York Daily News*. It could be "the closest thing you can get to a general strike," warned the head of the Metropolitan Transit Authority in New York.

The bosses appealed to the courts to keep the strike from spreading. Northwest and Piedmont airlines got a court order barring picketing of other airlines. Then, commuter railroads in New York, New Jersey, and the Philadelphia area were awarded a series of restraining orders against picketing.

On March 24, a federal judge ordered that an examiner be appointed to investigate the financial dealings of Eastern Airlines (in regard to Lorenzo's application for bankruptcy proceedings). The examiner would also be granted powers as a mediator in order to put an end to the strike.

The judge also allowed Eastern to refuse to provide the back pay it owes the strikers—which is estimated at \$24 million to \$35 million. At the same time, the court placed no restrictions on paying past wages and future wages to non-striking employees.

Is the government "impartial?"

Although the Eastern strikers have virtually shut down the airline's operations, they have suffered a series of defeats in the courts. And at each stage of the battle—before the com-

(continued on page 4)

'Oh death, won't you carry me over'



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

"Mother, oh mother, come to my bed—Place a cold towel upon my head—My head is hot and my feet are cold—Ole devil's gonna get my soul—Oh death, Oh death, won't you carry me over 'til another day."

That's a song my grandmother and mother used to sing to us children when we were small. We lived in Lexington, Ky., and my family came from the Kentucky mountains. There were at least nine or 10 verses, and "Grandma" would sing every one of them. The song got grimmer as it went along; but we kids loved it.

I used to always ask why this young woman was dying, and I would get a different answer every time. If it was raining outside, my grandmother would say it was because the young woman went out in the rain and got all wet. If it was snowing, she would say it was because she went out into the snow, got too cold, and caught consumption.

It was years before I got what seems like the real reason for her dying so young. My mother told me, right after I had the first of two illegal abortions, that the young woman in the "Oh Death" song died from an abortion. She wasn't trying to scare me, because I had already returned from the hospital for emergency treatment for my illegal abortion. She was just remarking on why she thought the young woman had died so young.

Many women die

The Center for Disease Control estimates that 150,000 women die each year from illegal abortions. That does not count other disabling effects because of anti-abortion laws in many countries. Women who live through illegal abortions are often sent to jail if they get caught having had an illegal abortion. Many of them are apprehended when they apply for emergency treatment at a local clinic or hospital.

Before the Roe v. Wade ruling by the Supreme Court in 1973, millions of American women desperately went to illegal abortionists, placing their lives into the hands of incompetent amateurs. And if Roe v. Wade is overturned, millions more will do so again.

Even if the Supreme Court "only" rules that states have the right to limit abortions—by requiring teen-agers, for example, to get parental consent, or women to get their husband's or lover's consent—many women will again be driven to illegal abortionists. Many will die.

It is an outrage that Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, who has been appointed by President Bush to head up the Department of Health and Human Services, has stated that he supports the overthrow of Roe v. Wade.

This creature Sullivan was approved by the Senate—with only one vote against. And that single vote was by Senator Jesse Helms, who thought that Sullivan was "too liberal" on abortion. (Sullivan had said that he supports abortion in the

case of incest, rape, or the likely death of the mother.)

Not one Democrat or Republican voted against him. Not one of them had the decency to even mention the danger to the lives of thousands of women if abortion is made illegal, not to mention the added expense—no small matter to millions of women.

(Ironically, Congress, which confirmed Sullivan almost unanimously, is completely covered by

health care, including hair transplants, face lifts, fat removal—anything they want, legally and safely, and free of any charge whatsoever.)

Pro-choice mobilizations

Worst of all, the near-unanimous approval of pro-Death Dr. Sullivan will give a powerful impetus to the misnamed "Right to Life" and "Operation Rescue" gangs, which are mobilizing around the country to block women from exercising their Constitutional and human right to choose.

On April 2 in San Francisco and April 9 in Washington, D.C., hundreds of thousands of pro-choice supporters will demonstrate to those politicians that the vast majority of people in this country support legal abortion. Every poll has shown this to be the case.

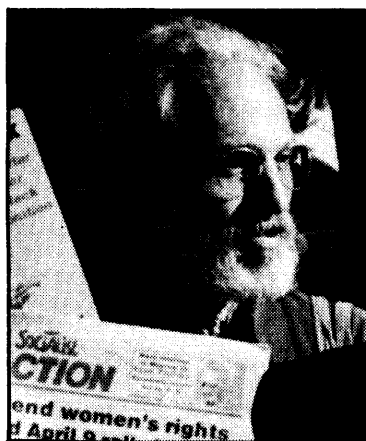
Moreover, pro-choice activists will be using those marches to recruit reinforcements necessary to defend abortion clinics from the "Operation Rescue" goon squads. Every mobilization by these gangs against women's right to choose needs to be met with counter-mobilizations. By outmobilizing them, we will discourage gangster tactics which violate our rights.

On April 2 and April 9, thousands of young women—coming into action for the first time—should join the National Organization for Women and other organizations dedicated to the preservation of Roe v. Wade. April 2 and April 9 will be the first big counter-mobilization, but it will be only the beginning.



BEHIND THE LINES

Pennypinching airlines skimp on safety



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

"Coffee, tea, or a parachute?" Yes, I too am afraid to fly. I never buy an airline ticket without first studying the AMTRAK timetables. But considerations of time and money point toward the inevitable: It's JFK, La Guardia, or bust for me. So I try to make the best of it.

Recently, when the roof flew off an Aloha Airlines jet, I thought it was par for the course. When a Boeing 737 lost its engine near Chicago and another lost a piece of its wing near Atlanta, I still thought, "That's the breaks."

When engine failure resulted in the deaths of 44 people in Britain, I tried hard to keep a stiff upper lip. And I tried even harder when nine people blew out of a hole in a United Airlines jet.

Last month, however, I heard on the radio that a supersonic Concorde plane (it costs over \$3000 for a London to New York flight) "developed cracks" while it was preparing to crash the sound barrier.

There was cause for worry! If even the aircraft reserved for rich

folks are structurally unsafe, the "super-saver" cattlecars we working people jam into must be in bad shape indeed.

Older planes

Several of the planes that developed structural or mechanical difficulties in recent months were quite old. In fact, the average age of U.S. airliners has risen since 1979 from 10.28 to 12.67 years.

Older planes require increased inspections and maintenance. But the percentage of the airlines' budgets devoted to maintenance has actually been reduced during the last decade.

The number of mechanics per plane has dropped from 16.6 to 11.8 since 1979. "No problem," say spokespeople for the industry. They claim that "labor-saving equipment" has made the mechanics more "productive." Thus a relatively small workforce is supposedly able to cope with a fleet of airliners that has nearly doubled in size in 10 years.

Generally, when the employers call for "productivity," the workers know they mean "speedup." When workers are forced to work faster, safety always suffers. The chances are that rivets will pop, cracks will form, and engines, roofs, and wings will fall off.

New equipment?

New safety equipment—such as collision-avoidance systems and windshear-warning devices—have been widely publicized. But it'll be a long time before they come into standard use. The pennypinching airline corporations are not going to purchase this equipment until

ordered to do so by the FAA (or until doomsday, whichever comes first.)

Frank Lorenzo's Eastern Airlines and Carl Icahn's TWA recently cut back their weather departments, thus increasing the workload of flight dispatchers and the possibility of errors.

Eastern also imposed strong disciplinary measures to reduce "absenteeism" among pilots. As a result—before the strike—many pilots were flying while sick and on medication. And Eastern's sister non-union airline, Continental, has raised the time that pilots can be required to spend in the cockpit to the monthly legal limit of 100 hours—from 75 hours a decade ago.

Lorenzo says that such conditions are necessary because he was "losing money." In reality, the workers have been forced to give concessions (and safety has been thrown overboard) solely to pay off the banks and other junk-bond holders.

"Open your books!"

The airline industry as a whole has been making money hand over fist—a record \$3 billion in operating profits last year.

United's operating earnings increased 89 percent during the first nine months of 1988—to \$540.6 million. But the bosses at United (often portrayed as "good" capitalists compared to "bad" capitalists like Lorenzo) are asking for even more wage concessions from flight attendants and pilots. Again, the bondholders must be paid off.

Another moneymaker, Northwest, has required employees to work as much as 14 hours without a break. Crews returning from



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

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

Business Manager: KATHY SANDS

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overseas often must make a domestic trip before they are allowed to rest. Northwest refuses to pay the microscopic fines (\$11,000) levied by the FAA because no "accidents" or "incidents" have yet resulted from the long hours its employees must work.

As Continental 737 Captain Don Henderson told *The Wall Street Journal* (Sept. 19, 1988), "Years ago airlines were expected to do better than the minimum standards. Now the attitude is, 'As long as its legal.'"

The airlines are prime candidates for the slogan, "Open your account books!" The bosses and the banks must not be permitted to cover up the fact that they have sacrificed

public safety in their rush for bigger profits. In the meantime, I wonder if I can still get a ticket on AMTRAK.

Trial update

In last month's issue, we reported on the case of Greg Wiggins, a Black bus driver in San Francisco who was attacked by police while on the job—and then framed up in court. On March 4, Wiggins was found not guilty on the charge of battery against the cops. But the jury found him guilty of resisting arrest—which could carry a sentence of one year in prison. Wiggins told *Socialist Action* that he plans to appeal the decision.—M.S.

El Salvador after the elections

Right-wing victory assures showdown despite FMLN appeal for negotiations

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

The willingness of El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) to make dramatic concessions to the country's rulers produced no agreement for a postponement of the elections, and on March 19 Alfredo Cristiani, candidate of the right-wing ARENA party, won the presidency as expected.

Cristiani defeated Christian Democratic (PDC) candidate Fidel Chavez Mena and the left's Democratic Convergence (CD) candidate Guillermo Ungo. Cristiani won close to 54 percent of the votes cast—said by the government to be less than 40 percent of the electorate—and avoided a run-off. Ungo finished fourth with less than 4 percent of the vote.

The United States has pursued its war in El Salvador under the guise of supporting the political "center." This "centrist" showcase has been a pillar of Washington's Central American policy. The ARENA victory could shatter it.

That's why Cristiani has tried to portray a more moderate image than ARENA's real leader, death-squad architect Roberto D'Aubuisson. ARENA has worked hard to cultivate this new image. ARENA leaders haven't forgotten the millions of dollars that the U.S. poured into the coffers of the PDC to defeat D'Aubuisson in the 1984 election.

The major U.S. media have helped ARENA, portraying a "pragmatic" and "moderate" Cristiani and referring to the "new face of the right." Still, a few stories describing the true character of Cristiani have found their way into the press. One article describes him as a man who has workers at his San Vicente coffee plantation living "in dirt-floor shacks under crushing poverty," and who raised their wages only after FMLN threats to attack the farm. (*Boston Globe*, March 22, 1989)

FMLN proposal rejected

The elections took place against the backdrop of an FMLN peace proposal. The FMLN offered, as a "first step toward seeking agreement and generating conditions that make the road to peace irreversible," to participate in the elections if they were postponed for six months.

This was later expanded to include a "definitive" laying down of arms, an agreement to "incorporate into the nation's political life," and recognition of "the existence of a single army" that did not include FMLN forces.

But the Salvadoran rulers ultimately rejected this proposal. Despite broad discussions at the end of February, and much maneuvering, the PDC government of outgoing president Jose Napoleon Duarte and ARENA finally decided to hold the elections as scheduled.

Each of these players had something to lose by postponement. The PDC, who expected to face ARENA in a run-off, saw a risk of opening up that opportunity for the CD instead.

ARENA wanted to say no all along, but was forced to go along with some negotiations "by the proximity of the elections and international pressure," suggested Rene Roldan, vice-presidential candidate of the CD. ARENA saw victory as already theirs; postponement might have snatched it from them.

Army Chief of Staff Colonel Rene Emilio Ponce charged that the proposal was a cynical attempt by the FMLN to fuel divisions within the army, destabilize the existing political order, and set a precedent for ignoring constitutional requirements. The army hinted that, if the proposal was accepted, they might stage a coup. "They wouldn't have to think about it half an hour," a top government official told *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Disruption campaign intensifies

With the rejection, the FMLN renewed its campaign to disrupt the elections. In the week preceding the election, FMLN leaders emphasized their opposition through what was termed "an impressive show of force" by the U.S. media. They cut off electricity to 90 percent of the country, blew up state vehicles



Roberto D'Aubuisson, architect of the Death Squads and founder of the ARENA Party, now officially calls the shots in El Salvador.

parked on city streets, and raided army installations. On March 15 they fired rocket-launched grenades at soldiers near the National Palace in the capital.

These attacks were coupled with a guerrilla ban on transportation. The FMLN vowed that vehicles on roads would be "turned into flames or blown to pieces." This effectively cut off many towns and cities across the country; military trucks had to be used to carry many Salvadorans to work.

In addition, the FMLN's "urban militias" announced plans to sabotage polling places and "later annihilate the personnel who allow themselves to be used in this farce." The FMLN General Command later denied that this was a threat, characterizing it as an "exhortation" intended to convince precinct officials to stay away from the polls. This suggests some split over tactics.

These FMLN actions brought harsh criticisms from their political arm, allied in the CD. Ruben Zamora is said to have flown to Nicaragua to urge FMLN commanders to lift the transportation ban and not interfere with the voting. Just days before the election, he characterized the FMLN attacks as "a political game. . . . We express our opposition to the strike as a negative influence. It is not right."

Guillermo Ungo denounced the FMLN's boycott of the election. He said that encouraging abstention was an "error" that would help ARENA secure a victory. But the FMLN's Ana Guadalupe Martinez characterized these criticisms as a "temporary separation" within the alliance, which has "autonomy of tactics."

The new line-up of power

Washington clearly did not want ARENA to win the presidency. Throughout this decade, the United States has pumped over \$3.3 billion into El Salvador to shore up the "center" represented by the PDC. But this so-called center has been unable to solve any of the fundamental problems facing the country.

ARENA's victory makes things more complicated for the Bush administration. For years there has been bipartisan support in Congress for financing El Salvador. But Cristiani's election is already having repercussions in Washington.

Sen. Mark Hatfield (R.-Ore.) proposes holding back half of El Salvador's military aid for six months to see if Bush and ARENA pursue a negotiated settlement of the war. And Rep. Tony Coelho, the House Democratic whip, asked recently, "Can Cristiani really be the President, or will D'Aubuisson run the government?"

With D'Aubuisson calling the shots, a bloodbath against the workers and peasants is still possible, despite recent U.S. warnings about human-rights violations. D'Aubuisson controls the paramilitary units that kept "peace" in the Salvadoran countryside throughout the '60s and '70s. His followers include many junior army officers. These elements may view the ARENA victory as a

signal to try their hand and mount a massive reign of terror.

The day after the presidential election, in fact, the army sealed off the headquarters of the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), indicating that further attacks on the independent union movement may be forthcoming.

Where is the FMLN headed?

The FMLN has vowed to pursue its peace proposal anew now that the elections are over. "The objective," according to Martinez, "is to get everyone to sit down quickly at the negotiating table."

The Christian Science Monitor reported on March 20 that some FMLN spokespeople had voiced hope for an ARENA victory, believing that it would further polarize the country and that negotiations would be more meaningful "with a strong party that could keep its commitments."

In the spring 1989 issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine, FMLN Commander Joaquin Villalobos provides a clearer picture of the FMLN's commitment to alliances with El Salvador's ruling class: "For the FMLN, the

basis for a solution among Salvadorans is essentially contained in the Central American and Latin American solutions expressed by Esquipulas and Contadora. The problem to be resolved is the interference of the United States. Everything else is open to discussion."

But the goal of Esquipulas and Contadora, expressed in the so-called "Arias plan," is to disarm the struggles of workers and peasants throughout Central America while consolidating the power of the capitalists in each country.

Adoption of the Arias plan, for example, has isolated the Nicaraguan Revolution from the working class and peasantry in the region—its natural allies. The Sandinistas have been forced to make major concessions to the Nicaraguan capitalists.

In a Feb. 6 interview in *Time* magazine, Daniel Ortega indicated his willingness to reach compromise on virtually all the complaints the United States has voiced over the years. He also indicated that Nicaragua's model would be the Scandinavian countries: "They're small, they have a heavy emphasis on social programs, the state has a role in the economy, but so does the private sector." He promised no more confiscation of private property.

The FMLN is offering these compromises now. Its lack of confidence in the Salvadoran masses leads them to the negotiating table—where they can provide assurances *in advance* that they won't be another threat in the U.S. backyard. Hence its commitment to power-sharing, a mixed economy, and respect for the army.

Villalobos claims that stabilization can be achieved "only through internal agreements and pacts expressing the interests of diverse social and political sectors," meaning concessions to the Salvadoran ruling class. But the FMLN and the popular movement must formulate a program that can fulfill the aspirations of the Salvadoran people to *dismantle* the oppressive oligarchy that has robbed them of their dignity, their rights, and their ability to put bread on their tables.

The Salvadoran masses cannot successfully travel on this course alone, however. They need the help of the Sandinistas, who must deepen their revolution—not reverse its gains—and extend it throughout the region. ■

March 18 CISPES protests



Thousands of antiwar activists demonstrated in cities all across the country on Saturday, March 18. The actions were organized by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) to protest against U.S. intervention in that country.

Above: Demonstrators surround the U.S. Federal Building in New York City.

2000 rally in Boston to support Eastern strike



Boston solidarity rally for striking Eastern workers was largest labor event since the 1940s.

Scott Adams-Cooper/Socialist Action

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

BOSTON—Striking Eastern Airlines workers were treated to a show of solidarity from over 2000 trade unionists and other supporters at a rally in Boston on March 14—the largest labor solidarity rally in Boston since the 1940s. The rally, sponsored by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and the three striking unions—the International Association

of Machinists (IAM), the Transport Workers Union (TWU), and the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA)—was held at the Boston Teachers Union Hall.

The make-up of the crowd showed how deep the support is throughout the labor movement. There were large contingents from the building trades; from the rail unions, who had met earlier with the IAM in anticipation of a secondary boycott of the local commuter

rail lines; and a busload of members of the Harvard University Clerical and Technical Workers Union (HUCTWU), fresh from their organizing victory of last fall. There were paperworkers from Jay, Maine, and visiting auto workers and textile workers from Michigan, Virginia, Ohio, and Alabama.

The rally began with Boston-based strikers marching into the large hall to take an honored place at the front. Machinists

wearing union jackets and flight attendants and pilots in full uniform entered to cheers of "Union! Union!" Frank Myers, the regional director of the AFL-CIO, told the rally that Eastern owner Frank Lorenzo had "grossly miscalculated the solidarity of the labor movement. The strike has reminded us that 'an injury to one is an injury to all!'"

Eddie Burke of IAM Local 1726, who chaired the meeting, told Lorenzo, "You can pay us now or you can pay us later, but you're not going to fly this airline with scab labor." Arthur Osborne of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, referring to Eastern's discount fares on its Boston-New York-Washington shuttle, said, "Lorenzo can fly his planes for gas money, and we'll grow stronger every day."

One high point of the rally was the address by Molly Yard, president of the National Organization for Women. Yard flew in from Washington, D.C., just to attend the rally and offer her solidarity [see center pages]. She was greeted with cheers, particularly from the Flight Attendants, when she linked the struggle of labor with the struggle for women's rights. Yard promised N.O.W.'s support to the striking Eastern workers, and encouraged them to attend the April 9 march for women's rights in Washington, D.C. Boston N.O.W. plans to subsidize buses for Flight Attendants to attend the march.

Led by members of HUCTWU, people sang "Solidarity Forever" and filled buckets with money for the Flight Attendants, who have nothing in their strike fund and are barely getting by. Pilots, many of whom make upwards of \$100,000 a year, were seen throwing \$100 dollar bills into the buckets.

Other speakers included Gov. Michael Dukakis, and two possible successors—Lt. Governor Evelyn Murphy and Mayor Ray Flynn of Boston. Murphy provided perhaps the most picturesque quote of the night, charging Lorenzo with being the "mastermind of the great plane robbery of 1989." Massachusetts Labor Secretary Paul Eustace, a former Eastern machinist, also spoke.

(It's ironic that, with all of this "support" from the state government leadership, the strikers are being hassled by the state agency that runs the airport in Boston. MassPort limits picketers to 10 per line, and forbids leafleting and picketing at the same site.)

Signs from union locals around the city covered the walls of the hall, and handmade signs saying "Stop union busting," "Solidarity," and "Labor supports Eastern workers" abounded.

As Eddie Burke told the crowd, "The labor movement is alive and well, and we can see it here tonight." He asked the crowd, "Is labor dead?" and was met with fists in the air and a thousand shouts of "No!"

UAW dissident scores gains for upcoming district vote

By KEVIN FITZPATRICK

DETROIT—Following a series of well-attended meetings, Don Douglas, a key leader in the "New Beginnings" opposition in the United Auto Workers union (UAW), announced his candidacy for regional director in early February. [For more background, see the February 1989 issue of *Socialist Action*.] In the first weeks of this campaign, Douglas has won important victories.

In the strict sense, the director will be chosen by the delegates to the formally merged Detroit-area Regions 1 and 1-B. The selection will take place at the UAW's Constitutional Convention in Anaheim, Calif., on June 18-22.

The contest now is over who will win the majority of the approximately 1050 delegates who will represent the over 100,000 members of what will be the UAW's largest region.

A juggernaut effect?

The supporters of Bob Lent, the Administration Caucus candidate and incumbent director of Region 1-B, were cocky. The official UAW leadership had put the arm on local officials to support Lent, hoping to create a juggernaut effect.

On top of this, a "Friends' Social Club" was set in motion, which will collect up to \$400,000 to fight UAW dissidents. The money is being "voluntarily donated" by UAW staffers.

And two former UAW presidents, Leonard Woodcock and Douglas Fraser, along with other retired officers, had issued an attack on Victor Reuther. He is a supporter of both

"New Beginnings" and Region 5 Director Jerry Tucker's "New Directions" movement.

Harold Cox, president of Local 653, felt emboldened enough to pipe up, "I think all the people who know Bob Lent will support him." Perhaps people know Bob Lent all too well, because that very local gave 14 of its 21 delegates and eight of its 14 alternates to Douglas supporters.

The *Detroit Free Press* reported on March 3 that "one UAW insider" called the vote a "shocker." The local's vice president, also a Lent supporter, had to admit that "the membership is letting the international union know they don't like what is going on."

In the next two weeks, Douglas swept the delegates at GM's Orion Township assembly complex, and walked away with his own Local 594 (GM Truck and Bus) in Pontiac. The Administration Caucus is now talking out of the other side of its mouth, claiming that once the vote gets outside GM and Pontiac, Lent will start to win. But it forgets that GM was precisely the showpiece of "labor-management cooperation."

"Time to make it happen"

The struggle for Don Douglas reflects the deep discontent auto workers feel with the wretched policies of the UAW leadership. "New Beginnings," in a pamphlet called "Decade of Decline," not only attacks the original concessions bargaining. It also shows the aftermath of this capitulation to the corporations: "whipsawing" (playing off one local against another), "team" concepts, and massive layoffs and unemployment.

It states the importance of the fight: "The

UAW led American Labor into retreat during the Reagan years. Only our Union is large enough and strong enough to declare that it's time for labor to surge forward again, and make it happen."

As part of the fight for union democracy and "accountability," the opposition has prepared a single, simple resolution to be presented to the Constitutional Convention.

Pointing out the burning differences that exist within the union, the proposal puts forward a specific constitutional amendment that will forbid "omnibus resolutions" through which the Administration Caucus has buried all alternative proposals at the Special Bargaining Conventions that precede contract expirations.

These are small beginnings; the fight is hard and the road ahead is far from smooth. But something is stirring deep down in the ranks of the American labor movement, something that will find a stronger and more political expression in every battle—won or lost—and in every lesson learned in that struggle.

...Eastern

(continued from page 1)

bined force of the employers, courts, and governmental authorities—the union leadership has retreated.

When Eastern Airlines executives said they were "delighted" with the decision to appoint a mediator in the strike, both the IAM and the Air Line Pilots Association announced that they, too, applauded the decision.

At the same time, the unions (together with Democratic Party members of Congress) are continuing to press for a federal emer-

gency board to end the strike. They thus maintain the fiction that a government mediator or emergency board could be impartial in the Eastern dispute.

But the Eastern strike has already been pushed back by the courts. What more proof is necessary to show that governmental agencies are *always* loyal to the bosses?

Spread the strike!

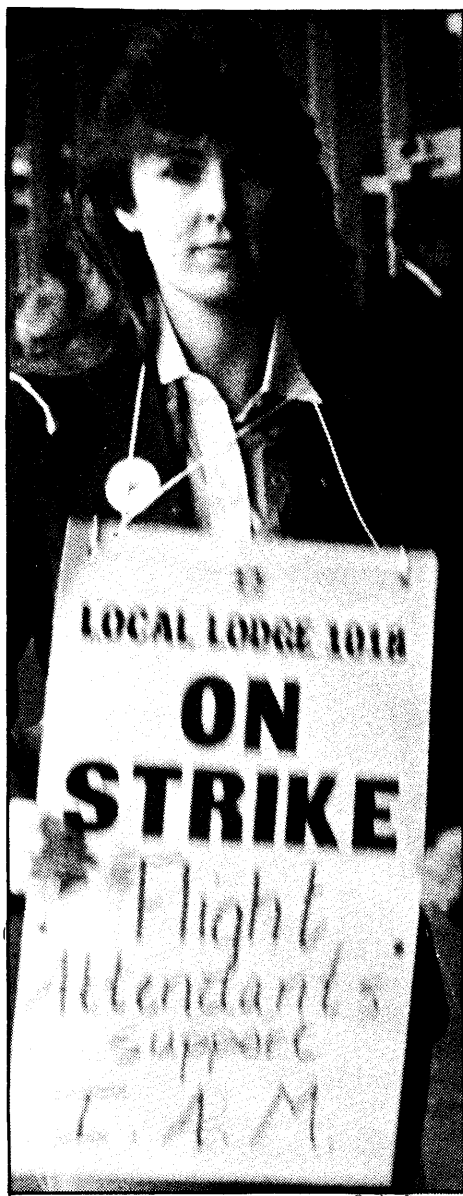
In reality, the union officials are aiming for a compromise. The government mediator would tell the workers to give concessions—although less than Lorenzo originally asked for. And the union tops would justify the settlement with the statement: "It's all we can get right now."

But this is a mistaken policy. The strikers can win much more. Workers are tired of sacrificing for the sake of Lorenzo and the other coupon-clippers. And the heroic solidarity expressed by the pilots, the flight attendants, and other unionists have shown the power of the labor movement on the picket line.

Lorenzo went to the courts, not because he was strong, but because *the strikers* were strong—and he had no other choice. Now the strike is in danger. The unions must continue to hold fast on the picket line. They must enlarge the strike, in the first place, by targeting Continental Airlines, a non-union airline also owned by Lorenzo.

If the courts and the federal government continue to try to tie down the strike with injunctions against secondary picketing, then the unions must be prepared to defend their rights.

Mass picketing is necessary. The entire labor movement must be mobilized to come to the aid of the Eastern strikers. Solidarity and strength are the only things that will make Lorenzo give in.—The editors



Becky Carmen

The following interview with Bill Leumer, president of IAM Local 565 in Sunnyvale, Calif., was conducted by Nat Weinstein on March 24.

Socialist Action: Your local union is not directly affected by the Eastern Airlines strike but I can see from this leaflet distributed at the March 18 San Francisco airport rally that your local is more than routinely in support of this strike. Why?

Bill Leumer: First of all, let me say that the following comments are my personal opinion, not necessarily those of my local union.

This strike means a lot to the whole labor movement. Because of the support from Eastern pilots and flight attendants, the machinists have virtually shut down a powerful corporation. This was done in spite of those who claim that such labor solidarity couldn't be carried out nowadays, or in the current political climate, at least. It shows that when union members are asked to fight, they will. And when this happens, organized labor's potential power is shown for all to see.

One other thing is that this strike and its outcome is increasingly being seen by many people, in different unions, as a battle that we *must* win—to keep our own standard of living from being lowered by our employers. That's why this is our strike too. If the unions lose this one, we'll all lose. If we win, it could be the beginning of the end of the current policy of retreat and concessions.

S.A.: So, you think that this strike can be won?

Leumer: Hell yes! That's why I'm so damned excited by it. It's the possibility of winning, for a change, that has got every union activist that I know eager to help out. But we all know it's not going to be easy.

S.A.: You mentioned the "current policy of retreat," and that the successful outcome of this strike could end that policy. Could you explain this some more?

Leumer: Sure. For the past 10 years or so almost every union contract settlement has contained concessions to the employers. I don't know anyone who has had their real wages keep up with the cost of living. No, wages have steadily gone down as a result of the concessions policy.

Every concession made by the airline unions to Frank Lorenzo and the rest of the airlines has led to more and more demands for concessions. And, I should also say, the bosses demand ever-lower wages and benefits even though profits keep going up!

That's why I say that if we win this strike, it'll prove that fighting back can win, while concessions guarantee more concessions.

S.A.: So you think this strike will be won?

Leumer: No, that isn't what I'm saying. I'm saying that it *can* be won. But for this

An interview with the president of IAM Local 565:

'The Eastern Airlines strike can be won!'

to win, it will take more than just shutting down Eastern Airlines. That is not going to be enough to force the struck company to come to terms.

So far, the IAM leadership has postponed extending the strike because of a barrage of injunctions outlawing actions in solidarity with striking Eastern workers. In my opinion, if the union allows such injunctions to tie its hands, the enthusiasm and fighting spirit will dwindle.

That's just what every struck company counts on. And Eastern Airlines' boss, Frank Lorenzo, hasn't lost a moment in taking advantage of the anti-labor bankruptcy court. Every gain he makes here will undermine the union's chances of winning the strike.

S.A.: Explain this. Most people think a

would appoint an examiner, granting him broad powers to "mediate" the strike. Both Eastern and union representatives praised Judge Burton R. Lifland's move as a possible avenue toward a strike settlement.

But only the next day, Judge Lifland again showed his anti-labor bias by issuing a temporary restraining order prohibiting the machinists' union from "disrupting" Eastern's operations at Logan International Airport in Boston and at La Guardia Airport in New York.

We see the same pro-employer bias shown by every judge who has been asked to limit or outright forbid picketing. So-called "temporary" restraining orders are a joke; at least one judge has announced they will be in effect for the duration of the strike!

determined to do what is necessary—and possible—to win. This way we will win.

S.A.: Are you saying that the IAM should order all machinists working for the other airlines to join the Eastern workers' strike?

Leumer: It's not that simple. After years and years of telling our members that the bosses are too strong, that the government is in the hands of unfriendly politicians, and that you just can't break the law, it's not going to be easy to get machinists, pilots, baggage handlers, and flight attendants working for other airlines to come out in support of their striking sisters and brothers.

The union officials will have to convince their membership that solidarity is not merely a good deed you do for others, but that it's in your own immediate interests. And most important, if we really stick to our guns and exercise our constitutional rights, every blow against us will become a reason to bring new forces out in active support of the strike.

It's actually not hard to convince the membership to jump into the fight with both feet. They don't really need to be convinced of this. But an intelligent union leadership knows that you have to show the membership that you mean business and will do whatever is necessary to back them up and win.

And get this. The first thing a smart leadership must do when their members are told they can't picket, or can't strike, is to set the example, defy the threats by judges and politicians to send you to jail if you dare to exercise your democratic right to strike! If the leaders don't lead, the members won't go anywhere—or they'll get themselves new leaders.

S.A.: But won't breaking the law alienate the public?

Leumer: There is really no such thing as "the public." The public is divided into three distinct parts: The bosses and their friends, the workers and their friends, and people in the middle who are not sure which side they are on—which side best reflects their own interests.

The first thing we have to do in any fight is to get our side into it by hammering away at our common interests—that's what solidarity is all about. The bosses are never confused about where their interests lie, and they always jump into the fight like a team.

The politicians do their thing, the courts do theirs, the cops theirs, and the news media slyly twists every event to make it look like what's good for the boss is good for the "public"—and the strikers are always shown as harming the "public interest."

S.A.: Well, you've said a mouthful. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

Leumer: Yes, one more thing. Whatever happens in this strike, we've shown that solidarity is still alive. And that if we lose this strike, it's not because of any lack of the membership's will to fight.

I had a chance to talk to an old friend who is an IAM official on strike. He didn't want me to mention his name after he vented his frustration and anger at the conduct of the strike. This is what he said in response to some of the things I have just told you:

"The courts can't be trusted. They're kicking the shit out of us—with the injunctions and temporary restraining orders as you have pointed out in Boston's Logan Airport and in New York's La Guardia Airport. We never should have announced our intentions to picket the railroads, we should have just done it! It would have made all the difference if we used our rights.

"Yes, we're appealing the injunctions, but we ain't going to get very far given whose side these bastards are on. But once the legal stuff fails, I know that my members would be hard to hold back—they're already damned tired of being kicked around."

Now, I don't know whether this pent-up anger among the members will be able to change union policy this time. But I'm sure that an explosion is not far down the road, and when it comes we'll be able to take back everything we lost—and more. ■



IAM LOCAL 565
Strike Support Committee



ALL OUT FOR SOLIDARITY RALLY WITH EASTERN STRIKERS Saturday, March 18, 1989 at 12 noon S.F. Airport, South Terminal (U.S. Air)

The IAM strike against Eastern Airlines is an historic development for the U.S. labor movement. Why? Because with the support of the pilots and flight attendants, the machinists have brought a large corporation to a grinding halt. So much for those who claim that the strategy of solidarity could not be carried out in this day and age.

Eastern Airlines' top dog, Frank Lorenzo, is demanding \$150 million worth of concessions from the machinists. The machinists' response—"NO WAY!"

The large corporations have united with the government, the courts and politicians of every stripe to defeat our brothers and sisters at Eastern. The only difference among them is over how to crush the unions, slash wages and eliminate pensions. This attack on Eastern workers must be seen as an attack on all of our standard of living.

Our unions and our whole future weigh in the balance of this battle. Already the government and virtually every politician of both parties backs the imposition of court ordered injunctions which unlawfully bar sympathy strikes guaranteed under the Railway Labor Act of 1926.

Every major media outlet in the country clamors against the secondary boycotts. They fear the massive power of union solidarity. The corporations know only too well that labor uniting to win is the road to victory.

President Bush has declared that he would introduce legislation outlawing secondary boycotts if injunctions fail to stop the spread of the strike. Even the so called "friends of labor" are prepared to back these anti-labor laws.

We must send the message of **NO SUPPORT** to any laws that restrict the rights of our union brothers and sisters to defend themselves against attack.

Lorenzo's filing for bankruptcy is merely a gimmick aimed at defeating the strike. But the gimmick will not succeed if there is a massive show of strength at this rally and others to come plus an extension of the picketing to Continental Airlines (also owned by Texas Air) and a call to railroad workers to join the battle.

The striking machinists know that the whole labor movement must be brought into the fight, including the unorganized.

Eastern workers are putting up a tremendous fight. They are solidly determined not to give more concessions. This is what makes this strike an inspiration to us all.

We have been asked for help by Eastern's machinists. We must let our brothers and sisters know that they can count on us, the rank and file, to back them up. Our local and thousands of other unionists throughout the country are the only ones Eastern workers can rely on.

We are their key to victory. Our active support by our attendance at this rally will show the government and the corporations the potential power of unions when we stand together in **UNION SOLIDARITY**.

All Union officers and stewards are expected to attend this rally and bring co-workers.

We also hope our brothers and sisters from IAM Local 322, Teamsters, IBEW and the Carpenters will join us Saturday.

Bill Leumer, President

Ken West, Treasurer

Co-Chairs, IAM Local 565 Strike Support Committee

Union labor donated 3/89

bankruptcy court's role is just to make sure all creditors are paid back as equally as possible.

Leumer: The bankruptcy court has already made clear its real function. It intends to help Frank Lorenzo defeat the strike. One of the first things this court did was to okay Eastern's refusal to pay striking employees \$9 million in wages earned before the strike.

It also approved Eastern's refusal to refund money to holders of tickets on planes that have been grounded by the strike. That's a whole lot of extra cash for Eastern to play with and to hold out against the strike. Almost at the same time the court showed its "impartiality" by okaying payment of wages to Eastern's non-striking employees.

This double standard toward Eastern's "creditors" is only the tip of the iceberg. But it should come as no surprise. The bankruptcy court had previously enabled Lorenzo to break the unions at Continental by invalidating union contracts, among other things.

Just a few days ago the judge in charge of Eastern Airlines' bankruptcy filing said he

S.A.: So what should be done?

Leumer: Ever since this strike began Lorenzo has been allowed to organize his forces without hindrance. He has brought forward his reinforcements from all sides.

First he got injunctions against sympathy strikes by rail workers and by those at other air lines. And now he's getting the courts to reduce the number of pickets and keep them where no one can see them. Lorenzo just loves a fight like this, where his opponent is channeled into fighting according to his rules which say: "I can beat the hell out of you, but you can't fight back!"

When the unions even think out loud about bringing their reinforcements into the battle, then the government, the courts, and the cops step in and declare: "No way, that's against the rules—labor solidarity is out!"

This strike will be won only if we stop playing according to the bosses' rules. And our first rule is to bring all our forces into the fight in simple self-defense. The splendid spirit of solidarity shown by Eastern strikers will be reinforced only if we show that we are

NEW YORK—The Martin Luther King Day rally each January has been a good place to pause and assess the state of the anti-racist movement here.

Last year's demonstration was unusual; it was animated by red-hot struggles for justice for victims of specific acts of racist violence. In particular, the struggle for justice for the victims of the lynching at Howard Beach, Queens, gave the anti-racist movement a sense of its own power.

This year, likewise, there has been no scarcity of cases waiting to be championed by the anti-racist movement. Unfortunately, this year's event had a pronounced electoral emphasis. Prominent on the speakers' list were those urging that the number-one task of activists in the year ahead is to "Dump Mayor Koch."

The marchers were given a campaign rally for David Dinkins, Manhattan borough president and highest ranking Black official in New York City, who has announced his candidacy for mayor. Activists were urged to register 250,000 new voters for Dinkins "in the spirit of the civil rights movement in the 1960s."

The civil rights movement

One of the central insights of the re-awakened anti-racist movement in New York since 1986 has been the recognition of the need to bring the civil rights movement of the South to the northern cities.

To listen to Dinkins and his supporters at the rally, the victory of the civil rights movement was due to its support by Democratic Party politicians. But the civil rights movement won everything it fought for by militant struggle—legendary sit-ins, freedom rides, and protest marches—not by lobbying Democrats.

"We cannot depend on any political party, for both the Democrats and Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence," wrote John Lewis, head of the student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, in a speech for the August 1963 March on Washington that was suppressed by the march organizers.

Given the existence of a mass movement against Jim Crow that threatened to go beyond the bounds of Democratic Party politics, President Kennedy acceded to the March on Washington—and then only to be better able to control it.

The "Chicago example"

Another theme harped on at the Martin Luther King rally was the need to emulate the "Chicago example." In 1983, Democrat Harold Washington became Chicago's first Black mayor.

"The example of Chicago" is indeed worth

New York mayoral race:

Dinkins campaign derails anti-racist movement

examining. If the Chicago campaign of 1983 is any indication, Dinkins will face a racist campaign waged against him by his chief campaign rival—a racism fostered and perpetuated by the Democratic machine Dinkins has been loyal to all his life.

Mayor Edward Koch, who since 1977 has built a base among white ethnic groups on the basis of fighting affirmative action and "poverty pimps," has recently been exposed as a patronage pimp for white-owned businesses and Democratic Party hacks. Koch's policies have been instrumental in creating a climate where racially motivated incidents like the 1986 Howard Beach lynching are on the rise.

But if "the Chicago example" is any indication, mobilizing on behalf of Dinkins will be a trap for working people. Dinkins' running on the Democratic Party ticket is a pledge in advance that he will serve the interests of the banks and corporations—not workers, the poor, and the homeless.

This is the reason why big-business newspapers like the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Sun Times*, and *Crain's Chicago Business* endorsed the Washington campaign. For the same reason, *The New York Times* and *Newsday* have already written favorably about Dinkins in the first few weeks of his candidacy.

The first big test

One task of New York City's next mayor will be to administer the biggest round of cutbacks since the city's budget crisis of the mid-1970s. At stake are the jobs of thousands of city workers and the maintenance of many vital city services—including fire protection, childcare, drug-treatment programs, and education.

Mayor Koch has already announced a \$480 million shortfall for the coming year, due to reduced state aid by Governor Cuomo as well as the loss of anticipated tax revenue due to the October 1987 stockmarket crash.

One of the first big tests for Dinkins and his supporters came at a "Campaign for a People's Budget Conference" held at Hunter College on Feb. 4. The event, attended by 800 people, was sponsored by the New York State Rainbow Coalition.



David Dinkins (center) flanked by Harlem Congressman Charles Rangel and Mrs. Dinkins

In a manner strikingly similar to that of Martin Luther King Day, the conference was orchestrated like a Dinkins campaign rally by Democratic Party supporters behind the scenes. But Dinkins' speech to the gathering didn't even criticize Governor Cuomo, let alone the banks and corporations whose profit drive is the source of the budget crisis.

"I didn't work this hard and register all those people and walk all those miles doing Rainbow work to have somebody whose views I don't agree with walk in and think he's got it made," said one activist in an article on the conference in *The City Sun*, a Black weekly.

Yet this is the terrible logic of the Rainbow's "inside/outside" strategy with regard to the Democratic Party.

Anti-racist activists now face the grim prospect of any demonstrations over the next year being subordinated to the agenda of electing Dinkins. A similar situation is faced by trade unionists, housing, and AIDS

activists.

Given this prospect, some activists may withdraw from electoral politics, instead of devoting themselves to work around single issues. Of course, mass mobilizations are needed on a whole range of single issues.

But the situation points to another lesson as well. Anti-racist activists need an independent Black political party they can truly call their own, a party that educates, agitates, and mobilizes in their interest 365 days of the year—every year.

The entire course of events since the Howard Beach protests—from the struggle for justice for Tawana Brawley to the recent maneuvers with regard to the New York mayoral elections—points to the fact that this party must be independent of the big-business interests of the Republicans and Democrats.

Some 25 years after the March on Washington, the suppressed portion of that speech by John Lewis retains its burning relevance. ■

Minneapolis forum blasts cop drug raids

By HAYDEN PERRY

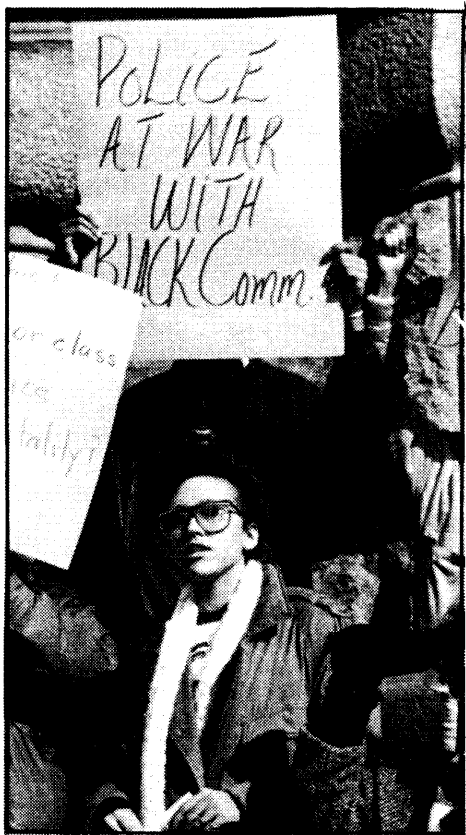
At a Socialist Action forum held at Macalester College in Minneapolis last month, 40 people heard the so-called war on drugs exposed as a police-led war on the Black community.

While police are throwing grenades into the homes of innocent Blacks, speakers pointed out, government officials are deeply involved with international drug dealers such as Gen. Manuel Noriega in Panama.

Chris Nisan, Community Director of the African Student Cultural Center, put the blame squarely on the ruling class for drug addiction in the poor communities. "Drug abuse is a serious problem in our community," he said. "But who are the real culprits? They are not the small dope dealers on the corner."

"We know the real dope dealers are in the highest echelons of the government. We know Oliver North is a dope dealer.... We know that during the Vietnam War dope was pumped into the Black community, as the military helped drug dealers in South East Asia."

Brian Schwartz, a member of Socialist Action, backed Nisan's charges. "There is no war on drugs," he declared. "The propaganda campaign against drugs has been carried out with two major purposes: One—to provide a smokescreen to hide the U.S. government's complicity in international drug traffic.



Lynn Henderson/Socialist Action

Two—to create an atmosphere in which people will accept a stepped-up war on the Black community and a war on everybody's

civil liberties."

An outcome of the "war on drugs" was the death of Lloyd Smiley, 71, and Lillian Wiese, 68. While asleep in their home, they were killed in a fire started by a "thunderflash" stun gun hurled through their window by members of the Minneapolis Police Department. [See March issue of *Socialist Action*.]

As a result of this outrage, Nisan reported, the Black community has organized and is demanding criminal prosecution of the police officers responsible and an end to police harassment of the citizens who are making these demands.

"People are starting to protest," Nisan concluded. "It is not just a coincidence that for the last month there have been no further grenade attacks or bulldozer parties. They haven't occurred because a protest movement has emerged." ■

Demonstration denounces racist Long Beach cops

By BRAD WIEDMAIER

LONG BEACH, Calif.—On March 11, startled Saturday shoppers heard chants of "Re-teach Long Beach police" and "One day when you're going to class, Dickey may shove you through glass."

A march and rally of over 100, called by Students Against Police Abuse (SAPA), condemned police harassment of Long Beach Blacks and the brutal arrest of Don Jackson, a Black police officer on disability from the

city of Hawthorne.

Mark Dickey, a white cop, pushed Jackson's head through a plate-glass window after he had been stopped for an alleged traffic infraction. The victim was then charged with resisting arrest.

However, an NBC television crew had filmed the incident. The TV crew and Jackson were attempting to get on film an instance of police abuse, which has been prevalent in Long Beach.

Police and city officials attempted to deny what took place, but the proof on film was too damning. Officer Dickey was forced under oath to disown his report. Yet this has not stopped the city from continuing to prosecute Jackson for resisting arrest.

The rally backers are calling for a community review committee that would monitor police behavior and have the power to make decisions against officers charged with abuse. They also demand that Dickey, his partner, and the Long Beach police chief be fired.

In a related event the next day in Hollywood, 500 supporters of Don Jackson raised \$15,000 for legal costs. Entertainment personalities and Black leaders, including Jesse Jackson, were present. ■

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Operation Rescue routed in Los Angeles

By KATHLEEN O'NAN and
MARTY DENZEL

LOS ANGELES—After the rout of Operation Rescue here on March 25, Kathy Spillar, an organizer of the newly formed nationwide Coalition for a Safe and Legal Abortion, said: "We have proved that we can beat Operation Rescue today in Los Angeles. We have got the forces, the skills, the determination to stop them anywhere. By the end of the year there will be no more Operation Rescue."

Operation Rescue met with resounding defeat on several levels. Its leaders had promised that 2500 to 3000 "rescuers" would shut down Los Angeles abortion clinics. On the largest of the three days of demonstrations—Saturday, March 25—no more than 500 showed up. But well over 1000 pro-choice activists came to the defense of the L.A. clinics.

Each day saw Operation Rescue at only one clinic instead of the promised three to five a day. Pro-choice activists, on the other hand, were mobilized at 5 a.m. at more than 50 of

the area's 90 clinics. Furthermore, using a command center and mobile telephones, the pro-choice forces were able to move within moments to defend any of the clinics that might be hit.

Randall Terry, the former used car salesman who founded Operation Rescue, had promised followers that they wouldn't be arrested for illegally blocking the clinic facilities. Or if they were arrested, he said, they would be "released immediately by the police" and would only receive fines comparable "to a parking ticket."

Instead, Terry and three others found themselves in jail awaiting arraignment on felony charges of conspiracy to commit a crime. And those who had been previously arrested at any clinic—or who failed to cooperate or refused to give proper identification—were jailed. Only cooperating first-time offenders were released after booking.

Police chief Daryl S. Gates announced that the City Attorney's Office will seek to have Operation Rescue pay for the police cost of their Saturday demonstration, estimated to be in excess of \$100,000. This is in addition to

any fines or jail sentences imposed by the court.

No clinic was shut down

No clinic was shut down for the day and all patients who were scheduled were seen—either later in the day or at another clinic. No woman who was seeking medical attention was unable to receive care.

Spirits were high despite the steady and sometimes driving rainstorm which persisted throughout the Saturday demonstration. Hundreds of defenders of the right of women to choose chanted, "Not the church, not the state, women will decide our fate." Cheers were heard as women were escorted into the clinic by defenders soon after the arrests were made.

In contrast, on Feb. 11, Operation Rescue had successfully closed two L.A. clinics. There were no arrests. Then on March 3, a judge granted the American Civil Liberties Union's request for an injunction barring protesters from bodily blocking entrances and demonstrating closer than 15 feet from clinic entrances and exits.

Heavy public pressure was brought to bear on the LAPD to enforce the injunction. Police Chief Gates initially stated that the LAPD would rely on "citizen's arrests" during the holy week blockage.

A city council meeting voted 11 to 0 to demand that the LAPD enforce the injunction. Under public pressure the LAPD moved reluctantly. An order to disperse was not given by the police for two hours. When the arrests did finally begin, they took almost four hours to complete.

Before this serious setback for Operation Rescue, a "National Day of Rescue" had been called for April 29. Los Angeles activists are again preparing for defense of the clinics. For more information, call the ACLU Pro-choice Hotline at (213) 487-INFO.

Other Los Angeles pro-choice actions for April include a rally for "Women's Equality, Women's Lives" on April 9 sponsored by South Coast, Long Beach and Orange County chapters of N.O.W. It will be held at the Plaza of the Flag in Orange County Santa Ana Civic Center. For more info, call South Coast N.O.W. at (714) 859-9372. ■

Ellen Convisser, President, Boston NOW:

'3500 people lined Beacon St. to stop Operation Rescue'

The following interview with Ellen Convisser, president of Boston N.O.W., was conducted by Alexei Folger for Socialist Action. This interview has been edited and abridged.

Socialist Action: How has the chapter organized to combat Operation Rescue? They've been attacking Boston fairly frequently since the end of October.

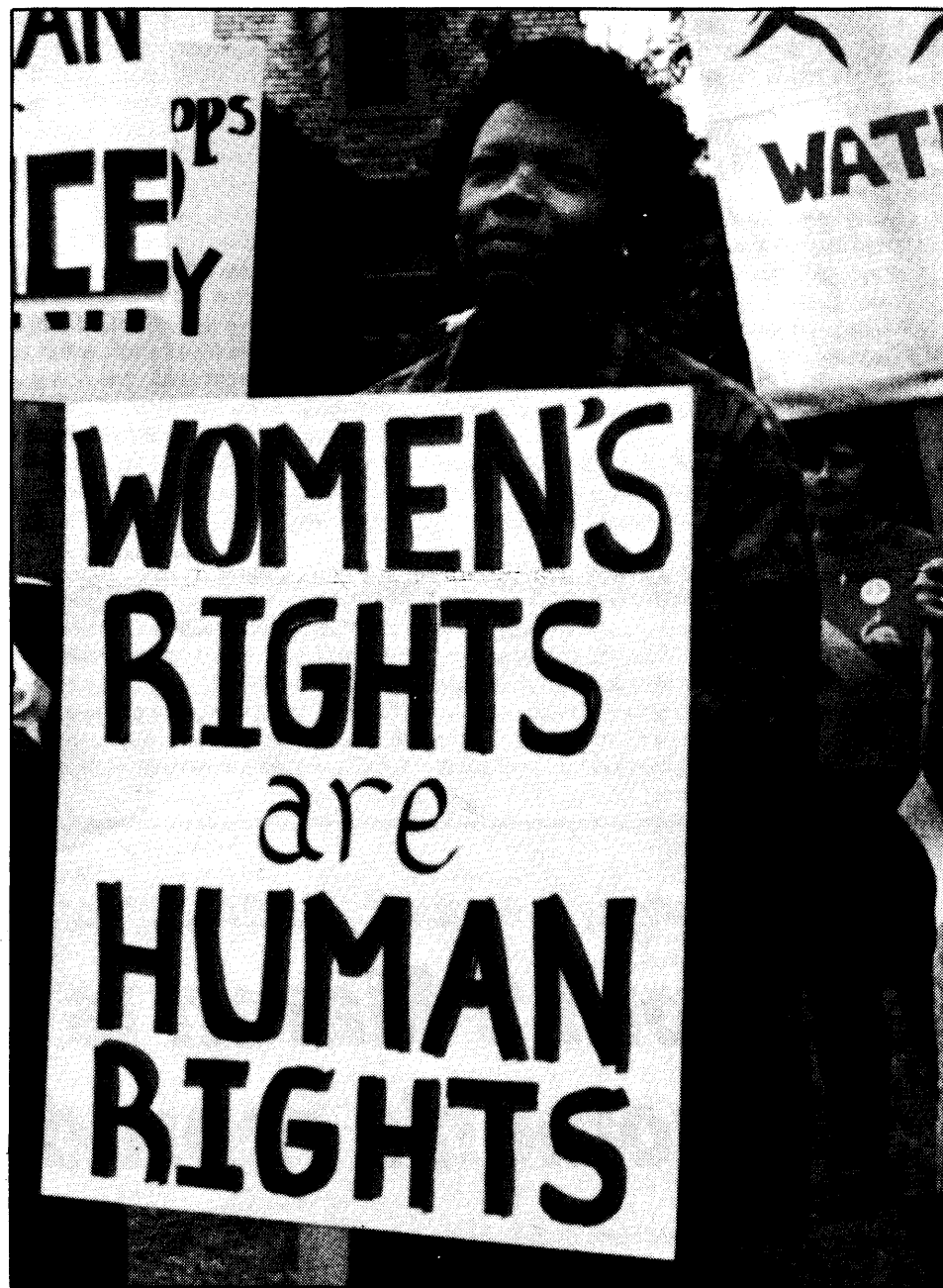
Ellen Convisser: We had been targeted as an area they really wanted to focus on back in October, as you know. But basically what happened was that the pro-choice community here came together so quickly and so intensively that we've discouraged them from focusing on us the way they wanted to.

S.A.: How did you do this?

Convisser: Initially we started out by saying we were not going to be responsive to them, that what we wanted to do was make pro-choice statements that weren't reactive in a direct kind of way to Operation Rescue. But soon it became clear to us that while we need to maintain our own agenda, this approach was insufficient.

In addition, we had not sufficiently addressed the entire range of issues on the abortion and reproductive rights agenda. These include funding, access, lesbian and gay parenting rights, and forced sterilization.

So it started out that our plan was to do two things. One was to continue to have a pro-choice presence in Boston. The other was to work within the national pro-active, pro-choice movement. And we did that. We did that very successfully on Oct. 29 when we lined Beacon Street with over 3500 pro-choice



Rick Reinhard/Impact Visuals

activists.

S.A.: Three thousand five hundred. That's a lot.

Convisser: All the pro-choice activities

here in the Boston area have not been difficult to organize because people are very angry about this issue, people are totally inspired by their anger and by the attacks of Operation

Rescue. So it really hasn't been that hard.

S.A.: How is Boston N.O.W. helping to build the April 9 march and rally in D.C.?

Convisser: We will probably be sending down over 12,000 people to the march. We're organizing on about 40 different campuses in the Boston area. When we hear that young people today—particularly young women—are not interested in this issue, that's really baloney.

The campuses have really come through strongly, and it's really been very rewarding to see this whole generation of young women coming along who are willing to work on this issue. Just because they haven't personally experienced the absence of legal abortion, they are still very frightened of losing this right.

They are also very committed to the larger issues, not just limiting themselves to keeping abortion legal. They are also talking about access to abortion and all the other related questions.

The other thing that we're doing is trying to subsidize people to go to Washington. We want to make sure that people who don't have the money to pay for transportation don't miss the march. These subsidies will include at least one busload of flight attendants from Eastern Airlines.

S.A.: That's probably unprecedented.

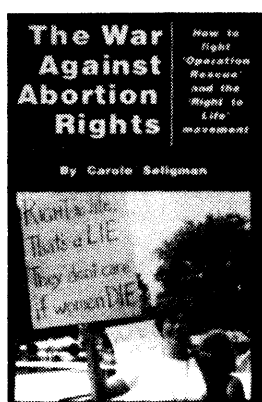
Convisser: It's also another women's network that has been created. We're really seeing the march as a tool for the further organizing that we have to be doing in a couple of ways.

One is just in terms of sheer numbers. We're all under attack. Two, we need to be fighting for an entire progressive agenda that includes all of the issues—economic equity, civil rights issues—an agenda in which we don't have to trade one issue off for another.

That can only be achieved by having a true coalition of people who are coming from different places. Often when we're dealing with legislatures, even within the progressive community, choice issues get traded off.

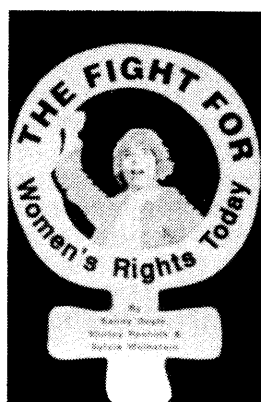
On the local level, the abortion issue will become highlighted in every election in a way it hadn't been previously. We are committed here to not trade off our issues. And to me a pivotal issue is the issue of choice in its broadest definition. ■

Three new pamphlets on Women's Liberation



The War on Abortion Rights: How to Fight 'Operation Rescue' and the 'Right to Life' Movement

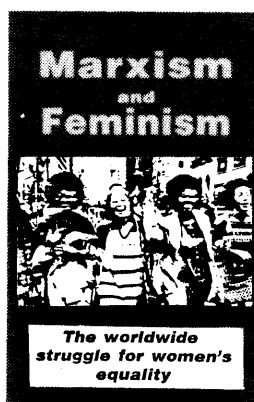
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Marxism and Feminism: The Worldwide Struggle for Women's Equality

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Bernadette Devlin speaks on International Women's Day

In British-occupied Northern Ireland, women as well as men are imprisoned for struggling to free their country from a foreign invader.

It has become a tradition for women and men to rally on International Women's Day, March 8, at the gates of Maghaberry Women's Prison outside Belfast. This year, Socialist Action staffwriter Hayden Perry joined the several hundred Irish nationalists who massed at the prison gates to shout encouragement and support for the Republican women incarcerated there.

A band made up of very young people, playing traditional tunes of Irish struggle, led the marchers before the prison gates. At an impressive moment in the demonstration, a leader intoned the names of the political prisoners confined behind the walls. As each name was called out the crowd shouted, "We support you. We are with you."

A number of speakers addressed the rally. Among them was Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, who helped found the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland 20 years ago and has been fighting for a united socialist Ireland for two decades. Excerpts from her speech are printed below.

It seems to me, standing at the gates of the prison, all of us women together, that this is a measure of how far we as women and as sisters have come. Our being here today—and our making noise today—is for our sisters, the women inside the prison, who will know and hear some way that we are here.

When we started in the Civil Rights Movement, we did not know where we were going. All of us believed it would not be very long. We innocently believed that we would get civil rights and some degree of justice, and then go back to where we came from and get on with the rest of our lives.

The development of the struggle was clearly seen in the demands that we made.

There was not a voice in Ireland raised in objection to the slogan, "one man, one vote."

But if this demand were granted we would be no better off—because we were not men. We learned as we went along.

The work of ordinary women

The leaders of the early civil rights period were not people like Bernadette Devlin, but people whose names were not known then, and are not known now. They were ordinary women who fought their battles of evictions

and organizing protests.

Before the Civil Rights Movement was started, there were four years of solid work being done—in the main part by women. Once the committee got formed, one or two token women were elected to it.

That is where we were in terms of women's equality 20 years ago. We did not even have time to find out if we were oppressed. I was asked the question in 1969 in America, "Was I oppressed as a woman?" My answer, which was very honest at the time was, "I haven't the time to find out."

I was oppressed because of my class. I was oppressed because of my community. And someone wanted me to deal with another layer of oppression, no thanks! I didn't have the time.

But I found out it made a difference. When internment was introduced, we sometimes benefited from sexism. Women avoided the death penalty. The majority of people interned were men.

That meant the bulk of the work outside was done by women, who were the wives or sisters or friends or daughters of people who were interned—or their comrades.

The development of the struggle was un-

even. It was not always easy. We dealt with our sisters in the feminist movement. For a long time they would not stand at the gates of the prison. The imprisonment of our women was "not a feminist issue," they claimed.

Why? The war was "a man's issue." And our women wound up in prison because they blindly and emotionally "followed their men."

We argued it out with the feminists, and we who were feminists and Republicans stuck to our position. We survived this period. It was not always easy going.

I think it is bad to forget that we had those problems. Because it is out of them that we grew. It is still uneven. Still the great bulk of the work falls to us. It is still up to us to see that our offspring are fed before we leave. We are still doing two jobs at once.

We are still seeing that the money reaches the weekend. We should never forget how strong we are, that we manage to do so much, and learn in bits and pieces.

No great "glory!"

I think there is something else, after 20 years, that we should never forget. It hurts! There is no great glory in trying to rear your family while your husband is in prison. When your partner is in prison, and there is not enough money to feed your children. There is no great spiritual uplift in having to trek to the prisons of this state once every seven days—for the best part of 20 years.

It hurts when you see young women taken off to prison, and the best years of their lives spent in that hell hole. There is nothing uplifting about being in prison.

We do it, we battle on. It is the women who never speak at meetings, who are the backbone of any struggle. The women who do the social and community work. The women who concentrate on looking after the other sisters. Or engage in the broad political work. Or take up the military struggle. None of them do it for kicks. None of them do it for excitement. And none of them do it to be personally uplifted.

We have come to the prisons, and we have seen young lives ruined. We have seen, over 20 years, such tears and such sorrow, such suffering. If anybody had told us 20 years ago that was what lay in the road for us, don't you think in our innocence and naiveté we would have gone home?

But we go on. And we learn from that sorrow, and we learn from that strength. And in all our uneven development, all we ask of our sisters who support us is to grow with us, and share with us. We know what is in front of us.

Do you really believe that the British capitalist state is going to stand by quietly while we try to build an independent workers' republic in this country? Do you really believe that the British capitalist state has done its worst on us?

They have not even started to crucify us. And we know it. And yet these women are here. And that prison has young women in it. And young women just coming out of it. Because after all we have suffered you could not beat it out of us with a stick.

There is a strength, and a caring and sharing in us, because we know how to say, "I am strong and I hurt," and not feel that those two things are contradictory. ■

Socialist Action Forums on Women's Rights

San Francisco

Two-day conference on **'Feminism and Revolution'**

Fri., April 14, 8 p.m.

Film: 'How we got the vote'

Sat., April 15,

Three sessions:

11 a.m.: **Stephanie Coontz** on 'The Origins of Women's Oppression'

2 p.m.: Film on reproductive rights around the world

4 p.m.: Panel Discussion on 'The Women's Movement Today,'

Speakers: Linda Castro, Zaklya Somburu, Carole Selligman, and others.

All sessions at 3435 Army St., Rm. 308. For more info. call 821-0458.

Boston

'What's Next for the Women's Movement?: Beyond the April 9 March'

Panel:

Ellen Convisser, Pres. Boston N.O.W.

Alexei Folger, Socialist Action

Other speakers to be announced.

Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m.

Cambridge YWCA
7 Temple St.

For more information call 497-0230.

Los Angeles

'Defend the Right to Choose!

Today's Fight for Abortion Rights and Reproductive Freedom'

Speakers:

Carol Downer, Exec. Dir., Feminist Women's Health Clinics

Dr. Betty Brooks, Moderator of Feminist Forum

Susan McGreivy, Feminist attorney for women's and gay rights

Tybie Marton, Socialist Action

Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m.

L.A. City College
Music Bldg, Stud. Ctr.,
855 N. Vermont

... Thousands march

(continued from page 1)

like when women died from botched illegal abortions, and they don't intend to find out by personal experience.

Delegations from Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Norway are expected to join the marchers in Washington. Women in these countries face similar battles to keep abortion legal and accessible.

San Francisco action

In San Francisco, organizing for the April 2 March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives met with similar success. Busloads of pro-choice activists from as far away as Sacramento and Redding are joining the demonstration.

Organizations which traditionally shy away from mass action—such as chapters of the League of Women Voters—not only endorsed the march, but are organizing contingents as well. Organizers predict April 2 will be the largest pro-choice demonstration in many years in San Francisco.

All this activity means that women are ready to fight back. Tired of relying on backroom lobbying and letter-writing

campaigns, women are taking to the streets to demand their democratic rights. The women's movement is shaking off the effects of the demoralizing defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982 and moving forward.

The unity forged among the diverse groups building these marches demonstrates both the potential for the women's rights movement and the correct strategy for winning our democratic rights. The leadership of the pro-choice movement, like the leadership of the trade-union and civil rights struggles, often uses mass action only when efforts at lobbying Democratic and Republican politicians fail.

But the interests of women, like the interests of the working class as a whole, are diametrically opposed to the interests of capitalist politicians. The rights we fought for 15 and 20 years ago are being taken away by courts and members of Congress who are more interested in profits than in human lives.

The real test of the leadership of the pro-choice movement will be what happens after April 9. For the sake of the thousands of women who will be doomed to die from illegal abortions, the movement must remain visible in the streets to safeguard abortion rights and to restore Medicaid funding and repeal all the parental-consent laws now on the books. ■

Soviet Union pushes 'peaceful co-existence' in southern Africa



South African Defense Force withdrawing from Angola. What the apartheid regime was unable to win on the battlefield may be given to them at the negotiating table.

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Has "detente" come to southern Africa? In recent months, the Soviet Union has held several meetings with South African officials. The Soviets point out that a diplomatic settlement is possible in the region on terms highly favorable to the apartheid regime. And the South Africans are responding.

The negotiations could have an effect on the outcome of several conflicts, including the right-wing guerrilla wars against the governments of Angola and Mozambique. Ultimately, the Soviets suggest, an accommodation could be arranged between anti-apartheid fighters in the African National Congress (ANC) and the regime in Pretoria itself.

The first stage of a regional settlement, in fact, has already been put into place. On April 1, a transitional period begins in the South African colony of Namibia, when United Nations Resolution 435 comes into effect. The resolution, first adopted in 1978, prescribes a step-by-step process to set up an independent Namibian state.

The implementation of Resolution 435 was made possible under a "protocol" that was signed on Dec. 22, 1988, by South Africa, Angola, and Cuba at the United Nations in New York. The Soviet Union played an important behind-the-scenes role in engineering the pact.

No less than Chester Crocker, the U.S. representative in the negotiations, lauded the work of the Soviet officials. He stated that the protocol "constitutes a very remarkable textbook case of American-Soviet cooperation to recognize the current historical realities and resolve a regional problem." (*Le Figaro*, Dec. 24, 1988)

South Africa gets concessions

Under the terms of the Dec. 22 accord, Cuba—which was instrumental last year in defeating the South African invasion of southern Angola—agreed to redeploy its troops toward the north of Angola. By July 1, 1991, Cuban troops will be pulled out of the country entirely.

In exchange, the South African Defense Force must abandon its bases in northern Namibia (which borders Angola). This would presumably prevent the South Africans from providing military aid to its allies in Angola, the UNITA terrorist forces.

Under Resolution 435, thousands of U.N. "peacekeeping" troops and observers will be sent to Namibia to supervise the November 1989 constituent assembly elections there.

But South Africa has received important concessions. A Pretoria-appointed administrator will share responsibility with the United Nations for the implementation of

Resolution 435. The colonial administrator is solely in charge of maintaining "law and order."

South Africa will retain a military presence in the southern portions of Namibia and it will continue to dominate the country's economy. South Africa, for example, claims sovereignty over Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep-water port.

"Peace" in South Africa?

Also as part of the deal, the African National Congress (ANC) agreed to close down its guerrilla bases and refugee camps in Angola—as well as in Namibia. Over 6000 ANC fighters and their families must now find refuge in Tanzania or another country far from the "frontline" states bordering South Africa.

The Soviet Union undoubtedly had a major role in convincing the ANC to withdraw from Angola. And in recent weeks, according to numerous reports, Moscow has raised the stakes. The ANC has been asked to back off from its strategy of guerrilla warfare against the South African regime and to seek negotiations with Pretoria.

"In our opinion, we doubt that revolution in South Africa is possible, if you're talking of revolutionaries storming Pretoria," said Boris A. Asoyan, deputy chief of the Department of African Countries in the Soviet Foreign Ministry. "There is really no alternative to a peaceful solution." (*The New York Times*, March 16, 1989)

Gorbachev has offered to host peace talks between the ANC and the white-supremacist government. The substance of these talks was proposed by a Soviet official as long ago as December 1987 at an ANC-sponsored conference in Tanzania: "The ANC should expect to be part of a coalition government in the future and should not seek to dominate it if that would deepen political divisions." (*Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 5, 1988)

Gleb Starushenko, the deputy director of the Africa Institute in Moscow, even suggested a "bicameral parliament that would give the white minority an effective veto within a majority-ruled government." (*Ibid.*)

"Two-stage" struggle

Moscow has influence over the ANC not only through diplomatic channels but also through the intervention of the South African Communist Party (SACP), which dominates the ANC central leadership.

Both the ANC and the SACP, like their sponsors in Moscow, put forward the Stalinist schema of a "two-stage" struggle in South Africa. During the current stage, the Stalinists maintain, the main task is to construct a multi-class front of all people who are against apartheid.

This anti-apartheid front would include members of the capitalist class and their political parties (such as the "liberal" Progressive Federal Party). Therefore, the struggle of workers against the capitalist class must be put off to the indefinite future. And "liberal" whites must be granted guarantees against domination by the Black majority.

Gleb Starushenko outlined the Stalinist viewpoint quite succinctly in a June 1986 speech: "Communists do not advance at the present stage of social development any other slogans but general democratic ones. They believe that the restructuring of South African society along socialist lines is a matter of the future and will be possible only after the conditions are ripened." (*Free Azania*, Special Issue 1987)

The ANC's dilemma

According to this view, the ANC must be on constant guard against "adventurist" elements that wish to carry the struggle "too far." In the words of Starushenko: "The ANC is a factor of stability. If it is destroyed, the more radical left will take its place." (*The Star*, Johannesburg, July 25, 1988)

The ANC is caught in a dilemma. If it is to keep its influence among the Black masses (and outflank the "more radical left") the ANC

must maintain its image of an organization of activists and fighters against apartheid. But the Soviets now urge the ANC to take a different course: one of negotiations and blatant concessions to Pretoria.

Already, there have been reports of resistance inside both the ANC and the South African Communist Party to the "new thinking" expressed by Soviet officials.

Even if this is so, it is not likely to deter the Soviet bureaucracy—which has bigger fish to fry than just the freedom struggle in southern Africa. Ultimately, Moscow is seeking a broad detente with the United States itself.

The Soviet bureaucrats want to prove themselves willing partners in settling "regional conflicts" on terms highly advantageous to U.S. imperialism. In return, they hope, the United States will ease up on the military and economic pressure it places upon the Soviet Union.

All the rope it needs

The U.S. government, for its part, is willing to give the Soviet Union all the rope it needs to hang its allies in Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere. While Chester Crocker was showering praise on the Soviet Union for a job well done in Angola, for example, George Bush was promising redoubled aid to the UNITA rebel force there.

The U.S. Army has carried out joint military maneuvers with Zaire with the long-term objective of providing UNITA with logistical support for a new base in northern Angola. According to the journal *Africa Confidential*, UNITA is already making use of some 60 experts in explosives who were trained by U.S. advisers together with the Nicaraguan contras.

As in Nicaragua, the Bush administration has not given up hope that UNITA can apply enough pressure on the Angolan government to force it to agree to a coalition government.

In the meantime, Angola has been given a carrot by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It may obtain more loans and credit in return for pursuing a government plan to loosen price controls, privatize some sectors of the economy, and open up the country to private capital.

In Namibia, likewise, the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO)—which stands to win a majority of seats in the new constituent assembly—has pledged to maintain a "mixed (capitalist) economy." Soviet officials encourage this course, stating that it's not possible to "build socialism" there. (*The New York Times*, Feb. 20, 1989)

Meanwhile, South African Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha recently suggested another settlement on the Angolan/Namibian model—this time on Africa's east coast.

Botha pointed out that the Soviet Union could be brought in to help broker a pact between the government of Mozambique and the cutthroat RENAMO rebel troops. In the past, RENAMO has been financed by South Africa and by ultra-conservatives with murky ties to U.S. military intelligence.

"If we could do it in the west," Botha said, "why can't we do it in the east?" And why not, indeed? If the Soviet bureaucracy is willing to cut a deal—and it no doubt is very willing—the forces of reaction could make great gains in Mozambique. ■

Khola Mayekiso on U.S. tour



Moses Mayekiso hugs his wife, Khola, after being released on bail after 900 days in prison.

Khola Mayekiso, wife of jailed South African trade-union leader, Moses Mayekiso, is currently on a U.S. speaking tour. She will speak in New York on Friday, April 7 at 6:30pm at the District Council 37, AFSCME hall, 125 Barclay St. For further details about the tour contact the N.Y. Labor Committee Against Apartheid (718) 768-1756.

... socialists travel to Moscow

(continued from page 16)

right now!"

They said this meeting was not all that unusual. They repeated what we had heard earlier from Medvedev, that there are regular seminars, panel discussions, and occasional articles in the press (and even on Leningrad TV several weeks ago) that raise the question of Trotsky's rehabilitation.

A friend offered us his car, and we rushed to the Writers' Union meeting. There were 150 people present. The keynote speaker was Dr. Stuartsev, who gave a two-hour presentation on the need to clear Trotsky's name and the role Trotsky played in history. The talk was followed by lively discussion from the audience. At one point, a 106-year-old Red Army veteran got up to speak about his personal experiences with Trotsky.

We were greeted as representatives of Trotsky's and Serge's family and were very warmly received. Vlady Kibalchich spoke in Russian from the podium in support of clearing the name of his father (Victor Serge), himself, and Trotsky. Vlady is still stripped of his Soviet citizenship.

The March 26 national elections

Many aspects of the old Stalinist election law still exist. If you are a member of several official organizations you can vote many times. For example, if you're a member of the CPSU, the Academy of Science, the Writers' Union, and Komsomol (the CPSU youth organization)—you can vote four times for the "official" candidates of each organization. The average Soviet citizen gets to vote only once in the general election.

But there are two new democratic features to the election law which create big opportunities for dissident organizations to raise their own ideas independently of the bureaucracy.

First, the new election law allows complete freedom of agitation for candidates without the obligation of obtaining permits for activities. This is often violated, however. When we were in Moscow, five People's Front activists holding an election meeting were arrested. So this law on paper is by no means enforced in practice.

We were asked by the defendants to go to the trial. The proceedings were postponed until they could get an attorney. One of the activists was in the hospital because he had been beaten. Two of the people refused to recognize the trial and failed to appear. The two who showed up told us they were going to sue the city because they had been illegally prevented from having a meeting in support of a candidate.

These examples of resistance, and even open defiance, of arbitrary treatment reflected a level of rebelliousness that did not exist even two or three years ago.

The second democratic feature of the new election law is one that allows unofficial organizations to make nominations for candidates to the new supreme governing body: the Congress of U.S.S.R. People's Deputies. This means that in any one of the



(Left to right) Susan Weissman, Boris Kagarlitsky, Carl Finamore, and Ralph Schoenman discuss results of People's Front Founding Conference.



Paul Siegel (left) and an interpreter (right) speak with a woman, a Bukharin supporter, who survived Stalinist imprisonment. Her husband was shot and her child died in a labor camp orphanage.

dozens of districts in Moscow a meeting of at least 500 people can make an unlimited number of nominations by majority vote.

The Moscow People's Front was able to get meetings of 500 people in most of the city's districts. This was a tremendous achievement.

As a result, the People's Front grew considerably. In one district, activists told us how they rang doorbells and visited about 200 people a day to convince them to come to a meeting. This club soon grew from three people to 50 people.

Boris Kagarlitsky, a leader of the 40-member Socialist Initiative Club, estimates that the People's Front has 2000 to 3000 people in Moscow. It is the most advanced and largest unofficial political organization in the city.

The People's Front nominated five of its own candidates in these district meetings and supported other candidates as well. It

supported former Moscow regional CPSU chief Boris Yeltsin, for example. [See report by Ralph Schoenman on an explosive Yeltsin election meeting of 2500 people in the next issue of *Socialist Action*.]

The second stage of the elections, however, is where the CPSU begins to assert its bureaucratic control by screening out the candidates. Electoral commissions exist in each district to screen all the candidates to determine which ones will be on the final ballot.

Of the five People's Front candidates, only one made it through this second stage. He is Sergei Stankievich, a leader of the Moscow People's Front and a CPSU member.

The screening process works as follows: CPSU-dominated structures (such as labor collectives comprising enterprises with anywhere from five to 500 workers) can make nominations on an equal footing with district meetings of 500 people. Every nominating meeting in turn gets seven seats on the electoral commission.

So if you have a meeting of 500, you get seven delegates to come to the electoral screening committee. If you are a labor collective of five, you also get seven delegates. And there are literally dozens of these small collectives. In addition, neighborhood organizations composed of pensioners are also represented on the electoral commissions. These people are very conservative because of their dependence on the state.

It is testimony to the growing strength of opposition forces that they were able to make substantial gains despite the many obstacles.

People's Front conference

We were present at the founding conference of the Moscow People's Front on March 11-12. There were 55 delegates present from the 34 constituent clubs and about 100 guests.

The conference began with a discussion over the composition of the presiding committee. At the very beginning something occurred which showed the wide appeal of the People's Front. A lieutenant colonel in the army took the floor and stated why he should be elected to the presiding committee.

The officer joined the People's Front three days before the conference and said, "I am being repressed in the military because I am taking it upon myself to defend the families and the soldiers who are being demobilized from Eastern Europe and Afghanistan and are

entering civilian life without any protection." He was elected overwhelmingly to the presiding committee.

There was also a debate on whether to have someone from the Russian Federation Club be part of the presiding committee. The nominee was a Russian nationalist who came under strong criticism because of his views, which many people considered anti-Semitic. He had previously condemned all the Jewish leaders of the People's Front by name.

The Russian Federation Club, according to Boris Kagarlitsky, is not as extremist in its views as Pamyat, the openly reactionary, anti-Semitic Russian chauvinist organization. However, the club did publish a Pamyat statement without comment, which led to a big uproar at the conference.

But even those who condemned this person for his views did not want the person expelled, with the exception of Kagarlitsky. It shows the extreme level of tolerance that exists among the intellectuals in the People's Front as an overreaction against the Stalinist purge mentality from which they want to desperately free themselves. As a result, they are overly tolerant.

The Russian Federation leader was not only elected to the presiding committee, but to the Coordinating Council, the seven-person leadership body.

One of the main controversial debates at the conference was whether to adopt resolutions that were either hostile or conciliatory to the CPSU.

Whereas Kagarlitsky was for expelling the member from the Russian Federation Club, he was unwilling, when it came to a major programmatic question, to take a clear position. He considered the two motions—to be hostile or conciliatory to the CPSU—to be a provocation, because the adoption of either motion would have split the People's Front membership. We were told that approximately 20 percent of the People's

(continued on next page)

USSR/USA tour inspires Trotsky supporters

The \$30,000 fund drive launched by Walnut Publishing Co. to finance the USSR/USA tour of an international delegation of supporters of the program of Leon Trotsky got off to a roaring start last month. More than \$6000 has been contributed by 41 socialists across the United States and Canada.

A number of the contributors are lifelong supporters of the program of Lenin and Trotsky and founders of the Fourth International, the world party initiated by Leon Trotsky. They were inspired by Trotsky's courageous fight against Stalin in which he counterposed the rule of the great majority through the vibrant soviets created in the caldron of the 1917 Russian Revolution to the bureaucratic rule of the Stalinist caste.

Walnut Publishing Co. President Jeff Mackler reported to *Socialist Action* that the Oct. 15 through Nov. 15 U.S. component of the tour will include Esteban Volkov and Pierre Broué, in addition to the American Trotskyists who recently returned from the Soviet Union.

Volkov, Leon Trotsky's grandson, has spearheaded an international campaign to request that the current Soviet leadership rehabilitate his grandfather. In December 1988, he traveled for the first time in 57 years to the Soviet Union to meet his half sister, Alexandra Sakharonovna, who he hadn't seen since he was a child and whose very existence he was unaware of until last October. [Alexandra died on March 10, during the visit of the delegation to the Soviet Union. See accompanying story.]

Pierre Broué is the author of the most complete biography on Leon Trotsky yet to appear (available in French through Editions Fayard). Broué is also the director of the French-based Leon Trotsky Institute, which has published the complete works of Trotsky in French. Broué traveled to the Soviet Union in November 1988, where he met with leading anti-Stalinist historians and intellectuals and addressed a meeting of over 500 people, sponsored by the Memorial group, on the life and legacy of Leon Trotsky.

Mackler indicated that Walnut's plan to tour 12 U.S. cities—with several members of the international delegation appearing in each city—took a giant step forward in the first month of the fund drive. Contributions payable to "Walnut Publishing Co." can be sent to: 3435 Army Street, Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Participants in the delegation to the Soviet Union

Vlady Kibalchich, son of early Soviet revolutionary leader and author Victor Serge. "Vlady," as he is more commonly known, is a widely acclaimed artist and muralist. Born in Leningrad in 1920, he left the Soviet Union in 1936 after three years of internment, together with his father, in a Stalinist camp in Kazakhstan. After traveling throughout Europe in the 1930s and '40s, he settled in Mexico, where he currently lives.

Carl Finamore, staff director since 1985 of the San Francisco-based Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice, and a member of the National Committee of Socialist Action. Finamore traveled to Poland in 1982 while it was under martial law. In 1988, in collaboration with Polish Solidarnosc leader Zbigniew Kowalewski, he co-authored "Solidarnosc and the Struggle for Workers Self-Management in Poland."

Susan Weissman, noted Sovietologist, author, and host/coordinator of the KPFC Radio (Los Angeles) nationally broadcast program "Portraits of the U.S.S.R." Weissman is a member of the editorial boards of numerous scholarly publications on Soviet Studies and political affairs, including *Critique* and *Against the Current*. Her articles and lectures have included extensive research on the writings and ideas of noted Soviet revolutionary leader and author Victor Serge.

Ralph Schoenman, past Executive Director of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and past convenor of a nationwide symposium "American Workers and Artists for Polish Solidarity." Schoenman is the author of numerous books including "Bertrand Russell: Philosopher of the Century," "Prisoners of Israel," and "The Hidden History of Zionism," published by Veritas Press.

Paul Siegel, Professor-Emeritus of English at Long Island University, New York. Siegel is a distinguished Shakespearean scholar. He is also co-chair of the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee, based in New York. This committee has organized a political campaign demanding the political rehabilitation of Leon Trotsky and other victims of Stalin's purges. Professor Siegel is the author of several books, including "Revolution and the 20th Century Novel" (1979), "Shakespeare's English and Roman History Plays: A Marxist Approach" (1986), and "The Meek and the Militant: Religion and Power Across the World" (1986).

Front members are CPSU members.

The People's Front program calls for socialist democracy, ecology, human rights, democratic reforms, self-management, and an end to price increases—but there is absolutely no fundamental challenge to *perestroika*.

The front's full name is the People's Front in Support of Perestroika, and that is not just simply a defensive formulation in order to avoid repression. The intellectuals and professional workers in the People's Front favor *perestroika* market reforms because they confuse these reforms with democracy and participation in economic decision-making. Their goal is solely limited to lessening the damaging effects of *perestroika* austerity reforms on the population.

The People's Front founding conference did not, therefore, offer alternative proposals of democratic planning, free trade unions, or the unrestricted right to strike. These urgent political planks are absent in both the statement of intentions of the Socialist Initiative Club, which is a more advanced Marxist club, and in the program of the People's Front as a whole.

Perhaps the central debate at the conference was whether to have the 34 clubs remain relatively autonomous or whether to adopt a more centralized coordinating committee. Those clubs that wanted to carry out their own political projects wanted to retain the decentralized character of the front.

The so-called Kagarlitsky program calling for the election of a central leadership body won overwhelmingly by 44 to 10.

Discussion with Kagarlitsky

But a question arises. With the broadly formulated program of the People's Front and the widely divergent views of its component parts, is it in a position to act effectively and will it be able to maintain its political independence from the reform wing of the bureaucracy?

We discussed this question with Kagarlitsky and asked about the possibility of organizing united-front coalitions on specific issues (such as democratic election reform and the defense of political prisoners) while building an organization on a clearer political basis than the People's Front. Kagarlitsky didn't think this approach was correct. He defended the all-inclusive membership and broad program of the People's Front.

Kagarlitsky also stated that he favored restricting the People's Front to intellectuals and professional workers. He rejected having workers join the People's Front, claiming they would not be interested in the discussions. This is another problem. Without

Nadejda Joffe



Carl Finamore/Socialist Action

One of the high points of the tour was meeting Nadejda Joffe, the 82-year-old daughter of Adolf Joffe, a leading Left Oppositionist and friend of Trotsky's who committed suicide in 1927.

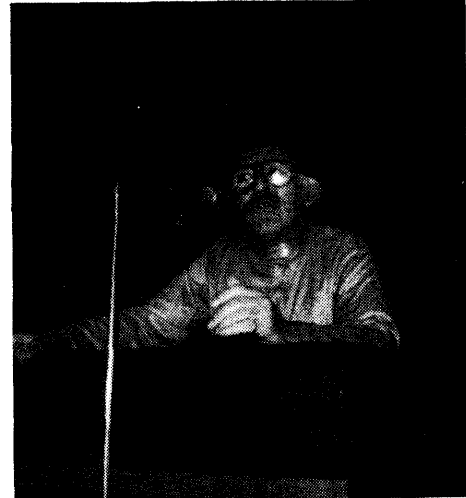
(In a farewell letter to Trotsky, Adolf

Joffe emphasized that in committing suicide he was not despairingly giving up the struggle against Stalinism, but in his condition of extremely painful illness, for which Stalin had refused him permission to receive medical treatment abroad, it was the only form of protest against Stalinism he could make.)

Nadejda herself was a member of the Left Opposition. She suffered repression beginning in 1929. First, she was sent to Siberia for three years, and then she was sent for 10 years to the notorious Kolyma labor camp near the Bering Straits. Nadejda bore four children in this period. Her husband was shot after his second sentence.

In 1949, Nadejda was arrested for the third time and sent into permanent exile. She was released in 1956 during the Khrushchev thaw.

In an interview with the Trotskyist delegation, Nadejda emphatically stated her view that Stalinism is diametrically opposed to Bolshevism and to the revolutionary ideas of Lenin and Trotsky. The revolution, she said with spirited conviction, aspired to be the highest intellectual, social, and cultural achievement in history. She ended by sending her greetings and best wishes to American Trotskyists.—PAUL SIEGEL



Ralph Schoenman/Socialist Action

Vlady Kibalchich speaks at Writers Union.

cratic control of distribution, the right to strike, the right to form independent unions, and the freedom to form political parties, both the People's Front and the Socialist Initiative Club run the risk of being isolated from the only powerful section of society that has the power to defeat the bureaucracy and fulfill the original goals of the Russian Revolution. ■

Alexandra Sakharonovna, Trotsky's granddaughter, dies

Alexandra Sakharonovna, Leon Trotsky's granddaughter, died of cancer in Moscow on March 10. She was 65 years old.

One of the main goals of our trip was to meet "Sasha," as she was called by friends and relatives, and to bring her books and presents from American Trotskyists. But when we arrived in Moscow on March 3, she was already unconscious.

"Sasha" had only surfaced publicly as Trotsky's granddaughter last October, after she learned she had terminal cancer. Fortunately, before her death she was able to meet Esteban Volkov, her half-brother, whom she hadn't seen since she was eight years old.

Volkov traveled to Moscow in December. In an interview with *Socialist Action*, he recounted how he was filled with joy to see Sasha. "She was always smiling and full of optimism despite the advanced stage of her illness," Volkov said. For more information on the life of Alexandra Sakharonovna, see the January 1989 issue of *Socialist Action*.—P.S.

the social weight of the working class, the People's Front is more vulnerable to the pressures from the powerful Gorbachev wing of the bureaucracy—and hence more likely to adapt to it.

Boris Kagarlitsky's Socialist Initiative Club is a Marxist group, though you do not have to be a Marxist to be a member. It does not really have a program itself; it has a statement of intention. Thus, even though it has more political definition, it closely follows the vague and broad political approach of the People's Front as a whole.

Despite the questions we were left with, the contributions of the Socialist Initiative Club must be recognized as very important. It was Kagarlitsky, for example, who got the People's Front to adopt a position on socialist democracy, whereas many people did not even want the word socialist in the program. Some also just wanted economic—and not political reform mentioned in the program.

But without an approach toward the Soviet working class around clear demands for workers' control of production, mass demo-

Four-page special on U.S.S.R. tour in our next issue:

- Paul Siegel on Leon Trotsky in the U.S.S.R. today
- Ralph Schoenman on Boris Yeltsin's election campaign
- Greetings from Socialist Action and delegation to founding conference of Moscow People's Front
- Interviews with Otto Latsis, Roy Medvedev & Boris Kagarlitsky

Copies of letters presented by the delegation to Otto Latsis, Central Committee member of the Communist Party (CPSU).

To His Excellency Mr. Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev
President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Kremlin
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

We the undersigned—Vsievod Volkov Bronstein, Veronica Volkow Fernandez, Nora Dolores Volkow Fernandez, Patricia Volkow Fernandez and Natalia Volkow Fernandez—grandson and great granddaughters respectively of the Russian Revolutionary Marxist Lev Davidovich Bronstein, better known as Leon Trotsky, write you, with all due respect, to ask that our grandfather and great-grandfather, his family, and his comrades in struggle be officially cleared of all the slanders and false criminal charges that were leveled against them under direct orders from Joseph Stalin.

We ask that the historical truth be fully brought to light concerning both the fundamental role played by Leon Trotsky, alongside Vladimir Lenin, in the development and triumph of the October Revolution, and the unequal and heroic struggle he waged against the Stalinist dictatorship—to the point of losing his life—in order to preserve the essential Marxist-Leninist postulates of the October Revolution.

We also request that the writings of Leon Trotsky, which constitute a valuable compilation of historical and contemporary Marxist teachings, be freely published in the Soviet Union.

You have written that the Soviet Union must find its way back to the ideals and foundations of Leninism. This is very necessary.

But for this to be accomplished, it is vital to uproot and discard forever the criminal methods of Stalinism so that the word socialism can never again be associated with totalitarianism, but rather with the fullest freedoms and authentic democracy. Only then will the Soviet Union once again stand as an example and beacon for humankind.

Sincerely,
Mexico City, December 30, 1988

Vsievod Volkov Bronstein
Vsievod Volkov Bronstein
Veronica Volkow Fernandez
Veronica Volkow Fernandez
Nora Dolores Volkow Fernandez
Nora Dolores Volkow Fernandez
Patricia Volkow Fernandez
Patricia Volkow Fernandez
Natalia Volkow Fernandez
Natalia Volkow Fernandez

Esteban (Vsievod) Volkov
Cerro del Vigilante # 191
Frac. Ronero de Terreros
Mexico, 21, D.F. z.p. 04320

To whom it may concern:
To the Government of the Soviet Union,
February 14, 1989
Mexico, D.F., Mexico

The participants in this study group—Vlady Kibalchich, Susan Weissman, Ralph Schoenman, Paul Siegel, and Carl Finamore—will be traveling shortly to the Soviet Union, where they hope to observe and learn more about the changes under way in that country.

The aforementioned all have close ties of friendship with the signer of this letter, Esteban Volkov, and with his daughters (grandson and great-granddaughters respectively of the Russian revolutionary Lev Davidovich Bronstein, better known as Leon Trotsky), which is why they have been entrusted to take our petition, addressed to His Excellency President Mikhail Gorbachev, to the highest Soviet authorities.

In this petition we ask that my grandfather, Leon Trotsky, be officially cleared of the calumnies and false accusations leveled against him under orders of Joseph Stalin, and that the prohibition on the publication of his writings be lifted so that they may be freely published in the Soviet Union.

With our most profound respect, we ask the Soviet authorities to please extend to the participants of this study group all the help and support they will require to fulfill the mission that has been entrusted to them by the descendants of Leon Trotsky, given the unquestionably extraordinary and historic character of their task.

Very sincerely,

Esteban Volkov
Esteban Volkov
Apdo. 21945
Mexico, 21, D.F.

Unfriendly skies for Frank Lorenzo

Eastern Airlines strike-buster Frank Lorenzo recently caused a stir when he boarded a Delta plane en route to the East Coast. The Delta pilot, after he heard Lorenzo was on board, refused to fly the plane. (After some delay, Delta found a replacement pilot.)

"Reagan made me do it!" That sums up Oliver North's trial defense. And his lawyers have the memos to prove it. Some papers, it seems, were saved from the shredder for a rainy day. In the eyes of the Gipper, however, North remains a "national hero" (even if he is a dirty little snitch.)

It's been 10 years since the nuclear disaster at Three Mile Island. The cleanup at the reactor site has still not been completed, although we (the taxpayers) have already spent over \$1 billion on the project. (Since TMI, incidentally, U.S. nuclear utilities have reported nearly 30,000 mishaps at other plants.)



Over 100 million Americans may be breathing toxic chemicals and industrial waste in the air, the Environmental Protection Agency warned. EPA officials admit that the health hazard is far worse than they "expected." But even so, how accurate is the new EPA estimate? (It's based on information provided by the big industrial polluters themselves!)

"It's standard procedure," said police chief Frank Jordan. San Francisco's top cop was referring to the tactic of using undercover officers to infiltrate political demonstrations. But the plainclothesmen blew their cover at a March 20 CISPES picketline when they beat up the protesters and sprayed them with mace. (It was necessary to counter "outside agitators," Jordan explained to the press.)

These same San Francisco cops (this time in uniform) were unleashed on another demonstration last September. Farmworkers leader

Dolores Huerta was left with two broken ribs and a ruptured spleen. On March 8, the S.F. Police Commission voted to take no action against the officer who clubbed Huerta. Ironically, the Board of Supervisors had declared the same day "Dolores Huerta Day." (Gee, thanks for nothing!)

The poor are getting poorer, a new Congressional study affirmed. From 1979 to 1987, the average family income of the poorest fifth of the population declined by 6.1 percent. The study also pointed out that the rich are getting much, much richer. (But you probably guessed that already.)

City council members in Plano, Texas, proposed that their community adopt a "sister city" in the Soviet Union. The debate raged for two months. Some residents warned that the "sister city" program would give the Soviets a foothold to conquer America. Today Plano, Texas—tomorrow the world! (The proposal was withdrawn.)

Des Moines press attacks Mark Curtis Defense

By ADAM WOOD

It has been over one year since Mark Curtis was arrested in Des Moines, Iowa, for crimes he did not commit. Curtis, a packinghouse worker and member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), was charged with burglary and sexual assault on a woman he never saw in his life.

The bosses and their courts threw Mark into prison last November. The testimony of the arresting officer, a man with a history of lying in court, was enough to convict Curtis for 25 years. But even his conviction has not satisfied the ruling rich of Des Moines. The capitalist press continues to slander Mark to this day.

The March 7 issue of the *Des Moines Register* carries an attack on Curtis that masquerades as a "news" article. The newspaper states that many former Curtis endorsers have reconsidered their support. It attempts to prove its case by listing four people who withdrew their support for Curtis and one

who is planning to write to the SWP for more information on the case.

The article goes on to state that "dozens" of letters have been received by the family of Demetria Morris, the alleged victim. No letters are listed in the *Register*, however.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee lists 131 endorsers on its letterhead from 14 countries. Four deserters don't amount to much, especially considering the enormous flood of slanders against Curtis coming from the *Des Moines Register* and other mouthpieces of the capitalist class.

The *Register* is compelled to keep up the fight against Curtis precisely because his case continues to receive support. Recent endorsers include ILWU Local 34 in the San Francisco Bay Area, which combined its endorsement with a \$200 contribution to the defense committee.

On March 4, over 150 people rallied in Des Moines to mark the first anniversary of Curtis's arrest and to pledge their continued support for his case. An event in San Francisco that same night attracted over 100 people in support of Curtis.

Nick Castle, director of the new film "Tap," announced at the Des Moines rally that his next project will be a documentary on the Curtis Case.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee can be contacted at P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Telephone (515) 246-1695. ■

Mexican rally demands García's 'reappearance'

José Ramón García Gómez, who was kidnapped by Mexican authorities on Dec. 16, is still missing. García is a member of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT), the Mexican section of the Fourth International.

His comrades believe that he is still alive but that he has not been released because of fears he will reveal compromising facts about the police and the government. It is therefore important to continue and extend the campaign to force the police to let him go.

On Feb. 25, the PRT organized a forum on the case in the town of Cuautla, in the state of Morelos, where García lived and where he was a candidate in the March 1988 municipal elections.

Some 2500 people participated in the meeting, 250 of whom represented trade unions, community organizations, universities, and other institutions. The forum demanded García's reappearance, the release of all political prisoners, and an end to all measures of repression. In all, 82 organiza-

tions and 50 peasant communities were represented.

García's companion told the forum that he was the "first missing person" under the new government of Salinas de Gortari: "He has been kidnapped and held for 72 days. He has 'disappeared' because he fought as a democratic candidate, supporting Rosaria Ibarra [the PRT's presidential candidate] and in solidarity with Cárdenas [in the fight against election fraud]."

The forum decided to promote an international day of demonstrations on behalf of García and other political prisoners on April 15. Activities aimed at consulates and embassies around the world will be coordinated on April 14.

Appeals for García's release can be sent to: Fernando Gutierrez Barrios, Minister of the Interior, Bucareli 99, Mexico, D.F., Mexico. Please send copies to the National Front Against Repression, Medellín 366, Col. Roma Sur, 06760 Mexico D.F., Mexico. ■

What's Happenin' this Month:

Boston:

Socialist Action Forum:
'The Stakes in the Eastern Strike: Labor Panel Speaks Out'

Speakers: **Judy Coughlin**, Fin. Sec.-Treas., TWU Local 553 (Eastern Flight Attendants); **Paul Cannon**, former Pres., PATCO Local 202; **Dave Walsh**, past Pres. Transp. Comm. Union District 1089. Sat. April 1, 7:30 p.m., Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St.

Third Annual East Coast Educational Conference

Sat., April 29, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sponsored by Boston Socialist Action. Location to be announced. For more info, call (617) 497-0230.

Baltimore:

'Perestroika and Glasnost: An Eyewitness Account of the New Situation in Gorbachev's Soviet Union'

Speaker: **Carl Finamore**, Socialist Action. Wed., April 12, 7 p.m. Towson State Univ. (sponsored by Progressive Stud. Union) and Thurs., April 13, 7:30 p.m., UMCB, (sponsored by Progressive Action Cttee)

San Francisco:

Christic Institute presents:
'Behind the Headlines - Guns, Drugs, and the C.I.A.'

Speaker: **Martha Honey**, U.S. journalist based in San José, Costa Rica, plaintiff in the Christic Institute Contragate lawsuit.

Sat., April 8, 2 p.m. Booth Hall, Boalt Hall of Law, Berkeley.

New York:

Jimmy Kutcher Memorial Meeting

Sat., April 22, 2:30 p.m.

Film Showing: *'The Case of the Legless Veteran'*

Speakers, Refreshment. New York Society for Ethical Culture

For info. call *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* at 212-633-2007

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New book traces evolution of American family over 300 years

By SUZANNE FORSYTH

The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families 1600-1900, by Stephanie Coontz. Verso Press, London, 1988. 365 pp. \$13.95 paperback.

"The Social Origins of Private Life" is a Marxist analysis of the changing forms of the American family over a 300-year period. It's well worth reading. The basic premise of the book is summarized in the statement: "American history provides no model for those who seek to recover some perfect family from the past."

Coontz argues that there is no biologically "inevitable," "universal," or "natural" family. Instead, she examines the variety of social arrangements we have considered "family"

BOOK REVIEW

through the years and places them in the social and economic context of their times.

The first family system she describes is that of pre-colonial Native-Americans. These societies were not based on the private property of individuals or on a coercive state power. They were essentially communal. The immediate biological family was dissolved into much larger kinship groups which organized labor and the distribution of goods and resources.

Introduction of private property

Next, Coontz examines life in the colonial or "household" family. Again, these families were very different from what we would consider a "normal" family today.

Like the Native American examples, colonial families



A 1955 image of women in the home.

were not defined in terms of immediate biological relations. Everyone within an individual household—including servants, apprentices, or boarders—was considered part of the family.

Colonial society differed from the Native American communities in that they were based on the ownership of private property. But present-day attitudes about the separation of the public and private spheres did not exist.

The family patriarch was by no means at the top of the hierarchy. He was subordinate to the church, community leaders, and the King—and values of obedience to superiors was emphasized. This was because individual households could not survive without a precarious system of interdependence between them.

From the 1820s to the 1980s, a new family ideology was formed—as capitalism increasingly transformed American society. The household was less and less a site of production, and production of commodities outstripped production for immediate use.

The rigid colonial household was no longer necessary. This precipitated a separation of public and private spheres of activity, with women being consigned to the private, "non-productive" sphere of the home. The status of women was diminished along with their productive role.

According to Coontz, the primary function of the 19th-century family was the socialization of individuals into work roles and gender roles within each class.

The "cult" of privacy

In the last chapter, the author outlines the next transformation in the family, which she promises to explore in depth in another book.

Beginning in the 1890s, the emergence of modern industrial capitalism in the United States brought new changes in society. The "basic patterns and contradictions of modern family life took shape in this period," Coontz points out.

As public institutions of education, work, and mass media and culture began to predominate in the social process, the role of the family was lessened. The family today is focused on a new "cult" of privacy as it functions as the primary arena for individuals' emotional fulfillment.

Overall, Coontz's book is quite thought-provoking. It offers many insights into family life that I hadn't realized before. However, its academic style might discourage the average reader. At times, the density of detail makes it difficult to keep the author's main themes in view.

"The Social Origins of Private Life" is a challenge to the basic assumptions which justify our social order as being "inevitable." It promotes understanding of the complex relationship between the development of capitalism and changing human social organization. I look forward to her next book.

Our readers speak out

Homework

Dear editor,

I found Amanda Chapman's article on the Dept. of Labor's campaign to legalize "homework" in the garment industry very interesting from a personal viewpoint.

I live in a relatively quiet area of Los Angeles and many, if not most, of my neighbors are recently arrived Chinese immigrants. The quiet is penetrated by the ever present hum and buzz of industrial sewing machines. These machines can be heard often as early as 5 a.m. and as late as midnight or beyond.

I've often noticed that elderly grandparents take a lot of responsibility for infants and toddlers on my street, carrying them for hours at a time on walks. These children are lucky indeed because the buzz heard on the street from their parents' sewing machines is actually a terrible racket in one's apartment or even from an adjoining apartment.

Also, the immigrants who run these machines need to work without the demands that young children make, so in all weather except during heavy rain, they are cared for in the streets by relatives too old to be sewing.

Of course, this all occurs under illegal conditions. But if "homework" is legalized, the problems will only increase. The availability of work will increase and more homes will resonate with machines. The fear of deportation alone will prevent most of these undocumented workers from complaining to any enforcement agency. More tiny, crowded apartments will be turned into factories.

Kathleen O'Nan,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Bear Arms

Dear editor,

I was disappointed to see no mention of attempts in California and nationally to ban importations and sales of semi-automatic weapons. This is a touchy subject among liberals, but among socialists the issue should be clear.

I can point to the usual reasons to oppose any such bans: our Second Amendment rights as well as the advantages of the present affordability offered by the availability of many military-surplus semi-autos for sporting or collecting.

However, as in the case of our American Revolution of the 1770s, the

naked truth is that there may be a time when a well-armed citizenry may be required for defense against an oppressive government.

Thus, arms having a firepower equivalent to that of the existing military should always remain available to the people.

Eldo Hartz,
Atlanta, Ga.

Gun Control

Dear editor,

Two recent tragic shootings have been used by several local governments to ban two types of weapons. Just recently the Stockton, Calif., and Los Angeles city councils banned all semi-automatic rifles. This after a demented racist loner emptied his AK-47 into a schoolyard of Asian children in Stockton.

In Winnetka, Ill., the village council banned possession of all handguns. This came several months after a crazed woman, Laurie Dann, shot five children in a school. Winnetka joins several other suburbs and the city of Chicago in making hand weapons illegal.

The liberals and moderates who back gun-control measures like these claim that getting rid of guns will get rid of crime. Yet crime is a part of capitalism. The poverty that helps produce crime has an "eternal" place within it. Theft is actually the highest virtue in its boardrooms, murder the essence of its foreign policy.

Beneath the bread crumb of "fighting crime" is the hook of defenselessness against an armed government, criminal and fascist.

Both the liberals and the NRA-type rightwingers want to forget the reason for the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It enshrines the "right to revolution." It reads: "A well-regulated militia being necessary to a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Liberals have claimed that if the present National Guard is armed (the "militia"), that alone satisfies the Second Amendment. However, the capitalist state has direct control over the Guard. It's an arm of the military.

The "sense" of the Second Amendment is that the militias of the pre-colonial and post-colonial United States were actually what we would call workers defense guards or Black self-defense groups today. They are intimately connected with the population and independent of the state.

Historian Charles Leedham put it this

way, "With recent history fresh in memory, the amenders [of the Constitution] wanted no restrictions on the people's right to keep arms ... somehow, perhaps soon, the government might just fall into the hands of scheming men who would attempt to rule with an army."

Thomas Jefferson even declared, "What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that the people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms."

The founders of the United States were revolutionaries, unlike the counter-revolutionary capitalist class that runs the country today. Defend the right to keep and bear arms!

Greg Gibbs,
Chicago, Ill.

Reply

Socialist Action agrees with the defense of the right to bear arms, as expressed in the letters printed above. This right was widely embraced by American colonists after 1770, when British Redcoats shot down Boston patriots demonstrating against British oppression.

The right to bear arms, conquered by American colonists in the Revolutionary War, had to be reconquered after independence was won. It was not written into the Constitution by the new U.S. government. Only later, after a political struggle, were this and other basic rights (the Bill of Rights) adopted by Congress and ratified by the states.

The Second Amendment to the Constitution is vital to the defense of human rights, as Thomas Jefferson and other leaders of the first American Revolution explained many times. Citizens need a means of defense against the government of the United States itself, when necessary.

The Second Amendment is vital to the right of Blacks to defend themselves, arms in hand, against mob rule and lynch law—whether carried out by the Ku Klux Klan or, as has often been the case, by racist police or other armed agencies of city, state, or by federal governments.

It is no less central to the right of workers to defend themselves against strikebreakers (whether hired company goons or official police and military forces) when they are unleashed to repress workers' rights under the Constitution.

Regardless of what the Democratic and Republican politicians claim, the major reason for banning semi-



This is a page where our readers can speak out. We welcome letters. But please keep them short. When necessary, for reasons of space, they will be abridged.

—The editors

automatic weapons is not to disarm dope-pushers or crazy mass murderers. Nor is it aimed at restoring civility in rapidly disintegrating capitalist America.

The increasing attack on the right to bear arms is part and parcel of the preparation by the capitalist class to defend its rule when the tottering economy collapses, mass misery intensifies—and millions of people decide they have had enough and begin to struggle for a rational reorganization of society.—The editors

Capitalism

Dear editor,

In recent months, Zbigniew Brzezinski and other toadies of the ruling class have proclaimed that the failures and changes experienced by the societies of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China indicate that socialism has been discredited and that Marxist theory has been found to be intellectually bankrupt.

These statements are being made at a

time when a conservative estimate of the cost of bailing out the insolvent savings and loans in this country is given as \$150 billion—enough to build 1 million houses costing \$150,000 each. Homelessness in the United States is a national disgrace.

In the last fiscal year, Japanese corporations spent seven times as much of their after-tax profits purchasing the securities and debt instruments of each other as they spend on building and equipping new productive facilities. Meanwhile, Latin American countries are suffering the greatest economic depression in their history—resulting in widespread malnutrition.

As to the future of capitalism, let's call upon Alfred Malabre, the economics editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, who writes: "No amount of governmental, or for that matter private, maneuvering will avert a very nasty time ahead.... The next economic hurricane—the first to strike this country since the Great Depression in 1929—cannot be prevented."

Bill Wilner,
Los Angeles, Calif.

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U.S. socialists travel to Moscow, press fight to clear Trotsky's name

By CARL FINAMORE

Moscow is cold, rainy and overcast in March. But political and intellectual life in that city is in full bloom. Pre-election campaign meetings, rallies, and demonstrations reached an unprecedented level on the eve of the March 26 national elections.

A new election law passed last year made it possible, if still quite difficult, to nominate candidates who are not part of the government structures. Even the Communist Party (CPSU) daily newspaper, *Pravda*, reported that there would be complete freedom to campaign for these "unofficial" candidates.

This was the time chosen for a 10-day early March visit to Moscow by a delegation of U.S. Trotskyists—Susan Weissman, Paul Siegel, Ralph Schoenman, and Carl Finamore. We were joined during the final days of the trip by Vlady Kibalchich, son of Victor Serge, a leader of the Left Opposition during the 1920s and '30s. [See box for identification of tour participants.]

One of the main objectives of the trip was to deliver a letter to the Soviet authorities from the family of Leon Trotsky. The letter requested that Trotsky's name be cleared and that his works be published freely in the Soviet Union. [See reprint in this issue.]

We quickly arranged a meeting with Otto Latsis, Deputy Editor of *Kommunist*, the theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Latsis agreed to give the letter to the CPSU Central Committee for discussion, but did not promise an official response from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Latsis also informed us that some of Trotsky's writings would soon be published by the government publishing house. But the partial, edited publication by the Soviet government of Trotsky's views concerned us. The official government biographer of Stalin, General Dimitri Volkogonov, has already written that Trotsky was the "Demon of the Revolution" and would have been worse than Stalin.

Every week, we were told, excerpts of Trotsky's writings or reports about Trotsky's



March 5 Memorial rally of 500 in Moscow's Gorky Park calling for expansion of democratic rights. Sign reads: "The crimes of Stalinism are crimes against humanity."

views appear in *Pravda* and other major Soviet publications. These reports deal almost exclusively with the period of war communism during the civil war, when Trotsky called for the militarization of labor after his own proposals for an NEP-type program (limited concessions to the medium and large farmers) were rejected.

Certain problems were readily apparent.

The presentation of Trotsky's views was being organized by the same political machine that he had so eloquently indicted over 60 years ago.

The selection of excerpts, the failure to place them in the context of the party debates at the time, and the refusal to publish Trotsky's full views have greatly distorted Trotsky's role and ideas in the minds of many Soviet people today. We often encountered the view that Trotsky—and even Lenin—were the intellectual precursors of Stalinism.

Of course, the bureaucracy still idealizes Lenin, but for Trotsky they continue to heap abuse, distortions, and attacks.

Meeting with Roy Medvedev

One of our first meetings was with Roy Medvedev, the Marxist dissident who is now running for Deputy in the Congress—and is favored to win. Medvedev told us he does not agree with Trotsky's ideas and that he supports *glasnost* and Gorbachev. But, as a historian, he said he completely opposes the current distortions of Trotsky's political views. Medvedev, in fact, publicly attacked Volkogonov's false characterization of Trotsky. He told us that it was Stalin who was the "Demon of the Revolution."

Medvedev told us, however, that he believes it is very difficult for the Soviet leadership to clear Trotsky's name. He said that Trotsky's political positions were so antagonistic to the whole Stalinist machinery and the basic structure of the bureaucratized society that taking this step would be a major challenge for the regime. Nonetheless, he said, it was inevitable that someday Trotsky would be rehabilitated.

While most people we spoke to considered Trotsky's rehabilitation inevitable, it is my own view that it will be some time before this happens. It is not necessary for the bureaucracy to clear Trotsky's name now. It is only necessary to allow the mostly one-sided discussion about him to continue.

Whatever happens, it is obvious that the Left Opposition opponents of Stalin are not going to get a fair hearing if the presentation of their views is left in the hands of the governing apparatus. Nonetheless, there are big openings for supporters of Trotsky to

participate in the current discussions about the history of the anti-Stalinist opposition.

Meeting of Writers Union

Almost immediately after our arrival, we identified ourselves not only as representatives of Trotsky's family but as political supporters of his views. We encountered absolutely no fear or apprehension. On the contrary, there was tremendous interest in what we had to say.

As a result of this approach we stumbled on an important meeting we otherwise would have missed. People found out about us and said, "Oh you're the Trotskyists, well you should go the writers' meeting, it's going on

(continued on page 12)

Soviet coal strike

The day prior to our arrival in the Soviet Union, on March 2, thousands of coal miners in the northern city of Vorkuta went on strike to protest the changes in production norms brought about by Gorbachev's *perestroika* reforms.

The miners demanded a six-day workweek (since 1985, they had been working with no days off), a 40 percent pay increase for the night shift, and the dismissal of many company administrators. To fight for these demands they formed an independent union and called it *Solidarnost*, a direct reference to the independent workers' movement in Poland.

On March 4, 104 miners began a hunger strike underground. That same day the Soviet Minister of Coal Production traveled to Vorkuta to settle the conflict. He agreed to most of the strikers' demands. He fired the mine director and agreed to the wage increases, retroactive to Jan. 1. The strikers, through their new independent union, had won.

That the first coal strike of this magnitude should take place in Vorkuta is not altogether unexpected. Vorkuta has a long tradition of anti-bureaucratic struggle. It was here that tens of thousands of supporters of Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition were sentenced to forced labor camps by Stalin in 1936. These Trotskyists resisted valiantly, waging a 132-day hunger strike before they were mercilessly gunned down in 1938.

It was also here that a gigantic uprising of anti-Stalinist dissidents—primarily Ukrainian nationalists—took place in 1953.—C.F.

Highlights of the tour

- Presented letter from the family of Leon Trotsky to Otto Latsis, Deputy Editor of *Kommunist*, the theoretical journal of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Latsis promised to present the letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU. Also did extensive interview with Latsis.
- Suzi Weissman and Vlady Kibalchich obtained agreement of the Soviet Foundation of Culture to aid in the search for the lost manuscripts of Victor Serge. These manuscripts were stolen from Serge as he was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1936.
- Attended a meeting of the Moscow Writers' Union on the subject of clearing Leon Trotsky's name. The delegation was warmly greeted by the audience of 150. Vlady Kibalchich, son of Left Oppositionist Victor Serge, addressed the meeting.
- Attended a meeting of 2500 to support the candidacy of Boris Yeltsin, a veteran member of the ruling bureaucracy who has cultivated a populist image in recent years.
- Attended a mass outdoor meeting of Memorial of over 500 people. Memorial was formed to expose the crimes of Stalin and to seek compensation for the survivors of the repression.
- Attended the founding conference of the Moscow People's Front, the largest unofficial political group in that city.
- Extensive interview and discussions with Boris Kagarlitsky, leader of the Socialist Initiative Club and of the Moscow People's Front.
- Extensive interview with 106-year-old Alexander Davidovich Brianski, a veteran of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions, who spoke in defense of Trotsky at the Writers' Union meeting.
- Meeting with Nadejda Joffe and family.
- Extensive interview and discussion with Marxist historian and dissident Roy Medvedev.
- Distributed many classic works of Trotsky in Russian and presented a copy of the *Bulletin of the Left Opposition* to the historian of the group Memorial.
- Attended the trial of five arrested People's Front activists. They were tried for unauthorized election activity.
- Extensive interviews of the Trotskyist delegation by the *Moscow News*, the *Moscow University* newspaper, the *Moscow CPSU youth newspaper*, a *Moscow regional district paper* called *Avantgard*, and a *Baltic region newspaper*. (We don't know if they will be printed.) *Komsomolsky Pravda*, the CPSU national youth paper, also interviewed Suzi Weissman and Vlady Kibalchich on the life and works of Victor Serge. *Moscow TV* requested an interview but was unable to contact the delegation before our departure. Arrangements were made to interview Vlady Kibalchich, who remained in Moscow for 10 more days.—RALPH SCHOENMAN