



Buffalo clinic defenders repulse anti-choice bigots

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

Operation Rescue (OR), the right-wing anti-abortion outfit, came to Buffalo, N.Y., vowing to lay siege to the women's health clinics in the area. Buffalo Mayor James Griffin extended a public welcome to the OR lawbreakers. Accordingly, OR zealots from as far away as California were flown in to take part in the attack—which was patterned after last summer's 46-day blockade of clinics in Wichita, Kan.

But hundreds of pro-choice activists also came to Buffalo to defend the clinics. Buffalo GYN Women services clinic director Marilyn Buckham explained, "This is a national defense organized by Buffalo women. We're inviting people from all over because it's a national issue."

In the end, Operation Rescue was outnumbered, out-mobilized, and defeated. Not one clinic had to close its doors.

The pro-choice defense effort in Buffalo



Clinic defenders in Twin Cities, Minn. Young women like these were the backbone for clinic defense in Buffalo, N.Y.

**What next
after April 5?**
See back page

began on Saturday, April 11, when about 1000 pro-choice supporters rallied in the rain. Addressing the rally, Eleanor Smeal, of the Fund for the Feminist Majority, pledged, "There will never be another Wichita."

At a news conference, she said that the Wichita protests were dragged out because the abortion-rights activists did not do enough to oppose Operation Rescue. She predicted that the mobilization against OR in Buffalo would put a quick end to the hassle.

"Operation Rescue will have to find new ground, and it's going to be harder and harder for them to find a place to terrorize women," Smeal said.

As soon as Operation Rescue announced that it was making Buffalo a target, pro-choice activists in that city started getting a flood of telephone calls from other areas offering help. Eight pro-choice groups joined forces and drew thousands of activists into the Buffalo United for Choice coalition. The campaign started with fund raising events and mailings, and later organized training for clinic-defense groups.

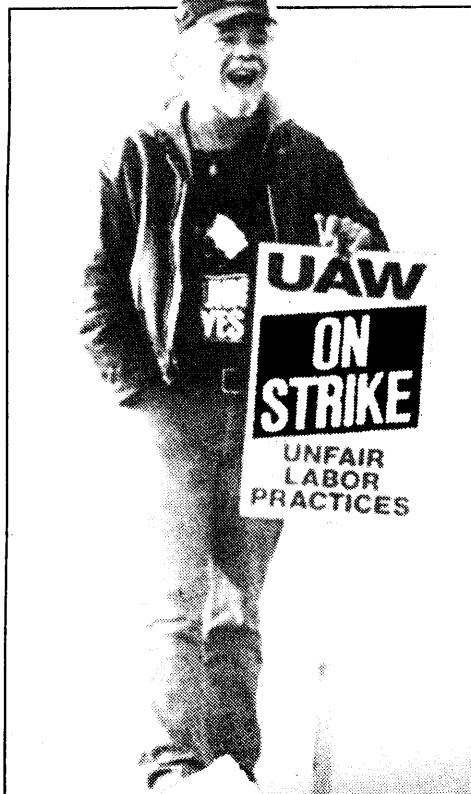
"It's my body"

On April 20, the day that Operation Rescue announced they would "shut down" the clinics, hundreds of pro-choice supporters gathered before dawn in front of every Buffalo-area clinic. The defenders sang, "It's my body, and I'll choose if I want to!" Some waved signs reading, "My body is

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Caterpillar bosses exploit bankrupt labor strategy

By NAT WEINSTEIN



The United Auto Workers union (UAW) ended its five-month-old strike against Caterpillar, Inc. on April 14. UAW negotiators accepted a federal mediator's recommendation that UAW members go back to work on the company's terms while "negotiations for a new contract would continue."

Without being consulted by top UAW officials, the 12,600 strikers were told to return to their jobs. This decision, catching the striking workers by complete surprise (and coming after a company-ordered back-to-work movement had failed to materialize), provoked widespread resentment in the union's ranks.

On the very day it reported the union's return-to-work announcement, *The New York Times* noted: "Interestingly, the parade of cars and trucks that drove by the Caterpillar plant today was larger than it had been in recent days. The striking union members, driving by with clenched fists raised, produced a chorus of car horns in the early morning daylight symbolizing their reinforced defiance of a company order that

they abandon their strike or be permanently replaced."

After the UAW officialdom's unjustified surrender (they blamed it on the rank and file), the Caterpillar bosses lost no time before throwing salt in the union's wounds and further pursuing their advantage.

Immediately after the UAW announcement that workers could return to work on their first regular shift, the company's first follow-up punch was to bar the factory gates. They arrogantly told workers that they "would be notified by mail when to return." Soon afterward, the company announced that it would not rehire all strikers.

But Caterpillar shortly "retreated" from this position. They began issuing ambiguous and contradictory announcements. They said they did, after all, intend to rehire all strikers. But they also said, in almost the same breath, that about 10 percent of strikers would be "let go" through early retirement and attrition. (This contradicts the company's highly touted announcement during the strike that all workers who

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The link between Buffalo and Peoria



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

In the last few weeks, we have witnessed two historically important struggles for workers' constitutional rights. In Peoria, Ill., the workers of Caterpillar were fighting for their constitutional right to freedom of assembly, the right to free speech, and the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

And even more important, they were fighting for the right to earn a decent living. All of these rights have been denied to them by the laws, the court system, the police, and the Caterpillar bosses.

In Buffalo, N.Y., we are watching another massive struggle for women's reproductive rights. Once again, the capitalists and all their agencies are scheming to deny women their fundamental right to freedom of assembly, free speech, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—and most of all, their right to control their very own bodies.

Need for solidarity

Both of these battles are working-class battles. The outcome of the Caterpillar strike is of imme-

diately important to those heroic pro-choice fighters in Buffalo. And the Buffalo fight is of immediate importance to those Caterpillar workers who fought hard against their bosses but lost because of a "leadership" that refused to lead an effective fight-back.

In Buffalo, however, the pro-choice forces are taking command of their own defense lines and are not allowing the Operation Rescue scabs to cross. They have massed by the hundreds to defend their clinics and have set an example to all workers: Don't let the scabs through, hold the fort!

In Peoria, the scabs were allowed through picket lines by official union policy. The pickets were warned by their union officials against blocking the plant gates.

One of the slogans in Buffalo used against the fetus-fetishists is, "Pray, you'll need it, your cause has been defeated!" The same "right-to-lifers" who are attempting to take reproductive rights away from women today, will be among the "right-to-

work" scabs tomorrow.

Solidarity is a life or death necessity. The fight of women to control their own bodies is a working-class issue. Every worker, male or female, is forced to support their families by selling their labor power. If they cannot control the size of their families, they are at the greater mercy of greedy employers, like Caterpillar. The more children you have, the more you need to "dance with the devil" every month to stretch your paycheck. Every victory by the workers for higher wages is a victory for working men and all women.

A fighting fist

There was a time when every worker knew this in their bones. In the 1930s, the organizing drive of the CIO played a role in mold-

ing every worker—male, female, old, young, Black and white—into a united, fighting fist.

In Detroit, the UAW marched 5000-strong to defend a Black community when sheriffs were trying to evict them. Such picket lines and social battles were the force behind employer concessions such as unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, and other social-welfare programs grudgingly granted to all workers—organized and unorganized.

But it has been many years since the labor movement earned the reputation of being the defender and champion of all of capitalism's victims. To defend workers' interests in the big struggles ahead, the labor movement must once again reestablish itself as the champion of the working class and all its historic

allies—especially those in the women's and Black and Latino movements for social, economic and political justice.

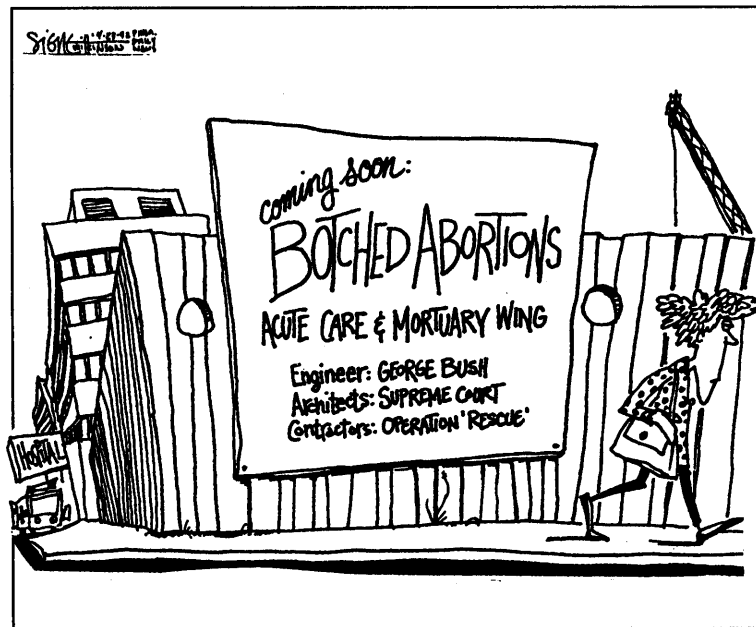
Can you visualize the impact that would be made if great numbers of trade-union members, with their union banners flying, were standing beside their sisters and brothers in Buffalo, defending the clinics in a united fight for the right of women to control their own bodies?

Such an action would send a signal to all capitalists and their agents that an injury to women, to Blacks, to labor, is an injury to all!

It's important to learn from history. To know that women by the tens of thousands marched and fought for the eight-hour day along with their union sisters and brothers. That mass women's organizations fought against slavery, against child labor, and for public education, as well as for women's rights. Women joined the fight for the right to organize into a union in little towns and big cities all across this country in the 1930s.

I know this for a fact. My grandmother was one of those low-paid, unskilled working women who helped organize the CIO in Middletown, Ohio, in those hard times. She fought with a passion, knowing it was for all women like her and for all working people.

Only this kind of unity can stop the Caterpillar example from spreading. United we stand, divided we fall. Sound familiar? That's what it's all about. ■



'Spoiled beer and bad mushrooms'



... and in this corner

By
Joni Jacobs

Socialists usually don't pay much attention to the Democratic or Republican party primaries. It doesn't make much difference to us which capitalist politician wins the slug-fest to run for and occupy the White House for the next four years.

A Wisconsin voter summed up this year's contest pretty well during a radio interview. She said choosing between Bill Clinton and Jerry Brown was "like asking do you want a spoiled beer or a bad mushroom?" Not very appetizing fare on the Democratic menu this year.

You have to admit, these guys got *chutzpah*. Both Clinton and Brown turned up at the April 5 pro-choice march, despite the fact that neither one can properly be called "pro-choice."

Bill Clinton does not think teenaged women deserve the right to choose, so he signed Arkansas' parental consent law. He does not think public money should be used to fund abortions for low-income women, so he's consistently opposed legislation to do so. He does think abortion

should be legal—not accessible, just (barely) legal.

Jerry Brown says he discovered that abortion is murder while sitting on a mountaintop in Nepal. He thinks the Democratic Party should continue to support anti-choice candidates and incumbents. And he refused to take a stand against Operation Rescue's campaign of violence against family planning clinics. Of course, that was three years ago, when he was only the chair of the California Democratic Party, not a presidential candidate.

The gall of these duplicitous egomaniacs pandering for votes at the biggest pro-choice march in history, as if they deserved to get any! It made me realize how absurd and surreal the entire electoral process has become.

It's surreal to see the labor bureaucracy backing an openly union-busting, "right-to-work-for-less" candidate like Clinton. It's surreal to hear Clinton referred to as a liberal, when Arkansas is one of the most conservative, anti-worker states in the union.

It's surreal to hear both Clinton

and Brown make proposals for revitalizing the economy. Neither the Democratic or Republican parties wants to organize the U.S. economy on anything other than market capitalism. As long as the economy is organized on market capitalism, there will be periods of overproduction that lead to recession and depression. These periods of crisis are becoming more frequent and intense.

But there is nothing the politicians can do to change that as long as they stay within the capitalist system.

That's what socialists mean when we say there's not a dime's worth of difference between the two parties, that they're two sides of the same coin, two doors that lead to the same room, etc., etc.

These cliches highlight the fact that there isn't a two-party system in this country. There's a one-party system with two factions, both of which represent the interests of the rich against those of working people.

The Democratic Party is just as responsible as the Republican Party for driving down the living standards of working people. They are both parties of union-busters, anti-choicers, anti-civil rights, corporate polluters and war makers. Candidates like Clinton only make this more clear. It's hard to persuade voters that an "anybody but Bush" voting strategy is going to make a difference if the end result is a "Repubocrat" like Clinton.

In the New York primaries, an astounding thing happened. Eighty-six percent of those eligi-

ble to vote didn't bother to. There has been endless speculation as to the reasons why, but an inescapable fact must be that the vast majority of people didn't think it was important for them to make a trip to the polls.

Maybe people don't think their votes will count, or the choices presented aren't real, or whoever's in the White House won't make a difference in their daily lives, or a combination of these or other factors.

Whatever the reasons, the sham that America is a democracy is wearing thin. Fewer and fewer people participate in the electoral process because they know that their vote does not decide what will be the policies of the employers and their government. Getting more people to go to the

polls to pick the lesser among the evils won't change this. In fact, history has shown that we get more results when we act independently in our own interests with mass mobilizations—in the streets and on the picketline.

Working people need true democracy. We need workplace and community-based committees to decide not only the laws of the land, but what to do with the earth's resources and our ability to transform them into products that meet human needs. We need a system where those who create the wealth decide what to do with it. In other words, we need socialism.

Working people need choices beyond spoiled beer and bad mushrooms. But we aren't going to get that in this year's election.

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Stakes are high for women in court hearing on Pennsylvania abortion law

By JONI JACOBS

On April 22, 1992, one day after ordering the death of Robert Alton Harris in California, the United States Supreme Court heard arguments in a case which could mean a death sentence for untold numbers of women.

Lawyers on both sides of the abortion debate argued for and against *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, a challenge to the Pennsylvania law which severely restricts women's right to abortion.

Previously, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) had asked the Court to rule directly on whether *Roe* is still the law of the land. In that 1973 decision, the Court said abortion was a "fundamental" right which states could not infringe upon without a "compelling interest." Any restrictions on abortion were subject to "strict scrutiny" by the Court.

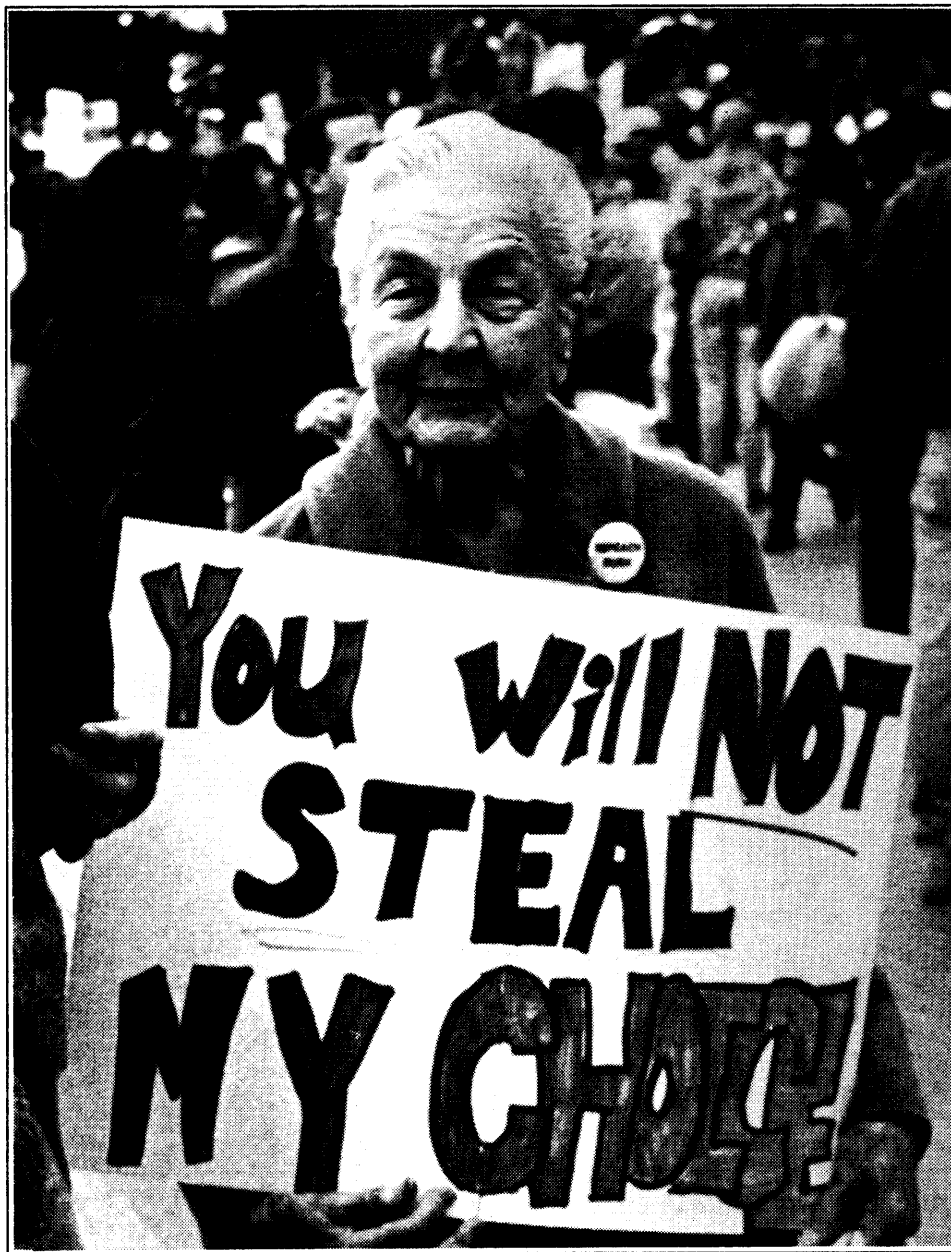
In this case, the Court said it would limit its review to the actual elements contained in the Pennsylvania law. The Court would decide whether those restrictions place an "undue burden" on women exercising their right to abortion, without ruling on whether that right remains fundamental.

The Pennsylvania law requires:

- Doctors to tell women seeking abortions about fetal development, including showing them pictures and counseling them on alternatives to abortion.
- Women to wait 24 hours after receiving such information before having an abortion.
- Doctors to keep detailed records, subject to public disclosure, of all abortions performed.
- Married women in most cases to notify their husbands of their plans for abortions.

In 1986, the Court struck down, by a 5-4 vote, almost identical regulations imposed by a previous Pennsylvania law. Since then, three members of that five-justice majority have retired and were replaced with justices considered hostile to abortion rights.

Acknowledging the heightened interest in this case, the Court treated this debate



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

almost as if it was a rock concert. People waited outside the court all night long in the rain in order to receive a pass to stand in line for "first come, first served" seating.

Those admitted to the courtroom heard Kathryn Kolbert of the ACLU arguing against the law. She asked the justices to

reaffirm *Roe* and declare that the constitutional right to abortion is broad enough to invalidate every restriction in the Pennsylvania law. She politely skirted Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's request that she specifically address the law's restrictions.

Instead, Kolbert spoke about the case's

central issue—"the power of the government to force a woman to continue her pregnancy against her will."

"Pennsylvania's onerous restrictions must fall," Kolbert argued. "Women might again be forced to the back alleys for their health care ... with grave consequences."

By not arguing against the Pennsylvania restrictions themselves, the ACLU's strategy was based more on politics than the law. It gambled that a bad ruling by the Court would galvanize the pro-choice movement at the polls this November.

However, the generally expected outcome is a ruling that makes it unconstitutional for states to criminalize abortion, but permissible to impose waiting periods and counseling requirements, as well as hospitalization requirements and other restrictions now being considered in some states.

"In a way, that is the worst possible outcome," said Walter Dellinger, a Duke University law professor. "The people really at risk are vulnerable women, the young and the poor. Their rights won't be protected politically unless suburban Republican women find themselves at risk, too. Only if it's clear that no one has rights will there be a political groundswell to restore those rights."

The ACLU, Planned Parenthood, NARAL, and other pro-choice groups are pronouncing *Roe v. Wade* all but dead. They are calling for pro-choice supporters to elect congressional candidates to pass the Freedom of Choice Act as an alternative to winning abortion rights through the courts. In fact, the main organizers of the historic April 5 march in Washington, D.C., were clear in their message that the next step is to vote pro-choice in November.

But this gamble by the leadership of the pro-choice movement may backfire. A muddy ruling by the Court will make it difficult to galvanize "single issue" voting by pro-choice supporters. The only candidates presented to these voters are from the Democrat and Republican parties, both of which have voted for restrictions on abortion in Congress.

Moreover, it is doubtful that the Freedom of Choice Act would pass Congress without restrictions similar to those contained in the Pennsylvania law. In any event, anti-choice forces would surely challenge the Act, which would once again place the fate of millions of women at the doorstep of the Supreme Court. ■

... Buffalo

(continued from page 1)

not the property of church and state."

Seeing how badly outnumbered they were, OR sent out mere handfuls of anti-choice pickets—who were forced to stand across the street from the clinics and shout passages from the Bible to anyone who might be listening.

By mid-day, the clinics had finished all the abortions scheduled for the day. According to Kit Bonson, a spokesperson for Buffalo United for Choice, "Every single patient got through."

At a press conference that afternoon, Operation Rescue was forced to backtrack from its earlier boasts. When asked if they had been scared away by the large number of pro-choice clinic defenders, OR claimed they had never said they would go to the clinics before the "prayer" rally that evening.

When reporters pointed out how badly outnumbered they were, OR said, "It's not a numbers game. It's a success if even one person stands up for life." When asked if they still planned to shut down the clinics, OR replied, "Our goal is to save at least one life—not shut down the clinics. There's no virtue in being arrested."

Reporters commented that OR seemed to have revised its goals because of the large pro-choice turn-out.

At the April 20 evening "prayer" rally, Operation Rescue announced a three-pronged offensive—Operation Rescue (direct assault on the clinics), Operation First Amendment (legal picketing in support of those engaged in "rescues"), and Operation John the Baptist (harassment of abortion providers at their homes).

A letter from Buffalo Mayor James Grif-

fin was read, which said that OR's presence in Buffalo would be worthwhile if even only one clinic was shut down.

Throughout the week, pro-choice activists gathered at every clinic in the pre-dawn hours, successfully outmobilizing Operation Rescue. Responding to this large pro-choice turn-out, police set up barricades separating pro-choice supporters from OR thugs. And, whenever OR goons attempted to rush the clinic doors, police arrested them.

'Choice' activists overwhelm OR

Cherie MacDonald, Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics spokesperson, explained that the large pro-choice presence forced the cops to act despite the mayor's earlier promise that the police would show kindness and understanding toward OR demonstrators. All clinics remained open

every day with no appointments cancelled.

Operation Rescue claimed that a massive influx of people on April 25 would turn the tide. Instead, on a cold, rainy morning, an estimated 1500 pro-choice activists showed up and positioned themselves to defend the clinics. They outnumbered OR by three to one. NOW President Patricia Ireland declared, "We're forming a human shield to make sure every patient gets into the clinics and to make sure 'Operation Bully' can't get through."

Although OR thugs did push through pro-choice supporters and temporarily block one door at the GYN Women services clinic, patients continued to enter through the other two doors. Those who staged the violent assault were arrested.

Approximately 300 anti-abortionists were held in local armories for refusing to give their names or to post bail. Attempts

to win public support by portraying themselves as "Christian martyrs" have met the same lack of success as their efforts to shut down the clinics.

Many Buffalo residents have complained that Mayor Griffin should not have invited Operation Rescue to their city, pointing out the \$14,000 per day in extra police costs could have been put to much better use.

An Operation Rescue spokesman, the Rev. Keith Tucci, promised that Buffalo OR members will continue demonstrating after the national leaders leave. He also said they might return to Kansas.

On the other hand, Buffalo pro-choice women have vowed to continue turning out in large numbers for as long as necessary to keep the clinics open. As long as that continues to happen, Operation Rescue doesn't stand a chance. ■

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Ku Klux Klan marginalized by need for 'respectable' racism

By HAYDEN PERRY

While David Duke, former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, was running for President, he found it expedient to minimize his association with the hooded terrorists. He realized the image of hoods and bedsheets in the White House is scarcely "presidential."

Since Duke has studied American history, he may feel he was born 70 years too late. In 1922, endorsement by the local KKK klavern would practically guarantee a candidate's election in a state or local contest. This was a period when over four million Klansmen and women dominated political life in many parts of the country.

It is doubtful that the six young men who founded a social club in Pulaski, Tenn., in 1866 expected their little group to expand to that size. They only wanted a club like the Greek fraternities they knew in college.

The Greek word *kyklos* means circle of friends. An adaptation of that word gave them "Ku-Klux" and adding "Klan" created an enigmatic title for the fraternity. Officers were given titles in the same style: Grand Cyclops, Grand Wizard, Grand Magi, etc. To keep their identity secret, members wore a hood and robe.

All this was not so far out at a time when Freemasons and Shriners held secret rituals or paraded in exotic costumes. But social conditions in 1866 gave the Ku Klux Klan a far more ominous role than secret society play-acting.

The South was then occupied by Union troops, freedom schools were teaching former slaves to read and write, and Blacks were voting and holding office. Life for unreconstructed whites was becoming intolerable.

To restore white supremacy, freedom schools had to be destroyed, and Blacks kept out of the voting booth. It would take a 19th-century version of Latin American death squads to terrorize the newly freed slaves into submission.

The Ku Klux Klan became the perfect cover for gangs of hooded horsemen spreading terror in Black communities. The fraternity boys were pushed aside as former Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest turned the KKK into an underground army of repression. Its emblem became a burning cross signifying religious sanction for Klan members, and the fires of hell when burned before a victim's home.

Extra-legal terror against Blacks

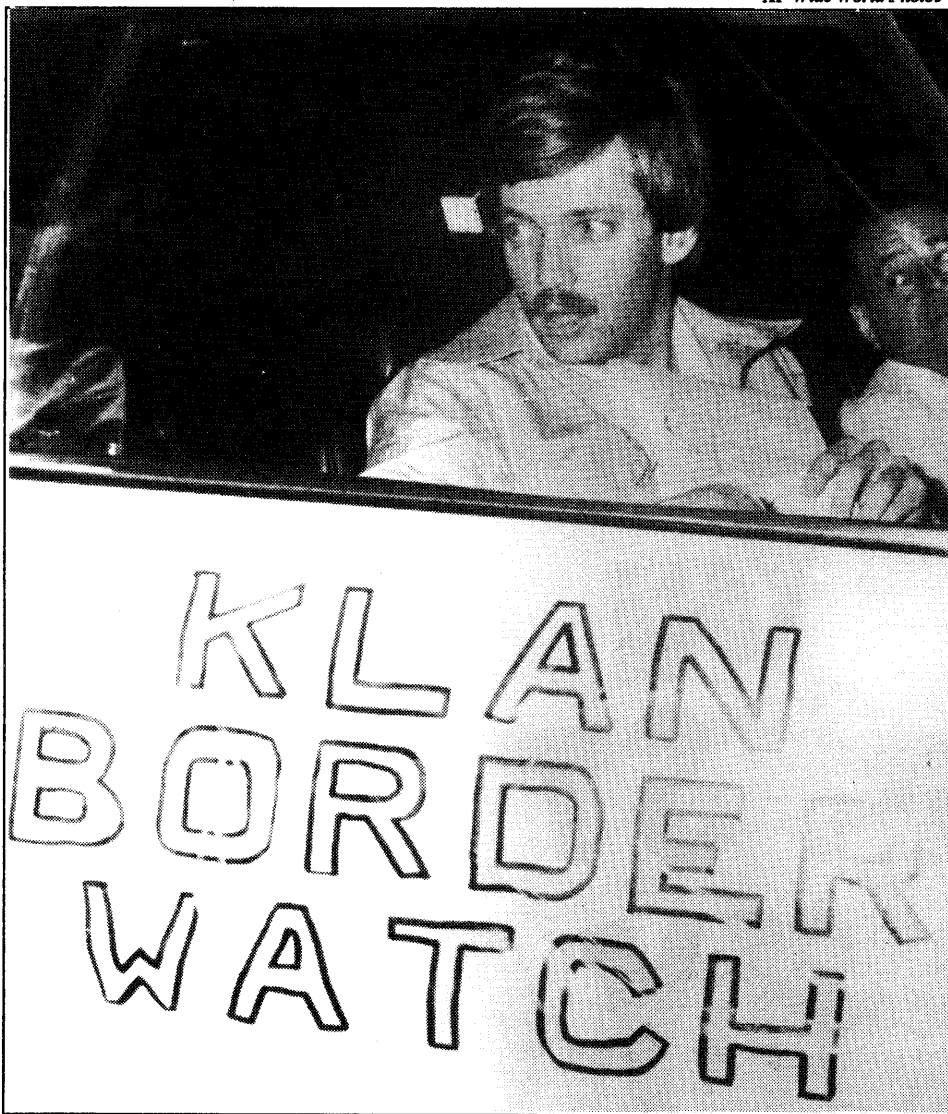
The Klan targeted successful Blacks who owned farms or held office. Between 1866 and 1875 Klansmen killed an estimated 3500 Blacks, and whipped or tarred and feathered thousands more. Whites, who taught or otherwise helped former slaves, were beaten or driven out.

By terrorizing Blacks so they failed to vote, the Klan restored the Democrats to power in state after state. When the Hayes-Tilden compromise in 1876 ended Reconstruction, the white Southern elite won back political power. Now they could pass all the Jim Crow laws they wanted.

They no longer needed the Klan, which had degenerated into bands of uncontrolled vigilantes. Through internal corruption and loss of official support, the Klan practically faded away by the late 1870s. KKK underground roots, however, were still intact—ready to flower again whenever the climate was right.

In the meantime, mass immigration from Central and Southern Europe at the turn of the century made poor American-born whites uneasy. The rise of trade unions and the socialist movement made the wealthy uneasy.

In 1915 a movie focused on white peoples' fears in a dramatic way. This was "Birth of a Nation," the first full-length motion picture. Its theme was the heroic role of the KKK in defending pure Southern womanhood against "bestial" Blacks.



Above: David Duke in 1977. He has shed his robe and hood for a three-piece suit. Right: KKK marching in Washington, D.C., in 1925—a time when the Klan boasted of a membership of four million.

This picture attracted 50 million viewers, who thrilled to dramatic action never before seen on the screen. Its social message was uncritically accepted by thousands. A special screening in the White House was viewed by President Woodrow Wilson, who said the story was "terribly true."

Such endorsement eased the resurrection of the KKK. It was now titled, "The Invisible Empire of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan." They retained all the mummery and regalia of the old Klan and added Catholics, Jews, communists, and labor agitators to their list of enemies of white, Protestant America.

They pointed to the hordes of immigrants who were threatening the purity of true American Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Membership in the Klan became "respectable." Protestant ministers joined, as they preached against crime and immorality that the government could not control.

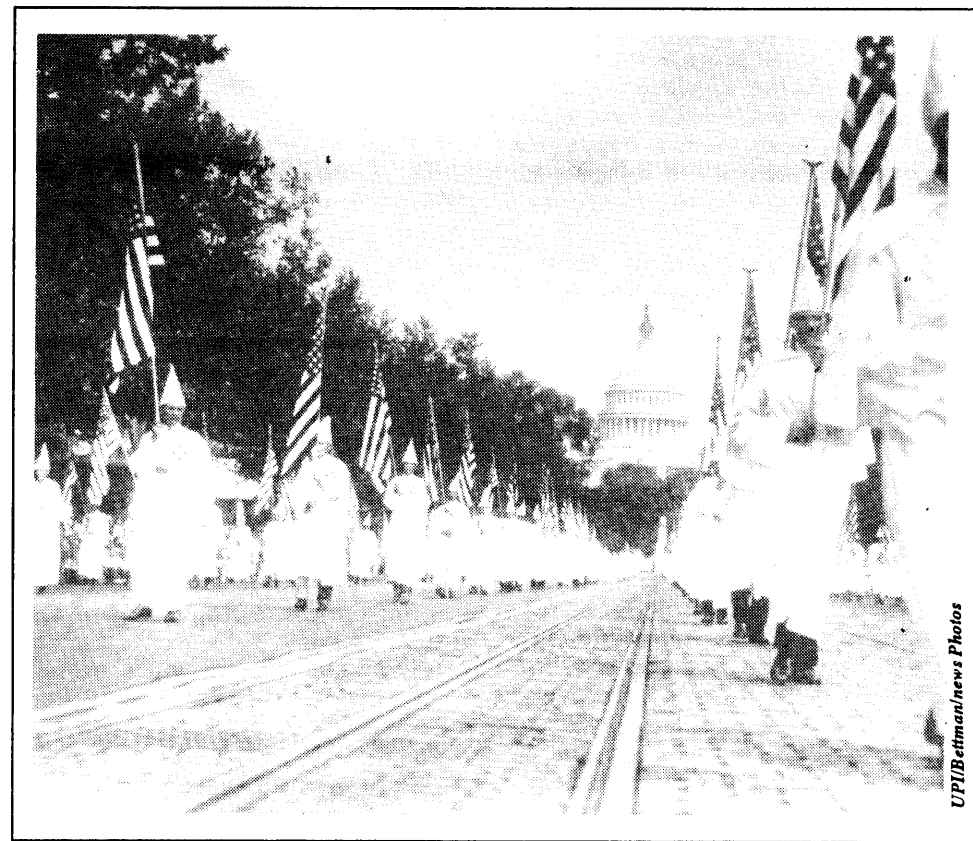
The Klan undertook to uphold "family values" by punishing wife-beaters, family-deserters, and home-wreckers. In 1923, Klan raiders whipped 2300 alleged transgressors—both men and women.

In the early 1920s, the Klan not only had whips, they had votes. In Chicago, 50,000 Klan members demanded the support of politicians and businessmen. In Oregon they elected a governor and state senators.

But then the tide that swept in the Klan soon receded. The great economic boom of the 1920s set in. Social relations stabilized, immigration was curtailed, and the bogeyman of "hordes of foreigners" ceased to scare.

Corruption within the Klan led to the exposure of Klan leaders as common swindlers. Trade unionists and other workers confronted the KKK in the streets and routed them. It was time for the hooded order to retreat to the boondocks and wait for another day.

Various shirted groups tried to take



advantage of the turmoil of the Great Depression. But each time they raised their heads, workers smacked them down. For example, the Silver Shirts in Minneapolis collided with Local 544 of the Teamsters. They faced rows and rows of hostile workers at the one public meeting they tried to organize.

The Klan sprouted new branches after the 1954 Supreme Court decision against school segregation. Blacks were sitting-in at lunch counters, and freedom marchers were taking over the streets. An atmosphere reminiscent of Reconstruction days developed.

Klan is marginalized

The Southern way of life was threatened and the KKK prepared to ride to the rescue. Once more, recruits assembled around burning crosses to pledge allegiance to the Invisible Empire. But the Klan today is only a shadow of the hooded order of the '20s.

In the 1950s, more broadly-based White Citizens Councils were set up by the Southern power structure to defend segregation. Police and sheriffs confronted the

freedom marchers with clubs and hoses.

The Klan was assigned the subsidiary role of terrorists and underground death squads. In the four years after the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision, there were 530 cases of Klan related violence and intimidation. There were six murders, 29 shootings, five stabbings, and bombings of 30 homes, seven churches, four synagogues and four schools.

The Klan operated with relative impunity, as they recruited police and sheriffs. But the murder of two little girls in a Birmingham church bombing and the killing of three civil rights workers in Mississippi shocked the nation.

To "responsible" racists, the message of the Klan was great—but the messenger appeared uncouth, outdated, and somewhat ridiculous. The cause of white supremacy should be presented by clean-cut all-American youth—supposedly typified by David Duke.

Duke realized that hoods and robes would be accepted by only a tiny extreme fringe element, while the message of white supremacy would attract many more. The Klan's message of hate had to be presented in middle-class terms.

A three piece suit replaced the hood and robe, and the Grand Wizard became the National Executive. Duke finally dropped the KKK, setting up The National Association for the Advancement of White People. (NAAWP)

Duke will use any vehicle to reach out with his message of hate. Today he assumes a populist stance, as he appeals to the worker who fears Black and immigrant labor. He attracts the distressed middle class with xenophobic condemnation of "international financiers."

Duke's quest for respectability is helped by the basic racism of the ruling class. Bush's criticism of a "quota" civil rights bill echoes Duke's opposition to affirmative action. Duke only says what an important section of the ruling class is already thinking.

However, the ruling class is not yet ready for Duke, and Duke has not put together the mass movement of classical fascism. Meanwhile the Klan—split into dozens of competing dens and klaverns—is marginalized.

It still remains dangerous, however, as it becomes part of the shadowy underground of the Survivalist Right—the Minutemen, Skinheads, Nazis, and other hate groups. They all preach the doctrine of race war and apocalypse. They practice armed terrorism and assassination.

They all feed on the fears of the backward and uneducated, who have been abandoned by Republicans and Democrats alike. Many could be recruited as pro-capitalist storm troops if social tensions demand it.

But the radical right can only advance if the organized labor movement abstains. The labor movement must become a pole of attraction for these dissatisfied millions, who themselves are victims of capitalism.

It is time to rebuild the labor movement, found a labor party, and create such a pole of attraction for the great working-class majority that the race haters will be marginalized to the point of impotence. ■

The following is an article submitted by Nicholas Lignola, a prisoner at the Sierra Conservation Center in California.

In a letter included with the article, Mr. Lignola states:

"As an inmate in the California Department of Corrections I am able to witness, first hand, some of this state's more flagrant abuses. I felt compelled to share my thoughts and observations with the public, who I believe is, in great part, unaware of these facts. If you feel it would be useful, I would appreciate your publishing this article in one of your publications. I thank you in advance and look forward to hearing from you in the near future."

By NICHOLAS LIGNOLA

I never would have thought that my life's destiny would have included time in prison. Then again, I never would have thought that I would have ended up on the streets of San Francisco's Tenderloin, hustling \$20 for another "rock" of crack cocaine.

But life has many twists and turns. When one falls prey to substance abuse and addiction it's like being caught in a downward, turbulent spiral. It is precisely that spiral that brought me to this prison.

Sierra Conservation Center (SCC) is not one of the "high power" prisons that makes people shudder just at hearing the name. It is not Folsom, San Quentin, or Soledad. It is, however, a prison—a place of confinement. It is a place where, at public expense, men are detained, housed, clothed, and institutionalized. It is a place where the "seeds" are sown in the cycle of incarceration.

For many of the men this is but a training ground for that day when they too will be able to go to those "high power" prisons that are a must on every true gangster's resume. In reality, Sierra is a haven for many poor, drug addicted, misguided "wannabes" who never had a stake in the society by which they are now incarcerated.

In a time of budgetary crisis and alleged fiscal restraint, Sierra is a prototypical publicly-funded boondoggle, which should raise the ire of every hard-working California taxpayer.

Very few of the 3500 inmates at Sierra Conservation Center have the skills or ability to earn \$30,000 per year when out on the streets. Yet, this is the approximate sum that California's taxpayers pay for each man who spends a year at Sierra Conservation Center, or at similar prisons. Tuolumne County, where SCC is located, has a relatively depressed, rural, economy.

To the population of Tuolumne County, the presence of this institution has been a blessing. Or, has it? What is for certain is that SCC, and institutions like it, is a bleeding sore on California's already blighted financial spreadsheet and on its hemorrhaging social fabric.

If asked whether California should fund schools for adult delinquency, any rational taxpayer would reply with a resounding negative. Yet, it is precisely this type of institution that is being increasingly funded as California goes on a mad race to build more and more correctional institutions to house an ever-increasing number of petty offenders, most of whom are addicted to drugs and come from underprivileged environments.

While reducing its budget for education, California has gone on a spending spree for prison construction. Are California's leaders purposely avoiding to deal with the root problems which lead to incarceration?

Is dealing with the reality of the fact that in the lower socioeconomic brackets an entire generation is being lost to drug abuse too painful or too inconvenient?

Whatever the case, it is time that the honest taxpayers of California take a look at the hard reality which confronts them. The problem will not go away by itself.

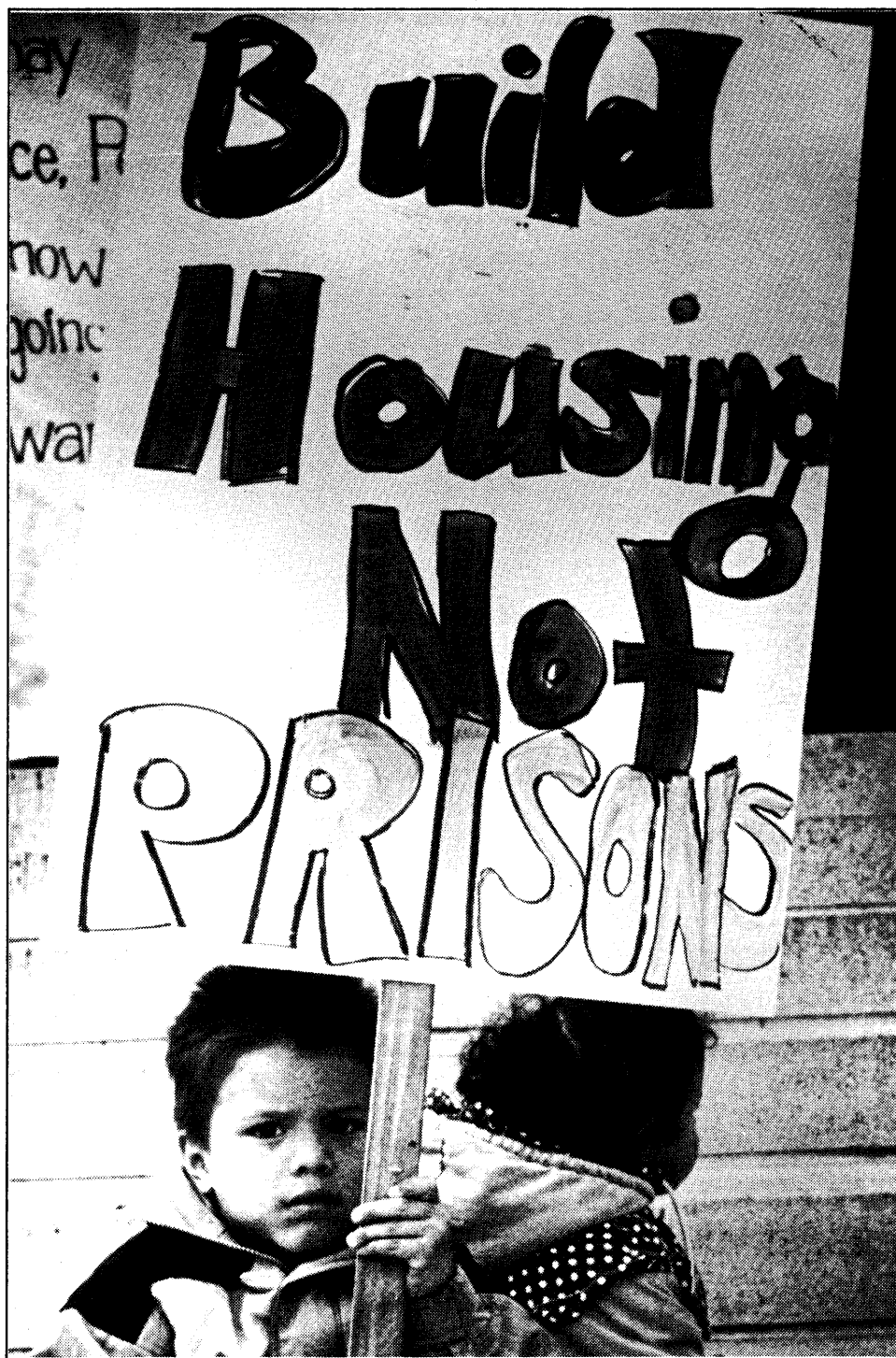
Central to the problem at hand is the fact that because of special interests, corruption, and graft, the proliferation of prisons is merely serving to employ a constantly growing, and ever-more parasitical, sector of the state's economy.

In fact, the correctional system has become a haven for continued and progressive criminality. It becomes clear that the legislature is apparently not concerned with stemming the root of the criminal problem which is poverty, lack of education, and substance abuse.

It would, indeed, appear that the legisla-

Wasted time

A prison inmate provides a searing indictment of California's penal system



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

ture, supported by certain privileged segments of society, has a vested interest in perpetuating the cycle of incarceration which results in the effective disenfranchisement of an "undesirable", and potentially politically threatening, segment of society.

In the early 1980s, the California Department of Corrections had approximately 25,000 inmates. Today, the system is teeming with approximately 105,000 inmates.

Californians, however, have certainly not benefited with significantly lowered crime rates. So, who has benefited from this enormous and scandalous waste of human potential and resources? Certainly, the ever-increasing bureaucracy, the thousands of correctional officers, and the legions of highly paid, non-uniformed, employees have found ample benefit at the trough of this wasteful enterprise.

Indeed, in a depressed state-wide economy, the correctional "industry" has been a consistently growing endeavor. It is to be expected that these beneficiary groups will continue to fight hard to maintain and expand the status quo. Where, but in the "correctional" system, can a marginally educated man or woman be paid in excess of \$42,000 per year to put an average two hours of work in during an eight-hour day?

Yet, the system continues to call itself "Department of Corrections." On what basis does it use this misnomer? I would be the first to agree that criminal acts must be punished and that society has a right to protect itself from people who pose a public threat.

However, the "Department of Corrections" is actually becoming a "warehousing" project for the dispossessed, uneducated, the poor, and the addicted. The overwhelming majority of people entering the correctional system today do not meet the public's criteria of what constitutes a "dangerous criminal."

About three quarters of the people in California's prisons are addicted to either alcohol or drugs, better than half are functionally illiterate, and a majority have lower than average intelligence quotient scores. In other words, the Department of Corrections is now the receptacle for the problems which California refuses to address.

In the course of these "Republican years", beginning in the early 1980s, the divisions within American society have grown greater, as well as more painful and apparent. California has been at the forefront of this reactionary swing.

What once was considered a liberal and progressive State has now become a bastion of economic exploitation, police brutality, and of insensitive and unresponsive government. California incarcerates its citizens at a higher rate than any nation on earth, including South Africa.

A very sad distinction for the "Golden State." While California's inner cities decay and wither under the oppression of "trickle-down" economics, drugs, gang violence, and police brutality, California's Republican leadership concerns itself with prison expansion rather than urban renewal.

Dollars taken from education budgets are diverted to incarcerate the very people the State has chosen to deprive of an education and, consequently, of access to society.

Whereas low-income and single mothers are unable to avail themselves of childcare services at reasonable cost, the state has taken it upon itself to become an involuntary adult "baby-sitting" service for the grown children of California's squalid public housing projects.

Is it any coincidence that whereas only 12 percent of the state's population is African American, over 35 percent of the prison population represents this ethnic group? Is it coincidental that the largest single incarcerated group is Hispanic American? The Department of Corrections principal task has become to remove the human results of California's misguided fiscal policies off of city streets.

It is time that the honest, tax paying, public come to the realization that Sacramento's politicians have a very different agenda for California than the average citizen. It is a basic law of bureaucracies that their primary purpose is to perpetuate themselves. The California Department of Corrections has gone out of control.

Is there any sound rationale in slashing public funding for housing, education, and social services while then paying over \$30,000 per person, per year, for each inmate in a state prison?

As long as the poor and illiterate are prevented from gaining a stake in California society, they will continue falling prey to the tragedy of illiteracy, violence, and substance abuse. The cycle of incarceration takes the focus away from the real problems.

The state is systematically incarcerating that segment of society which is considered burdensome by those special interest groups which support Sacramento's politicians.

Stated simply, the legislative agenda concerning California's social problems is "out of sight, out of mind!" It has become painfully clear that this approach is a dismal failure. The people of California deserve better. ■

DHORUTA BIN WAHAD WINS NEW TRIAL

By DAWN REEL

The United States, alone among the world's governments, claims to hold no political prisoners. The official position is that, in this truly "humane" society, all those jailed for politically motivated actions are "criminals."

But such cases expose the fact that there are political resistance movements of such great potential impact that the government is compelled to use repression against them.

Over 50 of the political prisoners are activists in the fight for Black liberation. Many are serving incredibly long sentences. For example, eight Black political prisoners will soon begin their third decade behind bars.

One long-imprisoned Black activist, who has now gained his freedom, is Dhoruta Bin Wahad. He is a former leader of the Black Panther Party, who was imprisoned on false charges for 19 years—from 1972 to 1991.

In 1971, Bin Wahad was framed by the FBI and the New York City Police Dept. (NYPD) because of his leadership position in the Black Panther Party. After a prolonged court battle, Bin Wahad proved that the district attorney and NYPD were guilty of misconduct against him and that his original trial was invalid. The Manhattan district attorney, however, demanded that Bin Wahad be put back in prison before a new trial could take place.

At a court hearing on April 16, Bin Wahad beat back the attempt to rearrest him and won his chance for a new trial. A new trial is important, not only to do justice to Bin Wahad for the 19 years of his life that were robbed from him, but also to do justice to the fact that there are many more Bin Wahads in the U.S. prison system.

Close to 200 defense supporters attended the hearing. Bin Wahad told them afterwards that he was free "because all of you are here." He then urged the crowd to broaden the struggle, and attend the hearing for the New York Three (Herman Bell, Anthony "Jalil" Bottom and Albert "Nuh" Washington) on April 28.

Further information on these cases can be obtained from: The Campaign to Free Black Political Prisoners and POWs in the U.S., P.O. Box 339, Bronx, NY 10463-9339. Telephone: (718) 624-0800.

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK
and LEONARD GRBINICK

Ed Mann: 1928-1992

An appreciation of a trade unionist who always put the working class first

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio—On March 21, 1992, Ed Mann was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage. On March 23, he died. The world won't be the same now that Ed Mann is gone, but it will also never be the same because he was here 64 years.

Ed Mann was born on Jan. 6, 1928, in Toledo, Ohio. After serving in the Marines during World War II, he moved to Youngstown, where he held a series of jobs while attending Youngstown State on the G.I. Bill.

Ed joined the United Labor Party, a group formed in Akron at the end of World War II, which ran candidates for local office. He started attending Socialist Workers Party (SWP) meetings. When the majority of the Youngstown SWP branch left with the Bert Cochran split in 1953, Ed ended his formal association with the party, saying, "When there are splits and you don't understand why, you become disillusioned."

Although Ed never joined any other socialist group, throughout his life he remained true to the ideals that motivated him as a youth. In later years, he would describe himself as an "anarchist" who couldn't fit into an organized group.

Ed began working at the Brier Hill Works of Youngstown Sheet and Tube in 1952. Since he wanted to be a machinist, he took an apprenticeship test shortly after he was hired. Since the department where he worked needed a shop steward and no one else wanted the job, Ed was appointed. He immediately filed a grievance which won considerable back pay for a number of people. After that, although he received the highest score in the company on the apprenticeship test, he never heard anything more about the apprenticeship program.

This early experience demonstrated one of Ed's most important qualities. He always fought for what he believed was right regardless of any negative impact on his personal life.

Ed's principled approach soon brought him into conflict with the leadership of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1462, as well as with the company. He opposed the union leadership's corruption and cronyism and special deals with the company. He said, "The union thought what was good for the company was good for the union. I don't agree. I think the union should look out for its members. The company can look out for itself."

Ed also played a role in steelworker rank-and-file movements nationally. In the late 1950s, he supported the Dues Protest Committee. A small group of people in Local 1462 formed the Organization for Membership Rights. This later evolved into the Rank and File Team, a group which played a major role in opposing the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (a pact between the USWA and major steel companies in which the union gave up the right to strike in exchange for small guaranteed wage increases) and supporting contract ratification by the membership.

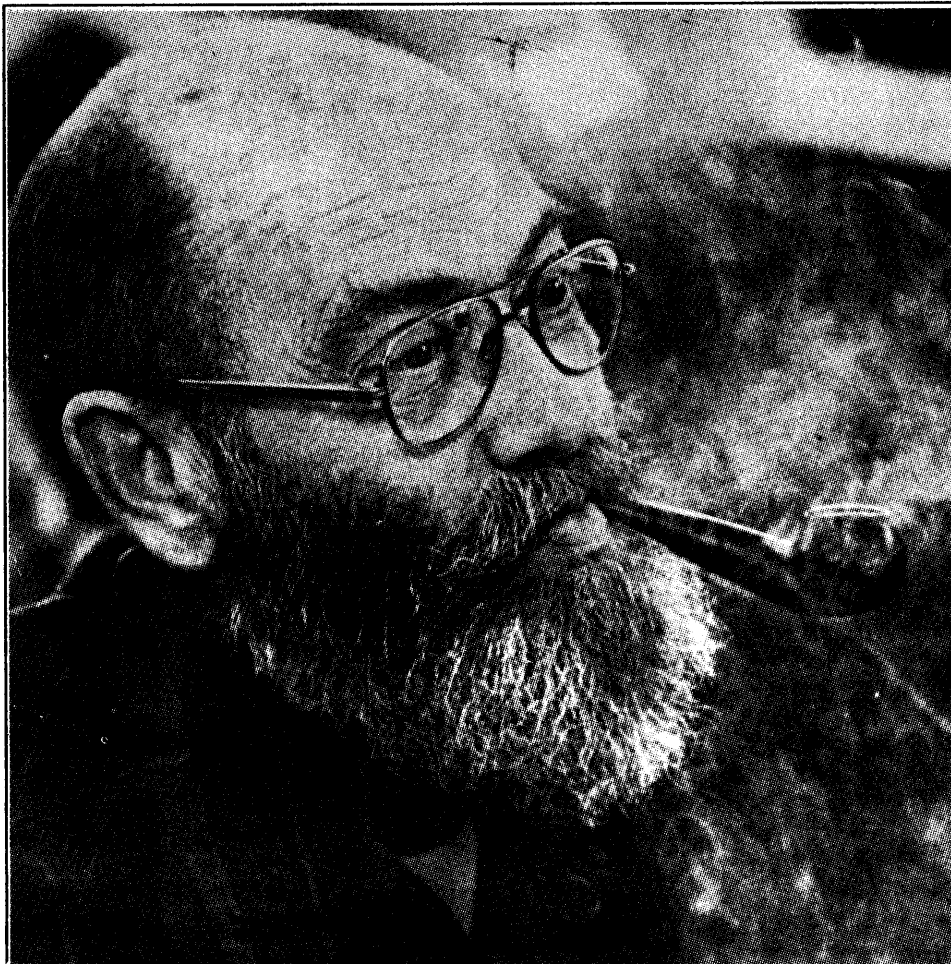
He also worked closely with Black steelworkers who opposed the discrimination they faced from both the company and the union.

"Home of the rank and file"

In 1973, Ed was elected president of Local 1462, a position he held until he retired when the plant closed in 1980. A sign hanging over the entrance to the Local 1462 hall best described Ed's philosophy. It read: "Local 1462—Home of the Rank and File."

Ed encouraged membership initiative on the shop floor. When the company tried to cut bonus pay or jobs, Ed didn't tell workers to file a grievance and wait a couple years for a favorable arbitration decision. Instead, he explained that if they stuck together, they had the power to force the company to back down. And, when faced with solid wildcat strikes, the company *did* back down on several occasions.

The example Ed cited most frequently to show how people can be involved and make a difference was the strike over the death of a steelworker named Tony. Shortly after the company had rejected 33 safety grievances, a popular worker, only days short of retirement, was crushed to death



Ed Mann

Youngstown Vindicator

'Although Ed retired from the steel mill in 1980, he did not retire from being an activist. Whenever there was a strike or a picket line in the Mahoning Valley, you could find Ed Mann there with his wit and knowledge. Ed was the type of person who would inspire people to reach beyond what they felt they were capable of doing. He genuinely liked and believed in people.'

when a truck backed over him. (One of the safety complaints had been the need for warning backup horns on trucks) At Ed's urging, the workers walked out in memory of Tony until the company met all their safety demands.

The next day, *The Youngstown Vindicator* reported that Tony was killed because of his own negligence. Although the company had already agreed to meet all their safety demands, the workers voted to stay out until the company had a retraction printed in the newspaper. After this retraction was printed the next day, the workers returned to the job.

Fighting plant closings

In October 1978, LTV Steel announced plans to shut the Brier Hill Works, which it had acquired as a result of the merger of J & L Steel with Youngstown Sheet and Tube. On Jan. 22, 1979, Local 1462 held a meeting at the union hall. By coincidence, Gordon Allen, Sheet and Tube's superintendent, was speaking a short distance away at the Mahoning Country Club. After the meeting, steelworkers decided to picket Allen's speech.

Later, they decided to go inside and demand to talk to someone with the authority to save the plant. When Allen finally emerged, he said, "Now, Ed, you know we are handling this through the union." Spontaneously, steelworkers cried out, "We are the union!"

After putting up the best fight they could, Ed concluded that the plant closing was inevitable and it was necessary to negotiate the best plant closings benefits

possible for the membership.

Ed remained a key figure in the fight against the shutdown of other steel mills in Youngstown. On Nov. 30, 1979, Ed went with a group of people to Pittsburgh and participated in the occupation of the U.S. Steel Building. On Jan. 28, 1980, Ed led the workers at U.S. Steel Ohio Works (USWA Local 1330) in the occupation of the U.S. Steel administration building in Youngstown.

Ed took out petitions to run for Congress as an independent candidate, planning to focus on the issue of plant closings and the total disregard that corporate America, backed by the Democrats and Republicans, has for working people and their families. Unfortunately, health problems forced him to withdraw from this race.

Later, he concluded that the campaign would have been a mistake because it did not grow naturally from any mass movement and, thus, would not necessarily lead to the conclusion that workers should run for office independent of the bosses.

He believed in people

Although Ed retired from the steel mill in 1980, he did not retire from being an activist. Whenever there was a strike or a picket line in the Mahoning Valley, you could find Ed Mann there with his wit and knowledge. Ed was the type of person who would inspire people to reach beyond what they felt they were capable of doing. He genuinely liked and believed in people.

Ed was an active member of the Workers Solidarity Club of Youngstown, a group

which lends active support to strikes and organizing drives. Not only would he help strikers get all they were entitled to from their international unions and provide such nuts-and-bolts assistance as wood for the barrels during a cold Ohio winter, but he would also offer valuable advice.

He would explain how no strike had ever been won by following court injunctions and how workers could only win to the degree they were able and willing to take unified action.

Ed Mann was not just a sideline commentator. In 1982, he helped persuade all the unions in the Mahoning and Trumbull County areas to help out in the bitter Trumbull Memorial Hospital strike. He helped organize weekly mass picket lines in violation of an anti-union injunction. During this strike, Ed was a victim of police brutality and was arrested.

While most of those arrested took their attorneys' advice, plead guilty to misdemeanor charges, and paid a \$50 fine, Ed appealed his felony convictions all the way to the Ohio Supreme Court. The ACLU represented him in this victorious court case. And, certainly at least as important to Ed, the strategy of effectively blocking access to the hospital won the strike and laid the basis for a much more involved local union membership at the hospital.

Active in social movements

When LTV Steel filed for Chapter 2 bankruptcy in July 1985 and attempted to cut off retirees' health benefits, Ed was in the forefront of the protests. He worked with other Youngstown area retirees to form Solidarity USA to fight for these benefits.

Ed was also active in many social movements. He participated in demonstrations against the Vietnam War, remained an active member of the Peace Council of Youngstown, and was a past president of the Youngstown Chapter of the ACLU.

All this sounds as if Ed was spread very thin—and he was—but he handled it well. This would be almost impossible for a healthy person to do. Ed was not a healthy person. He wore an insulin pump on his belt because he was a surgical diabetic. He had numerous operations for various reasons, but they never slowed him down.

Ed Mann proudly carried an IWW card, pointing to the history of Big Bill Hayward and the need for the unions to return to their militant past. While he felt class-conscious workers should be active in their unions, fighting for better wages and working conditions, and running for elected office, he stressed that just getting better people elected to office was not enough.

He argued that fundamental change could only be achieved by replacing the existing business unionism with militant, socially conscious unions—and replacing the existing society with one based on human needs.

Ed was also a devoted family man. His wife and life-long companion, Betty, worked closely with him in his struggles to build a better world. Early on, his three children—Nathan, Timothy, and Beth—and later his three grandchildren—Rodney, Jed, and Ashley—received a first-hand education on the importance of trade unionism and solidarity.

On March 28, the Sam Camens Center in Youngstown was packed as steelworkers, other trade unionists, social activists, and friends came to pay tribute to Ed Mann. A panel consisting of a retired steelworker, a lesbian feminist activist, a leader of the Workers Solidarity Club, and the treasurer of Solidarity USA, each told how Ed Mann had touched their lives and inspired them in their organizing efforts.

Folksinger Charley King sang some of Ed's favorite labor songs. Attorney Staughton Lynd described Ed's far-reaching radical ideas. The high point of the program was a tape of the speech Ed delivered in that same hall on Jan. 28, 1980, when he led over 700 people in the takeover of the U.S. Steel Youngstown administration building.

The family requests that material tributes to Ed Mann take the form of contributions to Boy Scout Troop 100 in Hubbard, Ohio—to pay summer camp tuition for needy boys—to Solidarity USA, the Workers Solidarity Club of Youngstown, or the ACLU. ■

Why can't everybody have a job?

In this period of recession that seems to drag on with little upturns and downturns, millions of people have been unemployed for at least some time, and many have been unemployed for the whole recession. And the threat of being unemployed hangs over the head of many more workers.

The hardships of unemployment are especially noted in periods of economic downturn, but even in economic "good times" there is always a layer of workers without jobs. Karl Marx called this sector of the workers capitalism's "industrial reserve army."

Why does this army of unemployed—sometimes larger, sometimes smaller—always exist under capitalism? Why can't everybody have a job?

The answer is to be found in the continual and anarchic upheaval of capitalist production.

Under the lash of competition between capitalist enterprises, the employers are always searching for ways to drive down their costs of production through the introduction of labor-saving machinery. These means of production are therefore constantly being renovated, and since this is going on all the time, some workers are always being laid off.

And, since it takes some time for laid-off workers to hunt down another job, there is always a layer of unemployed.

The existence of this industrial reserve army comes about through the workings of the system itself. It is not a conscious plot on the part of the capitalists.

However, they do find it useful in the class struggle with the workers.

The army of unemployed is a continual check on the wages of the employed. The unemployed, seeking work, are in competition with the employed for the same jobs. The employers can always threaten their employed workers with replacement through hiring the unemployed, desperate to have a job, at lower wages.

If there were full employment (which cannot happen under capitalism), this pressure of competition between the employed and unemployed wouldn't exist, and wages would tend to rise. So the existence of the industrial reserve army objectively helps the capitalists keep wages down.

The threat of being replaced is also used by the bosses to try to keep workers in line concerning work conditions, like the intensity of labor demanded by the employers, the length of the working day, health and safety questions, etc.

The formation of unions comes about as workers realize they need to band together and bargain collectively instead of individually with the employers. This reduces the competition between workers, which means they get a better deal.

Unions are able to threaten to withhold their labor in the bargaining process with the boss. If necessary, they can strike and stop production, bring a halt to the employer's profit-making, bringing pressure on the capital-

ists to be more reasonable.

Of course, the capitalists can attempt to retaliate by hiring replacement workers from the industrial reserve army, breaking the strike and resuming production with the union smashed. Striking workers therefore had to devise tactics to prevent this from happening.

One of these was the picket line. The term is borrowed from the military, where it means a line of soldiers established to defend and hold a certain position. The striker's picket line is a similar formation, designed to prevent the bosses from breaking a strike by hiring replacement workers.

Another was the sit-down strike, where workers occupied a factory in conjunction with a mass picket line to prevent any resumption of production. This was the tactic used in the organization of the automobile workers in the 1930s.

The employers have utilized their control over the government to counter such tactics with court injunctions and the raw power of the police, national guard or even the army.

Experience has shown that striking workers faced with such employer actions can be victorious, however, through a combination of mass determination not to be intimidated and waging a more general political fight to win the support of working people and others in society to the justness of their cause.

In the labor upsurge of the 1930s that created the industrial unions, workers saw that they had

Learning About Marxism

By Barry Sheppard



to reach out to the unemployed. Huge numbers had been unemployed themselves during the depression, and many unemployed workers looked to the power of the new unions to help their situation.

The division between the employed and unemployed is the most fundamental division that capitalism creates in the working class. Overcoming it has to be a goal of any winning labor strategy.

It was as a result of the great labor upsurge of the 1930s that the capitalist government conceded unemployment payments. This was an important victory for workers. Previously, unemployed workers were dependent on family members, friends or charity.

The more workers are united, the less they are in competition with each other and the stronger they are in confronting the employers. The labor movement needs to fight against the division between employed and unemployed. A labor program to do this should contain the following elements:

- Full unemployment compen-

sation at union scale wages for the full duration of unemployment.

- A crash program of public works to meet socially pressing needs such as low cost housing, rebuilding the cities and infrastructure of roads, bridges, etc.

- 30 for 40—reduce the work-week to 30 hours to spread the available work—without any reduction in pay.

- Affirmative action for Blacks, other oppressed minorities and women to overcome their disproportionate representation in the industrial reserve army of the unemployed.

The capitalists and their apologists would howl that these measures would cost them too much.

But their "suffering" would pale next to the relief of real suffering that unemployment means for working people.

And, we should keep in mind that it's their system that wreaks the havoc of unemployment. We owe them nothing. If we don't take action to defend ourselves from the adverse effects of the workings of capitalism, who will? ■

Safeway wins big concessions in Calif. Teamsters pact

By JEFF MACKLER

OAKLAND, Calif.—In a settlement likely to set the pattern for future negotiations between California's multi-billion-dollar grocery industry and the Teamsters Union for years to come, Northern California Teamsters voted by an 86 percent margin to accept a "recognition agreement" with Safeway Corp. replete with major concessions.

The agreement, covering some 800 workers, was ratified on April 26 by a 333 to 55 vote. It was called a "recognition agreement" because it was signed by the Teamsters with a "new" employer, Specialized Distribution Management Inc. (SDMI), a non-union management outfit that was preparing to open a \$1.8 billion state-of-the-art distribution center in Tracy, Calif.

Safeway had threatened to move its operations to Tracy and to fire all 800 Teamster drivers and warehouse workers at its current Northern California distribution center in Richmond, Calif. To make it clear that SDMI meant business about opening non-union, SDMI began a campaign to solicit applications for jobs at the Tracy plant. Some 29,000 unemployed workers filed applications for the announced 1000 new positions.

The practice of transferring unionized operations to non-union employers (the old bosses under a new name), utilizing a series of legal machinations, is called "double-breasting."

In the course of months of negotiations,

compliant Teamster officials limited the exercise of union power to a largely ineffectual shoppers' boycott of 50 of Safeway's 250 Northern California supermarkets.

A combination pep rally and press conference, organized by the Teamster officialdom in conjunction with their associates in the Bay Area labor movement, was attended by some 400 strikers. With great fanfare, the boycott was announced, the employers denounced, and the rank and file sent home—confused.

Some union members applied for jobs at the non-union facility, others joined the informational picketing, and most stayed home—perhaps fearful of antagonizing SDMI should they later be compelled to apply for work.

Teamster officials let it be known that they would offer no resistance to the "double-breasting" operation other than to try to organize the non-union plant by utilizing the procedures of the National Labor Relations Act.

However, when Teamster officials told Safeway's phony stand-in, SDMI, that they were prepared to negotiate major concessions in exchange for union recognition, the company eagerly moved to guarantee recognition—and a continuation of dues payments to Teamster treasuries.

A final assist before the Teamster tops capitulated was sought from the local "friendly" Democratic Party congressman, Tom Lantos, who called for a meeting with both sides to "defuse this time

bomb." When Safeway declined to accept Lantos's invitation, the congressman disappeared with scarcely a comment—other than to offer a pat on the back to the union for its commitment to a "reasonable" resolution and a respectful slap on the wrist to management for not showing up.

Two-tier wage package

The new agreement provides for the company to take back all Teamsters who want to work at the new plant, a number estimated to be roughly 500-600 of the original 800 employees. It also maintains the union's old wage rate (\$16 per hour) and a health and welfare package.

But it also contains an ironclad no-strike pledge, an agreement to end the present and future boycotts, and a stipulation to eventually submit all unresolved issues to binding arbitration.

The five-and-one-half-year agreement includes a two-tier wage system. New workers—approximately half the workforce—will start at \$11 per hour. It also provides a reduction of from \$1.40 to \$.75 in the employer's hourly contributions to the Teamster pension fund.

The old contract, which covered many older and experienced workers, included provisions for five weeks of vacation pay to those workers with 20 years of service, 12 annual holidays and—for most workers—12 sick days a year. All these items are now to be renegotiated, with an outside arbitrator having the final word. It is not hard to predict that big cuts in these benefits will be imposed on Safeway workers.

The Northern California Teamster Joint Council 7 includes 60,000 union members, a formidable power were it to be mobilized in defense of the embattled grocery workers at Safeway. The deployment of this force on the field of battle against the giant Safeway Corporation would have signaled a return to the kind of struggle that built the American labor movement in decades past.

Instead, Teamster officials have given Safeway Corporation, and the food industry in general, the green light to whipsaw union workers from one end of the country to the other.

In past strikes, Safeway met Teamster pickets at the distribution centers with force and violence, employing professional thugs and cops to break the arms and legs of union members and then arresting them for trespassing on company property. Scab truckers were hired to drive through union picket lines with lethal force. During a strike against Safeway in 1978, a Teamster picket was killed when a scab-driven truck rammed through the picketline.

To reverse the trend of deepening defeats imposed by employers across the country, the labor movement must return to the simple idea that working-class unity and solidarity at the point of production and in the political arena is a prerequisite for success.

The failure of local Teamster officials to challenge the employers with massive picket lines and protests at the distribution center was central to the Teamster defeat.

Newly elected International Teamster president Ron Carey offered considerable help to the local boycott effort, but was largely excluded from the inner circles of the union hierarchy that negotiated the defeat. Hopefully, the lessons of this failed effort will be carefully evaluated by the Carey administration and by rank and filers around the country as they set their course for the coming battles. ■

... Caterpillar

(continued from page 1)

return to work under its terms would be "guaranteed their job for six years.")

Then, on April 20, Caterpillar made another announcement, that "virtually all striking workers would be asked back [emphasis added]." Around the same time, Caterpillar also declared that new production techniques introduced during the strike meant that all strikers would not be called back to work. A rumor was widely reported circulating in Peoria that this might add up to as many as 10-15 percent of the strikers.

It is clear that the company intends to press its advantage as far as it can. But it will do so craftily—testing and measuring the response of the union—to avoid triggering a possible explosion of resistance from the ranks of the UAW.

Defeat results from union policy

The decision to end the strike has been correctly characterized in the media as a major defeat for the UAW and the most serious setback for labor in the past decade. But it is also claimed, falsely, that this is more evidence of an objective decline in the intrinsic power of the American working class and its unions.

The Caterpillar bosses' victory over striking members of the UAW is *not* proof that the intrinsic power of organized workers, especially the industrial unions, has declined. Even though the industrial workforce is a smaller proportion of the working class, unions at the strategic centers of the nation's industrial production fully retain their ability to bring the whole economy to a grinding halt.

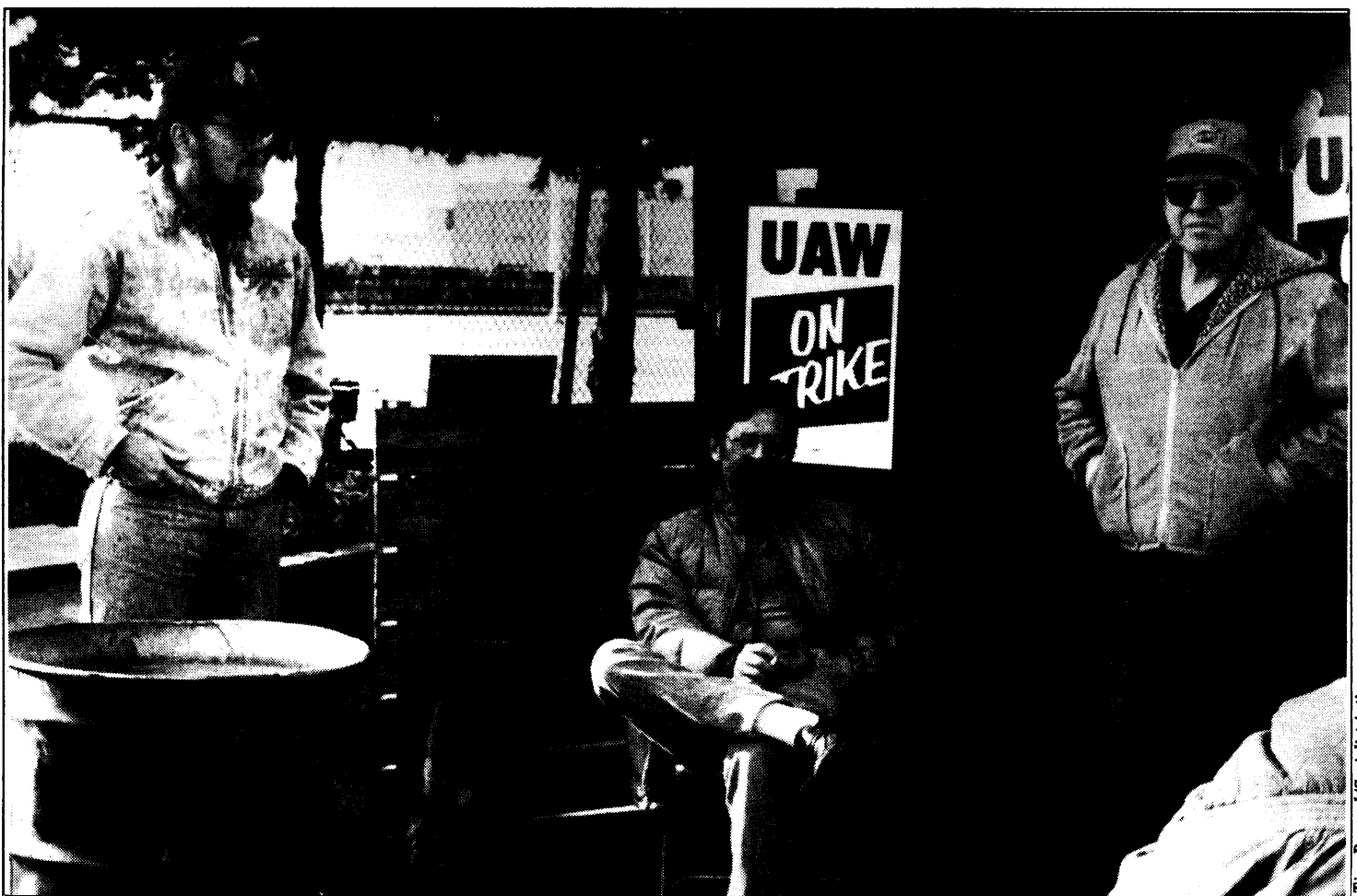
Rather, it is the latest proof of the bankruptcy of the top labor officialdom's strategy of class collaboration—a strategy based on the absurd notion that there is a fundamental identity of interests between workers and their bosses that outweighs all conflicting interests between them.

In addition to these strategic errors, the union's public stance was badly presented. The UAW officialdom allowed the mass media to make the most of company propaganda designed to undermine the workers' determination to win their strike. The central UAW negotiating strategy focused on "pattern bargaining," rather than opposing Caterpillar's wide-ranging takeback demands, especially the company's demand for a lower-tier wage scale for all new employees.

This allowed the Caterpillar bosses to divert attention from the giant chunk it intended to take from its employees' living standards. Meanwhile, the company, with the eager assistance of the mass media, focused on the \$39,000 top annual wage and the promise of six years of job security it was offering workers, and on how "unfair" it was to try to impose a "pattern contract" on the company.

Lower wage scales

The two-tier wage system—the real decisive issue in the Caterpillar strike—is one of the most damaging assaults on unions to come down the pike in over half a century. Besides forcing unions to make new employees second-class members, the



The union tops blamed their capitulation to Caterpillar on the grounds of complacency among the rank and file.

two-tier system will ultimately drive all wages down to the lowest levels.

Already, those unions that have conceded a lower wage scale for new union members have found that higher-paid workers are being pressured to take early retirement, and are even being offered "buyout" bonuses to induce them to quit. And to increase the pressure on them to "voluntarily" take the buyout, higher-tier workers are being harassed to the point of being fired on trumped-up charges.

Older workers are gradually being replaced by youngsters, including sons and daughters of first-tier workers, who are being paid as little as a third of their parents' wages.

The union's focus on pattern bargaining was designed to win support from a mythical category called "the public," who are presumed to favor a union policy intended to be fair to all employers, rather than appealing to the great majority of the population who are in the same boat with striking UAW members.

This focus was, in the final analysis, a vain appeal to their "partners," the auto industry bosses, to intervene on the union's side in order to preserve "peaceful coexistence" between workers and bosses.

But it is common knowledge that the auto industry's big three—General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler—will now gleefully turn "pattern bargaining" against the UAW and demand concessions for themselves in next year's contract negotiations that are equal, at least, to whatever is granted to Caterpillar.

Labor policies of the past

This "partnership" scam led inexorably to the tactics that the UAW used in this strike. These counterproductive tactics, moreover, have been applied by virtually

every union in the country ever since 1947, when the Taft-Hartley Act was passed.

To better understand the wrong policies of today, we must look at the much more effective policies employed by the militant industrial unions during the mass labor upsurge of the 1930s.

In those days, workers learned from bitter experience that only mass picket lines could stop scabs from taking their jobs. And that's what they did. The policy of shutting struck plants down tight was followed by millions of workers and their unions. This was central to the strategy that showed American labor to be the world's most powerful working class.

This policy was also applied to foremen and supervisors. No one was allowed through, if the workers could help it. Bitter experience had taught the workers that even a trickle through the picket lines of management personnel—with a handful of scabs among them—demoralized workers. The trickle could grow into a union-busting flood that could sink the strike, even if a majority of strikers stood firm. That's why mass picketing—letting no one through—is the only way to go.

It's important to note, however, that effective picketing didn't require everyone to be on the line at all times. Enough force was needed merely to hold the line when it was attacked until reinforcements could be mobilized. When striking workers were by themselves not able to stop the attack, unemployed and off-duty workers were called upon to help. And when necessary, sister unions called on their members to stop work and help keep scabs out.

This sort of solidarity was established as a norm the threat of such mass reinforcements, alone, often served to convince the bosses and their agencies of repression that strikebreaking would not work. Today, too, the bosses can be made to fear the worst—that aggressive strikebreaking might trigger an outpouring from workers everywhere in massive protests, especially if any worker's blood is shed.

When the slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all" is reestablished as a fundamental principle of trade unionism, unity of the bosses tends to break down. When they come to fear that such outbreaks of mass worker resistance could shake the very foundations of capitalist rule, the ruling class tends to become divided, loses its resolve, and is often compelled to back down.

Blame the rank and file

However, a 180-degree change in the principle of labor solidarity, imposed by the government with the help of the top labor officialdom, opened up the unions to the defeats suffered in the last decade.

The UAW officialdom already justifies their capitulation at Caterpillar by blaming the rank and file. The media reports that unnamed UAW officials are whining that

they had to end the strike because many workers gave signs of breaking ranks.

Harley Shaiken, a widely quoted professor of labor studies at the University of California at San Diego, a former UAW official and a well-known apologist for the union bureaucracy, was reported in the April 16 *Chicago Tribune* as saying: "The union staged an orderly retreat and avoided a debacle."

The *Tribune* also reported him saying, "The union was fearful of losing jobs not only to replacement workers but also to members of its own ranks [returnees]." It's not hard to guess that Shaiken's informants were top UAW officials readying themselves to pin the blame on the victims of their own bankrupt policy.

Nor is there any truth in the argument that antilabor laws now on the books make mass picketing impossible. The fact is that virtually identical laws were on the books when the big labor battles were waged in the decade of the 1930s. Defiance of these antilabor laws by millions of determined, fighting workers made them a dead letter and ultimately led to their repeal.

A similar policy would lead to the same result today. The only missing ingredient is a fighting union leadership—with a fighting strategy.

Post-war antilabor offensive

The roots of the crisis faced today by organized labor were planted nearly 50 years ago. The American capitalist class went on the offensive in 1946, when Winston Churchill, England's prime minister, launched the Cold War in Fulton, Mo.

A red-scare broadside, leveled by the capitalist-controlled mass media and its political representatives, caused an anti-communist hysteria to sweep across the land. It served to reduce worker resistance to a legislative assault on the unions—not unlike an artillery barrage preceding a military offensive.

This resulted in passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947—by majority vote of both capitalist parties. This act combined banning alleged "communists" from holding union office, banning mass picketing, and banning so-called "secondary boycotts."

It's important to note one of the main functions of the red-baiting provision of this act. It served as bait to induce the most conservative layers of union officials to buy the law's requirement that every union officer sign an oath that he or she was not a communist. This, in turn, gave the labor bureaucracy an incentive for limiting their opposition to Taft-Hartley to harmless and ineffective protests.

The noncommunist oath provision of this antilabor act gave the bureaucrats a weapon against militant trade unionists and rival trade-union factions. It provided them with a powerful weapon for consolidating

(continued on next page)

LESSONS OF THE P-9 STRIKE



A balance sheet of the militant struggle against Hormel
By Jake Cooper

Lessons of the P-9 Strike

By Jake Cooper

A first-hand account of the militant 1985-86 strike by meatpacking workers that was one of the biggest tests for labor in the '80s.

Jake Cooper was a participant in the great 1934 Teamsters strike that turned Minneapolis into a union town, and was an organizer of support for the P-9 strikers.

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(continued from previous page)

bureaucratic control over the unions. The anticommunist provision of Taft-Hartley helped the labor bureaucracy break down the democratic traditions created by the tumultuous mass labor upsurge of the 1930s and '40s.

The result was that a majority of labor's officialdom was able to quite rapidly consolidate a bureaucratic stranglehold over the unions.

There were notable exceptions, however, to this capitulation. They included leaders of the United Mine Workers, the International Typographical Union (these two unions refused to sign the "noncommunist oath" requirement of Taft-Hartley), the United Packinghouse Workers, and the Atomic Trades and Labor Council—all of whom had been on strike in 1948 in defiance of Taft-Hartley.

President Harry S. Truman then swung the Taft-Hartley club at these striking unions. (Truman had vetoed the act the previous year. But it was not because he was "pro-labor," as the myth goes, but only because he was for more stringent antilabor laws and, most of all, because he knew that Congress would over-ride his veto.¹)

The rest of the top labor bureaucracy kept silent—including CIO President Philip Murray, and AFL President William Green (these two union federations were separate at that time).

By pinning the "communist" (that is, *Stalinist*) label on union militants, they were driven from union positions, and in many cases, hounded off their jobs and out of their unions. This served to intimidate and demoralize the most militant and conscious layers of the rank and file. Even an unsubstantiated charge of being a "commie" could lead to the firing of union militants—as it did to so many writers, artists, and intellectuals who were so labeled during the McCarthyite phase of the witchhunt.

This episode reveals an important component of the labor bureaucracy's current strategy of partnership with the bosses and their political representatives. Against the rank and file, there is, indeed, a concrete foundation for what they call "the partnership between unions and management."

Both bosses and bureaucrats fear a new upsurge of labor militancy—the bosses, because profits will suffer, and the self-serving bureaucracy because its hold on the unions and the privileges they enjoy will be broken.

But even under these difficult circumstances, it took decades to gradually undermine labor's fighting traditions. How was this accomplished?

Mass picketing given up

The right to mass picket was *theoretically* outlawed by Taft-Hartley. It's one thing, however, to pass an unpopular law which takes away rights guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States. It's quite another to physically take them away. These rights, freedom of speech and assembly, were considered by a great majority of workers—and an absolute majority of the population as a whole—as inalienable rights. They had all the greater force because they were won in the course of mass struggle.

The mineworkers and a few other unions were left to resist Taft-Hartley without any help from the heads of the AFL and CIO. After their defeat, routine injunctions against mass picketing were meekly honored by the labor bureaucracy, without even a pretense of resistance.

But the ranks were made complacent because, in most cases, there was no significant attempt to herd scabs through the picket lines established by the powerful industrial unions. It appeared as if just the posting of a couple of pickets at each entrance was enough to close down struck workplaces.

That's when the second stage of the softening up process began. It soon became routine for management personnel to go back and forth through token picket lines. That laid the basis for what we saw happen in 1985-86 in Austin, Minn., when, after the strike at the Hormel Co. was on for two months, 200 "management personnel" were allowed through picket lines unchallenged.

Then, four months later, Hormel announced that permanent replacement workers would be hired if the union, Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers, didn't call off the strike and return to work on the basis of the last company offer.

By this time, the six months of token picketing had taken their toll. Two hundred

Jay, Maine, and other places. Now Caterpillar workers—members of one of the most powerful industrial unions, located in the heartland of industrial unionism—have become victims of the bosses' antilabor offensive and the defeatist strategy imposed on the unions by its highest officials.

Another innovation introduced by Taft-Hartley is the outlawing of "secondary boycotts." This is the ban against honoring the picket lines of sister unions. This is the most insidious aspect of this Act; it makes elementary labor solidarity illegal!

This provision, more than any other, could not be made to stick without the active support of the top echelons of the union officialdom.

Since Taft-Hartley was enacted, a gradual process, by which union negotiators quiet-

The Caterpillar defeat itself will have the effect of helping to shake the world's most powerful working class out of a lethargy induced by misleadership.

One and a half million Teamsters have risen up. They have overthrown one of the most criminal labor bureaucracies and elected a new leadership, including members of the rank-and-file Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU).

And now the UAW top officialdom itself is faced with a similar challenge from another rank and file movement, the UAW Movement for New Directions (NDM). Jerry Tucker, its candidate for UAW president, has laid out its Major NDM 1992 Convention Platform. It constitutes a remarkable advance over programs offered by other rank and file movements—including



union members, thinking that any job is better than none at all, went through their union's picket lines.

Nearly 40 years of token picketing had established an inertia that could not easily be overcome. By the time striking Hormel workers woke up, it was too late to mobilize effective picket lines. Every day, strikers could see more and more cars in the Hormel Co. parking lots.

The Hormel bosses' union-busting pattern was repeated against paper workers in

ly slipped "no-strike" clauses into union contract after contract, put the force of the union's own "voluntary" action behind laws making working-class solidarity an empty and meaningless slogan.

But, it would be a big mistake to conclude from all this that workers and their unions have already lost the class war. Far from it. The unions retain their full capacity to mobilize a counteroffensive. And there are now signs that a reawakening is taking place.

ing the TDU. (See box on this page.)

Two planks in this excellent platform stand out: "End 'jointness' sham—return to adversarial, solidarity unionism." and "Pursue independent political action/new party alternative."


Further developments signaling a reawakening is evidenced in the latest issue (April, 1992) of the Labor Party Advocates' newsletter. While the quotes by prominent international union officials in favor of a labor party are muddled by comments implying residual hopes in the Democrats, the thrust of the LPA campaign popularizes the idea of a labor party. This serves to break down illusions in the "two parties of the bosses."

This cuts across the AFL-CIO top officialdom's endorsement of the Democratic Party candidate for president, Bill Clinton—as sorry an excuse for a "friend of labor," as we have seen. The AFL-CIO bureaucracy stubbornly persists in supporting company unionism in politics, and blocking the road to independent labor political action. But evidence is mounting that long-held disillusionment with capitalist "friends of labor" is nearing a point of qualitative change.

The latest defeat suffered by Caterpillar workers underscores the need for labor to return to the class-struggle strategy that built the powerful industrial unions—and to go further still along the road to independent labor political action.

A strategy to unite all working people—Black and white, women and men, organized and unorganized, young and old, employed and unemployed—is vitally necessary. It would be an irresistible force for fundamental change. ■

¹ "Truman's repeated incitations against labor; his seizures of the mines and railroads for purposes of strikebreaking; his threat of armed force against the maritime workers; his demand for a 'draft strikers' bill; his signing of the Hobbs Act; his invoking of an injunction and a 'vengeful' fine against the coal miners; his call for revision of the Wagner Act; his boast that he would 'beat the Republicans to the punch' in pushing anti-labor legislation; his speech to Congress calling for a federal ban on many traditional union activities—all these were vital elements in the birth-process of the Taft-Hartley Act." See "Labor's Giant Step," by Art Preis, Pathfinder Press, New York.

UAW  **NEW DIRECTIONS**

MAJOR NDM 1992 CONVENTION PLATFORM HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

- Full membership voting rights; One-Member, One-Vote referenda for all international officers.
- Convention delegate roll-call votes by electronic means.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- End "jointness" sham -- return to adversarial, solidarity unionism.
- Fight concessions, plant closings, speed-ups, team concept, whipsawing, and corrupt patronage systems.

ORGANIZING

- Mobilize resources for all-out industrial organizing push, both nationally and internationally.
- Emphasize strategies involving progressive community allies, women, minority communities, environmentalists, etc.

POLITICAL ACTION

- Pursue independent political action/new party alternative.
- Initiate national labor TV and radio networks, use all new technology to build and promote solidarity.

INTERNATIONALISM

- Participate in new forms of International Unionism. Push creation of North American industrial union, as first step to full internationalism.
- Support labor/peace/justice struggles worldwide.

For a more detailed copy of the UAW NDM Platform, contact: New Directions, PO Box 6876, Saint Louis, MO 63144

The platform of the UAW's Movement for New Directions.

Mercia Andrews is the national organizational secretary of the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA), a South African revolutionary group. Andrews recently completed an 18-city speaking tour of North America, which was sponsored by the Democracy in South Africa Tour Committee and endorsed by Socialist Action and other organizations.

The following interview with Andrews was conducted prior to the tour by Catherine Rosehill. It first appeared in the French feminist magazine, *Cahiers du Feminism*. This English-language version is taken from the April 13, 1992, edition of *International Viewpoint*.

Question: What are the main features of Black women's lives in South Africa, both in the families and in work places?

Mercia Andrews: I think that the idea of the liberation of women from oppres-

The church has played an important role in tying a rope around the necks of women. Things like wearing jeans are taboo in many Black communities. Most women, even those who are in the trade-union movement or who are in leading bodies, still object to women wearing jeans.

If you look at a simple thing like abortion rights, everybody is afraid to put it on the agenda—political organizations as well as the women's movement. In fact, it is quite ironic that women in the [ruling white] National Party have taken this up before the liberation movement has done so.

To sum up, as in the rest of Africa, very little progress has been made in liberating women from the home and giving them leadership positions within political organizations.

In the workplace, some gains have been won such as paternity rights and so on, but

Toward a Socialist Women's Movement

I think it is because of the maternal instinct that asks: if I lose my job who will provide for the family? But in many cases, as in the SACCU strike, as well as the nurses' strike last year, they have played a leading role.

So, I should say that over the last 10 years the role of women in fighting for liberation in this country has been very significant. It is unfortunate that none of this has been consolidated into women leading organizations.

Mostly, they fight the battles and then return back home to the oppressions within the family—of their husbands not allowing them to attend meetings. During the day when the husband is at work, the women are in the battle field, and at night the men go to meetings and the women stay home.

Also, I think in many organizations like the civic movement and the neighborhood movement, the majority of members are women, as is the case in the unemployed and cooperative movements.

In the church the women are also the bulk of the membership. Overall, women in this country have played an important and major role in building organizations and in the struggle for a new South Africa.

Question: There are in this country two different types of division: the apartheid division into racial groups and the division between social groups.

How have these two lines of division affected the possibility of building a genuine grassroots feminist movement, feminist consciousness, and women's mobilizations?

MA: Firstly, because of the legacy of apartheid and of tradition, you find that many Black working-class women from the townships have very few of the skills or education of their white and middle-class women counterparts.

Therefore, in many of the organizations the debates around gender issues do not take place at the grassroots level, because people have not been exposed to these questions. The idea of a discussion around sexism is difficult.

I find this in my own work. It will take a long time to be able to say to women that they have a different role in society. We need to find a mechanism to take these debates to ordinary women.

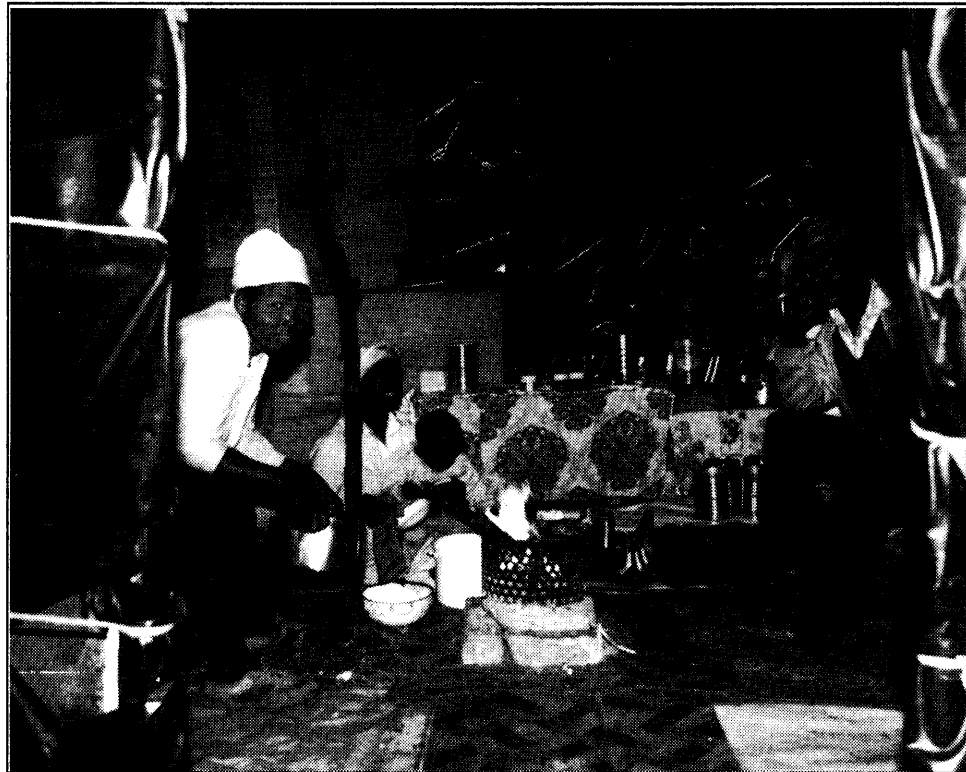
An example is the big gender conference that was organized in mid-1991. Invited were feminist academics, and activists in political and other organizations, some grassroots women as well as some international guests.

At this conference, 80 percent of the women were either white intellectuals or middle-class coloreds or Indians. Ten percent were women from political organizations, and there was a small percentage of women from grassroots organizations.

All these academics had papers to present. By the second day, the 20 percent of activists who were Black women and rural women stopped the conference. They said "we are sick and tired of you academics and white feminists coming to give papers on us, Black women. You do research on Black women in rural areas, Black women in the factories, but you never taught us the skills to do this.

"You never taught us the skills to talk about our own lives, to control our own lives. You want to write on our backs and often it is not even to make a contribution to our liberation but to make a contribution to your academic qualifications and we object to that". So they stopped the conference.

That was the start of a revolt against the circles that make decisions and carry out the debates around working women. So the point I am making is that unless we politicians find a new vehicle to take some of these issues to rural and working-class



"...the struggle for improved housing, for electricity, or for education, has been predominantly fought by women."

sion in the home as well as exploitation in the workplace is at different stages in different circles. Debates are occurring but mainly within certain political organizations. It certainly hasn't reached townships or rural villages, where it is in its infancy.

In this country, there has never been an autonomous women's movement amongst the oppressed women. Women's organizations have been mainly linked to political organizations.

Because of this, they were never free to follow their own agenda. Women's organizations have neglected the whole issue of gender and of the position of women in our society. Mainly, they were the support mechanisms for political organizations. So, I should say, as in the rest of Africa, there is no real grassroots movement of women.

Over the last 10 years women have become unionized, but even here they have had to battle for positions of union leadership. A classic example is of the South African Catering and Commercial Union (SACCU), one of the unions which has won the most gains for women in the workplace but where very few of these women are represented in the leadership.

Another example is the teachers union, where 70 percent of the membership are women but very few are represented in the leadership. The legacy of these organizations was the idea that first we must build the organization before gender issues could be taken up.

Within the home, I think the traditional role of women is the same. Even for young women, it hasn't really changed. Women still play the role they have always played, providing services for their husbands or for their children.

only for a very small percentage of women.

Question: What is the proportion of women involved in wage labor?

MA: By 1989 (before these last two years of recession and lay-offs) it was up to 48 percent of urban women. But these figures are not accurate because they exclude women in the so-called Bantustans, and it does not include under-employment. There are hundreds of thousands of women in the informal sector.

Question: What are the biggest sectors of women's employment?

MA: Commercial and catering food industry work, domestic work and garment work—in the traditional female sectors. In the metal and electrical industries, there are very few women. In mining, there are no Black women. So women are concentrated in the traditional health and service sectors.

Question: What has been the role of women in the most recent major struggles?

MA: This question needs to be approached at a number of levels. If you take community struggles, economic issues, housing issues and so on—in the neighborhood organizations and in civic associations—ordinary women have played an important role.

They have fought battles with the municipalities, with the authorities, and with the police and against the state. Often they have to take the lead because they have been driven to do so by the economic situation.

So, the struggle for improved housing, for electricity, or for education, has been predominantly fought by women. Within the trade-union movement both men and women have been involved in struggles. Here, women have often been a little more reluctant to lead these struggles.

Toward a South African women's movement

I think it is because of the maternal instinct that asks: if I lose my job who will provide for the family? But in many cases, as in the SACCU strike, as well as the nurses' strike last year, they have played a leading role.

So, I should say that over the last 10 years the role of women in fighting for liberation in this country has been very significant. It is unfortunate that none of this has been consolidated into women leading organizations.

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Also, I think in many organizations like the civic movement and the neighborhood movement, the majority of members are women, as is the case in the unemployed and cooperative movements.

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That was the start of a revolt against the circles that make decisions and carry out the debates around working women. So the point I am making is that unless we politicians find a new vehicle to take some of these issues to rural and working-class



women, we will not have a real feminist movement in this country or a movement that is going to be able to speak about the interests of working class women.

We will have a petty-bourgeois feminist movement that will highlight irrelevant issues.

So, we will have to grapple with this. We don't yet know how to do it. Many of us political activists have neglected these issues and have instead built political organizations at the expense of building a women's movement in this country.

Opinion: What are the specific concerns of young Black women involved in social struggles?

MA: There are a number of issues that are coming to the fore. One of them is the concern that women often make up the bulk of the membership of organizations but that they are not in the leadership.

There is also a desire to understand politics. Women have often been pushed to sing songs and shout slogans without really understanding the political issues. In our own organization there is the desire to set up study groups and debate the political issues raised by the feminist movement internationally.

There is also a demand for a different approach to education. People want to go to school, to educate themselves.

So, people want all the things in the new South Africa that have been previously denied to them. They want the fruits of their struggle, to go to school, to have work.

There isn't a specific issue of what women want as women except the question of violence against women. In 1991, there were many protests against this violence and women are saying that this is a political issue and that they want greater safety.

There is also a very strong anti-labola feeling. Labola is the traditional way of buying a bride—an arranged marriage between two families. Women are saying that they do not want to be bought and sold like cattle. Working women in the trade unions have taken up this question.

Opinion: In a country where people are

supposed to fight against their oppressor, what is the level of violence against women?

MA: It's extremely high. Even some men who are members of political organizations beat up their wives. There isn't the consciousness that we are equals, that there shouldn't be an abuse of power against someone who is physically weaker.

Women are used within political organizations, and are victims of sexual abuse in trade unions. Some trade-union tops will try to sleep with all the women. There is a lot of that type of sexual abuse.

Rape has become a major problem. Statistics show that there is a rape in our communities and in our cities every 20 minutes. Women cannot think of taking trains at night alone. We cannot walk in our cities or streets by ourselves.

The level of violence and incest is very high. I think that the sociological explanation probably has something to do with rapid urbanization and the breakup of rural communities and the inability to cope with society.

Incest is on the rise, which is an unusual phenomenon for so-called African families where the family, children and the extended family are very important, which is disintegrating. We will have to deal with these problems but I am not sure exactly how.

Question: Concerning this violence, are there any state structures or proposals in the political or mass organizations to set up centers where battered women can go?

MA: Slowly, such centers are being formed. They include groups like "rape crisis", "lifeline," and "childline," as well as centers for battered women. But very few women actually go to such centers. I know of a comrade whose husband is also a political activist. Every weekend she is beaten. She has a broken nose, a broken arm.

It is difficult to intervene even though we treat it as a political issue. It is difficult to know what to do because the next week they are together again. Very few working-class women actually go to these centers. It is mostly students or petty-bourgeois women who go.

The working women see it as part of their lives, and even if they fight back, there isn't a political consciousness about it. Another example is that in many of our communities it is still the case that, if a woman marries the chief, he is allowed to have three or four more wives, and she must accept that. This is part of the tradition and culture not only amongst Muslims but amongst Zulus as well.

Over the last two years, a gay and lesbian movement has emerged. In 1990, there was a march in Johannesburg, but most of those marching wore a bag over their head because it is against the law in this society to be gay. And to be gay in an African township is even worse because it is seen as being sick.

Many of the women in the ANC women's league used to say that gays and lesbians are the result of capitalism and apartheid, and once apartheid is destroyed there will be no more gays or lesbians. So there is a real conservatism concerning these issues.

Question: What is the situation as far as maternity and contraception are concerned?

MA: There are two problems with contraception in this country. The biggest problem emerged at the beginning of the 1980s, when the National Party government tried to enforce the use of contraception because they claimed that there was a population explosion. But the communities saw this as an attempt by the white apartheid government to suppress the number of Black people in this country.

It was seen like this partly as a result of how it was done. They were encouraging whites to have three or four children but they were saying that Blacks must use contraception, and this marred the whole political conception of what contraception can actually mean for a woman—the freedom that she can have, etc.

So there are many problems, and I don't think that political organizations or feminists have done enough to politicize the whole issue of contraception.

What we have done is to highlight some of the ways in which contraception has been used in this country. A woman would go into a hospital to have a baby, and without any consultation or permission they would give her injections and a hysterectomy. This was done in many hospitals, and people would only discover afterwards what had happened.

So, we have tried to highlight these wrongs of the system and to educate people about this and explain their rights to them.

But we have not done enough to raise the importance of what contraception can do for women in terms of economic independence, social independence, and so on. I think we have to do a lot more of that kind of work.

In many rural communities, contraception is taboo. So, I think that women have not woken up to the fact that their lives can be dramatically changed if they consider the available options. Also, the kinds of contraception that are given to women, particularly working-class women, have always been the cheapest.

These women have always been used as guinea pigs, and they have never been given education or options to choose this or that method.

Maternity benefits are still a big problem in this country. Legally, the situation is that a woman can take three-months maternity leave, and the state will pay 40 percent and the employer a small amount. So there isn't full-pay compensation when women go on maternity [leave]. There is therefore no proper maternity law.

Some unions have won certain benefits, including SACCU, which has won good maternity benefits. They have six months of maternity benefits fully paid by the

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South African movement

**MEN
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Freedom
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Workers**

supposed to fight against their oppressor, what is the level of violence against women?

MA: It's extremely high. Even some men who are members of political organizations beat up their wives. There isn't the consciousness that we are equals, that there shouldn't be an abuse of power against someone who is physically weaker.

Women are used within political organizations, and are victims of sexual abuse in trade unions. Some trade-union tops will try to sleep with all the women. There is a lot of that type of sexual abuse.

Rape has become a major problem. Statistics show that there is a rape in our communities and in our cities every 20 minutes. Women cannot think of taking trains at night alone. We cannot walk in our cities or streets by ourselves.

The level of violence and incest is very high. I think that the sociological explanation probably has something to do with rapid urbanization and the breakup of rural communities and the inability to cope with society.

Incest is on the rise, which is an unusual phenomenon for so-called African families where the family, children and the extended family are very important, which is disintegrating. We will have to deal with these problems but I am not sure exactly how.

Question: Concerning this violence, are there any state structures or proposals in the political or mass organizations to set up centers where battered women can go?

MA: Slowly, such centers are being formed. They include groups like "rape crisis", "lifeline," and "childline," as well as centers for battered women. But very few women actually go to such centers. I know of a comrade whose husband is also a political activist. Every weekend she is beaten. She has a broken nose, a broken arm.

It is difficult to intervene even though we treat it as a political issue. It is difficult to know what to do because the next week they are together again. Very few working-class women actually go to these centers. It is mostly students or petty-bourgeois women who go.

The working women see it as part of their lives, and even if they fight back, there isn't a political consciousness about it. Another example is that in many of our communities it is still the case that, if a woman marries the chief, he is allowed to have three or four more wives, and she must accept that. This is part of the tradition and culture not only amongst Muslims but amongst Zulus as well.

Over the last two years, a gay and lesbian movement has emerged. In 1990, there was a march in Johannesburg, but most of those marching wore a bag over their head because it is against the law in this society to be gay. And to be gay in an African township is even worse because it is seen as being sick.

Many of the women in the ANC women's league used to say that gays and lesbians are the result of capitalism and apartheid, and once apartheid is destroyed there will be no more gays or lesbians. So there is a real conservatism concerning these issues.

Question: What is the situation as far as maternity and contraception are concerned?

MA: There are two problems with contraception in this country. The biggest problem emerged at the beginning of the 1980s, when the National Party government tried to enforce the use of contraception because they claimed that there was a population explosion. But the communities saw this as an attempt by the white apartheid government to suppress the number of Black people in this country.

It was seen like this partly as a result of how it was done. They were encouraging whites to have three or four children but they were saying that Blacks must use contraception, and this marred the whole political conception of what contraception can actually mean for a woman—the freedom that she can have, etc.

So there are many problems, and I don't think that political organizations or feminists have done enough to politicize the whole issue of contraception.

What we have done is to highlight some of the ways in which contraception has been used in this country. A woman would go into a hospital to have a baby, and without any consultation or permission they would give her injections and a hysterectomy. This was done in many hospitals, and people would only discover afterwards what had happened.

So, we have tried to highlight these wrongs of the system and to educate people about this and explain their rights to them.

But we have not done enough to raise the importance of what contraception can do for women in terms of economic independence, social independence, and so on. I think we have to do a lot more of that kind of work.

In many rural communities, contraception is taboo. So, I think that women have not woken up to the fact that their lives can be dramatically changed if they consider the available options. Also, the kinds of contraception that are given to women, particularly working-class women, have always been the cheapest.

These women have always been used as guinea pigs, and they have never been given education or options to choose this or that method.

Maternity benefits are still a big problem in this country. Legally, the situation is that a woman can take three-months maternity leave, and the state will pay 40 percent and the employer a small amount. So there isn't full-pay compensation when women go on maternity [leave]. There is therefore no proper maternity law.

Some unions have won certain benefits, including SACCU, which has won good maternity benefits. They have six months of maternity benefits fully paid by the

employer and guaranteed jobs from the employers when they can return to work. They have also won the right to take their children to health clinics once a month. So some unions have very good benefits and others have not.

A large section of the workforce, such as domestic workers, who make up a large section of the workforce in this country, and farm workers, have none of these rights.

Question: What can women expect from the radical changes underway in South Africa?

MA: Like the rest of the population, they can expect nothing. An alliance has been set up in this country between the ANC women and women from the National Party, and they have invited other sectors of organized women to participate in this alliance.

But it is a mixed bag, going from the woman editor of *Cosmopolitan* magazine to executive-forum business women, to

solidarity is needed between the feminist movement in South Africa and the feminist movement in Europe?

MA: I think that we should establish links but that they should be links based on equality where we can learn from each other. The European feminist movement mustn't believe that we have to import their brand of feminism into this country or into any other Third World country.

Here we have a completely different social and cultural setting, with different traditions. So, they have got to learn from us and we from them.

I think they have gone through many years of struggling to build a feminist movement in their countries, and perhaps they should begin to draw a balance sheet of their movement before coming to tell us what to do.

We realize that the feminist movement in our country is very young. At the same time, many of the women activists are clear that they do not want to import bour-



Roger Meintjes

“Another example is the teachers union, where 70 percent of the membership are women but very few are represented in the leadership.”

women from some political organizations. I cannot see that any gains for working people will come out of such an alliance. And this alliance is allegedly to discuss constitutional changes.

The bulk of working-class women are not really concerned about this because it is never discussed in their communities adequately. So, I doubt there will be any major changes for women. One new thing is that they have changed legislation for women. Women are no longer seen as minors.

Previously, women could not open accounts or sign checks without the consent of their husbands. Women can now act economically independently.

But I think that this is more because they needed to extend their market than because they believe that women are capable. So, I can't see any major changes coming for women.

Question: What kind of international

geois feminism into our struggle.

Insofar as we can learn from the international and European community, I think it will be good. Maybe it will take a long time, but we are going to build an indigenous brand of working women's politics in this country. I think that is our task.

There are lots of skills that we may need, but I think that it must be on an equal basis and not an unequal big sister-little sister relationship.

I also think that the women in this country have a rich history of mobilization and struggle that surpasses any experiences in the "First World" [advanced capitalist countries].

So I think that when we do get our act together, it will be a powerful feminist movement.

I also think that there are lots of things we can learn from similar communities in Asia, as well as from women in the Latin American countries. ■

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The struggle in South Africa after the 'whites only' referendum

Roger Meinjes



The following is an interview with members of the secretariat of the Workers' Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA), a South African revolutionary organization, who give their view on the results of the March 17 "whites only" referendum and assess the current stage of the negotiation process between the African National Congress (ANC) and the De Klerk government. The interview is taken from the April 13, 1992, issue of *International Viewpoint*, a biweekly magazine published under the auspices of the Fourth International.

Question: The De Klerk government won a significant victory in the recent referendum. How would you explain this clear change in white sentiment, which has occurred without any change of government or in the nature of the state?

Answer: A big majority voted "yes" in the racist referendum: 68 percent against 32 percent. Most political analysts had predicted a closer result, with the right wing expected to get over 40 percent, which is what the pre-referendum by-elections had seemed to indicate.

The white electorate had two choices: either the old apartheid policies, which are now seen as impractical; or a power-sharing negotiated settlement, which [big] business and most of the white middle class now see as offering the greatest safeguard for their interests and privileges.

The rapid return of South Africa into the world community, with the lifting of trade, sporting and cultural boycotts, helped convince many whites who remained suspicious of the negotiations that a power-sharing settlement really represented the best option.

Even a large section of the Afrikaans-speaking white workers, from traditionally very conservative areas of the country, voted yes, although they are the section of the white population worst hit by the current economic recession and also the social layer which has the most to lose under a de-racialized system.

Three factors lie behind the strong endorsement of the negotiations by the white electorate:

- The lack of an alternative to negotiations. It was clear that the policies put forward by the right wing would lead to great political and social instability.

They would mean a state of emergency, political unrest, further international isolation, and so on. The experience of the 1985 uprising was fresh in everyone's memory.

'For millions of Black workers and rural people poverty is deepening as a result of the recession.'

- It was clear, in spite of the far right's propaganda, that the negotiations were not about handing over power to the Black masses.

The way in which legal apartheid had been scrapped, without any substantial change in the social and economic position of whites, showed that De Klerk's enterprise was not going to jeopardize the privileged position of the majority of whites.

- The actual course of the negotiations had made whites confident that they were being entered into from a position of strength, with the ANC (African National Congress) being forced to make the majority of compromises.

In the last few months particularly, the ANC has appeared as a very respectable political movement rather than a liberation organization with an armed wing.

It was also clear from the Namibian settlement and the performance of SWAPO (the South West African People's Organization) that the fundamental way of life of whites was hardly affected.

The fact that racism has become an autonomous factor and that many whites now have to compete with Black workers for jobs explains why almost one million voters still remain opposed to negotiations. If the negotiations do not lead to an economic upturn, and violence and crime continue to spiral, many of those who "reluctantly" voted "yes" will turn against the government.

Those who interpret the result as meaning that the white electorate is now prepared to hand over power to Black majority rule are making a grave mistake.

The government campaign made it clear that the mandate they were seeking was for power sharing and if that was not accepted at the negotiations the government would go back to the whites to seek a new mandate.

This is why a large number of whites who would normally support the right wing in elections supported the "yes" vote.

Since the referendum, the government has taken a very hard line in the Conven-

tion for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) negotiations, as seen in their proposals on the interim government.

They have proposed a two chamber parliament with a chamber representing minority groups that would have a veto [power] on decisions reached in the other chamber. Also, they propose the creation of advisory councils, like the advisory councils with no power for Blacks under the apartheid system.

They are insisting that the ANC completely abandon the armed struggle and disband MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's armed wing) before any agreement on an interim government.

Of course with MK posing no security threat this demand has more to do with trying to divide the radicals from the moderates in the ANC and ensure that when the government shares power with them they will act to respect law and order and will not tolerate the existence of private armies.

Q: How would you characterize the current feeling amongst the Black population? Is there a widespread feeling that society is changing and that Mandela has won the first round?

A: There was widespread relief amongst many Blacks that the "no" vote lost. The immediate prospect of a Conservative Party government, of harsh repression and civil war, was averted at least for the moment.

Yet at the same time there is not much optimism amongst Blacks that major change is at hand. The scale of the violence on the Reef, in Natal and even in Cape Town is tempering any hopes Blacks might have in the "New South Africa."

For millions of Black workers and rural people poverty is deepening as a result of the recession.

Illusions that negotiations, scrapping of apartheid, [and] the right to vote will bring about major changes in people's lives is steadily being eroded by the violence, falling living standards, the sharp rise in unemployment, and violent crime.

At the moment, in the absence of a credible alternative, many Black people are still

prepared to place their hopes in negotiations. Many working class activists are confused by the contradictory situation where the de-racializing of the system is taking place but at the same time the working class is suffering major attacks.

For many the situation is one where they have one foot in the negotiations and another remains in the mass movement favoring mass action.

The ANC leadership's response to the "yes" vote has been muted. Clearly, by supporting the "yes" vote, the ANC recognized that the negotiations were not being undertaken from a position of equal strength but that power was still chiefly held by whites.

Many in the leadership of the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) are aware that De Klerk will use the "strong mandate" to force even more concessions in the negotiations and were therefore not overly enthusiastic about the referendum result.

Q: Could you briefly describe what socio-economic changes could occur in the coming years and what the legacy of apartheid will be?

A: While the CODESA negotiations proceed, not much is being done at the socio-economic level. Although there is much talk about a social contract and the need for an economic forum involving government, the bosses and the unions, not much progress has been made.

Meanwhile, the bosses continue with their rationalization program which involves large scale retrenchments, closure of inefficient plants, imposing of wage freezes, and so on.

For its part, the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance is demanding that they be consulted on the economic restructuring and the government should not proceed unilaterally. In this regard, the government has suspended its program of privatization.

The government intends, on a limited scale, to redirect state expenditure to address some of the most pressing social problems affecting the urban and rural poor.

However, this represents a mere drop in the ocean and at any rate is constrained by the regime not wanting to alienate further sections of the white electorate.

Under current conditions, economic revival depends very much on attracting new foreign investment. This in turn depends on the negotiations leading to stable social and political conditions that would encourage inflows of foreign capital.

Here the international situation is also crucial; that is, the state of the world economy and the ability of the major industrialized countries to offset the effects of the current recession.

This does not mean that the political reforms and the ending of sanctions will not have a stimulating effect on the economy. It will also accelerate the growth of the Black middle class, as access to management training and the professions will increase.

What we are saying, however, is that it will not be on the scale required to address the huge inequality between Black and white. For example, four conglomerates own 75 percent of the shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

More than 90 percent of industrial property and 87 percent of the land is owned by whites. This is not even to mention the huge backlog in hospitals, clinics, schools, housing and so on.

Unemployment is estimated to be approaching 50 percent of the entire Black work force!

Q: What has been the attitude of the main trade union federations toward the referendum and the negotiations? The international press has mentioned some tensions between COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) and the ANC.

A: There has been a debate as to whether COSATU should participate in CODESA.

The COSATU Central Executive Committee resolved to seek membership in CODESA—a position strongly rejected by COSATU's second strongest union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), who argued that the interests of their members would be adequately represented by the ANC and SACP.

NACTU (National Congress of Trade

(continued on next page)

Tory victory in British elections strikes a blow against embattled working class

LONDON—The victory of the Tories over the Labour Party in the British general election in April is a disaster for the British working class and a setback for the left on a European-wide scale.

The hated Tory Government—which has smashed up the trade unions, created poverty amongst wide sections of society, attacked the health and education services, deepened the economic crisis, and created millions of unemployed—is back in office.

The Tories won under the corrupt “winner takes all” system, which has given them 20 years in office without ever winning more than 42 percent of the votes cast.

(The Tories’ victory is based on a plurality of votes between themselves, the Labour Party and the Liberals.)

Although the Tories’ majority in Parliament dropped from 101 to 21—representing a 2.5 percent swing to Labour—this majority is more than enough to keep them in office for a full five-year term.

No one predicted Labour’s defeat—neither the Labour Party leadership, the Tories—or the opinion polls, which continued to put Labour in the lead right up to the last day.

So what went wrong? It was first and foremost the politics of Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock’s campaign. After trying for years to look as much like the Tory Party as possible, Labour had no distinct policies on which to win the election, and what they did try to offer looked contradictory.

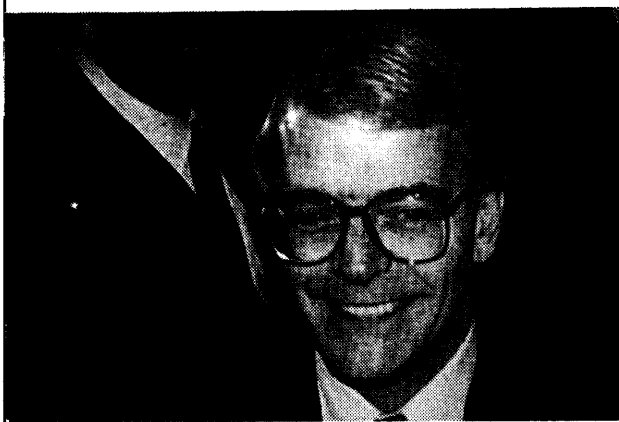
There was a huge turnout of voters. But the Tories succeeded, with the help of the right-wing press, in bringing about a reactionary mobilization of sections of the middle class and better-off sections of the working class.

Prime Minister Major’s Conservatives succeeded, through their campaign against the “dangers” of a Labour government, in massively mobilizing their social base. Labour promised that it would rebuild the National Health Service (NHS), public services, education, and industry. But no explanation was given of where the funds for this process would come from. Their argument that these things would be financed by “growth” was not convincing.

Indeed, the election was not just won or lost during the campaign. It is the outcome of the whole decade-long process of imposing the policies of “new realism” in the labour movement.

The “new realist” Labour and trade-union leaders—by failing to back working-class struggles such as the historic miners’ strike of 1985, by conceding the political debate on the market economy to the Tories, by undermining working-class confidence and combativity everywhere—totally undermined any project for radical social change.

The result of “new realism” has been a fall in trade-union membership by one third since 1979, and the departure of tens of thousands of activists from the Labour Party.



(Top) Labour’s Kinnock; (Bottom) Tories’ Major.

The swing to Labour in the election was biggest in areas that have been hardest hit by the impact of the recession and specific Tory attacks. Areas where the Tories had marginal support in the past fell to Labour in the North West, the Midlands, and London—all areas hard hit by recession, unemployment, poverty, and cutbacks. In most areas where there were strong left-wing campaigns, Labour candidates did even better.

Already it is being argued that sociological changes make it impossible for Labour ever to win again, and that the working class is too small a base to build a popular majority. This is untrue. Britain remains an overwhelmingly working-class country. More than that, recent surveys show that at least 80 percent regard themselves as working class.

In some inner-city constituencies, there have been social changes that have brought in more “yuppified” middle-class voters, while high housing prices have pushed out the traditional working class. But these changes have a marginal effect on the election outcome nationwide.

What will now be the outcome of “Kinnockism’s” debacle? For British capitalism, it creates more stable political conditions but solves none of its underlying

Irish republican leader loses seat but gets higher vote

Northern Irish Republican (Sinn Fein) leader Gerry Adams lost the seat in the British Parliament that he had held from the time of the mass campaign in defense of the H-Block prisoners (1980-81). His status as an MP had been a gain for the Irish struggle, although he refused to attend the imperialist parliament. Nonetheless, despite the suggestions of the capitalist press, his electoral loss did not reflect loss of support.

Gerry Adams’ defeat in West Belfast at the hands of the SDLP (Social Democratic and Labor Party, the pro-capitalist Catholic party) was the result almost entirely of a tactical shift by Loyalist voters away from the official Unionists (pro-British) toward the SDLP. In fact, Gerry Adams’ share of the vote actually went up from 41.2 percent to 42.1 percent. The 7.8 percent increase in the SDLP vote was accounted for by the nearly 7 percent drop in the Unionist vote.

While the name “West Belfast” conjures up an image of a Republican stronghold, in fact, sections of the Loyalist Shankill Road area are in Adams’ constituency. Gerry Adams was the victim of a big media campaign suggesting that thousands of Loyalists were “expected” to shift from their traditional Unionist party and to vote tactically to defeat him.

problems. The slump will continue. This will be translated into more sustained attacks on the working class—in a situation where there is a stable Tory majority.

Inside the labour movement as a whole, especially in the “new-realist” dominated trade unions, the immediate reaction is likely to be one of skepticism and demoralization.

Workers under attack will most likely feel that the balance of forces in society has moved against them once more. How this will pan out in the longer term is more problematic. Against the immediate demoralization, there is the fact that the argument of waiting for the Labour Party is no longer credible. Those under attack will have to fight back or go under.

The left must now be prepared to support struggles wherever and whenever they break out. The long-term task of rebuilding confidence in struggle will probably start around small strikes and low-key campaigns. But generalizing and popularizing any struggles that do break out will pay immense dividends in the long term.

Three days after the election, Neil Kinnock resigned as leader of the Labour Party, and an election process has begun for his replacement. New rules make it very difficult for the left to run in the election. But the new leader will be almost certainly to the right of Kinnock—probably John Smith.

This article was given to us by the editors of *Socialist Outlook*, a newspaper published by Fourth Internationalists in Britain.

... S. Africa

(continued from page preceding page)

Unions) has come out in support of those organizations rejecting CODESA but has not lent its weight to advance any mass campaign for an alternative.

Tensions also emerged between COSATU and its allies over the referendum. While COSATU rejected the referendum as racist, the ANC and the SACP called on their white supporters to vote “yes.” Amongst the rank and file there was substantial rejection of this position.

For many worker activists who had joined the SACP looking for a radical anti-capitalist organization this was one of the first indications of a contradiction between the rhetoric and the practice of the SACP leadership.

Q: Is the demand for a constituent assembly still on the agenda? How can an alternative to the short-term likelihood of a coalition National Party-ANC government be presented?

A: The demand for a constituent assembly represents the expression of the demand for full and equal democratic rights which has been central to our national liberation struggle.

Since we believe that the negotiations at CODESA will compromise this, the demand for a constituent assembly remains relevant.

It also helps us to expose the regime’s actual commitment to democracy. It is very clear now that the government is doing everything possible to circumvent this demand and is placing great pressure on the ANC to move away from it.

This is the thrust of its proposal around

the Interim government. Initially, the government wanted CODESA to be the constitution-making body but are now proposing that the interim government be the constitution-making body.

However, in the unions there is growing support for a general strike for a constituent assembly if the government resists this demand. Our real problem is translating the demand for a constituent assembly into a mass campaign.

So long as the demand remains at the level of propaganda it remains very abstract as it is possible for the government to give any agreement they reach at CODESA the tag of constituent assembly and thus confuse the masses on the content of the demand.

The mainstream of ANC, SACP, and COSATU, are content to promote this demand at CODESA through negotiations and shy away from a mass campaign.

At the same time inter-organizational rivalry between the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Azanian People’s Organization (AZAPO) has prevented the forces outside of CODESA from initiating any serious campaign around the demand for a constituent assembly.

In WOSA we are attempting to link the call for a constitutional alternative to a program of fundamental social reforms around which the working class can be mobilized—demands for a living wage, against retrenchments, for mass electrification and housing.

Q: A new period has now opened up. An organization like WOSA has a long term project of struggling for national liberation and socialism. What will now be the central axis of your work?

A: In WOSA we are aware that with the

major changes that have taken place internationally, the collapse of Stalinism, the increased belligerence of imperialism, and the South African government’s opening up of negotiations from a very strong position, the struggle for national liberation and socialism has been put on the defensive.

The mass movement is in a much weaker position than it was, say, in 1985-86. This has been compounded by the confusion created by the ANC’s turn to negotiations.

Our strategic approach in WOSA is to promote campaigns around radical social reforms. We believe that as the struggle against legal apartheid ends, the more fundamental aspect of that struggle continues for fundamental social reforms aimed at overcoming the impoverishment of our people.

This approach requires fighting for the political leadership of the mass movement. At this moment we see that it is terribly urgent to build a broad-based pro-class struggle current inside the trade unions, civic organizations, and so on, on a united front basis.

It is possible in a few years, on the basis of initiatives of this type and with a new wave of struggles—after it becomes clear that the political settlement has not resolved the social questions—that the building of a mass working class party will be on the agenda again.

Q: Is there still a threat of violence from the far right? What role is Inkatha playing now?

A: The far right will be under two contradictory pressures. The more moderate section will now be pulled more to entering negotiations and advancing their

demand for white self-determination at CODESA.

The more radical neo-fascist element may consider a kind of urban terrorism aimed at destabilizing negotiations.

The right wing base remains potentially very big, with close to a million voting “no” and with a large section of those that voted “yes” still very sympathetic to their cause. These people have a ready access to arms and very good contacts in the security establishment.

Although Inkatha has denied signing a non-aggression pact with the AWB (a far right group) there is clear evidence of growing contact between the right and those bantustan leaders opposed to the ANC line.

Inkatha is finding itself in a weaker position as the ANC and the government move closer together in the negotiations and is moving towards a separatist position for the so-called Zulu nation.

This is drawing them closer to the far right, and helps explain the sudden upsurge of terror attacks in the townships, on trains, and so on.

Now Socialist Action readers can look forward to an on-the-spot report from South Africa.

Our July issue will feature exclusive interviews and stories from one of our editors, who will be traveling there in June. Don’t miss it!

What was the shouting about at the Congress of People's Deputies?

By GERRY FOLEY

The confrontation in April between the Yeltsin government and its critics in the Russian Congress of People's deputies ended with several shamefaced deals. There are two apparent reasons why the noisy confrontation faded out in a general muddle. Both sides are fundamentally in favor of capitalist restoration, and both sides fear the people.

The leader of the anti-Yeltsin bloc, Sergei Baburin, pledged: "The Russian Unity bloc has not hid the fact, and will not hide it, that if the president calls on the Opposition to form the government, we will do so without hesitation. We are ready to take responsibility for continuing the economic reforms, but without giving up the principles that brought us together. On the other hand, we do renounce the adventurism of the present government."

That is to say, the market reforms are OK, but they should be carried out more slowly. This continues the dispute in the bureaucracy that already existed before Yeltsin assumed effective government power. The same divisions ran through the Gorbachev government.

The Russian Congress of People's Deputies was elected two years ago, when the Communist Party was still able to manipulate the electoral system. Some 86 percent of the 1046 Russian people's deputies are former members of the now legally dissolved Communist Party. Two thirds of them were functionaries under the former regime.

This unrepresentative body has three years (an eternity in the present crisis) before it has to face the voters again. However, the last thing the great "de-Communist" Yeltsin is interested in is new elections. According to *Der Spiegel* of April 13, Yeltsin has told his supporters that parliamentary rule would mean "suicide" for Russia. The British business magazine *The Economist* of April 18 agreed:

"Yeltsin is trying to set up what he calls a 'presidential republic,' in which he would have the freedom to appoint ministers without parliamentary scrutiny and to appoint local governors. There are signs that such a system could work. In Nizhny Novgorod, for example, Mr. Yeltsin appointed a reformist governor, who then appointed the mayor. The two organized Russia's first showpiece auction of shops, at last putting privatization plans into practice."

"Plundering the people"

The contending camps in the Russian Congress of People's Deputies hurled accusations and threats against each other. The head of the central bank, Georgii Malyukhin, for example, denounced Yeltsin's policies as "plundering the people."

On April 11, the Congress passed a resolution demanding that Yeltsin in a short time cease holding the combined posts of premier and president. This would thereby curb Yeltsin's power to rule by decree. The resolution also proposed 300 adjustments that the government considered would undermine its policies. In response, Yeltsin's cabinet threatened to resign, and said in a statement issued the same day:

"The sum of the demands raised by the Congress will condemn the country to hyperinflation, mean stopping the process of privatization, and curtailing the agrarian reform. The proposals to lower taxes and at the same time increase social and other spending are incompatible and can lead only to a collapse of the financial system. It is necessary and wise to realize that such



Protests against Yeltsin's price rises in Moscow. 'Tensions are high.'

Washington Post

decisions will perforce lead to curtailing the support from world society and return Russia to the road of isolation."

On April 13, the Russian government issued another statement that was still more explicit and detailed the whole diabolical mechanism involved in the campaign to restore capitalism: "In 1992, the republics of the former USSR are obliged to pay about \$21 billion for service on the foreign debt. The share of this that Russia has agreed to pay is 51 percent, that is, about \$12.5 billion."

"With the agreement of the commercial banks and the official credits, an extension was offered for a series of payments. Thus, the total for 1992 was reduced from \$21 billion to \$10 billion. The extension is conditional on the support of the IMF and operates until June 20."

The government statement then went on to explain what the dire consequences would be if they did not stay the course: "The volume of aid decided on by the Big

Seven and the IMF amounts to \$24 billion. Of these, \$6 billion are to go into the fund for stabilizing the ruble, without which it cannot be made convertible....

"Foreign investors believed in the seriousness of the market reforms in Russia. Changing the course toward deep-going economic transformations will inevitably lead to stopping big potential investments. Without serious foreign investments and achieving the convertibility of the ruble, the integration of Russia into the world economy is impossible."

Financial sleight of hand

The Big Seven's trumpeted announcement of a \$24-billion aid package for Russia was well timed for the session of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies, and was obviously designed to offer the restorers of capitalism some carrots to wave. In fact, it was mostly a financial sleight-of-hand trick. The bulk of the money was not real.

In the April 3 *New York Times*, Andrew Rosenthal explained that the Big Seven had agreed among themselves to create a \$6 billion fund to maintain the value of the ruble. They agreed also that the IMF and other lending institutions should lend Russia \$4.5 billion. The countries that extended credit to the Soviet Union before

Jan. 1, 1991—this does not include the United States—would defer \$2.5 billion in debt payments. And that, a total of \$13 billion (only \$10.5 billion in new money), Rosenthal pointed out, was all that was really committed in aid.

In other words, this latest and loudest promise of aid stays within the narrow limits of what the capitalists have felt able to offer up until now. Fundamentally, they offer no capital for developing production in the ex-USSR but only credits to make it possible for them to increase their markets there.

This "aid" is, therefore, essentially a subsidy to the capitalists' own export industries. Moreover, it is designed to overcome the difficulty of selling more products to a country whose own production, and therefore income, is declining disastrously.

What is more, the totally insufficient aid that Russia has been promised is only the bait in a trap of growing dependence on the capitalist

financial institutions.

In an editorial published in the period of the confrontation in Moscow, *The New York Times* noted with satisfaction that threats from the IMF had been effective in preventing the Polish government from retreating from its austerity policies when faced with strikes and protests. It recommended a similar medicine for Russia and other countries trying to restore capitalism.

The confrontation at the Russian Congress of People's Deputies marks the first time the capitalist countries have openly applied pressure to assure continuation of the capitalist restoration process in the ex-USSR, and the first time that a bureaucratic faction has directly based itself on this pressure against an opposing faction.

The capitalist states are thus becoming openly involved in the struggles in the ex-Soviet Union. This is an extremely dangerous step, not only for the peoples of the ex-USSR but for international peace. ■

Wind storm at Soviet Congress changes nothing

Despite the declarations of both sides concerning the disasters that would result from their respective proposals, the neo-Stalinist/Yeltsin dispute ended without any clear decision. But the implication was that the Yeltsin government's policies, however weakened, would be continued.

The Congress adopted a statement (by a vote of 578 to 203, with 64 abstentions) declaring that it supported the measures of the government and the president "aimed at a fundamental transformation of the economy."

At the same time, the statement instructed the government to take heed of the earlier decisions of the Congress but "with consideration for the actual economic and social conditions."

This qualification, in fact, gave the government latitude for doing what it considers economically necessary. (During the debate, supporters of the government argued that what they considered economic laws were as immutable as Newton's laws in physics.)

"Mr. Gaidar [Yeltsin's economics czar] and his colleagues in the Government emerged smiling and claiming victory," *The New York Times* reported. It quoted Yeltsin's new economics min-

ister, Andrei Nechayev, as saying: "This means we have settled our relations with the Congress on a moral level, and I hope they will not interfere in our daily work."

The Congress voted on April 11 to cut taxes on enterprises, bring public sector wages into parity with the private sector, provide automatic cost of living increases for pensioners, and restore subsidies for state farms.

The taxes that the Yeltsin government has imposed on industry have been an extremely sore point for both state enterprise managers and entrepreneurs.

This points up one of the sharpest contradictions of the crisis. The price increases have meant an enormous increase in the incomes of the enterprises. This represents a big increase in the rate of exploitation of the masses, and is a source of explosive resentments. At the same time, privatization makes it impossible for the state to draw revenues directly from the tills of the enterprises.

All of this makes taxation a primary battlefield between the enterprises and the state. The neo-Stalinists have tried to use this issue to enlist the new capitalists and would-be capitalists in their campaign against the Yeltsin govern-

ment. It is a safe bet that there will be tremendous pressure on the government to implement the tax-cut plank in the Congress's program.

On the other hand, the chances of the public-sector workers and the pensioners collecting on the Congress's promissory notes to them are not so good. Something obviously had to be offered to the pensioners, whose buying power has vanished like smoke. But it is not likely to amount to much in an economy where the great majority of the people are facing dire impoverishment.

Fundamentally, there is no way to square privatization and the return to a market economy with protection of the living standards of the masses of people.

However, all sorts of adjustments among the various layers of the bureaucracy are possible. Thus, according to *Der Spiegel* of April 13, Yeltsin is now promising to bring some of the big industrial managers into his cabinet. And concessions were made on the taxation of enterprises.

It is undoubtedly such issues that were at the heart of the dispute at the Congress, and not the "plundering of the people," in which all layers of the bureaucracy and the piratical would-be capitalists share responsibility.—G.F.

Serbian neo-Stalinists on the offensive in Bosnia-Herzegovina

As we go to press, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina seems very similar to the one in Croatia. Another in a series of fleeting truces has evaporated. The Yugo-Serbian army is using its heavy arms to terrorize civilian populations and cover local Serbian chauvinist irregulars engaged in a war of slaughter and pillage against the other nationalities in the republic.

The Bosnian leadership, like the Croatian one, has been slow to mobilize to meet the threat posed by the neo-Stalinist Serbian chief, Slobodan Milosevic. It made the mistake of thinking that this danger could be staved off by political maneuvers and still worse by relying on the "peacemaking" of the Western big powers and their instrument, the United Nations.

Only one of the oppressed peoples of ex-Yugoslavia was prepared for Milosevic's aggression and dealt him a decisive defeat. It was the Slovenians. They refused to let the Yugoslav army reabsorb the local militias that were set up to defend the country against Soviet intervention, and instead used them as a basis for building up an independent armed forces.

The Slovenian leaders understood the threat that the Serbian neo-Stalinist regime represented, and that it could only be countered with a decisive use of armed force.

Of course, the Slovenians had two advantages. They had the experience of the Serbians trying to organize a military coup to establish a neo-Stalinist regime in Slovenia. In addition, there are no national divisions in the republic that Milosevic could exploit. But Slovenia is also the smallest of the republics, and it could not have routed the Serbians without a correct policy.

In its Sept. 10, 1991, issue, the Croatian magazine *Danas* asked Anton Bebler, one of the Slovenian government's principal military advisers, for the secret of the Slovenes' success. He said: "Apparently, the Croatian leadership lived under the illusion that war could be avoided, that the Yugoslav army would never use armed force, that sovereignty could be achieved peacefully."



Croatian family in bomb-damaged house in Dubrovnik.

Romano Cagnoni

Bebler also said that it was a big mistake to expect any real help from the Western powers. In fact, although the West was involved in arranging a ceasefire that finally has held, this came about only after the desperate and heroic Croatian forces began giving a good account of themselves on the battlefields. Up until then, all the ceasefires negotiated by Western mediators only served to delude the Croats.

On the other hand, the Croats now have the right to complain that the other oppressed peoples of Yugoslavia have not come to their aid, but either played a waiting game—like the Kosovo Albanians—or sought a separate solution for themselves through political maneuver—like the Bosnians and Macedonians.

Milosevic's ruthless rampage in Bosnia-

Herzegovina seems to have driven the lesson home of the need for a united war against the neo-Stalinist chauvinists. *New York Times* correspondent Chuck Sudetic quoted a woman of the Bosniak Muslim community in a besieged apartment building in Sarajevo as saying: "When they attacked Slovenia, we remained quiet. And when they made war in Croatia, we told ourselves it would never happen here. Now it has arrived, and we now know how wrong we were."

The naked aggression of the Serbian neo-Stalinists and the local Serbian chauvinists against the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, after the outrages of the Croatian war, has made it necessary for the Western powers to "tut-tut" them more vigorously. But the State Department's attitude has remained

the same. It is oriented toward an eventual deal with Greater Serbia, and so it is trying to spread the blame for the conflict over all the parties.

Thus, at the start of the latest fighting, State Department spokesperson Margaret D. Tutwiler said, "No party is blameless for the current situation. This includes Croatia and Croatian irregular forces in Bosnia. Moreover, Muslim—the third nationality as defined by Yugoslav law—irregular forces also are now involved in actions contrary to peaceful resolution of the crisis."

In any war, outrages are committed on all sides, but the responsibility for the conflict in Yugoslavia is absolutely clear. It comes from the policies of the Serbian neo-Stalinist regime that has driven the oppressed peoples to secede in order to defend themselves and has continually deepened the national conflict by its chauvinist assaults.

While some argue that the Tudjman regime in Croatia played into Milosevic's hands by its insensitivity toward the Serbian minority, there seems no basis for any such accusations against the Bosniak leadership. The Muslim Bosniaks are only a relative majority in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They are historically one of the most oppressed of the Yugoslav peoples.

Both the Yugoslav monarchy and, to a certain extent, the Stalinist regime tried to pressure Muslims to emigrate to Turkey. In the latest period, any attempt at self-expression of the Slavic Muslim people has been met by the Serbian media with hysteria about the "Islamic fundamentalist threat." (The Albanians are mostly Muslims, but they are defined more by their language than their religion. The Bosniaks speak Serbo-Croat.)

Although the Bosniaks have only a relative majority, it is their weight and historical role that gives the region its distinct character. It has been clear for some time that a Bosniak nationalist movement was going to arise. At the same time, the press reports indicate that the local Croats and most of the Serbian population do not support the assault on the Bosniaks. ■

By HAROLD LAVENDER

VANCOUVER, B.C.—One of the first targets of the April 5 coup d'état by President Alberto Fujimori and the Peruvian military was the country's political parties. Troops and tanks surrounded the headquarters of the parties and trade unions. Party leaders and elected members of the dissolved parliament were detained.

Barrera Bazan, a leftist who is chair of the Chamber of Deputies, is being held on a ship off the coast by the highly anti-Communist Peruvian navy.

Those leaders not arrested have gone into hiding. Security has been stepped up at airports to prevent them from leaving the country. The veteran revolutionary leader Hugo Blanco reportedly took refuge in the embassy of Mexico and is now in that country.

By a twist of fate, three central leaders of the Unified Mariateguista Party (PUM, named for an early Peruvian Marxist) were abroad at the time of the coup. One of these, Eduardo Caceres, secretary general of the PUM, came to Vancouver on the first stop of a cross-Canada tour to build urgently needed international solidarity against the military coup. At a press conference here on April 9, he offered some initial thoughts on the coup.

Caceres began by referring to Fujimori as "Citizen Fujimori." He said that when the president violates the constitution as Fujimori has done, he is considered removed from office.

Caceres pointed out that the existing Peruvian constitution grants a clear right of insurgency against the coup. Fujimori, having suspended the existing Peruvian constitution and its guarantees, plans to draft a new constitution within the next 18 months and have it approved by plebiscite.

In the 1990 presidential elections, Fujimori won popular support by campaigning against the free-market-shock policies of his opponent Vargas Llosa, which were inspired by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). But on taking office, he implemented the full IMF shock treatment. The immediate result of these measures was a 400 percent rise in inflation in August 1990 alone.

The aim of this policy was to open up Peru for foreign investment. But it failed to attract much new capital. This was partly due to the international recession, and the very deep recession in Peru. But it also reflected a tumultuous social and political breakdown. The coup was, thus, a forceful attempt to impose order.

Moves toward a strong presidential-military state began well before the coup. The parliament gave the president

The meaning of the coup in Peru



Patrick Chanvassy/GMA

authorization to enact legislation in certain areas. However, Fujimori chose to go far beyond what was authorized. He enacted over 100 decree-laws, intruding into many areas not authorized by parliament.

Many of these decrees involved so-called pacification—in reality, a policy of extreme militarization—in effect, a piecemeal imposition of military dictatorship. The military was allowed to take control of regional governments.

A military-controlled National Intelligence Service was created. It was given power to go into every public office, ask for information, and jail those who refused to provide it. Caceres said this legislation was "more repressive than that of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile."

Fujimori's unconstitutional decree laws led to broader resistance in parliament than he expected, and this prompted him to stage the coup.

Washington's \$30 million in military aid and \$60 million in economic help was very far from what Fujimori needed. Caceres estimated that about \$2 billion would have been necessary to stabilize the situation. Now in a post-cold-war world, Washington may have trouble openly giving massive aid to Fujimori and the Peruvian military.

The Peruvian military has a long record of violating human rights. Indeed, recently Peru topped the world in the number of people "disappeared." Now, Caceres warned, the military may be given a green light to launch a total offensive to annihilate the opposition.

This war will not just be waged against the Shining Path guerrillas. Their support is growing, given the hunger and misery caused by the government's free-enterprise policies, but they have a fringe base of support, perhaps 5 percent of the population.

In the current situation, Caceres expects the Peruvian military to follow the example of the Argentine military dictatorship's "dirty war" against the left in the 1970s and go after all opposition. In this situation, human-rights groups, trade unions, peasants' unions, and all manner of popular organizations and left parties are potentially in extreme danger.

In this context, the left faces a double challenge. It needs to join with all possible forces to oppose the military's war on democracy and to isolate it internationally. At the same time, it needs to help organize the mass movement to defend itself and begin to lay the basis for a working-class and popular alternative.

Here in Canada, we have simpler tasks. We need to get out the true story of Fujimori's coup, and condemn the violation of human rights in Peru. And we need to put pressure on the Canadian government to expressly condemn the coup, to cut aid to Fujimori, and to open our door to Peruvian refugees. ■

Attempted coup in Venezuela: Symptom of explosive social tensions

By RAUL ZIBECCHI

Following is our translation of an article printed in the April 10 issue of *Inprecor*, the French-language journal of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Coups d'état are common enough in Latin America. But the two putsches that occurred in Venezuela in December 1991 and February 1992 surprised all those who thought that—after 30 years of “democratic” government—this country was a model of stability for the whole continent.

The Socialist International—whose most prominent Latin American leader is the Venezuelan president, Carlos Andrés Pérez—expressed worry about a return of the old specter of putschism in the region. In fact, the Social Democrats' favorite Latin American government is in a bad way.

On Feb. 4, 1992, a group of army and air force officers tried to oust Andrés Pérez. Everyone blamed this attempted coup on his corrupt administration and the social crisis provoked by the various economic austerity plans inflicted on Venezuela.

The appeal issued by the government to defend what is seen outside the country as model democracy failed to keep the population from remaining indifferent to the putsch and even from looking forward to the president's fall.

The fact is that Venezuelans are not ready to lift a finger to defend a “democratic” government that has wreaked havoc—with 85 percent of the population poverty-stricken!

There is no use in seeking the underlying causes of the putsch in the vague ideological notions of the rebel officers. (They proclaimed themselves followers of Bolívar, the father of Latin-American independence.) It is more to the point to look at the spiraling social crisis, all-pervasive corruption and the brutal economic policy that the president adopted on his return to power.¹

The “Caracazo” of 1989

To understand the present events, we have to go back three years, to the start of the second term of office of Andrés Pérez. As soon as his pretentious, monarchical-style inauguration was over, the new government adopted an economic package that tripled the prices of gas and other essential necessities.

The time when international oil prices brought some prosperity to Venezuela was over. These oil profits were frittered away in projects that did not benefit most of the population. But a high economic growth rate maintained political stability and social peace.

On Feb. 27, 1989, a popular revolt swept Caracas, the capital and principal city of the country. The entire country demonstrated its refusal to pay the costs of the economic turn imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).



Soldiers loyal to Pérez carry away dead comrade during February coup attempt.

Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets—burning, wrecking, and looting thousands of stores. They blew up the “democratic” showcase that for 30 years had consigned them to the shadows. Because of the geography of the city, in a few hours the demonstrators were able to stop traffic totally, to overcome the police, and to lay siege to the rich neighborhoods.²

To restore order, Andrés Pérez appealed to the armed forces. But “calm” returned only after a week of very sharp confrontations, in which, according to Amnesty International, more than a thousand people lost their lives.

A few weeks later, the situation seemed under control. But an unbridgeable gap opened up between the ruling Social Democrats and the majority of the people.

After 1989, mass mobilizations erupted with a power that had not been seen since the 1960s. The poor neighborhoods became bastions of resistance. The police rarely dared come into them, and when they did they mounted a military-style occupation, and left only after carrying out repressive operations.

War against the masses

The Caracas revolt marked not only the end of the apathy of the poor but the opening by the government of an outright economic, judicial and military war against the masses.

Three years later, the families of the victims are still looking for dozens of “disappeared.” It seems clear that the armed forces have gotten rid of hundreds of bodies in order to conceal the extent of the massacres. Carlos Andrés Pérez has been hiding behind the argument that there were “only” 275 dead. The families are talking about 3000 victims.

In its three years in office, this govern-

ment has managed to depress the standard of living of the Venezuelan people to the slim pickings of the dark days of the Pérez Jiménez regime in the 1950s:

- The number of households living below the poverty threshold rose from 19 percent in 1981 to 40 percent in 1990.
- Per capita calorie intake has dropped by 25 percent over the last 10 years.
- The number of undernourished children rose from 10 percent of the total in 1981 to 18 percent today.
- School enrollment has dropped from 4.9 million in 1981 to 3.7 million today.
- Finally, the unemployment rate is 20 percent, and 35 percent of the economically active are working in the “informal sector” [street peddling, prostitution, odd jobs, etc.].

At the same time hunger has become a glaring evil, and corruption has penetrated into all areas of the government and business. The population has been becoming more and more alienated from politics. In the last elections, the abstention rate went up to 40 percent.

Human rights abuses

To curb mass mobilization³, the Andrés Pérez government imposed military control over the poor neighborhoods. Sentry posts were established in these areas, and the army carried out wrecking operations any time it felt like it.

On top of the economic war waged against it, the population faced a war of repression. Over the past three years, human-rights organizations have pointed to a worsening of the situation.

The report of the Venezuelan Program for Education and Action in Support of Human Rights (PROVEA) refers to 135 deaths caused by the security forces, and dozens of “disappeared” in the period fol-

lowing the Caracas rebellion.

It also points out that the armed forces have held maneuvers at various sites practicing a response to a “domestic conflict.” But there has been no guerrilla movement in Venezuela since the 1960s.

Moreover, from the crushing of the guerrillas up until the Caracas revolt, social conflicts were sporadic. But today social agitation and insecurity in the areas are the predominant features of the situation.

The magazine *SIC*, which is linked to Christian groups, recently exposed police ties with sections of organized crime, including the bribes collected by functionaries to be able to get through the month on their meager wages. According to the magazine, if things continue this way, “the evil will become so ingrained that a whole generation will have to be sacrificed, as in Colombia, in order to find the beginning of a solution.”⁴

As soon as the putsch was crushed, Andrés Pérez once again exhibited all his cynicism. After denying the existence of any “malaise in society,” he said, “There is no case of corruption in my government.” He also declared that he would pursue his economic policy, which, he claimed, was beginning to bear fruit.

However, in Caracas, as in other cities, the graffiti on the walls reveal the mood of the people. “CAP [Carlos Andrés Pérez], crook and oppressor.” “CAP, you are going to swing.” That is what you see at the entrances to the poor neighborhoods, where the army mutineers were applauded like heroes.

All the signs are that the explosions are only beginning. A silent tug of war is going on between the Venezuelan masses and the business and political circles around the president. In November 1991, the trade-union confederations called an imposing general strike throughout the country. The authorities responded by killing and arresting dozens of people. There were violent confrontations. Buses were burned.

The dog-eat-dog capitalist policy of Carlos Andrés Pérez and the IMF is undermining the traditional role of the Venezuelan state. People believe less and less that any institutions can serve as mediators in these conflicts. The social classes are arming themselves to defend their interests. ■

1) On Dec. 4, 1988, Carlos Andrés Pérez (Acción Democrática) was returned to the presidency, with 54.5 percent of the vote. He had previously served a term as president from 1974 to 1979. He has long been the most prominent Social Democratic leader in Latin America, and took several initiatives to mediate the conflict in Central America.

2) The population of the poor neighborhoods in Caracas is concentrated on the slopes along the highways surrounding the capital. From these shantytowns, you can see the whole city. So, the people can easily oversee the connecting routes and encircle the middle-class neighborhoods.

3) Since 1989, there have been several smaller rebellions in provincial villages and cities, including Mérida, that resembled the Caracas revolt.

4) Because of the economic crisis and a lack of perspectives, numerous armed youth gangs have arisen in some poor neighborhoods. They are involved in robberies or in the drug traffic.

Urgent appeal for protests against political repression in Syria

There are currently 8000 to 10,000 political prisoners in Syria, despite the recent release of more than 2800 Palestinian and other detainees. The great majority are members of the Islamic fundamentalist movement that took up arms against the regime and was crushed in a terrible bloodbath in 1982. (The common estimate is that 10,000 were killed.) However, hundreds have also been jailed simply because of their leftist views and represent genuine prisoners of conscience. They are being held without any sort of trial under a “state of emergency” that has been in force continuously since 1963.

Close to 400 current detainees are from the Communist Action Party (CAP, a revolutionary Marxist organization that

has fraternal relations with the Fourth International); almost 50 are from the Syrian Communist Party-Political Bureau (SCP-BP), a splitoff from the Communist Party.

Around 80 belong to the left faction of the Syrian Baath Party, which is known under the name of “February 23,” and some dozens of detainees are from a Nasserite current. Since the beginning of 1992, six militants from the Committees for the Defense of Democratic and Human Rights in Syria have also been held.

Presently close to death due to illness worsened by detention are Riad El-Turk (SCP-BP, in prison since 1980); Omar Kashashe (SCP-PB, in prison since 1982); Adnan Mahfud (since 1987); and

Aktham Nuaisseh (CDF, arrested January 1992).

Currently in danger of death or permanent disabling as a result of torture are two underground leaders of the CAP arrested on Feb. 1, 1992—Abdul Aziz Al-Khayer and Bahjat Shaabu.

Some of these prisoners have achieved world records for political detention (four have been in jail for 22 years and 13 for 21 years).

Two CAP members have died under torture, in 1980 and 1987, as have two SCP-PB members, in 1984 and 1987. A CAP and an SCP-PB member each died from the direct effects of torture after being released in 1987 and 1991.

A recent example of torture and imprisonment helps to illustrate the

plight of these victims of the Syrian regime:

A member of the CAP, Jamal Hasseino—born in 1948 and employed at the Bank of People's Credit, married with two children—was arrested on May 6, 1990, after being denounced by an informer who had seen him in possession of a political statement from the party. He was harshly tortured, then thrown into prison, despite the fact that he was undergoing treatment for a brain tumor. Jamal Hasseino lost the power of speech and lapsed into a semicomatose state while in prison. He was released on July 25, 1991, but died a few days later.

Send messages of protest about these conditions to: Embassy of the Arab Syrian Republic, 2215 Wyoming Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

Send copies to: Emergency Defense Campaign, P.O. Box 1890, New York, NY 10009. Fax: 202-234-9548 ■

We are reprinting excerpts from an interview with Carlos Tablada by Martin Koppel that appeared in the Jan. 24, 1992, issue of *The Militant*, weekly newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Tablada is an economist at the University of Havana and is the author of *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*, published by Pathfinder Press.

Tablada's own views are of some note, and we are sure our readers will find it interesting that a person in his position is expressing them today. What he says about past differences in the Cuban Communist Party concerning the introduction in 1975 of the Soviet model of economic management is relevant to today's debates in the Cuban Communist Party.

The collapse of COMCON and the trade it guaranteed for the embattled revolutionary island is a severe blow to the Cuban Revolution. But the collapse of Stalinism has made it easier for Cubans to express views that are necessary for coming to grips with the "special period" the Cuban Revolution is going through.

"...The Cuban revolution was a heresy not only from the point of view of bourgeois culture, but from the point of view of Soviet Marxism," Tablada [said]. "In the 1950s the Soviet model was the dominant Marxism in the world. According to Soviet Marxism, it was impossible to make a revolution and take power in Cuba.

"But my people took power on Jan. 1, 1959. We made deep structural changes. We carried out a land reform. We defeated the United States at Playa Giron [the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion]. We built a socialist system that is participatory and democratic. We survived the [1962] Missile Crisis. We defeated the counterrevolutionaries. None of this would have happened if we had followed Soviet Marxism," Tablada declared....

"Another contribution Che made was explaining that simply by making a revolution in property relations where the means of production, the banks, and foreign trade are put in the hands of the people—this by itself doesn't guarantee that a socialist or communist society will be built.

"Che stressed that the building of socialism is a conscious process, unlike capitalism," with its anarchic market forces, the Cuban economist explained. "Consequently," Tablada continued, "together with developing production there must be a process of developing people's consciousness.

"Che wrote that one of Stalin's great crimes was to have substituted uncontrolled worship of authority for communist education. Stalin and the Soviet bureaucratic caste eliminated communist education in the process of production, the organization of society, and the development of the Soviet man and woman. That is why it was unable to develop a socialist society, leading to the results we see in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union."

Tablada added that during Guevara's time, "everything that departed from Soviet socialism was denounced as revisionism. It was like the Vatican during the Inquisition. To disagree with Moscow was to be a heretic."...

"But Che wasn't dogmatic or prejudiced. He read everything. Che recommended studying not only Marx, Engels, and Lenin, but writers like Aristotle. Among the Marxists, he didn't hesitate to say it was also necessary to study Trotsky—who was and in part is still considered the Devil—because he was indisputably a leader of the Russian revolution. He also recommended studying revisionists such as Khrushchev."...

"Che reached the conclusion, as early as November or December of 1960, that Cuba shouldn't apply the Soviet model, because it departed from the essence of socialist and communist principles. The model that was developed in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—after the Russian revolution began to be distorted and killed—was not socialism. Che says that in his works."...

Tablada described how Che's political perspectives were abandoned in Cuba in the years following his death. "From the beginning there were two tendencies in the Cuban revolution."

Cuban economist Carlos Tablada: 'From the beginning there were two tendencies in the revolution'



"What began to happen was what Fidel and Che had warned us about. In the name of socialism we were applying measures and relations that were clearly capitalist and had nothing to do with socialism."

One, he stated, was the communist leadership represented by Guevara and Fidel Castro. "But there was another tendency that favored applying the Soviet economic model. They were, and are, revolutionaries. They supported the Soviet system, not from the point of view of a bureaucratic caste trying to win privileges, but because of the dominant ideological influence of the Soviet Union in the revolutionary world. Soviet society was idealized.

"That tendency became the majority opinion in the Communist Party of Cuba in the 1970s. And since in my country we have a collective leadership—that is, Fidel isn't a dictator—we began to establish this model. So beginning in 1974-75, we committed the grave error of copying the Soviet model for 10 years.

"What began to happen was what Fidel and Che had warned us about. In the name of socialism we were applying measures and relations that were clearly capitalist and had nothing to do with socialism."

Cuba began to rely increasingly on capitalist methods to administer the economy that, for example, gave more weight to fulfilling production quotas than to meeting social needs and producing quality goods. This led to the increasing demobilization and demoralization of working people and to the growth of a conservative bureaucratic layer in the state apparatus.

"So a process of rectification was begun," Tablada explained, "in November 1984 on the economic level and in 1986 on the social and political level," to reverse this trend. "This has been a struggle where the people have been reconquering the space that the bureaucracy had taken away from them. This struggle has been restricting the bureaucracy's power. We started to do the things we had stopped doing."

Tablada referred to the building of hospitals and schools—done in large part through the mobilization of thousands of volunteers as well as advancing the struggle for women's equal participation in society and efforts to combat the capitalist legacy of racism....

The Cuban economist recalled that voluntary labor, which had been abandoned

during the 1970s, was revived with the launching of rectification.

Now, however, because of the disruption in Cuba's trade with Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, "volunteer labor continues, but it is limited in the non-priority industries as a result of the economic shortages. About 85 percent of our trade was with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Cuban-Soviet trade has decreased by 60 percent compared to 1989. We have big shortages of raw materials. We've had to close down plants and reduce work hours."

The use of volunteer labor has continued to play a role in priority sectors of the economy, he said, such as the development of agriculture and the construction of biotechnology plants.

Tablada commented that before the rectification fight was launched, "we were becoming corrupted in the economic sphere. But we were not corrupted in the area of international politics. That period of 1975-85 was precisely where my people's internationalism became a massive activity.

"Not only did more than 300,000 Cubans serve in Angola over these years, but 160,000 Cubans have gone to more than 100 countries as doctors, nurses, teachers, workers, engineers, and technicians. They've lived like the ordinary people in those countries. And we haven't asked for a penny in return. The Cuban internationalists have been financed by our own people. All this has made us stronger."...

He added, "We understand that in the long run a revolution in a single country can't survive. The revolution must be extended. Revolutions can't be exported, but revolutionaries must respond to international counterrevolution by supporting revolutionary movements in countries where these struggles occur."...

Tablada pointed to the historic significance of the October 1917 Russian revolution. "Without the Russian revolution, it would have been very difficult for the Cuban revolution to triumph. It was the greatest conscious undertaking in the history of humanity and opened the possi-

bility of achieving a more humane and just society than capitalism, which had failed to do so in 500 years."...

However, he commented, "the bureaucratic caste that began to establish itself in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s, '30s, and '40s, departed increasingly from the principles of the Russian Revolution. The industrial revolution of the late '30s and the reconstruction of the country after the war can only be explained by the legacy of the Russian revolution.

"The bureaucracy turned Marxism into an instrument to justify its privileges on the level of its domestic and foreign policy.

"In spite of that, the caste existed on the basis of the existence of a workers' state. You can't explain the defeat of fascism by the Soviet Union during World War II except by the communist legacy of the Russian revolution.

"Now the Soviet caste is striving to turn this workers' state into a completely capitalist state. But capitalism has prematurely sung its victory song, because capitalism has nothing to offer the Soviet working class."

Tablada said, "I don't consider it a misfortune that the Soviet Communist Party has disappeared, because in my opinion it

stopped being communist many years ago. It's encouraging because now the real possibility opens up for communist organizations to arise again and take up the banner of the Russian revolution and its founders."

Tablada explained that "with the failure of the Soviet regime and the pro-Soviet Communist Parties it has been shown that our Marxism is based on the interests of the peoples of the world."

When the Cuban revolution triumphed, he remarked, "both the imperialists and the traditional left declared that it was a historical exception. The victory of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua and the Grenadian revolution were important because they showed that Cuba was not a historical exception. It was proven that despite all the resistance and resources mobilized by imperialism, it was possible for two more home-grown revolutions to take place."

Does the subsequent overturn of these two revolutions disprove this point? Tablada replied, "Their defeat doesn't negate the Cuban revolution but just the opposite. It proves that once a revolution is made, it must be consistently taken to the end; otherwise it will be lost."...

"Grenada shows the importance of revolutionary unity and revolutionary morality," Tablada underlined. "Differences among revolutionaries cannot be resolved as they were when the Russian revolution died under Stalin. Stalin killed practically all the founders of the revolution, he eliminated all the members of Lenin's Political Bureau. That hasn't happened with the Cuban revolution.

"In the case of the Sandinista revolution it shows the importance of not making concessions on principles to the imperialists. A revolution can maintain a flexible policy and must when it's surrounded by capitalist governments, but if it makes concessions on principles it'll get its head chopped off.

"When the Sandinistas lost power in the [1990] elections, the response of the ordinary citizen in Cuba was: 'That happened because they made concessions to the empire.'..."

French elections

Dear editors,

I was quite impressed with your coverage of the French elections. I felt it was markedly superior to the scant coverage of the bourgeois press, or even of the progressive press.

Your paper was the only place I could find any coverage of Lutte Ouvriere or the Ligue Communiste Revolutionaire and their role in the elections.

The only request I could make is that you provide more coverage of Socialist Action's electoral efforts, as well as your relationship to various electoral efforts in progress.

Chad Anderson,
Champaign, Ill.

Kurds

Dear editors,

I quite appreciated Pinar Selinay's article regarding Kurdish uprisings, in the April issue of *Socialist Action*. It is refreshing to read such great coverage of events in Kurdistan, a story that is widely ignored by the "popular" press.

The Kurds, being the world's largest minority (30 million) without a homeland of their own, have endured great hardships in this century alone. Hundreds of thousands have died due to fascist state terrorism in Turkey, poisoned by Saddam's butchers, and jailed and oppressed by the ayatollahs in Iran. Throughout this ordeal, they have remained steadfast in their struggle for a free and independent Kurdistan.

It is time the "Great Powers" correct the wrong they did in the 1920s and redraw the maps to mirror a united Kurdish nation-state before we approach the millennium.

Mehran Ron Kamangar
Daly City, Calif.

Matriarchy

Dear editors,

Approximately 40 people attended a program on "Matriarchy and the Myth of Women's Inferiority" at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The event featured Linda Thompson, a Socialist Action member who has lectured widely on the role of women in ancient society.

Thompson presented results of her research documenting the matriarchal origins of civilization. She explained that her material has come from two sources—the work of African and African American scholars writing on early African civilization, and feminists documenting matrilineal societies around the Mediterranean and in Europe.

She demonstrated that most of the advances in areas such as agriculture, science, writing, and metalworking—usually attributed to white males—were actually developed by women and men of color in advanced matrilineal civilizations before the rise of Greece and Rome.

She pointed out that white, male, Eurocentric scholars have either ignored or attacked research indicating that women played a pre-eminent role in early cultures. Quoting African American scholar Asa G. Hilliard—who wrote,

Dear editors,

It's irritating enough to see the capitalist press, here in the U.S. at least, refer to the Soviet left as the right and the right wing as the left. But it's difficult to see much better in an evaluation of Soviet politics that sees "no fundamental difference" between the various elements of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

This was exactly the analysis offered by Gerry Foley in his article "Is Another Coup on the Horizon in the former Soviet Union?" in the March issue of *Socialist Action*.

In the final paragraph, he offers us an astonishing conclusion, with two seemingly contradictory elements: (1) "The process of capitalist restoration is supported by all factions of the decaying Stalinist bureaucracy." (2) "The neo-Stalinists seem to represent the most immediate threat of repression."

Both these statements don't stand up to scrutiny. First, the primary danger of not just repression but, yes, also capitalist restoration, civil war, starvation, and foreign intervention comes from Yeltsin, Gorbachev, and others on the right.

These elements admire the "democracies" of the West, such as the U.S., Germany, and Japan. They want to vend out Soviet industry to foreign capital and see no military threat from capitalism abroad whatsoever.

The "neo-Stalinists," on the other hand, do see a foreign military threat. Why does Gerry Foley demigrate this concern? Plus, they are not for capitalist restoration, though some elements support expanding capitalist incentives, as the Stalinists did and are doing in China.

Far from being demagoguery, there is almost a refrain of land, bread and peace in the appeals of the "neo-Stalinists." Bread because the capitalist restoration being pushed is leading to starvation. Land and peace, because the fragmentation of the Soviet Union is leading to racial and national civil war, plus destruction of national security.

This fear of total collapse is spread across almost all of the political spectrum, and accounts for why anti-Semites

"A person who loses his or her memory is disabled"—Thompson explained how an understanding of women's true history could inspire the women's movement to a new level of organization.

A lively discussion followed the presentation, clearly indicating interest in reclaiming our real history. Among the topics discussed was the need for feminists to learn from the history and experiences of Black women.

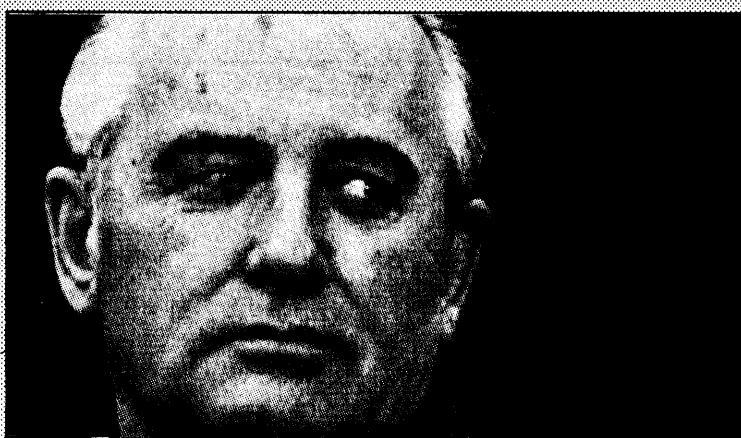
Julia Steinberg,
Baltimore, Md.

Healthcare

Dear editors,

I want to commend you for your consistently high quality coverage of the healthcare crisis in this country. As part of a

Are there differences among the Soviet bureaucrats?



and the Russian Orthodox Church can find themselves temporarily allied with elements of the military and various groups on the left. It's no more alarming than the fact that Patrick Buchanan spoke out against going to war with Iraq. That didn't make the anti-intervention movement rightist in character.

The support of national rights of smaller nations within the Soviet boundaries by Gerry Foley is an admirable part of his article. Unfortunately, he seems to have been lulled into believing that these struggles are occurring in a void, where outside interests are at a minimum and imperialism is frozen in time and space.

Better for socialists to start building a defense of the Soviet Union now, instead of confining their efforts to Castroist Cuba. Imperialism can strike at a moment's notice, just as it did against Iraq. To think that the "neo-Stalinists" thus still seem to represent the most immediate threat of repression" inside the Soviet Union is a serious misjudgment of the present situation.

Gary Abdo
Monmouth, Ore.

Gerry Foley replies:

The terms "left" and "right" are imprecise—especially in the context of the old Soviet Union and East Europe—and that is why I did not use them. I did not write that all factions in the bureaucracy were the same. There is an important difference, one that could lead to a civil war, but it is not over restoring capitalism. It is over whether or not to restore

police-state forms of rule now.

That is, after all, what the August coup sought to do. That is why I refer to this faction as "neo-Stalinist." The demonstrations I have called "neo-Stalinist" have essentially the same program as the coup, and openly defend the would-be junta.

Many statements by leaders and supporters of these demonstrations (I have cited a number of them) show that they are not opposed to the economic program of Gorbachev and Yeltsin. It is true that anticapitalist and anti-market-reform slogans have started showing up in these demonstrations. But in context, they have to be seen as cynical attempts to exploit the reaction against Yeltsin's anti-working-class measures.

That is apparently how the masses see them, since they have not turned out for these actions. After all, before Yeltsin gained power, he made similar concessions to the feelings of the people.

Gary Abdo is very wrong in his comparison between the neo-Stalinists' program and that of the Bolsheviks. Only through democratic organization can the working people remove the dangers he cites. And the iron hand the neo-Stalinists propose is precisely the biggest obstacle to that. Repression is a tool of the privileged, and as such the imperialists and the bureaucracy have a common interest in it.

Abdo seems to have forgotten that the imperialists supported Gorbachev last spring when he was in a bloc with the neo-Stalinists against

Yeltsin, and that on his trip to the USSR in August Bush called on the national movements to accept subordination to Moscow.

In pursuing his program of capitalist restoration, Yeltsin will have to try to repress the masses, as I and other writers have repeatedly written. But Yeltsin built his support on the basis of opposition to the repressive wing of the bureaucracy; he now still finds himself without an effective means for repressing the masses—as shown concretely by his failure to repress the independence movement in Chechen-Ingushetia.

On that question, the political movement on which he bases himself, Democratic Russia, disavowed him. At that point, a spectrum of reactionary procapitalist forces grouped in the Narodnoye Soglasie (People's Understanding) bloc left Democratic Russia and began supporting the neo-Stalinists in the name of "Russian unity."

It was no accident or chance convergence that these forces turned up in the neo-Stalinist demonstrations. There is a fundamental resonance between the retrograde Russian chauvinism of these groups and the chauvinism that the Stalinist bureaucracy fomented more and more as its pretenses of Marxism faded. The last stage of this was the program of "military-patriotic" education under Brezhnev.

It is not "bread, peace, and land" that these forces are concerned with. On the contrary, just the opposite is true, since they are backing an armed rebellion against Moldavia by neo-Stalinists claiming to represent the Slavic population of the republic, and they propose to support similar operations based on the Russian minorities living among other peoples oppressed by Stalinism.

The great masses of the people who do want "bread, peace, and land" have not turned out for the neo-Stalinist demonstrations because, among other things, they know that what their organizers propose is war against the peoples of the former USSR who have begun to exercise their right to self-determination—a right that was central to the Bolsheviks' peace program. ■

research project I am doing for a class in urban health policy, I recently re-read Mark Harris's "The business of health: A critical diagnosis" (*Socialist Action*, July 1990), Hayden Perry's "Medical insurance profiteers undermine national healthcare" (*Socialist Action*, July 1991), along with the recent article by Chris Beiler, "Healthcare in America—right or privilege?" (March 1992).

These articles not only provide an excellent explanation of what's wrong with the system, they also point the way forward to the kind of independent working-class movement that is needed to win free quality healthcare for all. You should compile all of these articles into a pamphlet.

S.S.
Mill Valley, Calif.

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Why workers shouldn't be fooled by Ron Daniels campaign

Some radical-minded working people are supporting longtime Black political activist Ron Daniels in his presidential campaign as an independent. They see his "Campaign for a New Tomorrow" as a viable "independent" alternative for Blacks and other progressive-minded people to support against the Democrats and Republicans in 1992. In California, Daniels is running for nomination by the Peace and Freedom Party.

Who is Ron Daniels? What does he stand for? Should supporters of Black and women's rights, and the labor movement, support his campaign?

Gary Convention

Daniels served as executive director of the National Rainbow Coalition and deputy campaign manager of Jesse Jackson's 1988 Democratic Party presidential campaign. Before that he was active in Black nationalist politics. He was president of the National Black Political Assembly from 1974-1980.

The Assembly was formed out of the historic National Black Political Convention held in Gary, Ind., in March 1972. That convention adopted a radical Black Political Agenda, which outlined a strategy for Black liberation. It specifically criticized the Democrats and Republicans as parties that have "betrayed us."

At the same time, the convention did not call for the formation of an independent Black party and followed a policy of supporting "good" Black Democrats—that is, an inside-outside strategy. Daniels was an advocate of this strategy.

I attended the Gary convention and supported the more militant

Black nationalist currents who wanted to use the Black Political Agenda as a program to build an independent Black political party. Daniels opposed our call. In fact, he oriented the Black Assembly away from independent Black electoral action.

Formation of NBIPP

In the late 1970s, supporters of independent Black politics formed the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP). It adopted a program that stood on the shoulders of the Black Political Agenda and urged Blacks to build an independent Black political movement to fight racism and for Black self-determination. Daniels at first stood outside the process, since he still supported the "inside-outside" strategy. He eventually got on board and became a co-chair of NBIPP in the early 1980s.

NBIPP, however, was unable to develop beyond a narrow base of support in the Black community. Daniels and other NBIPP leaders, in its decline, decided to back Jesse Jackson's 1984 Democratic Party presidential effort. For Daniels, this was a return to the inside-outside strategy of the Black Assembly.

Campaign for a New Tomorrow

In an interview with Tim Wheeler, editor of the Communist Party newsweekly, the *People's Weekly World*, April 11 issue, Daniels explained his decision to run for president. It came, he said, after Jackson decided not to run as an independent in 1988.

"The Rainbow Coalition held great promise to me," he explained, "In the end, it repre-

sented great strides and lost opportunity. Jesse Jackson was one of the few political leaders who challenged the madness of Reaganomics and Reaganism. *The problem is that he was ignored by the Democratic Party.* [My emphasis.]

"Many of us felt," he continued, "that was a time for Jackson to go as an independent candidate—to change the political chemistry, the political dynamics. With working people, women and minorities behind him, he could have gotten 10-12 million votes.

"But alas, Jackson elected not to do that. Instead of putting forth an inside-outside strategy, which would have allowed for running Rainbow Democrats, Rainbow independents, etc., as progressive Democrats, he elected to stay locked inside the Democratic Party."

Daniels claims, "We need a declaration of independence from the Democratic Party." But it quickly becomes clear in the interview that his campaign is aimed at pressuring the Democrats towards reform. He asks rhetorically why the Democratic Party refuses to organize low-income people. He then states: "That would put a Democrat in the White House. But in order to do that, the party would have to put forward a far more radical program than it is willing to do."

Daniels added that he sees his campaign as organizing for a broader campaign in 1996. A national progressive convention will be held on Labor Day weekend in Ypsilanti, Mich., to organize his Campaign for a New Tomorrow. The convention will not form a new organization. Its purpose, Daniels explained, is to



Which side are you on? By Malik Miah

build a broader progressive movement as Blacks tried to do in the Gary conference of the early 1970s.

A fundamental flaw

What is wrong with the perspective put forward by Daniels? Fundamentally, he states that the problem is that the Democratic Party ignores us. It needs to be rebuilt with a radical program for working people and the oppressed.

But this misses the main reason why the Democrats (and Republicans) exist: They are parties organized by the capitalist rulers to run their system of super exploitation and oppression. They are used to convince the majority of society—workers—to believe in the system.

Not to tell the truth about these parties to Blacks and other working people is why "lesser-evilism" (supporting the best of the worst) is not a policy to bring real social change. We have low political consciousness in the working class. Working people do not yet see our class and political interests clearly.

The formation of a "progressive" party along the Daniels line can only deepen those illusions. What's needed is a clear break and rejection of those parties. This includes "good" Democrats.

The "inside-outside" strategy advocated by Daniels for 20 years has not and cannot succeed. That's why Jesse Jackson has opted for full immersion into the Democratic Party. He will back Clinton or whoever is nominated, whatever his program.

Tapping real anger

Daniels is seeking to tap the genuine anger of working people who are demanding change. (It's also why some workers are seriously looking at the billionaire Ross Perot's "independent" campaign.) Workers know the future is bleak with a recession, lost strikes (for example, Caterpillar), and heavy attacks on social gains such as affirmative action and abortion rights.

Workers do need a party representing the interests of working people. We need a labor party—as well as an independent Black party. Working people need more than a Rainbow Democratic Party or Peace and Freedom Party.

While I'm glad to see Brother Daniels supporting striking workers, abortion rights, and other socially progressive causes—and using his campaign to do so—a true independent movement will not emerge based on the strategy of the Campaign for a New Tomorrow. It is a false start. ■

By FRANKLIN BALCH

Giotto: A painter for the masses

Giotto's powerful frescoes in the Church of St. Francis at Assisi, Italy, painted at the end of the 13th century, establish Giotto as a painter for the masses. Their message was understood by the illiterate poor and undoubtedly helped to reinforce a growing rebellion against Church dogma and practice.

In his book, "Science in History," J.D. Bernal points out, "St. Francis reflected in his life and preaching the revolt of the poorer townsmen against worldliness and excessive wealth.

His message was popular, dangerously so, and all of papal diplomacy was needed to keep it from breaking out in heresy and civil strife."

One fresco in particular—"St Francis Renounces His Father's Goods and Temporal Wealth"—illustrates the growing class consciousness of this turbulent period.

In the painting, St. Francis and his father, a wealthy merchant, confront each other on a street in Assisi. At issue is the saint's refusal to obey his father's repeated orders to stop squandering his inherited wealth by helping lepers and the poor. The father is threatening to disinherit him.

The father stands at the head of a group of well-dressed onlookers, while St. Francis is accompanied by friars and a few Church dignitaries. The saint has just discarded his clothing and is naked except for a cloak held around him by his bishop. His arms are raised in prayer.

The father, greatly incensed—his son's discarded garments draped over one arm—steps forward as though to strike Francis, but is restrained by a companion.

The two groups are separated by a dark space that some believe may initially have contained figures, perhaps painted by one of Giotto's assistants.

Sensing the crowding of too many figures, Giotto painted out the central ones, substituting for them the tantalizing dark space—a sort of wedge—perhaps symbolic



Giotto's "Lamentation," part of a fresco at the Arena Chapel in Padua.

of the gulf that separates rich from poor.

There is an interesting parallel between the role of political art and that of class struggle in that both are to be seen as initiators of radical change—in the one case, change within the structure of society itself, and in the other, change within the arts of painting and sculpture.

First great political artist

Towards the end of his life, Marx, along with Engels, wrote: "For almost 40 years we have stressed the class struggle as the immediate driving force of history and in particular the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as the great lever of the modern social revolution." Political art has played a similar role in art history, acting as the great lever of the modern aesthetic revolution.

Giotto was the first great political artist. His frescoes, particularly those depicting the life of St. Francis of Assisi and those of the Arena Chapel at Padua, had a profound effect on the subsequent development

of painting. Albert Barnes claims in "The Art in Painting" (1937) that Giotto's frescoes "had in them the germs of most of what gives modern painting its value."

Many years earlier, Roger Fry, the English painter and art critic, wrote a magnificent article on Giotto, which was later reprinted in his book, "Vision and Design" (1910). Fry notes: "Here at last after so many centuries of copying the traditional forms handed down from a moribund Pagan art—centuries during which these abstractions had become entirely divorced from the life of the time—here at last was an artist who gave a scene as it must have happened, with every circumstance evidently and literally rendered..."

Subjects filled with life

Giotto anticipated some of the more fruitful innovations of painting, including the rudiments of linear perspective, the use of foreshortening, and a feeling for deep space. But Giotto's greatest contribution to painting was his ability to breathe life into

the human subjects represented in his frescoes.

His people, often of humble origin, seem real. There is the "poor knight" to whom Francis gives his cloak, and "the simple man," who honors the saint by providing him with a cloak to walk on. In both cases, Giotto reveals emotion by a combination of facial expression, gesture, and stance.

Then there are the nuns of St. Clare who "cry on the body of St. Francis" as it is carried to Assisi for burial. One has the strong sense of witnessing an actual scene. Each nun has a distinct personality, made tangible and real through Giotto's power to express individual feelings in paint. His hands are especially eloquent.

Two frescoes, "Joachim's Expulsion from the Temple" and "Joachim's Return to His Sheepfold," both in the Arena Chapel at Padua, reveal an "anguished old man" shattered by humiliation and shame—his "shame" being that he had given Israel no children! What is evident in Giotto's frescoes is that he was deeply in sympathy with the masses, that he gave them hope and reasons to fight for a better life.

Possessed of a powerful and inquiring mind, Giotto found in Bonaventura's life of St. Francis the real meaning of the saint's teaching. Its message was radical, having to do with the harsh realities of a class society and the ongoing struggle between rich and poor.

Fry calls Francis "the great orthodox heretic"—orthodox because Pope Innocent III finally "had the good sense to accept the one man through whom the Church could again become popular and democratic," and a heretic because he "established the idea of the equality of all men before God," as well as preaching a "primitive communistic Christianity."

Through these frescoes, Giotto was able to give forceful expression to the saint's ideas and moral message. ■

After April 5: What next in the fight for choice?

By CAROLE SELIGMAN and JONI JACOBS

An estimated 750,000 to one million people marched in Washington, D.C., on April 5 to defend abortion rights. This huge mobilization rivals in size the largest of the demonstrations at the height of the U.S. war in Vietnam—demonstrations that had deep and lasting effects on a whole generation of youth.

What will be the impact of the giant pro-choice mobilization of 1992?

The march was massive. The marchers themselves must have been struck by the power of such staggering numbers. This is a period of escalating attacks on working people. (Per-capita income actually shrank in 1991, for the first time in nine years.) So it is encouraging that women are fighting back.

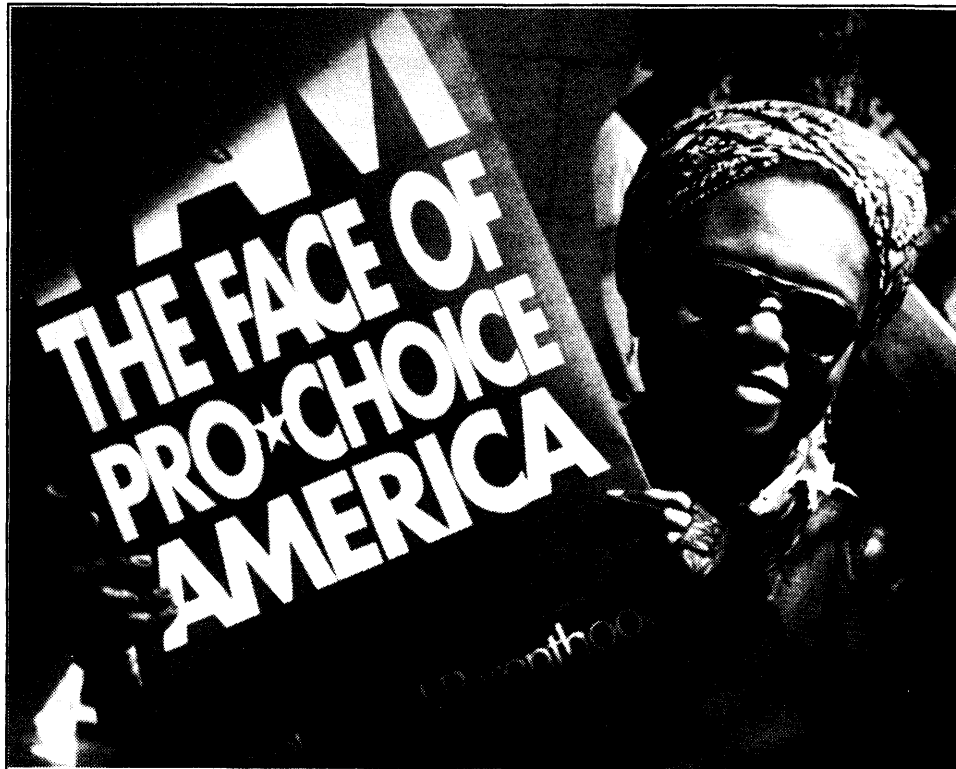
Surely the efforts of one million people should cause a change in the government's attack on abortion rights. Unfortunately, the situation is more complicated than the numbers indicate.

A major political message—an erroneous one—was broadcast by the organizers of the April 5 march. That message contradicted the potential power represented by the numbers of the demonstrators. The message was "secure abortion rights by voting for women candidates in 1992."

The evidence of the message was overwhelming. Thousands of marchers carried signs supplied by the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) that proclaimed, "We will decide on Nov. 3" (election day).

Candidates for Congress and the Senate from several states paraded across the stage, asking for support in the elections. Dianne Feinstein, California Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate, asked the crowd, "Are you ready to march for me in November?"

Carol Moseley Braun, the first African American woman to win the Illinois senatorial Democratic primary, was enthusiastically introduced by Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women. Braun's message was: Democracy and the Bill of Rights are "alive and well"



because she won her party's nomination.

What's wrong with this "vote for choice" message? Simply this: The candidates running in the 1992 elections—women and men, Democrats and Republicans—do not represent women's interests. They represent the fat cats who profit from the inequality women suffer.

This simple fact can be seen in the failure of the government at all levels—federal and state—to defend or expand the rights of working people.

The Democrats try to blame the Republicans for the erosion of women's rights. Yet they have enjoyed a 25-year majority in Congress and in most states. Under their majority control, the Equal Rights Amendment was defeated, anti-abortion laws were passed, welfare subsidies for children were cut, and comprehensive child-care legislation was nullified.

Meanwhile both parties voted for military expenditures in the trillions of dollars while human needs went callously neglected. The anti-women policies of the U.S.

government are, in their essentials, clearly *bipartisan*.

Sexism is profitable

The United States economy is based on capitalism, which depends upon dividing workers against each other based on race, gender, and other so-called "natural" boundaries. When women are paid less than men, the bosses keep the difference and make higher profits.

That's why sexism is so difficult to root out—it's profitable, and profit is the motor force of the U.S. economy and politics. Defense of the private profit system is the *raison d'être* of both the Democratic and Republican parties. And both parties oppose any inroads into the profitable practice of sexism.

Before American women won even the right to vote, for example, it took massive demonstrations in the streets, a mass Socialist Party, and the international impact of the rights that women won in the Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Women won abortion rights in 1973 under the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. That period was one of a youth radicalization, but it was also one of relative economic stability for the capitalist class. This country's rulers could afford to grant a concession to the women's movement, which followed on the heels of the civil rights and the anti-Vietnam War movements, in order to dampen the growing discontent among working people.

Today, however, the situation is different. Government and employer attacks against women, oppressed minorities like Blacks and Latinos, and labor have taken place in a period of economic stagnation. The capitalist rulers are no longer inclined to grant democratic concessions like abortion rights. In order to protect their dwindling rate of profit, they are forced to drive down our living standards, civil rights, and democratic rights.

Can't represent everybody

In this context, women cannot expect the Supreme Court to hand them abortion rights—we must be prepared to *take* them.

As the organizers of the April 5 march pointed out, women need a vehicle to carry our fight for equality into the electoral arena. Women need a political party to represent our interests. But contrary to the march organizers' message, the Democrats are not that party.

A party that truly represents women cannot also represent the wealthy capitalists

who profit from the exploitation of women. The interests of women (and all working people) are counterposed to the interests of the ruling rich and corporations.

When the Democrats and Republicans say they represent both working people and their bosses, they are lying. It's impossible to reconcile the competing interests of the two classes in one party—working people always lose out. In 1989, one percent of U.S. households (with a net worth of \$5.7 trillion) had more wealth than the bottom 90 percent (whose net worth totaled \$4.8 trillion). How can one party represent both groups? Impossible!

Even an "independent" third party or "independent" candidate who doesn't clearly break from alliances with the ruling rich is no better than the existing pro-rich parties.

Since women have no independent party to vote for in 1992, the illusion that change will be won through the elections disarms and misorients the women's movement. It does us no good to "stop Bush" when the attack on women's rights is being—and will continue to be—carried out by *both* the Democrats and Republicans regardless of the outcome of the elections.

Admittedly, the women's movement is in a difficult position. On the one hand, no political party exists that can represent its interests. On the other, the movement cannot create such an instrument by itself.

A party that represents the interests of women would also represent all workers—male and female, Black, brown and white—as well as the interests of all others who suffer the effects of the profit system.

Forming such a party will involve the traditional organizations of working people—the labor unions—who don't yet agree, unfortunately, that a labor party is needed. Labor must work with women's groups and organizations of the oppressed national minorities to form a political front that can represent them all.

Movement must be independent

So what can be done? In the absence of a suitable electoral instrument that expresses the needs of women, several important steps can and must be taken in the fight for women's rights.

Most importantly, the movement must be independent from those who profit from sexism. Besides staying out of Democratic and Republican campaigns, being independent means using strategies independent of the capitalist class, such as street mobilizations.

Massive mobilizations are a key component of an independent movement. They should be organized regularly and coordinated nationally.

For example, of the nearly one million people who marched on April 5, an estimated 75 percent were from outside the Washington, D.C., area. How many more millions of people could be mobilized to demonstrate on the same day in major cities in their local areas, involving every state in the country?

During the Vietnam War, nationally-coordinated local actions, such as the International Days of Protest, were important independent actions. They mobilized millions in the street and provided focal points for education and organizing in every community nationwide.

Another key task of the women's movement is militant defense of family planning clinics. The events in Buffalo, N.Y., show that there is great understanding within the movement of the need to intensify defense of the patients and health-service providers at abortion clinics. The movement now understands that the events in Wichita, Kan., where the anti-abortion fanatics actually closed clinics, preventing women from getting health services, must never be allowed to happen again.

The tasks of the women's movement are great. They require the broadest support among the population as a whole in order to win. The April 5 Mobilization for Women's Lives shows that broad support exists and can be mobilized and expanded.

Happy Birthday, Malcolm X



If Malcolm X had lived he would be 69 years old this month.

Born on May 21, 1925, the militant Black leader was gunned down by assassins on Feb. 21, 1965. His untimely death left a leadership void in the Black community that has yet to be filled.

However, his ideas live on with today's Black youth, who wear with pride ball caps embroidered with a simple "X."

The subject of numerous books—and now a movie directed by Spike Lee—Malcolm X's message of winning Black liberation "by any means necessary" has a wider audience than ever.

Michael Lange, an acting instructor at Merritt College in Oakland, Calif., is currently on a campus tour in which he portrays Malcolm X giving his speeches.

Be sure to see the June issue of *Socialist Action* for coverage of Lange's tour and the response of students to Malcolm X's speeches.

—the editors