



**Hospital  
workers  
fight back**  
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## Amnesty for L.A. Prisoners Jobs & Justice, Not Jails

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action



Protestors assemble in San Francisco, Calif., hours after the Rodney King verdict is announced.

By JOSEPH RYAN

The fires may be out in Los Angeles, but the embers are still smoldering and can reignite anytime.

President Bush, speaking for a ruling class that was profoundly shocked by the depth of the rebellion, is speaking out of

But while Bush continues his campaign to turn the victims into the criminals, the victims are speaking out for themselves.

In an interview in the May 31, 1992, edition of the *San Francisco Examiner*, members of formerly rival Los Angeles street gangs (the Bloods and the Crips),

give an articulate description of the situation in Los Angeles.

"South Central Los Angeles is a Third World country," declared Krashawn Scott, an inactive member of the Los Angeles Crips gang. "There's a south central in every city, in every state. There's no

domestic agenda. No five-year plan, no 10-year plan, no 20-year plan."

Cle Sloan, a member of the Bloods, stated that, "We have no rights. The justice system doesn't work for us."

When Sloan was asked about why the "riot" occurred he said, "It was not a riot—it was a class struggle that took place in South Central. When Rodney King asked, 'Can we all get along?', it ain't just about Rodney King. He was the lighter and it blew up."

The rebellion, Sloan said, was "about the average resident in south central making less than \$14,000 annually and one in ten earn less than \$5000."

Another gang member stated, "We don't have land, language or a nationality. We don't have jobs or money. So they drop ... guns and drugs into our community. We worked for 308 years. We built America but did we get paid for it? Somebody owes us."

Who owes is the capitalist class. They reaped tremendous profits off the super-exploitation of Black working people and they will continue their campaign of repression and police terrorism to insure the status quo remains unchanged.

The economic plan needed to address the questions posed by these young men from south central won't come from the ruling rich. On the contrary, the conditions that led to the Los Angeles rebellion—double-digit unemployment, no social services, poor housing, and police repression—cannot be solved by a system that thrives on the special exploitation of these communities.

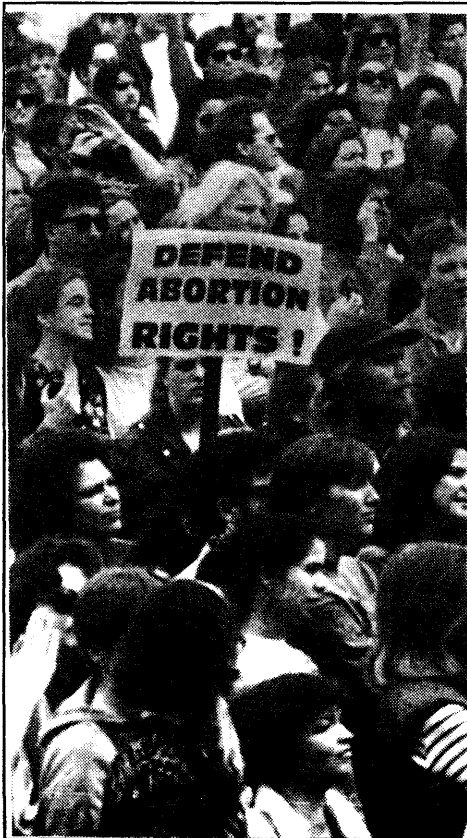
What frightens the ruling rich the most, however, is that a new generation of fighters against these conditions are beginning to make themselves heard. ■

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rebellion supplement  
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both sides of his mouth.

While he makes empty promises of economic aid to south central Los Angeles, including establishing "free enterprise zones" and tax breaks for corporations—solutions that are currently impoverishing workers and peasants in Third World countries—he also is stressing the need for "law and order"

"Federal assistance," he said, "offers no reward for rioting." His mixed message indicates that the ruling rich in this country have no program for addressing the scourge of unemployment, poverty, and racism that sits on the back of the Black and Hispanic communities in every city across the land.



### NOW conference needs to steer mov't towards political independence

The National Organization for Women (NOW) will hold its national conference in Chicago, Ill., at the end of this month. NOW has gained new members and greater stature as the champion of women's rights in the United States and worldwide. This is partly due to its giant mobilizations in support of women's rights to choose legal

NOW has educated women and men about sexism, exposed it and made it harder to get away with it unnoticed. Young school-age girls are less willing to accept unequal treatment with boys and this may be the greatest gain for women's rights so far.

Recently *Parade* magazine carried an article by the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund (NOW LDEF) about adult women fighting back against childhood sexual abuse they suffered by male family members.

NOW has campaigned for lifting statutes of limitations on such crimes, making it possible for women to bring charges against the abusers years after the crime took place. This is an important means to overcome the damage such abuse leaves and an important way to protect

#### Editorial

abortion. NOW mobilized 600,000 and 300,000 in Washington, D.C. in 1989 and some three-quarters of a million pro-choice marchers on April 5 this year.

The new respect NOW has earned because of its ability to mobilize great numbers for the cause is already paying off in terms of increased feminist consciousness in the country.

(continued on page 4)

# Is it Justice or 'Just Us?'



## Fightback

By  
Sylvia Weinstein

"In America justice means 'just us' white folk." That's a quote from H. Rap Brown, one of the leaders of the Black movement for justice in the 1960s and 70s in the United States. After the Rodney King verdict it seems more apt than ever. All over the world there are Rodney Kings being ground down into the dirt, beaten, kicked and brutalized by "official" law and order thugs. In Israel, justice for Palestinians means "just us" Zionists. In South Africa, justice, again, means "just us" white folk. In Northern Ireland, justice means "just us" pro-English Protestants.

The police represent an occupying army in the Black communities of the United States. They are there *not* to protect African American citizens from crime, but to repress any attempt by them to resist criminal capitalist persecution, exploitation, and oppression. At the same time that the mouth-

pieces of the oppressive system cry crocodile tears over the poverty and the racial injustice in America's central cities, they seek to drown out the cries of pain with the loudest denunciations against "violence as a means of righting wrongs."

Israeli "just us" is another example of oppression of a people by a racist oppressor. The Zionists are trying to solve the "Palestinian problem" just as Hitler tried to solve the "Jewish problem." There is a difference in scale. But that's only because Palestinians are the great majority and a final solution is not within the capability of Zionism.

Just a look at the May 1992 murders of Palestinians by the Zionist settler-state will reveal Israel's hidden agenda against a whole people. Since the beginning of the Intifada over 1,064 Palestinians have been killed.

MAY 2: Antone Louis Shoumali, 22, from Beit Shour

was shot and killed by Israeli border guards in the Bethlehem area. Shoumali was a business administration student at Bethlehem University. He died from three bullet wounds to his chest.

MAY 3: Majed Muhammad Nahhal, 14, from Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza, died of gunshot wounds in the head from Israeli soldiers who were in the camp.

MAY 4: Basem Abdel Hafez Awwad, 17, in Deir al-balah, Gaza Strip was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers. Awwad was killed by two bullets and his body was taken from the hospital and buried at a mass funeral.

MAY 5: Zakaria Mahmoud

Mushtahi, 44, a resident of Shajaiyeh quarter of Gaza City, died in Barzali Hospital from gunshot wounds sustained after being shot by Israeli soldiers. Ahmad Muhammad Barakat, 25 from Ein Beit Elma refugee camp was shot and killed by an Israeli prison guard.

MAY 7: Israeli soldiers shot and critically wounded two Palestinians in Sa'ir, Hebron area. The two injured Palestinians will be arrested after they leave the Ramallah Hospital.

MAY 8: Mahmoud Issa al-Shalaladeh, 23, from Sa'ir, died in Ramallah Hospital from wounds sustained the day before when

Israeli soldiers shot him. Sadeq Ramadan Da'na, 16, was shot and killed in Hebron by Israeli soldiers.

These are Palestinian people who were murdered by Israeli soldiers from May 2 through May 8. But this only scratches the surface of Israeli version of "just us."

There is first and foremost the economic crimes against the Palestinian people, the unemployment imposed on this people, the second-tier wage status imposed on them, the curfews, the homes destroyed and the unrecorded number of Palestinians killed and wounded during the same period. And just as in the case of Rodney King, each brutal murder is blamed upon the victim.

Whenever an oppressed people fight their oppressors this kind of "justice" will prevail. But there will come a time when the oppressed will turn the tables. It will be our turn, no matter whether it will be begun by Palestinians in Israel; Blacks in South Africa; Blacks, Latinos and women in this country; or whether it will begin by a generalized rebellion of the working class somewhere in the world.

Don't give up. Do not despair. We will prevail. We will win because there are more of us than them. That's why their guiding strategy is "Divide and Rule!" and ours is "An injury to one is an injury to all!"



George Baramki Azar

# Quayle's Morals and Ours



## ... and in this corner

By  
Joni Jacobs

Besides criticizing Murphy Brown for becoming a single mother ("thereby mocking fatherhood"), some other things vice-president Dan Quayle said last month were pretty interesting. Unfortunately, the media's focus on Murphy has let Quayle get away with some pretty outrageous comments.

Quayle's speech was a classic example of how the ruling class uses morality to justify social institutions that benefit its interests.

According to Quayle, the riots in South Central Los Angeles involved a violent underclass of people living in chronic, long-term poverty who have "far too little upward mobility, because the underclass is disconnected from the rules of American society."

"I think the time has come to renew our public commitment to our Judeo-Christian values," Quayle said. "For the poor, renewing these values will give people the strength to help themselves by acquiring the tools to achieve self-sufficiency, a good education, job training and property."

Translation: Judeo-Christian values are a means to an end,

that end being the accumulation of property. Because the underclass is immoral (disconnected from the Judeo-Christian rules of society), they don't accumulate property.

In a nutshell, Quayle said that poor people are poor because they are immoral. The flip side of this is, of course, that rich people are rich because they are more moral than everyone else.

Of course, that can't be true. If immorality leads to poverty, the Kennedys would have been on welfare long ago. They're one of the richest families in the world, yet they've had more than their share of sexual indiscretions, divorces, mistresses, and even rape charges.

Obviously, the family values that Quayle espouses aren't meant for the rich.

In "Their Morals and Ours," Leon Trotsky explained how abstract notions of morality always have a class content; they benefit one class against another.

He wrote, "Bourgeois evolutionism halts impotently at the threshold of historical society because it does not wish to acknowledge the driving force in the evolution of social forms: the class struggle. Morality is

one of the ideological functions in this struggle. The ruling class forces its ends upon society and habituates it to considering all those means which contradict its ends as immoral."

Thus, when Quayle raises his abstract notions of family values, he's trying to stop the class struggle before it sweeps his class out of power.

But what of the institution of marriage, which Quayle lauds as a cure for the inner city blues? Do unstable families breed poverty and anarchy? If all the single mothers in L.A. found husbands and played by society's rules, would they be rewarded with property?

Well, it seems to me that the looters in L.A. accumulated property the only way they could—they took it—given the staggering unemployment rates in the African American community.

Besides, unstable families don't create poverty; poverty creates unstable families. And the policies of this capitalist government create poverty, thereby destabilizing the very families Quayle shed crocodile tears for.

This government's bi-partisan phony war on drugs has done more to destabilize African American families than any "immorality" could.

That abomination has put more Black men in prison in this country than in any other country of the world, including South Africa.

The welfare system also destabilizes families by refusing to pay benefits if an able-bodied male is in the household. Given the high unemployment rate, that's like kicking the men out

of the families. Plus, by paying benefits below the poverty level, the system forces people to cheat to survive, and then it punishes the victims it catches in the act of survival.

The capitalist system itself destabilizes families.

In "The Communist Manifesto," Karl Marx exposed the hypocrisy of the capitalists quite well. He wrote, "The bourgeois claptrap about the family and education, about the hallowed correlation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of modern industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labor."

Quayle is no different. Quayle's speech was a rhetorical call to arms for conservative

forces to protect the sacred shrine of private property. That's why Quayle didn't voice one regret for the lives lost in the L.A. rebellion; he only mourned the destruction of property.

That's Quayle's morality—the rights of private property over the rights of everybody else.

His morality condemns thousands of people with AIDS to death because it costs too much to find a cure.

His morality caused hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people to die so U.S. corporations could maintain control of the world's oil supply.

His morality would rather see women die from botched, illegal abortions than allow them to control their own reproduction.

If it takes Quayle's kind of morality to get into heaven, I'd rather burn in hell.

## Socialist ACTION

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# Summit Hospital strike sets example for all of labor



Part of the crowd of over 1000 hospital workers at May 29 rally at Summit Hospital in Oakland.

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

By JEFF MACKLER

OAKLAND, Calif.—The last week of May witnessed the beginning of a militant strike by five Bay Area trade unions which may set the example of the kind of solidarity which can reinvigorate the entire U.S. trade union movement.

1700 members of the California Nurses Association; the Hospital Workers Union, Local 250; the Office and Professional Employees International Union, Local 29, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, Local 28; and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 6, shocked over-confident management negotiators when they hit the bricks over a dispute about the right of union members to respect picketlines put up by other unions at the hospital.

Management officials had predicted that union members would never strike. When they were proved wrong, they predicted that the strike would disintegrate in a matter of

days. They have now moved to import 200 scab hospital workers from as far away as Denver, Colorado.

Summit Medical Center is one of the largest private hospitals in the San Francisco Bay Area. It was recently established through a merger agreement of Providence, Merritt and Peralta Hospitals, an agreement which included a staff reduction of some 300 workers.

The 1985 Providence contract retained the right of workers to respect the picketlines of other unions at the hospital. Similar language was lost by the unions at Peralta and Merritt at about the same time.

The three-way merger provided all five unions the opportunity to regain this invaluable weapon—the power to bring the full force of all workers together against a recalcitrant, union-busting employer.

While several other issues are in dispute, including an inadequate healthcare package and an attempt by management to impose a two-tier wage system, the right to respect

all union picketlines is clearly the single most important factor motivating the striking hospital workers.

Two rallies held at the hospital site on May 27 and May 29 attracted thousands of union members and supporters. The united demonstrations brought together a powerful combination of forces that included many women workers, Blacks, Asians, and Latinos. The strikers were obviously overjoyed at their newfound power.

The May 29 Oakland rally featured the Rev. Jesse Jackson, whose appeal for solidarity was well-received. A post-rally march ended up inside the hospital where security guards initially attempted to intimidate striking workers who entered the lobby. They quickly backed off when confronted with a much larger and determined force.

A meeting called on Saturday, June 30, by the leadership of the Bay Area AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils and a number of statewide and international unions pledged

to organize mass picketing at the hospital site. Two days later, on June 1, hundreds of strikers and supporters closed down several of the main entrances to the hospital. Plans are being discussed to call a mass rally in the coming week, reaching out to the entire community and Bay Area labor movement.

Several labor officials indicated that if management's efforts to secure injunctions limiting the number of picketers was successful they would be ignored, that is, challenged. When an injunction limiting union rights was issued, pickets were seen defiantly tearing up copies of this union-busting court order.

Another issue which may yet prove to bring additional support to the striking hospital workers is the fact that the ban on abortions previously imposed at Providence Hospital has now been extended to the newly created Summit facility, according to the provisions of the corporate merger agreement.

Leaders of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) have been asked to help bring solidarity to the Summit workers.

The May 31, *Oakland Tribune*, captured the sentiments of the strikers quite accurately. The *Tribune* reported:

"X-ray technician Paul Wright said the decision to strike was difficult because, 'I've got a wife, two children and a mortgage payment.'"

"He had only one month of savings, had jeopardized his family's annual vacation and even the ability to buy his son a birthday gift. And all that after his union had worked out a 'really good' economic package, he said.

"But the choice became clear when he looked into the future."

"I just had to think of the long term, two to three years down the line," said Wright, watching with pride as his nine-year-old son walked the picket line nearby."

"If the unions gave in now, this administration would be able to pick the unions off one by one.

"I've always considered myself as having integrity," Wright said. "I don't want to go against that."

Wright's integrity is equalled by the determination of the 1700 strikers who have had enough of employer-imposed concessions and union retreat. His words are another indication that the sleeping giant of American labor will soon rise to demonstrate its power. ■

## IAM Local calls for new labor strategy

By BILL LEUMER,  
President, Local  
Lodge 565, IAM

We are reprinting below an article from the June 1992 issue of *STRAIGHT TRACK* newspaper which we think will be of interest to our readers.

*STRAIGHT TRACK* is published by the Intercraft Association of Minnesota (ICAM), which is a coalition of rail union members from various crafts and unions.

ICAM promotes the broadest participation of all rail workers in their respective unions and solidarity in action between all rail unions in pursuit of its common goals.

ICAM recognizes the importance of full cooperation between rail unionists on different railroads. Finally, ICAM points to the need for rail labor to reach out in solidarity to other sections of the labor movement as well as the general public whose lives are deeply affected by the industry.

For more information about *STRAIGHT TRACK* and ICAM write to: *STRAIGHT TRACK*, 3948 Central Ave., N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55421.

—the editors

I have been a long-time reader of *STRAIGHT TRACK* and I am sure that the initiative taken by my local will be of interest to your readers.

My union, Local Lodge 565, International Association of Machinists (IAM), has adopted a resolution calling for a new labor strategy. It has been submitted to the IAM for consideration at our national convention scheduled for late summer of 1992. The Local 565 resolution calls for a return to the fighting strategy that built the powerful industrial union movement of the 1930s and '40s.

I have taken the liberty of sending you a copy of a portion of our resolution indicating the direction of our proposals for action. Readers interested in receiving a copy of the full text can write me at 535 Day Street, San Francisco, CA 94131.

...THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the IAM use its enormous potential influence in the American labor movement to call for an emergency Congress of Labor, where rank and file representatives and officers from every union throughout the country would participate in democratically formulating a fightback program. One that meets the needs of working America and of all its natural

allies—especially women, Blacks and Latinos, and all other victims of the injustices imposed on us by corporate America. And;

That this Congress of Labor take up the need to break from the two parties of big business and to form an independent Labor Party based on the unions and democratically controlled by its membership. And;

That the goal of the Labor Party be to wage a united struggle by working people and their allies for a government which serves the interests of the great majority. Labor's motto should be: Working people make the country run—Working people should run the country!

That the Labor Party lead a return to the militant policies of the 1930s and '40s which built our unions into a mighty social and economic force. The militant mass mobilizations of millions of workers, combined with independent working class political action would make American labor the mightiest force for fundamental change this world has yet seen. The millions of currently alienated, unorganized workers would once again be inspired to join the ranks of organized labor and look to the labor movement as their own ... ■

### "State of the Black Freedom Movement in South Africa"

A report back by Michael Schreiber, co-editor, *Socialist Action* newspaper, after a two-week fact finding tour of South Africa.

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## ... NOW conference

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other potential victims.

The ability of NOW-affiliated organizations to get the feminist message to millions through the Sunday newspaper is a result of the respect—and clout—NOW won.

Its ability to mobilize powerful feminist actions shows the news media that the demands NOW raises have massive support among the population as a whole. They know that for every person who made the trip to Washington, D.C., thousands more at home support the goal of abortion rights.

### What should be our agenda?

This new national stature puts a special responsibility on NOW's 1992 national conference. It must carry the feminist struggle forward, winning new adherents and broader support, particularly among Black and Latina women, who are most supportive of feminist demands and goals.

To accomplish this, NOW should aggressively champion the needs and aspirations of women on whom the burden of sexism is heaviest: those with the least economic independence, the poor, the unemployed, and those with children to support who earn low wages.

Unfortunately, judging from the speakers at the April 5 demonstration and the performance of one of NOW's largest chapters—San Francisco—this does not seem to be the direction NOW is heading

in June of 1992, despite the national conference's theme of "Diversity." The NOW leadership's main project between now and the November general election is to elect women to office.

The women most consistently promoted by NOW are not too impressive.

Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, two Californians running for U.S. Senate, both favor the death penalty. Both supported the Gulf war. While Mayor of San Francisco, Feinstein vetoed several pieces of legislation that would have benefited women, including a pro-choice resolution. Feinstein opposed implementing comparable worth for city workers, and opposed city-funded childcare.

Both Boxer and Feinstein are big-money Democrats who speak as feminists but whose base of financial support in these high-priced senate races is the wealthy capitalist owners of real estate and industry, whose profits derive in part from the special exploitation of women.

All the women politicians NOW is promoting, with a few Republican exceptions, are Democrats.

But the Democratic Party is no friend of women. Women's rights have never been protected or advanced by the Democratic Party. Anti-woman government policies, such as cutbacks on social services and regressive taxes, are bipartisan. But the Democrats try to make it seem that only Republicans are responsible for these conditions. This lie is also being sold in the Black community in the same way.

Blacks have had a long history of experience with politicians who try to co-opt

and take credit for the Black liberation movement. African Americans fought to end the "Jim Crow" segregation laws in the 1950s and 1960s. At the time, the supporters of the "Jim Crow" laws were heavily based in the Democratic Party (its Dixiecrat wing).

After Black people built a massive direct action movement that swept away the "Jim Crow" segregation laws of the South, the capitalist politicians jumped on the bandwagon. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson took credit for civil rights

**"Feinstein vetoed several pieces of legislation that would have benefited women, including a pro-choice resolution."**

and voting rights legislation—which the movement forced Congress to pass. Johnson, who had been known as a racist Texas Congressman, became "the civil rights president."

### Political independence

Similarly, politicians are now trying to co-opt and take credit for the feminist movement. The movement can take credit for making it possible for women to run and win elections—to the degree that it has battered down sexist ideology among the voters.

But the movement should not mistake

this victory for the kind of victory possible if a woman was elected to public office as part of a labor party ticket or a Black party slate.

In other words, for an electoral victory to serve women's interests, it must be genuinely independent of the two capitalist parties. The Democrats and Republicans are two hands of the same monster, American capitalism. Neither party can represent the interests of women, Blacks, Latinos, or, in fact, any working person. The reason both these parties exist is to assure the continued operation of their profit system—their ability to exploit us.

Until that time when a real independent party, a workers' party, can be built, women's interests cannot be served in the elections.

Even if a candidate claims to support all the main feminist issues—abortion and all reproductive rights, childcare, the equal rights amendment, equal pay, publicly funded healthcare, etc.—their adherence to the two-party structure is an automatic negation of consistently defending women's rights.

NOW must continue to fight for all women's rights as an opponent of the Democratic and Republican parties, not as a participant, because these two parties are enemies of women!

The NOW conference should instead call another mass national march and educational campaign for women's rights and reach the majority who support women's rights by mobilizing our power independent of the rulers and their two-party system. ■

# Abortion services conference documents intimidation tactics of Operation Rescue



Defeated in face-to-face mobilizations with pro-choice forces, Operation Rescue is focussing on the tactic of harassing doctors and individual healthcare providers.

By JONI JACOBS

The National Abortion Federation (NAF) held its annual conference in San Diego, Calif., on April 11-13, 1992. The conference drew doctors, administrators and clinic support staff involved in providing abortion and birth control services.

As part of the conference, a panel of doctors from all across the country gave dramatic testimony on the heightened campaign of anti-choice violence directed against them.

Almost as if to highlight the need for such a panel, two abortion clinics were bombed the weekend of the NAF conference. It was believed, however, that the incidents—one in Oregon and one in Ohio—were not related to the conference.

During the panel discussion numerous examples of Operation Rescue's tactics of harassment and intimidation were reported. These included:

- A prominent pro-choice activist who

was also active in her church recently died. Anti-choice fanatics picketed at the cemetery and placed ads in the local newspapers that said the activist didn't deserve a "Christian" burial.

- A woman, 28-weeks pregnant with a hydroencephalic fetus sought an abortion, but was unable to obtain one. Once anti-choice forces found out about her attempts to have an abortion, they hounded her daily during the rest of her pregnancy, including following her and calling her home. The fetus was born alive but did not survive long outside the womb.

- A doctor lost his three year-old child in an accident. Anti-choice fanatics taunted him, saying that since he killed other people's children, it was good he lost his own child.

- A Florida doctor reported that anti-choicers plastered his town with "wanted" posters that advertised his name, address, phone number, and other personal infor-

mation. The posters claimed that the doctor was wanted for "murder and child abuse" because of his pro-choice activities.

One doctor spoke about being a victim of the anti-choice movement's new strategy of getting at doctors through their families and communities. His wife was not able to handle the constant threats and taunts of the anti-choice movement, and grew less supportive of the doctor's work. The doctor felt he had to continue to provide this vital service to women. He was forced to choose his profession over his private life, and his marriage ended in divorce.

George Tillman, the main provider of abortion services in Wichita, Kansas, spoke about what it was like during Operation Rescue's six-week siege last summer. He described an elaborate scheme that was used to get women past Operation Rescue into the clinics.

Women seeking abortions were told to

check into a certain hotel and use a cellular phone to call a secret phone number. The person on the other end would take the woman's phone number and call her back at a specified time. When the callback came, the woman was given the first name and the color of the van of someone who was coming to pick her up. She was told to stand outside of the hotel in a certain spot at a certain time, and to bring along only her identification and the money to pay for the abortion. The van picked her up and drove her to the clinic, often after regular hours.

Tillman described these schemes as reminiscent of 1965, when abortion was illegal, rather than 1991.

After the panel described these and other incidents of anti-choice terrorism, a discussion was held about how to respond. While it was acknowledged that the situation is unique and requires a unique response, two overall sentiments emerged from the discussion.

For the most part, doctors felt that fighting back—as opposed to maintaining a low profile—is a more effective strategy. It was expressed that "burying your head in the sand" only invited more anti-choice terrorism and violence.

Doctors also emphasized the importance of community support for the clinic. The better the relationship between the clinic and the community, the better the response was against anti-choice terrorism.

Despite the growing anti-choice campaign against abortion providers, a couple of positive stories were also reported. One doctor used the small claims court system to sue the local leaders of Operation Rescue for interference with her business. She was able to garnish their wages and use the money to fund abortions for low-income women.

Another doctor in Wisconsin provided a great example to all abortion providers. She had received word that Operation Rescue was going to target her home with massive picketing. After first worrying over how her neighbors would react, she decided to fight back. She organized her neighbors to protect their community by putting up lawn signs with the message that "outsiders" were not welcome in their neighborhood.

Next, the doctor organized a pro-choice block party for the day Operation Rescue was to show up and picket. When Operation Rescue arrived, they met over 500 pro-choice supporters armed with music, balloons, pro-choice signs, and food. The O.R. people were so outnumbered, their "massive" picket quickly fizzled out. ■



# "Savage Inequalities" exposes conscious racism in American education system

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

"Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools," by Jonathan Kozol, Crown Publishers, 1991.

I waited a year to read "Savage Inequalities," reading bits and pieces of it in bookstores, waiting for it to be published in paperback. Finally I borrowed it from a teacher's library. But hopefully, you won't wait so long to read this important book.

Remember the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*? In that decision the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that separate schools for Black and white children were *inherently* unequal. The ruling changed the law of the land as established in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which ruled that separate public facilities were permitted as long as they were equal.

Jonathan Kozol, in his stunning work, argues that the United States has given up on implementing the *Brown* decision by failing to desegregate the public schools. He argues that the country has gone back to (or remained in) the time of the *Plessy* decision, trying to justify separate, grossly unequal schools in the name of concepts such as "local control" and equal "minimum standards." He decries the lack of any interest or attention in implementing the *Brown* decision.

## Ghetto education

East St. Louis, Ill.; Chicago, Ill.; New York, N.Y.; Camden, N.J.; Washington, D.C.; San Antonio, Tex.

Kozol visits schools in these cities and compares the schools whose pupils are Black, Latino and poor with the nearly all-white schools in wealthy suburbs located adjacent to them.

Kozol's tour is rich in facts culled from direct observation, interviews, and research. He talks to children of all ages, teachers, administrators, and then paints for the reader an indelible picture of state governments that should be indicted for child abuse for the criminal treatment of the children they are charged with educating.

An ex-member of the Los Angeles street gang, the Crips, quoted in the *San Francisco Sunday Examiner* (May 31, 1992) said, "South central Los Angeles is a Third World country...What we got is inadequate health care, inadequate housing and inferior education. I wish someone would tell me the difference between Guatemala and south central." This is exactly the conclusion Kozol leads us to by his close examination of ghetto school systems.

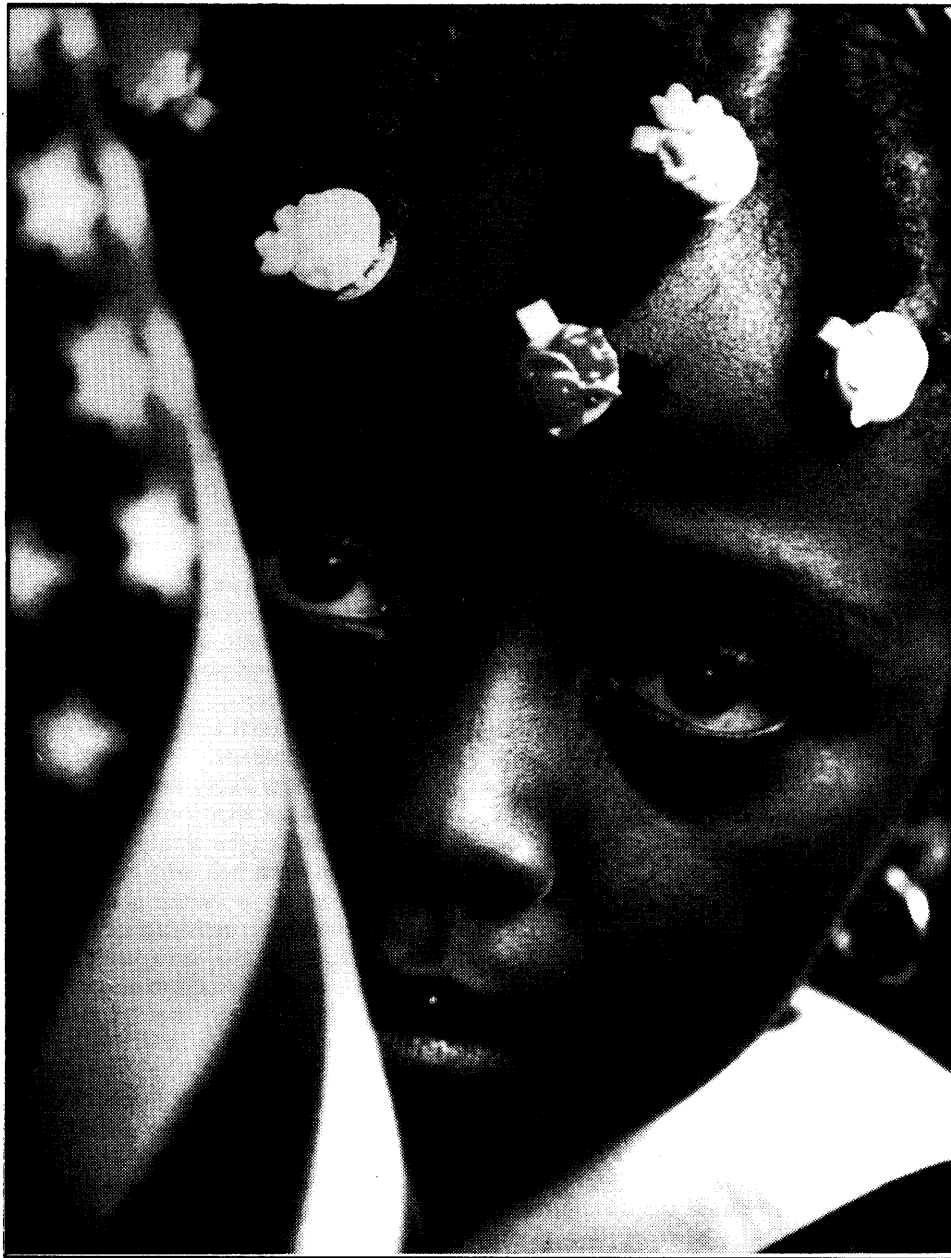
Take East St. Louis, Ill., for example—the subject of the first chapter in "Savage Inequalities." Kozol takes us on a tour of this community and its schools—called by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development "the most distressed small city in America."

The city lies downwind from some of the country's largest chemical companies and waste incineration plants. The toxic fumes from these plants poison the air, ground, and water of the community, causing diseases (such as lead poisoning). And add to these foul insults, none of these plants pay the local property taxes that are used to support the schools in East St. Louis.

The companies have created their own incorporated but unpopulated "towns" to escape any responsibility for paying their fair share (which should be 100 percent of the total!) of taxes for local public institutions, even though the toxins they produce are poisoning the children of East St. Louis.

Because the city is on land, that is subject to periodic flooding of the Mississippi River, the schools are often flooded with raw sewage and toxic chemicals.

Amazingly, East St. Louis has the



**"Ghetto schools have huge overcrowded classes. Wealthy schools have classes half the size. Poor schools do not have enough books to go around and the books are old and outdated. Wealthy schools have plenty of new books for all. ..."**

highest property taxes in the state, but the extreme poverty of its residents and the low market value of their dwellings means that there is little money to be collected.

Kozol doesn't discuss schools in a social vacuum. He connects the conditions of the schools with the conditions of the communities they are in. But he doesn't allow the poverty of these communities to stand as an argument for the children getting an inferior education. Why should it? Public education is supposed to help equalize opportunity for all children.

## Undemocratic education system

Kozol indicts the profoundly anti-democratic nature of school systems that provide an excellent education for children of wealthy families and a demeaning education (if you can even call it education at all) to the children of the poor.

This is a result of how U.S. schools are funded. He describes how funding mechanisms created for the wealthy by their political representatives in state governments use state and federal funds to subsidize their *own* children's education.

Meanwhile they allow the children of the poor to endure schools that have dangerous and ugly physical plants, overcrowded classrooms, poorly paid teachers, a lack of basic equipment (from books to sports equipment), and educational programs geared to preparing students to pass standardized tests rather than for the joys and rewards of meaningful learning.

Though East St. Louis may be the most "Third World" of the communities surveyed in Kozol's book, the savagery of the inequalities between white and Black

schools are most profoundly laid bare by the author when he compares ghetto schools to wealthy suburban schools in communities within a five minute drive of each other, such as Camden, N.J., and adjacent Cherry Hill.

Kozol looeds at class sizes, teachers' salaries, numbers of permanent versus substitute teachers, ratio of counselors to students, science laboratory equipment, sports equipment, textbooks, lunch rooms, playgrounds, and all the things that indicate the quality of an individual school.

He traveled the short distance from the schools with predominantly Black pupils to the all-white schools comparing all these indicators and finds that conditions are polar opposites.

Ghetto schools have huge overcrowded classes.

Wealthy schools have classes half the size. Poor schools do not have enough books to go around and the books are old and outdated. Wealthy schools have plenty of new books for all. Poor high schools have one counselor for several hundred to a thousand students. Wealthy schools have one counselor for 150 students. Poor schools lack showers, goal posts, basketball hoops, etc. Wealthy schools have it all, including swimming pools, several sports fields and many physical education teachers. Wealthy schools have large numbers of computers, microscopes, and well-equipped labs for science learning. Poor schools have few to none.

How can it be that in a so-called "democracy with liberty and justice for all," such gross inequities exist? Kozol blames the wealthy. They make sure that

the decks are stacked against properly funding and desegregating the schools and, in the process, lavishly funding the schools attended by their children.

## Firsthand experience

I have seen how this works firsthand. I teach in a working class community located within the wealthiest county in the country. I have the state maximum—33 children in my kindergarten class.

Most of the classes in the school I teach in are at the maximum size level. Playground equipment is at a minimum. The instrumental music program was just cut from the elementary schools altogether. There are no teachers for the arts (music, drama, dance, visual arts). The wealthy suburbs to the south of my district, however, have all these things and more. In short, the wealthier the parents—the better the schools for the kids.

The inequality in the public schools is a real indicator of what kind of a "democracy" we have in this country. Even other industrialized capitalist countries provide equal funding for all their public schools. The wealthy have blocked that possibility here by their manipulations of school funding systems—mainly through the use of local property taxes.

Kozol shows how even states that have ruled against funding inequities have been unable (or unwilling) to implement their own rulings due to loopholes created by and for the rich to insure separate and unequal schools.

This is all the more reason to remove them and their government from having any power over our lives and the lives of our children. If the lives and well-being of its children are a good indicator of a society's basic health, and I think they are, we surely live in a very sick society. Jonathan Kozol's book proves it in a most powerful way. ■

## Parental consent laws overturned in Calif.

Young women in California won a major pro-choice victory on May 27, 1992, when Superior Court Judge Maxine Chesney struck down as unconstitutional a law that required minors to obtain their parent's consent before getting an abortion.

Judge Chesney ruled that the privacy provisions of California's state constitution protects minors as well as people over age 18.

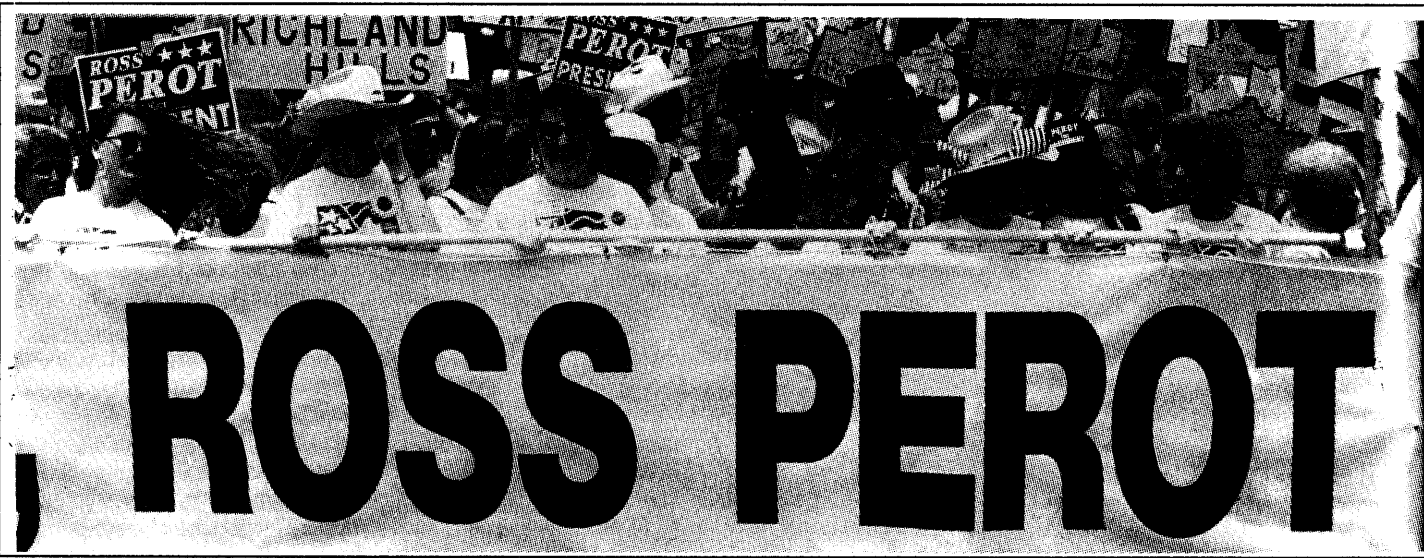
This is a very important victory for young women. In states where parental consent/notification laws are in force, young women have already died and suffered other tragedies. The best-known case is that of 17-year-old Becky Bell from Illinois. In 1989 she had an illegal abortion because she could not tell her parents about her pregnancy. She died. Her family is actively campaigning against these parental consent laws to save the lives of other young women.

Another young woman, Spring Adams, was murdered by her father, who had raped and impregnated her. She sought an abortion with the help of her mother, but was shot to death by her father when he found out. These cases point out the horrifying absurdity of such laws.

Parental consent laws also put young women at risk by forcing them to delay abortions until later in the pregnancy, when they are more dangerous. Young women who are not able to tell their parents must go through a complicated judicial bypass procedure which can often take weeks.

Judge Chesney's ruling striking down California's version of these heinous laws comes in the context of the United States Supreme Court's reconsideration of all women's fundamental right to abortion.—C.S.

# Ross Perot's campaign: Another "miracle" of capitalist democracy



David Woo—Dallas Morning Times

By NAT WEINSTEIN

Multi-billionaire Ross Perot has sprung from nowhere to be a major candidate for President of the United States. Pollsters claim that he is running ahead of the leading candidates of both capitalist parties—incumbent President George Bush and Governor Bill Clinton.

This is one of those "miracles" of capitalist democracy whereby a man without a political organization can overnight become a credible challenger for the nation's highest political post.

The Perot phenomenon is explained by two main factors. The first obviously flows from the very nature of "democracy" in capitalist countries. American capitalist democracy, more than any other, is based on the Orwellian principle that "All people are equal, but some people are more equal than others."

This works out so that those with the most dollars usually get the most votes. Thus, Ross Perot's zoom up to the status of a major contender for the presidency rests in great part on his mind-boggling personal fortune. It enables him to single-handedly impact on the consciousness of the great majority of the population.

One report in mid-May claimed Perot had only spent a piddling amount (\$5000) on his campaign. But the May 23 *New York Times* reported that he had already given \$1.25 million to a committee (unnamed) devoted to getting his name on state ballots, and that he had "guaranteed lines of credit for the Perot Petition Committee

from NationsBank of Texas totaling nearly \$2.4 million."

It was reported that Perot may spend as much as \$300 million of his personal fortune for his campaign. (And the way it works, he will get a multiple of that amount in free publicity on top of that.)

Ross Perot has been blasting the bipartisan political establishment for years. Like many a demagogue before him, much of his most effective criticism is directed at the many social and economic injustices intrinsic to capitalism. He has attacked the two parties for everything from their aggression in the Gulf War to the system of legalized bribery whereby billionaires like himself get politicians to do their bidding in exchange for contributions to their election campaigns.

Although hardly a typical "man of the people," his populist demagoguery includes scathing attacks on the soak-the-poor U.S. tax structure. In the May 25 issue of *Time Magazine* we find this typical Perot critique—right out of the horse's mouth—of the heavily biased, pro-capitalist tax system:

"Our current tax system is a very ineffective, inefficient tax system basically put together by special interests over a period of many years...The current tax system is not [fair]...The grossest inequity I have seen in my adult life is when they created the new tax system...where people like myself would pay at a lower rate than people who had a lower income...Now for me to pay a lower rate than some guy making

less than me is a joke."

However, even though Perot hammers away at Democratic and Republican misdeeds and wrongdoing, his popularity is really a measure of the unusually low esteem with which today's voters regard both capitalist parties.

It is also most likely that only the most gullible believe that Perot is a brilliant problem-solver (the richer you are, the smarter you must be), who can rescue the country from an economic malaise caused by inept scoundrels and scalawags.

Rather, it is the incapacity of the scoundrels and scalawags to stop capitalism from going to the dogs that has fueled this growing rejection of the two parties of big business.

This come-down for Democrats and Republicans alike has been a long time in the making. With each election, disillusion in both parties has been growing. Increasingly, fewer people believe that capitalist politicians can stop the country's descent into social, economic and political chaos.

And even more numbers of working people are getting wise to the confidence game played by the Democrats who yelp at the consequences of trickle-down "Reaganomics," but over the years have willingly joined Reagan, Bush, and Republican legislators in pushing through anti-working class, anti-poor legislation.

There have been few times in American history when both parties have been held in such utter contempt. And because of the lack of a credible alternative to the political representatives of the capitalist class, this

alienation had been registered only indirectly, by the steadily rising rate of voter abstention.

Thus the groundswell of support for the candidacy of Ross Perot is highly contradictory. It reflects a changing consciousness whereby conflicting perceptions momentarily coexist in the minds of most potential voters. And given the lack of a real alternative, this "rags to riches" billionaire has become a medium for venting growing mass outrage against mainstream politicians—another way of voting for "none of the above."

## Protesting electoral system

But why now? Why are more millions than ever before lashing out in protest against the American electoral system? After all, how long has it been since many people believed politicians told the truth or kept their promises?

The reason should be obvious:

American capitalism has been engaged in a decades-long campaign to bolster sagging profit rates at the expense of the American working class's living standards—an assault that has so far resulted in a significant decline in real wages for the average worker. But it has not yet succeeded in stopping the fall in the profit rate and stabilizing the economy.

To raise profits and stabilize the system, capitalists must rip considerably more out of the hides of working people. That's why the trend toward new takeback demands and strike-busting by the bosses grows. That's why *bipartisan* national, state, and local legislatures extort increasing amounts of taxes from the poor to hand over to the rich.

But this drive to reduce the workers' share of the nation's wealth is not simply due to a blind and senseless greed. The ruling class must bolster the falling rate of profit or else the incentive for investment will decline even more drastically; and with it will come a collapse of the system as a whole.

Despair and hatred of the official political establishment grows daily as more and more of capitalism's victims—especially the youth—realize that unlike previous generations they cannot hope to ever achieve the living standards of their parents, much less surpass them. Moreover, evidence keeps piling up that any real economic turnaround for the better is highly unlikely.

Keenly aware of this explosive social backdrop, Perot is basing his appeal on the fact that he is running *outside of* and *against* the Democrats and Republicans. But like his erstwhile political cohorts, Perot has no solutions for the economic crisis, which is why he assiduously avoids advancing any concrete program. ■

While many workers have so far been able to make up for reduced earnings by increasing the number of working family members, the misery of a growing minority has been intensifying.

Blacks, Latinos, women and other oppressed sectors of the working class, who have historically been *over-represented* in the ranks of the reserve army of unemployed, are sinking deeper into the ranks of the impoverished and the jobless.

But something new has been happening. Increasingly, those sections of the working class previously enjoying a relatively privileged position are being driven down to the status of the so-called "underclass." (That is, working-class people who have almost lost all hope of ever again getting a job that pays a living wage.)

The biggest surprise, however, coming after the rebellion triggered by the racist Rodney King verdict, is the widespread recognition by ruling class circles that the uprising was not just another explosion in the ghettos against racial injustice.

A headline in a May 25, 1992, *Newsweek* commentary on the meaning of the uprising was not untypical. It read: "This Was No Riot, It Was a Revolt." Nevertheless, there has been no sign that the ruling capitalists and their political representatives know what to do—beyond chanting in chorus, "We must do something!"

## L.A.—Shadow of things to come

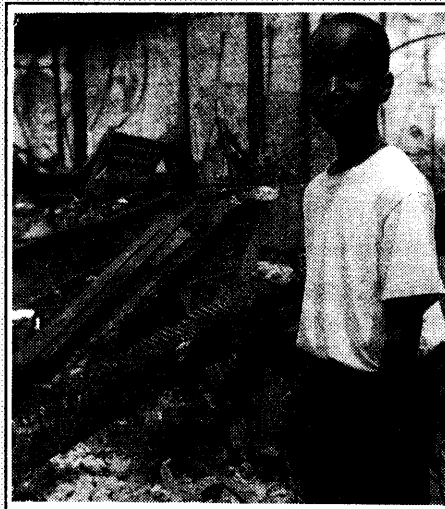
The author of the *Newsweek* piece, however, retired U.S. Army Col. David H. Hackworth, the magazine's military expert, is something of an exception.

He describes how he grew up as a poor white youth in Los Angeles in the 1930s and had run around with a mixed-race street gang, sharing their poverty and suffering the irrational shame felt by those families forced to turn to the state for "welfare" to stay alive. His story has the ring of truth.

With this as his point of departure, he tells of the despair and resentment he and his mixed-race teen companions felt then. He equates those feelings with the same moods felt by American youth in the central cities today.

He goes further, saying: "I've seen similar despair and resentment on the faces of Yugoslav guerrillas in Trieste after World War II. I saw it among Korean insurgents in 1950, and again in the five long bloody years I fought guerrillas in Vietnam. What all of these disadvantaged young people had in common was a blind dedication, a belief in the efficacy of sheer violence to achieve a kind of rough justice."

He concludes with a call for another Civilian Conservation Corps. He says such an institution, like the one established in the throes of the great depression of the 1930s, "could be orga-



nized in a job-training and reconstruction corps to lead our disenfranchised youth of all races on a campaign to rebuild themselves, our crumbling roads, swaying bridges, and to tear down the Third World ghettos and rebuild them into modern cities."

Hackworth's proposal is not without merit, and has an unusual ring of sincerity not to be expected from a representative of the reactionary U.S. officer corps. But it requires more than band-aids to pacify the fury in our cities.

And the capitalist class can't afford a cure: If the capitalist class were to foot the bill required to seriously alleviate

mass suffering—to provide jobs with a living wage, affordable housing, enough schools and teachers to educate the growing numbers of crippled minds, health care for all, etc.—the resulting cut in the rate of profit would aggravate the overall crisis of capitalist economy.

Unfortunately, the needs of the capitalist system drive it in the opposite direction. The moguls of American capitalism must go considerably further toward reducing worker living standards and raising profit rates if they hope to stabilize their increasingly shaky economic system. They have no choice. They must try to save their system by further cuts, increasing the suffering of more millions. This is their long view.

But this can only result in the creation of an ever-larger portion of the working class with nothing to lose but their misery. This means that the working class will be *compelled* to fight back.

Capitalism itself, as we can see, is paving the road toward the only way out for working people—toward the Third American Revolution. A revolution which will establish a truly democratic order extending into every nook and cranny of society—in every workplace, in every community. Real democracy—not *dollar* democracy—will lead to the abolition of all forms of social, economic and political injustice. This, in turn, will lead humanity toward creating a world socialist order based on production for human needs, not profits.—N.W.



# Thousands march to 'Save Our Cities, Save Our Children!'

By RICHARD HILL

BALTIMORE, Md.—In the aftermath of the rebellion and outrage that swept South-Central Los Angeles and the rest of the U.S. in the days following the acquittal of the criminal cops in Simi Valley, Calif., tens of thousands marched on Washington D.C. on May 16.

The march to "Save our Cities—Save Our Children," an action called by the U.S. Conference of Mayors late last fall, became a mass protest of the neglect of the nation's cities and of racial injustice.

As in recent protests around the country, the marchers were predominately Black, with one-fourth to one-third being white, Latino, and Asian. Many were African American youth who had spear-headed local protests.

Organizers said 200,000 marched, while U.S. Park Police claimed to have counted only 35,000. D.C. police estimated 150,000.

Participants represented trade unions, especially from New York and New Jersey, community organizations, homeless groups, students and teachers, churches, and political groups.

Marchers came from cities along the Eastern Seaboard, from Pittsburgh, from Atlanta; smaller contingents came from Midwest communities. A group of Native-American activists traveled from Alaska to participate. Over 500 buses were chartered from New York City alone.

From Baltimore, an estimated 7,000 par-



K. Condyles/Impact Visuals

ticipated. About 90 buses carried demonstrators, leaving from the State Office complex, from churches, from every corner of this majority-Black city.

Mary Slicher, director of a community group working with homeless and jobless men and women, pointed out in the May 17 *Baltimore Sun*, "We've had tremendous cuts in our programs. Our priorities are just so backwards. We need to put our

resources where our needs are—and I think most Americans feel that way."

Curtis Price of *Street Voice*, which organized a delegation of homeless, was also quoted in the *Sun* as saying, "The homeless have a voice, too." Several busloads of homeless women and men attended the march from Baltimore.

The "Save Our Cities—Save Our Children" march called for massive funding for

jobs, housing, education, healthcare, and the environment. Federal aid for urban programs, cut over the last decade, has left millions of children hungry, and millions of workers unable to find jobs. Demonstrators called for money to be taken from swollen military spending to fund human needs.

Politicians speaking at the march, primarily Democrats, sought to put the onus for the increasing misery of working people on the Reagan/Bush Republican administrations. They denounced the cuts as "callous Republican neglect."

However, some speakers, many signs, and numerous chants opposed the bi-partisan Republican and Democratic party enforcement of "belt tightening."

Jay Dover, a Baltimore city high school student active in a student-community coalition (Bentley Memorial Student Pantry), which provides bulk food and hot meals in the Greenmount community, was asked what brought out the four busloads from that area. He replied, "People realized we all have a stake in fighting for the empowerment of our communities. But this [May 16] needs to be a starting point."

May 16 reflected the anger and frustration working people feel today, especially Black workers in the cities. It gave them a national voice of protest against the Rodney King verdict.

For the politicians, on the other hand, it was merely pressure on the Bush Administration—nothing more. This became clear during the rally, and left many demonstrators frustrated. They realized that a single march would not win the massive funding necessary to create jobs, build housing, and so on. They were seeking an on-going organized campaign, a movement that can unite all the victims of the capitalist U.S. government's priorities.

That challenge remains for working people—to organize an effective fightback. ■

*(The following is an abridged version of an editorial in the May 17, 1992, issue of Granma International, the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party (CCP), on the events in Los Angeles and how they relate to Cuba.—the editors)*

...Barely a week ago, the sham prophet, George Bush, went to Miami in search of the Cuban vote, and proceeded to proclaim the imperial edict that Cuba would no doubt explode in the 1990s. As he read that verdict, it was actually he who was sitting on a time bomb that hours later would begin exploding in Los Angeles and 12 other U.S. cities. With his own house burning down, the hero of the Gulf War now has to recognize the short-sightedness that led him to ignore the imminent social explosions of his own country, while Cuba celebrated on May 1 a day of revolutionary glory that expressed the will of a whole nation to continue determining its own way of life.

So while those condemned by Bush were showing off their splendid political and moral hearth, the American paradise was the scene of a moment of particular exasperation and wrath. We can't help but underline that this also occurred in a country whose government tries to dictate the type of society and democracy Cuba should have; that maintains a criminal economic blockade; that allows the counterrevolutionaries and anti-Cuban terrorists to do as it chooses; that wages a high-intensity propaganda and broadcast war against us; that harasses us in all possible ways and even threatens military intervention—a possibility it has never renounced—to impose by blood and fire the restoration of capitalism.

The entrails of a society built on hate and inequality came to light in the last few days, when U.S. television showed successive scenes of the brutal beating given to Black youth Rodney King by four policemen over a year ago, in which they clubbed him 56 times in little under a minute and a half, and of the jury's acquittal of the perpetrators of that beating, greeted with applause by the audience of policemen and the joyful embraces of the accused and their ostentatious wives. It was the clamor of a justice debased.

It is obvious that the jury delivered its verdict in obedience to important U.S. power sectors. The fate of four police officers was the least of the issue. But to condemn the police just because an amateur happened to capture on videotape images revealing its habitual brutality was unbearable; it would have meant condemning police violence, and therefore the system that uses it and sustains it.

There has been talk of an explosion of violence, but violence is a permanent condition of U.S. society that has deep historical roots. There is economic violence. There is social and racial violence. There is criminal violence. And there is police violence.

...It is the explosion of the social contradictions accumulated by a society that is racist, yes, but that

## What the Cubans say about the L.A. rebellion

also exploits and discriminates against the poor, be they black, white, or immigrants of any ethnic group. It is the explosion of a system that applies the same pitiless neo-liberal model it prescribes for our countries to citizens and workers with the least resources, creating in both cases a situation in which the brunt of the effects of unemployment, reduced public spending and economic recession is borne by the poorest sectors of society.

Racial violence is in the very origins of a country that, in the words of Marti, signed its Constitution on the backs of slaves.

...This system promotes deceptive notions and scales of values, sayings, for example, that "Hispanics" are more active and prosperous than Blacks, when it would be more accurate to speak of Latin American and Caribbean peoples, many of whom are Black or mixed-race such as Jamaicans and Haitians, and suffer fierce discrimination.

The United States, the most opulent of capitalist countries, has its own internal Third World, which it treats with the same cruelty and brutality as a country located far beyond its borders. In this case, George Bush's vocation for repressing even U.S. citizens is particularly significant. He did not wait to see whether the police and National Guard could take care of the situation before calling in the army's regular troops under the command of Colin Powell, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, including units with experience in Panama and the Gulf War.

...When the disturbances subsided, the preliminary figures were 58 dead and more than 2300 wounded, 220 of whom were in critical condition. These figures are way above the number of U.S. casualties in Operation Desert Storm, and reveal the ferocity of the repression.

It is curious to see the prompt and brutal procedures, following no other law than that of war and brute force, which the government in Washington applies to the citizens it considers to be disruptive.

It is well known that this same government, its officials and the ideologues of the U.S. system are the same people who are hypocritically criticizing Cuba for being "intolerant" and sending to court—with every guarantee and without prejudicing their physical or moral integrity—the counterrevolutionary elements who play the United States' game within Cuba and break our laws; and properly punishing the terrorists trained in Florida, right under the FBI's nose, to plant bombs, murder people and set fires in Cuba.

According to U.S. sources, hundreds of the prisoners taken over the last few days in the United States were doing nothing more than protesting the acquittal of the four police officers, and neither broke any laws nor displayed unruliness. They are, therefore, political

prisoners pure and simple. And this is the government that intends to incriminate Cuba for "human rights violations"? How can this barbarity be explained?

Furthermore, what kind of moral authority can the leaders of such a system claim in order to make themselves into a universal paradigm, to decide how other nations of the world should be organized and governed?

What freedom, what justice, what equality and what real human rights can the United States truly boast of when events like this occur?

It would certainly be interesting to find out what those in the former-Soviet Union, who are now frantically imitating the United States in everything, think about this facet of the U.S. "model." Those in Russia particularly, who seem to believe that by simply reinstating primitive capitalism and turning the country over to the new bourgeoisie ... the miracle of abundance will take place. Those who stabbed socialism in the back for a fistful of dollars to later reveal their true identity as ridiculous merchants. Over there, May Day this year became a day of protest against hunger, corruption and injustice. Do they think it would be just as easy to order the Tamanskaya and Kantemirovskaya troops into repressive action if the desperate population were to take to the streets?

All the countries with serious national and ethnic conflicts that insist on a heedless and opportunistic adoration of the U.S. model should gaze into the mirror of Los Angeles. These problems can never be solved within a system of that nature.

This May Day, both in Cuba and in the United States, was also a lesson for the weaklings within and for those who, without going as far as actual betrayal, are nevertheless burdened by a lack of faith, discouragement and confusion.

...As for those who are hypercritical or weak in revolutionary spirit, if any of them still honestly believed that there is another course for our country that doesn't involve resistance and defense of our sovereignty—the revolution and socialism at any price; if any misled soul still thought difficulties could be sidestepped by giving in and making concessions, or through strange attempts to create a kind of Frankenstein that would bring together the benefits of socialism and the supposed efficiency of developed capitalism—a capitalism that certain armchair commentators think is perfect and free of contradictions—these events should be enough to bring them back to their senses.

These events in the United States tell us once again what could happen to Cuba if it were to fall back into U.S. hands. That is the model that would await us. That would be our freedom. That would be our justice and our dignity. ... ■

# Gates and Hongisto: Two sides of the same coin

Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates has been blasted by liberals as an advocate of rough-house police tactics. They point to the 56 baton blows to Rodney King's head and body by Gates' finest, as an example of a police department out of control. They and others demanded Gates' resignation and his replacement by a more "sensitive" cop. The new police chief will be Black and supposedly more in touch with the community.

We'll see. But considering the fundamental purpose of cops in our society—to protect the property of the rich—don't hold your breath expecting much positive change.

## The "People's" Cop

We in San Francisco recently experienced a "people's" cop. In fact, our top cop, Richard Hongisto, is a well-known liberal in a city full of liberals. His appointment by the former police chief, now mayor of San Francisco, Frank Jordan, was a surprise. Jordan ran for mayor as an "outsider" and pledged more law and order in a city known worldwide as liberal and tolerant.

Hongisto, on the other hand, was a member of the Board of Supervisors and county assessor. He claimed to be (maybe still is) a strong supporter of civil rights, gay rights, women's rights, and the overall liberal agenda. What more could the working people of San Francisco want?

We soon found out. In response to the jury's verdict of "innocent" for the cops who beat up Rodney King, there was not only a rebellion in Los Angeles, but large protests in San Francisco. Led by young people of all

colors, the Bay Bridge was blocked for hours, protesters marched in the financial district, and rallies were held all over the city.

What did our new mayor and police chief do? They suspended civil liberties, declared a 9:00 p.m. curfew, and decreed that all protests would be considered "unlawful assemblies."

Hongisto sent out the city's "finest" and began arresting any-

nights after office hours, Hongisto traveled the streets with his foot soldiers. He quickly became known as "the cop's cop."

## Civil Rights? Humbug!

The outcry against Hongisto's methods, however, led to protests across the city. The S.F. Board of Supervisors, who had earlier *unanimously* approved the state of emergency, refused Hongisto's and Jordan's request



one at or near the protests. Even a reporter for the national magazine, *Business Week*, was picked up in the round-up.

No one was warned before the arrests started. Many protesters were roughed up. Most were held in jammed cells for hours before being allowed to make a phone call for help. Few were charged. Even the mayor's aide was beaten by a cop, even after identifying herself.

Hongisto's blue troops enjoyed themselves. They couldn't believe how "great" a police chief they had gotten. He led the campaign personally. At

to extend it a few more days.

Even the big-business dailies cried foul—mainly because the curfew was wiping out receipts for businesses downtown.

What happened to democratic rights? Hongisto in a typical arrogant manner replied: sometimes civil liberties must be abridged to protect the greater rights of the public. Law and order, he added, is what the people of San Francisco deserve and want.

Sounds familiar doesn't it? You've heard military dictators in Latin America, Africa, and Asia argue the same point to



## Which side are you on?

By  
Malik Miah

deny "their" people their basic democratic rights.

Yet most American politicians and cops are taught not to say such things in public. We Americans fought hard for our civil rights and don't take lightly our rights being thrashed. Cops are told to keep mum in public while trampling on civil liberties in practice. Gates and other other top cops have done so for decades.

Hongisto was so taken by his "success" in keeping the S.F. protests under control, he decided to go after other critics. After the Bay Area free newspaper, the *Bay Times* ran a doctored front page photo of Hongisto with a night stick thrusting upward from his groin, Hongisto "suggested" to three cops that they remove hundreds of copies of the paper from news racks. They did so.

The public uproar, coming on the heels of his mass arrests of protesters, led Jordan's hand-picked Police Commission to fire Hongisto. The point was obvious—and disingenuous: it was Hongisto who violated civil rights, not the mayor or other top city officials.

## A Cop Is A Cop

What lessons can we draw from the Hongisto affair? Many liberals are wringing their hands

trying to rationalize how their "friend" Hongisto could be so brutal and undemocratic. They have all decided it was a personality problem. Wrong.

I submit: Gates and Hongisto are flip sides of the same coin. So are the handful of Black police chiefs and the few top female cops. A cop is a cop is a cop. Liberal or conservative. Black or white. Male or female.

Gates and Hongisto have the same job: protect the property of the well-to-do; and arrest workers, especially minorities, when they protest injustice. Civil liberties be damned if it interferes with their job.

What working people want—particularly what Black people demand—is a police force under *their* control. They want an end to police terror. They want the four LA cops who beat King fired and charged under federal law. Blacks want an end to the police occupation of their communities.

We can't win all of this yet. That will take a mass revolutionary movement that throws the ruling rich out of political power. But through mass protests now—using our democratic rights won in struggle—we can push back the cops and their puppeteers in the city, state, and federal governments. ■

By GERRY FOLEY

The tumultuous events in Bangkok, beginning with a mass demonstration estimated at 200,000 persons on Sunday, May 17, and ending with the flight of Premier Suchinda Krapayoon at the end of that week, are a dramatic illustration that we are far from a new age of capitalist expansion and stability.

In fact, the explosion in Thailand came not long after the rebellion in Los Angeles, and the latter was used by the Thai rulers as an example that bloodshed may be necessary to preserve order in the best of houses.

In the May 20 issue of the leading Dutch daily, *NRC Handelsblad*, Willem van Kemenade, summed up remarks of the Thai vice-premier, Samat Sundarawee, at a press conference as follows:

"The vice-premier justified the shooting of unarmed citizens with a reference to Los Angeles where 53 were killed. He said that this was the only solution, because otherwise the entire city of eight million inhabitants would have been torched."

The Thai premier was more vulnerable, however, than his American counterparts. Fearing for his skin, he had to run for his life. The coalition of five parties backing him appeared totally discredited and unable to form a government.

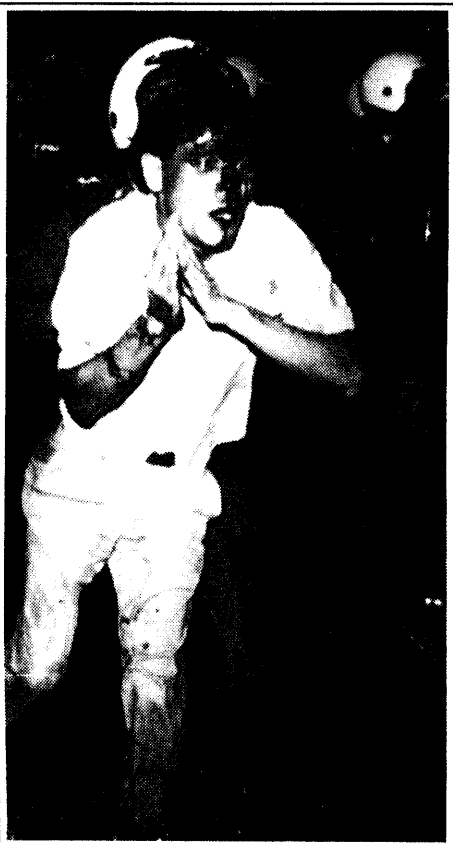
## "Success story" unravelling

Thailand is supposed to be one of the success stories of capitalism in the underdeveloped world, one of the hard-driving "dragons" of Southeast Asia.

However, the economy grew in a chaotic way, causing huge social problems. About 10 million rice farmers were driven off their land into the shanty-towns that account for 20 percent of the population of Bangkok.

Much of Thailand's foreign currency has come from "sex tourism," that is, mass prostitution of women and children, a

## Explosion in Thailand: One of the 'dragons' starts to fall



Pongseak Chalyanuwong—APP

great many of whom have been forced to sell themselves because of the ruin of the rural economy. It is expected that by 1994, 10 million people in the country will be infected with the AIDS virus.

Furthermore, the ruling class, in particular, the generals, who form one of its most venal components, are deeply involved in trading in the narcotics that originate in the so-called Golden Triangle. The country has become a jungle of crooked trading and corruption.

A correspondent of the *Volkskrant*, Mieke Kooistra, wrote in the May 21 issue of the Amsterdam daily that the Thai military was far more devoted to business than fighting. He referred to a border clash with extremely underdeveloped Laos in 1968, in which the Thai forces gave a poor account of themselves. "Before that during the Vietnam war, the Americans had to recognize that the Thai army was useless."

On the other hand, "Everyday in the English dailies published in Bangkok, there are special publicity supplements, thick, many-colored brochures put in for the opening of a new factory or office complex.

"Everyone of these brochures opens with greetings from the governor—a military officer in gold braid. Whether it is Bangkok's ambitious harbor project, an educational institute, or a telephone company, a military man is always at the head. His function is generally symbolic. But that says volumes about the position that the armed forces assume in Thai society. The Thai military, moreover, have their own commercial bank, golf courses and other businesses."

Since the parliamentary system was established in 1933, the military has staged 17 coups, and allowed civilians to rule only 12 of those 60 years. The present crop of gorilla profiteers are in close cahoots with the South African and Burmese military.

It is undoubtedly true that the spread of wealth and social differentiation in Thailand has made it more difficult to maintain military rule. The leader of the opposition, General Chamlong Srimuang, is a bourgeois politician, whose program is limited to denouncing corruption and call-

ing for a return to the values of ascetic Buddhism. He called on the demonstrators to stick to pacifist forms of protest. But the big press version of the Thai upsurge as a "Yuppie revolution" is clearly a distortion. It had a very radical dynamic.

Police posts were attacked and burned around Bangkok. The demonstrators were largely young, and the students played a major role, even though the revolutionary organizations that existed in the 1970s upsurge were destroyed.

## "Suicidal heroism"

In the May 20 *NRC Handelsblad*, Kemenade described the situation after the initial mass demonstration: "There is a mood of massive popular anger, and there seems to be more than a minimal disposition for suicidal heroism. For the entire night, tens of thousands of people, largely students but also middle-class people, occupied strategic points at Ramkhamhaeng University and blocked them with heavy trucks.

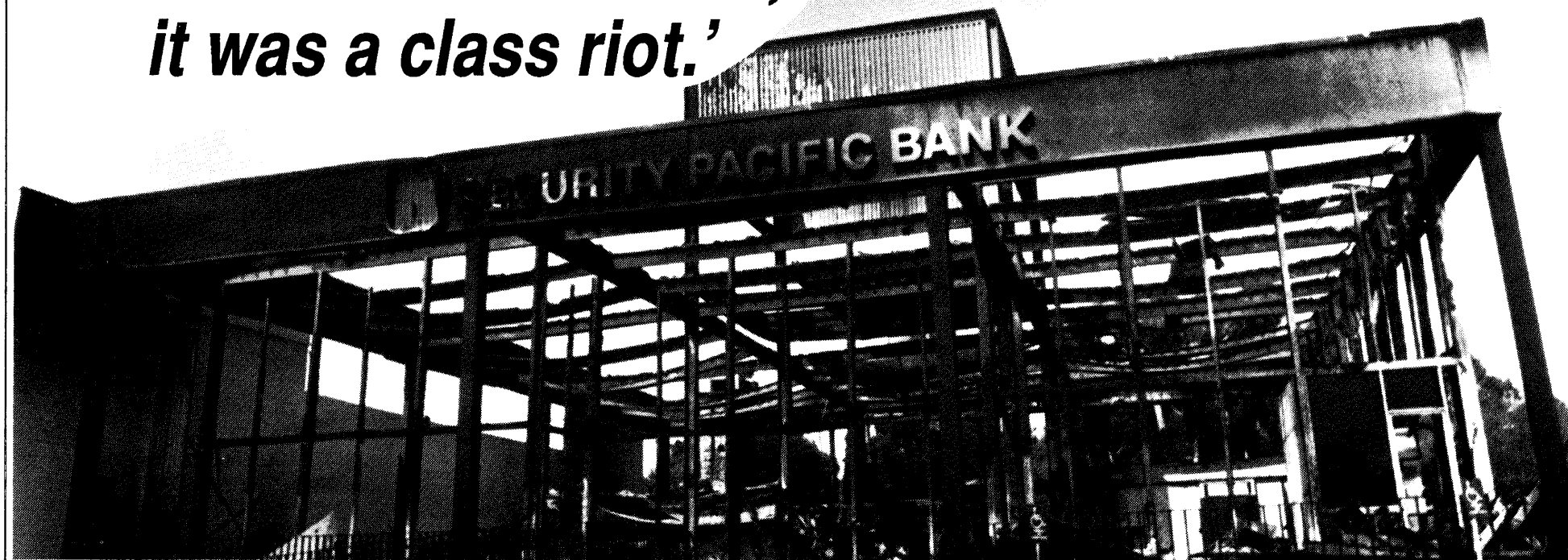
"Students danced on the trucks and shouted slogans for hours against Suchinda.... About 4:00 or 5:00 a.m., columns of young bikers brought information or rumors about troop movements on the capital. They were cheered like heroes."

The protests against Suchinda assuming the premiership, when he had been elected by no one and had promised not to take official leadership of the government, undoubtedly offered an opportunity for the downtrodden and alienated to express their accumulated anger against the brutal exploitation and humiliation of the Thai people.

Now that the pot has boiled over, all the bourgeois political forces in the country are apt to find that it will be hard to get the lid back on. There is now an opportunity for rebuilding a revolutionary and working-class alternative in one of Washington's bastions in Southeast Asia.



**'This wasn't a race riot,  
it was a class riot.'**



Kathleen O'Neil/Socialist Action

The quotation in the headline above is taken from a special report in the May 11 edition of *Newsweek* magazine. This one-sided judgement by urban sociologist, Joel Kotkin, that class—not race—propelled the protests, nevertheless helps explain the depth of the uprising in South-Central Los Angeles. The intolerable conditions being suffered by Latinos and even white workers in this community spurred them to take action in solidarity with their Black sisters and brothers when the outrageous Rodney King verdict was announced. This is what triggered and gave force to the powerful response throughout that city and across the United States.

But it was the fundamental issue of racial

## Editorial

oppression that detonated the rebellious outbreak. All Blacks, including the most successful, become victims of racism in general and police brutality in particular. At the same time, it was the generalized misery suffered by all sections of the working class in the central cities that explains the multi-racial composition of the protesters and the exceptional force of their combined action.

*Newsweek's* analysis summed it up this way: "The elements of race and class mingled and combusted with tremendous heat, setting off secondary eruptions in San Francisco, Seattle, and Atlanta."

# THE MEANING OF THE REBELLION IN L.A.

This event reveals for the first time how deeply broad sectors of the working class have been affected by the relentless decades-long ruling-class assault on workers' living standards. It also marks the latest and most convincing proof that the coming American Revolution will combine a workers' struggle for class liberation with a Black struggle against superexploitation and national oppression.

### The spark igniting the tinderbox

When four white cops were caught on videotape in the act of beating Black motorist Rodney G. King within an inch of his life while he was being arrested for a traffic violation, the U.S. ruling class was put on trial in the eyes of America and the world. The repeatedly televised video, showing 81 seconds of one of the most brutal beatings ever captured on film or tape, allowed the whole world to eye-witness a day in the life of Black America.

A widely held belief that the King beating was not unique was confirmed by a

*Washington Post/ABC News* poll. This poll, taken after the King verdict, showed that "three quarters of the whites questioned agreed with the all-but-unanimous feeling of African Americans that the system of justice was loaded against them."

The sequence of events leading up to the trial of the four cops was more than enough cause for suspicion about the outcome. A judge was easily found who shifted the trial from multiracial Los Angeles to Simi Valley, a comfortable white middle-class suburb favored by white cops retiring from the LAPD. Then, in line with well-established racist patterns, a jury was selected without a single African American on the panel.

Subsequently, the only surprise in this racist jury's decision was the sheer nakedness of its upside-down verdict: The jury ruled that the prostrate and helpless Black victim was the criminal, and that the four gun-toting, club-wielding cops were his intended victims!

A reaction from the Black community

was only to be expected. But the fury of the uprising in South-Central Los Angeles—which spread to cities across the land—exceeded all expectations.

Most surprising of all was the widespread recognition in the nation's media—as was most sharply expressed in *Newsweek*—that the rage registered by these uprisings went far deeper into the basic structure of capitalism in America—deeper than just a reaction against police brutality and the racist foundation of American "justice."

A typical analysis was contained in a May 3 *New York Times* story titled, "Decades of Rage Created Crucible of Violence." The author, Don Terry, comments: "...the acquittal of the four police officers ... was only a spark put to the tinderbox of anger built up over years of deep poverty, governmental neglect, racism, charges of police abuse and high unemployment."

In fact, the economic situation for African Americans has grown even worse

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The following are excerpts from a speech by Malcolm X at the Corn Hill Methodist Church in Rochester, N.Y., on Feb. 16, 1965—only five days before he was assassinated. The complete speech is published in the book "Malcolm X: The Last Speeches," edited by Bruce Perry and published by Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

They accuse us of what they themselves are guilty of. This is what the criminal always does. They'll bomb you, then accuse you of bombing yourself. They'll crush your skull, then accuse you of attacking him. This is what the racists have always done—the criminal, the one who has criminal processes developed to a science. Their practice is criminal action. And then use the press to make you victim—look like the victim is the criminal, and the criminal is the victim. This is how they do it.

...They take the press, and through the press, they beat the system... Or through the white public. Because the white public is divided. Some mean good, and some don't mean good. Some are well

## As Malcolm X said...

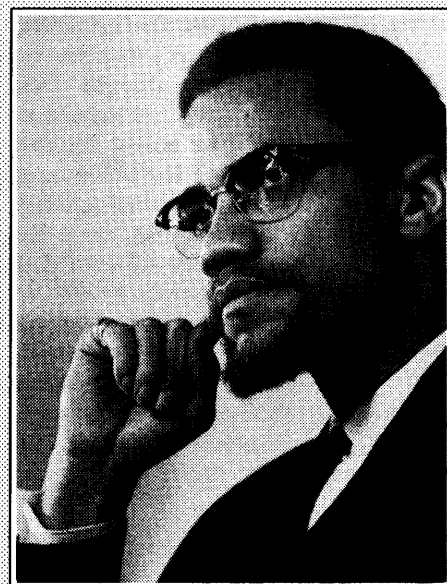
meaning, and some are not well meaning. This is true. You got some that are not well meaning, and some are well meaning. And usually those that are not well meaning outnumber those that are well meaning. You need a microscope to find those that are well meaning. [Applause]

So they don't like to do anything without the support of the white public. The racists, that are usually very influential in the society, don't make their move without first going to get public opinion on their side. So they use the press to get public opinion on their side. When they want to suppress and oppress the Black community, what do they do? They take the statistics, and through the press, they feed them to the public. They make it appear that the role of crime in the Black community is higher than it is anywhere else.

What does this do? This message—this is a very skillful message used by the racists to make the whites who aren't racists think that the rate of crime in the

Black community is so high. This keeps the Black community in the image of a criminal. It makes it appear that anyone in the Black community is a criminal. And as soon as this impression is given, then it makes it possible, or paves the way to set up a police-type state in the Black community, getting the full approval of the white public when the police come in, use all kind of brutal measures to suppress Black people, crush their skulls, sic dogs on them, and things of that type. And the whites go along with it. Because they think that everybody over there's a criminal anyway. This is what—the press does this. [Applause]

This is skill. This skill is called—this is a science that's called "image making." They hold you in check through this science of imagery. They even make you look down upon yourself, by giving you a bad image of yourself. Some of our own Black people have eaten this image themselves and digested it—until they themselves don't want to live in the Black



community. They don't want to be around Black people themselves. [Applause]

It's a science that they use, very skillfully to make the criminal look like the victim, and to make the victim look like

(continued on page 11)



## 'You got yourself into this, now sit down!'

By BARBARA PUTNAM

LOS ANGELES—On Saturday, May 3, the First African Methodist Episcopal Church and other community groups called for a demonstration at 12 noon at Parker Center in downtown Los Angeles to protest the Rodney King verdict. The call for the demonstration had been widely broadcast on Radio KPFK, which had been announcing numerous demonstrations, such as one at UCLA, all day.

Five members of the National Organization for Women (NOW), including this reporter, who were attending the NOW State Conference in Burbank, mustered up a car and got big, red, round signs that declared "Stop Racism NOW" and went to check out the noon demonstration. When we got downtown, we saw about 200 demonstrators rounding the corner at Third and Broadway and we joined them. They were glad to see us and pushed us to the front of the demonstration.

Within five minutes, however, we were totally surrounded by a large number of police, who began to shove demonstrators and yelled at us to get on the sidewalk and sit down in front of the Security Pacific Bank at First and Broadway. Many of us asked to leave, but the cops blocked our path, jabbed their batons at us, and harshly spit out, "You got yourself into this, now sit down!" At

no time did they ask us to disperse, although later, we were all charged with "failure to disperse."

We began to chant, "We come in peace, you come in violence!" Soon, hundreds of National Guardsmen arrived, spilling out of jeeps and vans and snapping their bayonets onto their rifles as they jogged toward us. Little kids with their moms started to cry. Several young Black women courageously stood up and



This was a picture story that hid the fact that these people were arrested

tried to calm everybody.

An elderly Black man, carrying an exhibit of the Rodney King beating, also tried to keep us from feeling afraid. Finally, the cops roughly grabbed us one by one and handcuffed us and took us to waiting buses, where men and women were segregated from each other.

We spent hours in the bus. Some women had to get their handcuffs taken off because their hands had swollen in the heat of the day. Finally, we ended up at the Van Nuys jail. We were booked, fingerprinted, and left in holding cells, with

one telephone for over 30 women. We heard several different stories from the cops concerning what they were going to do to us. Ultimately, all of us were charged with "failure to disperse" and had to raise a bond of \$250 in cash, pending a court appearance scheduled for the last week of May.

As I was being fingerprinted, I told one of the station officers that nobody told us to disperse. He admitted that he knew there had been no order to disperse and that the order to arrest us "came from way up there," referring to the political powers that be.

The next morning, I searched the *Los Angeles Times* for news of our arrest. I found only a photo with no comment. However, the big story of the day was how the National Guard and police had been the peaceful ushers of a protest demonstration of 30,000 Koreans protesting the damage to their businesses. The second big story was the cleanup campaign billed as the big "ray of hope" of the day. Our demonstration had been totally crushed and then blacked out.

All the NOW sisters who were arrested with me said they were glad they went through this experience. As one put it, "Now I know how Rodney King felt."

After returning to the Bay Area, I called one of the NOW sisters. The following message was on her answering machine: "I'm not taking any calls, I'm out in the streets protesting the fact that the police now have the right to beat people senseless—and so should you [be protesting]."

## ...L.A. rebellion

(continued from page 9)

since the urban uprisings of the 1960s. Average Black unemployment for the 1980s was over 11.4 percent, nearly three times the rate for whites (4.1 percent). Among Black teenagers, unemployment stands at a constant 50 percent, and over 40 percent of all Black children are growing up in poverty.

Furthermore, over the last decade funding for social programs in the inner cities has dropped to 60 percent. One of the most telling statistics, which clearly reveals the pent-up rage in the Black community, shows that there are more Black males in prison than there are in college—one out of four Blacks is either in prison or on parole!

On-the-spot television newscasts clearly showed that the fury of the protesters was directed at a "system" that shut them out and condemned them to lives of poverty. Virtually everyone interviewed cried out for jobs that could provide a decent living and decent housing. This forced the capitalist mass media to take note of the underlying economic and social cause of the outbreak of mass protest. It couldn't be denied or ignored.

Moreover, growing public awareness of corruption in "the system" has forced itself onto mass consciousness. Disenchantment with the status quo deepens every time capitalist crooks are caught red-handed—looting savings institutions and banks, cheating on government contracts, swindling insurance policy holders, and others engaging in such criminal activities.

In fact, never in history has there been such a rogues' gallery of swindling bankers, brokers, corporate executives, politicians, and high government officials (including a U.S. president and vice-president) caught in the act of megabuck larceny and political chicanery. And more often than not, these crooks are punished less severely than petty thieves—when punished at all.

### Media creates a "white backlash"

However, the capitalist media has also worked overtime to create the basis for another "white backlash" like the one they created and nurtured after the ghetto explosions of the 1960s. At that time, one of their poison-pen journalists went so far as to concoct a story alleging the existence of a "Blood Brotherhood." It was a pure invention, never substantiated, in which unnamed Blacks were alleged to be plan-

ning murder and mayhem against whites.

Today, virtually every news account of the Los Angeles uprising includes the word "violence" in its title. The daily death toll was reported like scores in the World Series. And the false impression was driven home that it was Black and Latino "rioters and looters" killing innocent whites.

But the fact is that of the 58 people who were reported killed during the first week of the revolt, all but 14 were Black and Latino (26 Blacks, 18 Latinos, 2 Asian, and 10 whites). This strongly suggests that it was cops who did the killing.

Moreover, the "looting" that the media focused on was a drop in the ocean compared to the systematic looting by the capitalist class of social services, public school budgets, welfare funding, funds which provide medical assistance to the poor, and so on.

Nor have the media noted the really big-time looting of workers by a tax policy that has been steadily shifting the costs of government from the rich to the poor. Nor have they noted the biggest looting operation of the century—the decades-long capitalist assault on workers' wages and benefits. Living standards of American workers, once the highest in the world, are now second-rate and sinking.

And when it comes to violence, the people lashing out in the streets of the ghettos and barrios can't hold a candle to the wholesale violence of the American capitalist class. The U.S. infant mortality rate, alone, tells a grim tale of the violence systematically being done to the nation's working class children. The death-rate of children in the United States is higher than that of many "Third World" countries—higher even than Cuba, a poor country whose misery is intensified by a U.S. blockade. That statistic alone tells us who is really doing big-time violence, and to whom it is being done.

### Solving the crisis of leadership

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the Los Angeles-centered rebellion is that the great force expressed in the uprising is evidence of the much broader revolt of working people gestating beneath the surface of American society.

The second conclusion we can draw from the reaction to the King verdict is that victims of capitalist injustice possess earth-shaking power when they are driven to the point of mass rebellion.

But the third and most important lesson is that without effective leadership and without a program around which the power of the exploited and oppressed masses can

be effectively focused, spontaneous rebellions are not enough—just like gasoline without cylinders and pistons to focus its explosive power.

Up to this moment, unfortunately, such a leadership with the courage to lead and an effective program for action has yet to emerge. The current leaders of the Black communities have so far made no visible attempt to point the way forward.

But experience teaches us that every generation finds and selects, from those among them, people willing and able to lead the struggle forward. The generation of the 1950s and '60s found its Martin Luther Kings and Malcolm Xs, and the generation of the 1990s will also find leaders who will lead.

Furthermore, the crisis revealed by the fallout from the Rodney King verdict affects the working class as a whole, which also has not yet solved the problem of leadership. Nor is it a coincidence that this challenge to working people in the central cities comes on the heels of the defeat of the United Auto Workers, the most powerful industrial union in the country, in their strike against Caterpillar, Inc.

There is great consternation among all AFL-CIO members at the paralysis of their top union officials in the face of the capitalist offensive—just as there is among Blacks, Latinos, and others suffering from urban poverty and decay. However, new worker leaders will emerge, and if history is any guide, this generation of militant trade unionists will also select from its ranks leaders willing and able to effectively lead the coming fightback.

But leadership is an empty term if considered apart from a program of action. In the context of the challenge facing them today, we think the following proposals meet the current needs of the working class and all its natural allies—Blacks, Latinos and other oppressed minorities—and points the way forward.

### For an emergency action alliance

There is indeed an emergency that calls for action—now! On top of all other causes of discontent, 14,000 people have been arrested in connection with the rebellion in Los Angeles.

On May 6, it was reported that 6600 protesters were still being held without charges. Ordinarily, they must be released if charges have not been made before the legal limit of two days has expired.

But the California legislature took emergency action on the same day that the two-day limit expired—extending the holding period without charges to an

unprecedented seven days!

The vote upholding this fundamental violation of human rights was passed by a shocking majority of 62-0 in the California Assembly and 33-0 in the Senate. (Would these lawmakers act as swiftly and decisively in the true interests of justice?) This gives authorities time to concoct phony felony charges against those who dared to protest against police brutality, juridical injustice, and political and economic repression.

Moreover, tomorrow, as in the past, the same high-handed repressive measures will be taken against working people who dare to take action in defense of their jobs, their living standards, and their human rights. It is time to take a stand. It is well past time for labor to again abide by the principle, "An injury to one, is an injury to all!"

An emergency alliance for action is on the order of the day. Labor and all its natural allies should organize for marches and demonstrations around demands that serve to unite all victims of racial, economic, and political injustice. Even one big demonstration in just one city could set off a movement that cannot be easily stopped.

In the first place, united-front demonstrations should include demands focusing on the Rodney King verdict and its consequences:

Bring the Criminal Cops to Justice! End Racism and Sexism in America! Stop Repression of Black and Latino Communities! Free the Thousands of Los Angeles Protesters Now! The current police occupation of the Black community should be replaced by a community-controlled police force drawn from residents of the community.

A second list of demands should address the problem of permanent and increasing unemployment, hitting hardest against the oppressed nationalities. Demands would include:

Affirmative Action/Jobs and Justice for All! 30 Hours Work at 40 Hours Pay! A Massive Public Works Program to Rebuild the Cities! Build Housing, Schools, Mass Transit—NOT MORE PRISONS! Convert War Production to Serve Human Needs! Stop Government Looting of Social Services! Tax the Rich, Not Working People!

And finally, the need for working people to break from the two parties of big business becomes more urgent every day. Independent working-class political action in the streets of America, as has been outlined above, would be a giant step toward an independent party of labor open to all its natural allies. ■



BY MALIK MIAH

## Why I refused to condemn "looting" in Los Angeles

My first night back at work at United Airlines in San Francisco, the hot topic of discussion was the ongoing "riot" in Los Angeles.

While most of those I talked to condemned the jury for acquitting the four white cops for their beating of Rodney King, several of my white co-workers, all young, defended the decision. They instead demanded swift action against the "criminal looters." They echoed the belief of one juror person, who said: "They" would have rioted even if we convicted the cops.

A common argument was: "You only saw 21 seconds of the video. The media only showed the worst part. But the jury saw the entire video (81 seconds) and knew what occurred before King was arrested. King refused to cooperate with the police. The video shows he tried to get up."

Incredible. Yes. But what's more revealing is the fact that no amount of facts or history could change their minds. Herb Caen, a popular San Francisco columnist, got a similar response from his readers ("Redneck Country North," he called it) after he condemned the racism of the verdict.

Police brutality and what we all saw—even if it was only 21 seconds—was secondary, in the opinion of some co-workers, to the fact that King had refused to

"cooperate" with the cops. One worker said: "He did it to himself."

Now while this attitude was a minority viewpoint among whites based on nationwide polls, it was a majority in my 11-person crew, which is almost all white. How could they see the verdict and respond so differently than I and most other Blacks?

Even the whites I work with who agreed with me on the injustice of the verdict did not agree that cops and the criminal justice system are racist. In fact, all placed equal or greater condemnation on the "rioters."

### Riot or rebellion?

I told them I will not condemn the "riot," because there is no equal sign between racism and the response of the victims to their oppression.

Moreover, there is a big difference between a riot and a social rebellion. According to *Webster's Dictionary* a riot is "disorderly behavior; tumult." But a rebellion is "open resistance to, or defiance of, any authority."

What we clearly had in LA was open defiance of authority. Blacks, Latinos, and some Asians and whites, went to the

streets to protest an injustice. Even rival gangs united in action.

The slogan, "No Justice, No Peace!" summed up that anger very well. It was far more than disorderly behavior. It reflected the political content of the protests. It was in the fine tradition of the first American revolutionaries who threw tea into Boston Harbor. The problem was, of course, there was no leadership taking the rebellion beyond immediate striking out at the powers that be.

I didn't expect most of my co-workers who are white to agree with all my points. But I did expect some to listen. Instead, one white guy who thinks the workers who clean United's planes are less than equal (human) because they do that type of labor, angrily shouted in response: "Look in the mirror. You hate all cops. You're a racist."

That's the first time I've been told that. I'm a racist for refusing to condemn the "riot" and for calling the four white cops and the jury's ruling racist.

### "Two Nations"

There is a growing polarization in our society. It is fueled by the rightist policies

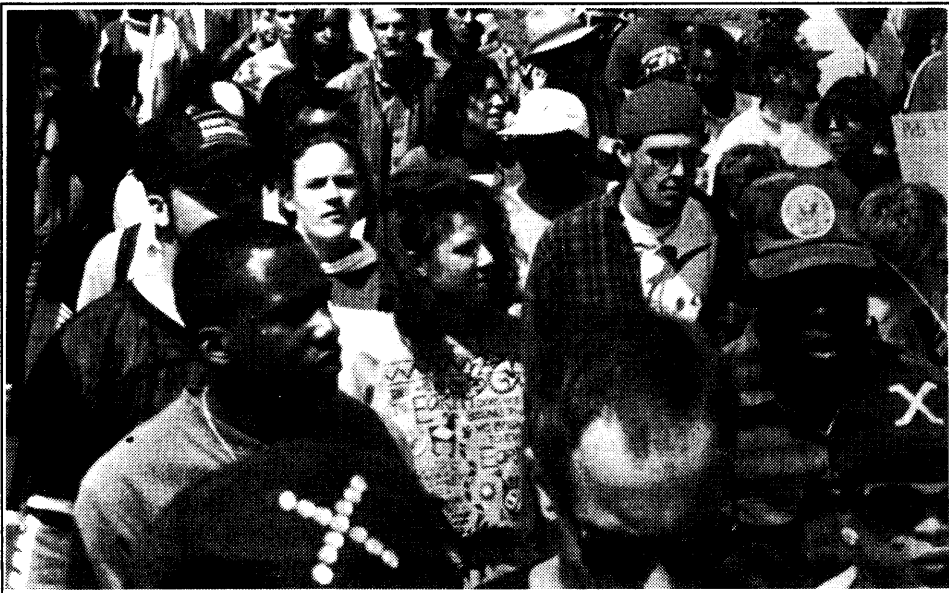
of the government and employers. That's why racism—institutionally and in ideology—is alive and well in America. That's one lesson of the Rodney King verdict. It isn't just Simi Valley. It permeates our society. It will take a social revolution to begin to end it.

Legal equality isn't true equality. Why? Racism is used by the white rulers (there are no Blacks in the ruling class) to maintain their rule over the vast majority of workers who are in a majority white. They get white workers to think job losses, poor housing, and inferior education, are caused by Blacks moving into their neighborhood or getting "their" jobs.

In Andrew Hacker's book, "Two Nations," he asks whites to put a price on Blackness: "What would you demand for being turned into a Black person?" And the answer was simple: \$1 million per year for life. Every white person is completely aware of their privileges for being white in America.

The rebellion in LA was for a simple reason: Blacks are not considered or treated as equal citizens. We are considered less than human by many whites. We are treated without dignity.

The King verdict was the straw that broke the camel's back. That's why I refuse to condemn the "rioters" and why I say there can be no peace until there is justice for Black Americans. ■



Lynn Henderson/Socialist Action

Large size of Minneapolis protest was spurred on by local police brutality.

## Demonstrations sweep the country

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Outrage swept the country following the announcement of the police-brutality verdict in Simi Valley, Calif. From small towns to the inner cities—from Peoria, Ill., to New York's Times Square—people demanded justice. It was the largest spontaneous mobilization in this country since the beginning of the Gulf War.

Black youths took over the streets in Milwaukee and Madison, Wis. Protesters in Seattle blocked rush-hour traffic on a major freeway. Atlanta was placed under a curfew as state troopers battled protesters for two days.

National Guard units were mobilized in Las Vegas, Nev., to put down the rebellion there. In Denver, police attacked a peaceful Cinco de Mayo festival in the city's Chicano neighborhood.

But most of the protests were peaceful. Demonstrators marched through Fort Wayne, Ind., singing "We shall overcome." In Philadelphia, 150 protesters rallied in front of City Hall the day after the decision. A larger demonstration was planned for Saturday, May 9.

Over 1000 took part in a May 1 protest march in Midtown Manhattan on May 1, and several hundred more marched in Harlem. Close to 400 teenagers demonstrated in Brooklyn.

Many of the protest marches were led by high school and college students. On some campuses, the day after the verdict was announced, instructors dismissed classes early to permit their students to attend protest meetings. Even grade-school children in some communities held protest

rallies in their schoolyards.

High school students led a march through Berkeley, Calif., on April 30. Police arrested 396 of the protesters when they blocked the Bay Bridge to San Francisco.

On May 5, over 400 students gathered at the University of California, Berkeley, where they presented a list of demands to a representative of the university chancellor. The students linked the racism displayed in the Rodney King episode to their own demands for a college of ethnic studies, increased African American, Chicano, and Native American student admissions, and "fair and equal" tenure for faculty.

In Boston, about 500 people rallied in the center of the Black community on Friday, May 1. When Sen. Ted Kennedy arrived, he was booed and hissed, and so he left without speaking. The next day, about 150 demonstrated in front of the Boston police headquarters.

On May 4, Black high school students led a demonstration in front of the Cambridge City Hall on "Cambridge Police Appreciation Day." On May 5, an emergency meeting of 350 was called by the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts and the Boston NAACP.

In Amherst, Mass., students at the University of Massachusetts took over the administrators' offices to protest "institutional racism," which they said led to verdicts like the one concerning Rodney King.

At the same time, antiracist protests in solidarity with the U.S. actions were held in Stockholm, Calcutta, Toronto, Berlin, and other major cities of the world. ■

## 6000 protest King verdict in Twin Cities

By CYNTHIA BURKE

MINNEAPOLIS—Downtown traffic here came to a halt on Saturday, May 2, as thousands protesting the Rodney King jury verdict poured into the business district.

The action, organized by the Black community in just two days, was one of the biggest in the nation, and it was the biggest mobilization seen in the Twin Cities for some time. The organizers estimated the crowd size at 6000. The central theme of the march and rally was a call for the prosecution and jailing of the LA cops.

The march, which began in the heart of the North Minneapolis Black community, had quadrupled in size by the time it reached the culminating rally in front of City Hall. The march brought out the Black community in force, with about a third of the protesters being white and Native American.

Conspicuously absent were uniformed Minneapolis police. Rally organizers told police their presence was neither needed nor desired. Minneapolis police chief Laux's decision to "honor" the wishes of the movement is being ascribed, by him and the local media, to sympathy with the marchers' cause.

The truth is that Police Chief Laux needs to save face, given the violent record of the Minneapolis police department and others in the Twin Cities area, and the effective exposure of this record by a powerful local anti-police-brutality movement.

In 1989, an elderly Black couple sleeping peacefully in their home was killed by a stun grenade lobbed by cops in a so-called drug raid in which no drugs were found. Neighbors of the couple who saw what the police were preparing to do warned the cops that the senior citizens were inside sleeping, but the cops went

right ahead. Police Chief Laux's comment on the senseless killing of the couple was: "This is a war we are fighting, and in a war there are casualties."

A few days later, a party attended by young African-Americans at a downtown hotel was raided by Minneapolis police, who broke a young woman's wrist, showering on the party-goers such epithets as "coon," "nigger," "bitch," and "cow."

Again in 1989, a cop in the suburb of Inver Grove Heights shot two 13-year-old Hmong boys in the back while the boys were running away from him.

In early 1990, a multi-jurisdictional police force from four cities, including Minneapolis, used attack dogs to storm a peacefully assembled group of African-American mourners outside a hospital. Those attacked were relatives and friends of a young man who had just died at the hospital.

Later that year, St. Paul police shot in the back and killed a mentally ill, homeless man who was fleeing them.

In late 1990, Tycel Nelson, a 17-year-old Black youth was shot by a Minneapolis cop in the back while Nelson was kneeling on the ground.

These are only some of the recent atrocities, all of which have been answered with militant protests led by Black community leaders who also led the May 2 march—such as Chris Nisan, currently Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress, Keith Ellison, attorney and leader of the Coalition for Police Accountability, and others. These protests have relied on mobilizing the community in rallies, demonstrations and picket lines that are laying bare that vicious underworld of officially sanctioned police violence in the supposedly liberal Twin Cities area. ■

## ... Malcolm X

(continued from page 9)

the criminal. Example: In the United States during the Harlem riots, I was in Africa, fortunately. [Laughter] During these riots, or because of these riots, or after the riots, again the press, very skillfully depicted the rioters as hoodlums, criminals, thieves, because they were abducting some property.

Now mind you, it is true that property was destroyed. But look at it from another angle. In these Black communities, the economy of the community is not in the hands of the Black man. The Black man is not his own landlord. The buildings that he lives in are owned by someone else. The stores in the community are run by someone else. Everything in the community is out of his hands. He has no say-so in it whatsoever, other than to live there, and pay the highest rent for the lowest-type boarding place, [Applause] pays the highest prices for food, for the lowest grade of food. He is a victim of this, a victim of economic exploitation,

political exploitation, and every other kind.

Now, he's so frustrated, so pent-up, so much explosive energy within him, that he would like to get at the one who's exploiting him. But the one who's exploiting him doesn't live in his neighborhood. He only owns the house. He only owns the store. He only owns the neighborhood. So that when the Black man explodes, the one that he wants to get at isn't there. So he destroys the property. He's not a thief. He's not trying to steal your cheap furniture or your cheap food. He wants to get at you, but you're not there. [Applause]

And instead of the sociologists analyzing it as it actually is, trying to understand it as it actually is, again they cover up the real issue, and they use the press to make it appear that these people are thieves, hoodlums. No! They are the victims of organized thievery, organized landlords who are nothing but thieves, merchants who are nothing but thieves, politicians who sit in the city hall and who are nothing but thieves in cahoots with the landlords and the merchants. [Applause] ■

## S.F. cops arrest hundreds in gestapo-style crackdown

SAN FRANCISCO—Citing the danger of "mob violence" following the Rodney King verdict, Mayor Frank Jordan imposed virtual martial law upon this city's Black and Latino neighborhoods. Curfews were in effect for two consecutive nights. Some 1600 people—including many shoppers and residents going to or from their homes—were arrested in the police clamp-down.

On Friday evening, May 1, a group called Roots Against War called a peaceful "speak-out" at 24th and Mission Streets, in the heart of this city's Latino neighborhood. But the meeting was not permitted to proceed. Although it was not yet curfew time, the police, in riot gear, surrounded the crowd of nearly 400 and arrested everyone.

Several newspaper reporters and photographers, including the editor of *Business Week* magazine, were also thrown into the paddy wagons despite their frantic attempts to show their press credentials. Other bystanders only escaped by ducking into shops that still had their doors open.

The following first-hand report was given to *Socialist Action* by Jerry Caldwell, a student at City College of San Francisco.

My mother and I were going to a demonstration that we had heard was supposed to take place at 24th and Mission. As we were getting out of our car, I saw some other students from City College that I recognized. They told me that the cops had already broken up the demonstration—I think they were already arresting people. It was only about 7 p.m. on Friday—still daylight and well before the 9 p.m. curfew.

The students told me that they were going to regroup in the Castro district. As we were walking down 18th Street toward Castro, we saw a row of cops lined up across the street. We had to turn into a small street—Hartford St. Then the cops blocked us from both ends so we couldn't escape. They arrested everybody.

One guy tried to run away. They caught him, and I think they roughed him up a bit. There was a handicapped woman there, too. The cops took her cane away from her because it was a "weapon." They made everyone sit down in the center of the street. We asked the other people—there were about 100 of them—why they were there. Only about three-quarters of them had come to demonstrate. A quarter of the people were just bystanders.

The cops started cuffing us. I asked them, what are the charges? Have I broken any laws? They just told me to be quiet. Some students from S.F. State University began to chant: "We never got an order to disperse!" Everyone joined in.

Then they separated the females from the males, so I was separated from my mother. We were put on a bus and joined with people who had been arrested at the initial demonstration at 24th and Mission. We were driven to a big warehouse, on Pier 28, on the waterfront.

I could see hundreds of people already there, who were enclosed in pens made out of police barricades. There were about 150 people in each one. As we arrived, they cheered us, and we cheered back. I saw other people that I knew from City College. Again, no one could give us an answer about what laws we might have broken.

Finally—it was maybe about three in the morning—they started to take us out of the pens. We asked the sheriff's deputies where they were taking us. They refused to answer. We were expecting to simply be fingerprinted and let go. Instead, they took us on buses over the Bay Bridge to Santa

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action



Over 1500 demonstrators—mostly students and mostly white—converged on the Calif. State Bldg. in S.F. on the day following the Rodney King verdict

Rita prison.

At Santa Rita, they put us in a big pen surrounded by a 25-foot-high fence with razor barbs on the top. We arrived about 4 a.m. It was real cold, and a lot of people only had T-shirts and jeans. Some people had to stay outside like that all night.

Then they threw us in a holding tank with only a cement floor, one bench, and one exposed toilet. About 25 of us were packed on top of each other there like sardines. I might have slept 15 minutes—that's all. On Saturday afternoon, they gave us a lunch of an orange and some kind of pimento-baloney-type sandwich. That was all the food I received in my 27-hour's custody.

After they frisked us one more time, we were put into the regular prison housing unit, called a "pod." The cells there had two bunks each.

Finally, I could sleep—but not for long. The sun was still high when I awoke to my name being called on the intercom. I sprang out of bed, and was taken by a guard back to the holding tank.

I had been lucky. My mother had been able to reach her boyfriend by telephone, who then bailed us both out. They brought us back to police headquarters on Bryant Street and processed us. It was about 10 p.m. on Saturday night, when I got out. Many people had to stay in jail much longer.

### Repression deepens as Bush visits L.A.

By KATHLEEN O'NAN

LOS ANGELES—On May 7, George Bush came to town. While touring the area of the rebellions in his 35-car motorcade, Bush remarked, "This is just wanton lawlessness." He vowed, however, that the devastated areas will be rebuilt.

Joseph Duff, president of the Los Angeles NAACP pointed out that although most people think Bush is doing something, "he's offering nothing more than the customary stuff that's offered by the federal government when there's a disaster."

"Bush is missing the point," Duff explained, "if he is going to come here and talk to us about hoodlums and thugs, give us small business loans, and leave. We're looking for substance. We're not going to accept Band-Aid solutions."

Similar statements greeted Bush at several protest demonstrations during his Los Angeles visit.

Over 500 people marched through exclusive Beverly Hills on May 7, to join in the protests against racial discrimination and police violence that have been seen throughout Los Angeles County. Chanting, "Free the 14,000! Indict the Guilty Cops!" and "No Justice, No Peace!" the demonstrators attracted friendly support from most of the residents whose homes they passed and from many of the employees at the expensive shops and boutiques.

In addition, a protest demonstration was held at MacArthur Park, the center of the Pico-Union area, which had been ravaged the previous week by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and LAPD raids.

The L.A. police broke into countless apartments on the pretext of looking for "looters." Then, contrary to city and state laws, the police turned over to the INS hundreds of people who lack documentation of legal residency.

Over 350 people have already been deported to Mexico. At least 200 more are incarcerated at the INS Detention Center, awaiting deportation to Central America. Not one of the deportees has been charged with criminal activity or possession of "looted" goods.

Of the 14,000 people currently in police custody, over 2000 are described by the LAPD as "illegal aliens." The INS has arranged "detainers" for more than 700 of these people, which means that the police will turn them over for immediate deportation as soon as they are released from county jails.

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# The two faces of Stalinism in the U.S.

## Can the Committees of Correspondence learn from the past?



By JEFF MACKLER

(This is the last of a four-part series on the split within the Communist Party, USA.)

For the past 35 years or so, my father, who was a lifelong member and then sympathizer of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), insisted virtually every time we discussed the question that, "There is no such thing as Stalinism. Stalin is dead," he said. "Stalin died a long time ago."

This has been the refrain of the Communist Party USA since 1956, when the then Soviet head of state and party, Nikita Khrushchev opened but a few pages of the book on Stalin the man. The CPUSA and its top Stalinist leader, Gus Hall, lockstep with their Soviet mentors, also took some distance from the person of Stalin.

The man who led in the physical annihilation of the central leaders of the 1917 Russian Revolution, who presided over the murder of tens of thousands of Soviet communists and millions of others who resisted his counterrevolution, was said to have made some "mistakes."

The difference between Stalin and Stalinism, the central subject of this final article on the CPUSA and on its offspring, the Committees of Correspondence (COC), is vitally important to all those who struggle for socialism.

What is the difference between Stalin the man and Stalinism?

It is now freely admitted by his former adulators that Stalin was the central person responsible for mass murder, for the subjugation and repression of the national minorities in the USSR, for the destruction of the democratic soviet system of government established by the 1917 revolution, for anti-semitism, sexism, homophobia, and great Russian chauvinism, and for many other crimes against humanity.

But what of Stalinism? Isn't there some truth to the argument that these crimes died with the man?

It would be useful in answering this question to outline the basic features of Stalinism so that readers can come to their own conclusion.

### A counterrevolutionary current

1) Stalinism was and remains a counter-revolutionary current in world politics. It is based on the subordination of the interests of the Soviet masses and the world's working class to the privileges of the middle class Stalinist bureaucracy.

The "ideology" of Stalinism was based on the "theory" of "socialism in one coun-

try" according to which "defense of the USSR," in reality defense of the privileges of the bureaucracy, was the paramount concern of the Soviet state.

2) Anything which threatened the privileges and stability of the bureaucracy, from opposition by the working class and oppressed nationalities in the USSR, to revolutionary developments outside its borders that threatened to interfere with the status quo the Stalinists had established with world imperialism, was to be sharply opposed.

3) By the middle to late 1920s, the Stalinist bureaucracy smashed workers democracy in the soviets and in the workplaces of the USSR. It usurped political power.

After the soviets established by the 1917 revolution were destroyed, their central leaders were murdered along with virtually the entire leadership of the Communist Party. All power was vested in Stalin's person and in a bureaucratic caste of privileged functionaries who administered the state, party, police, and army.

4) Lacking a social base in the working class or among the vast peasantry, and having only a parasitic relationship to the progressive nationalized economy, the bureaucracy was compelled to institutionalize a system of mass repression to preserve its rule.

5) The international policy of Stalinism was dictated by the need to defend the conservative bureaucracy. In practice, this meant almost 70 years of negotiated deals with world imperialism. The interests of those struggling against capitalist exploitation and national oppression were traded by the Stalinists in exchange for concessions by imperialism to strengthen the Soviet bureaucracy.

This is the origin of the "two-stage" theory of revolution according to which a "national democratic" stage in underdeveloped nations had to precede a socialist revolution.

In reality the so-called national democratic revolution was based on the formation of coalition capitalist governments where economic and political power remained in the hands of the ruling rich. Local Stalinist parties and their supporters were allocated governmental posts, and sometimes great influence, provided only that capitalism was not challenged at any "stage."

6) In the advanced capitalist nations, Stalinists promoted a policy of class collaboration, supporting the "lesser evil" candidates of the liberal wing of competing capitalist parties, or, where there were mass working-class based Communist parties, as

in France and Italy, tying these parties to the political and economic policies of capitalism.

In every instance, the policy of Stalinism was reformist, not revolutionary. Its essence was an alliance with "progressive" capitalists to preserve the capitalist state.

7) Stalinism differs from social democracy, another reformist current in the workers' movement, to the extent that it gives political support to and is dependent on this or that wing of the world Stalinist movement. The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), for example, looks to its own and to world capitalism for its political ideology and practice as opposed to the Soviet bureaucracy.

With this brief summary of Stalinism, an assessment of the CPUSA and the Committees of Correspondence (COC) will become clearer.

### Reliance on the Democratic Party

The newly-organized Committees of Correspondence is planning its first National Conference for Berkeley, Calif., July 17-19. The conference call is titled, "Perspectives for Democracy and Socialism in the '90s." Its first paragraph states:

"The choices and actions socialists and others on the left make have the potential to influence the course of the 1992 elections and to help shape the social and political movements in our country for decades to come."

On this central issue, the 1992 elections and capitalist politics in general, both the CPUSA and the Committees of Correspondence are in essential agreement. Both advocate and practice a strategy of support to the Democratic Party, a capitalist party of war, racism, sexism, homophobia, poverty and environmental destruction.

Members of the CPUSA and the COC do not limit their support to the Democratic Party to mere admonitions to vote. They are often active participants in this party, taking on major responsibilities.

In the case of the CPUSA, the party has not deviated from support to the Democratic Party since the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Not a single article in the ongoing discussion pieces published by the COC in preparation for their national conference questions support to the Democratic Party from the level of national politics down to local candidates.

The press and publications of the COC and the CPUSA insist that the defeat of George Bush must be the number one political priority of the American left. As the primaries have proceeded, their preferences have shifted from Harkin, to Brown,

to Clinton, all the time bemoaning the absence of Jesse Jackson as a candidate.

### Relations with the former USSR

Prior to the August 1991 failed coup in the USSR, the still-united CPUSA had two contending currents. The Hall wing favored, and still does, a return to power of the neo-Stalinist bureaucracy which led the coup.

The forces that split some six months later to become the COC, preferred the other wing of the bureaucracy; the wing, then in power, led by Mikhail Gorbachev. It mattered little that both components of the bureaucracy favored the restoration of capitalism.

Equally important, the fact that the contending elements within the Soviet bureaucracy spent the past five years in a stepped up frenzy of negotiated deals with world imperialism, was of little concern to the CPUSA and the forces that were to become the COC.

The imposed settlements in Namibia, in Angola, the cutting of aid to Nicaragua, El Salvador and Cuba, and the abject alliance with U.S. imperialism during the genocidal Gulf War, were not factors to consider. Whatever the Soviet bureaucracy decided, the American party supported.

Today, the COC is presently, perhaps temporarily, without a visible current in the former USSR to look to for political guidance. The CPUSA seeks a return to power of the old-guard Stalinist hardliners, by force if necessary.

The COC does support several Stalinist formations still struggling for accommodation with their national capitalist classes.

In El Salvador, for example, the COC looks to the FMLN, especially to the wing led by Salvadoran CP head Shafik Handel. The latter seeks to establish a coalition capitalist government with the Christian Democratic Party.

In South Africa, the COC supports the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the African National Congress (ANC) position in favor of a coalition capitalist government with the De Klerk regime.

The SACP and the ANC, despite the fact that the Black population represents the overwhelming majority of South Africa, seek a settlement which fundamentally preserves white power and privilege.

The SACP is fully aware that a challenge to white capitalist rule would require the revolutionary mobilization of the South African masses.

The same was the case with Nicaragua, and, in fact, in every nation on earth where the rule of capital prevails, including in the United States.

In each of these nations the working class and its allies among the oppressed represent the great majority. They possess the power to change their lives and, in the course of their struggle to change the world, to begin the construction of socialism worldwide.

The central tenet of revolutionary socialism is the establishment of the democratic rule of the majority everywhere.

The history of this planet has demonstrated that no ruling class has ever abandoned its power and wealth without using all the force and violence at its disposal to block majority rule. Hence, the task of genuine socialist revolutionists is to mobilize the great majority in opposition to capitalist rule.

The worldwide Stalinist movement stands in first place as "the gravedigger of revolution." Understanding this historically-established fact is the prerequisite to the further advance of the revolutionary movement.

The COC has embarked upon a period of conscious self-criticism, having discarded some of the backward and reactionary Stalinist positions of the past, including rejection of the struggle for the democratic rights of gay men and lesbian women, and rejecting the environmental movement. It has also rejected its past opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment.

But it has yet to even consider a fundamental balance sheet of the experience of American and world Stalinism. Until this task is put on the agenda for discussion, debate, and resolution, no lasting progress will be registered by those who seek to reclaim the banner of Marxism and renew the struggle to build the mass revolutionary socialist party. ■

# Azerbaijan: Another bastion of Stalinism begins to fall

By GERRY FOLEY

The breakdown of Stalinist rule in the former Soviet Union is now clearly spreading to the republics of Islamic tradition, where the Communist Party, in nationalist disguise, has remained firmly in control. Challenges to the ruling bureaucracy by organized oppositions in Azerbaijan and Tadjikistan have already led to confrontations bordering on civil war.

These developments represent the opening of an important new stage in the collapse of the bureaucratic system, whose contradictions are particularly explosive in the Caucasus and Central Asia. In these areas, the standard of living has been about half that of the European parts of the former USSR. Unemployment is estimated at over 20 percent. Skilled jobs have gone largely to Russian newcomers.

In the March 5 session of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan, the People's Front and the Democratic Bloc demanded the resignation of the president of the republic, Ayaz Mutalibov. They accused him of taking Azerbaijan into the Commonwealth of Independent States illegally and of refusing to form an independent national army.

The continued presence of Soviet army units was supposed to have been responsible for the scope of the slaughter in Khodzhal, an Azeri town in Nagorno-Karabakh captured by local Armenian forces. In fact, it was the defeat of Azeri forces in Nagorno-Karabakh that gave the opposition an occasion to mount a challenge to Mutalibov.

Under the pressure of mass demonstrations, the neo-Stalinist president was forced to resign and a caretaker government was put in place.

In the wake of the failed Soviet neo-Stalinist coup in August, the Azeri party boss had managed to get himself elected overwhelmingly as president of "independent Azerbaijan." The main oppositionist organization, the Popular Front, was still in tatters after the defeat it suffered in January 1990, when the Soviet army crushed an Azeri national uprising in Baku and some other towns and areas.

## Defeat and repression

In the whole process of the rise of the national democratic movements in the ex-USSR, only in Azerbaijan did such a movement suffer a grave and lasting defeat. It became isolated from other democratic movements because it allowed itself to be drawn into a competition in chauvinist drum beating with the Azerbaijan Communist Party.

Following its defeat, the Front suffered both from splits and repression. It was marginalized for an entire period, in which the Communist Party and government resumed the leadership of the anti-Armenian campaign. It was in this situation, after the failed neo-Stalinist coup in Moscow, that Mutalibov was able to outflank the Azeri national democratic movement for a period, declaring Azerbaijan independent and sweeping the presidential elections.

In fact, the Azeri Communist Party tried to ride the wave of anti-USSR feeling, while maintaining its essential connections with the Great Russian Stalinist bureaucracy. The neo-Stalinist wing of the all-Union CP, led by Yegor Ligachev, demonstratively supported Azeri chauvinism. To this day, the principal publication of neo-Stalinism, the battered but unreconstructed *Pravda*, outspokenly aligns itself with Azeri chauvinism.

In Azerbaijan, unlike the other non-Russian republics, the local Communist authorities and their all-Union big brothers, actually promoted Azeri nationalism, or chauvinist distortions of it. This reflected their aim of combating the Armenian national democratic movement, which was the first to touch off a mass

struggle, as well as a long-term policy by Moscow of fostering Azeri chauvinism.

Despite the complicity, and even leadership of the Azeri People's Front in the anti-Armenian campaign, the Armenian national democratic leadership defended it against Soviet repression. The Baltic People's Fronts were able to arrange direct negotiations between the Armenian and Azeri national movements, although they quickly broke down.

Nonetheless, the Azeri People's Front was a popular movement, which had to struggle against the Communist Party authorities to gain political rights. It also

the deposed party boss to his position.

Immediately, Mutalibov announced that he had been watching the Armenians take control of all of Nagorno-Karabakh, and he was determined to take the strongest measures, up to establishing a dictatorship, in order to stop the advance of the Armenians.

He also announced he would put an end to the conflicts among Azeri political parties and movements that had supposedly prevented the Azeri people from uniting against their primordial enemy—that is, the Armenians.

That evening, the first decrees of the

Leonid Ogarev—ELSEVIER



Oppositionists to Stalinist government demonstrate in Tadjikistan.

*“Massive resistance developed immediately against Mutalibov’s strongarm move. Some 50,000 people gathered outside the headquarters of the People’s Front.”*

reflected the genuine grievances of a nationally oppressed people (oppressed by Moscow, not by Armenia). Furthermore, other opposition groups have developed, such as the Democratic Bloc.

The recent events make it clear that the Communist Party leadership, even decked out in nationalist clothing, was unable to convince the Azeri people that it was devoted to achieving their national liberation.

While the defeats suffered by Azeri forces in the Nagorno-Karabakh offered the Front an opportunity for attacking the CP government, they were undoubtedly not the only issue for the Azeri people. In fact, the Armenian enclave is not an obstacle to the national liberation of the Azeris.

Thus, the CP could not save itself by adopting a nationalist disguise. Its change of coloration only reflected its weakness, and it was only a matter of time until the national democratic forces resumed their offensive from more favorable positions.

Like their big brothers in Moscow, the neo-Stalinists in Baku tried to recoup their positions by a coup, and its failure decisively weakened them. On May 14, a special session of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet was to hear a report on the Khodzhal massacre. In connection with this, Mutalibov was invited to attend.

The report absolved him of any responsibility for the disaster. Then it was proposed that he be reinstated as president. The bulk of the deputies, unreconstructed CP apparatchiks elected in rigged elections, voted overwhelmingly (with only two against and six abstentions) to restore

restored neo-Stalinist government were read over TV. Mutalibov named a new minister of the interior. A curfew was established for Baku for two months. The activity of all political parties and groups was suspended. Special permission was necessary for entering or leaving Baku. Martial law was established in the city. Military censorship was imposed on the press.

## Thousands mobilize to resist

Massive resistance developed immediately against Mutalibov’s strongarm move. Some 50,000 people gathered outside the headquarters of the People’s Front. In protest against the removal of the old minister of the interior, the police joined the demonstrators. People’s Front self-defense units were already in place to protect the demonstration.

On the following day, May 15, half a million demonstrators marched on the government buildings. They were joined on the way by peasants coming from the countryside. The marchers came under heavy fire from buildings on the route, but managed to occupy the Supreme Soviet building as well as the radio and television center.

At 7:40 p.m., the minister of defense, R. Gaziev, a member of the People’s Front, announced that the Front had taken firm control of the Supreme Soviet building, that only the presidential palace remained in the hands of the Mutalibov government and was being protected by Commonwealth of Independent States military forces.

Gaziev said that the Front wanted to

avoid bloodshed, but was prepared to storm the building. That evening, Front forces were able to occupy the palace without fighting. Mutalibov had fled.

The National Council rescinded the party bosses’ decrees. An agreement was reached May 18 for a coalition government, including both the Front and the less hated old CP notables. On the same day, the Supreme Soviet met, with hundreds of thousands of demonstrators gathered outside. It unanimously voted for ousting Mutalibov.

At 2:00 a.m., May 19, the Supreme Soviet voted to dissolve itself. Until the new presidential elections occur, full powers devolved on the National Council, renamed the “National Majlis.”

On May 19, the Front candidate for president, Abdulfaz El’chibey, went on TV to promise, “there can be no question of a dictatorial regime. The National Front is determined to continue along the road of the democratic rebirth of the republic.”

The Front seems to be in command. However, it is not a homogenous body. Furthermore, it is ruling in coalition with other forces, including sections of the old CP bureaucracy. Nonetheless, it is clear that the stability of the Stalinist bureaucracy has been shattered. Azerbaijan has been plunged into a seething political cauldron.

Now, as in the past, the greatest danger is that the mass movement will be diverted into a war with the Armenians, from which it can gain nothing, regardless of who wins militarily. The Front itself has armed units involved in the fight in Nagorno-Karabakh.

On May 19, “a delegation of entrepreneurs” offered the Front money to finance military operations. These “entrepreneurs” are most likely elements of the old bureaucracy trying to reconvert themselves into “patriotic” capitalists. The Turkish government itself threatened to intervene militarily on the Azeri side, but retreated quickly after a warning from the Russian military.

The Azeris suffered another major military defeat on May 19, when Armenian forces captured the village of Lachin between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. In so doing, they opened the road across the narrow strip of Azerbaijan separating the enclave from Armenia and ended the blockade that the Azeris mounted around Nagorno-Karabakh.

Moreover, this seems to represent not merely a military victory. The area separating the enclave from Armenia is inhabited by Kurdish people, who have begun demanding their national rights and seem to have allied themselves with the Armenians.

## Situation of other nationalities

The Azerbaijan republic is much larger than its estranged neighbor. But unlike nationally homogeneous Armenia, Azerbaijan is a multinational republic. And not only Armenians have been subjected to national oppression in Azerbaijan, but Kurds and other nationalities of Muslim tradition.

One such nationality is the Lezgians, numbering about a million, according to its leaders. This nationality is divided between Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation.

On September 29, 1991, an assembly of representatives of the Lezgian people called for restoration of their statehood. The May 15, 1992, issue of *Russkaya Mysl’* republished an article from the Russian independent publication *Express-Khronika* by Usman Kanberov, the editor of the Lezgian *Lezgistadin Khabarar*.

Kanberov wrote: “The misdeeds of the Azerbaijani Communists toward the Lezgians are well known. Almost half of the 670 thousand Lezgian minority in Azerbaijan are registered as Azeris. In the schools of the Lezgian regions, the Lezgian language is not taught, there are no radio programs in the language, and our people are not mentioned in Azerbaijan’s schoolbooks.”

The Lezgian movement, Sadval (Unity), seeks unification of the Lezgian people in an autonomous republic in the Russian Federation, and therefore the secession of

(continued on next page)



## German strike wave

# Europe's most powerful working class begins to stir

By GERRY FOLEY\*

The warning strikes of German public workers at the end of April and beginning of May mark the fading of the interlude of capitalist glory that followed the reunification of the country and the dismantling of the collectivized economy in East Germany.

One of the pillars of world capitalism has begun to look shaky, sending tremors through the world's big business press.

In the first place, the determination of the workers showed a buildup of explosive potential. For example, in the second week of the strikes, an illustrated magazine staged a stunt, sending actors dressed as soldiers to try to requisition the trucks of garbage collection workers, in the name of a governmental declaration of emergency. The workers, who did not know that they were not facing a unit of real soldiers, refused to obey their orders. They tore up the emergency order and blocked the way.

What is more, when the well-heeled and well-ensconced German trade-union bureaucracy tried to settle the conflict behind the backs of the workers, surrendering their fundamental demands, they were dealt a resounding rebuff. Since the workers, however, had no alternative leadership, the strikes ended; but the climate of social partnership and conservative consensus was deeply shaken.

The leading German magazine, *Der Spiegel*, wrote that the conflict had led to a defeat both for the trade-union leaderships and the bourgeois Kohl government. "The politicians and the unions have lost touch with feelings in broad sections of their voters and members."

The public workers union, the ÖTV, (which includes transport workers) voted 55.9 percent against the agreement. *Der Spiegel* commented: "The ÖTV tops were dumbfounded by the vote. Such a sharp rebuff of the president is unprecedented in the history of the organization."

Uniting public workers from transport to garbage collection, the ÖTV and its allies wielded enormous potential power. Some 2.5 million workers joined in the struggle. This was the first major strike action by the ÖTV since 1974, when it forced Willy Brandt to resign from the chancellorship.

### Inflation, reunification, takebacks

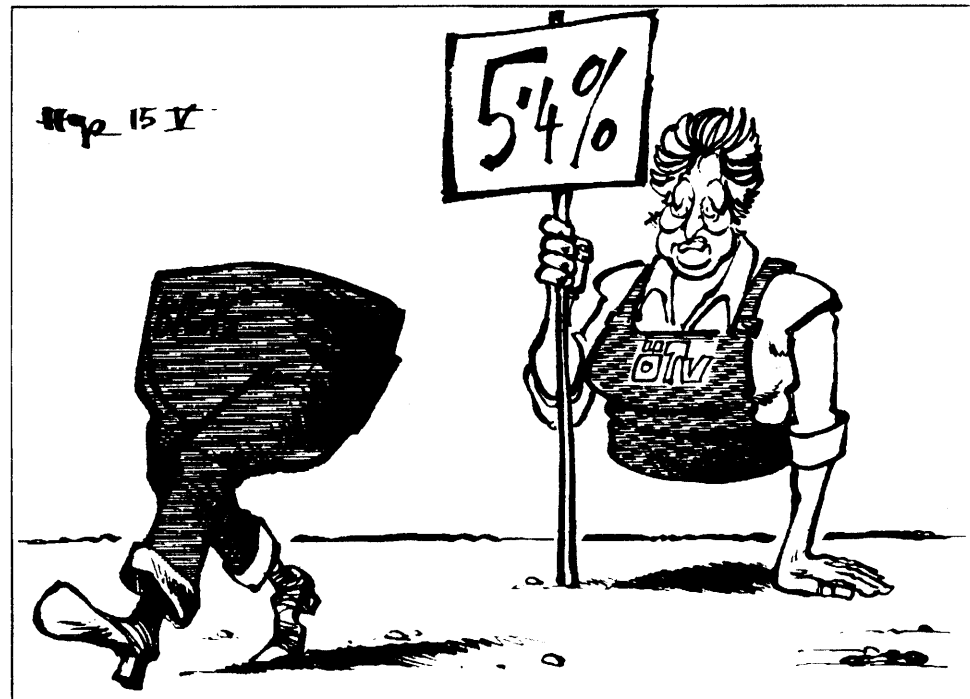
What provoked this breakdown of "social peace" was the decline in real wages accelerated by the "costs of reunification," that is, the subsidizing of capitalist restoration in East Germany. Instead of investing in the East, the West

German capitalists have been deindustrializing it. At the same time, they want to expand their sales in the area.

The contradiction between destroying people's livelihoods and selling products to them has so far been covered up by enormous subsidies financed by public borrowing. One notable result of this is a big increase in inflation, which is now almost 5 percent, and is eating away at

This is despite the fact that public opinion was favorable to the union cause, even though public workers' strikes mean immediate hardships for the population at large.

Some 60 percent of those questioned in polls expressed "understanding for the strike." Furthermore, the ÖTV's coffers were filled with 600 million marks (about \$400 million), and it thus was in a good



*Der Spiegel* cartoon shows ÖTV union head Monika Wulf-Mathies having the legs taken out from under her as the ranks rejected 5.4 percent wage agreement.

real wages. Another is increases in taxes and other state charges that are expected to take about 2 percent of wages.

The government is also talking about shifting payment for health care to individuals, when for generations the country has enjoyed relatively generous socialized medicine.

Facing this death of a hundred cuts, the powerful public workers' union demanded a raise of 9.5 percent to try to recoup their members' losses.

The government and the municipalities on the other hand wanted to slice real wages still more. After months of negotiations, the authorities offered only 3.5 percent. The conflict was then referred to arbitration. The unions were awarded 5.4 percent. But the government set a ceiling of 4.8 percent. The conflict became a confrontation.

Nonetheless, the union leaders' attitude remained markedly defensive. They failed to prepare the public and the ranks politically for a strike. The president of ÖTV, Monika Wulf-Mathies, even warned against a politicalization of the strike.

position for a determined struggle.

However, the unions did not declare an open-ended strike. The postal and railway unions staged walkouts of a few thousand workers. The ÖTV of over a hundred thousand, but only for a short time. Business was disrupted but not stopped. It seemed that the union leaderships hoped that the authorities would still see the light, even though belatedly.

On the average, 150 thousand workers were on strike every day in the first week of the strike. In the second week, the number jumped, as garbage collection and transport were partially or entirely shut down. The daily average of strikers rose to 300,000 and finally reached 400,000.

There were other hopeful signs. Despite the low level of unionization of hospital workers, about 10 to 20 percent of the hospitals were shut down. A lot of unorganized workers joined in the actions.

Where there were more consistent union leaderships, as in Hamburg, demonstrations were organized that were almost as big as the Labor Day marches on May 1, but much livelier. The giant metalworkers

union, I.G. Metall, supported the struggle with warning strikes and demonstrations, in which half a million workers participated.

### Settlement fuels demoralization

But then, as the strikes seemed to be spreading, suddenly the ÖTV leadership settled on May 7 for the arbitrators' award of 5.4 percent. They failed even to try to explain the compromise to the ranks. "The strikers heard only the next day that the struggle was over," *Der Spiegel* reported in its May 18 issue. "Many were called during the night by their supervisors and told to come in on the early shift." The ÖTV president recognized that as a result "a lot of the workers felt demoralized."

Given the rate of inflation and increases in taxes and other payments to the state, the settlement means a further decrease in real wages. (That did not keep the union leadership from hailing it as a "political victory" because it exceeded the government's ceiling.)

Nonetheless, the bosses were not satisfied with holding the line. Employers' Association chair Murrman announced that contracts in industry "will and must fall below this level." That means that the bosses are determined to force major declines in real wages.

Going into a new phase of struggle, the German unions have suffered an initial tactical defeat as a result of the capitulation of their leaderships. Nonetheless, the strikes showed an important shift in the attitudes of the union members and the population.

This was the first wave of strikes since 1984. More than a half million workers actively took part, and gained a sense of their own strength and feeling of solidarity. The ranks saw the strikes in a very political light. According to the polls, more than 60 percent of the population viewed this conflict as the beginning of the end of the Kohl government.

Taking together all the unions involved in the strikes, close to two-thirds of the membership voted against the settlement. There were majorities for it only among postal workers and the police.

The class-struggle activists in the unions played no special role in this conflict, having been left scattered and unprepared by the long quiescence since 1984. Nonetheless, they renewed their ties during this struggle. The conditions now exist for strengthening the class-struggle nuclei in the unions.

An important issue in the reviving workers' movement will be democratization of the unions and an analysis of the weakness of this strike wave. Why should the unions go into conflicts one after the other and not together? And, moreover, why should union members have to pay the costs of strikes. The Polish Solidarnosc, for example, a decade ago won the principle that strikedays should be paid for by the enterprises.

\* Most of the facts and assessments for this article have been taken from a more detailed piece written for the German Fourth Internationalist press by Axel Sienknecht and Hans-Jürgen Schultz.

## ...Azerbaijan

(continued from previous page)

the Lezgian areas from Azerbaijan.

Thus, a democratic government of Azerbaijan will have to face not only the problem of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, but other national problems. The Armenian government and the Armenian leaders in the enclave, by the way, no longer call for unification between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, but only for self-government for Nagorno-Karabakh and the right of the Armenian majority there to maintain their national character.

With the opening up of a free political process in Azerbaijan, there is at least a chance that the various national conflicts can be solved or mitigated by negotiations. If that happens, another prop will be knocked out from under the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In Tadzhikistan also, a process similar

to the one in Afghanistan seems to have begun. In February, the national-democratic forces began an occupation of the Shakhidon square to protest against arrests of opposition leaders. Finally, the government of President Nabiev, the local counterpart of the Azeri Mutalibov, gave way. But a couple of days after the agreement, the neo-Stalinists occupied Ozodi square to protest such concessions, in particular the resignation of the premier, Safarali Kendzhaev.

On the same day, Nabiev appointed Kendzhaev head of the State Security Committee. That was not enough for the neo-Stalinists, but it was too much for the opposition, which resumed its demonstrations. Thus, in early May opposing groups were conducting ongoing demonstrations in two different squares.

The opposition demonstrators in Shakhidon square were protected by a self-defense force of youths wearing white headbands with the slogan "Freedom or Death." In the leading Dutch magazine

*Elsevier* of May 16, Margreet Strubosch wrote that the self-defense forces were unarmed but their commander had warned that "when the time comes, the weapons can be found."

Armed clashes were being reported in early May between opposition forces and armed neo-Stalinist units, such as the Presidential Guard, which is supposed to be dissolved.

Reportedly, Russian soldiers guarding the Tadzhik frontier with Afghanistan are deserting in droves, because they fear being attacked for their weapons.

The national democratic forces are usually described as Islamic, but it remains to be seen exactly what this means. Islam is tied up with the national difference of the Central Asian peoples from their Russian rulers. There are a number of parties grouped together in the opposition front, called "Rebirth."

Strubosch interviewed one of the leaders of this front, Davlatshiev Dorobsho, who, she wrote, was astonished at the idea that

anyone could think the Tadzhik opposition wanted an Iran-style Islamic republic. She summarized: "Rebirth is against any form of totalitarianism. What is happening...is simply a revolution."

## International Viewpoint

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It is a little more than a year since the U.S. military established a "security zone" in northern Iraq supposedly for the protection of the Kurdish people, who faced a genocidal onslaught by the forces of Saddam Hussein. The need for some sort of political solution for the Kurdish people of Iraq is becoming more and more acute. While the status of the territory controlled by Kurdish rebels remains unclear, elections have been scheduled for May 17.

The conflict between Kurdish rebels in Turkey and the Turkish army has also sharpened. Thus, the Kurdish national question looms even larger in the politics of the region.

The following article, based on an interview with a Kurdish revolutionist, offers rare information about the development of the Kurdish rebellion against Saddam Hussein and the situation following the defeat it suffered at the hands of his forces. It also reviews the evolution in Iraqi Kurdistan after the Gulf War.

The article was originally published in the paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International. We have translated it from the March 1992 issue of *Inprekorr*, the journal of German Fourth Internationalists.

"It was wonderful to go home," Saman said, as we talked about his trip to the liberated areas of Iraqi Kurdistan last summer [1991]. "Wonderful"—a sharp contrast to the misery and defeats of the Kurds that he had described before.

But perhaps this statement was not so strange. Alongside the understandable joy of this Iraqi Kurd and socialist over going back to his homeland, from which he fled 15 years before, there was also a feeling of happiness that at least something had changed in Kurdistan.

After the end of the war with Iran and the August 1988 peace treaty, the Iraqi government launched a big offensive against the Kurds. Now, for the first time since then, there was liberated Kurdish territory in Iraq.

At the time of the big offensive, the Iraqi armed forces destroyed 4,000 Kurdish villages and 20 middle-sized towns. In 60 attacks, poison gas was used. The armed Kurdish movement, together with many Kurdish civilians, was forced to flee into the mountains in Iran or Turkey.

In the summer of 1991, according to Saman, the Kurds controlled two-thirds of [Iraqi] Kurdistan. Following his return, the cities of Erbil and Sulaimaniya were recaptured by Kurds.

"Among those I talked to, there was a feeling that something can be done, that something can be built. Just think, a few months earlier all of Iraqi Kurdistan was liberated. At that time, the Kurds had unlimited possibilities. But then it is not only Kurdistan that has changed.

"The people in all parts of Iraq are bolder than before. The regime's repressive apparatus has broken down. Saddam's police and armed forces are no longer masters of the situation. During the uprising, when the people occupied the police buildings, they destroyed all the files on the dissidents. It will certainly be a whole period before these dossiers can be restored.

"This regime is based on a system of repression. You only have to think what happened to Ceausescu when his security forces collapsed."

#### Traveled freely

Saman himself experienced what the collapse of the repressive apparatus means. In the month that he spent in the liberated areas of Kurdistan, he was able to meet more than 200 relatives and friends personally.

Many of them had traveled from Baghdad to the north, and not a single soldier or policeman stopped them at the "border" into the liberated area. Before the war, this would have been unthinkable.

The war waged against Iraq last year by the U.S. alliance did not hit Kurdistan as hard as the rest of Iraq.

"There are no strategic targets, and the military bases are outside the towns. Nonetheless, the city of Kirkuk was bombed once, after the military brought planes into the streets. Hundreds lost their lives, but still the attacks were not as bad as in the south.

"I have literally to force people to talk

# Kurdish struggle continues

A militant who was an eyewitness to the March 1991 uprising describes the subsequent evolution of self-determination movement



A Kurdish woman fighter during the uprising in March 1991.

Kaveh Golestan—SIPA

about the war. The people were so hard hit both before and after the war that their 'inhibition threshold' is very high."

The Kurdish uprising began in early March, when it became clear that Saddam Hussein had been defeated in the Gulf War.

"It started in the city of Rahnia. I heard from people that a few, maybe a few dozen demonstrators went onto the streets after they had heard that Saddam was beaten. They said, moreover, that this initiative came from a small communist group.

"In a few hours, a rebellion swept the entire town, and the population had occupied the nearby army bases. The revolt spread from town to town. It was a spontaneous uprising."

Were there groups that organized the rebellion after it got started, Saman was asked.

"In the beginning, small left groups were the most active. Then, the Donkeys [the regime's Kurdish militias] took over.

"Up until now, all regimes have tried to recruit Kurds for their purposes. During the war with Iran, many Kurds fled into the mountains rather than serve in the army. Saddam offered such people a way out, giving them the possibility of serving in the Kurdish militias, which we call the 'Donkeys,' rather than having to join the army.

"Thus, before the uprising, there were 300,000 armed Kurds in the country. Their leadership was made up of Saddam supporters. The ranks, however, were ordinary young men who wanted to avoid the war.

"So, when the revolt broke out, many of these militiamen turned their guns against the regime.

"In the following phase, even the leadership of the 'Donkeys' went over to the side of the people. This is easy to explain. Throughout Iraq, the people thought that Saddam was out of the picture.

"The uprising grew quickly. At the end of March, Kirkuk, the biggest city in the region, fell. While the Kurdish fighting units were marching on the city, the population itself rose up in rebellion. The government soldiers threw away their guns and fled.

"In many cities, the people formed committees of elected delegates, which organized the street fighting and distributed food."

Saman stressed that at this point the big Kurdish organizations had no influence over the uprising. He was referring to the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, led by Mahmud Barzani; and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, led by Jalal Talabani. These organizations constitute the traditional lead-

ership of the armed struggle. Saman's bitterness about their attitude during and after the uprising was evident.

"They only came back after half of Kurdistan had been liberated. After the people took over Kirkuk, Barzani and Talabani tried to hold their first rallies. They had only a few supporters, fighters, and a still weaker popular base. Their first objective was to regain control over the mass movement.

"They fought the committees, rather than building them up in order to reinforce the uprising. They saw these bodies as competitors.

"In Sulaimaniya, the big organizations even used armed force against the committees. The PUK reportedly simply shut up the buildings where the committees met.

"What is more, they relied on the U.S. alliance to 'arrange' a Kurdish state or Kurdish federation for them."

#### Lack of preparation

The biggest mistake of the DPK and PUK leaderships, according to Saman, was that they did not prepare for Saddam Hussein's counteroffensive, although they knew that it was coming.

"They did not use the pressure of the mass movement and the strength of the uprising. This is all the more incomprehensible if you consider what a state of disorganization the Iraqi army was in. The soldiers were asking themselves 'Who are we actually fighting for here?'"

Saddam launched his counteroffensive at the end of March and beginning of April with helicopter attacks on Kirkuk.

"They started their assault from the air. They learned that from the Americans. Later on, they used ground-to-ground rockets, like the Scud, but with a shorter range. Kirkuk suffered heavy damage. A lot of neighborhoods were flattened.

"The people fled in panic. There was a chain reaction. As the refugees reached the towns further north, the population there also fled. The people screamed, 'gas, Halabja!' [In 1988, in Halabja, thousands of Kurds were killed by poison gas.]

"During the helicopter attacks, Saddam's soldiers threw out canisters filled with a material that resembled gas, which increased the panic."

Almost 2.5 million Kurds fled to Iran or Turkey. A few miles north of Arbi, the Iraqi counteroffensive stalled. According to Saman, this was because of the reaction of world public opinion and the resistance of the Kurdish forces, which had now come into their mountain bastion.

On April 18, U.S. troops came in and began to establish a "security zone" for Kurds in the north of the country.

"They claimed that they wanted to protect the Kurds. In reality, they only wanted to stop the flood of refugees before it reached Turkey.

"Most of the Kurds I talked to did not have much objection to the presence of the U.S. troops. They saw them as a protection against Saddam. But they had mixed feelings about the United States, since they opposed the sanctions against the Iraqi population."

When Saman was in the liberated area, the Kurdish leaders were negotiating with Saddam in Baghdad. He was critical of the secrecy that surrounded these talks.

"The people knew that the Kurdish leaders were exchanging brotherly kisses with Saddam in Baghdad. But they were not informed about the results of the negotiations. There had never been so much international support for the Kurds, but the people in Kurdistan got little from it."

#### Bureaucratic leadership

The main reason for the mistakes of the Kurdish organizations, according to Saman, was the bureaucratization of their leaderships. They have a long tradition of deals with governments of the neighboring states, under the motto, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." An example of the problems of this policy is the Iran-Iraq treaty of 1975. At that time, the Kurdish leaders in Iraq relied entirely on Iranian help. When this was suddenly cut off, the Kurdish movement was crushed.

"They cannot not base themselves on the mass movement, because they fear that it would get out of their control. So, ever since they returned to the country, they have tried to push the mass movement back. Instead of basing themselves on the mass movement, they tried to buy the support of the leadership of the 'Donkeys.' For the same reason, they immediately entered into negotiations with Saddam, after they realized that the U.S. and its allies would not support them.

"You could say that Saddam and the Kurdish leaderships were both weak, and that therefore they had a common interest in negotiations. Both sides wanted to gain time in order to rebuild their positions."

In the spring of 1990, Saman said, there was definitely a possibility of the Kurdish uprising uniting with the uprising in the south.

"Here in the West, it is said that the

(continued on next page)



In the face of mass discontent with the capitalist-restorationist policies of the Polish government and the lack of any major party representing the working people, there was a splintering of the vote in the last parliamentary elections. None of the pro-government parties got even a minimum mandate. The party of the president, Lech Walesa, won only about 8 percent. Regardless of the election results, the capitalist-restorationist policies have been continued, but it has been very difficult to get a stable governmental majority in parliament.

In this context, Walesa, and his bourgeois admirers in the West, such as the *British Economist*, openly propose "presidential rule" as a solution. In fact, there have even been rumors in the most recent period that Walesa was preparing a coup. In its March issue, *Dalej!*, the paper of the Polish Fourth Internationalists, responded to this threat. The following is its lead article.

Class division is sharpening in our society. The gap is increasing between those who are enriching themselves off of the recession and off of the breakdown of our economy, and those who are paying the bill for all this.

Polish society is more and more sharply divided into two fundamental social groups. Besides the fact that these groups live in the same state and use the same language, they already have virtually nothing in common.

On one side are those who are continuing to push the compromised policy of privatization and marketization, who are inspired by a greed for privileges and wealth.

Displaying total subservience to the Western economic powerhouses, they disregard the interests of the majority of Poles with the same arrogance that marked the Stalinist governments of the Polish Communist Party.

This group is made up of various elites. One component is the new post-Solidarnosc nomenklatura, which is now completely separated off from society. Another is speculators of various sorts, who previously got along well with the Communist Party apparatus, and often collaborated with it. Today, they have gotten the official title of "businessmen." There is the old party nomenklatura, which continues to be quite active. It rightly understood the name the people gave it, the "red bourgeoisie," and now it is coming into its "golden age" of unimpeded development.

On the other side, are those who live by the work of their hands and minds—the Polish working people. After long years of struggle with the Communist Party dictatorship, we are not getting a

## Poland today — 'It is us or them'

chance to taste the fruits of victory. For more than two years, the new government has been demanding more and more sacrifices from us. Instead of the promised capitalist prosperity, we are being offered unemployment, inflation and impoverishment.

We have been deprived of the minimum social rights—the right to a job, the right to a decent wage, the right to free education and healthcare. The crazy clericalists of the right-wing Christian People's Union want to deprive women as soon as they can even of their right to control their bodies.

Class divisions are becoming more evident and glaringly unjust. They are more than more striking for the working people, who are coming *en masse* to the conclusion that the problem does not lie in the fact that the government's present policy is producing bad effects but that the real problem lies in the fact that its entire policy is wrong.

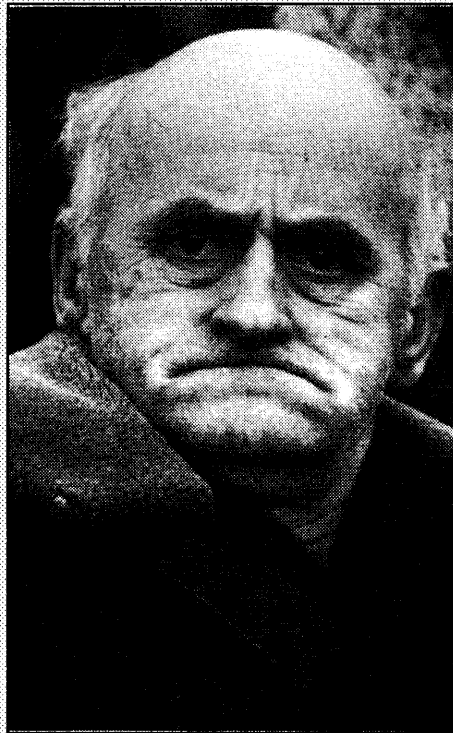
This is attested clearly by the results of public opinion polls published in February by *Gazeta Wyborcza*. These polls show that only every fourth Pole is still supporting the course toward capitalism laid out by the elite.

The majority of society does not want either privatization or the subordination of our economy to the West. It is demanding that state industry be defended, that the jobs of the workforce be defended against the piratical demands of foreign capital. Even *Gazeta Wyborcza*, which has consistently hailed the virtues of Balcerowicz [the architect of the government's capitalist-restorationist policies], has been forced to recognize that "the majority of Poles reject the capitalist bases of the reform."

The elites are still turning a deaf ear to the voice of the majority. In general, the government has not responded to the protests of specific categories of workers, for example the February strikes of railway workers and teachers. The elites' reaction to the growing social discontent is leading to desperate attempts to "broaden the ruling coalition."

This is intended to convince us that there is a general agreement for "continuing down the road" of privatization and marketization—[that is,] of unemployment and poverty.

An agreement for that exists only among the economic and political elites (including the Stalinist-capitalist successor of the Communist Party, which is more and more giving approval to Olszewski's policy in hopes of being admitted to the "broad coalition" of par-



liamentary forces.)

Realizing that they can no longer count on broad mass support, the elites are determined to act in spite of, and against the society. This involves limiting democracy.

Up until now, the conceptions of abandoning even parliamentary democracy have been showing up most often in the statements of Lech Walesa.

In fact, the public statements of the president have been hardly more than blather, full of contradictions and empty generalities. But the basic meaning of his latest declarations is quite clear. He is proposing that the elites stop playing at parliamentarianism and combine forces to hit the masses hard, quickly and decisively, before they are able to move from the stage of discontent and uncoordinated protests to the stage of conscious self-organization and self-defense.

This is the basis of his concepts of "presidential rule," "suspending parliament," or "general sessions of parliament," of "special powers" for the government and the presidency. The idea is simple, a coup or rule by decree, in order to break the resistance of the masses as quickly as possible and impose a continuing decline in the standard of living.

Today, the Polish elites are naked. They are becoming unreliable for the Western powers and the International Monetary Fund [IMF]. They are not in control of the economic situation,

because the strikes and protests are seen by the West as a signal that they are losing their grip on the social and political situation.

This is the reason for the dramatic letter that the IMF sent to the Polish government in February demanding "a stronger policy of structural changes" and "containing the budget deficit." The IMF is demanding sharper cuts in expenditures for social services and a more rapid "rationalization" of the labor market, that is a faster growth of unemployment.

The Western financiers understood perfectly that in ordering Walesa and Olszewski to "tighten the screws" right away, they are at the same time ordering them to dump democratic methods of government. Walesa and Olszewski agree—maintaining democratic rules will not only make it impossible to meet the demands of the IMF but also to maintain the present position of the Polish elites.

The stepped-up offensive against our society cannot go unanswered. It is high time to counter the wave of antisocial demands from the cabinet, Walesa and the IMF with the just demands of the Polish working people.

The society, and above all the existing organization of the workers' movement, has to show without delay that it will not remain passive in the face of the attempts to ram [capitalist-restorationist] horse cures down its throat.

We call on all workers' organizations to hold a joint discussion of a strategy for struggle to defend the elementary rights and dignity of working people, to establish inter-factory and inter-union democratic structures to defend the interests of working people, [and] promptly to undertake a national action, using all available means, to meet the attack of Walesa and Olszewski and win the following demands:

- full and automatic compensation for increases in the cost of living.
- A stop to mass layoffs and the elimination of unemployment.
- Immediate increases in appropriations for education, health and housing.
- An immediate program for rescuing the economy and defending state industry.

This will be a political struggle. We have no other option. In order to assure the masses of people the basic conditions for living and working and to give the Polish economy a chance to survive, we have to defeat and smash the antisocial and antidemocratic policy of Olszewski, Walesa and the whole corrupt gang of parasitic elites.

Walesa and Olszewski have declared war on us. It is us or them. ■

## ...Kurds

(continued from previous page)

uprising in the south was led by Shiite Muslims. That, however, is not the most important aspect. The uprising began during the army's retreat after its defeat in Kuwait. Reportedly, on entering Basra, an officer drove his tank directly into a statue of Saddam, shouting 'How long are you going to stay cowards? Wake up!'

"While I was in Iraq in August, there were reports that hundreds of thousands of civilians were still surrounded by Saddam's troops. There was a massacre. The people said that more civilians were killed in the crushing of the uprising than during the war itself.

"Neither is it known in the West that there were uprisings in Baghdad itself, for example, in the 'Saddam City' working-class suburb. The government ordered shelling of this neighborhood.

While Saman was in Iraq, most of the refugees came back. Along the roads leading from the Turkish border, there was one UN refugee camp after another. Later in the fall, there was a second wave of returnees.

At that time, there was still enough food in Kurdistan. The Turkish border was open, so that food shipments could come over.

"You could find everything on the black

market. Naturally, there was a hyperinflation. A white-collar worker's monthly salary was just enough to buy ten kilos of meat.

"Subsequently, the Iraqi government imposed an economic blockade on Kurdistan, and the most recent reports are that the distress in the north is now as great as in the rest of the country.

"The people wanted a decision. A lot of them said, 'If the negotiations don't produce anything, there is going to be more war.'"

Did the people you met support the leaderships of the Kurdish organizations?, I asked.

"To be honest, yes. Lacking any alternative, most did. Among the intellectuals, however, I met some who were critical of all the leaderships."

### Negotiations at an impasse

In the fall [of 1991], the negotiations were at an impasse. Saddam proposed a limited autonomy. However, the region's most important city, the center of the oil industry, was to remain in Iraqi hands. Even the Kurdish demand to be allowed to adopt their own laws was rejected. The country was to have a common police, army and budget, with a few exceptions.

Barzani's DKP was rather inclined to accept the offer, while Talabani rejected it. There were contacts between Kurdish lead-

ers and the Turkish government. Turkey made some promises about Kurdish autonomy in the framework of the Turkish state.

"If Talabani and the PUK think that they can get the support of Turkey, naturally they are going to be less ready to compromise [with Saddam]."

Saman is pessimistic but does not exclude the possibility that the Kurds will risk another uprising.

"The people that I met in the liberated area are ready. They all know how weak the government army is. There are more than a hundred thousand armed Kurds in the mountains, and they control some of the most modern military structures in Iraq."

A few days after this interview, shortly before Christmas, Saman's view was confirmed by an interview with Talabani. The latter called on Kurds to prepare themselves for a new war against Saddam Hussein.

"My friends in the south have also told me about growing discontent. A relative in Baghdad died from a simple burn, after his family had tried in vain for a week to find a place for him in the hospital. Food and medicine are in short supply."

There are also reports of persistent demonstrations against the regime, even in the south. In August, there was the fourth attempt at a coup since the outbreak of the war.

Saman sees growing discontent throughout the country, even if the strongest

organized resistance is limited to Kurdistan. At the same time, he speaks of deep disillusionment.

"The U.S. encouraged the people to rise up. Then, it only looked on as the government's planes slaughtered people in the south. Representatives of the resistance in the south came to the headquarters of the U.S. alliance in southern Iraq and appealed for food. They got nothing. That is what Western concern for human rights amounts to in reality.

"I am more and more convinced that the U.S. induced Saddam to invade Kuwait. Then, they stopped the war just as Saddam's regime was in danger. They themselves fear even a "half-democratic" Iraq. What effect would it have on the dictatorships in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait?"

Most of the Arabs that Saman talked to in southern Iraq said that they did not back Saddam in the war.

"They considered him an idiot who had plunged the country into war, and wanted to get rid of him. Today, they are suffering from the sanctions, and at the same time cannot help seeing that the U.S. wants to keep Saddam in power.

"It is often said that the sanctions are driving the people into Saddam's arms.

"I don't believe that. No one supports Saddam. He started the war. But the sanctions could provoke anti-imperialist feelings or a general anti-Western mood." ■



# Situation in Nicaragua worsens as gains of Revolution are dismantled

The following is an abridged version of a newsletter article written by Garrett Brown, a supporter of the Nicaraguan Revolution who visited that country during New Years 1992. Although the article concerns observations made almost six months ago, it gives a good feel for the current economic and political trends in Nicaragua today. If anything, things have only gotten worse in the last six months. The article is reprinted with the permission of the author.

This is a report from a brief visit to Estelí over New Years 1992. I was last in Nicaragua exactly one year ago, and in both visits spent time only in Estelí, though I spoke with people living in Managua [the capital] on both occasions.

In general, the situation in Nicaragua today is desperate. One might even say it is a "train wreck," with bodies and wreckage flung in all directions, and those who are "putting it back together" have a clear counter-revolutionary agenda.

The changes from the time of the Sandinista government are dramatic and have come at a very accelerated pace since my last visit.

If the Sandinista period could be described as a "revolutionary flow tide," overwhelming obstacles and sweeping along many people and processes in its forward march, the current situation might be described as a "reactionary ebb tide," in which the momentum has shifted definitively in the other direction and is now dragging people and processes into the past with an equally voracious power.

The Economy: Nicaragua has an official unemployment rate of 59 percent, meaning an even higher actual rate. Hunger and poverty have increased tremendously and are clearly visible on the streets. Families are surviving by pooling whatever salaries they have, and participating in the informal sector whenever possible. But there are many families who are eating no more than once a day—and then with a very restricted diet.

Land tenure in this predominantly agricultural country is still a very unsettled question as attacks and threats by the "recontra" continue to create uncertainty and instability among food producers in the countryside.

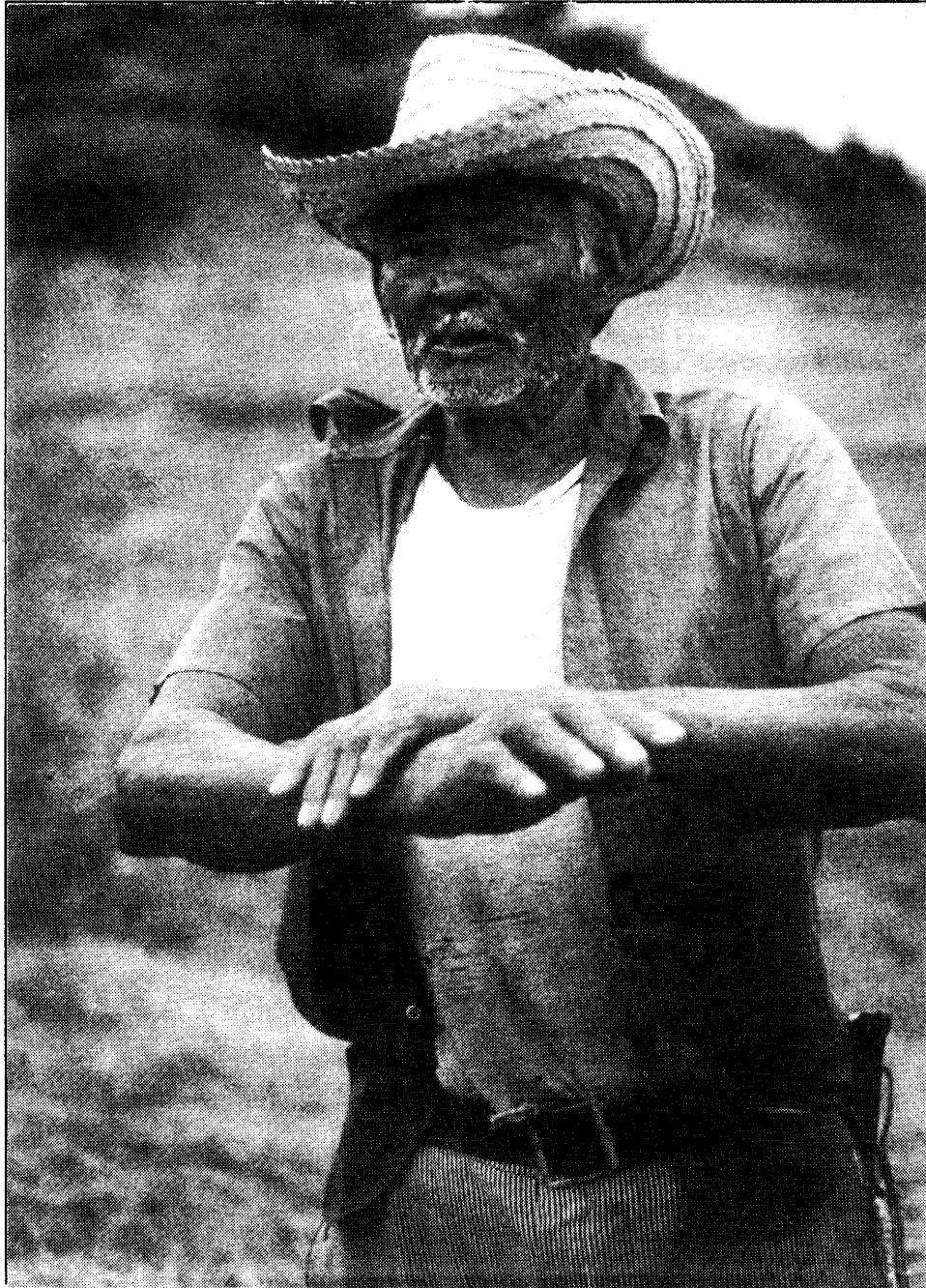
The economic pressures in Nicaragua today virtually overwhelm all other activities as people struggle simply to see tomorrow.

The public healthcare system has virtually collapsed. There are no more subsidized medicines available and many people now don't bother going to the hospital or centros de salud [health centers] for anything less than immediately life-threatening illnesses because they don't have the money to buy any prescribed medications.

Any serious illness now becomes a financial emergency. The hospital itself now has a "private" (payment required) wing as well as the "public" wing. Overall, public health is clearly deteriorating in Nicaragua, especially among the poor majority, and things like AIDS and cholera are waiting ominously in the wings.

The education system is now pay-as-you-go. Parents must rent their children's schoolbooks (and pay for them if lost or damaged). They must also pay a "curriculum fee" in the "public" schools. The MED [Ministry of Education] was even going to require a fee to receive report cards, but backed off from that proposal.

The university now costs 7000 cordobas (\$1400) a year to attend, and the Estelí branch is being threatened with closing. Adult education and literacy classes have been eliminated from MED budgets. All of this is in addition to a major shift in curriculum and materials by the new government, eliminating old texts and lessons and replacing them with U.S.-AID-supplied materials.



***"Many cooperatives remain together and producing, but a large number have already disappeared, losing their land to former owners or to bank foreclosures, or because the co-op members have sold the land or divided it up among themselves to avoid losing it otherwise."***

Land reform is seriously threatened, though the Chamorro government recently vetoed the latest attempt to overturn it immediately.

Many cooperatives remain together and producing, but a large number have already disappeared, losing their land to former owners or to bank foreclosures, or because the co-op members have sold the land or divided it up among themselves to avoid losing it otherwise.

The net result is a creeping return to the old patterns of land ownership and rural social relations (dominated by a handful of rich men), a result which is the undisguised goal of all sections of the new government.

The industrial sector, always a tiny portion of the economy, has continued to shrink as the new government seeks to "privatize" state-owned facilities, thereby creating "labor unrest," on one hand, and "lack of confidence" on the part of prospective owners, on the other hand.

The number of public employees has been drastically reduced, but there is no other gainful, productive employment available for laid-off state workers.

The famous U.S. aid has been slow in coming and has had little effect (apart from lining the pockets of various government functionaries) when it has arrived. No private capital is expected to enter the economy in any significant way until "stability" of the traditional Latin American kind is "restored" in Nicaragua.

All in all, a bleak economic situation offers few prospects for significant improvement in the immediate future.

Politics: The UNO government has definitively split between the "moderate rightwing" faction of President Violeta Chamorro and the "ultra-rightwing" faction of Vice President Vigilio Godoy, National Assembly President Alfredo Cesar and Managua Mayor Miguel Aleman.

The "ultra-right" have the support of the U.S. ambassador and have already made several attempts to overthrow the Chamorro government. Chamorro remains in power due to the support of the Frente Sandinista (FSLN) which has 40 percent of the seats in the National Assembly and dominates the officer corps of the Army.

The FSLN's strategy is to stabilize the

Chamorro government on the grounds that the alternative is worse. But this means stabilizing a government whose avowed purpose is to undo everything the FSLN government did; perhaps not next week, like the Godoy-Cesar-Aleman group, but certainly in the next year or two.

The government has, in the last 18 months, already achieved the above noted "successes" in transforming the healthcare and education systems along "democratic," non-Sandinista lines. The end of "verticalism" in the FSLN and the restructuring of the party in its ongoing "democratization" has positive aspects.

But there is also now a lack of central direction and information-transmission which, when combined with the economic pressures, has produced a serious lack of political coherence and a decline of party activity on the grassroots level.

Base-level Sandinistas are pretty much on their own in terms of defending the "gains of the revolution," but even when activity surges from the base, as in the case of the trade unions, the FSLN leadership has frequently intervened in the name of "stability" and "national reconciliation" to undercut the protests and to make additional concessions and agreements with the Chamorro faction of the government.

Militarily, the new government has made large strides in changing the character of the Sandinista, now National, police, by replacing personnel and using the police against workers and peasants.

Although the national leadership of the police is still Sandinista, the ranks are increasingly new and drawn from UNO and contra sources. Miguel Aleman has created an, as yet, unarmed force of several hundred municipal "inspectors" drawn from the most anti-Sandinista forces in the capital.

The Army has been reduced to under 20,000, now the smallest in Central America, and more cuts have been proposed. The EPS [Sandinista People's Army] remains Sandinista in leadership and composition, but has emphasized its "apolitical and constitutional" character.

This has meant that without an order from Commander-in-Chief Violeta Chamorro directing the army to protect cooperatives and vehicles in the countryside, the "recontra" have been able to act with complete impunity in destroying or overrunning co-ops, burning vehicles and killing opponents.

As a result, the EPS has sat on its hands while several dozen people have been killed. Fortunately, the "recompas," ex-EPS officers and soldiers who have taken to the hills once again to fight the recontra, have acted as a counterbalance to the recontra and reduced attacks in some areas. The peasantry in many areas, however, continue to live, as in previous years, in a virtual state of war.

The "New Society:" The change from a revolutionary society committed to equality and social justice to an increasingly traditional Latin American society with profound inequality, poverty, and discrimination, was perhaps the most dramatic aspect of this trip.

Even in a poor town like Estelí, the rich have returned from the U.S. to dominate the city once again. Their houses downtown are newly painted and repaired, their U.S.-bought cars clog the streets, their street-level garages now offer Nintendo video arcades and high-fashion boutiques for their children and friends.

Meanwhile, on the outskirts of the city there is a virtual explosion of shantytowns of plastic and scrap wood houses where families eat once a day and do not have electricity, water, sewage, accessible healthcare or education.

The disintegration of Nicaraguan society has also accelerated in the last year as well. Crime and street violence, unheard of during my [previous] time in Estelí, are now becoming common in Estelí and are epidemic in Managua.

Many of the people I visited in Estelí were, quite understandably, depressed and disoriented. One older woman who lost a son in the war in 1986, took a look around her after explaining her family's perilous situation, and asked rhetorically: "And my son died for this? This is what all our sacrifices were for?" ■



# The Revolutions of 1848

(With this month's issue, Barry Sheppard begins a series on the revolutions of 1848.)

When Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote the "Communist Manifesto" for the group of communist-minded workers they had joined, the Communist League, revolution was in the air throughout Europe.

Hardly had the ink dried on the first printing of the "Manifesto" in February 1848, when revolution broke out in Paris against the monarchy of Louis-Phillipe.

This marked the first of a series of revolutions that swept through the German states and Austria, the Czech lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary itself, and the Kingdom of Lombardy and Venice, other Italian states, and Poland.

It is reported that when the Russian Czar heard of the revolution in France he immediately mobilized his officer staff with a cry of "To horse!" in anticipation of using the huge Russian army against the spread of revolution, which he correctly feared was on the agenda with the spark from Paris. It turned out that his troops were not needed much, except in Hungary, since the revolutions collapsed due to the treachery of the bourgeoisie.

I say "treachery" because these revolutions opened with bourgeois-democratic aims, including for democracy, national unity, against the rule of the landed aristocracy, and against national oppression. Such demands, some of which are still important today, were raised in the Great French Revolution of 1789 and in the First American Revolution.

What happened in the revolutions of 1848-49 was that the bourgeoisie turned against its "own" revolution, out of fear of the emergence of the industrial workers as a class in its own

right, who began to raise their own demands.

In France, this conflict between the workers and the capitalists culminated in the course of the revolution in open civil war. In June 1848, the world witnessed the first proletarian revolution in four days of fierce fighting on the streets of Paris.

The June revolution was not the first open political clash between the workers and the capitalists. Earlier, in England, where capitalist industry was first developed and was the most extensive, a workers' political movement called the Chartist (referring to a document called the "Charter" which listed the workers' demands) developed.

This movement never went as far as revolution, however, and peaked in 1842. The revolutionary wave of 1848-49 bypassed England.

The background to the events of 1848 was a severe capitalist economic crisis that began in 1847 and affected not only England, but the other European countries in which capitalist industry was being developed.

There was widespread unemployment and misery among the French workers.

The monarchy did nothing but continue its policy of repression against any worker organizations. Unions were illegal. The bourgeois republican opposition was timid, even though support for the government had practically evaporated.

Writing in a Belgian newspaper, Marx commented in January: "What does the Ministry [of the monarchical government] do?—Nothing. What does the parliamentary, legal opposition do?—Nothing. What can France expect from the present Chambers?—Nothing. What does M. Guizot want?—To remain Minister. What do Messrs. Thiers, Mole and Company [opposition leaders] want?

To become ministers again. What does France gain from this "get out of here so I can take your place?—Nothing.

"Ministry and opposition are thus condemned to do nothing. Who alone will accomplish the coming French revolution?—The proletariat. What will the bourgeoisie do for this?—Nothing."

And in fact, this is what happened the next month, on Feb. 23, 24 and 25, when the workers' uprising toppled the monarchy. In every square in Paris the workers proclaimed a republic.

The workers did not try to set up their own government, however. They still had illusions that their interests and those of the bourgeois republicans were complementary, and a Provisional Government was set up dominated by the latter.

These timid gentlemen did not want to proclaim a republic immediately, but the workers' action forced them to. The workers had also secured arms in the course of the insurrection, and felt themselves masters of the streets.

During the insurrection, bourgeois youth and students took part. The atmosphere was one of "fraternity" between the classes.

But the workers soon began to raise their own demands. On Feb. 25, a worker representing a large workers' delegation burst into a meeting of the Provisional Government with a gun in his hand, demanding that the ministers decree a "right to work" and a minimum wage. The government on that day issued a proclamation guaranteeing citizens the right to work. Soon it abolished the laws against workers forming unions.

On February 29, under the pressure of demonstrations of workers, the government also set up a government commission on the affairs of workers, presided over by a moderate socialist.

## Learning About Marxism By Barry Sheppard



Two days earlier it issued a decree setting up national workshops to help alleviate unemployment.

These compromises with the demands of the workers were forced on the bourgeois republicans. But they retained control over the civil and military administration, police, finances, and foreign policy. The armed people controlled the streets.

Workers began forming unions, a process that was to grow in the coming months, and naturally raised more demands to improve their lot.

The first counter-blow by the bourgeoisie came in a counter-revolutionary demonstration on March 16 by bourgeois units of the National Guard (there were both bourgeois and proletarian sections of the Guard). The workers answer came in a huge demonstration of 200,000 on March 17.

In mid-April, a workers' demonstration of 100,000 was organized, demanding a democratic republic, the "end of exploitation of man by man," and expressed determination to continue to organize labor associations. This unarmed march was met by armed bourgeois units of the National Guard, who tried to break up the march and shouted abuse at the workers.

The workers still had faith that the Provisional Government would meet their demands and ended their demonstration with the slogans of "Long live the Republic!" and "Long live the

Provisional Government!"

Elections to a Constituent Assembly at the end of April resulted in a more conservative government, reflecting a more backward populace outside of Paris. Ballots had also been tampered with, and even in areas where the workers were a vast majority, anti-worker candidates were elected.

This resulted in worker uprisings in the cities of Limoges and Rouen, which were put down by force by the Provisional Government.

Of the 880 newly-elected delegates, 500 were moderate Republicans, including many who were monarchists before February. The democratic camp was represented by less than 100 deputies, with a few socialists among them.

An Executive Committee replaced the Provisional Government. The socialist wing was cut off from the new government. The commission on workers affairs lost its power as a governmental institution.

The situation in the country was becoming more polarized. The bourgeoisie had utilized its position of power in the Provisional Government to organize the vote for the Constituent Assembly for a "moderate" victory supported by a reactionary wing of neo-monarchists.

The illusions of the workers in the Republic were wearing away.

(Next month:  
The June Revolution)

## CELIA STODOLA WALD 1946-1992

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Celia Stodola Wald, a long-time member of the Trotskyist movement, died on May 7, after a long battle with scleroderma. She was 45 years-old and is survived by her husband, Alan Wald, and their daughters, Sarah and Hannah.

Celia was born Aug. 27, 1946, in East Orange, N.J., and graduated from high school in Fargo, N.D., in 1964. I first met her in the 1960s, when she was a fellow student at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Celia was a leader of the campus chapter of the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. We soon became close friends.

Celia and Alan joined the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) in March 1968. Within a couple of months, the membership of our YSA chapter at Antioch grew from three to 22 students. This was due in no

small part to Celia's work in the leadership.

Celia joined the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Los Angeles in 1969. She soon became a member of the Oakland-Berkeley branch of the party. In 1971, she was a full-time staff member of the National Peace Action Coalition in San Francisco.

In 1975, Celia moved to Ann Arbor, Mich., where she attended the University of Michigan School of Nursing. From 1979 until the fall of 1982, Celia practiced nursing in the ante-partum unit, Women's Hospital, University of Michigan Medical Center.

She was a founder of the Ann Arbor Committee for Human Rights in Latin America. In 1986, Celia became a founding member of Solidarity, a socialist group based in Detroit. She participated in Solidarity's Fourth International Caucus until her death. ■

## U.S. Marine Cpl. Tahan Jones fights for his freedom

By JEFF MACKLER

On June 14, Black antiwar activist Corporal Tahan Jones will face a U.S. Marine Corps court martial. This is a proceeding that is twice as likely to jail an African-American than a white.

Outrageous Marine Corps violations of its own regulations, abetted by a dictatorial military "justice" system, combined to keep one of the nation's most prominent Gulf War protesters confined to Camp LeJeune, N.C., for almost one year without a trial date.

Jones, a 22 year-old working class youth who faces seven years in prison on trumped up charges of missing a troop movement and desertion, played a major role during the genocidal Gulf War in linking racism in the United States to the racist war against the Iraqi people.

An example of the racist treatment afforded Jones in the course of the denial of his application for Conscientious Objector status was the statement of investigating officer Paul Swanson: "I believe that he [Jones] is incapable of articulating any discerning thoughts or perceptions concerning such subjective matters as conscientious objection to war."

Jones's case has received wide support across the United States and internationally. Amnesty International is among the long list of organizations protesting his persecution for his antiwar views.

Supporters should call General C. L. Vermilyea (504) 948-1210 to demand that all charges against Jones be dropped and that Jones be immediately discharged as a conscientious objector. ■

# The fight to save the Brazilian rain forests

By HAYDEN PERRY

Delegates flying to Rio de Janeiro to attend the United Nations Earth Summit, June 3-14, may see the smoke of forest fires that are reducing the world's most valuable ecosystem to sterile wasteland.

In the peak year of 1987, as many as 8000 fires were set in a single day. As result of this holocaust, species of fauna and flora not yet classified are being lost forever. Indians lose their hunting grounds, their way of life, and their existence as a people. All humanity is threatened by disastrous climate changes.

Partly in response to the crisis in Amazonia, the Earth Summit Conference of 140 countries is being held in Brazil. The drama of the Amazon is a complex story of greed—and heroism—set in the arboreal home of some of the world's last truly aboriginal peoples.

From 1870 to 1900 (when the British began to plant rubber trees in Malaysia) an army of 124,000 poor Brazilians plunged into the forest to milk rubber trees, much as the Vermont farmer harvests maple syrup. Wild rubber trees are widely scattered. As many as 700 acres are patrolled by a single tapper. Even then, the tapper collects only enough rubber for a subsistence living.

The tapper has no property rights. Control is exercised by merchants who buy the latex and transport it. The merchants advance the tapper tools and minimum subsistence for the season, and add the charge to his current account. This means a lifetime bondage of debtor to creditor, as the illiterate tapper cannot read the scales that cheated him or the bosses' books that recorded his growing debt. Unable to escape, one generation follows another along the trails that lead from tree to tree.

## Threatened with extinction

In 1953, a nine-year-old boy was learning his craft from his father, who had learned from his father in the same stretch of forest in the province of Acre, part of the most remote area of western Brazil. The boy was Francisco "Chico" Alves Mendes Filho.

Chico Mendes was destined to be a key figure in the campaign to save the rain forest. He also would become its principal martyr. But first, he had to learn to read. It was a difficult task, since there were no schools at that time for tappers in the forest.

In 1956, a revolutionist, Euclid Tavora, took refuge in Acre while fleeing the military. He brought with him revolutionary zeal and the theory of the class struggle. Young Chico, who instinctively rebelled against the injustice of the system, learned from Tavora not only the skills of reading and writing, but the art of organizing and the ideas of socialism. Later, Chico ran for public office on the Workers Party ticket.

In 1975, Mendes helped establish the Rural Workers Union. Later, a thousand tappers attended the founding conference of the National Union of Rubber Tappers. By withholding rubber, and other tactics, the tappers won concessions from their bosses. But now they faced an enemy that threatened all forest dwellers with extinction.

The Brazilian government wanted to relieve the pressure of poverty and population in the East, and to open a vast region for domestic and foreign investment, by settling the rain forest. The Amazon basin was to be a 20th-century version of the North American migration to the West.

But the floor of a rain forest cannot be equated to the fertile prairie of the United States. Once the trees were cut down or burned, the leached-out soil gave out after one or two years. The settlers who were lured to the Amazon by great promises soon gave up farming. Some tried mining, which further degraded the land. Others settled in shantytowns along the highways that were cut into the forest, or drifted to the slums of the big cities.

They were followed by the cattlemen,



Brazilian Rubber Workers Union poster: "They are stealing the green from our national flag." (Right) Chico Mendes: "I want to live."

who are a very different breed. They have capital and they have guns. They were granted, or seized, large stretches of forest, and cut down the larger trees for lumber. They burned the rest, and spread grass seed by plane to create pasture for their cattle.

Along with the Indians, the tappers were supposed to get out of the way. But Chico Mendes and the Union were not leaving. Instead, they organized the *empate*. This was a wall of men and women standing in the path of the men hired to cut down the trees.

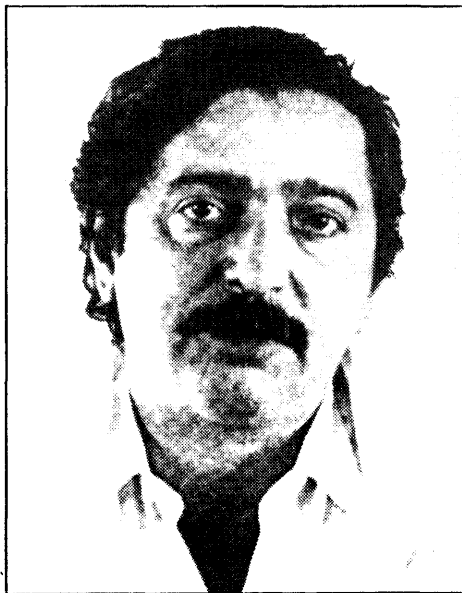
Mendes spoke later of this struggle: "We organized 44 *empates*. About 400 of us were arrested and about 40 of us were tortured, and a few were killed, but we succeeded in keeping more than three million hectares of the forest from being destroyed."

The multi-national Bordon Meat Packing Company abandoned plans for a 10,000 acre cattle ranch, as Indians joined the tappers in opposition.

Environmentalists in America and Europe saw the world-wide effect of the forest's destruction. When leaders of the campaign to save the rain forest arrived in Acre, they found Mendes in the thick of the fight. They adopted Chico and enlisted him in the campaign. He was flown to conferences in Rio de Janeiro, Washington, and London, where he was welcomed as a key ally.

Chico's horizon expanded. He saw the role of the World Bank, controlled by the United States, forcing a disastrous policy on Brazil, a debt-ridden country. The Bank pushed the Trans-Amazon Highway to open the region to speculators. They cleared land only to sell it, at a profit, to multinationals, and move on to burn and clear again.

Mendes and others had a counter proposal. It was the "extractive reserve." This meant taking from the forest only the products that nature could replace. Rubber, Brazil nuts, and pharmaceutical drugs—



some already known, others yet to be discovered—would return more benefits than cattle raised for hamburgers, the conservationists argued.

## Death squads

Such proposals could be discussed in Sao Paulo or Brasilia, but back in Acre the gun settled all arguments. It was like the old American West, but with a difference. In America the rancher, the cowboy, and the outlaw all had guns. In Amazonia the tappers had nothing more than cheap hunting rifles.

The rancher had his private death squad. On his isolated ranch he could murder hired hands and others with impunity. He could then move West if authorities were inclined to prosecute. Such a rancher, Darli Alves da Silvas, arrived with his sons in Acre in 1974, one step ahead of arrest warrants for murder back in Minas Gerais.

The family bought up land and joined the Rural Democratic Union (UDR), the organization of the big ranchers. Here the problem of Mendes and the *empates* was high on the agenda. The solution was the traditional one for property holders in rural Brazil—kill the people who offended them.

Darli Alves was assigned, or assumed, the assassin's role. He and his sons drove around Xapuri, where Mendes lived,

denouncing him and threatening his life.

Mendes may have thought his international reputation would protect him. He made no attempt to leave. He wrote letters to officials in Brasilia and Sao Paula reporting the death threats. He got no answer. He appealed to the local police, who assigned two bodyguards but took away his pistol permit.

Mendes learned of the charge of murder against Alves, and demanded that the arrest warrants be forwarded. They were sent to Xapuri, officials claimed, but were "lost" in the Xapuri police station.

Important leaders of the forest campaign let Mendes face his assassins alone. They sent no delegations to Xapuri to stand beside this leader under siege. The Rural Workers Union failed to organize adequate defense. The city council, on which Mendes once sat, left the way clear for the killers. When an *anunciado*, a formal warning of imminent death, was issued by the ranchers, a sense of resignation gripped the community. As in a Greek tragedy, the outcome was foretold. Making the threat real, four other Rural Union presidents had been shot to death that year.

In December 1988, Chico warned his brother, "Zuza, you watch out because things are getting very hot. I feel I am not going to make it to Christmas." Chico was right. On Dec. 22, the assassins struck. At dusk, as Chico stepped out of his house, a fatal charge of buckshot tore into his side.

Mendez had not sought martyrdom; he knew it would not advance the cause. Two weeks before his death he said, "Public rallies and lots of funerals won't save the Amazon. I want to live."

## "The judge was following orders"

Darli Alves was arrested for the murder. At his trial, Feb. 28, 1992, three witnesses testified they saw Alves pull the trigger. Despite this, the judge—who presided without a jury—declared Alves innocent. The official seal of approval was put on the ranchers' death squads.

Osmarino Amanco Rodriguez, who followed Mendes as general secretary of the Rubber Workers Union, denounced the verdict. He said, "The judge chose to believe Darli Alves for one simple reason—the state is directly implicated in the assassination of Chico Mendes. The judge was simply following orders."

The union leader said that it was necessary for the tappers to discuss forming self-defense brigades. He also called on the international workers movement to support a boycott of the Earth Summit.

Beside the Mendes assassination, other changes have rendered the Earth Summit a meaningless exercise. As planned, the nations of the world would have announced cuts in their emissions of carbon dioxide—in order to keep CO<sup>2</sup> emissions at 1990 levels. As a nation that contributes 20 percent of annual carbon-dioxide emissions, the United States is a key player. But the American ruling class does not intend to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions—at least, not on such a timetable. It will cost them money.

But how would it look if the world's worst polluter announced that the United States would wreck the Earth Summit and continue polluting? Not a good scenario. And so Bush exerted this country's clout on world leaders, and the problem was solved. The rest of the world will scrap plans for cutting CO<sup>2</sup> emissions so U.S. business can prosper. "This is worse than a compromise, it's a retreat," says a spokesman for the Audubon Society.

Now Bush can fly down to Rio in triumph and sign an agreement that means nothing. This sellout by the world powers further threatens the rain forests. The ranchers and speculators will see a green light to continue to cut, burn, and kill. The tappers and their allies already know that the fight to save the rain forests and the world's environment can only be led successfully by the international working class. Workers in every country must make the cause of the Amazon people their own. ■