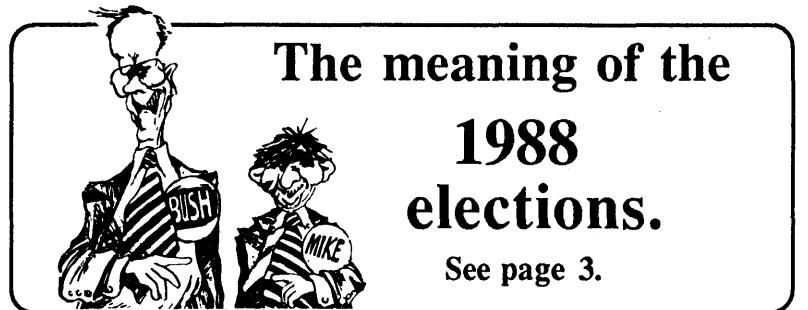


A Socialist ACTION



The meaning of the
1988
elections.

See page 3.

NOVEMBER 1988 VOL. 6, No. 11 50 CENTS

One year after 'Crash' banks again on thin ice



Bill Biggar/Impact Visuals

The Palestinian uprising, the Intifada, has not waned after 11 months despite stepped-up Israeli brutality.

One year ago, the stock market nosedived. On the surface, the U.S. economy seems to have recovered since that time. Recent reports indicate that the nation's commercial banks are again making hefty profits.

But it doesn't take much digging to see that the U.S. banking system is actually under extreme and growing strain. The savings-and-loan (S&L) system, for example, is on the brink of collapse.

"The S&L mess is the biggest financial debacle the United States has faced in

Midwest farmworkers,
See page 5.

Palestinian resistance faces new challenge

By ALAN BENJAMIN

The coming meeting of the Palestine National Council (PNC) is expected to declare the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza and the formation of a provisional government-in-exile to administer the new state.

In exchange for the recognition of this Palestinian state, the upcoming PNC—the Palestinian parliament-in-exile—is expected to formally announce the P.L.O.'s recognition of the Israeli state's right to exist within secure borders.

These views have been issued publicly by top P.L.O. officials over the past several weeks.

If this occurs, it will mark the first time in 40 years that the highest leadership body of the Palestinian movement formally recognizes the legitimacy of the Israeli state—a state which is based on the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their lands and the destruction of their national existence.

Numerous Palestinian publications, and many supporters of the Palestinian resistance, are already hailing the expected announcement of a Palestinian state. Some—like Naseer Aruri, who writes in the Oct. 26 issue of *The Guardian* newspaper—call it a first step, a transition,

toward the establishment of a democratic and secular state in all of Palestine.

But are these cries of "victory" justified? Will a Palestinian state—assuming it is declared at the 19th PNC meeting—be independent? Will it be a state in any meaningful sense of the term? And will it be a transition to "a democratic and secular state in all of Palestine?"

There is more than ample reason to

believe than none of these three criteria will be met.

Will it be independent?

Bassam Abu Sharif, a close adviser to Yasir Arafat, submitted a written document to the Algiers Summit of the Arab nations last June in which he stated that the P.L.O. is willing to endorse United Nations

(continued on page 9)



Where is Gorbachev's perestroika headed?

Special 8-page
supplement inside.

decades," *Business Week* (Oct. 31) notes with alarm. "About one-third of the nation's 3000 thrifts are in the red, and the industry is hemorrhaging at the rate of \$1 billion a month."

The economic advisers for the ruling rich have even more reason to be anxious. The giant corporate takeover bids of the past months have provoked a burst of speculative frenzy that could once again bring Wall Street to the breaking point.

In the first nine months of this year, 4813 mergers and acquisitions, worth \$366 billion, have been launched or completed. This compares with 4082 transactions, worth \$249 billion, during the same period last year.

In mid-October, RJR Nabisco announced it would borrow close to \$17 billion with the help of the Shearson Lehman Hutton investment firm to finance the largest corporate takeover in U.S. history. "The speculative fever has become so pronounced that almost every big company in America is a possible target," states *The New York Times* (Oct. 25).

The *Times* warns that such multibillion-dollar speculative financing could severely affect the nation's economy, perhaps even setting off a major depression, in the event of an economic downturn. With the issuing of huge sums of debt to finance the corporate takeovers—usually in the form of junk bonds—even the slightest recession could bankrupt the corporations, making it impossible for them to pay back all the debt they owe.

This is the same scenario that led to the collapse of the stock market on Oct. 17, 1987.

S&L failures

The hot summer of 1988 witnessed a number of billion-dollar savings-and-loan failures. How did these failures occur?

An editorial in *The New York Times* (Oct. 20) provides the answer: "It's no mystery how one-third of the nation's savings and loans dug themselves a deep financial hole. In 1982, Congress gave thrifts [S&Ls] broad discretion to invest outside their traditional home mortgage market. But it left intact their unlimited right to raise money through Government-insured deposits.

"Hundreds of fast-buck artists entered the
(continued on page 6)

'You work an honest day...'



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

A few weeks ago, I ran into my friend Kathy, who works for Safeway as a checker. She looked so down that I invited her over for a visit, and this is her story. Her name is changed because she wants to quit her job instead of getting fired.

"God, how I hate this job," Kathy said. "I am going to quit because I really can't stand it anymore. We checkers are treated like serfs instead of workers. I've been working at Safeway as a checker for nine-and-a-half years. It will be 10 years in July, and it's never been so bad.

"When I first started working there, I liked it. The pay was good and so were the health

benefits. When you worked in the same store, you got to know all your fellow workers and we used to stick together.

"It has changed just since our last contract, three years ago, when we got the two-tier wage system. [Checkers have the most seniority and make the highest wage.] Everyone I talked to said they were going to vote against the two-tier contract."

Mail-in ballot

"We went to the union hall and voted. But the counters said, 'It was too close to call.'" We had to vote again, this time, with a mail-in ballot. That vote was overwhelming for the contract.

"Now really, I have not talked to one Safeway worker who said they voted for that contract. But here we are with the two-tier.

"Safeway is expanding all its non-groceries sections—flowers, bakery, drugs, and deli. All of those new 'general-merchandise clerks' earn less than we checkers. In fact, the most they can make is \$9.50 per hour, no matter how many years they work.

"There were hard feelings between the new-hires and us. Management told the general-merchandise clerks not to talk to us, that we would make things hard for them.

"It was a while before we could become friends with the baggers. They resented us because they were working for the minimum wage, about \$5.35 an hour, and we were making over \$13.

"Safeway began to yank the checkers around. They began to move us all over the city. No matter how long we had worked at a store, they can transfer us without notice. You are working with workers you don't know, and that leads toward distrust instead of unity.

"They can change our hours. I'm forced to work from 12 midnight till 8 a.m. with no increase in pay. You are always

on call, even on your day off. When Safeway calls, you go in.

Increased surveillance

"Management has increased its surveillance of the checkers. If they catch you talking to a fellow checker, they will call on the service phone and demand that you quit talking or they will write you up.

"In fact, we are watched so close that the only time we can talk is when we're in the bathroom. Even then, we check all the toilets before we speak. When it comes to its workers, Safeway doesn't believe in its

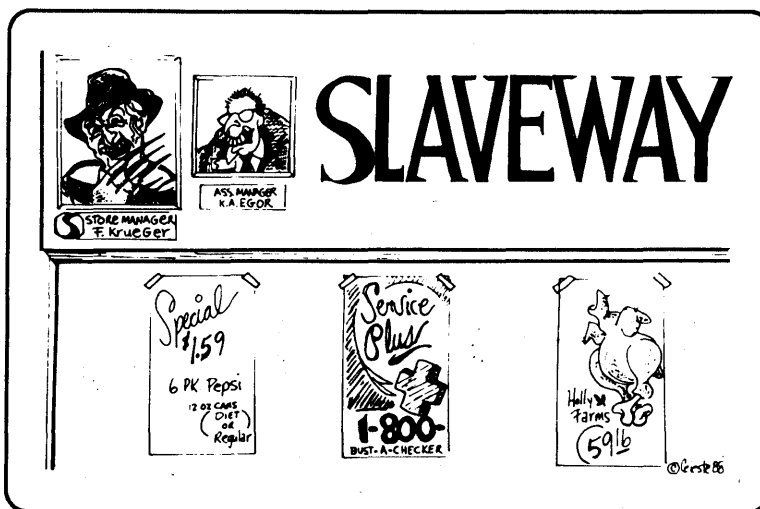
slogan, 'Since we're neighbors, let's be friends.'

"Checkers are complaining of more injuries. The people who design the stores never were checkers. In fact, I don't think they've ever shopped in a store. We're getting wrist injuries [carpal-tunnel syndrome] because of the constant moving of groceries over the price scanner.

"We're supposed to spend a maximum of two hours behind the checkstand but are never relieved when we're supposed to be because of the shortage of checkers. So we're stuck until management finds a replacement for relief time. It's painful on your legs and back when you're forced to stand in a two-foot hole for two hours and longer.

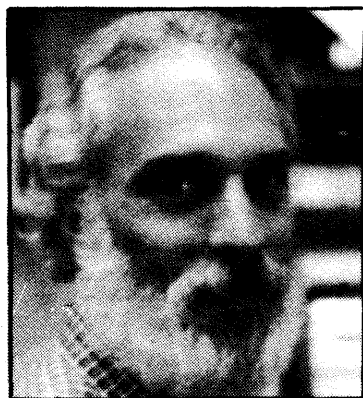
"I have a lot of complaints about the union. It is not democratic. But I would not be without it. Without the union we would be helpless. At least we have the union to protect us against some of the worst faults of management. I just wish the union would act stronger and faster."

Well, that, my friends, is Kathy's story. If there are any workers reading this who are thinking of signing a two-tier contract—think again. Organize, don't agonize. ■



— Behind the lines —

1968: S.F. State students strike for Black Studies



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

The word "STRIKE!" stands up in two-inch letters across the masthead of the *Golden Gater*. The Oct. 4 issue of the newspaper, published by students at San Francisco State University,

commemorates a student strike on this campus that captured headlines around the country 20 years ago.

Incredibly, the *Golden Gater* seems to look back on the 1968 strike with shame. "During the 1968 strike," the editors emphasize, "the entire educational process on this campus was under siege for more than four months."

I showed this editorial to several people who had participated in the strike. "It was a state of siege by the 'tac squad,' not by the students," one former strike activist replied. "A thousand cops swarmed onto campus every day. They held the campus."

Another participant agreed. "Well before the strike began," she told me, "the police shock troops would come out to

campus almost every day, march to the hut occupied by the Black Student Union (BSU), and drag students out to the police station. Several students and teachers who tried to interfere with the arrests were severely beaten."

Black studies

She explained, "For some time, the Black students had been agitating for Black studies classes and for Black teachers. This was unheard of at the time. The administration refused to listen. Finally, the BSU decided that it had had enough of police attacks. It called a strike."

Soon afterward, socialist groups met with the BSU. On the suggestion of the socialists, a leaflet was put out to explain to the majority of the student body the need for a Black studies program and what could be done to win it.

Mass rallies of thousands of students were organized. The student strikers were soon joined on the picket line by teachers and classified workers, who were fighting for union recognition. The teachers' strike brought a larger layer of off-campus trade unionists into the struggle.

Oil workers' support

"At that time," a participant told me, "oil workers who were on strike across the bay had just been attacked by the police. Jake Jacobs, president of the union local, said on TV that he could now understand it wasn't the students at S.F. State who were violent, but the cops."

"Right away, we got on the phone to Jake Jacobs," she continued. "Soon, a contingent of oil workers came onto campus and spoke in support of the

student struggle. Then S.F. State students, in turn, went up to Martinez and helped the oil workers on their picket lines."

After four months, the administration finally agreed to discuss the BSU's demands. But it refused to withdraw the fabricated charges that were lodged against over 700 students who had been arrested.

Thanks to the painstaking efforts of many students, parents, and other volunteers who served on the defense committee, most of the defendants were freed. But

some students were sentenced to three or four months in jail.

The strike at San Francisco State was the longest student strike in the nation. It was the first time in recent decades that portions of the labor movement were drawn into a student struggle. In the end, the strikers were able to win the first Ethnic Studies Department in the country.

The *Golden Gater* notwithstanding, students at S.F. State can be proud of their predecessors. ■

Reagan's colossal fish story

Hard to believe that three giant mammals could be tossed about in the flotsam of a presidential campaign. Yet last month, the whales trapped in the Alaskan ice flows found themselves helplessly caught up in a nationally-televised news conference by Ronald Reagan.

With a nod to fellow "environmentalist" George Bush, Reagan announced that a helicopter would be sent in to help the whales. During the next few days, the White House put in as many as three telephone calls a day to monitor the rescue attempts.

What kindness! What bravery! And what a coverup! The U.S. government's effort to save three whales rivaled the World Series for prime-time television coverage. Meanwhile, little was said (and even less is done) about pollution destroying the entire marine environment—and threatening people living on the shoreline.

In Puget Sound, at least a dozen whales a year wash ashore with their livers exploded because of pollutants. Near the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, dead beluga whales are found with enough PCBs, pesticides, and mercury in their bodies to be classified as "toxic dumps."

But whales are not the only inhabitants of these areas. People eat poisoned seafood from the bays. We drink chemical-laden water from the tributaries.

At almost the same time that President Reagan was crying crocodile tears over the three whales, the Interior Department gave the go-ahead for oil explorations along the Alaska coast. The oil companies were granted permission to set off seismic explosions right in the midst of the whales' migratory routes.

The U.S. government could care less about whales—or any species, for that matter. The demands of the oil corporations and the other capitalists take precedence.—M.S.

Socialist ACTION

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialist Action*.

S.F. socialist candidates speak out on 1988 elections

The following interview with Joseph Ryan, Socialist Action candidate for Board of Supervisors in San Francisco, and Sylvia Weinstein, Socialist Action candidate for Board of Education, was conducted on Oct. 27.

Socialist Action: You are both candidates for local office in San Francisco. What's been the response to your campaign so far?

Sylvia Weinstein: Wherever Joe or I speak, we get a tremendous response. I think people are happy to see somebody who really talks about the issues and says something different. But the meetings have been much smaller than in past years. I think the national elections are responsible for this.

I think the average voter is just simply nauseated with the choice of Bush or Dukakis. And the same can be said for the local candidates, who refuse to address the problems of cuts in social services, unemployment, and homelessness. I think voters don't see any real difference between the candidates, both locally and nationally.

Joseph Ryan: A recent *New York Times* poll indicated that 58 percent of people eligible to vote said they'd prefer to vote for someone else. The *Times* poll further stated that the voter turnout will prob-

ably be the smallest since the 1920s. This is an indication that people are fed up with the fact that their living standards are deteriorating, and neither the Democrats or Republicans are offering political solutions.

turn in this country. The ruling class has moved to the right—not working people. That's what I hear when I'm out on the streets. As a matter of fact, what I hear is a large number of people say that all the capitalist candidates are crooks. I think the vast majority of people understand this and are getting sick and tired of being treated like idiots.

S.A.: What are the main planks of your campaign?

Ryan: The program we advocate for San Francisco is the same program we believe is necessary on a national level. On the local level, we say that the labor movement should break from the Democratic Party and form a labor party. We say they should run their own candidates based on a program that meets the needs of working people. If this was done in San Francisco, it would

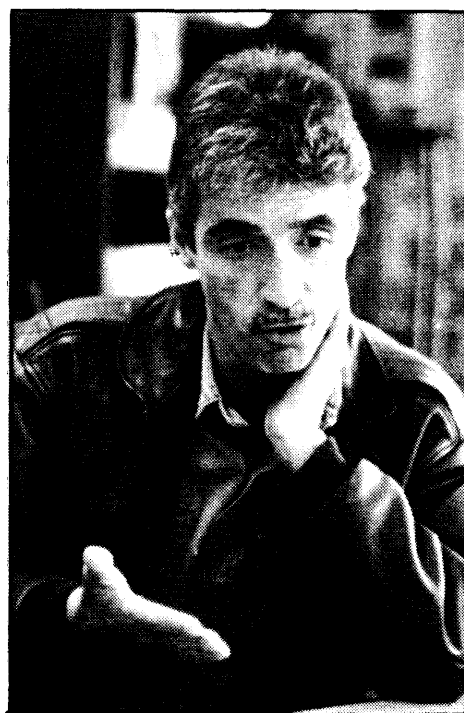


serve as an example for the rest of the country.

We think the workweek should be cut from 40 hours to 30 hours with no cut in pay. We think a public works program should be instituted at union scale to put everybody to work. We think all the cutbacks in social services should be reinstated—and expanded. There's only one place we can get the money for this and that's from the corporations, which have gotten away with paying \$1 billion less in local taxes over the last 10 years.

S.A.: What is your position on Propositions 96 and 102, the so-called AIDS initiatives on the California ballot?

Weinstein: We're opposed to both of them. All they do is punish the victims of AIDS by taking away their right to con-



fidentiality. It's a right-wing attempt to instill in the population a witch hunt atmosphere toward AIDS victims.

We believe the answer for the AIDS crisis is a massive "Manhattan Project"-type program to find a cure. We need a massive influx of funds for research, for a cure, and certainly a vaccine. We believe the drug industry should be nationalized and that AZT should be available free of charge to all AIDS victims. There should be no profit in providing healthcare.

Ryan: The fact that these two

propositions, 96 and 102, are on the ballot is the legacy of progressive movements being tied into the Democratic Party. There's a good chance both of these propositions will pass. And a big reason for this is that the gay rights community and their allies have been demobilized. They have all been sucked into the Democratic Party to get Dukakis elected.

We are also opposed to Prop. S and Prop. R, which are two San Francisco initiatives that favor the homeporting of the battleship USS Missouri. The only difference between them is that Prop. S says the city should pay for dredging costs, while Prop. R—sponsored by Mayor Agnos—says the Navy should pay the costs. It's a difference of who gets a better deal—the Navy or the city.

S.A.: There have been increased attacks on the abortion rights movement both here and nationally. What are you doing about that?

Weinstein: Personally I'm going to be out there defending the clinics when the so-called "Operation Rescue" people get into town. They are a fanatical reactionary movement who are trying to impose their opposition to the legal right of women to get an abortion. They're using the methods of the old civil rights movement with quite a different goal. The civil rights movement was fighting to *expand* the rights of Blacks. This movement is fighting to *restrict* the rights of women.

S.A.: What about the argument that you should vote for the "lesser evil?"

Weinstein: I think it has less and less



Adam Wood/Socialist Action

of a hold. I think fewer people believe there's a lesser of two evils. What we've tried to do is show that it isn't just by the electoral process that you can win your rights.

In fact most of our victories—the right to organize unions, the civil rights struggle, the women's right to vote, etc.—were won in the streets by masses of people. That's how we ended the Vietnam War. If you want something, get out there in massive numbers, organize, and you can win it. That's our message.

Ryan: These elections, both locally and nationally, are a barometer. And the high voter abstention rate is a barometer that indicates a lack of confidence in any of the capitalist candidates, and with it, the capitalist system. This worries the capitalist class because they know—just as we know—that a tremendous economic and social crisis lies just down the road.

S.A.: Since you're not running on a national level, who are you calling to support?

Weinstein: We urge everyone to write in the names of the Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice president: James Mac Warren and Kathy Mickells. ■

Socialists under D.A. investigation

By JOSEPH RYAN

SAN FRANCISCO—Joseph Ryan and Sylvia Weinstein, Socialist Action candidates for Board of Supervisors and for Board of Education, received notice that their campaigns are under investigation by the District Attorney of San Francisco.

In a letter dated Oct. 21, 1988, Assistant District Attorney George Beckwith demanded that the socialists reveal the names, addresses, and employers of contributors. Socialist Action candidates fully comply with financial reporting requirements except the publication of information which would subject their supporters to harassment.

Socialist Action did not report the names of its contributors during its 1984, 1986, or 1987 election campaigns. The city attorney did not object until now.

Numerous court decisions have

confirmed that the government conducts illegal persecution of minority parties and radical political activists. These court decisions have also upheld the rights of socialists to keep the names of their members and contributors confidential in order to avoid victimizations.

A 1982 Supreme Court decision, written by Justice Thurgood Marshall, states: "The Constitution protects against the compelled disclosure of political associations and beliefs." Marshall also cited an earlier court decision which stated that the "inviolability of privacy in group association may in many circumstances be indispensable to preservation of freedom of association, particularly where a group espouses dissident beliefs."

Socialist Action has asked the city attorney to immediately withdraw its investigation. Ryan and Weinstein have pledged a full-scale legal and political defense if the city doesn't back down.



Linda Eber/Impact Visuals

How Columbia workers prepared ranks for strike

By BRENDA BISHOP

The clerical workers at Columbia University recently won a modest but significant victory for equity for women and racial minorities when they settled their contract the morning of the strike deadline.

The union had voted to walk out on Oct. 13 unless the university addressed its main demands: an end to institutional discrimination, equal pay for equal work regardless of race or sex, appropriate training for all, childcare benefits, no givebacks, and fair wage increases for all.

Like support staffs at many other universities, the 1100 members of the Columbia local of United Auto Workers (UAW) District 65 are predominantly women (76 percent) and non-white (56 percent).

The workers' adamant demands were hardly surprising. In the three years since the first union contract was signed, the wage gap between whites and non-whites

widened from \$1000 to \$1500. This was largely as a result of "discretionary" [discriminatory] hiring practices which channel non-whites into the lowest grades and into the lowest rates of pay within grades.

This racial inequity was perpetuated by Columbia's refusal to provide equal training and promotion opportunities for those in the lowest grades.

The disparity in average pay for male and female workers on campus is even more pronounced. The average salary in the mostly male maintenance-workers' local is \$12,000 higher than the average (mostly female) clerical workers' salary.

While the university provides faculty and officers with childcare and private school-tuition subsidies, they refused to grant similar assistance to the nearly 25 percent of clerical workers who are parents.

The last straw for the union was Columbia's insistence that it could pay no more than 3-percent pay increases across the board for three years and that it needed

to reduce vacation and healthcare benefits for new hires.

Building solidarity

Enraged by Columbia's takeback proposals, the workers took advantage of stalled negotiations to organize support for the planned Oct. 13 walkout.

Significantly, UAW District 65 secured a commitment from the two other campus unions—Local 1199 and Local 241 of the Transport Workers Union—to honor their pickets. (The inability of the clerical workers at New York University to obtain a similar guarantee severely hampered their strike, which ended last month.)

One week before the strike deadline, a massive noontime rally was held on campus with the support of the campus unions and the New York City Central Labor Council. In addition, faculty and student support committees were organized weeks in advance and arranged to have hundreds of classes and other services

moved off campus in case of a strike.

UAW District 65 mobilized its stewards throughout the New York/New Jersey area to join the pickets.

Significant first step

Faced with this strength and unity, the university backed down—but not all the way. Columbia refused to directly implement a comparable-worth policy or to eliminate all "discretion" in hiring.

The university did agree, however, to raise the starting salaries for the lowest grades, implement a three-step promotion system based on seniority, provide tuition credits for certain technical training courses, and conduct a comprehensive re-evaluation of the job-classification system—which would be subject to a union veto of subsequent university recommendations.

Columbia also compromised on the issue of childcare. It agreed to pay \$40,000 a year in direct subsidies and to establish a task force with union involvement to conduct a feasibility study within 18 months.

Although the dollar amounts are peanuts for a \$2 billion institution like Columbia, it nevertheless represents a significant first step. Columbia was forced to acknowledge its responsibility for providing childcare for campus workers.

Moreover, the workers' resolve forced the university to withdraw its proposed give-back on health benefits. The workers correctly recognized that acceptance of the university's proposed two-tier benefits plan would make new workers skeptical of the union and undermine future organizing efforts.

Main lesson? Stick together!

Campus workers Charles Hodge and Marlene Mansfield provide a living example of the unity that was forged during pre-strike preparations.

Hodge is a Black computer technician who has been the victim of Columbia's institutionalized racism. He earns less than \$20,000 in Grade 8 after 10 years of service, while just this year a white Grade 5 receptionist was hired at \$20,000.

As a member of the negotiating committee, Hodge explained that the workers "want the university to acknowledge that it is racist because it's profitable."

Marlene Mansfield is one of the higher-paid white workers. But still gets \$4000 less pay per year as a student coordinator than a male window-cleaner does. She is also a single mother who is saddled with substantial childcare costs.

Both Hodge and Mansfield realized that their specific injustices could only be addressed through a strong union. These two class conscious workers are an example of why the demands raised by the union this year will be fully achieved through united struggle in the coming years. ■

BY AMANDA CHAPMAN

Office workers face occupational hazards

In the early part of the industrial era, workers in factories and sweatshops (including women and children) endured 12-hour-or-longer days, six-day or seven-day weeks, poor light, foul air, unsafe machinery, and supervisors who forced them to maintain an inhuman pace.

It was only through decades of militant struggles that industrial workers were able to win child-labor laws, the eight-hour day, and minimal health and safety standards—as well as the right to organize themselves into unions to fight for a healthier workplace and a better standard of living.

But most office and service workers have only been on the fringes of these struggles. One reason for this is that these workers are outside of commodity production, which is the decisive sector of the economy. In addition, their work is seen as safer and less demanding. They have also been excluded because they are predominantly women.

The rapid automation of the office since the mid-1970s has been called by many analysts "the second industrial revolution." The lack of strong trade unions has left the workforce unprotected. Clerical workers are more concentrated, more productive, more closely supervised, and more alienated from the end results of the services they provide.

Chronic health problems

Several medical surveys in the United States, Canada, and Europe have shown

that over half the people who worked with video-display terminals (VDTs) suffered from eyestrain and irritation, back and neck pain, chronic headaches, blurred vision, and other ailments.

University of California researchers studied eye patients using VDTs. The researchers stated, "Their ability to bring objects into focus was more than 50 percent below normal for their age."

In another study, 45 percent of the 871 computer operators surveyed reported pregnancies ending in miscarriage, stillbirth, early infant death, premature delivery, or major birth defects. Some scientists believe that the radiation emitted by VDTs may be the cause.

Many of the health problems experienced by clerical workers, and particularly those who use VDTs, are related to stress. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has concluded that word processors experience higher levels of stress than any other occupational group ever studied, including air-traffic controllers.

Stress-related problems do not usually cause the same level of immediate distress

or disability as other work-related injuries or diseases, but they can ultimately lead to strokes, heart disease, or psychological problems. They can also aggravate many other chronic ailments.

According to the Public Broadcasting Service, one out of every three computer workers is electronically monitored through their computer to gauge their productivity. This electronic surveillance is an important source of stress.

High rate of turnover

Everywhere that clerical workers are employed they most likely find themselves performing a narrower range of tasks, at a faster pace, with less control over how they perform them, with less of a stake in the final product, and with less skill required of them.

Because the work is less satisfying, more stressful, and less valued by management, there tends to be an increasingly high rate of turnover for office personnel. Experience and training are becoming less important.


These factors have led to a rapid growth in the percentage of workers who are part-time, temporary, or contract workers. These

workers are paid less than full-time, permanent workers. They have little or no job security or benefits.

There is little cohesion and a lot of competition among these workers, which makes them less likely to form unions on their own initiative and more vulnerable to scabs, strike-breaking, and union-busting.

The only way that office workers can significantly improve their working conditions and their standard of living is through the kinds of militant struggles waged by industrial workers in the early years of the labor movement.

Millions of clerical workers—the overwhelming majority of whom are women—have a vital interest in the revival of the trade-union movement, its extension to all sectors of the working class, and the forging of strong links between industrial workers and service workers. ■


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The following is an interview with Baldemar Velasquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC). The interview was conducted shortly after the FLOC convention by Shirley Pasholk in Toledo, Ohio, on Sept. 2, 1988.

FLOC prepares for tough union organizing fight

Socialist Action: What do you consider the most significant accomplishment of your recent convention?

Baldemar Velasquez: I think it's the fact that for the first time workers have a forum for expressing democratically what their desires and wishes are.

Their participation in the convention was a self-expression they never had before. They're beginning to run something on their own and demanding the respect that they deserve.

S.A.: What are your relations with the United Farm Workers (UFW)?

Velasquez: They're very good. At this past convention, we reaffirmed a resolution from the 1985 convention to express our affiliation with the AFL-CIO through the United Farm Workers.

We're ready to move forward because we see that what's needed in this country is a national union of farm workers. We want to make that a reality and play our part in it.

S.A.: Could you describe the composition of the convention?

Velasquez: We had close to 300 delegates at this convention—about 100 more than we had at the one in 1985. All delegates have to be farm workers. We want to make it possible for all farm workers to participate whether they're men, women, or young teenagers who are workers.

As a matter of fact, we had 53-percent women delegates. That's very important because women are workers and we have to allow them equal access in terms of leadership, staff, and decision-making.

At the last two conventions, we've had over 100 children. So, we have to provide daycare for them. If the kids stay behind, the women stay behind. That's the way it works in society.

S.A.: What steps have you taken to help ensure unity and democracy within the union?

Velasquez: We've seen that there were certain elements in our constitution that would restrict participation from some members.

For example, there was a requirement in the constitution that in order to be a delegate to the convention you had to have been a member for at least 30 days on a contract farm.

The convention begins the first weekend in August and the cucumber harvest doesn't start until the first of September. Workers arrive from Texas at the last minute.

In cucumbers, you have a 60 percent turnover from year to year. So that new person comes onto a contract farm and is a member of the union, but is restricted from participating in the convention.

So we had to make a change in the constitution where that membership requirement was changed from 30 days to three days to allow everybody to have their voice heard.

Convention committees—resolutions, constitution, rules, and credentials—create the whole agenda for the convention. These committees meet for a full month prior to the convention with open meetings so that any member who wants to participate in the meetings can.

The resolutions committee is the largest because it involves the shaping of policy. We had meetings where over 100 members debated which resolutions would come to the floor. Their participation in that process is key in democratizing the organization.

We are now moving toward a plan where every farm will have a committee of members to administer the contract. As it is right now, the field staff makes sure the growers abide by the different parts of the contract, but it's better to turn that over to the people right on the farms who are there all the time.

S.A.: You've also sent organizers to Florida and Texas to follow the farm workers back home. How has that worked out?

Velasquez: That's part of the normal process of having the organizers travel with the workers. They continue their follow-up with the workers in Texas and Florida in order to have the participation of the members in the union.



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

Over 53 percent of the delegates at the FLOC convention were women. Velasquez says that without their participation "we lose the wisdom we can get from the experiences only women have."

I feel that democratizing the union is a very key factor in our ability to have the resources and the people power to go out in future organizing drives. This union belongs to the people and they've got to take responsibility and ownership of it.

S.A.: How many farm workers do you have under contract?

Velasquez: We have 3000 workers under contract. We're negotiating for another 1000 workers—and as many as 2000 more—which we hope to have covered by the end of the year. That would give us about 40 percent of the workforce in Ohio organized.

We're growing very rapidly. We've just signed-up five new farms in the last week. We have majority cards on close to 20 additional farms.

S.A.: Could you go into some of the contracts you've been successful in winning?

Velasquez: I think the important parts have to do with the new initiative that we have here in the Midwest to bring together multiparty collective-bargaining agreements.

This prevents huge corporations from shifting production from one place to another or one grower to another to get away from an organizing campaign.

In this part of the country, we're dealing with the so-called small family farmer. These growers have been able to keep their operations above water because they've had cash crops and the availability of our cheap labor.

What we do is pull in the large conglomerates that really dictate the environmental situation that both growers and farm workers are victims of.

So we're able to bring Campbell's Soup to the bargaining table. Not one penny of the benefits we've won has come out of the growers' pockets. It's come out of the companies' pockets.

The growers are beginning to see there's an advantage to organized collective action. If they're signed under a contract for a three-year period, the company cannot take their contract away from them for that time.

S.A.: What are some of the concrete gains you've achieved for the farm workers in these agreements?

Velasquez: Wages. On most farms, the tomato workers received over a 50-percent wage increase the first year of our contract with Campbell's. We were able to gain the first hospitalization insurance for these workers. The cucumber workers are going to get up to an 8-

percent wage increase on everything they've earned all summer. We're dealing with a piecework share-farming system in cucumbers so we're able to get the wage increases on the basis of incentive pay at the end of the year.

We were able to have a grievance procedure in all the contracts. Before, if a worker complained, he or she was fired. Now we have a way to process grievances without the fear of being fired.

We've also been able to get a dues check-off from the growers. We were able to get the company to add on a percentage for the dues on top of the wage increase so the companies are essentially footing the bill for the dues.

We have committees set up with the company and the growers to negotiate further benefits such as daycare and housing and to investigate the pesticide issues.

This year we're going to build at least 20 new housing units which will be models to wipe out the one-room shanties which are presently being used for whole families.

We're negotiating for a couple more daycare centers so that all the children will have their daycare needs met next year.

We have to be wise in terms of when we cooperate and when we stand firm. I feel if we constantly surround ourselves with the workers who are out there on a day-to-day basis, we more than likely will make the right decision.

S.A.: What has been your experience as far as harassment?

Velasquez: Over the years it's been pretty intense at times. We've had our staff attorney beaten and his skull fractured. We've been arrested and dragged off to jail.

We've experienced the Ku Klux Klan, cross burnings, and midnight terrorist tactics like taking the guts and organs of farm animals and staking them to the front doors of union members and supporters.

But we sense a change in these rural areas as the growers begin to accept that the union is here and they might as well deal with it since they've seen that the union can get the big corporations to the negotiating table and get something out of them.

The harassment we still get to this day is in individual and isolated cases on particular farms because the unified opposition that was out there has been pretty much broken. These guys are just dinosaurs and they can't intimidate us anymore. ■

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Mass. construction firms attack prevailing wage law

By MICHAEL KOOPER

BOSTON—Construction unions here have been put on the defensive as scab contractors seek to repeal the state's prevailing wage law. The law, on the books since 1914, requires that state and local governments pay union-scale wages and health/welfare benefits to workers on all public construction jobs.

The law prevents public money from being used to undercut wages and conditions negotiated by workers. As one union electrician put it, "Both non-union and union contractors are on the same footing for public contracts because they both have to pay these minimum wages."

The Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), the nation's largest non-union building trades organization, is leading the repeal efforts through its "Fair Wage Committee." This committee includes a number of large corporations outside of construction, including the Kemper and Aetna insurance companies.

The ABC strategy is to challenge the Massachusetts law (Massachusetts is generally considered a stronghold of

construction unions) as a prelude to a full-scale national attack on similar laws in 34 states and a renewed attempt to repeal the national prevailing wage law, known as the Davis-Bacon act.

A "tax-saving" measure?

In a substantial advertising effort, ABC paints this blatant union-busting attack as a tax-saving measure. Stephen Tocco, who chairs the Fair Wage Committee, claims that repeal of the law will save Massachusetts taxpayers \$200 million each year. He poses the question as "whether we decide we want to continue to build affordable housing for elderly or homeless or anybody."

Many observers have challenged the \$200 million figure. With wages comprising only 15 percent of total construction costs, reduced pay would not save significant amounts. And taxpayers would only realize the savings if the contractors passed it on to the public—which isn't going to happen.

What does ABC really want? It wants to hire cheap, unskilled workers from states with high unemployment (Massachusetts

has a relatively low unemployment rate); to bid just below the unions for public construction jobs; and, by gouging the wages, take the big difference in profits for themselves.

That's what the real motive is—profit. There's no wording in the referendum that directs the "savings" back to the taxpayers.

And it isn't just lower wages that will help create big profits for these contractors. Union workers can complain about shoddy work and unsafe conditions—something the ABC crews can't do. And the union construction jobs are the only ones with "costly" affirmative-action programs.

The unions strike back

Massachusetts labor has struck back at this blatant union-busting attack. They've belied the repeal effort, stating that "the ABC and other corporate robber barons will resort to lies and deceit in order to convince the voters . . . that workers are worthless and don't deserve a decent quality of life."

The building trades have organized the Quality of Life Committee, and have raised \$1 million dollars through assessments and contributions. They've reached out to AFL-

CIO unions, correctly characterizing the repeal effort as an attack on all labor.

But while their efforts have been positive, they lack one critical component: greater rank-and-file participation.

Most of the union campaign has focused on TV and radio advertising. These ads clearly point out the profit motive and blast the alleged tax-savings, but this type of a response hasn't galvanized the workers themselves.

A recent article in Electrical Workers Local 103's paper made the case for building a mass coalition with "union members outside the building trades, as well as minority, women's, and community organizations."

But such a coalition hasn't been built beyond endorsements. There have been no marches, no rallies, no community organizing.

The fight against repeal is a critical one. In a number of other states, repeal of prevailing wage laws has been followed by the introduction of union-busting "right-to-work" laws.

As Arthur Osborn, Massachusetts AFL-CIO president, stated, "This 'for profit' referendum will have a negative impact on all workers, public sector, service employees, and industrial workers—not just building trades. This issue is large corporation vs. communities, not union or non-union. If ABC is successful all workers lose."

... banks on thin ice

(continued from page 1)

thrift business, betting the depositor's money on high-risk ventures and raking off fat up-front fees. . . . When the bottom fell out of commercial real estate in the Sun Belt [due to the fall in oil prices], Federal insurers were left with hundreds of insolvent S&Ls and liabilities exceeding the national income of Denmark."

The Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the federal insurance agency, pledged more than \$21 billion this year to rescue 114 savings-and-loan institutions. In one deal alone, the costliest rescue of a thrift to date, the bank board committed \$2 billion to the American Savings and Loan Association of Stockton, Calif.

One bank analyst, Mark Perkins of Perkins Smith in Tampa, Fla., estimates that a government bailout of bankrupt S&Ls would cost \$60 billion now and \$200 billion if carried out over 10 years. That is considerably more than the combined national income of several African countries.

Bailout by taxpayers

Where does the bank board get the money to rescue the sick thrifts? It must resort to issuing debt and other obligations to be paid off in the future. The board now holds almost \$23 billion in obligations, for which it pays over \$2 billion a year in interest.

But most analysts believe that the bank

board lacks the resources to handle the thrift-industry institutions that are still ailing—and to pay back its old debts at the same time. As a result, the government will have to step in and pay the bill—out of taxpayers' pockets.

According to Frederick Wolf, a congressional auditor of the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp., a bailout by the taxpayers will go "far beyond anything that the government has ever had to deal with." *Add Business Week* points out: "Rescuing the depositors of crumbling S&Ls will add billions of dollars to the federal deficit."

"Why make a widget?"

Financial experts are usually quick to point out that another crash like that of last October is highly unlikely given the many "financial tools" available to the government to regulate the economy. These arguments are hardly convincing.

Because of the growing difficulties in finding lucrative returns on investments in the productive sector of the economy, large corporations and banks are increasingly making their loans for speculative and non-productive uses—corporate mergers, leveraged buyouts, and real estate.

"Why invest in making a better widget," asks *Harper's Magazine* (May 1987), "when funding the takeover of a widget company can make you money so much faster and easier?"

This search for a quick killing, writes *Harper's* is "what drove the [1987] bull market, further concentrating the nation's wealth and placing yet more money at the service of a speculative fever that grew daily more irrational and dangerous."

Harper's goes on to note that the government, "echoing the pre-1929 fad for corporate combination," has totally abandoned its regulatory function and allowed "corporate mergers and acquisitions to occur with abandon."

Can another crash be averted?

There are many people, including Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, who are now calling for a tightening-up of the government's regulatory function. Reversing the Reagan administration's position, Greenspan called for modifying the tax laws to discourage borrowing for corporate takeovers.

The New York Times editorialists call for "banking reforms . . . to avoid a major catastrophe."

Will the capitalist politicians have the political will to put these reforms into place? This seems improbable for the



moment.

During the presidential election campaign, neither the Republicans nor the Democrats have wanted to confront the crisis of the banks. *The Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 25, 1988) explained why: "Both Republicans and Democrats know that they can be blamed for allowing the crisis to develop. So they aren't eager to talk about it in the campaign." Moreover, the *Journal* notes, they have no solution to offer.

But even if the limited regulations and reforms proposed by Greenspan and others were implemented in the near future, they would still be insufficient to avert a major crisis. At best, they can only postpone the day of reckoning.

The scramble for quick profit—the logic of which is built into the very fabric of capitalist economy—has produced a debt time-bomb that cannot be defused. It keeps ticking away.

Private debt stands today at the staggering figure of \$6.7 trillion. And the gross federal debt—the "national" debt—has more than doubled during the Reagan years to a mind-boggling \$2.6 trillion. The recent speculative orgy will only fuel the debt crisis.

The post-October 1987 recovery has been built on borrowed time. No one can predict when it will occur, but it's only a matter of time before the new wave of speculation leads to another collapse.—The Editors

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Masses demand: 'Pinochet must go!'

Meanwhile, opposition parties promise continued power for military

By ADAM WOOD

"He's already fallen! Adios General!" These were the cries that rang out in the streets of Chile following a plebiscite on Oct. 5. General Augusto Pinochet, Chile's brutal dictator, had lost his bid for eight more years in power.

Thousands of young people took to the streets, expressing their joy and demanding Pinochet's immediate resignation. Under the terms of the plebiscite, Pinochet is not obligated to call elections until December 1989. The response of the protestors to this provision was expressed by their cry, "One more year—ha! ha! ha!"

On Oct. 7, over 1 million protestors rallied in Santiago demanding that Pinochet step down. Smaller demonstrations around the country were met by tear gas and water cannons.

The majority of Chilean workers, students, and peasants have been swept up by this election victory. The prospect of removing Pinochet, the butcher who engineered the murder of over 10,000 Chileans following the overthrow of Salvador Allende's democratically elected government in 1973, has given new life to the social movements.

A secret weapon

The potential exists to mobilize the Chilean workers and peasants for a struggle against the military which could result in the creation of a new society.

Pinochet and the army will need more than water cannons to turn the momentum back. Unfortunately, they may have their secret weapon in the form of the reformist misleadership which dominates the mass movement.

The leading force advocating a "no" vote in the Oct. 5 plebiscite was the Command for the No, a coalition of 16 parties. It includes capitalist parties such as the Christian Democrats (the leading force in the coalition) as well as factions of the divided Socialist Party.

Now that the plebiscite has been won, these opposition forces are falling all over themselves to find a "consensus" candidate for the upcoming elections who can be seen as "responsible" by the military. So far, the Christian Democrats have succeeded in uniting five of the opposition parties behind a candidate they will select.

The leading contender is Patricio Aylwin, president of the Christian Democrats. The Command for the No has been renamed the Democratic Command, and it appears likely that the other 16 parties in the coalition will fall in behind the Christian Democrats.

Aylwin is a long-time figure in Chilean politics. *The New York Times* (Oct. 7, 1988) calls him "a worthy representative of the landed gentry." During the presidency of Salvador Allende, Aylwin was a staunch opponent of the reforms implemented by that government.

In addition, *The New York Times* reports, "Many Christian Democrats are thought to have privately encouraged the coup [by Pinochet], and their public statements at the time [1973] came close to that." (Oct. 15, 1988)

Aylwin and most of the parties that called for a "no" vote on the plebiscite are now attempting to reassure the army that, in the words of one opposition leader, "This

was a defeat for Pinochet and not for the armed forces." Their stated goal is to win over the parties that voted for Pinochet in the plebiscite and to coax the military into calling an early election.

To achieve this goal, the opposition is tailoring every detail of its political platform to suit the military and the capitalists of Chile. Every public statement is accompanied by an assurance that the opposition in power will follow the same economic policies as Pinochet.

The opposition refers to the Chilean economy as "the positive legacy of the dictatorship." Positive for whom? What this "positive legacy" has really meant in Chile



Chilean youth, like all of Chile's oppressed sectors, sent out a clear message on Oct. 5: "Adios General." They demanded that Pinochet step down now, not in 11 months.

is that, over the last seven years, the top 200 companies increased their profits five times over while real wages fell drastically.

The Christian Democrats and their supporters have also stated that they do not intend to go after the military for crimes committed under Pinochet. They have assured the military that they would only prosecute individuals for specific crimes, if "responsible charges made with foundation" are brought forward.

This piecemeal approach to justice has been called by some Chilean activists "the privatization of human rights."

Over 10,000 people have been murdered under Pinochet, and thousands more have suffered brutality and torture. It will be insufficient to locate individuals in the military who are "responsible" for the government's crimes. The entire ruling class is responsible for 15 years of dictatorship.

Allende's record

Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government, which was overthrown by Pinochet, has been held up by representatives of both sides as the radical past no one wants to repeat. They shudder at the thought of the limited nationalizations and land reform implemented by Allende.

Allende's flaw was not the reforms he implemented,

but rather his belief that real reforms could be carried out in a political bloc with the capitalists and the military. This policy held the workers and peasants back from organizing themselves to rule Chile.

The Popular Unity government tried to win over a wing of the capitalist class by cutting back on the scale of nationalizations and promising to uphold private ownership of the distribution of goods. Similarly, the government tried to pacify the international banks by offering full payment of Chile's \$2 billion debt.

The Allende regime also made an effort to "gain the confidence" of the military. In November 1972, Allende appointed several generals to his cabinet. Only one day before the coup, the Communist Party, a main component of the government, defended Pinochet's "loyalty" to the constitution!

Meanwhile, the Socialist and Communist party leaderships worked to demobilize workers who tried to counter the bosses' disruption campaign. Peasants who

"illegally" occupied the land faced prosecution.

Fight has just begun

The workers and peasants need to see that a government existing side by side with the military cannot build a society based on human needs instead of profit. With or without Pinochet, the army belongs to the capitalists, and they know how to use it to maintain their rule.

The capitalists may be forced to make concessions, as under Allende. But for the bosses, this simply represents a holding operation. If the workers are held back from taking the reins of society, the capitalists will bide their time until the right moment. Then they will strike.

Now that the plebiscite has been won, the struggle will be for the workers and peasants to formulate their own demands and remain independent from the Christian Democrats and other capitalist parties.

There will be immense pressure against this orientation. The Socialist Party is committed to a coalition with the capitalist parties, and the Communist Party has indicated its willingness to support the candidate of such a coalition. Workers who decide to take a revolutionary course will have to overcome these reformist obstacles.

The electoral defeat of Pinochet represents a real victory for the majority of Chileans. However, the fight has just begun.

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Hurricane Joan adds salt to U.S.-inflicted wounds

Hurricane Joan has devastated Nicaragua. Over 100 people were killed. Close to one-tenth of the population was made homeless.

Inhabited areas on the east coast "practically disappeared from the map," the newspaper *El Nuevo Diario* said. A Red Cross nurse reported from the city of Bluefields: "There isn't enough left of the houses to make a fire."

Near the capital city of Managua, hundreds of thousands of shanty-dwellers, refugees who had been displaced by the U.S.-backed contra war, found their homes swept into the river valleys.

A large part of the coffee crop and one-third of the banana crop were destroyed by the 125-m.p.h. winds. This comes on top of agricultural losses from rains associated with Hurricane Gilbert in September. Almost half the bean harvest and 7 percent of the corn were lost at that time.

Even before the two storms, the economy was in a shambles. So far this year, the average wage-earner's income has dropped by two-thirds. The price of a pound of beans has risen over 1800 percent. Malnutrition has become common in the poorest areas.

Health officials report a sharp rise in infectious diseases. Meanwhile, 60 percent of the medical doctors in Nicaragua at the time of the revolution have left the country.

These hardships are caused primarily by the contra war. The Nicaraguans have been forced to direct half of the national budget toward defense. In the wake of the hurricane, the government will be hard-pressed to provide the necessary emergency

services.

The danger remains, moreover, that the contras will try to take advantage of the hurricane damage to further destabilize the economy. During the current period of "ceasefire," the contras have mounted a number of attacks on agricultural cooperatives. In the northern border region alone, over 1000 people were kidnapped between April and September. Twenty-two civilians were killed.

While torrential rains continued to batter the country, a plane from Cuba landed in Managua carrying 35 tons of rice, condensed, milk, beans, and tuna. Later, Canada and several Western European countries also pledged emergency aid.

The U.S. government alone has refused



to send any hurricane-relief to Nicaragua. After touring several areas of the country stricken by the storm, President Daniel Ortega pointed out, "The best humanitarian aid the United States could give us would be to stop its terrorist policies against Nicaragua."

A relief effort is being organized in this country by Quest for Peace. Telephone (415) 531-0779.

By SUZANNE FORSYTH

British gov't covers up murder of IRA activists

The coroner's inquest into the March 1988 killings of three unarmed Irish Republican Army (IRA) Volunteers by the British Special Air Services (SAS) on Gibraltar ended on Sept. 30. A nine-to-two majority brought a verdict of "lawful killing."

The families of the victims—Mairead Farrell, Sean Savage, and Dan McCann—plan to take the case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. They may also file a civil suit in Belfast.

After numerous delays, the inquest began Sept. 6, a full six months after the shootings. From the beginning, the proceedings were weighted in favor of the agents who carried out the killings. The British government set the agenda and called the shots as to what information could and could not be divulged.

The jury of 11 men was selected by the Gibraltar police and included senior Gibraltar civil servants, one of whom was jury foreman.

British Home Secretary Douglas Hurd and Defense Secretary George Younger produced certificates claiming immunity for intelligence and defense information. They sought to protect British cabinet members who ordered the killings.

The British agents were allowed to remain anonymous and to testify behind screens. Others simply gave written statements, thereby denying cross-examination rights to the victims' families. No counter-

part to this provision exists in English law.

Campaign of disinformation

Between the time of the killings and the inquest, an hysterical disinformation campaign was launched by the British. This included statements that there had been a shoot-out between the "terrorists" and regular police and that a "500-lb." car-bomb had been defused by experts.

The British carried out an almost pathetic search for a fourth "bomber," naming five separate innocent people. Of course, all of these claims have been proven utterly false.

In addition, the lawyer for the victims' families, Paddy McGrory, was denied access to official documents, witness reports, or other findings until they were presented at the inquiry. McGrory was not allowed to call witnesses.

In contrast, the British government had a legal team with extensive files, statements, interviews with witnesses, and scientific experts to prove their case.

And yet, to any unbiased observer, the only verdict in the Gibraltar killings can be murder. Every one of the agents' main contentions was contradicted by the evi-

dence. The belief is growing that a shoot-to-kill policy exists against any Irish person thought to be dangerous to the British state.

The agents' claim that the Volunteers had secretly entered Gibraltar was completely contradicted by the admission of Spanish police that the three were under "minute by minute" surveillance by the British. It was revealed that Spanish authorities informed the British at the moment of the border crossing.

According to the testimony of Gibraltar Special Branch Officer Joe Ullger, "The only way to succeed [in the British plan] was to allow the three Volunteers to come in and for them to be dealt with" (*Irish People*, Oct. 8, 1988). In other words, the victims could have been stopped at the border and arrested alive, but were instead allowed across so British agents could kill them.

Spanish police were ready to testify to this up until Sept. 19, but were prevented from doing so after British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher paid a visit to Spanish Premier Felipe Gonzalez. Thatcher convinced him to not allow their testimony "out of respect for the legal proceedings in

Gibraltar." (*Irish People*, Oct. 8, 1988)

The SAS claimed they believed the IRA had a car-bomb which could be detonated by remote control. This testimony was shattered by an electronics expert who demonstrated the impossibility of detonating a bomb in the car which was one-and-a-half miles away from the killings.

Furthermore, that the agents even believed there was a car-bomb is contradicted by the fact that the area near the car was cleared only after the slayings, two hours after it was parked.

Eye-witness accounts

Most damning were the eye-witness accounts of the attack. Carmen and Maxie Proetta witnessed the shooting of Farrell and McCann from their flat, which directly overlooks the gas station where the incident took place. Under heavy cross-examination, both maintained that no warning was sounded and that Farrell raised her hands as if to surrender before she was shot down. McCann was then shot as he held Farrell, trying to protect her.

The Proettas witnessed agents go over to the bodies as they lay on the ground, point their guns, and "finish off" the unarmed Irish Volunteers. According to the Proettas' testimony, blood gushed out from their bodies "like when you break a pipe" (*Irish People*, Oct. 8, 1988). Their account was corroborated by other witnesses.

Because of her determination to testify, Carmen Proetta was the victim of a smear campaign. The British press accused her of being a prostitute, owning a shady "escort" agency, having a criminal record, and being anti-British.

Although agents claimed to have "challenged" the Volunteers, "soldier D" revealed during the testimony that he would have continued shooting until the victims were dead even had they surrendered. On examination, it was discovered that a total of 27 bullets had riddled their bodies, 16 in one person alone. Some were shot from the back—and at a range as close as four feet.

Three weeks after the Gibraltar verdict, the Margaret Thatcher government introduced legislation that will abolish the traditional right of defendants in the North of Ireland to not be forced to testify against themselves. Already, in the "Diplock courts," people are convicted on the uncorroborated testimony of paid informers.

These reactionary measures—and the fact that since 1983 there have been at least 49 killings by security forces in the North of Ireland—clearly demonstrate there can be no justice for the Irish under British rule. ■



Irish freedom fighter's appeal to 'Irish America'

By WILLIAM HUGHES

After five years inside a federal prison cell, Joseph Patrick Doherty, an Irish freedom fighter, is still waging a gallant fight for his own liberty. But he finds the time to be deeply concerned over the unity and purpose of the Irish American community.

In a recent interview at the Metropolitan Correction Center in New York City, Doherty, now 33 years old, expressed his views about the role of the Irish American community in the cause of Irish freedom.

"There has to be a greater commitment on the part of Irish Americans," said Doherty. "They must work harder for a British withdrawal from Ireland. British withdrawal is the key to real peace for our land—a peace based on genuine justice."

"I realize many Irish Americans are turned off by the violence they see on their evening television news," he continued. "But they must begin to look behind the headlines to the causes of the problem—the discrimination, the repression, the tactics of the British army, the death squads, the massive propaganda of misinformation, and the sense of hopelessness that is so

pervasive in the six counties. We are in a war."

Fighting extradition

Doherty has spent 15 years of his young life behind bars for offenses associated with his membership in the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Since 1983, the Thatcher government, aided by the Reagan administration, has been trying to extradite Doherty to the north of Ireland.

In 1981, Doherty was involved in a shootout in Belfast with a unit of the Special Air Service, which is suspected by human-rights organizations of having a shoot-to-kill policy against Irish Republicans. A British officer was killed in the duel. Doherty was arrested and convicted of murder in the notorious Diplock (non-jury) court.

But before the sentence of 30 years could be imposed, Doherty made a spectacular escape from jail. He was arrested in this country on an immigration warrant.

Doherty is a staunch supporter of "liberation theology" and a great admirer of Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. He draws parallels between the heroic struggle in the six counties of Ireland and the struggles for national liberation and social justice taking place in

South Africa, Central America, South America, and Poland.

"If I were born in this country," he underscores, "I'm sure things would have been different for me. But I was born on the New Lodge Road in Belfast, the son of a longshoreman, in an environment of hatred and violence.

"After the crushing of the civil-rights movement, there were few options open to me. I was regularly baited by British soldiers as being 'an Irish bastard.' I was interned without trial. I belong, however, to a generation of determined Irish."

"Bring the troops home"

"The year 1989," Doherty added, "will mark the 20th anniversary of the presence of the British army en masse in the six counties. I think the British people, like the Americans during the awful trauma of their Vietnam War conflict, want their boys to come home. That's why Irish American involvement now in the British withdrawal movement is so important to help bring this matter to a positive conclusion."

"Irish America must become unified," Doherty said. "We don't want their money or guns. But we do need a strong lobby in Washington, D.C. It must take a strong stand with the politicians and not allow them to get away with any play-acting."

Supporters of Irish freedom are inspired by Doherty's courage in the face of his long ordeal. "Every day is the same, but somehow it's always different for me," Doherty said. "I have to be strong. I must keep my dignity." ■

... Palestinians face challenge

(continued from page 1)

Resolutions 242 and 338, both of which affirm Israel's right to exist, on the condition that "the national rights of the Palestinian people be recognized."

According to the pro-P.L.O. weekly, *Al Fajr*, Abu Sharif's proposal had the support of Arafat and a majority of the top P.L.O. leadership. The document, according to *Al Fajr*, constituted a "trial balloon."

In recent weeks, a flurry of diplomatic initiatives have been undertaken with the goal of giving a content to the concept of "Palestinian national rights" that would be acceptable both to the P.L.O. leadership and to the U.S. and Israeli governments.

The different formulas under consideration, however, do not involve the formation of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza.

The "moderate" Arab governments of the region, for example, have been placing increased pressure on the top P.L.O. leadership to accept a plan that would establish a Palestinian state in confederation with Jordan. While all the details have not been worked out, the plan involves placing a Palestinian mini-state under the direct control of Jordan's King Hussein.

This plan was proposed by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and has been endorsed by Hussein and by Israeli Labor Party leader Shimon Peres.

The Shultz Plan (or "Jordan option" as it is sometimes called) had been rejected by P.L.O. Chairman Yasir Arafat in 1986 as a violation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. But on Oct. 23, 1988, after a meeting in Jordan organized by Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, the P.L.O. leadership announced it was now willing to consider a confederation with Jordan. The meeting included Arafat, Hussein, and Mubarak.

Palestinian self-rule?

Hani Hassan, a top P.L.O. official and a close adviser to Arafat, heartily endorsed the "Jordan option" as a formula "to establish Palestinian self-rule in the Israeli-occupied territories."

"Confederation with Jordan is a Palestinian wish and a Palestinian aim," Hassan said. "If the Americans ask us to do this, they are asking us to do what is in our interest."

The Soviet bureaucracy has also offered back-handed support to the proposal to form a Palestinian confederation with Jordan. After an Israeli delegation visited the Soviet Union in mid-July, "Western diplomats reported that Moscow appears to have dropped its insistence on the creation of an independent Palestinian state as part of a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and may be open to other proposals." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, July 28, 1988)

Contrary to what P.L.O. leader Hani

Hassan may wish to believe, the U.S. government, which has bankrolled the Israeli state's brutal repression of the Palestinian people for over 40 years, does not have the Palestinian people's best interests at heart. In the past year alone, more than 380 Palestinians have been killed, while thousands more have been injured and tens of thousands have been detained and tortured by Israeli police.

If the imperialists and their allies (including the Soviet bureaucracy) are pushing the "Jordan option" it is precisely because it will place a Palestinian mini-state under the tutelage of Hussein, the man who, in the "Black September" of 1970, brutally put down a Palestinian uprising that demanded genuine self-rule.

Will it be a sovereign state?

Another option considered by the P.L.O. leadership—and wings of the liberal Zionist establishment—does not involve a confed-

Other "liberal" Zionists who have endorsed Segal's proposal have argued that, in order to win the support of the Israeli Labor Party, it should be stipulated that a new Palestinian state would not include all of the West Bank and Gaza.

Israeli Labor Party leader Shimon Peres, the alleged "peace candidate" in the Nov. 1 presidential elections, has stated that only portions of the West Bank and Gaza would be "exchanged for peace." These are areas which have the fewest Israeli settlements and "are not essential to our security."

Peres' conditions could be easily dismissed as ludicrous were it not for the fact that Jerome Segal, the "moderate" Arab nations, and Yasir Arafat openly called on the Israeli people to vote for Peres as a "way to secure a just peace in the region."

Will it be a transition?

The final and most important consideration in assessing the meaning of a

U.S. journalist shot by Israeli troops

Neal Cassidy, a photojournalist for Impact Visuals, was shot and wounded by Israeli troops in the West Bank town of Nablus on Oct. 18. He was hit by a plastic bullet when troops opened fire without warning on a group of unarmed Palestinian demonstrators. Socialist Action expresses its outrage at this incident.

will never permit—there is ample evidence to indicate that they will strongly oppose recognizing Israel's right to exist on portions of occupied Palestine.

Even the mainstream media has pointed this out. Marcia Kunstel reports the mood of many Palestinians in an article titled, "A West Bank state wouldn't be enough for many Palestinians" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Oct. 12, 1988). She writes:

"[Palestinian] refugees spread throughout the Middle East ... desire to return to the land their families fled when the new state of Israel was created 40 years ago. Thousands of them came from land that is not in the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

"We are against such a state," said Hassan Ali, a 25-year-old resident of the Sitt Zena refugee camp in Syria, who was asked about a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. "I personally seek the liberation of Palestine, but not what Arafat calls for today," he said.

"Why should I go back to somewhere that is not really my home?" said Mustafa, who did not give his full name. "My home is Jaffa [far outside the West Bank]. My orange grove is there. I have my property there. I have the deeds. So why shouldn't I go back?"

The Wall Street Journal (Sept. 29, 1988) quotes 15-year-old Fadi al-Khalidi: "Up to now everything that Chairman Arafat has done has been right. But the day he recognizes Israel is the day I will oppose him. I will win my Palestinian state by fighting, not by recognition."

These views indicate that the Palestinian people's goal to free their entire homeland from Zionist occupation is still very much alive in their hearts and minds.

A democratic, secular Palestine

In 1968, the P.L.O. first put forward its program for the establishment of a democratic, secular Palestine—one in which Palestinian Jews, Arabs, and Christians could live together as equals and without discrimination.

Yasir Arafat described this proposal as follows:

"We are saying 'no' to the Zionist state, but we are saying 'yes' to the Jewish people of Palestine. To them we are saying, 'You are welcome to live in our land, but on one condition: You must be prepared to live among us as equals, not as dominators.'"

This perspective is fully applicable today. Far from being "maximalistic," as the P.L.O. leadership now claims, it is the only one that offers a revolutionary perspective for the Palestinian struggle. It is the only one, moreover, that can point the way toward a durable peace in the region.



Neal Cassidy/Impact Visuals

"I will win my Palestinian state by fighting, not by recognition of Israel."

Fahdi al-Khalidi, age 15

eration with Jordan. But it is no less a violation of Palestinian national rights.

This version of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza was outlined by "liberal" Zionist professor Jerome Segal in a prominently featured article in the June 19, 1988, issue of *Al Fajr*.

Segal's views were endorsed by Hanna Siniora, senior editor of *Al Fajr*—an endorsement which carries tremendous weight. It was Siniora who represented the P.L.O. at a meeting last January with Secretary of State George Shultz. Siniora's endorsement is widely viewed as tacit support for Segal's proposal by the "moderate" elements in the P.L.O. leadership.

Segal's blueprint for a Palestinian state is specific.

- It will be a permanently demilitarized state so as to allay Israeli fears. ("This way," Segal told an audience at Hebrew University on Aug. 23, "this [Palestinian] state won't be able to attack Israel.")

- It will forbid "all acts of terrorism and announce penalties for any violations." [Hence, if any Palestinian were to resist an Israeli attack or provocation, the new state would be obligated to take legal action.]

- Only light weapons required for the maintenance of law and order by Palestinian police would be allowed.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army would control all border checkpoints to monitor the demilitarization of the state. Exiled Palestinians would have the right to return to the Palestinian state—but only to visit.

Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza is whether it will be a transition, as many P.L.O. supporters claim, to the establishment of a unitary, democratic, and secular Palestine.

The answer to this question is a categorical "no" if the establishment of a Palestinian state entails the recognition of the Israeli state's right to exist in its pre-1967 borders. Those lands are also "occupied territories." They were seized from the Palestinians through massacres and savage repression 40 years ago.

The recognition of the Israeli state's right to exist takes all legitimacy away from the struggle to liberate the rest of Palestine from the Zionist colonial-settler state. It is no longer a bridge toward an ultimate goal; it is an almost insurmountable obstacle.

In fact, recognition of Israel retroactively invalidates the decades-long struggle by the Palestinians, making their "40 years of rejectionism" the reason for the failure to achieve a "peaceful settlement" all along.

Opposition to mini-state

Supporters of the P.L.O. leadership's "two-state" solution argue that the entire Palestinian population now supports the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza.

While it is probably true that many, if not most, Palestinians would support an independent and sovereign Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza as a first step toward full liberation—something which the U.S., Israeli, and Arab governments

Socialist Action Forums

Detroit:

Midwest Educational Conference:
Nov. 12-13, Wayne State University.
"Labor's Turning Point," with Jake Cooper, "What Malcolm X Would Say Today," by Kwame M.A. Somburu, "Nicaragua: Is the War Over?" by Carl Finamore, "What is Socialism," by Barbara Putnam.
For more info. call: 313-871-4049.

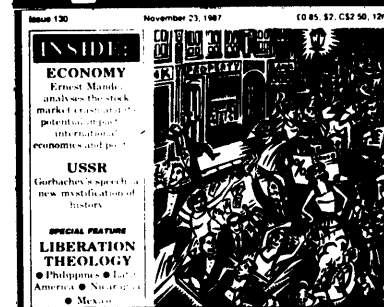
San Francisco:

Film: "Cover-Up" (Iran-Contra Scandal).
A Socialist Action speaker will lead the discussion. Fri., Nov. 18, 8 p.m.,
3435 Army St., Rm. 308, S.F.

Los Angeles:

"Palestinian Uprising: One Year Later."
Speaker: Ralph Schoenman, author
"The Hidden History of Zionism."
Fri., Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m.
Los Angeles City College, Holmes Hall,
Room 6, 855 N. Vermont.

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Cleveland Heights schools segregated, parent charges

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, Ohio—This suburban community has always prided itself in being racially integrated. National publications have even run ads stating that people who want to live in an integrated community should live in Cleveland Heights.

According to Barbara Madison, president of the Heights Concerned Parents, these claims are untrue. "The school system is not integrated," she said in an interview with *Socialist Action*.

"By the time they get to high school," Madison pointed out, "the kids are really segregated in different classes. The smart kids are in 'gifted and talented,' the middle group in 'expanded,' and the dumb kids in 'standard.'"

"I went to a 'standard' class," she continued, "where a guy showed a film the whole period. It wasn't a problem to him that half the class was asleep. But to me there is a problem because that's an all-Black class. If this is an 'integrated' high school, how can you have an all-Black class?"

"I can go down the hallway and see an all-white class where the 'smart' kids are. That's not integration. It's segregation in the same building.

"We have a parent in our group whose daughter is the only Black kid in a 'gifted and talented' class. Once, she raised her hand and asked a question. The teacher said, 'If you don't understand what's going on, maybe you'd better go to a lower level.'"

"This kid is a fighter, though. She managed to fight hard enough to get into this class. She has to fight to stay in there as well. I think we have to train more fighters."

A school for "undesirables"

Last year, the system opened another high school, Taylor Academy, in order to "help" the large number of pupils who were failing. Madison charges that the new school is racially segregated. When she expressed her concerns about Taylor Academy to a member of the school board, he conceded, "It probably will be 100 percent Black."

"He's telling me," Madison said, "that so many Black kids are failing in Cleveland Heights High School that they have to open up another school. You can't tell me Cleveland Heights has never had a large number of white kids fail, or Jewish kids fail, or Catholic kids fail. Why, all of a sudden do we have to have a school for Black kids? Especially if that school is based on failure."

Madison submitted a list of questions to the school board concerning the curriculum at Taylor Academy. She pointed out that foreign languages are not included. The school board replied that "these kinds of kids don't need them."

"The state law gives clear definitions for courses of instruction," Madison told *Socialist Action*. "I don't see how you can deny someone instruction because they

failed two classes at Heights High."

"The last chance?"

"Initially, we called Taylor 'the detention center,'" she continued. "The residents in the area had been quite concerned: 'You're going to open a school for truants in our neighborhood. You mean those little thugs are going to be walking up and down the street?'"

"The response to that was, 'Oh, no problem. We're going to close all the doors—one door in and one door out—and have a guard.' That's a jail!"

Many parents have been taken in by the school system's arguments that Taylor is the "last chance" for their kids. They were not told that sending their children to Taylor was voluntary.

But protests have been organized, and

some parents have responded. "Taylor Academy started off slated for 200 kids," Madison said. "When we got through picketing, it was down to less than 150."

"If we can make people understand what's going on in the school system and if we can get enough community support, I think we can close Taylor Academy without having to go to court."

Tracking four-year-olds

It is urgent to change the tracking system, Madison pointed out: "Tracking really hurts minority kids because it's based on standardized tests which have been proven to be socially and culturally biased. So if you give a Black kid a test, he's not going to do as well as a white kid. He's not going into 'gifted and talented' but into those terrible remedial 'standard' classes."



... Strike

(continued from page 12)

your family. That's the kind of fight working people can wage with real strength and commitment.

Stopping the scabs, of course, does not guarantee success. But it does force the capitalists to pay a political price if they are compelled to bring in the police and National Guard to keep the plants open.

Strike ends without a vote

The orientation of the Jay leadership was to listen to the advice of lawyers, politicians, and consultants like Ray Rogers, the architect of the Corporate Campaign. This kept them from organizing direct participation of all the workers, not only the paperworkers themselves but their natural allies throughout the U.S. labor movement.

The mill remained open. The Corporate Campaign was getting out lots of information, but victory looked unlikely. With the \$55/week strike benefits about to run out, and facing a decertification election

among the scabs in the mill, Local 14 leaders went to Nashville, Tenn., to meet with the UPIU's IP Council, comprised of the other IP locals from around the country.

They proposed that locals at all the other IP mills that are working without contracts strike in support of Local 14. This was rejected. According to Local 14 President William Meserve, "They were afraid of the replacement [strikers being replaced by scabs] issue." On the heels of that rejection, the leadership folded their strike.

Union leaders say they halted the strike to prevent a stampede of Local 14 members back to the mill when the money ran out. But they didn't call a meeting of the strikers before ending the strike; they folded without a vote. Given the steadfastness and militancy of the Jay paperworkers, they would probably have voted to continue.

Rank-and-file members of Local 14 were reportedly stunned and angered by the decision to give up. Losing the strike could cost their jobs and possibly their

Children are tracked even before they enter kindergarten. "Little four-year-olds are designated 'gifted and talented,'" Madison said. "We found out that the pre-school program—which is called Pegasus, the winged white horse—is basically for white kids. But we're paying for all this."

Madison talked to the same school-board member about the Pegasus program. "He said, 'Oh, it's designed specifically for white, upper-class kids.' A school-board member! Again, he had no problem with that."

"I think there is a problem in Cleveland Heights," Madison emphasized. "It's a matter of hypocrisy. Although they say we're integrated, it's not really true. They have special programs to attract whites to the neighborhood. They say, we can give your little white kid a really good education, and you don't have to worry about those 'others.'"

Heights Concerned Parents is protesting these conditions. "When we picketed on the first day of Taylor," Madison concluded, "it had an impact in making the public aware of what's going on in the school system. We're going to have to plan other protest activities."

homes. Its end offers little promise that many strikers will return soon to the mill. The scabs keep their jobs, and IP management says that union members will have preference for jobs *only* as "normal" openings occur.

If the current job-turnover rate continues, as few as three union members a week will return to their mill jobs.

The Jay strike was but another piece of the growing struggle between employers and workers in this country. The capitalist class is on the offensive, looking for openings to bust the unions, not only in the ailing sections of the economy but—as the Austin and Jay examples point out—in the profitable industries as well.

Local 14 could have won, if they'd mobilized their membership, other workers, and their allies in a massive effort to keep the mill shut down. When strike action becomes necessary to defend living standards, there is *no substitute* for effective picket lines that keep out the scabs.

S. Africa divestment wins

By BILL O'KAIN

CINCINNATI—On Sept. 27, 1988, University of Cincinnati President Joseph A. Steger announced the total divestiture of all the university's holdings in companies that do business in South Africa. These holdings were in 28 different companies and represented about \$10 billion—or 8 percent of the school's total endowment.

There have been demonstrations and meetings on the campus for several years to protest the investment policies dictated by the Board of Trustees. The protest movement forced a partial "selective" divestment in 1985.

The latest decision to totally divest was the result of a one-year-long campaign that began with a small but spirited demonstration on Nov. 24, 1987. That demonstration, along with a successful petition

drive, made divestment a major political issue on the campus.

Several racist incidents on the campus added fuel to the divestment movement. These incidents, coupled with the results of a study that revealed that one-half of the minority workforce at the university perceived discrimination, put the school administration on the spot.

They couldn't continue their stance of purportedly defending minority rights in Cincinnati, while closing their eyes to apartheid racism in South Africa.

The locally based Anti-Intervention Coalition, which initiated the divestment activities last year, is no longer in existence. But its success should not go unnoticed. This kind of broad-based group can keep the issue of South Africa alive. Divestment is only a small step toward the liberation of the Black majority in that country.

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'It takes a great prosecutor to convict an innocent man'

By JONI JACOBS

The Thin Blue Line, directed by Errol Morris.

"Any prosecutor can convict a guilty man; it takes a great prosecutor to convict an innocent man."

If the above statement is true, then Douglas Mulder, Dallas County District Attorney, is a "great" prosecutor. And Randall Adams—convicted in 1979 of the killing of a Dallas, Texas, police officer—is a victim of his "greatness."

This is the inescapable conclusion which Errol Morris brings to his latest film, "The Thin Blue Line." Through use of first-hand testimony and newspaper reports, Morris proves that Adams was not guilty of the killing. Instead, he was set up by the real killer, who was too young to be electrocuted by the state. Adams was framed-up for the killing so the state could have somebody to execute.

Killing a guard of the ruling class (a cop) is considered to be more than just murder. It is such a dangerous assault against the status quo that somebody has to die for the offense.

Adams was prevented from getting a fair trial because the judge and jury were so overwhelmed by the "heinousness" of the crime that they were blinded to the facts. He is alive today only because the Supreme Court overturned his death sentence on a technicality. However, the Texas Attorney General commuted the sentence to life imprisonment in order to block Adams from getting a retrial, which might have proven his innocence.

The film demonstrates how easily the criminal justice system can be manipulated against working people. While Morris doesn't directly draw this conclusion, it is inferred that the system is an instrument of class oppression.

Anatomy of a frameup

The facts of the case show Adams was innocent. On Thanksgiving weekend in 1979, Dallas police officer Robert Woods was shot and killed while stopping a car for not having its lights on. On Dec. 22, 1979, Adams was arrested and charged with the killing.

Adams had arrived in Dallas the same weekend Officer Woods was killed. Although he and his brother had intended to pass through Dallas on their way to California, Adams landed a job in Dallas, and they decided to stay so he could work. Throughout the trial, the prosecution tried to paint Adams as a "vagrant" or a "transient," when actually he was just a worker looking



Randall Adams

for a job.

Adams was fingered by 16-year-old David Harris, who was arrested in Vidor, Texas, for assaulting a clerk at a convenience store. The police found that Harris had used the same gun that killed Officer Woods, and that he had stolen a car which fit the description of the one driven by Woods' killer.

Adams' connection to Harris was based on sheer chance. Adams' car had run out of gas the day after Thanksgiving, and Harris had picked him up. They spent a few hours together drinking beer and watching movies at a drive-in theater. When Harris tried to invite himself to spend the night, Adams politely refused. Harris never forgot this slight.

When Harris was picked up a month later for assault, he bargained his way out of the charges by fingering Adams as the "cop killer." Harris was given complete immunity for testifying against Adams although he had a long string of assaults and burglaries on his record.

In fact, Harris is now on death row in Texas for the murder of another man. In one of the last scenes of the film, Harris admits on tape that he knew Adams was innocent, and implicates himself in Woods' killing.

Balanced and objective

"The Thin Blue Line" is more than a documentary of a murder investigation—it is itself an investigation. Director Morris allows each witness to tell his or her story without prejudice. All the evidence is laid out fairly. Although it is apparent that Morris believes Adams was innocent, his presentation of the case is

completely balanced and objective.

The documentary is a pleasure to watch. The cinematography is very artistic. The subtle music of Phillip Glass haunts the screen, creating a feeling of impending doom. Without overt sentiment or gore, Morris dramatizes Officer Woods' killing so that the senselessness of it spills over to Adams' conviction, which is equally as senseless.

One of the problems with the film, however, is the conclusion that Morris draws. He gives the impression that what happened to Adams was a freakish event. In fact, the legal system is often used against working people.

The American legal system is based on English common law, which was designed so the nobility could keep property at the expense of the peasants. In the same way, the American legal system allows capitalists to keep property at the expense of working people. The clearest example of this is the role of the cops and courts in breaking strikes.

"Justice" at a price

While everyone should be guaranteed their right to a fair trial, the criminal-justice system doesn't do this. Instead, it protects the rights of those who can afford them. For instance, proportionately more Blacks than whites are in jail, not because Blacks commit more crimes, but because they can't afford competent legal representation.

A poor person relying on an overworked and underpaid public defender is not getting the quality of legal protection that a high-priced defense lawyer provides.

Unfortunately, Morris presents Adams' case in the context of a system that occasionally makes mistakes. In reality, there is rarely justice for working people in our present legal system. More often, it is a system of criminal "injustice."

There are striking parallels between "The Thin Blue Line" and the case of Mark Curtis, a Socialist Workers Party member who was recently convicted of attempted rape in Des Moines, Iowa. The evidence in Curtis' case in no way connected him to the crime or the victim. His conviction was the culmination of a conspiracy against him because of his union activities and his work with undocumented workers.

"The Thin Blue Line" is a powerful lesson for all working people. Seeing it makes me always want to have an iron-clad alibi handy in case the state decides to turn its criminal injustice system against me. Unfortunately, at this point in time, even an alibi won't help those the state is determined to prosecute and convict. ■

Our readers speak out



P-9

Dear editor,

In my pamphlet, "Lessons of the P-9 Strike," I failed to mention the names of several important leaders of the packinghouse workers in the 1930s. I'd like to acknowledge their contribution as well.

Joe Ollman, Joe Vorhees, and Carl and Marion Nielson were all members of the Communist League of America, the Trotskyist organization at that time. They were leaders of the 1933 sit-down strike of the Austin, Minn., packinghouse workers.

Joe Ollman was no doubt the chief organizer and strategist. At one time he was proposed to be president of the packinghouse workers' union. Only his health prevented him from running for that post. Still, he was selected to be the union's international representative in this district, a position he held till his death.

Ollman was also an outstanding

leader in the 1948 strike in South St. Paul. The strike was in bad shape nationally. Only the decision by the local leadership to close down the Swift, Armour, and Cudahy plants saved the strike.

The company used an injunction to limit the pickets and then proceeded to bring in scabs. But the workers drove all scabs out of the Cudahy plant. After a bitter battle on the picket line, the plants were closed. The governor of Minnesota called out the National Guard. He also ordered the plants to remain closed till a settlement was reached.

Carl and Marion Nielson also played a very important role. They wrote regularly for the union paper in Austin and were in constant touch with the Trotskyists' Minneapolis branch and with the leaders of the Teamsters' union.

The Austin comrades, like the Trotskyists nationally, were in the forefront of almost every labor struggle that took place in their area. They helped make Austin a union town.

Jake Cooper,
Chaska, Minn.

Nurses

Dear editor,

I just purchased a copy of *Socialist Action* and have enjoyed the news articles immensely. The articles are informative and interesting.

But please be careful with your

facts. Under "Healthcare For Profit," May May Gong states that "one in 10 American babies dies before reaching its first birthday."

I am a public-health professional and I know better, as you should. The rate is not good, but it is approximately 1 in 100. For Black children, the rate is 1 in 50. Don't destroy the reliability of your paper with these kinds of errors.

Mary Anne Nierer,
San Francisco, Calif.

Thanks for bringing this to our attention. My source was the Aug. 22, 1988, issue of *Newsweek* magazine, where the error originated. *Newsweek* never printed a correction.

According to the Oct. 19 *Wall Street Journal*, the exact infant-mortality rate in 1987 was 10.4 per 1000. This ranks the United States at the bottom of the list of the top 20 industrialized countries. I think you would agree that this record is criminal in the richest country in the world.

May May Gong

Ecuador

Dear editor,

The Salasacas are Indians living in the Andean plateau, some 70 miles south of Quito, Ecuador. For centuries, they had rather isolated lives in an area poor for agriculture and not much coveted by the region's usurpers.

But in the last 20 years, their quiet has changed; more highways are going close to their territories, more Indians are killed by speeders, more thefts are committed by "whites" (mostly mestizos)—who have all the rights.

The Indians got tired of being abused. Last June, one of the Salasacas found two young persons stealing some of his belongings. He summoned other people, who surrounded the thieves. The latter then

threatened the Indians, saying that they belonged to a big group who would take revenge for any injury.

The Indians, out of fear, decided to kill the two thieves. A legal nightmare has ensued. The Indians now face harsh sentences. But many people are defending the Salasacas, who were trying to protect their rights.

Antonio Proano,
Los Angeles, Calif.

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Paperworkers forced to end strike after 16 months

By MICHAEL KOOPER and ROGER SHEPPARD

BOSTON—The 16-month-long strike by paperworkers against the International Paper Company (IP) in Jay, Maine, came to an end on Oct. 12. Although it was the hardest-fought labor struggle in the New England area in many years, the strike was defeated.

In many respects the struggle took the same road as the 1985-86 strike of the Hormel packinghouse workers of Local P-9 in Austin, Minn. The lessons learned from the defeat of P-9 have now become even more compelling.

On June 16, 1987, 1200 workers in Jay went out. They are mostly members of Local 14 of the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU), with others from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers.

The paperworkers in Jay were only one of four locals around the country that were either on strike or locked out by International Paper. (The others were in DePere, Wisc.; Lock Haven, Pa.; and Mobile, Ala.) But Local 14 spearheaded the strike, while pressing for a coordinated bargaining strategy to involve all the locals.

Workers held fast

IP had a union-busting strategy from the beginning. Even before negotiations formally began, IP constructed a barbed-wire fence around the mill. Finally, the company forced workers into the strike by demanding unacceptable work rules and hiring practices.

Despite the difficult conditions faced by strikers, Local 14 held fast. Only 50 union members crossed the picket line to return to work.

The union held weekly Wednesday-night mass meetings. Crowds of 1000 and more, including unionists from other paper mills and industries, gathered there to hear news of the strike, listen to supporters from around the country, and sing labor-solidarity songs.

Local 14 was very successful in rallying support from other paperworkers, the building trades, and unions throughout New England. For example, a rally in Jay on Aug. 1, 1987, drew more than 8000. A Labor Day march in September 1987 in nearby Waterville, Maine, drew 5000.

Rallies were built in Boston and other cities. Leaders of Local 14 traveled around the country, winning the support of UPIU locals and unionists in other industries.

The government—on whose side?

The strikers also had some success in getting local politicians to state that they were on their side. The town of Jay passed several resolutions (though unenforced) that were designed to restrict IP's use of scabs.

The strikers began to think that the government was on their side. But IP is the largest landowner in the state of Maine—and perhaps in the United States. The strikers soon found that IP also owns the governor, the legislature, the police, the judges, and the National Guard.

Being a small town, Jay was torn down the middle by this strike. Local management and workers live side-by-side, and are frequently in the same family. The local police, whom IP relied on at the very first to control picketing at the mill, are brothers, cousins, and uncles of the strikers. (The authorities later shifted to using the state police.)

The fight was a bitter one and a costly

The authors helped build labor solidarity with the Jay strike in the Boston area.



Liz Green/Impact Visuals

'The strikes that win are the ones where the employer's operations are shut down...'

one—not only economically but in human terms.

The strike's critical phase

It didn't take long for IP to bounce back from the initial shutdown of the mill. Soon after the strike began, IP contracted with BE&K, a notorious strike-breaking outfit from Alabama. Scabs were recruited from throughout the South.

Pretty soon, IP was running the mill with about 1000 scabs and management personnel, which the company described as "at full staff."

IP got judges to issue injunctions against picketing and blocking the scabs from entering the mill. The government threatened local and state police and National Guard intervention to enforce the injunctions and "protect" the scabs' "right to work."

This was the critical juncture of the strike—when the scabs began coming in. That's when the union needed to *shut down the mill*. To accomplish this would have necessitated a nationwide call to all labor to stand with them and stop the scabs. That call would, of course, have included the other IP mills.

These strategies were discussed in Local 14's executive committee and among the rank and file. But Local 14 saw itself between a rock and a hard place. If the scabs weren't stopped, the strike would be lost. If they did try to stop the scabs, they faced a fight with the National Guard and would likely end up in jail—unless they rallied the entire labor movement around them.

The Hormel strike

This is the same essential controversy that arose in the P-9 strike in Austin,

Minn. On the cold morning of Jan. 21, 1986, 500 P-9 strike supporters kept the scabs out and successfully closed down the Hormel plant. But Governor Rudy Perpich deployed the National Guard, and the workers retreated.

The P-9 leadership didn't think it was possible to keep Hormel shut down. They relied on the tactic of a "Corporate Campaign" to win the strike.

Like P-9, the paperworkers took the same road, based on the erroneous judgment that, as Stephen Early of the Communications Workers of America recently said, "strikes in the manufacturing sector have been harder and harder to make work—and it's worth evaluating the effectiveness of other strategies."

Now that both P-9 and the Jay strike have been defeated, the results of Early's "evaluation" should be clear. It's time for unions to go back to the strategy that worked in the days of widespread union militancy: a fight at the point of production to keep scabs out and to keep the company from running a struck plant.

The reality is that the capitalists can only be forced to give in to the demands of workers when their plants and mills are shut down and their profits are cut off. The defeat of both P-9 and Local 14 make the lesson clear.

The strikes that win are the ones where the employer's operations are shut down, and *no scabs cross the line*. This is the lesson of the big union struggles of the 1930s like the Teamsters strike in Minneapolis, the Longshore strike in San Francisco, the Auto-Lite strike in Toledo, and—yes—the Hormel strike of 1933.

And it's the lesson of Local 26 of the Hotel Workers in Boston, who beat back

the threat of scabs in 1982 and 1985, and have pledged to do it again in December if the bosses try to break the line.

What's the Corporate Campaign?

The Corporate Campaign is supposed to be a way to defeat union-busting companies by cutting off their power base at the banks, holding companies, and other industries that have a financial interest in the struck company.

This is done through boycotts (like the "Cram the Spam" campaign of P-9) and through informational picketing designed to "embarrass" the company into fair treatment of its workers.

In the case of the Jay strike, the Corporate Campaign had a number of components. It became a campaign against IP's board of directors, one of whom also was a director of the Bank of Boston. So Local 14 called for a boycott of the Bank and all of its subsidiaries unless they severed ties with the director and IP—which of course never happened. It also became a boycott of Avon Products, which also shares a director with IP.

The Corporate Campaign does have a positive side. It served as an outreach to unions throughout New England. It served to rally support in many industries and scores of unions. But the negative side is overwhelming.

The Campaign tells workers that "you can't win a strike on a picket line anymore." But picket lines are a very powerful thing. They preserve the *integrity* of a worker's job. When you're on the line protecting your own job, and a scab tries to cross, it's like someone breaking down the front door of your house and coming for

(continued on page 10)

Where is Gorbachev's 'perestroika' headed?



Steelworkers demonstrate in Montenegro, Yugoslavia. The specter of such an upsurge in the Soviet Union keeps Gorbachev awake at night.

Horvat-Picture Group

Growing worker unrest forces party shake-up

By CARL FINAMORE

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev returned from a September visit to Siberia in a hot sweat. People there were "at my throat," he said on Soviet television. Apparently, Gorbachev heard an earful of complaints—and for good reason.

People are fed up. There has been a steady and serious decline in the Gross National Product (GNP)—particularly in agricultural production—in the last two decades. And these figures have continued to drop since Gorbachev took over as general secretary of the Communist Party (CPSU).

Exiled dissident Alexander Amerisov presents an accurate picture, confirmed by numerous other reports, when he writes: "Gorbachev's policies ... have backfired, producing misery for the Soviet people rather than benefiting them. Wages are down. Prices are up. Shortages are even greater than under Brezhnev."

The skepticism of the Soviet people toward the economic reforms is, therefore, quite understandable. It also explains why the bureaucracy has been consciously moving slow in implementing *perestroika*—that is, economic restructuring involving the introduction of capitalist-type market mechanisms. The bureaucrats want

to avoid a flare-up with the working class.

While increasingly bold expressions of public dissent have been appearing for some time, it was the heat Gorbachev took in Siberia that finally convinced him to make some rapid-fire political moves aimed at removing the resistance to his reform program among "hard-line" sectors of the bureaucracy.

He immediately convened an emergency session of the Supreme Soviet and got himself elected president. Several other changes were made to strengthen his leadership in the CPSU.

Gorbachev's goal is to satisfy the minimal social needs of the population

before impatient workers and peasants begin to utilize democratic openings of *glasnost* to raise their own program. The bureaucracy is desperately trying to avoid a massive political confrontation with the working class like the one that began in Poland years earlier when similar economic austerity "reforms" were introduced.

China has also just reported that strikes took place in 19 cities this past summer in reaction to *perestroika*-type price increases.

In short, Gorbachev is in a race to keep *perestroika* ahead of *glasnost*. But, paradoxically, it is precisely the introduction of *perestroika* "market reforms" which makes a confrontation with the working class and poor farmers inevitable.

Latest government shake-up

Among the most important recent leadership changes made in the CPSU was the elevation of Vadim A. Medvedev to a full seat on the CPSU politburo. He was

(continued on suppl. 7)

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT



Is Gorbachev returning to Soviet democracy?

By CARL FINAMORE

When the Soviet Union launched the world's first satellite in 1958, Sputnik entered overnight into the vocabulary of every language. Two new words—*glasnost* and *perestroika*—have also rocketed to our attention, but with much more down-to-earth objectives.

Soviet economic, political, and social structures are being overhauled and, in some cases, wholly replaced. Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev describes his sweeping reform efforts as a "revolution without shooting."

Seeking mass approval for his policies, Gorbachev has dissociated himself from the extreme political repression and forced-march economic measures of Josef Stalin's 30-year rule. Gorbachev says he is for "freedom of speech, the press, conscience, assembly, street processions, and demonstrations."

And while there have been significant democratic openings at all levels of society—openings which the Soviet masses are seeking to break wide open—Gorbachev is delivering considerably less than he promises.

Less than one year ago the Communist Party (CPSU) newspaper, *Pravda*, warned against the growth of unofficial political clubs and condemned advocacy of opposition political parties or independent trade unions.

"Their activities sometimes take on a clearly illegal character," the newspaper said in a front-page editorial, referring to newly organized unofficial political clubs. "Without the permission of authorities, they organize demonstrations, even disturbances. They illegally print and disseminate literature hostile to socialism."

In May 1988, the most prominent of the independent magazines, ironically named *Glasnost*, had its equipment confiscated, its files and manuscripts destroyed, and its editor jailed. There are numerous other examples of Gorbachev complaining that too much freedom to criticize his policies will "introduce confusion into society."

In addition, Vladimir Khlebnov, who in 1977 founded the country's first independent union, the Free Interprofessional Association of Workers (SMOT), has been in psychiatric detention since 1978. All efforts to secure his release, as well as that of the other SMOT co-founders, have been labelled acts "of imperialist destabilization" by the ruling Communist Party.

Back to Lenin?

Despite this poor record, Gorbachev would like the Soviet workers to believe that his proposals for changes in the nation's political structures amount to a return to Lenin. In his address to the May 1988 Central Committee, where he outlined these changes, Gorbachev stated that

"the party acted in this very way in Lenin's lifetime and under Lenin's leadership."

But does *glasnost* really mean the introduction of genuine soviet democracy as conceived by the revolutionary founders of the Soviet state? Hardly.

The heirs of Stalin's political machine are introducing reform measures which, unlike early Bolshevik policies, are exclusively designed to retool their cumbersome and grossly inefficient bureaucracy.

In particular, in order to increase labor productivity, it has become absolutely necessary to relax the iron grip of the centralized bureaucracy over virtually all aspects of the economy. The bureaucracy is being reshuffled, but it's the same old deck of cards. Gavriil Popov, a chief Gorbachev adviser, admits as much when he notes that "the tempo of change will be determined by how fast the apparatus learns new ways to lead."

Among the winners in this new deal of the cards will be factory managers and local economic administrators. The rights of the workers and the factory committees are peripheral to the real purpose of Gorbachev's reforms—which is the strengthening of the role of the managers.

The "State Enterprise Law," enacted Jan. 1, 1988, will invest managers with control over the use of profits for reinvestment or as workers' bonuses. Even the clearly stated right to elect managers is subject to

"confirmation by the superior body."

Zhores Medvedev, a leading Soviet dissident, says that Gorbachev is not proposing "self-management ... in any real sense. He talks about self-management in the context of the need to restrict ministerial interference [with decisions of the managers]."

A revival of factory committees with control of production is one of the factors Lenin and Trotsky stressed would result in increased productivity, elimination of waste, and preparation for workers running the government.

But Gorbachev's reforms are not aimed at increasing workers' control of their enterprises. Their goal is to legitimize the power of managers.

Democracy for austerity's sake?

Polish Solidarnosc developed in reaction to the same policies which Gorbachev wishes to introduce into the Soviet Union. [See accompanying article on Gorbachev's economic reforms.]

Gorbachev has admittedly watched Poland's experience very closely. He has observed the failure of the discredited Polish Communist Party (PUWP) to institute price hikes and other economic "reforms."

Realizing that the Soviet CPSU also lacks the moral authority to successfully impose *perestroika's* austerity program, Gorbachev has turned elsewhere. He wants



The Russian Revolution was based on an alliance of the working class and the peasants, who were the vast majority of the Czarist army.

the soviets (councils) to give the stamp of approval for his anti-working class economic package.

To achieve his purpose, he must invest the soviets with a carefully crafted democratic image. Gorbachev claims that he desires to limit "functions performed by the party and state bodies and [to] restor[e] in full power the soviets at all levels."

His most ambitious plans are to be implemented in April 1989, when the Supreme Soviet will be replaced by a freshly elected Congress of People's Deputies.

But how can this Congress really represent the interests of the workers and peasants when the Soviet government still denies basic political rights to the population?

Gorbachev's soviets

Originally, the soviets were democratically elected councils that developed throughout Russia in the months leading up to the 1917 insurrection. They were made up of delegates from mass organizations representing millions of workers, peasants, and soldiers.

Since that time, the influence, power, and rights of the soviets and other mass organizations have been completely usurped by the Stalinist Communist Party. None of the *glasnost* democratic reforms will fundamentally reinvigorate these soviets or mass organizations.

For example, to ensure bureaucratic political dominance of the soviets, no other socialist parties are tolerated. The hundreds of new independent political clubs are also closely monitored and harassed.

Boris Yeltsin's downfall as Moscow CPSU chief occurred after he allowed a wide range of independent socialist clubs to hold a national convention where numerous anti-bureaucratic resolutions were passed, including one resolution favoring a multi-party system.

It is impossible to speak of soviet democracy when dissenters—particularly those seeking to return the Soviet Union back to the path of Lenin and Trotsky—are not allowed full political rights, including the right to form parties.

The glaring absence of soviet democracy can be seen in the recent election of Gorbachev as president of the Supreme Soviet. He was elected in a one-hour session by a vote of 1500 to 0.

Real soviet democracy

The Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky repeatedly emphasized the critical role of mass organizations through which the majority could actively participate in government. Lenin's theses on democracy were adopted by the First Congress of the Communist International in 1919.

This report stated that "genuine democracy ... is possible only ... by enlisting the mass organizations of the working people in constant and unflinching participation in the administration of the state."

For the first time in history, the workers, peasants and soldiers—the overwhelming majority of the population—controlled the government. In fact, the Bolshevik program went further. It called for the workers and peasants to *be* the government.

"It gives those who were formerly oppressed," Lenin said, "the chance to straighten their backs and, to an ever-increasing degree, to take the whole government of the country, the whole administration of the economy, the whole management of production, into their own hands."

The Bolshevik leaders' broad appreciation for "mass participation" in government has nothing in common with the narrow parameters of *glasnost*.

Several parties in bitter opposition to the Bolsheviks functioned in the soviets. They ran elections, circulated their press, and organized meetings and demonstrations.

After the revolution, their rights were fully guaranteed by the Bolsheviks. In fact, the Bolsheviks actively solicited the participation of Soviet opposition parties in the government. But only a small left-wing section of the Socialist Revolutionary Party agreed for a brief period to join the government.

The other parties took up arms against
(continued on next page)

Policies of Stalin's rise echoed in new reforms

By JOANNE VINCOLISI

Since coming to power in 1985, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has regularly leaned on the early record of the Bolsheviks for his support, hoping that it will provide the necessary historical and theoretical precedents for his current policies.

While shoveling more dirt on Stalin's political grave, Gorbachev has resurrected a popular Bolshevik leader, Nicolai Bukharin, to accomplish this task. Bukharin was the chief architect of Stalin's economic policies from 1923 to 1928.

Bukharin and Stalin claimed to base their policies on the New Economic Policy

relationships would have eliminated the capitalist "world market" profit criterion for trade. A new trade basis between countries would develop commensurate with the expansion of productive capacity, eventually leading to a generalized system of planned economy in distribution as well as production.

Revolution makes detour

But these post-World War I revolutions failed. The young Soviet republic was isolated and on the verge of economic collapse after four years of imperialist armed intervention.

In 1921, immediately after the civil war,

NEP as quite simple: "Industry should supply the rural districts with necessary goods at such prices as would enable the state to forego forcible collection of the products of peasant labor."

But a major dispute soon broke out in 1923, with Trotsky on one side and Bukharin and Stalin on the other. It involved defining the exact character of production incentives. This may appear to have been a rather academic discussion. It wasn't. The results radically altered the future course of the Soviet Union, with many of the same issues resurfacing today.

Trotsky urged a steady increase in

different approach—one which is remarkably similar to today's *perestroika* reforms. They introduced capitalist profit incentives to increase production. This only aggravated the imbalance between city and country, while intensifying the oppression of poor peasants by rich landowners, or kulaks.

Perestroika's role model

Bukharin told the peasants to "get rich." Both he and Stalin encouraged the kulaks to let supply and demand market mechanisms exclusively determine the price of their products. Unfortunately, a large number took this advice seriously. A broad layer of rich peasants and middlemen, the "NEP-men," developed.

Millions of peasants refused to sell their grain to the government unless prices were continually raised.

This price-gouging siphoned away scarce government capital needed to build up industries in the cities. Indeed, kulaks were getting rich, but the cities were starving. By the spring of 1926, over 60 percent of the grain destined for sale was in the hands of only 6 percent of peasant proprietors.

The most ambitious rich peasants even tried to find ways to sell grain for a higher price on the world market, thus violating the monopoly on foreign trade exercised by the Soviet government. If they had been successful in circumventing the government's trade monopoly, there would have been even less grain available for the hungry Soviet people.

Everything came crashing down in 1928. The kulaks convinced the middle peasants to hoard grain and foodstuffs in a calculated joint effort to blackmail the government into raising prices.

"The working class," Trotsky wrote, "stood face to face with the shadow of an advancing famine."

Forced collectivization

Reeling in panic at the threat posed by the kulaks, the state bureaucracy, under Stalin's leadership, broke with Bukharin. Its reaction was brutal. Agricultural products were taken from the peasants with bayonets. The kulak threat was eliminated by attempting to dissolve 25 million individual peasant holdings into 2000 collective farm units within a three-year period.

This forced march toward collectivization caused long-term damage to Soviet agriculture. Millions of peasants were politically alienated from the Soviet regime. And economic results were no better.

Trotsky writes that "the collective farms were set up with ... equipment suitable ... for small-scale farming. In these conditions an exaggeratedly swift collectivization took the character of an economic adventure."

The forced collectivizations of 1929-31, were a tragic and unnecessary result of the grievously mistaken policies promoted for five years by Stalin and Bukharin. Unfortunately, these same policies serve today as the model for *perestroika*. ■



(NEP), which the Bolsheviks adopted in 1921. This is not completely accurate. Though some elements were similar, the strategy pursued from 1923 to 1928 was completely opposed to that of the Bolshevik Party under Lenin and Trotsky.

Stalin's and Bukharin's reactionary approach flowed from their defeatist orientation of building "socialism in one country." Lenin and Trotsky maintained the traditional Bolshevik theory of linking the fate of the first workers' state with the advance of the world revolution.

The early Bolsheviks stressed the need for socialist revolutions in every country, especially Germany. It was considered self-evident that the young Soviet republic could only survive with financial credit, raw materials, and tens of thousands of skilled workers supplied by other victorious revolutions.

Non-exploitative international economic

factory production was one-fifth of the pre-war level. The collapse of productive forces surpassed anything history had ever seen.

A devastating chain reaction took effect. The peasants refused to supply food to the cities because factories were not producing commercial products in exchange. The peasants buried their harvested crops, saving them for a better day.

Under civil-war pressures, the government was forced to militarily requisition agricultural products. But that "military communism" policy had to stop when the war ended.

The NEP thus began in 1921. It utilized pre-revolution production incentives such as supply and demand and traditional money payments. Trade between the city and countryside was reestablished on this basis. In this sense, Lenin and Trotsky supported the NEP as a necessary "retreat."

Trotsky describes the objectives of the

industrial growth to supply the peasants with farm equipment and consumer items to serve as necessary production incentives. He correctly predicted that this relationship was the firmest basis for closing the "scissors," a reference to the ever-widening social gap between the city and country.

Industrial expansion, Trotsky argued, would be financed by charging peasants a higher price for commercial goods and paying them less for their agricultural stocks. This unequal exchange—or "borrowing"—from the peasants was absolutely necessary in order to rebuild the devastated economy.

Of course, the price differentials could not be excessive. Trotsky points out that, "Too heavy 'forced loans' of products, however, would destroy the stimulus...[for peasant] labor."

Stalin and Bukharin had a completely

... Soviet democracy

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the revolution. As a result, they were outlawed.

Civil war narrows democracy

The civil war, fueled by the invasion of 14 imperialist armies, not only imposed severe physical hardships on the Soviet population, it also gravely altered the political course charted by the Bolsheviks.

Trotsky commented that democracy "narrowed in proportion as difficulties increased. In the beginning, the party had wished and hoped to preserve freedom of political struggle within the framework of the Soviets. The civil war introduced stern amendments into this calculation."

In his book "The Revolution Betrayed," Trotsky stressed that the leaders of the revolution considered any measures in conflict with soviet democracy "not as a principle, but as an episodic act of self-defense."

As civil-war induced famine spread across

the Soviet Union in 1921, Lenin and Trotsky were forced to support severe restrictions on the highly valued inner-democracy of the CPSU. There was a ban on organized internal political groupings apart from the democratically elected leadership of the CPSU.

Trotsky reports that these steps were "again regarded as an exceptional measure to be abandoned at the first serious improvement in the situation ... lest it lead to a strangling of the inner life of the party."

But, unfortunately, temporary measures taken in self-defense perfectly suited the needs of the emerging Stalinist privileged layer to silence all dissent. To this day, even with the much-heralded *glasnost*, factions and tendencies are strictly prohibited in the CPSU.

Toward socialist democracy

Lenin's last political act before he died was an offer to form a bloc with Trotsky

against the developing bureaucratic deformations in the CPSU and the soviets.

Trotsky waged this battle until he was murdered in 1940 by an assassin carrying out Stalin's orders.

Two years prior to his death, in September 1938, Trotsky and his supporters launched the Fourth International, a new world party committed to socialist revolution. One of Trotsky's closest associates in this effort was Leon Sedov, his youngest son. Sedov was responsible for coordinating the work of Trotsky's supporters inside the Soviet Union.

In October 1936, prior to his mysterious death in a French hospital, Sedov summed up the tasks of Soviet workers in their struggle against the ruling bureaucracy. In an article on the meaning of the Moscow Trials, he wrote:

"The Soviet proletariat can only march toward socialism by the revival and full blossoming of soviet democracy, by the legalization of all soviet parties—above all the party of revolutionary Bolshevism. But the revival of soviet democracy will only be possible through the overthrow of the parasitic bureaucracy. And the overthrow of

the bureaucracy can only be accomplished by the revolutionary force of the toiling masses." ■

Suggested reading

1. The Third International After Lenin

by Leon Trotsky

Written in 1928, it was smuggled out of the Soviet Union after being suppressed by Stalin. It outlines the specific economic and political proposals of the Left Opposition in its fight against bureaucratism. \$8.95 paper, Pathfinder Press.

2. The Revolution Betrayed

by Leon Trotsky

Examines the social roots and political development of the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration of the original goals of the Russian Revolution. \$6.95 paper, Pathfinder Press.

3. Marxist Economic Theory, Vol. 2

by Ernest Mandel

4. The Meaning of Gorbachev's Reforms

by Alan Benjamin

(Socialist Action pamphlet \$.75)

5. Poland: The Fight for Workers' Democracy

by Zbigniew Kowalewski

(Socialist Action pamphlet \$1.50)

Fidel Castro, *Perestroika*, and workers' democracy



Fidel Castro has made it clear that what Gorbachev thinks is good for the Soviet Union is not necessarily good for Cuba.

By ROLAND SHEPPARD
and ALAN BENJAMIN

In his annual July 26 speech this year, Cuban President Fidel Castro centered his attention on the *perestroika* (economic restructuring) reforms pursued in the Soviet Union and other workers' states.

Castro, in a carefully worded speech commemorating the 35th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada barracks, did not openly oppose *perestroika*, but he rejected this policy for Cuba. He stated that "Cuba will never adopt methods of capitalism."

In sharp contrast to the top ideologues of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Castro stated, "Socialism and capitalism are diametrically different by definition and essence."

Castro's speech was a strong reaffirmation of the Cuban Communist Party's "rectification" campaign, which was launched at the Third Party Congress in 1986. This campaign developed in response to the *perestroika*-type economic measures introduced in Cuba in the late 1970s.

These were measures that authorized private producers—mainly farmers—to sell whatever surplus they had left (after selling their quotas to the state at fixed prices) on the "free" markets. There the producers could obtain whatever price the market would bear.

The reforms, however, led to the proliferation of middlemen (often rich peasants) who made small fortunes selling farm produce in the towns. They did this by hoarding goods in order to speculate and price gouge.

Seeing the dangers to the revolution posed by the development of this privileged and parasitic social layer, the Cuban CP slammed on the brakes and resorted back to the campaign of moral and ideological incentives characteristic of the early years of the Cuban Revolution.

In response to those who argue that Cuba should abandon its "rectification" process and step in line behind Gorbachev's market reforms, Castro said:

"Many capitalists believe that the socialist system will have no choice but to adopt methods, styles, and even motivations and a certain kind of idiosyncrasy of a capitalist nature. They're indulging themselves in wishful thinking. ... It has never occurred to us to think that we have to copy what the Soviets do."

Elsewhere he stated, "If someone is suffering from corns, why look for a remedy for a toothache?"

At one point, Castro alluded to one of the dangerous consequences of *perestroika*: unemployment. He rejected capitalist incentives for production (the threat of layoffs to increase productivity) and the introduction of unemployment in a "socialist" society.

"We don't want anyone jobless on the street," Castro said, "and the day we work well, with efficiency, and there is a surplus labor force, the solution lies in reducing the number of working hours."

The concept of guaranteed full employment and a shorter workweek in a highly industrialized socialist system is a far cry from Gorbachev's acceptance of the need for unemployment in the Soviet Union. (Gorbachev actually said that whoever finds the solution to unemployment should get a "Nobel Prize.")

Castro concluded one portion of his remarks on *perestroika* with a wish of his own. He said he hoped that Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership would "rectify" their current market-reform "mistakes," just as Cuba had done in 1986.

Castro lambasted the capitalists and their apologists who, "on the basis of the self-criticism now going on in the Soviet Union," are bent on discrediting the great achievements and gains of the socialist revolutions. "They're trying ... to detract from the historical merits of socialism and demoralize it," Castro said.

In response to the multiplying number of critics of socialism—all of whom are having a field day with what they call Gorbachev's confessions of the failures of Marxism and socialism—Castro spoke with great pride

about the record of the Cuban Revolution.

He began by pointing out that the Cuban July 26th Movement carried out a socialist revolution in opposition to those who insisted that Cuba must first have a prolonged capitalist stage to gain independence from the United States.

"Cuba ... was the first country to free itself from U.S. imperialism in this hemisphere ... and the first one to carry out a socialist revolution," Castro stated.

"This revolution was precisely characterized by a reluctance to copy from others," Castro continued. "Had we been willing to follow stereotypes, theory had it that no [socialist] revolution could be made here; ... that's what the books used to say, what the manuals used to say."

This was a direct reference to the Soviet leadership and to the Cuban Stalinists, then organized in the Cuban Socialist Party. Both were responsible for writing the manuals and books that promoted the "two-stage theory of revolution."

Cuba's agrarian reform

Castro also described how the Cuban Revolution had carried out its successful land reform. The Cuban approach rejected forced collectivization and used education and patience to organize the poorer farmers to produce in a collective manner, while nationalizing the large private farms into state farms.

Referring to the small peasants or sharecroppers who were given the land, Castro stated:

"We haven't forced any of them to join cooperatives. The process of uniting those plots has taken us 30 years. We've gone ahead little by little on the basis of the strict principle of it being voluntary. ... And yet more than two-thirds of their lands now belong to cooperatives, and all of them are making headway, they are prospering."

This approach by the Cuban leadership was identical to the one advocated in the Soviet Union by Leon Trotsky in the middle and late 1920s, prior to Stalin's forced collectivizations. [See Carl Finamore's article on the Soviet economy in this section.]

Ninety miles from the U.S.

Castro went on to explain to the July 26 rally that the Cuban people have no one else but themselves to rely on to solve their economic problems and to defend their revolution from the threats and pressures of U.S. imperialism.

"Were imperialism to attack us," Castro said, "who is there to defend the island? No one will come from abroad



The Cuban revolution has relied on mass mobilizations of the population to discourage U.S. aggression.

to defend our island; we defend the island ourselves. It isn't that someone might not want to defend us, the thing is that no one can, because this socialist revolution is not just a few kilometers from the Soviet Union; this socialist revolution is 10,000 kilometers from the Soviet Union."

Here Castro reveals his understanding of the new terms of "peaceful coexistence" worked out between Reagan and Gorbachev over the past few years. He is aware that the summit agreements involve settling "regional conflicts" across the globe and knows that he can be cut off from Soviet support at any time, leaving him vulnerable to the imperialist colossus to the north.

This is why Castro appealed so strongly for the Cuban masses to mobilize to defend the revolution.

Castro's veiled response to Gorbachev demonstrated the great strengths and achievements of the Cuban Revolution—and of socialism in general. But it also brought to light some of Castro's and the Cuban leadership's shortcomings.

These weaknesses center around two themes: the lack of institutions of workers' democracy in Cuba and the lack of a consistent proletarian internationalist perspective to defend and extend the Cuban Revolution.

Lack of socialist democracy

In his speech, Castro indirectly rejected the limited *glasnost*/democratic openings Gorbachev has introduced in the Soviet Union—openings which Gorbachev justified on the grounds that "criticism is a bitter medicine, but the ills of society make it a necessity."

Castro categorically rejected the idea that Cuba had any ills which would make *glasnost*-type measures necessary. "We have created our own political way to suit the country," he said. "We have to rectify absolutely none of this. Ours is a superdemocratic system."

Elsewhere Castro stated, "It is not that we want to be more virtuous than anyone else, or more pure than anyone else. It's that we are 90 miles away from the most powerful empire on earth, and 10,000 miles from the socialist camp. ... That is why imperialism tries to weaken the revolution ideologically ... so that it can swallow us like a ripe apple."

In his speech, Castro said he would never allow what he called "pocket-size parties" to organize in Cuba. He repeatedly spoke of the need to maintain "ideological purity" and to prevent all those who would "sow dissension" from doing so. "We don't need capitalist political formulas," he said, "they're just trash."

Castro here confuses bourgeois democracy with proletarian democracy. The existence of a multiparty system is not necessarily a "capitalist formula." For example, Lenin and the early Bolsheviks tried to preserve the multiparty character of the soviet system. In fact, Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary oppositionist parties functioned legally all through the civil war until they engaged in armed insurrection against the government.

Castro correctly points to the need for a Leninist combat party to lead a revolution against capitalism and to consolidate a workers' state. But he departs from Lenin and the early Bolsheviks when he upholds the prohibition of tendencies and factions inside the Cuban CP as well as the prohibition of any opposition political parties. [See article by Carl Finamore on soviet

democracy in this section.]

The prohibition of tendencies and parties makes it difficult—in fact, nearly impossible—to organize opposition against a mistaken policy.

While it is correct and necessary for the Cuban Revolution to use any means necessary to prevent the exiled Cuban capitalists and their supporters inside the country from organizing against the revolution, it is not true, as Castro implies in his speech, that all forms of dissent in Cuba are pro-capitalist and counterrevolutionary.

Underground political currents

There exist in Cuba a number of political currents—made up mainly of intellectuals and artists—that firmly support the revolution but object to the one-party monopoly on political power by the ruling Cuban Communist Party. These currents, all of them underground, have also pointed to the failure of the revolution, now in its 30th year, to provide institutionalized channels for criticism, debate, and genuine participation by the masses in the major decisions affecting their lives.

These objections are justified. Cuban "people's democracy" is unquestionably more democratic than anything that ever existed in Cuba in the past. But the Cuban CP, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, and the numerous other mass organizations are plagued with severe bureaucratic deformations.

The structures of all these institutions are vertical and top heavy. No organized opposition groupings are allowed. And no real decisions are made by the lower bodies or mass organizations; these are all made by the Central Committee of the party.

Close observers of the Cuban Revolution often point out that Castro regularly recognizes—and corrects—serious mistakes or abuses committed by leading party bodies. Although this is undoubtedly true, no revolution can rely on one person, however brilliant or committed to the revolution he or she may be, to correct the myriads of problems and mistakes inherent in any

genuine social transformation.

The existence of organized channels for genuine participation and debate—i.e., of genuine socialist democracy—is not a danger or liability to the Cuban Revolution. It is a vital necessity.

Limits to Cuba's internationalism

The Cuban Revolution has been under intense pressures and attacks from its inception. Today, with Gorbachev's shift toward accommodation with U.S. imperialism, the revolution is more vulnerable than ever.

In his speech, Castro acknowledged that the next two to three years will be extremely difficult ones for the Cuban masses. He predicted economic hardships resulting from, among other things, the deteriorating terms of trade with Cuba's capitalist trade partners.

For nearly three decades, the Cuban leadership has been confronted with the difficult situation of increasing the well-being of its population within the confines of a beleaguered island. The economic support from the Soviet Union has been essential to its survival, but not sufficient to provide the capital and consumer goods which the Cuban people require to move the revolution forward.

The revolution has been successful in resisting the imperialist blockade and siege. But it cannot ultimately survive or deepen the gains it has made unless it breaks out of its isolation in the Western hemisphere. For this to happen, the Cuban example has to be extended throughout the rest of Latin America as the road for national independence.

Although Castro and the Cuban CP have demonstrated a willingness to materially oppose U.S. imperialism in Nicaragua and Africa, they have been unwilling to apply the lessons of the Cuban Revolution, which Castro acknowledged in his speech, to the rest of the colonial world.

Referring to Nicaragua, for example, Castro has repeatedly stated that the Sandinistas have not proposed to carry out a socialist revolution, and that he fully agrees with this view. Castro has strongly endorsed the Sandinista government's commitment to a capitalist mixed economy. In his July 26 speech he reiterated this view.

But the entire history of the 20th century—particularly in Latin America—has proven that there is no middle capitalist road between U.S. imperialism and the example of the Cuban socialist revolution that can lead to genuine national independence.

Uneven response

Castro's condemnation of Gorbachev's *perestroika* reforms reveals the healthy revolutionary character of the Cuban leadership and the Cuban Revolution. Castro's reaffirmation of Cuba's political structures and international policies, however, point to the important weaknesses of the Cuban revolutionaries.

Castro and the Cuban CP are not Stalinist. And while there are noticeable bureaucratic deformations, there is not a hardened bureaucratic caste at the helm of the revolution that must hold back the masses in order to preserve its material privileges.

The Cuban leaders can best be described as "revolutionaries of action"—i.e., revolutionaries who are genuinely committed to advancing the interests of the workers and peasants, but whose program for carrying out this objective contains severe limitations.

But whatever its weaknesses, Castro's speech represents a breath of fresh air at a time when the leaders of the Soviet Union, China, and the Eastern European workers' states are hailing the "virtues of the market economy" and the advantages of "peaceful coexistence." Castro's speech will provide valuable ammunition for all those who want to respond to Gorbachev and uphold the road toward socialism. ■



U.S. troops in Grenada. The Cuban revolution is constantly faced with the threat of U.S. invasion.

Alex Webb/Magnum

Chilean Marxist traces Lenin's 'Trotskyism'



By ROBERTO PUMARADA

La Revolucion Social: Lenin y America Latina by Marta Harnecker. Siglo XXI, Mexico City, 1986, and Editorial Nueva Nicaragua, Managua, 1986.

The development of the imperialist phase of capitalism, resulting in World War I, led Lenin to conclude that the coming revolution had to combine in a single process both the democratic (anti-feudal) and the socialist revolutions.

Thus in 1917, Lenin broke with the conception of a "two-stage revolution" inherited from the founders of Russian Marxism. This schema held that the bourgeois-democratic tasks would have to be concluded *before* embarking on a socialist revolution.

Lenin explained that the Russian capitalists could not carry out a democratic revolution. Instead, he pointed out that only a workers' state supported by the peasantry could fulfill those tasks—as well as go forward toward socialism. Lenin's

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views on the matter thus came to coincide with those espoused by Leon Trotsky in his theory of "Permanent Revolution."

After Lenin's death, however, Josef Stalin revived the old "two-stage" theory. Opposing points of view were vilified as "Trotskyism."

The Stalinist dogma effectively required maintaining political blocs with "progressive" sections of the ruling class. The policy resulted in such disasters as the military coups in Indonesia (1967) and Chile (1973).

It is in this context that the publication of Martha Harnecker's "La Revolucion Social: Lenin y America Latina" takes on significance.

The evolution of Lenin's views

Harnecker, a Chilean theorist who lives in Cuba, (and whose writings have taken

on a semi-official character) undertook a study of the development of Lenin's strategic conceptions in order to apply them to Latin America.

She elaborates Lenin's views on the class character of the revolution, describing their evolution between 1905 and 1917. Harnecker's conclusions on this point confirm the traditional Trotskyist interpretation of the subject.

Relying heavily on her reading of "Two Tactics" and "The Agrarian Program of Social Democracy," Harnecker summarizes Lenin's pre-war conception, rooted in the economic determinism of the Second International, as accepting that "the revolution of 1905 is a *bourgeois revolution* in its *economic-social content*. If it triumphed, it would not destroy capitalism but rather develop it further." (emphasis in original)

In this analysis, the attempts by Stalinists to portray Lenin's single 1905 reference to the "uninterrupted" character of the Russian revolution as a healthy rebuttal to Trotsky's "ultraleftism" are shown to be historically false.

Harnecker explains what Lenin really meant by this formulation. She writes: "Once the bourgeois-democratic revolution has triumphed, clearing the ground for the development of capitalism, the proletariat will consciously begin immediately a struggle for *another revolution*, the socialist revolution."

"The uninterrupted character of the revolution consists in not contenting itself with the triumph of a democratic regime which gives free reign to capitalism, but rather in *continuing to struggle* for socialism in the conditions created by the democratic revolution."

The need for socialism

On the eve of the October 1917 Revolution, Lenin transcended these views. Reviewing Lenin's "Letters From Afar," "Letters On Tactics," and the "April Theses," Harnecker notes the break and attributes it fundamentally to the analysis of imperialism developed by Lenin during World War I.

She points out that the Russian Revolu-

tion took place in one of the most backward countries of Europe and, at the same time, one that had suffered the accelerated impulse of war.

"The crisis produced by the war," she writes, "demanded the adoption of radical measures which, although still not affecting private capitalist property, submitted capitalist control to workers' control, which already imply the first steps towards socialism."

This required the establishment of a "dictatorship of the proletariat," which Harnecker describes:

"[T]he dictatorship of the proletariat does not mean the exclusive government of one class nor the elimination of an alliance with other classes... [it] signifies the political leadership of the proletariat. The proletariat as the leading and dominant class, must know how to direct its policies in such a way that it first resolves the most urgent problems."

In this sense then, "The soviet government was a workers' and peasants' government because it represented the two principal classes of the revolution, whose struggle or agreement determined the luck [of the] revolution."

Lenin's "Trotskyism"

Lenin later explained his new conception in more depth in "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" and in the articles "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" and "The Fourth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution."

In the last article, Lenin stated, "Bourgeois-democratic reforms are a byproduct of the proletarian revolution, that is, socialist.... The first transforms itself into the second. The second resolves in passing the problems of the first, the second consolidates the work of the first. The struggle, and the struggle alone, determines how far the second will go."

As Harnecker points out, "It seems important to insist that the transformation of the first into the second, which the Bolshevik leader here sets out, has nothing to do with his 1905 conception of the uninterrupted passage of the bourgeois-

democratic revolution into the socialist.

"In that epoch, [according to Lenin's thinking at the time] the only tasks which the revolution set forth were the bourgeois-democratic tasks which drove the country, not towards socialism, but rather, towards the development of capitalism."

Harnecker concludes, "It is impossible for socialism to definitively triumph in a single country, especially if it is a backward country such as Russia, without the triumph of the socialist revolution in some of the advanced countries."

What Harnecker misses

Harnecker's book is not without defects. In one sentence, she dismisses Lenin's belief that a socialist government had to be based on soviets (workers' councils). She fails to come to grips with the degeneration of the Russian Revolution led by Stalin and its impact on the non-Russian Communist parties.

Thus, the policies of the pro-Moscow Cuban Popular Socialist Party before 1959 and the Chilean Communist Party in the Allende era are occasionally and uncritically mentioned. This is a serious error in a work which purports to explain the importance of Leninism in Latin America.

Harnecker's ambivalence flows not only from a misperception of these parties as revolutionary but also from a rigid division of the revolutionary party's program into "minimum" and "maximum" demands. She states:

"It is important to differentiate the political discourse directed to the vanguard from the discourse directed to the great masses. These, especially if they are backward, must be informed only of the immediate tasks which the revolution plans to put in practice: It is not necessary to talk of other tasks, nor insist on the socialist character of the revolution, much less of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

This passage has a grain of truth. "Talking socialism" and abstract posturing are apt to alienate workers who do not see the connection between their everyday struggles and socialist solutions.

But the failure to raise "transitional" demands—which link the daily or economic struggles for "minimum" demands to the "maximum" demand of socialism—poses the danger of allowing reformist leaders to keep the fight within "minimum" boundaries.

Transitional demands

The relationship of forces in any struggle often leads to compromises. In such cases, transitional demands are needed to educate the workers and carry the struggle forward during the next upsurge. Without such education, the movement can dissipate without future prospects, particularly where reformists are involved.

This is where Harnecker's separation of minimum and maximum goals becomes dangerous. She warns against an organization becoming bogged down in opportunist minimalism, or carried away by sectarian ultimatism. But she fails to pose any solution short of trusting the revolutionary vanguard to know what to do next.

When it is understood that Harnecker still includes the official Communist parties in the "revolutionary vanguard," even though they support Stalin's two-stage theory, one has a right to pause.

Harnecker intends to follow the present book with one which will elaborate her views on this and other questions in more detail.

Her present work, though marred by the problems noted, is nevertheless a serious study of Lenin's conception of a revolutionary situation and of the evolution of his thought on the key question of the class character of the revolution in the imperialist era. It also confirms some of the views traditionally defended by the Trotskyist movement:

"For Latin America to escape from underdevelopment, there is no other road than the revolutionary transformation of society through anti-imperialist and democratic solutions, which, in our countries, are at the same time necessarily anti-capitalist solutions." ■

... Growing worker unrest

(continued from suppl. 1)

also named chairman of the party commission on ideology. Medvedev gives a good picture of where *perestroika* is going.

The economic reforms he describes are extremely far-reaching. They challenge fundamental aspects of a planned economy and seriously jeopardize a broad range of social gains made in the 1917 Russian Revolution.

"The market is an indispensable means of gearing production to fast-changing demand, and a major instrument of public control over quality and cost," Medvedev says. "Cooperative businesses and individual enterprises are effective not only in small-scale production, ... they may also be useful in organizing ... large-scale industry. Our previous concepts of public property ... have proved untenable."

Nikolay Shmelyov, a leading Soviet government economist, was even more descriptive. Writing last year in the leading Soviet political and literary journal, *Novy Mir*, he said:

"We need to permit companies and organizations to sell freely, to buy freely, to buy and borrow from their reserves ... to invest their enormous but idle resources. ... In place of fruitless efforts at central planning ... we should introduce contracts between supplier and consumer."

Shmelyov continued: "Only profit can measure the quantity and quality of economic activity and permit us to relate production costs. ... One way of reducing the current shortage of capital funds [is] for the appropriate enterprises to sell bonds to enterprises ... and private parties as well."

None of these capitalist-like "market reforms" come cheap. They all have a price, and it's the working class and poor farmers who will pay.

The cost of reforms

There are numerous examples indicating that the reforms mean more austerity for the majority.

For example, Gorbachev has strongly hinted that he no longer plans to wait two years before raising prices on consumer goods like meat and milk. He only backed away from price increases last year because of strong popular resistance.

On another occasion, Gorbachev's chief economic adviser, Abel Aganbegyan, complained about the 1986 government food subsidies and said that it had become "a major problem how to get out of this mess." This messy problem for the bureaucrats—in reality one of the major social achievements of the socialist revolution—costs approximately \$91 billion a year.

Another policy shift that has caused great concern among Soviet workers is the gradual introduction of unemployment.

According to Soviet economist Vladimir Kostakov, Gorbachev's economic "modernization" program could result in the loss of between 13 million and 19 million jobs within the next 10 years.

In June 1987, the government adopted a law stipulating that all laid-off workers will obtain the wage of an average Soviet worker (approximately 200 rubles) for three months. Those who cannot find a job in the same branch of industry will be "recycled," that is, retrained for another job.

But Kostakov warned that the service sector and other industrial branches might not be able to absorb the large numbers of unemployed manual workers. "We are already experiencing difficulties with re-employment of the released workforce," Kostakov stated.

Indeed, Gorbachev no longer acknowledges the Soviet state's historic responsibility in assuring everyone a job. Advocates of *perestroika*, in fact, continually refer to unemployment as a "natural" part of life.

Profit or planned economy?

But the negative impact of *perestroika* is not limited to the standard of living of the

working class. There are other very damaging consequences for the economy as a whole if the profit motive becomes the major stimulus for production.

Gorbachev was confronted with these problems during his recent visit to Siberia. He criticized many enterprises which were making a huge profit by emphasizing production of luxury items. Following the logic of the profit motive, some factory managers apparently have been shifting production away from inexpensive mass consumer items.

"There are some who have simply embarked upon the anti-social road and cut down the output of cheap goods in popular demand," Gorbachev complained. "Imagine what will happen," he said, "if everyone takes this road."

That's exactly the problem.

But Gorbachev should be pointing the finger at himself. His plan for broad application of the profit motive will necessarily mean more wasteful diversions of labor and capital.

A far better recourse—one which Gorbachev is *not* proposing—would be to fully democratize the planned economy, replacing the bureaucratic administration

solution. "The substance of the current agrarian policy," he says, "is to change the relations of production on the farms." This includes promoting "contractual and lease agreements for up to 50 years."

In a dramatic speech on Oct. 13, Gorbachev called for farmers throughout the Soviet Union to be freed from the current state-run system of collective agriculture. Specifically, Gorbachev proposed that the limited experiments in leasing state lands to individual farmers should be promoted across the country. "Our idea," he said, "is that all agriculture, the entire agrarian sector, should follow this path."

Gorbachev has already encountered some problems in the countryside, just as he has in the city. Even with the colorful imagery of making "the farmer sovereign master" over the land, many farmers suspect Gorbachev's motives. *The New York Times* reports "a public jealous and resentful of the growing private entrepreneurial class."

Addressing himself to those agricultural workers who are reluctant to give up the social and economic security of the collective farms, Gorbachev remarked: "No fool is going to go to work on a lease



Novosti-Sipa

Gorbachev's goal is to satisfy the minimal social needs of the population before impatient workers and peasants begin to utilize the democratic openings of 'glasnost' to raise their own program... In short, Gorbachev is in a race to keep 'perestroika' ahead of 'glasnost.'

altogether with genuine forms of soviet democracy. This would more rationally and equitably determine production for social needs. [See accompanying article on soviet democracy.]

Reorganizing agriculture

Bureaucratic mismanagement of the economy is probably most acute in the countryside. Peasants neither have a sufficient quantity of equipment in good running order nor a sufficient quantity of desirable consumer products. This eliminates two key incentives for high productivity.

Why should peasants produce more if there are not enough quality goods flowing to the countryside?

Gorbachev thinks he has discovered the

contract as long as he can have a salary without earning it."

This statement by Gorbachev, in addition to being condescending, places the blame for low productivity in the wrong place. The major problem stifling production in the Soviet Union is not the workers—but the parasitic bureaucracy that rules the country. This is a privileged social layer that has amassed great material benefits through its monopoly on political power.

Risks of agrarian policy

Production of foodstuffs should be planned according to the democratically decided needs of the population. The primary use of the profit motive in agriculture runs the same risks as those already incurred in industry.

Planting may very well shift away from inexpensive foods toward highly priced specialty crops. And if private peasants are allowed to grow crops specifically for more profitable foreign markets, a serious food shortage could develop inside the Soviet Union. A food shortage is not idle speculation. It is, in fact, exactly what occurred in Soviet agriculture in the 1920s under similar conditions.

Long waiting lines and scarcity of mass consumer items will also grow dramatically if top Gorbachev adviser Abel Aganbegyan is correct in his prediction that "the monopoly of the ministry of foreign trade will be ended" with the new reform program. Last year there were already over 1300 enterprises with independent relations with the foreign market.

Economics and politics

Since Stalin's triumph over the original Bolshevik revolutionary program of Lenin and Trotsky—a triumph born from the assassination of virtually the entire leadership of the early Bolshevik Party—Soviet bureaucrats have subordinated the needs of oppressed people all over the world to their privileged, reactionary interests. They term this approach "Building Socialism in One Country." It is the polar opposite of the internationalist appeal of "Workers of the World, Unite!"

Perestroika economic overtures to capitalist banks and foreign markets will substantially increase pressures to accommodate to imperialism. *Time* magazine welcomed the reforms because, "Gorbachev may represent the West's last chance, at least in this century, of better integrating the Soviet Union into the world economy. There it could come under pressure to behave like a Western country, competing for capital and markets, lowering the barriers to foreign investment, and even making its currency convertible." (July 27, 1987)

Vadim Medvedev didn't waste any time in letting the imperialists know he was ready to deal. On the day he was elected to the politburo as chief ideologist, he put a new twist on the time-worn Stalinist "peaceful coexistence" policy of screwing the working class.

Medvedev actually termed the class struggle "outdated." Instead, he said, "socialism and capitalism will inevitably interact within the framework of the same human civilization." Not to be outdone by Medvedev, former Foreign Secretary Eduard Shevardnadze declared that "the struggle between the two systems is no longer the decisive factor."

The result of these hallucinations is that the Stalinist bureaucracy is cutting aid to Nicaragua, Angola, Cuba, Vietnam, and other liberation fighters—using them as poker chips to deal with imperialism.

Although this is the same essential foreign policy Moscow has followed for over 60 years, it is an even greater counterrevolutionary threat when combined with increased reliance by the Soviet Union on the capitalist world market.

Political revolution

It would be a widely different world had the socialist revolutions spread from Russia, as the Bolsheviks expected. But that did not happen. Instead, a political counterrevolution occurred, with Stalin at its head.

Today, the heirs of Stalin still rule over the workers, parasitically feeding on the gains of the 1917 revolution. The bureaucratic degeneration of the first victorious socialist revolution was the result of the tragic isolation of the Soviet Union due to the delay in the world revolution—and not, in any sense, a logical result of Marxism.

The current Soviet misleaders—"reformists" and "hard-liners" alike—must be removed through a political revolution which preserves the anti-capitalist social character of the country. To accomplish the task of establishing genuine socialist democracy, it will be necessary to build a new communist party based on the revolutionary program defended by Lenin and Trotsky. ■



Allison Evans

Zbigniew Kowalewski and Dave Walsh (chairperson, seated) at Socialist Action forum in Boston

Kowalewski greets El Salvador rally

By ZBIGNIEW KOWALEWSKI

The following greetings were presented to an El Salvador solidarity meeting of 300 people in Boston on Oct. 14.

I am pleased to give greetings to this meeting. For many years, I have followed with admiration the struggles of the Central American people against imperialism and capitalism, and for national and social liberation. One year before the victory of the Sandinistas' popular revolution, in my book published in Poland, I explained the history of the struggle waged in Nicaragua by the generations of General Sandino and Carlos Fonseca.

In 1980-81, as an activist in the Polish workers' movement, Solidarnosc, I experienced the formidable force and creativity of the mass mobilizations of the workers, followed by the students and the farmers, all of whom were fighting in defense of their rights and interests against the ruling totalitarian bureaucracy.

They demonstrated their capacity to take their destiny in their own hands and to design a project of the true socialism—socialism based on the full workers' and mass democracy, on the power of the workers' councils, and on the people's self-management of the economy, the society, and the state.

I am sure that the Salvadoran workers and masses are able to organize themselves in a similar manner and to generate a similar project of a new society and power without oppression and exploitation.

The tremendous development of mass organizations recently shows that the time of the Salvadoran workers and farmers may not be far away.

The struggles and goals of the Salvadoran people and the Polish working class are deeply similar. But an extremely serious problem is that there exist at the same time very deep mutual misunderstandings. The origin of this is the fact that they have very different immediate enemies and that in both countries many people maintain the negative idea that the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

The day when these misunderstandings will be overcome, the day when the Polish workers from Solidarnosc will support the heroic struggle of the Salvadoran workers and farmers, and the day when the Salvadoran popular movement will understand the legitimacy of the struggle of Polish Solidarnosc, will be the day when an enormous step will be made on the road toward the true international socialist democracy.

Kowalewski kicks off tour in eight cities nationwide

Zbigniew Kowalewski brought the message of Solidarnosc and Polish workers' self-management to eight cities during the first leg of his month-long U.S. tour. [See calendar for events in remaining cities.]

• **In Boston**, Kowalewski's four days (Oct. 13-16) were packed with meetings and interviews. He spoke at three Socialist Action-sponsored campus meetings (Suffolk Univ., U. of Mass., and Tufts) to audiences ranging from 20 to 40 students. He also spoke at a citywide Socialist Action forum that drew close to 60 people.

While Kowalewski was in Boston, Rubén Zamora, a leader of El Salvador's Democratic Revolutionary Front, addressed a public meeting sponsored by the Democratic Socialists of America and the Central American Solidarity Association. Kowalewski was invited to give greetings to the gathering of 300. [See greetings on this page.]

Kowalewski's remarks were received with great enthusiasm. While on stage, Zamora walked over to him, shook his hand, and referred to him as "compañero."

During his stay, Kowalewski was interviewed by the *Lynn Daily Item*, a Boston-area daily paper with a large Polish-American readership, and Tufts University Radio.

• **In New York**, on Oct. 15, Kowalewski spoke at a rally of 100 people commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Fourth International sponsored by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and the Fourth Internationalist Caucus of Solidarity. This was the culminating event of a weekend of activities. Other rally speakers included Rosario Ibarra, Charlie Van Gelderen, Susan Caldwell, John McAnulty, Mahmud Hawari, Lloyd D'Aguilar, Jake Cooper, Alan Wald, Paul LeBlanc, Gerry Foley, Esteban Volkov (Leon Trotsky's grandson), and Claudio Mangani.

• **In Detroit**, on Oct. 19, Kowalewski spoke at Wayne State University to a group of 40 people that included several Poles and other Eastern Europeans. The student paper, *The South End*, ran an extensive interview with Kowalewski as well as a front-page article on the meeting.

• **In Cincinnati**, on Oct. 20, Kowalewski spoke to a meeting of 20 students at the University of Cincinnati and to several informal gatherings of student and union activists. He was also interviewed by the campus newspaper, *The News Record*.

• **In Youngstown, Ohio**, on Oct. 23, he addressed a meeting of 60 people, mainly trade unionists, sponsored by the Youngstown Workers' Solidarity Club and

Solidarity USA, a militant group of steel-worker retirees.

When Kowalewski concluded his remarks by saying, "I think my ideas are very close to your ideas, so I'm very happy to be with you," the audience responded with enthusiastic applause. The informal discussion, in which steelworkers raised their problems with the company, the government, and the union bureaucracy, indicated that they also felt there were common lessons to be learned from their experiences and those of the Polish workers.

Kowalewski also spoke at a Socialist Action forum in Cleveland and was interviewed by several Northeast Ohio radio and television stations. The *Sunday Warren Times* carried an interview.

• **In Chicago**, on Oct. 25, Kowalewski spoke to a class of 20 students at Roosevelt University and to a forum of 15 students at Northeastern University. A citywide Socialist Action forum at the U.E. headquarters drew 40 people.

• **In Minneapolis-St. Paul**, on Oct. 26-28, Kowalewski spoke at three Socialist Action campus meetings (Univ. of Minnesota, Carlton College, and Macalester College) with a combined attendance of 110 students. The major daily newspaper in St. Paul ran an extensive interview.

• **In Kansas City**, on Oct. 29, Kowalewski spoke to a citywide forum of 35 people organized by friends of Socialist Action. This was the first of three public meetings scheduled in the area. [Next month's *Socialist Action* will report on the two other events in Kansas City as well as on the events in the remaining four cities of Kowalewski's U.S. tour.]

This roundup was compiled from reports filed by our correspondents in each city. For reasons of space, the reports have been abridged.

Kowalewski November tour dates:

Los Angeles: Fri., Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m., L.A. City College, Holmes Hall, Rm. 6, 855 N. Vermont	Lecture and film showing of "Ten days that shook the world." 3435 Army, Rm. 308. Donation: \$5 (\$8 includes dinner)	Baltimore: Thurs., Nov. 10, 7 p.m., Towson State Univ., Linthicum Hall, Co-sponsored by Prog. Student Union
San Francisco: Sat., Nov. 5, 3 p.m., "Struggle for socialist democracy in Poland and the Soviet Union."	Wed., Nov. 9, 12 noon, 422 Stephens, Berkeley Campus. Co-sponsored by AFT Local 1474, AGSE, District 65 UAW.	New York: Fri., Nov. 11, 7:30 p.m., Hunter College, West Bldg. Room 415

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