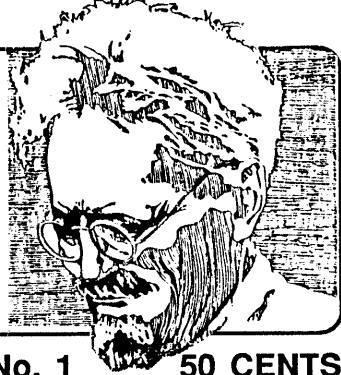


# A Socialist ACTION

Mass meetings  
in Moscow for  
Leon Trotsky,  
Eyewitness reports.  
See pp. 8 - 9.



JANUARY 1989 VOL. 7, No. 1 50 CENTS

## Defend women's rights Build April 9 rally in D.C.!

It wasn't that long ago that waves of coathangers with reddened tips were commonly visible at protests and marches supporting the legalization of abortion.

Before the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision recognizing

### Special report:

The women's  
movement  
16 years after  
*Roe v. Wade*,  
See pp. 10-11.



Pro-choice demonstrators oppose Operation Rescue outside Queens, N.Y., clinic on Dec. 9.

women's fundamental right to choose, women, desperate to terminate a pregnancy, commonly utilized coathangers and other sharp instruments to induce abortions. Many were maimed and killed.

Since the 1973 victory, more than 20 million women have been able to obtain abortions in a safe and legal environment. Yet despite the legalization of abortion, many women still have their options limited and their lives and health jeopardized.

Right-wing forces who want to turn the clock back have succeeded in having all federal funds for abortions cut off in 37 states. Over a decade ago, Rosie Jimenez became the first victim of this new denial of women's constitutional rights.

In recent months, these well-funded, anti-women forces have become bolder in their attempts to restrict and roll back women's reproductive rights.

Groups opposing legal abortion are blocking entrances and invading clinics performing abortions. Clinic bombings are taking place around the country. And now the Supreme Court is considering a case that could overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision, leaving the determination of abortion's legality to each individual state.

In response to these threats, women are organizing to defend their rights. The National Organization for Women (NOW) has issued a national call for an April 9 National March for Women's Equality, Women's Lives in Washington, D.C. This demonstration can send a clear message that the majority of people in this country will not tolerate the curtailment of women's rights.

All out for April 9! No More Coathanger Abortions!

## U.S. and Israel press for more concessions from Palestinians



By ADAM WOOD

The U.S. State Department must have P.L.O. chairman Yasir Arafat a little confused. On Nov. 15, speaking for the Palestinian National Council (PNC), Arafat delivered a historic concession that had long been demanded by the United States.

The PNC declared that it would accept U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338, which recognize Israel's right to exist. Arafat also announced

that the PNC condemned all forms of terrorism. George Shultz had proposed earlier in the year that an international peace conference be held to deal with the Middle East and that each of the participants "accept U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and renounce violence and terrorism."

Arafat and the PNC were now ready for the peace conference, but where was the United States? The PNC declaration was called "ambiguous" by the State Department, and

the U.S. government demanded a clearer statement of support for Israel's right to exist.

The U.S. State Department blocked Arafat's attempt to address the United Nations in New York, forcing the U.N. General Assembly to hold a special session in Geneva to hear his proposals. On Dec. 13, Arafat spoke to the General Assembly and reiterated the position adopted by the PNC. The U.N. greeted his presentation with overwhelming support. Surely the United States would reconsider now.

Still no good. Arafat's statement "got a cool reception from administration officials." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Dec. 14, 1988)

### Finally a bite

Finally, on Dec. 14, Arafat called a press conference where, for a third time, he recognized Israel's right to exist and renounced terrorism. This time, he got a bite.

George Shultz called a press conference where he declared that the U.S. government was now ready to negotiate directly with the P.L.O. toward the convening of an international peace conference. Negotiations between a P.L.O. delegation and the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia began on Dec. 16.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* (Dec. 15) noted that during his press conference, Arafat had used the term "renounce" terrorism rather than "condemn." The paper speculated that this may have been a key element in Shultz's turnaround. But it seems a little far-fetched that the United States would hold up international negotiations for a month over one verb.

In reality, the U.S. government understood the historic nature of the PNC's decision from

(continued on page 18)

# Who says dishonesty doesn't pay?



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

A White House commission is recommending pay increases of up to 50 percent for congressmen/women, federal judges, and top-level government officials. Congressional salaries would jump from \$89,500 to \$135,000. U.S. District judges would get the same.

The payoff for cabinet members would jump from \$99,500 to \$155,000, the vice president and the chief justice would come in for a boost from \$115,000 to \$175,000—and finally, the president's annual salary would leap from \$200,000 to \$350,000.

Unless Congress takes action against the White House commission's recommendations, the pay raises will go into effect in 1993.

Don't bet on a congressional protest against these increases in wasted taxes. But there is a catch they won't like. The pay-raise recommendation includes a total ban on "honoraria" (payments by special-interest groups to lawmakers for speeches or writings). These payments are more often than not a disguised form of bribery and

a reward for services rendered.

Take a look at the extra loot the looters have been raking in for "lecturing." Such "luminaries" as ex-Attorney General Edwin Meese, ex-Education Secretary William Bennett, ex-White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker, and ex-Director of Office and Management James Miller are receiving \$15,000 to \$25,000 a shot flying around the country speaking to corporate groups and trade associations.

Donald T. Regan, former White House chief of staff, was paid \$100,000 for a week of lectures in Japan shortly after leaving his White House job.

These are the type of people you should pay to not move into your neighborhood—if you had enough

money. If they did move in, you should increase your home security. Yet here they are, making fortunes in pay-offs by opening their big mouths to bankers and corporate owners.

Of course, in a way, it is owed to them. They enthusiastically played the role of Robin Hoods-in-reverse for their class—they really put their hearts into taking from the poor and giving it to the rich.

### Money to thieves

So, for some, the belief is that if you just throw more money at the crooks it will make them less crooked (they call it "ethics violations"). At least, that's what the White House commission tells us. We know better. Throwing

money to thieves is like throwing meat to a shark—it just whets their appetite.

Instead of letting them pass legislation siphoning public funds to giant corporations and giving them a bigger cut through raising their salaries, why not use that money to give jobs to the jobless, homes to the homeless, and food to the hungry?

All of those former big-business toadies who are flying all over the world speaking as experts are experts, first and foremost, in the robbery of the world's working class. They have nothing to say as experts in what's good for the people.

Do the lectures of former Secretary of Education William Bennett speak of the fact that 69

percent of the teachers nationwide said poor health of students was a problem in their schools? Or that 68 percent reported problems with undernourished children in their classrooms? Or that 89 percent of the teachers reported neglected or abused children in their schools?

### Freezing to death

Neither do these people lecture on how to stop and reverse the problem of accelerating homelessness—and a doubling of people freezing to death in the streets in the last 10 years. Nor are they getting out the word on the tragedy of whole families, especially those of single mothers, becoming an increasing proportion of the homeless, and how it must be stopped.

They have nothing to say about the fact that while over 20 percent of the homeless hold full-time jobs, they cannot afford living space. According to these experts, it's a mystery why people "choose" to live in cars and cardboard boxes when there are such wonderful public "shelters" available.

It doesn't occur to these gentlemen to call attention to the skyrocketing costs of housing—in large part due to their systematic "urban renewal" programs, which mean leveling existing housing for the poor and subsidizing new housing for the affluent.

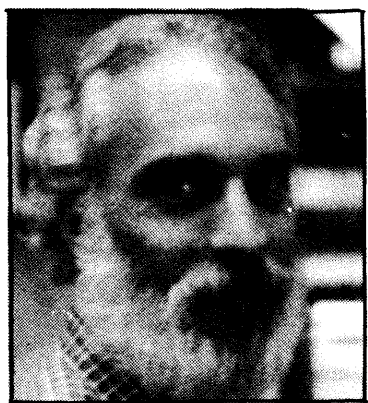
It's as if they didn't understand the elementary capitalist law of supply and demand—decreasing housing for the poor is driving prices beyond the means of ever-more working people.

Paying off those bums in Washington is not the way to go. What the working class has to do is kick the bums out—not pay them off.



## BEHIND THE LINES

# It was a cold Sunday in December



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

It was a cold Sunday morning in New York. A good day, perhaps, for breakfast in bed—for reading the funny papers and for sipping something hot.

On that cold Sunday morning, the body of Daniel Burgos was found in a junkyard. He was lying next to the Chevrolet Caprice he called home—frozen to death. Number K881087 in the Kings County Hospital Morgue.

That was Sunday. Fourteen shopping days until Christmas, said the newspapers. By Thursday, four other homeless people had died on the streets of New York. A death a day.

There are some 3 million homeless people in the United States, the statisticians say. Some die of exposure, some of malnutrition. Many are murdered. Thousands are beaten and robbed. Thousands of

homeless women are raped.

### Nothing "specific"

Does anybody care? This season, to be sure, stories about the homeless displaced Scrooge and Tiny Tim in the daily newspapers' Christmas editions. Preachers declared from the pulpit that the Virgin Mary herself was homeless when she found "no room at the inn."

Even George Bush told a news conference that homelessness is "a national shame." But, he quickly added, "I have not gotten into that specific yet."

Everybody "cares" about the homeless. But nothing "specific" is being done.

Last year, Congress budgeted \$550 million to help pay for shelters and other aid to the homeless. That's the price of one Stealth Bomber. But it doesn't begin to tackle the job of rebuilding America's cities—which must be done to solve the plight of the homeless.

The only solutions put forward by Bush & Company sound like they've been ripped out of a novel by Dickens. They call upon the wealthy to remember charity: "Don't forget to let something trickle down to the poor!"

On Dec. 19, Bush appointed New York Congressman Jack Kemp as the new Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Kemp, for those who have blotted out any memory of his presidential cam-

paign, is the veritable high priest of voodoo economics, the man who (according to his own telling) tutored Ronald Reagan in the ABCs of the "trickle-down theory."

Kemp's latest lecture, as Head Master of Housing, concerns "urban-enterprise zones," which would give federal tax reductions and other "incentives" to businesses that agree to relocate into depressed inner-city areas.

### "Redevelopment?"

The course that Kemp proposes is merely an extension of the local urban-redevelopment schemes of the last few decades—which had disastrous results. Entire working-class neighborhoods were demolished. The banks, industries, and developers were offered lucrative "incentives" to erect office towers, convention centers, and luxury hotels in their place.

But experience showed that tax breaks were not enough for the big corporations. They wanted the whole kit and caboodle—including free city services and sweetheart union contracts—in exchange for not moving to the suburbs or to a foreign country.

In the end, working-class city residents paid more in taxes to support the corporations; in return, they received only a handful of new job opportunities at low wages.

As for the people who were displaced from the showy "redevelopment" projects, where did they go? Most of them were relegated to

other slums, to city-run shelters—or onto the streets.

What is needed is the exact opposite of Kemp's "urban-enterprise" tax giveaway. The large corporations should pay much *more* in taxes, not less. We should open the capitalists' account books to public view to see how much they have stolen from working people over the years; they would then be taxed accordingly.

The taxes would be collected on a nationwide level, so the corporations couldn't escape them by

moving to the suburbs.

The tax revenue would finance an emergency Conservation Corps to rehabilitate the inner cities. Youth and the unemployed would be put to work at union wages building and maintaining housing, clinics and hospitals, schools, and mass-transportation facilities. Unskilled men and women would be trained and supervised by union workers.

This proposal would go a long way toward eliminating homelessness and the other effects of poverty. It can be done!



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Impact Visuals

# Skinheads: Do shaved skulls reflect new look of fascism?

By ADAM WOOD

On Nov. 13, 1988, Mulugeta Seraw, an Ethiopian man, was beaten to death in Portland, Ore., by members of the East Side White Pride skinhead group. Earlier in the year, on Feb. 28, Scott Vollmar was stabbed and killed by a skinhead in Campbell, Calif., after he defended a Black friend.

On Jan. 7, 1988, skinheads in San Diego attacked a group of Vietnamese immigrants. On Dec. 20, 1987, two skinheads in Florida stabbed and beat to death a homeless Black man while he was sleeping.

In July 1987, skinheads confronted a 54-year-old Black woman in San Jose. She was told that she would have to pay a "nigger toll" to get past. Then the skinheads said, "We're going to string you up in that tree."

Racist attacks by skinheads are increasing around the United States. Gangs of teenagers sporting clean-shaven skulls and steel-toe boots are a common sight now in major cities across the country.

Many people are asking themselves where these thugs came from and how much of a threat they represent. Can we say good-bye to the hooded robes of the Klan and say hello to the shiny heads of the skinheads? Is this fascism's new look?

Skinhead style came to the United States along with the Punk movement from Britain in the late 1970s. Unlike Britain, where these movements were made up of frustrated working-class youth, punk and skinhead style appealed primarily to middle-class young people rebelling against the commercialized, polyester culture and styles dominant in late 1970s America.

These styles expressed a cultural rebellion primarily. When punks or skinheads considered themselves political, it was usually as radicals and "anarchists"—opponents of the status quo.

## "White pride"

In Britain, the skinhead movement by that time had already developed a reactionary character, attacking immigrants and allying itself with right-wing and racist organizations such as the National Front.

While there were reactionary and racist elements among American skinheads, they remained in the minority. In the aftermath of the economic downturn in the United States, this situation began to change in the mid-1980s.

Skinheads began to turn against radicals and others in the punk scene and began promoting "white pride" and "Aryan values." They opposed abortion as a "threat to the white

race." Gangs of skinheads started forming organizations, some of national scope, which attacked "enemies of the white race," including Blacks, Jews, gays and lesbians, and leftists.

Bands from Britain singing racist garbage became popular with American skinheads. One of the more popular skinhead bands, Skrewdriver, sings:

*Put up a fence,  
Close down the borders,  
They don't fit in  
In our new order.  
Nigger, nigger, get on that boat  
Nigger, nigger, row!  
Nigger, nigger, get out of here,  
Nigger, nigger—go, go, go!*

## Aryan Youth Movement

In October 1985, a group of skinheads attended a gathering of racist organizations in Cochoctah, Mich. This was the first time that American skinheads attended a gathering of this type.

Skinheads who refused to go along with this orientation were often physically beaten out of the scene. In Cincinnati today, one observer noted that there are some parts of the city where non-racist Punks and skinheads can no longer walk at night.

More sophisticated elements in the far-right and neo-fascist movements saw potential in these skinhead gangs and sought to help and guide their organization. Tom Metzger, head of the White Aryan Resistance (WAR), admired the developing racist skinhead movement in England and saw the potential to turn the American skinheads into a new dynamic, activist layer of the racist movement which could attract youth.

Metzger and his son John have organized the Aryan Youth Movement and are trying to unite the fragmented skinhead organizations into one united neo-fascist youth movement. So far, Metzger has been modestly successful in winning existing skinhead organizations to his political program.

The Center for Democratic Renewal in Atlanta puts the current organized skinhead population at 3500, up dramatically from an estimated 300 in 1986.

## "It's our game!"

What is the skinhead program and why is it attracting people? Many of the Skinhead leaders, in particular the ones associated with Metzger, put forward a more demagogic version of fascism than the KKK.

Just as Hitler and Mussolini appealed to the German and Italian "people" against the

"foreign and Jewish bankers and corporations," Metzger and the skinheads claim, "This is a working class movement...the white-wing. ... Our problem is with monopoly capitalism. You take the game away from the left. It's our game!" (speech by Tom Metzger at Aryan Nations Congress, July 1987, printed in *The Monitor*, April 1988)

A leaflet circulated by "WAR Skins" in Hollister and Gilroy, Calif., expressed this same sentiment in typical bonehead style: "Skinheads are tired of the system screwing them over!" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Dec. 3, 1988)

Fascism plays on people's frustration with the existing system, and tries to give itself a radical anti-capitalist tone. This is the way it develops a mass character and appeal.

Metzger, for instance, opposes U.S. intervention in Central America and supported the fight of the P-9 strikers in Austin, Minn. He invokes with favor Jack London's *socialism* as well as his racism, the traditions of the Industrial Workers of the World, and even Lenin's concept of a revolutionary organization!

These neo-fascists claim to oppose both capitalism and communism. They claim that their main enemies are the "traitors to the white race" in government and corporate America and they call for a "white civil war." One skinhead group, The American Front, organized a "white workers' day" demonstration in San Francisco on May 1, 1988, which attracted 50 people.

## Attacks on capitalism's victims

But the "working class" rhetoric is not borne out by the facts. In practice, the actions of these skinheads and neo-fascist organizations are not directed against those who rule the country but against the victims of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

Skinheads aren't on labor picketlines fighting the boss, they're in trendy neighborhoods beating up homeless people. According to *Rolling Stone* (Dec. 1, 1988), "the typical skinhead victim is unarmed, outnumbered, and often defenseless."

The Aryan Youth Movement's newspaper carried a report on the lynch-mob attack on a young Black man in Howard Beach, N.Y. The paper saluted the "revolutionary efforts...for hunting down and causing the death of Negro Michael Griffith." Here we have a clear picture of their vision of the "white revolution"—racist thugs running over an unarmed Black man.

In addition to individual attacks on Blacks, gays and lesbians, homeless people, and the elderly, skinhead groups regularly attack

Black political events. Tom Metzger urged his followers to disrupt a Martin Luther King Day event in Fontana, Calif., in 1988.

The growth of the skinheads and other potential fascist organizations in recent years is a symptom of the increasing uneasiness felt by most Americans over their future.

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 90 percent of all bank and savings-and-loan economists predict an economic slump by 1990. The skinheads and similar groups are playing on people's fear and despair. They are attempting to channel these grievances and direct them against scapegoats among the oppressed.

Their unstated goal is to demonstrate to the ruling class that they can be counted on in a crisis situation. They would provide the shock troops in attacks on civil liberties, on social-protest movements, and strikes.

As social conditions worsen, the skinheads will have more human material to recruit from. The task of labor and socialist movements in the United States is to provide people with a positive alternative to capitalism and a movement with the strength to make that vision a reality. This will pull the rug out from under the skinheads.

In the meantime, it's necessary to unite all the victims and potential victims of the skinheads and other proto-fascists into a force that can't be intimidated by thugs. Some significant anti-skinhead actions have taken place recently, but in many cases the potential for an organized response to the skinhead threat has not been tapped.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, organizers of an anti-skinhead campus demonstration on Dec. 3 called the event without any serious attempt to involve existing Black and other student organizations. To its credit, the demonstration succeeded in attracting 200 young people.

Nevertheless, relatively small and narrow demonstrations will not be effective as the current social polarization increases and skinhead-type movements become more of a threat.

Broad, mass actions are necessary to expose the skinheads as the cowards and thugs they really are. This strategy must be implemented now if the anti-skinhead movement is to avoid being isolated from its potential allies.

While it would be premature to see the skinheads as a major movement or threat at the present time, they represent a challenge that will grow if the economy starts to fall apart. The skinheads give us a glimpse of capitalist America's future. What better incentive to fight for a socialist America! ■

# How Boston hotel workers triumphed against bosses



The hotel workers union won their demands because the membership prepared a militant strike.

By MICHAEL KOOPER

BOSTON—On Dec. 1, less than two hours after their deadline to begin a strike that was likely to shut down nine major hotels here, Local 26 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union won virtually all of their contract demands. The hotel owners were forced to concede on every key issue.

For the third straight time, Local 26 has made significant gains—at a time when many unions are still in a giveback mode. The real threat of militant action by the workers brought the hotel owners to the table ready to give in. It's an example all of labor should learn from.

Local 26, representing more than 3000 workers, had promised to shut down the employers' operations at a time when the hotels were to be booked solid and national attention would be focused on the League of Cities convention here.

Local 26 promised militant action to guarantee that no scabs could be brought in to take their jobs. They made the bosses fear the consequences, and it won them a just contract.

The union mobilized its membership around their demands, just as it did in 1982 and 1985. That's the way this union has functioned since 1981, when Domenic Bozzotto won the local presidency. His campaign targeted the so-called "back of the house"—housekeepers, cooks, dishwashers—many of whom are immigrants from Third World countries. Today Local 26 is half women and 55 percent people of color.

## What they won

Hotel workers are still among some of the lowest paid in the city. Their average annual income is \$16,000. But they have consistently demanded and won wage increases and benefits that other unions have been giving up throughout the 1980s. This time around, the union won a 16-percent pay raise over three years, turning back owners'

demands for a four-year contract and yearly "lump sum" bonuses.

They established an educational trust that will be funded by employer contributions of three cents an hour per worker. The union demanded the fund to help teach language skills to the more than 30 percent of the membership who do not speak English as their first language, and to establish a college scholarship program.

Another major item was a 60-percent increase in contributions to the union's health

and welfare fund.

The most visible issue was housing. The union had threatened to strike over this issue alone. Local 26 demanded—and won—the establishment of a trust fund for affordable housing that is the first of its kind in the United States.

Bozzotto noted that other unions have built housing, but this settlement would bring the employers' money into the picture. The range of the bosses' involvement, however, still hinges on a critical question.

## Detroit: A 15-year record of decay under Democrats

By KEVIN FITZPATRICK

DETROIT—In the heart of this city, the Motor City, Motown, a sudden misstep could cause a pheasant to explode out of the brush and rubble. This great metropolis has begun to shelter the animals of field and woodland once again.

This advanced decay has progressed for the last 15 years under the administration of Mayor Coleman Young, one of the most prominent of the Black liberal Democrats.

In 1973, when Young was first elected, he represented the hopes of Blacks for an end to their oppression and poverty. Based on his record as a militant in the labor and civil rights movements, (with a long connection to the Communist Party), Young swept aside the officially designated white liberal candidate in the primary. In the final election, Young defeated an openly racist opponent (the white chief of police).

## What is the record?

For 15 years, Young has followed the path of the Democratic Party, wheeling and dealing with the robber barons of Detroit finance and industry. One real-estate swindle has followed another. Now there are just two auto assembly plants left in the city.

This liberal Democrat has practiced capitalist "trickle-down economics"—with the normal consequences of that policy—while denouncing Reagan for doing exactly the same thing.

In this overwhelmingly Black city (63.1 percent according to the 1980 census; now estimated at being close to 70 percent), Black unemployment was 30.7 percent in 1985, with the overall rate for the city in 1987 at 20.4 percent.

In 1969, in the wake of the rebellion of 1967, the percentage of those under the poverty line was 14.9. In 1979, after five years of Young's administration, (with his

"friend" Jimmy Carter in the White House), the figure had risen to 21.9 percent.

By 1984, poverty had almost doubled to a startling 42.8 percent.

Per-capita income in constant dollars dropped 12.8 percent in the 1969-83 period.

Finally, in 1987, the infant-mortality rate of the city stood at 20.3 (number of infants per 1000 live births who died before their first birthday). That is almost twice the rate of the United States as a whole. In 1985, the city's Black infant-mortality rate was 22.3.

## "Throw the rascals out!"

A change has begun among the voters that may foretell trouble for Young. In the August primary, 60 percent of the voters rejected Young's plan "to revive Detroit's economy" by bringing in casino gambling. Voters felt there was already no shortage of "job opportunities" in the fields of crime and prostitution.

In a "throw-the-rascals-out" mood, the electorate dumped the incumbents in the November school-board race—all of whom Young had gone out of his way to support. The voters also rejected two tax increases and a bond issue for the convention center backed by Young.

In the November election, the Black voting rate was 54 percent, having declined from 63 percent in 1984. This was a sign of the lack of enthusiasm for Young's "friend" Dukakis. On the night of the election, Young sat slumped in a chair at the TV station where he was supposed to be an election analyst. Perhaps the analysis was all too clear!

Since then, Young has recovered enough to state that he intends to run again in 1989. Unfortunately, Blacks and working people remain hampered in mounting an effective opposition to the policies of Young and other Black liberal Democrats. No labor party (based on the unions and the oppressed) exists. Building such a party is essential in order to carry out an organized political fight.

The fund is not permitted under the federal Taft-Hartley Act, which regulates union-management trusts.

Even though the union faces an uphill battle in the political arena to change the law, the victory is significant. The owners will pay five cents per hour per employee into an escrow housing trust that will generate a reported \$500,000 over the next 18 months.

If the law can be changed by that time, the trust will be activated and another \$500,000 will be contributed by the owners over the remaining 18 months of the three-year contract.

One has to make close to \$60,000 a year to afford the average house in Boston. To pay the average rent, one must make \$32,000 a year. So, while \$1 million isn't a lot of money for housing in Boston, Local 26 has set an important precedent for the U.S. labor movement.

Speakers at union rallies noted that it was the responsibility of the employers to provide affordable housing for workers: They created the shortage through profit-grabbing real estate speculation, and they must be forced to solve it.

This frightened the hotel owners. As reported in the *Boston Globe*, "Privately, some hotel operators conceded that there was reluctance to go along with the union's housing-trust-fund demand, particularly among two of the chain hotels. The Sheraton and the Hilton were reportedly concerned it would set a precedent for housing assistance in other cities."

Hotel union leaders from Washington, D.C., have already hinted that, with Boston leading the way, they might seek a similar fund when their contract expires next fall.

## How the union won

Local 26's strategy was to prepare so well for a strike that they could win their demands without it. They threatened to paralyze downtown hotels with massive demonstrations. They threatened to picket at the suburban homes of the hotel owners. They threatened disruption of hotel operations from the inside.

These weren't idle threats. The union negotiated with a 164-worker-strong committee, ensuring that every hotel worker got news of the contract talks. They mobilized over 2000 workers for the strike-authorization rally, and the message was sent loud and clear to the employers that the union would fight by whatever means necessary any attempt to bring in scabs should the strike commence.

Local 26 reached out for support from other unions and from a variety of community organizations: to speak at their rallies, and for support on the picket lines and in the demonstrations.

Local 26 has demonstrated, without having to strike, that even the threat of shutting down the employers' operations can win. And the bosses know that when the rank-and-file is involved in the contract struggle as they were in Local 26, they can't count on an easy coopting of the union leadership.

When it came down to deciding whether to precipitate a strike, the owners saw that the power of the union and their allies made it more trouble than it was worth. ■

## Socialist Action Forums :

### Boston:

'U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Haiti'

#### Speakers:

Jean-Claude Martineau, author and playwright, noted Haitian activist;

Isabel Prime, Haitian Student Association.

Sat. Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m.

Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St., Cambridge, For more information, call (617) 497-0230.

### Los Angeles:

'After the Elections: The Fight for Women's Rights'

Speaker: Sylvia Weinstein, 1988 socialist candidate in S.F. Jan. 20, 1988

L.A. City College, Franklin Hall, Rm. 101. 855 N. Vermont.

## Boston contractors lose on prevailing wage law

In our November 1988 issue, Michael Kooper reported that scab construction companies in Massachusetts were attempting to repeal the state's prevailing wage law by means of a referendum on the ballot.

The labor movement campaigned to uphold the law—which requires that state and local governments pay union-scale wages and benefits to workers on all public construction jobs. We are pleased to report that in the November election, voters overwhelmingly defeated the employers' proposal. ■

# Nabisco takeover sets new records for greed

By HAYDEN PERRY

"Revulsion, disgust are the words that come to mind on this deal. Morally I find it repugnant. Financially I find it frightening." Thus it was that Wall Streeter and money-manager Michael Harkins sized up the \$25 billion buyout of RJR Nabisco Inc.

This transaction, which has been headlined as "a deal that even Wall Street found disgusting," was actually a routine takeover operation that has been performed on thousands of companies in the last few years.

What has drawn so much attention to the Nabisco buyout is the record price paid (\$24.9 billion), the millions of dollars collected by lawyers, bankers, and takeover artists—and the staggering load of debt piled on a company that has been only mildly profitable.

## The name of the game

Profits is the name of the game in the business world. It is the drive for profits that turns the wheels of RJR Nabisco, producing a vast array of consumer products from Shredded Wheat to Oreo cookies to deadly Winston cigarettes.

Presiding over this huge conglomerate was C. Ross Johnson. As chief executive officer, he was charged with producing efficiently, selling profitably, and distributing these profits to shareholders. For this Johnson was paid a salary, stock options, and executive perks that kept the wolf far from the executive door.

But greed knows no bounds. Johnson wanted more. He wanted to be a multi-millionaire. And he knew how he could do it—get rid of the 112,000 stockholders who were always clamoring for dividends and keep RJR Nabisco all to himself (and a few friends). He would also be safe from other corporate raiders, since there would now be no shares on the market.

Johnson proposed to eliminate Nabisco's 112,000 shareholders by operation LBO, Leveraged Buy Out. In October, Nabisco stock was selling for around \$56. Johnson proposed to offer the stockholders \$75 a share. This would cost about \$17 billion. The money could be raised by selling bonds based on the assets of this huge conglomerate.

On Oct. 19, Johnson presented his proposal to his board of directors. Here Johnson's excessive greed turned what might have been a routine approval into a frenzy of bidding that alarmed the Establishment from Wall Street to Washington.

## Call for more bids

Johnson had made a cheap bid for the company. The true value of the stock is closer to \$90. As stockholders, the directors did not want to be shortchanged. They also thought a \$100 million special management fee for Johnson and his associates pushed greed even beyond the norms of Wall Street avarice.

Johnson said he intended to share some of the money with some of the 15,000 employees—sometime. The directors were not impressed and called for more bids. They were soon coming.

Kohlberg, Fravis, Roberts & Co. (KKR), buyout specialists, came in with an offer of \$94 a share. The Johnson group then upped their bid to \$101. KKR roared back with an offer of \$106. Management went \$2 better at \$108. KKR went to \$109. Desperate, Johnson came back with a complicated bid said to be worth \$112. The directors said it was no better than \$109.

To break the deadlock, the directors asked a question. Would the winner be willing to freeze employees' contracts and benefits till the end of 1991? KKR said yes. Johnson said no, and lost the company.

Paying \$109 for shares that were worth only \$90 might look like a losing game. But KKR cannot lose. They are not playing with their own money. They put up only \$15 million, less than 1 percent of the \$25 billion. The rest was borrowed.

Who would lend that kind of money? Plenty of people, if the interest rate is high enough! And the interest rates on these bonds are high, all the way to 40 percent. Managers of pension funds, who want to look good in the short run, grab these bonds. Sure they are

risky, really junk bonds, but the risk is further down the road. It is today's bottom line that counts on Wall Street.

## Winners and losers

Newspapers described the last days of bidding on Nabisco as a "feeding frenzy" as

percent in value. John Creedon, president of Metropolitan, said, as he saw \$1 billion go down the tubes, "What is being done threatens the very basis of the capitalist system."

The buyout artists counter that they are strengthening capitalism by shaking up

realize even IBM could be seized by financial privateers.

## The debt bubble

More alarming is the loss of \$313 billion in shares that have been taken out of the market from 1984 to 1987. These certificates of ownership of American industry have been replaced by \$341 billion in IOUs. This new debt added to the already existing corporate debt gives the staggering total of \$1.8 trillion!

Lawmakers are mumbling about curbing the "excesses" of corporate raiders. They look on them as aberrations in an otherwise rational system. But they are finding that raiders, far from being marginal, are an

## Thousands protest homelessness in N.Y.



Brenda Bishop/Socialist Action

On Dec. 18, New Yorkers took to the streets to demand an end to homelessness and the housing crisis. According to *Newsday*, about 15,000 took part in the event—the largest tenants' march in New York City history. The Rev. Jesse Jackson joined the marchers. Sign after sign declared, "Housing is a right."

The march and rally capped a full week of events protesting government housing policy. Housing Action Week was endorsed by a coalition of 175 groups, including every major housing and homeless organization as well as many unions (Hospital workers Local 1199, AFSCME District Council 37, and UAW District 65 among others), religious groups, and peace and social-justice organizations.

Conservative estimates indicate that more than 50,000 New Yorkers are homeless; some 11,000 children are living in welfare hotels or shelters. At the same time, the city owns more than 50,000 apartments that are held vacant for future development, and the same number of units are being "warehoused" by private landlords.

The federal government spends only three cents on housing for every dollar spent on weapons systems. Continued demonstrations supported by broad coalitions of workers, tenants, and homeless people will keep up the pressure on the Democrats and Republicans to turn this situation around.—BRENDA BISHOP

lawyers, investment bankers, LBO specialists, and commercial banks crowded around to get their cut of the pie. The cuts were substantial.

Lawyers, who do not give their advice freely, got from \$100 to \$200 million. Commercial banks, which will put up some of the money, will get \$170 million or more. Takeover specialists Shearson Lehman Hutton and Drexel Burnham Lambert, (under indictment for fraud and other crimes,) will rake in \$300 million for getting investors together. About 70 individuals will grab an estimated billion dollars for less than three months work.

If there were winners, there must be losers. C. Ross Johnson might consider himself a loser. He did not get the company and \$100 million. But this ever-resourceful captain of industry has constructed a substantial golden parachute to cushion his fall from the executive suite. It is estimated he will walk away with over \$4 million.

Real losers are the taxpayers. Nabisco will pay no federal income taxes from now on. Interest payments on debt is not taxable; a big incentive to raise money through borrowing rather than selling shares. Revenue lost to the government can run from \$2 billion on up.

Other losers are the original bondholders. Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. bought \$5 billion's worth of bonds just before the buyout proposal became known. With the prospect of huge new debts, the bonds fell 20

stodgy managers and raising productivity. How bleeding Nabisco of nearly \$1 billion for lawyers, bankers, and other leeches strengthens the company is not explained.

## Less production, not more

Actually, takeover operators couldn't care less about managers. They don't plan to do much managing. In fact, they don't plan to do much producing. They intend to cannibalize Nabisco by selling off its food divisions, and keeping the profitable tobacco company. This will reduce the debt by \$6 billion. But American smokers will have to puff millions more cigarettes to pay the remaining \$28 billion debt.

What if there is a recession and Nabisco defaults? This could put unbearable strains on the economy. But the takeover artists could still come out all right. They figure the government could not allow such a large conglomerate to go belly up.

They would rush in with billions of the taxpayers' money to shore up Nabisco. They previously spent \$7 billion to save the Illinois Central Bank, and plan to spend \$50 billion or more to rescue failing savings-and-loan enterprises.

This may be a comforting thought to the raiders. But more responsible members of the capitalist class are growing uneasy. They see a very dangerous trend. They had once thought that sheer size would protect a large conglomerate from a raider. But now, they

integral part of the American economy. Dislodging them without upsetting the rest of Wall Street is scarcely possible. Members of Congress have been told that the threat of a little more regulation set off the stock market crash of October 1987.

Workers who face speed-ups, wage cuts, and layoffs while the companies for which they work are looted will be less reticent about shaking up Wall Street. When the captain permits the ship to be seized by pirates, it is time for the crew to take control. This is a scenario that makes Wall Street very nervous.

Martin Weinstein, a Wall Street arbitrator, expressed this feeling in *Time* magazine. "Do I sense fear?" he asked. "Yes. At some time there is going to be a rebellion against greed." To be effective such a rebellion must lead to workers' control of American industry—to run it for the benefit of all. ■

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# Why Mark Curtis must be defended

By CARL FINAMORE

Mark Curtis is behind bars. He was convicted on Sept. 14 of third-degree sexual abuse and first-degree burglary. Curtis is serving a 25-year sentence for crimes he did not commit. Not one shred of physical evidence backs up the charges.

Mark Curtis is a 29-year-old member of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance. He has been a political activist since 1977.

FBI records show that Curtis was under surveillance for several years while protesting U.S. military intervention in Central America. He has been active in community and union activities since moving to Des Moines, Iowa, in 1986.

Curtis was known to the Des Moines Police Department because two weeks before his arrest he had participated in a march against police brutality. In fact, just hours before his arrest, he had spoken at a public meeting protesting an immigration raid at the Swift meatcutting plant where he worked.

On the evening in question, March 4, 1988, Curtis left his home shortly after 8:45 p.m. He was on his way to make a quick purchase of groceries because he was expecting out-of-town guests to arrive within moments. This is all unchallenged court testimony.

After a few blocks he was stopped by a 18- or 19-year old Black woman who claimed she was being chased by a man.

The woman refused Curtis' offer to call police and instead asked to be driven three blocks to her home so that she could safely make a phone call for help. The woman asked Curtis to accompany her to the enclosed porch to make sure the man chasing her hadn't arrived first. He waited on the porch and the woman went inside.

This is the last time Curtis saw this woman. It is also the time the prosecution claims he attacked a different Black woman in the house, 15-year-old Demetria Morris. Unbeknown to Curtis, he had been led to the Morris home.

But it is precisely here, where the crime allegedly occurs, that the tightly woven frame-up begins to unravel.

## Facts of the frame-up

Curtis leaves his home shortly after 8:45 p.m.; the police receive a call for help from the Morris home at 8:51 p.m.; the cops testify that they arrive on the scene in 30 to 90 seconds. How could Curtis drive eight blocks, randomly select a home, park his car in front, enter the home, and attempt a rape—all in an ever-so-brief span of time?

The prosecution's case just doesn't hold up. In fact, the account of the incident by the alleged victim, 15-year-old Demetria Morris, belies her identification of Curtis as the assailant.

Here are some of the most important facts:

1. Demetria Morris repeated at the trial her previous account of the timing of the alleged rape attempt. In unrebutted testimony, she said the assailant arrived at her home as early as 7:35 p.m. but no later than 8:10 p.m. This was based on her recollection that the attack occurred shortly after the beginning of a television program called "Video Soul." The program actually started at 8:00 p.m.

2. Mark Curtis gave unrebutted and corroborated testimony that he was at a bar with dozens of co-workers from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

3. Demetria's first report of the assailant was that he was 5 feet 6 inches and had heavy smoke on his breath. Demetria said she recognized a tobacco odor because her father smokes. Curtis is 6 feet 2 inches and doesn't smoke. At the trial, she also said that the assailant had a large belt buckle. Mark was not wearing a belt when arrested.

## Conviction based on two cops

Seeing its frame-up evaporating, the prosecution boiled its case down to the testimony of two arresting police officers. These are the same cops who turned Curtis over to be brutally beaten while in custody



Mark Curtis the day after he was brutally beaten by cops at the Des Moines City Jail. X-rays showed his cheekbone was fractured and numerous stitches were required to close a deep gash above his left eye.

because he was one of "them Mexican-lovers or colored-lovers."

The arresting cops claim they were responding to a phone call for help from Jason, Demetria Morris' 11-year-old brother.

Jason said that the assailant was inside the porch on top of his sister. Yet, none of Demetria Morris' body hairs, which would appear through normal contact of this kind, were found on Curtis. In addition, no dog hairs from the porch floor were found on him though Demetria was heavily covered with these hairs.

Paul Bush, a forensic expert for the state police, testified that "there was nothing there that I noted to tie the two individuals together as far as seminal fluid or hair is concerned." How could not even one of these hairs show up on Curtis' clothing if he was the assailant? Furthermore, Bush reported that he did find other human hairs on Demetria Morris' body, but they were not from Curtis.

No physical evidence exists to convict Curtis. And the contradictions in the testimony of the alleged victim exonerates him as well.

It was the testimony of the two arresting cops that convinced the jury. But the jury was not allowed to hear about the past record of the chief cop witness, who at one time was "temporarily suspended" from the Des Moines Police Department for "lying" about a previous arrest incident.

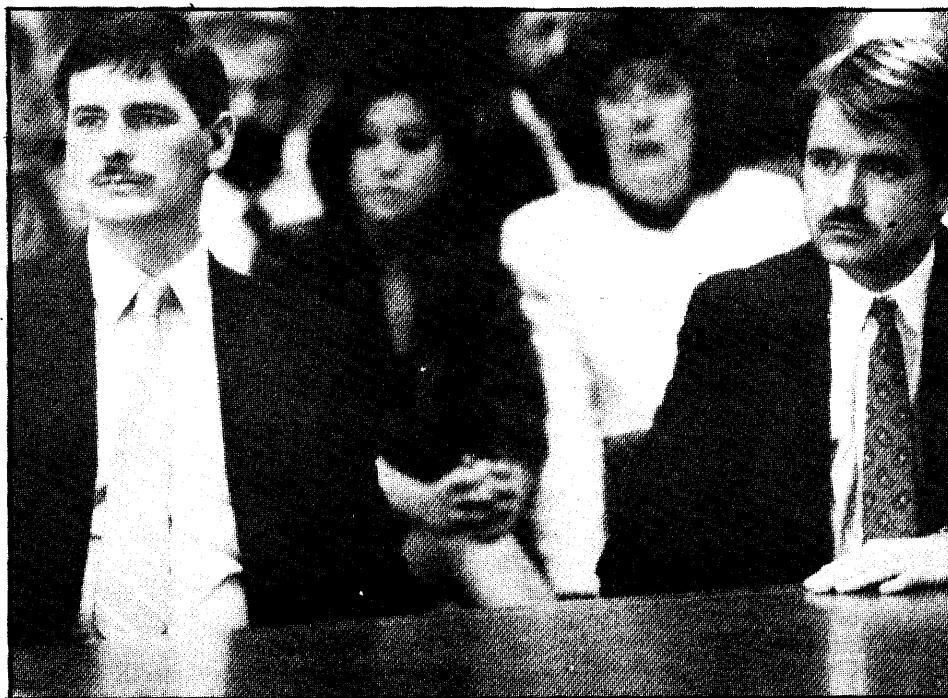
Other important evidence amply demonstrating the state's motive in framing Curtis was also kept from the jury. Defense attorneys have cited a number of prejudicial trial errors as the basis for a new trial.

The state prosecutors needed to cover up their complete lack of evidence. But their smokescreen wasn't enough to blind everyone.

One of the motions for a new trial cites testimony from Blanche Stockbauer, one of the jurors in the Curtis case. Her affidavit states that "I was one of four jurors who believed that the State of Iowa had not proven their case. ..." Stockbauer had not received proper instructions from the court about deadlocked juries. She stated that "I did not know that, if I continued my vote of not guilty, a mistrial would occur. ..."

## Other elements of the frame-up

It is impossible to explain every part of a puzzle in a frame-up. That's why it is often an effective, though twisted, form of prosecution. The defendant has to prove innocence, rather than the state proving guilt.



Curtis (left) with attorney Mark Pennington during his Sept. 1988 trial

Curtis defenders, for example, cannot find the woman who originally flagged him down and led him to the Morris house. And we do not know the extent of the Morris family's participation in the frame-up except to say that they are actively working with the police and a discredited political group called the Workers League in spreading patently false information.

Keith Morris, the father of the alleged victim, recently sent a letter to all organizations and individuals who supported Curtis, urging them to rescind their endorsements for a "convicted child-rapist." He states: "I made several attempts to speak with leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in Des Moines, hoping to convince them that they were making a big mistake in defending Curtis. But they were totally uninterested in the facts of this case. Their response was to laugh in my face and flash a wad of hundred dollar bills at me to show how much money they were making from the case." (from the "Open letter to the supporters of Mark Curtis by Keith Morris")

Does this description of Curtis Defense Committee members as mercenary opportunists out to make a quick buck sound credible? Of course not. But Keith Morris does provide us with a little insight into his

own credibility.

Morris' way of "hoping to convince" supporters of Curtis was to break the windows of the Des Moines Pathfinder Bookstore, which also serves as headquarters of the Curtis Defense Committee. Shortly before the attack, Morris bragged to several cops that he was "going to kick some ass." Yet the cops did nothing to stop him, and he has still not been charged.

We may never know the answers to every question about this frame-up. Some faint-hearts are still questioning the innocence of Sacco and Vanzetti. One leading liberal recently published a book claiming that the Rosenbergs were guilty.

This is not how anyone should approach victims of capitalist injustice.

## Class solidarity

We in Socialist Action take the word of Sacco and Vanzetti, the Scottsboro Boys, the Rosenbergs, and Mark Curtis over the cops, courts, and politicians.

We base ourselves on the mountain of evidence stretching over 100 years' experience with capitalist frame-ups—particularly since the 1886 Chicago Haymarket Square martyrs

(continued on next page)

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were unjustly hanged because they were leading a fight for the eight-hour day.

It isn't simply blind faith in Curtis, the SWP, or other targets of the cops and courts. None of us has a license to kill, rape, or steal simply because we are political activists or racially or sexually abused by capitalism.

But there have to be compelling, indisputable facts to sustain prosecutions launched by a government intent on discrediting political activists and protest movements.

Curtis has far more credibility than a witchhunt prosecution based exclusively on the testimony of two cops. He has his word as a 29-year-old political activist whose 11-year-record of fighting for a better world is unblemished. Our confidence in Mark Curtis is bolstered by the fact that there is a complete absence of one single piece of physical evidence against him.

Class solidarity is the most powerful weapon of working people against the injustices of capitalism. Our strategy, therefore, must seek to maximize the political unity of the working class.

Socialist Action members defend Mark Curtis just as we would a member of our own organization.

#### A long working-class tradition

Unconditional defense of victims of capitalist oppression or state persecution has a long history in the working class. The

All victims of capitalist persecution were defended regardless of their individual political orientation. The class principle "An Injury to One is an Injury to All" found political expression in the ILD.

#### Workers League disruption

The Workers League (WL) is a group claiming to be socialist that actively works with the police and courts against the workers' movement. Its provocative and reactionary actions make it ripe for successful infiltration by the police.

The WL is actively promoting suspicions and doubts about the Curtis case to disrupt the SWP and to sabotage attempts to build solidarity. This group replaces facts with innuendo. It substitutes slanderous conjecture for physical evidence. And most of what it says is based on information supplied by the cops.

This group has a long history of provocative and disruptive activities within the workers movement. The whole movement should repudiate their actions.

The Workers League began a smear campaign in the mid-1970s against founding leaders of the SWP like Joseph Hansen and George Novack. The WL actually claimed that they, and others, were Stalinist agents who organized the 1940 murder of Leon Trotsky in Mexico. Preposterous as it may sound today, the WL persists in these lies. Gerry Healy, former leader of the Workers' Revolutionary Party in Britain, originated

Send away for more information and materials that can help spread the word about the Mark Curtis case.

Five thousand new endorsers are being sought by March 4, the first anniversary of Curtis' arrest and beating. There is also a special fund-appeal being made to raise \$50,000 to help cover defense activities and the crucial appeal for a new trial.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee can be reached at P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa, 50311. The phone number is (515) 246-1695. Express your support—contact them today!

In defense cases, it is important to recognize that physical violence is not the only weapon used by the government against political activists. With the full resources of its state apparatus, capitalism has tremendous capacity to distort, manipulate, and even invent "evidence" against opponents of the status quo.

Institutions like the FBI, CIA, and National Security Council exist to disrupt, disorient, and discredit social protest movements and even governments that oppose imperialist policies.

The Bay of Tonkin provocation, for example, was staged off the shores of North Vietnam in 1964 in order to justify sending more U.S. troops to Vietnam. Even though we antiwar activists did not have the facts, we correctly took the word of the Vietnamese fighters against the U.S. government's description of the event. Several decades later,

who, themselves, are Black, Latino, women, or unionists.

Many of the prosecution witnesses against the Black Panthers were Black. The recent John Sayles film, *Matewan*, records an historical incident where the top union organizer was framed up for rape by mine-owners using testimony from a working-class woman. This type of cynical manipulation, and more, has repeated itself throughout history.

#### Defend Mark Curtis!

An immediate response to appeals for aid from the oppressed or sections of the working-class movement is also absolutely necessary to stop or limit the extent of victimization. Capitalists must be taught that attacks on individuals or organizations opposed to the status quo will meet resistance from the whole movement—and fast.



Black Panther Party members protest frame-up and imprisonment of Huey P. Newton at Oakland, Calif. courthouse in 1968. Above: James P. Cannon (l.) and William "Big Bill" Haywood in Moscow in 1922. Below: Bartolomeo Vanzetti (l.) and Nicola Sacco in handcuffs during their 1921 trial on frame-up charges of robbery and murder. They were both executed in August 1927 despite massive international protests.

International Labor Defense (ILD) was founded in 1926 by James P. Cannon in collaboration with Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) labor leader Big Bill Haywood who, himself, was living in Moscow to escape a 20-year frame-up sentence. Cannon went on to become the founder of the American Trotskyist movement.

While the ILD was the chief international defender of Sacco and Vanzetti, it also supported dozens of lesser-known anarchists and union organizers.

The ILD drew up a list of 106 political activists who were victimized by capitalist courts. Each case of these fighters for social justice, some of them long forgotten, was publicized. The class bias of the courts, cops, and politicians was exposed—and the full force of labor solidarity was mobilized. Demonstrations and picketlines were organized in many cities. No one stood alone.

But the ILD was best known for its completely non-sectarian approach to defense. Though the ILD was largely sustained through the efforts of the Communist Party (CP), it is noteworthy that not one of its cases involved a CP member.

Cannon successfully prevented the bitter sectarian disputes inside the CP from interfering with the functioning of the ILD.

these slanders to explain the SWP's opposition to his own sectarian policies.

In 1977, the WL escalated its verbal abuse and began physically assaulting SWP members. A couple of years later, WL member Alan Gelfand actually petitioned the courts to take control of the SWP and appropriate its internal records. Gelfand claimed this was necessary in order to obtain information proving the SWP was run by FBI agents.

Then as now, the WL insists that the "SWP is an organization riddled with police agents and provocateurs." The WL passes off perverse fabrications as "factual evidence supporting the charge of government control of the SWP."

No one is exempt from these attacks. Yesterday it was Hansen and Novack. Today Mark Curtis is the target. The WL infers that Curtis is an agent because he was hired by a defense plant several years ago after being "publicly identified as a YSA member in *The Militant*," the newspaper of the SWP.

#### Nature of frame-ups

The WL cannot claim to be a part of the workers' movement or expect to be treated as such when it collaborates with the cops and courts to attack the movement.

documents have proven that the U.S. government did indeed lie about the alleged attack on American warships.

Working people should always take the word of the oppressed against the capitalists. This is true even when we do not have hard supporting evidence. We simply do not possess the resources to unravel all aspects of a carefully woven frame-up.

But the capitalist state does have these resources. Numerous eyewitnesses are produced and physical evidence is supplied which "proves" the guilt of the accused.

The frame-ups of the Black Panther Party members, the Wilmington 10, and Joanne Little all occurred in the last 20 years, but they differed little from the earlier frame-ups of Joe Hill, Sacco and Vanzetti, and Ethel and Julius Rosenberg.

In each case, evidence was manufactured to obtain convictions. Racist and anti-communist prejudice was the glue that kept these dirty frame-ups from crumbling.

We must unconditionally and automatically accept the word of working-class fighters and victims of racial or sexual abuse against the word of cops or other agents of the capitalist state. This is true even when the state's case rests on the testimony of alleged victims

Solidarity is, therefore, fundamentally a mass-action oriented political approach, not only a moral rejection of injustice.

When a member of Socialist Action is attacked, our whole membership is mobilized to make the capitalists pay a heavy political price for every person they seek to victimize.

To ensure this automatic reflex, we have absolute trust among ourselves. Our confidence in one another is based on our common acceptance of a class-struggle program. We fight to build a world free from class oppression, violence, racism, and sexism. We have no interest in stealing, raping, murdering, or drug-running. Only capitalists and their cronies profit from these crimes.

We extend this same trust and confidence to rebel fighters everywhere. Our solidarity with the oppressed and other sections of the workers' movement is based on our common pro-working class orientation. We solidarize with all fighters for a better world and with all oppressed victims of this system.

A serious campaign in support of Mark Curtis is the best political preparation any fighting organization can make to defend itself. That is what we mean when we say everyone has a stake in defending—and freeing—Mark Curtis. ■



Young Seva with Trotsky and Natalia in Mexico in 1939 ...



... Esteban (Seva) Volkov at Socialist Action rally in August 1988

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

# Trotsky's grandson returns to Soviet Union after 57 years

**Esteban Volkov recounts visit with sister, who had been living anonymously since her release from a Stalinist prison.**

The following interview with Esteban (Seva) Volkov, grandson of Leon Trotsky, was conducted by Alan Benjamin on Dec. 23.

**Socialist Action:** You just returned from a five-day trip to Moscow, your first trip back to the Soviet Union in 57 years. What was the purpose of your trip?

**Esteban Volkov:** In early December I got a phone call from Pierre Broué, who told me that he had just returned from Moscow and that he had found my sister, Sasha [Alexandra Sakharonovna, Volkov's half sister]. But he said that Sasha was deathly ill and would probably not live much longer. [See interview with Pierre Broué on opposite page.]

The next day, my wife Palmira and I went to the Soviet Embassy to request a visa to the Soviet Union. Three days later we got a call that our visa had been cleared in Moscow.

**S.A.:** What made you think that your sister was still alive after all these years?

**Volkov:** About 12 years ago, Lola Galin, who was a close collaborator of Leova [Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son] and who lived in New York at the time, sent me some review clips of a book by Olga Ivinskaya, who was Boris Pasternak's companion.

In her memoirs, Olga Ivinskaya mentions my sister. She said that when she was first sent to prison, she was placed in the same cell as a young woman who bore a striking resemblance to Lev Davidovich [Trotsky]. So she asked her if she was related to the Old Man. The young woman said she was his granddaughter. The two women became good friends; it is a friendship that has remained to this day.

Over the past 10 years I repeatedly tried to find my sister, but to no avail. It was only about six weeks ago that Sasha decided to surface and declare publicly that she was Lev Davidovich's granddaughter.

**S.A.:** Tell us about your trip.

**Volkov:** When we arrived at the airport in Moscow, I was carrying some personal documents I had just picked up at a series of political events in Paris and Rome. When the customs authorities saw these materials, they took us aside, confiscated my documents, and summoned their superiors.

When the top authorities came over, they gave orders to return my confiscated belongings and they sent us on our way. Apparently *glasnost* has made some headway.

That same evening we went to my sister's place. You can imagine our joy to see each

other. Even though her cancer is at an advanced stage, she was always smiling and full of optimism.

**S.A.:** According to Pierre Broué, she didn't know that you were alive either.

**Volkov:** That's right. She said that she had also tried to get information about me through the International Red Cross and other agencies. It seems hard to believe that she was never told about my whereabouts in Mexico. It is not as if I had been living anonymously.

**S.A.:** Tell us about your sister. According to Isaac Deutscher, she was imprisoned by Stalin in the mid-1930s with the other "children of the enemies of the people" ...

**Volkov:** Actually this is not what happened. Stalin decided to spare her life and to keep as her as a sort of hostage.

[When Zina, Trotsky's oldest daughter, contracted tuberculosis in 1931, she left for Berlin to seek a cure. But Stalin allowed her to take only one of her two children with her. She took Seva, age 5, leaving Sasha, age 8, behind.]

Sasha was not detained until 1949. Prior to that she had lived with her paternal grandmother; that is, the mother of Sakhar Mogline, Zina's first husband.

[Zina remarried a teacher named P.I. Volkov two years after Sasha was born. With him she had one child, Seva.]

After her detention, Sasha spent five months in jail. She was then sentenced to 10 years in exile in Khazakhstan Balchach. But with Stalin's death, that sentence was reduced to five years.

It is during her exile that she met her current husband, an engineer named Anatol, with whom she had a daughter, Olga, who is now 26. Olga has a boy who is 5 years old. Sasha herself is a chemical engineer.

**S.A.:** What is her view of her grandfather?

**Volkov:** I told her that one of my goals, one of my passions, is to see to it that the full truth about our grandfather be told, that his name be cleared, and that justice finally be done to the millions of innocent victims of this bloody Stalinist tyranny. She said she was fully in agreement with these views. She said she deeply admired Lev Davidovich.

**S.A.:** Did you meet any other people during your stay in Moscow?

**Volkov:** Yes. A film crew of the pro-Gorbachev monthly magazine *Ogonyok* did a long interview with me about Lev David-

ovich's last years in Mexico, and, for the first time, they interviewed my sister about her life's story.

We also met with the Memorial group. The organizers invited us to their office, the House of the People, where a large 6-ft.-by-9-ft. photo of Lev Davidovich was prominently displayed in the entrance. Under the photo was a big sign urging people to sign a letter that demanded Trotsky's rehabilitation.

Once there, I was asked to say a few words to a meeting of the group that happened to be

taking place in an adjoining auditorium. I was told there were about 500 people present.

So I addressed the group and commended them for their magnificent work. Then, upon request, I gave a detailed account of my recollections of Lev Davidovich and answered many of their questions.

**S.A.:** How were your comments received?

**Volkov:** Very enthusiastically. I told them to continue their work and not to be sidetracked. They responded that ours was a common struggle. ■

## Campaign launched to free Jose Ramon Garcia Gomez



Jose Ramon Garcia Gomez, a member of the Mexican Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), was kidnapped in front of eyewitnesses on Dec. 16 while driving his automobile (Volkswagen license plate No. URW272) in his hometown of Cuauhtla, Morelos. Garcia Gomez was a local PRT candidate in last July's national elections.

Witnesses to the kidnapping identified the assailants as members of the Ministry of the Interior, Mexico's national security police.

*Socialist Action* contacted internationally renowned human-rights activist Rosario Ibarra, who is the head of the National Front Against Repression. Ibarra has joined other prominent personalities to demand Garcia Gomez's immediate release.

Ibarra reported that a demonstration was held in Cuauhtla shortly after Garcia Gomez's disappearance. Speakers at the rally, which drew several hundred people, included Rosario Ibarra and former presidential candidate

Cuauhtemoc Cardenas.

Rosario Ibarra and the Mexican PRT are organizing an international campaign to demand Garcia Gomez's immediate release. They are urging supporters of human rights around the world to send telegrams and letters demanding Garcia Gomez's immediate release to President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Palacio Nacional, Mexico, D.F., Mexico, and to Minister of the Interior Fernando Gutierrez Barrios, Secretaria de Gobernacion, Bucareli esq. General Prim, Mexico, D.F. Mexico.

Please send copies of all letters and telegrams to the National Front Against Repression, Medellin 366, Col. Roma Sur, 06760 Mexico, D.F. Mexico.

Ibarra, who has secured the release of dozens of disappeared political activists in Mexico, reiterated that only the broadest and swiftest international effort would force the Ministry of the Interior to release Garcia Gomez. *Socialist Action* calls on all our friends and supporters to join this effort. ■



# Moscow rally calls for rehabilitation of Trotsky

The following interview with Pierre Broué, director of the French-based Leon Trotsky Institute, was conducted by Alan Benjamin on Dec. 4, 1988. Broué is the author of a recently published monumental biography of Leon Trotsky, which at present is only available in French from Editions Fayard.

**Socialist Action:** You recently returned from a trip to the Soviet Union. Who organized the trip and what was its purpose?

**Pierre Broué:** I was contacted by a socialist activist in the France-U.S.S.R. Friendship Committee who asked me if I would be willing to be part of a delegation to the Soviet Union, assuming the Soviet consulate granted me a visa. I said yes.

So I wrote a request for a visa in which I stated that I was a Trotskyist, a biographer of Trotsky, and that I wanted to do some research on the Soviet Union and to talk to Soviet historians about gaining access to the state archives on Trotsky. I also said I wanted to find Trotsky's granddaughter. Fortunately I was granted a visa.

**S.A.:** Did you have access to the state archives on Trotsky?

**Broué:** Absolutely not. I met Yuri Afanasiev, the director of the Historical Archives Institute, who told me that there had been no change of policy concerning the archives I was interested in—that is, the Joseph Stalin collection and the KGB archives. He said that access was still highly restricted and that only a few historians and intellectuals such as Dimitri Volkogonov [Stalin's official biographer] and Chatrov [a leading playwright] had been given access to the files.

**S.A.:** And did you find Trotsky's granddaughter?

**Broué:** Yes. I found her soon after my arrival. Her name is Alexandra (Sasha) Sakharonovna. She is about 65 years old. She is the daughter of Zinaida [Trotsky's oldest daughter] by her first marriage with a teacher named Sakhar Mogline. She is the half sister of Seva—that is, Esteban Volkov.

[Zina remarried P.I. Volkov two years after Alexandra was born and had a second child, Seva.]

I spent many hours with her, filling her in on the history of her family. She didn't know under what conditions her mother had left the Soviet Union 58 years ago or how her mother had died 55 years ago. I also spoke to her about her brother, Seva, whom she only remembered as a 5-year-old boy.

Alexandra was exiled and then imprisoned until the mid-1950s. Upon her release, following Stalin's death, she became a chemist and lived anonymously until three months ago, when she declared she was Trotsky's granddaughter. She did this after finding out that she had terminal cancer. [For more on this story, see interview with Esteban Volkov on opposite page.]

**S.A.:** An article in the Nov. 22 issue of the French daily *Le Monde* gave an account of a meeting in Moscow that called for the rehabilitation of Leon Trotsky. It was the first meeting dealing with Trotsky in the Soviet Union in over 60 years. I understand you were at that meeting.

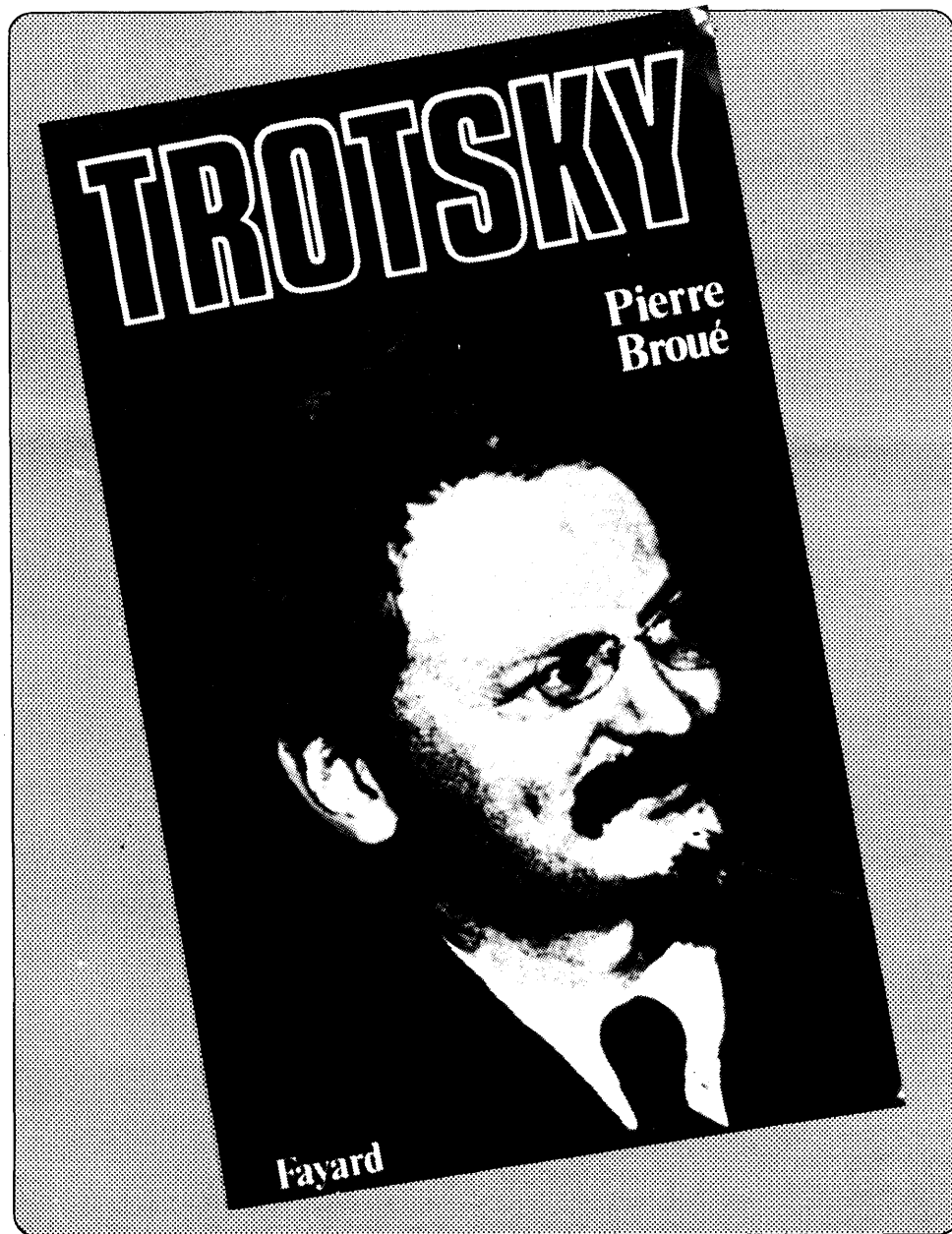
**Broué:** Yes. My first day in Moscow I received a phone call from someone who invited me to attend a meeting that was being held the next day—that is, Nov. 15—to demand Trotsky's rehabilitation.

The meeting was held at the Palace of Culture of the National Aeronautical Institute. It was organized by the Memorial group. [This is an independent organization that has spearheaded a campaign to erect a monument to the victims of Stalin's repression.]

Four hundred tickets for the event had been sold in advance, even though no publicity had gone out, only word of mouth. The night of the event, more than 1000 people were knocking at the doors of the Institute, trying to get in. The hall seated only 400, but 500 were allowed in. I didn't have a ticket but was ushered in and placed in the front row.

At the entrance there were large billboards with photos of Trotsky, Natalia [his companion], and Leon Sedov [his son and close collaborator]. The billboards included information about Trotsky's role in Soviet history and his fight against Stalin. People were

**Pierre Broué, just returned from a trip to the Soviet Union, describes his successful search for Trotsky's granddaughter and the atmosphere of excitement at a Nov. 15, 1988, Moscow public rally that called for the Russian revolutionary's complete rehabilitation**



When Broué symbolically offered his new 1100-page biography of Trotsky to the Soviet workers, the audience responded with loud applause.

literally jumping over each other to read the text.

The event was chaired by a young university student named V. Lyssenko. The speakers' platform included other students, a university professor named S. Dzarasov, a historian named Bouldgakov, as well as two children of renowned Bolshevik Party leaders.

One of them was Nadejda Joffe, the daughter of Adolf A. Joffe, a leader of Trotsky's Left Opposition who committed suicide in 1927 after Stalin refused him all medical care. The other was Egor Piatnisky, whose father was a leader of the early Communist International who later disappeared in the Stalinist camps. Both had been imprisoned in the 1930s for being what was called "children of the enemies of the people."

The speakers began their presentations by refuting the current attacks on Trotsky (not the old slanders of the Stalin era), according

to which Trotsky was equivalent to Stalin and would have been as ruthless a dictator as Stalin had he won the "power struggle."

They responded to the countless lies published regularly in the Soviet press, such as the one that depicts Trotsky massacring loyal Soviet Communist Party members while leading the Red Army during the Civil War. Their goal was to refute all the slanders and restore the historical truth about Trotsky's role and ideas.

Nadejda Joffe recounted childhood memories of going to school with Leon Sedov and sitting on Trotsky's lap. She remembered Trotsky as a kind and caring man. Egor Piatnisky focused on Trotsky's ideas, giving an excellent presentation of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

The audience was very interesting. There were people of all ages and all walks of life. Two rows were reserved for the old-timers,

that is, men and women in their seventies and eighties, many of whom were also children of old Bolshevik leaders.

Speakers at an open microphone in the auditorium included Galina Antonov-Ovseenko, the daughter of one of the principal leaders of the Red Army who was executed in 1938. She had been in a Stalinist camp from 1937 to 1953.

Galina spoke with tremendous energy and passion, unable to contain any longer what she had been unable to say all her life. At one point she said: "What is Trotskyism? It is my whole life!" And she continued, "Now it is time for us to demand our history. Give us back our history and the truth, the whole truth."

Others who spoke asked questions, some of them quite naïve. One young person, for example, asked if it was true that Stalin allowed Trotsky to take a train car full of gold when he expelled him from the Soviet Union. Other questions were more complex, dealing with past and present political debates. Still others wanted to know why Trotsky was not at Lenin's funeral.

One speaker from the audience said he wished the speakers had more fully taken up Trotsky's role in founding the Fourth International. He also said that he had a copy of Trotsky's "The Revolution Betrayed," which he urged everyone to read. He gave his name and telephone number so that people could get a copy of the book from him.

**S.A.:** Does "Revolution Betrayed" circulate widely among the dissidents?

**Broué:** This book as well as others by Trotsky get around very fast. If a copy is brought from abroad, you can be sure that the next day 500 copies have been made and distributed. This is also true of video-cassettes.

For example, I took a copy of a two-hour video documentary on Trotsky that was recently shown on French national TV. [Broué was the historical consultant of the documentary.] I was told that by the end of my one-week trip, a couple-hundred copies of the documentary had already been made and circulated underground.

**S.A.:** I also understand that you were able to speak at the meeting.

**Broué:** Yes. At the end of the question-and-answer period, the chairperson called on me to answer questions pertaining to the Trotsky archives.

I took the floor, to my great surprise, and began my remarks by stating my name and saying that I was a Trotskyist. I was immediately interrupted by thunderous applause.

I said I had devoted over 30 years to researching the life and work of Trotsky. I recounted how some of Trotsky's archives had ended up at Harvard and those of Leon Sedov had ended up at the Hoover Institute at Stanford. I explained what documents could be found in these archives.

I then showed a copy of my recently published biography of Trotsky, which is over 1100 pages in length and weighs close to 3 lbs., a comment that made everyone laugh. I said I had written this book not only for French readers, but also for Soviet working people to help them in their struggle against what I called the assassins of historical truth and memory.

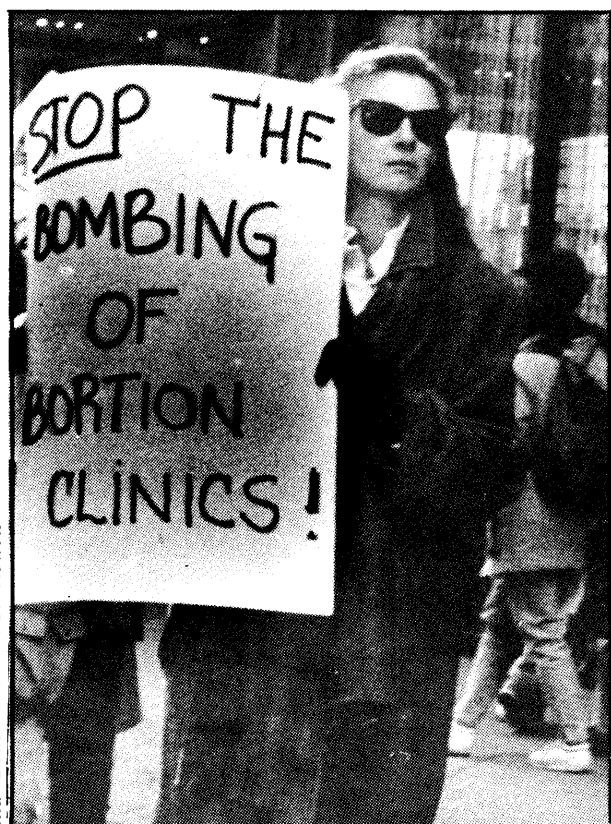
I then symbolically offered my book to the Soviet workers and youth by giving it to Nadejda Joffe. Nadejda took the book, waved it passionately over her head, and exclaimed loudly: "Never in my 82 years of life has a present meant so much to me and given me such great joy!" The audience responded with even louder applause.

The meeting then concluded with a vote on a resolution that called for Trotsky's rehabilitation, his reintegration into the Soviet Communist Party, the restitution of his Soviet citizenship, and the publication of all his works.

After the meeting, I was immediately surrounded by dozens of people, old and young, who were exhilarated to meet a Trotskyist and who were thirsty to find out more about Trotsky. They said how important it was for them to finally be able to find their way back to the traditions of the early Bolshevik Party. ■

# Struggle for women's rights resurges as attacks increase

## Momentum builds for march on D.C.



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

By SANDY DOYLE

"Our bodies, our lives, our right to decide."

This chant rang out in the late 1960s and early 1970s as women began organizing to fight for equal rights. In the United States, only two-and-one-half years after a militant demonstration of 50,000 placed the question of legalizing abortion on the agenda of the women's movement, the Supreme Court ruled that women have a constitutional right to abortion. The Jan. 22, 1973, *Roe v. Wade* decision placed women's decisions to have abortions under the realm of individual privacy.

Prior to the "second wave of feminism" in the 1960s, most efforts to legalize abortion in this country had been conducted on the erroneous basis of population control or medical ethics. The emergence of the women's movement fighting to control our bodies and thereby our lives changed the focus of the debate.

Movement activists did not see the right to choose abortion in isolation from other demands raised by the movement. The Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC), for example, raised three interrelated demands under the heading of a woman's right to choose. The demands addressed areas where women's rights to make choices were being denied by the government and by the legal and medical establishments.

In addition to demanding that safe and legal abortions be available to all women, WONAAC demanded an end to forced sterilizations, which especially victimized Black and Latina women. The coalition also demanded access to the means of birth control for all women of child-bearing age. Teenagers, in particular, faced immense difficulties in obtaining birth-control pills, devices, and even correct information about pregnancy.

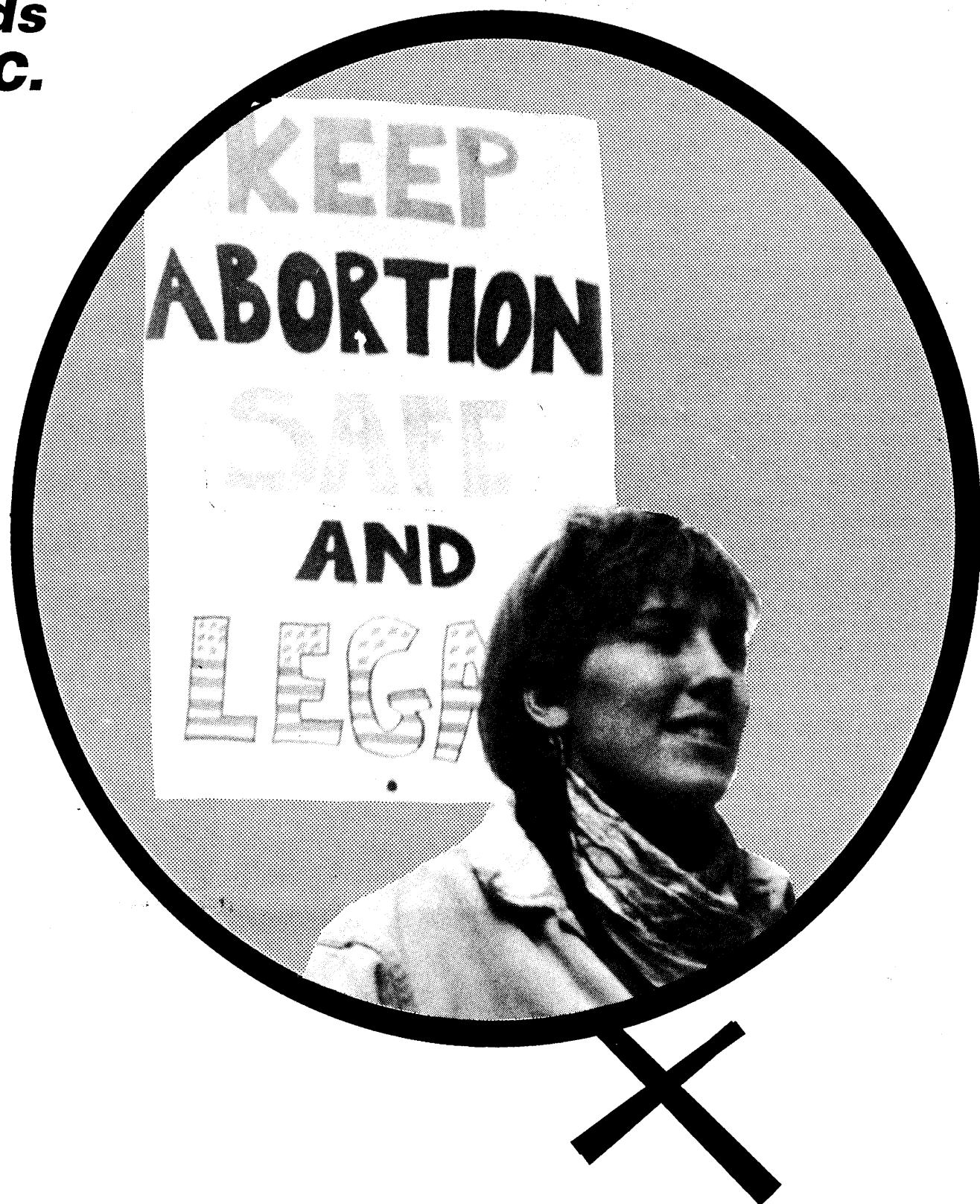
"Every child a wanted child"

Prior to the 1973 court decision, abortions were only available in a few states. It was apparent to every activist that working women and poor women and their families suffered most deeply from the restrictive laws. Women who could not afford to travel to places where abortion was legal or pay a private doctor in a state where restrictions existed were forced to go to "back alley" abortionists, who were often unqualified.

Self-induced coat-hanger abortions were common. Many women died from these botched attempts. Others were mutilated and unable to bear children in the future. The fight by the women's movement to reform abortion laws was clearly a fight for all women and would benefit working-class and poor men as well.

Women's groups also publicized the need for quality medical care throughout pregnancy for all of the women who chose to give birth. Literature stressed society's responsibility to provide the means for children to have adequate care and nutrition. "Every child a wanted child" was a familiar slogan.

The entry of women fighting vocally and visibly for the



right to make our own decisions about our lives sent anti-abortion groups into a frenzy of denunciation. Following the '73 court decision and the widespread legalization of abortion, the right-wing forces concentrated on countermobilizing and organizing to turn the clock back to a time when women were more easily kept in subordinate positions.

The large array of anti-abortion groups has succeeded in whittling away at the victory represented by the *Roe v. Wade* decision, but they have not succeeded in overturning it and outlawing abortion entirely.

These same forces mobilized to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment as it neared passage in the late 1970s. These anti-women forces are willing to fight to keep women in their status of second-class citizens. Over 10,000 members of one of the misnamed "Right-to-Life" groups, Operation Rescue, have been arrested in the past several months as they harass women seeking abortions.

But as these right-wing fanatics and the government officials of the Democratic and Republican parties who agree with them are discovering, their task is not going to be so easy. As Molly Yard, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW) stated in the Dec. 5 issue of *Time* magazine: "Mr. Bush may intend to make abortion illegal again, but he has to understand that if he tries, he will be awakening a sleeping giant."

Yard was responding to the latest government attempt to deny women our constitutional rights. In mid-November, the U.S. Justice Department submitted a "friend-of-the-court" brief that urged the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the appeal of a Missouri case, *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, which involved a law defining life as beginning at conception.

The U.S. Court of Appeals had ruled the Missouri law unconstitutional. Past court votes on abortion cases have only narrowly upheld *Roe v. Wade*. A Supreme Court decision that failed to uphold the freedom to choose would

allow individual states to reenact laws which severely restrict or ban abortions.

### April 9 demonstration

The Dec. 5 *Time* article mentions the "mammoth pro-choice demonstration" planned for April 9, 1989, in Washington, D.C." NOW, together with the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), has begun publicizing and obtaining support for this march. Yard recently addressed the convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and won this important endorsement. [See box.]

The demonstration was originally scheduled to focus on the planned reintroduction in 1989 in Congress of the Equal Rights Amendment. It is now billed as a National March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives in response to the serious threat posed to abortion rights.

Given the jeopardy in which women's lives will be placed if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, this is a good decision. The issues presented by the ERA are not counterposed to, but are complementary to defending reproductive rights.

The April 9 march can unite all supporters of women's rights. Just as the issues of reproductive choice are interrelated, the issues most commonly discussed in relation to the ERA—equal pay for equal work, equal opportunity, and equal access to education—are not separate from the issues of personal choice that women confront in deciding when and how to raise children.

As long as women have less than real equality, choices about when and if to bear children are necessarily affected. If women cannot make decisions about our bodies, we cannot be equal in any real sense. Conversely, when access to birth control and abortion is limited, women are

often not able to take advantage of opportunities for education or good jobs. In this context, the issue of childcare obviously remains a pivotal one for women as we fight for real equality.

There are many issues relating to women's status in society that can and should be addressed as supporters begin organizing to put the fight for women's rights on the offensive.

#### Changing consciousness

The recent *Time* magazine article on the status of the fight around reproductive rights mentions another phenomenon worthy of consideration. The *Time* writer states that "Motivating this [sleeping] giant—the millions of women who have exercised their right to abortion—may prove difficult." The writer gives the following reasons for this opinion:

While an average 1.6 million women in the United States have had abortions each year since 1973, and while a majority of Americans favor the right to abortion (64 percent of the population according to an October 1988 NBC poll), many supporters tend to think of abortion as a settled question. The article quotes Emily Tyne, a former NARAL official as saying, "Many people we deal with have grown up with legal abortions. ... They feel it's a fundamental right that's part of their world."

Indeed, a whole generation has "come of age" since the *Roe v. Wade* decision and has grown up not only with abortion legal and birth-control information more available but in a society that has begun to project women in a different manner.

Contrast the women in today's popular television programs with those of the '50s, when America's favorite family was the Ricardos of "I Love Lucy." Lucy's crazy antics were usually a rebellion against some dictate of her husband and master, Ricky. In one episode, Ricky actually turned Lucy over his knee and spanked her for her "disobedience!"

There is a more generalized awareness that society should not discriminate against half of its population. More young women and men reject ideas that women are inferior or unable to take on challenging careers.

This has even percolated down to Little League sports, where boys on a Catholic elementary school basketball team in upstate New York recently refused to play without their female teammate. The league had threatened to remove the team's only female from competition, citing their concern "in case she was injured."

This represents a big change, as the first females to try out for previously all-male teams could verify.

#### Why we still have to fight

But even though there has been real progress in the past two decades and real victories have been won in the arena of women's rights we still have a long way to go in every area of concern to women.

In the workplace, a much higher number of women are working in previously all-male job categories. But over the past decade, many of the affirmative-action gains have been wiped out, and women still make significantly less money than men in the same fields.

For several years, numerous studies have shown that women and their children are the fastest growing group of the poor. Homeless families wander from shelter to shelter in every major city in this country today.

And as the capitalist austerity drive deepens, an accompanying propaganda offensive against women's equality has been launched.

Magazine articles and books geared to women worriedly

## C.L.U.W. endorses pro-choice march

By JAN GOGLE

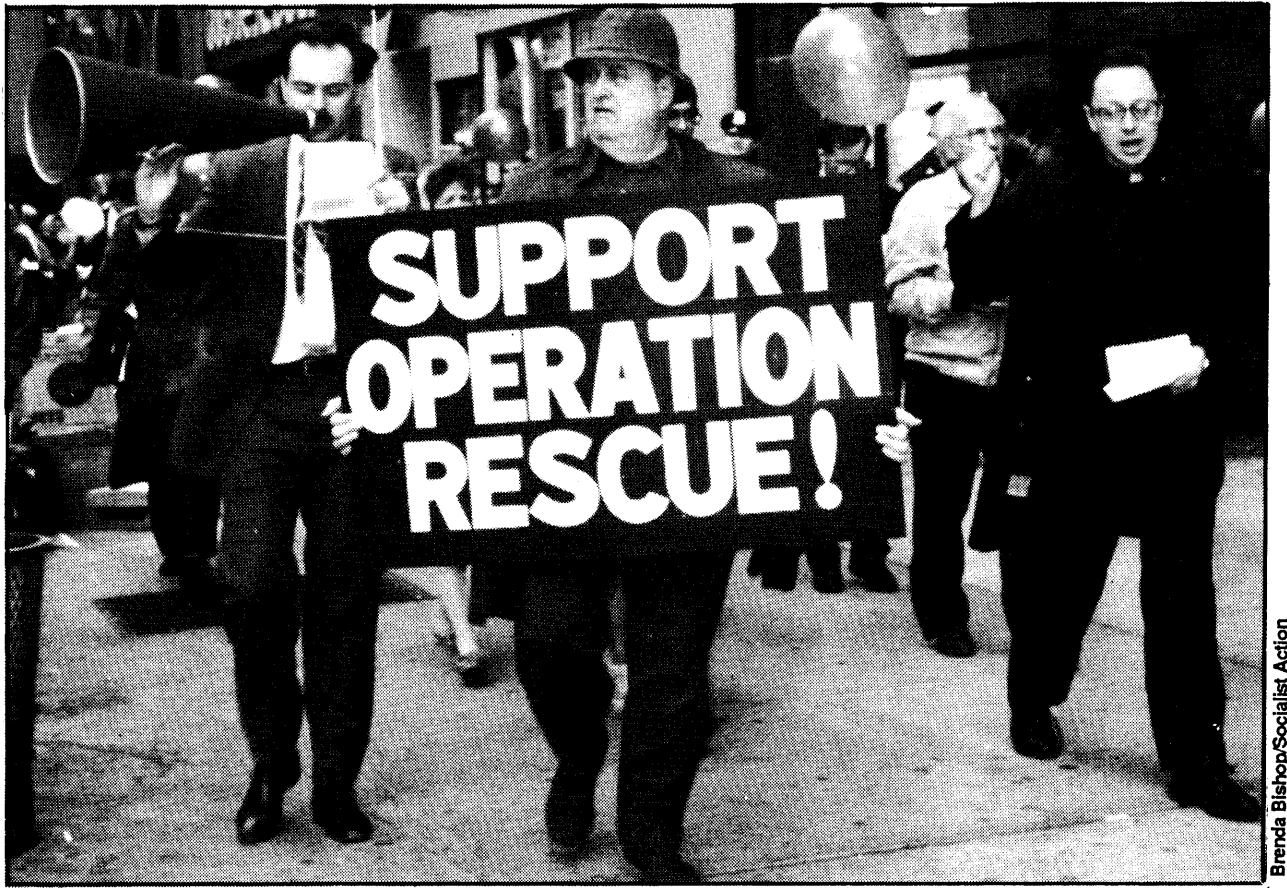
Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) activists from Washington state hosted the fifth biennial convention of CLUW in Seattle on Nov. 17-20. More than a thousand union members from CLUW chapters all over the country were there. One third of the participants were Black women.

A high point of the convention occurred on the final day. Molly Yard, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), addressed CLUW members. Yard said that a stronger alliance of labor unions and women is needed "if we are to see progress in this country." She said that proposed legislation supported by NOW has been stalled in Congress for nearly a decade. "We'll replace them with us," she told the crowd of cheering CLUW members.

Much of Yard's fiery speech urged participation in several demonstrations planned by NOW. She predicted that one of these events, a "pro-choice" march in Washington, D.C., on April 9, 1989, "will be the biggest women's march in history."

"No woman is free without the right to control her productive life," Yard said. "It's a women's right to say what she will do with her body. It's not up to the state."

CLUW delegates voted unanimously to support the April 9 demonstration called by NOW. Women want to move forward, and a large turnout in Washington, D.C., on April 9 will be a step in the right direction. ■



Brenda Bishop/Socialist Action

Misnamed Operation Rescue is on a national campaign to shut down abortion clinics.

discuss the effects on children of having working mothers. When children alienated from this society turn to drugs, and the public educational system fails, mothers are blamed.

Responsibility for all of society's ills are put on individual family units. Those who oppose women's rights continue to imply that women who are really concerned about their children should stay home with them. They ignore the fact that women do not work for "pin money," but in order to keep a roof over their heads.

While this propaganda offensive against women's human rights goes on, quality childcare becomes scarcer, adding to women's burdens. Low-paid women and male workers pay disproportionate percentages of their salaries for childcare, which is often not the quality daycare they want for their children.

And though it is illegal, a growing number of pregnant women report that they are being discriminated against by potential employers who don't want to pay any maternity leave. The bosses simply give other reasons for failing to hire a pregnant woman—and they are rarely challenged.

When it comes to forced sterilization, the U.S. government and the medical establishment have also become more sophisticated. We no longer read about large-scale plans to sterilize all welfare mothers who get pregnant. But statistics regularly show that more unnecessary hysterectomies are performed in U.S. hospitals than almost any other type of surgery.

It is quite probable that many of the women who are victimized in this way are the poorer women in our society. A disproportionate number of the poor are Black, Latina, and Asian. Poor families are less likely to have the resources to get a second opinion.

#### Attacks on reproductive rights

Over the past 10 years, reproductive rights have been limited rather than expanded. In 37 states, Medicaid no longer pays for abortions, and parental-consent laws have been passed and enforced in several states.

During the time Minnesota's parental consent-law was enforced (it is currently under appeal), it succeeded only in raising the state's teenage birth rate. According to information published by the American Civil Liberties Union Reproductive Rights Project, the proponents of parental-consent laws actually advise teens against telling their parents they're pregnant until it's too late to get an abortion.

For several years, the federal government has cut funding for clinics that offer abortion counseling in addition to birth-control information. By introducing rules that seek to prohibit counselors from discussing all the options open to women who are pregnant, the government hopes to stop women from terminating pregnancies.

While this is a vain effort, the constant threats of cutting off funding tie up the resources of clinics in fighting the state's encroachments. The resources could be better used in making birth-control methods more widely available, especially to teenagers who are still often uneducated about the realities of getting pregnant. Given the AIDS crisis, this lack of education can become even more critical for young people.

#### Cindy's story

The difficulties that a teenager can confront when parental-notification laws are in effect is detailed in the recent and widely publicized story of a young woman named Cindy.

When Cindy found out she was pregnant, telling her Catholic parents who oppose abortion was not an option. She had to arrange to go to court in St. Paul, Minn.—a four-and-one-half-hour bus trip from her home—to have a judge decide that she was competent to make the decision

to terminate her pregnancy. After getting shuffled from one unhelpful clerk to another and finally getting court authorization, she had to make another trip. This time, luckily, she was driven by a friend to get the abortion.

But by this time Cindy was too far along in her pregnancy for that clinic and had to be referred to another clinic for a more complicated procedure. This required yet another trip from her hometown. In the end, she missed three days of school and work, and paid more money from her savings due to the delay in getting her abortion. She also served several days of school detention for her unexcused absences.

Cindy's story sounds more like one from the days before abortion was legalized. And she was relatively lucky: She wasn't physically harmed as countless other women who were forced to go to illegal clinics.

But we can and must expect better treatment than this for women in 1989.

The fight for women's rights is not over. The supporters of women's rights, who are in the majority of this country's population, need to go on an offensive to protect and expand our freedom to choose. We need to take visible united action as we will on April 9.

The changed consciousness that began smashing the stereotypes of women as second-class citizens makes it possible to involve all the allies of women's rights in this march and in our future battles. Labor unions, civil rights groups, students, and other young women and men are all needed to ensure our rights and make another slogan of the women's movement reality: "Not the Church, Not the State, Women must decide our fate." ■

## Free Dr. Elizabeth Morgan!

Dr. Elizabeth Morgan has been in jail for over one year. The District of Columbia Court of Appeals denied her appeal on a civil-contempt conviction last Aug. 5.

Morgan, who believes that her then-5-year-old daughter was sexually abused by the child's father, refused to turn her daughter over for unsupervised visits with the father. The judge, Herbert Dixon, refused to hear evidence of sexual abuse from experts who had examined the child. The judge also refused to hear the child's evidence. There are additional allegations of abuse from the child's half-sister.

There has been a favorable ruling in a separate legal action that Dr. Morgan brought against the father demanding that the court hear the evidence from the child victim and medical experts. But even if that court rules that the abuse occurred, it has no weight on Judge Dixon, who can keep Elizabeth Morgan in jail for another two years.

In addition to jailing her, the court has fined her more than \$200,000 and seized her home to pay the fine. The judge also ordered her to pay her former husband's legal expenses and seized her passport. Morgan now has legal and medical bills totaling over \$1.5 million, with no means to pay while she sits in a jail cell. Her daughter meanwhile is in an undisclosed location with friends of her mother.

Why would a respected plastic surgeon sacrifice her career and home and be separated from her daughter if she does not have just cause to fear for her child's safety? Morgan says she will stay in jail until Hilary is 18 if that's what it takes to keep her from being violated further.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) is supporting Morgan in her fight and has held rallies and protests demanding that she be released. ■

# Marxism and nationalism: An introduction to the struggle in the Ukraine



Thousands demonstrating in Soviet Armenia. An upsurge on an equal scale in the much larger Ukraine lies just beneath the surface.

By NAT WEINSTEIN

Zbigniew Kowalewski's study of the history and role of nationalism in Eastern Europe (see article next page) is an important contribution to understanding the irrepressible upsurge of mass opposition to the Stalinist bureaucratic castes that continue to exercise dictatorial rule over the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

His thesis is that the struggle for true self-determination by the historically oppressed nationalities, especially within the U.S.S.R., is an organic component of the unfolding working-class political revolution.

Kowalewski documents the profoundly anti-capitalist, anti-landlord character of the nationalist struggles of workers and poor peasants in Eastern Europe. It is only in this light that it is possible to begin to understand Gorbachev's inflexible opposition to the movements for national self-determination. Gorbachev's motive is not to defend the unity of the first workers' state, but to defend bureaucratic privilege.

The following brief review should be useful to the reader, who may be unfamiliar with the revolutionary Marxist view of nationalism, for understanding the complex role of this phenomenon in today's world.

## Progressive or reactionary?

Is nationalism progressive or reactionary? This is one of the questions most misunderstood by serious fighters for human rights. The confusion is largely due to the way the question is posed.

All nationalisms cannot be placed under the same heading. Serious people must ask *which* nationalism is being considered—that of the oppressor or that of the oppressed? Three graphic examples of diametrically opposed nationalisms immediately come to mind: The nationalism of white America versus the nationalism of Black America, that of white South Africa versus that of Black South Africa, and the nationalism of Jewish Zionism versus that of the Arabs in Palestine.

In each case, the nationalism of the one is opposed to the nationalism of the other. In each case, a whole people—irrespective of social class—is denied a greater or lesser portion of the natural rights owed all human beings residing in the given geographical area.

For this simple reason alone, the nationalism of the exploiters and oppressors in America, South Africa, and Palestine—of all those who deny subjugated nations, nationalities, or racial groups their natural rights—is reactionary; while the nationalism of those denied their natural rights in these three places is progressive.

This is a good beginning guideline for determining the objective character of the many expressions of nationalism in the world today and throughout history.

In each of the cases so far considered, opposing national interests cannot be understood apart from the class struggle. Nationalism is set into motion and is conditioned by the opposing interests of the two main classes in modern society—workers and capitalists.

## Proletarian internationalism

The question of nationalism must be set in the context of the Marxist principle of proletarian internationalism: The class interests of the workers in all countries transcend the

boundaries of nationality. An advance or retreat by workers in one country accordingly strengthens or weakens workers everywhere else. And the logic of the struggle for freedom of the world's workers is toward the abolition of all national boundaries in a global socialist confederation.

Workers of any dominant national grouping have absolutely nothing to gain from the super-exploitation of their counterparts among the oppressed nationalities. While they may have a *relatively* privileged position *vis-a-vis* their oppressed class sisters and brothers, they are also exploited and oppressed, albeit to a lesser degree.

The relative privileges of the workers in the dominant nationality, however, tend to create in their minds the illusion that they are *beneficiaries* of the system of inequality and that they have a vested interest in perpetuating national or racial oppression.

On the contrary, the system under which workers of oppressed nationalities are generally denied such things as equal pay and equal access to jobs works to *depress* the living standards of the "privileged" workers. The lowered living standards of the oppressed workers aggravate competition between workers. Class solidarity, a strategic requirement for an effective struggle to advance the living standards of all workers, is thus undermined.

The illusion is carefully and systematically cultivated by the true beneficiaries of national oppression, the capitalist class. The labor bureaucracies and other reformists are among the chief instruments of the capitalists for sowing and perpetuating this reactionary illusion.

This privileged parasitic layer encrusted on the economic and political institutions created by the working class has tied its caste interests to those of the ruling capitalist class, and thus indirectly benefits from the oppression of national and racial groups.

Union bureaucrats in the United States, for example, gravitate toward the most backward sections of the working class to secure a base for their class-collaborationist policies. They more or less openly cater to the racist attitudes capitalism inculcates within the ranks of society in general and the working class in particular. This more-or-less subtle identification by labor's misleaders with national and racial oppression creates a much bigger problem for the revolutionary workers' movement than meets the eye.

The division thus created between Black and white workers, for example, often becomes so acute as to be unbridgeable by routine sloganizing for working-class "unity." That's why, for example, Socialist Action, supports a range of demands—including separatist demands—arising from the Black freedom movement seeking immediate redress for centuries of racial injustice.

It will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the working-class movement in the United States to achieve the highest levels of solidarity without the clearest demonstrations of support for Black demands ranging from affirmative action to the unqualified right to *independent* Black economic, political, and social organization and action.

At this point in history, this is the only sure road to working-class solidarity—without which effective defense of its class interests, not to mention the conquest of working-class political power, is impossible.

## Self-determination in the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union has been likened by the revolutionary Marxist movement to a trade union that has taken state

power and rules in the historic interests of the world working class. But it is viewed as a union that has degenerated under the misleadership of a bureaucratic caste which has conquered political power by the most ruthless terroristic gangster methods such as we have seen on a relatively small scale in American unions.

The Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the workers of Czarist Russia to victory, had the clearest understanding of how national divisions within the working class can and must be overcome.

On the one hand, the workers' councils (soviets) that constituted the government of the revolutionary state created by the October Revolution were unambiguously committed to full equality for all national components of the Soviet Republic. Where Czarist Russia, with the support of the capitalists from the dominant regions, skillfully played one nationality against another, the workers' government worked assiduously to overcome national divisions.

The democratic soviet power took note of the residual effects of Czarist Imperial Russia, which had earned it the designation of "prison-house of nations." This history made it difficult to erase the legacy of chauvinist indoctrination of many workers belonging to dominant nationalities in their areas, especially in Russia.

The fears and suspicion of the long-oppressed nationalities could not be wiped out in a single stroke. Lenin and Trotsky tirelessly explained that the unity of the Soviet workers' state could only be gained if the constituent nationalities had the right to self-determination—including the right to separation.

In 1922 this right was institutionalized, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was established as a voluntary association of autonomous republics with the right to form independent Soviet socialist republics.

## Stalinist betrayal

But Stalin very swiftly embarked on a course that negated the internationalist conquests of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet state. As early as 1923, Stalin engineered the bureaucratic repression of Georgian Bolsheviks who sought to defend the national interests of their people against bureaucratic abuse.

Lenin, in response, proposed a bloc with Trotsky against this violation of Bolshevik principles. Following Lenin's death, and with the consolidation of Stalin's power, the right to autonomy and self-determination became an empty juridical "guarantee" that existed on paper but was systematically violated in everyday life.

Today we are witnessing a desperate attempt by Mikhail Gorbachev, the undisputed representative of the essentially unreconstructed Stalinist bureaucracy, to preserve the dictatorship of the ruling caste.

Gorbachev's *glasnost* (openness) is not the beginning of the self-reform of bureaucratic totalitarianism, but rather a tactical retreat. It is no accident that Gorbachev's "reform" of the Soviet constitution includes abolition of the nominal autonomy of the associated republics. This act, alone, gives the lie to his alleged goal of truly democratizing the Soviet Union.

Zbigniew Kowalewski's focus on the progressive character of the Ukrainian struggle for national independence helps deepen our understanding of the *revolutionary* nationalism of oppressed peoples. ■

The eruption of massive movements for national rights in Armenia and the Baltic countries naturally raises the question of the Ukraine, the largest of the non-Russian republics and where, especially in its western region, there has been a long and heroic tradition of resistance to the Great Russian chauvinism of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The following article examines the first signs of a resurgence of the Ukrainian national movement.

By ZBIGNIEW KOWALEWSKI

"The bureaucracy strangled and plundered the people within Great Russia too," Leon Trotsky wrote about the Stalinist system. "But in the Ukraine matters were further complicated by the massacre of national hopes. Nowhere did restrictions, purges, repressions, and in general all forms of bureaucratic hooliganism assume such murderous sweep as they did in the Ukraine against the powerful, deeply rooted longings of the Ukrainian masses for greater freedom and independence."<sup>1</sup>

Stalin and the Moscow bureaucracy saw these Ukrainian national aspirations as the most dangerous obstacle to rebuilding and maintaining Russian domination. In order to crush them, in the 1930s they condemned millions of Ukrainian peasants to death by famine, exterminated almost all the creative intelligentsia, and destroyed the Ukrainian Bolshevik Party and state apparatuses by police terror.

However, this massive terror, of an extent rarely seen in history, "has led the toiling masses of the Ukraine, to an even greater degree than the masses of Great Russia, to look upon the rule of the Kremlin as monstrously oppressive," Trotsky wrote.

The situation of the local Ukrainian ruling bureaucracy, headed by Volodymyr Shcherbytsky is paradoxical. Although it is resisting the central authorities' Gorbachevite course, the latter are leaving it a lot of leeway, because it is rendering them an important service. It is keeping a heavy lid on the potential for national ferment in the major non-Russian republic of the U.S.S.R.

#### National fight is spreading

This year the people in the small Armenian republic engaged in gigantic mass mobilizations. On Aug. 23, the anniversary of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, hundreds of thousands of people in the still smaller Baltic republics went into the streets to demand the historic truth, political democracy, and national freedom. Imagine what would happen if national mobilizations assumed proportional dimensions in the Ukraine.

The fight in defense of the national language and culture, as well as the struggle against nuclear power inspired by the Chernobyl disaster and the battle for the truth about the national holocaust of the 1930s, are spreading to broader and broader social strata. But these struggles are running up against tenacious resistance.<sup>2</sup>

The weakest link in the bureaucratic system in the republic—and it is one of the weakest links in the U.S.S.R.—is the western part of Ukraine. Annexed in the same circumstances as the Baltic countries, the Kremlin fought hard to subjugate it.

Under the Nazi occupation, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) built up an armed force of 40,000 fighters to resist German imperialism. Once the war was over, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) waged an armed struggle and carried on determined underground activity, which was crushed only at the beginning of the 1950s.

However, those years of state terrorism on a grand scale did not break the spirit of the masses. Their passive resistance, as soon as Stalin was dead, led to the Moscow-appointed governor being ousted by the national bureaucracy, which for the first time put one of its own into the post of chief of the republic.

The nationalist fighters who lost the battle in their lands mounted a surprise attack from the rear. Having filled the "Gulag Archipelago" in 1953 and 1954, they launched multinational mass strikes in the concentration camps, from Norilsk and Vorkuta north of the Arctic Circle to Kungur in central Kazakhstan.<sup>3</sup>

German prisoners released from Vorkuta testified: "They say that their program is democratic, that they do not want the return of the landlords and the capitalists. They want only one thing—the Ukraine's independence.... Their program very much resembles a socialist program—they say that they are against the existence of classes, and that in this respect the Ukrainian people are

# The continuing Ukrainian nationalist movement

different from the Russian people, which has its magnates in the Kremlin."

#### Heated up quickly

It was foreseeable that if anything got started in these lands of an indomitable people, it would heat up very quickly. That is exactly what happened this summer in Lviv, the historic capital of western Ukraine.<sup>4</sup>

The first slogan that took hold among the masses called for democratic election of delegates to the all-Union conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) summoned by Gorbachev.

On June 21, 1988, a crowd of 50,000 people tried to intervene in this process. On July 7, over 20,000 inhabitants of the city

their memory.

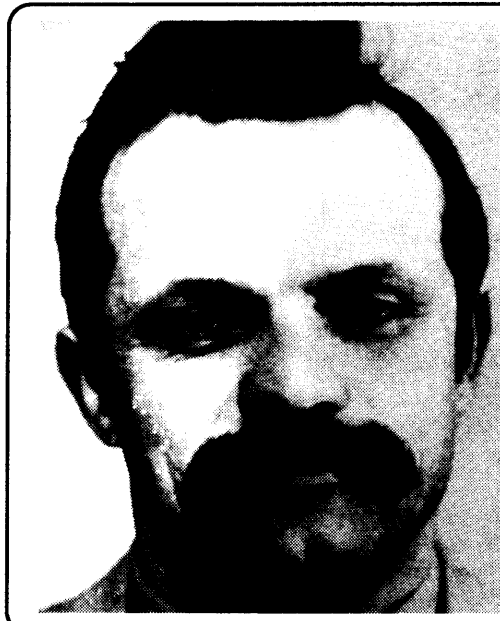
Immediately, the Communist Party and the KGB apparatuses ordered the press to open fire and to focus on Makar. He was accused of wanting to rehabilitate the worst "criminal enemies of the people" and of trying to make the region into another Nagorno-Karabakh, a reference to the agitated Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan.

But Makar was not intimidated by the media campaign. The horrible crimes that were committed in the Ukraine in the 1940s, he said, were the work of the Soviet security forces. All that was necessary to see this and to identify the guilty ones was to open up the archives that have been kept secret to this day.

Makar said: "Walking the streets of our

ities in the U.S.S.R., the UHS considers that its task is to "activate" the popular masses in all areas, with the aim of forming mechanisms of popular participation in the exercise of the state power and in real supervision of the state apparatus.

It continues: "For a genuine democratization of Soviet society, limited changes are not enough. It is necessary to break up the existing state system.... The UHS calls for the transfer of real power in the republic from the hands of the Communist Party to soviets of democratically elected people's delegates.... All parties, unions and informal associations, and even simple citizens' initiative groups must have the right to run candidates for deputies." Trade-union freedom was also indispensable.



**"It is true I am not one of the 'comrades' because I live in a workers' hostel, in a 12-square-meter space that I share with another person. I don't have an official car at my disposal. I live from a wage."**

**—jailed Ukrainian nationalist Ivan Makar**

came out into the streets. On Aug. 4, after the spontaneous street demonstrations had been banned by the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., a subsequent demonstration was the object of extremely brutal repression by the police, who loosed police dogs on the crowd.

"The sounds of barking dogs, the cries of children, and the screams of women should be the last details of a film called, 'Democracy and Restructuring Lviv-style,'" a statement of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union said.

"The first drops of blood were shed on Lviv streets on Aug. 4, 1988, together with the last illusions of the people of Lviv, whom the ruling apparatus treated as enemies. All was in its place: The people tried to exert their lawful rights—the ruling apparatus responded with repression.... It remains to be seen what the second stage will bring."

Leaflets circulating in Lviv proclaimed: "The Stalinists have declared a pitiless war on us. Down with 'the democracy of police dogs,' down with the dictatorship and the violence of the bureaucrats!"

The tone of the demonstrations was set by Bohdan Horyn, a Helsinki Union activist, who described the entire history of the Soviet Union from 1929 to the rise of Gorbachev as "counterrevolutionary and anti-Soviet." He demanded the elimination of the bureaucracy's privileges, the expropriation of the enormous property of the KGB and its diversion to socially useful projects, and the granting of real state powers to the institutions of the republics.

#### New mass front formed

In the midst of the demonstrations, the Democratic Front in Support of Perestroika was formed, bringing together the Helsinki Union, the discussion clubs, along with the peace, environmentalist and cultural groups (including Jewish ones), among others.

The Democratic Front was also joined by the supporters of the rights of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, which survives underground and has a broad social base.

The initiative committee for the mass mobilizations was presided over by Ivan Makar, a young engineer from the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. In his fiery speeches, Makar hurled a sharp challenge at the bureaucracy. Besides threatening to call a general strike in the city if the demonstrations were repressed, he demanded that the guerrillas of the UPA be recognized as anti-Stalinist fighters and that monuments be erected to

city, sporting medals on their chests, are no few of those who perpetrated real crimes against humanity. They are those who fought not at the fronts of the war but against a peaceful population, shooting people and deporting people to Siberia. They are not saying out loud the whole truth about their 'heroic acts' on our lands.

"They are part of those 'fighters of the Stalinist phalanx' who are always ready, without being asked, to 'offer fraternal aid' and 'liberate' people (robbing them if necessary of the last crust of bread and even their lives), to 'raise' the level of the culture of others and introduce 'limited contingents' into foreign territories."

Portrayed by the official press as an outsider in the service of foreign powers and a self-proclaimed ringleader of the masses, Makar replied:

"It is true that I do not belong to the 'comrades' because I live in a workers' hostel, in a 12-square-meter space that I share with another person. I don't have an official car at my disposal.

"I don't get treatment in the special medical centers reserved for the party regional committee, nor do they send me food at home. I live from a wage. That is my 'tough,' to use your picturesque expression (because you suggest that all of us are feeding out of the 'troughs' of the CIA and similar Western institutions)."

Makar has been jailed, thus becoming the Ukrainian *perestroika's* first political prisoner.

#### Vanguard of mobilizations

In the vanguard of the mobilizations has been the Ukrainian Helsinki Union (UHS). This organization was smashed by the KGB at the end of the 1970s. In the mid-1980s, it lost several of its activists in what is known as the Perm "death camp." Among them was a brilliant poet and admirer of the struggle of Solidarnosc, Vasyl Stus.

In March 1988 the UHS revived. In June, it organized a conference in Lviv. Together with dissident groups in Armenia, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, it established the Coordinating Committee of the Patriotic Movements of the Peoples of the U.S.S.R.

The statement of principles of the UHS published in July was surprisingly radical in comparison with the positions of similar dissident organizations in Eastern Europe.

Centering on the defense of the right to self-determination of the oppressed national-

The demand for deep-going political democracy was accompanied by the call for deep-going national democracy. On both levels, the UHS proclaimed "it is essential to abolish completely the antidemocratic, centralist, Stalinist, and Brezhnevist constitutions of the U.S.S.R. and draw up constitutions for the U.S.S.R. and the republics on new bases...."

"In the future, in our opinion, the nations of the U.S.S.R. will be able to live together in the framework of a confederation of independent states. A stepping stone to this may be the formation of a federation of sovereign democratic republics."

The rights of national minorities living in the Ukraine had to be guaranteed by establishing their national-territorial autonomy, and in cases where they did not live in compact territories, through national-cultural autonomy.

The deported Tartars had to be allowed to return to their native land, the Crimea, and re-establish the autonomous republic abolished by Stalin.

#### Continuity of historical memory

The radicalism of the UHS is amply explained not only by the Ukraine's great traditions of national resistance but also by the continuity of the historical memory passed on in an unbroken way from generation to generation of fighters for freedom.

Alongside young activists such as Makar are older dissidents like Vyacheslav Chornovil, Iryna Kalynets, the brothers Mykhailo and Bohdan Horyn, and many others. Sent to the Gulag Archipelago in the 1960s and 1970s, they met activists of the nationalist old guard who fought arms in hand in the ranks of the UPA and later organized the strikes in the forced labor camps.

The UPA's strategy called for "toppling the dictatorship of the parasitic class of Stalinist magnates and the destruction of the Great Russian prison of the nations" through "an all-union social revolution, combined with national revolutions by the oppressed nationalities." On the ruins of Russian domination, the UPA aspired to establish a system of free national states.

The independent Ukraine was to be a people's democratic republic governed by a democratically elected people's power and guaranteed by respect for human and civic

(continued on next page)

# Ukraine

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rights, political pluralism, and trade-union freedom.

In the free state would be built a "classless society," defined as "a society of workers, peasants and intellectual workers without capitalists, landlords and Stalinist parasites." The foundation would be social ownership of the basic means of production, workers' participation in the management of the production processes and a planned economy.<sup>5</sup>

With respect to this, the program of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union represents a step backward. It supports the so-called "market economy values" that today characterize the "dominant ideology" both of the reform sections of the bureaucracy and the democratic oppositions in the U.S.S.R. and in the Soviet bloc.

"To stimulate the economic prosperity of the republic," the UHS states, "[we] consider it indispensable to give the maximum encouragement to private initiative, which can be expressed in the conversion of a part of the state industrial plants into stock companies or cooperatives.... What must dominate is a market economy, with its mechanism for freely setting prices...."

The authors of the program do not realize that at the same time they are demanding altogether just and absolutely necessary measures for eliminating the gigantic social inequalities that mark Soviet society, they are proposing the introduction of other mechanisms that generate no less grave inequalities.

## A retreat from best traditions

But it is not only on this ground that the authors of the UHS program are retreating from the best traditions of Ukrainian revolutionary nationalism.

Vyacheslav Chornovil, the leader of the UHS and one of the most outstanding Ukrainian dissidents, has put forward a thesis on the nationalities question in the U.S.S.R. In it he states that the roots of the national oppression established by the Stalinist system have to be sought in Marxist theory itself.

Chornovil states: "One of the weakest areas of Marxism is the theory that the nation is a unity which arose under capitalism, the premise about the total subordination of national interests to class interests, [and] the prognosis not only of a classless but also of a nationless society in communism...."

"It is Marxism which produced the infamous 'theory about the fusion of nations' at some unspecified time in the future ('fusion', 'total unity', 'a single Soviet people'); it has been adopted in various versions by all programs of the CPSU and has caused much damage—for without waiting for the 'future' it is being carried out today.... Stalin's solution to the national question was definitely not a deviation from Marxist-Leninist theory ... it was just carried out with inhuman and despotic methods."

According to Chornovil, the definition of nations developed by Stalin in 1913 was the crystallization of Marxist thought in this area. Inasmuch as Stalin's definition maintained that there were no nations not characterized by territorial unity, the Soviet regime could deny the existence of nationalities such as the Crimean Tatars and many others that were expelled from their lands by Stalin.

Chornovil considers that "Lenin began as an orthodox Marxist for whom the national question was of secondary importance and subordinate." He argues that Lenin had to revise his orthodoxy under the pressure of the acute national question that existed in the Czarist empire, and work out his theses on the right of nations to self-determination.

But in reality, Chornovil states, Lenin defended "the inexpediency of self-determination vis-a-vis communist interest (unity of class interest, advantage of larger states in building up socialism)."

At the same time, however, Chornovil pays homage to the proposals on the nationalities question that Lenin presented in his testament in opposition to the great-power chauvinism that was growing at the time. He writes:

"The first steps taken by the national movements during Russia's revolutionary years and also the growth of national liberation movements in the whole world forced Lenin to rethink his own centralistic concepts, he began drawing up a new nationalities policy....

"Lenin even thought that the dissolution of



**The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic contains over 20 percent of the Soviet population and supplies 25 percent of the nation's foodstuffs. The Ukrainian people have a long history of resistance to Great Russian chauvinism.**

the united socialist state was possible and that the union of independent Soviet republics should be preserved only in the military and diplomatic fields. Unfortunately Lenin did not have enough time to elaborate his new nationalities policy, and the article mentioned above was concealed from the people up to 1956 and still kept secret later on."<sup>6</sup>

## A position rooted in Marxism

It does not require much effort to demonstrate the complete absurdity of the thesis according to which the origin of national oppression by the Great Russian Stalinist bureaucracy is rooted in some definition of Marxist theory.

I need only recall that in the Ukraine itself, for more than two decades, various rival Marxist tendencies confronted each other in sharp ideological struggles around the national question and the solution to it.

From 1918 on, within the Bolshevik Party itself tendencies arose, as well as parallel Communist parties outside it, that on the basis of Marxist theory tenaciously defended the idea of an independent socialist Ukrainian state. A non-Bolshevik pro-independence Ukrainian Communist Party existed legally in the U.S.S.R. up until 1925, although its founders had resisted the advance of the Red Army in the Ukraine arms in hand.

In the second half of the 1920s, a powerful radical current in the Bolshevik Party in the Ukraine defended national rights against the chauvinist degeneration of the Russian revolution. Its most outspoken representative was the writer Mykola Khvylovy, a convinced Marxist, who called for Ukrainian national independence as a means of resisting this degeneration, which he denounced with all the power of his extraordinary talent.<sup>7</sup>

Among the most radical spokespersons for national rights, including advocates of separation, there were always many Marxists. And many of them were in the vanguard of the successive processes of Ukrainian national revival.

In the mid-1960s, Dzyuba, a Marxist, was the most militant public defender of the national rights of the Ukrainian people.<sup>8</sup>

## Revolutionary nationalists

The Ukrainian revolutionary nationalists of the 1940s who rejected Marxist theory, at the same time opposed equating it with Stalinism. They thought that in order to orient correctly the course of the revolution in the U.S.S.R. it was essential to demonstrate that the Stalinist regime had in fact broken all ties with Marxism, and that it feared genuine Marxism like the devil fears holy water. They denounced Stalin's reactionary theories about building socialism in one country based on the Russian nation as "the leading, preeminent nation."

They recognized that Marxism was the

theory that made it possible to show that socialism had not been built in the U.S.S.R. and to unmask the antisocialist, oppressive, and exploitative character of the dictatorship of the Stalinist parasites.

UPA commander Osep Diakiv-Hornovy wrote: "It is becoming more and more difficult for the Stalinist masters to manipulate Marxism because it is precisely Marxism which is the theory that constitutes their most dangerous foe, for it is completely at odds with ... and unmasks their policies. Today Marxism looms up equally as a danger for Bolshevism as once it was for Czarism."

## "Soviet patriotism"

Commander Yakiv Busel, another leader of the Ukrainian liberation movement of the time, explained that Stalinism was not a product of Marxism but of a process of great-power chauvinist degeneration of the Russian revolution. He wrote:

"The slope on which Bolshevik propaganda has slipped since the emergence of the Soviet state goes from the ideas of world revolution, which raised the proletariat to the rank of the dominant force in international political life, to ideas of the nation and fatherland, holding that patriotism 'has become the decisive force in the development of the society.' This slope is a reflection of another that goes from the idea of building a world workers' state to that of building a Russian empire."

The "Soviet patriotism" promoted by the ruling clique in the Kremlin, Busel wrote, "is in no way different from bourgeois patriotism—to the contrary it is identical to the official patriotism of every multinational

imperialist state."

"Marx said that the workers have no fatherland. Convinced that the workers would win simultaneously in all countries, Marx looked toward a future world workers' state, or more precisely, a future world society. He did not foresee that this society would have special corners or any 'holy lands.' ... Contemporary soviet patriotism has nothing to do with Marxism. It is the product of a new Bolshevik empire."

## Trotsky's genuine Marxism

The struggle for national and social liberation in the U.S.S.R. cannot be waged effectively if Stalinism is equated with Marxism, if the extraordinary explosive force that lies in the contradiction between them is not understood. That was the conviction of the UPA commanders. Today this idea retains all its validity.

In one of his last messages, Leon Trotsky clearly defined the fundamental difference between the Stalinists and real Marxists with respect to the Ukrainian question.

The position of the Stalinists, according to Trotsky, was the following: "Inasmuch as the socialist revolution has solved the national question, it is your duty to be happy in the U.S.S.R. and to renounce all thought of separatism (or face the firing squad)."

But what Marxists had to say to the Ukrainian people, Trotsky believed, was this: "Of importance to me is your attitude toward your national destiny and not the 'socialistic' sophistries of the Kremlin police; I will support your struggle."

Trotsky explained also that the advanced workers of Russia and the world "must even now understand the causes for Ukrainian separatism, as well as the latent power and historical lawfulness behind it, and they must without any reservation declare to the Ukrainian people that they are ready to support with all their might the slogan of an independent Soviet Ukraine in a joint struggle against the autocratic bureaucracy and against imperialism."<sup>9</sup>

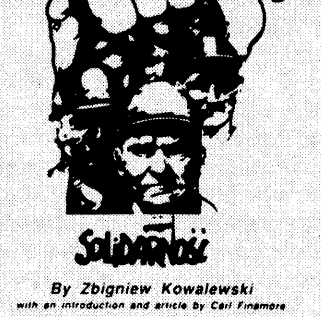
It is important that the freedom fighters who are taking the lead today in the mass national movements in the Ukraine and other republics of the U.S.S.R. understand that this is the only genuine Marxism. ■

## Footnotes:

1. L. Trotsky, *Writings: 1938-39*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1974, pp. 302-303.
2. More news about these developments can be found in the magazines *Soviet Ukrainian Affairs* and *Soviet Nationality Survey*; as well as in the bulletins of the Ukrainian Press Agency. The address of all these publications is 78B Kensington Park Road, London W11 2PL, England.
3. One Ukrainian leader of the strike in Norilsk published his memoirs. See D. Shumuk, *Life Sentence: Memoirs of a Ukrainian Prisoner*, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS), Edmonton, 1984.
4. Lviv is the Ukrainian spelling for Lvov.
5. See A. Wilkings, "Revolutionary Nationalism and Anti-bureaucratic Revolution," *International Viewpoint*, No. 73, April 8, 1985.
6. V. Chornovil, "Topics for Discussion in the Area of Nationalities Policies," *Ukrainian Press Service*, No. 5, 1988, pp. 6-9.
7. Some of his works are available in English. See M. Khvylovy, *The Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine: Polemical Pamphlets, 1925-1926*, CIUS, Edmonton 1986.
8. See I. Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification?*, Monad Press, New York, 1974.
9. L. Trotsky, *Writings: 1939-40*, Pathfinder Press, New York 1973, pp. 48, 53.

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# Nicaragua today: Decapitalization and the case for workers' control



The damage inflicted by Hurricane Joan, combined with the destruction of the contra war and the economic sabotage of the internal capitalists, is just one more blow against the Nicaraguan economy.

By CARL FINAMORE

Nature dealt Nicaragua a cruel blow several months ago. Hurricane Joan destroyed whole villages and left 300,000 homeless. It also wiped out hopes that the fragile economy would rebound from its prolonged tailspin.

The port of Bluefields on the Atlantic Coast was completely leveled. Vast sections of the social and industrial infrastructure, from schools to bridges, no longer exist. Extensive damage was done to such basic agricultural products as rice, cotton, sugar cane, cattle, and poultry.

The catastrophe could not have happened at a worse time. Even before the hurricane, there were 20 successive currency devaluations in the last year. Nonetheless, the devalued new cordoba remains in a steep decline, going from 10 to the dollar last February to 1600 to the dollar in November. In addition, some reports fear that runaway inflation could appear.

Francisco Mayorga, an authoritative Nicaraguan economist, predicted that inflation could reach as high as 40,000 percent. This may seem extreme, but today inflation already stands at 12,000 percent. By all accounts, Nicaragua faces its most difficult challenge since the 1979 revolution toppled dictator Anastasio Somoza.

## Character of the war

The U.S. war against Nicaragua is not over, its military phase has only shifted terrain. The new trenches are in the factories, workplaces, and farmlands. The weapons are hoarding, speculation, and decapitalization.

It is a war from which the workers and peasants continue to suffer and bleed.

The contras have failed to gain a foothold because the Nicaraguan people are fighting for a revolution and against a clear enemy—the armed Somocistas funded by U.S. imperialism. Despite all the suffering, death, and economic dislocations, the overwhelming majority supports the revolution.

This remains true. But today, the main threat is not so simply identified. It is a threat that comes from people who claim to be "Sandinistas, but not Communists." Every one of them claims to support the 1979 revolution. They pose as nationalists, but they are nothing more than contras without the green uniforms. They are the Nicaraguan capitalists. They are the internal front of the contras.

Nicaraguan capitalists are taking over center stage, standing in for their discredited mercenary surrogates. Keeping these murderers waiting in the wings, the capitalists have launched a full-scale internal contra war of their own.

The capitalists hate this revolution. They show their hostility every day, and it's taking its toll.

## Economic sabotage

These "nationalists" have taken \$1.7 billion out of Nicaragua since 1977. Most of

their booty is sitting in Miami banks. This capital was needed to repair, build, and produce a new Nicaragua. Instead, these so-called patriotic businessmen removed funds equivalent to one half the damage caused by the U.S.-backed contra war. How did they do this?

Nicaraguan businessmen make illegal arrangements with foreign vendors. First, they work together to surreptitiously exaggerate the price of imported parts and equipment. Then they obtain scarce foreign-exchange dollars at a very cheap price from the government to pay for these transactions. The profit from this duplicity is split with their overseas partners.

Often the imports never reach the factory or warehouse. They end up in the black market, where incredibly high prices can be charged.

Of course, all of this is illegal. In fact, the country's largest sugar refinery was recently

their machinery deteriorate to such an extent that small campesino farms are often more productive. In 1988, campesinos produced a liter of milk for 8.5 cordobas. The 70 top dairy ranchers demanded 25 cordobas a liter. They settled on payment of 13.85 cordobas a liter from the government.

This explains how capitalists escape the terrible poverty devastating the country. In fact, according to *Envio*, the largest businesses are still making as much profit as they did in 1980.

## Next stage of the revolution

Unfortunately, there is at present no effective way of monitoring economic sabotage. Without adequate mechanisms of control, the capitalists will continue to squander resources to line their own pockets and undermine the revolution.

The first document published by the Government of National Reconstruction in July 1979, its Fundamental Statute, established the right of workers to participate in the administration of the companies where they work.

This commitment was reiterated later in the first two articles of the new constitution, approved in 1987, with the following words: "The unions should participate in the drawing up, execution, control, and evaluation of production plans."

Supporters of the revolution recognize, however, that most worker participation is restricted to figuring out ways to boost productivity. This is obviously insufficient; a new approach is needed.

Establishing rigid control of large

landowners and big businessmen by the existing unions of the rural and urban workers would permit honest inspection of financial records, inventory lists, and production schedules. This would have immediate practical advantages.

For example, it would guarantee that imported products paid with hard-earned foreign exchange would actually arrive at the warehouses, factories, or farms—rather than landing in the black market, as it does now.

Workers' and peasants' control would also greatly reduce, if not eliminate, the diversion of government production incentives into the pockets of the capitalists. Simply put, its task would be to monitor the hoarding of goods, to report conscious damage or disrepair of equipment, and to inspect the books, inventories, and warehouses to ensure that production is made available at reasonable prices.

Taking these important steps does not automatically mean that production must be nationalized.

It is not necessarily wrong to allow capitalists to make a profit so long as the revolution can benefit from their technical expertise, financial connections to the world market, and other services. But it is dead wrong to allow the capitalists to swing the economy back and forth without the counterweight of control exercised by the only real allies of the revolution—the workers and peasants.

The capitalists must realize that their industries will be nationalized if they continue to sabotage the economy. The workers need the freedom to decide when and where this is necessary. They also need the power to enforce their decisions. The experience of control prepares the urban and rural workers for advancing to direct management of production once it becomes necessary.

## An idea worth discussing

The current economic difficulties are sure to stir big discussions inside Nicaragua. They already have.

The Oct. 13, 1988, issue of *Barricada Internacional* reports that "debate is raging among the rank and file of many companies." The article continues, "Our union has no way of participating," complains Roberto Rodriguez, a worker at Polymer S.A., a private company. Rodriguez says that there are no mechanisms for discussing finances or wages. He adds that for the management 'there hasn't been a revolution; they continue to treat workers the same way as they did before 1979.'

The capitalists are following a dangerous course. The same workers and peasants who overthrew Somoza will not so easily watch their revolution be stolen from them. But to protect and defend their gains, they are now challenged to extend the revolution by asserting more control over political and economic life.

## Nicaragua needs your assistance!

The U.S. government is looking on with glee at the despair inflicted on Nicaragua by Hurricane Joan. Even though it actively assisted in the earthquake-relief effort in Armenia, the U.S. State Department has continued to refuse sending any hurricane relief to Nicaragua.

Supporters of the Nicaraguan Revolution, on the other hand, are joining in hurricane-relief efforts and material-aid campaigns so that the natural disaster won't create even more despair for the contras and their internal allies to exploit.

A relief effort in this country is being organized by Quest for Peace. They can be reached at (415) 531-0779.—C.F.

nationalized for these identical acts of decapitalization. But these provocations are happening throughout the economy.

President Daniel Ortega reports that \$500 million in government subsidies to capitalists was wasted in 1987. No production resulted from these government grants.

Subsidies are intended to stimulate private production. But either through hoarding, speculation, or by letting their facilities fall into disrepair, the capitalists circumvent sales at pre-arranged prices to the government.

*Envio*, a Jesuit-funded magazine that supports the revolution, reports another revealing item about Nicaraguan capitalists: They are the most inefficient producers in all of Central America. And they pass the costs of this inefficiency onto the people. (*Envio*, May 1988)

The major rice, beef, and dairy ranchers, for example, extort prices from the Nicaraguan government that are several times higher than world-market prices.

In addition, the big landowners have let

**ASSAULT ON NICARAGUA:**  
The Untold Story of the U.S. 'Secret War'

Speeches by Daniel Sheehan Daniel Ortega

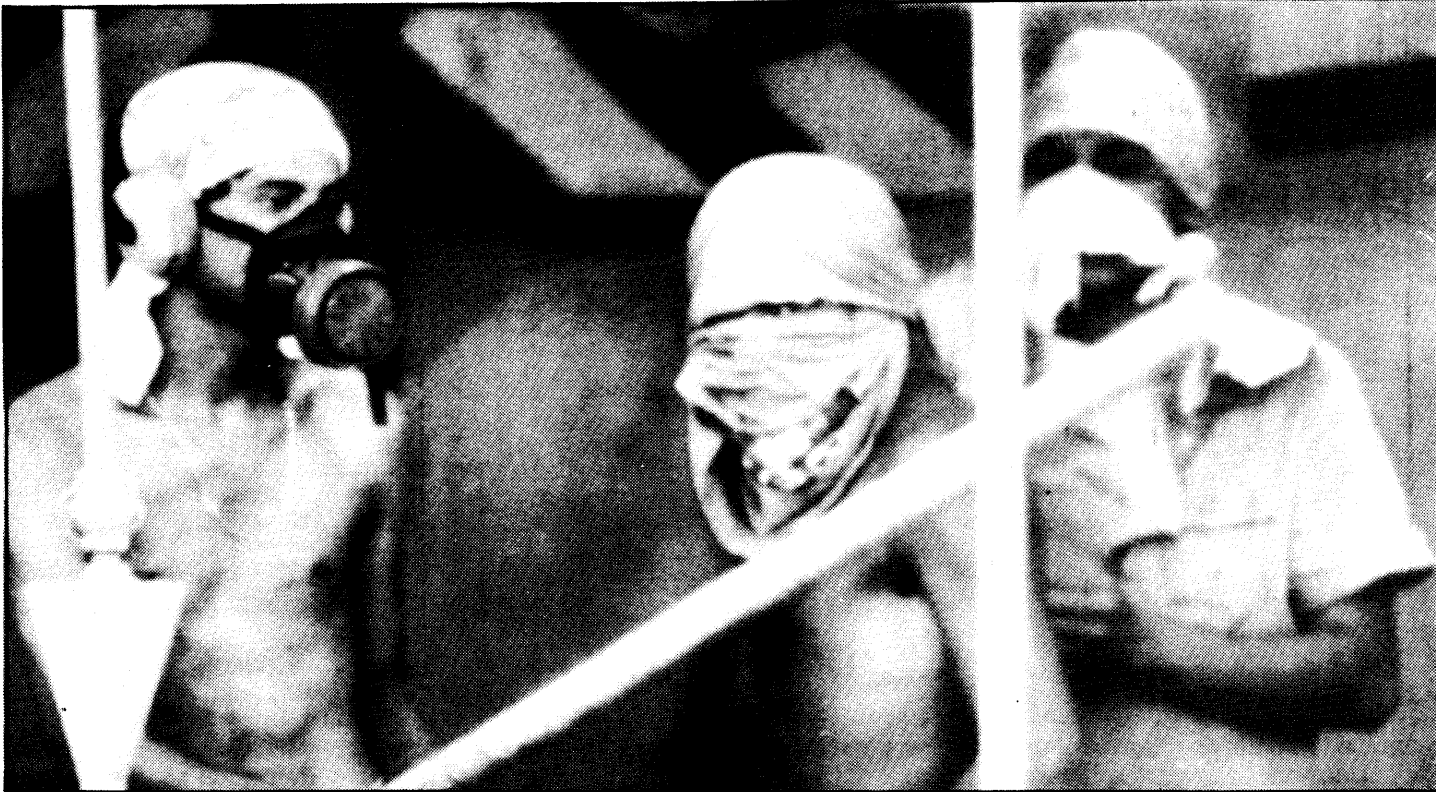
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# Workers Party scores big gains in Brazil's municipal elections



Striking steelworkers in Volta Redonda fight back army. Five workers were killed in army attack.

By ALAN BENJAMIN

On Nov. 15, the 70 million Brazilian voters who went to the polls in over 4300 municipalities dealt a severe blow to the ruling party that replaced the military dictatorship three years ago. At the same time, they voted in great numbers for the parties they considered to be on the left, primarily the Workers Party (PT) led by Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula).

The majority party in the government, the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), virtually collapsed in the country's municipal elections, losing control of Brazil's major industrial centers. "The PMDB took a drubbing," stated the Nov. 19 issue of *The Economist*. "With inflation close to 900 percent this year and living standards crumbling, the governing party left Brazilians thoroughly disenchanted."

But the "swing to the left," as *The Economist* called it, is what has the Brazilian ruling class and its imperialist sponsors most worried. The Dec. 26 *Los Angeles Times*, for example, noted that "José Sarney's unpopular transitional government hangs on with little apparent direction or public support. Leftist parties are gathering in strength in a rush for power."

Sarney himself sent out the most ringing alarm signal when he stated, "The country is moving toward totalitarianism. We will take off for a socialist revolution. ... Brazil today is on a slope to the left, and there are no forces on the horizon capable of reversing the situation." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Dec. 26)

## PT gains ground

The Workers Party (PT)—a militant and independent party that arose out of the massive strike movement of the late 1970s and that has an estimated membership of 500,000—was the biggest winner in these elections. It has emerged as the second major party in Brazil, after the ruling PMDB.

The PT's mayoral and city-council candidates won in almost all the cities of the state of Sao Paulo, the most industrial state in Brazil. Luiza Erundina, the PT's mayoral candidate, won the election in the city of Sao Paulo (population 14 million).

The PT mayoral candidates also came in ahead in Porto Alegre, one of the country's largest cities, and in numerous cities of Brazil's interior, a predominantly rural region where the right-wing parties have traditionally ruled.

The Democratic Workers Party (PDT),

## In our next issue:

For reasons of space, the announced article by Gerry Foley on 'The Armenian Upsurge and the Struggle for Political Revolution' will be published in our next issue.

which is led by Leonel Brizola, also fared well in the elections, winning in Rio de Janeiro and four state capitals in Brazil's Northeast.

The PDT is often referred to as the second-largest "leftist" party in Brazil. But is not a working-class party. It is a populist capitalist party with some influence in the trade unions. In a number of cities, the PDT ran candidates in alliance with the PDS, the party of the military dictatorship.

## Not an electoral movement

But the sharp swing to the left in the elections was more than an electoral movement. It was the electoral reflection of a powerful strike movement that had preceded the elections.

One week before the elections, for example, there were 1.5 million workers out on strike. Seventeen of the 20-odd government ministries were on strike; the national administrative apparatus was paralyzed.

The strikes had been provoked by the bitter austerity policies implemented by the government at the behest of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These policies are aimed at guaranteeing interest payments on the \$112-billion foreign debt to the imperialist banks.

An agreement signed earlier this year between Brazil's finance minister and the IMF called for drastic cuts in public spending (meaning the dismantling of the entire public sector) and a freeze on wage increases.

The government reacted to the strike wave by sending in the army to Volta Redonda, a steel complex 90 miles from Rio de Janeiro that had been occupied by the 700 striking workers.

On Nov. 10, the army assassinated five striking steelworkers. But the government strategy backfired. Despite the army intervention, the strike continued. Unable to dislodge the workers, the army was forced to leave the premises.

The day after the army attack, moreover, 80,000 oilworkers went out on strike in solidarity with the steelworkers.

## Administering capitalist austerity?

On Jan. 1, 1989, the newly elected mayors and city councils will take office. The 36 municipalities run by the PT—particularly the city of Sao Paulo—are bound to be at the center of the nation's political attention.

The central government has already declared war. In early December Finance Minister Mailson and President Sarney announced that 25 percent of the federal budget previously allocated to all municipalities (not just those controlled by the PT and PDT) will be withdrawn in order to meet the payments on the foreign debt.

Brazil's cities are already on the edge of financial collapse. If on top of this, 25 percent of the state subsidies are removed, the cities won't have enough money to meet even one month's payroll.

Sao Paulo has 138,000 public employees. If PT mayor Luiza Erundina were to accept the 25-percent reduction, it would mean having to implement the austerity policies and lay off a large percentage of its city employees. This, as the government hopes, would tremendously discredit the PT in the eyes of the workers.

The PT already went through a similar experience three years ago in the Northeast city of Fortaleza (population 1 million), when the PT candidate was elected mayor. The national government responded by financially strangling the city, forcing the city's public workers out on strike.

The PT mayor of Fortaleza was incapable of organizing a national fight against the government in defense of Fortaleza. This, in turn, led to a serious crisis inside the PT and a major setback for the PT in that city.

It is obvious that the administration by the PT of the city of Sao Paulo will pose all the issues raised in the case of Fortaleza, but this time at a much higher level.

## The challenge ahead

Administering capitalist austerity is obviously unacceptable. So what is the PT proposing in Sao Paulo and elsewhere?

A big discussion has opened up in the PT about how to approach the municipalities. Related to this discussion is how to approach the upcoming presidential election, which is slated for Nov. 15, 1989.

Some of the more conservative leaders of the PT have argued that the PT must administer the municipalities to the best of its ability so as to demonstrate that the PT can competently conduct the affairs of state. This, they argue, would place the PT in the best possible position to win the Nov. 15

presidential election.

At a meeting of the PT's National Executive Committee on Dec. 10-11, Lula and a sector of the party's trade-union leadership strongly opposed this view. They argued that unless it held state power, the PT would be forced to betray the aspirations of the masses if it tried to administer the municipalities.

Consistent with this view, Lula and a series of organized revolutionary-Marxist tendencies inside the PT endorsed a resolution that called for early presidential elections to get rid of the Sarney government. That resolution was passed by a vote of 31 to 29.

## Organizing "popular councils"

Another strategy that has gained ground in the PT is the one proposed by Luiza Erundina during her election campaign in Sao Paulo.

Erundina called for the formation of "popular councils" in the city's neighborhoods and districts. The councils would organize the population to fight for their demands and to assist the PT mayor in promoting policies in the interests of all the poor and oppressed.

Prior to the Nov. 15 elections, Erundina held seven mass "popular assemblies" where the people discussed their problems and formulated the concrete demands they wanted her to champion as mayor. These mass meetings won her tremendous support among the city's estimated 8 million shantytown dwellers.

The Brazilian capitalists have understood the deep revolutionary implications of Erundina's call for "popular councils." An article by a prominent right-wing lawyer, Bueno Magano, in the Dec. 10 *A Folha de Sao Paulo* warned:

"What is particularly threatening about this proposal [for popular councils] is related to its cultural content. This question of popular councils originated in Russia, where the word council meant 'soviet.' The soviets were the springboards for the Russian Revolution, and with the victory of the revolution, they became the instruments of the government."

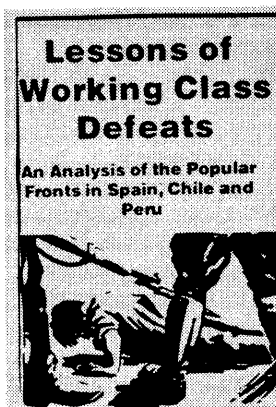
Now that she has been elected mayor in the nation's largest city, Erundina, who considers herself a "radical Christian and a Marxist," will have a major challenge ahead. Though she won a majority of votes for mayor, the PT has only 37 percent of the votes on the Sao Paulo city council.

It is most probable that the right-wing parties will form a bloc against the PT mayor to prevent her from implementing her program. To confront this likely boycott, Erundina will have to actively promote the popular councils, seeking to transform them into an instrument of self-organization and struggle against the central government.

It will also be necessary for Erundina to appeal to other municipalities to wage a common fight against the 25-percent reductions in subsidies to the municipalities.

This is the only perspective that will permit the PT to continue to grow as an independent workers' party and to fully assume its revolutionary role in Brazil today.

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# Max Goldman: 'Part of socialist history'

By JAKE COOPER

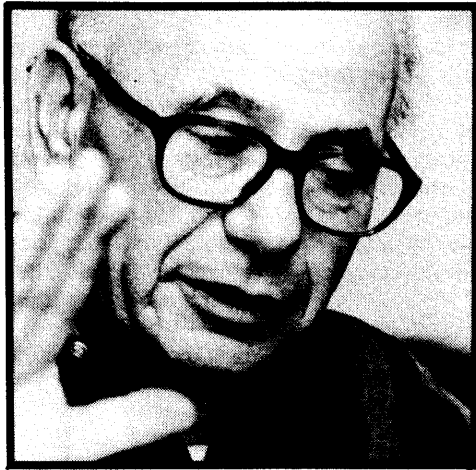
He was fondly known as The Little General. Workers will remember Max Goldman as a socialist who devoted a good part of his life to the interest of the working class, the unemployed, and the homeless. On Dec. 2, 1988, Max Goldman died of a heart attack in Los Angeles. He was 83.

What they said about Joe Hill was true of Max: "Where working men defend their rights is where you'll find Joe Hill."

Max was a leader of the Federal Workers' Section of Local 574 in Minneapolis. This was part of the Teamsters local that led the great strikes there in 1934. He was never a paid official. He gladly gave that period of his life to the interest of the poor and unemployed—those workers thrown out of work by the ravages of the terrible Depression of the 1930s.

The role that Max played in the work of the unemployed was a major factor in the victory of the 1934 Minneapolis strikes. To quote Jack Maloney, a leader in the Teamster struggle there, "Without the aid of the unemployed, the strike could not have been won."

Max Goldman came out of the Communist Party when Trotsky broke with Stalin. He



Max Goldman

joined the Communist League of America, and when the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) was formed, he played an outstanding role in building that party. He was a branch organizer in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Newark, N.J.

In 1939-40, Max was one of the key leaders in Minneapolis in the fight to uphold the SWP's Trotskyist program against a petty-bourgeois opposition current. Ironically, in 1983, the present SWP leadership undemo-

cratically expelled Max from the party in a purge of the Trotskyists.

## "The real conspiracy"

In spite of terrible blows leveled at him by the capitalist class, Max never wavered in his belief in a socialist world. Twice he was sent to prison. The first time was because of his participation in the Works Progress Administration strike of the late 1930s. A few years later, he was sent to prison with leaders of the SWP and leaders of Teamsters Local 544.

The following is a speech by Max given at a banquet in Minneapolis on Dec. 18, 1943, in honor of the 18 convicted leaders of the SWP and Motors Transport Workers Union Local 544-CIO:

"This world is now not fit for human beings to live in, and it is necessary to build a new and a better society. We are convicted of conspiracy, even though we openly publish our views, sell our papers and pamphlets, hold public meetings, and try in these and all other possible ways to disseminate our program.

"The real conspirators in the world today are Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, and the other big-wigs who meet behind closed doors and never tell the people what they discuss and decide.

"There will be other trials—and then these

culprits will be put on trial. I hope to work with the majority of the people and with my comrades against this real conspiracy."

## Fought for his ideals

Max was a keen student of the revolutionary movement. His knowledge helped him to recruit many students and workers into the Trotskyist movement. He was an educator, student, and fierce fighter for his ideals. He also loved the arts, music, paintings, dancing, and the writings of great artists.

Max was a devoted family man. He married Goldie Cooper, a great comrade. They had two children, Sherry and Michael. Goldie died in 1952. Michael died when he was 26 years old. These losses were terrible blows to Max. He married Shevi a year later. They had two children, Marla and Mark. Max and Shevi lived together for 35 years.

Those who knew Max and worked with him in the labor movement grieve his loss. We also revel in the thought of the complete life that he lived. We hold our heads high in his memories. He helped pave the way to a better world. He and his comrades raised the class struggle to a higher level. Max will not be forgotten. He is already a part of socialist history. ■

# Sylvia Bleeker: 'Sided with the underdog'

By FRANK LOVELL

Sylvia Bleeker, a product of the 1917 Russian Revolution and an early adherent and lifelong advocate of Trotskyism in this country, died on Nov. 23, 1988, at her home in New York City. She was 86 years old.

Born on Dec. 25, 1901, in a small town in Byelorussia, Russia, Sylvia became a part of the revolutionary movement at age 16.

She left Russia during the civil-war period and in 1920 sailed for the United States. During the voyage she met her future husband, Morris Lewit (Morris Stein), also a Bolshevik partisan. They remained lifelong companions and political collaborators.

Their first problems were to find work and learn the language. Morris became an apprentice plumber, and Sylvia found work in the garment industry as a milliner. They both joined the Communist movement and soon became prominent within

the New York section.

One of their first political projects was the organization of a Jewish language club, the Sunrise Club. It offered discussions on the meaning of the Russian Revolution, and gave classes in language studies and work opportunities for immigrants. It also recruited members to the Communist Party.

During the next several years, Sylvia and Morris developed their natural affinity for the trade-union working-class tendency in the party, the Cannon-Foster faction.

## Expelled for "Trotskyism"

When Cannon, Schactman, and Abern were expelled in 1928 for "Trotskyism," it did not take Bleeker and Lewit long to discover the real meaning of Trotskyism. Hardly more than a year after the first expulsions, they were both summarily expelled on the same spurious charge.

Sylvia was a candidate for Congress in New York on the



Sylvia Bleeker

Communist Party ticket when she was expelled in 1930 as a supporter of the Communist League of America—the Trotskyist organization founded by Cannon and other expellees. By this time, she had become a prominent figure in the union movement, identified as a leader of the left wing.

With the rise of fascism in Germany, Sylvia and Morris began in 1932 the publication of a Trotskyist newspaper in Yiddish, *Unser Kampf* (Our Struggle), to explain the danger of fascism and how to fight it.

She was a constant agitator, always on the side of the underdog. This was her role both inside and outside the party, and she carried favor with no one. A popular streetcorner speaker in the years before World War II, she became especially well-known in the Jewish communities, where she spoke in Yiddish.

She was a small woman with bright red hair and a freckled face, and she could be sad or glad to suit the occasion. But on the speakers' stand she was full of fire and quick with an answer to all questions that were fired at her.

## A leader in defense work

During the war years, Sylvia served as an alternate member of the Socialist Workers Party national committee and was active in defense work of the party—making use of her wide connections in the New York labor movement. After the indictment of the SWP leaders and

Minneapolis Teamster officials and supporters in 1941, their defense against the spurious charges of "seditious conspiracy" became the most urgent work of the party.

In 1946, Sylvia and Morris went to Mexico to visit and help reorganize the household at Coyoacán [several years after Leon Trotsky was assassinated there]. Morris was then assigned to try and help reorganize the secretariat of the Fourth International in the aftermath of World War II. In 1947-48, he and Sylvia spent about a year in Paris on this assignment.

In 1956, Sylvia attended the SWP's Trotsky School at Mountain Spring Camp in New Jersey. She firmly believed then and for all the remaining years of her life that those who stop learning stop

living—one of her favorite themes.

By the end of the 1950s, both she and Morris were to suffer ill health and began to withdraw from active party work. For the remaining quarter-century of her life, from the early 1960s until she died, Sylvia remained a constant supporter of the Trotskyist movement and the Socialist Workers Party.

True to the convictions of her youth, she was an outspoken supporter of the Trotskyists who were purged from the SWP in 1983-84, and especially outraged by the calumny against her close friends and comrades of many years, George Breitman and George Weissman. She endorsed and supported the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* from the first issue five years ago. ■

# Dick Fraser: 'He remained a committed socialist till the end'

By DAVE COOPER

Dick Fraser, a longtime socialist, died of cancer in Los Angeles on Nov. 27. He was 75 years old.

I first met Dick in the late 1930s, when I was visiting my sister Goldie in Minneapolis. Max Goldman, Goldie's husband, had arrived from a Socialist Workers Party (SWP) convention in New York a few days earlier. As we sat down to eat, the doorbell rang.

In walked a smiling young man. He announced he had just arrived from the same convention. He didn't have money for bus or railroad fare so, as he explained, "I took a free ride on box cars."

That was Dick Fraser. In true IWW spirit, he found a way to get where he was needed. I remember his gentle nature, his quiet manner, his youthful smiles and laughter as he described his trip from New York to Minneapolis.

Dick was an accomplished

violinist in his youth. He had already played with the San Diego symphony. But when Dick became convinced of the need to build a revolutionary socialist party, he put his violin in its case and became a professional revolutionist.

Dick was a recruiter, an agitator, a socialist writer, and a party builder. He served four years as a merchant seaman.

When I came to Los Angeles, Dick was the organizer of the SWP branch. If it was a matter of cleaning up the headquarters, hitchhiking to meet a contact in some distant city, or making a major speech, Dick was there. He was a kind and gentle comrade with his friends and hard as nails with class enemies.

Dick left the SWP in 1966 and for a time was a supporter of the Freedom Socialist Party. Although we had our political differences over the past years, he remained a committed socialist until his death.

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Children as young as 14 have been dying as troops in the Iran-Iraq war. A proposal before the United Nations would raise the minimum age for combat to 18.

The U.S. government has vetoed this resolution. A State Department spokesman pointed out that an American boy can enlist at 17—with his mother's permission.

**Chevron stockholder** Jeremy Garchik called for the oil company to quit naming its ships after living persons. He argued that a catastrophe involving a ship, such as an oil spill, would always be "associated in the public mind with the now unfortunate honoree, who clearly ill deserves such infamy."

The hunt is on for a new national chairman of the Democratic Party. A prime candidate is Ron Brown, the big-time lawyer who helped to head up Jesse

Jackson's presidential campaign. Besides Jackson, candidate Brown has another client of renown in his portfolio. Beginning in 1982, he was a lobbyist in Washington, D.C., for Baby Doc Duvalier of Haiti.

Brown says that he did have some "apprehensions" about working for the former dictator, but thought he could "do more good than harm." Besides, Baby Doc paid him \$12,500 a month for his services.

The Northern California Psychiatric Society has condemned the CIA for practicing on "unsuspecting patients." The CIA has been forced to pay \$750,000 to eight Canadians who had been subject to brain-washing experiments in the 1950s and '60s.

The experiments were designed to see whether an intelligence agency could program its own assassins, among other things. They didn't

produce assassins (as far as is known), but victims suffering bouts of memory loss, anxiety, depression, and wild mood swings.

"If we hear of these things happening again, we will not stand by idly," declared Dr. Maurice Rappaport, the society's president.

**Brother Paul Johnson**, who works with the homeless in Miami, told *The New York Times* how some of the wealthy respond to the problem. He said he attended a cocktail party with very prosperous guests.

After praising the good work he was doing for the unfortunate, a wealthy matron asked, "What one measure would you propose to solve the problem?" He answered, "Raise the minimum wage to \$5 an hour."

At this, warm admiration was replaced by frosty rejection. Impossible! "At \$5 an hour I could

not afford my maid," she exclaimed.

In view of the homeless problem, the state of California has urged every community to erect a minimum number of low-cost apartments. This presented a problem to the super-rich community of Tiburon, on San Francisco Bay. Low-income housing would bring in low-income people—and there goes the neighborhood.

But happy solution! Someone pointed out that low-rent apartments could be built on Tiburon estates to house the cooks and maids who now have to commute long distances to make life pleasant for the wealthy.

**Three Alabama judges** ordered defendants with AIDS not to appear in their courtrooms, but to enter their pleas and receive their sentences by telephone.

Despite the Surgeon General's

assurances that AIDS is not easily spread, the learned judges did not believe it. "Call me paranoid if you want to," said Judge Jack Montgomery in Birmingham.

A huge burial ground consisting of about 50 common graves has been discovered in the neighborhood of Minsk, in the Soviet Union. According to the Oct. 9 *Moscow News*, an estimated 100,000 bodies were buried there.

The victims had been slaughtered by Stalin's secret police, the KGB. The Soviet weekly reported: "That factory of death functioned daily from 1937 to June 1941. Particularly disturbing are the large number of women found buried."

After the discovery, more than 20,000 people demonstrated in Minsk, capital of Byelorussia, to condemn the crimes and the hesitation of the authorities to shed more light on the massacres.

## ... Palestine

(continued from page 1)

day one. The leadership of the Palestinian movement had given up the fight to unite Palestinians and Jews for the liberation of all of Palestine. They had accepted the right of the apartheid Israeli state to exist on Palestinian land and were ready to accept a "mini-state" in the West Bank and Gaza.

The stalling on the part of the State Department could only be for the purpose of pushing the P.L.O. as far as it would go. The warm reception to Arafat's concessions on the part of the European capitalist countries probably had an effect on the U.S. government's decision to act when it did.

### Israeli reaction

The Israeli government reacted with predictable dismay to Shultz's announcement of talks with the P.L.O. An official statement from Israel said, "We do not consider that this step will advance the peace process in the Middle East."

On Dec. 22, a new coalition government took power in Israel after more than 50 days of bickering between the Labor and Likud parties. Yitzhak Shamir and his rightist Likud party will carry the majority in the coalition.

The new government is based on common opposition to the P.L.O. and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Shimon Peres of the Labor Party affirmed that "there will be no negotiations with the P.L.O." (*New York Times*, Dec. 21, 1988)

The coalition government also plans to increase Zionist colonization of the West Bank and Gaza. Eight new settlements are planned for the next year.

The Israeli government depends on U.S. financial and military support for its very survival. If the United States were to decide to



move ahead in convening a peace conference, the Zionist state wouldn't have much say in the matter.

Nevertheless, it's very helpful for U.S. policymakers to have Israel take such an adamant position against negotiations with the Palestinians. Israel can play the hard cop, and the United States can justify asking for more concessions because of Israel's "stubbornness."

### "Quelling the violence"

One of the main goals of the U.S. government is to bring to a quick end the

uprising—the Intifada—that has shaken Palestine for over a year. Aware that Israeli military measures against the Intifada have proven ineffective, U.S. officials are pursuing other means to this end.

Undersecretary of State Michael Armacost made this clear in a report given after the negotiations opened with the P.L.O. Pointing out what the P.L.O. must do to continue a dialogue with the United States, Armacost said: "I think it would be very helpful if there is a subsiding of violence in the territories."

According to *The Washington Post*, Armacost "called upon the P.L.O. to demonstrate

by 'deeds' that it has truly renounced terrorism and to use its influence to quell the violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip."

Evidently the State Department considers children throwing stones at armed soldiers to be "terrorists."

### Heading into a trap

In his Dec. 14 press conference, Arafat made an important statement. He said, "Let it be absolutely clear that neither Arafat, nor anyone for that matter, can stop the Intifada, the uprising." This is true. But though he may not be able to stop the uprising, Arafat and the entire P.L.O. leadership have adopted a course that can greatly disorient the Palestinian masses and take them into a trap.

The United States is willing to allow the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian Bantustan in confederation with Jordan if all other options fail. It is aware that such a course would sidetrack—and ultimately derail—the Palestinian resistance movement. Arafat has stated that he is open to this "confederal" solution.

The P.L.O., of course, has every right to pursue the historic goals of the Palestinian people through diplomatic means. But diplomacy must always be subordinate to the overall goal of national self-determination. Recognition of the Israeli state in exchange for a Palestinian mini-state is tantamount to the rejection of self-determination for Palestine.

The national demands of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and inside the "Green Line" (that is, the territories occupied prior to 1967) can only be met by the liberation of all of Palestine. That would mean the dismantling of the Zionist state and its replacement with a democratic and secular Palestine with equal rights for Jews and Arabs.

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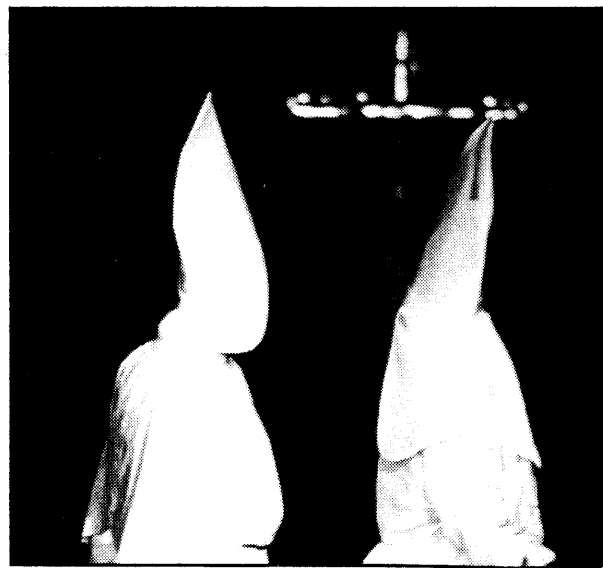
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# New movie distorts civil rights struggle



By MARTY DENZEL and JEAN MESLIER

*Mississippi Burning*, a new film directed by Alan Parker.

Last month, "Mississippi Burning," a film dealing with the battle for civil rights in the South, swept the National Board of Review's 1988 awards. It received the best film, best actor, best supporting actress, and best director prizes.

The film's director (Alan Parker of "Midnight Express" and "Angel Heart") goes to great lengths to remind us how bad the situation was for Southern Blacks during the 1960s. He doesn't exaggerate. The church burnings shown in the film, for instance, reflect the fact that between June 1964 and January 1965 alone, KKK nightriders burned 31 Black churches across Mississippi.

But in attempting to make his message more urgent, Parker comes up with a film that is less about civil rights struggles and more about the struggle between two cops over how violent and ruthless their investigation should be.

## Rough and dirty

The story focuses on FBI agents Ward (Willem Dafoe) and Anderson (Gene Hackman), who are assigned to find out what happened to three young civil rights workers (based on the 1964 murders of Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney). Their investigation initially provides no results other than increased

violence—as Blacks are terrorized by local Klansmen, including the sheriff and his deputy, to keep them from talking.

Anderson, a former Mississippi sheriff, feels it's necessary to play rough. After several setbacks, Ward, who is in charge, agrees. By using intimidation, force, deceit—Anderson's methods—the bodies of the three civil rights workers are found, and the murderers are prosecuted.

The message is that justice can only be accomplished by governmental authorities playing as rough and dirty as the criminals—the same message as in films like "Dirty Harry." Eventually, the FBI investigators adopt the methods of the Klan to the point where several of them masquerade as KKK members.

The film presents no other recourse for justice; the northern activists are killed in the first scene and no others are shown. By implying that basic freedoms for Blacks were won through the ruthless tactics of white FBI agents, therefore, "Mississippi Burning" distorts history.

No mention is made of Blacks and whites who marched, organized, fought, and died in the 1950s and 1960s for basic civil rights such as voting. There is not one individualized Black character, and the only strong Blacks (who are not passive and frightened) are a young boy and an FBI agent who appears in one scene.

## "Being poor was killing him"

While the FBI is presented positively (although inaccurately—it had no Black agents in 1964), it was in fact guilty of violating civil rights in its persecution and harassment of Black leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. Moreover, it has recently been plagued with racial discrimination suits.

Since the film is mainly concerned with the most sensational effects of racism—such as church burnings, castrations, and murder—it is not surprising that it doesn't attempt to explore the causes of racism.

The film only briefly refers to the hatred of poor whites toward poor Blacks (which works to divert them from fighting back against the bosses). In one scene, Anderson explains his father's attitude toward Black farmers: "He was so filled with hate, he didn't know it was being poor

that was killing him."

Even though "Mississippi Burning" shows a subject that is not often treated, it is hard to recommend it. It directs us to the wrong source for justice. As history demonstrates, we cannot depend on the government and its police to obtain equality for Blacks and other minorities. We have to obtain justice by our own mass actions. ■



Mississippi 1964: Sheriff Lawrence Rainey at his arraignment for murder of three young civil rights workers. Movie is based on this incident.

# Early American radical paper promoted the 'socialist dream'

By HAL VERB

*Talking Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912*, by Elliott Shore, The University Press of Kansas, 1988.

This is a well-documented new book on the rise and growth of early American "grass roots" socialism and the significant role of the radical press in agitating, organizing, and promoting that movement.

Elliott Shore, with the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, N.J., is

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considered a leading authority on the alternative press. He has deliberately chosen the rather narrow time period of 1890 to 1912 to focus on the career of J.A. Wayland, who achieved permanent fame as America's greatest producer of radical mass-circulation newspapers.

Wayland was the editor, publisher, and main writer of *The Appeal to Reason*, a weekly socialist paper that he started in 1895. Upton Sinclair once stated that as many as 4 million were loyal readers of the tabloid. Sinclair's famous novel, "The Jungle," exposing the meat-packing industry of Chicago, was serialized first in the pages of *The Appeal to Reason*.

In 1906, *The Appeal* printed a special edition, the famous "Rescue Edition," in support of "Big Bill" Haywood and other Colorado mine leaders who were being framed on a bomb plot charge in which Idaho's Governor Steunenberg was killed. The newspaper roused the entire labor movement to join forces in common defense efforts across the country.

A total of 3,100,000 copies were printed and were probably largely responsible for helping to free Haywood and the other leaders. Two years later, in 1908, *The Appeal* printed the astounding total of 25,000,000 copies of

the "Rescue Edition."

## Government harassment

Despite the popularity of *The Appeal to Reason*, the fact is that neither a socialist transformation of American society nor a viable mass socialist party occurred. Shore provides a thoughtful and penetrating analysis of this failure.

To be sure, the federal government took an active role of harassment almost from the very moment *The Appeal* was launched. There had been several attempts by the post office to initiate new mailing "regulations" that directly undercut the paper's circulation.

After Eugene V. Debs' historic "Arouse the Slaves" article in the "Rescue Edition," Canada banned the newspaper for "sedition." Shore reprints a copy of a 1907 edition of *The Appeal* that features across the front page a blank section titled "censored by the Attorney General of the United States"

No less a figure than President Theodore Roosevelt actively pursued the fight to close down *The Appeal*. Soon after Debs wrote his stirring appeal on behalf of the miners, the government had criminal charges brought against "Fighting Editor" Fred D. Warren (who had taken over the helm of *The Appeal* in 1904).

## "A business institution"

While granting that this harassment by the government was important, Shore views the demise of *The Appeal*, and with it of the socialist movement, as based more significantly on factors resulting from the reformist outlook of a large part of the movement's leadership. These factors were personified in the life of J.A. Wayland.

Wayland's early career had been based on real estate speculations in Colorado. He described himself at first as a "radical republican." He then briefly joined the populist movement and, after a flirtation with utopian colonies (he founded the Ruskin colony in Tennessee) and launching several newspapers, he finally settled on publishing *The Appeal*.

To Wayland, *The Appeal* was like a

business institution. He fervently believed that by using the press and utilizing boosterism and American "get-rich-quick" schemes, he could put socialism firmly into the American political landscape.

Such practices as these, Shore notes, eventually caught up to Wayland. In 1903, *The Appeal's* staff of 100 employees went out on strike against him. The employees pointed to a number of glaring unsocialist practices that Wayland pursued, such as maintaining a sweatshop and allowing the business managers to make insulting remarks toward women workers (known as "the girls").

Wayland had also opposed unionism at the newspaper plant, although he gave lip service to it in his articles. At other times, he had indicated that he was not in favor of strikes, which did not endear him to the more theoretically grounded writers who were Marxists.

## No party organ

Although Wayland, for a very brief period, had identified with the Socialist Labor Party

of Daniel De Leon (at one time he even published the SLP's platform to promote it), he never utilized *The Appeal* as the organ of any socialist party.

Shore recalls that when the sagging fortunes of *The Appeal* were at a low point, Wayland offered to sell the paper to the Socialist Party. But the party declined this important opportunity, presenting the argument that its constitution forbade it from adopting an official party organ.

Today, with citizens gaining more and more of their information from non-print sources, the American left is more isolated from reaching the public than it was before World War I. What it does publish is not often available through such commercial distributors as newsstand agencies—a situation that has changed little since Wayland complained about it in the 1890s. The wire services are as closed to radical reportage as they were a century ago.

Yet American radicals continue to dream the dream that Wayland dreamed—namely, convincing the mass of people to remake American society through the truth of the printed word. That these dreams are still dreamed shows the indomitable spirit of social conscience, but the means for spreading the word are as restricted as they were when Wayland was talking socialism. ■

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# Why the ruling rich blunt MLK's legacy

By JOSEPH RYAN

On Jan. 15, 1989, the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would have been 60 years old. But an assassin's bullet, fired in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968, has made that impossible.

Millions of Black people and their allies in the labor, student, and social justice movements will commemorate Martin Luther King's birthday because he was a martyr in the fight for freedom and social equality. He was one of *our* heroes.

In contrast, the ruling class in this country will try—like vultures—to feed off the memory of Martin Luther King. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the leader of the Russian Revolution, was more than familiar with this "game." He thought it was important to explain what the ruling class does once a great leader of the oppressed has been cut down:

"After their death," Lenin said, "attempts are made to turn them into harmless icons, canonize them, and surround their names with a certain halo for the 'consolation' of the oppressed masses and with the object of duping them. ... They [the ruling class] omit, obliterate, and distort the revolutionary side... the revolutionary soul," of what the great leaders were striving for.

Furthermore, Lenin continues: "They push to the foreground and extol what is, or seems to be, acceptable to the bourgeoisie [the capitalist class]."

Such has been the approach of the American capitalists and politicians every Jan. 15, when they "celebrate" the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.

## Praised by his enemies

People like Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Michael Dukakis, Ted Kennedy, and the chief executives of U.S. corporations all give patronizing lip service to what they say were the hallmarks of Martin Luther King's life. They stress King's commitment to "non-violence" and "passive resistance." And they try to "console" the masses with phony phrases about how they have the same goals Dr. King had.

Meanwhile, they cover up the fact that there was a struggle even to get MLK's birthday declared a national holiday. And while they pay tribute to the great man's life in carefully prepared speeches, they obscure the fact that when Martin Luther King was alive he was visited with, as Lenin said about other martyrs, "relentless prosecution, the most savage hostility, the most furious hatred, and the most ruthless campaign of lies and slanders."

In reality, many of these so-called "admirers" of the dead MLK were enemies of the living MLK. While King was leading the decade-long 1960s fight to abolish "Jim Crow" segregation in the South and risking his life on marches and rallies to demand voting rights for Blacks, the federal government was spying on him. When King organized the massive march on Washington, D.C., in August 1963, the "liberal" President Kennedy tried to get him to cancel it.

And when King spoke out forcefully against the U.S. war in Vietnam and organized a Poor Peoples' Campaign against poverty, he became *persona non grata* in white liberal circles. Many of those who now praise MLK only do so to bury him.

## A dynamic social force

Martin Luther King, if he chose, could have had an easy life. An ordained Baptist minister, he came from a fairly well-off middle-class family. His father, Martin Luther King Sr., was the head of the most prestigious Black church in Atlanta. But instead of a life of relative privilege, he

Vernon Merritt



Martin Luther King Jr. relaxes after historic Selma to Montgomery, Ala., civil rights march in 1965.

devoted his life to racial justice and social activism.

From the time he first came into prominence as the chief spokesperson for the 387-day bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala., in 1955—and until his death 13 years later—MLK was recognized as the chief spokesperson for the Black civil rights movement.

MLK was not a revolutionary. He was a reformer, a Christian, and he had great illusions in the capitalist system. But he realized that he was the representative and leader of a dynamic social and historical force: the struggle for Black liberation.

Although King was considered to be in the moderate wing of the civil rights movement, he was "tolerated" by the ruling class only because he was an expression of this immense social movement.

When Congress passed the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act in 1964 and 1966 respectively, it was only because of the pressure of this mass movement in the streets—of which King was a central organizer.

But the logic of this movement, once *de jure* segregation had been abolished in the South, led King ineluctably from the question of racial justice to the question of economic justice. King recognized that the question of racism was intrinsically connected to economic exploitation.

## On a collision course

From then on, King was on a collision course with the capitalist rulers and their two political parties—the Democrats and Republicans. The American capitalist class was willing to give flattering support to the fight against the archaic system of "Jim Crow" in the South. After all, they had to improve their image in the eyes of world public opinion.

But their attitude changed dramatically when King stepped "over the bounds" by linking the demand for economic justice to ending the war in Vietnam. On April 4, 1967, one year to the day before he was assassinated, King spoke out: "I speak for the poor of America who are paying the double

price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam." At this Riverside Church speech in New York City, King declared war against the Vietnam War.

Furthermore, King took the crusade for racial justice "Up South" to cities like Chicago and New York to fight against the *de facto* segregation of the North. He initiated a movement, the Poor People's Campaign, around an economic bill of rights to demand economic justice for whites and Blacks alike. Despite what might have been his instinctive "conservatism," MLK always found himself at odds with the capitalist status quo.

"Most of the poor people in this country," King said, "are working every day but earning so little they cannot begin to function in the mainstream of economic life of our nation. We've got to do something about joblessness, and we are going to Washington to demand an economic bill of rights."

When he was assassinated, King was in Memphis specifically to lend support to a strike by that city's Black sanitation workers.

Crocodile tears notwithstanding, the ruling class was happy to see MLK "put out of the way." His death deprived Blacks and all the oppressed of a dynamic moral and political leader.

## A war against the poor

If King were alive today he would see that while the ruling class "eulogizes" him, they are conducting a savage economic war against the Black community—and the working class in general. If anything, things are worse today than they were in 1968. The long road of slow reform has led from the so-called War Against Poverty of the '60s to the War Against the Poor today.

While Black unemployment for 1967 was just over 7 percent, 20 years later the Black unemployment rate is over 13 percent. And Blacks today are still more than twice as likely to be unemployed as whites.

For Black children under the age of 18, the poverty rate of nearly 50 percent has scarcely changed over the last 20 years. Many of the social programs that MLK fought for have been eliminated. Shockingly, over the last two years the life expectancy of Blacks in the United States has declined for the first time in this century.

If MLK were alive today, he would see how effective the capitalist tactic of "divide and conquer" has been. Over the last 20 years, for example, the largest aggregate increase of poverty has been among whites and Hispanics.

It's hard to say what would have happened if MLK had lived. But a number of things are certain. He would have continued to try to build a social movement—to the best of his ability and sense of integrity—to challenge the exploitation being suffered by Blacks and working people today.

He probably would have built a movement that was active and visible not just during elections—but *between* elections. His efforts might have been frustrated politically, instead of by an assassin's bullet, but he would have tried.

Talking about the decade of the civil rights struggle, King once said: "The greatness of this period was that we armed ourselves with dignity and self-respect. The greatness of this period was that we straightened our backs up. And a man can't ride your back unless it's bent."

Undoubtedly, Martin Luther King would today be on the side of those fighting against oppression and exploitation. There is no guarantee that he could have made a decisive difference, but one thing is certainly clear: He would have been in the front ranks of those fighting against war, racism and poverty.

This is the Martin Luther King that the ruling rich try to bury through false praise.