


A Socialist ACTION

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See pp. 14 - 15.



NOVEMBER 1989 VOL. 7, No. 11 50 CENTS

Mass action: Key strategy to defend women's rights

The Nov. 12 Mobilization, sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW) to defend women's right to choose safe, legal, accessible abortion, comes at the perfect time. Never has the need been greater for independent, massive, national mobilizations of women's rights supporters.

The attacks against women's fundamental right to control their own bodies have continued unabated at the national and state level since the July *Webster* decision. That decision gave state legislatures the power to restrict women's access to abortion by up-

Editorial

holding the heavy restrictions imposed by the state of Missouri.

The Nov. 12 Mobilization in Washington, D.C., takes place on the eve of three more decisions on abortion cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. Any one of these cases could be used as a handle to completely overturn the historic *Roe v. Wade* case which recognized a woman's right to privacy in her reproductive choices.

There have been a few small victories lately. In Florida pro-choice activists demonstrated in such powerful numbers that they prevented the Florida legislature from approving the governor's anti-abortion law. The U.S. Congress approved Medicaid funding for abortion for rape and incest victims.

But President Bush showed his contempt for women by vetoing that legislation. He also vetoed budget appropriations for the city of Washington, D.C., which included abortion funding for low-income victims of rape and incest.

The legislature of the state of Pennsylvania has passed the most restrictive abortion legislation yet. The new law requires a woman to get her husband's permission to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Now, in Pennsylvania, *men's* right to choose (for women) is the law, and the privacy provision of *Roe v. Wade* is null and void.

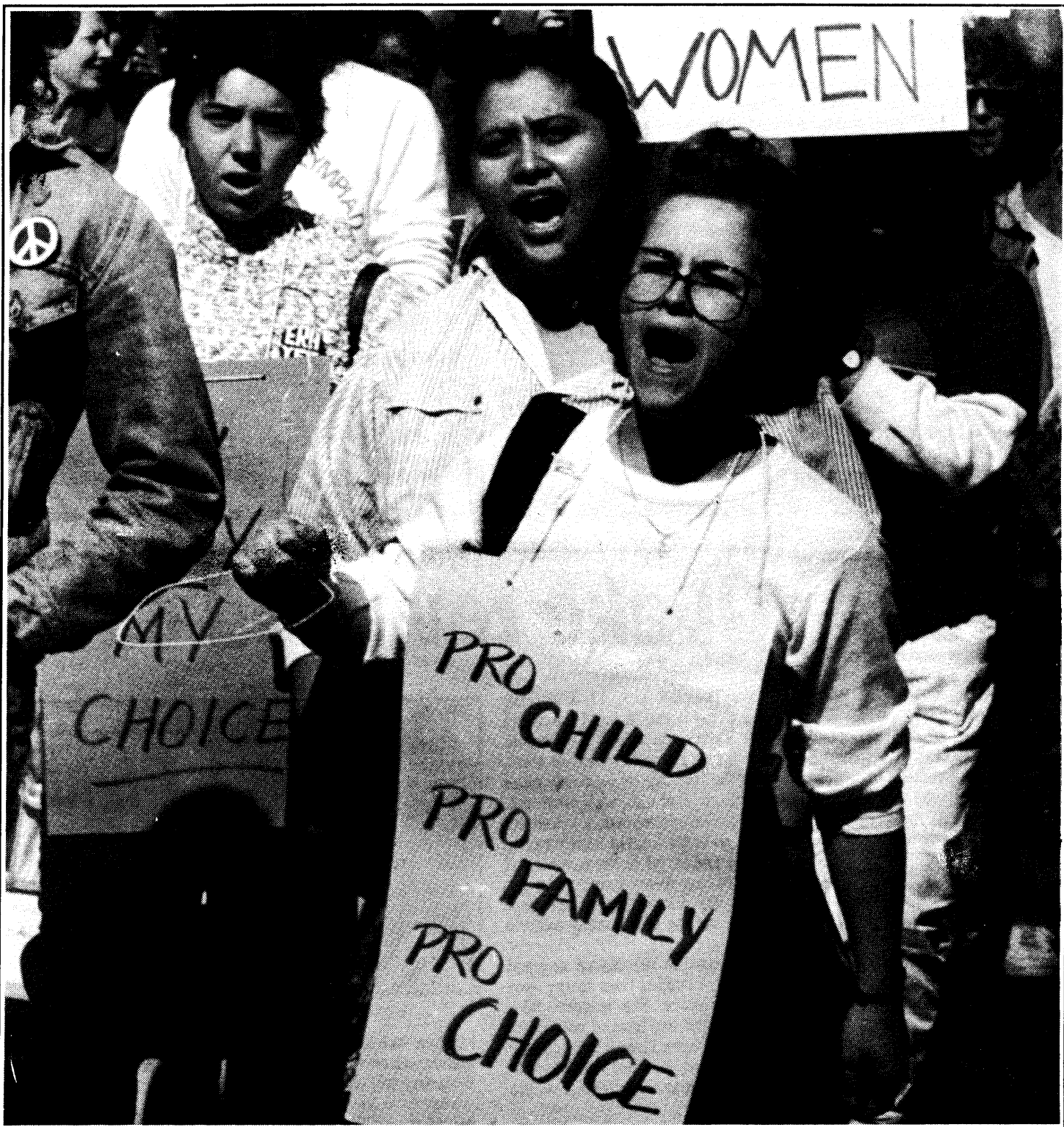
Following suit, the Michigan Senate passed a bill requiring parental consent for a young woman under age 17 to obtain an abortion, even if the pregnancy is the result of rape by the girl's father!

Most ominous, however, is the law that was just passed in Idaho criminalizing abortion and subjecting women who have abortions to jail terms up to five years and doctors who perform them up to 10 years.

Hand in hand with the governmental attacks on women are the extra-legal attacks by Operation Rescue (OR). This fanatical anti-choice outfit regularly resorts to violence in its efforts to shut down family planning clinics. In a major challenge to pro-choice activists, OR has called for its police and veteran members to shut down family planning clinics in Washington, D.C., on Veterans Day, Nov. 11—the day before NOW's Mobilization at the Lincoln Memorial.

In the context of these vicious attacks, all supporters of women's right to choose must decide what strategy to employ in the months ahead in the struggle to secure our rights.

Many of the national pro-choice organiza-
(continued on page 4)



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

U.S. Hands off Nicaragua!

The U.S. war against Nicaragua continues unabated. Events surrounding the Oct. 28 summit of Western Hemisphere leaders in San José, Costa Rica, indicate that the U.S. war might, in fact, heat up.

Consider the following: Despite the cease-fire agreement between the Sandinista government and the U.S.-backed contra mercenaries, 736 government soldiers have been killed in contra ambushes since the cease-fire. An estimated 5000 armed contras are currently in Nicaragua, half of them having crossed the border from Honduras in recent weeks.

These contra attacks are a direct violation of the peace plan engineered by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias. Contra aggression is explicitly forbidden under the \$49 million "humanitarian" aid deal approved by Congress

last April.

But Democratic and Republican party politicians are little concerned about the continued death and destruction being brought on the Nicaraguan people by the ex-Somoza Guardsmen. Hardly a word of criticism of the contras has been raised by these "champions of democracy."

When Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega dared defend the sovereignty of Nicaragua, declaring at the San José summit that Nicaragua would no longer honor a "cease-fire" that is being violated every day of the week by the contras and its U.S. sponsors, then all hell broke loose.

"Traitor," cried the Democrats, in reference to Ortega. "Hypocrite," charged Costa Rican President Arias. "Little man" and "animal"

were the words of ex-CIA head George Bush.

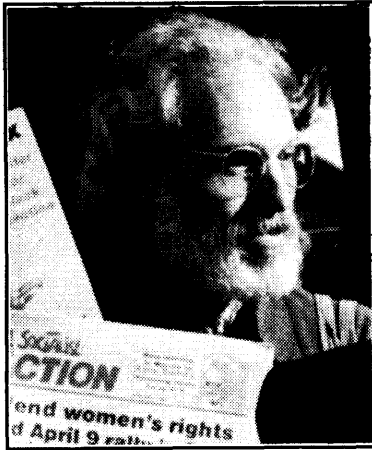
The day after Ortega's declaration, the rallying cry in support of the contras gained steam.

"We intend to honor the agreement the Democratic-led Congress struck with the administration last spring to provide humanitarian assistance through the Feb. 25 elections in Nicaragua," stated Senate majority leader George Mitchell (D-Maine).

Maintaining contra aid until the Feb. 25 national elections in Nicaragua is a violation of the accords signed by the five Central American presidents in Tela, Honduras, last August. The five presidents called for the demobilization of the contra forces by Dec. 8.

The U.S. war against Nicaragua has stepped up on the economic and political fronts as well as the military front. Shortly before leaving for the San José summit, President Bush extended the trade embargo imposed by
(continued on page 9)

You just can't 'duck and cover'



Behind the Lines

By
Michael Schreiber

troops were marched onto the still-radioactive Ground Zeroes.

The government tried to keep the public in the dark about the development of its nuclear arsenal. Scientists who dared to speak out lost their jobs. Of course, it wasn't easy to cover up a giant mushroom cloud and a blanket of deadly fallout stretching from Utah to Massachusetts.

Every city had its ban-the-bomb rallies and picket lines—but for a long time they remained small. In general, socialists and a few "peaceniks" were the only ones to tell the truth about the A-bomb. After Vietnam, however, more and more people began to challenge the official gospel.

"Fat Man"

Now even Hollywood has begun to base its stories on elements of

the truth. A new big-budget movie, "Fat Man and Little Boy," dramatizes the production of the first atomic bomb during World War II. One of the characters, a scientist, points out that—even in 1945—enough plutonium had been stockpiled to produce thousands of bombs far into the future.

"Fat man" has intrigued the film critics. But, while staying clear of the film's central premise that the bomb should not have been produced, they've accused its scriptwriters of bending some of the details in the plot for dramatic purposes.

The major controversy arises from the suggestion in one scene that the government injected people with radioactive material. Yet the filmmakers can cite a 1986 Congressional report that 18 people were injected with plutonium be-

tween 1945 and 1947.

I saw the film three days after the earthquake. Like many other "quake survivors" in the theater, my eyes filled with tears—having just lived through a small sample of what the Big One might do.

Now the government wants to reassure us that the threat of nuclear war has diminished. The Russians might quite possibly "come to terms," we are told, but the United States will continue building up its nuclear weaponry "just in case."

In case of what? Another Korea? A Vietnam? A Nicaragua? No, the Big One will continue to lurk in our dreams—until we stop it. We can't just sing, "Duck and cover!"

An earthquake, unfortunately, will come some day. (Maybe California will fall into the sea.) But the planet can be spared destruction in a nuclear war. It's up to us. ■

Whenever the neighbor's kids clomp down the stairs—I flinch. The slightest vibration from a car can terrify me. Like many Northern Californians since the earthquake, my dreams at night are filled with visions of the Big One yet to come.

People in the Eastern states often think that Californians are crazy to live here. "Any moment, your house could collapse on your head!" they point out. "You could be swept into the ocean!"

But Easterners—and the rest of the world—also face a Big One. The chances are great that this catastrophe won't come from deep within the earth. It'll drop from the skies. This is the Big One that killed over 200,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It's ironic that California schoolchildren, as they huddle under their desks in earthquake drills, are taught to sing, "Duck and cover!" Their parents were taught the same little jingle when they were children. But then, during the Cold War of the 1950s, it was to "prepare" for a nuclear attack.

Children were taught to fear the Russians—the "Communists." When the air-raid sirens sound, we were instructed, it means that the Russians are going to drop a bomb on us. That's what the President, our teachers, and even our cartoon friends on television told us.

The games we boys played in the schoolyard soon changed. Before, we used our stick rifles and pencil handguns to "fight" the Nazis. Now, as the Korean War wound on, our invisible enemies became the "Reds." The games took on an immediacy; after all, the air-raid sirens could sound at any moment.

The Big Lie

The government and the media raised the paranoia against "war-loving" Russians in order to justify this country's own military buildup—and to cow the American people from raising any effective protest.

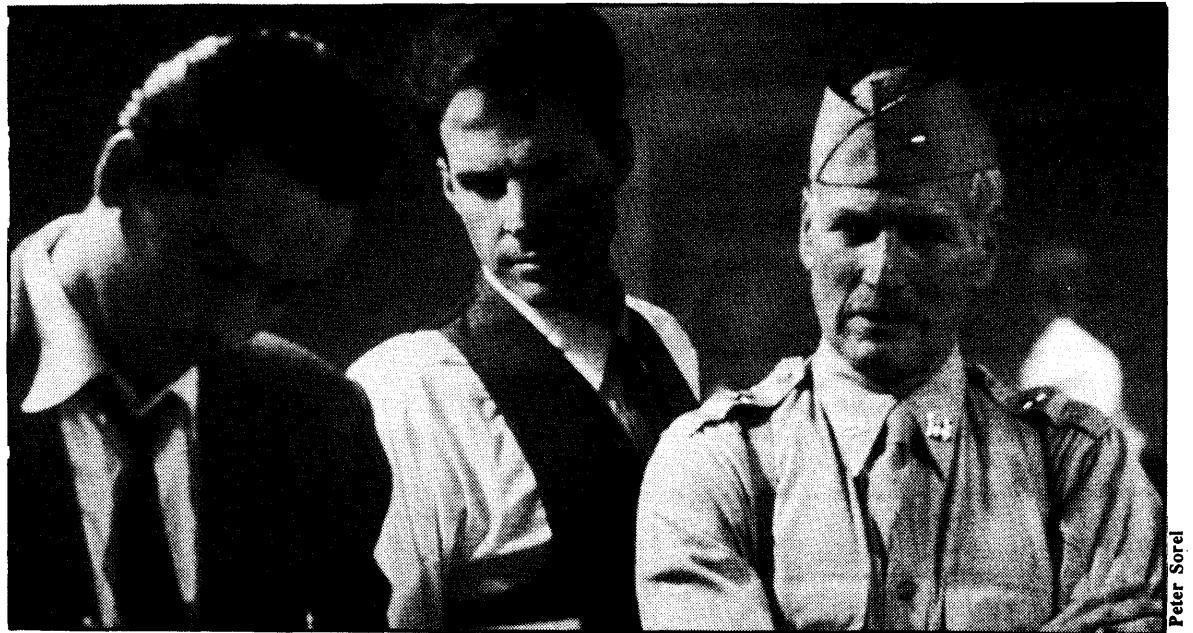
Yet the atom bomb was first constructed (and dropped on civilian populations) not by the Russians, but by the United States. Dropping

the Big One was justified then as "a step toward peace." It would force Japan to sign a peace treaty, said the government. The lives of thousands of U.S. servicemen would be saved.

This was a lie. Dropping the A-bomb was the opening act of the Cold War. The people who died were expendable. In a political sense, the Big One was directed primarily against the Soviet Union, not Japan.

The U.S. government feared that the Soviets, having won the war in Europe, would seek to occupy Japan. The United States hoped to keep Japan (and China) entirely within its own sphere of influence. Thus, it was necessary to bring the war to a quick stop—even if it meant reducing 200,000 people to radioactive dust.

The U.S. government later considered dropping the Big One in Korea. The government's plans to "win" a nuclear war on the battlefield were worked out in numerous tests in Nevada and the South Pacific. Minutes after the firestorms had cleared, thousands of U.S.



Left to right: John Cusack, Dwight Schultz, and Paul Newman in "Fat Man and Little Boy."

Quake revealed our best nature

On Tuesday, Oct. 17, I was sitting at my home in San Francisco's Noe Valley when the 7.1 quake hit. The house I rent was built in 1907, after the Big One of 1906. My older daughter, Bonnie, was with me. The quake was rugged; it jerked my chair so badly I could hardly get up to run and stand in the doorway. I kept yelling to my daughter to get under my doorway, and she kept telling me she was already under a doorway.

As soon as the house stopped shaking, I rushed over to my next door neighbor. She is even older than me and has been in bad health for some years. I had heard screams coming from her house. The door opened, and she was sitting at her



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

kitchen table crying. Her two grandchildren were with her; it was the young girl who was terrified.

I moved a chair to a doorway and helped the grandmother into it. I did all I could to calm the young girl. The boy seemed to take it pretty well. Actually, I expected more after-shocks, but they didn't come till later that night.

My husband had left shortly before the quake to pick up our two grandsons at school. He had not returned yet, and I was silently sick at heart. Also my youngest daughter had just started a new job that day in downtown San Francisco. The only thing I knew about her job was that it was in a law office on the 23rd floor. Actually, all I could envision was the 23rd floor.

Felt better together

The neighbors began to walk out to the sidewalk and wave at each other. All of us remarked that it had been a heavy quake, the worst we had ever felt. But we still had no idea how much damage it had caused.

Our phones were down, we couldn't call out. But somehow, my oldest grandson called in to say he was alright and to ask how his mother and the rest of us were. About that time, along came my husband with our two younger grandsons—who had not even felt the quake. They had been in the car.

The young man next door had a portable TV; we had the batteries. So we set it up on the steps to listen to the news. Portable radios also began to come out. It was a warm night, and no one wanted to go inside the house. Somehow we all felt better together.

I kept going in to check the beans and rice that had been on the stove when the quake hit. My neighbor kept telling me to turn off the gas, but I figured that's all we had and I wasn't going to give it up.

Then we began to get the news. It was reported that the Bay Bridge had fallen down. I didn't believe it because I could see the bridge from my house. I said the news media simply can't be trusted. But this

time they could be.

Finally, hunger began to set in. So I moved a table, wine, soda, and salad outside and we all joined in. Anyone who needed food got it. As usual, I cook for the masses—quake or no quake.

Then my daughter finally got home from downtown. She had had to walk down from the 23rd floor, but she had ridden her bike to work and was able to get home an hour after the quake.

Risked their lives

All over San Francisco, people helped one another with whatever they had. Story after story proved that workers, regardless of their race, risked their lives to save people from the carnage. It proved once again that human nature is not, as the capitalists would have us believe, one of greed and self-interest.

It is the capitalists who are full of greed, who live for profits instead of human need. In fact, most of the suffering from the quake is because of greed—the refusal to spend money to keep our bridges and infrastructure in shape.

We have been taxed beyond reason for Star Wars, stealth bombers, and nuclear madness. Very little of our taxes go for mass transit and other pressing social needs. It is not the working class, but capitalism that fouls things up.

Already, the politicians, business leaders, and rulers are preparing to force working people and the poor to pay for their lawless refusal to prepare for the widely predicted earthquake. We can count on them to let the planet and its inhabitants go to hell—so long as the profits keep rolling in. ■

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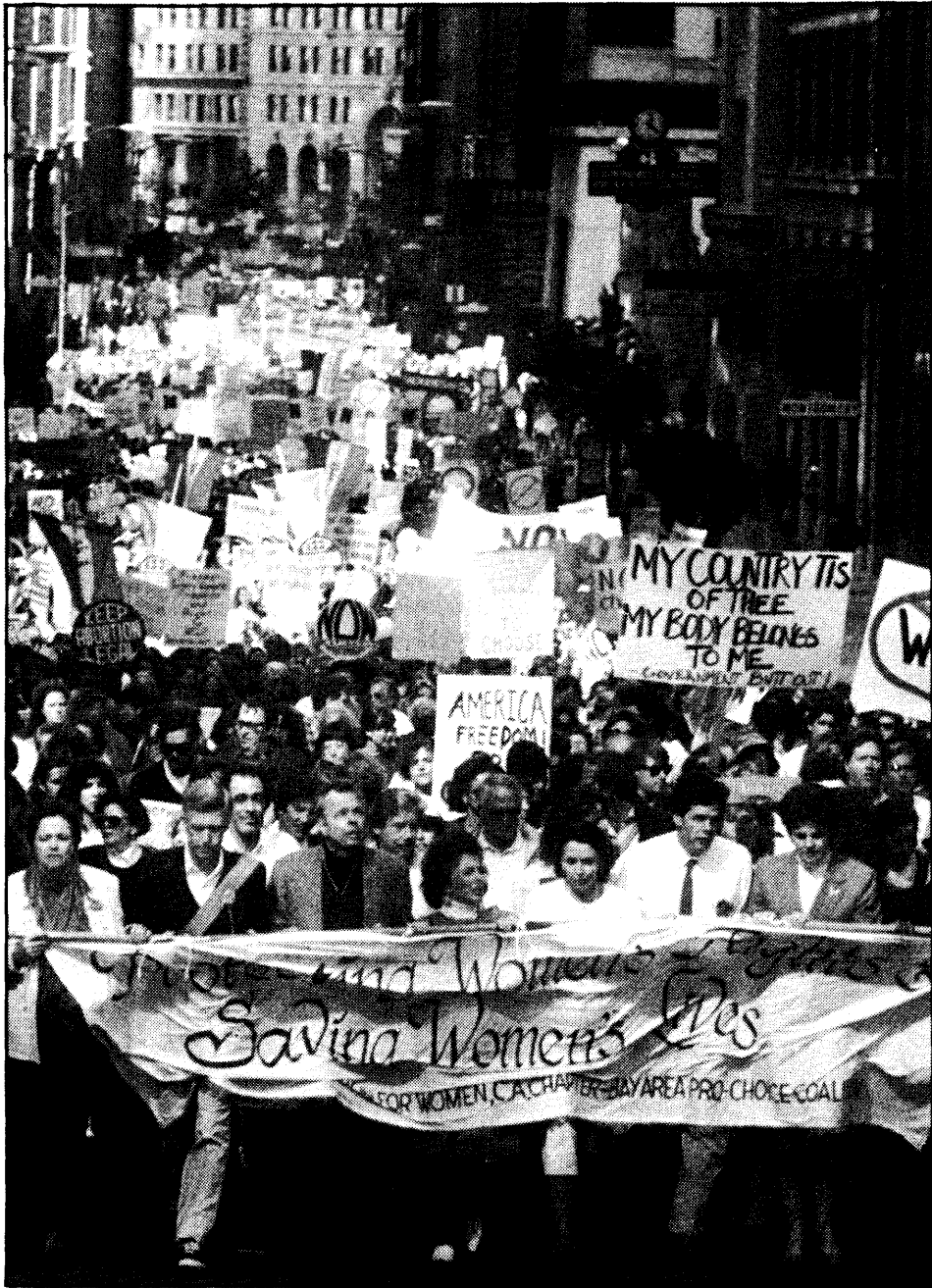
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San Francisco: 60,000 march to defend women's equality and protect women's lives

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action



Marching through downtown San Francisco

By JOSEPH RYAN

Chanting "Our Bodies, Our Lives, Our Right to Decide," close to 60,000 pro-choice supporters marched in San Francisco on Sunday, Oct. 15. The theme of the march and rally was: "Defending Women's Equality, Protecting Women's Lives."

Organized by the San Francisco chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Bay Area Pro-Choice Coalition, the huge march was seen as a potent warm-up for the national pro-choice rally in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 12. It was the largest locally initiated pro-choice march in U.S. history, doubling the 30,000-strong abortion rights march held in San Francisco on April 2, 1989.

"This march proved that people are out there to defend reproductive rights," said Helen Grieco, executive director of San Francisco NOW. "This march demonstrates loud and clear that the country is pro-choice and willing to come out."

The composition of the spirited march was representative of fresh young forces that are mobilizing to defend a woman's right to choose. Thousands of high-school and college-age women paraded briskly through the streets, defiantly waving coat hangers and militantly shouting, "Never Again, We Won't Go Back!"

An atmosphere of celebration pervaded the march in the aftermath of two events that occurred a week earlier: the Florida legislature's refusal to act on anti-abortion proposals from Governor Bob Martinez and the U.S. House of Representatives' vote to use federal money to fund abortions for victims of rape or incest. Although the U.S. Senate also approved this bill, President Bush vetoed the proposal on federal funding.

Bush's veto should further fuel the gigantic outpouring expected on Nov. 12. As Helen Grieco told this reporter, "This march should be seen as a kick-off for Nov. 12. Reproductive rights have to be mandated on a federal

level, not just a local level."

Two different political events

The program of the rally at the Civic Center was in stark contrast to the independent spirit and militancy of the march. Many of the marchers, not interested in listening to speeches, dispersed as soon as the march ended. March and rally organizers indicated that while 60,000 marched, only 30,000 stayed for the rally.

Unfortunately, the rally, a three-hour parade of Democratic Party elected officials and supporters, had only one political theme: The focus of the movement should now be to elect "pro-choice" candidates (Democrats) and lobby state legislatures.

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) stated that "the fight is now in the state legislatures and the ballot box." The speakers' list included Congresswoman Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), who unabashedly took full credit for the House's vote on federal abortion funding for victims of rape or incest; Kim Cranston, the son of Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.); California Attorney-General John Van DeKamp; former S.F. Mayor Dianne Feinstein; and Assemblyman Tom Bates.

Other speakers, like those from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the League of Women Voters, also underlined the theme of walking the precincts rather than marching in the streets. Scant mention was made of the need for clinic defense against Operation Rescue. And the significance of the Nov. 12 demonstration was lost in the crowd of Democratic Party politicians on the prowl for votes in the 1990 elections.

"Stay mad"

The few bright spots among the speakers were Norma McCorvey, who was the Jane Roe plaintiff in the historic *Roe v. Wade* 1973 Supreme Court decision, and Sylvia Weinstein, co-chair of the march's logistics committee and *Socialist Action* columnist.

McCorvey stated that she was "mad as hell" and that women should stay "mad as hell and mobilized" if they want to prevent a return to the days when the right to choose was illegal and women died from botched back-alley abortions.

Weinstein, a long-time feminist and socialist activist in the Bay Area, said that "mass independent mobilization was the way Blacks won civil rights, it was the way we got the United States out of Vietnam, and it's the only way we'll be able to protect our right to choose."

"No politician," she said, "ever gave us anything we didn't have to take for ourselves by demonstrating massively. Let's all get to Washington, D.C., on Nov. 12."

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

Outnumbered three-to-one by pro-choice activists at the San Rafael, Calif., Planned Parenthood clinic on Oct. 7, anti-choice Operation Rescue (OR) blockaders were "rescued" by the San Rafael police and the California Highway Patrol.

The police, playing their traditional role of strikebreakers, assisted OR in denying women access to the clinic by keeping clinic defenders away from the doors and taking more than four hours to arrest the trespassers.

Despite the treachery of the police, the clinic defense in this small Marin County town, 15 miles north of San Francisco, was another victory for the pro-choice movement. OR did not stop any abortions that day; all patients scheduled for services were treated.

Anti-choice forces hit

Anticipating a hit by OR on the weekend of Oct. 7, Bay Area chapters of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Bay Area Coalition Against Operation Rescue (BACAOR) successfully mobilized more than 600 pro-choice activists in the Bay Area from Marin County to San Jose.

Weeks were spent training hundreds of activists in clinic defense. NOW trained a special team of legal observers and clinic facilitators. This advance work paid off well. Many activists commented on the high degree of organization this time around.

At 6 a.m. on Oct. 7, clinic defenders gathered at 10 Bay Area clinics. When pro-choice infiltrators of the OR car caravan received word where the OR hit would be, these volunteers converged on San Rafael to re-enforce the local clinic defense forces.

Pro-choice activists successfully held the doors against a line of OR, who leaned with their full weight into the pro-choice defenders in an attempt to break through. More OR members tried to establish a foothold for a larger blockade by sitting down near the clinic

Police 'rescue' Operation Rescue during clinic attack

doors. Due to the large numbers of pro-choice defenders, however, this attempt was futile.

Meanwhile, San Rafael police congregated across the street from the clinic and watched the struggle for access to the clinic. They did nothing to enforce a statewide court injunction which prohibits OR from being within 15 feet of any family-planning clinic.

As the ranks of the pro-choice defenders grew, they were able to nonviolently move the OR violators from the doors and provide a corridor to the clinic. At least two patients were able to enter the clinic.

At this point, the police donned riot gear, moved in, and established a line between the pro-choice defenders and OR. It looked like the police would at last enforce the law and clear the blockaders away from the clinic property. Instead, the police kept pro-choice defenders from removing OR. All other patients had to be taken to a nearby clinic for services.

The delay in gaining access to the clinic was exacerbated by negotiations carried out between the police and OR leader Jeffrey White. Although the injunction specifically prohibited him from doing so—and although clinic defenders chanted for his arrest—police allowed White to travel freely behind police lines. Pro-choice leaders, by contrast, were physically stopped by police from conferring with clinic defenders behind police lines.

After more than two hours, arrests of the OR criminals finally began—one at a time. It took the police more than four hours to arrest 96 OR members; in the meantime, the clinic was kept closed. Several pro-choice defenders sarcastically compared the painfully slow ar-

rests of OR to the speed with which police have moved against civil rights or antiwar demonstrators.

Pro-choice activists later learned that the fraternization between OR and police was much more extensive. An off-duty San Jose police officer drove Jeffrey White to the San Rafael clinic and participated in the clinic blockade. At OR's prayer service the night before, a San Francisco police chaplain, the Rev. Mike Ryan, was introduced to the audience and praised for his anti-choice activities.

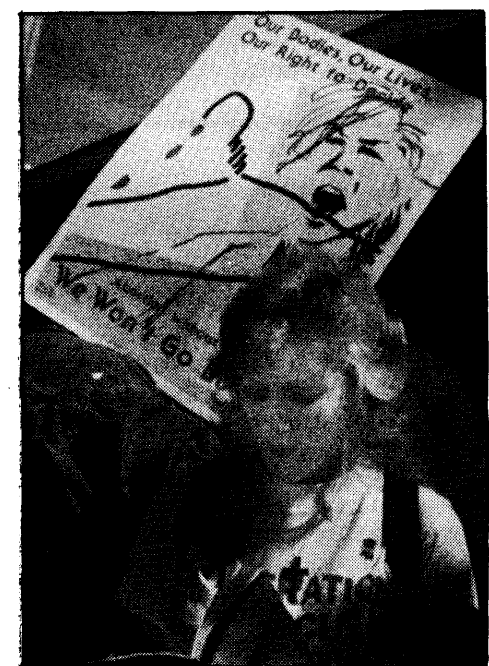
Lessons to be learned

The San Rafael clinic defense provides many lessons for the pro-choice movement. In defending women's access to family-planning clinics, the pro-choice movement is acting to uphold and defend the law of the land. Abortion is *still* legal. Women have the right to seek services in these clinics, and the clinics have the right to operate and be accessible to women.

Though this is obvious to most, some people within the movement see the pro-choice defenders as demonstrators. This is wrong. Clinic defense is not a *demonstration* at the clinics—it is not an exercise of free speech. It is the defense of women's rights against the *illegal* blockade of anti-choice fanatics.

OR has no right to be at the clinics. It is as if the KKK was demonstrating at a voting booth to prevent Blacks from voting in the South.

The police are supposed to enforce the law but, when the law upholds the rights of women (or Blacks and workers) the police



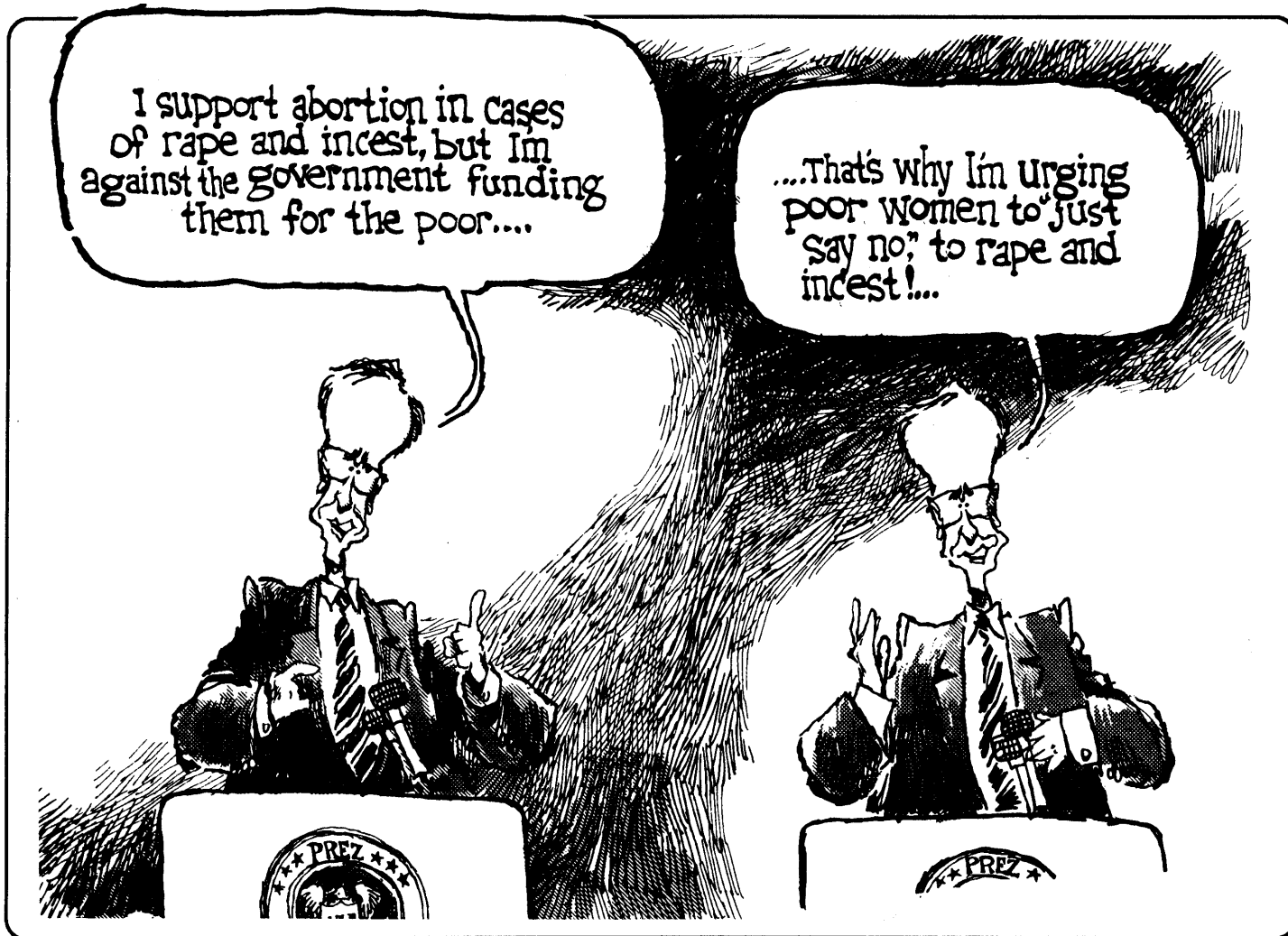
Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

Operation Rescue fanatics were outnumbered before police intervened.

tend to look the other way. That is why the clinics must be defended by the movement, with no reliance on the police.

Since most cities are controlled by the Democratic Party, the complicity of the police with OR is the responsibility of the Democratic Party and a demonstration that the "liberal" Democrats cannot be counted on to defend women's rights.

We must continue to demand that city officials—including the mayor, the city council, and the police—enforce the law and keep the clinics accessible. But given the experiences of the last year, with escalating attacks by OR and police inaction—or action so slow as to be counterproductive—the responsibility of defending women's access to family-planning clinics rests with NOW and the rest of the pro-choice movement.



Defend rights of rape, incest victims, NOW paper demands

By SANDY DOYLE-O'NEIL

On Oct. 25, the House sustained President Bush's veto of a bill permitting federally financed abortions for poor women who are victims of rape or incest. The bill, as originally passed by Congress, would have provided funding for victims who "report promptly" to law-enforcement or public-health officials.

Nine states have added rape and incest exemptions to their bans on use of public funds for abortion. However, as detailed in a July 1989 handout from the National Organization for Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund, these very exemptions have proved unworkable and punitive.

The NOW paper points out that "in most states with public-funding exemptions for rape and incest, victims must report their

sexual attack within a predetermined number of days. The effect of these reporting requirements is to preclude most rape and incest victims from being able to take advantage of the exceptions allegedly created in their interest."

Reporting requirements ignore the trauma faced by women who are subjected to brutal rapes. Both rape and incest victims may be too frightened to reveal the cause of their pregnancies. Psychological denial of the assault is also frequently a factor with both categories of women.

Just as often, young incest victims who identify the incest as the cause of their pregnancy are not believed by adults around them who have a vested interest in denying the abuse.

Despite some improvements following the rise of the women's liberation movement,

women who report and seek prosecution of rapists are still made the criminal instead of the victim in many courtrooms around the country. Thousands of mothers have joined a new underground railroad, taking their children into hiding to keep them from being forced by courts to visit fathers who have molested them.

Rape is widespread

Of the over 1.6 million women who obtain legal abortions in the United States each year, about 1 percent, or 16,000, give rape or incest as the reason for their decision. About 4000 of this number would be poor enough to qualify for federal funding.

Rape and incest may be among the most underreported crimes in the country, however. The NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund paper on this topic reports that even the FBI

estimated in 1987 that one forcible rape occurs in the United States every six minutes.

In addition to crime statistics, various feminist scholars and groups have begun studying the incidence of so-called date rape. These figures are often not considered in statistics such as the FBI's.

The idea that women owe some sexual satisfaction to any man who they go out with is still a widespread one. A May 1989 survey in *The New York Times*, for example, reported that 50 percent of junior high school students in Rhode Island thought it would be acceptable to rape a woman if a man had spent at least \$15 on her.

When it comes to surveys of incest and other types of sexual abuse suffered by children, high numbers of women report having been abused before reaching the age of 18. As survivors of incest and other assaults become more free to speak out, the numbers will continue to rise.

Marital rape

NOW reports on two surveys of women in Boston and San Francisco in which 10 percent and 14 percent respectively reported that their husbands had used force or threats of force to "persuade" them to have sex with them. In most states, however, rape of a wife is not considered rape in the legal system. A husband is legally entitled to his conjugal rights.

Susan Estrich explains it succinctly in her 1987 book "Real Rape" when she says, "In most states you can rape your wife with greater impunity than you can rape your girlfriend or neighbor. As of 1985, only 10 states have completely eliminated the marital exemption. Nine states provide an absolute exemption so that even the most brutal rape by a husband is not a crime."

Even in most of those states that have changed their marital rape exemption laws, the woman is not safe as long as the couple is living together. A wife has to be in the process of a divorce or separation in order to press rape charges against her spouse.

In addition to all of these difficulties, NOW's paper also points to a 1980 study showing that rape and incest victims most likely to be disbelieved when reporting these crimes are Black women, women who are reputedly promiscuous, women who know their attacker, and women who don't report the crimes promptly.

The survey showed that these women were less likely to have their complaints result in convictions or even come to trial. Yet, more Black women are raped proportionately to white women. As the NOW paper states, "Once rape becomes the prerequisite to obtaining otherwise illegal abortions, disbelief of these women will be even greater."

The NOW paper concludes that, in order to safeguard the rights of rape and incest victims to safe and legal abortions, "we must ensure the rights of all women, regardless of their reasons, to abortion."

... Strategy

(continued from page 1)

tions are urging the movement to shift the debate from the federal level to the states, and to respond to that shift by adopting an electoral focus. According to groups such as the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), electing pro-choice legislators is the main task of the movement at this time.

For this reason groups such as NARAL, Planned Parenthood, and others forced NOW into an agreement which compromised the national focus of the Nov. 12 Mobilization. In order to win the endorsement of these groups, NOW had to agree to build the action as an Eastern Seaboard event, instead of as a national action.

Still, NOW has been aggressively explaining to its burgeoning membership the vital importance of fighting for abortion rights on a national basis instead of state by state.

NOW President Molly Yard compares the need to organize the pro-choice movement on a national basis to the anti-slavery movement and the movement to end the Vietnam war, both of which succeeded because of their national focus.

The national news media—never a friend of women's right to choose—has played the role of aggressively pushing an electoral focus. Article after article tells us the fight for abortion rights has shifted to the states (despite the national attacks which are happening now and are still to come).

Molly Yard—the most important abortion rights leader because of NOW's role in mobilizing the largest and most militant demonstrations—has stopped being quoted. Instead, the media is projecting Planned Parenthood President Faye Wattleton and NARAL Executive Director Kate Michelman as the national pro-choice spokespersons.

The national media is owned and controlled by the same rich and powerful enemies of women's rights who run the political institu-

tions of this country. Women's rights activists should look for the underlying reasons why the media has entered the debate over tactics and strategy, and carefully question their motives. The media has never shown any true concern over our basic rights—how can we respect their advice on how to defend them?

The extent to which the movement is swept up in electoral politics is the extent to which we will continue to be on the defensive and lose our precious rights.

Independent mass action!

The better strategy for the movement to embrace now is to jealously guard its independence from the two capitalist political parties—the Democrats and the Republicans—and its politicians, and to build its power through a national campaign of more, increasingly massive mobilizations.

The best way to protect our rights is to continue the pace set by the two giant 1989 Mobilizations called by the National Organization for Women in Washington, D.C., last April 9 and this Nov. 12.

Fundamental to this strategy is the continued, expanded, and active defense of family-planning clinics in every community in the country against Operation Rescue's violence. When women are physically prevented from exercising their legal right to choice, abortion is not accessible.

We must remember that the Equal Rights Amendment was lost when the movement stopped mobilizing massively in the streets and turned to electing so-called pro-ERA legislators. That was the road to defeat—let's not travel down it again.

The stakes are greater now. Women's lives

are on the line. Our movement should stay in the streets where it is powerful and independent. Let the politicians run scared while we mobilize the pro-choice majority in action to demand women's most fundamental right. ■

40,000 march for choice

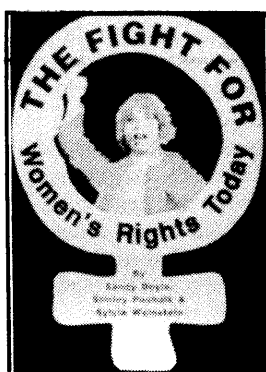
By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Forty thousand people marched here on Oct. 29 in the largest pro-choice demonstration in Ohio's history.

Buses came from throughout the state, including small towns in isolated rural areas. There were also large contingents of college and high-school students, including numerous religious colleges. The pro-choice march and rally was over twice the size of a "right-to-life" demonstration held the previous day in Columbus.

NOW President Molly Yard, one of the featured speakers, told the crowd: "We will rally in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 12 at the Lincoln Memorial. Just as Abraham Lincoln said that we cannot exist half-slave, half-free, we cannot exist with women half-enslaved and half-free. We cannot exist with women free to have abortions in Hawaii and New York, and enslaved in Idaho, Louisiana, and Mississippi."

Among the other speakers at the rally were Governor Richard Celeste and Senator Howard Metzenbaum.



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By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

Chants of "No new abortion law! We're never going back!" rang out across English Canada and Quebec as thousands took to the streets Oct. 14 in support of women's right to choose abortion. Oct. 14 is Persons Day, commemorating the date the Canadian Parliament declared women to be "persons."

In the largest coordinated campaign since the 1970 Abortion Caravan, actions occurred in 31 cities and towns. Over 4000 marched in Toronto. Vancouver, Ottawa, and Montreal each had demonstrations of 2000. A demonstration in Kingston numbered 1800.

Protests were also held in such smaller cities and towns as Moose Jaw, Grand Prairie, and Thunder Bay. In some towns it was the first progressive demonstration ever held. In Saskatoon, pro-choice demonstrators successfully fought off a violent attack by anti-choice goons.

Reflecting the rapid growth of campus pro-choice groups, college and high school students formed large contingents. Both the Ontario Federation of Students and the Quebec Student Federation actively participated. Following the Toronto demonstration, high school students met to plan on-going activities.

Labor was also well represented in these protests. Both the president of the Metro Labor Council and the leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP) spoke at the Toronto

Canadian women say: 'We're never going back!'

demonstration. Leaders of some 40 national Canadian trade unions adjourned a meeting to participate in the Toronto action. Similarly, a meeting of federal NDP leadership candidates in Toronto recessed to participate in the march.

The response of onlookers showed the growing support for the demand to treat abortion as a medical matter, not a criminal one. In city after city, onlookers voiced their approval for the demonstrators' demands.

The *Toronto Star* reported that hundreds of passersby joined the march. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) based its coverage in the small town of Collinwood, Ontario. Person-on-the-street interviews in Collinwood indicated that abortion rights is no longer seen as a big city issue, but something affecting all women.

Anti-choice groups had vowed to capture media attention and popular sympathy by staging a hunger strike outside the new session of Parliament. Instead, a pro-choice picket line garnered most of the attention as

busloads of tourists stopped to voice their approval and pose for pictures with the pro-choice banners, thoroughly demoralizing the anti-choice protesters.

Attacks on clinics

Although Operation Rescue has increased the frequency of its clinic assaults, its numbers are dwindling. Their most recent tactic is for teenagers to chain themselves to the clinics, since under the Young Offenders Act they're not subject to as severe legal penalties as adults. In the latest attempted assault, pro-choice forces turned out in such large numbers that the Operation Rescue thugs were kept across the street from the clinic.

The breadth and size of the pro-choice mobilizations have increased the possibility that the Tory government will fail to push new legal restrictions through Parliament. Although the Tories are still promising a new law by Christmas, a rumored proposed new law met such widespread opposition that it was never introduced.

Even some members of the Tory cabinet

threatened to resign rather than vote for the proposed restrictions. A CBC correspondent reported that pro-choice groups "called for a strong response and they got it."

Plans are underway to send a Canadian delegation to the Nov. 12 Washington rally. Discussions are being held to plan future Canadian pro-choice activities.

Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics spokesperson Cheri MacDonald explained to *Socialist Action* that it's been two years since the previous abortion law was ruled unconstitutional.

MacDonald said, "The longer we go without an abortion law, the more obvious it is we don't need one. However, the situation with access is still abysmal outside Ontario and Quebec. We can either go forward and provide real access to abortion for all women or go backward and recriminalize it."

"The majority clearly supports the demand of the women's movement: No new abortion laws; treat abortion as a medical matter with funding provided under the provincial health plans." ■

Bush's drug program: Build more prisons

By JEFFREY GOLDMAN

For those of us who somehow believed in George Bush's "kinder and gentler nation," his "new" drug program (with the aid of drug Czar William Bennett) should set the record straight.

As tens of thousands seek help in social-aid programs and are turned away for lack of funds, Bush says it's time to build more jails. Never mind that there is no better training ground for criminals than our existing penal system.

Shortly after the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan, a new drug appeared called "crack." This highly addictive drug overran impoverished ghettos and created a new economic base for the large numbers of unemployed youth. This coincided with massive cuts of funding for drug-rehabilitation centers and other social programs. Meanwhile, the CIA was sending plane-loads of cocaine into this country as part of its drive to aid the Nicaraguan contras.

As vice president, Bush was the director of Reagan's anti-drug program. Bush has been publicly associated with some of the world's largest illegal drug suppliers while privately owning large amounts of stock in the drug firm Eli Lilly. (Bush never mentions that three times as many people die each year from prescription drugs than from all illegal drugs combined.)

In September, Bush's drug speech was aired on national television. He held in front of us a bag of crack which his advisers had used to lure a Black teenager to make the sale across the street from the White House.

While Bush made clear where the crack had been bought, he never told the American public why millions opt to self-destruct. Not a word about poverty, unemployment, or lack of job training and skilled jobs. No mention of the growing gap between rich and poor, decaying urban areas, and the deteriorating social and family fabric—while social programs are dismantled.

Heightened police repression

As if this were not enough, civil liberties have been stripped away—especially in the Black community. Recent actions include evictions without trial for tenants suspected of drug dealing, the National Guard used at the border and other entry points, increased drug testing in workplaces and schools, loss of federal benefits and fines up to \$10,000 for even a single joint of pot, and the death penalty for murders that are drug related.

Certain states will seize autos and other property if contraband is found. Roadblocks are set up (often in poor areas) for drug



Larry Downing-Newsweek

Bush's so-called "drug program" is being used to legitimize attacks on democratic rights of Black community through police repression.

searches, attorneys are subpoenaed to testify against clients, and police are given the ability to search people in public places if they look suspicious. The Miranda ruling for ille-

gal search and seizure has been weakened—as long as the officer is acting in "good faith."

A significant illustration of these rulings working together is an event which occurred

in a group of highrise housing projects in Chicago. Police and National Guard units sealed off the surrounding area and went floor by floor ordering to have each door opened. Those that weren't were kicked in.

Anyone without IDs to prove they lived at that address were searched and thrown out. Armed guards stood watch for several days to check IDs; visitors were not allowed. Similar tactics are used in South Africa.

Drug raids in Latin America

Domestic policy is not the only piece to this puzzle. Our foreign policy has been a series of contradictions and lies. Just before the pledge of support to eradicate Colombia of its cocaine production, the United States dropped support for the International Coffee Trade Agreement. This sent prices down for Colombia's number-one legal export, which will result in at least one-half-billion dollars revenue lost, along with many jobs.

We now have U.S. military advisers going on drug raids in Colombia without the consent of Congress. The secret memo which initially leaked this information also indicated that the United States is pressuring Bolivia and Peru to allow our military presence.

As the 1980s draw to a close, we have seen both alter egos of capitalism fail. Both liberals and conservatives in the halls of government have shown that their programs only grow out of exploitation—whether it be of minorities, underdeveloped nations, or the planet's natural resources.

The funds we need to help those who suffer lie in the bank accounts of the rich of this nation. A redistribution of wealth, new job training, free national health programs, and a new emphasis on education will go a long way toward ending the present course of destruction. ■

Jeffrey Goldman is a member of Greenpeace in San Francisco.

Massachusetts students rally against cutbacks

By MARK SCHNEIDER

BOSTON—Between 15,000 and 20,000 college and university students descended upon the Massachusetts State House here on Oct. 18 to protest cutbacks in the state higher education budget. The protest was the largest State House demonstration since May 1970, and served as a stunning rebuke to Governor Michael Dukakis.

The protesters thronged the State House steps, bearing official school banners and hand-drawn posters, then held a rally on the Boston Common. After student and labor leaders decried the senselessness of education cutbacks, the students surged through the halls of the State House in a mass lobbying effort.

Students came by bus from the far north-

west corner of the state, and from Cape Cod in the south to Salem in the north. (The previous week, 2000 students from the state's University of Lowell held a separate rally.)

The protesters were overwhelmingly youthful undergraduates involved in a social protest for the first time. Faculty members and administrators stood in the streets and chanted slogans along with the students. The rally was backed by the Presidents of Massachusetts' Public Colleges and Universities association, the Board of Regents, and the State Student Association.

Education leaders, including former supporters of the Governor, are furious at proposed 5 percent across-the-board cuts in the higher education budget. During Dukakis' 1988 presidential bid, a state budget deficit here was hidden by chicanery to preserve the

Governor's image as a "good manager."

The fraudulence of the debate in the 1988 presidential election is now illuminated by the situation of Massachusetts higher education. The "education President" holds the White House, the "education Governor" holds the State House, and public education is being gutted.

The situation is not much better in elementary schools and high schools. In the last fiscal year, 5000 teaching jobs were lost statewide. The *Boston Globe* reported recently on a three-year veteran of the Brockton public schools with a master's degree in English from Harvard who was laid off from a \$22,000 a year job.

Some proponents of higher education understandably feel that the cuts can only be stopped by increased taxation, and have promulgated a ballot referendum for a 1 percent increase in the state sales tax. The burden of sales taxes, however, are felt most by the poor. Another proposal, which would create \$300 million by closing unfair tax loopholes for big business, is also gaining ground and may appear on the ballot. ■

Nadezhda Joffe recalls years of struggle in defense of Left Opposition

Jonathan Halabi/Socialist Action



Nadezhda Joffe: "Trotsky fought for his ideas until the last day of his life. And that's how we should remember him."

The following remarks are the translated version of Nadezhda Joffe's speech at Harvard University's Boylston auditorium on Oct. 20, 1989. The translator who assisted throughout Nadezhda Joffe's Boston visit was George Saunders, noted editor and translator of "Samizdat" (Pathfinder Press) and translator of many works of Trotsky.

Thank you very much. That is the only phrase I know in English. I'm very glad to be able to speak before this audience tonight and I'm very grateful to my American friends who made this appearance possible.

For decades, the only thing that was ever said about Trotsky in our country was that he was an "enemy." For years, people in our country were arrested only because they or their friends or relatives had been acquaintances of Trotsky.

In the political trials of the late 1930s, at which Trotsky was not present but where he was in fact the main defendant, he was accused as a spy, a saboteur, and an agent of the Gestapo. And only in the last few years have they at last begun to write about Trotsky. Thus far they have not written very much, and what they have written has been distorted and inadequate.

Probably the main aim of our organization, Memorial, at this time is to strive toward the rehabilitation of all those who were repressed under Stalin—somewhat before and somewhat after, but primarily during the Stalin era. Their true role in the history of the country should be re-established and brought to light.

"Trotsky as I knew him"

And now I'd like to say a few words simply about Trotsky, as a human being, as I knew him. My father [Adolph Joffe] was over the course of many years Trotsky's closest co-thinker politically and his closest friend. My first memories of Trotsky are from my very earliest childhood. I knew Trotsky for many years; I knew his children; I knew his family; I was at his home very, very often.

Even now, when they are beginning to write some of the truth about him as a revolutionary, they continue to not tell the truth about him as a human being, to distort what he was really like as a human being.

They say he was haughty and arrogant, and that he had a lust for power. That is not true. He was neither power-hungry, nor arrogant or haughty. He simply did not disclose all of himself the first time he met anyone. There was a certain restraint about the man.

He was also very demanding in all work, and that did not always please everyone. But he was just as demanding of himself as he was of those who worked with him. The closer someone was to Trotsky, the more

Trotsky demanded of that person.

He had many political co-thinkers, but I think that he really had only two close friends: Adolph Joffe and Christian Rakovsky. But he was a devoted and loyal friend.

"My father's political protest"

My father fell extremely ill in 1923 when he was the ambassador to Japan. The infection that attacked him in Japan went into remission, but it was in 1927 that it came back and was intensified, and that was the cause of his death later. So this illness in 1923, you can see, was quite a serious one.

In the Soviet Union they did not have any methods for treating this illness, and it was necessary to go to Germany to obtain treatment. This was in 1927. But the Central Committee would not give permission in 1927 for him to go to Germany.

Only after the death of my father did my family and I find out how intensely Trotsky had fought to get the Central Committee to grant this permission. Nevertheless, the Central Committee refused this permission, and my father was left in an impossible situation.

At that time he was working on the Concessions Committee. This was for foreign economic concessions in the Soviet economy. Trotsky was the chairman of that committee and my father the deputy chairman. He was giving lectures at Moscow University at the same time he was working as deputy chairman. But when he was not allowed to go for treatment and the illness was becoming worse, he was left in an impossible position and he could not even rise from the bed.

He was an extremely courageous man, and if he had felt that there was any hope that he could recover and re-enter the political fight, he would have done so. But he did not have any such hope. He understood this both as a political person and as a physician. He had been educated and trained as a physician.

On Nov. 16, 1927, he ended his life by suicide. He left a letter addressed to Trotsky. It's a major political document, and there he explained the reasons for his action. He asked that his action be seen not as a weakness, not as giving in, but as the only act of political protest left to a person placed in this impossible situation. The GPU [Stalin's secret police] stole this letter. Over the course of two full days the GPU refused to give the letter back to my family and to Trotsky.

When rumors and talk about this letter circulated throughout Moscow, reaching even the ears of foreign correspondents, they handed over a photocopy of the letter to Rakovsky. And so none of us were ever able to see the original letter.

The funeral for my father turned into a ma-

jor, powerful demonstration of the Left Opposition. Thousands and thousands followed the coffin on its way to the cemetery. There was a mass rally at the cemetery, where Trotsky spoke. That was Trotsky's last public speech in Moscow. He was deported from the city two months later.

"We rushed to his apartment"

The day on which Trotsky was removed from his apartment, I was there at Trotsky's apartment. When some of my friends and I learned that the GPU was coming to take him away, we rushed to his apartment, but we missed him. He had just been taken away.

His daughter Nina was there, and she described what had happened. Trotsky refused to leave the apartment, and so they carried him down the stairs into the GPU automobile.

His eldest son, Leon Sedov, and his wife went with him. The younger son, Sergei, followed them to the railroad station and then came back to the apartment and told everyone what had happened. That is the way Trotsky was sent off to internal exile.

Trotsky was not only one of the outstanding figures in the Russian Revolution, he was undoubtedly the most tragic figure. He experienced the deaths of all four of his children, directly or indirectly at Stalin's hand. He had two daughters by his first wife, and two sons by his second.

His daughter Nina died of all the stress of his exile. She died of a very severe case of tuberculosis, which was quite rare at the time. Stalin allowed Trotsky's eldest daughter Zina to leave the Soviet Union, and took away her Soviet citizenship so that she could not return. She was only allowed to take one of her two children. Zina committed suicide in Germany at the time Hitler came to power, leaving behind Sieva, her youngest child.

"In the barracks with Alexandra"

In Polyma, the labor camp in the far east of the Soviet Union, I was in the same barracks with Alexandra Sokolovskaya, Trotsky's first wife. She read to me the letter she received from Trotsky in 1933 or 1934 at the time of Zina's death.

Trotsky's oldest son, Leon Sedov, was my close friend in my youth. We were approximately the same age. Leon Sedov accompanied his father into exile when he was deported from the Soviet Union, leaving behind a wife and young son whom he dearly loved. He preferred to be the loyal assistant and helper of his father. In 1938 Leon Sedov was killed in Paris. After Leon Sedov died, Trotsky wrote an obituary in his honor which he entitled, "Leon Sedov—Son, Friend, Fighter."

The younger son, Sergei, remained in the Soviet Union. He was a scientist and engineer, and never took interest in politics. Nevertheless, he was arrested in 1935, and they shot him together with many other Trotskyists in 1937 or 1938.

Trotsky lost not only all of his children, he lost all of his co-thinkers who remained in the Soviet Union. He had to watch as they were humiliated, destroyed, and murdered. Nevertheless, he never gave in. He continued to fight against Stalin and to fight for his own ideals until the last day of his life. And that's how we should remember him. ■

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Soviet speaking tour starts with a bang

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

BOSTON—One hundred thirty people packed a meeting in Boylston Auditorium at Harvard University on Oct. 20 to hear Esteban "Sieva" Volkov (the grandson of Russian revolutionist Leon Trotsky) and five other panelists on the first stop of a U.S. tour sponsored by Walnut Publishing Co. and Socialist Action.

Volkov was joined in Boston by Professor Pierre Broué, noted Marxist historian and biographer of Trotsky; Professor Paul Siegel, the co-chair of the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee; and Carl Finamore, a member of the National Committee of Socialist Action. Both Siegel and Finamore traveled to the Soviet Union last spring to deliver an appeal from Volkov and his family to Mikhail Gorbachev for the rehabilitation of Trotsky.

A featured speaker in Boston (and New York) was Nadezhda Joffe, the 82-year-old daughter of Trotsky's close collaborator Adolph Joffe and an organizer of the original Bolshevik opposition to Stalin who spent 30 years in a Siberian labor camp. She drew standing ovations before and after her talk. [See reprint of Joffe's Boston speech on opposite page.]

Introducing the panelists was Bernie Sanders, former mayor of Burlington, Vt., who, in an article published the next day in *The Harvard Crimson*, described his presence on the same stage with these figures as "a humbling experience."

The Boylston meeting capped three days of excitement in the Boston area. Earlier in the week, Volkov, Broué, and Joffe addressed a seminar at the Harvard Center for European Studies, and then were feted at a reception

sponsored by Harvard's Houghton Library, which houses the Trotsky Archives.

Volkov and Broué also traveled to Providence, R.I., where they spoke to a spirited group of scholars and students at Brown University's Center for Foreign Policy Development.

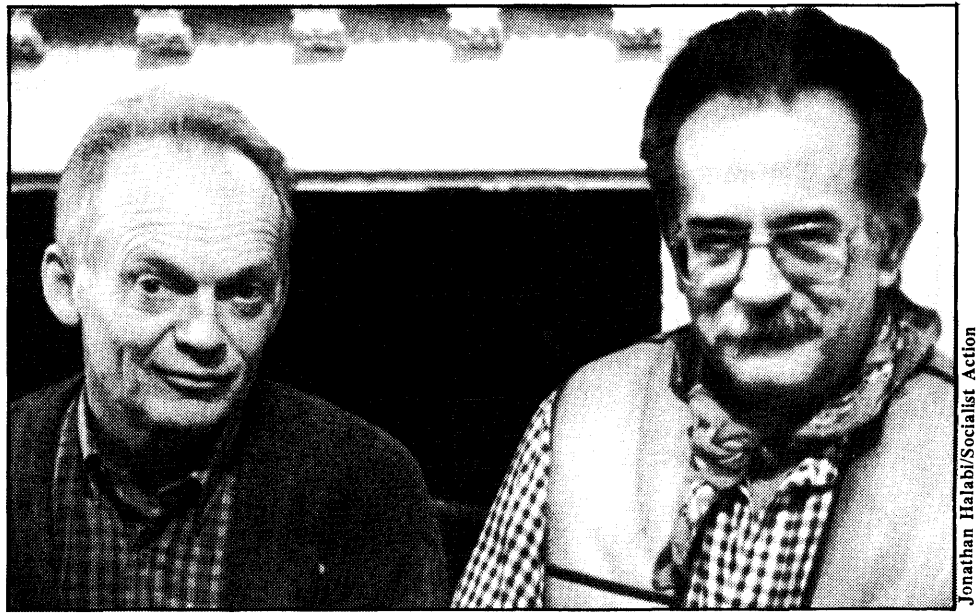
One enthusiastic student from Azerbaijan, who attended the Brown seminar, had his picture taken with Volkov because he said his friends back in the Soviet Union would "never believe that I met the grandson of Leon Trotsky."

The tour's beginning coincided with the publication of Walnut Publishing Co.'s new book "Gorbachev's USSR: Is Stalinism Dead?"—a collection of essays in defense of socialist democracy written by many of the tour participants. Dozens of copies of the book were sold throughout the tour.

The most moving remarks at all of the meetings were those by Nadezhda Joffe. Thirty years of life in Siberian labor camps gave her strength and vigor. Her voice rang loud and clear. She explained that she learned to be an effective orator because it was the only way to be heard over the ferocious Siberian winds.

The Boston leg of the tour produced an extensive article in the *Boston Globe* about Volkov, an interview on the local public television station, and two articles in *The Harvard Crimson*.

The *Crimson* article captured the spirit of the Oct. 20 Harvard meeting in its final paragraph: "The meeting concluded in grand socialist style as the panel spontaneously broke into a rendition of *Internationale*, the 1880s song of the international working class." ■



(Left) Trotsky's grandson, Esteban "Sieva" Volkov; (right) Trotsky's biographer, Pierre Broué, during speaking tour on East Coast.

Jonathan Halaibi/Socialist Action

NYC meetings hear about Trotsky and Soviet democracy

By LIZ CAMPBELL

NEW YORK—On Saturday, Oct. 21, Socialist Action and Walnut Publishing Co. held a forum here on "The Meaning of the Changes in the Soviet Union Today." Over 140 people came for an evening that emphasized the international importance of Trotsky's ideas for political struggle today.

The meeting also underlined the significance of the fight in the Soviet Union to clear Trotsky's name, re-establish his true historical role in the Bolshevik Revolution, and publish his complete works for Soviet workers.

The forum was part of the second leg of a cross-country speaking tour. The speakers included Professor Paul Siegel, Carl Finamore,

Esteban Volkov, Professor Pierre Broué, and Nadezhda Joffe. [For identifications see Boston Soviet tour article on this page.]

On Oct. 22, close to 70 people attended a reception for the speakers. Participants at the reception included noted celebrities and a whole generation of Trotskyist militants from years back. One of the reception's organizers, Lillian Pollak, had been among the young comrades who visited Leon Trotsky in Mexico in the late 1930s. Several thousand dollars were raised to finance the original trip to the Soviet Union as well as the national speaking tour.

The following day, a successful seminar was held at Columbia University's Averell Harriman Institute, featuring Volkov and Broué. ■

Shipbuilders under attack by bureaucracy

By ROLAND PETERSON

The past period of concession bargaining led by the AFL-CIO international leadership has also led to the housebreaking of local unions opposing the policies of their international union.

Local 6 of the Industrial Union of Marine Shipbuilding Workers of America (IUMSWA), in Bath, Maine, is one of the few local unions that has not been housebroken. It has successfully fought off the two-tier and other concessionary schemes of the trade-union bureaucracy and the employers.

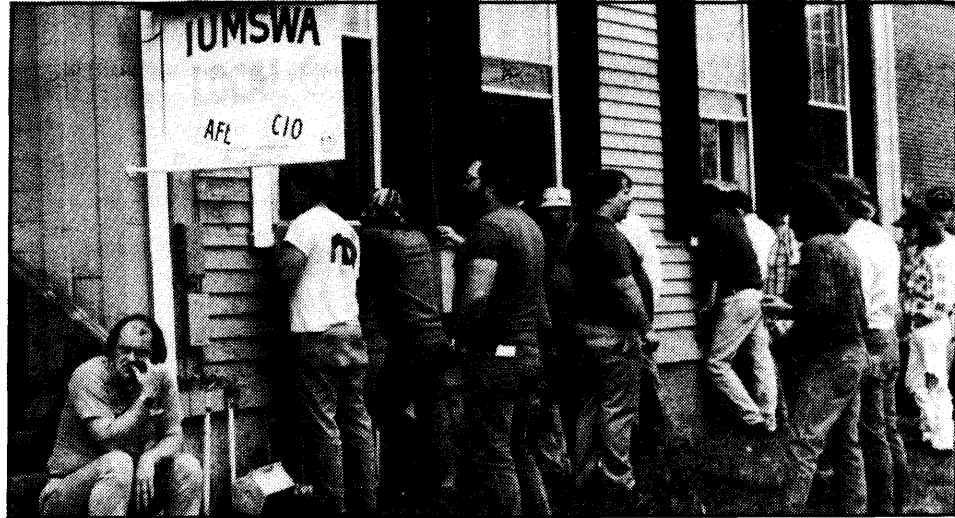
Local 6 is under attack by IUMSWA President Arthur Batson. Although the local pays the majority of the per-capita taxes in the IUMSWA, it has a minority of the votes in the international union, making it difficult to oppose Batson within the structure of the IUMSWA and to change his concessionary policies. Nevertheless, the membership is putting up a fight to defend their union.

Batson's cronies have come into the area and have removed the president of the local, Ainsley McPhee, on charges of "dual unionism." McPhee's real crime was that he did not allow backroom concessionary settlements of grievances that the international and the Bath Iron Works bosses had worked out behind the backs of the local union.

Greg Guckenburg, Local 6 financial secretary, was also tried for "dual unionism" when he, too, refused to OK the sweetheart grievance procedure.

In response, the Local 6 Committee for Union Democracy has been formed by the officers and members of Local 6 to oppose the actions of the bureaucracy and to explain the issues of the dispute to the rank and file. They have, in accordance with the local's by-laws, collected over 3500 signatures calling for a special meeting to reinstate McPhee.

As the membership of Local 6 becomes more and more aware of the role of the International union, President Batson may very well come to the realization that he has bitten off more than he can chew. ■



Crowded-out Local 6 members observe and listen to trial proceedings.

Roger Sheppard/Socialist Action

Civil war at Local 6

By LAWRENCE E. LOCKMAN

We reprint the following article, "Civil war at Local 6," from the *Brunswick, Maine, Times Record* of Oct. 9, 1989, to provide background to the dispute in the shipbuilders union. Lawrence Lockman is a shop steward of Local 80, United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU).

In the aftermath of a hotly contested election battle between rival labor unions at Bath Iron Works, workers are getting a close-up look at how organized labor deals with dissidents.

It's not a pretty sight.

The dispute at Local 6 began in 1987 when the international union representing BIW workers—the Industrial Union of Marine Shipbuilding Workers of America (IUMSWA)—voted to merge with the International Association of Machinists (IAM). Actually, the only ones who voted were delegates to the conventions of the international unions; there was no rank-and-file vote of the 7000 shipbuilders at BIW.

As a result of the merger, union dues required of Local 6 members increased substantially, and more increases are in the works. In the view of many disgruntled BIW shipbuilders, all they gained from affiliating with the IAM was "extra baggage" and higher

dues.

In an effort to regain control of their local some members circulated a petition calling for an election to choose a different international union. Others gathered signatures for a wholly independent local union, to be called Bath Shipbuilders Independent Union (BSIU).

Supporters of BSIU succeeded in forcing an election contest between the proposed independent union and the established shipbuilders/machinists union. Both sides campaigned vigorously prior to the June 14, 1989, election, but it never was an even match. The independents played David to the international's Goliath.

The Maine AFL-CIO, funded in part by dues collected from dissidents, printed and mailed three special editions of its official newspaper to all BIW workers. A combination of scare tactics and pleas for solidarity best summarizes the AFL-CIO campaign against the independent union. Workers were told they would lose their contract and probably their jobs if they voted to go independent, and would receive "zero" support from other unions in the event of a labor dispute at BIW.

On the other hand, if they chose to remain in the "house of labor," shipbuilders were assured of the continued fraternal support of all AFL-CIO-affiliated unions. "Union brothers and sisters helping each other ... that's what unions are all about," said Maine AFL-CIO

President Charles O'Leary.

It should be noted that O'Leary's attacks on the independent local may have been driven by something other than brotherly concern for the shipbuilders. The Maine AFL-CIO stood to lose over \$5000 a month in union dues if the independent shipbuilders prevailed.

Due at least in part to the negative campaign waged by O'Leary's organization, the effort to form an independent local failed by a vote of 3240 to 2307.

Reprisals against dissidents

Within a matter of weeks, reprisals against the dissidents began.

In at least one instance, out-of-state union bosses didn't even wait for the election results before moving against their opponents. Local 6 Vice President Mickey Meader was targeted for retribution during the summer of 1988, after he had gathered over 2300 signatures to force an election between IUMSWA/IAM and the rival carpenters' union.

Brought up on charges of "dual unionism," Meader was tried and convicted by a union trial board composed of representatives of IUMSWA's national office. The kangaroo court imposed the maximum penalty: removal from office and expulsion from the union.

Undaunted, Meader is suing in federal court for reinstatement. He continues to work at BIW, and though he pays no union dues, he retains all his rights under the labor contract (wages, benefits, grievance procedure, etc.).

More recently, Local 6 President Ainsley McPhee has been the target of a carpetbagger trial board imported from IUMSWA headquarters in Baltimore. McPhee was charged with dual unionism for merely signing a carpenters' union petition. The charges were brought by IUMSWA boss Arthur Batson, and heard by two of his cronies from Local 33 in Baltimore.

Last month, the trial board announced its verdict: guilty. McPhee was booted out as president of the local and barred from holding any office for the next three years. More charges are expected against other union officers.

The search-and-destroy, take-no-prisoners strategy being pursued by out-of-state labor bosses is being met with grassroots resistance by BIW shipbuilders. Several hundred showed up to support Local 6 President McPhee at his trial.

Stay tuned for more. It ain't over till it's over. ■

100,000 demand 'Housing Now!'



Rick Reinhard/Impact Visuals

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A popular T-shirt bore the message, "There's no place like home. Everyone should have one." That summed up the sentiments of the 100,000 protesters who turned out here for the Oct. 7 Housing Now! rally.

As they marched from the Washington Monument to the steps of the Capitol, demonstrators continually chanted, "What do we want? Housing! When do we want it? Now!"

The labor contingent stretched several city

blocks behind a banner proclaiming: "Housing now! Which side are you on?" The AFL-CIO chartered 165 buses from around the country. Twenty came from the Steelworkers alone.

Government workers, auto workers, machinists, garment workers, and communication workers sent large delegations. Signs carried by bricklayers, carpenters, cement masons, painters, and electricians pointed to the irony of high unemployment among workers who could be building needed housing.

Buses came from college campuses and

community organizations. Retiree groups emphasized the problems faced by those trying to get by on meager Social Security payments. Gay activists described the housing discrimination faced by AIDS victims.

The 215 cities with Housing Now! coalitions brought many homeless families to the demonstration. Large numbers of homeless from Washington, D.C., participated. Over 250 homeless people walked from New York City to dramatize their plight.

Boos for the mayor

Labor officials, civil rights leaders, com-

munity activists, entertainers, and politicians shared the speakers' platform. When Washington, D.C., Mayor Marion Barry rose to welcome the protesters to Washington, he was met by prolonged boos from the crowd because of the city government's abysmal record.

But other politicians were warmly received by the crowd, which failed to recognize that attacks on social services are a bipartisan policy. The crowd applauded as speaker after speaker blamed homelessness on the Republican Reagan and Bush administrations.

Many speakers correctly explained the government's support to private profits over human needs. National Organization for Women President Molly Yard expressed anger that the government spent billions to bail out the savings-and-loan industry while turning its back on poor people with substandard housing or no housing at all.

Louise Stark, a leader of the National Coalition for the Homeless, also pointed to government giveaways to the rich. She noted that President and Mrs. Bush lived in "some of the best subsidized housing in the country" while receiving free healthcare and other benefits.

"The big lie"

Several speakers pointed to the ready availability of federal funds for military spending while social programs are cut. Southern Christian Leadership Conference President Joseph Lowery said, "We're sick and tired of this big lie, 'there is no money,' when there's money for the contras in Nicaragua, for South Africa's allies in Angola, and for wealthy bankers in the United States."

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees President Gerald McEntee emphasized that the housing crisis doesn't just affect the unemployed. He explained how the majority of those working for poverty-level wages pay over 75 percent of their income for housing costs. Millions of Americans are only one paycheck away from homelessness, he stressed.

McEntee promised the demonstrators that labor will continue to protest until "everyone in this country has a decent place to live."

The Housing Now! demonstration, drawing thousands into the streets to protest government policies, points the way forward. Just as demonstrators expressed no confidence in Mayor Barry, they can learn that both the Democratic and Republican parties support the interests of big business. This will open up the possibility of building the type of independent movement that can win a decent job and house for everyone.

By HAYDEN PERRY

Congress faced a political catastrophe last month. Wealthy senior citizens (and some not so wealthy) were besieging their offices protesting the catastrophic health insurance law passed last session.

This law, passed by an overwhelming 328 to 72 vote in the House last year, had been hailed as the answer to the ruinous medical bills that confront so many older citizens. There was provision for payment for hospital stays, help with drug expenses, and part payment of doctors' bills. Medicare programs already cover part of these charges, but the new law piled on additional benefits.

Congresspeople fell over each other taking credit for this "great gift" to the elderly. Now they have stampeded to rescind the law. What went wrong?

First, the package of benefits proved to be not so generous as the lawmakers claimed. Medicare beneficiaries now pay 20 percent of their doctors' bills. The new law would limit the patient's share to \$1370 a year. A welcome cap perhaps—but doctors' bills would have had to reach \$6850 before this benefit took effect. It is estimated that only 7 percent of retirees would ever benefit from this provision.

To meet the high price of medicines, the plan proposed paying half of the cost of drugs after the senior has spent \$600. But only 17 percent are expected to spend that much money on prescriptions in a single year. The other 83 percent of the elderly would collect nothing, even though they spend as much as \$50 a month.

The aspect of aging that most disturbs the elderly is the cost of longterm nursing-home care. With charges of \$1500 to \$2000 a month, savings are soon exhausted, homes sacrificed, and bequests to heirs swallowed up. The catastrophic health law financed only a few days in a nursing home after a hospital stay. The problem of longterm care was ignored.

"The people should pay!"

These benefits failed to meet the needs of the elderly—they were costly. Reagan and Congress said the elderly should pay for their own healthcare. They are already paying nearly \$32 a month under Medicare. The Budget Office calculated the additional premium needed to fund the extended benefits. The answer was \$30 to be added to the present tax. This made a total of \$62 a month.

Many politicians recognized that a premium of \$62 a month was too heavy a burden for those retirees living on a

Catastrophic health plan scrapped by Congress



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

little over \$400 a month. So they cut the additional charge to \$4 a month, and put a 15 percent surcharge on those wealthier retirees who pay income tax. For 1989, the surcharge would be limited to \$800, but the cap would go up thereafter. By 1993, the surtax would be 28 percent, with a ceiling of \$1050.

It was this surtax that brought the wrath of wealthy senior citizens down on Congress. They made their objections known loudly and clearly. Any increase in taxes for the well-

off was a betrayal of Reagan-Bush principles, they pointed out. Indexing for inflation meant that a retired couple, in a few years, could pay as much as \$3300 a year in additional tax and Medicare premiums.

To add insult to injury, most of the well-to-do retirees already have the proffered benefits, either through private pension plans or private insurance. "You are laying an outrageous tax on us for something we don't need!" they yelled—loudly enough to be heard in every Congressional office.

Millions are unprotected

Congresspeople saw crowds of indignant retirees, led by those well-heeled elderly who can give or withhold considerable campaign contributions. At the same time, thousands of other seniors, who would pay only the extra \$4 premium, also felt the new law was a ripoff.

The House rushed to placate this important voting bloc. With a 360 to 66 vote, Congressional representatives hastily reversed themselves—agreeing it was a lousy law that should never have been passed.

The Senate, realizing that repeal could mean a loss of \$15 billion in revenue, tried to salvage something. Nearly all were agreed that the wealthy should not be taxed unduly. So they concentrated on saving the \$4 extra premium. To do this, they slashed the benefits to the point where almost no one will collect anything. The House and Senate bills are now in conference, with total repeal of the law the most likely outcome.

Trying to meet the health needs of the American people by doing a little bit for this group or another group leaves millions of Americans unprotected. Even if the elderly were accommodated, young uninsured workers, children, and sufferers from AIDS would have to fight for their right to healthcare.

The logical answer is nationalized healthcare that covers every resident of the United States for free. Healthcare should be controlled by working people (and those too old or too ill to work) instead of by the ruling rich.

Boeing strikers hang tough against 'insulting' contract

By JOSEPH RYAN

The strike by 58,000 Boeing machinists began over a month ago. Many striking machinists thought the strike would last—at tops—three weeks. But now it looks like it could be as bitter a struggle as the 1977 Boeing strike, which lasted 45 days.

Yet no matter how long the strike lasts, the walkout of Boeing workers, combined with the strike of Eastern machinists and Pittston coal miners, is symptomatic of a new militancy erupting among America's industrial workers.

On the other hand, the "hardball" stance of the companies is testimony to the fact that while workers want to erase the concessions of the past decade, the capitalist class will not take *one step back* from the victories they've scored.

Voting down "final" offer

The Boeing strike began on Oct. 3, 1989, when over 40,000 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) filled the Seattle Kingdome and raucously voted down the company's "final" contract proposal by an 85 percent margin—well over the two-thirds majority needed to authorize a strike.

For a month, union and company representatives had yet to meet—despite the intervention of a federal mediator.

Meanwhile, Boeing, which employs a total of 144,000 employees and builds 60 percent of the capitalist world's commercial airliners, is playing a waiting game as union pickets pace back and forth at plant gates in Seattle, Wash.; Portland, Ore.; and Wichita, Kan.

The company had offered the workers a three-year package that included pay increases of 4 percent, 3 percent, and 3 percent annually; 8 percent and 3 percent lump-sum "bonuses" the first two years of the contract; cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) covering 99 percent of increases in inflation; and reduction of mandatory overtime from 200 hours to 160 hours per quarter.

"This contract is without a doubt one of the most lucrative contracts laid down in years," a Boeing spokesperson stated. "I don't feel like I'm feeding you a line," he told the Seattle press, "when I say we made a substantial economic offer to workers."

But the workers had a different opinion. "This is an insult," one veteran IAM member stated. "The company is sitting better than it ever has been, and this is the worst contract of my four."

He, like other IAM members, knew that over the last five years Boeing raked in record profits. From 1986 through 1989—due to a boom cycle in commercial jetliner orders—the aircraft manufacturer made over \$2.1 billion in profits, based on \$56.4 billion in sales. In 1988 alone, Boeing made \$614 million in profits.

A large portion of these profits come from wage and benefit concessions the IAM made in contract negotiations with Boeing in 1983 and 1986. In 1983, a two-tier wage scale was introduced, which paid newly hired workers substantially less money. The wage differentials go from \$8 to \$18 per hour.

In 1986 contract negotiations, the company demanded and received a wage freeze for all workers, substituting instead a lump-sum bonus payment at the end of the year. In addition, the company gutted the previously negotiated 100 percent medical coverage by forcing workers to pay a \$75 deductible per family member.

Hoping to catch up

If anybody has been generous over the last five years, it's been the Boeing machinists. They justifiably expected to "catch up" economically in the 1989 contract after making sacrifices based on Boeing's past pleas to help

it remain "competitive in the market."

These sacrifices not only included wage and benefit concessions. For the last two years, the machinists have been working mandatory 10-hour days *six and seven days a week*. This dangerous, back-breaking pace of production is the result of a 1600-plane backlog in orders that Boeing must fill.

Many of the striking workers are convinced that Boeing made a provocative offer to force the machinists on strike. Boeing would use the strike as an excuse for its inability to fill its orders.

"I think Boeing promised its customers something it could not deliver and is making the workers pay for its mistake," a striking worker wrote to the *Seattle Times*.

Furthermore, in the past, the company has been fined for numerous safety violations:

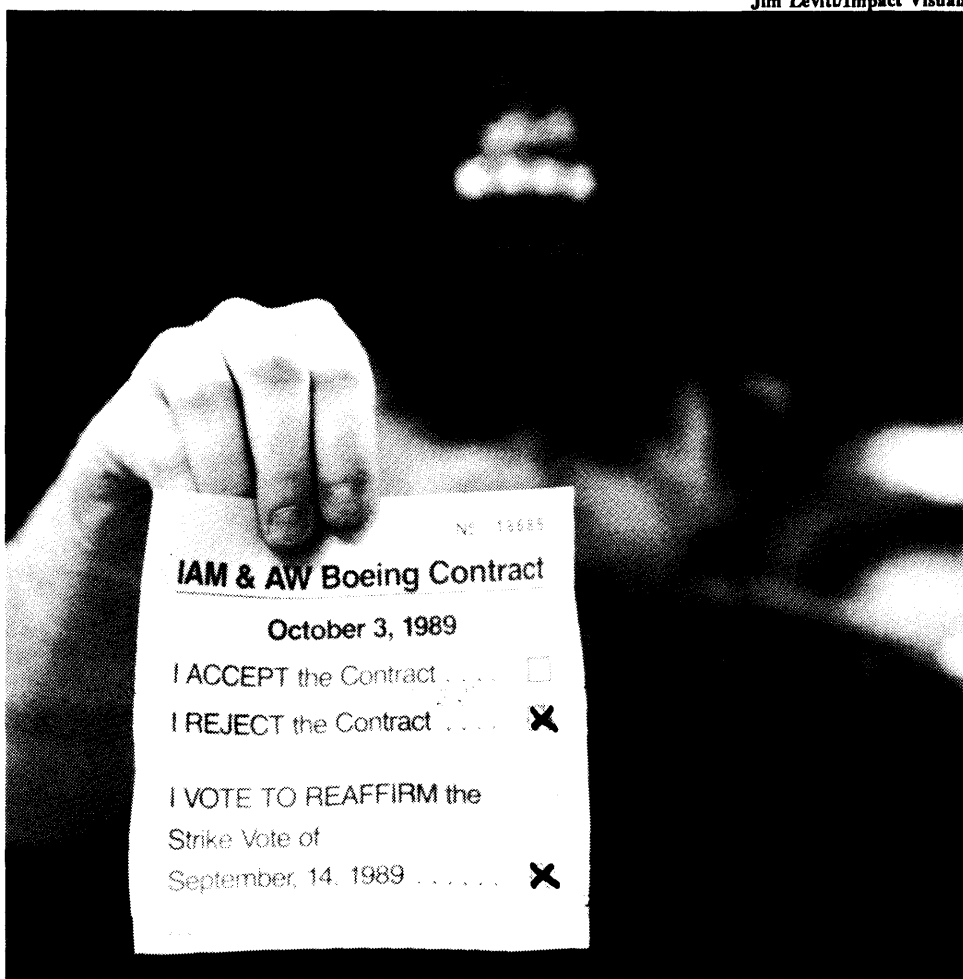
\$128,780 by the Washington State Dept. of Labor for 36 violations, and \$41,530 by the U.S. Dept. of Labor for 40 violations. Undoubtedly, some Boeing workers looked forward to this strike as a long overdue vacation from murderous working conditions.

What do the workers want?

The machinists and production workers want their fair share for making Boeing one of the most profitable aerospace companies in the world. The striking machinists have made their demands clear. They want a substantial wage increase—not a lump-sum bonus that doesn't figure into their wage and benefit package.

They want their 100 percent medical coverage reinstated for themselves and their fami-

Jim Levitt/Impact Visuals



SWP legal victory advances Mark Curtis defense effort

On Aug. 11, the Socialist Workers Party scored a legal victory in a Los Angeles federal court that represents an important victory for all supporters of democratic rights. We are reprinting below excerpts from the statement of Kate Kaku, a steering committee member of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, containing the facts of this decision and its meaning for the international effort on Curtis's behalf.

A significant advance for all supporters of democratic rights, and of the fight to defend Mark Curtis in particular, was won last month in a legal victory scored by the Socialist Workers Party, of which Mark is a member.

For more than 10 years, this party has been the target of a harassment and disruption lawsuit prepared, organized, and financed by an anti-labor group known as the Workers League.

The suit filed by Alan Gelfand—a lawyer who is employed by Los Angeles County and is associated with the Workers League—charges that the SWP is run by FBI agents. It demands that the courts overturn his expulsion from the party and remove the party's elected leadership. Gelfand's claim is that his constitutional rights were violated because "FBI agents" in the party's leadership engineered his expulsion.

On Aug. 11, Los Angeles Federal Court Judge Mariana Pfaelzer categorically ruled that "there is no evidence" to back up Gelfand's

accusations, and that his motivation in bringing the suit was to "disrupt the SWP."

"Plaintiff's initiation of this litigation was not in good faith," the judge adds. Gelfand did not "have any substantial basis in fact for any of his allegations, nor did he have a good faith belief that the allegations were true."

The judge concludes that the years of "pretrial discovery"—including the taking of hundreds of hours of sworn depositions from SWP members and supporters by lawyers whose large fees were paid by the Workers League—were "abusive, harassing, and in large part directed to matters which could have no probative value in this litigation. The discovery was not conducted for the purpose of discovering evidence in support of plaintiff's claims, one of its main purposes was to generate material for political attacks on the SWP by the Workers League...."

Immediate beneficiaries

Supporters for justice for Mark Curtis are the most immediate beneficiaries of this victory. The Workers League's main activity today is to smear and disrupt the international defense effort for Mark.

Mark is a unionist and political activist serving 25 years in Anamosa State Prison on frame-up rape and burglary charges. The Mark Curtis Defense Committee was formed after Mark's arrest to launch a worldwide campaign of protest.

The Workers League has carried out a systematic countercampaign, aimed particularly

lies. Most important, they want *voluntary* overtime—not mandatory overtime, which has been used to increase production at minimal cost to the company, on the one hand, and bleed the workers, on the other.

Meanwhile, the striking machinists keep an upbeat attitude on the picketline.

On Saturday, Oct. 14, pickets brought their spouses and children to the plant gate in Puget Sound, Wash. On Sunday, Oct. 22, Rev. Jesse Jackson and over 2000 machinists and their families rallied in Seattle, Wash.

The machinists are confident of victory because they believe Boeing will have to settle if the company hopes to fill its long backlog of orders. So far, Boeing has not attempted to herd scab production workers into their plants. But the company is attempting to fill some plane orders by using managerial personnel.

Unfortunately, the second largest union at Boeing, the Seattle Professional Engineering Employees Association (SPEEA) is crossing the machinists' picketlines, ostensibly because of a "no strike" clause in their contract, which expires in December of this year.

So the Boeing workers are faced with the same dilemma as other workers: Formulating a political strategy to win a strike in the face of a company that's dead serious about dealing the union a defeat.

It is from such dilemmas that a *class-struggle left wing* develops in the unions. In a city that once had a celebrated general strike, the labor movement has a good point from which to start.

... Quake

(continued from page 20)

ing about the spirit of solidarity that seemed to arise spontaneously in the face of great stress, loss, and human misery. Strangers still stop to pick up stranded commuters. Cars driven with no extra passengers are considered by many to be anti-social.

Is this an exception to the callousness and backward social attitudes we have been told are now common among the American people? I don't think so.

In times of social turmoil, the victims of injustice tend to come together to change their state. When they do, they demonstrate again and again the deep sense of love and respect for human life inherent in us all. When they do, all the prejudice and hatred of the past dissolve into the shared knowledge that we have more in common with each other than we do with those who live for the dollar.

When people come together to work for social change—and more and more, they will—the world is in for a magnificent future.

at those in the labor movement who have publicly opposed the frame-up of Mark. Claiming to be socialist, they have peddled the cops' frame-up case and smeared the defense effort around the world, labeling it a "political provocation of the Socialist Workers Party ... with the aim of discrediting socialism and the workers' movement."

The federal court ruling in Los Angeles is a powerful blow exposing the true character of this international promoter of the cops' frame-up of Curtis.

... Nicaragua

(continued from page 1)

President Reagan in 1985. The embargo, coupled with the nine-year contra war, has devastated Nicaragua's economy.

Bush also escalated his attacks on the preparations for elections currently underway in Nicaragua, falsely claiming that the opposition parties are being intimidated and harassed by the government. (The U.S. government is currently funneling close to \$9 million to the pro-contra opposition coalition UNO.)

Everything indicates that if the UNO coalition does not win the Feb. 25 presidential elections—which is a near certainty because these pro-contra supporters have little support among the Nicaraguan people—Bush and the Congress will claim election fraud and renew military aid to the contras.

The U.S. government has no right to intervene in the internal affairs of Nicaragua. End U.S. aid to the contras! U.S. Hands off Nicaragua! —the editors

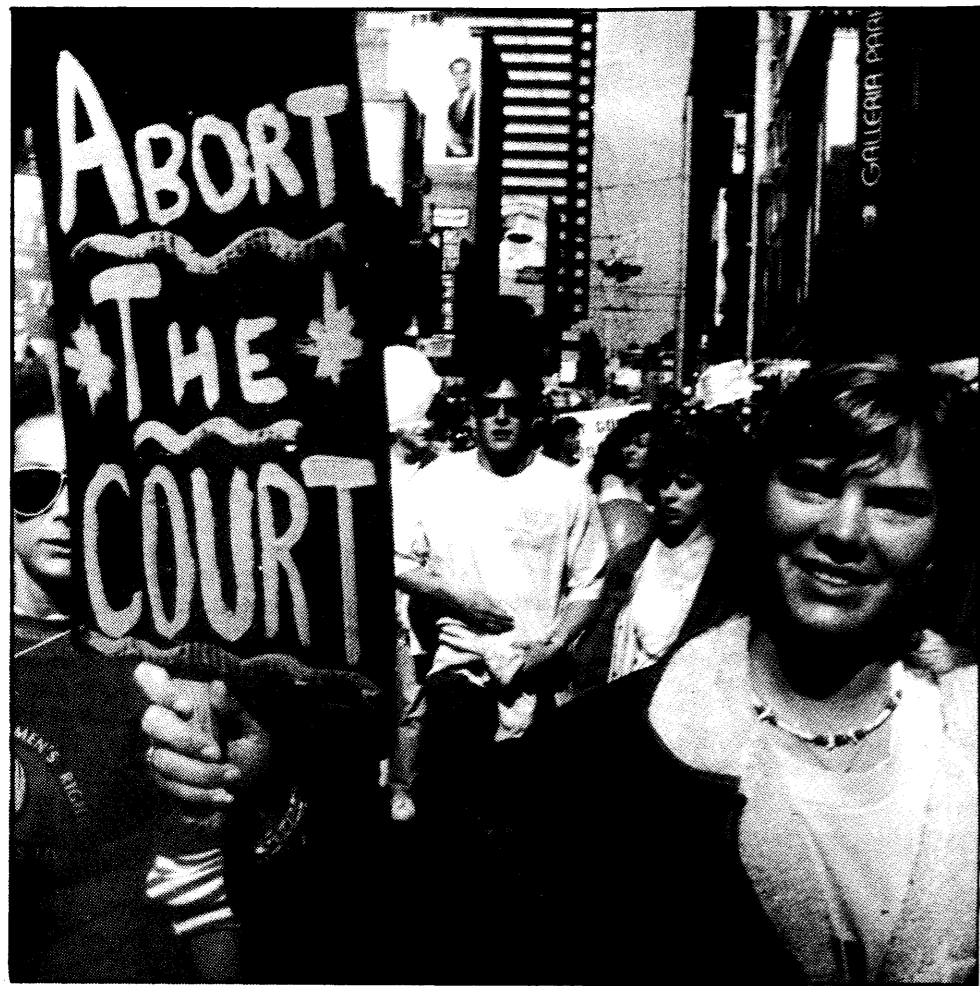
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Should women form a third political party



Oct. 15, 1989, demonstration of 60,000 in San Francisco, Calif.

The following speech was given by Socialist Action staffwriter Sylvia Weinstein on Oct. 20, 1989, at a San Francisco Socialist Action forum titled, "Should women form a third political party?" The speech has been edited for publication.

Since the earthquake of Tuesday, Oct. 17, we have witnessed a side of human nature repressed by the "normal" world created by capitalism. All of a sudden, people all over the San Francisco Bay Area were helping others in need, many times risking their own lives to do so.

It is events such as this earthquake that gives the lie to the myth that people are, by nature, selfish and unfeeling. Selfishness and greed are inherent, not in human nature, but in the system of capitalism. The worst in human nature is created and fostered by a social environment that pits human beings against each other.

But although human beings are conditioned by their environment, they also have the power to shape and change their environment—and thus change human nature.

All of us sitting in this room tonight could probably sit down and work up a pretty good world together. Most of us would agree on the need to clean up our environment, end global pollution, and insure world peace.

We certainly could also agree that we need to provide the basic necessities for all people—food, clothing, clean water, decent shelter, universal healthcare, and quality education from pre-kindergarten to college—as a basic right in a society in which human needs come before profits. Then we could also agree on the need to end national boundaries—that, in fact, we are all one people, regardless of race or national origin.

I know too that we would readily agree to end all manifestations of racism, sexism, and ageism. And we would want a society that is democratic and open—with the full participation of all its citizens. That's not a bad start for a world I believe all of us here would like to see.

I think I can go further yet. I believe that we here would also agree that the majority of the population of the United States know that they are not getting a fair shake. Their standard of living has gone down, they are caught in the killer web of steadily rising prices, while their paychecks are taking a beating. Whereas it used to take one to support a family, it now takes two—and it's increasingly harder to keep up.

I think we can also agree that the majority of people have no faith in the present political process. In fact they are convinced that the politicians are crooks and sell out to the highest bidder.

Outrage at NOW convention

Most people, however, can see no way out. That's why we're having this discussion. What can we do about the declining quality of

life? How can we find our way to build the kind of world I'm talking about—a better world, where people come first?

Those were my thoughts at the National NOW convention in Cincinnati earlier this year. A workshop led by Molly Yard and Eleanor Smeal expressed a sense of outrage—directed against the Democratic Party especially.

That outrage crossed all lines—new and old members, independents, socialists, and even many long-time supporters of the Democratic Party. They had been betrayed on the ERA and they were being betrayed on the issue of abortion. Liberal Democrats, in national and state legislatures, and locally in city after city, have been working hand in hand with the Republicans to destroy women's right to choose.

It's this sense of outrage that impelled over 600,000 women and supporters of women's rights to march in Washington, D.C., last April 9. Just plain old outrage. They needed to yell it in the streets.

Both Molly Yard and Eleanor Smeal were shocked at the intensity of feeling expressed at the workshop. They ended the conference with a promise to investigate the possibility of the formation of a "third political party."

It was a shot heard around the world. The media immediately came out with quote after quote from so-called friends of women's rights about how impossible this was. They worked overtime to urge NOW that its only hope lay within the Democratic Party.

What about a "women's party?"

Some women at the workshop expressed support for the idea of a "women's party." This idea, which has surfaced whenever the anti-woman bias of both Democrats and Republicans becomes particularly glaring, is a symptom of the growing distrust of these capitalist parties.

But a political party must take positions on all political questions—not just women's issues. A political party must take a stand on all political questions such as unemployment or military spending versus spending for social needs (housing, education, medical care, old age pensions, etc.).

All of these issues can be decided either in favor of the rich or the poor—but not both. Not all women would see the necessity to place human needs before profits. (Would a Mrs. Rockefeller or a Mrs. Donald Trump put human needs ahead of their profits?)

A political party representing the genuine interests of the great majority of women must also be representative of the great majority of the people, all of whom, in one way or another are victims of capitalist society.

Socialists have been urging the formation of a third party in this country for many years. But the only real alternative to the capitalist parties would be one based on working people and their allies—women, Blacks, and other oppressed nationalities. A



30,000 demonstrated in San Francisco, Calif., on April 2, 1989, to protest the impending Webster decision. This demonstration was a preview of the 600,000 strong march in Washington, D.C., one week later on April 9.

genuine alternative would not be just a feminist party, it would also be a Black party, a labor party.

Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow

A third capitalist party would do none of us any good. It would do no more good than Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. Jackson and his Rainbow both base their program on the capitalist status quo. That's why Jackson supported Dukakis for president in 1988.

Capitalists had confidence that Jackson represented no real threat to their system. On

those who are relegated by capitalism to the bottom of the heap.

Workers and capitalists

When I say the working class, I mean all of those who must work for a living. Whether they work with their hands and brains or their brains and hands makes no difference. And by capitalist class, I mean all those who get the lion's share of this wealth by the right of ownership of the means of production.

Workers are the people who produce all of society's wealth: everything, from food,

to do anything to prevent a repetition of such disasters—not if it will cut into profits.

Why a working-class party?

Why do socialists say that a political party based on working people and its natural allies—women, Blacks, and other oppressed sectors of the population—would be the right kind of party? It's not some mystical belief.

First of all, the working class in the United States constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population and objectively has material interests that tend to unite workers into a cohesive force. Furthermore, in addition to its numbers, the working class has the power to exert an economic force even more potent than its great numbers.

Second, the working class is organized into fighting institutions with great potential power—trade unions. We shouldn't underestimate this force. The setbacks that have been dealt working people and their unions over the last 20 years are a result of misleadership.

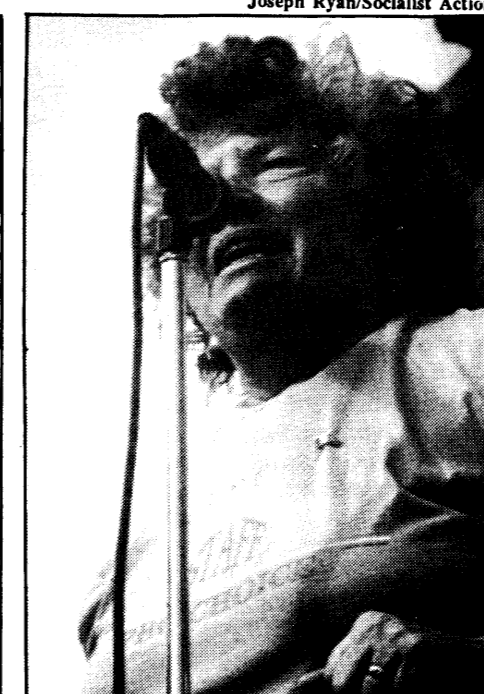
The labor bureaucracy has followed the fatal policy of relying on their "friends" in the Democratic Party to protect them from the corporate profiteers. This is the same mistake being made by leaders of the women's movement, the Black movement, and the other exploited and oppressed members of society.

Third, the working class does not need to exploit anyone to defend its interests. In fact, workers are the chief victims of the capitalists, who have been increasingly driving down living standards in their unremitting greed for higher profits.

This means that working people are a powerful potential force standing in the way of the attack by the capitalist class on the living standards of the great majority of the American people. More than that, the working class is the only force capable of leading the majority in a fightback to regain lost ground and make new gains.

Fourth, on the economic plane alone, the capitalists are stronger than the workers. The working class is stronger only if it mobilizes all its members and its natural allies for a political struggle in its class interests.

These class interests include abolishing



Sylvia Weinstein speaking at Oct. 15, 1989, rally in San Francisco, Calif.

sexism and racism. The reason is simple. Sexism and racism are used to compel women and oppressed nationalities to work cheaply. The lower wages systematically paid these oppressed layers of the population are also used to depress the wages of all other workers as well.

Fifth, the 20-year-long attack on the living standards of American workers is not going to end. It will intensify, as the ruling class seeks to solve its problems by lowering real wages, cutting social services, and increasingly shifting the tax burden from the rich to the poor.

And this is only the beginning. All signs are pointing to a major collapse of capitalist equilibrium—and with it, a qualitative worsening of living standards.

The collapse of the savings-and-loan institutions and other manifestations of a developing global economic crisis are like the recent earthquakes in California. They are warnings of the Big One to come—the result of a basic flaw in the earth's crust. In the same way, these economic quakes are a result of a basic flaw in the capitalist system of production.

"An injury to all!"

In order to win the coming battles, working people in unions will be forced to fight to defend their living standards. They will quickly learn that they need the help and support of their natural allies—women, Blacks, and other oppressed people. They will again become the champions of the cause of all the victims of capitalism.

In the 1930s, when the American workers were on the move, they became the social conscience of this nation. The new industrial union movement absorbed the lessons of previous defeats.

Big strikes had been defeated because of the prevailing labor practice of going along with the employers' exclusion of Blacks and women from higher paying jobs. The militant new democratic unions went further than merely opening their doors to those who were previously excluded. Their progressive social policies flowered and sprouted seeds in general social life.

But this progressive trend was not really new. Once taking the road of class struggle, workers have historically embraced the cause of all victims of capitalism. It was the working class which led the fight against child-labor and for the bill of rights, public schools, public health, unemployment insurance, social security pensions, and other public services.

Despite the present domination of the unions by the conservative bureaucracy, the working class has a proud history of honoring



3000 pro-choice partisans marched in Cincinnati, Ohio, in July 1989.

its early slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all!"

Call a national conference

A genuine alternative to the Democrats and Republicans can only come from the working class. Their fighting institutions—the unions—have millions of members in every city of this country. They have vast resources in money and rank-and-file activists as a base to build a powerful political party. And most important, they have enormous economic power to back up electoral victories.

The National Organization for Women could set into motion the process of building a working-class party. NOW could call a national conference of labor, Blacks, women, and all our allies. They could begin a united movement to fight on the issue of the defense of democratic rights for all, for the Equal Rights Amendment, for a massive construction program to combat homelessness.

The conference would be against racism, sexism, unemployment. It would be for affirmative action and against the destruction of our environment. And the right of women to control their own reproductive functions would be high on its agenda.

I am certain that such a national conference would get an immediate hearing. It would put enormous pressure on the labor bureaucracy and make it difficult for them to continue the fatal policy of relying on the so-called friends of labor. It would inspire rank-and-file unionists, Blacks, and other oppressed nationalities to press their organizations to participate in such a national conference.

No matter how far an initiative by NOW could go toward achieving a genuine third-party alternative to the status quo, it would give a realistic perspective to progressive forces for a practical solution down the road. That alone would justify such a conference.

Unfortunately, the NOW national leadership is already pulling back from its call for an investigation into a third party. In any event, we must remain in the streets, independent and militant. We must do just as we have done this past year with the massive abortion rights marches.

Our independence, our militancy, has accomplished more than was achieved in all those years of sending telegrams, endorsing Democratic Party hacks, and giving wine-and-cheese parties to our enemies in hopes they might throw us a bone. That didn't work, it can't work, it won't work.

Defending the clinics

In the meantime, we must also continue to fight Operation Rescue (OR) to a standstill. We have prevented them from stopping women at the clinic door. Many times, the operators of the clinics have resented our presence. I feel we have given them the message, however, that although they operate the clinics, all women have the right to use them. And it's our right to defend the clinics and women's choice.

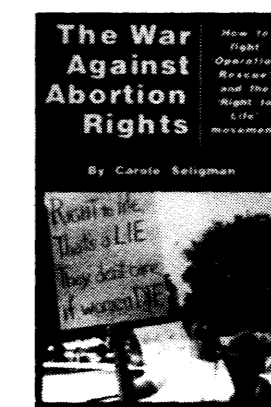
We have been able to out-mobilize and outwit OR at every step. This must continue and increase. We cannot depend on the police to protect our clinics. The police generally bend over backwards to protect the OR law-breakers. No, the only ones we can depend on is ourselves—in the hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands—to keep our clinics open.

It's most important to understand that supporting our hangmen—the Democratic Party hacks—just makes the rope tighter. We have to continue with massive street actions, nationally and locally, and we must step up our defense of the clinics. Only this will work. It's been proven throughout history that mass, independent action is imperative if we want to win.

History teaches us that if we live right, if we continue the struggle, if we continue to reach out to that great majority who are really with us, we will get our chance to make the great changes necessary to preserve human life—all life—on this planet.

One of the most important things you can do is join Socialist Action. We are a small organization, but we have kept alive the best traditions of the workers' movement. And small as we are, we have made an important contribution to the day-to-day struggle for social, economic, and political justice.

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Socialist Action debates Communist Party on radio

On Sept. 15, 1989, Kevin Pursglove, host and moderator of KQED-FM National Public Radio's popular program *Forum*, invited representatives of three alternate political parties to comment on the domestic and foreign policies of the Bush administration.

The show opened with the introduction of the three participants: Jeff Mackler, Co-National Secretary of Socialist Action; Kendra Alexander, Northern California Chair of the Communist Party, and Jim Perrin, Chair of the San Francisco Libertarian Party. For reasons of space, we have edited the transcript and omitted the remarks of the Libertarian Party representative.—the editors

KQED: Good morning. I'm Kevin Pursglove. Here's the lineup for *Forum* today. We turn to an assessment of the policies and plans of the Bush administration.

First of all, let's take a look at some of the domestic issues. The president's gotten a lot of attention this week because of his proposed fight on drugs. Let's start with you Mr. Mackler. Do you agree with what the president's been saying so far?

Jeff Mackler: I think the president's war on drugs is fairly close to Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty of the '60s. It's a program that's designed to ignore or distort the issues by placing the blame on the victim as opposed to those who profit from the multi-billion dollar drug industry. The real issues involved are not addressed by either the Democratic or Republican parties which have a bipartisan policy on this question.

The central question is why do people take drugs? The increase in drug use indicates a deep demoralization that a large sector of our society feels because of lack of jobs and increasing poverty. In this context, drugs are an escape from a society which seems to provide little hope.

The Bush administration proposes greater punishment for the victims of its social policies. It proposes to employ more police, build more jails and courts, and stiffen the penalties while at the same time maintaining the minimum wage which is in itself inadequate to provide a decent standard of living.

KQED: If the communists were in power, or if you had access to the president at this stage of the game, would you encourage a tremendous movement toward the prevention and therapy aspects of the problem and reduce drastically the money spent on enforcement?

Kendra Alexander: I would do two things. I would spend the most money on trying to prevent the drugs from coming into the United States, border interdiction, trying to stop it there. Second, I would try to spend it on treatment and try to get people to correct the problem.

Mackler: Well if Socialist Action were in power, which is the question you asked Kendra, we wouldn't have a government where drugs were profitable. We wouldn't have a society where a few billionaires make money on drugs.

KQED: It now looks like we're going to have some kind of reform in this country on the capital gains tax. The Bush administration has been in favor of this and the word from Capitol Hill is that the Democrats are coming up with a plan that the Bush administration can live with. Is the idea of a reduction in the capital gains tax a good idea or a bad idea?

Mackler: Today you'll read in the headlines that the House Committee dealing with this subject voted to approve and send to the floor a proposal to reduce the capital gains tax. It was Bush's proposal, but again, it was a bipartisan decision with the Democratic Party joining the Republicans in giving more tax breaks to the rich while working people and the poor pay more.

It was blatantly motivated on these grounds, a tax break for the rich on the theory that people who trade in stocks, usually people of considerable wealth, would be able to turn over their profits faster and invest them in job-creating businesses. It's an example of the so-called trickle down economic theory which in reality widens the gap between the rich and poor.

KQED: Let me touch on one more domestic issue and then we'll move into the area of foreign policy. What's your assess-

ment of the Congressional plan as was pushed by the Bush administration in relation to the savings and loan crisis?

Mackler: Again, it's a multi-billion dollar bailout of the rich. One-third of the money that's been lost was a direct product of graft on the part of savings and loan officials. The Congressional proposals are aimed at the American people, the ultimate payers, bailing out the billionaires again.

KQED: If the Socialist Action party were to sit in on the cabinet meeting, or if you had your own government—if you were to assume power right now through the electoral process, or if you were to have a major chair on that cabinet table, how would you have dealt with the savings and loan problem?

Mackler: In order to leap to the hypothetical level of Socialist Action in power, you have to also assume the premise that there is an aroused population of working people and their allies among Blacks and women who desire to change society in their great majority. They are proceeding to build institutions to do that. In the course of doing that they would eliminate all those institu-

KQED: How do you grade the performance of the Bush administration in the area of foreign policy. Why don't we use the relationship between the United States and Soviet Union as a jumping-off point.

Mackler: The Bush administration and the Gorbachev regime in the Soviet Union have found a common interest. I think this contradicts the idea that the Soviet Union is a socialist nation. The Soviet Union is not a capitalist nation; it is a bureaucratized workers' state where the power of the workers was usurped by Stalin and a bureaucratic caste. But I don't believe the Soviet Union is a socialist nation. Socialism and democracy are synonymous.

The Soviet Union is not a democratic society in which its working people defend their own interests through their own organizations. It took some 60 years for those who support the Soviet government to admit this simple fact. This fundamental but convenient misstatement is also made daily in the media—the identification of socialism with Soviet society.

This misconception has entered our popular

support for the terrorist army of Jonas Savimbi in Angola, or to its arming of the mass murderer Pol Pot in Cambodia, or to its invasion of Vietnam.

There was complete agreement between China and the United States on these issues. The basis for the agreement was not democracy but a deal—a deal where China's borders were opened for capitalist investment and profit in return for China's assistance in the traditional rapacious foreign-policy practices of the United States.

KQED: You see the Soviet Union and China making a mistake then and not necessarily the Bush administration.

Mackler: The reason that Gorbachev has been compelled to make the proposals that he did is that there's a rising discontent in the Soviet population. The Soviet workers themselves are beginning to raise the ideas that were raised with the original 1917 Russian Revolution—that is, working-class power as opposed to power exercised by a bureaucratic elite.

U.S. aid to Gorbachev and to Poland, as exemplified by the recent food subsidies to Poland, is designed to head off a social crisis where the real question of socialism—workers' rule—is posed. The United States would prefer relations with the Stalinist bureaucrats, and I include Gorbachev among them, more than they would prefer having the people of the U.S.S.R. and Poland exercise power through their own institutions.

Alexander: Well we're talking about a number of different questions. The original question was the Bush administration's relationship with the Soviet Union.

One of the most positive things that came out of the Reagan administration—and hopefully this will be followed through with the Bush administration—is a reduction in nuclear weapons. This was initiated by the Soviet Union.

The military budget is hurting the United States and it's hurting the Soviet Union. And so there has been movement in that direction. Now it needs to be faster movement. There needs to be a 50 percent reduction in nuclear weapons that will free up much more money in this country and in the Soviet Union. So that's one aspect of the problem.

There has to be continued pressure on the Bush administration to move in that direction. The other side of the question is, of course, that the Communist Party of the United States believes that the Soviet Union is a socialist country with a lot of problems.

All socialist countries have a lot of problems today. There has been a lack of democracy in these countries that has been coming back to haunt them. There's been a problem of too tight control and not enough democratic participation of the people. And of course, that's becoming a major issue and it's a healthy development that's taking place.

And you know, it rocks us who are communists to see this kind of thing happening in the socialist world. But, on the other hand, what is happening today in the Soviet Union is that Gorbachev has said, "This is what the situation is. We need more democracy. We cannot solve these problems without the full participation of our people." And so, they're beginning to correct some of these problems.

KQED: Let me ask the panelists in light of the discussion. Should the United States withdraw from NATO and bring our troops home from overseas?

Mackler: I am for the United States leaving NATO, as I am for the United States dismantling their missile bases throughout the world—hundreds of missile bases that literally surround the Soviet Union. I believe that the global U.S. military presence is the greatest danger in the world today. Capitalism's profit drive makes it inherently prone to expansion and war.

KQED: Do you want to see cutbacks in the military budget for just the philosophical reasons of what the military represents or for economic reasons or just what?

Mackler: I'd like to see not only cutbacks but a total elimination of all nuclear weapons on the part of the United States. That's where I would begin. That's the starting point. I don't think the problem in the world today is

(continued on next page)



Larry Downing-Newsweek

'The Bush administration and the Gorbachev regime in the Soviet Union have found a common interest.'

tions which exist purely for profit—for the rich.

We would have a nationalized banking system where investment was for human needs, decided upon democratically by the workers. Capitalist society doesn't provide for democracy.

The same Bush who is reducing the capital gains taxes, in alliance with the Democrats, is dead opposed to the democratic right of women to choose abortion—to control their reproductive functions. That's why the president of the National Organization for Women, Molly Yard, has called for a demonstration of a million people in Washington D.C., on Nov. 12.

In San Francisco we'll have a complementary demonstration on Oct. 15. These actions are called to simply defend a basic democratic right that was won by women a decade and a half ago. The rights of minorities have been slashed by the Supreme Court's attacks on affirmative action. And the rights of labor have been under constant attack on every front, from the right to defend the picket line and basic working conditions to the very right of unions to exist.

language. Socialism is a failure we are told, because of the now-admitted failures of the Soviet economic and political practices. The identification of the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Poland with a socialist society is an easy one but not true.

It's easy and helpful for proponents of capitalism to say, yes, if you want socialism you can have labor camps, you can have closed borders, you can have poverty, unemployment, strike-breaking, an absence of democratic rights and of workers' input, and so on. Therefore, the capitalist-owned media proclaim, capitalism is the alternative.

But there is an interesting aspect to this discussion. The Bush administration supports Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* not because it believes in democracy. If democracy were the issue, the Bush administration would not continue its friendly attitude towards China.

The issue is not democracy but the U.S. potential for profits. And that's the basis for Bush's relations with China and the Soviet Union—profit. Neither Bush nor the Democratic Party objected to China's support to Chile's dictator, Augusto Pinochet, or to its

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an aggressive Soviet Union that threatens the world with nuclear war.

In this respect, I do make a major distinction between the United States and the Soviet Union. The profit-based capitalist system is the reason for the U.S. war drive. The Soviet bureaucracy's policies are based on seeking accommodation with the United States to preserve bureaucratic privilege, not profit.

In fact, if you take a look at the foreign-policy discussions which are going on today you will see a worldwide rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union—but not a progressive one in my opinion. The aim of it is essentially to satisfy the needs of the rich in the United States and the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, on the one hand, at the expense of the people of the world on the other.

That is why Nicaragua, for example, was virtually cut off by the Soviet Union—virtually cut off and left without financial aid even in the face of the contras. This rapprochement means that the South African people who are struggling for their liberation are going to be pressed to accept a government where the fundamental institutions of wealth are controlled by the rich, a government without the more onerous aspects of apartheid and with perhaps some Black figures as window-dressing.

Alexander: The main issue is that we have to save the earth. We have to save the planet, we have to save the people. Nuclear war is unthinkable, it would destroy the world. So there has to be a decision made in the world to ban all nuclear weapons.

Now you're not going to be able to completely disband all armies. There are certain questions of national defense and so forth. Those will continue over the next period. But I am for withdrawal from NATO. I am for dismantling all the U.S. bases around the world, and I am for continuing negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Jeff [Mackler] throws in a lot of things when he speaks. You have to listen to what Daniel Ortega says about the support of the Soviet Union for Nicaragua. You have to listen to what Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress says about it.

Any statements you read from them say that there is continuing support by the Soviet Union for their liberation struggles—for the efforts of the Nicaraguan people to maintain their country. So what Jeff says is just not true. It's just not what they're saying.

KQED: If you were in power today and you were not able to totally reduce nuclear arms around the world because that's an incredibly multi-layered and complex problem, but if you had the power to recall troops to the United States, how would you respond to the governments of China, West Germany, Britain, the Republic of Korea? What would be your response to them if they said we want these troops here?

Alexander: All of this has to be on the basis of equal negotiation. The Soviet Union unilaterally stopped testing nuclear weapons, but the United States did not meet that unilateral action and, therefore, the Soviet Union was forced to restart testing. You have to have joint efforts to reduce the tension in the world. And it's a negotiated process, but it should move quicker.

Mackler: The question assumes that we're only talking about the policies of governments and in this case, practically speaking, it appears that we are. But suppose we ask the people of the world whether they want U.S. troops in their country.

Suppose we asked them whether they think



Workers and students in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) demonstrate for democratic reforms.

'The reason that Gorbachev has been compelled to raise the proposals he does is that there's a rising discontent in the Soviet population.'

the U.S. armies are protecting them against anything, or whether they are actually protecting those governments against the people themselves? Why does the United States have a hostile attitude toward the Nicaraguan people and not toward the dictatorships in Latin America that we fully support?

KQED: But you cannot take a worldwide referendum on whether or not U.S. troops should be in the Republic of Korea or Japan and so forth.

Mackler: Well that's one of the interesting things about being on this show, Kevin. I don't envision myself trying to rationally convince the head of a government that represents the rich to disinherit the interests of the capitalist system. I think that the change to a socialist society will be a product of the overwhelming involvement of the people themselves. So yes, I must look to the people.

[The remainder of the program consisted of responses to questions phoned in by callers.]

Caller: I have a question for Jeff Mackler. In a socialist society what sort of institutions do you envision that would prevent unions and other popular organizations from becoming top-down organizations that end up repressing workers' rights, as for instance in Mexico?

Mackler: The Soviet Union got its name from the Russian word soviet, which means council. These councils, established up by the Soviet people as a product of their revolution, were the most democratic institutions the world has ever known. They were literally councils of the entire population, beginning where people were engaged in work. The soviets decided virtually everything. In fact, it

was literally a soviet government, not a government of the Communist Party.

It was a government of the people who had the right to immediately recall officials. The wages of officials, who were elected, were the same as the wages of skilled workers—and the decisions were made by the people themselves.

The newly organized soviets in the U.S.S.R. today are virtually powerless. They meet once a year and if they do make decisions, such as the election of Gorbachev by a vote of 1500 to 0, the vote is a formality. The real power in the U.S.S.R. today still resides in the hands of an elite group of Stalinist bureaucrats in the Gorbachev core group.

Let me just take one second to respond to Kendra on the question of Soviet aid to Nicaragua and to the ANC. A book just published by Walnut Publishing Co. [the publishing house associated with Socialist Action] titled "Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution" by Alan Benjamin documents quite clearly the idea that the Soviet Union has systematically cut off aid to the Nicaraguan government. This is a central reason the Sandinista government has made concessions to the United States and the contras which undermine its national sovereignty.

We have similarly documented Soviet support for a deal in South Africa at the expense of the liberation struggle.

Alexander: First of all I think we ought to be clear about what socialism means and what a socialist country is. A socialist country is one that is economically organized so that a few people don't get rich off the country and that the profits made are put back into society. In the Soviet Union there continues

to be free health care, education, etc., because profits are put back into it.

But the Soviet Union is having tremendous problems. You have to read the stuff that's coming out from the Soviet trade unions, for instance. They say that the problem has been that they have a trade union that's in the same council with the management and they sort of work things out together. Now that has to end.

The trade unions have to be independent of the management of industry. They have to be there for protecting the interests of the workers themselves. That's why you had the miners' strike. It was a big explosion of miners which is one of the strongest bases of socialism in the Soviet Union because they didn't feel the government nor the management was listening to their concerns about how to run the industry.

Caller: What is your view of democracy in the United States?

Mackler: Democracy in my view is very simple. It's the direct control of society by working people through their own institutions. There is no such thing in the United States.

We talked about the savings and loan issue. Who made the decision to bail them out to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars? Not the American people. It was a tiny number of politicians in Congress, the same few who ripped off the billions from the HUD. Who profits from the war industries—to the tune of billions? Who makes war? The people never make those decisions. They never have any say in any of these fundamental aspects of their lives.

KQED: We have run out of time. I'd like to thank our guests. This is Kevin Pursglove of Forum.

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Polish workers and their families are tired of waiting in lines caused by shortages of consumer commodities. This contradiction today has an explosive character.

New Polish gov't decrees austerity; U.S. steps up aid to avert uprising

By ALAN BENJAMIN

"Socialism as an economic theory is dead. Long live the free market," proclaimed Representative Donald E. Lukens (R-Ohio) after the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly on Oct. 19 to approve \$550 million in aid to Poland aimed at supporting "democracy, private enterprise, and a free-market economy."

The House vote came less than two weeks after the new Polish government headed by Solidarnosc Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki announced the most sweeping pro-capitalist measures yet undertaken in Eastern Europe. According to Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz, the state will slash subsidies on basic consumer items and public services, large segments of state-owned industry will be privatized, credit will be tightened, interest rates will be allowed to rise, and wages will be frozen.

These measures were enacted at the insistence of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the watchdog organization of the major Western financial institutions. At the round-table agreements held earlier this year, Solidarnosc leader Lech Walesa and his group of close advisers had agreed to support a three-pronged plan of economic "reforms" as a condition for rescheduling payments on Poland's \$39 billion debt to the imperialist banks. [See June 1989 and September 1989 issues of *Socialist Action*.]

The first phase of these reforms was contained in Mazowiecki's October austerity package. The two subsequent phases of the reforms, to be implemented by 1991, call for the introduction of a stock market, an end to the monopoly on foreign trade, the generalization of bankruptcy laws, and the total "freeing" of prices and services. "To be blunt," stated the Oct. 19 issue of *The Economist*, "Poland has taken a major stride toward the reintroduction of capitalism."

Effects on Polish workers

The effects of the government's economic measures were felt almost immediately. The price of cheese rose 100 percent in a matter of days, gas rose by 50 percent—and it is estimated that the price of coal (and therefore of electricity) will double by mid-November. In a country plagued by a 200 percent annual inflation rate, the price hikes—combined with the wage freeze—will have a devastating effect on the working class.

It is estimated, moreover, that up to one-third of the Polish workforce will be laid off within the next 18 months as a result of the plant closings contained in the "reform" package. While the government has provided a limited safety net for those who will lose their jobs, Solidarnosc economists acknowledge that as many as 2 million workers will

have no unemployment insurance and no prospects of job retraining in the foreseeable future.

Pie in the sky

Capitalist economists and government spokespersons in the United States have warned that "suffering is the first step toward reform"—that is, things will get worse for Polish workers before they get better. But at the end of the tunnel, these capitalist pundits insist, will be a land of milk and honey, with jobs and economic prosperity for all.

The promise of a better life ahead for the Polish workers once the pro-capitalist reforms are fully implemented is, of course, pie in the sky. The capitalists and their representatives in the IMF are aiming at turning Poland into a vast pool of cheap labor for imperialist investment. They are not concerned about economic development, nor are they interested in the general welfare of the Polish people.

De-industrialization and the conversion of Poland to the status of a semi-colonial, comprador nation is what the IMF and the capitalist West have in store for Poland.

At the behest of the IMF, major regions of Western Europe—where industries are also considered "unproductive"—have already been turned into abandoned rust belts. Millions of workers have been thrown out of their jobs, swelling the ranks of the unemployed. With this immense reserve army of labor, the capitalists are pushing for the unions to accept wage cuts and greater "flexibility" in work rules.

The capitalist prescription for Poland's ailing economy is even more brutal. It entails dismantling the planned economy and reversing all the social gains of the Polish workers' state.

Hoping to avert civil war

The first economic measures decreed by the new coalition government headed by Tadeusz Mazowiecki are providing Polish workers with a taste of things to come. Even Solidarnosc leader Lech Walesa, who was the man responsible for Solidarnosc's support to the pro-capitalist economic reforms contained in the round-table agreement, was forced to admit that the social cost of the government's austerity program was unbearable.

"If the price increases continue," Walesa said shortly after the price of gas shot up by 50 percent, "it is quite likely that we will be unable to contain the anger of the workers. In the long run this could unleash a civil war."

Aware that Poland's new austerity package could provoke a strike wave similar to the one that led to the formation of Solidarnosc in 1980, the Bush administration and the U.S. Congress have rushed to provide \$300 million worth of food to get Poland through the winter. The additional aid is being earmarked for a six-month unemployment-com-

pensation program.

It is unlikely, however, that this amount of aid will be sufficient to contain the anger of the workers. Walesa had publicly requested \$10 billion in U.S. aid from George Bush—roughly 20 times the amount currently provided by the House of Representatives—to sweeten the transition toward capitalist restoration.

And even if Walesa's \$10 billion request were met, this would only postpone the day of reckoning. The worldwide capitalist system is in its death agony. It has no progressive role to play anywhere in the world. It has no solutions to improve the well-being of the majority of the Polish people. Sooner or later, the Polish workers would be compelled to rise up against the penetration of capitalist exploitation, unemployment, and austerity.

How long the honeymoon?

The government headed by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the first government in the past 40 years not headed by a member of the Stalinist ruling party (the Polish United Workers Party), has aroused the hopes and expectations of the Polish people.

The limited, but not unimportant, measures of political democratization undertaken by the new government (reform of the penal code and the courts, liberalization of the press, and the new electoral laws) have been widely supported.

But the essential reins of political power remain lodged in the hands of the Polish bureaucratic caste. The all-powerful office of the presidency is in the hands of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the man who decreed martial law in December 1981. And the key ministries of Defense and Interior—as well as the police—remain under the strict control of the bureaucracy.

Jozef Piniór, a leader of the left-wing opposition organization, the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution), characterized the response of the Polish people to the Mazowiecki government as one of "cautious optimism."

"Everyone was pleased when Mazowiecki was chosen," Piniór stated, "but there has been no dancing in the streets. The streets are quiet; the demonstrations we see now are very small. Walesa should have been able to arrive at the Palace of Culture at the head of 200,000 people."

Piniór continued, "The establishment of the Mazowiecki government does not mean that the society has taken power.... I think Mazowiecki is in his honeymoon period. It will last a month at most. Then there will be another wave of strikes."

At the time Mazowiecki took office, Poland was experiencing the most extensive strike wave of the past two years. Over 100,000 road construction workers and post office workers were on strike for a month

over pay. Wildcat strikes of railworkers had also broken out in many of the major industrial cities of the country.

But within a week after Mazowiecki took office, the strikes ended. The workers decided to give the new government a chance to improve their economic situation. They were also under intense pressure from Walesa and Mazowiecki, who called for a moratorium on strikes and denounced any remaining strikers as "provocateurs."

Opposition to Walesa's line

With the announcement of the new austerity measures in mid-October, it can be expected that strikes and other forms of opposition to the coalition government will occur in the coming weeks and months.

This is all the more likely given that Walesa and his group of advisers do not speak for the majority of Solidarnosc members—and even leaders—in their decision to form a coalition government with the Stalinist bureaucracy and in their decision to implement the IMF's austerity program.

The best militants and leaders in Solidarnosc—people who oppose the pro-capitalist reforms to one degree or another—are already waging an internal fight within Solidarnosc against Walesa's policies and for the convening of an emergency Second National Congress of Solidarnosc. They are demanding that Solidarnosc's representatives in the government be accountable to the rank and file. [See accompanying story on the opposition currents within Solidarnosc.]

One of the Polish opposition leaders with the best understanding of the threats to the workers' standard of living posed by the pro-capitalist reforms is Jozef Piniór, a central leader of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution. In response to the decision to privatize much of Poland's nationalized industry, Piniór stated:

"More and more people will see that privatization is not the solution. There is now a free market in food, and only a couple of days ago the prices went up another 40 percent...."

"We demand that Mazowiecki abolish the post-Stalinist system. We also want the workforce to control the economy through self-management committees."

"If there are strikes exclusively over pay, then we will support them. But we think they should turn into demands for control of production through self-management committees."

Piniór's views are sound. The challenge for the opposition currents within Solidarnosc in the period ahead will be to offer a political perspective for the upcoming struggles along the lines raised by Piniór and his party. This will pave the way for the realization of the original goals of Solidarnosc—the creation of a society based on genuine institutions of workers' democracy. ■

Opposition to Walesa grows in Solidarnosc

Soon after the Walesa wing of the Solidarnosc leadership agreed to conduct "round-table" negotiations with the Polish Stalinists last spring, a big public debate broke out in Poland over the wisdom of these negotiations—and, later, over the outcome of the negotiations. Prominent leaders of Solidarnosc began to raise their voices loudly in opposition to the policies put forward by Walesa and his advisers.

The most prominent leaders of the fight against Walesa are Andrzej Gwiazda (former vice president of Solidarnosc), Marian Jurczyk (leader of Solidarnosc in the port city of Szczecin), Andrzej Slowik (leader of Solidarnosc in Lodz and Bydgoszcz), and Jozef Pinior (the main leader of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution).

The character and scope of the opposition to Walesa within the official structures of Solidarnosc has received little—if any—cov-

erage in the mainstream media in this country. The capitalist ruling class in the United States, which owns and controls the media, would like us to believe that the entire population of Poland supports Walesa unconditionally and is clamoring for a return to capitalism.

The ruling-class propaganda blitz to the effect that "Socialism is Dead" would be undermined if it became known that sizeable currents within Poland not only oppose the austerity package imposed by the IMF, but increasingly oppose the penetration of capitalism into Poland.

We are printing below excerpts of interviews and statements by these opposition leaders in which they evaluate the round-table agreements and the new Mazowiecki government. These excerpts are reprinted from the French socialist newsweekly *Informations Ouvrieres*.

Jozef Pinior:

'Workers will react to capitalist appropriation of the economy'



Jozef Pinior is a central leader of the Polish Socialist Party-Democratic Revolution.

"Political wisdom has led the bureaucracy to look for an agreement with the Church and the opposition. Their strategy is transparent. It involves organizing the transition from totalitarianism to an authoritarian regime and an anti-working class economic reform.

"The authoritarian regime was put into place by the round-table agreements. It consists of a president with unlimited powers [Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski], 35 percent democracy [a reference to the voting restrictions in the recent elections]—and complete control by the *nomenklatura* over the army, the police, and the means of mass information with which to maintain themselves in

power.

"The Walesa opposition has agreed to support this process toward the embourgeoisement of the *nomenklatura*. These reforms are supposed to make the economy more dynamic. In fact, they are aimed at providing the world with cheap labor and dooming the youth and the majority of the workers to destitution. This was the basis of the round-table discussion.

"The 'Magdalenka opponents' [Walesa and his supporters who negotiated the round-table agreements at the Magdalenka Palace] are flooding the country with speeches about the need for responsibility. They are pressing the people to legitimize the very same people who instituted martial law and broke Solidarnosc.

"Today the legendary figure of the Polish workers is traveling through the country calling on the workers not to take strike action. He is not ashamed to ridicule all opposition members who do not agree with him.

"Solidarnosc, the movement in which the oppressed put all their hopes, is transforming itself into perestroika. Sooner or later this will end up in a rebellion of Solidarnosc's grass-roots....

"The *nomenklatura* does not have any program to develop the productive forces capable of satisfying the social needs of the population—and it is stupid to think that the workers will not react to the capitalist appropriation of the means of production by the ruling elite." (*Informations Ouvrieres*, May 10-17, 1989.)

Andrzej Slowik:

'Round-table agreements are a threat; new Solidarnosc congress is needed'

Andrzej Slowik is a central leader of Solidarnosc in the Lodz region.

"A year ago, the KKW, Walesa's personal working group, decided that it was time to ask for the registration of new trade unions. We opposed this. Solidarnosc exists. The authorities are not entitled to disband it.

"There is no need for any reregistration. We

should have been given back our original registration, that's all. What we want is the relegalization of Solidarnosc on the basis of its original statutes....

"Not a single trade union in the world can accept a decrease in living standards. That is why we demand that wages be indexed to prices. Neither can we accept the liquidation of Social Security in any form. There is no way we can accept an increase in the number of working hours per week. And we cannot tolerate unemployment being used as an economic tool of the government. Such a position is unacceptable....

"We see these round-table agreements as a threat. We are afraid that the worst-off will be the hardest hit.

"We think that the segment of our trade-union leadership that negotiated the agreements was not ready for the discussion. There were no preparatory meetings in the factories or in the regions where the issues on the table could be freely discussed by the workers.

"We will be fighting for a new congress of Solidarnosc to straighten out this situation." (*Informations Ouvrieres*, May 3-10, 1989.)

Marian Jurczyk:

'Walesa registered a new union; original statutes, program dropped'

Marian Jurczyk is a central leader of Solidarnosc in the port city of Szczecin.

"The purpose of our fight [against Walesa] is to defend the identity of our union. Whereas we are defending the heart and soul of Solidarnosc, Walesa and a small group of his close advisers registered a new trade-union formation on April 17, 1989.

"It was a totally new union both formally and legally speaking. Except for the name and logo of the union—and the president who was elected at the union's founding congress in 1980—everything else is different....

"The statutes of the original Solidarnosc were thrown out the window; the founding program of Solidarnosc was discarded. New officers of the union—people who were never elected by any official union body—were registered by the authorities. In many cities, parallel structures to those currently existing were set up by Walesa in agreement with the state and party authorities....

"The second reason for our opposition to Walesa concerns the contents of the round-table agreements. During these agreements, for example, a clause was introduced that limits the right to strike. I do not know of



any genuine union that willingly agrees to renounce the right to strike. Such a union could not exist for long.

"We would like to help the Mazowiecki government, but I don't think his government will survive too long. The spiraling increase in prices will provoke a nationwide social explosion." (*Informations Ouvrieres*, Sept. 13-29, 1989.)

Andrzej Gwiazda:

'Task Force was set up to fight for the interests of the workers'



Andrzej Gwiazda is a central leader of Solidarnosc in Gdansk who was elected vice president of the union at its founding congress in 1980.

"Since 1985, the KKW [the National Executive Commission consisting of people appointed by Walesa] has asserted in its press that it is necessary for the Polish people to accept a decrease in living standards so as to allow the reforms to go through.

"Such statements have been repeated on various occasions by Walesa himself. No member of the trade union is entitled to issue such statements....

"The group of Solidarnosc members participating in this [round-table] discussion only represented a fraction of the trade union. They share Walesa's point of view and were appointed by him.... There was no Solidarnosc delegation to the round-table agreement.

"There have been attempts to convene the National Commission (KK) of Solidarnosc, which was democratically elected by the first Congress in 1980. But all of these attempts have been opposed by Walesa and his group.

"Twenty-two KK members in a 1986 pilgrimage of workers to Jasna Gora asked Walesa to convene the National Commission (KK). Walesa ignored their appeal. It is for this reason that all the members of the elected KK who were angered by Walesa and his group, 16 of them to be exact, decided to set up the Task Force.

"We have various points of view within the Task Force, but all members agree on the defense of the democratic principles and procedures. The founding trade-union congress adopted statutes. It is important for a trade union to respect its statutes....

"Solidarnosc was set up to defend the interests of the workers. This should be reaffirmed. All together, Polish workers only receive 5 percent of the riches they produce. In this context any strike is good. When the Polish workers receive 40 percent of the riches they produce, we can then discuss the validity of strikes.

"The Task Force is now in the process of elaborating a political orientation for the coming period. Not only are the living standards decreasing, but serious economic problems are developing.

"For example, according to the new economic law decreed on Jan. 1, 1989, the prime minister is entitled to turn bankrupt state firms over to private individuals. On this point, an independent economic analyst, Mrs. Jadwiga Staniskzki, has asserted that through this law the party's functionaries are becoming the new owners of the companies.

"Indeed, it is very simple for these state functionaries to let a firm go bankrupt and then pass it on to private ownership—either directly to themselves or to one of their friends—without having to pay a cent. This has already been done in some sectors of the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk.

"What is actually needed is for the workers themselves to take over their firms and become owners and elect their managers. By this I mean a process of genuine socialization. Wages should be increased. The firms' profits should go directly to the workers." (*Informations Ouvrieres*, March 8-15, 1989.)

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International Tribunal demands cancellation of imperialist debt

By MYA SHONE and RALPH SCHOENMAN

The International Tribunal on the Debt, which took place Sept. 21-24 in Lima, Peru, was impressive for the breadth of participation and the seriousness with which it had been prepared.

Thirty countries were represented, and 180 delegates were formal participants in the proceedings of the Tribunal. Thirty-five detailed testimonies were presented on specific topics pertaining to the nature of the international debt; its origins; the mechanisms through which it had been imposed; the social, economic, and political consequences for individual countries; and the structure of power required for its imposition.

The International Tribunal based itself upon the statutes which set forth the workings of the Bertrand Russell Tribunal on U.S. War Crimes in Indo-China in the late 1960s. The findings were to take the form of judgment by the peoples of all countries—who were the actual “jury.”

The Tribunal was a forum in which to assemble an indictment of institutions which visit specific injustices upon all the world's exploited and oppressed peoples—primarily the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the European Economic Community (EEC). It was thus a revolutionary “grand jury,” a voice for the voiceless.

Broad sponsorship and preparation

The Tribunal was prepared by broad political forces in Peru, notably the Workers Party and the Popular Democratic Unity (UDP), a mass-based organization that supports Cuban revolutionist Che Guevara's perspective for continental struggle against U.S. imperialism.

The major independent Peruvian trade-union federations also played a central role in preparing the Lima Tribunal. [See box for names of Sponsoring Committee members.]

The six presidents of the Tribunal's sessions were Yves Dechezelles, director of the League for Human Rights in France; Helio Bicudo, a prominent figure in the League for Human Rights in Brazil and a member of the central leadership of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT); Omar Menouer, founder and leader of the League for Human Rights in Algeria; Segundo Melendez, a deputy in the Venezuelan Parliament representing the Movement for Socialist Action (MAS); Ricardo Letts, a central leader of the Partido de Unificación Mariateguista (PUM); and Ralph Schoenman, past executive director of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

The Inauguration of the Tribunal took place at a public rally at the Municipal Theater in downtown Lima, with over 1500 people in attendance. The list of speakers included prominent trade-union militants from a num-



The presidents of the tribunal salute the sentence against imperialism.

ber of Latin American countries, as well as representatives from the United States, Spain, France, Germany, Yugoslavia, Algeria, Senegal, Haiti, and Cuba.

The theme of the Tribunal was captured in the slogan inscribed on the main conference banner in many languages: “It is not the peoples' debt.”

Indicting the imperialist debt

The major papers and testimonies presented at the Tribunal documented the process through which the ruling classes in the imperialist countries, facing declining profit rates at home, induced neo-colonial governments to borrow extensively from the imperialist banks.

Economic projects aimed at increasing export earnings in the debtor countries were fostered, making these economies particularly vulnerable to the manipulations of pricing controlled by the imperial countries. Contrived drops in the prices paid for export commodities or raw material result in increased borrowing and in devaluation of the currencies of the dependent countries, thereby creating a worsening debt cycle.

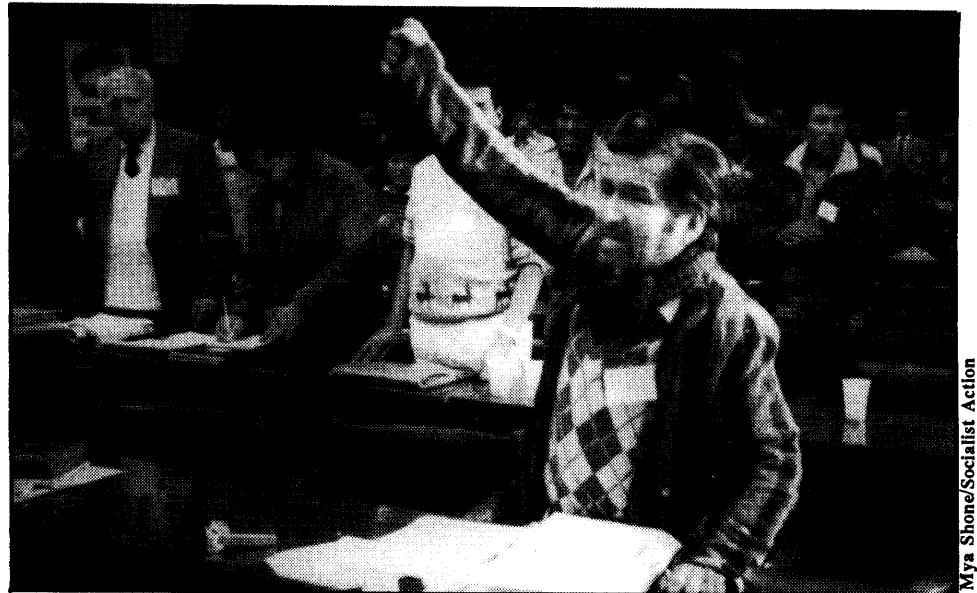
Once the debtor nations are caught in this cycle, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and EEC come forward as arbiters of renegotiation. These institutions are the instruments of the ruling class, whose banks have made the loans. The IMF and World Bank proceed to impose austerity economies on the debtor regimes.

In short, the debtor regimes are compelled to eliminate the meager social services which exist in the dependent countries, to freeze wages—and to liquidate the infrastructure of health care, education, housing, and food production.

Papers presented at the Tribunal also revealed how the debt incurred by client regimes in the over-exploited countries has been “liquidated”—and often paid off many times over—because the huge interest payments reach or surpass the sum of the original principal very quickly.

Hence, in the era of declining profit, capitalism has reverted to a pre-colonial mode of pillage which has genocidal consequences. According to the World Bank's own data, mass famine, destruction of viable agricultural land for cash crops subject to the vagaries of a manipulated world market, will result in the death of 30 million children in Africa in the next 10 years.

In Latin America, governments in debt are now transferring rights to natural resources as a barter payment for the interest on the debt which the governments cannot meet. In this manner, the mineral wealth, forests, and resources for potential development are being handed over to the banks and conglomerates



Ecasuro Medrano, a leader of the squatters movement, salutes the sentence and voices his approval for the decision of the tribunal.

in the wholesale liquidation of nominal sovereignty and command over basic resources and goods.

As the standards of living plummet, as epidemic disease increases, life expectancies plummet, pauperization generalizes and despair deepens, the client governments which have obtained the loans resort increasingly to para-military murder squads to attack the population when it attempts to resist.

Thus, the debt is the vehicle for revisiting upon the semi-colonial world conditions which have not been seen since slavery. None of the indigenous ruling classes can avoid this cycle. Only the working class and peasants, victims of imperial exploitation, are able to challenge the new slavery.

The example of Chile

The report from Albert Galvez Muenza, Secretary-General of the Construction Workers of Chile, was typical of the high level of discourse and research which characterized the Tribunal hearings. It exemplified, as well, the involvement of working-class militants, many of them occupying important trade-union positions.

The 1988 public debt of Chile was \$16 billion and private debt was \$3 billion. The sector of the ruling class that was tied to transnational corporations was closely linked to the military dictatorship.

All of the debt was contracted by private corporations acting through the Pinochet state. The total obligation was so crippling that in order to service it, debt was constantly incurred and the IMF was determining the operation of the Chilean economy.

Today \$21 billion are owed; 22 percent of

Chilean production is devoted to servicing this debt. Far more than this amount has been paid since 1982, however.

At the same time, the IMF imposed austerity and drastic cuts in all social services, in health, and education. Since 1973, when the government of Salvador Allende was overthrown, employment has collapsed and entire branches of national industries have disappeared.

Unemployment has reached 40 percent of the workforce and in many sectors it is over 50 percent. In education, all of elementary and secondary school education has been removed from the public sector and put in private hands. There are 60 to 80 pupils per class. Fifty percent of students are now out of the educational system seeking work and half of them are unemployed.

Only 48 percent of the children of Chile now finish elementary school. Ninety percent have dropped out of secondary education for financial reasons.

To enforce these Draconian measures, barbarous repression has been necessary. The trade unions are being destroyed, and under the doctrine of national security an internal war has been unleashed against the population, notably the working class. Over 800 people have disappeared recently, Muenza asserted.

Workers' states not exempt

The weaker industrial economies—and the bureaucratized workers' states—are being subjected to a like fate. In the Soviet Union, China, Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, for example, the introduction of market mecha-

(continued on next page)

Sponsors of the Lima Tribunal

The Sponsoring Committee for the Lima Tribunal included Genaro Ledesma, Senator and President of FOCEP (the Popular, Workers, Peasants and Students' Front); Yehude Simon, Deputy and President of the National Popular Assembly (ANP); Ricardo Letts, President of the National Popular Assembly (and one of the main leaders of the Mariateguista Party, PUM); Carlos Malpica, Senator; Jorge Hurtado, Secretary-General of the UNIR (National Union of the Revolutionary Left); Saul Cantoral, Secretary General of the FNTMMSP (National Federation of Miners, Steel Workers and Metal Workers of Peru)—who was recently assassinated by a para-military death squad; Moises Palomino, President of the FNTMMSP; Olmedo Auris, Secretary General of SUTEP (National Union of Education Workers of Peru); Cecilia Oviedo, Secretary-General of the Popular Democratic Unity (UDP); Ladislao Chavez, Secretary-General of SIDER-PERU (National Union of Workers at Sider-Peru); Enrique Rodriguez, First Vice President of FENDUP (National Federation of Teachers of Peruvian Universities); Leonor Zamora, CODEH-Ayacucho (Committee for Human Rights in Ayacucho); and Hernan Cuentas, Workers Party.

Message from Yue Wu, leader of Beijing Autonomous Federation of Workers

One of the delegates who was unable to attend the Lima Tribunal because of visa problems was Yue Wu, a central leader of the Autonomous Federation of Workers of Beijing. Wu sent a message to the Tribunal which posed the crucial question of how to solve the problem of the debt through promoting and defending the interests and rights of the workers.

Wu recounted the recent popular explosion in Tiananmen Square which was suppressed at the cost of hundreds of lives. He stated:

"It was under the cover of economic and political reform designed to head off mass revolt, that the sector of the privileged caste around Deng Xiaoping installed neither democracy nor a legal system but, exploiting their positions, used their power to create millionaires among their children, parents, relatives, and subordinates.

"By 1987, for example, some 200,000 companies had been registered which controlled and monopolized the sale of the majority of consumer products such as food, oil, salt, electronics, and armaments. Through contacts at the highest governmental levels, a double pricing system was established, both in the planned and the "free" market sectors.

"Bureaucrats and their relatives and cronies buy at low state fixed prices and sell great quantities of the production of China on the black market at vastly elevated prices, with the immediate consequences of deterioration of the Chinese economy.

"In 1978, commercial transactions in China totaled \$2 trillion, and there was a dollar reserve of \$114 billion. By 1988, transactions had fallen to \$1 trillion, with a deficit of \$7.8 billion. The Chinese bureaucracy now launched an open campaign to borrow from foreign banks, and by January 1989 the debt

in China exceeded \$42.6 billion dollars, with interest payments of \$10 billion due by 1992.

"During all this, the economic priority in China has been the construction of luxurious palaces for Deng Xiaoping and his associates along with imported cars and luxury goods.

"Using on the one hand the dollar resources of the country to obtain arbitrary purchases to serve bureaucratic privilege, the corrupt bureaucratic caste was forcing China's more than 1 billion people to endure a life of increasing misery.

"This was the principal reason and motor which impelled the Chinese people firmly to oppose the foreign debt and bureaucratic privilege, which are directly linked. This is the basic issue which provoked an explosion for a great democratic movement in China.

"Our movement, based upon the working people of China, raised demands for an end to corruption in opposition to this bureaucracy of commerce, calling for freedom of information and publication and for total democracy.

"Deng Xiaoping declared that he has no sympathy for workers, students, and the inhabitants of cities who join in mass demonstrations and great strikes. Hence, hundreds of thousands of soldiers with tanks and armored vehicles were launched upon the bloody suppression of the democratic movement.

"Tens of thousands of workers, students, and inhabitants of our cities were killed and wounded in the cruel repression of a peaceful and unarmed movement.

"Following this, all of China has fallen under a white terror on a large scale, with mass arrests and executions, both public and secret.

"Many of the leaders and members of the Autonomous Federation of Workers of Beijing have been murdered or imprisoned without any legal process. This group of criminals, leaders of the government of Deng Xiaoping, Li Peng and Yang Shangkun, are not only against the Chinese workers but are the enemies as well of the elementary rights and aspirations of the workers of the world, of trade unionists, and human beings everywhere."

Tribunal demands reappearance of José Ramón García Gomez



Ana-Maria Santander (center) presents the case of the disappearance of her husband, José Ramón García, before the press.

Ana-Maria Santander, the wife of José Ramón García Gómez, a leading member of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) in Mexico who was kidnapped by government security police last Dec. 17, presented a compelling report to the International Tribunal on the kidnapping of her husband.

Santander recounted her meeting with Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari on May 6, during which she demanded that the Commission of Inquiry set up by the Mexican president to investigate the kidnapping of her husband fulfill its obligations. According to Santander, the Commission never met after its first session in mid-February.

Following her report, the Tribunal delegates went en masse to the Mexican Embassy in Lima, and a delegation composed of Ricardo Letts, Segundo Melendez, Yves Dechezelles, Ralph Schoenman, Victoria Melgar, and Ana-Maria Santander met for two hours with the Mexican Ambassador to Peru.

By chance this man was from the state of Morelos, where José Ramón had been kidnapped. The Ambassador knew the Governor of Morelos and was a friend of Salinas. He undertook to send his own personal request to Salinas to receive a Tribunal delegation at the end of October to ask for President Salinas' personal intervention to secure the release of José Ramón.

The following are excerpts from the presentation to the Tribunal by Osmarino Armanco, secretary-general of the Rubber Workers Union of the Amazon (Brazil).

"I have come here to address you on the defense of the people of Amazonia. I am not an intellectual. I have not had a chance to study. There are no educational opportunities for the rubber workers. Please, if you do not understand me, pose questions.

"Here are some of the rubber shoes and boots that we produce. We work in terrible conditions in the Amazonian forest. We work in the oil and rubber industry. The forests have been invaded with the aim of fighting a war against the population.

"We were trained to work. People have lived this way for decades. The armed units came and set people's homes on fire. The Indians were hunted down, murdered and raped. In 1973, the church began to work in the area. It was in 1937 that the first trade union was founded in the Amazon.

"We are here before this tribunal because we feel that at last this is our court. Now we can present for the first time OUR case. This is our trial....

"Our houses are burned and so we must fight against the owners. We have always struggled in this way and our fight has had a large impact. We have a rich history of resistance in Brazil. Nine million hectares of land have been seized and through all this the government has developed a terrible mecha-

nism of repression against the people.

"I want to speak in the name of these people. The workers began organizing in the region and we formed the first regional trade union. The leader of our trade union [Chico Mendes, the person who preceded Osmarino as president of the union] was murdered. The culprits were never found. We organized meetings about this.

"You should know that there are now 1,800,000 people unemployed and without a permanent place to live in this region. The conditions of the people are getting worse. We have formed a council to work together with the Indians. We were always told that they live like animals. We live the same life. We are all exploited by the capitalists.

"Thanks to our trade union and our organization we have organized to stop the repression and the assassinations. But people also need to find ways to prevent illness which is everywhere. We need to work 15 days to earn enough to buy one liter of oil, assuming you are not sick.

"There is another important task which our trade union is carrying out. We are organizing to show that it is possible to work without destroying the environment and the forest. We

have proven it. All the economists and the experts discuss how to do work without the destruction of nature. But we have expropriated land as protected land to show how to do it.

"The problem in Amazonia is the private ownership of the land. We in the Amazon say that the land belongs to all the people of the world, not to the rich countries. In the rich countries, the workers are also exploited and assassinated as we are.

"We are defending our workers, our people, and also the environment. We are giving Japan trouble. They talk of building a road from one coast to the other. This can only be done by destroying the jungle and the land.

"We are trying to explain here in Lima that the workers' movements from all of Africa and Latin America are authorizing you to take positions. The decisions taken about the Amazon must also reflect our authorization to make decisions to help the people.

"We ask you to also discuss forms of self-defense. Our trade unionists are under attack continually. There have been assassination attempts against my life. For this reason we require that all our trade-union leaders plan their every movement so that they will be

Leader of Amazon Rubber Workers addresses Tribunal



Osmarino Armanco-Rodriguez

accompanied always.

"Help the disappeared. We must find ways to defend them. This work we believe is not only the responsibility of the Brazilian comrades but of all comrades."

...cancel imperialist debt

(continued from preceding page)

nisms results in dependency on the world capitalist market, increased borrowing, corruption, and subjugation to the austerity remedies of the financial police of world capital: the World Bank and the IMF.

The debt provides the common ground of oppression of the workers and peasants of these Stalinized workers' states, as the bureaucracies increasingly perform the explicit role of converting themselves into the local instrument of the world capitalist system.

In a lengthy message sent to the Tribunal, Andrzej Gwiazda showed that the government now established in Poland, composed of the Catholic Church, the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the hierarchy of Solidarnosc, has embraced the policy of the IMF for Poland. Gwiazda is a leader of the opposition to

Walesa within the leadership of Solidarnosc.

The IMF, Gwiazda pointed out, has provided an official counsellor to the Polish government to oversee implementation of austerity measures and pro-capitalist reforms. The power of the *nomenklatura*, he stated, is undergoing a specific transformation. The old bureaucratic privilege is being translated into direct property ownership. Many of the functionaries are becoming not-so-small property owners.

Gwiazda stated that the IMF policies are designed to reduce the standard of living of the Polish people. The deliberate suppression of production in the countryside and in industry is being carried out so that production can be organized not for need but to pay the foreign debt. This can not be accomplished without demoralizing the people and paralyzing their self-organization.

Who signed these agreements with the IMF, Gwiazda asked? The rank and file of Solidarnosc were not even informed, let alone consulted, about the acquisition of these loans from the banks or about how the funds would be used in Poland.

These debts can only be paid by taking from the people—from their production and from their living standards, Gwiazda asserted.

"We need a block of countries throughout the world to repudiate and refuse to pay this debt," Gwiazda concluded. "We say that the people of Poland and Peru have the same struggle and we support the International Tribunal in its effort to bring together all the victims in order to fight back together."

Sentence of the Tribunal

After hearing all the testimonies and papers from 35 witnesses, the Tribunal—composed of the six presidents of sessions, two secretaries, three presenters of the charges, and 24 jurors drawn from the delegates—weighed the

evidence and the summary of it prepared by a commission. It proceeded to issue a severe sentence against imperialist and capitalist domination.

The sentence that was adopted unanimously by the Tribunal states in part:

"[T]his debt cannot in any manner be considered as the peoples' debt. They neither solicited it, nor contracted it—and nor have they benefited from it....

"[T]he International Tribunal in Lima, after having deliberated according to the rules of law universally recognized in states based on the rule of law ... adopts the conclusions of the reports presented to this body.... Consequently, it declares the total, immediate, and unconditional cancellation of the foreign debt of the countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, Caribbean (Haiti, Antilles), Eastern Europe (Poland, Yugoslavia) and considers legitimate the fight of their peoples against payment of the foreign debt and against the plans of the IMF."

Kwame M.A. Somburu:

'Namibian peace accords violate principle of self-determination'



South African troops on one of their many search-and-destroy operations in Namibia.

Kwame M.A. Somburu, a leading activist in the struggle for Black rights and a staffwriter for Socialist Action newspaper, was invited by the United Nations Decolonization Committee to address the 44th session of the U.N.'s General Assembly on the issues of Namibia and New Caledonia.

Scheduling changes, which may have resulted from the political content of Somburu's speech, prevented him from addressing the General Assembly. Instead, Somburu was constricted to present perfunctory remarks to an Oct. 12 meeting of the U.N.'s Decolonization Committee on the topic of New Caledonia.

Because of the importance of the Nov. 6 elections in Namibia—and given the great controversy over the recent "peace" accords in that country—we are reprinting major excerpts from the speech Somburu had prepared but was unable to present. Copies of Somburu's prepared speech were distributed to many of the U.N. delegates.

United Nations Resolution 435 proclaimed 11 years ago that the people of Namibia were to be freed from bondage. After 63 years under the lash of the capitalist/apartheid state of South Africa, the United Nations decreed that the pain, humiliation, and pillage inflicted by the colonial rulers was to end.

But slavemasters, as we know—including the modern wage-slavers who hold sway in the world today under the banner of free-enterprise capitalism—are a peculiar lot. Their pearly teeth, attached to the rapacious laws of profit and greed, are not to be separated from their victim—voluntarily that is—and certainly not by passive declarations of principle devoid of the power of implementation.

Where do we stand today 11 years after the adoption of U.N. Resolution 435?

Brought to bargaining table

The slavemasters have been brought to the world's bargaining table. Apartheid's deaf ear, we are told, has tuned in to the modern freedom song. Pretoria has finally promised adherence to 435. Under the terms of the new accords, "free elections" are to take place on Nov. 6, 1989.

First of all, why this shift?

Cuito Cuanavale. This is the name of a little-known place in southern Angola where in 1988 South Africa's armed forces, the most powerful on the African continent, were handed a mighty defeat at the hands of the combined forces of SWAPO, the Angolan army, and the internationalist fighters of revolutionary Cuba.

Of course, South African troops were not supposed to be in sovereign Angola, just as the United States and South Africa are not supposed to provide the terrorist Jonas Savimbi with weapons of war. But they were defeated in combat. The all-powerful white army was defeated by those it had harried for a decade, by those it has denied the right to self-determination.

Cuito Cuanavale registered an important victory for Black South Africa, but not a decisive victory. The slavemasters were merely made to realize that they were not invincible, that their military might could not endure forever.

But the slavemasters are not unclever in

their ways, especially when advised, or should I say, compelled, by their superiors to pursue a less dangerous course. "What is the robbing of a bank, to the founding of a bank?" asked the revolutionary playwright Bertold Brecht in his "Beggar's Opera."

"Can we not deny yet another victory to the oppressed by changing the rules of the game?" the slavemasters ask.

The United States and the Soviet Union agree. They are negotiating to achieve a kinder and gentler South Africa—a South Africa which sheds the onerous image of apartheid and yet maintains its imperial relations with its neighbors and at the same time its wealth and power in the hands of the few. Their plan for Namibia is little different.

Regional agreements to mute the class and national liberation struggles are quite the thing these days. Self-determination is a negotiable item, not as we previously thought, an inalienable right.

Let us have free elections on November 6, 1989, say the new accords. Let the Namibian refugees return to participate. Let them choose a constituent assembly and if SWAPO wins—not by a simple majority like everywhere in the world—but by two-thirds—they can form a government and write their nation's constitution.

The world watches Namibia closely. What does it see?

The real meaning of the accords

The accords say that the paramilitary units must be dissolved, that the terrorist armed thugs of Koevoet must be eliminated.

But South Africa's appointed Administrator gently urged the terrorists back to their barracks where they were reeled and integrated into the regular oppressor force, which will remain to help with the "fair elections."

The overlord government which drafted the Voter Registration Act remembered to include its own among those eligible to vote. Today they are mobilizing to transport some 150,000 racist whites to Namibia to help ensure the success of their neocolonial solution.

Under the aegis of the "mixed economy," the nation's riches are to remain in unchanged hands. The diamond mines, Namibia's chief resource, will remain the property of the multinational cartels.

The fiction of an independent economy is further undermined by South Africa's declaration that Namibia's main and only deep-water port at Walvis Bay will not be considered part of the nation-to-be. And of course, Namibians resident in this area have been denied the right to register to vote.

The negotiated timetable provided that all but 8000 of South Africa's 100,000 regular armed forces were to be withdrawn by June. Yet 100,000 remain. Today one of every 14 Namibians is armed by the oppressor and organized into one of its repressive forces designed to convince everyone that the exercise of the right to vote may be answered with immediate punishment, if not death.

All political prisoners were to be released and the refugees allowed to return home. The political prisoners remain incarcerated and the return of the refugees has been postponed indefinitely.

The promised 7500 U.N. troops has been reduced with the approval of the Security Council to less than 5000—mostly unarmed

men, powerless to resist the organized intimidation and violence which is an integral part of South Africa's "freedom" plan.

The United Nations was not so timid when it sent in tens of thousands of so-called peacekeepers to fight on the wrong side of the freedom struggle in the Congo and Korea.

Jonas Savimbi's Namibian UNITA terrorists are today enlisted in the drive to add to the vote totals of the apartheid political creation, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance.

But when SWAPO soldiers returned to their country to participate in the elections, they were slaughtered in a war that had supposedly ended, a war that has already cost the lives of 11,000 Namibians and created 100,000 refugees.

And the U.S.S.R., which cast its Security Council vote to reduce the number of observers in the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group, scolded SWAPO for its error of returning home unannounced, thereby provoking the colonial occupier to retaliate!

Behind the backs of the people

At Yalta and Potsdam, secret agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union were concluded at the close of World War II. These were agreements behind the backs of the world's people to maintain the power and prerogatives of imperialism, on the one hand, and of Stalin's murderous bureaucracy, on the other.

Similar agreements—ostensibly on a "regional scale" but in fact covering the globe from Angola, South Africa, and Namibia to Afghanistan, and from Kampuchea, Central America, to Eastern Europe—are under negotiation today. Their aim? To preserve the power and privilege of the few against the many.

And the liberation struggle? The people's victories are to be sacrificed as pawns in the international game of peaceful coexistence.

Still, the principle of self-determination will in the end prevail, not because it is written into the text of ignored doctrine, but because it inspires the majority everywhere, and the majority, as the history of the world tells us, will—despite every setback—prevail and write its own chapter in humanity's glorious future.

Capitalism and Stalinism

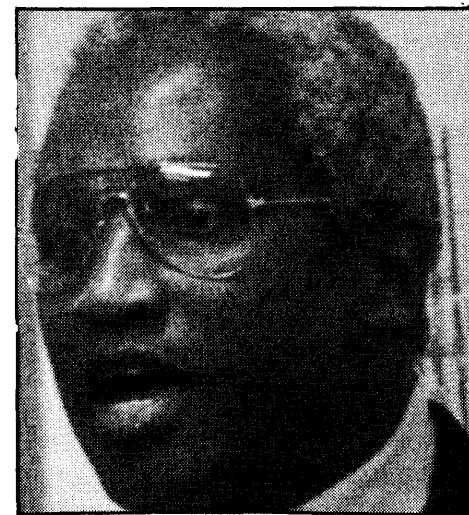
For now I close with these simple words. The South Africans must leave Namibia today. They have no recognized right, aside from the rejected right of naked power, to negotiate any aspect of the future of the Namibian people.

To those who have come to believe that capitalism is the way of the future, I will observe that without the support and encouragement of the United States, the world's leading representative of military intervention against oppressed people, the apartheid/capitalist state of South Africa would have been defeated long ago.

The maximization of profit is the driving force of capitalism, a predatory social system based on a government of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich.

The capitalist balance sheet records the enslavement of the African continent for 100 years or more. It records the history of colonialism itself.

To those who have been taught that the



Kwame M. A. Somburu

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

Soviet Union is a socialist state as opposed to a Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship, I would respond as follows.

Socialism is workers' democracy. It is government based on the direct rule of the workers and peasants themselves—rule through their own institutions in their own name. Socialism and democracy are inseparable.

Socialism has nothing in common with privilege, labor camps, corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, national oppression, sexism, peaceful coexistence, or collaboration with the class enemy. By these standards, President Mikhail Gorbachev has changed nothing. Neither has Deng's China, where Stalin's heirs resorted to murderous violence when workers' democracy and student protest challenged bureaucratic rule.

The scientific socialist ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky have long inspired the oppressed with the vision of a future free from all forms of oppression and exploitation.

Struggle's true allies

The struggle of the people of Namibia for self-determination is not isolated from the worldwide struggles of billions of people who are in varying kinds of conflicts with many of the governments represented here today.

The true allies of the oppressed cannot and will not be found among the governments committed to capitalist or Stalinist rule. To the contrary, they will be found among all those committed to struggle against these evils.

They will be found among the Black and Latino masses and among the women in the United States struggling for elementary democratic rights.

They will be found among the Palestinian victims of Zionist Gestapo-like terrorism. Is there a difference between Israeli apartheid and its South African ally's version of oppression?

Today, U.S. Marines and other armed agencies of the U.S. ruling class, with the complicity of its allies in South Africa, operate with impunity, not on three continents, but worldwide. They are the enemies of humankind. There will be no liberation without the destruction of their predatory social system and its replacement by world socialism.

This task is the sole property of the workers and peasants the world over. ■

A Cry for Help: The Tracey Thurman Story

By SANDY DOYLE-O'NEIL

A Cry for Help: The Tracey Thurman Story. An NBC made-for-TV movie, broadcast on Oct. 2, 1989. Starring Nancy McKeon, Dale Midkiff, Yvette Heyden, Terri Hanauer, and Bruce Weitz.

While a crowd gathers and a policeman looks on, the man grasps his small son under one arm. In a manic dance-like step, he stomps on the neck of the woman lying helplessly on the ground. A few moments earlier, he had stabbed her in the face, neck, and back.

Another blood-and-gore scene dreamed up by a Hollywood script writer to hook a viewing audience? Unfortunately, not. The script writers were actually somewhat restrained compared to all descriptions of the actual events. "A Cry for Help: The Tracey Thurman Story" is based on Thurman's very real experience with a violent husband.

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence estimates that over 3 million women are victimized each year by domestic violence. Like many of these women, Tracey Thurman did everything the legal and social-work system told her to do to avoid another beating by her soon-to-be ex-husband, Buck.

But the restraining orders and numerous calls to the Torrington, Conn., police department failed to prevent the June 10, 1983, assault which left Tracey Thurman partially paralyzed and near death.

The "Thurman Law"

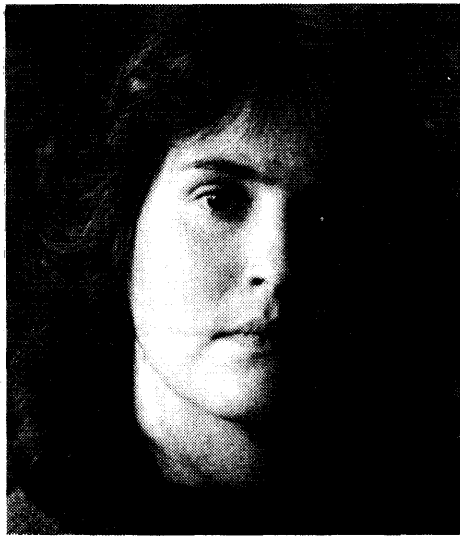
The all-too-familiar tragedy enacted in Torrington was deemed newsworthy for its aftermath. Tracey Thurman's determined struggle for some modicum of justice led her to file suit against her city's police department for violating her constitutional right to equal protection.

The eventual success of her suit (a jury awarded her almost \$2 million in damages) is credited with helping to effect some changes in the way police in several municipalities handle domestic-violence complaints.

Connecticut's police now operate under what is known as the Thurman law. This statute requires the arrest of offenders in cases



Nancy McKeon as Tracey Thurman



The real Tracey Thurman

of probable domestic violence. Eight other states and more than half of the major cities around the country have enacted similar legislation in the past few years.

But the traditional attitude of police, courts, and society as a whole was clearly expressed by an officer who explained to Thurman prior to the June 1983 attack that it would be easier to arrest Buck if she weren't married to him. The town's police chief backed up his officer's stance stating, "We were trained that way, to avoid arrest with a husband and wife."

Limitations of the movie

The movie ends after the verdict is given. The postscript brings home the magnitude of the problem when it informs viewers that one woman is beaten by her spouse every 15 seconds. A number to call for aid and information is displayed on the screen.

The directors and cast generally avoid any temptation toward melodramatics or trivialization of the problem. McKeon, in the title role, gives an especially sensitive portrayal of a young woman's pain and confusion in coping with a permanent physical disability.

The movie alludes to some of the possible factors causing Buck's violent behavior; it points to his gambling, drinking, periodic unemployment, and troubled childhood.

Buck's objections to his wife's desire to hold a job despite the needed income (as well as his general macho attitude toward women) also come through.

But the movie doesn't probe very deeply into the causes of wife battering--sometimes referred to as one of the nation's most popular sports.

One other shortcoming is noteworthy. Partially because the movie deals with one woman's courageous personal fight, and partially because of television's often bemoaned tendency to package happy endings, viewers could be led to believe that the limited reforms made by police and courts will keep another "cry for help" from going unanswered.

The "rule of thumb"

It will take more than a few reforms in the police and judicial system to stop all of the forms of violence against women prevalent in our society.

Totally changing sexist attitudes toward women will require a different kind of society, one in which there is no profit to be made by keeping some parts of the population as second-class citizens. It will have to be a society in which individuals stay together out of real

choice and not economic or social compulsion.

Ignoring and/or legitimizing domestic violence has a long history. In English common law, upon which much of our current legal system is based, men were considered to have a legal right to "physically chastise an errant wife." The only restraint on this male right was the "rule of thumb." The stick a man beat his wife with could not legally exceed the width of his thumb! Women and children were generally regarded as a man's property.

It was only a century ago that domestic assaults were made illegal in the United States. Ever since, however, the system has continued to treat a man's beating and raping "his" wife and children differently than other crimes.

Marital rape is still not a crime in several states. A few states now extend the "marital rape exemption" to unmarried couples living together. In these circumstances, a woman may be able to press charges for assault if her husband or companion beats her, but she can't legally press charges for the more serious crime of rape.

In the meanwhile, enacting reform bills does not guarantee that these new laws will be vigorously enforced.

Women still dying

In 1984, the U.S. surgeon general identified wife battering as the single largest cause of injury to women. According to the Los Angeles Times, killings by enraged husbands or lovers account for almost one-third of women murdered each year. There are similar figures for Canada.

Once the women's movement began addressing the problem of domestic violence in both countries, some efforts were made to help women in this situation find a way out of their often worsening situation. Many shelters have been opened.

At these safe places women and children can recuperate, get counseling, and take any legal steps necessary to maintain their safety. Trained staff help them make plans for any needed schooling and job training. Most of these shelters are financed by donations and suffer chronic underfunding. Some have had to turn away women because they don't have the resources to help all who need it.

Government officials have done little to alleviate this situation. While they can't stop abuse from occurring, the shelter system offers women some help. Tax money would be better spent on expanding this and other supportive services rather than on building more tanks and bombers.

Our readers speak out

Gibraltar 3

Dear editor,

We, the relatives of the Gibraltar Three, have launched a petition which requests the Irish government to take an inter-state action against the British government in the European Court of Human Rights over the killing of their loved ones on March 6, 1988.

Our only objective in launching this petition is to seek justice. We sincerely believe that the Strasbourg court offers us the best opportunity.

Mary Savage,
Belfast, Northern Ireland

The Gibraltar Three—Daniel McCann, Sean Savage, and Mairead Farrell—were gunned down by the British SAS security forces in Gibraltar.

The petition circulated by their relatives points out that Spanish authorities did not testify during the inquest because Spain does not recognize British sovereignty over the Rock. The evidence, the petition states, would have exposed the British version of events and shown that the SAS knew that the victims were unarmed and posed no threat.

A copy of the petition and further information can be obtained by writing to Mary Savage, 14 Down-fine Gardens, Turf Lodge, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT11.—the editors

RU 486

Dear editor,

One advantage we in the pro-choice movement have is the advance of science. The invention of RU-486, the two-month-after pill, will take the abortion question out of the public clinics and make abortion a private matter.

With RU-486 a woman need only get three pills from a drug store and take them. The cost of three pills is only three dollars. The pills today can be purchased in most drug stores in Mexico and Canada, but not yet in the United States.

It is our job to legalize RU-486 now. The sooner it is legal, the sooner tens of thousands of teen-age lives and careers can be saved from an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy. A key element of legalizing RU-486 is simply educating people to the fact that the pill exists, is inexpensive, safe, is presently legally available in Mexico, Canada, Europe, and many other places, and is easy to use. Legalize RU-486!

Paul Kangas,
San Francisco, Calif.

Solution

Dear editor,

I am 17 years old and I have read a pamphlet that a friend who supports Socialist Action lent to me. This year is my last year in high

school.

I am not yet clear about what my plans will be after I graduate. But one thing for sure is to make or try my best to make this world a better world.

Most of all what really hurts me is when I see the homeless and hungry suffering. Every time I see a picture of a hungry little boy standing there, all I do is give my spare change. I do not want to do this for the rest of my life.

I want to do something much

greater. Instead of helping the problem not to be so great I want to help find a solution, or at least try and dedicate part of my life in helping to find a solution all the way through, until I can.

I would really appreciate it if you can give me more information about the Socialist Action organization, and also I want to know more of what is going on in the struggles for freedom in South Africa and the U.S. intervention in Central America. In general, more

about the pamphlet itself, "Toward a Socialist America."

A.G.,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Well done!

Dear editor,

Well done, people! What would be the price of your newspaper? I am a retired engineer.

F.F.,
Helsinki, Finland

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Earthquake's untold story



Thomas Van Dyke-San Jose Mercury News-Sygnia

Farm workers and cannery workers in Watsonville, Calif., have been the hardest hit by the earthquake.

By JEFF MACKLER

OAKLAND, Calif.—Minutes after the devastating 7.1 earthquake struck, thousands of Northern California's working people were on the streets trying to help their neighbors. In those moments, humanity's best instincts came to the fore.

Strangers ran into collapsed or burning buildings and reappeared carrying senior citizens who had been trapped. People appeared from nowhere to set up free kitchens in the streets. They brought food, clothing, and other basic necessities to people they had never met before.

The quake hit the poor the hardest—those who are compelled to live in the oldest hotels and dwellings, structures that otherwise might have been condemned. But the quake's terror was not restricted to the most unfortunate victims of social injustice. The homes of an estimated 110,000 workers were destroyed or reduced to a fraction of their value.

Even here, class distinctions played a central role in the treatment of the quake's victims. In San Francisco's largely upper-income Marina district, those who had been ordered to abandon their homes were relocated to relatively comfortable facilities that included security guards, trauma counselors, masseuses, and gourmet food from the city's finest restaurants.

In contrast, the Black residents of Oakland's Peralta housing project were moved to minimum facilities with little but cots and blankets. And what about the ordinary, pre-earthquake homeless? Less than a week after the quake, in the midst of a torrential rainstorm, San Francisco police were back on the job rousting the homeless from tents and cardboard lean-tos they had set up in Civic Center Plaza.

And while the media focused heavily on the plight of the area's businesses, little was made of the thousands of migrant workers and other rural residents of Watsonville, a short distance from the quake's epicenter. These workers had lost their jobs and more when many of the area's canneries were destroyed.

Was there a real "rescue" effort?

A most immediate problem was the mile-long collapse of Interstate 880, a four-lane, double-decked megastucture connecting the East and South Bay with San Francisco.

The now-sandwiched structure was built on vertical piers without horizontal supports. This, according to California's chief of construction at the time, was done without regard

to the minimum construction requirements in force in 1957 when I-880 was completed.

Thirty-two years later, after a number of official reports found the freeway's construction seriously wanting, it took a terrible earthquake to bring to public attention the fact that the installation of the required supports stipulated in the building manuals of the 1950s would have prevented the freeway's fall.

Four days after the quake, the rescue effort was virtually stopped when authorities surmised there could be no more survivors. The newspapers and television parroted official arguments that nothing else could be done to save lives.

But on day five, when 56-year-old Sacramento longshoreman Buck Helms was found alive by a paramedic, the search had to be resumed for a day or so to stifle public concern that not enough was being done to find those

brought into the area. The lack of life-saving equipment was later explained away as "poor coordination between the public and private sector."

California is the "seventh richest nation on earth," yet state officials refused to spend the money to rent heavy cranes and other related equipment.

The expense did not compute when compared with the number of human lives which might have been saved!

But there were many who did not consider matters of cost accounting. Without waiting for rescue teams, people from the nearby Black community of West Oakland used every means at hand—from forklifts borrowed from nearby warehouses to sheer courage in mounting the still-shaking structure—to try to rescue those who had been trapped.

When I arrived at the I-880 site the day after the catastrophe, thousands of residents were

'The real-estate developers, large merchants, and banks see the quake as a renewed source of revenue.'

who remained, perhaps still alive.

On day seven, when orders were given to remove the destroyed structure, the authorities were again shocked when they uncovered several automobiles lacking any passengers. This meant that at least some of the abandoned passengers had been able to climb out of their vehicles and find their way home without first reporting to the local authorities. The logical conclusion from this discovery was not drawn, however. The search for the possible living was not resumed.

A problem of "cost accounting?"

Why wasn't more done to save lives? From the point of view of the various agencies involved, it was a simple matter of cost accounting. Heavy cranes were needed to lift the huge slabs of concrete that might still hold people prisoner. These cranes were readily available on downtown construction projects and at the Port of Oakland.

But even at height of the "rescue" effort, a pathetic three or four supercranes had been

standing watch, looking for some way to help. Local streets were filled with pickup trucks loaded with bundles of clothes and emergency supplies. Energetic youth sought some way to become involved, whether it be clearing small pieces of concrete rubble or just trying to assist disinterested police and other public officials.

But there was nothing to be done. The massive equipment needed to reinforce the falling freeway from below and to lift the fallen portions from above was not forthcoming.

What has been done with the vast resources of the state of California? And with those of the federal government? The facilities and personnel of the U.S. armed forces, which reside in the tens of thousands in the Bay Area, were used only minimally. The machinery of the state's private construction firms also remained idle.

The real-estate developers, large merchants, and banks see the quake as a renewed source of revenue. It's not too different from the

general capitalist phenomenon of war and depression—which can have the "beneficial" effect of destroying society's social surplus in order to renew the search for higher profits.

Losses to the insurance companies are expected to be minimal—with industry experts estimating less than half the \$5 billion chalked up to Hurricane Hugo. With a loss reserve of some \$250 billion and a policyholder surplus (the amount by which assets exceed liabilities) of \$120 billion, the worst-case scenario is for relatively flat profits for this business quarter only.

Orin Kramer, an insurance-industry consultant, told *The New York Times* that the industry's return on equity this year would be 8 percent, down from 17 percent last year, but still a handsome return.

Capitalist confidence in this multibillion dollar industry was registered in a general rise in stockmarket prices of insurance companies immediately following the quake, with some showing increases of 5 percent or more.

This rise was attributed to two prime factors. The smaller companies among the 3000 doing business in the property and casualty area are expected to undergo, according to *The New York Times*, a "painful shakeout" so that "a streamlined, more efficient industry can emerge."

In plain talk, the billionaires who manipulate capital for maximum profit are counting on reduced competition on the one hand and massive rate increases on the other to further bloat their wallets at the expense of working people.

Just 20 percent to 25 percent of the area's homeowners carry any sort of earthquake insurance, with most policies carrying stiff 10 percent to 20 percent deductible clauses. Thus, the overwhelming damage caused by the quake will be borne, not by the insurance companies but by the policy holders who pay heavy premiums for coverage which will provide little or no benefits.

Politicians compete for media time

Meanwhile, virtually every politician from California's Governor George Deukmejian to local officials are looking to every variety of regressive tax hike to transfer the financial burden of the disaster from the rich to the working class and the poor. Democratic State Assemblyman Dick Floyd, for example, is proposing a special gasoline tax of 25 cents per gallon to pay for the damage to the state's roads.

The quake was seen as a prime political opportunity for these ruling-class representatives, who flocked to the area to compete for media time. For the Democratic and Republican politicians, tragedies like Hurricane Hugo and the California earthquake are opportunities to demonstrate the compassion of a society ruled by a handful of billionaires.

But the billionaires have never been known to voluntarily contribute to the advancement of the social good. They leave this to a pathetic group of professional charities who rush about, as they are now doing, distributing a band-aid pittance here and there to placate our conscience.

Nationwide public-works program!

The Pacific Coast is not the only region subject to earthquakes. Scientists have pointed out that within the next few decades a large quake will probably hit populated areas on the East Coast and the Mississippi Valley.

Interstate 880, before it collapsed, was not atypical of the dilapidated state of roadways, bridges, schools, and housing throughout the nation. Our towns and cities stand in decay for want of a public policy which places human needs before profits.

A massive public-works program across the country would serve the dual purpose of providing useful employment to those who have been driven from the job market and of rebuilding our cities to make them safe, efficient, and functional for everyone.

To accomplish this, however, requires the mobilization of millions of people, organized in their unions and other working-class organizations, against the powerful few who resist spending a dime of their wealth on anything but their own welfare.

Days after the quake, people are still talk-

(continued on page 9)