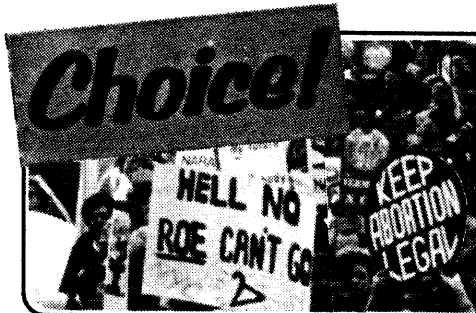


A Socialist ACTION



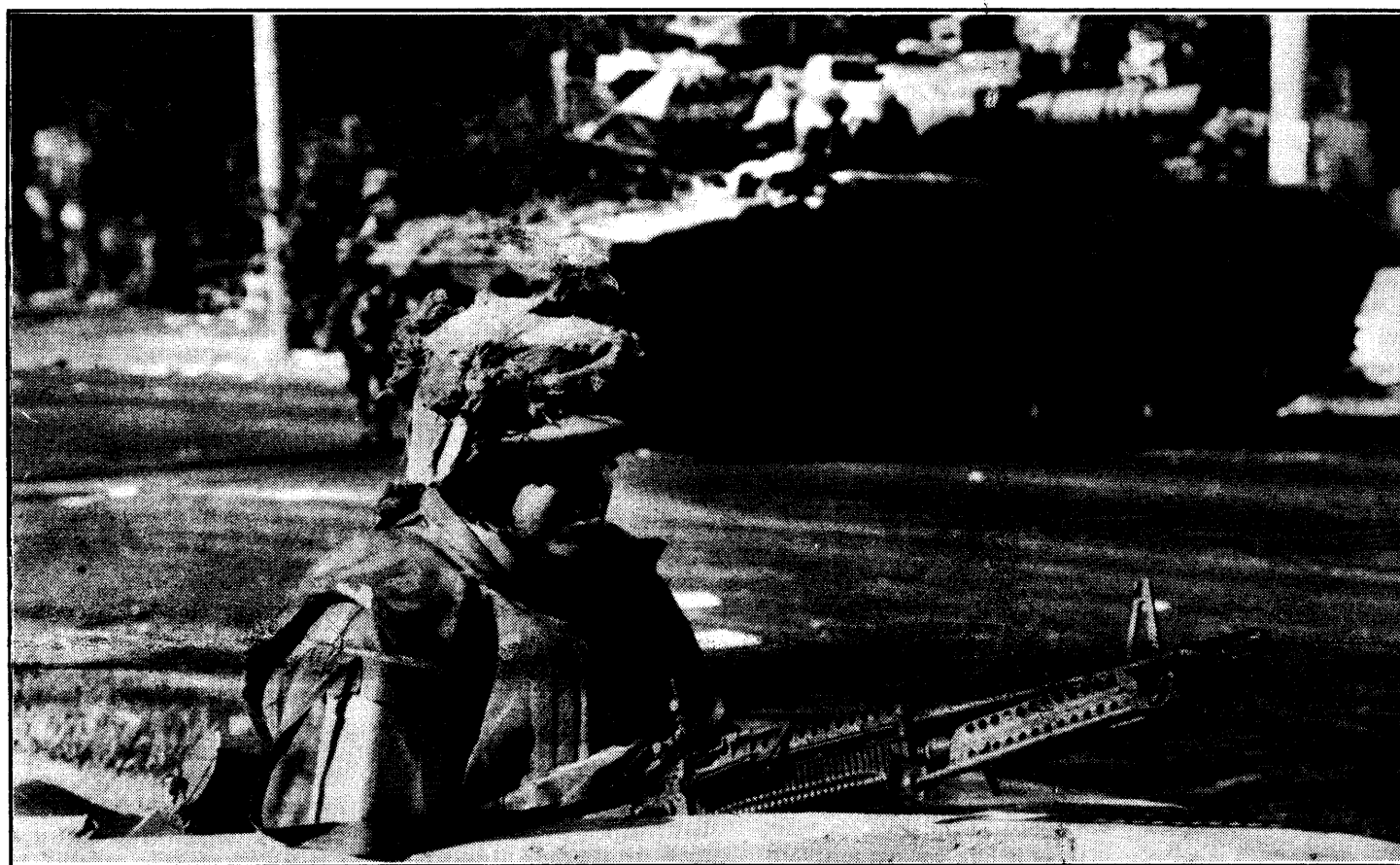
Defending
women's
rights,
See pages 4-5.

VOL. 8, No. 1

JANUARY 1990

50 CENTS

U.S. hides real reasons for invasion of Panama



By NAT WEINSTEIN

"In taking possession of a state the conqueror should well reflect as to the harsh measures that may be necessary, and then execute them at a single blow. ... Cruelties should be committed all at once." ("The Prince," Niccolò Machiavelli)

The U.S. government's Dec. 20 pre-dawn assault on Panama was much more than a bloody trampling upon a small Central American nation's right to self-determination. What spurred U.S. policymakers to take a course of action guaranteed to induce

U.S. targets Nicaragua,
See page 17.

greater hatred and hostility toward the U.S. government throughout the world cannot be fully explained by the reasons given by its spokespersons.

The Organization of American States, which is not often known to oppose their good neighbor to the North, voted 20 to 1 against the U.S. invasion of Panama, albeit with the mildest formulations. And on Dec. 29, the General Assembly of the United Nations, meeting in emergency session at the request of Cuba and Nicaragua, overwhelmingly condemned the U.S. invasion as a "flagrant violation of international law" and called for a swift withdrawal of U.S. forces.

But far more important is the near-universal hatred by the world's toiling masses for the criminal violation of Panama's sovereignty by the U.S. capitalist government.

Declared motives and objectives

At a news conference the day after American airborne gunships, rockets, and over 20,000 troops thundered into Panama, President George Bush was asked by a reporter, "Only a month ago ... you didn't think it would be prudent to launch a large-scale military operation. What changed your mind, and particularly why did you opt for the maximum use of force in this situation?"

Bush answered: "I think what changed my mind was ... the death of the marine; the brutalizing, really obscene torture of the Navy lieutenant; and the threat of sexual abuse and the terror inflicted on that Navy lieutenant's wife; the declaration of war by Noriega; [and the need to show that] we could guarantee the safety of Americans there ... and to move with enough force ... to be sure that we minimized the loss of life on both sides and that we took out the P.D.F. [Panamanian Defense Forces]."

Bush went on to restate that "our argument was not with the P.D.F., but with Noriega, and if they would get rid of him and recognize a democratically elected government, we could go back to more normalized relations." (*New York Times*, Dec. 22)

Following the president's lead, the media repeatedly quoted Bush and other spokespersons who charged that Noriega had "declared war against the United States." This alleged declaration of war was treated as a major justification for the assault on Panama. But nothing could be further from the truth.

This claim is a fabrication that is appar-

U.S. has become an occupying force in Panama, violating its right to self-determination.

Romanian workers spearhead revolution against Stalinism

By JEFF MACKLER

Propelled by mighty mobilizations of the working class, the political revolution in Romania and the rest of Eastern Europe is unfolding with lightning speed. Nothing is left untouched—no constitution, institution, law, decree, political party, head of state, or individual.

The December events in Romania were ignited by the austerity measures and brutal dictatorship of the hated regime of Stalinist Communist Party head Nicolae Ceausescu and by the longstanding national oppression of ethnic Hungarians, focused in the western city of Timisoara of present-day Romania.

A profoundly revolutionary dynamic, barely within the control of the eclectic and temporary 37-member council of the hastily formed National Salvation Front, is at work.

Self-proclaimed "dissidents," with the support of what appears to be the privileged army officer corps, have put together a rag-tag interim government sorely lacking in authority. The government includes the least discredited—or perhaps the least known—among Ceausescu's Communist Party members, along with student leaders, intellectuals, and a priest whose threatened deportation played an important role in the original Timisoara demonstrations.

Promising free elections in April 1990, newly appointed National Salvation Front Vice President Dumitru Mazilu, like his



Armed Romanian citizens take aim at pro-Ceausescu sniper.

only slightly more secure counterparts in Eastern Europe, announced, "We have a plan for a new government, with new people." But as in Czechoslovakia, East Germany,

and Bulgaria, governments and leaders who are proclaimed today, disappear tomorrow.

A case in point was the self-appointment of the terminally sclerotic Corneliu Manescu as head of the new Romanian state. A day later, he was replaced as president by Ion Iliescu—whose credentials include a reported casual Moscow college-days acquaintance with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Worker/student militias

A vital feature of the Romanian political revolution has been the arming of a portion of the working class and youth. The direct involvement of workers and students in the battles with Ceausescu's Securitate (security police) was not accidental.

Incensed by the mid-December massacre of hundreds of protesters in Timisoara, the courageous Romanian masses moved to defend themselves as well as they could. The continuous mass proletarian mobilizations in Timisoara and later in Bucharest eventually led to a paralysis in the ranks of the Romanian army and then to its open defection to the side of the people.

In Bucharest, Ceausescu himself, just returned from Iran where he had participated in commemorative ceremonies for the deceased Ayatollah Khomeini, was totally unprepared for the events which were to transpire.

While addressing a public rally of what he presumed were his supporters, Ceausescu

(continued on page 10)

(continued on page 16)

The ghost of Christmas present



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

One of the things that makes Christmas and New Year's Day bearable is the chance to see "Scrooge" with Alistair Sims once again. There must be a dozen remakes of Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol." But none, to my mind, can compare to the 1951 English version with Alistair Sims in the role of Scrooge.

"A Christmas Carol" was written by Dickens in 1843. That was a period when liberals, such as Dickens, thought that capitalism could be reformed just by changing the nature of the individual capitalist. Ebenezer Scrooge goes through his transformation after witnessing the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future.

What could be more horrible than when the ghost of Christmas Present opens his cloak to reveal two starving children huddled and freezing at his feet. The ghost of Christmas Present points and says: "This child is named hunger," and then points to the other and says: "This child is named rage." The ghost pauses for emphasis and balefully intones: "And it is that child (pointing to rage) you should fear."

In "A Christmas Carol" everything ends well. Scrooge goes through a transformation, becoming the best of bosses and a "father" to Tiny Tim, his employee Bob Cratchit's crippled son.

The world's Tiny Tims

The story was written 146 years ago. Unfortunately, the fate of the world's children has not really improved. Nor has capitalism reformed itself. Instead, the imperialist powers have amassed the world's wealth at the expense of millions of the world's poor. Panama is just the latest example of how, unlike Scrooge, the capitalists will stop at nothing to protect their monopoly on power.

And for the world's Tiny Tims, it has gotten no better. The child named "rage" can be seen everywhere—from Northern Ireland to Palestine, from Panama to Romania, and right here in the USA.

In Palestine, the Israeli Army said it will begin impounding the property of parents whose children are throwing rocks at the hated Zionist army of occupation. The army is constrained from jailing children under 12 because of "appearances." So they punish their parents by destroying or confiscating their homes.

The army admits that stonethrowing by the thousands of children who wander Palestinian refugee camps and villages is spontaneous and beyond the control of parents. The rock throwers, mostly children under the age of 13, are full of rage because every day they live under the gun of Zionist occupiers who are jailing, beating, and killing their older brothers, sisters, and parents. The United States is the Scrooge which finances Zionist terror.

And what about the Tiny Tims of our own country, the home-

base of world imperialism? For Black children there has been an increase in infant mortality simply because 31 million Americans have no health insurance. There is no prenatal care for millions of pregnant women. The reason is simple: You got no money? You get no medical care.

In the sunny state of California, the government has cut \$24 million dollars from the family-planning budget—closing nearly 40 health-care clinics which served poor women and their families. Twenty-five million women and children are living in poverty.

Education in this country is another example of the heartlessness of the ruling class. Over 23 million adults are functionally illiterate and will be condemned to join the ranks of the growing population of impoverished. Two to seven million of our children are

"latch-key" children with no supervision. Their parents are at work and unable to be at home to supervise their kids when they come home from school.

Year after year, plans to im-

prove the educational standards for our children are unveiled. But nothing comes of them. Our schools continue to deteriorate.

Reducing class size to no more than 20 children per class, provid-

ing remedial programs for those who are already behind, and expanding quality childcare through our existing school system for all children regardless of income is a basic first step for beginning to improve our educational system. But that costs money, and the U.S. government makes Scrooge look like a bleeding-heart liberal compared to them.

To make bad matters worse, child-labor-law abuses have increased in this country. Violations of those laws have increased by 150 percent since 1983. There were more than 24,000 child-labor violations this year alone. Youngsters, just as in Charles Dickens's time, are still condemned to work in garment sweatshops and in the fields picking fruit and vegetables.

It reminds me of a poem by Sarah N. Cleghorn: "The golf links," she wrote, "lie so near the mill; That almost every day; The laboring children can look out; and see the men at play." That poem was published Jan. 1, 1915, and to the world's shame, has not yet been outlived.

Despite the jubilation by the world's Scrooges over the so-called "failure of communism," it is capitalism which fails our children. It is a failure to most of humanity and most especially to the young people of this world. Happy revolutionary New Year. ■



Mary Ellen Mark

'Educational reform' or victimization?

This month's guest commentator for "Behind the Lines" is Sean Padilla, an educator in New Mexico. Michael Schreiber's regular column will appear again next month.

By SEAN PADILLA

Behind the ruling-class rhetoric touting the benefits of educational reform, Republican and Democratic state legislators have begun the process of stripping teachers of due-process rights when they dare exercise their First Amendment right to free speech.

This was demonstrated by the recent dismissal of Patricia (Trish) Wahe, a Fort Sumner, N.M., spe-

cial education (apparently too outspoken for the school board's taste). She met with parents of special-education students and privately advised them of their rights.

Ima Lee Wells, president of the National Education Association of New Mexico, concluded that the school board terminated Ms. Wahe in order to hire "an inexperienced, more compliant teacher" who could "be paid at a lower salary."

Prior to the educational-reform law of 1986, teachers could be fired with "good and just cause," but this required documentation by the administration. The burden of proof now has been shifted to the teacher. Under the facade of the misnamed "educational-reform" law known as Senate Bill 106, he or she must prove that the school board acted for arbitrary, capricious, or legally impermissible reasons.

Alice in Wonderland

—Mark Bennett, a Santa Fe, N.M., lawyer, was the "independent" arbitrator in Trish Wahe's case. Though he upheld Wahe's firing, he felt compelled to denounce both the law and the district's personnel policies. The termination of a teacher for "lack of potential," Bennett said, "smacks of the Red Queen in Alice in Wonderland ... beheading people on a whim."

Fortunately for Trish Wahe, the case will not end with the arbitrator's decision. Her union (NEA-NM) filed suit Oct. 20, 1989, against the state of New Mexico, the state Board of Education and Superintendent, and the Fort Sumner School Board and Superintendent.

The suit asks the court to: 1) declare that Wahe and other NEA-NM members affected by the "Education Reform Act of 1986" have been deprived of rights guaranteed by the contract and due-process clauses of the New Mex-

ico and U.S. Constitutions, 2) permanently enjoin the defendants and other entities from enforcing the law, and 3) offer Wahe her previous position.

In addition to the lawsuit, NEA-NM is demanding that the 1990 session of the New Mexico legislature pass a bill to give all school employees the right to an arbitration hearing where "good and just" cause must be established if a school employee's job is to be terminated.

Beyond sloganeering

Laws which permit school administrators to fire experienced and committed teachers when they disagree with school board policies has nothing to do with improving the quality of education. Genuine education reform will require spending some of the hundreds of billions of dollars earmarked for the "defense" budget and interest payments to the rich.

In the first place, teachers' salaries must be raised. Average

salaries in New Mexico have plummeted to 40th in the nation and are 18 percent below the admittedly inadequate national average.

"At risk" students should be identified and money appropriated for programs to curb the unacceptably high "drop-out" rate. Class sizes must be reduced, but not at the expense of overloading other classes.

All education workers must have the right to negotiate a collective-bargaining agreement which should include (but not be limited to) working conditions, salaries, and benefits. School councils, democratically elected by education workers and parents—rather than appointed administrators—must be authorized to establish school policy and priorities.

Then—and only then—will the question of "education reform" move beyond the election-year sloganeering by Democratic and Republican Party politicians. ■

Behind the Lines

cial-education teacher with 10 years of service. Under a law known as the "School Reform Act of 1986," any New Mexico teacher can be fired if the school board believes it can hire another person with the "potential" of superior performance.

But Wahe's quality of work was never questioned. Yearly evaluations routinely commended her as a conscientious and dedicated teacher. As a matter of fact, the day she was officially notified that she had been fired, her peers named her "Instructor of the Year" at the Emergency Services Convention in Albuquerque.

Wahe was singled out because she was an outspoken advocate for

Socialist ACTION

Closing date:
Dec. 30, 1989

Editor: ALAN BENJAMIN
Asst. Editors: MICHAEL SCHREIBER
JOSEPH RYAN

Staff: Paul Colvin, May May Gong, Hayden Perry, Kwame M.A. Somburu, Sylvia Weinstein.

Business Manager: DAVID KIRSCHNER

Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly for \$8 per year by Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Second-class postage is paid at San Francisco, Calif.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Socialist Action*, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

RATES: For one year (12 issues)—U.S. 2nd Class: \$8, 1st Class: \$16; Canada and Mexico 2nd Class: \$12, 1st Class: \$16; All other countries 2nd Class: \$15, 1st Class: \$30. (Money orders, checks should be in U.S. dollars.)

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialist Action*. These are expressed in editorials.

The death penalty: America's peculiar form of 'legal homicide'

By HAYDEN PERRY

Scattered across America over 2000 healthy people, mainly in their 20s and 30s, are contemplating their date with death. They are the men (and a few women) sentenced to death by hanging, poison gas, electrocution, or lethal injection. Twenty seven were 16 or 17 when their alleged crimes were committed.

Death row in American prisons is not a brief stopping place on the road to swift and certain execution. Rather it is a purgatory stretching into years of soul-destroying anxiety and uncertainty. It is a place of unbearable tension, with the prospect of death looming close, then receding—only to confront the condemned prisoner once again.

This is because death sentences must be appealed to higher courts, a process taking months and years. It is not uncommon for prisoners to occupy death row for five years or more as appeal after appeal is filed. Even as the condemned person is walking his last mile, a stay of execution might return him or her to their cell, their ultimate fate still undecided.

This is how capital punishment is applied in America, almost the only country in the West still inflicting the sentence of death for civil crimes.

This long, tortuous road from the death cell to the gallows reflects the ambivalence in American society about the death penalty. Some polls indicate support for the death penalty as an "ultimate deterrent." But there is a strong reluctance to actually take the life of another human being.

Statistics bear this out. It is estimated that over 100 executions a year took place from 1890 to 1950. By 1960, the yearly average was down to 50. After that, the number steadily dwindled until 1967, when a moratorium ended all executions while constitutional questions were considered.

"Cruel and unusual punishment"

In 1972, in the *Furman v. Georgia* case, the Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty, as applied, violated the Eighth Amendment barring "cruel and unusual punishment." It was unconstitutional, the justices said, because the small number of capital offenders (out of 20,000 homicides a year) actually executed were chosen "capriciously" and "freakishly," with no rules for applying the law.

This ruling lifted temporarily the shadow of death hanging over some 600 men on death row at that time.

Meanwhile, foes of the death penalty have brought to the Supreme Court more arguments for ending capital punishment. One is the admitted bias against Black defendants. From 1930 to today, 3865 persons have been put to death; 2067, over half, were Black. This is five times the proportion of Blacks in the population.

When a Black kills a white person the penalty is often death—but not when whites kill Blacks. Out of 15,000 executed murderers, only 30 have been white men who killed Blacks.

Capital punishment fails as a deterrent. It has been demonstrated that the number of murders actually rises slightly in the weeks following a well publicized execution. In New Orleans in 1988, the murder rate from July to September rose 17 percent despite a series of eight executions in that period.

The argument that it is cheaper to kill prisoners than keep them in jail has been proven false. A New York study showed that the cost of trial and appeal averaged \$1.8 million, twice the cost of life imprisonment. In California the cost of a capital case has been estimated to be \$4.5 million.

Making executions seem "humane"

The strongest obstacle to the immediate wholesale execution of 2000 condemned people is the cultural level humanity has reached. Public opinion will no longer tolerate barbarities accepted in the past—eye-gouging wrestling matches, public flogging and torture, or public executions.

In 1936, at the last public execution,



20,000 people came out in Kentucky to see a Black man hanged. Would such a spectacle be tolerated today? America is in many ways a kinder, gentler nation, despite Bush and his supporters who want to extend the death penalty to drug pushers and 23 other types of

these calls for more humanity in the justice system when it considered the death penalty. The rate of executions peaked in the 1930s when mass unemployment led to mass discontent. Southern states have used the death penalty more than any other region. The

'The capitalist class has always relied on the death penalty when it feels threatened. The rate of executions peaked in the 1930s when mass unemployment led to mass discontent.'

offenders.

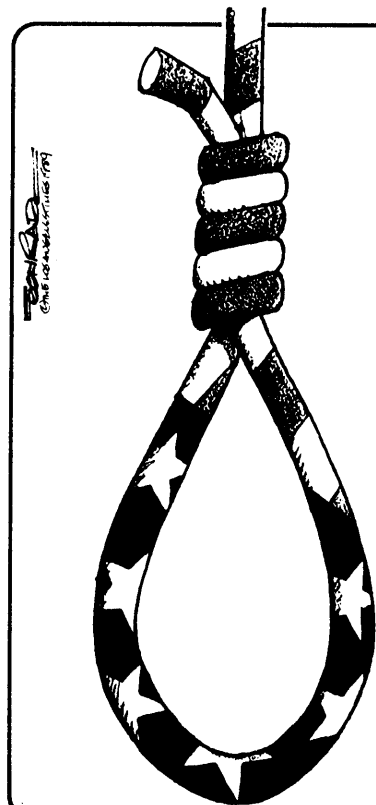
Even those state governors who push for the death penalty strive to make the infliction of death seem more "humane." Some have adopted a lethal injection in a hospital-like setting. They suggested that a physician should inject the fatal dose. But the American Medical Association refused, saying the Hippocratic Oath commanded physicians to save lives, not to kill.

The Supreme Court was not responding to

It was listening to the rulers of America who feel the latent hostility of the working class.

The capitalist class has always relied on the death penalty when it feels threatened. Heirs of the slavocracy use it to terrorize Black people.

The Supreme Court did not declare capital punishment itself unconstitutional, only the way it was applied. State courts continued to impose sentences of death, while legislatures amended penal laws to meet Supreme Court



Opponents of the death penalty staged a vigil before the gates of San Quentin prison on Dec. 16. Over 250 men are awaiting execution in the prison's gas chamber.

Nuns and priests, members of Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the National Coalition to Oppose the Death Penalty were among the demonstrators. The wife of a condemned prisoner and two men who had spent years on death row also participated.

A line of armed guards blocked off the road to the prison gates as though they expected these gentle folk to storm the walls. But there was no confrontation, as speakers addressed the problem of the state executions to show that "killing people is wrong."

Petitions with 70,000 signatures have been submitted to Gov. George Deukmejian calling for the end to executions in California. His response has been to propose restrictions on the right of appeal so as to speed up the procession of 250 men to the gas chamber!

requirements. They did this by making the death penalty mandatory for certain crimes, or by laying down detailed rules for guiding judges and juries. Meanwhile the number on death row rose to over 2300.

In 1976, the Supreme Court lifted the ban on executions by declaring that the disproportionate number of Blacks executed was irrelevant, and upheld the revamped death-penalty laws of Florida, Georgia, and Texas.

Nixon's appointment of conservatives helped swing the Court to a pro-death position. Reagan's appointments made the Court majority a veritable panel of 18th-century "hanging judges." In a series of decisions, the Court ruled that judges may overrule jury decisions and impose a death sentence and that death-penalty opponents can be kept off juries.

One of the more egregious rulings declared that it was all right to execute boys who were as young as 16 when their alleged crimes were committed. It also affirmed that mentally impaired people could be executed.

To speed the 2000 condemned on their way, former Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell and a panel of jurists has proposed to limit Supreme Court reviews of state trials. The historic right to the writ of *habeas corpus* would be curtailed. This would have a devastating effect.

The execution of an innocent person can never be reversed. There can be no compensation for those wrongfully executed. Yet the justices propose that prisoners fighting for their lives should have fewer avenues of appeal than a corporation defending its profits. Appeals to higher courts are far from frivolous. Judges have reversed death sentences on constitutional grounds in 75 percent of the appeals filed.

If the Bush administration and the Supreme Court majority have their way, the United States will witness a rash of legal homicides, as over 2200 condemned prisoners are executed and new batches of capital offenders are sent by the courts to fill up the death rows again.

Activities against the death penalty

But there are countervailing forces. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have abolished the death penalty. In a number of states with the death penalty on the books, no one has been executed for 20 or more years.

Thirty religious denominations have joined in a campaign of "Lighting the Torch of Conscience" to cast light on the scandal of America's death rows. In California, where 250 condemned prisoners crowd death row, "Death Penalty Focus" of California engages in marches and prison gate vigils to publicize and protest imminent executions.

The National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Amnesty International, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference are other organizations actively working to end all legal homicides.

While the moratorium on executions prevailed, public interest in the question was muted. But now that the executioners are once more at work, it is time to declare loud and clear that the death penalty is legalized murder—a relic of a less civilized past that will should no longer be tolerated in this country.

The vigil was part of a nationwide effort to stem the rush to legal homicide that threatens to put the United States in the class of states like Iran. It is also part of Amnesty International's worldwide campaign to secure an international standard of human rights.

Michael Bauman, leader of "Death Penalty Focus," said he sees a growing opposition to legal homicide. The resumption of executions has set alarm bells ringing. Only the "lesser people," he noted, are selected for gas chambers.

Activists against the death penalty are making themselves as visible as possible. On Oct. 15, they started a 70-mile march from Sacramento, the state capital, to San Quentin. It was interrupted halfway by the Oct. 17 earthquake. Now that the shaking has stopped, they plan to take up the march again.

They also intend to demonstrate at San Quentin every time a prisoner is sent to the gas chamber by a murderous state extracting vengeance.

The impact of forced sterilization on poor, Black and Latina women

By SANDY DOYLE-O'NEILL

This is the second article of a two-part series. In last month's issue the author described the restrictions and cuts in abortion funding and pre-natal care which have had the harshest effects on poor women and women of oppressed nationalities.

As detailed in several histories of women in the United States, early population control efforts in this country were motivated by racism and anti-Catholicism.

According to Angela Davis in "Women, Race, and Class," President Theodore Roosevelt concluded an important speech in 1905 by proclaiming that "race purity must be maintained." By 1906, he equated the falling birth rate among native-born whites with "race suicide."

This rhetoric occurred in the context of a growing racist ideology which coincided with the United States' seizure of the Philippines. The philosophy of the population-control movement fit right into the ideological needs of growing monopoly capitalism.

By 1932, 26 states in this country had passed compulsory sterilization laws, and thousands of women deemed "unfit" to reproduce had been sterilized.

A 1939 statement by the Birth Control Federation of America indicates the racist ideology of the population-control movement. "The mass of Negroes, particularly in the South, still breed carelessly and disastrously, with the result that the increase among Negroes, even more than among whites, is from that portion of the population least fit and least able to rear children properly."

Unfortunately, a significant number of feminists in the birth-control movement supported this reasoning and advocated birth control to check population growth among the lower classes, particularly Catholic immigrant workers' families. Some birth control proponents argued that Blacks and immigrants had a "moral obligation" to limit the size of their families.

Sterilizations in the 1970s

The civil rights movement of the 1960s played a role in exposing the racism of these population control schemes. In 1968, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) published "Genocide in Mississippi," a pamphlet which took up cases of sterilization abuses against Black women.

A good deal of attention was focused on the case of the Relf sisters in Alabama. The case was also publicized by a few abortion rights groups, such as the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC), which included a demand to end sterilization abuse in its campaign to repeal all abortion laws.

The two young Relf sisters were sterilized without either their informed consent or that of their parents. As this case became public, more women who had been involuntarily sterilized came forward. Many low-income women were threatened with having their welfare benefits cut off if they refused to be sterilized. Most of these women were Black, although some low-income white women were coerced in this manner as well.

In fact, a study conducted by Princeton University at that time estimated that 20 percent of all married Black women had been permanently sterilized and that 43 percent of all women sterilized by federally subsidized programs were Blacks.

Twenty percent of all Chicana women had also been sterilized, the study revealed. By 1976, 24 percent of all Native American women of childbearing age had been sterilized.

The federal government had long been using tax money to sterilize women of oppressed minorities. In 1939, the great liberal, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, declared that Puerto Rico's economic problems were caused by overpopulation. A special government sterilization program was introduced, which, after some initial opposition, was also supported by the Catholic Church.



Stephen Shames

Black and Latina women are the main targets of forced sterilization programs.

As a result of this program, the birth rate for Puerto Ricans fell 20 percent.

By the early 1970s, over 35 percent of all Puerto Rican women of child-bearing age had been sterilized.

A search of public-health records revealed that over the years, federal and state governments in this country had outdone Hitler. The Third Reich sterilized more than 250,000 "undesirables." Our federal government ended the reproductive lives of 100,000 to 200,000 women in just one year!

New regulations introduced

As these statistics became public, groups in the Black, Asian, and Latino communities led campaigns to end those abuses. As a result, new rules were introduced requiring the informed consent of women who were being sterilized.

Provisions against any type of coercion were enacted. In the past, many doctors approached a patient right after labor to get her consent to sterilization. This practice and others—like threatening the cut-off of welfare funds—were supposed to be halted.

In some states, as in California in 1975, waiting periods were introduced. Groups representing oppressed minorities favored these measures, which allowed time for individual women to be sure that the decision to be sterilized was really what they wanted.

Unfortunately, some active groups in the women's movement, including the National Organization for Women (NOW), opposed the proposed waiting period.

Mainstream women's groups were concerned about the difficulty many white women who wanted to be sterilized were encountering in getting doctors to perform the surgery. They argued that it was difficult enough to get doctors to agree to sterilize some women without adding a waiting period.

Today it is still difficult in some areas for middle-class or white working-class women to be sterilized. Doctors often insist on applying the "150 rule." This guideline multiplies a woman's age by the number of children she has. If the result is higher than 150, she qualifies to be sterilized; if not, doctors often refuse to perform the surgery, believing that the woman couldn't possibly know her own mind.

While this was—and is—a sexist practice which infringes on the right of women to control their own bodies, women's move-

ment groups made a mistake in opposing the waiting period on this basis. The needs of women of oppressed minorities, large numbers of whom have been sterilized without their knowledge and informed consent, must predominate in this situation.

Sterilization abuse still happens

While many thought the problem of forced sterilization was solved, this is not true. By 1982, close to 42 percent of all Native American women and 10 percent of Native American men had been sterilized, as had 35 percent of all Puerto Rican women. Of all Black women, 24 percent were sterile compared to only 15 percent of white women.

Although some of the most blatant abuses have become illegal, subtle sterilization abuses still occur. Subtle abuse occurs, for instance, when a woman gives consent but her social condition prevents her from really having any choice.

Adele Clark, a feminist scholar writing in "Test-Tube Women," discusses several ways in which subtle sterilization abuses continue to have an impact on poor and oppressed minority women in this country:

1) The lack of accessible abortion accounts for one form of sterilization abuse. While the federal government refuses to pay for most abortions of poor women, sterilizations are funded by Medicaid. When abortions are paid for by state governments, the state is reimbursed about half the cost. In contrast, 90 percent of sterilization costs are reimbursed to the states.

The impact of this can be seen in Illinois. In 1979, when federally funded abortions were still available, 3625 sterilizations were performed. In 1980, when abortion funds were cut, 6219 sterilizations were performed.

2) Hysterectomy has become the most common major operation performed in the United States. Although since 1975 hysterectomy is not supposed to be used solely for contraceptive purposes, doctors can simply list other causes for the surgery. Poorer women are less likely to be in a position to pay for a second opinion to confirm that the surgery is necessary.

Several studies in the early 1980s found that poorer and oppressed minority women were more likely to be pushed into a hysterectomy. Moreover, in several states where no regulations prohibit it, hysterectomies are routinely performed on women living in institutions.

3) A 1982 study documented many cases

where companies require women to be sterile to qualify for some jobs. This is the worst form of economic compulsion. High unemployment rates and economic insecurity also contribute to this compulsion. It is probable that a number of women and men who have been sterilized in the past few years did so because they couldn't afford the costs of childbirth or of raising children.

4) Studies have also shown that many people who are voluntarily sterilized do not understand that the procedure is irreversible. A disproportionate number of women and men of oppressed minorities who had been sterilized thought this could be changed.

5) When people choose to be sterilized because they have limited access to or knowledge of other forms of contraception, they fall victim to sterilization abuse. Poorer women tend to use fewer methods of birth control. And many of the most effective contraceptive methods cause problems in people with health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure, which appear in a higher proportion in oppressed minorities.

Yet the government spends little money on research programs to find and develop better birth-control methods. Those programs which do exist tend to develop methods for women, rather than men, to use.

6) Clark points out several other forms of sterilization abuse still in practice. One of the most appalling is the disproportionate number of women on welfare who continue to be sterilized. A 1982 study showed that a woman on welfare with three children was 67 percent more likely to be sterilized than a non-welfare mother with the same number of children.

The study concludes, "Something occurs in the process of delivering publicly assisted family-planning healthcare that channels services in the direction of more permanent services such as sterilization which are immediately cost effective."

Clark herself concludes that these "disproportionate sterilization rates among welfare and IHS [Indian Health Services] women reflect a patterned institutional discrimination on the basis of population control of poor people and people of color that is class, race, and welfare related."

Sterilization is now the most common form of birth control worldwide. The right of all women to choose abortion, sterilization, or childbirth must be championed by the entire women's liberation movement. ■

Why 'single-issue' vote is a trap for pro-choice mov't

Jan. 22, 1990, is the 17th anniversary of the historic *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, which declared that states could not pass laws restricting women's right to privacy in choosing an abortion.

Traditionally, Jan. 22 is a day of celebration. However, since July 1989, when the Supreme Court's Webster decision allowed states to place new and extreme restrictions on abortion, women have less to celebrate and now must fight harder to regain abortion rights.

Faced with the need to develop a plan to win back our most basic rights, several pro-choice organizations have unfortunately adopted an electoral strategy which includes the tactic of "single-issue voting".

"Single-issue voting" is the tactic of recruiting pro-choice supporters to work, raise funds, and vote for those candidates who support the pro-choice position, regardless of their positions on other important issues.

"Friends" of women's rights?

Proponents of the "single-issue voting" tactic have had to work hard to convince many activists in the pro-choice movement of the effectiveness of their approach. For one thing, most activists are also committed to a wide range of other women's rights issues—such as the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), childcare, pay equity, and much more.

In addition, many activists—including members of the National Organization for Women (NOW)—are fed up with the strategy of electing so-called "friends" of the women's rights movement. Time after time, these "friends" (once safely in office) have abandoned women's issues.

NOW members' anger and frustration with past electoral tactics led the organization to pass a resolution at their 1989 national conference which called for NOW to explore making a definitive break with the Democratic and Republican parties by establishing a new party committed to the "feminist agenda."

Since the NOW conference, however, NOW's national leadership has done much more to implement the old tactic of working to elect "friends" than to promote a break with the two ruling-class parties. In fact, the idea of breaking with the Democratic and Republican parties has been re-interpreted as "single-issue voting."

Their argument goes like this: NOW and the women's rights movement has gotten nothing by subordinating the movement to the Democratic Party. Therefore, NOW will take a "non-partisan" approach to electoral politics and support only those candidates who take a strong pro-choice position in the elections.

This means that NOW will support candidates based on their claimed pro-choice positions without regard for whether they are Democrats or Republicans (or what their positions are on other issues). Some NOW leaders claim that this stance represents independent political action.

The form this approach is taking is that NOW is organizing voter-registration campaigns asking those who support pro-choice positions to register to vote in the upcoming state elections. As the elections draw nearer, NOW and the other groups that share this strategy will announce which candidates deserve the "pro-choice" vote.

Politicians rush on board

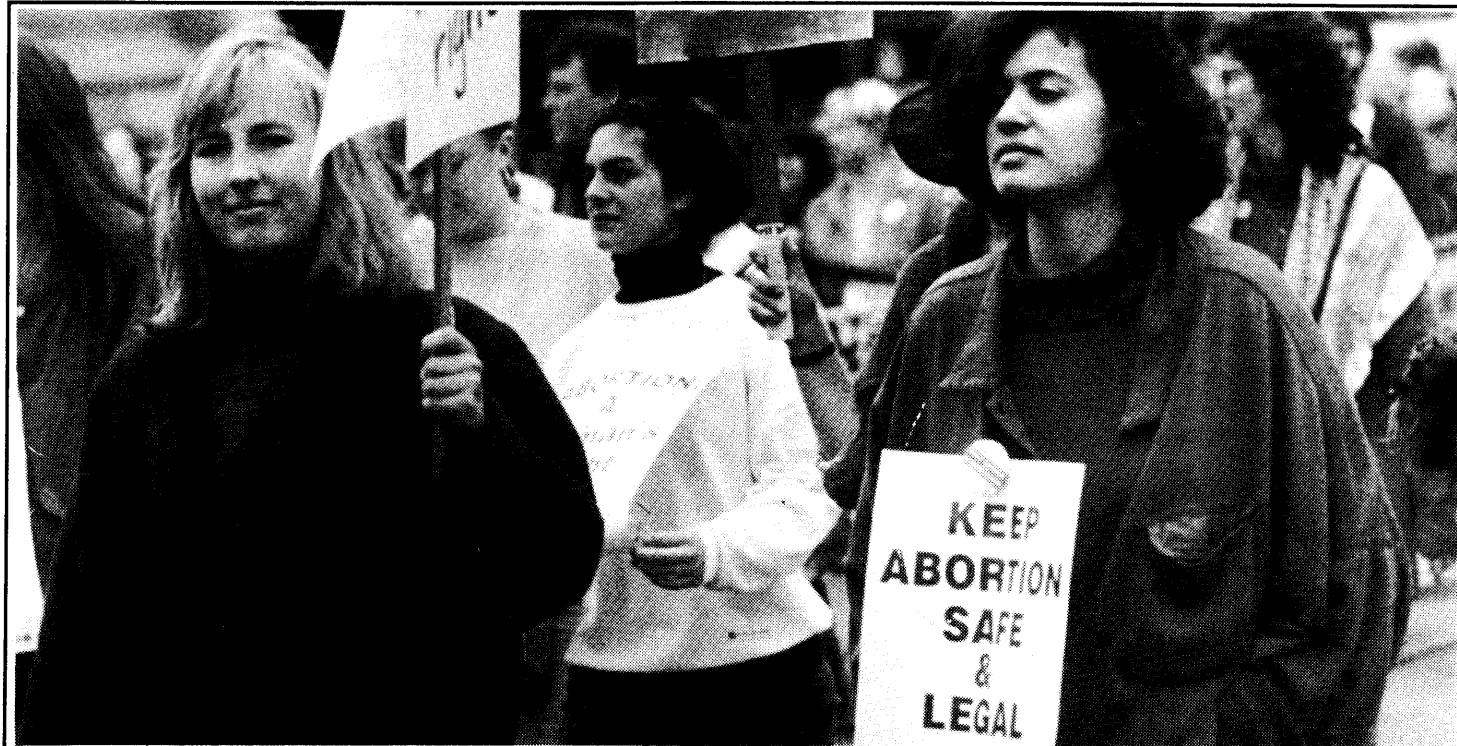
Now that polls show that the pro-choice position has gained majority support among the population, many politicians are rushing to wear the pro-choice mantle.

Dianne Feinstein was introduced by NOW President Molly Yard at the 300,000-strong pro-choice rally last Nov. 12 in Washington, D.C., as the NOW-endorsed candidate for California governor. But Feinstein, who has a poor record on women's rights as the former mayor of San Francisco, has not yet gained the endorsement of either California NOW or San Francisco NOW.

Feinstein is hoping to be able to trick more of the people more of the time now that the pro-choice winds are blowing.

Another interesting example of jumping on the pro-choice bandwagon centers around the recent *Ragsdale v. Turnlock* case. The case, scheduled to be heard by the Supreme Court in the fall of 1989, was taken off the Court's calendar after a consent decree was signed by Illinois state officials and health providers. [See accompanying story below.]

Neil Hartigan is the Illinois attorney general who appealed the state court's decision



Pro-choice supporters who demonstrated their power in the streets are now being told to vote for politicians who give 'lip service' to abortion rights.

to strike down the legislature's restrictions on abortion. Long an active opponent of women's right to choose, he is now the Democratic candidate for governor and cannot afford to be known as the man who helped roll back *Roe v. Wade*.

Hartigan is now declaring himself "pro-choice" in an attempt to keep Democrats from crossing party lines to vote for Jim Edgar, a Republican who has long been known as pro-choice.

A long record of defeat

"Single-issue voting" is clearly a new name for a very old tactic used by the labor

The Democratic and Republican parties divide the labor of representing the interests of the ruling class against the interests of the vast majority of working women and men in our society.

For instance, Barbara Boxer—a liberal, pro-choice Democratic Congresswoman from California—introduced a bill to provide federal funding for abortions knowing full well that the Republicans would not override the expected presidential veto.

Boxer helped create the illusion that there is a difference between Democrats and Republicans. She'll get the pro-choice vote, but women still don't have federally funded

of a single-issue electoral tactic dooms good causes to defeat.

The only thing that legislators listen to is power. The power of the reproductive-rights movement is not represented by money or votes but by uncompromising mass action in the streets.

A major reason so many politicians are jumping on the pro-choice bandwagon is because 630,000 marched in Washington, D.C., last April 9 and close to 1 million rallied all over the country on Nov. 12. These actions clearly represented majority public opinion. These were the kinds of actions that cause the politicians to take notice—and even make concessions.

A new fighting spirit

The year 1989 saw a major offensive against women's rights in the form of the *Webster* decision, Supreme Court attacks on affirmative action, and Operation Rescue's extra-legal attacks against women's health clinics that offer abortion services.

These attacks cannot be separated (by the tactic of "single-issue voting") from the other major issues affecting the lives of women, children, and all working people in the United States—issues such as homelessness, poverty and hunger, declining real wages, and inequality in healthcare.

The women's rights movement has acquired a new fighting spirit in response to the attacks against it. Thousands of new activists are engaged in the struggle. This is the time to involve even more pro-choice supporters in protest rallies and marches and in defending the abortion clinics.

On the other hand, an electoral strategy that ties the pro-choice movement to the two capitalist parties will only serve to deflate and diminish the movement. "Single issue voting" will mean certain defeat—just as it led to the defeat of the ERA.

We must develop a *strategy* of mass, independent action, rather than using mass actions as a *tactic* in a strategy of electing capitalist politicians. Keep the movement in the streets!

Victory in Illinois?

By TINA BEACOCK

CHICAGO—Women here and around the country heaved a sigh of relief last November when a consent decree was signed in the *Ragsdale v. Turnlock* case.

The 11th-hour settlement—signed by Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan, the American Civil Liberties Union (representing healthcare providers and Illinois women), and the state health department—prevented the case from being heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.

If the Court had upheld *Ragsdale*, abortion clinics in Illinois would have had to comply with strict licensing requirements that would have driven up the cost of abortions and made them inaccessible to most women.

But the settlement was not an

unqualified victory for women. Women more than 18 weeks pregnant must now have their abortions at a hospital or special surgical center, subject to *Ragsdale's* regulations.

Very few clinics perform late-term abortions (only one in the Chicago area). Moreover, Cook County General Hospital, the largest public hospital in the Chicago area, has banned abortions in its facilities since 1980.

The 18-week limit continues a pattern of whittling away at the right to choose established after the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973. A *Chicago Tribune* editorial drew the logical conclusion when it lauded the settlement but then asked, "Except in life-threatening or other extenuating circumstances, why should any abortion be legal after 18 weeks?"

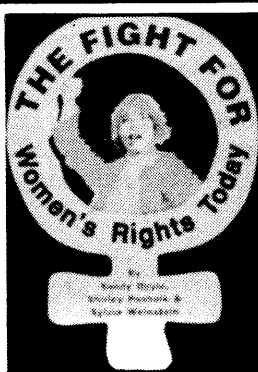
movement to repeal anti-union legislation (such as the Taft Hartley bill) and by the women's movement to win passage of the ERA. But this tactic—of rewarding your "friends" with your vote and punishing your enemies by denying your vote—has always failed.

For example, support for the ERA grew during the years when NOW used a mass-action approach to fight for ratification. But when this successful approach was abandoned for a strictly electoral one, the ERA met its defeat.

The dead-end of supporting candidates of the Democratic or Republican parties should be underscored by recent events. Democratic politicians control most of the city governments in this country. Yet when Operation Rescue rides roughshod over women's legal access to health clinics, these governments are unwilling to enforce their own laws and direct their police departments to ensure access to the clinics.

abortions.

Because the Democratic and Republican parties only put up those candidates who are committed to upholding the capitalist profit system—which is based on inequality—use



Pamphlets on Women's Liberation

The Fight for Women's Rights Today

by Sandy Doyle, Shirley Pasholk, and Sylvia Weinstein (\$1.25)

Marxism and Feminism: The Worldwide Struggle for Women's Equality (\$1.50)

Send order to 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Include 65 cents for postage and handling. Make checks payable to Walnut Publishing Co.

Why 'private enterprise' can't clean up damaged eco-system

By LINDA THOMPSON

Second part of a 4-part series

At the end of last month's article, two questions were posed: Are the warnings of the environmentalists pessimistic, and is it possible for capitalism to clean up the current ecological mess?

An article in the July 24, 1989, issue of *Newsweek* magazine attempts to address these issues. The special report is titled "Cleaning up our mess: What works, what doesn't, and what we must do to reclaim our air, land and water."

The author, Gregg Easterbrook, states that he is attempting to "sort out which ecological alarms merit worry and which are overblown; which Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] programs work and which do not." He is reassuring: "Readers should be of good cheer." In his estimate, things are under control.

However, when carefully analyzed, Easterbrook's article is actually an attempt to lull an awakened public back to sleep, to take an underhanded swipe at the environmental movement, and to suggest that nuclear power is a safe alternative source of energy to the burning of fossil fuels.

Easterbrook considers it good ecological sense to "stop splitting hairs . . . on arcane estimates of potential health hazards. Forget Love Canal: Superfund toxic waste sites are overrated as environment hazards. Arrest the Nimby (Not In My Back Yard) Patrols: By blocking construction of new waste facilities, they keep bad old ones in operation." According to him, reason will prevail and the EPA will come to the rescue.

Easterbrook's assessments seriously differ from those of many leading environmental specialists. I am referring to, among others, two classic assessments written during the 1970s: Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas's "The Three Hundred Years War: A Chronicle of Ecological Disaster" and Barry Commoner's "The Closing Circle."

Douglas and Commoner assess the damage and analyze the cause. They lay the responsibility squarely with capitalist industrial and farming powers and with government policies that support their interests.

James Bellini's recent "High Tech Holocaust," written in 1986, has more current information on the damages, which not only bears out the predictions of the earlier writers but show that things have become far worse in terms of lives and non-renewable resources that have been lost. All three authors estimate that things are out of control.

New polluting technologies

Barry Commoner—a biologist, ecologist, and educator—is perhaps one of the best known and most widely read environmentalists. He pinpoints the start of the current, serious ecological degradation with the beginning of the post-war era.

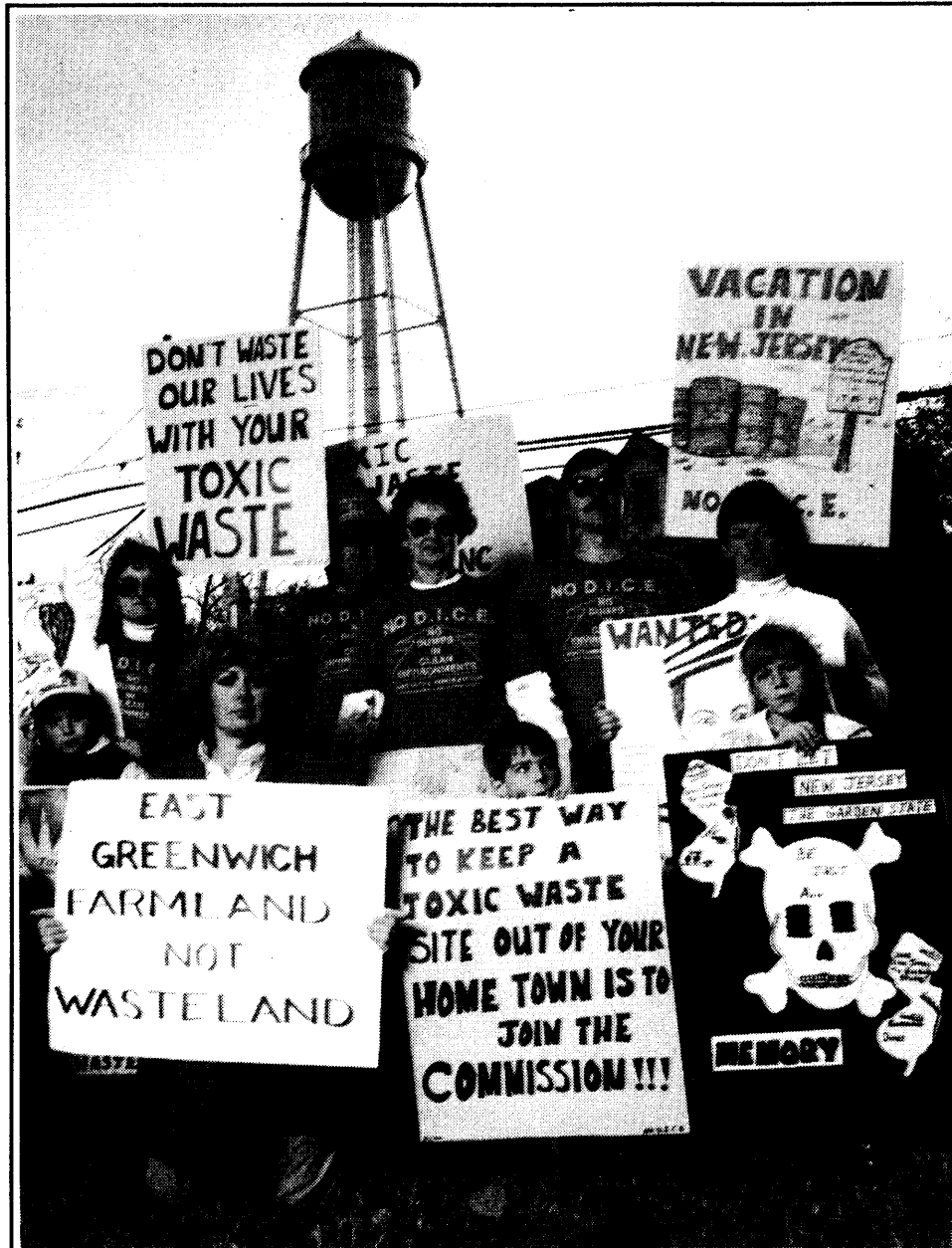
Some have claimed that the current levels of pollution come from the increased population and affluence of this period. Commoner, however, provides documentation to show that this cannot explain the 200 percent to 2000 percent rise in pollution levels since 1946.

Total production, as measured by the GNP, increased by only 126 percent while pollution levels have escalated far beyond those figures.

Commoner analyzes statistical tables of U.S. industrial and agricultural production since World War II. He finds that, while production for most basic needs has kept about even with population growth, the kinds of goods produced have changed radically.

New synthetic production technologies have replaced the older natural ones. For instance, detergents have replaced soap; aluminum, plastics, and concrete have replaced steel and lumber; and chemical pesticides and herbicides have replaced natural methods of pest and weed control.

The chemical industry needs increasing amounts of electrical power—which has encouraged the development of the nuclear-power industry. Trucking has replaced rail in



'When federal agencies and the Coast Guard are called in to clean up the disasters, the costs are passed onto the working class.'

shipping and requires six times as much fuel.

Commoner estimates that the increase in population accounts for roughly 12 percent to 20 percent of the increase in pollution. The affluence factor (or amount of goods per capita) only accounts for from 1 percent to 5 percent of the increase in pollution.

Thus, while the standard of living of the American people has changed very little during the last five decades (average hourly wages actually fell by 7 percent between 1979 and 1987), new high-polluting technologies have been responsible for reducing the quality of life for millions.

How this has taken place in the air, water, and land (atmosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere) will be examined below. At the end of this article, we will analyze why it has happened.

Air pollution is legal!

Gregg Easterbrook makes a telling point about air pollution in his *Newsweek* article. "It's all legal," he notes.

In 1986, Congress required corporations who discharge large amounts of more than 320 chemicals to disclose their toxic output. When the statistics were tallied, *admitted* air pollution added up to over 2.7 billion tons of toxic chemicals per year. Virtually none of these chemicals are controlled by the federal government.

Every year, more cities register deadlier air quality. Two-thirds of the U.S. population lives in "air quality non-attainment" areas, a euphemism used by the Environmental Protection Agency to denote areas where air-quality standards are consistently violated.

Air in the inner city is the poorest. The majority of workers who live there are ex-

posed to carbon monoxide levels 30 percent higher than those experienced by affluent suburbanites.

The original Clean Air Act of 1970 was supposed to have cut auto and airplane emissions by 90 percent in the year 1975. But due to the powerful automaker and airline-industry lobby, those provisions have never been enforced.

Alternatives exist to the present-day smog-generating engines. Ralph Nader has exposed the fact that pressure by the petroleum industry has eliminated the development of electric and steam-driven cars and mass public-transportation systems.

Dead lakes and rivers

Lakes and streams worldwide are becoming polluted by atmospheric contaminants. This pollution has been caused mainly by the combustion of large amounts of fossil fuels—coal, oil, and gas. Oxides of sulfur and nitrogen are released into the air, where they react with oxygen, water, and other substances to form acid rain.

Chemical elements such as sulfates and nitrates are naturally emitted from the sea and soil; until the 1960s, such natural emissions were greater than those produced by manufacturing activities. In 1940, about 22 million tons of sulfur oxides and 6.7 million tons of nitrogen oxides were created in the United States. By 1976, these emissions had increased by 45 percent and 273 percent respectively.

Today, the world emits approximately 100 million metric tons of sulfur into the air every year as a result of economic activities.

James Bellini, in "High Tech Holocaust," documents the damage to the world's ecosystem. In Sweden, 18,000 lakes are acidified.

In Norway, 13,000 square kilometers of lakes are reported dead. In Ontario, Canada, some 50,000 lakes are at risk.

Crop losses in the United States due to acid rain are estimated to be 5 percent of their cash value, much-needed crops have been seriously affected in India, and Europe is experiencing crop losses of \$500 million a year.

Most governments foresee no reduction in sulfur oxide emissions over the next 10 years. In fact, most analysts predict huge increases in these emissions in the advanced countries (as well as in the smaller nations) due to increasing coal consumption.

Waste in the waterways

So great has the contamination of our waterways become that this very source of life itself has become endangered. Bellini warns that we have perhaps only half a century before the world's waters become as contaminated as the land.

From earliest times, humans have used the water systems to dispose of waste. Before modern population increases and industrial production, this waste was too small to create any real problem. However, within the last 100 years—and particularly within the last 50 years—Bellini points out, "We have transformed the hydrosphere from a wholesome, cleaning medium into an increasingly poisoned one."

Water is used in most industrial processes, and this contaminated water inevitably ends up in the outside environment. Highly dangerous chemicals, nuclear waste, and increased sea traffic add to the risk. Some 70,000 different chemicals made for industrial and agricultural use are finding their way into the hydrosphere.

Highly dangerous metals like mercury, copper, lead, and cadmium are also increasingly carried into our water supplies. Heavy metal contamination, a result of acid rainfall, is an immediate threat to all living things—including humans.

Today 9 percent of stream pollution comes from industry and 65 percent comes from nonpoint sources such as agriculture. While the National Pollutant Discharge System requires that industry get permits for any emissions they discharge directly into the waterways, control of runoff from streets and fields remains largely uncontrolled.

The oil industry has been one of the major polluters. Gigantic oil spills—in addition to "routine" discharges—have spread millions of tons of petroleum (composed of dangerous hydrocarbons) directly into the hydrosphere.

Last year's Alaska spill has not yet been cleaned up, and Exxon has never claimed any serious responsibility to do so. Exxon was fined only \$50,000 by the government, and the company invested another \$200,000 in a limited cleanup effort.

Giant industries get away with a mere slap on the wrist, and the fines rarely add up to the financial gains made by failing to install proper safety measures in the first place. When federal agencies and the Coast Guard are called in to clean up the disasters, the costs are passed onto the working class.

Land tainted with pesticides

Since the 1940s, agribusiness has switched to the massive use of inorganic fertilizers (in order to increase the productivity of depleted soil systems) and pesticides. As Rachel Carson documented in her 1962 book, "Silent Spring," this has produced a death-dealing cycle of contamination. More and more chemicals are needed to eradicate pests that become immune to the ever-expanding array of pesticides.

The chemical manufacturers are now attempting to expand their markets in the underdeveloped countries and thus contaminate previously untainted agro-systems. Imperialism has long promoted single-cash-crop production that distorts the economies of neocolonial areas and impoverishes the local population. Now the capitalists are seeking to poison these areas as well.

In Nicaragua, cotton became an important crop in the 1950s. Its introduction accel-

(continued on next page)

(continued from preceding page)

ated the concentration of land ownership, capital-intensive technologies, and the heavy use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides.

Contamination was so rampant that the United States banned imports of beef from Nicaragua due to high levels of DDT in the meat. During the peak years of cotton production, more than 3000 agricultural workers were poisoned, many fatally. This pattern has been reproduced throughout the underdeveloped countries.

Alternative methods of pest control exist, including biological methods and diversification of croplands. But they have remained undeveloped since they are less profitable for agribusiness.

Superfund or "Superscam?"

Approximately 50 million metric tons of chemical wastes are produced in the United States each year. In 1987 alone, 2.3 billion pounds of toxic chemicals were dumped into landfills.

After the advent of the environmental movement, beleaguered communities that had been used as dumping sites began to fight back. At Love Canal, N.Y., over 22,000 tons of chemicals were found under a schoolyard in 1978. Afterwards, toxic dumps in thousands of other communities were "discovered" by the EPA.

The government's "Superfund" has inventoried over 1224 sites for cleanup; since the program's inception only 27 have been removed from the list and certified as totally "clean." Superfund works as a federally operated insurance program for industries that contaminate the earth. That's why they went along with it.

The \$8.5 billion in the "Superfund" is supposed to be used for cleanups; then the federal government is supposed to recover the costs from the liable parties. But neither aspect of the program has been implemented—earning the program the name "Superflop."

It could be more correctly labeled "Superscam," since 80 percent of the funds used so far have gone to consultants rather than toward cleanups.

Perhaps the most frightening instance of toxic waste comes from the approximately 528 nuclear-power plants in the world. William O. Douglas wrote in 1972: "If as little as 1 percent of our present annual production of radioactive garbage is lost to the environment, the equivalent of about 100 Hiroshima bombs would be contaminating this country every year."

Even the term "disposal" is misleading when applied to nuclear wastes. No current method of "disposal" exists to prevent radioactive elements from being released into the environment. For all practical purposes, the pollution that is generated now will be permanent. Radium has a half-life of 1620 years, and one type of poisonous iodine produced by nuclear reactors has a half-life of 17 million years.

Clearing the land for profit

Real estate and banking interests, developers, and construction companies are responsible for the large-scale loss of open space, parkland, and wilderness areas in recent years.

These profit-seeking corporations act to prevent the building of low-cost housing in the cities, while contributing to urban sprawl and disrupting the ecology of rural areas. The government is complicit in this rape of the land.

One government policy pays farmers not to grow in areas with high rainfall. Yet it subsidizes farm irrigation in states with low rainfall—thus wasting billions of dollars to support wealthy growers.

The Forest Service is building roads into backcountry areas and turning public forests into lumber. One analysis showed that the government actually subsidized the lumber industry with over \$1.2 billion in five years.

The Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management all promoted policies that poisoned coyotes, weasels, minks, foxes, and badgers. Carrion birds fed on their carcasses and also died. These policies were for the benefit of sheep owners who have over 8 million sheep on public land.

William O. Douglas has documented how the Forest Service uses herbicides extensively in its brush-control program. Large-scale spraying then drifts off target, affecting trees. Douglas reports that forests that have been sprayed are more likely to be



'Superfund works as a federally operated insurance program for industries that contaminate the earth.'

flammable. It has been suggested that the Forest Service adopt as its motto, "Only we can prevent forests."

"There will be no going back"

This review can only begin to describe the damage that has been done to the environment. There is not enough space to cover the buildup of trash and the wasteful packaging practices of big business, or the worldwide extinction of species by the whaling and fishing industries and the ivory trade. Nor is there space to deal with the deliberate development of a deadly nuclear arsenal and chemical warfare.

The first article in this series discussed the major threats to life on this planet, but these phenomena merit additional consideration. Michael Oppenheimer of the Environmental Defense Fund disclosed on the "ABC Nightline" show that scientists have been predicting the Greenhouse Effect (global warming) for over 200 years.

Dr. Oppenheimer told moderator Ted Koppel, "The important point is this, that the changes are irreversible, and that there's a lag between the emissions of the gases and the full manifestation of their consequences. So we can't move into the world, casually look about, and decide we don't like it and go back. There will be no going back."

Dr. Oppenheimer said that he thinks there is still time to act. "But if we don't start today to limit the emissions of these gases, we're going to be building an irreversible change, and we're going to be leaving for the next generation a world which is moving

downhill toward uninhabitability."

While the dangers of global warming have been known for two centuries, the discovery in 1985 of the gaping hole in the ozone layer in the Antarctic took scientists completely by surprise. How many other death-dealing processes have been set in motion that might take us by surprise? How many other startling revelations are being kept hidden from us?

Given the technology currently available to us, it would be possible to build a heaven on earth. Funds now given over to the U.S. military budget could be used to radically rehabilitate the environment. And yet we are reaping a whirlwind of destruction and death.

Can capitalists reform their ways?

Many people share the dangerous illusion that, as the problem intensifies, the ruling

class will come to its senses and see the wisdom of employing ecological safeguards to industrial production.

Robert Heilbroner, a left-liberal economist, suggests this alternative. He states: "The capitalist and managerial classes may see—perhaps even more clearly than the consuming masses—the nature and nearness of the ecological crisis, and may recognize that their only salvation (as human beings, let alone privileged human beings) is ... to accept a smaller share of the national surplus simply because they realize there is no alternative."

The fallacy in this argument is that it implies that the capitalist class could somehow introduce rational changes into an obviously irrational mode of production. This has been the goal of those in the environmental movement who believe in capitalism and want to clean it up.

However, the polluters really have little choice in the matter if the "private enterprise" system is to prevail. They cannot prevent pollution any more than they can prevent recessions, depressions, or stock market crashes. The drive for profits has a dynamic of its own. Its final logic is to drive humanity into barbarism or annihilation.

The major consideration as to how capital is invested has always been the rate of profit returned on the investment—not what is needed by society. The newer industrial technologies developed after World War II have served the multinational corporations in two important respects:

First, as Barry Commoner has documented, new products often return an extremely high rate of profit (until they are duplicated and the profit rate falls due to competition). Therefore, there is an inherent drive to continually introduce new products and technologies before their long-term ecological effects are known.

Second, the production of new synthetics has in many instances relieved the imperialist nations of their need to obtain raw materials from the potentially revolutionary neo-colonial countries, where private investments can be endangered. Thus, there is an apparent method in the "madness" of the capitalist class.

An economic system which spawns and perpetuates this kind of "madness" is clearly in need of being eliminated—before it eliminates us.

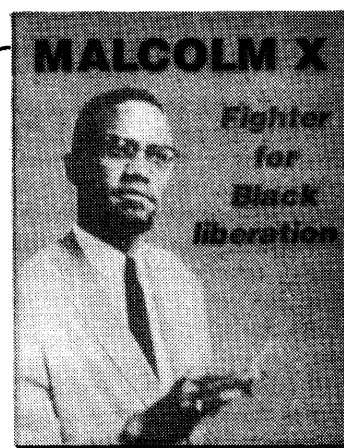
Commoner estimates that it might cost roughly \$600 billion in order to remedy major ecological faults in the capital equipment of this country. He says that this investment would be roughly one-half of the expenditures for durable equipment and structures for the period from 1946 to 1968.

Restoring our damaged ecosystem would cost additional hundreds of billions of dollars. Commoner states: "Perhaps the simplest way to summarize all this is that most of the nation's resources for capital investment would need to be engaged in the task of ecological construction for at least a generation."

The ruling class, however, instead of embarking on a major program of ecological rehabilitation has chosen to invest its capital in new technologies and production that clearly intensify the deterioration of the environment.

Perhaps the end justifies the means for some. Is there perhaps a certain amount of illness and environmental degradation that must be tolerated in order for masses of people to get the cheap products they desire? This attitude could not prevail if people were informed of the extent of the suffering that the destruction of the environment has created in terms of human health and lives.

The next article in this series will review the horrible legacy of disease that the polluters have left to the planet and its inhabitants. ■



A key pamphlet on the Black struggle

By Kwame M.A. Somburu et al.
Send \$2 (includes postage) to 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Make checks payable to Walnut Publishing Co.

Union leader, Anthony Mazzocchi, calls on labor to form its own party

By JOSEPH RYAN

"I think the time is now appropriate to escalate a discussion on the need for a labor party."

These were the words of Anthony Mazzocchi, International Secretary-Treasurer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW), as he spoke to a public meeting at the Alameda Central Labor Temple in Oakland, Calif., on Dec. 12.

The meeting, attended by nearly 100 people, was sponsored by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 444 and was endorsed by AFSCME Locals 2700 and 512, and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 265.

Mazzocchi, who has long been agitating for the formation of a labor party in the United States, began his speech by relating his experiences as a young worker and union organizer at the end of World War II. Those were the days, Mazzocchi said, when the unions saw themselves as a social movement.

"I understood that it was the job of trade unions to civilize work, that it was the job of trade unions to fulfill a vision of a shorter workweek, of humane working conditions where workers had control over their lives at the point of production.... That was a time when we didn't even have a grievance procedure; if we didn't like what happened that day at work—we didn't work the next day."

Groundwork for proposal

Mazzocchi laid the groundwork for his labor party proposal by reviewing the great strike wave of 1946-48: "I recall the struggle to fight the implementation of the Taft-Hartley Act. I was in New York City, which was a union town, and we put nearly a million people into the streets—all trade unionists.... In those days you could do [that] because there was tremendous consciousness.... Unions were seen as crusaders for the advancement of the interests of all people."

But things began to change, Mazzocchi said, when the union movement agreed to abide by the new restrictions imposed by the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act.

"Secondary boycotts were outlawed; a whole host of restrictions were imposed upon trade unions. And we sort of complied with those restrictions."

As a consequence, Mazzocchi stated, the influence and public perception of unions has declined to the point where today, "workers see us ... as powerless to struggle successfully against the bosses."

Mazzocchi believes that trade unions still wield great power—in spite of the many lost union organizing drives and strikes, the current inability of the unions to win substantial gains for workers (instead of concessions), and the shrinking membership of the union movement.

"We have more money than we did before," Mazzocchi said, "we have tremendous resources, and we have people of great ability."

Furthermore, Mazzocchi believes that American working people are looking for a change, especially in the electoral arena.

"I think American workers don't vote because that's a sign ... of their sophistication," Mazzocchi told the audience. "What

they are saying is—and I think they're saying it very clearly—'it doesn't matter.'"

"American workers," he continued, "have been voting 'none of the above' in increasing numbers.... I think there is a tremendous reservoir of people who are sitting on their hands [in the voting booth] because they believe that what exists [Democrats and Republicans] doesn't represent their best interests."

"That 50 percent [of the electorate] has been described as the third party of the 'non-voter'.... I think we're at the point in history where people have rejected the existing political parties."

Nucleus of a labor party

Mazzocchi described the betrayals and current strikebreaking of the Democratic and Republican parties. He noted, on the other hand, that when Jesse Jackson raised populist issues during the 1988 presidential campaign, he received a favorable response from working people, especially trade unionists.

To combat declining living standards and



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

wages, Mazzocchi believes the time is ripe to begin organizing a structure—around a "bold" social program—that could be a nucleus for the formation of a labor party.

"My proposal is that working people form a new party.... We need an instrument, a party, to provide a space for what the program should be. And I believe if we begin to argue out what that program should be—within a party structure—we'll attract tens of thousands and millions into a party like that. I think Americans are waiting for such a party."

Mazzocchi described how the labor movement would be strengthened by forming its own party. "I think it will be much easier for labor to organize because people will say: 'That's a movement I want to identify with!'"

Mazzocchi said that a labor party needs to be formed not only to strengthen labor *vis a vis* the boss, but also to be in a position to negotiate with the government for the social programs working people need. "For example," he stated, "we need nationalized health-care in this country."

One disturbing flaw in Mazzocchi's labor party proposal, however, was the fact that he ruled out challenging the Democrats and Republicans in the voting booth until some vague time in the future. "It takes time before you challenge for power," he stated.

While Mazzocchi correctly elaborated on the decisive importance of formulating a program for a labor party, he seemed to downplay the fact that the best barometer for gauging public support for such a program is in elections, both locally and nationally. He believes that running prematurely in elections—and losing—would eventually be fatal.

The experience of the United Mine Workers' successful write-in campaign last November in Virginia would seem to point in the other direction.

Mazzocchi also failed to point to the decisive role of victorious struggles on the picketline, which raise political consciousness and build self-confidence among the union ranks, thereby laying the basis for the formation of a political instrument—a labor party.

Although Mazzocchi seems to be putting the cart before the horse, his call for the labor movement to begin discussing the formation of a labor party—albeit a call in the wilderness at the present—should be supported. If some of his proposals seemed vague, it may be because too few working people have had the opportunity to participate in this important discussion.

... labor

(continued from page 20)

strike in 1981, and the AFL-CIO bureaucracy did nothing.

The government sent a signal to employers to step up their attacks, and the inaction of the labor bureaucracy sent the message that there would be little resistance to these attacks. The stage was set for accelerating—at a carefully controlled tempo—the offensive against workers.

The capitalists were careful to not directly attempt to attack the strongest section of the working class—the steel, auto, and rail unions, etc. Such a move could have backfired, triggering an explosive resistance from industrial workers.

The bosses took a long-term approach. Their strategy boiled down to: (1) attacking the weaker unorganized sections of the working class by drastic reductions in social benefits, (2) restructuring—through plant closings, plant relocations, and layoffs, and (3) introducing two-tier wage plans and changing work rules.

The effect was immediate. Between 1979 and 1984, millions of American working people were deprived of needed social services as the government slashed programs such as extended unemployment benefits, aid to mothers with dependent children, and medical and welfare benefits.

At the same time, 11.5 million American workers lost their jobs due to plant shut-downs. Some of the most powerful industrial unions were decimated by these shut-downs, primarily because the union bureaucracy agreed in principle with the capitalists' need to maintain "profitability" and "productivity" *vis a vis* international competitors.

Over 550,000 steelworkers and 250,000 auto workers permanently lost their jobs.

Between 1984 and 1985 (the last year for which figures are available) 700,000 union workers were forced to accept two-tier contracts. Without doubt, the number of workers forced to accept two-tier contracts has doubled since then.

Rank-and-file resistance

The 1980s, however, were also a time when working people attempted to organize resistance against the employers' assaults. Airline workers, like the TWA flight attendants, railworkers in New England, and city workers in Detroit and Philadelphia, to name only a few, were involved in important skirmishes that indicated a growing militancy.

But in every instance the labor bureaucracy sabotaged the class interests of these fighters. They signed contracts behind the backs of the membership, undermined solidarity by respecting "no-strike" clauses in contracts, or refused to organize mass picketlines to challenge court-ordered injunctions on limited picketing.

The most graphic example of the bureaucracy's treachery, and the lengths to which it will go to in the interest of "business unionism" was its betrayal of the 1985-86 Hormel strike of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local P-9 in Austin, Minn.

This strike, which became an inspiration for workers across the nation, was the first serious resistance by an industrial union to company takeback demands. Local P-9, a union with militant class-struggle traditions, was openly challenging the prevailing UFCW strategy of granting concessions. Lasting nearly one year, the strike was betrayed by both the UFCW and AFL-CIO bureaucracies.

UFCW officials, with the AFL-CIO's blessing, signed their own agreement with Hormel, encouraged scabbing by offering post-strike benefits, and eventually put P-9

under trusteeship. Nearly 1800 valiant packinghouse workers permanently lost their jobs. The defeat of the P-9 strike only further emboldened company and government attacks against working people.

Struggle allowed to wane

As the recent 10-month-long strike by Eastern machinists clearly attests, the union bureaucracy is more than capable of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. When the Eastern strike began in March 1989, the class solidarity interests of the workers put the struggle in an advantageous position.

The machinists were joined in the strike by pilots and flight attendants; the airline was virtually shut down. But because of the union leadership's lack of a class-struggle perspective—like mass picketlines at the airports—the struggle was allowed to wane. Consequently, the pilots and flight attendants have returned to work, and the machinists are out by themselves. Thousands of militant workers are beginning to draw their own conclusions.

The union bureaucracy, in an attempt to cover up its no-win policy, has championed what it calls the "Corporate Campaign." The "Corporate Campaign" is a strategy based on public-relations campaigns and civil disobedience. In essence the "Corporate Campaign" approach is counterposed to the strategy of mass picketlines, rallies, and solidarity actions.

This strategy has yet to win a strike. On the contrary, the "Corporate Campaign" strategy is rooted in the belief that it is impossible to win strikes these days, and serves the function of protecting the bureaucracy from a head-to-head confrontation with the boss—and the government, as represented by the courts, the police, and the National Guard.

As the 1990s begin, the union bureaucracy

finds itself in a crisis. They have been cutting their own throats because they are committed to the preservation of American capitalism. But out of the social crises that lie down the road a new leadership will emerge in the unions.

This leadership will not tie the fate of working people to the fate of capitalism. This leadership, which will come from the ranks who are the victims of the bureaucracy's policies, will raise a social program that is independent of the class interests of the bosses.

To fight unemployment they'll demand the shorter workweek with no cut in pay. To fight homelessness they'll demand public-works programs to build housing.

To fight poverty they'll demand full union-scale wages for everyone.

And to fight the betrayals of the political parties of the employers, the Democrats and Republicans, they'll form their own political party—a labor party.

The historic mission of the labor movement will place it in the leadership of all the oppressed who are fighting for social justice. Only through this kind of independent, class-struggle activity will the 1990s become the stage for the reversal of the legacy of the 1980s.

**International
VIEWPOINT**

A biweekly magazine published
by the Fourth International.
One year: \$47. Write to:
2, rue Richard Lenoir, 93108
Montreuil, France.

Court fines Christic Institute to cover up gov't drug-running

The following press release was issued by the Christic Institute, a public-interest law firm, on Nov. 13, 1989. Socialist Action joins the dozens of religious and civil-rights organizations in protesting the \$1 million court-imposed sanctions order against the Institute.

This heavy fine against the Christic Institute is clearly aimed at preventing the American public from finding out the truth about Washington's drugs and arms running to finance the contras. Among other things, the U.S. ruling class—its courts and its media—are determined to hide President Bush's direct involvement in overseeing this drugs-for-arms program in Central America, a program that involved Panama's Gen. Manuel Noriega.

This explains the unprecedented attack on the Christic Institute. It explains why the Iran-contra investigation ended in a total cover-up of those at the top directly involved in the scandal—namely Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

And it also explains why top U.S. officials, according to several "off-the-record" news reports, are wary of having Gen. Noriega stand trial in a U.S. court on drug charges. They are concerned he might spill the beans on President Bush, for whom he

worked when Bush was CIA chief and later vice president. After all, didn't Noriega threaten to blackmail Bush when he said he had "Bush by the balls?"

Socialist Action readers are urged to protest the Atlanta court's sanctions order against the Christic Institute. For more information about how you can help, please call the Institute at (202) 797-8106.—the editors

WASHINGTON—Several churches, public-interest organizations, and legal experts filed briefs in the Atlanta Federal Appeals Court on Monday, Nov. 13, opposing the largest sanctions order ever imposed on a law firm by a U.S. court.

In February, a federal court in Miami ordered the Christic Institute, a religious public-interest law firm in Washington, to pay more than \$1 million to 15 defendants named in the *Avirgan v. Hull* civil lawsuit. The same court had dismissed the suit in June 1988, four days before the trial was scheduled to begin.

The Atlanta court ruling came under Rule 11, a provision that allows judges to punish lawyers for bringing "frivolous" lawsuits to courts.

The defendants sued by the Christic Insti-

tute in *Avirgan v. Hull* include contra leader Adolfo Calero, retired Army Major Gen. John Singlaub, retired Air Force Major Gen. Richard Secord, and Robert Owen, formerly Oliver North's liaison to the contras. Also named as a defendant is accused drug-trafficker John Hull, a U.S. citizen who owns extensive land holdings in Central America and has admitted he acted as the CIA's liaison with contra forces in Costa Rica.

Avirgan v. Hull alleges that the defendants were members of a criminal racketeering enterprise that conspired to aid the contras in violation of federal law. The lawsuit charges the enterprise with murder, arson, and illegal traffic in drugs and firearms.

One of the fundamental issues in the lawsuit is a terrorist bombing at a press conference in La Penca, Nicaragua. Several journalists were killed or wounded in the attack. One of the survivors, ABC cameraman Tony Avirgan, is a plaintiff in the Institute's lawsuit, along with his wife, journalist Martha Honey. They charge that members of the racketeering enterprise conspired to bomb the press conference in a failed attempt to assassinate a rival contra leader, Eden Pastora.

Court disregarded key evidence

The Institute argues that the Miami court

which dismissed the charges in June 1988 disregarded most of the evidence on the bombing—it addressed only 17 of the 699 exhibits submitted—as well as the plaintiff's other allegations.

Key elements of the lawsuit have also been verified by Congress and the courts. Six months after the case was filed, for example, the Iran-contra scandal surfaced in the press, and a year later House and Senate investigating committees confirmed the existence of the arms-smuggling enterprise.

The lawsuit's allegations that contra bases were used to smuggle cocaine from Colombia to the United States were confirmed in February by the Senate Narcotics Committee. In the past year, several of the Institute's defendants have been convicted or indicted on criminal charges by federal courts. Defendant John Hull fled Costa Rica after a legislative committee identified him as a cocaine trafficker.

In their briefs, the numerous organizations supporting the Christic Institute argue that the sanctions order imposed by the Atlanta Federal Court has no merit and is only designed to block citizens from bringing controversial lawsuits to the courts.

Christic Institute lawyers have asked the Federal Appeals Court in Atlanta to reverse the sanctions ruling and reinstate the case. They say they expect a decision on this appeal later in 1990.

If the appeal is not granted, the Institute would have to be shut down and its assets transferred to these right-wing defendants, some of whom have already been indicted or convicted on criminal charges, to pay the \$1 million sanctions order.

El Salvador: A Government at War with Its Own People

Six Jesuit priests murdered in cold blood by soldiers of the U.S.-funded army. Bombs, rockets, and machine gun-fire raining down from U.S.-supplied aircraft on innocent civilians in densely populated neighborhoods of San Salvador. Martial law decreed, abolishing

all civil rights. The press muzzled by military censorship. Religious, labor, and political leaders driven into hiding.

This is the Salvadoran government's response to their people's dramatic uprising in demand of democratic change.



Jesuit priests slain by army death squad, November 16. Many other religious leaders, under government death threats, have gone into hiding.

Incredibly, the official policy of President Bush is to prop up the brutal regime in El Salvador, supplying it with \$1.5 million daily in weapons and financial aid. And now, in an eerie replay of Vietnam, the Administration won't rule out the use of U.S. troops in the fighting.

El Salvador's People Have Risen Up for Their Freedom

After suffering decades of U.S.-backed military dictatorship and poverty, the Salvadoran people have risen up in revolt. Their uprising raises hopes for a democratic future—free of hunger and death squad terror.

Residents of many neighborhoods and towns have taken to the streets, building barricades and trenches to keep the army out. Their revolt has been sparked by a nation-wide offensive, beginning November 11, of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), the rebel alliance fighting for democracy and social reform in El Salvador.

Contribute to the Movement for Freedom in El Salvador

The FMLN, conscious of its responsibility to the people, has undertaken to construct and operate *Emergency Mobile Hospital Units* in areas under government attack in order to provide treatment to injured civilians and FMLN members.

Let us heal the wounds inflicted by the immoral policy of our government, offering the Salvadoran people emergency hospitals and medicines rather than bombs and bullets.

The *Bravo Fund* was established to fund the construction and supply of these emergency mobile hospitals, and other humanitarian and developmental projects.

In one nearby hut, a rocket from a helicopter killed a mother and her two daughters. "The army's firing from their helicopters like madmen," said Raul Hernandez Martinez, whose 11-year-old son was killed in another explosion.

—San Francisco Chronicle, November 13, 1989

Your Contribution Is Urgently Needed to Save Lives

Please make your check payable to "The Bravo Fund".

Yes, I want to save lives in El Salvador! I enclose a check to "The Bravo Fund" for the construction of FMLN emergency mobile hospitals, in the amount of:

___ \$1,000 ___ \$500 ___ \$250 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$25 ___ other

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Mail to: The Bravo Fund P.O. Box 460586 San Francisco, CA 94146 (415) 647-9433

(Contributions are not tax-deductible.)

The U.S.-El Salvador Institute for Democratic Development: Making Salvadoran Voices Heard

The U.S.-El Salvador Institute for Democratic Development is a new national organization of U.S. citizens, with its office in San Francisco. The Institute has a mission both educational and humanitarian in character.

With its unlimited access to the national media, the Bush Administration has tried to convince the people of the United States that U.S. intervention in El Salvador is justified in the name of "national security interests," and it has attempted to portray a home-grown rebellion against tyranny as "Soviet-backed subversion" against the United States. For too long, the Institute believes,

these Cold War pretexts of U.S. intervention in Central America have not been adequately challenged in the United States. The Institute proposes to open debate on U.S. policy by bringing before U.S. audiences the protagonists of El Salvador's movement for democracy, to let them speak for themselves, and have a fair hearing in the United States. Thus the Institute makes available official representatives of the FMLN to participate in public forums and debates as well as interviews with the media. At the same time, the Institute works to defend and promote the rights of Salvadorans affected by the war, including members of the FMLN, to receive prompt humanitarian assistance to relieve the traumas of war. The Institute is a sponsor of the *Bravo Fund*, which will provide this humanitarian assistance for projects for the war wounded and their dependents. The Bravo Fund was established in memory of Dr. Alejandro Bravo Betancourt, a Mexican doctor assassinated in El Salvador by the Salvadoran army on February 13, 1989.

(continued from page 1)

suddenly found himself drowned out and besieged by an angry crowd. Forced to flee for his very life, he ordered his security forces to open fire on the rapidly unfolding mass demonstrations—which demanded his resignation and an end to the despotic rule of the Communist Party.

When the Securitate followed his orders, killing hundreds, if not thousands of unarmed demonstrators, the world was astonished to learn that even greater numbers took to the streets of the capital the following day.

What followed was a civil war which involved virtually the entire population. Factories were shut down and armed worker/student militias joined with the defecting regular army to take over key aspects of the state's functioning. Estimates of the number of dead range into the thousands.

"Deliver your arms!"

Obviously worried about a still-armed population, on Dec. 24 the week-old Iliescu government issued a series of decrees designed to consolidate all power in its hands. The Council of the National Salvation Front declared:

"The army is the only one to possess arms, the firm arm defending the people. All those who, these days, have come into the possession of arms and ammunition, regardless of the circumstances, have to urgently deliver them by Monday, Dec. 25, at 1500 G.M.T. [Greenwich time] at the latest.

"The units of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense are merged to take over the single command of all troops and all weapons.

"Management and all working people are called upon to insure the protection of economic, trade, and medical units.

"The bodies of the new structures of democracy must urgently begin their activities of restoration of the country by firmly setting themselves up and becoming immediately subordinate to the council."

Five days later, however, the revolutionary dynamic unleashed after decades of Stalinist rule, was still in full stride.

Masses continue to organize

The spectacular breadth and speed of events has put the new government at a great disadvantage when compared to other crippled but still functioning Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe. Virtually every political and military figure associated with the present government has been associated in one way or another with the previous regime. This fact, coupled with the armed insurrection against Ceausescu, may prove decisive in the weeks and months ahead.

While the new government desperately seeks to govern with the aid of the administrators of the barely changed institutions of the old regime, the masses, without awaiting formal permission, continue to organize strike committees, newspapers, political organizations, and armed groups.

Government officials lamely explain that "competence," not past political association, will be the first criterion in selecting the new technocrats. Meanwhile, workers and students are proceeding to organize their own discussions regarding the administration of factories and other state institutions.

Worker occupations have already challenged the authority of the appointed "management" in some factories.

The new government has been forced to certify the rights which the Romanian masses have already conquered with their own blood. In the case of the ethnic Hungarians, for example, their right to their own language, schools, and cultural centers—denied for the past decade—is today unchallenged.

The right to possess an unregistered typewriter has been decreed—after the appearance of countless leaflets and newspapers. The right to abortion, long denied by Ceausescu on the grounds of the need to increase the size of the population, is today decreed without opposition.

Ceausescu's warehouses emptied

In an attempt to win legitimacy with the still-armed and ever-organizing masses, the new government felt compelled to empty the special hiding places of the Communist Party and the government export warehouses—where nearly all of Romania's agricultural products were stored awaiting ship-

... Romanian workers spear revolution against Stalin

Reuter



Peter Turnley/Newsweek

ment to foreign markets.

Ceausescu's aim had been to exchange these products for hard currency to continue payment on Romania's \$11 billion debt to the imperialist-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other such lending institutions.

For this fidelity to international capital and because of his frequent pro-U.S. foreign policy initiatives, the Ceausescu regime had won the enthusiastic support of the U.S. ruling class.

Until a few years ago, for example, Romania had been granted most-favored-nation status by the U.S. Congress. When it comes to protecting the economic interest of U.S. capital, concern for human rights—whether in El Salvador or Romania—takes a back seat.

In addition to the mass graves which will forever remind the Romanian people of the price of their struggle against Stalinism, the depth of the corruption of the Ceausescu regime is being revealed for the first time.

In the name of "socialism," Ceausescu stole over \$1 billion from the Romanian people and stashed it in various foreign banks. In the name of "socialism," Ceausescu built a golden palace for himself while he plowed under historic cities and villages to construct slipshod and inadequate housing for the masses.

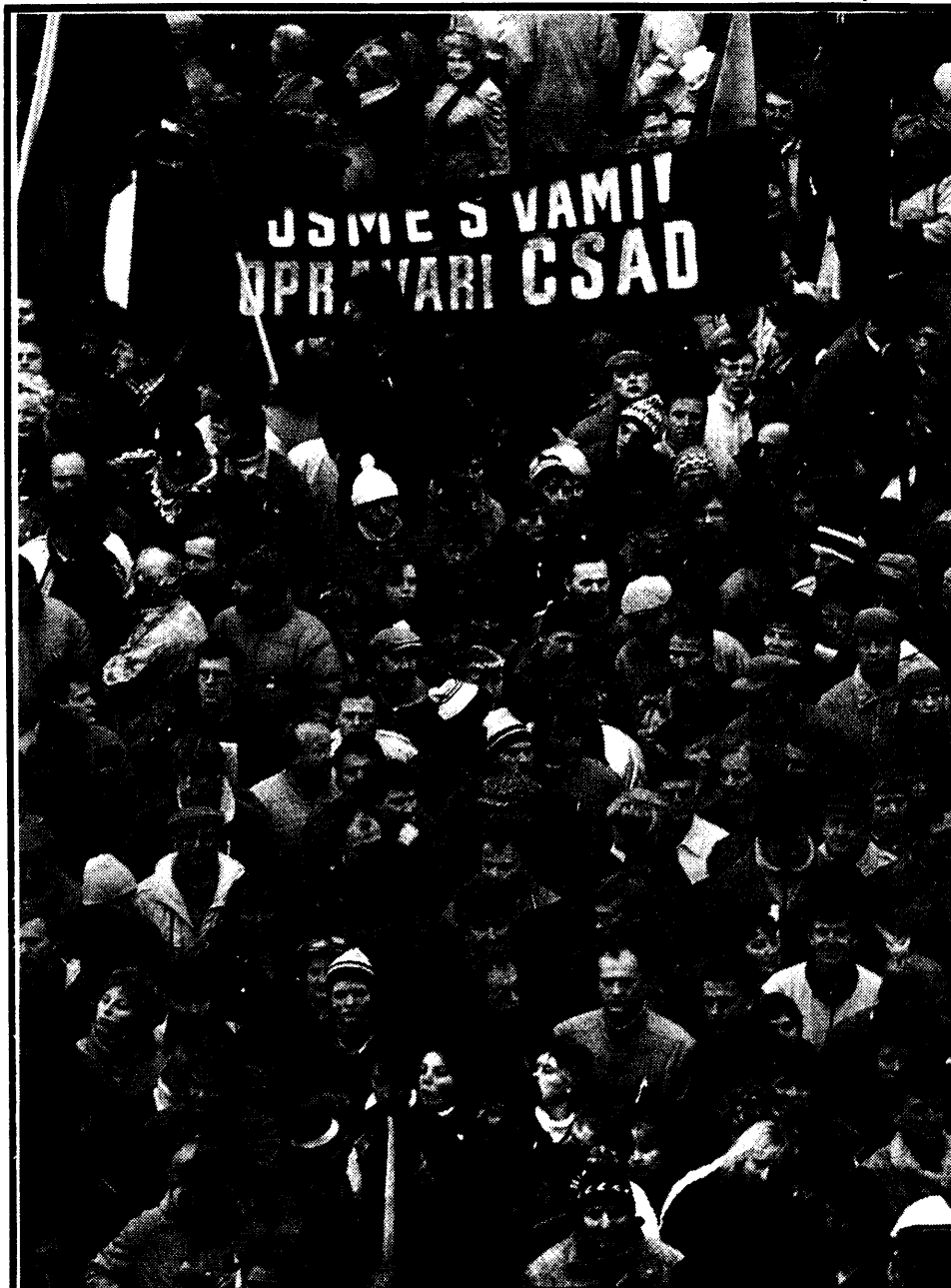
And in the name of "socialism," Ceausescu, like his Chinese Stalinist cohorts, praised virtually every U.S.-supported dictator in return for the privilege of securing loans which would mortgage the future of the Romanian people to U.S. banks.

It is ironic that the Zionist, apartheid state of Israel—whose 1967 predatory war against the Arab nations of the Middle East was praised by Ceausescu—today stands as one of the few with a "mixed mind" in regard to the Romanian revolution.

Stalinist control has not ended

The revolutionary mass mobilizations in Romania and in Eastern Europe are not likely to be contained in the coming period. This fact, above all, causes great concern in both Washington, D.C., and Moscow.

However, while an unprecedented blow has been struck against the Stalinist regimes—which have been ruled by bureaucratic elites imposed by the Soviet army following World War II—Stalinist control of these defunct workers' states has not been ended.



Top photo: Defiant under sniper fire, Romanian masses display self-confidence. Lower: Czechoslovakian workers and students celebrate resignation of Stalinist 'Old Guard.'

Most of the state institutions, especially the police and military, still remain in the hands of the Stalinist bureaucrats, who are determined to rule in order to perpetuate their privileges.

The last few months have witnessed a frantic and still-continuing series of maneu-

vers designed to find a governmental formula which is both acceptable to the people and which, at the same time, allows the continuation of the rule by a privileged bureaucratic caste.

The wide range of formulas include that of neighboring Bulgaria, where recent threats of

... Romanian workers spearhead revolution against Stalinism



Reuter

a general strike led to the resignation of top Communist Party officials but not yet to the wholesale removal of the government and central leaders of the Communist Party.

In Poland, at the other extreme, the Stalinist General Jaruzelski still rules in a coalition with openly pro-capitalist elements that, for now, have captured control over the Solidarity union leadership.

Poland's new economic measures

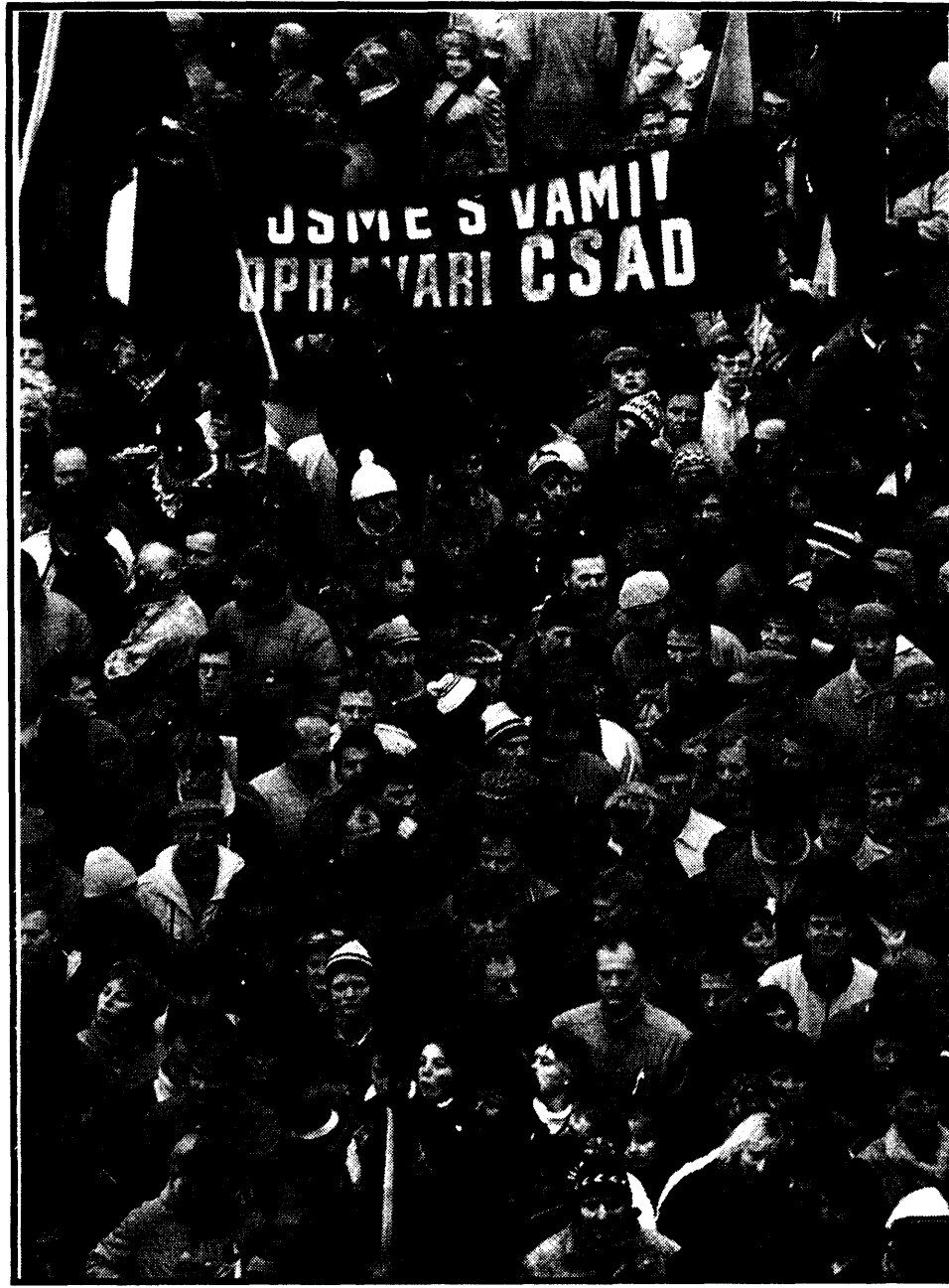
Recent developments in Poland highlight most clearly and remarkably the course the Stalinist leaders of Eastern Europe have embarked upon to maintain their privileges, a course leading to the open restoration of capitalism at the expense of the working class.

The Mazowiecki/Walesa government today proposes deeper budget cuts and anti-working class measures than any contemplated by the Stalinist regime when it was the sole ruler less than a year ago.

This month, Poland's new crash economic program begins to take effect. Subsidies for goods and services, which last year accounted for 31 percent of public spending, will be reduced to 14 percent. Reduced subsidies will remain in just a few areas—housing, public transportation, coal, bread, and low-fat milk and cheese.

Price increases of 25 percent to 50 percent each month are expected, as state enterprises lose their government support and are compelled to raise prices to survive. Coal and energy prices are expected to rise five to seven times. About 400,000 workers are expected to lose their jobs in the resulting plant closures.

The price increases and the cuts in government spending are expected to result in a 20 percent decrease in real income and a 5 percent decrease in industrial output. Finance



Peter Turnley/Newsweek

ment to foreign markets.

Ceausescu's aim had been to exchange these products for hard currency to continue payment on Romania's \$11 billion debt to the imperialist-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other such lending institutions.

For this fidelity to international capital and because of his frequent pro-U.S. foreign policy initiatives, the Ceausescu regime had won the enthusiastic support of the U.S. ruling class.

Until a few years ago, for example, Romania had been granted most-favored-nation status by the U.S. Congress. When it comes to protecting the economic interest of U.S. capital, concern for human rights—whether in El Salvador or Romania—takes a back seat.

In addition to the mass graves which will forever remind the Romanian people of the price of their struggle against Stalinism, the depth of the corruption of the Ceausescu regime is being revealed for the first time.

In the name of "socialism," Ceausescu stole over \$1 billion from the Romanian people and stashed it in various foreign banks. In the name of "socialism," Ceausescu built a golden palace for himself while he plowed under historic cities and villages to construct slipshod and inadequate housing for the masses.

And in the name of "socialism," Ceausescu, like his Chinese Stalinist cohorts, praised virtually every U.S.-supported dictator in return for the privilege of securing loans which would mortgage the future of the Romanian people to U.S. banks.

It is ironic that the Zionist, apartheid state of Israel—whose 1967 predatory war against the Arab nations of the Middle East was praised by Ceausescu—today stands as one of the few with a "mixed mind" in regard to the Romanian revolution.

Stalinist control has not ended

The revolutionary mass mobilizations in Romania and in Eastern Europe are not likely to be contained in the coming period. This fact, above all, causes great concern in both Washington, D.C., and Moscow.

However, while an unprecedented blow has been struck against the Stalinist regimes—which have been ruled by bureaucratic elites imposed by the Soviet army following World War II—Stalinist control of these deformed workers' states has not been ended.

Most of the state institutions, especially the police and military, still remain in the hands of the Stalinist bureaucrats, who are determined to rule in order to perpetuate their privileges.

The last few months have witnessed a frantic and still-continuing series of maneuvers designed to find a governmental formula which is both acceptable to the people and which, at the same time, allows the continuation of the rule by a privileged bureaucratic caste.

The wide range of formulas include that of neighboring Bulgaria, where recent threats of

Dictator Ce Romania

By BRAD JUDD

The Ceausescu clique—including his wife and family—transformed Romania's Stalinist regime into a personal dictatorship.

No one since Stalin has done more to discredit socialism, although he really had little to do with socialism. Even the *Los Angeles Times* admitted in an editorial: "Ceausescu's iron grip on government and his ruthless secret police force have less to do with socialist ideology than with raw personal power. He and a large network of relatives run Romania's government like a family business."

Ceausescu and Elena mixed aspects of the Stalinist prototype with qualities of Byzantine regimes like the 6th century blood-stained rule of Emperor Justinian I and Queen Theodora. Ceausescu's security group, the Securitate, answered to his direction only. The Securitate held higher priority than the army (itself the second largest in Eastern Europe) and received the best and newest equipment.

Bolstered in its loyalty by numerous privileges, the Securitate's benefits exceeded those of the Communist Party (CP). The arrests, internal exile, and executions of thousands—and the use of from one-fourth to one-third of the population as informers—are indications of the extent of political repression.

Golden supperware

Ceausescu's gaudy lifestyle made disgraced East German leader Erich Honecker look like a pauper. Swiss banks report some \$400 million in accounts in Ceausescu's name.

When revolutionists entered the mansions of the Ceausescu family, they found paint-

earhead linism

a general strike led to the resignation of top Communist Party officials but not yet to the wholesale removal of the government and central leaders of the Communist Party.

In Poland, at the other extreme, the Stalinist General Jaruzelski still rules in a coalition with openly pro-capitalist elements that, for now, have captured control over the Solidarity union leadership.

Poland's new economic measures

Recent developments in Poland highlight most clearly and remarkably the course the Stalinist leaders of Eastern Europe have embarked upon to maintain their privileges, a course leading to the open restoration of capitalism at the expense of the working class.

The Mazowiecki/Walesa government today proposes deeper budget cuts and anti-working class measures than any contemplated by the Stalinist regime when it was the sole ruler less than a year ago.

This month, Poland's new crash economic program begins to take effect. Subsidies for goods and services, which last year accounted for 31 percent of public spending, will be reduced to 14 percent. Reduced subsidies will remain in just a few areas—housing, public transportation, coal, bread, and low-fat milk and cheese.

Price increases of 25 percent to 50 percent each month are expected, as state enterprises lose their government support and are compelled to raise prices to survive. Coal and energy prices are expected to rise five to seven times. About 400,000 workers are expected to lose their jobs in the resulting plant closures.

The price increases and the cuts in government spending are expected to result in a 20 percent decrease in real income and a 5 percent decrease in industrial output. Finance

Ministry officials say that the measures could push the inflation rate to nearly 1000 percent.

Hardest hit will be industrial workers. In the coal industry, Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki has called upon Polish miners to work on Saturdays. The same Solidarity leaders whose "roundtable" talks with the Polish Communist Party soon led to their inclusion in the government, had previously demanded an end to the six-day workweek.

Under the joint Stalinist/Mazowiecki proposals, various state enterprises will be sold to the growing private sector, where they most likely will fall into the hands of the same Stalinist bureaucrats who previously mismanaged them.

Western bankers wait in the wings

It would be a mistake to think that the Polish Stalinists have only grudgingly acquiesced to these measures. To the contrary, these are the very same measures they sought to impose on the working class over the past decade. The Stalinists calculate that the bitter pill of austerity and unemployment will be accepted with less resistance if it is administered by those the workers still have confidence in.

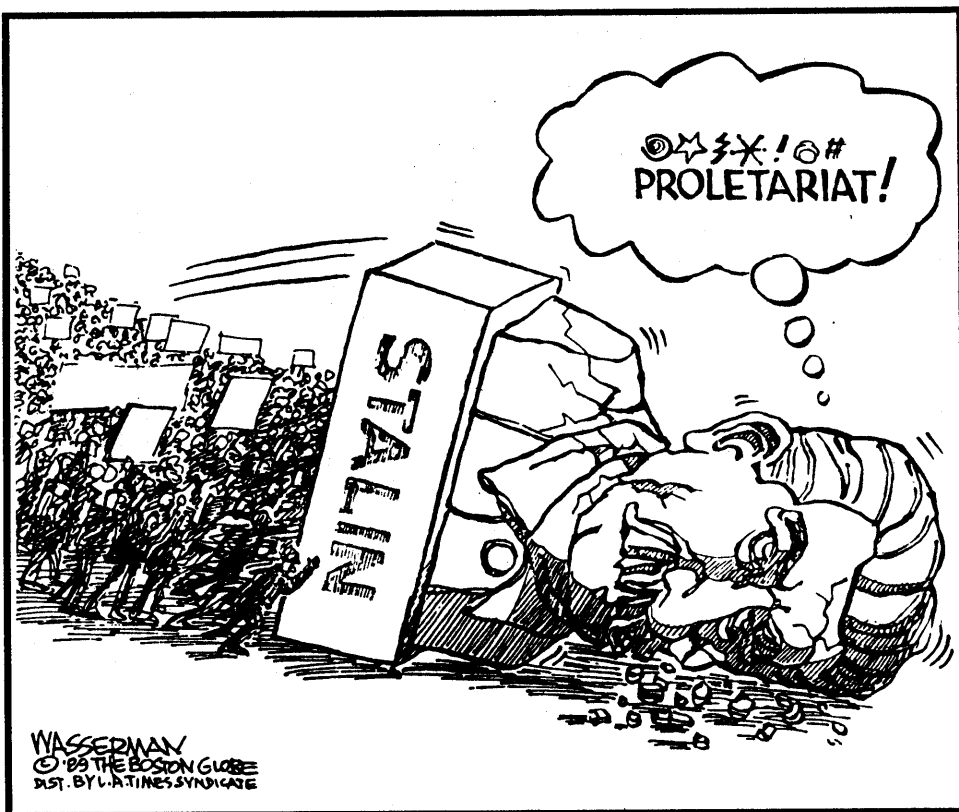
Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund, barely waiting for the ink to dry on the newly adopted "reforms," has begun to take action in support of capitalist restoration.

IMF Managing Director Michael Camdessus has announced that a letter of intent for a \$700 million standby loan agreement with Poland will be signed soon. This will open the way for additional loans of \$3.2 billion to \$3.5 billion and a liberal rescheduling of Poland's \$40 billion debt to Western nations.

While the world capitalist community and its petty supporters in Poland are counting on the Solidarity-led government to carry out its promised austerity measures, the Polish workers have yet to be heard from.

"In the name of freedom and democracy," they are told, "you must sacrifice for your own good and the good of the nation." But many Poles are bound to ask, "Why can't we have freedom and democracy and a decent standard of living as well?"

For the time being, the Lech Walesa lead-



ership, in collaboration with the Stalinist bureaucracy, has managed to reregister the Solidarity union and in so doing, ignore the mounting calls in the ranks for the convening of a democratic congress of this once powerful 10-million-member workers' organization.

As the attacks on them mount, however, the Polish workers will begin once again to rebuild their unions as well as their own political parties to defend their class interests.

Roots of economic stagnation

The current crisis of the economies of the Stalinist states—which has led to their near collapse—has two major sources.

The first and most important is the historic exclusion by imperialism of Eastern Europe and the USSR from the world division of labor. In simple terms, the Stalinist states have been subjected to a virtual worldwide embargo since their formation. For four decades and longer, with few excep-

tions, their economies have been distorted by the need to produce all commodities with the limited resources within their own borders.

The Stalinist bureaucracy itself is the second key reason explaining the recent economic stagnation. The obvious benefits arising from a rationally planned economy (where production is organized to meet human needs as opposed to production for private profit) has been negated by the exclusion of the working class itself from the planning process.

In the Stalinist states, planning is the sole prerogative of a corrupt layer of bureaucrats who have little or no way of evaluating the merits of their decisions—other than their own enrichment.

Real socialist planning, as opposed to its Stalinist caricature, requires the direct participation of the working class through its own democratic institutions. In the USSR before Stalin, these were known as factory

(continued on page 12)

Dictator Ceausescu ruled over Romania like a feudal prince

By BRAD JUDD

The Ceausescu clique—including his wife and family—transformed Romania's Stalinist regime into a personal dictatorship.

No one since Stalin has done more to discredit socialism, although he really had little to do with socialism. Even the *Los Angeles Times* admitted in an editorial: "Ceausescu's iron grip on government and his ruthless secret police force have less to do with socialist ideology than with raw personal power. He and a large network of relatives run Romania's government like a family business."

Ceausescu and Elena mixed aspects of the Stalinist prototype with qualities of Byzantine regimes like the 6th century blood-stained rule of Emperor Justinian I and Queen Theodora. Ceausescu's security group, the Securitate, answered to his direction only. The Securitate held higher priority than the army (itself the second largest in Eastern Europe) and received the best and newest equipment.

Bolstered in its loyalty by numerous privileges, the Securitate's benefits exceeded those of the Communist Party (CP). The arrests, internal exile, and executions of thousands—and the use of from one-fourth to one-third of the population as informers—are indications of the extent of political repression.

Golden supperware

Ceausescu's gaudy lifestyle made disgraced East German leader Erich Honecker look like a pauper. Swiss banks report some \$400 million in accounts in Ceausescu's name.

When revolutionists entered the mansions of the Ceausescu family, they found paint-

ings from the national museum, closets filled with furs and jewelry, solid gold bath fixtures and supperware, and even a golden scale to measure out imported meats for the family dog.

Ceausescu's increasing power isolated him from reality and contributed to his pursuance of numerous untenable policies that became central causes for his downfall. Most crazy of Ceausescu's excesses was his ruinous pace of repayment of the foreign debt to Western banks. He even forced Romania to exceed the payment schedule!

Ceausescu ordered that basic foodstuffs, fuel, and other domestic necessities be withheld from Romanian consumption and sold on the foreign market to pay back the debt. Even before this, Romania supported the lowest standard of living in Eastern Europe and has the only Warsaw Pact standard of living lower than the Soviet Union's.

Perhaps Ceausescu's reconstruction of more than 33 of Romania's cities most visibly illustrates the bankruptcy of the policy of "the architect of our grandiose times."

The modern facades of new residential blocks lining grandiose boulevards concealed what was a step backward, as many individual units shared only one kitchen and one bath per floor. Whole neighborhoods and districts were obliterated and reorganized for more efficient administrative control.

Thousands were dislocated in the capital, Bucharest, once known as the "Paris of the Balkans." Monumental boulevards were cut through the city, destroying whole historic districts. Ceausescu acknowledged his debt to French Emperor Napoleon III, whose purpose was not only to have imperial aggrandisement but also to be better able to put



Nicolai Ceausescu

down urban revolt.

Ceausescu's attempt to visit a similar fate onto the rural villages directly contributed to the revolt by the Hungarian minority in the western part of the country. The plan called for razing 8000 of the nation's 13,000 rural villages, moving the inhabitants into agro-industrial centers with massive housing blocks.

The main excuse for this project was the "rational" development of agriculture. In the regime's view, the plan had the benefit of breaking up village, family, and nationality ties to the land and reassigning the inhabitants throughout the country.

Ceausescu's rise to power

Ceausescu joined the Communist Party in

the early 1930s. The CP had been severely weakened by Stalin's transformation of it into an external tool of Soviet foreign policy. Romanians viewed it as a foreign instrument.

Under pressure of the Germans, in 1941, the fascist regime in Romania attacked the Soviet Union. After Germany's defeat, the least-tainted nationalists were drawn into a coalition government with the Communist Party under Red Army domination.

After Stalin scrapped the coalition with the nationalists, the CP dominated the regime. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej established his regime firmly by 1952 and began making the party and Romania more and more independent from the Soviet Union.

As Ceausescu established control between 1965 and 1968, he deepened the general course of independence from Moscow, while denouncing Gheorghiu and posturing against his more onerous aspects. Ceausescu was given unprecedented power to resist the conservative holdovers. Much like Gorbachev today, Ceausescu played the role of the young, able reformer.

After 1968, Ceausescu received an overwhelming vote of confidence when he refused Romanian participation in crushing the democracy movement in Czechoslovakia.

Internationally, Ceausescu was praised by the West. Nixon granted favorable trade status. Ford and Carter continued the policy, ignoring the growing severity of human rights abuses because of the anti-Soviet "benefits." Reagan continued favorable status until the new possibilities under Gorbachev and changes in Eastern Europe ended Ceausescu's usefulness to U.S. policy.

Mikhail Gorbachev at the beginning of the 1990s cuts a strikingly similar profile to Nicolae Ceausescu in the late 1960s. Gorbachev has been accorded unprecedented powers, as was Ceausescu. The Romanian has been called the last Stalin-like CP head; but without terminating Stalinism, could forces in the USSR cause Gorbachev to end up equally as repressive?

Gorbachev backpedals to keep bureaucracy afloat

By CARL FINAMORE

When Mikhail Gorbachev became head of the Communist Party (CPSU) in 1985, he was reportedly stunned by what he read in the confidential reports prepared for him. An economy which had been treading water for several years under former Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev was now beginning to sink.

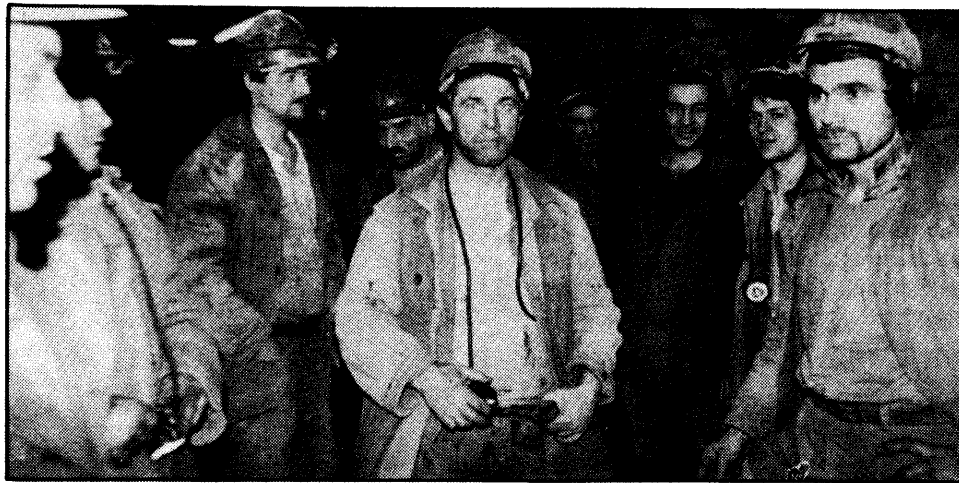
But Gorbachev has received even worse news in the last few months. The four-year shock treatment of perestroika economic reforms has not worked. To paraphrase one top Soviet editor who was personally rebuked by Gorbachev for using inflammatory language, "The economy is adrift in a sea topped with gasoline waiting to be lit."

Last summer's strike of 500,000 coal miners could have easily been the spark. The embers are still burning. In November, most of the 34,000 coal miners in Vorkuta (Siberia) voted to restart their strike because of government procrastination in satisfying their demands for more pay, more availability of food and consumer supplies, and official recognition of their strike committees.

Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhov gave us a glimpse of just how bad it is when he reported to the first session of the Supreme Soviet that 40 million people live below the poverty line; 40 percent of the country's industrial plants are worn out; the annual budget deficit is around \$162 billion; and the foreign debt is \$50 billion and rising fast.

Reform measures put on hold

Until recently, most facts and figures on the Soviet economy have been concealed from the public. But the long food lines,



Siberian coal miners, on third day of sit-down strike, resist perestroika.

scarcity of most consumer goods, and rising prices are no secret to any Soviet citizen.

So it really is not surprising that Soviet President Gorbachev recently announced that some key planks of his perestroika economic reforms would be temporarily abandoned. Gorbachev and Prime Minister Ryzhov warned the second session of the Congress of People's Deputies meeting in December that immediate steps had to be taken to diffuse widespread and growing discontent in the population.

Specifically, price subsidies to consumers will remain in effect until at least 1991. This will ensure the stabilization of prices for basic necessities and buffer the exorbitant prices being charged by private enterprises—which presumably still will be encouraged to prosper.

Private businesses (or "cooperatives," as they are called) primarily function in the re-

tail or service sector. While this may not be the most decisive part of a nation's economy, it is the one where the average citizen has the most contact. The number of cooperatives has grown from 13,921 in 1987 to 77,548 in 1988. Two million people are employed in these ventures.

Soviet newspapers regularly report the complaints of consumers concerning the high prices charged by cooperatives who take advantage of shortages to reap extensive profits.

To avert an immediate confrontation over this issue, Gorbachev's revised economic plan also calls for pumping \$106 billion worth of consumer goods into the state-controlled market, nearly four times the annual increase in recent years. (Under Stalin in the years 1929-1952, industrial production received nine times more capital than light industry producing consumer items.)

These are all signals that Gorbachev is worried that a social explosion like the ones which are rocking Eastern Europe will derail his attempt to radically restructure the Soviet economy through the phased introduction of the profit motive.

It is these broader political considerations, and not Gorbachev's bureaucratic jousting with conservative apparatchiks—as most capitalist media analysts claim—which accounts for the latest retreat from some of his more ambitious market-type reforms (such as eliminating price subsidies and introducing unemployment in the name of cost-accounting efficiency). Gorbachev's latest moves are also an admission that his market reforms will indeed cause severe social disruption.

Austerity takes hold in Poland

In Poland, it is only the extreme popularity of government officials who were leaders of the once-banned Solidarity union that has temporarily blocked mass mobilizations against perestroika-type market reforms. Austerity measures there have led to 400 percent inflation, high prices, and the prospect of growing unemployment.

Janusz Trzcinski, a Communist Party member of parliament, said: "People within our party are amazed that Mazowiecki [the Solidarity adviser who was elected Prime Minister] can do all of this. If we had done one-tenth of that, the country would have gone up in flames."

Gorbachev must proceed more cautiously than Mazowiecki, who was previously jailed by the Polish regime. Unlike Mazowiecki, Gorbachev rose from within the despised bureaucratic machine, a machine which daily shows its kinship with another, newly emerging, privileged section of society seeking private profit at the expense of the majority.

In the short term, Gorbachev can sidestep an immediate confrontation with the Soviet working class, but he can't dance around the fact that the objective of perestroika reforms is to lower the living standards of millions of people for the profit of a few. ■

... Romania

(continued from page 11)

committees and *soviets* (or workers' councils).

Following the 1917 Russian Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky, these councils, organized from the local to the national level, were the fundamental governmental institutions of workers' power. They decided the basic economic and political questions facing the newly formed workers' state.

The dictatorship of the few—of capital—was replaced, for the first time in human history, by the rule of the vast majority through organizations of their own making, run in their own interests.

The destruction of the soviets under Stalin was accompanied by the murder of virtually every leader of the 1917 revolution, tens of thousands of their militant supporters, and the parallel slaughter of tens of millions of Soviet workers and peasants.

Soviet/American "partnership"

Worried about the armed rising of the workers and students in Romania, the Bush administration's spokesperson, Secretary of State James Baker, publicly suggested to Mikhail Gorbachev that the USSR seriously consider sending Soviet troops to aid the new government of still-tainted Stalinists.

This bold and thoroughly reactionary suggestion was made in the context of the new worldwide détente between the United States and the USSR. Previous agreements of this type, reached in the name of "peaceful coexistence," were based on the spurious idea embraced by Josef Stalin in 1924 that socialism could be built in the USSR alone.

In reality, peaceful coexistence meant bargaining away the struggles of the workers and their allies worldwide in exchange for the preservation of the privileges of the Soviet bureaucracy at home. Support for the working class, as it time and again confronted capitalist oppression, was subordinated to deals with imperialist governments.

A key aspect of the new détente involves U.S. aid to the Soviet and Eastern European Stalinist bureaucracies for the purpose of helping them to maintain their rule over the masses. The United States is fully prepared to assist in propping up these discredited regimes, especially if their future invest-

ments are guaranteed.

The United States prefers a partnership with compliant Stalinists to the alternative of uncontrolled workers' mobilizations aimed at defending the social gains which were achieved with the elimination of capitalism.

More than anything, the U.S. rulers fear the overthrow of Stalinist rule and its replacement with a democratic system of workers' rule based on the actual organizations of the workers themselves—that is, *real socialism*.

Hard as they look, the world's capitalist pundits have not been able to point to a single example of the Eastern European working class demanding an end to the social gains they have achieved. There have been no mass calls to end the system of free medical care, childcare, and education that still prevails today in Eastern Europe and the USSR.

Similarly, there have been no demonstrations to end the state's provision of housing, basic foods, and energy at below actual cost, not to mention the lifelong job security and associated pensions—which provide, unlike here in the United States, a livable income (albeit at low standards).

To the contrary, a key factor explaining the mass mobilizations in Eastern Europe is the explosive opposition generated by the austerity measures imposed by the various Stalinist regimes in consort with the dictates of the IMF.

Paying off the \$32 billion IMF debt by increasing prices and lowering the standard of living of the Polish people in 1979, for example, was a chief factor in the rise of the independent trade union Solidarity.

Today, in exchange for capitalist investment to stave off internal opposition to Stalinist rule, the Soviet bureaucracy promises to assist the United States and its imperialist allies in maintaining the rule of oppressive capitalist regimes from South Africa and the Middle East to Central and South America.

In this context, while the Bush administration, in the name of saving lives and human rights, urged Soviet intervention in Romania, it proceeded to install its own regime in a bloody invasion of Panama that cost the lives of hundreds of Panamanian workers.

Likewise, in the name of "peaceful settlements of regional disputes," the USSR condemned the Sandinista government of Nicaragua for providing aid to El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front,

Gorbachev's USSR: Is Stalinism Dead?



A collection of essays in defense of socialist democracy

Edited by Carl Finamore

Essays by
Esteban Volkov, Pierre Broué, Susan Weissman,
Nat Weinstein, Paul Siegel, Ralph Schoenman,
Zbigniew Kowalewski, Gerry Foley, Hayden Perry,
and Carl Finamore

Walnut Publishing's new book "Gorbachev's USSR: Is Stalinism Dead" (208 pages with photos) analyzes current events in the Soviet Union against the backdrop of the struggle for socialist democracy waged by Leon Trotsky and his supporters against Josef Stalin in the 1920s and '30s.

To order, send \$9.95 (includes \$1 for postage and handling) to Walnut Publishing Co., 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

which was struggling to topple the brutal regime of Alfredo Cristiani. A succession of U.S.-supported regimes in El Salvador over the past decade are responsible for the death-squad murders of 70,000 Salvadorans.

Historic role of working class

The events unfolding in Eastern Europe today are truly spectacular. It is as if history were on videotape, and someone was pressing fast forward. Each day, another myth is shattered—and with it comes an increased understanding on the part of the workers that they are the ultimate source of power and progress in society.

With the Soviet admission that the 1939 Stalin-Hitler pact constituted a violation of the sovereignty of the Polish and Eastern European people, the masses in Lithuania and the other Baltic nations press harder for their long-denied national rights.

With the opening of Czechoslovakia's borders to East Germans, the Czechoslovak workers themselves were inspired to take to

the streets to decide their fate, followed by the Bulgarians and now the heroic people of Romania.

Europe is alive with revolution. For the first time in 40 years, the working class is poised to resume its historic march for liberation from all forms of oppression—capitalist and Stalinist alike.

The victories achieved by massive working-class mobilization and organization will not be lost on workers the world over—including those in the United States, who have endured almost two decades of concessions and retreat at the hands of the capitalist class and its political representatives.

Revolutionary socialists welcome the uprisings in Eastern Europe with open arms and great joy. They look forward to lending whatever assistance they can as the working masses strive to build their own revolutionary parties, the necessary next step to forever sweep away the decaying Stalinist regimes and open the road to worldwide socialist revolution. ■

The meaning of the Brazilian elections

Fernando Collor de Mello, the wealthy right-wing candidate of the National Reconstruction Party (PRN), became Brazil's first elected president in close to 30 years. He defeated Luis Inacio (Lula) da Silva, leader of the Workers Party (PT), in the second round of the presidential elections, obtaining 43.7 percent of the vote to Lula's 38.9 percent. The elections took place Dec. 17.

The difference in the votes obtained by the two candidates—close to 3 million votes—came as a surprise to many political ob-

Introduction

servers. Polls taken on the eve of the elections had indicated that Lula was not only quickly catching up to Collor, but was in fact surpassing him.

The Dec. 18 issue of the Rio de Janeiro daily *Jornal do Brasil*, one of the country's major newspapers, helps explain this discrepancy. In an article titled "Crimes of the Bus Owners," the editors denounce the "scandalous and criminal attitude of the owners of the bus companies who kept their



Two presidential contenders: Luis Inacio da Silva 'Lula' and Fernando Collor

buses in the garage on election day to prevent the voters in the electoral strongholds of PT candidate Luis Inacio da Silva from going to the voting booths. This is a shameful maneuver that is inadmissible in any serious country and that can only un-

dermine the elections. Those responsible must not go unpunished."

Indeed, in the major cities of Brazil where Lula was way ahead in the polls, the private bus owners prevented hundreds of thousands of voters (some estimates place the number in the millions) from going to the polls. In a public communiqué dated Dec. 18, the PT leadership also denounced this "fraudulent and illicit attempt to favor the candidate of the PRN."

This month we begin a two-part series on the elections in Brazil. The main piece below contains an assessment of the first round of the elections, which took place on Nov. 21. In those elections, Collor and Lula came in first and second, respectively, out of a field of 24 candidates. (The two front-runners then had to face each other in the Dec. 17 runoff elections.)

This document was published in late November by *Luta pelo Socialismo*, a current of supporters of the Fourth International who are a tendency inside the Workers Party. It is reprinted here in an abridged form.

In our next issue we will publish a more in-depth assessment of the Dec. 17 elections and of the new political situation created by the victory of Fernando Collor de Mello.

— the editors

The presence of Lula in the second round of the presidential elections confirms the change in the relationship of class forces in favor of the workers.

The victory of Lula over the various bourgeois candidates who falsely portrayed themselves as being on the "left," moreover, represents a step forward for the Workers Party (PT) and for the working class in general.¹ Lula's victory in the first round is a sign that the millions of exploited and oppressed people of Brazil aspire to independent, working-class solutions to their demands.

Yet while the presence of Lula on the ballot represents a victory for working people, the PT's election campaign [during the first round] suffered from some grave political deficiencies that must be pointed out.

The first concerns the results in the cities and regions where the PT had elected mayors and city councils. By and large, in these regions the PT results were very poor, demonstrating that the masses wanted more than promise of change; they wanted a real change.²

The second problem involves the policy of alliances carried out by the PT leadership in line with the position adopted by the party's national convention.³

This policy blunted the PT's ability to differentiate itself from [bourgeois candidates] Mario Covas and Leonel Brizola. In fact, the leadership even characterized them as our allies, thereby allowing them to present themselves to the masses as working-class candidates, which they are not. In the states of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and in the South, they obtained far more votes than the PT in the first round.

The final problem is that the party's rank and file became involved in the campaign only late in the game. Lula sought to portray himself as a statesman, above all social classes and detached from his party. It was only in September, after Lula had dropped in the polls, that the ranks were appealed to and involved in the campaign.

A program to advance the struggle

We can win in the second round of these elections, but for this it is necessary to make some radical changes in our program and campaign.

We must at all times strive to maintain our independent, working-class profile. We must be intransigent: In our government there will be no room for any bourgeois figures or parties. We must speak clearly about the need for socialism and the self-organization of the working class and its allies.

If a Lula government is to satisfy the demands of the oppressed, it must rest on the force of the working class, organized in its own councils—in the workplaces and communities—independent of the state.

The Popular Democratic Program put forward by the Brazil Popular Front [the elec-

PT

a internacional

Jornal da Corrente Interna do PT - Luta pelo Socialismo

Edição extra - nov/89

LULA

PRESIDENTE

PT

Document from PT current

toral coalition led by the PT] is incapable of satisfying the demands of the population. A Lula government will have to:

- 1) Cancel payments on the foreign debt. The debt is illegitimate; its payment demands unacceptable sacrifices by the toiling masses. A PT government must spearhead the fight for the cancellation of the debt, forming an international front of governments and working-class organizations to cancel the debt.⁴
- 2) Implement an agrarian reform under the control of the workers.
- 3) Nationalize the financial system and foreign commerce.
- 4) Nationalize the multinational corporations and the large capitalist holdings.
- 5) End the tutelage of the military.
- 6) Save the Amazon region.
- 7) Implement an urban reform.
- 8) Pursue a proletarian-internationalist foreign policy.
- 9) Put an end to the discrimination against women and Blacks.

Fighting for these objectives, and basing itself on the mass mobilizations and aiding them to constitute their own councils, a Lula government could begin the transition to socialism, imposing itself as a Workers' Government.

Lula For President!

For a Workers' Government that breaks with the Foreign Debt and satisfies the demands of all the oppressed!

Footnotes:

1. Two "left-liberal" bourgeois candidates challenged the PT in the first round of the elections last November: Mario Covas of the

Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) and Leonel Brizola of the Democratic Labor Party (PDT).

2. The PT mayors in dozens of cities refused to cancel that portion of the foreign debt allocated by the federal government to the municipalities, and ended up administering the government's austerity program. This default was duly rewarded in the voting booths: In the city of Sao Paulo, for example, where Luiza Erundina was the PT mayor, Lula finished fourth in the first round of the elections.

3. At its Sixth National Convention in June 1989, the PT endorsed the leadership's popular-frontist electoral alliance with small petty-bourgeois and splinter bourgeois parties: the Brazil Popular Front. This front included the Green Party, the Brazilian Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB), and the bourgeois PSB.

4. Since the founding of the Workers Party (PT) in the early 1980s, Lula and his party had championed the call for the total cancellation of the foreign debt. At the Sixth National Convention of the PT last June, however, the party reversed its position on the debt, calling instead for a suspension of payments on the debt pending renegotiations with the international banks.

This new position, which was challenged by a significant percentage of the convention delegates, was the one Lula advocated during his presidential campaign. A top adviser to Lula, economist Paul Singer, explained the PT's economic program in an interview reprinted in the Nov. 21 *Los Angeles Times*.

"The Workers Party plans to suspend payments on Brazil's \$112 billion foreign debt while the country decides what part of the debt is illegitimate. Our forecast is that 40 percent of the debt is illegitimate, because it

Brazil's economy on the brink of total collapse

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER

Brazilian president-elect Fernando Collor de Mello inherits an economic situation on the verge of hyperinflation. The impending economic collapse will further pauperize the nation's overwhelmingly poor population.

Paying off the foreign debt has been the catalyst for hyperinflation in Latin America. Workers and peasants bear the brunt—through austerity measures like wage freezes, deep cuts in social services, and trade concessions to the big capitalist countries that cause massive price increases. Hyperinflation sparked food riots in Argentina last spring, as grocery prices doubled and tripled almost hourly.

Brazil's \$112 billion foreign debt is the largest of all the semi-colonial nations. Although interest payments have been suspended, inflation grows and external pressure to impose further austerity measures continues. Meanwhile, Brazil's income distribution is as unequal as that of the poorest African countries. *Favelas*—horrible slums—expand around the major cities. Millions of children are malnourished.

November inflation was 41.4 percent. The yearly rate is expected to hit 1300 percent. Money loses more than 1 percent of its value every 20 hours. Gasoline costs \$2.23 a gallon. For many items in stores, clerks phone the factory to find out the current price.

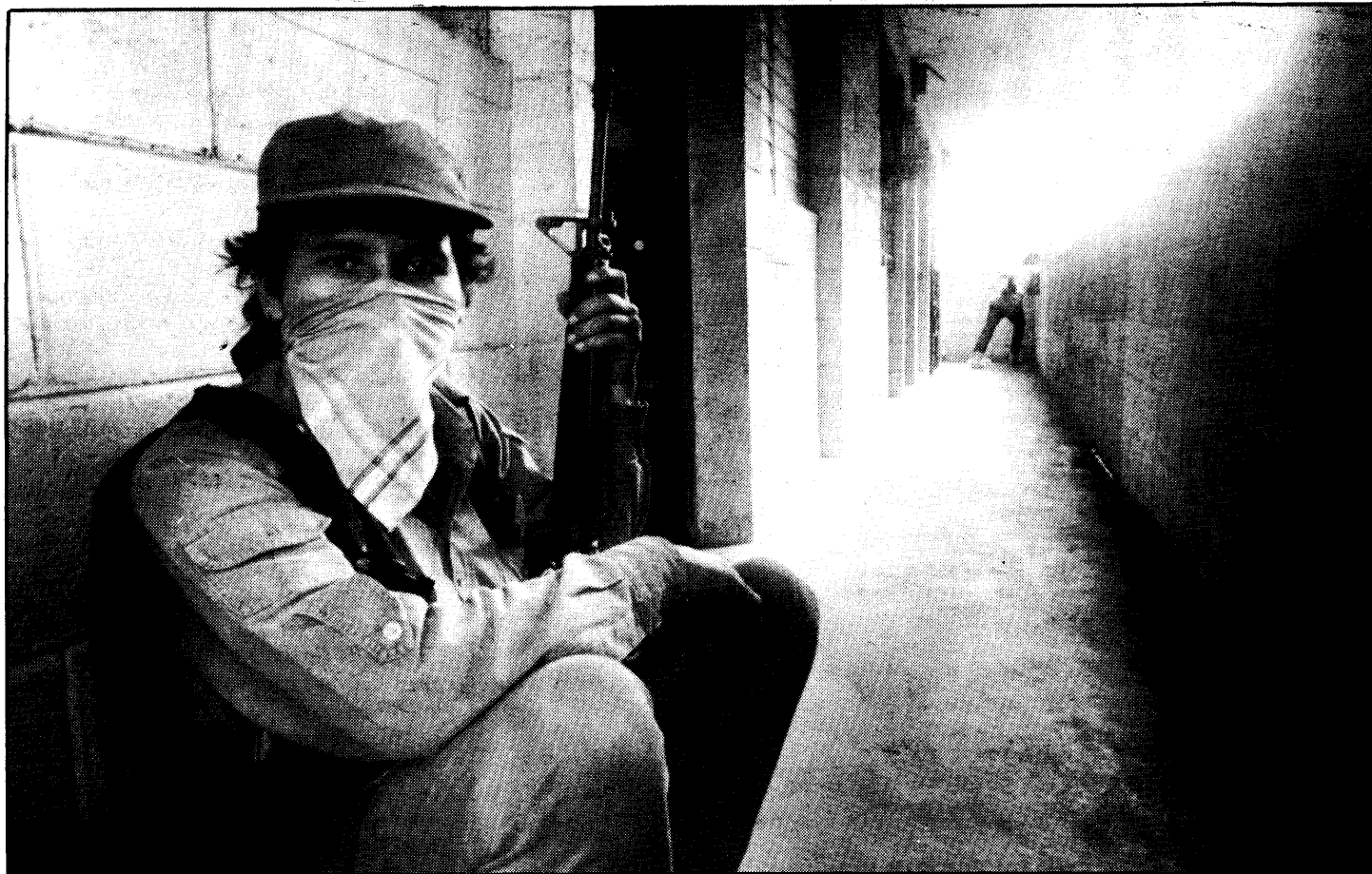
A recent government white paper on economic reform said that "the country is on the edge of a social explosion. The symptoms of deterioration are so grave we are obliged to forecast a catastrophe capable of happening in the short term."

Collor campaigned early for giving Brazil a blast of capitalism. He proposes expanding the economic system that has put 80 percent of Brazilians at or below the poverty line.

This is capitalism's prescription for the impending collapse of Brazil's economy.

is from the period of 1979 to 1984, when the United States raised international interest rates."

Hence, Lula announced he was willing to pay off close to \$70 billion of debt to the imperialist banks, which would have required imposing strict austerity measures on the population. ■



FMLN fighter takes a rest during the recent offensive against the Christiani government in El Salvador.

Donna DeCesare/Impact Visuals

Salvadoran regime steps up repression after FMLN thrust

By JIM HENLE

The dramatic military offensive of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation front (FMLN) has shaken the Salvadoran regime of Alfredo Cristiani. In response, Cristiani has launched an open war against the popular movement, with the full aid and support of the U.S. government.

The FMLN offensive, launched in the aftermath of the Oct. 31 rightist bombing of the FENASTRAS union offices, puts the lie to the Salvadoran government's claim of FMLN weakness [see *Socialist Action*, December 1989].

Attacking in the capital city of San Salvador and most major Salvadoran cities, the FMLN carried the fighting to the very doors of the ruling class. This was most graphically expressed when the FMLN attacked in the Escalón region of the capital, an area containing the residences of the leaders of the right-wing National Republican Alliance (ARENA) government and the military.

The offensive hit dozens of military targets throughout the country, attacked five of six Brigade headquarters early in the fighting, burned the military censorship office (CIN)

to the ground, and brought the economic life of the capital to a standstill.

The Salvadoran military's response to the offensive was a wave of attacks on the civilian population. Working-class areas of San Salvador were bombed indiscriminately. An estimated 150,000 refugees fled the bombings. *The Manchester Guardian Weekly* of Nov. 26 reports, "Residents fleeing areas where combat continued said bodies were piling up in the streets."

Witchhunt of oppositionists

The ARENA government is also conducting a witchhunt against all popular organizations and international observers. Over 100 union members have been abducted since the offensive began, and a state of siege persists. International attention has been most prominent in two cases, the grisly murders of the six Jesuit priests and their two housekeepers at the University of Central America, and the frame-up of Jennifer Casolo.

An eyewitness to the murders at the University, Lucia Barrera de Cerna, implicated an army unit of the First Infantry Brigade in carrying out the massacre, and the Army

high command in allowing it to take place in a secured area. Taken to Miami, Ms. Barrera de Cerna was interrogated by the FBI with a Salvadoran colonel present, intimidated, threatened with deportation, and forced to change her testimony.

After Barrera's release to American Jesuits, the Rev. Patrick Burns, SJ, the highest ranking Jesuit in the United States, asserted that the FBI "obviously tried to influence her testimony." Archbishop Rivera y Damas of El Salvador also condemned the harassment, and the Archdiocese's human rights monitoring agency charged the Salvadoran military with responsibility for the Jesuit priests' murders.

Jennifer Casolo, a church worker for Christian Education Seminars, was arrested on a charge of hiding a weapons cache in her back yard. The Bush administration aided in her victimization, with White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater remarking that "There are indications of her involvement. That's for certain."

Sen. Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, Casolo's home state, commented that Fitzwater "signaled open hunting not only on Jennifer but on hundreds of other legitimate

Americans working with poor refugees."

Casolo was blindfolded and threatened in jail. Her release was due entirely to the pressure of human-rights advocates and church people who understood the repression. But 70,000 Salvadorans killed in the last decade have not been so fortunate—nor were Casolo's two Salvadoran friends arrested with her who are still being held, or her lawyer, whose home was raided.

As Casolo says: "The Salvadoran people deserve a country where their children can eat and go to school and don't have to worry about being dragged out in the middle of the night.... I ask that those who went to bat for me continue to fight that justice is served, not just for us, but in El Salvador."

Diplomatic victory for Cristiani

The international outcry against the horrors perpetrated by the Salvadoran government, the bombing of its own civilian population, and the murders of the Jesuits, have added to ARENA's isolation. Seeing one of its bloody dictatorships in trouble, the United States rushed to exert its influence on the diplomatic front as it already had on the military front.

The agreement of the five Central American presidents in early December serves U.S. interests by trying to isolate the FMLN and by equating it with the Nicaraguan contras. The five presidents, including Sandinista Commander Daniel Ortega, "expressed their decisive support of Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani and his Government" and termed it "the product of democratic, pluralistic and participatory processes," according to their statement. They further blamed the FMLN for the violence against the civilian population and called for the guerrillas' demobilization.

The FMLN condemned the five presidents' accord as strengthening the "fascist policies" of Cristiani, and noted that the emphasis on shoring up Cristiani indicated his desperation in the face of the FMLN offensive.

U.S. out of El Salvador!

The crisis in El Salvador has entered a crucial stage. While the FMLN's stated policy is still one of attempting to keep the door open for a negotiated settlement with "non-fascist" bourgeois forces in El Salvador, for now negotiations are not on the agenda.

With firm U.S. backing and diplomatic cover, the ARENA government and the military are unlikely to be open to negotiations unless threatened with a complete collapse of the regime. The FMLN and the popular movement are considering the results of the offensive, which appears to have strengthened the FMLN, although the popular movement now struggles with severe repression.

As long as U.S. aid props up the Salvadoran government, life will continue to be a choice of suffering or rebellion for El Salvador's workers and peasants. Our responsibility in this country is to translate the widespread feelings of outrage against the Salvadoran government's murderous policies into mass actions against U.S. government intervention in all its forms.

By JEFF MACKLER

To protest continued U.S. support to the death-squad government of El Salvador's Alfredo Cristiani, various groups in the non-intervention, peace, and solidarity movements have called for demonstrations in cities across the country on Jan. 23.

Organized by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the Pledge of Resistance, Witness for Peace, and a host of other solidarity, religious, and anti-intervention groups, the actions will largely consist of non-violent civil disobedience protests at various government buildings.

In the San Francisco Bay Area a broadly sponsored march and rally is in preparation for Saturday, Jan. 20. Initiators include the central labor councils of San Francisco, Alameda, San Mateo, and Contra Costa counties, as well as the International Longshoremen's Union, CISPES, Nicaragua Information Center Community Action, and the Pledge of Resistance.

Also playing a key role in the protest, scheduled to assemble at the San Francisco Civic Center for a march to Dolores Park, are an impressive number of religious organizations led by activists representing several orders of clergy within the Catholic

El Salvador protests



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

Church.

The January actions are aimed at pressing Congress to cut off all aid to El Salvador. At the same time, they are seen as preparation for more ambitious regional demonstrations on March 24, the 10th anniversary of the assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Os-

car Romero.

A disturbing aspect of the call for the national spring actions, however, is the initial inclusion of a demand for a "political settlement" of the war in El Salvador. Inasmuch as the demonstrations are aimed at influencing U.S. policy, the implication of

such a demand is that the government of the United States has the right, by force of arms, to determine the future of another nation. Such a demand carries with it the notion that the right of nations to self-determination is a negotiable item.

Of course, imperialist policy-makers predicate their continued intervention in the affairs of other nations on the indefensible notion that U.S. power gives it the right to decide any nation's future, the recent invasion of Panama being the most recent example.

For most of the past decade the mass demonstrations which have been called to protest U.S. policy in Central America have been largely based on the simple and clear call for an end to U.S. intervention.

This demand has served the movement well, allowing it to win the broadest possible support without having to commit any component to a particular negotiating stance.

At the same time, the non-intervention demand defended the right of people who are victims of U.S. aggression to decide their fate for themselves, thus respecting the right to self-determination for all nations.

Hopefully, the March 24 organizers will see the greater utility and principled character of the demand: No U.S. Intervention in Central America! U.S. Out now!

Former Socialist Workers Party leader Barry Sheppard: 'Why I joined Socialist Action'

By BARRY SHEPPARD

(Introductory note: Barry Sheppard, a former leader of the Socialist Workers Party, recently applied for membership in Socialist Action. At a meeting of the Political Committee of Socialist Action on Dec. 6, 1989, Sheppard was taken into membership in Socialist Action. The following is a letter in which he describes the reasons for his joining.)

My joining Socialist Action is the result of a process of political convergence between myself and SA. There are four broad areas of political agreement that have led me to the conclusion that Socialist Action is the nucleus of the revolutionary party that must be built in this country.

1. The past decade has been characterized by a deepening of the capitalist offensive against the working people, including in the United States and the other imperialist countries. With notable exceptions—such as the British miners' strike, and the fights of the meatpackers, paper workers, Pittston miners, airline workers and others in the United States—by and large there has been a retreat of the workers before this offensive. The workers have yet to organize the kind of fightback that could begin to win.

This situation is the payoff for the decade of entrenchment of class collaborationism by the union bureaucracy in the period following the labor upsurge of the 1930s. The resulting disorientation of the workers has yet to be overcome, contrary to what we hoped and expected at the beginning of the 1980s. The political radicalization of the working class in the United States is still ahead of us.

In this situation, it is wrong to say that the unions are at "center stage" of U.S. politics, as the SWP has insisted for 10 years. This distorts reality and sets a disorienting framework for setting political tasks and goals both in the unions and in struggles that are being organized largely outside them. To so stubbornly hold onto this shibboleth is itself an indication of serious problems in the SWP.

Capitalism on a world scale is approaching a major crisis. The mounting unpayable debt of the oppressed nations to the imperialist banks is one sign. Another is the savings and loan crisis. The 1987 stock market crash and shakiness in the world financial system point to this coming catastrophe.

The Socialist Workers Party at its 1988 convention adopted an analysis of this crisis, the general line of which Socialist Action and I agree with. However, as this crisis approaches and begins to happen, we cannot predict how quickly the political radicalization of the working class will develop in response.

Eastern Europe

2. The great upsurge of the masses in Eastern Europe, and to a lesser extent so far in the USSR itself, against bureaucratic rule centers around demands for democratic rights and an end to the social inequality promoted by the petty bourgeois bureaucratic castes that sit on top of the workers' states like hideous parasites, sapping their strength, sabotaging the economic plan, and preventing development toward socialism.

We stand with the masses of Eastern Europe, the USSR, and China in their struggle to overthrow the bureaucratic misrule of the Stalinists. The toilers, by winning democratic rights, are freeing themselves of the bonds that have prevented them from stepping onto the political arena in their own name. This is a necessary step for the working people to reconquer full social consciousness after so many years of Stalinist inculcation of such bourgeois ideas as national chauvinism, anti-Semitism, the extolling of capitalist methods, and the rejection of proletarian internationalism—all in the name of Marxism.

In Eastern Europe, the Stalinists, with the help of middle-class "opportunists," are seeking to contain the mass upsurge by adopting reforms that go in the direction of bourgeois parliamentarism. These reforms give the appearance of democracy, but just as in the capitalist West, the toilers are reduced to passive onlookers who get to vote every once in a while for candidates they really have no voice in selecting. What is needed are real forms of proletarian democracy such as the soviets in the early years of the Russian Revolution, through which the workers can fight to cleanse the deformed workers' state of the bureaucracy and once again move toward socialism.

Another danger has reared its head. Trying to preserve their parasitic rule and positions of privilege, representatives of the discredited bureaucracy are openly calling for even more use of "capitalist methods" and "market mechanisms" that are aimed against the interests of the toilers. They are being aided by elements among the middle class "dissidents," who call for the restoration of capitalism itself. This has gone furthest in Poland and Hungary.

These moves in the direction of capitalism will be resisted by the workers and peasants because implementing these proposals will hurt them. The fight of the Soviet miners is a case in point. With newly won democratic rights, the struggle of the toilers will take on much larger dimensions.

It is only the toiling people as a whole, led by the workers, that will resist moves toward capitalist restoration. No confidence should be placed in the bureaucracy to do this—although as the struggle deepens, sections of the bureaucracy



'Socialist Action adheres to democratic centralism, and affirms the necessity of constructing a Leninist vanguard party in the United States in keeping with its conviction that a socialist revolution is necessary and will be posed as the crisis of world capitalism deepens.'

closest to the workers can break and go over to their side.

The capitalist-minded bureaucrats aren't content to skim the cream of social production for themselves. They yearn for the greater creature comforts they see their counterparts in the West enjoying. Some dream of becoming capitalists themselves, and some are already on the way to doing so.

The *Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, the founding document of the Socialist Workers Party and of the Fourth International, drafted by Leon Trotsky, hit the nail on the head when it explained in relation to the Soviet Union in 1938:

"The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming evermore the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back into capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism."

The successful outcome of this confrontation from the point of view of the workers is dependent upon the construction of a revolutionary Marxist party. The evolution of Solidarity in Poland is a clear example that simply the organization of the working people into independent trade unions to fight for their rights, however necessary, is insufficient.

Middle-class intellectuals, speaking in the name of Solidarity while stifling the voice of the workers, have now joined forces with the Stalinists in an anti-working-class government that proclaims its intention to restore capitalism.

To counter the decades of Stalinism masquerading as Marxism, a party is needed that can explain what true scientific socialism is, and why it is needed by the workers to win their struggle against the bureaucracy and world capitalism, including against attempts to overthrow such things as nationalized property in the means of production, economic planning, full employment, socialized medicine, etc.

The fight of the workers in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China is linked to and in the last analysis depends upon the worldwide struggle of toilers everywhere to free themselves from imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation, and to open the road to world socialism. It is through building a new communist party that the workers can make these links in consciousness and in fighting unity.

It is in this context that the position of revolutionary Cuba is so important. Cuba has charted a course directly against that of the bureaucracy in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China. "Cuba will never adopt capitalist methods" has become the watchword on the revolutionary island. A struggle has been launched against bureaucratic privilege and mismanagement, through attempting to bring the masses themselves into the process of making decisions concerning their needs, and giving them the wherewithal to carry them out.

Through this "rectification" campaign, for example, hundreds of new day-care centers have been built by the workers themselves, using their own volunteer labor and state-supplied material. To defend the revolution, a vast new militia encompassing millions has been formed. The leadership point to such activity to show why the masses themselves must take part in all aspects of economic and public life if socialism is to be built.

Cuba has yet to institutionalize forms of proletarian democracy at the level of the central power of the state. Information is restricted. The workers do not have the facts of world politics they need to make decisions on the big questions internationally. Overcoming these deficiencies would help the revolution to build upon the steps forward that have already been made to further the mobilization of Cuban workers and peasants in the struggle for socialism. Maximum mobilization and consciousness is needed to counter imperialist threats and the real danger of economic isolation as a result of a Gorbachev-Bush deal at the expense of the working people of the world.

Nicaraguan Revolution

3. The Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979 toppled the hated

dictatorship of the U.S.-installed and backed Somoza dynasty and opened the door to the possibility that a second country in the Americas would follow the road of the Cuban Revolution. The revolutionaries of the FSLN showed they had the capacity to mobilize the toilers in insurrection against the hated tyrant, and afterwards to mobilize them in the beginnings of agrarian reform, unionization of the workers, a mass literary and vaccination campaign, and in other ways.

For the first time, Nicaragua stood independent of the American Empire. That empire set about to destroy the revolution, and inflicted seven years of war and 50,000 deaths on the tiny nation. During the war, steps were taken by the FSLN to deepen the agrarian reform, and to correct bad errors the new government had taken toward the indigenous Indians and Black people in the Atlantic coast region.

The FSLN showed it had the capacity to move against capitalist property rights in defense of the toilers. But when the toilers demanded to go beyond support to a "mixed"—that is, capitalist—economy, and to embark upon the Cuban road of a thorough agrarian reform, control exercised over the work places by armed workers, and, at the appropriate time, the expropriation of the capitalist class and establishment of a workers' state, the leadership did not respond.

It is increasingly unlikely that the FSLN leadership will take the Cuban road, as they have deliberately set about demobilizing the workers and peasants in an effort to come to an agreement with the capitalist class. This course puts previous democratic and anti-imperialist gains in jeopardy, as the capitalists and their imperialist backers demand more and more.

It would take the mobilization of the toilers in their own interests, which are counterposed to those of the capitalists, leading up to the expropriation of the capitalist class, not only to advance towards socialism, but also to consolidate and deepen those gains already won. The opposite perspective threatens to unravel the revolution.

Internal democracy

4. In the past decade, the Socialist Workers Party has begun to use organizational reprisals to deal with political differences. This was true when the party majority cancelled the constitutionally required convention in 1983, and then expelled the minority. Banning those expelled from SWP bookstores and public events was another example. In a series of incidents since, including my own case, organizational measures have been used to smear or expel those with differing views. In the whole decade of the 1980s, only two full political resolutions were considered by conventions of the SWP—in 1981 and 1985.

Socialist Action rejects such methods. Socialist Action adheres to democratic centralism, and affirms the necessity of constructing a Leninist vanguard party in the United States in keeping with its conviction that a socialist revolution is necessary and will be posed as the crisis of world capitalism deepens. Socialist Action has adopted as its own the 1965 resolution of the Socialist Workers Party on party organization, with which I am in complete agreement.

These four areas of agreement make my joining Socialist Action necessary and appropriate. To be sure, differences remain. These concern the theory of permanent revolution, aspects of the nature of the South African revolution, and aspects of the Cuban Revolution. Given the comradely and democratic atmosphere in Socialist Action, I am confident that these will be worked out through discussion.

Finally, there is one more area of agreement, and that is that despite the damage done to it by its current leadership, the Socialist Workers Party remains an organization of revolutionary socialists. Objectively there should be a fusion between Socialist Action and the SWP. Appropriate guarantees must first be agreed upon by our two organizations that the democratic rights historically accorded minorities in the SWP up to the time of the expulsion of the comrades who formed Socialist Action will be respected in the fused organization. These rights are codified in the 1965 Organizational Resolution and SWP constitution, nominally in effect to this day.

'The Americans are running the show'

Gen. Maxwell "Mad Max" Thurman, who heads the U.S. occupation of Panama, has come under heavy criticism for the conduct of his troops. In addition, the "Maxatollah" thumbed his nose at the Panamanian constitution, which forbids the extradition of citizens (including Gen. Noriega) to foreign countries. The U.S. Army did not come to Panama to obey other people's laws, Thurman told reporters.

Thurman was responsible for blaring non-stop rock music at the Vatican Embassy.

Noriega and the Vatican officials were treated to such golden oldies as "Nowhere to Hide" and "I Fought the Law and the Law Won."

"The Americans are running the show," a wealthy Panamanian businessman recently told the press. "It is starting to dawn on us

that, really and truly, Panama has been conquered by a foreign power." Indeed, U.S. troops routinely enter and search buildings, stop vehicles on the streets, make arbitrary arrests, and even open fire without warning passersby.

Students in China in recent weeks have flaunted martial-law regulations in order to hold political meetings and rallies. At the same time, illegal posters went up

in two universities commenting on the uprising in Romania. One poster said, "Learn from Romania."

The Vatican is hiring extra exorcists. Six additional exorcists have been put on the Church payroll in Turin. With an estimated 40,000 Devil worshippers, Turin is considered to be Italy's most diabolic city. In Rome, the number of exorcists has also been increased from one to five.

The Devil has never been busier, says the Church's chief

expert on demonology, Monsignor Corrado Balducci. "To deny his existence is to do the work of the Devil himself," the Monsignor warns. Balducci has written a best-selling book, "The Devil Exists—You Can Recognize Him," a step-by-step procedure for deciding whether a person has been taken over by the Devil.

Why can't the United States produce an AIDS vaccine? One reason might be that at least 20 percent of scientists in this country are employed in projects of the Defense Department.

... Panama

(continued from page 1)

ently based on a very small (four paragraph) report in the *New York Times* on Dec. 16 which was hardly noted by anyone until after the assault on Panama began. The actual reference to the alleged declaration is entirely restricted to a single paragraph in this brief report. It reads:

"Ramon Ashby, an assembly member, said General Noriega, Panama's *de-facto* ruler, was expected to be given formal powers because of Washington's policy of aggression toward Panama. 'In a state of war, like we are in, a product of Yankee aggression, authority has to be consolidated,' he said."

This paragraph was all the foundation there was to the spurious report of a Panamanian "declaration of war."

Trumped-up case for war

Neither can anyone take seriously the justification for the attack on Panama based on the killing of the marine and abuse to a Naval officer and his wife. This same U.S. capitalist government refuses to take meaningful action when nuns, including American nuns, and priests—not to mention workers, peasants, and other political opponents of the Salvadoran dictatorship—are systematically murdered by the "democratic" Cristiani government of El Salvador.

Very few serious people can swallow the trumped-up case for war on Panama. In the Dec. 25 *San Francisco Chronicle*, for instance, columnist Richard Reeves blasts the "made-up history and pseudo facts pouring out of the White House" to justify the invasion.

"I was there, in Panama City when the United States was helping put and keep General Noriega in power," Reeves states. "He was our guy in May 1984 when we joined him in stealing an election because neither of us liked the result, an apparent leftist-populist victory by the 82-year-old former president of Panama, Arnulfo Arias Madrid."

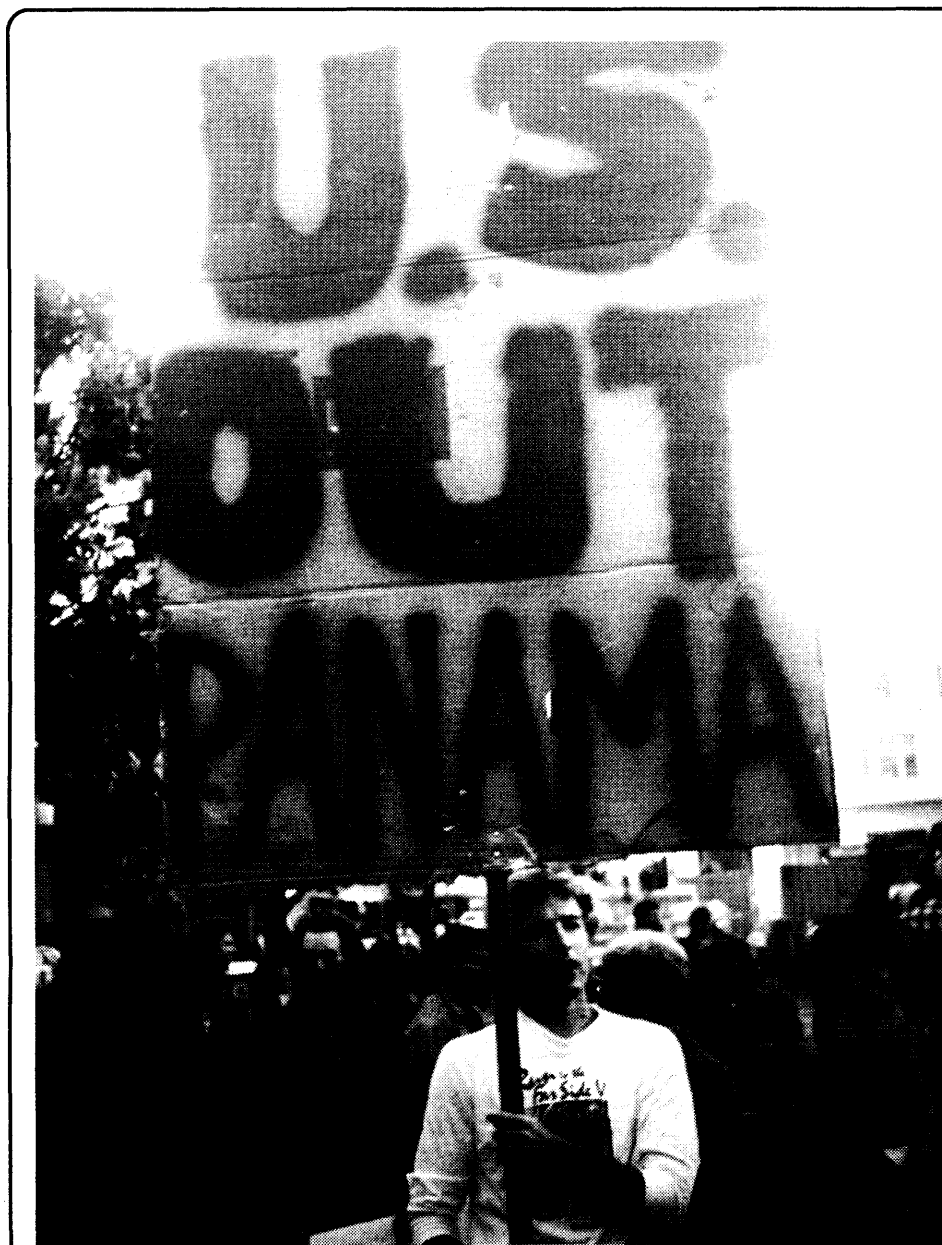
Even senior Bush administration spokespersons have given the lie to the phony pretexts seized upon to rationalize the invasion. On Dec. 23, they admitted that the invasion plan was drawn up weeks before by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin L. Powell. They also disclosed that the invasion plan had been carefully rehearsed.

It was reported, too, that additional helicopters and tanks were stealthily moved into Panama, also weeks in advance, to provide the beefed-up firepower necessary for a swift, massive invasion. All these preparations were made before the marine was killed and before the Naval lieutenant and his wife were assaulted, and before a state of war was falsely portrayed as having been "declared" against the United States by General Noriega!

Hidden motives and objectives

What then are the real reasons for the invasion of Panama?

First of all, the invasion is intended as a warning to anyone getting the idea into their heads that they can thumb their noses at the American colossus with impunity. The assault is patently intended to demonstrate that U.S. imperialism still has the will and the capability of crushing resistance to its dictates—despite events in the last few decades pointing to the contrary, such as its partial



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

Protests organized

On Dec. 20, more than 250 people rallied for a noon protest at the Federal Building in San Francisco to oppose the U.S. invasion of Panama. Speakers included Daniel Ellsberg, Philip Crawford of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the Pledge of Resistance, Richard Becker of the Peoples Antiwar Mobilization, Vietnam veteran activist Hal Muscat, Catherine Cusic of the Nicaraguan Information Center Community Action, and Jeff Mackler of Socialist Action. The previous evening, 500 marched from the Salvadoran Consulate to the Army Recruiting Center in San Francisco. Similar protests took place in cities across the United States.

defeat in Korea and the more decisive defeat in Vietnam.

This unstated U.S. objective helps to explain the outrageous scale of destruction in a very wide area around "strategic military targets"—especially those which were located in centers of working-class residential areas.

Contrary to Pentagon assertions, there was nothing "surgical" about the indiscriminate blasting of the lives and property of tens of thousands of the poorest of Panama's inhabitants. Articles are beginning to surface in the mainstream press—such as one in the Dec. 28 *San Francisco Examiner*—that report as many as 1000 civilian deaths (600 in the city, 400 in the countryside) resulting from the U.S. invasion.

There is an ominous message contained in the news-photos and video-tapes of residential areas smashed to smithereens which were widely circulated to Latin American readers and viewers: Don't dare to defy Uncle Sam!

Another unstated, but obvious purpose of

the invasion was to end Panama's policy of allowing Nicaragua and Cuba to evade some U.S. trade restrictions. Noriega had permitted Nicaragua, for instance, to use Panama as a central clearing house for its foreign commerce. It allowed both these U.S.-embargoed countries to get badly needed American-made goods, from machine parts to foodstuffs.

It especially serves Bush's short-term need to damage the Nicaraguan economy so that the negative effect on that people's living standards will increase the vote for pro-imperialist forces in the coming election.

The Eastern European connection

Taken individually or together, Bush's rationalizations for murder and mayhem in Panama are anything but convincing. And no more convincing is Bush's avowed commitment to freedom and democracy in Panama or anywhere else.

But there is a less apparent yet decisive motive for Bush's shift from one month earlier in favor of the Panamanian adventure.

Through its invasion of Panama, U.S. imperialism was able to send an ominous signal to the Stalinist regimes that "What we do, You can also do."

Time magazine explains this connection in its Jan. 1, 1990, issue:

"The Soviet Union denounced the invasion as a violation of international law but hastily added that it saw no reason why that should damage East-West relations. The unspoken message seemed to be that Moscow would recognize a sphere of influence in which the United States could operate with a free hand so long as Washington returned the favor."

This unspoken message comes at a time when the world's Stalinist regimes—with the infamous exception of those in China and Romania—have been able to show restraint in the use of military repressive force. But the relatively peaceful revolution thus far in this part of the world has little to do with any more moderate nature of these regimes.

The Gorbachevs and Jaruzelskis of Eastern Europe can be expected to again resort to the kind of brutal repression they have exercised in the past when the use of guile runs its course and gives way to the need for naked force.

American imperialists know that while the Gorbachevs and Jaruzelskis have been able to maintain their basic hold on power in this period of democratic reforms, this will not be so easy further along.

They know that these bureaucratic governments will feel compelled to use force when workers are galvanized to defend their economic gains. They know they are in for a fight when "market socialism" drives up the prices of basic necessities and closes down the jobs of millions of workers.

The decision to opt for military repression in Panama should be seen as a signal to the Stalinist bureaucrats that imperialism will sanction a similar Stalinist resort to tanks, guns, and bombs to "maintain order" when inevitable economic and social conflict erupts from the reintroduction of capitalist austerity and unemployment.

Baker's advance approval

What else can be the meaning of Secretary of State James A. Baker's unprecedented granting of advance approval to Soviet military action in Eastern Europe? Baker declared on the Dec. 24 NBC News program "Meet the Press" that "the United States would approve if the Soviet Union or other Warsaw Pact nations decided to send troops into Romania to support the pro-democracy forces trying to assume control in Bucharest."

And what else can be meant by the recent decision by Bush to renew close relations with China? Or the disclosure by Washington that top Bush emissaries were secretly sent there a month after the Tiananmen massacre—when at the very same time Bush had ostensibly taken something of a stand against the repression?

Put all these declarations and actions together and you have nothing less than an imperialist recommendation to the Gorbachevs and Jaruzelskis—and to the Li Pengs as well—not to hesitate to use whatever means are necessary to prevent or crush a genuine workers' revolution.

Finally, while very little has been revealed of the agreements reached between Gorbachev and Bush in Malta, there can be little doubt that some very explicit understandings were reached concerning the uses of military repression in each country's "sphere of influence"—an understanding we can be sure paved the way for the Panama atrocity, and others yet to come. ■

By ALAN BENJAMIN

U.S. steps up provocations aimed at overturning Nicaraguan Revolution

The U.S. ruling class continues to show its determination to overthrow the Nicaraguan Revolution by any means necessary.

After invading Panama, U.S. occupying troops forcibly entered the Nicaraguan ambassador's residence on Dec. 29, violating his diplomatic immunity. The Sandinista government charged that this act was aimed at provoking the ambassador into an armed confrontation that could be used to justify a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua.

The illegal search of the ambassador's residence, later dismissed as a "screw-up" by President Bush, resulted in the expulsion of 20 U.S. diplomats from Nicaragua. Predictably, the U.S. government responded by warning that fair elections could not take place in Nicaragua in the absence of these U.S. diplomats, whose main job was to "monitor" the elections.

This incident is only the latest in a series of provocations against Nicaragua.

In violation of the Tela Agreement reached by the five Central American presidents last August, which called for the demobilization of the contra forces by Dec. 5, the U.S. government—with full bipartisan support—continued to pump U.S. tax dollars to the contras.

Bush argued that U.S. funding to the contras would not stop until after the Feb. 25, 1990, elections in Nicaragua—assuming that the United States would certify these elections to be "fair."

At the same time, the U.S. government encouraged contra troops to cross the Honduran border into Nicaragua to intimidate Sandinista supporters and to mobilize anti-government voters. The State Department acknowledges that close to 5000 contra troops have been illegally infiltrated into Nicaragua.

When the Nicaraguan government justifiably responded to this provocation by ending the cease-fire with the contras, Washington let out all the stops in its condemnation of the Sandinistas. And it proceeded to attempt to discredit the upcoming national elections, falsely claiming that "Sandinista mobs" were harassing "peaceful anti-government protesters."

Retreating under pressure

The Sandinista government's response to these escalated attacks has been one of con-



Wounded Sandinista, Matagalpa Department, 1985.

cessions and retreat. At "peace talks" in Washington on Nov. 14 between Sandinista and contra negotiators, for example, the Sandinista government dropped its demand that the contras disband, proposing instead that they simply leave Nicaragua.

The contras only became emboldened by this Sandinista concession. They rejected the offer and demanded that they be allowed to relocate in designated areas inside Nicaragua. What they could not gain militarily on the field, they insisted they be granted at the negotiating table!

A week later, the Sandinistas offered still another concession in the hope of reinstating the cease-fire agreement. They called on the contras to pull back 2300 troops from Nicaragua, thereby allowing approximately 2700 contras to remain inside Nicaragua. But

the contras would have no part of this partial retreat—and no cease-fire agreement was reached.

Following the Malta conference between George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, the Sandinistas came under increased pressure to make concessions to the imperialists. *The New York Times* reports (Dec. 7) that following the Malta summit, the Soviet ambassador to Nicaragua personally visited Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega to demand that the Sandinistas halt all logistic and political support to the FMLN fighters in El Salvador.

The meaning of the Malta meeting, where Bush and Gorbachev agreed to settle "regional conflicts," was not lost on the FMLN combatants. *The Boston Globe* reports (Dec. 1) that "in recent interviews, Salvadoran rebel leaders have acknowledged that Gorbachev's policies of reform, coupled with changes in Eastern Europe, have delegitimized armed struggle and have left them increasingly isolated."

"A rebuke of the FMLN"

A week after the Malta meeting, the five Central American presidents met again in Costa Rica to attempt to find a "peaceful settlement" to the conflict in the region. The agreement drafted by the presidents, including Daniel Ortega, represents a stab in the back of the Salvadoran freedom struggle.

The agreement equated the FMLN combatants with the contras, calling for their prompt demobilization. *New York Times* reporter Lindsey Gruson described the accord in a Dec. 17 article:

"In a rebuke to the Salvadoran rebels of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, the presidents stopped just short of calling them terrorists while endorsing the Salvadoran government of Alfredo Cristiani

as 'the product of democratic, pluralistic and participatory processes.' Even Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, who only last month was linked to a shipment of arms to the Salvadoran rebels, was pushed into signing the declaration.

"It was a remarkable victory for the rightist government of El Salvador, which has recently been criticized for its human rights record and conduct of the civil war. 'Unbelievable,' said Senator Christopher Dodd, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Western hemisphere and peace corps affairs. 'It removes the political legitimacy of the FMLN.'"

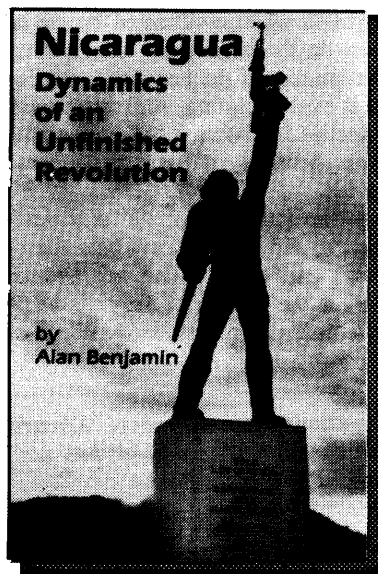
An alternative strategy needed

No amount of concessions will ever satisfy the imperialist colossus in Washington. On the contrary, every concession granted only whets the imperialists' appetite for more.

The FSLN government, if it is to defend the gains of the revolution and meet the needs of the Nicaraguan people, must directly take on the contras and their internal allies—the capitalists and landlords. This will require embarking upon a socialist course—such as the one taken by Fidel Castro and the leadership of the Cuban Revolution in the early 1960s. Unless it moves forward, the revolution will continue to retreat—and ultimately be defeated.

But even if it were to move in a socialist direction, the Nicaraguan Revolution could not survive in isolation. The FSLN government must therefore pursue a policy of extending the revolution to the rest of Central America and Latin America. The fate of the revolution is inextricably tied to the struggles in these countries—primarily the struggle in neighboring El Salvador. ■

A critical assessment of the Sandinista Revolution



• **Moisés Hassan** (former Sandinista leader and ex-mayor of Managua):

"In a short space, Alan Benjamin has selected the essential issues facing the Nicaraguan Revolution and presented a coherent analysis of the social forces in contention over the past decade.

"Foreign observers who support the revolution tend to uncritically echo the policy positions of the Sandinista leadership, thereby doing a disservice to the revolution itself. Benjamin has avoided this pitfall. He is not afraid to approach the problems confronting the revolution and to offer an alternative solution to the crisis facing Nicaragua."

• **John Weeks**, Professor of International Economics, Middlebury College:

"For those who look for new thinking on Nicaragua, 'Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution' is necessary reading. Alan Benjamin offers a well-argued answer to the question, where does the revolution go from here?"

• **Joe Ricciardi**, Economist, academic visitor, Central Bank of Nicaragua:

"A useful treatment of Nicaragua's mixed economy."

• **Professor James Rhodes**, Luther College (*Library Journal*):

"Benjamin provides a tightly argued and carefully documented case for what he terms 'an incomplete revolution.' This book is unique in that it assesses the impact of U.S. policy within the Nicaraguan political system."

"Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution"

by Alan Benjamin, editor of *Socialist Action* newspaper, in collaboration with researchers at Managua's ITZTANI Institute, 186 pp. Introduction by Rod Holt and Jeff Mackler. To order, send \$8.95 (includes \$1 postage) to: Walnut Publishing Co., 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Statement by MUR on El Salvador

The following declaration was released by the Executive Committee of the Movement for Revolutionary Unity (MUR) in Nicaragua on Nov. 12. The MUR is fielding ex-Sandinista leader Moisés Hassan for president as well as 180 other candidates for national and local office in the upcoming Feb. 25 Nicaraguan elections.

The military offensive launched by the Salvadoran guerrilla fighters has the potential of resulting in a veritable mass insurrection against the extreme right-wing government of El Salvador.

Political observers have noted that the purpose of the armed offensive taken by the FMLN leadership was to apply military pressure on the counterrevolutionary ARENA government in order to bring it to the negotiating table.

The Executive Committee of the MUR

believes that the participation of the Salvadoran masses in this insurrectionary process has broken through the eventual objective of negotiations, placing instead on the agenda the need for the seizure of political power. In this sense, the MUR supports revolutionary victory of the Salvadoran people over the military dictatorship.

If the revolution in El Salvador were to triumph, it would reinforce the revolutionary process in Central America, particularly in Nicaragua. The MUR therefore supports the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador. We support a definitive revolutionary victory against the military dictatorship of Cristiani.

The MUR also calls attention to the possibility of direct military intervention by U.S. imperialism in El Salvador, initially, and also in Panama and Nicaragua. For these reasons the MUR calls on the revolutionary people of Nicaragua to mobilize in support of the Salvadoran revolution, for their final victory over the Salvadoran dictatorship.

The MUR also calls on all the political parties of the revolutionary movement to carry out joint actions in support of the revolution in El Salvador. ■



Leon Trotsky

By PAUL SIEGEL

Soviet historians are beginning to inform the public of the true role of Leon Trotsky as the co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution. In the process, they are giving a more accurate picture of many of Trotsky's ideas.

At the same time, however, establishment historians who are Great Russian nationalists (chauvinists) and anti-Semites remain entrenched in official positions. These historians continue to promulgate fabricated slanders against Trotsky.

This was the news that was brought back by Professor Mark von Hagen of Columbia University's Harriman Institute from a conference of American and Soviet historians held in the Soviet Union Oct. 9 through Oct. 22. The conference focused on the history of the 1920s in the Soviet Union.

Von Hagen—who hosted a seminar at the

Soviet historians begin to reveal truth about Trotsky

Harriman Institute at which Esteban Volkov, Pierre Broué, Carl Finamore, and Paul Siegel spoke on Oct. 23—is a specialist on the Soviet Civil War (1918-1921). He is the author of "Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship," which will be published by Cornell University Press in February.

Among the subjects of the papers read by Soviet scholars at the conference were presentations about Trotsky in the October Revolution, the Left Opposition in the 1920s, the Left Oppositionist Evgenii Preobrazhensky, and Nadezhda Krupskaya (Lenin's companion) as an oppositionist. These presentations, according to Von Hagen, were quite objective and sympathetic to the Left Opposition.

Present at the conference was the daughter of the Left Oppositionist Leonid Serebriakov. Other recent signs of the relaxation of taboos on Trotsky are the publication of extracts from his "The New Course" and "The Stalinist School of Falsification" (with the announcement that they will be published as books) and the publication of extracts from Broué's monumental biography of Trotsky. There was also a Soviet TV documentary on the murder of Trotsky in 1940 by a Stalinist agent.

Danger of co-optation

Von Hagen stated, however, that a positive presentation of Trotsky is often accompanied by a co-optation of him by those associated with the reform wing of the bureau-

cracy.

Trotsky's revolutionary opposition to the theory of "socialism in one country" is depicted as advocacy for integrating the Soviet Union into the capitalist world economy, and he and Bukharin are being lumped together as opponents of Stalin without the important political differences between them being explained. He is also being linked with the Mensheviks, who are being studied by Soviet historians with new interest and sympathy.

Von Hagen does not believe, nevertheless, that the historians' treatment of Trotsky is proceeding in accordance with a predetermined plan. Glasnost has acquired a life of its own, and historians are achieving a greater degree of autonomy from the political leadership.

Historians—the majority being mediocre hacks long accustomed to obediently following the dictates of the state—at first lagged behind the literary artists and journalists who sought to recover the historical past. There are now, however, new historians and formerly shunned older historians who are intent on raising professional standards, ministering to the great popular interest in the suppressed past, and explaining the present by exploring its historical roots.

Battleground of debate

The study of history has become a battleground between conservatives and reformers. Thus Victor Danilov, who was interviewed

by me in *Socialist Action* [July 1989 issue], engaged in a lecture tour of the country to answer the charge by local party leaders and historians that collectivization came about through the ideas of two Jews, Trotsky and Kaganovich, while Stalin saved the Russian peasantry by stopping the collectivization drive on discovering the ruthlessness with which it was being conducted.

Though the facts are clear that Trotsky opposed Stalin's forcible collectivization and that Stalin halted it only after it had plunged the country into disaster, this meant nothing to the conservative historians.

Likewise, at the historical conference attended by Von Hagen, a Colonel Ponomarev read a paper in which he contrasted a cruel Trotsky with a humane Lenin. Trotsky, asserted the colonel without providing a shred of evidence, was excommunicated from Judaism by his father (whose relations with Trotsky have hitherto been described as amicable). Thus, even his own father, even his fellow Jews—whom Ponomarev regarded with distaste—disowned him!

Despite these canards by the conservative historians and the frequent destroying of the strength of his revolutionary ideas, Von Hagen is confident that—given the momentum of the changes in the historical profession—Trotsky's "The Revolution Betrayed" and other key works will be published before too long and that the power of his ideas will have a great impact. ■

'Born on the Fourth of July': Heartbreaking but misguided

By BOB DAVIS

Born on the Fourth of July, a film by Oliver Stone. Screenplay by Oliver Stone and Ron Kovic.

In spite of some serious dramatic and political weaknesses, "Born on the Fourth of July" is the most powerful film yet about

Movie Review

the Vietnam War. I almost never cry at movies. Several times during this film, I was literally sobbing.

The plot and message of "Fourth" are neither new nor complex. A young man (Kovic) goes off to war believing in his country; he returns paralyzed from the chest down and gradually loses his patriotic beliefs. Thus, his sacrifice was meaningless.

Unfortunately, in this viewer's eyes, Kovic's political transformation is dealt with too vaguely. It's unclear if he is changed be-



cause of his traumatic war experiences, by the lack of support for vets at home, by his girlfriend, or by the police brutality he finds himself mixed up in. Thus on screen, Kovic

never really comes to grips with the basic immorality of U.S. imperialism.

True, his experiences are vividly rendered, and a viewer who already understands the

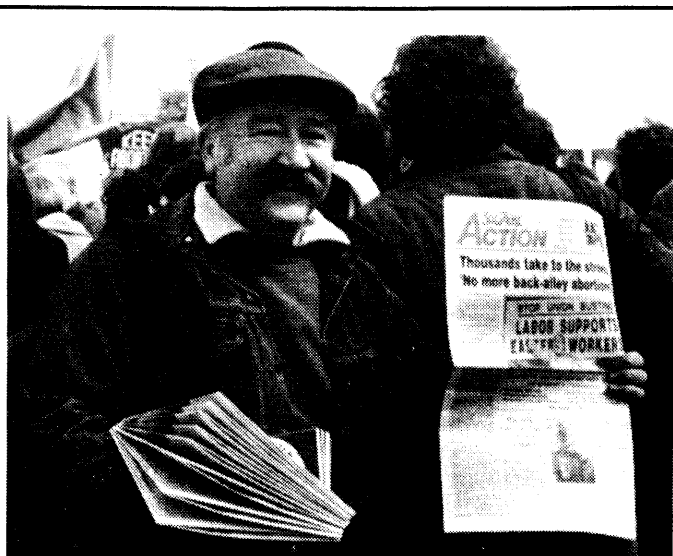
downright evil perpetrated by the U.S. government in that war will see his or her own ideas confirmed. But I dare say, other viewers with other—and even opposite—interpretations of that war can find "evidence" for their cases too. So what we're left with is merely the very general idea that "war is hell."

Similarly—and I don't think this is unrelated—Kovic finds his solution at the end of the movie in the Democratic Party. It's as if Kennedy, Johnson, and all those Democratic congressmen had clean hands! This part of the movie made me sick.

But so much for the film's negatives. Its truths are nonetheless devastating. Never have I seen the cynicism of American rehabilitation hospitals so exposed. Kovic's bewilderment when confronted by the lack of support on the homefront is heartbreaking. The emptiness of the new life wounded vets faced is overwhelming. And this movie pulls no punches in showing the police and government brutality antiwar protesters were met with.

It is trite (and yet so painfully true!) that the young and the innocent bear the burden of war's sufferings. The achievement of "Born on the Fourth of July" is to powerfully remind us of this lesson. When will we ever learn? ■

Bob Davis's mystery novel "Kimura," set in the Vietnam War period, has just been published by Walker Books.



Notice to our readers: Due to an increase in our costs, we have had to raise our first-class postage rates for the U.S., Canada, and Mexico from \$12 to \$16 per year. See box p. 2.

Subscribe today!

6 months for \$4.

one year for \$8.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Tel. _____

Send to: 3435 Army St., Room 308, San Francisco, CA 94110

Police collusion

Dear editor,

Recent events have illustrated once again that the police cannot be depended upon to keep the abortion clinics open.

Last November, Operation Rescue (OR) tried to shut down the clinics in metropolitan Washington, D.C. At the clinic in Suitland, Md., on Nov. 18, OR pushed abortion-rights defenders into a plate-glass window, causing minor injuries. Rather than arresting or even giving a warning to OR, the police expressed surprise when clinic defenders refused to move from the area.

After the police announced they were going to clear an area around the door, the pro-choice defenders moved away peacefully, expecting that the police would restore access to the clinic. However, the police only arrested 26 blockaders for trespassing, clearing a small area around the back door and ignoring the hundreds of OR members who surrounded the clinic defenders.

Meanwhile, at the nearby Hill-view clinic, two women needed follow-up care after having had second trimester abortions the previous day. Although pro-choice leaders explained the risk to the women's health, the police refused to clear a path to the clinic. It was left to the pro-choice defenders to try to protect the patients and doctors.

Julia Steinberg,
Baltimore, Md.

Eastern Europe

Dear editor,

Please send me a sub to *Socialist Action*. The events in Eastern Europe are so incredible, I need to read a Trotskyist analysis. Hopefully, there are some Trotskyists in those countries to offer a democratic, socialist alternative!

K.C.,
Berkeley, Calif.

Political trial

Dear editor,

I am writing on behalf of Out of Control, a group of lesbians in San Francisco that was started over two years ago to do support work for women political prisoners and prisoners of war.

One of our current projects is the Resistance Conspiracy Case. Six political prisoners, men and women, are on trial in Washington, D.C., for "conspiracy to influence, change, and protest the policies and practices of the U.S. government in various international and domestic affairs through violent and illegal means."

Included in the government's charges were the political bombings of the U.S. Capitol after the invasion of Grenada and of the South African Consulate to protest U.S. support of apartheid. No one was

injured in any of these actions.

The government has no proof to show who actually carried out the bombings. Rather, it wants to convict the defendants by proving "guilt by political association." The trial begins early in 1990.

For more information about the case, contact the Emergency Committee for Political Prisoners, P.O. Box 28191, Washington, D.C. 20038-8191.

Julie Starobin,
San Francisco, Calif.

Keep in touch

Dear editor,

I am moving. I'm sure you'll mail your fine paper to my new address. I especially liked the article about how there won't be true women's liberation until we have socialism.

J.I.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

El Salvador

Dear editor,

On Dec. 4 there was a noteworthy demonstration here in Detroit against U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

Holiday shoppers stared in amazement as about 600 demonstrators swayed slowly down the streets of downtown Detroit in a funeral procession called by the Central American Solidarity Committee (CASC). Pall bearers carried coffins draped in black symbolizing the six slain Jesuit priests recently killed by the death-squad government as well as the other 80,000 innocent people who have been killed in El Salvador over the past 10 years.

We all felt a little closer to the Salvadoran people when an organizer read a roll call of the dead. Following each name we cried out "Presente!" in the tradition of the Salvadoran demonstrations.

As in many other cities, there are small signs of a rejuvenation—after a long lull—of the antiwar effort.

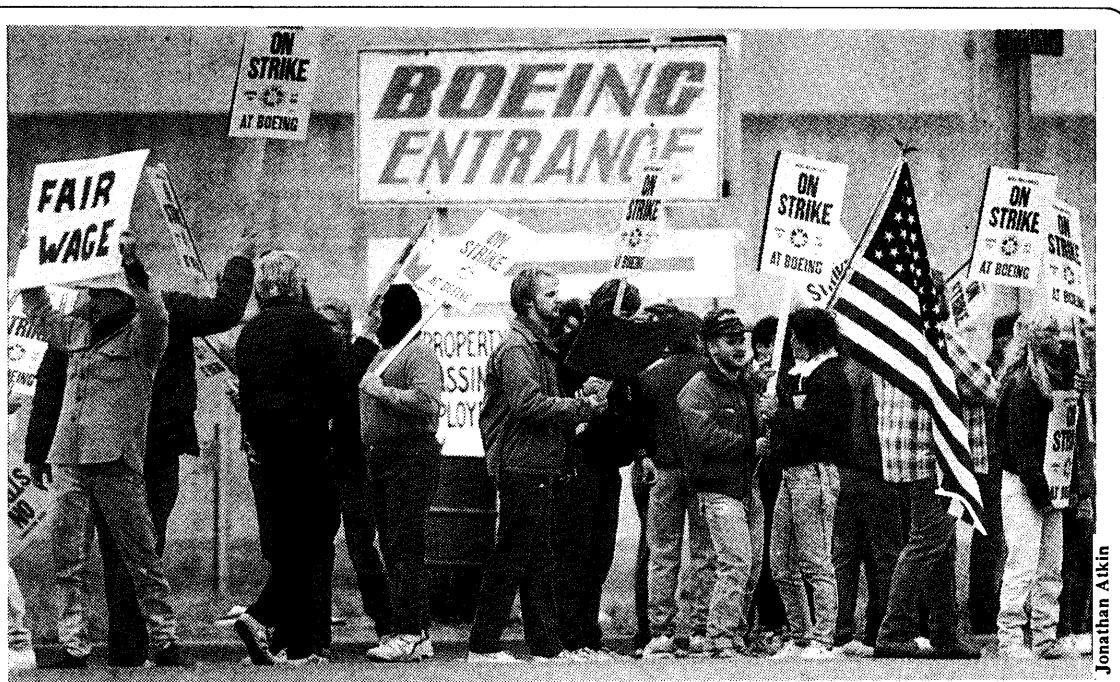
Barbara Putnam,
Detroit, Mich.

Yankee change

Dear editor,

I was gratified to read this morning's headlines in the *New Haven Register*, "Casolo comes home to glory." They referred to Jennifer Casolo, just returned to Connecticut after being deported by the criminal Cristiani government of El Salvador.

Jennifer is being received as a modern-day heroine in Thomaston, a small New England town with an austere Yankee tradition. Connecticut has been known as conservative and is still felt to be a Republican stronghold. It made me remember when I came home from college almost 30 years ago and excitedly



Jonathan Alkin

Boeing strike

Dear editor,

The article in the December issue of *Socialist Action* concerning the Boeing strike settlement was right on target when it stated that the company had an "ace in the hole" with the current union misleadership.

What the article didn't mention was that there was public disagreement among the union negotiating team over whether or not to accept the settlement that was proposed by the so-called neutral mediator.

Justin Astro, an IAM international vice-president and head of the union's aerospace division, sat in on the negotiations without a vote and urged the negotiations committee not to accept the sell-out proposal. Although two members of the negotiating team agreed with Astro, when it came time to vote on the proposal at a

mass meeting held in the Kingdome stadium, Astro did not voice his opposition to the proposed agreement.

One of the key tactical factors that led to this loss was the lack of communication between the union misleadership and the strikers. While Boeing took out full-page ads in the press and let the electronic media do its work for them, those on the picketline were left wondering about various rumors: what was the current status of negotiations, etc. Most strikers got their strike news and updates from the local media which, needless to say, were in Boeing's pocket.

I must add, however, that the unionists stood their ground and did not get fooled by some elements among the strikers who circulated a petition among the machinists that essentially urged an early settlement on Boeing's terms. The machinists showed that they were more than willing to fight. The strike could have been won if the union had a lead-

ership with a class-struggle perspective.

Until the union moved into its new \$10 million headquarters last year (with its nice new bronze plaque donated by Boeing), I worked next door to the IAM local representing Boeing workers. For several years, I would see the IAM District Lodge 751 president and his 15 hand-picked business agents coming and going. These bureaucrats dressed better and drove better cars than the capitalist owners of the outfit I work for.

When I attended a union rally for the strikers in November, it was literally the first time I'd seen the union president in anything but a fancy suit. I am confident, however, that the day will come when unions like District Lodge 751 will have real leaders from its ranks that don't identify with the bosses and will be willing to lead a fighting union in the tradition of the early CIO.

Rich Smith,
Seattle, Wash.

Photo is worth...

Dear editor,

I think your paper is one of the best socialist papers around, and here is my check for a year's subscription. My group is endeavoring to put out a libertarian socialist paper in Chicago to begin this spring.

One thing that really struck me was the photo by Tina Beacock on the back page of your December issue. This picture is truly worth a thousand words. If ever a placard brought home an issue, it was this one. [A placard in the photo read: "How would you like the police to investigate your miscarriage? Keep abortion legal."]

I would appreciate your permission to reprint this photo in our paper and on a flier dealing with abortion rights.

L.K.,
Chicago, Ill.

Gets around

Dear editor,

I read Jeff Mackler's article, "U.S. military aid fuels Salvador war, repression" in your December issue. The article was inspiring, as it gives some solid facts about what exactly is happening in El Salvador. It thus gives valid reasoning for action on the reader's part.

I think, however, that perhaps a lot of knowledge was assumed to be part of the reader's background. The facts did not jump out at me as easily as I would have liked. Most importantly, though, is the fact that the article is greatly complemented by the other articles relating to El Salvador.

I sure enjoy reading your paper, but it's not just me who uses it. My roommate used an article in the paper as a support for her politics paper on the issue of freedom. It doesn't go unused in these parts!

G.V.,
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Feudal farming

Dear editor,

I enjoyed the first part of Linda Thompson's series on the environment in your December 1989 issue. I look forward to further installments.

I'd like to add some information to Thompson's all-too-brief description of farming practices under the manorial (or "feudalist") system.

Until about 1050, most agricultural workers had little more than a (wooden) hoe to work with. Europe was still covered with vast forests. But then, an agricultural revolution took place that changed the land-

scape.

One of the most important new agricultural instruments was the heavy plow, which saved labor, allowed previously unpenetrable land to be cultivated, and effectively turned over the furrows and aerated the ground.

In addition, the three-field system of crop rotation was introduced; grain crops were often alternated with beans or peas—which added nitrogen to the soil. Farmers were able to keep more land under cultivation than in earlier periods. Waterways were dammed; a watermill (or windmill) could grind grain in the same time that it would have taken 40 people to do by hand.

During the 12th and 13th centuries, a great movement of land-clearing was undertaken. The forests were mowed down; the swamps were drained. Population grew and additional territory was opened to settlement.

The new ability to produce an agricultural surplus enabled the feudal lords to turn over large areas of their land to the production of commodities like cotton. Other fields were given over to sheep pastures. Trading centers developed into towns and cities.

Toward the end of the 14th century, Europe entered a new period of wars, plagues, and revolts. Large sections of the continent were temporarily depopulated; farms returned to forest. But in general, the ecology of Europe already had been changed forever.

M.S.,
San Francisco, Calif.

We welcome letters from our readers. Please keep them brief. Tell us how you wish to be identified.

Where To Find Us

Baltimore P.O. Box 16005 Baltimore, MD 21218	Cleveland P.O. Box 6151 Cleveland, OH 44101 (216) 429-2167	New York P.O. Box 20209 Ca. Finance 693 Columbus Ave. New York, N.Y. 10025
Boston P.O. Box 1046 GMF Boston, MA 02205 (617) 497-0230	Detroit P.O. Box 32546 Detroit, MI 48232	Pittsburgh 1625 Pillow Ave. Harwick, PA 15049
Chicago P.O. Box 267848 Chicago, IL 60626 (312) 327-5752	Los Angeles P.O. Box 60605 Terminal Annex Los Angeles, CA 90060 (213) 660-2891	San Francisco 3435 Army St., Suite 308 San Francisco, CA 94110 (415) 821-0458
Cincinnati P.O. Box 21015 Cincinnati, OH 45219 (513) 272-2596	Minneapolis P.O. Box 14087 Dinkytown Station Minneapolis, MN 55414	Santa Barbara P.O. Box 90644 Santa Barbara, CA 93190 (805) 962-4011

Rev. King's dream unfulfilled as Black poverty increases

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., had a dream that was shared by millions in America. He dreamed that one day, people would not be denied freedom solely because of the color of their skin.

Many Black people felt they had a reason to be hopeful. Blacks made their greatest gains in this century—both socially and economically—during the 1960s. The civil rights movement coincided with a period in which the U.S. economy (propped up by war spending) was still expanding. Unemployment was relatively low. At that time, the U.S. capitalists could still accommodate millions of Black people in the workforce.

As we enter the 1990s, many of the gains of the 1960s remain. Jim Crow (as an official doctrine) is gone. At the same time, a sizeable Black middle class—including close to 800,000 managers and corporate executives—has come into existence. White "Yuppies" have been joined by Black "Buppies."

But the dream is still a long way from being fulfilled. Racism persists. And the stagnant economy and government cutbacks of the last two decades have hit Black people particularly hard.

Black poverty has grown

Wages and living standards of Black workers have fallen (absolutely, as well as relative to whites). About 35 percent of the Black population lives under the official poverty line (compared to 28 percent in 1968). Last year, Blacks had 25 percent less to spend than in 1970. And median Black income is still only 57 percent that of whites.

Over 13 percent of Blacks are unemployed (compared to 9.4 percent in 1973). Between 1973 and 1986, the percentage of Black men between the ages of 18 and 29 who had full-time, year-round jobs fell from 44 percent to 35 percent.

The incidence of cancer in Blacks has risen 34 percent over the last 25 years (that of whites went up only 9 percent). One out of every four Black women's pregnancies ends in miscarriage. The infant mortality rate is 23 per 1000—twice that of whites and on a par with many underdeveloped countries in Africa and Latin America.

Since the days of Martin Luther King, segregation continues in our central cities. Almost one-third of Black people live in neighborhoods that are at least 90 percent Black. In a *Washington Post* poll taken last October, 52 percent of Blacks said that Black people in their area are discriminated against when they seek housing.

It's true that segregationists have less power now to muster entire police and sheriff's departments to keep Blacks out of "white" areas. However, the police generally



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

prefer to sit by while racist mobs (and murderers with parcel bombs) go to work.

Is Democratic Party an answer?

Meanwhile, police and city halls utilize the "war on drugs" to terrorize the Black community into submission. And atrocities such as Mayor Wilson Goode's 1987 fire-bombing of the MOVE headquarters in Philadelphia serve as a reminder to Black activists to "stay in their place."

Wilson Goode is one of the close to 7000

Black elected officials in this country who belong to the Democratic Party. Most Black leaders promote the idea that support to the Democratic Party can somehow work to improve conditions for African Americans.

But since the time of Martin Luther King, the Democratic Party has done everything possible to shake off its liberal "New Deal," "New Frontier," and "Great Society" image (which was never anything but phony campaign rhetoric).

An example of the Democrats' "new

thinking" can be glimpsed in the person of Doug Wilder, recently elected governor of Virginia. Wilder was formerly known as a "shoot-from-the-hip" liberal in Virginia politics. Now he styles himself as part of the "new mainstream" of the party. His more "moderate" stance, the Black millionaire says, is proof that he has "matured politically."

In the process of becoming "mature," Wilder changed much more than his trademark Afro haircut. He decided to back fewer anti-discrimination bills in the Virginia Senate and he increasingly called for stiffer jail sentences. He said that he could now support the death penalty because it no longer appeared to him to be imposed disproportionately on Blacks. [For more on this issue, see page 3.]

Wilder reportedly plunked down \$50,000 of his own campaign funds into a coordinated campaign to elect fellow Democrats in Virginia. His gesture of party loyalty is not unimportant in the South, where 147 "Dixiecrat" officeholders deserted the party last year to join the Republicans.

But no one should be surprised that politicians feel free to "crossover" into the Republican camp. Both the Democrats and the Republicans are merely two factions of the same party—which is run for the benefit of the capitalist class that rules this country.

"It's as simple as he who pays the piper picks the tune," Rep. Dan Glickman (D-Kan.) admitted in the *Washington Post* weekly edition (Nov. 6-12, 1989). "Money has made it more difficult for Democrats to define an economic agenda that is different from the Republican agenda; we are taking from the same contributors."

Thus the Democrats in Congress have unabashedly teamed up with the Republicans to hand over money that should have gone for housing, healthcare, and schools to the bankers and the military. From 1982 to 1985, for example, the Democratic Party majority in Congress authorized cuts of about \$110 billion from social-welfare programs. During the same period, the government's interest payments to the banks rose by \$124 billion.

If Black leaders (those who profess to be "mature" like Doug Wilder) are willing to serve the interests of big business, they will be duly rewarded. If not, they can expect the ruling class to try to silence them.

Martin Luther King, despite his illusions in the Democratic Party, put his main emphasis on the need for mass protest actions—strikes, marches, sit-ins, and boycotts. Today, likewise, solid victories can only be won through mass protest. A Black party that is completely independent of the Democrats could play an important role in uniting and organizing Black people to win their dream of freedom. ■

Increase in poverty tied to setbacks for unions in 80s

By JOSEPH RYAN

It would be the height of understatement to say that the 1980s were rough years for working people in this country.

Today, more people live below the poverty line (over 32 million), more people are homeless (over 3 million), and more people are unemployed (an underreported 7 percent average for the decade). With these deplorable social conditions as a backdrop, the weekly earnings of working people have dropped by an average of 9.2 percent—a \$32-per-week decrease.

The decline in living standards for Ameri-

can workers, especially for Black and Latino workers, began in the 1970s.

It got much worse in the 1980s. Over the last 10 years the rich definitely got richer, and the poor definitely got poorer as the captains of capital expanded their attacks on workers around phrases like maintaining "competitiveness" and "profitability."

Regrettably, the success of the bosses' offensive can be attributed to one decisive factor: the capitulation of the misleaders of the trade unions, who refused to organize any effective resistance to the employers' onslaught.

The class-collaborationist policies of the

AFL-CIO bureaucracy—policies predicated on the belief that a "partnership" exists between bosses and workers—came home with a vengeance in the 1980s.

Based on this "partnership," the bureaucracy lent a sympathetic ear to the bosses' demands for "concessions" and "takebacks." By conscious design, their refusal to organize a fightback helped facilitate the employers' austerity drive, on the one hand, and disarmed the union rank and file, on the other.

In one trade-union struggle after another, the bureaucracy undermined or sabotaged any fightback. In some situations they openly

played the role of strikebreakers. The results of these class-collaborationist policies are ominous: the union movement is weaker and all working people are poorer.

Unfortunately, the 1990s are starting out on the same sour note on which the last decade ended, as 8000 Eastern Airlines machinists and 20,000 New York telephone workers watch their strikes wither on the vine thanks to the bureaucracy's refusal to implement a fighting strategy.

Decade in review

Let's review the last decade. The bosses entered the 1980s with their class-conscious agenda for further driving down the wages and living conditions of American workers. They began by issuing a challenge—in reality a litmus test—to the trade-union bureaucracy.

Newly elected President Ronald Reagan busted the Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO)

(continued on page 8)