



Maintain sanctions until apartheid is abolished!



S. African students protest police attacks. Mass revolt forced regime to free Mandela.

Mass action needed to defend abortion rights

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

Another blow has been struck against a woman's right to choose!

On June 25, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld state laws in Ohio and Minnesota that restrict teenagers' access to abortion by requiring parental notification. Like the *Webster* ruling last year, without making abortion completely illegal, the Court is making more and more inroads into its accessibility—first for poor women, and now, for young women.

Thirty-five states now restrict teens' access to abortion. One young woman has already died from self-induced abortion because of such a law in Indiana.

The Supreme Court's 1989 *Webster* decision opened the door for several states and territories to attempt to restrict a woman's right to choose. First, the island of Guam and then Pennsylvania and Michigan passed new restrictions.

Now, the Democratic Party-dominated Louisiana legislature is attempting to send women back to the back alleys with its law criminalizing abortion.

These attacks require the most forthright and energetic response from the women's movement.

We need another massive national mobilization in the spring of 1991 to keep abortion safe, legal, and accessible.

Unfortunately, the leadership of the National Organization for Women (NOW) is showing signs of retreating from the militant course of action they charted in 1989,

turning instead to the electoral arena.

What mass action accomplished

When the Equal Rights Amendment went down to defeat in 1982, some people thought that the women's rights movement was dead. But as soon as the Supreme Court and the government moved to attack the right to abortion, a virtual explosion of women's anger erupted. Militant demonstrations in defense of women's rights to control their own bodies took place across the country.

The giant NOW April 9 and Nov. 12 mobilizations in Washington, D.C. were the centerpiece of the remobilized pro-choice movement. Pro-choice supporters in every state and locality were swept into action.

Thousands of protest actions, teach-ins, petition drives—all tied to the Washington actions—involved millions of people, including tens of thousands never before active in the women's movement or any other cause.

Support among oppressed nationalities—African Americans, and other minorities—labor unions, and youth was greater than at any other time in the struggle for women's rights.

And—best of all—the actions netted concrete results. New national polls showed a big increase in pro-choice opinion among the population at large. Idaho's anti-abortion legislation, inspired by the *Webster* decision (which had upheld the restrictive Missouri law), was vetoed.

Family-planning funds were restored in the California budget and, for the first time in

13 years, the California legislature is about to include abortion funding in the state budget.

Important victories were scored against Operation Rescue. The pro-choice movement outmobilized them at the clinics; and the courts—influenced by the pro-choice mobilizations—ruled against their blockades.

Democrats' dismal record

Four months away from the November elections, Democratic and Republican candidates for public office are falling all over themselves to court the feminist vote by claiming to have the best pro-choice, pro-woman credentials.

Unfortunately, the NOW leaders seem determined to ignore the groundswell of disgust with the two major political parties expressed by the members at the 1989 NOW national conference. They have invited numerous Democratic Party politicians to address NOW's 1990 conference, including gubernatorial candidates Dianne Feinstein of California and Evelyn Murphy of Massachusetts.

Feinstein, however, was considered so anti-women's rights when she was the mayor of San Francisco that she couldn't even get NOW's support in the Democratic primary for governor.

San Francisco NOW members cited as reasons why they wouldn't support Feinstein, her attempts to scuttle comparable worth for city workers, her opposition to implementing voter-approved childcare programs, her

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From the streets of Harlem to the Oakland Coliseum, people gathered by the hundreds of thousands to greet Nelson Mandela, deputy president of the African National Congress (ANC). This massive turnout reflects the strong determination of people in this country to back Mandela's call to maintain full sanctions against South Africa until apartheid has been abolished.

African Americans, in particular, have

New socialist group in South Africa,

See page 11.

been inspired by Mandela's years of struggle. They link the fight against apartheid by millions of Black South Africans with the fight against racism in the United States. Many have compared Mandela to Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

Sensing Mandela's immense popularity, the representatives of the ruling rich—the Democratic and Republican politicians—lined up to be photographed shaking his hand. The ANC leader was given a standing ovation at the Capitol; in the last 200 years, he was only the second private citizen ever to address a joint session of Congress.

President Bush wined and dined him at the White House, top corporate executives sat down with Mandela at the World Trade Center, and even the Empire State Building was lit up with the colors of the ANC.

What a change! Only two years ago, the ANC was on the U.S. State Department's list of "terrorist organizations"—the only such organization in Africa. And a new president, George Bush, was elected who was once the head of the CIA, the U.S. spy outfit that fingered ANC leader Nelson Mandela and turned him over to the South African security forces in 1962.

What accounts for this turnabout? Have the same people who ordered the invasion of Panama that killed thousands and violated a nation's sovereignty had a change of heart? Have the people who ordered the bloody invasion of Grenada or armed the Nicaraguan contras changed their stripes? Obviously not.

Writing on the wall

The U.S. ruling class has simply read the writing on the wall. The continued mobilizations of millions of Black South African workers throughout the 1980s raised the specter of revolution.

The white minority regime and its international allies realized that apartheid has outlived its usefulness and created a political situation so explosive that capitalist rule itself is in danger. So they opted for a "negotiated settlement" that would ensure a smooth transition to a stable, capitalist post-apartheid South Africa.

By promoting Mandela, and basking in the South African hero's much-deserved limelight, U.S. policymakers are simply saying, "We want to have a say in the future of South Africa. Help us secure a negotiated solution in South Africa that meets our interests and you can count on us for support."

But what would such a negotiated solution look like? The contours of the ruling-class

(continued on page 3)

Let's stand up and take a bow

Randall Terry is feeling sorry for himself. He says that his bullies in Operation Rescue are "tired and battle-weary."

In a *New York Times* article of June 11, it was reported: "On two consecutive Mondays in May, the Supreme Court let stand rulings in New York and Atlanta that forbid demonstrators from Operation Rescue to block access to abortion clinics."

"There are still \$450,000 in unpaid fines growing out of the New York demonstrations and more than a dozen pending lawsuits around the country; not to mention that after federal marshals seized the group's payroll account the staff of Operation Rescue's headquarters shrunk to three people from 23."

The National Organization for Women deserves credit for giving Randall Terry this heartache. It was NOW that organized two massive marches in 1989 which revealed the depth of support for women's right to choose. Politicians who had been silent about this attack on our fundamental, legal right to abortion found—all of a sudden—that they were really pro-choice.

Democratic Party candidates, such as Dianne Feinstein, had refused to speak at the "Days In The Park For Women's Rights" (annual demonstrations organized by NOW when Feinstein was mayor of San Francisco). Then she didn't want to be on the same platform as pro-abortion supporters. Now she has wrapped herself in the flag of "choice" in order to win the California race for governor.

During the Vietnam War, politicians who had stood firm in their support of the war, became "anti-warriors" when the opposition to that war had grown to mammoth proportions. Today, after NOW's massive marches in favor of choice showed the politicians who the majority really is, the politicians are changing their stripes to pro-choice. That's their only hope to win an election.

The "We" Generation

There's been a flood of articles written by all manner of soothsayers, palm-readers, and pseudo-psychoanalysts decrying the fact that "this generation" is unconcerned about others and only concerned with their own selfish interests. It has become known as the "Yuppie" or "Me" Generation.

Well, the major reason that Operation Rescue is crying the blues is because the "Me" Generation became the "We" Generation in just over a year.

Young people from the campuses and workplaces joined with the



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

older generation and poured out to defend their clinics, not only for themselves but for all women. Both women and men gave up their time to turn out for clinic defense at the crack of dawn (most times even be-

fore the crack of dawn) in rain, snow, or fog, and fought off the hoodlums of Operation Rescue.

All over this country—at clinic after clinic, from Boston to San Francisco, from Miami Beach to

the borders of Canada—we tangled with Operation Rescue and won. This generation has shown that they have the same courage as their foremothers who marched for women's right to vote, the eight-hour day, ending child labor, and human equality for all.

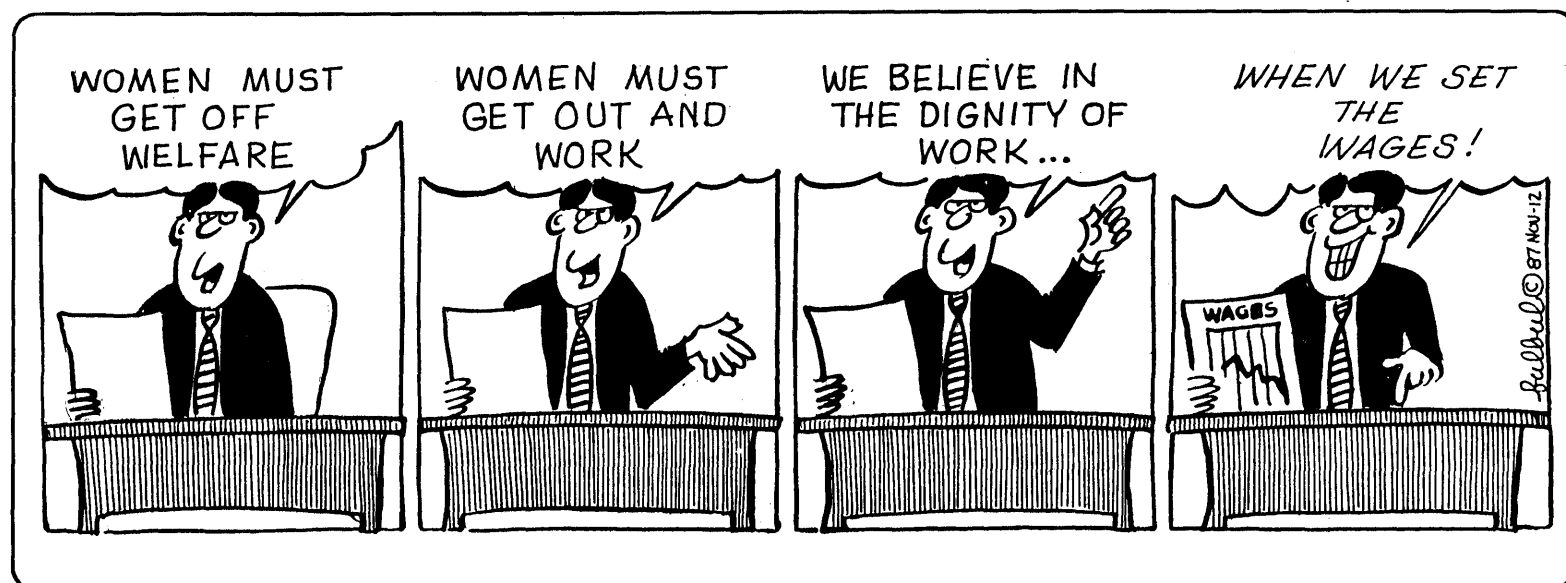
Thousands of those same young people joined the National Organization for Women because they feel that it is an organization which protects their interests. They are prepared to continue that fight until the right to choose is available to all who need it, regardless of costs.

There are over 250 laws in opposition to safe, legal abortion in the various states. Molly Yard, president of NOW, said that this issue cannot be a states-rights issue. It is a national issue. Just as this coun-

try could not exist half-slave and half-free, neither can women exist half-slave to their biological make-up and half-free.

NOW has the opportunity to once again step into the forefront of leading the fight for women's lives and women's equality. National NOW must mobilize this powerful new force, by organizing for a massive national march in 1991 to let everyone know that women will not tolerate a state-by-state encroachment on our rights.

It would be an invitation to disaster to put an ounce of faith in Democrat or Republican politicians. Only massive, visible, militant demonstrations will serve notice to all politicians, judges, and religious fanatics that we will not turn back!



Who profits from sexism?

Sexism intrudes on all aspects of our lives. The forms of oppression are social, economic, political, physical, and emotional. While all these forms of oppression are aimed at keeping women subjugated, men have not entirely escaped the effects. For example, some men have had to help a mate or daughter cross a hateful picket line to get into an abortion clinic. Others have seen their family income diminished by job discrimination aimed at working women's paychecks.

Despite the ignorance and prejudice that helps to perpetuate sexism, you would think that an educated society would make it a high priority to eradicate this plague and end its widely felt destruction. But any of us who have ever fought for

As I
see it

By
Kathy Setian

women's rights know that the opposite is true. Somebody must be benefiting from sexism. And that somebody must be powerful.

For example, employers only pay women 64 cents out of a dollar they pay to men, on average. The ratio is even worse for the few women in the highest wage brackets, who take home only 58 cents out of a dollar paid to their male peers, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The employer gets to keep the other 36 to 42 cents as extra profit. Multiply that by millions of working women and it is easy to see that employers profit directly and greatly from sexism.

Sexism within the family

By digging a little deeper, we can see that the employers get other advantages as well. If women are underpaid and underemployed, it forces many of us to be dependent on men economically. This dependence has often forced women into marriages for our economic survival.

Within the family unit, women

are assigned the job of reproducing, child rearing, caring for the elderly, cooking, feeding, nurturing, cleaning, and all of the other tasks needed to send the "productive" (paid) workers off to work each day. (This is regardless of whether we hold down a job for wages ourselves, in which case, women still perform 75 percent of the household tasks.)

What if we didn't perform this role? Society at large would have to provide these services, such as childcare and care of the elderly. And higher costs would ultimately have to be borne by those who control our social wealth: the employers and profit-makers.

Without the tool of sexism, there would be no economic necessity to prod women into compulsory marriage, no degrading ideology to justify keeping us there, and lower profits for the bosses. So whose side do you suppose the employers are on?

Control of reproduction

Let's consider another example. If a woman is denied the ability to control her reproductive life, who profits?

Since the development of the birth-control pill in 1960, the number of women working for wages increased by almost 200 percent. But the birth-control pill is not 100 percent safe or effective, so abortion plays an important role in a woman's control of her reproductive life.

Without access to abortion and advances in birth control, child-bearing is still left up to chance. This makes it much harder for a woman to complete her education, enter the work force, and earn a consistent wage.

But for the employer, this is a big advantage. It gives employers a great deal more flexibility if some workers—in this case, women of child-bearing age—periodically cycle out of the workforce and then back in again at the boss's discretion.

Employers have no obligation to rehire us again, especially in periods of economic crisis. And periodic economic crisis is a built-in feature of capitalism. So once again, it is the employers who gain a needed safety valve and derive a profit by limiting or denying women control over our reproductive lives.

Women are told from the time we are born (and sometimes even before we are born) that we are inferior, not as smart, not as aggressive, not as decisive—and that all of this is by nature or by God's decree.

Who profits from this social abuse and degradation? It provides a convenient rationalization and even a theological justification for denying women justice, dividing the working class, and ensuring an undergroup which can be doubly exploited for the profit of the rich.

These are just a few examples of the ways in which women are exploited. In all cases, when we look beneath the surface of hatred and prejudice that we may experience from men, we find a much more ominous enemy. This enemy is truly motivated by greed and self-interest—regardless of the human toll.

It is against this enemy who uses sexism and class division for his own profit and who controls the wealth of our society that we must take aim in order to win lasting equal rights and a just social order.

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Mark Curtis Defense Committee target of second frame-up trial

By CARL FINAMORE

Mark Curtis, a member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), is serving a 25-year sentence for rape and burglary. He was framed up one-and-a-half years ago based on the false testimony of the arresting police officers. Unchallenged court testimony places Curtis at a bar with friends when, according to initial reports by the alleged victim, the attack occurred.

But the trials of Curtis did not end with his conviction. He was harassed numerous times by prison authorities while at the Iowa Men's Reformatory in Anamosa. They were no doubt alarmed about Curtis's political activity, which included his election as an officer of an active prison discussion club called the Martin Luther King Jr. Committee.

All this recently led to Curtis being transferred on one-day's notice to the John Bennett Correctional Center in Fort Madison, Iowa, because "it was the right thing to do," according to the Anamosa warden.

It didn't take long for Curtis to run up against the same kind of treatment at Fort Madison. On June 13, Curtis was handed a "major report" stating that he had committed an offense. This would have meant transfer to a maximum security prison where Curtis's ability to communicate with his supporters would be drastically curtailed.

Curtis's alleged offense was that his wife, Kate Kaku, had placed \$1.35 in change in his pocket to hold for her while she smoked a cigarette. Kate had no pockets on her dress. After the visit, Curtis forgot to return the change. For this crime, he was charged with "unauthorized possession," "disobeying orders," "disruptive activity," and "attempted complicity."

Quick action by the Curtis Defense Committee led to several dozen protest telegrams landing on the warden's desk. As a result, all charges were dropped.

Inside the courtroom

A second frameup of Mark Curtis is taking place in the courtroom. A lawsuit has been filed against Curtis, Kate Kaku, and the Defense Committee by the parents of the alleged rape victim.

The lawsuit involves two issues. First,

the court is being asked to reaffirm the guilt of Curtis despite the fact that the case is still under appeal. Second, the court is being asked to assign substantial fines against the named defendants because they have profited from the "commercialization of his [Curtis's] acts." This last reference is to Defense Committee efforts to raise money to pursue the extensive legal and political aspects of exposing the frameup.

"This countercampaign" Kate Kaku points out, "has been spearheaded by a group called

the Workers League. This group repeats the line that Mark Curtis attacked a young Black woman and that Mark's defense campaign is against a Black family. This is not true."

"Our campaign is directed at the cops," Kaku explains. "It was the cops that framed Mark. It was the cops who beat him. It was the cops who called him a 'Mexican-lover, just like you like those coloreds.' It was the cops who lied in court and it was their testimony that convicted Mark."

The lawsuit is only one part of the

Workers League's campaign against Curtis. John Studer, executive director of the Curtis Defense Committee, commented to *Socialist Action* about a book published by the Workers League which argues that Curtis is guilty.

"The book is part of the longstanding and ongoing campaign of the Workers League in support of the cop frameup of Mark Curtis," Studer said. "The book attempts to explain that the thousands who are rallying in support of Curtis are dupes of Mark's party, the Socialist Workers Party, which they also claim is controlled by police agents."

Workers League book

The book Studer is referring to is titled "The Mark Curtis Hoax." In the book, the Workers League states its real motives for supporting the prosecution case against Curtis.

The author, Martin McLaughlin, claims that "there is massive documentary evidence that the Socialist Workers Party is run by government agents and serves the government and the corporate bosses as an instrument of spying and political provocation. The Mark Curtis defense campaign is part of a wider pattern of state operations which make use of the SWP to gather information on the workers' movement both within the United States and internationally."

The Workers League's scurrilous attack on the SWP as a police operation is the basis of their alliance with the cops in attacking the Curtis Defense Committee. They are attacking Curtis to get at his party.

Using the courts to disrupt the SWP is the same method employed several years ago when Workers League member Alan Gelfand filed a suit asking that SWP membership lists be made available so that he could "prove" that the bulk of the party's members were police agents. After 10 years of burdening the SWP with substantial legal expenses and diverting it from other political tasks, this case was finally thrown out of court.

On Aug. 15, 1989, a federal judge ruled that the Gelfand suit was designed "to disrupt the SWP." The judge also said that the suit was "abusive, harassing" and that "one of its main purposes was to generate material for political attacks on the SWP by the Workers League."

"What the judge said about the Gelfand case applies as well to their 'facts' about the Curtis case," Studer observed. Nonetheless, he emphasized, the case should be taken very seriously. It is an attempt to bankrupt Curtis and Kate Kaku and to strike a blow against the right of frameup victims to defend themselves. ■

A letter from Kate Kaku

Below we reprint major portions of a letter sent to Socialist Action on June 4, 1990, by Kate Kaku, wife of convicted SWP member Mark Curtis and a leader of the Curtis Defense Committee.

Dear Supporters,

Thank you very much for your recent letter renewing Socialist Action's support for the fight to win freedom and justice for Mark Curtis.

The defense campaign is at an important turning point. We face a trial now set for July 9 on a civil case filed by the Morris parents seeking general and punitive damages from Curtis for pain and suffering allegedly inflicted on their daughter.

This lawsuit seeks to demoralize Curtis and aid efforts of prison authorities to break him by threatening damages that will follow him after he gets out of prison. It is a move to prevent me from travelling around the world and speaking out in defense of my husband and political collaborator.

If successful, it can be a deadly threat aimed at the entire defense campaign. Your letter summed this up well, calling this operation "a serious attempt to bankrupt the committee, to smear its leadership and to paralyze its ability to publicize the injustice done to Mark."



Kate Kaku at Mark Curtis rally

We are launching a special fundraising campaign to meet the expenses entailed in defending Mark, myself and the Committee from this attack. Far from being derailed by the lawsuit, we are going to redouble our efforts to reach out and win new political and financial support for Curtis. The funds will aid in this effort as well.

New literature from the defense committee explaining the dangers of this attack are being printed, and, as they are available, we will send copies to you.

In solidarity,
Kate Kaku

Sanctions

(continued from page 1)

proposal were more clearly defined during Mandela's U.S. visit.

(1) Mandela was told to be "responsive" to white minority rights.

While Mandela insisted on the need for "one person, one vote" in a non-racial, unitary state, he also said he would be "flexible" in regard to the "timetable of its implementation."

This formulation could play into the hands of De Klerk and his white minority government, who want to shortcircuit the struggle for Black majority rule. They have insisted on being granted "veto power" over the Black majority through a two-chamber parliament.

2) Mandela was told to be "responsive" to the interests of the white "business community."

While Mandela insisted on the need to build an economic system that would eliminate the inequities that have benefited the "tiny, white minority" and left the Black majority impoverished, he also affirmed that he would support a capitalist mixed economy in a post-apartheid state.

Speaking to 280 corporate heads and Fortune 500 executives, Mandela said he was "sensitive" to investors' needs. He pledged that no "arbitrary government action" would be taken against capitalist investment following the end of apartheid. "The economy," he said, "will proceed on the basis of free enterprise. And we don't propose to interfere with that."

But "apartheid capitalism," as South African Blacks often refer to the current economic system in their country, cannot be reformed. It will be impossible to satisfy the

economic and social needs of the Black majority while safeguarding an economic system predicated upon exploitation and inequality.

These and other questions concerning the future of post-apartheid South Africa can only be decided by the South African people themselves. Nelson Mandela is totally right when he says that only the sovereign will of the people—expressed through a constituent

assembly based on one person, one vote—can determine the fate of South Africa.

Anything else would be to allow negotiations between self-appointed (or selected) leaders of the liberation struggle and the white minority regime behind the backs of the Black majority.

The U.S. government and the corporate rich have no right to dictate any negotiating terms to the South African freedom fighters.

'AIDS is still killing us'

By MALIK MIAH

The battle against the deadly disease AIDS was brought to the world's attention at the Sixth International Conference on AIDS held in San Francisco June 20-24.

Some 12,000 delegates and press registered for the five-day conference. This included hundreds of HIV-infected people who for the first time in the series of conferences were on the official program at all levels.

AIDS is a deadly disease caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Currently there is no cure.

The highlight of the conference took place outside its doors. Unofficial activities organized by militant gay rights groups took center stage during the course of the conference that reported little progress in finding a cure to the AIDS virus. Led by activists of the coalition ACT UP (Aids Coalition to Unleash Power), daily protests were organized in downtown San Francisco.

The focus of the protests was against government inaction to fight the virus and to help victims of the disease. Marchers also included many scientists and doctors attending the AIDS Conference, some participating in their first demonstration.

An ACT-UP activist summed up the feelings of the young who were critical of the official AIDS establishment: "We're losing our hard edge of criticism. AIDS is still killing us. I came here to agitate, not to collaborate. We should have rioted a long time ago."

Protesters also hit the U.S. government's reactionary immigration laws that prevented many HIV-infected panelists from attending the conference. Many others boycotted the conference because of this policy.

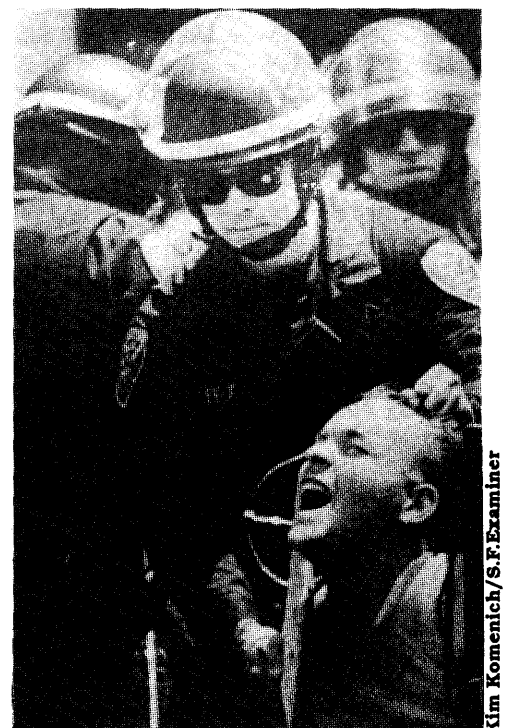
According to the World Health Organization (WHO) as of June 1 an estimated 600,000 AIDS cases, and some 300,000 deaths, have been reported. In the United States at least 83,145 people have died of AIDS.

While scientists and doctors have not yet found a cure for AIDS, the focus on the issue and what the government should be doing to help victims was all brought to the world's attention during the San Francisco conference.

The determination of demonstrators, led by ACT-UP, was especially crucial in this respect. It is by public protest that governments and employers are forced to act on issues of social concern—whether it concerns

They have no right to have any say in the future of South Africa. That right belongs to the South African people—and to them only. That is the meaning of self-determination.

The task of all supporters of the South African freedom struggle in this country is, following Mandela, to insist that sanctions be maintained until apartheid is fully dismantled and the Black majority rules! ■



AIDS conference protester being arrested in S.F.

the rights of unionists, Blacks, women, or the rights of gays and victims of deadly diseases such as AIDS. [Our next issue will carry more on the AIDS conference.—Edit.]

The business of health: A critical diagnosis



By MARK HARRIS

The 1980s were a decade in which the rich got richer and the poor got poorer.

Some of the rich got richer by investing in the nation's health care system, which in recent years has been afflicted by a virulent strain of market-driven greed that has transformed the practice of the "healing arts" into a feverish scramble for profits in the medical marketplace.

Some of the poor not only got poorer, but sicker, too, as the trend toward corporate health care found its corollary in drastic cutbacks in public health programs, epidemic hospital closings, and swelling ranks of uninsured patients; all the most visible aspects of a growing tangle of obstacles to care for millions of Americans.

The U.S. health-care system has become "a paradox of excess and deprivation," as Stanford researchers noted in a recent article in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (Jan. 5, 1989), spending more—and delivering less—than any other industrialized nation. The United States, in fact, spends 40 percent more per capita on health care than the country ranked second in per-capita expenditures, Canada. Despite the exorbitant cost of care, an estimated 37 million people lack medical insurance. Ten to fifteen million more are seriously underinsured.

The profit motive has, of course, always been a factor in the health-care "industry" as it has developed in the United States. But only in the late 1960s did corporate medicine begin to assume a more central role in the delivery of health services. The emergence of this new "medical-industrial complex," as Arnold Reiman, editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, cautioned in 1980, represents the "most important health-care development of the day."

Previously, the health system was based largely on thousands of practitioners, free-standing, nonprofit hospitals run by religious charities, public hospitals, and urban teaching hospitals. Large capital interests were mostly limited to pharmaceutical concerns and medical equipment and supply companies.

During the last decade investor-owned chains have emerged as an integral component of the health-care economy. By 1985, the four largest health-care corporations owned or managed 12 percent of all U.S. hospitals. This year it is expected that about 30 percent of general hospital beds will be managed by for-profit chains. Some health policy experts predict that by the mid-1990s about 10 large firms will provide 50 percent of the medical care in the United States.

"The rise of the for-profit chains, has for the first time introduced managerial capitalism into American medicine on a large scale," notes sociologist Paul Starr in *The*

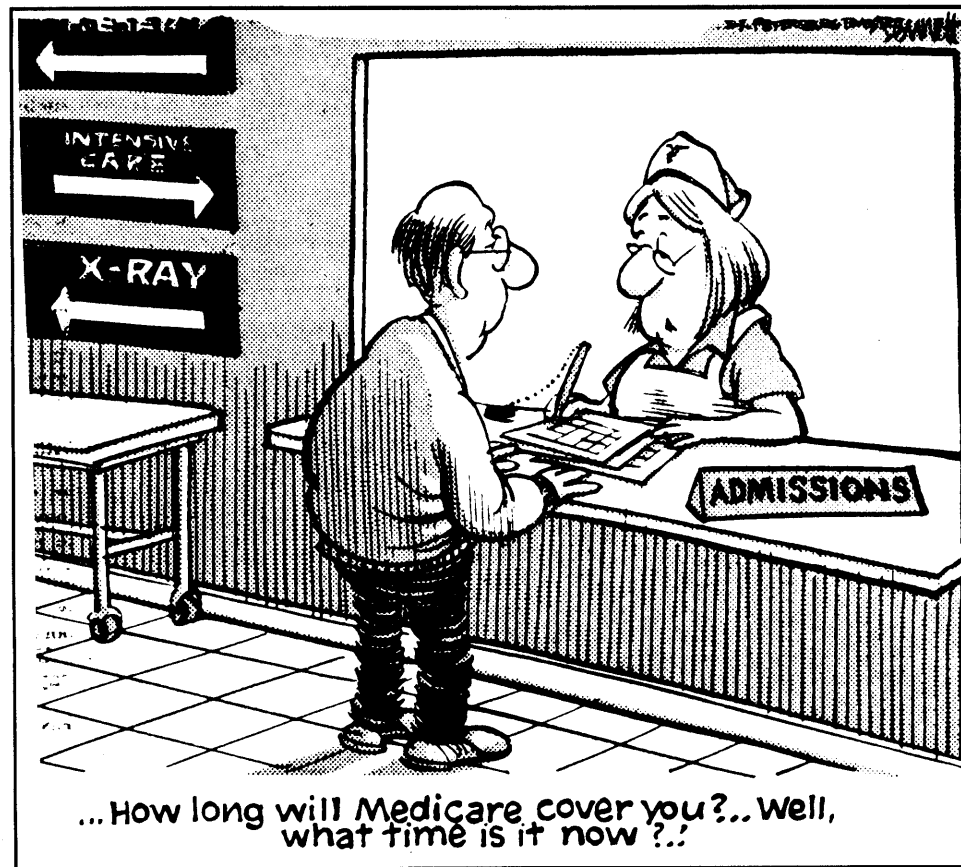
Social Transformation of American Medicine. The results have been far reaching—and insidious.

Uninsured, unprofitable, unwanted

The growing influence of for-profit health care has had a systemic effect on the delivery of services, forcing non-profit providers to mimic the marketing strategies of investor-owned groups in a frenzied competition for

elderly and the indigent, that sparked the corporate invasion of the health-care industry. The government, in effect, provided a blank check subsidy to organized doctors, nursing homes, and hospitals to charge whatever they liked for services. The Medicare program also allowed providers to charge an additional fee to the patient, above the bill presented to the government.

This fee-for-service payment system,



"paying customers." Health-care marketing has replaced health care planning in hospitals run by administrators who speak the language of consumer demographics and winning product lines. Uninsured patients, however, are not a "winning product line;" they have become unprofitable and unwanted.

The commodification of health care, as Starr observes, "is part of two broad currents in the political economy of contemporary societies. The older of these two movements is the steady expansion of the corporation into sectors of the economy traditionally occupied by self-employed small businessmen or family enterprises.... [T]he second and more recent movement is the transfer of public services to the administrative control or ownership of private corporations—the reprivatization of the public household."

Ironically, it was the creation in 1965 of Medicare and Medicaid, the publicly funded programs to provide medical care for the

which also included private insurers, propelled the economy of health care into an inflationary stratosphere of soaring costs: medical prices have risen at two to three times the annual inflation rate during the last two decades.

Cost-containment crusade

Business interests who were not investing in health care, but instead paying the costs of employee benefits began to rebel against this inflationary trend in the early 1970s. The Washington Business Group on Health, initiated in 1974 by chief executive officers of some of the largest U.S. corporations, conducted dozens of coalitions of business and health industry leaders in a sonorous campaign to "trim the fat" from health costs. This cost-cutting chorus sang a melody of efficiency in service, but in reality struck an altogether different note—health care was a commodity, to be bought, sold, and rationed.

Perhaps the most far-reaching of many measures to introduce incentives to limit care was the new Medicare prospective payment system established in 1983. Fee-for-service was abolished, replaced by reimbursement based on diagnosis-related groups (DRGs) that set an average cost of treatment for any given diagnosis. Thus, hospitals that could reduce service and discharge patients more quickly would profit.

However, while some hospitals have profited, those that treat a large number of medically indigent patients in poor, primarily urban neighborhoods have been financially strained, often to the breaking point. In general, people lacking medical coverage seek care later and are sicker than those with the means to pay. The primary care physician's office is frequently replaced by the emergency room and longer, more costly—and inadequately compensated—hospitalization.

Further, Medicare and Medicaid have suffered sharp spending cuts, coupled with more restrictive eligibility requirements and higher co-payments that have squeezed the ranks of eligible participants. Currently, only about 40 percent of those classified as poor, according to federal guidelines, receive Medicaid coverage, a decline from 65 percent in 1976. This translates into additional financial burden as hospitals absorb an ever-growing share of unremunerated expenses: In 1987 an estimated \$7 billion in hospital bills went uncollected, according to the American Hospital Association.

Hospitals, in turn, have countered by "cost shifting" these losses to employer-funded health plans in the form of higher charges. Employers, too, have cost-shifted the rising cost of health plans—to their employees. In 1980, one out of three insurance policies required no out-of-pocket payment by the policy holder. By 1987, only one out of 14 offered such a benefit.

"Cost containment, it became clear, was a euphemism in many settings for cost shifting," observes Joan O'C. Hamilton in *Stanford* magazine (September 1989). "Every time the cost balloon was squeezed in one place, it expanded in another."

The "dumping" of uninsured patients at public hospitals by private health providers has also emerged as a *de facto* and illegal cost-containment practice. Some hospitals have also closed emergency rooms. An alarming number have gone even further and simply shut down. Between 1980 and 1988, 445 hospitals in the United States went out of business. In 1988, a record 81 hospitals closed. The National Association for Hospital Development predicts that as many as 40 percent of the nation's 2200 acute-care hospitals will close or be converted to other uses over the next 10 years.

Still, health-care spending continues its upward spiral. The 1980s, the "decade of cost containment," saw the pace of cost increases accelerated even more, rising at an adjusted rate of 4.4 percent per year compared to a rate of 3.8 percent during the 1970s. Despite the ostensible failure of budget-pairing strategies, cost-containment blather continues to inform the literature and policy statements of health industry leaders. And so also does support for the market-based practices that are at the root of escalating costs.

The commodification of health care has led to a proliferation of lucrative outpatient and specialty services (i.e., sports medicine, cosmetic surgery, liposuction, chemical dependence, walk-in clinics) that often operate outside the scope of cost-containment strictures. The "medical arms race" in which hospitals compete to acquire the state-of-the-art technology that will attract top physicians and generate business also continues unabated. The result is not only wasteful duplication of services (hospitals within blocks of each other may offer the same highly specialized services), but costs that continue to escalate.

One such competitive rivalry was recently noted in *The Wall Street Journal* (June 6, 1990), which reported the game of high-tech one-upmanship being played between the two hospitals that serve Kalamazoo, Mich. A range of specialized services have been implemented, and duplicated, first by one, then by the other hospital. Both hospitals even added, amidst much fanfare, a helicopter ambulance to their list of services. There are only 90 helicopter ambulances operating in the United States. When one hospital boasted that its helicopter carried a nurse on every flight, the other countered by adding a doctor to every flight. Eventually, both hospitals upgraded to *twin-engine* helicopters.

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As for Kalamazoo's residents, they have seen more than helicopters flying high—local hospital charges are among the highest in the nation.

In fact, *The Journal* reports hospital costs in two-hospital towns average 30 percent more than in one-hospital communities. Other studies have confirmed that competition among provider organizations is contributing to—not mitigating—rising-medical costs.

Declining health among poor

The impact of cost-containment strategies is actually more tangibly measured, not in efficient allocation of resources, but in further limits to care, and the deteriorating health status of millions of Americans.

The RAND health insurance experiment recently found that funding cuts in Medicaid, community health clinics, and child nutrition programs has contributed to poorer health among beneficiaries. Larger out-of-pocket expenses have deterred the poor from seeking primary care for childhood respiratory infections, allergies, sore throats, and other conditions. An increase in maternal anemia, hospital admissions for infant diarrhea and dehydration, and low-birth-weight babies has also been documented.

The infant mortality rate, an important gauge of a society's overall health, has, after decades of improvement, reversed itself and begun to increase since 1985. The United States now ranks 19th among nations, behind such countries as Singapore and Spain, with a rate of 10.6 deaths per 1000 births.

For Blacks, the situation is even more grim. In Chicago, for example, the infant death rate in some predominately Black west side neighborhoods is more than three times the national average; worse, in fact, than in any country in the Western hemisphere except Haiti. Significantly, overall life expectancy for Blacks has actually declined since 1984.

The rising neonatal death rate offers an indication of the extent and depth of poverty in the U.S. population. "In recent years there have been more and more people ... with no prenatal care," Dr. Sharon Langendoerfer, a neonatologist at Denver General Hospital, told the *Rocky Mountain News* (Oct. 9, 1988), "and they tell us it is because they simply could not afford it."

Colorado denies prenatal Medicaid benefits to pregnant women in a family of three if family income exceeds about \$6000 a year. And, like most states, Colorado practices another type of care rationalization: an estimated 25 percent of women who do qualify for Medicaid benefits are effectively excluded by the confusing jungle of paperwork that confronts applicants.

A high-tech ivory tower

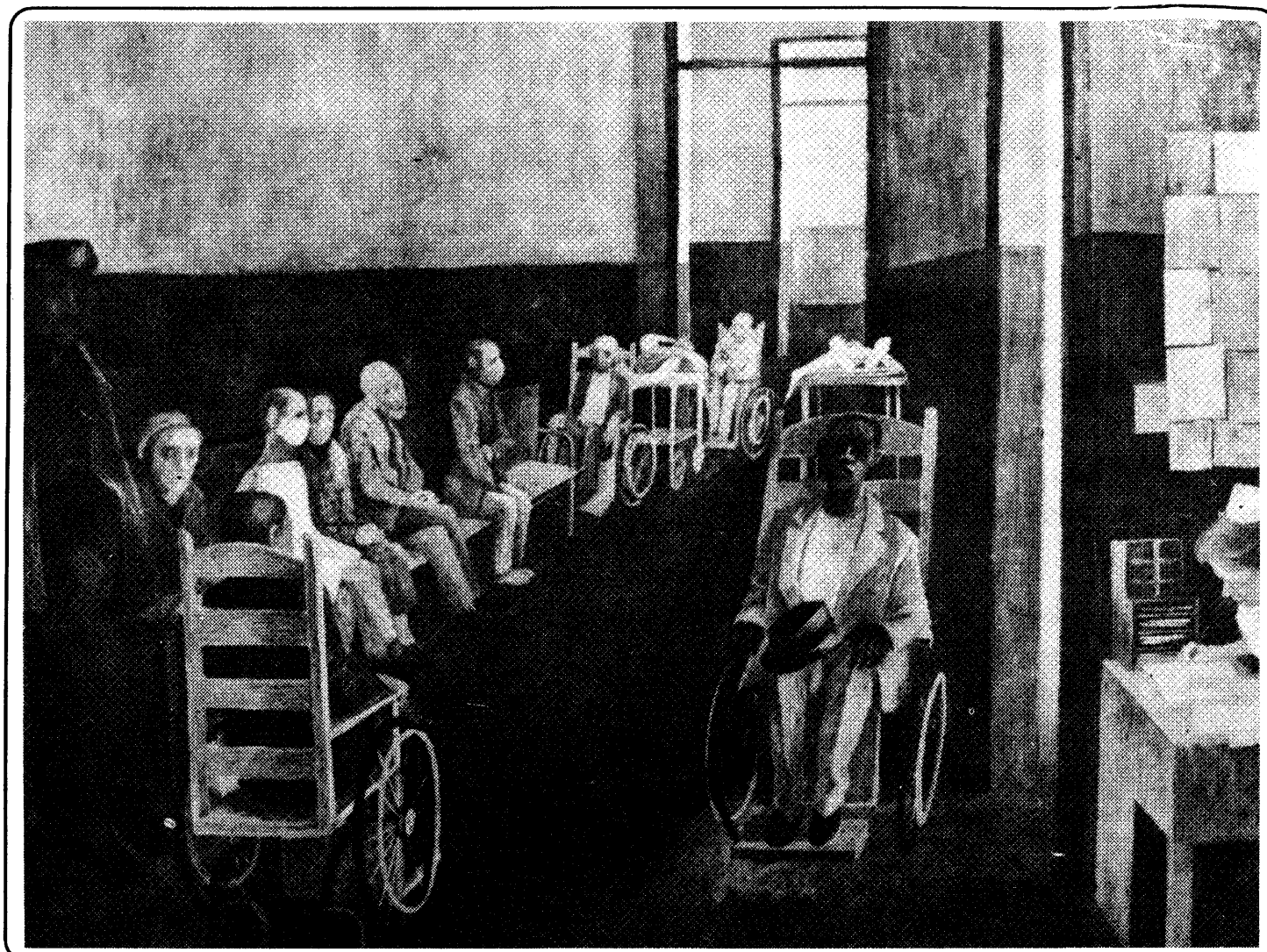
The link between poverty and the infant mortality rate also highlights another fundamental problem in the medical system: a narrow technological focus that downplays preventive medicine and the social and environmental causes of illnesses.

"I can fly a sick baby by helicopter to a neonatal unit," as Dr. Virginia Floyd, director of the family health section of the Georgia Department of Human Resources, illustrated in remarks to a 1988 Institute of Medicine of Chicago conference on infant mortality, "but I can't get \$3 for a mother to get to the doctor for a prenatal visit." (*Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 6, 1988).

A clinical orientation that bombards illness and disease with a dazzling array of sophisticated technology, but pays little attention to social conditions that predispose individuals to illness reflects an intrinsic identity of interest between the medical establishment and an economic system that values corporate profits over human needs. The foundations, corporations, and government agencies that shape health policy and fund medical research, as E. Richard Brown explains in *Rockefeller Medicine Men*, "support technical perspectives that separate health problems from their social and political contexts."

"Their policies," Brown notes, "reflect a general corporate class concern that any excess sickness and death not be attributed to the admitted inequalities of capitalist society or to the organization of production that places profits before environmental protection and workers' health."

The American Health Foundation provided a rather glaring example of this perspective when it recommended that employers en-



"Health care marketing has replaced health care planning in hospitals run by administrators who speak the language of consumer demographics and winning product lines. Uninsured patients, however, are not a 'winning product line;' they have become unprofitable and unwanted."

courage the placement of older workers in jobs that involve exposure to carcinogens because they are more likely to die of old age before cancer strikes.

More generally, cancer research tends to focus on viral, hereditary, and immunological factors in the etiology of the disease. Cancer prevention strategies emphasize the individual's responsibility to lead a healthy lifestyle. Yet there is strong evidence that up to 90 percent of all cancers are environmentally caused, and that perhaps 40 percent are tied to occupational risks.

Still, this technological bias expresses more than an ideological congruence with a social structure based on corporate power. There are also more down-to-earth financial stakes; pharmaceutical and medical supply companies, organized doctors, and hospitals promote new medical technologies and treatments as much for their money-making potential as for any proven clinical efficacy.

As a 1977 Congressional Office of Technology Assessment Report explained, government research subsidies provide much of the backing for development of new technologies and products, but it is private industry that will determine whether the resulting knowledge leads to new medical products.

"Once a product or service is developed," Brown explains in his history of American medicine, "the major medical interest groups determine its market. The commodity's producers extol its advantages and push for acceptance and sales. If the drug, instrument, or procedure increases the technical effectiveness of physicians, it is likely to be ordered by them. If it increases the status or incomes of physicians, it is also likely to be used. If its availability in a hospital is likely to attract physicians or otherwise produce income, hospitals will want to buy it. If third-party payers will foot the bill, it is a sure winner."

Need for national health plan

Modern medicine has, of course, made enormous strides in its ability to treat a range of diseases and conditions. But it is evident at a more fundamental level that the direction and nature of medical care has been shaped, or more precisely, distorted by the profligate class of investors and manufacturers who attempt to transform every human need into a marketable commodity. Social injustice, economic exploitation, the

inequities of wealth and poverty; all find expression in the health status of the population.

Every 1.4 percent increase in unemployment, according to a 1976 Congressional report, correlates to an additional 51,570 deaths, including 1540 suicides, 1740 homicides, 7660 state prison admissions, and 5520 state psychiatric admissions. The poor and racial minorities in general suffer higher rates of alcoholism, mental illness, and homicide than the rest of the population. Non-whites in every age category, in fact, die at rates 40 percent to 100 percent higher than whites.

The crisis in the U.S. health care system has prompted discussion within the medical community of the need for a national health plan to provide comprehensive health services for the entire population. The American College of Physicians has adopted a position in favor of some form of national health insurance, and groups such as Physicians for a National Health Plan have organized to press for basic change in the health-care economy.

This discussion indicates not so much an emerging ideological shift in U.S. health policy toward recognition that health care is a fundamental human right, as it reveals the severity of the crisis ravaging a system that is wasteful, expensive, and increasingly inaccessible.

The acute condition of the health-care system mirrors the deeper crisis of class inequality that defines social relations in the United States. The top 1 percent of the U.S. population controls 34 percent of the nation's total wealth, a share equal to that of the combined wealth of 80 percent of American families. The corporatization of health care and its transformation into a system that exploits human suffering as an economic commodity is the inevitable result of a social system that values private profit over human needs.

The history of humanity's efforts to combat disease and improve health has relevance not only in the annals of clinical medicine. Brown notes that medicine has historically played a rather small role in the reduction of morbidity and mortality rates. Better housing, working conditions, and nutrition, for example, reduced the death rate from tuberculosis and other infectious diseases common in the 19th century before medical cures were

discovered. "Improvements in general living and working conditions as well as sanitation, all brought about by labor struggles and social reform movements," Brown concludes, "are most responsible for improved health status."

The excess and deprivation that pervade the U.S. health-care system are symptoms of a more fundamental disorder in the pathology of society: the supremacy of a corporate power structure that pursues, plunders, and profits from the wealth and resources of the country.

The struggle for a health care system that genuinely serves the interests of the population cannot be separated from the larger historical movement for a social system—controlled by the working-class majority that produces the wealth and resources of the country—that will determine political, economic, and social policies by the criteria of human needs, not private profit. Such a society will consider excess and deprivation, wealth and poverty, insured and uninsured as the archaic vocabulary of an earlier era, and will consider the only "winning product line" the health needs of every human being.

Mark Harris is a former editor of a medical newsletter published in Chicago.

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Polish women organize to defend their interests and fight setbacks

By BRENDA BISHOP

These are times of great promise and great danger for women in Poland. For decades, the second-class status of women—in public life, on the labor market, and at home—was an unchallengeable fact of life, firmly rooted in the hypocritical policies of the ruling Stalinists and in the ideology of the powerful Catholic Church.

Now, the collapse of one-party rule and the nascent democratic process have created political space for women to begin struggling to change their situation.

A newly formed national feminist organization is taking the lead in advocating women's rights and challenging the institutions of male dominance that circumscribe every aspect of women's lives. Women within Solidarnosc are beginning to draw attention to the special problems of working women.

At the same time, however, women are facing a far-reaching assault on their legal rights and living standards that threatens to set them back decades. As the new "roundtable" government of Solidarnosc and the Stalinists rushes to privatize the ailing economy, women are becoming the majority of the new unemployed and have already lost their right to protected long-term parental leave.

Legislation to outlaw abortion is pending in the Polish Senate for the second year in a row. Women are even less represented in government than before, while *Playboy*-style calendars are displayed in most stores and offices.

Never has it been more critical for women to unite to defend their rights. While the potential for such organization exists, there are many obstacles which must first be overcome.

A twisted history

The situation of women in Poland is complex and contradictory. Basic legal rights and social benefits, which in the West were won only after protracted struggle, were provided after the establishment of a planned economy following World War II.

The Polish constitution guarantees the equality of the sexes. Abortion was legalized in 1956 on certain specified grounds, and has evolved essentially to permit abortion on demand for those enrolled in the national health system (not everyone is included).

A system of childcare support was developed which included, for mothers, the right to three months' paid maternity leave and leave to care for sick children (35 days per year per child) and, for either parent, the right to up to three years' parental leave, with an allowance of 40 percent of the former salary paid during the first 18 months.

Pornography was legally banned. New opportunities were made available to women who wished to attend universities and to study or work in traditionally male-dominated fields.

But in reality, little changed for most women. Male dominance was perpetuated in public life through the Stalinist party bureaucracy and in private life through the weight of tradition reinforced by the Catholic Church.

Women entered the work force in record numbers to help rebuild war-devastated Poland and currently constitute 46 percent of the workforce. But they have been kept segregated in the lowest paying jobs—often the most monotonous and unsafe—concentrated in the textile, food, and pottery industries, the clothing trade, and education and health services. Thus, the average woman earns only 65 percent of the average man's wages.

At the same time, women have always been expected to assume full responsibility for children and the home. The policies of the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) encouraged this sexual division of labor. For instance, rather than investing in daycare centers, the government urged moth-



Helena Zapadlinska, retired telephone operator: "Walesa is selling the country. We can't eat factories."

ers to take extended parental leave.

Women who seek abortions must often encounter long waits at the public clinics and hospitals. Most women prefer to see private practitioners although the cost can be quite expensive.

The one established women's organization, the Women's League, has been little more than a project to occupy wives of PUWP leaders, publishing a magazine, *Women's Life*, and providing some individual services to women, such as help in finding part-time work or childcare.

Yet women have not been entirely passive. In 1980-81, they became active in Solidarnosc in numbers equal to men, notwithstanding their noticeable absence from the history-making photos.

In those days, women saw their interests as identical to men's in the fight for political democracy and social justice. But even as Solidarnosc broadened into a mass movement of opposition, its critique of the political and social order never extended to the subordination of women. With the Church hierarchy as its strongest ally, the top leadership maintained its social conservatism.

One step forward, one step back

As in the West, it was the attempt to take away women's right to control their reproductive capability which created the conditions for women to begin openly struggling around their own agenda.

In February 1989, a bill was introduced in the Sejm (the Polish parliament) to protect the rights of the "unborn child." Violators—women and doctors alike—were to be subjected to a three-year prison term.

Women all across the nation were indignant. In a country where safe and reliable birth control is obtainable only by chance, many women are forced to turn to abortion as a last resort. In a population of 19 million women, nearly 700,000 women have abortions each year.

Independent women's action groups sprang up in every major city, often around univer-

sities. They undertook petitioning, parliamentary appeals, and even street actions in defense of the existing law.

After being inundated with letters and phone calls, the Women's League was forced to take a stand against the proposed legislation, while Solidarnosc managed to avoid publicly stating its position. Lech Walesa vacillated, stating at first that people have to stop "killing each other." Later, he suggested that the question is a moral one, better left to individual conscience rather than the state.

The bill died last summer before coming to a vote, but the newly formed action groups did not.

National feminist gatherings

In the meantime, the entire political landscape was changing in Poland. In "roundtable" discussions, Solidarnosc eventually agreed to a compromise with the ruling bureaucrats, leading to new elections.

When the PUWP was soundly trounced and unable to rule (only one of its uncontested candidates even won a plurality), Solidarnosc finally agreed to a power-sharing arrangement under which the PUWP retained control of the army and security forces, as well as the newly established post of president (filled by General Jaruzelski, who had declared martial law in 1981).

For the first time in years, it was possible to organize, demonstrate, and openly publish and distribute information without fear of repression or control. These changes gave impetus to feminist organizing.

As soon as the law on organizations was liberalized, the core of feminists moved to establish an official national organization. They registered with the government as the Polish Feminist Association (PFA).

At the beginning of November 1989, a conference in the western city of Poznan brought together activists from groups in the abortion rights campaign to exchange views on how to continue the women's struggle. On Nov. 12, at the request of the National

Organization for Women (NOW) in the United States, women organized a picket of the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw in solidarity with the 600,000 demonstrating in Washington, D.C., to demand safe, legal, and accessible abortion.

And later that same month, the first national meeting of women in Solidarnosc was convened to lay the groundwork for developing a women's agenda for the organization.

Women workers hit by austerity

Ironically, the very openings that made it possible for women to begin organizing also unleashed other forces which threaten to push women even further backward.

The government's solution to the problems of the inefficient, debt-ridden Polish economy is nothing short of the reintroduction of capitalist economic relations in all sectors. The effect has been to reduce living standards by 40 percent and to bring back unemployment.

Women are proving to be the hardest hit. Some 80 percent of those already dismissed are women, who are concentrated in the "non-essential" office jobs which are being eliminated. With less training and few transferable skills, these women will have great difficulty in finding new work.

Other women have been forced to quit their jobs as the cost of daycare soars to levels exceeding their take-home pay. Many more working mothers will lose their jobs as a result of changes in the law; employers will now be permitted to fire women during their three-year parental leave.

These attacks dovetail with a campaign to limit women to their role as homemakers and mothers. In January, the Sejm quietly eliminated the state subsidy to the Family Development Society (formerly the Family Planning Society), a private association that was the only family-planning body in the country.

Less than one month later, legislation to outlaw abortion—slightly altered from last year's failed bill—was introduced in the Senate. And in April, the Minister of Health issued regulations that would require the approval of three doctors and a psychologist before an abortion can be performed by the state. Although this decree has not yet been voted upon by parliament, it is already being implemented in some areas.

The leader of the center-right Union for Real Politics, Jerzy Korwin-Mikke, has even gone so far as to suggest that the right to vote should be taken away from women. His party also urges that women's access to higher education be limited, on the theory that women are less likely to make use of their degrees!

Women in Solidarnosc

While it is clear that women can only rely on themselves to defeat this array of attacks, there is little chance of building a mass independent women's movement in the near future. Women's advocates must therefore seek to win support for pro-women policies and to mobilize women through existing institutions.

The most important institution in this period is Solidarnosc. Only a strong workers' organization can lead the kind of fight in the workplace and in the political arena that will be necessary to defend women's economic interests. But Solidarnosc cannot be counted on to automatically play this role.

Under Walesa's iron hand, the top leadership currently supports the government's pro-market policies, accepts mass layoffs, and approves the loss of social benefits and the growth of social differentiation as the price that has to be paid to put the Polish economy back on its feet. Top union leaders (including the new head of the Gdansk region and the union's female spokesperson, Barbara Malek) are on record as justifying the mass dismissals of women first.

Nor do women have any decisive influence in Solidarnosc. Activists estimate that women comprise about 20 percent to 50 percent of leadership at the enterprise level, from 10 percent to 25 percent at the regional level, and have only token representation on the National Executive Committee. (No statistics are readily available, itself an indication of the problem.)

A women's commission was recently set up at the highest levels of the union to investigate, educate, and organize in regard to the problems of women workers. Unfortunately, the top leadership has hampered the commission in its work.

At the same time, the efforts of a handful

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Brenda Bishop spent seven weeks in Poland in January and February 1990. She held extensive discussions with feminists and unionists and attended the Conference of Women in Solidarnosc in Gdansk.

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of women activists have made some progress inside Solidarnosc. In January, a week-long seminar addressed exclusively to women's issues was held in Gdansk. A few dozen unionists (most of whom were leaders in their enterprises) and many feminist academics and activists attended.

At the outset, the full range of material and psychological problems facing working women in Poland was outlined. A report prepared by a member of the PFA from Gdansk, who was recently hired by the union's National Education Committee to concentrate primarily on women's issues, provided the background for the discussion.

Top on the list was the fact that all working women, regardless of age, education, or type of work, are saddled with all the housework and childcare after they have put in their eight or more hours on the job. Inequality in the job market resulting from discrimination in education, hiring, and promotion was also identified by some speakers.

In industry, where women constitute 13.2% of the workforce, they are exposed to an array of health and safety hazards: 63% work in a standing position without interruption, 50% are required to lift excessively heavy loads, 48% work with harmful substances, 46% work with high levels of noise, 35% are exposed to excessive dust levels, and 30% to high temperatures.

The search for solutions to these problems proved problematic. As the very first speaker put it, the only real answer lies in reversing the centuries-old tradition—passed from grandmother to mother to each new generation—that a woman's place is in the kitchen while a man's is on the shop floor.

Thus, in the quest for more immediate solutions, many women sought to carve out special protections for women, which would only perpetuate the sexual division of labor and fuel the forces of discrimination.

Some women favored the establishment of a maintenance allowance that would enable mothers to remain home to "educate" their children until the age of 10. Wide support was given for a ban on nightwork for women. A prohibition on women working overtime or working with hazardous substances and a homemaker's allowance were among the other suggestions raised.

More appropriate policy recommendations were ultimately formulated. The conference insisted that flexible working hours and part-time work should be made available to women and that more daycare centers of higher quality (i.e., lower teacher/child ratio and more flexible operating hours) should be opened. It was also stressed that men had an equal responsibility for home and childcare duties and that medical leave to care for sick children should be extended to fathers as well.

The principle of equal pay for work of equal value was endorsed, and the union was urged to take an active role in the job re-evaluations currently underway in many industries and to demand special job-skills training for women. In the health and safety field, it was agreed that pregnant women should have the right to a protected job, while the union should prioritize the fight to eliminate or minimize hazardous working conditions for all workers.

Participants expressed alarm over the potential loss of social benefits (such as parental leave) and the decline in health and safety standards that may result from the much-sought-after foreign capitalist investment.

Many women, however, were prepared to accept on principle that, if workers must be fired for the sake of "improving the economy," less harm is done by dismissing women—on the assumption that women earn less and that their income is supplementary.

But cold, hard economics may transform this belief. Inflation and the wage freeze have already made it next to impossible to feed a family on two incomes. And some women pointed out that women are, in fact, the primary breadwinners in many households.

"Moral control"

Ideologically, the cult of "motherhood" is being nurtured these days, while the sexual objectification of women is becoming more pronounced. Pornography, which is still officially illegal, arrived several years ago with the first market reforms and is now spreading like wildfire—a symbol of Poland's "modernization."

In the year that Miss Poland reigns as Miss World, calendars of nude women in degrading poses are produced by state companies, prominently marketed in state-run



Foreign "experts" from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) who led Solidarnosc Women's Conference.

Brenda Bishop



Warsaw movie theatre: Pornography is on the rise in Poland.

Brenda Bishop

shops, and found hanging on most office walls. The Church, which has done its best to suppress any discussion of sex, even forcing a lone textbook on sexuality out of print, has lost its tongue when it comes to the new porn.

Guilt and shame still inhibit most women from discussing these "private" matters. Despite the much-hailed freedom of the press that now exists, many feminists feel that a new form of self-censorship, an "inner moral control" shaped by Catholic ethics, makes the environment even more hostile to such discussions.

Though it is not yet feasible for feminists to think of producing their own publications, they are using other means at their disposal. In March, for example, activists and academics from across the country addressed the subject "Motherhood: Duty or Free Choice?" at a seminar in Krakow. Similar forums are being planned in other areas.

Building a feminist movement

The success of the independent feminist movement will depend in part on the ability of the young groups to strengthen themselves organizationally. At present, a handful of activists is assuming responsibility for an

overwhelming amount of work. Local groups have been functioning largely independently, taking their own initiatives based on local needs.

While this decentralization may be appropriate to the internal needs of the movement at this early stage, it makes it more difficult to coordinate the struggles on a national level—as well as to win media attention.

The independent feminist movement faces its greatest challenge from the formerly "official" organizations, particularly, the Women's League. Having lost the backing of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which provided it with operating funds, the League is trying to prove that it is still the leading women's organization in order to hang on to its extensive offices and privileges. Thus, it is attempting to play a more activist role.

The League has approached PFA about working together on draft legislation. To date, PFA has refused any collaboration, not wanting to be used to legitimize the League or to risk being discredited by too close an association with the old guard.

But at the same time, feminists cannot simply stand aside and let the League use its established position to set the direction or take all the credit for the women's movement. Nor can they afford to turn their backs on any who are potential allies in the fight to defend women's rights.

PFA's difficulties may be exacerbated by its reluctance to formalize its organizational structures. At present, there is no formal membership procedure, no clear leadership, no regularly convened meetings or formal mechanism for decision making, and no system of dues or other regular sources of funding.

In many ways, the PFA is still functioning the same as before it was legal, dominated by a tight-knit group of highly motivated individuals who constitute a *de-facto* leadership. These organizational weaknesses are likely to be resolved with time, as the need to incorporate more women forces the development of more formal methods of group functioning.

The abortion rights struggle

In the near future, the threat to abortion rights is certain to occupy center stage in the

struggle of Polish women. Opinion is divided on whether the anti-abortion bill has any chance of passage by parliament. In the long run, the position adopted by Solidarnosc and its allies in government will be critical.

At the 2nd National Congress of Solidarnosc, held in Gdansk on April 19-24, a resolution was passed calling for the protection of the "unborn child." Not much fight was put up against the resolution; some women activists in the union even voted for it. Afterwards, feminists organized a picket line of Solidarnosc's office.

The Church is pulling out all stops in its anti-abortion campaign, resorting to appeals from the pulpit and propaganda displays set up in chapels. The prospect of Poland becoming another Ireland is feared by many women. But there are other indications that even loyal Catholics are not prepared to follow the Church on this issue—as shown by the predominance of two-child households.

At the same time, many are becoming annoyed with the Church's ever-bolder intrusions into secular affairs. The introduction of a chaplain in Parliament and religious masses on television are but the most obvious examples. Even among those with moral objections to abortion, many believe the question must be resolved by individual conscience rather than by the political process.

The attack on abortion will be a decisive test for women and for Polish workers as a whole. The stakes are high, as it is not simply a question of restrictions but the loss of a democratic right that is more protected than in the West. The outcome will also be an important indication of whether the new era in Poland will awaken women to the need to organize to defend their interests or whether it will force them into passivity as never before. The answer to that question is linked to the larger political developments.

The disintegration of the old Stalinist order presents historic opportunities for a social transformation aimed at establishing a true political and economic democracy—socialist democracy. But in marked contrast to the mass mobilization of 1980-81, when the majority of working people participated in constructing a new union and workers' councils that were to be the infrastructure of a future self-managed republic, the process is now in the hands of politicians, parliamentarians and "experts."

Rather than seeking to organize working people or to actively involve them in their union or grassroots politics, these political leaders are preaching restraint and disciplined cooperation with their attempts to attract foreign investors.

Many in Poland are alarmed at the all-too-familiar conservative atmosphere in which criticism is discouraged as irresponsible and unpatriotic. Mass resistance by women is only likely to develop if and when the growing discontent of all working people is translated into a political struggle to protect their interests.

In the meantime, projects to defend women's rights and to raise the consciousness of women may achieve some advances while paving the way for the development of a broader women's movement. This is just the beginning of a new round in the long uphill struggle for liberation that women in Poland share with women around the world.



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The women's rights movement, population, and the environment

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

At the last National Organization for Women's national conference, NOW President Molly Yard introduced the argument that over-population is responsible for the destruction of the earth's environment. She sought to link feminists with the environmental movement, claiming that the moral arguments in favor of birth control and abortion rights dovetailed with the imperative of stemming the world's population growth.

Efforts to link the women's movement to the environmental movement are laudable. But population-control policies are *not* the solution for the problem of the destruction of the environment. Nor are they compatible with a campaign to protect and extend reproductive rights.

Since the advent of the second wave of feminism in the United States, which gathered momentum at the end of the 1960s, the struggle for the right to birth control and abortion has been firmly grounded in the democratic struggle for women to gain control of their own bodies.

Previous struggles for legalization of birth control methods and abortion had not been firmly connected with women's rights. Some advocates (including Margaret Sanger, the great birth-control pioneer) linked their advocacy of birth control to the need to limit population or as a solution to poverty among the working classes.

The feminist movement's adoption of the struggle for abortion and birth control as part and parcel of women's struggle for full human rights was in sharp contrast to the population-control advocates, who supported abortion and birth control only as an adjunct to their "higher" goal of limiting world population.

The fact that the feminist movement and the population-control advocates were on different sides of the fundamental issues was made clear when the feminist movement linked up with oppressed nationalities who were demanding an end to sterilization abuse suffered particularly by Puerto Rican, Native American, and African-American women.

For healthy children too!

The support of the feminist movement for pre-natal care and childcare, and against high infant mortality, also underscores the difference between those who support abortion and birth control as part of women's rights as a whole and those whose outlook is shaped by the view that the world is over-populated.

The women's movement is just as much in favor of women's rights to give birth to healthy, well-cared-for children as we are for women's rights not to give birth.

The danger, of course, in separating these issues from a women's right to choose for themselves is that women become instruments of either pro-natalist or anti-natalist state policy. They are forced to bear children against their will (as in Romania and many other countries in recent years) or to limit

births against their will (as in China and India).

The other danger is that population-control measures are used against poor and Third World peoples whose lack of wealth is confused with overpopulation. The enthusiasm in advanced industrial countries for population-control measures in Third World countries has been correctly branded as racist by the peoples of those countries.

What's the cause of pollution?

In the underdeveloped world, according to a recent United Nations report, 14 million children under the age of 5 die each year from diseases associated with environmental pollution. The environmental crisis has placed the very future of the human race, not to mention that of all other species, in question.

But in order to save the environment, we have to know how and why it is being destroyed. By focusing on population control, Molly Yard and others in the mainstream

'Molly Yard argued that global warming, air and water pollution, etc., were a product of over-population. But this is not true.'

environmental movement are placing the blame for the disaster at the wrong door.

We live in a society where chemicals, oil, and nuclear waste are routinely dumped in waterways, soil, and air. Molly Yard argued that global warming, air and water pollution, and the destruction of the oxygen-producing rain forests were a product of over-population. But this is not true. The United States, with a relatively low birthrate, accounts for barely one-twentieth of the world's population. Yet this country uses 50 percent of the earth's energy and produces a major part of its pollution.

Almost three-fourths of airborne toxics in this country are produced by big industrial enterprises. Factory farms are responsible for most of the 375,000 tons of pesticides that wash into our streams annually. The large timber corporations are engaged in a mad rush to reap the last of the old-growth forests.

The owners of the corporations responsible for this wanton destruction lobby the representatives they themselves put in government in order to water down any attempt at environmental legislation. Why? Because their profits suffer if they are forced to clean up their mess.

The cause of pollution is not that women have too many babies. The cause is our social system—capitalism—which uses technology for the purpose of amassing private profit *no matter what the effect.*

(It should be pointed out that the bureau-

cracies who usurped power in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have aped the capitalists of the West and even surpassed them in their wanton disregard for the environment and human health.)

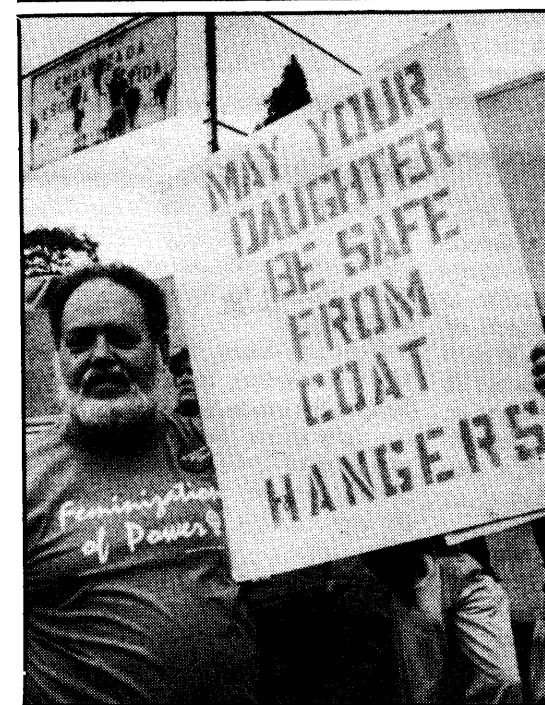
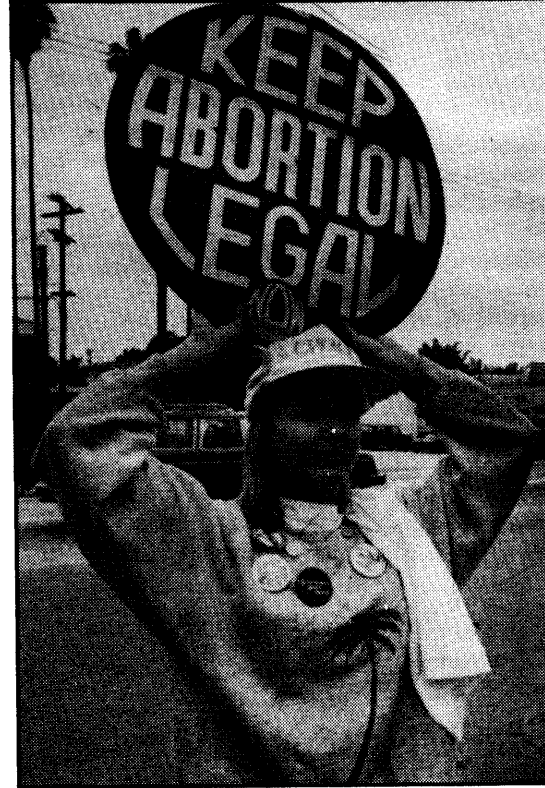
Control by working people

But there is no reason to believe that tech-

nology cannot be brought under the control of the majority of the people of the world—working people—whose interests require safeguarding the environment. Technology can be used to clean and protect the environment, while ensuring a higher standard of living for all.

History has shown that birth rates tend to fall as educational, social, and employment opportunities for women (as well as for men) increase. But the underdeveloped and neocolonial nations will not achieve the living standards of the United States and Western Europe without a revolution to replace the system that keeps them under the domination of the advanced capitalist countries.

Kathleen O'Nan/Socialist Action



THE CENTRAL LAB
OF TH
GREATER SAN FRAN

June 1, 1

Lane Kirkland, President
AFL-CIO
815 16th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Brother Kirkland:

We are in receipt of a copy of Brother Irvin Fletcher, President of the AFL-CIO Executive Council's review of reproductive choice.

While we appreciate the process submitted to the convention, we believe you and our local labor councils have support of protecting the right of choices free from any governmental interference.

We are confident an objective AFL-CIO would clearly reveal that the forefront of Civil Rights battles is in favor of reproductive rights. We reflect the views of a wide cross-section of members, but working people in general.

We respectfully request you to the Committee on Reproductive Issues prior to the issue by the Executive Council.

Owen A. Marron
Owen A. Marron, Exec. Secty.
Alameda Labor Council

Steven A. Roberti
Steven A. Roberti, Exec. Secty.
Contra Costa Labor Council

Preston T. Epperson
Preston T. Epperson, President
Napa-Solano Labor Council

Pro-choice union officers are actively lobbying the AFL-CIO as this letter (above) from California labor councils shows. Citing the support of the union movement for civil liberties and support for women's reproductive rights, these Bay Area labor council leaders also Bay Area working people, including unionists, are pro-choice. This has been reflected in the massive turn-out for two local pro-choice demonstrations in San Francisco—30,000 on Oct. 15, 1989—both of which were local building actions in support of the national demonstration in Washington, D.C. on April 9, and Nov. 12, that year.

...Mass action needed

(continued from page 1)

refusal to speak out for or aid the pro-choice cause in any way, and her poor record on appointing women to city posts.

But more important than the quality of the candidates themselves is the nature of the political parties whose banners they carry. The Democratic and Republican parties are enemies of women's rights, and no amount of lip-service to the contrary can change this.

These two parties are the political representatives of the ruling rich in this country—the corporate rulers who profit from women's second-class status in this society.

No matter which party controls Congress, women have been denied even legal equality (the ERA)—not to mention guaranteed

rights over our own bodies, childcare, housing, and freedom from every kind of institutionalized sexism. Our only hope of redressing these grievances is organizing action for our majority demands *independent* of the Democrats and Republicans.

The women's rights movement must focus on mobilizing pro-choice sentiment into a mass movement through national and local protest actions; speak-outs; and outreach to unions, youth, and oppressed minorities.

Recover lost ground

By *not* mobilizing a national demonstration in 1990, the movement has, in fact, lost some ground. Local NOW chapters that were a hotbed of activity just eight months

ago, with thousands of newly activated members, are experiencing a decline in activity.

The option of switching gears from militant, independent mass action to politicking for the Democrats is very unappetizing for many activists, who are fully aware of the dismal record of the capitalist political parties on women's rights.

The only victories the women's movement has ever won, historically speaking, were through independent mass action. Those victories include ending child labor, the vote, the eight-hour day, and unionization.

The best current example of how change can come about is the recent upheaval in Romania that brought down the Stalinist government of Nicolae Ceausescu. The Romanian anti-abortion laws, perhaps the worst in the world, fell because of these

mass mobilizations for democratic rights. What a rich lesson for us in the United States!

The fact that we already have won our rights to freedom of speech and assembly only makes it more possible to use these rights to mobilize our movement. What a deadly mistake it would be to retreat from the task of organizing independent actions in order to throw support to Democratic Party politicians who, once they are safely in office, will join with the enemies of women's rights and stab us in the back.

This is exactly what happened to the Equal Rights Amendment. The movement stopped the demonstrations and agreed to support those candidates for state legislatures who promised to vote for ratification. When they got in office—with the help, money, and precinct-walking of the women's movement—they turned around and voted against

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Wherever efforts at population control have been introduced—whether by means of "material incentives" or outright sterilization—they have been an infringement upon women's civil liberties and their rights to have control over their own bodies. Such government population-control policies portray women as criminals for having "too many children." In reality, they are the victims of an antiquated social system that is unwilling and unable to spread the bounties of the earth to the entire population.

NOW members cannot let themselves be fooled by the population-control advocates. The feminist movement must stay firmly centered on the struggle for a woman's right to choose.

Canadi against m

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

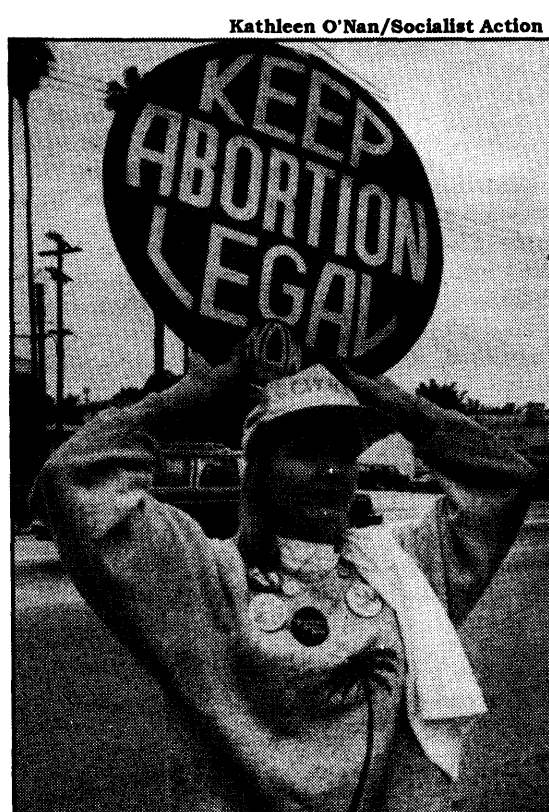
Women across English Canada and Quebec took to the streets as soon as the House Commons announced its intention to begin debate on the new abortion law proposed by Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Considering the short notice, the turnout for the emergency protests on May 25, was significant. In addition to demonstrations in Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Kingston, Montreal, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Saint John, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg, actions were held in such small towns as Antigonish, Colburg, Port Elgin, and Port Perry.

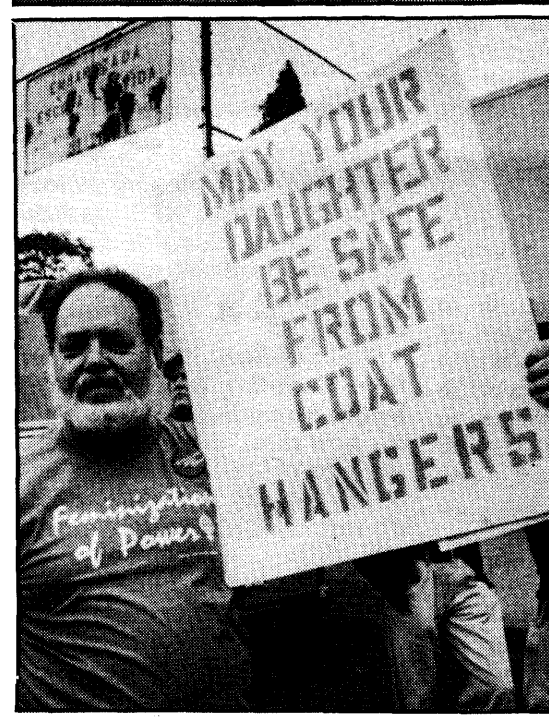
At its convention in May, the Canadian Labour Congress overwhelmingly went on record in support of abortion rights. Over two of the approximately 2000 delegates voted against this pro-choice resolution.

This support was visibly demonstrated as labor speakers at many of the May 25 rallies demanded that the proposed new law be defeated. These speakers compared the current struggle of women for reproductive rights to the labor struggles of the '30s.

During the week's debate preceding the House vote, all amendments to the proposed law were rejected. On May 29, women packed the House galleries to show their opposition to the pending legislation. T



Kathleen O'Nan/Socialist Action



**THE CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS
OF THE
GREATER SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

June 1, 1990

Lane Kirkland, President
AFL-CIO
815 16th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Brother Kirkland:

We are in receipt of a copy of your April 26, 1990 letter to Brother Irvin Fletcher, President of the Oregon AFL-CIO, regarding the AFL-CIO Executive Council's review of resolutions relating to reproductive choice.

While we appreciate the process for review of the resolutions submitted to the convention, we believe it appropriate to inform you our local labor councils have already taken positions in support of protecting the right of women to make reproductive choices free from any governmental interference.

We are confident an objective review of the history of the AFL-CIO would clearly reveal that the Federation has always been in the forefront of Civil Rights battles. We strongly believe a position in favor of reproductive rights by the AFL-CIO will reflect the views of a wide cross section of not only union members, but working people in general, in our area.

We respectfully request you to present our position to the Committee on Reproductive Issues prior to the consideration of the issue by the Executive Council.

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Pro-choice union officers are actively lobbying the AFL-CIO as this letter (above) from the heads of six Northern California labor councils shows. Citing the support of the union movement for civil rights as the precedent for their support for women's reproductive rights, these Bay Area labor council leaders also cite the fact that the majority of Bay Area working people, including unionists, are pro-choice. This has been reflected not only in polls but also in the massive turn-out for two local pro-choice demonstrations in San Francisco—30,000 on April 2, 1989, and 60,000 on Oct. 15, 1989—both of which were local building actions in support of the national mobilizations in Washington, D.C. on April 9, and Nov. 12, that year.

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The fact that we already have won our rights to freedom of speech and assembly only makes it more possible to use these rights to mobilize our movement. What a deadly mistake it would be to retreat from the task of organizing independent actions in order to throw support to Democratic Party politicians who, once they are safely in office, will join with the enemies of women's rights and stab us in the back.

This is exactly what happened to the Equal Rights Amendment. The movement stopped the demonstrations and agreed to support those candidates for state legislatures who promised to vote for ratification. When they got in office—with the help, money, and precinct-walking of the women's movement—they turned around and voted against

women. The NOW leadership should not repeat the failed strategy of the ERA campaign.

The moral authority of NOW is tremendous because of its tireless advocacy of women's fundamental rights and because of its leadership in calling the giant mobilizations of 1989. What we need right now is another mass national mobilization for women's equality and women's lives.

Through the previous mobilizations NOW was able to educate an entire generation about the importance of legal, safe, accessible abortion. This is a life and death issue—if abortion is made illegal or inaccessible, women will die. This knowledge, and a willingness of hundreds of thousands to act on it, makes it logical and imperative for NOW to use its well-earned authority to mobilize again.

Canadian Auto Workers Union underwent half the cost of a bus from Toronto.

Women forcibly ejected

When women expressed their outrage the House passed the bill by nine votes, security guards forcibly ejected them from galleries. Several women were injured, including one who required hospitalization.

Before leaving Parliament Hill, pro-choice supporters rallied outside and pledged to continue the fight for safe, legal abortion. News broadcasts reported the "bill passed Parliament amid an uproar with women's growling to fight back."

Several supposedly pro-choice Liberal members of Parliament were conveniently absent the day of the vote.

The bill is now before the Canadian Senate which can either pass or reject it and send it back to the House for further consideration. Pro-choice supporters are demanding that the Tories drop the bill, allowing it to die in the Senate. (The Tories took this course a year ago after child-care legislation passed the House.)

If, as is likely, the Tories continue to press for passage of the new abortion law, pro-choice supporters will demand that the Senate defeat this legislation. The Canadian Abortion Rights Action League has called

Canadian women march against new anti-choice law

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

Women across English Canada and Quebec took to the streets as soon as the House of Commons announced its intention to begin debate on the new abortion law proposed by Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Considering the short notice, the turn-out for the emergency protests on May 25, was significant. In addition to demonstrations in Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Kingston, Montreal, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Saint John's, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg, actions were held in such small towns as Antigonish, Colburg, Port Elgin, and Port Perry.

At its convention in May, the Canadian Labour Congress overwhelmingly went on record in support of abortion rights. Only two of the approximately 2000 delegates voted against this pro-choice resolution.

This support was visibly demonstrated as labor speakers at many of the May 25 rallies demanded that the proposed new law be defeated. These speakers compared the current struggle of women for reproductive rights to the labor struggles of the '30s.

During the week's debate preceding the House vote, all amendments to the proposed law were rejected. On May 29, women packed the House galleries to show their opposition to the pending legislation. The

upon the Senate to hold public hearings.

Cherie MacDonald, a spokesperson for the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC), pointed out that the stated purpose of the Senate is to "provide sober second thought" so that harmful legislation isn't rushed onto the books. She added that this bill should certainly require such "sober second thought."

OR emboldened

These legal attacks on abortion rights have emboldened Operation Rescue to step up their physical assaults on abortion clinics.

When pro-choice supporters learned that Operation Rescue planned a major attack against the Toronto Scott clinic on Saturday, June 16, they showed up in sufficient numbers to keep the Operation Rescue thugs on the opposite side of the street. Realizing they were too badly outnumbered to carry out their disruptive plans, the Operation Rescue goons said the rosary and left.

Several clinics have been vandalized this year. In Toronto, someone tampered with the clinic's phone service. One day, patients calling the clinic received a recorded message saying no one was home. The next day, patients' calls were answered, "Acme Coat Hanger Company." The third day, patients calling the clinic number reached the Toronto Right to Life office. It took police

The *Toronto Globe & Mail*, a major big business daily, ran a series of articles detailing the disastrous effect of the new law and quoting physicians opposed to these new restrictions. These articles stated, "This law is just asking people to set up doctors." Anti-choice groups are publicly urging that doctors who perform abortions be sued.

Many doctors have given in to the pressure and stopped performing abortions. Others now require a second medical opinion to protect themselves against potential legal action. Many doctors who continue to perform abortions say they are now very careful about who they will accept as patients. Dr. Morgenthaler has started requiring patients at his Toronto clinic to sign a paper to protect himself against potential lawsuits.

MacDonald said the limitation of access since the vote in the House gives a taste of what the situation will be like for Canadian and Quebecois women if the new law is allowed to take effect. She explained how the situation for women will be much the same as under the old abortion law which was ruled unconstitutional by the Canadian Supreme Court.

Very few hospitals will perform abortions. Even though not required by the new law, in practice abortions will only be performed when approved by a committee of doctors. Although clinics are permitted under the new law, very few are being set up, and entire provinces have outlawed them. Like hospitals, clinics will only be permitted to perform medically necessary abortions.

Restrictions' deadly result

Increased restrictions on access to abortion have already had a deadly result. The day before the House vote, a young woman from Kitchener was admitted to the hospital suffering complications from a botched, illegal abortion. Soon after, Yvonne Jurawicz, a West Toronto resident, died of a self-induced abortion. Her boyfriend explained that she had been afraid to face the blockades and harassment at the clinics.

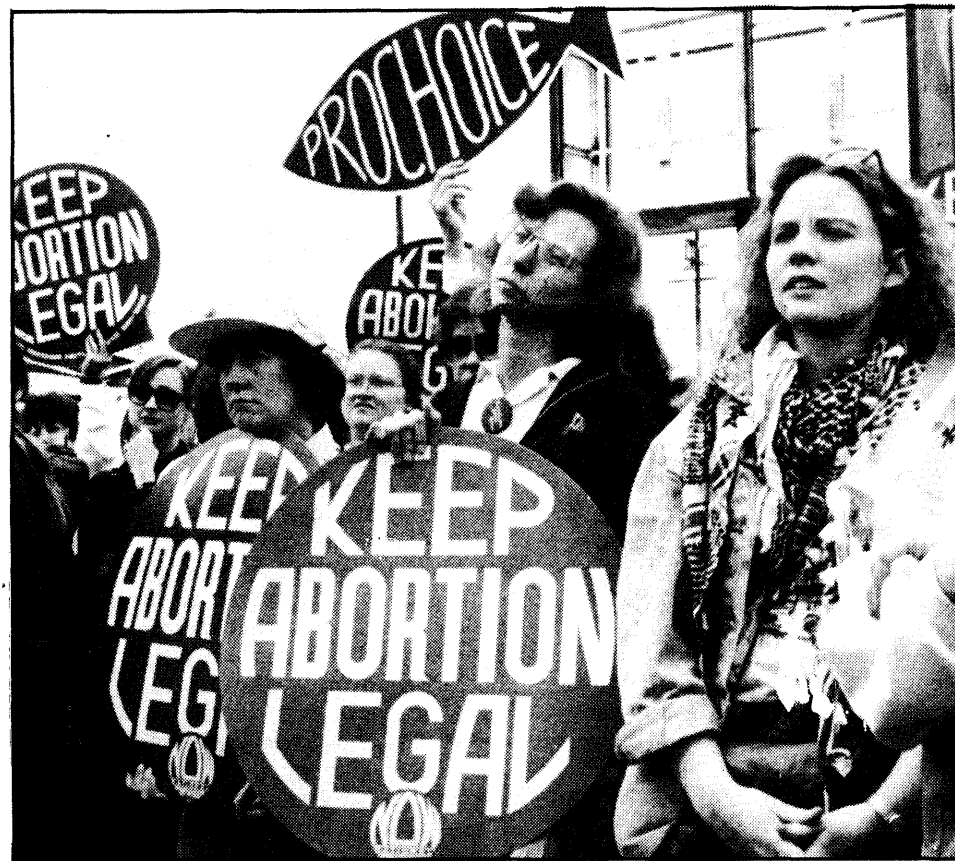
On June 15, pro-choice supporters held a vigil outside Tory headquarters in Toronto. Placing flowers on the office steps, they said the responsibility for Jurawicz's death rested with those who voted for the new law. They then marched to Toronto's Old City Hall.

At a press conference, abortion providers pointed out that similar deaths from botched abortions hadn't been seen since the 1960s. They explained that two cases in one week suggested the devastating results of the message women were receiving from the government. They added that instead of forcing women into dangerous back-alley abortions, the government should be encouraging the provinces to set up clinics fully funded by the provincial health insurance plans.

Anti-choice groups have used Jurawicz's tragic death as an excuse to further harass clinics and pro-choice activists. These misogynic bigots claim that Jurawicz never would have thought of using a coat hanger if it weren't for the pro-choice groups' use of a coat hanger as a symbol of illegal abortions. MacDonald received a late-night phone call at her home which began, "Isn't it convenient that it's just what the doctor ordered: a classic coat hanger abortion."

Ontario pro-choice groups are planning a conference in July. This will include many women in newly established groups in small towns and rural areas. The Pro-Choice Action Network will hold a national conference in August. A cross country day of action is planned for Saturday, Oct. 13.

MacDonald explained, "Every day more and more women are becoming involved—working women, high school and college students, immigrant women, Black and Native women. Regardless of the outcome of the vote in the Senate, we won't stop until every woman in Quebec and English Canada has access to safe, legal abortion, fully funded by the provincial health-care system."



Kathleen O'Nan/Socialist Action

Canadian Auto Workers Union underwrote half the cost of a bus from Toronto.

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When women expressed their outrage as the House passed the bill by nine votes, security guards forcibly ejected them from the galleries. Several women were injured, including one who required hospitalization.

Before leaving Parliament Hill, pro-choice supporters rallied outside and pledged to continue the fight for safe, legal abortion. News broadcasts reported the "bill passed Parliament amid an uproar with women's groups vowing to fight back."

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If, as is likely, the Tories continue to press for passage of the new abortion law, pro-choice supporters will demand that the Senate defeat this legislation. The Canadian Abortion Rights Action League has called

and phone company investigators some time to stop this harassment.

Even before the new law takes effect, access to abortion services in Canada continues to decline. Nova Scotia has outlawed clinics, declaring that abortions can only be performed in hospitals. On June 4, Dr. Henry Morgenthaler went on trial in Halifax for violating this anti-clinic legislation. The provincial government turned down his offer to sell the clinic to the province at cost.

At the same time clinics were outlawed, the hospital which performs almost all abortions in Nova Scotia has severely limited the number it will perform.

Similar cutbacks have taken place at other hospitals. In Winnipeg, the hospital which used to perform most abortions for Manitoba and neighboring provinces will now only perform the service for province residents. This hospital has also stopped performing second trimester abortions and begun requiring parental consent for minors. The situation in Calgary and several other cities is similar.

Ontario law requires parental consent for those under 16 for any hospital procedure. However, similar restrictions do not apply to clinics. The cutbacks in hospital abortions are particularly serious since there are less than 10 abortion clinics in all of Canada.

FEDERAL LABOR COUNCILS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

June 1, 1990

I enclose a copy of your April 26, 1990 letter to the President of the Oregon AFL-CIO, regarding the Council's review of resolutions relating to

the process for review of the resolutions. We believe it appropriate to inform the Councils have already taken positions in the right of women to make reproductive decisions free of governmental interference.

An objective review of the history of the Equal Rights Amendment shows that the Federation has always been in the front lines of the Rights battles. We strongly believe a review of the reproductive rights by the AFL-CIO will give a wide cross section of not only union members but the general public in our area.

I request you to present our position to the Executive Committee prior to the consideration of the resolutions.

Wayne Warbolt
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Castro at student rally: "The educational levels of our people are greater than those of the United States."

Castro anticipates social explosions in Third World

The following are excerpts from a press conference given by Cuban President Fidel Castro to Cuban and foreign journalists in Havana on April 3, 1990. For reasons of space we have selected one question and answer from the conference. The excerpts are reprinted from the April 22 edition of *Granma*, the newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party.

Stella Calloni [journalist for Argentina's daily *Sur*]: Comandante, there is a sort of wave of pessimism going around with people who say there has been a political earthquake in the world. An earthquake leads to shifts, some end up well and others end up very badly, right? However, are those who are well-off, say the overconfident First World [imperialist countries], are they really as well-off as they think?

Fidel Castro: The situation in the First World, or a group of countries in that so-called First World, looks good in economic terms.

That world is made up of those who plundered us for centuries, those who financed their development with our sweat and blood—I mean that large group of countries which were colonized and plundered and which are located in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. And not only did they plunder us for centuries, they are still plundering us and I think they are plundering us now more than ever.

When I visited the Latin America Memorial in Brazil, I put forth the idea that what they take from us now in one year—in Latin America alone—is more than what they took from us in three centuries....

[T]he net capital leaving Latin America right now is between \$25 billion and \$30 billion, and this doesn't include unequal

terms of trade or capital outflow, which is considerable. My estimate was about \$30 billion net—a conservative estimate—and that what they take every year is equal in value of 3000 tons of gold....

That wealth and opulence is based on the plunder of our countries.

Now with the changes in Europe, these countries of the First World want to turn the former socialist countries into new capitalist countries that will participate in the plunder....

We know what's happening for instance in Poland. The facts are well known. There is almost a war between Walesa and the Polish prime minister; they evidently disagree. At the end of last week there was talk of starting a strike in Gdansk, in the famous shipyards, there is another Solidarity, I think it's called Solidarity 80, which charges Walesa and the government with having implemented austerity policies that are unbearable for the people, whose real income has been cut by half. In other words, a very interesting phenomenon is at work, and historians and political experts will be able to study the construction of capitalism in all those countries.

This is one of the priority tasks for the First World now. Let's see what happens; so far it is going well—as long as our countries accept their continued plunder.

But how long can this situation be maintained? I doubt it will be for very long, and the situation in Latin America shows it. For example, inflation. Inflation in Latin America was 1000 percent overall in 1989, in some countries more and others less. In your country [Argentina] I think it was 3500 percent, wasn't it? More or less, in Brazil it was 1476 [percent], if memory serves, that's the figure I had. In Peru it was on the order

of 3000 and some percent also. This is the situation in Latin America, an uncontrollable phenomenon....

During this visit, in many of the interviews I compared the social situation in Latin America and Cuba, but I especially discussed the social situation in Latin America: infant mortality of 65 per 1000 live births in the first year; 85 [infant deaths] between 0 and 5 years per 1000 live births. In Cuba the rate is 11.1 in the first year and about 13 between 0 and 5 years, lower than in many developed countries and it is becoming one of the first in the world, and we are in the Caribbean and from the Third World.

Social situation: Illiteracy: growing. Poverty—yesterday there was a dispatch—between poor and very poor there are 220 million Latin Americans. And the problem of inflation is getting worse, not better.

Nutrition: Twenty-five percent of the Latin American population is undernourished. **Employment:** Thirty percent of the Latin American population on average is unemployed or underemployed.

I was in the wealthiest city in Latin America, in Sao Paulo, the most developed. I was told it has 20,000 factories—Lula told me when I went to see him; he is an industrial worker. Seventeen million people in the greater Sao Paulo area. When I talked to the mayor of Sao Paulo—she isn't in charge of all 17 million, it's a smaller area, because there are several municipalities in the big city—she told me: "I have 300,000 children without schools." Three hundred thousand without schools! She said it with sorrow. Then she added, "There is an area of 3 million people without a single hospital." An area of 3 million people without a single hospital!

This is the most developed, the wealthiest

city, like New York, it has an area with huge, splendid buildings. But what do you see alongside them. Many millions living in *favelas* [shanty-towns]. Cities have grown up without any kind of order, people come looking for jobs, looking for a solution to their problems, they build anything, and all the hills and heights are filled.

Problems of education and employment, the problems of housing and nutrition, all those problems get worse, not better. In recent years they have grown worse, as a result of the foreign debt crisis. I can see that objectively all these problems are getting worse.

So we can talk about the abundance of this First World you mentioned sitting on a volcano which can erupt. That volcano is in the Third World and nobody has an answer to these problems. Capitalism won't solve these problems.

I told them that in 30 years of socialist revolution, we have solved what Latin America hasn't solved in 200 years. The educational levels of our people are greater than those of the United States; our health indices are similar to those of the United States and in some respects we are ahead of them.

The capital of the United States [Washington, D.C.], the capital of the empire, has an infant mortality rate in the first year of life three times greater than that of Havana. Of course it is a city with a large Black population and the indices may be good for rich whites, but for Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Blacks they are shameful. There is terrible inequality in the health indices of the United States.

The services we have now, the situation of women in our country should be compared to that of Latin America: 58 percent of our technicians are women, and the proportion is growing. When I explained this to the Brazilians, the believers, the Christians, who met with me, to the intellectuals, they were amazed when I gave them the information that 38 percent of our workforce is made up of women; [I told them about] the number of day-care centers we have so that these women could join the work force fully and achieve a degree of equality which is still far removed for women in Latin America....

Those are the realities which I explained to the Latin Americans—not to mention the neglected children. There are more than 30 million neglected children in the streets of Latin America, more than 30 million! These figures are very grim. What future is there in all this? I don't see any. And they continue the plunder and the net export of capital. What is the future for all those countries? All this must explode.

That's why amidst the pessimism, I tell you that the system prevailing in the world has no future; the models of development they exported to countries of the Third World have no future....

These are the facts and so the current feeling of overconfidence won't last very long. This overconfidence will be temporary because the world is far from being a paradise, the world is far from having solved these problems, and what is happening is that they are getting worse all the time.

The volcano is there, in the huge humanity that makes up the so-called developing countries, which is a lie because they are not developing countries, they are underdeveloping countries since the gap between the most advanced and the Third World countries is growing, is widening. That's the reality today.

I don't see what they base their overconfidence on. I think it will be a passing feeling and people will react. The world revolutionary and progressive forces will raise their heads and regain their morale. ■

...Earth First!

(continued from page 16)

stress the need for widespread environmental consciousness and it did provide a lot of alternative ideas for how to remedy the environmental situations.

The problem with Earth Day was that it offered a lot of personal solutions, blamed a lot of people for the problem without addressing the political issues, without addressing the economic issues. They said, "Buy more efficient refrigerators," without questioning the whole issue of large-scale industrial fossil-fuel-burning or nuclear-burning power plants.

S.A.: Could you explain to our readers what Redwood Summer is?

Cherney: Redwood Summer is modeled after the Freedom Summer of 1964 in Mississippi. One of the political realities back in Mississippi in 1964 was that as long as only Mississippi was watching, bigotry was going to continue—and let's face it, it still continues today. But it was very important to shed the national limelight onto the situation which led to the civil rights act of 1964.

In the same way, Americans seem fixated on deforestation in the tropics without realizing that it's happening in their own country. By putting a call to college students to come to Northern California and by modeling it after Mississippi, we have drawn a tremendous amount of enthusiasm from young people who feel that they're missing something.

We certainly are drawing the connection that this is a civil rights issue. Not just civil rights for the earth, but civil rights for people too, since these forests give us our clean water, our clean air, our rainfall, and so forth.

So what people are going to do for Redwood Summer is come to Northern California, check into one of our offices, and then they will be sent to one of our base camps for two days of intensive non-violence training. And then, they can either participate in non-violent civil disobedience or in the dozens and dozens of support jobs that go along with that—like working in the kitchens, videotaping, childcare, etc.

S.A.: We've been told that Judi Bari—who is just upstairs now in this hospital—was singled out specifically for the work

she's done with timber workers.

Cherney: One of the untold stories of this case is that Judi Bari may have been targeted for assassination for her labor work. She's currently the secretary of the IWW [Industrial Workers of the World] Local 1 chapter out of Fort Bragg. She was organizing Georgia-Pacific workers into the radical union—the Wobblies—creating a dual union alongside the IWA, which is the International Woodworkers of America.

This is basically and socially unacceptable to the timber industry. They can't have an Earth Firster organizing saw-mill workers into a union. That is probably the ultimate slap in the face to the corporate timber industry. She is also one of the key organizers of Redwood Summer, even though she advocates non-violent direct action. ■

A first-hand view of Baltics' fight for self-determination

The economic blockade against Lithuania has begun to be eased. In fact it had largely boomeranged against Gorbachev. Both the breakdown of the centralization of the economy and the decline in the authority of the regime made it difficult to enforce effectively.

Lithuanian factory managers were able to travel to the other republics, including the Russian Federation, and make deals one-by-one with enterprise managers and black-marketeers, and then bring in the necessary goods over the roads.

The editor of the Lithuanian daily *Respublika* described to me how he traveled to Russia and traded on a basis of one kilo of meat for five kilos of newsprint. Besides failing to intimidate the Lithuanians, the ineffective blockade was undermining the Soviet regime's authority more and more.

In the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, in early June, I found irritating but not grave shortages. The city was relaxed. In the offices of Sajudis, the national movement, the support from other democratic movements in the Soviet Union was evident, mostly bags of sugar and medical supplies.

A change in outlook

Delegations from Moscow and Leningrad, mostly members of the people's fronts that now dominate the governments of these two cities, were visiting Vilnius. Tamara, a young woman from Leningrad, told me that she and her companions looked to Lithuania as the future for Russia also. She fully supported the Lithuanian declaration of independence.

"Since the Baltic peoples were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union," she said, they have to recover their independence before they can consider participating in any union, "reformed" or not.

This enthusiastic and unconditional support seemed to mark a sea change in the outlook of the Russian democrats, who had tended to be skeptical toward the Baltic national movements in the past. Trivimi Velliste, one of the main Estonian nationalist leaders, explained that the Lithuanian declaration of independence and Gorbachev's economic reprisals have led to a fundamental shift in the attitude of the Russian opposition.

These developments have also galvanized and focused the national democratic movements in the other Baltic countries, according to Aivar Jirgens, editor of *Neatkariba*, the paper of the Latvian independence movement.

Pause for thought

The refusal of the Western powers to support Lithuania has had a major political impact in all the Baltic countries. Addressing the Estonian Congress on May 25, Edgar Savisaar, the Estonian People's Front leader and now premier of the Estonian SSR, began by saying:

"In the past period, the illusion has been dispelled ... that the West did not recognize our incorporation into the Soviet Union and therefore supported our struggle for independence. Lithuania's situation today should give everyone pause for thought. Lithuania has been put in a very tight spot, and the West has not taken one concrete step to support her."

In Estonia and Latvia, where the fronts failed to take a clear position for independence until this fall, hard-line nationalist formations prospered. This did not happen in Lithuania, where Sajudis came out for independence much earlier, in February of last year.

Once the Latvian and Estonian fronts won control of their Supreme Soviets and started moves toward independence, however, the hard-line nationalist organizations began to feel a squeeze.

A myriad of parties—from Christian Democrats to Social Democrats to Greens—arose within the fronts as the political monopoly of the local Communist parties was broken. But the basic differentiation so far has been between radicals and moderates in the fight for national rights. Andres Ehin, an Estonian leader, remarked to me, "We have one party called Social Democrats and another called People's Conservatives, and they have exactly the same program."

I asked Mart Laar, a leader of the Estonian Christian Democrats, if he defined himself as "right wing" because he supported private

enterprise. He pointed out that the Communist Party supported private enterprise as much as any of the "right-wing" parties. "Right wing," for him meant radicalism in opposing the Stalinist state.

A complex scenario

There seems to be little social differentiation in the Baltic movements; nothing like that which has occurred in the Ukrainian national movement with the rise of the Lviv Strike Committee.

But to the extent that the fronts are actually able to run the republics' governments, it is likely to develop very quickly. Savisaar, for example, was economics minister before becoming premier, and his economic program is no different than the now clearly un-

popular one of Gorbachev. In fact, he has said that he favors cutting social services.

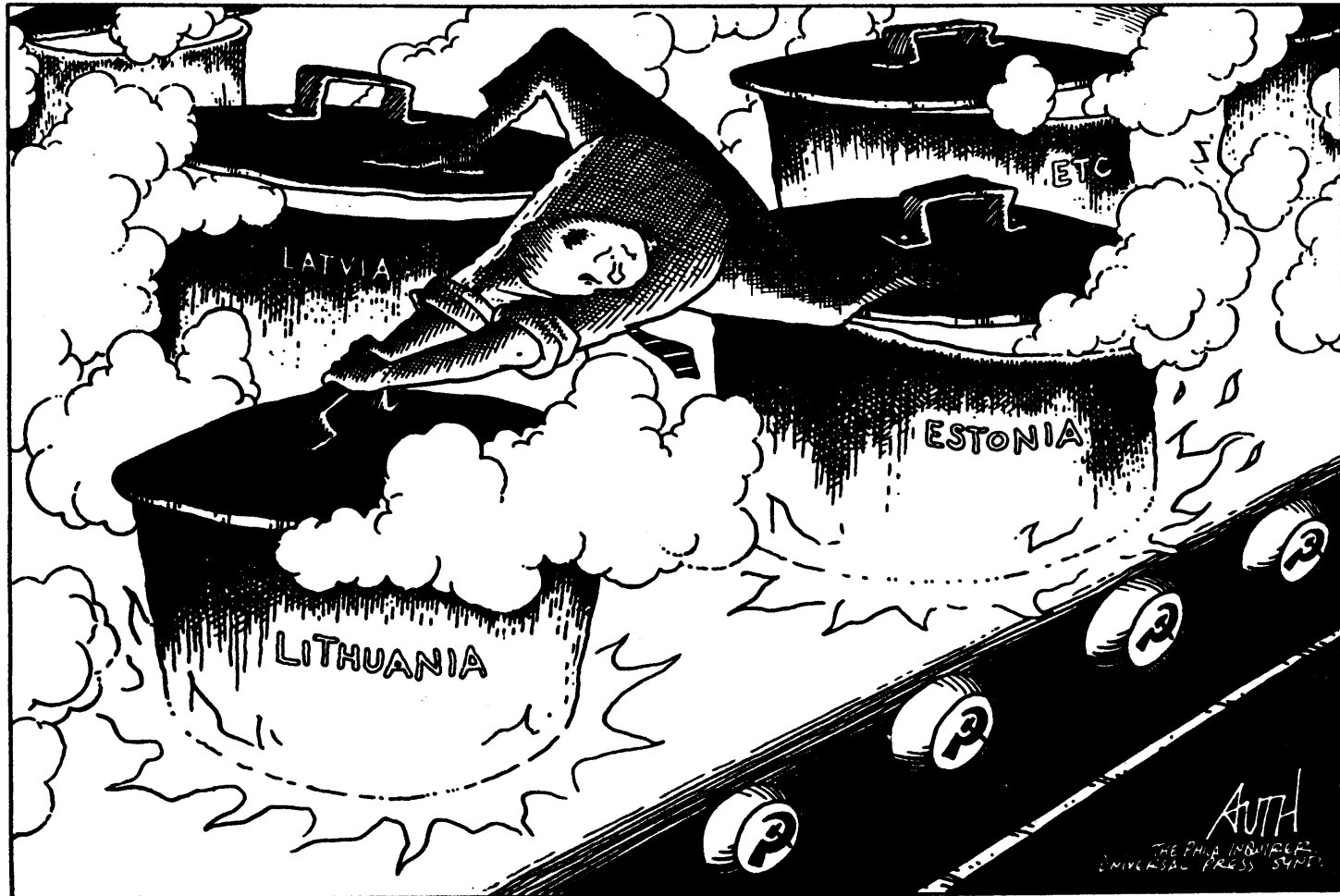
On the other hand, the fronts have encouraged, to various degrees, the organization of workers independent of the old bureaucratic structures, and independent unions are already important in Lithuania and Latvia. The Latvian and Lithuanian unions are also participating in the development of the independent workers' movement in the USSR.

Political and social experience are accumulating very rapidly in all the Baltic republics. Censorship has been gone for some time. Repression has been reduced to only a theoretical threat. The mass press reflects intense and fundamental political debate. There is a general disillusionment with the planned economy, but political and social attitudes

are still quite fluid.

Negative experiences of privatization in other East European countries have begun to have an impact. And there is no reason to think illusions in privatization cannot fade as quickly as the hopes that the Western powers would support the national rights of the Baltic peoples.

At the same time, there is no reason to think that the fight for national rights is won in the Baltic. The likelihood is that it will become more complex, and that both the reformist "realism" of front leaders and the abstract legalism of the hard-line nationalists will create new problems, to say nothing of the fact that they lack an economic program for achieving their declared aim of thorough-going democratization. ■



New socialist group founded in S. Africa

In the new and rapidly changing situation in South Africa, important debates on political orientation are taking place in every political current.

It is in this context that several groups of the socialist left came together in Cape Town on April 14-15 to form a national organization—the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA). Among the groups involved in this initiative are the Cape Action League (based in the Western Cape), Action Youth (based in the Transvaal), and Students of Young Azania and Mayeboya Youth (based in Uppington and the Eastern Transvaal).

WOSA also voted to establish close political ties with the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), whose founding document, the "Azanian Manifesto," strongly resembles its own founding documents.

WOSA's founding resolution states:

"The organization will give support to national liberation organizations insofar as they advance the struggle against oppression and exploitation, but at the same time it will strive to put forward working-class interests in the struggle.

"The organization is committed to the building of a principled united front of liberation organizations which actively promotes and does not compromise working-class interests.

"Our basic principles are the following: leadership by the Black working class, anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, anti-racism,

anti-sexism, one-person/one-vote in a non-racial undivided, unitary country—and we believe in collective leadership, accountability, and democracy...

"Central to our program of action will be issues affecting the Black working class in particular, and the oppressed and exploited people in general—such as housing, land, education, health, wages, and issues affecting women."

And the resolution concludes:

"Internationalism is a fundamental principle of socialism, since capitalism is an international system.... The struggle for socialism is therefore a worldwide struggle in which the organization recognizes that its struggle is linked to the struggles of oppressed and exploited people throughout the world and commits itself to support and defend working-class organizations in all countries."

In an interview with *International Tribune* (June 1990), one of the founding members of WOSA explained his organization's views on the negotiations underway in South Africa:

"We in WOSA don't believe that the majority of people in this country, the Black working class, will be able to free themselves from the yoke of apartheid capitalism through a negotiations strategy.

"It is clear that De Klerk is not prepared to give in to Black majority rule. De Klerk and the regime will attempt to juggle the structures of apartheid with a two-chamber par-

liament, etc. Nor will they concede to even the limited nationalizations that are being talked about. These nationalizations, like the ones in the Scandinavian countries, are very far from socializations and do not involve workers' control.

"What we see is that the sections of the liberation movement which are ready to talk with the regime, principally the ANC, are going to have to make more and more concessions at the negotiating table. And this will only compromise the interests of the working class. Workers will be discouraged from taking militant action as alliances are formed with sections of the bourgeoisie.

"What this means is that the question of an independent workers' organization, a socialist organization, is on the agenda."

WOSA is coming out with a monthly newspaper called *Workers Arise* and has plans for a bimonthly theoretical journal, *Socialist Action Review—A.B.*

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SWP in the 1980s: How wishful thinking can lead a party astray

(Second of a series)

By MALIK MIAH
and BARRY SHEPPARD

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is one of the oldest organizations claiming to be socialist in the United States. Its record in the labor, Black, women's rights, and other social movements for most of its existence has been impeccable. Beginning in the early 1980s, however, the SWP leadership initiated a sharp break with the party's past program and politics.

In last month's issue of *Socialist Action* we discussed how the SWP began to use administrative methods to deal with political differences. We traced the SWP leadership's rupture with its organizational principles since 1981. In this article we'll review the SWP's analysis of the objective political situation in the United States.

"Labor at center stage"

The SWP's analysis of the current situation is summarized in the first part of a draft "World Political Resolution" adopted at its June 1990 convention. Under the headline, "Labor movement remains at center stage of U.S. politics," it states:

"A more than 10-year offensive by the employers has failed to drive the labor movement from the center stage of politics in the United States. The labor movement remains where it has been since the second half of the 1970s when it fought its way back to center stage, from which it had been driven nearly three decades earlier (our emphasis)."

The labor movement's fight to regain center stage occurred, the resolution states, when the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) union won an important nationwide strike in 1977-78, and a movement for union democracy in the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) was built around the Steelworkers Fight Back campaign in the USWA's national elections in 1976.

The entire perspective of the SWP in U.S. politics, particularly in the labor movement is based on this erroneous view that the trade unions are at the center stage of U.S. politics today.

The SWP's 1975 political resolution, "Prospects for Socialism in America," explained that a new stage of political radicalization of the working class was on the agenda: "The effects of the combined social and economic shocks of the last half-decade, coming on top of the changes in attitudes wrought by the movements of social protest and the radicalization of the 1960s and 1970s, have brought us to the threshold of a new period in the transformation of the political consciousness of the American working class." (See page 19, "Prospects for Socialism in America," Pathfinder Press.)

Jack Barnes, SWP National Secretary, in a report on the resolution, stated, "We are at the beginning of the radicalization of the American working class. A corner has been turned in the objective circumstances, and the door has been opened for a new step forward in class consciousness and in the transformation of the political consciousness of American labor." (Ibid, page 82.)

The "turn in the objective circumstances" was the 1974-75 recession, the first worldwide recession since the 1930s. The capitalist class stepped up its attacks on labor that began in 1971 with Nixon's wage-price freeze. The ruling class was driven to do this in order to try to shore up a declining rate of profit in a situation of intensified competition with its imperialist rivals.

The post World War II "agreement" between the employers and the trade union officialdom to keep "labor peace" was now over as far as the capitalists were concerned. The world capitalist crisis was deepening. Direct attacks on the industrial workers, the source of most profit, could be expected to intensify. Attempts to qualitatively weaken the industrial unions were in the offing,

which could even lead to the destruction of major unions.

Barnes, in a 1979 report, further elaborated on what the SWP meant by the working class moving to center stage in U.S. politics. "When we say that American workers are moving to center stage," he told a leadership meeting, "we mean two closely intertwined things. First, the industrial workers are the central target of the rulers' offensive...."

"Second, we mean that the working class is moving to the center in the *resistance* to the offensive in the fightback. We're pointing to the impact of the 1974-75 depression on the consciousness of millions of young workers. We're talking about the skirmishes with the bosses that continually break out. We're talking about new moods, new attitudes." (See page 92, "The Changing Face of U.S. Politics," Pathfinder Press.)

As the industrial workers moved to the center of the resistance to the capitalist offensive, the trade union bureaucracy would divide and shatter, the SWP explained, under the blows of the employers' attacks and the fightback by the workers, and a class-struggle left wing would emerge to lead the labor movement forward.

Based on that perspective, the SWP correctly focused its union activity around three strategic ideas: the fight for union democracy; national and international solidarity; and political action centered on the need for the unions to end their support to the Democrats and Republicans and form an independent Labor Party. All the party's work in the unions combined joining struggles and strikes with raising this strategic perspective to build a fighting union movement.

The quote above from Jack Barnes in 1975 makes it clear that this concept of the industrial workers moving to center stage of U.S. politics was intertwined with another prediction: "We are at the beginning of the radicalization of the American working class."

In 1979, in a report that was adopted by the Fourth International, Jack Barnes extended this prediction to include the entire world, including the imperialist countries: "a political radicalization of the working class—uneven and at different tempos from country to country—is on the agenda." (Ibid., p. 36.)

The basic analysis the SWP made in this period was correct. The world capitalist economy had reached a stage where an employer offensive against the industrial workers and their unions was inevitable and had begun here and in the other advanced capitalist countries. But the expected political radicalization of the working class, and the industrial unions moving to center stage of politics in the advanced countries, has yet to occur. The processes that will lead to this have been more drawn out than we all hoped.

Did the 1977-78 coal strike and the earlier Steelworkers Fightback campaign actually mark the movement of the industrial workers to the center of American politics? At the time, they *were* central to politics in the United States.

This was reflected in the bourgeois news media. This was especially true for the miners' strike because it came into direct conflict with the White House and successfully defeated the attempt by President Carter to force the miners back to work under Taft-Hartley. At the time, it was not unreasonable to conclude that the industrial unions had indeed moved to center stage.

But this turned out not to be the case. The miners successfully defeated the attempt by the coal operators and the federal government to impose major concessions on the UMWA. A key factor in this victory was that the UMWA, in distinction from every other union, had undergone a rank-and-file revolt—Miners for Democracy—that enabled the rank and file to use the measure of union democracy they won to mobilize and exert their power.

This victory turned out to be an exception, however, and not the beginning of a new

stage of union struggle, as union after union accepted concession contracts without a fight.

Likewise, the Steelworkers Fightback campaign for union democracy lost. Most activists in that campaign became demoralized or absorbed back into the union bureaucracy. No significant divisions have arisen in the AFL-CIO unions since then.

In addition, here and internationally in the

tween working people and the rulers—the fight against racism and Jim Crow segregation, opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam, the fight for women's rights, and many other social questions. If anything the AFL-CIO bureaucracy actively opposed these progressive battles.

The SWP correctly referred to this three-decade period as a "detour" (political retreat) for the working class movement. The objective situation had not put a political radicalization of the labor movement on the agenda yet. The focus of the party's activity was in the mass movements outside the labor unions.

The result of 30 years of class collaboration were weak unions. When the employers launched their attacks on organized labor beginning in the 1970s, the trade unions were unprepared. They suffered major setbacks and defeats.

The unions now represent 16 percent of the working class. Increasing sections of basic industry are non-union, including major



Impact Visuals



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

Business Week

advanced capitalist countries, the 1980s did not see the political radicalization of the working class. In fact, it was a decade of political retreat.

Turn to industry

While the projected political radicalization of the working class has yet to materialize, the overall analysis of the 1975 and 1979 political resolutions and reports was correct. It was on that basis that the SWP decided to make a turn to the industrial unions and center its political activity in the labor movement. Within a few years a majority of party members were in industrial unions.

The 1979 political resolution explained the decision to turn to the industrial unions as a life-or-death question to build a revolutionary party in the United States.

For 30 years this was not politically advisable. The pact between the labor bureaucracy and the employing class since World War II allowed "labor peace." The unions did not play an active role in the big battles be-

auto plants, airlines, coal mines, and oil refineries.

But resistance to the employers attacks did take place in the 1980s, and continues. Major concessions have been imposed on workers in steel, meatpacking, airlines, paper, and numerous other industries. But the unions have not been destroyed. The rank-and-file, in fact, are more and more asserting themselves in strike battles.

Bigger confrontations are inevitable. The employers must increase the exploitation of working people to shore up their rate of profit. More workers, after taking two or three rounds of concessions, are now saying, "Enough."

Strikes over the last period have been *defensive battles* by workers who see striking as the only realistic alternative to giving concessions without a fightback. The industrial working class and its unions, under the new situation of the employer offensive, have neither gone back to the quiescence of the 1950s or 60s, nor have they yet politi-

cally radicalized and moved to center stage of U.S. politics.

It is out of these strike battles that class and political consciousness will arise in the labor movement. It is among these fighters that a new leadership will be forged.

But this is not automatic. Reaching class-struggle, and revolutionary, consciousness takes more than fighting back.

The challenge for revolutionary socialists is to recognize this process and help advance a program in these fights that advances the political consciousness of workers and wins the best to class-struggle ideas. But to do this, we have to start with the objective situation as it is and not as wishful thinking would like it to be.

Rout of the working class?

Although the facts clash with its views, the SWP leadership has reinterpreted events over the past decade to reaffirm that the labor movement is at center stage. They now write that the labor movement was being routed by the employers from 1980 to 1985, as it

position sufficiently to be able to buy off a large layer of the working class."

The idea of the rout of the unions by the employers contradicts the argument that the working class already had "fought its way back to center stage."

But the idea of the "rout" not only is contradictory with the rest of the SWP analysis, it is another exaggeration. The setbacks suffered by the unions in the 1980s explained by the new SWP resolution reflect the success of the ruling class offensive and the failure of the industrial workers to move to center stage. But what's most significant about the 1980s, is that a growing layer of workers, through their unions, did fight back. They did wage defensive strike battles. Workers did reach out for solidarity.

Unfortunately for labor we have not yet won a major victory. The rulers continue to dominate the terrain of the class struggle.

The beginning of the end of the rout, the SWP argues, was in 1985 when meat packers at Hormel in Austin, Minn., began a militant strike. The strike, while at one

methods did not begin in the early 1980s.

In the context of a leadership showing itself incapable of leading a fight, a section of the workers began to resist the takeback deals in the 1980s. Unfortunately most fought alone and without sufficient active solidarity from the labor movement as a whole, or others.

Decade of resistance

A quick review of some of the most significant strike battles confirms this point.

In 1981 the relatively high-paid air traffic controllers organized by PATCO (Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization) went on a nationwide strike against the government, its employer, over safety and working conditions as well as wages. In spite of a threat to fire them all, which happened, if they did not buckle to the government, they stayed out.

Broad support was won for the strike from many unions, but only on paper. Most significant, the other airport unions, the pilots, the Machinists and the flight attendants didn't support the strike by not crossing the picket lines. Such support could have won the battle, and the decade of the 1980s would have been very different.

The strike lost because most of the unions did not see the writing on the wall yet. The PATCO strike happened two years after Chrysler workers accepted a concession pact without a fight. But they struck anyhow. They felt they had no choice. A lesson many other workers later drew was the need for la-

Hormel battle, there was a wave of meat-packer strikes, which also lost. Flight attendants at TWA struck and lost. Paperworkers struck and lost. Cannery workers in Watsonville, Calif., and western coal miners did strike and win.

In 1989 a wave of strikes occurred at Eastern Airlines, Pittston, New York hospitals, ATT and the baby Bells, and Boeing. The Pittston strike was won after a hard-fought battle. The miners set an example in organizing the rank and file and their families in militant picket action, and in winning active solidarity from other unions through the setting up of Camp Solidarity and other ways.

What is most striking about this list of strike battles is that from 1981 to 1990 there were militant defensive strikes almost every year—during and after the so-called rout. The strikers of 1989 and 1990 were encouraged by these earlier battles. They all suffered two or three concession pacts before deciding to fight. That's why they are ready to strike even if they may not win. They are ready to see "their" company go bankrupt first.

What hasn't happened yet is a *turning point* victory like what occurred in 1934 that opened the door to mass struggles by working people and the formation of the industrial union movement. That's why the employers continue to press ahead unabated. They still hold center court, not labor.

At the same time lessons are being learned by a layer of workers who are involved in strikes. One lesson is that effective solidarity is the key to winning—that is, stopping the employers from using scabs and shutting down production. Other workers now see the need for real union democracy to organize effective strikes. But few workers, unfortunately, have yet drawn the conclusion that the overall political policy of the officialdom of class collaborationism, both with individual employers and politically through support to the capitalist parties, is a dead end.

Impact on SWP

The result of holding onto the erroneous view that the workers were beginning to radicalize (and not only on the economic front, but politically) and the assertion that the industrial unions are at center stage could only take its toll on the SWP. Everyone makes mistakes. But to cling to mistaken views when the reality clearly shows them to be wrong results in twisting reality to suit your preconceptions. A kind of panic set in among the SWP leadership as a result.

Insisting that the radicalization of the working class would become evident in the immediate period ahead became the leadership's stock in trade. After each new event in the class struggle, "it" was said to be just about around the corner.

Unrealistic norms of membership were insisted upon, such as that every member would sell at a plant gate every week, even though there was not the response that would justify such a projection. Or the new norm that no one will be accepted into membership in the SWP without going through a six-months probationary period during which they must get into industry—which had obvious implications for SWP members who were not in industry. Many members simply quit as a result.

The SWP discovered that there had been a "rout" of the labor movement *after the fact*. The "rout" became a new way to say that times have been tough, but finally now we have turned the corner—"it" may not have been quite here before but now "it" is upon us.

Any questioning of this view was cited as "proof" that the party members involved were getting tired or "giving up on the working class." This reinforced the SWP's shift away from the party's tried and true organizational principles, and led to further substitution of the use of organizational means to deal with political questions.

Such restrictions of party democracy are said to be justified because we are in or about to be in a period of class combat that necessitates total centralism. (Even when we do enter such a period such practices are wrong.) But holding onto a wrong assessment of political reality leads to a frantic need to suppress anyone who raises any hint that perhaps the emperor's new clothes are really no clothes at all.

Part and parcel of this denial of reality has been an abandonment by the SWP of the correct political orientation toward work in the unions and in other arenas of the class struggle that were projected in the party resolutions of 1975-79. Next month's article will take up this question. ■

'What is most striking about this list of strike battles from 1981-1990 (counterclockwise: Paperworkers, PATCO, Greyhound workers, Eastern machinists, and Hormel meat packers) is that there were defensive strikes almost every single year.'

bor to do more than pass resolutions of support.

In 1983 airline unions at Continental were forced on strike. The lack of unity by the unions there and from the labor movement allowed chief executive officer Frank Lorenzo to destroy the unions at Continental. Nevertheless the workers walked the picket line more than a year, some longer. They struck as their Eastern brothers and sisters are doing six years later.

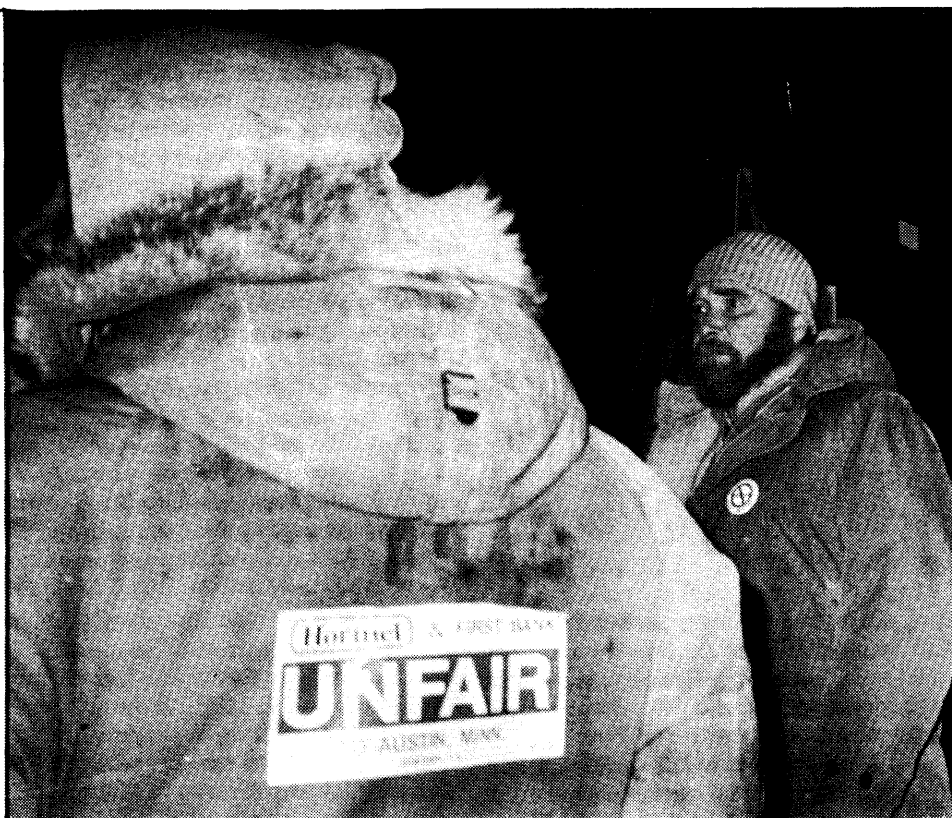
Bus drivers at Greyhound in 1983 also went on national strike. In a hard-fought battle that won a certain measure of labor support, the union finally accepted a major concession contract. But the workers fought, and the union was saved for future battles. That defensive strike prepared union members for the current strike.

Soon after the Greyhound strike, copper miners in southern Arizona struck Phelps-Dodge, then the second largest copper producer (now the largest). The mostly Chicano and Native American workforce stopped production for a few days with militant pickets. But the lack of national solidarity led to the strike's defeat.

AP Parts workers organized by the United Auto Workers (UAW) in Toledo, Ohio, went on strike against a union-buster in 1984. They were unable to win either. But they refused to accept their situation without a fight. They also sought solidarity from other workers.

In 1985 pilots at United Airlines struck against the two-tier wage system set up there. The lack of solidarity from the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and other workers made it impossible to win that battle completely. Out of that fight the pilots decided the best way to "win" was to buy the company under an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). In 1990 the other two unions, the IAM and the flight attendants, agreed and a concessionary buy-out plan has been accepted by the United Airlines Board of Directors.

Other strikes also occurred before Hormel, and since. Most ended in defeat. After the



Carl Finamore/Socialist Action



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

at the same time had already moved to center stage.

"In the wake of the 1981-82 recession," the SWP's new resolution states, "labor's retreat under the blows of the employers' offensive that began at the end of the 1970s turned into an *all-out rout* of the unions. The union officialdom's capitulation to the bosses turned into workers running away from a fight.

"The membership went along with this, and often voted for not only cuts in wages, concessions on job safety, and speedup, but also multi-tiered wage scales and various outsourcing (subcontracting) and temporary-worker schemes that qualitatively deepened divisions in the work force and among union members. Despite these heavy blows dealt to labor and the working class by the employers' offensive, and the resultant further weakening of the unions, the capitalists:

- "1) have not broken workers' resistance; and
- "2) have not improved their competitive

plant, became a national example for labor because of how the rank and file and its leaders fought.

They reached out for support nationwide and internationally. They stood up to the international leadership of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), who ultimately stabbed the strike in the back. The main lessons of the fight included how important it was for labor to stand united against union-busting and the need to move beyond the bankrupt policy of the labor officialdom. The latter's policy leads to defeat. Militant strike action with the aim of stopping production is being seen by more and more workers as essential to winning.

But it is an overstatement to call 1980-85 a rout of the labor movement. The weakness of the unions is a result of 40 years of class collaboration. Year after year since the 1940s the officialdom of the unions have given back union power to the bosses. They have accepted anti-labor laws without a fight. The increasing use of class-collaborationist



Section of Los Angeles mural painted by Mike Alewitz

Kathleen O'Nan/Socialist Action

Mural dedicated to undocumented workers, world without borders

On May 15, 1990, the California Library for Social Studies and Research sponsored a ceremony dedicating a two-story mural to the undocumented workers of Los Angeles. The mural artist, Mike Alewitz, is a coordinator for ART/WORK, a new organization of artists and activists in solidarity with the struggles of working people. ART/WORK can be reached at 31 Central Ave., Newark N.J. 07102, (201) 733-4959. The following is the dedication speech given by Mike Alewitz.

The mural is special not only because of all the people who contributed to its production, but primarily because of what it represents. I proposed this mural to Spark [Muckhart] based on a trip that I made to Los Angeles, where I saw some of the changes that have taken place in the city over the past decade.

And I think what we see in this city is a reflection of what is happening internationally—the massive uprooting of people who have been driven from their homeland, either from political or economical repression, and who come to this country, and come to Los Angeles in particular, seeking a better life

for themselves.

Unfortunately, the fact of the matter is that this better life will not be realized in this country. Once they get here, they will be met with new forms of repression, new forms of racism, and new forms of exploitation.

I had very capable and wonderful assistants whom I would like to introduce at this time—Debbie Velasquez, Mauricio Cabrero, Juan García, Spark Muckhart, Etha Malik, and Dudley Watson. Some people are not here, but those who are I would like to stand now. I'd like to give them a round of applause.

The people who painted this mural reflect what this city is. We are of Anglo, Iranian, African-American, Mexican, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan background. And while there are other nationalities in the city now, the fact is that the artists who painted this mural reflect the great diversity that Los Angeles has become.

There are really two Los Angeleses. One is the Los Angeles that you can see when you watch the show "L.A. Law." This is the Los Angeles of high-rolling lawyers who live in beachfront homes, who drive fancy

cars. Even the secretary is wealthy. The Chicanos and Blacks are lawyers and wear \$800 suits. The show reflects a culture and a myth. It's a lie. It's a lie that's fed to us like all the other shows that are on TV.

But there is a different Los Angeles. That's the Los Angeles that the undocumented workers find when they come here. That's the Los Angeles that I see when I drive down here to paint in the morning. Hundreds of workers, hundreds of men standing on street corners hoping that someone will come by and offer them day labor.

It's what I see driving by when I see women who have been driven into prostitution after coming to this country. You see a lot from the top of a scaffold when you're working in a neighborhood like this. You see what the drug war is really all about. It's really not a war on drugs; it's really a war on the Black community.

From the top of that scaffold, I watched young people forced to kneel in the streets by Los Angeles policemen with guns to the back of their heads after being pulled over in an attempt to terrorize the community here. It's a war that's really designed to make the victims of drugs into criminals.

This government is waging a war on working people. And some of the people who are on the front lines of the war—the Eastern strikers and the Greyhound strikers—are here today. The war that's being waged by the government is on behalf of the employers against working people. And in attempts to divide working people from each other in order to weaken us, it divides us by male and female, by Black, White, Hispanic, or Korean.

It tries to divide skilled craft workers from unskilled laborers. It tries to divide gays from straights. It tries to divide in any way that it can. But one of the most fundamental ways that it tries to divide workers from each other is between those who have jobs and those who are unemployed.

And so they create a stigma attached to some people. A lot of them they call illegal aliens, and they try to make them appear as something less than human—that they shouldn't have the same rights as other workers, that they shouldn't get the same pay as other workers, that they shouldn't be treated with the same respect as other workers. And I think what we all have to do is to make sure that we don't fall into that trap.

When people are killed crossing a border into this country or die locked in a van somewhere, it isn't happening to *those people*, it's happening to *us*. When people are paid slave wages, it isn't happening to *them*, it's happening to *us*.

When people are called by numbers like they are in garment shops in New York City, it isn't happening to *them*, it's happening to *us*. Because we are all part of one class, whatever we may think of ourselves, you may call yourself middle-class, or call yourselves something else but the fact of the matter is we are all working people. In one way or another, we sell our labor.

There are those who hate and fear immigrant labor. They hate and fear the millions of people who are driven into this country. But I believe—and I think most of you believe—that the millions of people who come to this country from around the world will have a profound political and culturally liberating effect on political life in this country.

The U.S. government does not speak for them and it doesn't speak for us. So we're here today to say, "Welcome brothers and sisters, we want you to join the struggle here. We want you to join us on the picket lines and the demonstrations here, no matter where you may have come from." We can begin by joining the Greyhound and Eastern picket lines.

The people who organized the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] were often referred to as the people with no names. And we want to welcome today those people who come with no names and no papers. We dedicate this mural to you undocumented workers. This is your mural. It is a small expression of the great potential power that labor solidarity has. We say to you—labor solidarity has no borders. ■

By SAMIA A. HALABY

Samia Halaby is a painter and teacher. She was invited to participate in the Third Havana Biennial as a Palestinian artist. She exhibited abstract paintings which depict centers of energy and motion based on and dedicated to the Intifada.

HAVANA—The Third Havana Biennial, which opened last November and continued for several months, provided a comprehensive view of our time by artists from oppressed nations (Third World).

The core of the Biennial, the "Tres Mundos" (Three Worlds) show, was housed in the city's Museum of Fine Art. The Biennial also included 23 satellite exhibitions that established a fuller definition of the visual arts by including fiber art, textiles, a fashion show, photographs, masks, dolls, toys, prints, calligraphy, and sculpture.

Artists from Africa, Asia, and South America—including the Caribbean—were invited. The 491 participating artists were given equal wall space and were encouraged to express their artistic wishes thereon.

Artists were invited who are frozen out of the bourgeois art circuit and the media which expands it massively.

This Biennial stressed equality. There were no prizes, no "superstars," and no exhibi-

An artist reports on 3rd Havana Biennial

tions that imputed the artist was not "fully qualified." The audience was given the dignity to judge for itself.

Religious and historical imagery

The Havana Biennial contained most of the artistic currents in pictures today; thus symbolism was prevalent. Its messages varied from liberalism to popular pride and political resistance. From oppressed capitalist countries, there was the symbolism of liberal-seeming and self-flagellation of those who feel guilty.

The liberal political viewpoint was best exemplified by the work of Juraci Dorea, of Brazil. Dorea goes to poor Brazilian villages and creates sculptures and paintings which use locally available materials such as leather, wood, and tar. The work is then photographed and documented and presented in museums as a report on the laudable activities of social art-workers.

Testimony of the poor villagers are then collected to prove how much they appreci-

ated these charitable "contributions." Dorea seems totally oblivious to the fact that these villagers would much rather have modern homes and modern jobs than modern art.

Most noteworthy of works of popular pride was that of Manuel Mendive Hoyos from Cuba. Its Santería religious themes have become secularized in the absence of a clergy. Mendive's work is a happening which combines a rich visual environment with music, dance, and bodypainting. His work elicits popular support in Cuba. At the Biennial his events gained such popularity that people waited for hours outside the booth.

Themes of resistance

In the "Tres Mundos" exhibition, another current of symbolism appeared that reflected the tradition of political resistance. In those which had a definite political view, visual metaphors were sharpened by verbal additions directly within the painting.

Excellent examples of effective political

commentary were the narrative pictures of Bayangu Mayala from Zaire, whose paintings exposed the cruelties of colonialism and imperialism. One is titled, for instance, "Heritage perdu: Le SIDA tue." (Lost heritage: AIDS kills).

There was also work that sought to criticize the ruling class and describe the pomposity and selfishness of those who serve them. One example was a painting by Ramon Moya Hernandez from Guantanamo, Cuba.

Hernandez's painting, titled "Fascism dressed in Obatala, or the portrait of Margaret Thatcher," was of a mostly naked woman draped in white. She was painted frontally like a medieval icon of a saint. Blood is smeared on her lips and drips on her body, and she holds symbols of fascism and oppression. The painting exposes the role contemporary Christianity plays as a veil for oppressors.

The Havana Biennial was surrounded with workshops and debates open to anyone to participate. It had the fertile quality of international exchange. One did not get a feeling of antiseptic distance from art and the making of it, as in exhibitions in capitalist countries.

The doors were wide open to the general population free of charge. At the opening, it seemed that all Havana was there. The warm air carried music and laughter. ■

Why trade unions are in decline

By MALIK MIAH

The trade unions today are the weakest they've been since the formation of major industrial unions in the 1930s. Only 16 percent of U.S. workers are members of unions—even fewer are in industrial unions. There is plenty of formal democracy but little real democracy in the unions. International unions in the main are controlled top down by entrenched bureaucracies.

The decline of unions as effective defensive organizations is best seen in the government's attack on the Teamsters. In June 1988, the Justice Department filed suit to oust top union officials found violating racketeer laws.

Nine months later, a deal was struck between the officials and the government. The officials agreed to hold direct elections for officers and to create a court-appointed panel to "fight organized crime" in the union.

The incredible acceptance of this degree of direct government interference in the running of a union is a blow to all of labor, especially those fighting for genuine rank-and-file democracy. It tightens an already established view in sections of the labor movement that the government is an ally of the rank and file and has a right to tell a union, a membership organization, how it picks its leaders.

It further legitimizes government attempts to take over unions and subordinate them to the dictates of capitalist courts and government laws. Such government intervention will make it easier for all employers to launch attacks on unions.

While all this is taking place, the fat cats running the Teamsters have

signed sweetheart contracts with willing employers. This has led many rank-and-file workers to incorrectly applaud the government's "defense" of union democracy.

Officials reject fight

How can one explain this predicament of the labor movement? Why are top union officials so willing to play by the rules laid down by city, state, and federal governments? Why don't they stand up and lead the union membership in defense of our economic and political rights?

It begins with the simple fact that the labor officialdom supports the system that exploits workers: capitalism. The officialdom rejects a political fight against the capitalist class and its two parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

The labor leaders are mainly concerned about protecting their high-paid jobs and privileges by keeping their main base of support, the better-paid workers, happy.

In the 1920s, before the rise of industrial unions in the 1930s, unions only organized along craft lines—the skilled workers. Unskilled workers were considered unimportant, despite being the overwhelming majority of the working class.

Blacks, women, and most immigrants—as well as farm workers—were simply not organized. The policy of craft unionism allowed the bosses to pit workers against each other. It undermined unity and solidarity.

Today we see this same policy being followed by the labor leaders in the industrial unions who push two-tier contracts, sign big concession pacts, and retreat on defending the most oppressed sections of the unions—the less skilled, women,

Which Side Are You On?

By
Malik Miah



and minorities.

The flip side of this narrow-minded policy of the officialdom is their refusal to get unions to initiate or support independent politics, including the formation of a union-based labor party.

"Growing together"

Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote about the relationship of unions and capitalist governments in a series of articles and letters written in the 1920s and 1930s before his assassination by a Stalinist agent in 1940.

In an unfinished article, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," Trotsky wrote, "There is one common feature in the development, or more correctly the degeneration, of modern trade-union organizations throughout the world: it is their drawing closely to and growing together with the state power."

The "growing together" Trotsky refers to is of the union officialdom and the government—that is, the officials linking the interests of the

unions with the concerns and needs of the capitalists. The goal is to make workers just like capitalists.

For example, in the airlines industry, the International Association of Machinists (IAM) top leadership is urging its members to support Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) to "save" our jobs by taking over "our" companies. Major concessions are made under the illusionary hope that "stock ownership" will lead to job security.

"The labor bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds," Trotsky added, "to demonstrate to the 'democratic' state how reliable and indispensable they are in peacetime and in time of war."

Ranks reduced to observers

In other words, the top labor officials don't see themselves as leaders of the working class against the imperialist capitalist class. They see themselves as labor functionaries of capital within the unions. They are the "sober" elements among the more "hotheaded" rank and file. They believe they are the union, not the membership.

That's why the labor tops turn more and more to pro-labor lawyers and investment bankers as the "experts" to negotiate labor's differences with the employers. The ranks become observers, at best.

Does the "growing over" of the labor unions into the capitalist state mean unions can never be transformed into revolutionary instruments for social change?

Trotsky replied: "Wholly possible are revolutionary trade unions which not only are not stockholders of imperialist policy but which set as their task the direct overthrow of the rule of capitalism. In the epoch of imperialist decay, the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution."

Will this be possible? Yes, as the inevitable world recession occurs in the coming period, it will awake working people who—after the initial shocks—will fight even harder against the employers' attacks. They will turn to their unions as one of the most important weapons to fight back. ■

Two lifelong fighters for Trotskyism

Harold Schonbrun

CHICAGO—Long-time Trotskyist militant Walter H. Schonbrun died on May 20 in Evanston, Ill. He was 74 years old. From his youth to his death, he worked to build the revolutionary party in the United States.

Harold—his friends and family knew him by his middle name—grew up in Toledo, Ohio. Socialist Action member Ted Selander recalls that Harold participated in the Lucas County Unemployed League as far back as 1932-33, when he was in his teens. The crucial Auto-Lite strike of 1934 also had a big impact on Harold's political formation.

The revolutionary socialist organization in Ohio at that time was the Conference for Progressive Labor Action (later the American Workers Party) which fused with the Trotskyists in the Communist League of America in 1934. The organization grew, and at a convention in Chicago in 1938, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) was founded. At that convention, Harold met his wife-to-be, Betty.

By 1938, Harold had moved to Cleveland. In 1941, he was drafted into the Army and participated in the final battles against the Nazis on the Western Front. After the war, he and Betty moved to Chicago.

Harold had some vocational training in the printing trades, and he attempted to get a typography job. But he found no welcome mat at any of the International Typographical Union-organized shops. Harold decided to tackle the problem in a different way. He got a job at a non-union place, organized it, and brought the whole shop into the ITU. Harold was a "typo" until he retired in 1978.

Harold left the SWP during the 1950s, but his union involvement increased. For many years, he served on the Executive Committee of ITU Local 16. Harold was highly regarded in his union. He was very active in the *Chicago Tribune* strike that began in 1985.

Harold continued to support the SWP as a

sympathizer. When the SWP began to be drawn off the revolutionary course in the early 1980s, he lent a hand in the effort to stay the course.

After the SWP leadership undemocratically expelled the party's political minority in 1983-84, Harold became a source of aid and comfort to the newly formed Chicago branch of Socialist Action. He followed our work closely and helped wherever he could.

Through the years, Harold had taken sculpture courses at the University of Illinois, Circle Campus. He became an accomplished sculptor in wood and metal. One work in his living room is that of a globe trapped in a cage of wrought iron bars. A single bar is broken apart, symbolizing the advances made by the working class in the revolutions of this century. It remains for us to break the rest of those bars.—VINNIE LONGO

Sam Randall

Sam Randall, a member of the Trotskyist movement since his youth, died May 30 in the Kingsbrook hospital in Brooklyn after a long illness diagnosed as Alzheimer's disease. He was 76 years old.

Early deprivation and hardship contributed to Sam's compassionate understanding of human misery, unlike many others who are brutalized by childhood mistreatment.

As the son of immigrant parents, he learned early in life that the vast majority of those who migrated to this country never found the promised land. Sam grew up in the Hebrew Orphanage Asylum in Manhattan.

Eventually, he made his way to California by hitchhiking, a common mode of travel in those days. He found a job in industry near Los Angeles at the Douglas airplane factory—at the time of the early CIO.

Strikes broke out everywhere, many poorly organized. Douglas was no exception, and the strike was soon defeated. But in the course of it, Sam met some Trotskyists,

who were trying to salvage something from the strike. He joined the band of Trotskyists in Los Angeles, who were then in the Socialist Party.

After the founding of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938, Sam returned from Los Angeles to his native New York and there decided to go to sea, first as a member of the Sailors Union of the Pacific and shortly thereafter as a member of the Seafarers International Union.

This was in the early days of World War II, as the Roosevelt administration was preparing to enter the war, and already at that early stage the government was intervening to "keep the ships sailing."

Sam's suggestions on how to conduct job actions, which inspired confidence among the sailors to stand up for their rights, and at the same time to fend off the intervention of the Coast Guard and other government agencies, won the respect of everyone involved.

When the U.S. entered the war, his trips as ship's navigator were transatlantic, carry-

ing troops and war materials. His main interest was in making contacts with the war-scattered cadres of the Fourth International.

During the 1960s, Sam continued his support of SWP campaigns, and was especially active in and financially supportive of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the civil rights movement, and the antiwar movement. During this period of his life, he met Ruth Schein, who had been attracted to the Trotskyist movement as a result of the Cuban Revolution, for several years his comrade and companion.

Upon learning of Sam's death, Ruth recalled that he seemed to have an infallible political instinct, always able to detect the main conflicting class forces at work. She said, "He had a way of analyzing complicated political problems and explaining them in workers' language."

Despite his early years in the orphanage and his years of sailing and living away from New York, Sam felt close to his sister and brother-in-law, Matty and Bob Appel. They were his family. They looked after him in the long years of his illness, devoting themselves to his care.—FRANK LOVELL

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Interview with Earth First! leader Darryl Cherney:

'Environmental movement is a force for revolutionary change'

On May 24, Darryl Cherney and Judi Bari, two leaders of Earth First!, were injured when a bomb exploded in their car in Oakland, Calif. The FBI and local police responded by charging that the victims made the bomb themselves.

The following interview with Darryl Cherney was conducted by Socialist Action reporter Barbara Putnam on June 10 at the hospital where Judi Bari is recovering from severe injuries to her pelvis. The interview has been abridged for publication.

Socialist Action: Darryl, why did you agree to give Socialist Action this interview when all the big dailies are clamoring for interviews?

Darryl Cherney: Well, I have been taking some of the interviews with the mainstream media, but I feel it's important to do outreach to all segments of society. The mainstream certainly needs to hear from Earth First! but the "left" community also needs to hear what we have to say—as we need to hear what they have to say.

S.A.: Today's *San Francisco Examiner* ran an article titled "Green Mafia: New Target of Political Suspicion." I guess that makes you a godfather. Why is Earth First! being characterized as "Green Mafia" by the logging bosses?

Cherney: As the Cold War is defused in Eastern Europe and in Asia, the FBI and the CIA need to come up with a new enemy and I think they're now trying to fabricate the "Green Menace," using techniques I see as "Green-baiting."

I see environmentalism as being one of the new prime forces behind revolutionary change. Ultimately, the exploitation of peoples is an environmental issue as much as exploiting the environment because the reasons that they have to go into South Africa or South America or any other nation is to get the resources. And in order to do that, they need to exploit the people—or slaughter them.

So environmentalism is going to have some very heavy economic repercussions as we as environmentalist activists become more successful. The corporations certainly are aware of this and have decided to meet us head on, early on with the same kind of smear campaign from the McCarthy era.

S.A.: How does Earth First! differ from other ecology groups?

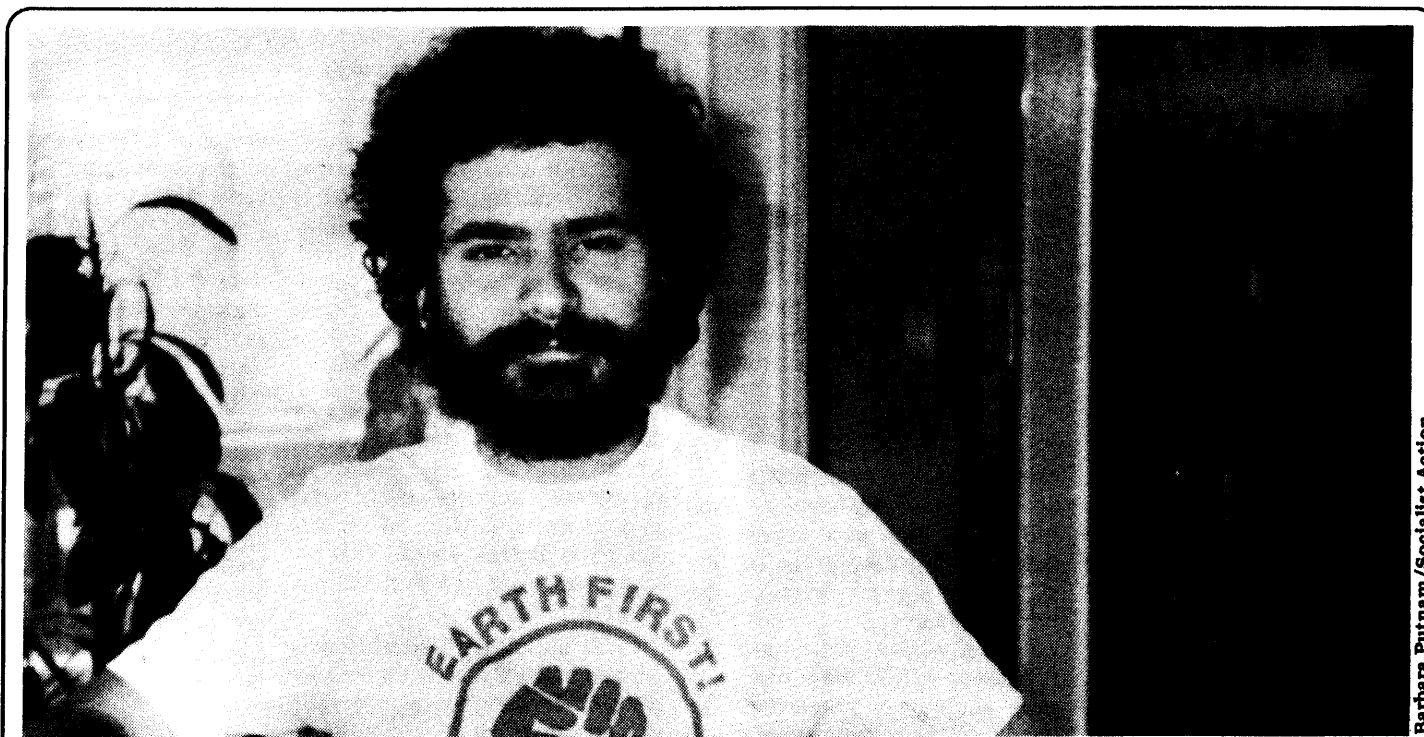
Cherney: Besides being a non-organization with no membership and essentially no rules except to put the earth first, Earth First! differs in three fundamental ways.

The first is "no compromise." We feel that, as far as the environment is concerned, all the compromises have been made. We can't compromise any more of the ozone layer, we can't compromise any more condors when we have only 26 left, or any more spotted owls when we have only two or three thousand left.

In the same manner, we shouldn't have to compromise any more Salvadorans or Guatemalans or South Africans. There are certain things you just can't compromise.

In addition to that, "direct action" is a primary method of Earth First! We allow our actions to the finer points of our philosophy. We're not an armchair outfit. If you see something wrong, you go and do something about it whether it's civil disobedience or writing a good solid letter. You need to be active to be an Earth Firster!

And finally, "biocentrism" is the key paradigm that Earth First! offers to the world. I think that even though it's an ancient way of thinking, we're representing it in a new way for modern society. What biocentrism says is that humans are not the center of the planet. The earth does not center around humans but rather humans must accept themselves as one of many species ac-



Darryl Cherney: "Environmentalism is going to have some very heavy economic repercussions."

Barbara Putnam/Socialist Action

cepting the limitations of what the earth has to offer.

S.A.: Under pressure, the capitalist politicians and their bosses are jumping on the ecology bandwagon. How does Earth First! deal with their fraudulent claims of cleaning up the environment?

Cherney: A good example of that was this past February when the timber industry and some really shady politicians came up with a bogus patter that made all the front pages. They said that Pacific Lumber wasn't going to log in some old-growth grove and they weren't going to export logs and that they were going to open themselves up to an audit.

All these things sounded somewhat good on the surface, but if you looked at what the agreement actually was, all the logging companies were already doing these things. Pacific Lumber doesn't export anyway, so agreeing not to export didn't really make a difference.

They said they weren't going to log in Headwaters Forest, a 3000-acre redwood grove, even though we knew damn well that they were going to. In fact, we caught them in the middle of building an illegal logging road after they agreed not to log in that area.

So what Earth First! did was launch a series of protests with civil disobedience that was non-violent. They did involve a number

of arrests. "No shady deals" and "No closed doors" was the theme of our demonstration.

S.A.: In your view, what were the strengths and weaknesses of Earth Day?

Cherney: Well, Earth Day's message was "Buy, Buy, Buy." It kind of became the Christmas of the environmental movement. You make a day of celebration, arbitrarily assigned, and you open yourself up for co-optation. There was no way of monitoring who could be a sponsor for Earth Day.

In fact, Dennis Hayes and the 1990 Earth Day committee essentially invited lots of large corporations to co-opt the environmental movement. On the other hand, it did

(continued on page 10)

Redwood summer: A call for 'freedom riders' to save forests

The following interview with Earth First! activist Candace B. was conducted by Barbara Putnam on June 8, 1990. It has been edited and abridged.

Socialist Action: You are helping to organize Redwood Summer. Tell us more about it.

Candace B.: Basically, what we are calling for is "freedom riders" to come and save the last of the giant trees and the ancient forests. We've put out a call all over the nation for people to come and participate in acts of nonviolent, civil disobedience in the redwoods to stop the logging that's going on there.

In November here in California, there are three major ballot initiatives that deal with forest issues—two that are environmental initiatives (Forests Forever and Big Green) and one that is being touted as an environmental initiative that is actually a timber industry initiative, that we've nicknamed "Big Stump."

The timber companies know that once the Forests Forever and Big Green initiatives pass—and pass they will—they are not going to continue to be able to do what they are doing. So they are logging massively so that they can get whatever they can before the new restrictions come down on them.

During Redwood Summer, we're train-

ing people to do nonviolent civil disobedience—we have trainings happening all the time in the Bay Area and up in Northern California where we have regional action centers. People are learning how to climb trees to do tree sits, people are learning about habitat restoration, people are learning how to work together.

S.A.: There's been quite a bit of media coverage saying that Earth First! is against the timber workers. Where do you think that is coming from?

C.B.: I think that a lot of that is coming from the timber companies. I mean, it's very easy for the timber corporations to point fingers and to say that these people who want the logging to stop want your jobs so that the issue of the old-growth forests and the out-of-control logging practices that the companies are indulging in get lost.

It's to polarize things so that the environmentalists are pitted against loggers and millworkers. Then the timber companies can step back and let us duke it out. Well, we're not going to take that, and that's part of the reason that we feel that Judi and Darryl were targeted. They've been drawing some very important links with millworkers and loggers and so forth up in the North country.

S.A.: So you are saying that the

companies themselves are anti-worker?

C.B.: I would say so. Definitely. I think it is incredibly irresponsible on the part of large timber companies to say that they are supporting their workers when what they are doing is destroying the last of their livelihoods.

I mean, if you chop down all the old-growth trees, clearcutting them, what are these people going to be doing in five years? There will be no jobs connected to the forestry industry at all. So, who are the real culprits here?

S.A.: What about the things the logging bosses are doing to "prove" they are complying with the demands for a better environment?

C.B.: First, they say you can "replant" trees. But as we have seen in the Canadian logging industry, silviculture does not work—especially when you are clearcutting. You can't replant an old-growth forest. What you are going to get after you have clear cut, slashed, burned, and robbed the soil of all its nutrients, is a bunch of sickly, scrawny little trees that get to be about 20 years old, and that is it.

So what these companies are talking about, in terms of replanting, is ridiculous. All they are going to have is a toilet paper pulp farm when they are finished with it.

We've got quotes from the chairman of Pacific Lumber, saying, "We log to infinity, all those trees are ours and we want them now!" This is no vision of the future. It's pretty scary.