



Negotiations in South Africa:
What do they mean?
See p. 12

Vol. 9, No. 11 NOVEMBER 1991 50 CENTS

Mideast talks: First big test for New World Order

By NAT WEINSTEIN

As the first meeting between contending forces in the Middle East was ending on Nov. 1 in Madrid, thousands of Arab residents of the Lebanese towns of Kafr Rumman and Nabatiye were fleeing an intensifying Israeli military assault.

Israeli forces have been shelling these towns and smaller villages across the 50-mile-long border of the enclave the Israeli army carved out for itself in southern Lebanon six years ago.

A military expert in the region told a local radio station, Voice of the Nation: "First Israel carved out the security zone [in Lebanon] to safeguard its northern territory. Now it wants to create a *cordon sanitaire* to protect the security zone."

This event exemplifies the history of the Middle East since the Zionist settler state was imposed on the Palestinian people in 1948 by common action of world imperialism and world Stalinism through the agency of the United Nations.

This latest incident, occurring during the three-day "Peace Conference," was accompanied by a virtual silence by the conference's American sponsor. The silence illustrates the latter's hypocrisy and exemplifies the basic source of the Arab-Israeli conflict—the unremitting criminal oppression spearheaded by Israel against the indigenous peoples of the Middle East.

The conference between Israel and "representatives" of some of its most aggrieved victims was slated to be followed by separate meetings between the Zionists and each of the three participating Arab delegations—from Syria, Lebanon, and a combined delegation from Jordan and Palestine.

Although the Zionists rule out any so-called "land for peace" deal, this kind of a "deal" will be at the center of any "peace" treaty reachable by these negotiators that stands a chance of enduring for more than the briefest time.

The Bush administration has forced Israel to come to the bargaining table. The U.S. victory in the Gulf War and the decline of the crisis-wracked USSR have combined to spur U.S. imperialism to forge a new balance of power between its client states in the region.

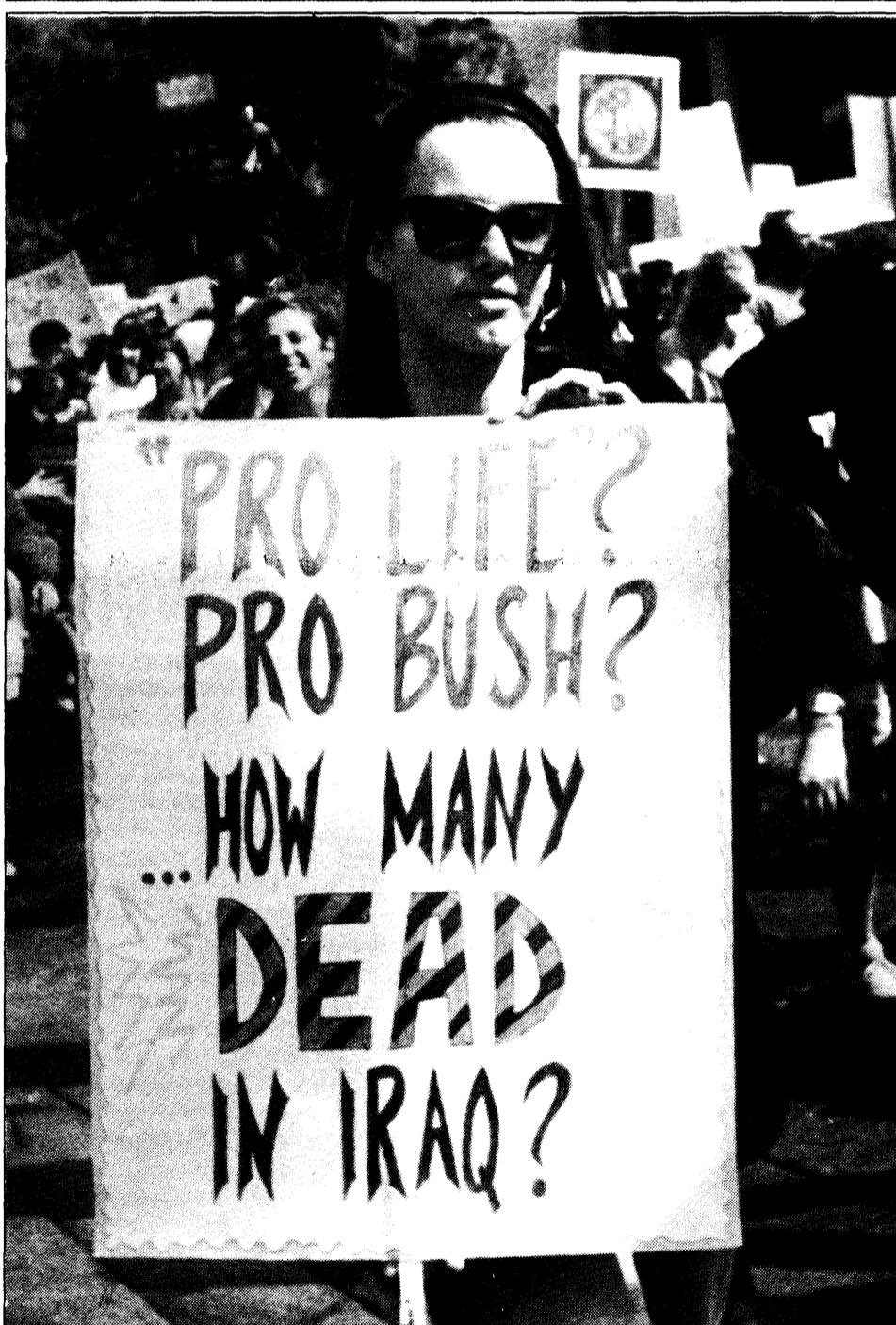
U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker III has made it clear that his government demands an accord be struck between its client Arab and Zionist regimes that would approximate more accurately the new relationship of forces in the region.

The Arab regimes know that there is less room for maneuver now, and they know that they must find a way around their peoples' hatred of the Zionist instrument of imperialism before coming to terms with Israel.

The Zionists also know that they must give back some of their stolen territories. Thus, they are essentially

(continued on page 13)

Supreme Court stacked against women



Pro-choice demonstrators march in San Francisco, Calif., on Oct. 5.

The Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings were an important step in taking sexual harassment out of the closet. Despite President Bush's public declaration that Anita Hill's testimony was "unfounded," many women and men have been newly energized in the struggle to defend women's rights. (See stories on pages 2 and 3.)

Now that Clarence Thomas has been confirmed (and so quietly sworn in), what does it mean for women's rights? The Supreme Court, even before Thomas's nomination, showed that it is stacked against women. Several state abortion law appeals are moving toward the Court, increasing the threat that *Roe v. Wade* will be overturned.

Pro-choice supporters must use their anger and energy to build a powerful movement to defend abortion rights. It would be a mistake to tie the women's movement to some Democratic Party "star"—male or female. We need a mass movement so strong and visible that the Supreme Court, the legislators, and the president are forced to respond in our favor.

The National Organization for Women has called for a demonstration in Washington, D.C., on April 5, 1992. NOW said it wants a million people there. Let's start organizing to make it happen! Let's plan for local building actions around the country!—CLAUDETTE BEGIN

Polish elections reveal opposition to pro-capitalist policies

By GERRY FOLEY

What the capitalists feared, happened in the first "free" Polish elections, held on Oct. 27. Voters roundly rejected the capitalist restorationist policies of the parties representing the middle-class elite that took over Solidarnosc and, consequently, responsibility for running the government.

Only 40 per cent of the population even bothered to vote. The process that began with the humiliation of Tadeusz Mazowiecki in the November 1990 presidential elections continued and deepened.

Mazowiecki was the premier of the first non-Communist government, which launched austerity policies and the plan for returning to a capitalist market economy.

In the presidential elections, he was not only overwhelmed by Lech Walesa, the historic leader of Solidarnosc, but by an obscure adventurer, Stan Tyminiski, who managed to tap the resentments of an important part of the working class—especially the younger workers—against the government policy.

In the Oct. 27 elections, Mazowiecki seems to have gotten at least a small morsel of revenge over Walesa. Initial projections of the vote credited his Democratic Union party with 13 per cent of the vote.

That is well ahead of Walesa's party, the Center Alliance, which seems to have won only about 8 per cent of the vote, and about the same as the Confederation for an Independent Poland, a romantic nationalist group that got an insignificant vote in the past elections. There could hardly have been a greater humiliation for the president's party.

Since Mazowiecki's defeat, Walesa, of course, has been responsible for the capitalist restorationist policies of the government. During the presidential campaign, he took an ambiguous line toward these policies. According to the *New York Times* (Oct. 29), the Center Alliance campaigned this time in favor of "rescuing" the state corporations—that is, for softening the pro-capitalist "shock therapy." But the actions of Walesa's government clearly spoke more loudly than the words of his party.

Moreover, two parties considered successors of the Communist Party—the Left Alliance and the Peasants' Party—got almost as many votes as the new main parties of the new elite.

When I visited Poland with a delega-

(continued on page 17)

Pennsylvania's challenge to Roe v. Wade



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

In 1989, the Pennsylvania legislature passed one of the nation's most restrictive anti-abortion laws. It was called the Abortion Control Act of 1989. The most restrictive parts of the act required parental consent for women under the age of 18, pre-notification of the husband, pre-abortion counseling, and a 24-hour wait after counseling before having the abortion.

On Oct. 21, 1991, the U.S. Court of Appeals threw out the provision requiring women to notify their husbands, but upheld the other restrictions.

On Oct. 22, State Attorney General Ernest Preate Jr. said he will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to return to the law the section requiring notification of husband. According to informed sources, this appeal will put *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark case that legalized abortion, on the fast-track toward review by the Supreme Court.

Louisiana, Utah and Guam have passed anti-choice laws even more restrictive than Pennsylvania's, but the Pennsylvania law has gone further in the appeals process.

Kathryn Kolbert—the lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union's Reproductive Freedom Project, which argued for the plaintiff, Planned Parenthood of Pennsylvania—said, "For the first time since 1973, a federal court of appeals has directly said that *Roe v. Wade* is no longer the law of the land."

On Oct. 5 in San Francisco, the Pro-Choice Coalition held a march and rally. Estimates were that over 7000 people marched. The march was organized in two months. It was an unusual march in that a large percentage of marchers were born after Jan 22, 1973, when *Roe v. Wade* became law.

Many of these young women

not only marched, but they took over organizational tasks such as out-reach, campus organizing, phone-banking, media activity and all of the other tasks that are required to build a march and rally.

Their energy and optimism added color and numbers to the march. And their anger kept them going. They were especially angry at the parental consent laws which have been passed in 26 states, including California. The California law is presently being heard in San Francisco Superior Court.

In the United States, seven out of 10 females and eight out of 10 males are sexually active in their teens. Only one in 50 teenage mothers finishes college, as compared with one in five women who delay child-bearing until their mid-20s. Only 4 percent of unmarried teen mothers give up their babies for adoption. About 43 percent of teen pregnancies end in abortion.

The myth that abortions take place late in pregnancy is a falsehood spread by the anti-choice minority. Ninety-one percent of all abortions take place in the first trimester. Fifty percent occur in the first eight weeks. Only 8 percent of all abortions are performed in the second trimester (6.1 percent before the 16th week). A tiny fraction, 1/100th of 1 percent, are performed during the third trimester, and then only

because of serious medical reasons.

Two young women have already died because of the parental consent restriction. Becky Bell, a 17-year-old high school student, could not bear to disappoint her parents by telling them she was pregnant. She died from an illegal abortion. Spring Adams, a 13-year-old victim of sexual abuse by her father (she was raped and impregnated by him), was shot and killed by that same father when he found out about her pregnancy. Spring's father shot her to death while she was sleeping.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) is asking that one million pro-choice supporters come to demonstrate in Washington, D.C., on April 5, 1992. In light of the recent Pennsylvania ruling—and the direct threat to *Roe v. Wade*—this march has become even more crucial in defending our abortion rights.

I hope that one million women who know what it was like before *Roe v. Wade* and one million who were born after *Roe v. Wade* all plan to go to Washington, D.C., for NOW's march. GET READY BUSH, WE'RE COMING! ■

Socialist ACTION

Closing date:
Oct. 31, 1991

Editors: MICHAEL SCHREIBER
JOSEPH RYAN

Staff: Alex Chis, Paul Colvin, Gerry Foley, Suzanne Forsyth, Malik Miah, MayMay Gong, Hayden Perry, Barbara Putnam, Kwame M.A. Somburu, Sylvia Weinstein.

Business Manager: BARRY SHEPPARD

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

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

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

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

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

If you're a woman, you've experienced it. Sexual harassment.

A big teach-in has been going on in the United States. Letters to the editor, radio call-in shows, workplace discussions and debates—all swirling around the issue of sexual harassment.

Now, with the issue more out in the open than it has ever been before, the discussion can turn to what the pervasiveness of sexual harassment reveals about our society and what can be done about it.

Let's not skip over the Killeen, Texas, mass murder. Investigators say that George J. Hennard, the murderer, hated women. Two-thirds of his victims in Luby's cafeteria were women. Wasn't this also the case in the Canadian mass murder at the engineering college two years ago?

And the newspapers reported last month that most injuries to women were a result of domestic violence. Husbands, boyfriends and other male relatives sent more women to the hospital than automobile accidents or any other cause.

Rape is at an all time high.

Do you see a pattern? I do. The status of women in this country is such that a plethora of crimes against women ranging from the most extreme, murder, to the most commonplace, sexual harassment in the workplace, are rising.

Can this violence be divorced from the governmental attacks on women in the form of failure to enact an Equal Rights Amendment, protect reproductive rights,

Thomas hearings tell us a lot about life in America for women



provide childcare centers, equal pay, or rights to all jobs on an equal basis with men? I don't think so.

Women, despite the many gains we have made historically (the right to vote, birth control, jobs, higher education, etc.), still are treated as inferior beings in the U.S.A. The pervasive experience that most women have with sexual harassment proves it. People who are respected are not humiliated at home and work on a daily basis. But great numbers of women are. Why?

The only answer that makes sense is that somehow, somewhere, someone materially benefits from the lower status of women. The members of the capitalist class are the ones that benefit by women's lower status. They benefit directly and hugely.

The pay differential between women and men puts billions of dollars in the pockets of the owners of the banks, the factories, the owners and exploiters of natural resources, and all the great wealth that the workers have created.

But the success of the capitalists is that they have convinced a great number of people who are also exploited by them, the men, that they too benefit from women's lower status.

The beauty in this arrangement for the capitalists is that the non-harmonious relations between men and women in the workplace are a big obstacle to the unity of the working class in fighting the boss for better pay and working conditions and ultimately for full ownership and control of the workplaces

throughout society (another name for socialism).

All the above horrors faced by women are why an independent women's movement has arisen and continues to grow. Each new outrage, such as the Thomas confirmation, shows women a new reason why they need their own movement. Each new outrage brings new fighters into the ranks of the women's movement. Only a strong independent women's movement can organize the potential power of women to win meaningful changes in our lives.

Demonstrations such as the two massive pro-choice mobilizations in Washington, D.C., in 1989 organized by the National Organization for Women are the kinds of actions we need to win new rights and to protect ones

we've already won but that now are threatened.

The gains women have made have been due to one of two factors. Women have won rights either as a result of their independent mobilizations as women (suffrage, higher education, etc.) or as part of a unified labor movement (the eight-hour day, end of child labor, equal pay in some industries, healthcare, etc.).

Every gain for women benefits working class men! Think about it. Higher pay and decent work conditions benefit the whole family. Reproductive rights, including the right to have an abortion, mean that family size can be consciously planned. Publicly funded childcare centers mean that children can get quality care while parents work outside the home.

As the old song "Bread and Roses" said, "The rising of the women means the rising of the [human] race."

An independent women's movement can accomplish great things for winning meaningful reforms that will benefit women as a whole.

But a movement that can encompass even greater numbers of people is needed to win the kind of change that will permanently upgrade women's status to a truly equal partnership with men in all aspects of life.

That movement is a united movement of the working class as a whole—women and men; Black, Brown, and white; union and unorganized; young and old.

A united movement of workers that puts the interests of workers first—especially the most oppressed—and the bosses' interests last is what we socialists advocate. ■

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

SAN FRANCISCO: The Bay Area Pro-choice movement achieved a big success when around 7,000 people, the majority of them young women, marched here on Oct. 5 to protest the attacks on a women's right to choose abortion.

The march and rally for "safe, legal and accessible abortion," and in defense of all reproductive rights, was called by the San Francisco Pro-Choice Coalition. Over 50 organizations, including the San Francisco Labor Council and a significant number of Bay Area labor unions and women's organizations, supported the action.

It was the first major pro-choice demonstration in San Francisco in two years.

The backdrop to the spirited march was the series of restrictions on abortion being enacted in state after state, the impending confirmation of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court, the August attacks by the Operation Rescue anti-choice fanatics on women's health clinics in Wichita, Kansas, and the well-grounded prediction that the U.S. government will overturn the historic *Roe v. Wade* decision soon.

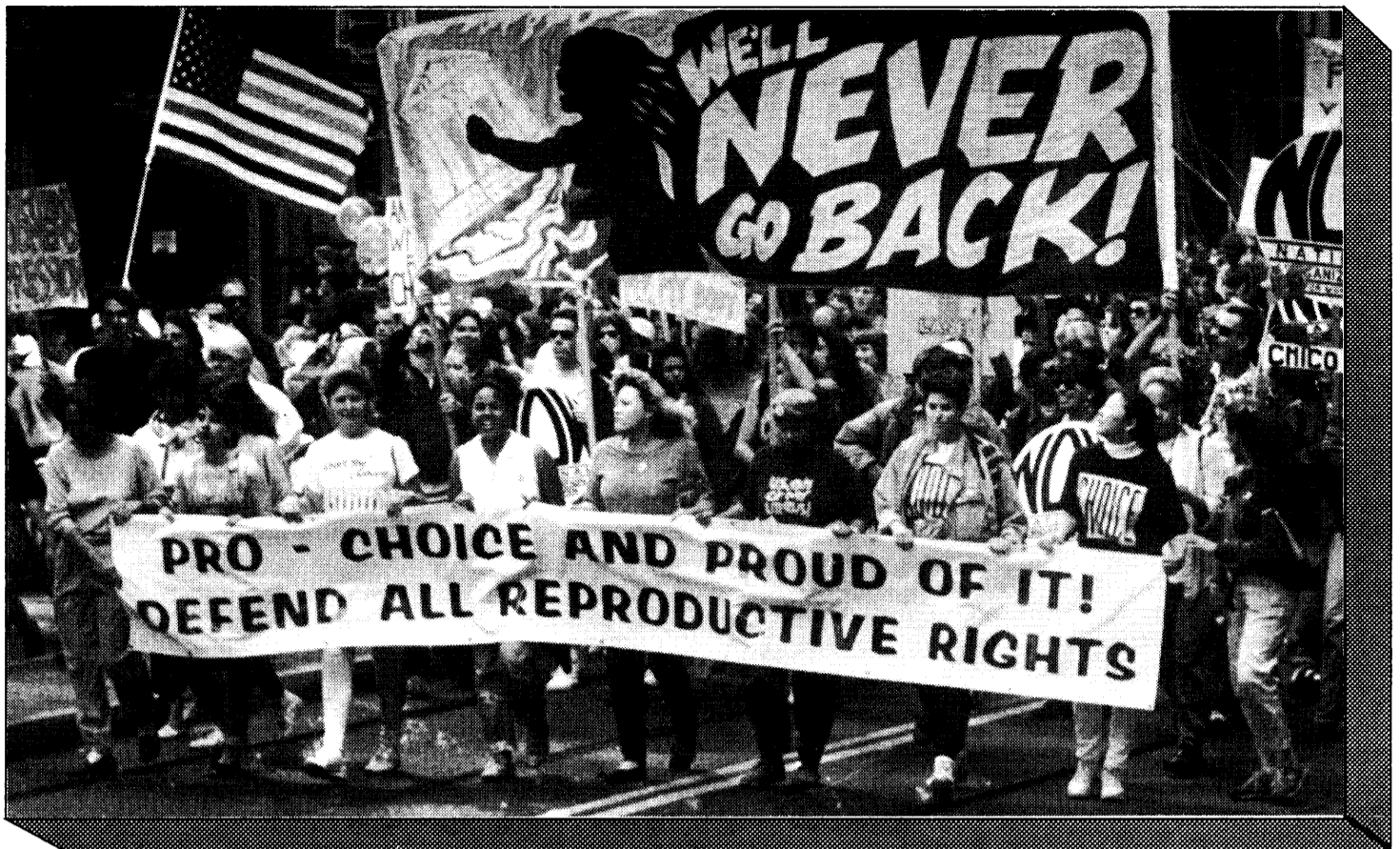
Many of the participants in the march were young women who were born after the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973. For them, the right to choose is an inalienable right and the government's anti-women policies are having profound consequences for them. They are unwilling see a democratic right they have taken for granted whittled away or lost.

Indeed, the major rallying cry of the march was: "We Won't Go Back!" as the vocal participants carried placards with slogans that ranged from "My Body, My Choice," and "Abort the Court!" to "Keep Your Laws Off My Body."

Many of the contingents in the march came from Bay Area college campuses, including the University of California, Berkeley; San Francisco State University; San Francisco City College; and many others.

Many sidewalk passers-by applauded the demonstrators as they strode up Market Street through the major shopping area. Some joined the march at the urging of participants.

Pro-Choice Coalition organizers were elated at the success of the demonstration. But while they had been confident of success, the action was handicapped by the stand-offish attitude exhibited by the San Francisco chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), California Abortion Rights Action



7000 in S.F. march say 'No!' to attacks on abortion rights



League (the Calif. NARAL affiliate), and Planned Parenthood. Despite their initial vote in favor of the event, CARAL and Planned Parenthood refused to lend their endorsement. And S.F. NOW didn't endorse the action until the week before Oct. 5. One explanation for this is that these organizations are involved in local election campaigns or lobbying efforts and seem to view street mobilizations as conflicting with their electoral projects.

Undoubtedly, if these organizations had enthusiastically thrown their weight behind the demonstration it would have been much larger.

Luckily, several other Bay Area NOW chapters, such as East Bay NOW, worked very hard to build the action and bring people to it.

The success of the October 5 march and the angry response to the Thomas confirmation mean that prospects for organizing much larger mobilizations for women's rights look bright. This could mean a huge turnout for NOW's national March on Washington scheduled for April 5, 1992.



Subscribe to Socialist Action today!

A monthly newspaper with a working class perspective on world events

- Introductory offer: \$3 for 6 months
- \$8 for one year

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Union/Organ. _____

Clip and return to: **Socialist Action**, 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 821-0458

'Toxic jobs or no jobs is not a fair choice for any community'

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

East Liverpool, a small Southeastern Ohio town on the banks of the Ohio River opposite Chester, West Virginia, is in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. The community's residents have been hard hit by the downturn in Ohio coal production and the closing of many nearby factories. In 1979, a new plant decided to locate in East Liverpool—Waste Technologies Industries (WTI):

WTI is building the largest hazardous waste incinerator in the world in East Liverpool. Its planned annual output of 352 million pounds of hazardous waste makes it five times larger than the average commercial hazardous waste incinerator.

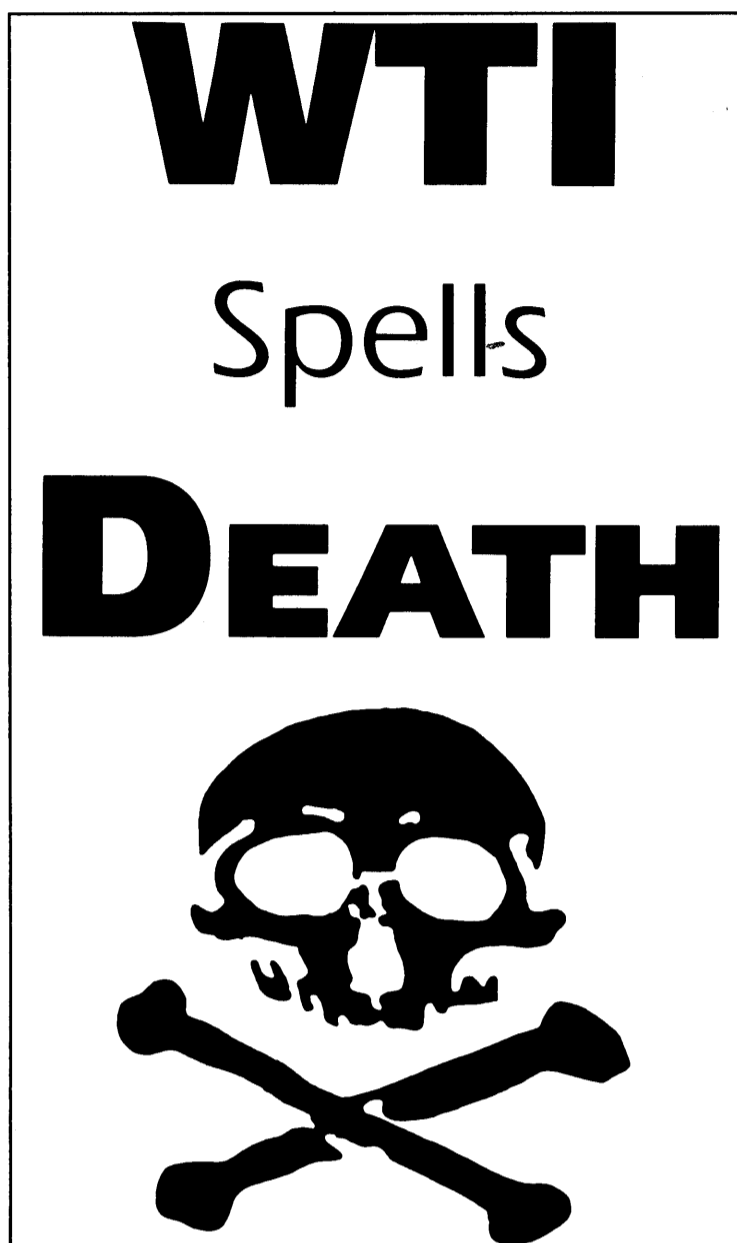
During optimal performance, WTI will spew out 4.7 tons of lead and thousands of pounds of dioxins, furans, PCBs, and other cancer-causing substances each year. Up to 100,000 tons of inorganic waste will be stored on the site. Tons of toxic ash will be produced as a byproduct.

While Ohio Gov. George V. Voinovich has refused to reconsider the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) operating permit given to WTI in 1984, and some local officials have proclaimed the positive features of new community investment, growing numbers of local residents have taken to the streets to make sure this plant never opens. They assert, "Toxic jobs or no jobs is not a fair choice for any community."

On May 10, 1990, EPA spokesman William Sanjour admitted: "Commercial hazardous waste management facilities do not bring about industrial growth; rather, they tend to depress any area in which they are located, from the point of view of economics, public health, the environment, and morale."

In granting the permit, the EPA claimed that risks from a well-managed commercial hazardous waste incinerator are minimal. When questioned by concerned local residents, however, EPA spokespeople were unable to cite a single one of the 17 commercial hazardous waste incinerators that meet their minimal criteria for a well-managed facility.

In fact, Chemical Waste Management, the company which will deliver the waste



and landfill the toxic ash, has been fined nearly \$10 million for violations at a Chicago incinerator that exploded in February.

WTI's permits will enable it to burn hazardous commercial waste from all 50 states and abroad. The trucks and trains which will transport this waste must pass through residential areas.

Located in watershed

Residents are particularly concerned about the location of this incinerator. It

sits in a flood plain along the Ohio River. Some of the waste will be transported by barge. Since the Ohio River serves as a source of drinking water for many communities in Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky, the potential for disaster is great.

Two schools, 150 homes, and several businesses are located within 2000 feet of the incinerator. An elementary school, only 1100 feet away, is directly level with WTI's smokestacks.

Children are especially susceptible to lead and other deadly chemicals. When parents complained about their children being forced to breathe in the toxic fumes, Gov. Voinovich offered to conduct background health tests on the stu-

dents. But angry parents assert they will not allow their children to serve as guinea pigs to monitor the deadly effects of various poison gases.

Although most area residents first became concerned over the health risks WTI poses to their families, further study has led many to conclude that this "landfill in the sky," as they dub WTI, shouldn't be built anywhere. Pointing to WTI's outdated technology, Richard Sahli, former deputy director of the Ohio EPA, stated, "This specific facility should

not be sited anywhere in the U.S."

Although WTI's construction is nearly completed and operation is scheduled to begin in November, residents feel confident they can mount a large enough campaign to prevent the plant from going on line.

They point to several recent successes won through large-scale community opposition. In 1990, an incinerator in Braintree, Mass., was defeated because it was too close to populated areas. In 1990, the GSX facility in Cleveland was shut down. In 1991, two Pennsylvania commercial hazardous waste proposals were rejected. In 1991, the state of Arizona stopped construction of two incinerators after they were almost completed.

"WTI Spells Death"

On Sunday, Oct. 13, over 1000 people turned out to demand, "Stop WTI!" Skull and crossbones signs with the slogan, "WTI Spells Death," dotted the crowd.

A busload of students came from West Virginia University. Youngstown, Toledo, Columbus, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh sent small delegations. Most of the participants, however, were from East Liverpool and nearby small towns in Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

Many protesters brought their children. Some carried signs with pictures of their children, bearing the message, "Don't Waste Our Future." The lead banner, "Prevent Child Abuse, Impeach Voinovich," expressed the commonly felt outrage over the "loaded gun pointed at every child's head in the Tri-State area of Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania."

Community support was evident throughout the mile-long march. A number of homes along the way bore anti-WTI placards. Many residents stood on their porches, cheering the protesters. Some decided to join in the march as it went by their homes. The only pro-WTI sign was on the Columbiana County Port Authority building where the rally was held.

Many local residents angrily declared that the only reason the EPA and state of Ohio allowed WTI to construct this incinerator in East Liverpool was because they felt the "dumb hillbillies" there wouldn't say anything. They vowed that they "won't die for WTI" and that they will continue to speak out until the plant is permanently closed.

After a two-hour rally, actor Martin Sheen led 35 local residents in a planned civil disobedience action on WTI property. Protesters viewed this as a way to secure national publicity for their demands. ■

CLUW convention focuses on abortion rights

By SUZANNE FORSYTH

PITTSBURGH—The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) held its Sixth Biennial Convention here on Oct. 3-7, celebrating a "Decade of Empowerment." Over 900 women attended, approximately 600 of whom were delegates representing their unions or local CLUW chapters.

The convention schedule included a rally for national healthcare, discussion of resolutions and constitutional amendments, the election of officers, a National Executive Board election by union caucuses, and workshops on the many issues facing working women.

The current threat to women's reproductive rights was noted by many speakers, including a sister in her 60s from the Communications Workers of America (CWA), who exclaimed passionately, "Let's not be polite and ladylike. This is our lives!"

The convention adopted a resolution which reaffirmed the organization's commitment to reproductive rights and called upon CLUW chapters to "work actively with other local organizations to protect doctors, clinics, and patients who have

come under attack." It also called for "the enactment of federal legislation to ensure reproductive rights of women."

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Tom Donohue met a hostile response from the convention floor when he tried to defend the AFL-CIO's decisions not to involve itself with what is recognized as a life-and-death question for working women. CLUW members reaffirmed their determination that the AFL-CIO should take a pro-choice position, and CLUW will take the resolution to the AFL-CIO convention in November.

A workshop on "Defending Reproductive Rights" was chaired by CLUW staffperson Kathy Parrent. Panelists emphasized the harsh effect restrictions on abortion have for working women and especially women of color.

Communication Workers of America Vice President Brooks Sunkett noted that before the *Roe v. Wade* decision, 80 percent of deaths due to illegal abortions were among women of color. Dottie Jones, director of the United Autoworkers women's department, called attacks on women's reproductive rights a "smoke screen" designed to keep women from equal participation in the work force. ■

U.S. officials go shopping for nuclear dump

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Deadly nuclear waste. Thousands of tons of it are stored in casks outside the country's 113 nuclear reactors. But the power companies are quickly running out of space.

By the end of the decade, used fuel from nuclear power plants is expected to amount to 44,000 tons. And "low level" radioactive waste—garments, tools, and parts—amounts to even more. It's too much to simply sweep under the rug. But where is it to go?

Not too long ago, the federal government proposed gathering spent nuclear fuel from around the country and burying it underneath Yucca Mountain in Nevada. But this site would only accommodate 77,000 tons. Soon after the facility opens (target date is 2010), it might be filled to capacity.

In addition, state legislators strongly objected to the Yucca Mountain plan—citing the dangers of earthquakes, a rising water table, and dormant volcanoes in the region.

And so, U.S. officials have tried to shop around the deadly waste material to poorer areas of the country, which might welcome an infusion of federal money. Nuclear waste storage, after all, has promise of becoming a "growth" industry. ■

David Leroy, the government's nuclear-waste negotiator, recently sent a letter to 623 people, including state governors and many Native American leaders. "Nobody wants nuclear wastes, period," he was forced to admit. "But there's never been a better time to offer proposals."

At this point, however, there is no long-term solution in sight. The big power companies must try to make-do by expanding their on-site storage facilities.

In Minnesota, for example, the Northern States Power Company has applied for a permit to create a high-level radioactive waste dump outside its Prairie Island Nuclear Plant. The facility is located on the Mississippi River near the Prairie Island Indian reservation and other residential areas.

The waste will be stored in metal canisters that are expected to last 25 years. Nuclear material, however, remains highly radioactive for at least 10,000 years.

Nearby residents, including the Prairie Island Indians (working through their tribal council), have organized opposition to the dump site. In addition, nine environmental groups in Minnesota have formed the Prairie Island Coalition Against Nuclear Storage (PI-CANS). For more information, contact them at 1313 5th St. SE, #323, Minneapolis, MN 55414. Telephone (612) 379-3853. ■

Socialist campaign strikes a chord in S.F. mayor elections

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

By BARBARA PUTNAM

San Francisco is one of the richest cities in the country. But 85 percent of the residents cannot afford homes. Rents have increased by 134 percent in 10 years, contributing to the growing homeless population.

Healthcare is inaccessible to most people. Taxes keep increasing, while the services these taxes supposedly cover are decreasing. Kids are now targeted as new tax victims by taxes imposed on candy, gum, and pop!

Eleven candidates have entered the San Francisco mayoral race this year. Most of them are look-alike Democratic Party politicians—Art Agnos the incumbent and challengers, Angela Alioto, Tom Hsieh, Frank Jordan, Richard Hongisto, and others. The key concern of these candidates is the fear of “driving business away from San Francisco.”

Socialist Action candidate Joni Jacobs, on the other hand, advocates mass mobilizations and independent political action on all fronts to challenge the right of bosses to determine what working people get or do not get—not only in San Francisco, but everywhere.

“Human needs before profits” was the central theme of the campaign. Jacobs pounded away in the same key that jobs, education, healthcare, housing, and AIDS research are all basic human rights—not “privileges” to be doled out by the wealthy handful and their political representatives. Central to the campaign was the idea of a *progressive* tax system that would tax only the rich—zero taxes on working people.

Support from youth

A good gauge of the effectiveness of the Joni Jacobs for Mayor campaign is the support it has gotten from young people new to socialist ideas.

For example, at the campaign kickoff rally last summer, four young women stood up and explained why they were supporting Jacobs for mayor. “She trained me at clinic defense,” one said. “I trust and believe in Joni because she has shown she will do anything to defend



Joni Jacobs speaking at Oct. 24 San Francisco City College TV broadcast.

women,” said another. Two young women attracted to the campaign have subsequently joined Socialist Action and more are coming our way as a direct result of the campaign.

At the Oct. 5 Pro-Choice demonstration, the campaign had a popular booth where Joni Jacobs passed out free food and engaged pro-choice activists in the campaign. Thirty-eight new young people bought subscriptions to *Socialist Action* as the newspaper supporting her campaign.

Right after radio or TV interviews with Jacobs, callers would set the phone lights ablaze at campaign headquarters with requests for more information.

Significantly, Joni Jacobs got the fourth highest number of votes of any candidate at the San Francisco Labor

Council mayoral forum on Aug. 26. Jacobs told the delegates that none of the “big money, pro-business” candidates running for mayor represent labor. She said it was time “to stop playing the bosses’ game, to stop voting for *their* candidates, and to stand up for our own interests with our own candidates.”

She drew cheers and the prized “ringing of the bell” when she elaborated the need for labor to organize its own politically independent party and to go back to the methods used in the 1930s—sit-downs and militant picketlines—to defend against the bosses’ offensive.

Media Blackout

Jacobs could have reached far more people had the media monopoly given her campaign the same attention they

gave the major (read “rich”) candidates.

“If I can convince working people to vote in their interest, I will win in a landslide,” Jacobs said, “But that’s hard to do when you have a media owned by the rich who are not interested in changing the status quo.”

Jacobs’ campaign supporters, primarily young pro-choice activists, began to organize an aggressive campaign of tabling in the neighborhoods, speaking out on campuses, and defending a woman doctor’s office when it was taken over by Operation Rescue.

They organized a protest demonstration at Channel 5 on Sept. 26 because it was televising a mayoral debate sponsored by the League of Women Voters (LWV), who excluded six of the candidates. Some of the best chants at the action were, “League of Women Voters line: if you’ve got the money, they’ve got the time,” and “No more cash and carry democracy.”

Supporters of Gloria La Riva, a member of the Workers World Party and running as the mayoral candidate of the All-Peoples’ Congress, joined in the protest because their candidate was also excluded. As Jacobs pointed out at the end of the action, the LWV, which began its life as a suffragist organization, converted itself into just another exclusionary organization. The next day, the *San Francisco Examiner* carried a front-page photograph of the action with Jacobs’ campaign banner prominently displayed.

On Oct. 24, students at City College organized a television broadcast that *did* include all candidates. About 250 students attended the event, frequently interrupting Jacobs with cheers and applause. One of the student technicians came up to Jacobs afterwards and told her, “You’ve got my vote!” Two other students came to the campaign table and volunteered to work to get out the ideas Jacobs championed.

When she speaks, Jacobs makes the socialist platform come to life. She encourages San Franciscans to stop looking for a “Tweedledumb or a Tweedledumber” Democrat or Republican to speak on their behalf, but to elect instead a candidate that “truly represents their interests.”

“I am such a candidate,” she proudly declares. “As a working person, I’ve experienced the same decline in living standards as the majority of San Franciscans. I want to use City Hall as an organizing center to help working people put human needs before profits.” ■

By ANNA TAYLOR
and MO HARRY

Young activists are attracted to the Joni Jacobs mayoral campaign because they find that they have a lot in common with her platform.

Unlike the numerous capitalist candidates, Jacobs addressed the real issues that working people are facing today as opposed to catering to the whims of big business. Maybe this is because Jacobs is a working person herself and not a career politician.

A number of people have been drawn in to help build Jacobs’ campaign because of her political activism, her platform’s goals, and the growing need for change in today’s status quo politics.

Many young women met Jacobs through clinic defense and the pro-choice movement. Mary Doran, a student at San Francisco State University, got involved with the campaign because of her commitment to protecting women’s rights. “I was attracted to Joni’s campaign because I met her through political activity,” said Doran. “I know that she is truly interested in the working women of this city—and of the world—and not just in running for her own benefit or career.”

Like Mary, most women are experiencing attacks on their rights with new anti-abortion legislation, the threat of the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, and the lack of concern about sexual harassment by the capitalist politicians of both political parties.

The slogan “Human Needs Before Profits” attracted others to the campaign.

William Huber saw Jacobs’ campaign poster and called to see how he could get involved. “I was thinking about the mayoral race,” Huber said, “and the dearth of any interesting candidate. I knew I wanted to get involved with a socialist candidate.”

I have been a Marxist for some time,” he continued, “but never involved in any campaigns. I liked the ideas on the poster, so I instinctively called to find out more and found Joni’s working-class platform to be realistic without compromising its principles.”

Christina Dahlin was an anti-war activist who got involved with Jacobs’ socialist campaign. About Joni, she said, “She is part of the working class and thus relates to working-class people as her equals with shared ideals and goals. I wholeheartedly agree with her slogan, ‘Human needs before profits.’”

People are wondering how the United States could wage a massive and unnecessary war against Iraq while domestic needs—jobs, healthcare, education, and housing, to name a few—are left to wither on the vine.

As our living standards continue to decline in the face of the government’s indifference, Joni Jacobs has come forward with a platform dedicated to human needs and aimed at achieving power and equality for working and oppressed people. She has come to represent the only working-class candidate and her socialist ideas are striking a chord with those who are becoming more disenchanted with the American capitalist system. ■

‘I agree with her slogan of human needs before profits’



Joni Jacobs campaign supporters at the Oct. 5 pro-choice march.

By JIM HENLE

BOSTON—Defending the democratic rights of the nation's most prominent military resisters, Tahan Jones and Erik Larsen, was the theme of an Oct. 19 meeting at the African American Center of Northeastern University.

Sixty people attended. Jones and Larsen were both present, on leave from Camp Lejeune, N.C., where their court martial proceedings are now underway.

Larsen had spoken to enthusiastic audiences in Boston a year ago at the height of the genocidal U.S. war against the Iraqi people. But, as Erik said, "It seems like when the war was finished and the protests were done, we were forgotten. We're still waging our battle."

Larsen pointed out that the aftermath of the Gulf War has been scrupulously hidden from the American people by the pro-war press. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis are suffering from horrible health conditions in a country devastated by U.S. bombing.

In the same vein, a wall of official silence has been erected to keep the fight waged for the freedom of American military resisters isolated from the American people. These courageous young men face prison sentences of up to seven years.

The Boston meeting was significant for the strong participation of antiwar veterans and representatives of the Black community. Vietnam veteran Bill Short chaired the meeting on behalf of the New England Jones/Larsen Defense Committee:

"During the Vietnam War," Short said, "I refused to fight and was court-martialed twice and sent to prison. I know how isolated and how lonely I felt during that time. I did not have a support group. I did not have a national speaking platform. I didn't even have legal council. I defended myself at my first court-martial. So I have a real good idea of how both Erik and Tahan are feeling tonight. And I think it's important that we show our heartfelt support for both of them."

Other speakers included Stephanie Atkinson, a Gulf War resister; Prof. Gerald Gill of Tufts University, and an authority on Black resistance to U.S. wars; Assistant Minister Rodney X of the Nation of Islam; P. Jesse Perrier, Vice President of the Smedley Butler Brigade; Shakur Ali, community worker and three-tour Vietnam combat veteran; Prof. Daniel Faber of Northeastern University; and Quan Smith, President of the Northeastern Black Students Association.

Several speakers referred to the strong opposition to the Gulf War in the Black community. Assistant Minister Rodney X observed:

"We really don't have a war that's worth fighting. So we don't want to participate in taking the lives of human beings—especially to go 9000 miles away and blow someone's brains out, someone who looks just like me and some of you, who never called me a nigger, never called me a coon, never enslaved my people in the ghettos of America.

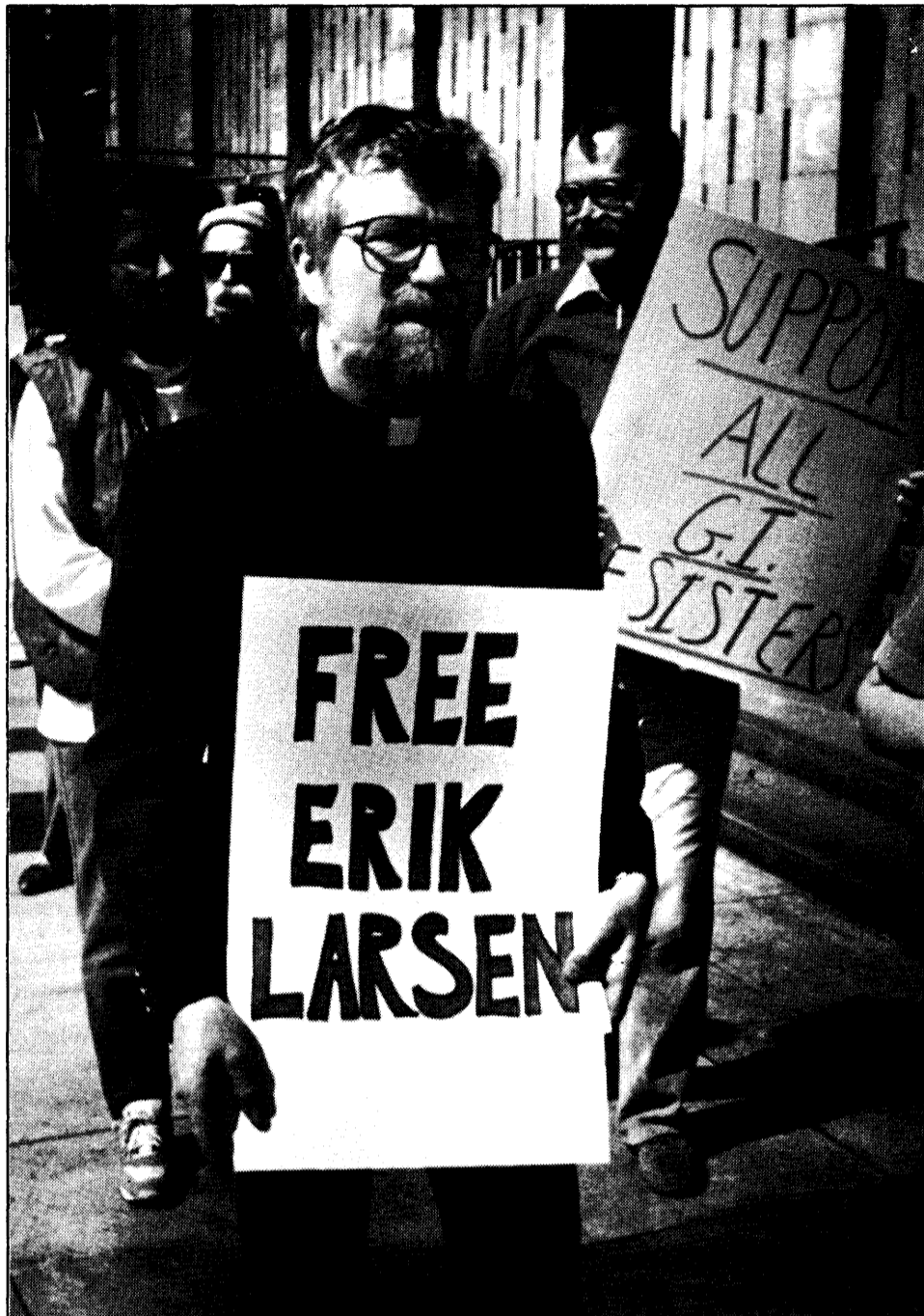
"The American people don't run this country. It's the rich, the corporations. Wars are fought over oil, gold and silver, diamonds, fought over power, land and people."

Prof. Gerald Gill presented an overview of Black resistance to war, from World War I to today. "There's a firm context of political dissent [from war] by African Americans from A. Phillip Randolph to W.E.B. DuBois to Malcolm X," he said. "Erik and Tahan are carrying on a proud tradition of resistance and defiance to what individuals perceive to be unjust, immoral, and imperialist wars."

Erik Larsen spoke movingly about the

Boston meeting defends GI resisters Jones and Larsen

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action



Rev. John Chamberlain of the First St. John's United Methodist Church in San Francisco is a central organizer in the defense campaign for Jones and Larsen.

breadth of GI resistance to the war. Close to 2500 resisters sought the help of antiwar organizations such as the War Resisters League and American Friends Service Committee. Thousands of others also joined the protest movement. Some groups of soldiers went AWOL [Absent Without Leave]. Others, especially Black GIs, were reported to have mutinied. Despite the harassment, intimidation, and in some cases physical abuse of resisters, the antiwar protests in the armed forces continued and deepened.

Shakur Ali, a Marine veteran of three tours in Vietnam, spoke of the brutalizing effect of war on young GIs. "Before I was 21," he said, "I killed more than a dozen people. By the time I killed the third person, I had no recollection of what I was doing. I had no conscience. I did not care. I just killed. I survived. I did whatever was necessary to survive. And these young men [Tahan and Erik and the other resisters] did something that I was unable or unwilling to do or didn't know that I could do. They stood up and said, 'No, I'm not going to take part in that.'"

Ali noted that the brutality of American society is not confined to the military. "In Tahan's case, he refused to serve a govern-

ment that is still enslaving his people."

Speaking for the Northeastern Black Students Association, Quan Smith observed that a real war against Black people is taking place in the United States today.

Jones and Larsen were also honored guests at a Boston reception. Jones spoke to 80, mostly Black, students at a Jobs for Youth High School.

The two resisters met with Don Muhammed, the minister of Mosque 11 of the Nation of Islam. Minister Muhammed solidarized with the unity Jones and Larsen had exhibited during the long course of their battle with the Marines. Jones and Larsen served in the same Hayward, Calif., Marine Corps reserve unit. A Black Marine and a white Marine who might be hanging separately, are hanging together, he commented.

The weekend was an important breakthrough for defense efforts on the East Coast. Veterans and anti-war networks have been activated and Black organizations are rallying support.

"For us the war is only beginning," Tahan Jones concluded, "There's going to be another Iraq, and it might be sooner than many of us think. It's important to continue the struggle. That way we don't have to

start from scratch. It's no time to slack off. It's important to get back into our communities—particularly the Black community and the poor communities who will be most affected by the war."

A representative of the Oakland, California-based national defense committee has indicated that an additional \$20,000 is needed to complete the legal defense efforts. Contributions can be sent to: Jones/Larsen Defense Committee, 1678 Shattuck Ave., Box 225, Berkeley, CA 94709. Phone (510) 655-1201.

In New England, contact the Jones/Larsen New England Defense Committee, 28 William St., W. Newton, MA 02165. Phone (617) 868-4132 or (617) 332-9016.

Write Erik and Tahan at: PFC. Erik Larsen 563-49-1139, Bldg. 8/H-1, Wing A, 2nd MEB, Sub unit 1/MCB, Camp Lejeune, N.C., 28542-5090. ■

'This process is rigged'

Tahan Jones, who has observed from personal experience at Camp Lejeune that every Marine Reservist application for CO [conscientious objector] status has been denied, told the Boston audience that, "The CO process is rigged."

Erik Larsen's attorney, Robert Rivkin, agrees. He points out that legal standards for CO status established during the Vietnam era under the pressure of a mass antiwar movement, have been effectively scrapped.

Rivkin says that if the federal district court would apply the legal standards that exist on paper, Larsen's appeal of the Marine Corps denial of his application would be upheld at his Nov. 1 hearing in San Francisco. Nevertheless, the military's current record of denying virtually all CO applications is unlikely to be challenged by the judicial system.

John Murko, the attorney for Tahan Jones, told *Socialist Action* on Oct. 30 that the Marine Corps has denied Jones's request to call 15 witnesses for his Article 32 (preliminary) hearing. The Marines said that none of the defense witnesses met the military's newly adopted criteria that witnesses must reside within 100 miles of Camp Lejeune. This, said Murko, is yet another abrogation of Jones's constitutional right to due process and a fair trial.

Murko also reported that the Marines continue their efforts to induce Tahan Jones to testify against Erik Larsen in Larsen's upcoming court martial proceeding. It is strongly implied that Jones will receive a reduced sentence for finking on his friend. Jones, however, has steadfastly refused the offers—even though he faces years in prison.—JEFF MACKLER

U.S. Postal Service Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685).

1A. Title of publication: Socialist Action.
1B. Publication no. 721090.
2. Date of filing: Oct. 15, 1991.
3. Frequency of issue: Monthly. A) No. of issues published annually: 12. B) Annual subscription price: \$8.00.
4. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110-4543.
5. Complete mailing address of the headquarters of general business offices of the publisher: Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110-4543.
6. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editor, and managing editor. Publisher: Socialist Action

Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110-4543. Editors: Michael Schreiber and Joseph Ryan, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110-4543. Managing Editor: None
7. Owner (if owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, its name and address must be stated.) Socialist Action Publishing Association (unincorporated), 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110, Nat Weinstein and Carl Finamore, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.
8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount

of bonds, mortgages or other securities (if there are none, so state: None.
9. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates (Section 423.12 DMM only): Does not apply.
10. Extent and nature of circulation. Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months. A. Total no. copies printed (net press run): 3250. B. Paid and/or requested circulation (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 1459. (2) Mail subscriptions (Paid and/or requested): 1028. C. Total paid and/or requested circulation (sum of 10B1 and 10B2): 2487. D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: 70. E. total distribution (Sum of C and D): 2557. F. Copies not distributed (1) Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 693. (2) Return from news agents: 0. G. Total (Sum of E, F1, and 2—should equal net press run shown in A): 3250.
Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to fil-

ing date. A. Total no. copies printed (net press run): 3000. B. Paid and/or requested circulation (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 1286. (2) Mail subscription (Paid and/or requested): 919. C. Total paid and/or requested circulation (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2): 2205. D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: 71. E. Total distribution (Sum of C and D) 2276. F. Copies not distributed (1) Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 724. (2) Return from news agents: 0. G. Total (Sum of E, F1 and 2—should equal net press run shown in A): 3000.
11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
(signed)
Barry Sheppard
Business Manager

By SUZANNE FORSYTH

"There is a time for outrage and for hitting the streets," Torie Osborn, executive director of the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Community Service Center, told the *Los Angeles Times* Oct. 1.

California's lesbian and gay community agrees the time is now since Gov. Pete Wilson announced his veto on Sept. 29 of AB 101, legislation that prohibited employment discrimination against lesbians and gays.

The veto came despite Wilson's indication that he would "probably" sign the bill and a statewide poll that showed Californians favored the signing of the bill by a margin of more than two-to-one.

Outraged gays and lesbians and their supporters responded with rallies at state government office buildings the day after the veto was announced, and subsequent rallies were held up and down California from Sacramento to San Diego.

On Sept. 30, 7000 marched from San Francisco's Castro District to Civic Center. San Francisco mayoral candidate and former police chief Frank Jordan appeared at the rally, only to be chased away by protesters mindful of Jordan's role in violent police handling of AIDS protesters in 1989. Jordan narrowly escaped, minus a shoe. A much publicized shoe-burning ceremony was held later in the week.

In West Hollywood, 2000 demonstrators rallied, chanting, "Civil rights or civil war!" going on to protest at a museum opening where the governor was speaking.

Gay rights activists have vowed to continue their fight. "This is Stonewall II," Osborn said in the *Advocate*, referring to the 1969 New York protests which sparked the gay rights movement. "The veto tapped

Gays and Lesbians outraged by Gov. Wilson's veto of rights bill



Protesters assemble in San Francisco's Castro District on Sept. 30.

into a well of anger and pain fed by 10 years of AIDS. It's energizing and mobilizing people like you wouldn't believe... The righteous anger that people feel will translate into something. When momentum happens at the grass-roots level in a broad-based way, it always changes the face of things."

Mickey Wheatley, a civil rights attorney and member of L.A. Queer Nation, called the Southern California rallies "an explosion of creative energy unlike anything we've ever seen." (*Advocate*, Nov. 5,

1991). The intensity of these protests is being compared to the anger displayed in 1979 when ex-cop Dan White was only convicted of manslaughter after his premeditated murder of liberal San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and gay Supervisor Harvey Milk.

For a week after the veto, protesters continued to hound Wilson at his public appearances. Three hundred activists, whom Wilson referred to as using "fascist tactics," confronted him at Stanford University's centennial celebration and drowned him out

with a chorus of "Shame!"

In his veto message, Wilson said that he rejected the legislation because it would impose unfair burdens on businesses and unleash a flood of litigation. He also offered the lame excuse that gays and lesbians are already protected from employment discrimination by a number of state laws and court decisions.

Those who took to the streets should be encouraged. Just weeks after the veto, on Oct 28, the California state court of appeals unanimously ruled that private employers may not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

Despite Wilson's apology for "any false comfort that may be derived from the veto by the tiny minority of mean-spirited, gay-bashing bigots," the veto indeed offered back-handed support to current anti-gay and lesbian campaigns, including the move to overturn a ban on anti-gay discrimination in Concord, Calif., and the effort to repeal domestic partners legislation in San Francisco.

Another insidious campaign is being led by the Rev. Lou Sheldon, head of the Anaheim, Calif.-based Traditional Values Coalition, who is attempting to introduce a ballot initiative that would amend the state constitution to require that any local gay rights ordinance be approved by a two-thirds popular vote.

As Roger Coggan, legal director for the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Community Service Center, told the *Advocate*, "When the governor of California refuses to protect the basic rights of gays and lesbians to work, what message does it send about the government's willingness to protect our other basic rights? It's a message that resonates in the actions of gay and lesbian bashers."

Uncle Sam's complicity exposed as BCCI scandal unravels

By HAYDEN PERRY

Just when we thought we couldn't absorb another financial scandal, the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) collapses with a crash that is shaking Washington and Wall Street. The power of greed and money to corrupt the most respected senior statesmen has been demonstrated. The rule by conspiracy imposed on the American people is exposed, as yet another government coverup unravels before Congressional hearings.

Founded by Pakistanis and Arabs in 1972, BCCI grew in 19 years into a multi-national giant with 350 branches in 70 countries. The United States was not one of those countries—officially, that is. Federal law and Wall Street's opposition bar these "upstart" Arabs and Pakistanis from owning American banks.

However, as an "offshore" bank with a branch in the Cayman Islands and agencies in Florida, BCCI could still do a lot of business in this country. Much of it concerned the laundry business—not clothes, but money. Suitcases full of dirty drug money, collected from all over the United States, could be moved through BCCI international channels and emerge as clean, untraceable bank deposits.

In 1988, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Customs Service, and the U.S. Attorney's office in Florida convicted six BCCI officials on laundering charges. In probing further into BCCI affairs, investigators found incriminating evidence that they rushed to their superiors in Washington.

They discovered that BCCI secretly controlled First American Bank in Washington, D.C.; a small bank in Encino, Calif.; and the First National Bank of Georgia. But the response to this news in Washington was a big yawn.

Since 1983, various federal agencies had heard rumors of malfeasance by BCCI officials, but no investigation was launched. An IRS investigator who wanted to pursue the accusations was told to lay off.

The money-laundering charge was settled by a plea bargain—a fine, but no jail time for anyone. This left the local BCCI connections intact. When Florida authorities sought to close down their operations in that state, a Justice Dept. official told them to leave BCCI alone.

In December 1988, an IRS official in Florida made a phone call to Federal Reserve officials reporting various BCCI scams and frauds. The officials took no action because "reports must be in written form."

Now that BCCI has collapsed, congressional committees are asking questions. Why was the administration shielding this "Bank of Crooks and Criminals?" How could the managers of First American Bank not be aware over a span of nine years that BCCI controlled their bank?



They admitted before the committee that they spoke to BCCI officials almost daily.

Adherence to two principles contributed to the phenomenal growth of BCCI. Offer financial services for almost any illegal operation a government or individual will pay for, and buy the services of strategic people wherever the bank operates.

But strategic people do not come cheap. Clark Clifford and his law partner, Robert Altman, made \$10 million dealing in their bank's stock with money borrowed from BCCI. They made more millions from fees for legal work for BCCI.

For less money, BCCI hired the best lobbyists in Washington. With their skills honed by service to the S&L crooks, these influence-peddlers could halt any hostile moves against BCCI.

A more subtle means of gaining friends in high places was through hefty contributions to worthy charities. They gave \$8.8 million to foundations headed by ex-President Jimmy Carter. This may have been a ploy to ease the way to the National Bank of Georgia, owned by Carter's associate, Bert Lance.

Money alone would not have preserved the coverup for nine years if the White House had not supported it. Who could believe that the Federal Reserve—the banks' watch dog—did not know what BCCI was doing right on their doorstep?

The BCCI was too useful to the CIA, FBI, and other conspiratorial bodies to be put out of business. Perhaps laundering drug money in Florida was a no-no, and had to be stopped. But the scams and frauds that robbed thousands of little people overseas bothered no one in Washington.

The \$23 billion in funds scattered about the world so freely was deposited in BCCI banks by small-business people and peasants in India, Africa and Latin America, and by Asian immigrants in Europe. They were proud to put their money in "their own" Third World bank.

These deposits were not invested in productive enterprises. Loans were made to shady characters who had no prospect of paying them back. Good money followed bad. The Bokal shipping company borrowed at least \$250 million in chunks of \$70 to \$80 million. The latter loans were made to pay accrued interest, which amounted in 1988 to \$395 million. Something had to give.

Because BCCI was worldwide, with no real center of command, it was possible to hide losses through "creative financing." *The Wall Street Journal* reports, "BCCI did not have an infinite supply of capital. It had to start inventing some. ... This was a full time occupation which involved the manufacture of documentation ... concealment of funds flow, etc."

Meanwhile, other loans were made to influential friends of the bank. Auditors traced \$2 billion in loans to sheikhs and others, with no record of repayment. An investigator spoke of "one cover up heaped upon another—of losses breeding frauds which in turn bred new frauds."

Authorities in London were aware of much of this, but they did nothing as the situation deteriorated. As in Washington, prominent Britons on the BCCI payroll blocked investigations. Suddenly, on July 5, 1991, the Bank of England, which regulates banks, shut down the London BCCI.

This wiped out the savings and current accounts of thousands of minority people in Britain. The effect was so devastating on minority businessmen that a British court delayed the execution of the order for four months.

Sheikh Zayed, Sultan of Abu Dhabi and one of the world's wealthiest men, is nominal owner of BCCI. He complains the British gave him no opportunity to recapitalize the bank with his millions. He sees the hand of British imperialism that does not want any Third World Bank to grow to the point where it could challenge Western financial institutions. It is doubtful that even the Sheikh's millions would be enough to make BCCI solvent. This "Bank of Crooks and Criminals" became less a bank and more an international conspiracy.

Spreading money around may have hooked individuals, but never bought acceptance by the banking fraternity. BCCI was "that Arab bank" to be used only when there was some dirty deal to be pulled off or big profit to be made."

Crooks and criminals ran BCCI, but American and British crooks and criminals in high places conspired with them. The losers are the millions of Third World people who have lost their money and their hope. ■

The critical role played by method in making philosophical generalizations

By CLIFF CONNER

This is the third in a series of articles on the philosophical foundations of Marxism. The articles are based on classes given by Cliff Conner at a Socialist Action national educational conference in August 1989.

In the previous articles, the author described the development of philosophy in ancient Greece. He showed that, although the first Ionian philosophers were materialists, idealist philosophy (as expounded by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) began to predominate. This was because idealism served as ideological support for a privileged ruling class.

Up to this point, there has been a certain simplicity to our story. It seems that from the standpoint of social justice and social progress, the materialists have been the "good guys" and the idealists have been the "bad guys."

But the correlation becomes much less clear-cut in more recent times. In 17th-century England, for example, we find the great materialist philosopher Thomas Hobbes in the most reactionary political camp, and we find the most militant revolutionaries attached to mystical religious sects. We also find the most important contribution to materialist philosophy being made by the great idealist philosopher René Descartes—who based his system on the proposition: "I think, therefore I am."

Descartes developed the notion of two real worlds, completely separate—one of the mind and one of matter. This was a more modern version of the idea that the gods exist but don't interfere in the world of nature.

Descartes said that we can't really examine the world of the mind, but we can examine the world of nature, and so he directed most of his attention to the material world. Many of the scientists and philosophers that he influenced only paid attention to what he had to say about the material world, and they ignored the other part.

On the other hand, Descartes' method was purely idealist. It was the same method Plato used. And I want to focus on this as one of the main points of this class, because it is such a common methodological error. It has even caused problems in the Marxist movement, as we will see.

A priori method of reasoning

What I'm talking about is the *a priori* method of reasoning. Plato took mathematics—and in particular, geometry—as his model of inquiry. In geometry, as you know, you start with certain very simple, basic propositions, or axioms, and by deductive logic you can discover a great body of truth, all by pure reason, all by just using your mind. Plato believed that that was the road to all truth. Any truth that couldn't be found by pure reason wasn't worth knowing.

Descartes also believed that all truth, all knowledge, could be deduced from basic *a priori* truths which he defined as "clear and distinct ideas." He tried to deduce a whole system of physics from a few axioms, but the results he achieved in physics are quite forgettable. The real advances in physics came from scientists like Galileo, who actually manipulated and observed physical objects as a way of determining physical laws.

Here we see counterposed two opposite methods of investigating nature. The idealist method is to try to determine the laws of physics by thinking—by deducing them from abstract first principles. The materialist method is to investigate the material world directly—to look at it, and touch it, and experiment with it.

Materialists like Galileo also used



Descartes: Developed the theory of two separate worlds—mind and matter.

'Here we see counterposed two opposite methods of investigating nature. The idealist method is to try to determine the laws of physics by thinking—by deducing them from abstract first principles. The materialist method is to investigate the material world directly—to look at it, and touch it, and experiment with it.'

their minds, of course. They reflected upon what they saw; they reasoned about their experiments. Their starting point, however, wasn't mind, but matter.

This is all pretty obvious, isn't it? Everybody should know this. What's the big deal? Well, as I said before, even people who consider themselves Marxists can get caught up sometimes in trying to argue from first principles. Let me give you a relatively recent example. (I say relatively recent, because up to now we haven't gotten beyond the 17th century.)

This involves the Cuban Revolution. There was a British Trotskyist organization that held the position that Cuba had not had a revolution but remained a capitalist country—and they could prove it. Look, they said, we've always agreed that to make a revolution in the epoch of imperialism a Leninist party is necessary. We all agree that there was no Leninist party in Cuba. Therefore, there could not have been a revolution in Cuba. It's as simple as one-two-three.

This is a classic example of *a priori* reasoning. It is always tempting because it is so much easier to come up with answers when you save yourself the trouble of actually looking at what's happening in the real world.

There's nothing wrong with using this kind of reasoning in a provisional way. In fact, it is necessary to do so. But if you reach a conclusion based on *a priori* reasoning, you can't assume that you've finished the job. You have to

test that conclusion against the material world to see if it holds water.

This is an important point, because Marxists are routinely accused of arguing from *a priori* principles. But dialectical materialism can't be treated as a set of abstract propositions from which you can deduce knowledge about the real world.

Friedrich Engels wrote a book to make this point. The central purpose of his "Anti-Duhring" was to show that Eugen Duhring's philosophical and political conclusions were worthless because they were derived from an *a priori* method.

Reject all generalizations?

There is a mirror-image problem of going too far in the opposite direction. Avoiding the *a priori* method does not mean rejecting all generalizations. Generalizations are indispensable to any method of obtaining scientific knowledge.

To take an up-to-date example: with regard to China today, what should our attitude be toward the reform wing of the bureaucracy represented by Zhao Ziyang? We could start by thinking in general terms. The Chinese bureaucracy is a Stalinist bureaucracy. Stalinist bureaucracies cannot be reformed. It follows that Zhao Ziyang is part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

That chain of reasoning is based upon the proposition that "all Stalinist bureaucracies are unreformable." Is that simply an *a priori* that should be rejected out of hand? Not at all. It is a

generalization based on more than half a century of historical experience with Stalinism.

That proposition was a hard-won generalization, paid for in blood, and we are not inclined to discard it lightly, without good reason, without some solid evidence to the contrary. We don't treat it as an absolute truth, but as a provisional conclusion that we will use as a basis for political action. If we simply rejected all such generalizations, we couldn't take any action; we'd be paralyzed.

The *a priori* method is an idealist method, but not all idealists were as thoroughly committed to it as Plato was. Aristotle, for example, was a much more down-to-earth kind of scientist. He wrote volumes and volumes on biology and he drew many conclusions by actually looking at nature, not by deduction from *a priori* principles.

Another form of idealism

But Aristotle was an idealist in another sense: his whole view of the world was a teleological one. Now, "teleological" is one of those \$25 words that just can't be avoided; there's no substitute for it. And since Marxists are often accused of teleological thinking, I think it's worth discussing.

Teleology is the proposition that everything that happens is a step toward some definite end; everything that happens is part of the unfolding of a predetermined plan that is built into nature. It is not hard to see where this idea comes from and why it seems attractive.

Consider Aristotle, who was one of the greatest biological observers of all time. Consider the acorn that invariably develops into an oak tree as if according to plan. Consider the chick embryo that grows into a chicken. Everywhere Aristotle looked he saw things apparently changing according to the unfolding of a built-in plan. And he generalized that to all of nature.

All "natural" motion, Aristotle thought, was an attempt by nature to reach a state of perfection. In physics, solid objects fall to earth because that is part of their built-in need to return to the center of the universe. The sun, moon, and stars go around the earth in perfect circles because that is their built-in plan.

Why is this an idealistic conception? Because if there is a built-in plan, then there must be some kind of universal mind or cosmic intelligence that devised the plan. Whether it is called God, or nature, or the absolute ideal, it is all the same thing—mind is assigned priority over matter. Furthermore, if everything in nature is striving toward some ideal, perfect state, then that must be true for humans and human society, too.

One of the major themes in the development of modern science has been the struggle against Aristotle's teleology. The biggest step forward was probably Darwin's explanation of evolution, which took the teleology out of biology.

Marx's method

How is it that Marxists—and even Marx himself—have been accused of teleological thinking? Well, didn't Marx say that there has been a natural progression in the development of human society from feudalism to capitalism, and that there is a natural next step to socialism? Doesn't that imply that society is developing according to an inner logic, or plan, toward some ideal state?

When summarized in this brief manner, Marx's view of history does bear some resemblance to a teleological schema, but the resemblance is only superficial.

First of all, Marx based his account of the development of societies in the past on a careful study of the historical evidence. Secondly, his projection of future social developments was founded on the same empirical basis. In principle, then, Marxism is no more teleological than Darwin's explanation of natural selection, or an astronomer's prediction of

(continued on next page)

Abstract art: a reflection of revolutionary times

In his opinion article in the August issue of *Socialist Action*, Franklin Balch initiated what has become a wide-ranging discussion on art. This was particularly brought on by his assertion that contemporary art has become "mired in irrelevant abstraction."

This is certainly true, but Balch neglected to point out that the visual arts are mired in irrelevant figurative work as well. To counterpose figurative art (specific mimesis) to abstract art (general, universal) is a fruitless debate.

In 1851, on the heels of the revolution of 1848, the great painter Gustave Courbet sent his paintings off to the Salon in Paris, the yearly show of French

OPINION

academism. His paintings, including the enormous "Burial at Ornans," were first exhibited in Ornans and other rural areas. By the time they arrived at the Salon, they were causing near riots.

Courbet's frank portrait of the emerging bourgeoisie had touched a sensitive nerve among Parisian society, and resulted in drunken debates raging before his paintings.

Let us look more closely at the "Burial." It is a figurative work; it shows particular burghers, with particular red noses. Yet it contains many abstract elements as well, in the way Courbet breaks up his lines, in the way the faces seem to float over the plane of their black garb, in the disjointed perspective that tilts the figures towards us.

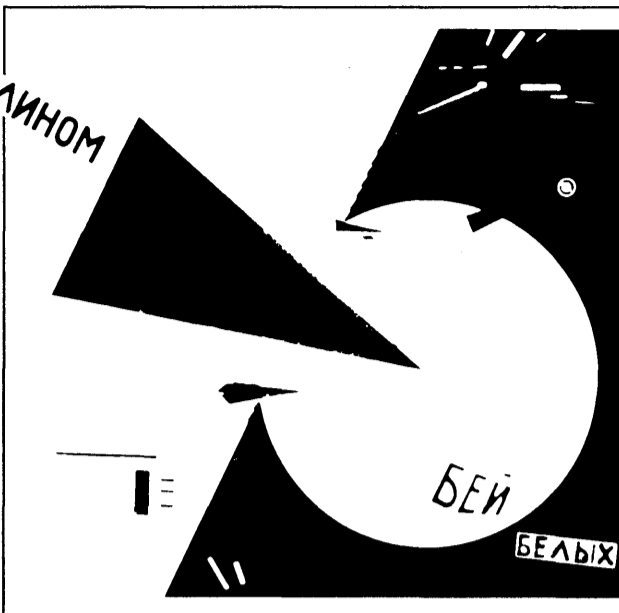
Let us take another example, a work by the great Soviet Constructivist El Lissitzky.

Inspired by mass spectacles and mobilizations of the workers on the boulevards, Soviet artists began to develop architecture based on open spaces, not the closed space of classical building. This new way of seeing began to be reflected in drawings and paintings. This work was completely non-objective, and appeared as forms floating in space.

And yet this work was designed to relate to the great mass of uneducated Soviet workers and peasants. In the particular example used here, the title is "Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge." Created in 1919, when the revolution was surrounded by counter-revolutionary White armies and fighting the imperialist encirclement, this work was quite specific in its form and content.

Roots in the past

Art may succeed or fail based not on whether it is abstract or figurative, but whether it is good or bad art. All great art contains much that is abstract and appeals to us on many conscious and unconscious levels. That is why the greatest art of the past, such as Egyptian or



El Lissitzky's "Beat the Whites With the Red Wedge"

Greek art, which had a far different specific meaning to its viewers, transcends time and still can evoke strong feelings from us today.

Abstract art, like all art, has roots in the art of past societies. Ideas, like commodities, are produced socially, and the images that artists create today are based on what they have seen before.

Much of the work of early Cubists, like Picasso and George Braque, was based on African art and African ways of seeing. In similar ways, the Constructivists and other schools which came out of the modernist movement—and the Russian Revolution—were influenced by Asian art and the national struggles that helped tear apart the old Czarist empire.

Here I must take exception to certain conclusions drawn by Samia Halaby in her reply to Balch in the October issue of *Socialist Action*. While I agree with much of what she has to say, I do not believe that "nationalism has no future." As we can see from liberation struggles from Central America to Eastern Europe, millions of people are mobilized in the fundamental struggle for the right to determine their own national destinies.

The democratic right to develop a unique art is as fundamental as the right to speak your own language or

wear your native dress. While we must recognize the destructive effects of cultural chauvinism of the imperialist powers and their allies, we must likewise recognize the progressive aspects of the oppressed nations struggling to develop their own cultural identity.

What better example of this than the Mexican mural movement, one of the high points of painting in this century. This movement was created not by individual geniuses, but by millions of Mexican workers and peasants, who—arms in hand—created a revolution that compelled the Mexican painters to come forward to decorate the buildings with the heroic story of their revolution.

A hunger for art

Balch asks if the visual arts have a future, and while there is merit to many of his criticisms of contemporary art, he misses the boat in assessing how much interest exists towards the arts.

It is true that painting and other "high" art remains primarily the domain of the upper classes, and reflects their demoralization and confusion. But in many ways these mediums have been surpassed by newer art forms like the electronic media, film-making, video, and performance art. Contemporary movies like "Do the Right Thing" or "Thelma and Louise," evoke wide-ranging discussions throughout society.

Today there is a great hunger for art. It is a reflection of the alienation that people feel from society. Although they desperately seek meaning in movies, literature and music, however, it is rarely found. There is a class content to art, and in our society that most often means the ideology of the ruling class, which remains as vacuous as their social vision.

Halaby ends her article with a somewhat puzzling call to artists. She says, "But instead of making art, let them prepare the best leadership parties for the working class."

It is the rare artist who is fortunate enough to survive on their art. Most of us are workers, and we like other workers can play an important role in organizing our class for the conquest of power. But artists also have a special role to play by making art—not the art that flatters the ruling class, but the art that educates, agitates, and inspires.

A revolutionary party is not simply a group of workers with the correct program, but also an organization of revolutionaries that can reach into the hearts of our fellow workers and inspire them to struggle. ■

...Method

(continued from previous page)

the next solar eclipse.

Nonetheless, it has often happened that Marxism has been misunderstood as a teleological doctrine—and not only by its enemies. The German Social Democratic Party, for example, held the teleological view before World War I that the downfall of capitalism was inevitable—guaranteed by an iron law of history.

This idea served to justify the erroneous political conclusion that the role of the revolutionary party is to wait. If capitalism will crumble all by itself, then the party's first obligation is to avoid political activities, like demonstrations or strikes, that would give the police an excuse to repress the party. I don't mean to suggest that this ideological error was the root cause of the German Social Democrats' failure as a revolutionary party, but it was part of the problem.

The 2000-year dominance of idealism that began with Plato came to an end with the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries. This ideological revolution was a product of a much more fundamental social revolution that was occurring in Western Europe and especially in England—namely, the rise to dominance of the capitalist mode of production.

Ideology of the bourgeoisie

The ideology of the rising bourgeoisie was not idealist, but materialist. Their materialism was of a specific kind, however, and it was expressed best by philosophers and scientists like Descartes, Hobbes, and Boyle. Their outlook came to be known as the

"mechanical philosophy." Although many of the mechanical philosophers were deeply religious people, their scientific thinking was conducted along strictly materialist lines.

Their particular brand of materialism, however, was hampered by some severe limitations. They considered everything in the material world to be explainable, in the final analysis, by mechanical principles. Even human beings were regarded as very elaborate machines. For that reason, this kind of materialism is called mechanical materialism.

Mechanical materialism arose just at the time that capitalism was beginning to transform industrial production through the use of machinery; it provided an ideology that suited the rising bourgeoisie perfectly.

Later, of course, after they became the ruling class, the capitalists found they faced a new threat from below, from the working class. The ideological benefits of idealism as a weapon in the class struggle once more became apparent.

Ruling-class ideology today is a melange of mechanical materialism and idealism—a wishy-washy agnosticism that can't make up its mind on the most fundamental philosophical questions. Most professional philosophers in American universities will tell you that the counterposition of materialism and idealism is a dead issue; no longer relevant.

For those who reject the ruling-class ideology, however, materialism is still very relevant. Without our materialist outlook, we would be completely unable to maintain our revolutionary bearings.

The advance notice for these classes gave them the title: "Dialectical Materialism and its Application to the Class Struggle Today." I hope nobody feels cheated by the fact that I've spent more time discussing the class struggle in ancient Greece than the class struggle

today, because there is a connection between the two.

The link between materialism as a philosophical point of view and our current political program lies in the method of historical materialism. Marx and Engels developed that method by analyzing the past: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," they wrote in the "Communist Manifesto." Then they applied that same method of historical materialism to the analysis of their contemporary political situation.

This method penetrates beneath the superficial appearance of events. The focus is not on individuals, but on social classes, and social classes are defined by their role in the process of economic production. Again, "being determines consciousness"—individuals play a role in political events that is strongly influenced by their class interests.

To take one example: without the method of historical materialism, we might be misled into thinking that the restoration of capitalism is imminent in Eastern Europe. Large numbers of workers in Eastern Europe say they don't like socialism, they don't care for Marxism, they are attracted to the American way of life, and so forth. If all of this is taken at face value, it would seem that a counterrevolution is in the offing.

But since the restoration of capitalism would not be in the workers' class interests, we are justified in doubting that that is what they are talking about. And sure enough, on closer inspection we find that when East European workers complain about socialism and Marxism, their real hostility is aimed at their repressive governments and against the Kremlin's "great-power chauvinism."

If they praise the American dream, they mean they want to raise their stan-

dard of living and have the right to organize independent trade unions and read uncensored newspapers. Nowhere are workers demanding the reprivatization of their factories or their national economies.

Impelled by class interests

What all this shows is that the workers are impelled by their material circumstances—their class interests—not in the direction of capitalism, but toward socialist democracy.

In American politics, our principled opposition to the Democratic and Republican parties results from a similar application of historical materialism. Democratic Party candidates like Bella Abzug or Jesse Jackson often appear attractive to people we work with in movements for social change. But our materialist understanding of the class struggle in ancient Greece and in 18th century France gives us a different perspective.

We know the class basis of the Democratic Party and we know that its material interests are fundamentally opposed to those of the women's movement and the struggle for Black liberation.

No matter how talented, sincere, or progressive-minded a Jesse Jackson or Bella Abzug may be, they cannot contribute to the process of social change as long as they are representing a political institution devoted heart and soul to defending the status quo.

I've tried to show that, from ancient Greece to the class struggle today, a materialist method is indispensable to a scientific understanding. But we will see that while a materialist outlook is necessary, it's not enough. It has to be a certain kind of materialism—dialectical materialism. We'll discuss dialectics in next month's issue of *Socialist Action*.

Yeltsin gets desperate: Market prices by New Year's Day?

By NAT WEINSTEIN

In Moscow, on Oct. 28, Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian republic, declared that the time had come to act "decisively, sternly, without hesitation."

Speaking to the Congress of Peoples Deputies, the highest parliamentary assembly in the Russian republic, Yeltsin warned that the people must brace themselves for the pain of a complete, instant decontrol of all prices to take place before the end of this year. Yeltsin went on to hold out the hope that the bitter medicine he wants to administer will cure the collapsing economy:

"I appeal to all citizens of Russia to understand that a one-shot change to market-controlled prices is a dire, compulsory but inescapable step. After a half year," he optimistically predicted, "prices will decline, consumer goods will begin to appear on the market. And by the fall of 1992, as I promised before the elections, the economy will stabilize, life will gradually begin to improve."

But there are at least two things wrong with Yeltsin's seemingly frank scenario. His medicine will be far more bitter than he lets on. First of all, he has no intention to let all prices peacefully find their levels in the market place. We can be certain that wages (the price of a day's work) will not be allowed to freely—or peacefully—rise in line with all other prices. This is because capitalist market relations dictate that the owners of all other commodities must be free to refuse to offer their goods for sale if the market price is too low, while workers must not be permitted to exercise the same right with the same degree of freedom.

And secondly, there is no evidence that even the most extreme leap can take Russia, or any of the other republics, onto a new economic playing field, where it is hoped that the laws of capitalism will pull these economies out of the tailspins they are in. It's certainly not likely for at least years to come—if at all!

Lessons of the Polish experience

Ironically, Yeltsin's "decision" to take a fateful running jump into a market-driven economy was made almost simultaneously with the Polish election, which registered a massive protest against the same medicine administered to the sick Polish economy. Poland's "reforms," widely regarded as the most extreme in Eastern Europe, have left Polish workers and their ailing economy sicker than ever.

Just prior to the Polish election an economist there, Tomas Telma, with the pro-capitalist consulting firm, Planecon, argued that Poland was on the road to capitalism. But, he said: "It may take Poland another five to seven years to get back to where it was in 1989."

The election results testified to the outrage of Polish workers, whose wages were kept under much greater constraint while prices freely rose in accord with the capitalist law of supply and demand. The result is that store shelves are now bulging with all kinds of quality goods and workers no longer have to stand in line for hours. But although there are now plenty of quality goods to buy without waiting, they mostly remain out of the workers' reach just the same.

And worse; living standards for the great majority are sharply down and unemployment has reached 11 percent of the workforce and is rising. However, widespread strikes by Polish workers forced President Lech Walesa's pro-capitalist government to pacify them by maintaining low, administered prices on vital necessities and by making other ameliorating concessions.

Thus the economy remains in crisis



Yeltsin's plan will mean increased misery for Russian workers and peasants.



'The attempt to retrogress from a socialized economic system to a capitalist, market-driven economy is proving to be far more difficult than anyone imagined.'

because the resistance of workers has blocked the Walesa regime from achieving its goal of a "free" market. That goal requires elimination of the remaining social guarantees. Despite inroads already made, these guarantees still keep a firmer floor under wages and a higher level of security for the unemployed than is possible in a truly market-driven economy.

But major capitalist investments will not be made until the key to a real market economy is in place. That key is a level of worker insecurity that will give the purchasers of labor power the upper hand in maintaining the lowest possible labor costs.

And even then, the huge costs required to build new modern plants or modernize the old ones would be justified only if there were markets for the avalanche of new competitive goods that would pour forth. This dilemma has not failed to cross the minds of potential investors in the capitalist world.

So far in every one of these countries the privatizers have held back from taking decisive steps toward a market system out of fear that it would provoke workers to take actions that might prove uncontrollable. The ruling groups know that any successful major defensive struggle may not stop there. Such defensive victories are an invitation to go further, to mount a counter-offensive to gain new ground. And, they know, worker victories in one sector have the nasty habit of inspiring workers

elsewhere to follow the example of their victorious class sisters and brothers.

The attempt to retrogress from a socialized economic system to a capitalist, market-driven economy is proving to be far more difficult than anyone imagined. The most aggressive campaign yet to leap to capitalism, in Poland, has not met with success. And, ironically, Poland is currently in a capitalist-style recession just the same. Moreover, in all of these countries, which are still far from crossing over into capitalist "paradise," a new crop of entrepreneurs manages to continue to add themselves to the growing ranks of ex-Communist Party millionaires.

This does little to induce workers and farmers to accept the much greater sacrifices needed before foreign capital will agree to invest on a scale sufficient to at least bring the economy to pre-1989 levels—much less to fulfill the promise of Western-style living standards. Meanwhile, world imperialism continues to stall, even in providing emergency assistance to the dangerously destabilized Soviet regime.

Can history be turned back?

It took thousands of years of class society to develop an elaborate system of commodity exchange before capitalism could come into existence. The pre-existing slave and feudal societies permitted the benign growth of markets in every village, town and city—an indispensable precondition for capitalism. In the course of many

centuries, nascent capitalist markets proliferated. And when the further development of markets and the capitalist mode of production was blocked by the feudal system, it could only go further by smashing down the old social order, by social revolution.

Even before the overthrow of feudal landlords, the new economic mechanism was already in place and functioning. All the remaining feudal restraints on the exchange of commodities were abolished in one stroke. The most important blow against the power of the feudal lords, the freeing of the serfs, was at the same time the unlocking of a vast supply of free labor for capitalist exploitation.

That opened the door to a much accelerated expansion of capitalist production and ultimately an integrated world marketplace.

For serfs, their transformation from being chained to the land to being chained to the capitalist class amounted, on balance, to an enormous leap forward. In the France of 1789, the masses were spurred to revolutionary struggle to carry through the capitalist revolution. Their battle cry was the truly inspiring slogan: "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality!" We don't hear such lofty slogans coming from the mouths of the masses in Eastern Europe. We hear only their cries of pain and the snoring of aspiring capitalists as they wheel and deal, producing nothing but misery for the masses and personal fortunes for the few.

When the political representatives of French capitalism, in the 18th century, called on the masses of urban plebeians and rural serfs to join in a glorious capitalist revolution they were able to get an enthusiastic response from millions prepared to die for a system of freedom and equality under the law and the promise of economic progress.

Similarly, when the political representatives of Russian workers, in 1917, called on the masses to struggle for land, peace and bread—and then for the overthrow of Czarism and capitalism to achieve it, millions were again prepared to die for the promise of a better life.

Where is the inspiration?

But it's not the same when an entirely reactionary social group attempts to restore an outmoded social system. History is not on the side of those who want to make the clock run backward.

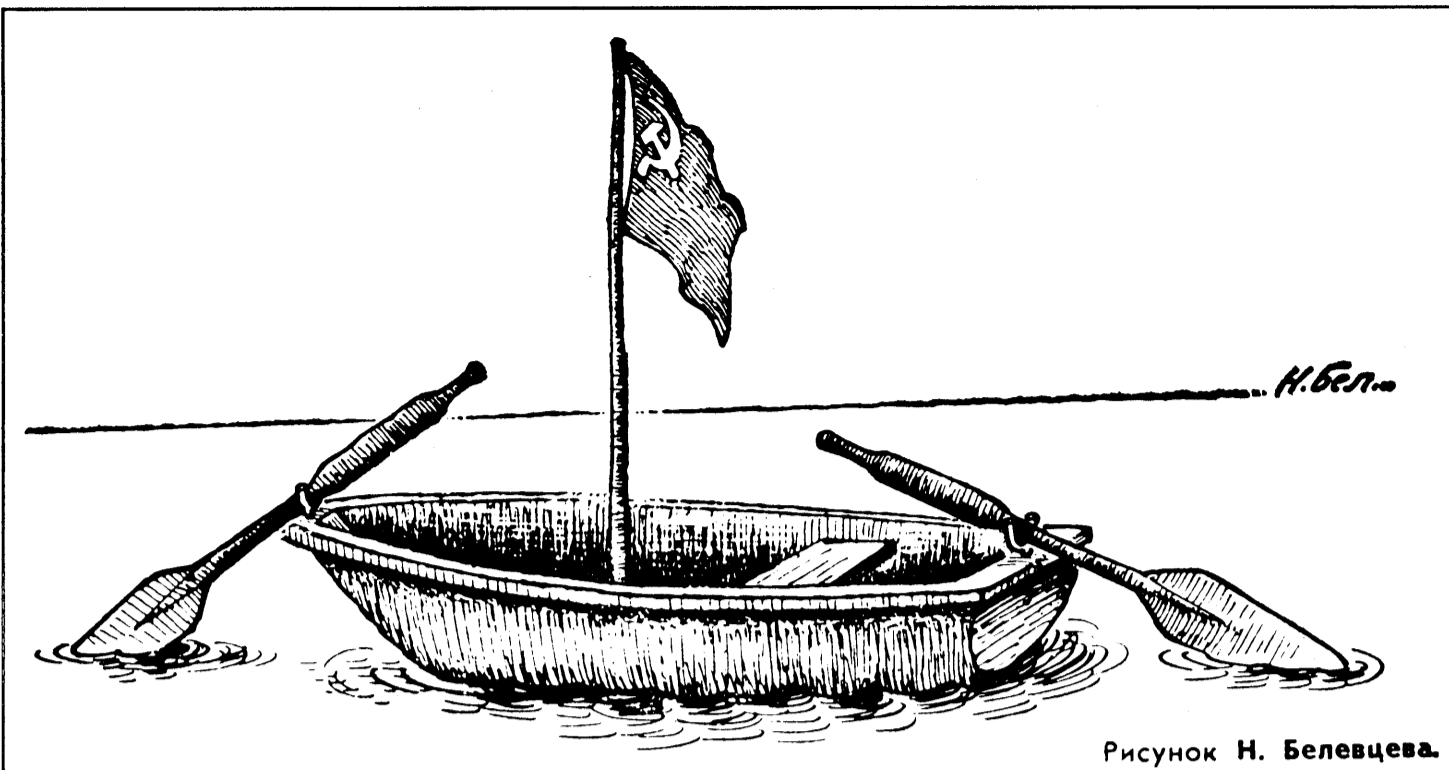
What slogans can the developing owning classes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union raise to inspire the masses to sacrifice for so-called reforms that not only go backward but leave the same oppressive bureaucratic caste—turned capitalist—to rule over a privatized economy?

The Soviet privatizers began their march toward capitalism in 1985 with control of the means of production and of the state firmly in their grasp—something available to no other force in history which sought to make fundamental changes in the social order. But even with this enormous advantage, they have failed to make a breakthrough anywhere. One grand plan after another has bit the dust because of the resistance of the workers.

Gorbachev's *perestroika*, a scheme for making a gradual transition to capitalism, failed. The much heralded 500-day plan went down the drain before it could get off the drawing boards. Yeltsin's latest plan may well meet a similar fate.

It is symptomatic that despite Yeltsin's tough-sounding talk, his main message amounts to a plea to the workers to accept further sacrifices. His argument boils down to the bare assertion that things have to be made much worse before they can get better.

In any case, the showdown will come when the bureaucracy and its allies in the disintegrating Soviet Union conclude that capitalism can be brought back only by naked force and violence. It is unlikely that Yeltsin, or any of his counterparts in the rest of Eastern Europe, has yet reached such a conclusion. And when they do bite the bullet, whatever pro-capitalist successes might be achieved in Eastern Europe, it will not be decisive. The game won't be over until it's over in the land of the October Revolution. ■



Cartoon in Oct. 24 *Pravda* indicates that everyone has abandoned the Soviet ship of state.

National movements keep pressure on crumbling Soviet state apparatus

By GERRY FOLEY

Since the failure of the coup at the end of August, the structures of the Soviet state have continued to crumble.

Turmoil and tensions have grown among the peoples of Muslim tradition, threatening to open up a major new front of the national democratic struggles. There have been blowups in Tazhikistan, for example, where the local neo-Stalinists tried an adventure of their own, as well as among the Chechen-Ingush and the Tatars.

But even where the old party leaders remained firmly in control—in Azerbaijan and, in particular, in Ukraine—they have been forced to maneuver in such way as to weaken the Stalinist state as a whole. Thus, before the failed coup, nine republics were prepared to sign the new Treaty of Union, and a tenth, Armenia moved toward a new association.

But now, both Azerbaijan and Ukraine have even refused to sign the new treaty for economic cooperation among the republics, which involves far fewer commitments than Gorbachev's shipwrecked new Treaty of Union. On Oct. 18, representatives of only eight republics—Russia, Armenia, Tazhikistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Byelorussia, Turkmenia, and Uzbekistan—finally put their signatures to the economic treaty.

Where is Ukraine going?

The most serious defection is that of Ukraine, the second largest Soviet republic and a vital source of foodstuffs. On the front page of *Pravda* of Oct. 21, Aleksandr Chernyak commented:

"In the new home, there are so far eight rooms. Not all the republics adhered to the treaty. It is impossible to conceive of the Union without Ukraine. But the representative of Ukraine at the ceremony, Ivan Plyushch, said that Ukraine does not want to 'slam the door.' It will be a member of the economic commonwealth, and will certainly sign the treaty, after bilateral negotiations are completed with the other republics. In Moldavia also, there is a desire to come into economic union. In Azerbaijan, the debates are continuing."

Gorbachev himself subsequently stressed that the economic union was unthinkable without the participation of Ukraine.

Western experts, according to Serge Schemann in the *New York Times* of Oct. 30, have also expected Ukraine to eventually go into the economic union. After all, the great majority of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet deputies were members of the Communist Party until it was suspended after the coup—as was the president of

the republic, Leonid M. Kravchuk.

Until they were thrown off balance by the failure of the neo-Stalinist coup, they were fervent opponents of "separatism." Once their fright is over, they might be expected to settle back into their old ways.

In particular, Kravchuk has to try to hold onto the stolen clothes of the national democrats until after the Ukrainian presidential election of Dec. 1, in which he faces a strong challenge from the national democratic movement, Rukh. Schemann noted that in the presidential race, "former Communists have emerged as some of the most ardent supporters of independence."

However, according to Schemann, both Western governments and the Soviet political leaders are beginning to come to the conclusion that it will be difficult to stop the momentum toward independence in Ukraine.

Up until now, the West has looked with alarm at the motion toward independence of the second Soviet republic. On his trip to the USSR in July, Bush even warned against a drive to independence, and earned the denunciation of Rukh leader Ivan Drach.

More recently, the British business magazine *The Economist* called for putting economic pressures on Ukraine to prevent it from building its own army.

Ukrainian "separatism" remains a prime target of the slightly reconstructed *Pravda*. But whereas before the coup failure, its denunciations were threatening, now they have taken the form mainly of lamentations about the "sad" state of affairs in Ukraine.

CP officials attack Gorbachev

Symptomatic of these tensions is the fact that the leadership of the now suspended Communist Party of Ukraine has expressed the sharpest criticism of Gorbachev since the failure of the neo-Stalinist coup. Thus, in its Oct. 22 issue, *Pravda* ran an interview with Stanislav Gurenko (beginning on the front page), in which the discomfited party boss said:

"The party has been dealt a heavy blow. But the most terrible thing, perhaps, is that it was sacrificed by the leadership of the CPSU. In the political history of the world, has there been an instance when a leader abandoned his party in a difficult moment without even calling a Central Committee plenum, and did not just leave but, using the position of the president of the country, actually gave his blessing to the destruction of the party structures, the seizure of the party property, and did not even permit the calling of a congress or a Central Committee plenum to determine

the future fate of the party? A lot of people are asking whether the former general secretary is still a Communist."

Gurenko went on to say that the ban on the Communist Party was designed to keep it out of the electoral campaign. The fact of the matter is that the enlightened leaders of the bureaucracy could see that the CP was certain to decline and drag the bureaucracy down with it. They are seeking new means, such as presenting the now "nonparty" Kravchuk as a moderate champion of independence.

The poet Boris Oleinyk, another figure pushed forward by the bureaucracy as a "moderate," has proclaimed the formation of a new party, the Union of Democratic Forces of the Odessa Region, which may be intended as a model for forming a Ukrainian equivalent of the Movement for Democratic Reforms, the all-Union bureaucracy's main attempt so far to find a substitute for the CP.

Odessa is a logical place to start such an effort, since it is the most Russianized center in the republic.

National movements on rise

However, whereas in most of the old Soviet Union the old Communist Party bureaucrats can afford to lay low for a while, in Ukraine they face the immediate threat of the rise of the national democratic movement.

Kravchuk and the dominant section of the bureaucracy have clearly decided to try to ride the wave, but it is understandable that another section—those directly responsible for the CP apparatus—think that this is too dangerous a game. According to all experience so far, it is.

For example, the sectors of the CP in the Baltics that tried to ride the national democratic wave there opened the way for the splintering of the CP and its disappearance as a major factor in political life. In Lithuania, the last Moscow loyalist CP leaders barely had time to make their getaway after the failure of the August coup before being arrested by Lithuanian forces.

In Ukraine also, the national democratic movement has a radical anti-bureaucratic tendency, reflected by the keynote speech of Drach at the Second Congress of Rukh in November, in which he denounced the bureaucracy as exploiters of the workers and *perestroika* as a plan to increase the exploitation of the working people and allow the bureaucrats to assume the position of outright owners of the enterprises. (See *International Viewpoint*, Dec. 10, 1990.)

The Ukraine includes important centers of a new radical workers' movement as

well, in the Donbass and in the Lviv coal fields, which have exercised an important pressure on Rukh.

Ukraine seems likely to be the first decisive test of the attempts to restabilize bureaucratic rule after the failure of the neo-Stalinist coup. In any event, it is will certainly be a crucial part of the anti-bureaucratic revolution in what the bureaucracy no longer dares to call "Soviet Union."

The moment of truth seems to be approaching very rapidly. Yeltsin's declaration of a program on Oct. 28 for fast (and "painful") transition to a market economy, and his statement that elections were an obstacle to economic reform, represented a bold (or desperate) dropping of the demagogic mask that he has worn up until now.

It seems significant that at the same time as he announced this program, Yeltsin also warned that failure to achieve it could "doom a state with a history of many centuries to collapse." Thus, he is apparently also donning the crown of the continuity of the Russian Empire previously worn by Gorbachev, and the other chiefs of the all-Union bureaucracy before him. This must certainly have set alarms ringing in Ukraine. ■

Gerry Foley completes national speaking tour

In the aftermath of the victory of the Soviet working people over the attempted coup, *Socialist Action* sent staff writer Gerry Foley on a speaking tour of 13 cities.

He spoke at forums and college campuses in New York; Boston; Baltimore; New Brunswick, New Jersey; Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio; Chicago; Milwaukee; Minneapolis; Kansas City; Los Angeles; San Francisco; and Portland, Ore.

Foley explained that the revolutionary process in the Soviet Union was objectively part of the worldwide fight for working-class power—that is, socialism—and in fact, the most advanced part at the moment. The victory of the Soviet workers, he said, should be an inspiration to working people in other countries—and in the United States, in particular, where workers have suffered a long series of defeats in the last decade.

Far from being a counterrevolution, in which the working people and the masses are reduced to passivity and despair, the process in the USSR was marked by the activity of the Soviet masses and workers, by their gaining confidence in their ability to change society. Their struggle against the bureaucracy's concrete steps to restore capitalism was more important than any ideological confusion that might exist in their heads because of the experience of Stalinist dictatorship.

Foley hailed the role of the national democratic movements in driving breaches into the totalitarian system and opening the way for a new workers' movement to arise.

The view of the Soviet developments presented in these talks was thus fundamentally different from that in the capitalist media, as well as that of the reformist and Stalinist-influenced left.

During the question period in some cities, there were debates with representatives of currents that believe that the Soviet Union has been capitalist for a long time and that, consequently, there is no fundamental change now. In New York, there was an exchange with neo-Stalinists who consider the national movements reactionary and anti-Semitic.

In Boston and New York, representatives of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency spoke along with Foley. ■

South Africa: Maneuvers proliferate as ANC pushes forward Patriotic Front

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

The South African ruling class has decided that apartheid must go. The Black revolt of the mid-1980s, as well as international sanctions, were proving too costly. The government of President F.W. de Klerk was given the job of carrying through a process of reform from above.

One by one, most of the apartheid laws were dismantled. The Black liberation movement was granted major concessions—such as the freeing of African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.

Promises were made that Blacks would soon be given representation within the government itself. The ANC maintains that De Klerk's government should resign in favor of a multi-racial "interim government." De Klerk rejects the proposal, but concedes that Black leaders might be given posts in his cabinet in order to form a new "collective leadership."

The price that the government has demanded from the ANC is that they call off the armed struggle, downplay the mass struggle, and participate as "responsible" partners in a negotiated settlement.

And so, for the past year, "talks about talks" have gone round and round.

Unfortunately, neither the ANC nor the government has dared to openly address the question that is most pertinent to these political negotiations—who should hold political power in South Africa?

There are only two choices: The oppressed Black working class, or the current rulers—the wealthy owners of industry, banks, mines, and agribusiness. Since these two classes have no substantial goals in common, they will be unable to find a satisfactory "settlement."

Patriotic Front conference

During the weekend of Oct. 25-27, the ANC met with its traditional rival, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), and close to 90 other groups in order to set the terms under which they will meet the government in negotiations.

The conference was held in Durban, South Africa. Organizations that attended the conference included the two leading Black labor federations—the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the National Congress of Trade Unions (NACTU).

A number of political, religious, and professional groups also took part, including the South Africa Council of Churches, the South Africa Catholic Bishops Conference, the mixed-race Labour Party, the Democratic Party (closely tied to the Anglo American corporation), and parties from the Bantustans and other apartheid-based structures.

A majority of the 300 delegates at the Durban meeting voted to form a new "Patriotic Front."

The idea of the Patriotic Front, as the ANC originally explained it, was to bring the Black liberation organizations together under a common platform, which they would then take forward into an All-Party Conference, which is planned to begin soon. The actual front, however, includes organizations from a much broader range of political viewpoints and class interests than had been first proposed. It even includes pro-capitalist "liberals."

Yet enthusiasm for the front is not unanimous. One major Black organization, the Azanian Peoples Organization (AZAPO), did not attend the Durban meeting.

AZAPO was one of the original conveners of the conference, together with the ANC and the PAC. Only days before

the conference, however, an ANC-PAC liaison committee informed reporters that AZAPO would be excluded from the

committees set up to prepare for the conference. The decision to exclude AZAPO came about on the urging of two of the

WOSA refuses to sign Peace Accords



Over 3000 people have been killed so far this year in violent clashes in South Africa's Black community. The African National Congress (ANC) charges that most of the attacks have been organized by a "third force" within the South African government in order to eliminate and harass ANC activists.

On Sept. 14, the ANC signed Peace Accords with the government and Inkatha, a conservative movement based among the Zulu people. But the Accords have done little to stop the violence. Over 150 people have died since the agreement was signed.

Several political groups refused to sign the Peace Accords. These groups included the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), the Azanian Peoples Organization (AZAPO), and the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA).

WOSA explained in a press statement why it rejected the Accords. WOSA pointed out that, despite the hopes of millions of people, "violence will persist because it is endemic to the system of apartheid-capitalism, because it will be promoted by right-wing groups, because an illegitimate and undemocratic government as De Klerk's is cannot avoid violence against the oppressed and exploited, because the mass struggle and strikes will not stop."

Following are several of the key reasons why WOSA said it refused to sign the accords:

1) "The peace mechanisms spelt out in the accords amount to co-optation of the political organizations as support structures to the SAP/SADF [South African Police/South African Defense Force] government. The political organizations and trade unions will sit on the regional and local peace committees along with the police and SADF, the local tribal authorities, churches, industry, and business.

"They will act as eyes and ears of the police, they will make rules for marches, rallies and meetings, and will cooperate with the police in identifying people responsible for 'unrest.'"

2) "We refused to sign a document which recognized this white minority government or the Bantustan governments as legitimate. WOSA believes that until [the] government unconditionally concedes the convening of a constituent assembly with full powers to decide the future of South Africa, until this illegitimate and undemocratic government ceases to exist, WOSA cannot accept that

they have ceased to be our enemies. We are unable to sign peace with our enemies."

3) "WOSA refused to sign the Peace Accords because it calls for the disbanding of all Self-Defense Units and allows for the arrest of all persons in possession of unlicensed firearms and other weapons. New, so-called Self-Protection Units, which work with the police and SADF, will be formed in place of Self-Defense Units.

"The Accords not only gives permission to the police to arrest all activists in defense structures, but also expects local leaders who serve on the peace committees to identify those in possession of weapons and even assist in arresting them. WOSA refused to sign because we will not do the dirty work of the police, and because we do not believe that disbanding Self-Defense Units can bring peace to the townships.

4) "The Accords requires those who signed to provide the police with the full names, addresses, and contact numbers of all local leaders and activists. It also gives protection to people who inform on their comrades in the name of keeping the peace.

5) "The so-called Peace Accords also criminalizes all 'unrest' activity and create special criminal courts to rapidly punish those responsible for 'unrest.' Social unrest, which effectively means mass action, is thus transformed from a liberating process into a destructive force, the consequences of which have to be corrected.

"In times of 'unrest' the peace committees will have to identify 'culprits' and hand them over to the special criminal courts agreed to in the Accords. This will provoke terrible divisions among local leaders and supporters. If WOSA were to sign such an agreement it means that we would agree to betray local people active in the liberation struggles. We therefore refused to sign."

In summary, WOSA stated: "The gist of the so-called development proposals is to make the oppressed and exploited majority, who are the victims of apartheid-capitalism, and the victims of violence, feel responsible for these crimes against them and to rope them into patching up the system whenever it breaks down.

"How to stop the violence? There is an alternative to the collaborationist Peace Accords: Build Peace From Below!" ■

"liberal" parties participating in the conference, the Democratic Party and the Labour Party.

Their action came in response to a letter that AZAPO Secretary-general Don Nkadameng had directed to the heads of the Bantustan parties who were invited to the conference. The letter demanded that those leaders resign from the government-associated bodies they serve on.

In a statement to the press, AZAPO spokesperson said that they had "learnt with dismay" of their exclusion, and that they found it regrettable that the Patriotic Front was being "torpedoed by a seeming need to accommodate liberals and puppets."

Nevertheless, the AZAPO letter gained a favorable response from several Black groups. Reports indicate, for example, that the youth group of the ANC broke with its parent organization to solidarize with the content of the letter. The NACTU labor federation also expressed approval.

A similar point of view was expressed by another organization, the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA). In a press statement, WOSA announced that it would attend the conference in order to present its proposals for a "fighting alliance of the oppressed

(continued on page 17)

What about nationalizations?

What economic policies does the ANC advocate for a future South Africa? In recent weeks, ANC spokespeople have given a confusing range of answers to the question.

It all started when the ANC suggested that one-third of the assets held by whites should be pooled for redistribution among Blacks. The response from "liberal" capitalists was instantaneous. "Communism!" screeched Democratic Party leader Zac de Beer.

Then Nelson Mandela said that the ANC still planned to nationalize the mines and some financial institutions. At that point, even President De Klerk joined in the fray: "I will not say 'yes' to a system that undermines private property ownership," he declared, reminding the ANC that negotiations hung in the balance.

The ANC began to backtrack. Pallo Jordan, the ANC's head of information, conceded that nationalizing the mines would not make sense because they are a "wasting asset." Another ANC spokesperson pointed out that Mandela also said that the ANC had no "ideological attachment to nationalization," and that the ANC would consider other ways to redress the imbalance of wealth.

But Tito Mboweni, head of the ANC's economic planning division, maintained that the ANC membership demanded nationalization and the issue would not be wiped off the agenda.

A similar round-robin range of views was displayed after ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa indicated that a Black majority government would not be eager to honor international loans given to the current regime.

Stanley Mabizela, ANC deputy head of international relations, then informed the press that a new government would have to honor such loans. Finally, another spokesperson, Carl Niehaus, "clarified" the point: Ramaphosa had merely said that the ANC reserved the right to "evaluate" such loans.

The ANC leadership knows that it is walking on thin ice. On the one hand, its big business "friends" have baited their hook with lucrative contracts, offers of foreign aid, and partnership in the government.

On the other hand, many rank-and-file ANC members have become restive—demanding decisive action in order to achieve democracy and a better life for working people and the poor.

And so, where does the ANC stand on basic economic issues? In the words of President De Klerk, "The ANC is blowing hot and cold."—M.S.

Women and the *intifada*

The outbreak of the *intifada* in December 1987 was marked by the entry into action of new participants in the struggle of the Palestinian people; youth and women. The role of the latter in the struggle has shaken the traditional organization of Palestinian society. The weight of tradition and the rise of the fundamentalist movement, however, have created an increasingly difficult situation for Palestinian women. Below we are reprinting an article from the Oct. 28, 1991, issue of *International Viewpoint*, which reproduced it from *El Fanar*, the newspaper of a Palestinian feminist group in Haifa, Israel.

Two significant stages can be distinguished in the changes in the status of Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The first period opened with the outbreak of the *intifada* in December 1987, and continued throughout the first year of this movement.

The first three months of the *intifada* were characterized by a wave of spontaneous and massive popular mobilization, affecting social layers which had previously hardly participated in action and political struggle; women, workers, peasants, inhabitants of refugee camps, and so on. This participation was reflected by the self-organization of the masses in the framework of popular committees, charged with the management of everyday life, which expressed the will of these sectors to emancipate themselves, take control of their affairs and establish a new scale of moral values.

Challenge to patriarchy

Women challenged patriarchal traditions and customs which confined them in the role of passive and weak creatures whose essential task was the care of children and the house.

In the context of the *intifada*, Palestinian women began to participate fully in all areas of political action, breaking down patriarchal traditions, taking part in the non-traditional tasks assumed until then by the men (participation in and taking of responsibility for leadership, guard committees, and so on).

At the end of the first three months, when the popular committees were brought under the control of the different political factions, the mobilization of women continued in spite of everything, but with a certain regression, marked by the return of women to their traditional functions. Their activity in the popular



committees and the neighborhood committees was then reduced to teaching and household economy; women took no part in the vigilante committees and in the constitution of what later became known as the Popular Army.

The gains of this first period of the *intifada* could be summed up thus; the emergence of popular organizational structures at the initiative of the people, which allowed broad participation; the emergence of a new scale of values which favor the participation of women in non-traditional areas, and, consequently, the waning of a number of traditional attitudes; the weakening of the absolute power of the father, the domination of brothers over sisters and the appearance of more democratic relations inside the family; the beginning of a withering fidelity to the family in favor of national fidelity; the dislocation of the social order which existed before the *intifada*.

The second stage of the radicalization of women in the occupied territories dates from around the end of the first year of the *intifada* and more precisely the banning of the popular committees in July 1988.

The struggle then shifted from the

general popular mobilization to clandestinity, reserved for the cadres and the main political factions; groups specializing in specific forms of struggle (the throwing of stones appeared). This has led to a dangerous social and political phenomenon; the glorification of militarism in all its forms in place of popular mobilization.

The decline in the level of mobilization has obviously engendered an overall regression in the participation of women, marginalizing them and setting back the democratic evolution opened with the beginning of the *intifada*. One of the aspects of this regression has been the appearance of the "culture of the *intifada*", characterized by austere behavior—the forbidding of feasts and leisure activities, which have been reduced to watching the television. These norms of conduct obviously affect women—who are subject to control of their behavior and dress.

Finally, what could be called the "culture of the veil" appeared which has set women backwards and reinforced their social and political isolation. This emergence of the "culture of the veil" is also due to the respect shown by all tenden-

cies of the political leadership to reactionary customs and traditions and to their incapacity to impose a political and social program for the democratic transformation of the social structures, an unavoidable condition for genuine national emancipation.

Field free for fundamentalists

This incapacity has helped to leave the field free for the fundamentalist movement—it has a clear political and social program, which has become an alternative because of the inconsistency, indeed the non-existence, of the secular national movement and the mass movement

Women being a pillar of the traditional patriarchal order, the fundamentalist movement understood that the consciousness of the latter had evolved because of the struggle.

They were conscious of the energy of women and the menace they represented to the former retrogressive order. They launched a virulent campaign to exclude women from social and political life and relegate them to the household and the home, launching appeals for the control of the conduct of the woman in the family, forbidding them to mix with men, proscribing all permissiveness and calling for the reinforcement of the power of the head of the family (his control over behavior, his right to constraint, coercion and the use of violence).

The fundamentalist movement enlarged its influence through appealing for the wearing of the veil, presenting this as a national duty—the proof of respect for the martyrs.

The wearing of the veil was officially imposed in Gaza in the summer of 1988, by slogans and communiques, as well as by the use of terror, physical aggression perpetrated by groups of children and adolescents against women who refused to do so.

This setback of the second period of the *intifada* can be illustrated by several phenomena: the decline of popular participation in general in political action, and of women in particular—only a small minority of politicized and organized women have persisted; the number of early marriages is growing and the age of marriage has dropped from 21 years before the *intifada* to 17 years; the desertion of the primary and secondary schools and universities, for several reasons—amongst others, the closure of these establishments—but also because of the early marriages and the lack of family help; measures of encouragement to motherhood and imposition by terror of the wearing of the veil; reinforcement of the family unit and the role of maternity to the detriment of the political organization of women. ■

... Mideast talks

(continued from page 1)

reinforcing their bargaining position by occupying more territory and dealing punishing blows to their armed Arab adversaries in Lebanon.

Nevertheless, it is most probable that a deal will be patched together after much kicking and screaming by the Arab delegations. Besides aiming to get as much as they can for each of their constituencies, they must demonstrate to their peoples that a deal which puts the Arab stamp of approval on the Zionist settler state was made only under the greatest duress.

However, while the demand may be negotiable for Israel's withdrawal from territories taken from neighboring Arab states after Israel was first established, it is improbable that even a temporary peace could be established unless Israel agrees to the Palestine delegation's demand for a "two-state" solution—if not immediately, then after a trial period of "autonomy" within the boundaries of Israel.

The PLO has long since felt compelled to abandon its demand for a democratic secular Palestine, within which all peo-



ples—Arabs, Jews and other constituencies—could live side by side as equals. Nevertheless, this aspiration continues to burn in the hearts of Palestinians and other Arabs.

Israel demanded—and got—separate negotiations between it and each of the Arab delegations. Compelled by its

American master to negotiate a new relationship with the Arab states, this, at least, gives it the opportunity to play off each against the other. But it is unlikely that whatever deal is finally arranged will hold up for long.

Beneath the surface of American imperialism's new order, the Arab revolution

continues to smolder. Whatever temporary arrangements may be made, atrocities like that being committed by the Israeli army in southern Lebanon today will continue to feed the flames of rebellion. The world revolution, along with its Arab component, cannot be indefinitely contained. ■

Haitians resist military coup financed by the rich



Over 60,000 Haitians demonstrated in New York City to protest the military coup.

By JIM HENLE

On the evening of Sept. 29, a military coup in Haiti, led by General Raoul Cedras, overthrew the government of Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The head of the first democratically-elected government in Haiti was fired upon and later seized and put on a plane to Paris.

Aristide was elected president on Dec. 16, 1990, during OAS (Organization of American States)-supervised national elections. The charismatic priest, who espouses the tenets of liberation theology, had an immense following among the poverty-stricken masses in Haiti.

He was elected by an overwhelming majority, receiving over 70 percent of the votes cast in an election that represented a new stage of the popular upsurge that led to the fall of the hated Duvalier dictatorship and continued to deepen afterward. In his campaign, Aristide had vowed, "The people is the main actor; we will do only what the people tells us to do."

But the coup has changed all that. As word of the coup spread the next day, barricades went up across Port-au-Prince, stopping all traffic, while the crowds armed themselves with stones, machetes, axes, and sticks.

Across the country, angry Haitians attacked the homes of officials and businessmen known for their support for the military. Crowds chanted, "If Aristide is having problems, we'll solve them with rubber," a reference to the burning tire treatment known as "necklacing" in South Africa.

The military responded with tear gas and bullets, leaving at least 140 dead in the first days alone.

By most estimates, the military has killed over a thousand people since the coup. But despite the slaughter, according to *Haiti Progrès* (Oct. 2-8), "The people is far from being demobilized and is supported by some of the soldiers. In fact, in the provinces, many soldiers deserted, affirming their solidarity with the people, and in a counter-offensive against the *Macoute* army, at Petit Goâve, the people seized the barracks."

General strike

On Oct. 21, at Cayes and in the southern region, a general strike was 100 percent solid. Some 40 popular organizations called for a general strike on Oct. 23, demanding the return of Aristide to

'By most estimates, the military has killed over a thousand people since the coup.'

power. Their call stated that they should not "remain passively waiting for the OAS or the UN to offer us the return of Aristide to the presidency like a gift or as the result of negotiations with Cedras and Honorat. Our real guarantee is the mobilization of the people, mobilization to demand the respect for the Constitution and the popular will." (*Haiti Progrès*, Oct. 23-29)

The government, unable to stop the strike, declared a holiday that day for the funeral of Christian Democrat Sylvio Claude, who had been a rare casualty of the angry crowds. Sylvio Claude died on the evening of Sept. 29, when a crowd surrounded him and gave him the punishment of "Père Lebrun," i.e., the necklace. His body was then dragged through the streets. The crowd had found evidence on Claude that he had foreknowledge of the coup.

When the general strike proved effective, the military pretended that everyone had stayed home for his funeral. Bourgeois papers in the United States dutifully showed pictures of the funeral, not mentioning the general strike—or the number of Haitians killed by the military.

The "necklacing" of this collaborator has been singled out by the bourgeois press as evidence of Aristide's use of terror against his opponents, and dovetails with the military's claim that he exceeded his democratic mandate.

As *Haiti Progrès* comments (Oct. 16-22): "It wasn't Aristide who created or encouraged [necklacing]. Actually, it goes back to the period that followed the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier, a time when the thirst for justice of a long-repressed people expressed itself in summary executions of well-known *Macoutes* and in *déchouquages* [uprooting] of homes and businesses belonging to Duvalierists."

In reality, it was the repeated mobilizations of the worker and peasant organizations against the military that prompted the coup.

Aristide's coalition was a combination of mass popular organizations—unions, peasant groups, neighborhood committees—and an assortment of church and

other groupings.

While responding to the pressures of the mass movement against *Macoutism*, he hoped to steer a middle course in the inevitable conflict of the masses and their oppressors.

His electoral program stated, "The state must find an equilibrium based on respect, justice, and the law between what the workers demand and what the private sector needs to be encouraged to put money into the country and help it to progress." (*International Viewpoint*, July 22, 1991)

But the foundation of the army and the state is its allegiance to the bourgeoisie and its repressive apparatus. The mobilizations of the masses and their insistence on freedom of expression and organization, land reform, social benefits, and rooting out the *Macoute* elements, were a mortal threat to the military and to their masters in Washington.

Aristide, who tried to balance himself between the class antagonisms of the rich and the poor, was incapable of organizing the necessary measures against the capitalist class and its military henchmen. A showdown was inevitable.

While the class instincts of the masses led them to take-overs of private property, coupled with demands that the army and the *Macoutes* be dismantled and abolished, Aristide demurred.

This, in the last analysis, gave the bourgeoisie and the army time to make their move.

Even the "loyal, constitutional" officers went with the coup, just as in Chile in 1973, when the "constitutional" officers led by Pinochet overthrew the elected Allende government.

Facade of military "democracy"

In the wake of the coup, the military is making a pretense of democracy to open the door for U.S. support. The Haitian Senate was "inspired" at gunpoint to "elect" a new puppet president, Joseph Nérette. Among other politicians returning to prominence is Bazin, who was overwhelmingly defeated by Aristide in the December presidential election, despite his reportedly being funded by

the CIA. (*Covert Action Information Bulletin* #36.)

The facade of military "democracy" is strictly for foreign consumption. For the Haitian masses, there is the naked face of terror. What the coup has shown is that the two Haitis—that of the military and the bourgeoisie on the one hand, and of the workers and peasants on the other—cannot coexist. One or the other must rule.

The tremendous growth of worker, peasant and neighborhood committees and the spread of organization to the rank and file of the army points the way out of the crisis. These organizations should not just be the source of power for the government; they should be the government.

Despite the repression, the mass movement has not been broken. Important voices of the Haitian movement, such as *Haiti Progrès*, are opposed to armed imperialist intervention under any pretext. The direct experience of U.S. intervention in the past has taught many Haitian workers that the UN and the OAS will intervene in Haiti only to protect the threatened class interests of the country's leading capitalists.

The United States has dispatched 500 troops to its Guantanamo military base in Cuba on the pretext of protecting American lives in Haiti. This is the same pretext used in 1915 when the United States invaded Haiti—beginning a 19-year occupation.

The treaty forced on Haiti at that time secured the financial and political domination of U.S. interests. Article X of the treaty was concerned with the military: "The Haitian Government obligates itself ... to create without delay an efficient constabulary, urban and rural, composed of native Haitians. This constabulary shall be organized and officered by Americans, appointed by the President of Haiti, upon nomination by the President of the United States."

The constitution, which later codified Haitian military brutality and U.S. domination, was written by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This is the origin of the brutal Haitian military and paramilitary forces that spawned Duvalierism and which today have overthrown Aristide.

Should masses come to power?

In the wake of setbacks in Central America and the diminishing of international aid, especially from the Soviet Union, many argue that the time is not right for the workers and peasants to come to power in Haiti. The international situation, they say, does not allow it.

This same argument was used to justify the Sandinistas' compromises with the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie at the expense of the workers and peasants. The Sandinistas' policy of applying the brakes on the revolutionary process was a key factor in the demoralization and reversal of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The coup has exposed the Haitian bourgeoisie as a traitor class who paid out \$40 million to finance the coup. The masses know that the Haitian capitalists and their U.S. masters will stop at nothing to maintain their bloody rule. To achieve even the most basic democratic and social demands, it will be necessary for the old state apparatus to be completely dismantled and for the workers and peasants to rule through their own organizations in their own name. This would be a social revolution of tremendous consequences.

A successful revolution in Haiti would not only galvanize support from throughout the Caribbean. Hundreds of thousands of Haitians in the United States would carry the message to the American people. The militancy, courage, and discipline shown in the huge mobilizations in New York, Boston, Miami and elsewhere give a hint of the power of the Haitians here.

The Haitian people will find support for their efforts in the African American communities and throughout the working class in the United States. With their own strength in Haiti and with international support, they can win this struggle—for themselves and working people everywhere. ■

Cuba denounces USSR's unilateral withdrawal of motorized brigade

Why doesn't U.S. pull out of Guantanamo Base, Cubans ask

By BARRY SHEPPARD

The unilateral announcement by Gorbachev in early September that the USSR was removing its military contingent from Cuba was a blow to the defense of Cuba in face of the unbridled hostility of Washington.

An editorial in the Sept. 22 issue of *Granma*, the newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, replied to the Soviet move, bluntly stating that it "has serious political connotations which compromise our security."

The editorial concludes: "The unilateral and unconditional decision by the USSR without consulting Cuba to withdraw its military unit gives the United States the green light to carry out its plans of aggression against Cuba. That would be the moral symbolism of the withdrawal of that symbolic military contingent. Any other explanation or interpretation is meaningless."

"Cuba will never let itself be turned over or sold out to the United States, and in order not to be enslaved again, we are willing to struggle to the death."

The editorial says the Soviet move should not "surprise those of us who experienced the outcome of the 'Missile Crisis' of 1962, when the Soviet government made another deal with Washington behind the backs of Cuba. At that time the Kennedy administration threatened nuclear war if the USSR did not remove nuclear missiles that had been stationed in Cuba even though Washington had ringed the USSR and China with thousands of nuclear missiles in foreign lands.

The editorial says the Missile Crisis was "a painful and unforgettable experience for our young Revolution in which the withdrawal of the nuclear missiles was decided without consulting Cuba. This was done despite the fact that our country, for the sake of strengthening the defensive capacity of the socialist community—above all the defensive capacity of the Soviet Union—had risked nuclear extermination. The enormous dangers we faced for the sake of everyone's security and the agreements which were violated in those days gave us the right to demand at least a minimal Soviet presence, which was accepted."

"Much has been said since then and much more has yet to be said, but no one can deny the drama, the speed of those events, the enormous and unprecedented tensions to which the Soviet leadership was submitted and the gigantic responsibilities entailed in those crucial hours which overwhelmed Khrushchev and despite his good faith exceeded his capacity as a statesman."

"If at least the point on the withdrawal of the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo—one of the five conditions set by our Party and government as a solution to the crisis—had been defended with the vigor and intelligence demanded by the situation, there would be no U.S. or Soviet troops in Cuba today."

Granma also points out that the Soviet military unit now being withdrawn was stationed in Cuba following the Missile Crisis at the request of the Cubans. This agreement was codified with Moscow in 1963, and provided for a permanent presence of the Soviet unit "which was committed to act if a U.S. invasion began."

The U.S. government was aware of this agreement. In 1979, in the midst of the Sixth Non-Aligned Summit in Havana, Washington, "for demagogic reasons and motives related to domestic politics," made a hue and cry about the Soviet unit, called the Motorized Brigade of the USSR's Armed Forces in Cuba. *Granma* states that the Cubans rejected



U.S. Marines on alert at Guantanamo Base during 1962 Missile Crisis.

"It is clear that concessions were negotiated and concretized with the United States in relation to Cuba, acceding to its demands without even a single word spoken to our country."

the idea of denying the presence of the Brigade, but that the Kremlin brushed the Cubans off and "yielded to public pressure from the United States" and claimed that the Brigade wasn't a military unit at all but "a supposedly inoffensive study center." This undercut the stated purpose of the Brigade's presence, which was to act as a deterrent to U.S. aggression.

The editorial states that the Brigade is to be unilaterally withdrawn this year "because its symbolic presence, it was said, belongs to another epoch. To us, 'symbolic'—a word we were the first to use—has two meanings: that its forces are not numerically significant in terms of Cuba's military defense, but that at the same time they had deep significance as an expression of friendship and solidarity in the face of U.S. threats."

The editorial asks "what is happening under the present circumstances, when the East-West conflict is considered over with the disappearance of one of the blocs and when in the name of new thinking in international relations, regrettable practices used in some very difficult moments in Cuban-U.S. relations seem to have reappeared."

"Moreover, what symbolism is involved and to what epoch belongs the inhumane and criminal blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba for more than 30 years? What is the symbolism and to what epoch belong the persecution, the hostility, the unyielding efforts to strangle our economy, the barbarous pressures on governments, international agencies and even U.S. businesses with investments abroad, aimed at isolating our country, at bringing it to its knees through political calumny of incompara-

ble hypocrisy, at defeating it through hunger?"

"What symbolism is involved and to what epoch belongs the illegal occupation of Cuban territory, on which the United States maintains against the express will of our people a military base which is totally obsolete for its strategic defense? What purpose does that base serve if not to humiliate and threaten Cuba?"

"Should we define the anti-Cuba policy of the United States, sick with hatred, arrogance and impotence, as 'de-ideologized'?"

"Is the crusade against the Cuban Revolution launched by George Bush and his emissaries—who have reached the limit by conditioning their aid and cooperation with the Soviet Union on breaking Soviet-Cuban ties and have demanded it with unbridled hysteria, at the top of their lungs, constantly, everywhere, on the most ridiculous pretext exempt of any ideological contamination?"

The *Granma* editorial goes on to docu-

ment the treachery with which the USSR officials consummated their deal with the United States.

"The revelation, during the joint press conference [of Gorbachev and Secretary of State Baker] at the end of the bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States, of the decision to withdraw the military contingent stationed in our country left international public opinion with the clear understanding of an unconditional concession. In announcing the decision, President Gorbachev omitted any reference to the U.S. military presence in Cuba, as did Secretary of State Baker, who having heard the news prior to the announcement had time to find the right words to use when it was his turn to speak. Among the reactions of our people to the news was the bitter intuition of a surprising concession, especially after seeing a few days earlier how the president of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, had dealt capably with the subject of Soviet relations with Cuba while on U.S. television."

"On Sept. 12, a few hours after the Cuban ambassador in Moscow had delivered to President Gorbachev's office an official note regarding the announced withdrawal, Soviet Foreign Minister Boris D. Pankin gave a press conference. In his initial statement and the responses to the journalists' questions, Pankin offered enough additional elements for us to establish the Cuban position on the principled question at hand and to announce it publicly, in the same style chosen by Soviet authorities. At this moment, the so-called complementary measures of confidence toward Cuba alluded to by the Soviet foreign minister are secondary and undeserving of any comment."

"Pankin explained that giving the information about the withdrawal of the instruction Brigade in advance to the United States—even before the Cuban government learned of it through the wire services—was in response to the perception that that decision entailed an exhortation of the United States and the expectation that it would respond with its own measures."

"In the understanding of Foreign Minister Pankin and therefore of Soviet authorities, Soviet actions are based on expectations which, judging by the inventory of steps which the United States could hypothetically take if those expectations were not unfounded, are extremely modest, such as the reduction of military personnel at Guantanamo and other equally significant measures."

"Such expectations would be subject to the decision of the United States and could be rejected at any moment, as is traditional in the United States' conduct, especially now that it considers itself the master of the world, while the steps the USSR has declared itself ready to take would be irreversible and unconditional. It is clear that concessions were negotiated and concretized with the United States in relation to Cuba, acceding to its demands without even a single word spoken to our country."

"Fortunately, in many senses we are not in October 1962 and almost not in 1991. Cuba's defense rests solidly on a doctrine and over 10 years of preparation which completely excluded any hypothesis which does not depend solely on our own lives and the unyielding determination to never again be enslaved by the United States..." ■

International Viewpoint

A biweekly magazine published under the auspices of the Fourth International

One year subscription: \$47
Send to:
2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108, Montreuil, France



Victim of Yugo-Serbian army mortar barrage in Croatia.

Der Spiegel

... Civil war in Yugoslavia

(continued from page 20)

response to the Croatian attacks on the Yugo-Serbian army bases on Croatian territory announced by a spokesman for the army. (*Der Spiegel*, Oct. 7). This statement is clearly a justification for terroristic attacks on human and psychological targets, like Dubrovnik.

Croats face terrorism

In the Sept. 10 issue of the most important Croatian news magazine, *Danas*, Anton Bebler, one of the main military experts of the Slovenian government, noted the special features of the war against Croatia:

"You face terrorism, which did not happen in Slovenia. Terrorism, such as the taking of hostages, such as the terrorizing of civilian populations to force them to flee their homes, their villages... Clearly, as the main weapon of terrorism in Croatia, they are using mortars....

"In Croatia, they are used mainly as a weapon of terrorism, as a means of frightening the population, as a means for forcing them to 'accept' a new government, or simply to scatter the population. For that reason, most of the mortar attacks are at night, in order to have a psychological effect on people, to instill fear, a feeling of helplessness....

"It is characteristic of this war that mortars are the main weapon.... With them, it is possible to attack populated areas in front of military positions, that is, under the protection of military units, which are supposedly holding buffer zones."

In an interview in the Oct. 7 *Der Spiegel*, Serbian minister of foreign affairs Vladislav Jovanovic claimed "we do not deny anyone the right to leave Yugoslavia. But by what right can Croatia force the Serbs who live there to go along with independence by a unilateral declaration. We also demand the right of self-determination for those Serbs who live in areas where they form the majority." He went on to say that "we do not demand the right of self-determination for the Serbs who live in the rest of Croatia. Serbia has no territorial demands on other republics."

This statement is obviously hypocritical because the Serbian-majority areas in Croatia are scattered and of little importance in themselves. They have only served as a bridgehead for an operation aimed at crippling the Croatian state. Moreover, at about the same time as this statement was made, Serbian and Montenegrin reservists were sent into another republic, Bosnia, ostensibly to

defend the Serbian minority. The republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence on October 15 in an attempt to get into a stronger position to defend itself against Serbian pressures.

About 30 percent of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina are Serbs, 20 percent are Croats, and just under 50 percent are Muslims who speak Serbo-Croat but have a Turkish culture. Both the Croats and Muslims have allied against the Greater Serbian threat. The republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina is the only institution in which the long perse-

largest piece he can.

These reports are part of a proliferation of wild rumors of dirty international deals and betrayals of the victims of Great Serbian aggression by neighboring countries and the European and world powers. The Sept. 27 issue of *Danas* carried a big cover headline, "Who Has Betrayed Croatia?" The speculation was stimulated by recognition that the great powers, whatever their embarrassment at the brutality of the Yugo-Serbian army's actions, tended to favor Serbia as the "stabilizing power."

Fourth International position

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International adopted a statement in October making clear the need for

'Like Nazi Germany, the Milosevic regime is deeply antagonizing one people after another.'

cuted Slavic Muslim people have a major voice.

Great Serbian chauvinism

Thus, the Great Serbian pressures on the republic represent a growing confrontation between Serbian nationalists and the Slavic Muslims. (Most of the Albanians are also Muslims.) In response to the Serbian assault, the Bosnia-Herzegovan government also declared its independence from Yugoslavia.

The southern republic of Macedonia likewise declared its independence in the face of the Great Serbian threat. This development could bring on international complications, since the Macedonian people spill over the Bulgarian and Greek borders, and both these countries have historic claims on Macedonian territory.

In an article in the Oct. 28 issue of *International Viewpoint*, the English-language publication of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, N. Champi wrote about indications that the Greek government was interested in grabbing Macedonian territory. He also reported rumors that the Serbian dictator Milosevic had offered support for such a move in order to get Greek support. Supposedly, the Serbian demagogue also offered to recognize Italian claims to part of the break away republic of Slovenia. Such rumors are in line with Milosevic's obvious aim of tearing Yugoslavia to pieces in order to get the

democrats and revolutionists to defend the Croats and other oppressed nations of Yugoslavia against the Great Serbian neo-Stalinist regime.

"The Fourth International:

- Denounces the aggressive war against Croatian sovereignty and the hypocrisy of the arms blockade imposed by the European Community and others, which makes no distinction between the aggressor and the victim....

- Supports a confederation of national states. Such a confederation cannot be imposed by force, and is impossible so long as a Great Serb policy is dominant in Serbia. There is a distinction to be made between Serb nationalism and that of the other republics, because of the transformation of the Yugoslav army into a Serbian one."

There is a fundamental difference between Serbian nationalism, the nationalism of the dominant, oppressor nation in Yugoslavia, and the nationalism of the dominated, oppressed nations, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, as well as the Albanians of Kosovo and the Hungarians in Vojvodina.

It is the Serbian neo-Stalinists and their allies that have destroyed the Yugoslav federation. First, they made the Yugoslav army into a Serbian one (90 per cent of its officers are now Serbs, and its Serbian character has been reinforced by a massive callup of Serbian reservists). On Oct. 3, the bloc of Serbia and its satellites announced that it had taken control of the Yugoslav federal

government. The Montenegrin vice chair, Branko Kostic, announced that the federal government had been removed and the parliament dissolved.

The fate of the Albanian people of Kosovo was already a warning for the other peoples of Yugoslavia. Milosevic abolished their autonomy within Serbia and set up a puppet government. This two-million strong population (more numerous than the Slovenians, and hence the third largest people in Yugoslavia) were subjected to the most brutal forms of national oppression.

In an interview in the Sept. 17 issue of *Danas*, Albanian Human Rights Defense Committee leader Adem Demaq said that more than 73,000 Kosovo Albanians have been fired from their jobs. Virtually none now hold responsible jobs. In addition, 15 thousand primary school teachers are out of work, since the Serbian government has just cut off funds to education.

The president of the teachers' association, Rexhep Osmani said that instruction in Albanian has already been forcibly halted in about half the high schools.

Like Nazi Germany, the Milosevic regime is deeply antagonizing one people after another. This is a rare example of short-sighted arrogance, whose disastrous results are entirely predictable. What is more, Serbian resources fall far short of what probably is needed for them to achieve their objectives even in the immediate period.

Milosevic already suffered a stinging defeat in Slovenia. By means of terrorism and exploiting the fears of the Serbian minority in Croatia, as well as certain weaknesses of the Croatian government, he managed to do more damage to the Croats.

Tenacious resistance

But even the poorly armed and ill-prepared Croat National Guard has begun to take a toll on the Yugo-Serbian army. At the beginning of the war, the Croats did not have a single tank. In Bjelovar alone, they seized 30 tanks and 400 Yugo-Serbian soldiers surrendered. In all, according to *Der Spiegel* of Oct. 7, some 11,000 Yugo-Serbian soldiers have deserted in Croatia, and 14,000 have been taken prisoner by the Croats. The Croats now reportedly have 120 tanks.

Besieged Croat forces, including local volunteers, have performed feats of tenacity and military effectiveness that have sustained the morale of the Croatian people. For example, *Danas* of Sept. 24 wrote: "The hottest place is Vukovar, exposed for days to continual infantry attacks and artillery barrages. But, entirely surrounded, cut off from the world, the Vukovarcani have successfully defended themselves against a technologically far superior foe.... The news coming out on the aggressors' losses is almost incredible—dozens of tanks have been destroyed, airplanes have been shot down, enemy losses number in the hundreds."

Moreover, as winter approaches, the Yugo-Serbian army's material advantages are being more and more neutralized, and it faces the problem of conflicts on other fronts, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nonetheless, the desperation and ruthlessness of the Serbian neo-Stalinist regime cannot be underestimated.

The Croats' first setbacks were explained by Bebler (*Danas*, Sept. 10) as the result of the Tudjman government's failure to take Milosevic's threats seriously, their failure to prepare the population for a decisive confrontation. Instead of mobilizing a people's army, he said, they formed competing national guard and police forces. "Those who are in a technologically inferior position have no choice but to rely on the conception of waging people's war."

What has been happening, in fact, in Croatia, seems to be that a people's war against the aggressor has been developing piecemeal and spontaneously. This points to a more fundamental threat for European "order" than the plotting of Milosevic with various cynical great powers and larcenous Balkan neighbors.

... Polish elections

(continued from page 1)

tion from Socialist Action last year, some nostalgia for the old regime was evident because the conditions of the workers have gotten far worse under the new government. The standard of living is estimated to have fallen by 30 percent or more. Industrial production is down by 20 percent. Unemployment is already 11 percent and continues to soar.

Nonetheless, it seems that only a relatively small percentage of the discontented workers have been attracted to the successors of the Stalinist regime. It is probably an oversimplification, moreover, to see the Peasant Party as simply a continuation of the old CP satellite party. Other such satellite parties gained an independent role as the Stalinist regimes broke up.

The peasants needed an outlet for expressing their anger. The policies of the new government so reduced the masses' ability to buy their products that they faced ruin.

In this election, trade-union candidates felt compelled to run directly under the name of Solidarnosc. They seem to have gotten about 6 per cent of the vote, although there were only a few of them, far from a full slate.

Is a coalition possible?

The party of Walesa's premier, Jan Krzysztof Belecki, the Liberal Democratic Congress Party, came in seventh, with just over 7 percent of the vote. The appearance of this more consistent free-enterpriser party represents a process of polarization among the forces that represent the middle-class elite that took over Solidarnosc.

Belecki is a businessman who played no role in Solidarnosc. But he is reportedly Walesa's favorite for premier of a new coalition government.

Belecki himself seemed hesitant about trying to continue to lead the capitalist restoration project in the face of a clear disavowal by the voters. In the *Los Angeles Times* of Oct. 29, Charles T. Powers noted that he was describing himself as "a person who can say that his policies have met with the antipathy of society."

New York Times correspondent Stephen Engelberg speculated about the possibilities for a new government coalition, but he was unable to come up with any convincing possibility for a stable bloc. He acknowledged that the perspective of a coalition of all parties originating in Solidarnosc around the Democratic Union was "unlikely."

The only other possibility Engelberg could come up with was an unnatural alliance of the Center Alliance, the peasant party and Catholic Election Action. The latter party reportedly campaigned for more mercy for the masses in the economic field but demanded a constitutional amendment banning abortion. Even if such a bloc could be achieved in parliament, it is hard to see it getting

any credibility with the population or maintaining any unity in the face of the growing struggles against the effects of the capitalist restoration policy.

In fact, in an interview with the Polish Press Agency immediately after the elections, Walesa said that it was necessary to strengthen the presidency and the executive branch in order to continue the procapitalist reforms.

That means in effect that these policies cannot be continued by parliamentary democratic means. This has been clear for some time. It was indicated already by the fact that after Mazowiecki's rout at the polls, the IMF was able to impose the the continuation of his economics minister, Leszek Balcerowicz, who was most directly responsible for implementing the policies that were rejected at the polls.

Euphoria to disillusionment

The Polish Fourth Internationalist paper, *Dalej!* ("Forward") has stressed the falseness of the claim that "economic democracy" (that is, free enterprise) and political democracy go hand in hand.

It pointed out that carrying out the restoration of capitalism would require thwarting the democratic aspirations of the masses that forced the Stalinist bureaucracy to retire to the back of the political stage. (See *Socialist Action*,

June 1991 for a summary of *Dalej!*'s argument.) This has now become starkly evident, and seems to mark a turning point in the political process initiated by the breakdown of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Engelberg wrote that the Polish election results were "another sign that the euphoria of 1989 has given way to disillusionment." He went on to say that "From Romania to Hungary to Czechoslovakia, the post-Communist governments are walking a fine line between the requisites of market economies and the need to prevent social explosions like the recent coal miners' rampage in Bucharest."

The Polish experience is key for the policy of capitalist restoration in all of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, since it is in Poland where it has been carried the furthest and under the most favorable political conditions.

Analyzing the Polish economic problems on the eve of the elections (*New York Times*, Oct. 25), Engelberg wrote: "Western Financial institutions, which view Poland as a model for the Soviet Union and other countries in the region, are urging government officials to keep money tight and stay the course, even at the cost of more social unrest."

On Oct. 26, the *New York Times* editors proclaimed "Poland Cannot Flinch." They argued: "For a few billion dollars the West can make sure that the Poles don't need to look back, and that their gallant leap doesn't fall a few feet short."

However, although Engelberg claimed that the market reforms were working, but with painful "side effects," the picture he painted of the economic decline made it clear that "a few million dollars" would only be a drop in the bucket in comparison to what would be needed to carry through capitalist restoration without a major social crisis.

"Mr. Glapinski, the Housing Minister, said that 60 percent of state-owned companies were now insolvent, which in turn caused a budget crisis," since most tax income came from the profits of the state corporations. Engelberg quoted Glapinski as saying that Poland was "in a state of catastrophe."

Engelberg's claim that the private sector is booming reflects pathetic illusions of a huckster utopia. There are more goods in the shops, but that is because most people can afford to buy less, to such an extent that the peasants are unable to sell their products.

Attitudes can change quickly

When I visited Warsaw last spring, I found that basic trading circulates the same as in 1981, but there was proliferation of gypsy-like small merchants selling socks, underwear and hotdogs from the back of vans. This might appear to some like a festival of individualism. But it is hard to see it as a paradise, either for the petty merchants or their customers. How long will it take for a new distribution network to arise on the backs of the hot-dog sellers?

The Polish procapitalists know how rapidly the attitude of the masses toward market reforms can change. The rise of Solidarnosc was preceded by a series of major planning failures, owing in large part to the Stalinist experts' overestimation of the possibilities of the international capitalist market for absorbing Polish exports.

So, in the first period of the mass workers' movement, illusions about the market predominated. Then, the workers realized that the market meant higher prices and cuts in social benefits—that is, that it was the program of the bureaucracy and not theirs. So, they shifted abruptly toward looking to self-management. The first big self-management congress was held in the summer of 1981.

When Solidarnosc failed to resist the bureaucracy's military coup of December 1981, the workers began to lose confidence in their ability to change the society. During the period of military dictatorship, middle-class experts, with Western support, were able to gain control of Solidarnosc. Once in government, they tried to follow the prescriptions of their patrons, which Walesa now complains were bad advice.

The wave of strikes that has been growing since the spring against the government and Solidarnosc leadership's capitalist restoration policies was a clear sign that the workers are turning against the market perspective. It explains, more than just the recession of the economy, why the international capitalist observers were worried about the test of the Polish elections. The results of the elections show that their fears were justified. ■



Does Walesa see the handwriting on the wall?

... South Africa

(continued from page 12)

and exploited." WOSA explained that the front should be based on a mass campaign for a democratically elected constituent assembly.

An "interim government?"

The new Patriotic Front is calling for negotiations to take place "as soon as possible" with the government. A declaration issued by the front endorsed the call for a constituent assembly. But it also—without acknowledging the contradiction—backed the ANC's proposal for an interim government.

The call for a popularly elected constituent assembly to write a new constitution is a basic democratic demand. It means that the majority of the people,

the Black working class and its allies, have the right and the ability to determine the character of the government that represents them.

The idea of an interim government, however, suggests the opposite—that Blacks must share power (albeit "temporarily") with the parties of the bosses and oppressors. It would not be popularly elected, but based on behind-the-scenes negotiations with all the parties concerned.

Last August, the PAC signed a joint press statement with WOSA that rejected the call for an interim government. The two organizations pointed out: "The interim government would result in the cooptation of the liberation movement, which would be forced to administer the apartheid system and would leave the process of 'transition' at the mercy of the state's security forces."

Unfortunately, barely two months later, the PAC seems to have reversed itself—

joining the Patriotic Front even though the front is promoting the ANC's interim government idea.

A "happy marriage?"

Dikgang Moseneke, deputy president of the PAC, said that the Patriotic Front is "a happy marriage" that will preserve the independence of its participants while allowing them to work together on issues with which they agree. (*Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 28, 1991.)

But it may be too early to ring the bells of connubial bliss. The fundamental interests and goals of the participants in the front, ranging from labor unions to procapitalist organizations, cannot be reconciled.

It is one thing to build a united front around a short-term campaign of mass activity—as WOSA proposed to the Durban conference. The participants need only agree on relatively limited goals.

But it is quite different to try to stitch together a bloc of parties and groups in hopes of winning (or "negotiating") state power. In such circumstances, the "marriage partners" must make a long-term commitment to a detailed political program.

This means compromise, and hard experience has shown that in multi-class "popular fronts," the pro-capitalist "partners" always call the tune. The organizations of the working class and the oppressed are constantly forced to sacrifice their principles in order to "hold together" the front.

According to ANC and PAC leaders, the "successful" Patriotic Front agreement shows that eventual fusion of their two organizations may be in the cards. In the meantime, however, both groups must contend with militant rank-and-filers and youth, who are angry at their leaderships' increased drift to the right. ■

END ALL TAXES ON WORKERS! TAX THE RICH!

In this column, last month and the month before, we saw that the exchange value of all the commodities produced by the workers under capitalism is equal to the average necessary labor time needed for their production, and is measured by money.

We saw that the capitalist owners of the means of production pocket the lion's share of this total exchange value produced by the workers. What they take, called surplus value, is the difference between the total value of all the goods produced by the workers and the wage they pay out to the workers for the food, clothing, shelter, etc., needed for the reproduction of the workers' continued ability to work and for the maintenance of their families, including the raising of the next generation of workers.

Taxes, we saw, come out of surplus value, and are the monies needed to run the capitalist state in the interests of the capitalists. Since the workers create all the exchange value produced in capitalist enterprises, the workers have created all of the surplus value, including that part the capitalists pay as taxes.

We saw that when the capitalist state imposes taxes on workers, those taxes are really not part of our wage, since they are part of surplus value. Our real wage—what we have to buy food, etc.—is what's left over after all the taxes we pay have been deducted. This is fairly easy for us to see in terms of income taxes, since these are deducted from our so-called gross wages before we ever get our paychecks. But things like sales taxes are hidden, and we are not as aware of them.

We discussed government payments to workers like unemployment and social security checks, which are part of the

wages of the workers as a whole, and can be called a "social wage."

Taxing bring socialism?

In this column, we want to take up what socialists propose about taxes under capitalism. First, though, we should clarify why we do not think that there is any "tax program" that can lead to socialism.

When the capitalist state imposes taxes on workers, that lowers our real wage in an immediate sense. But we recall that our wages are the money form of the value of the commodity we sell to the capitalists, our ability to work, or labor power. Like all commodities, the value of labor power is equal to the labor time spent in its creation, and in this case that is the value of all the commodities the workers must buy to produce and reproduce their labor power. So while wages are lowered by an imposition of a new tax on workers, over time they will tend to rise back toward their real value.

Conversely, if taxes are lowered for workers, our real wages temporarily rise. But again, over time and under the workings of the capitalist market for labor power, wages would tend to fall back to the real value of labor power.

So raising or lowering our taxes cannot effect any lasting change in the relation between capitalists and workers, as long as the value of labor power remains constant.

Nor do we propose to "tax" the capitalists out of existence. Leaving aside that the capitalist state is never going to do that, taxes go to paying the expenses of the capitalist state whose purpose is to keep the exploited and oppressed in line. We are against a more powerful capitalist state. An example is all the trillions

spent by Washington on its huge war machine of mass murder and destruction. Our slogan is "Not one penny for war!"

So it is clear we have no "tax program" that will lead to socialism. Only the expropriation of the present expropriators by the workers and the abolition of the wage system can do that.

The value of labor power

With these considerations in mind, let us turn to what we do say about taxes here and now.

The value of labor power represents the value of commodities needed for the maintenance of the workers and their families, and has a component that is determined by the struggle between capital and labor. There is a physical minimum below which it cannot go without destroying the workers and their families (sometimes wages have fallen below this minimum value with devastating consequences).

There is a struggle between the classes about what is "necessary" over and above this minimum for the workers and their families, with the workers seeking to raise their wages and the capitalists seeking to lower them. So what the accepted value of labor power is at any time or in different countries has this component determined by the struggle between the classes.

If taxes are imposed on the workers, and the workers accept them in the sense of being willing to "tighten their belts" for the "national good," then the value of labor power is lowered.

Even if the workers do not accept that their living standards should be lowered by the amount of any new tax, there will be a time lag between when the tax is imposed and when the workers' "gross" wages rise enough to compensate.

Learning About Marxism

By Barry Sheppard



Just as in the case when there is inflation, workers are forced into the situation of fighting just to stay even in terms of real wages, when taxes keep rising.

So we are against any and all new taxes on working people for these two reasons, and fight against them.

End taxes on workers!

In general, we are against all taxes on working people as an attempt by the capitalists to lower our real wages and to draw us into accepting responsibility for their state. This means we are against all sales and property taxes, as well as income taxes, levied against workers. After all, even the taxes the capitalists pay come out of the value we have created—do we have to be gouged twice?(!)

Our tax program is simple: Get rid of all taxes except a steeply graduated income tax, beginning at a base high enough to exclude workers from paying taxes at all.

This would have the advantage of clarifying for us just what our real wages are, and therefore would help us in our day in, day out struggle with the capitalists over what our wages should be.

This proposal also helps clarify that it is certain people—not abstractions like "corporations"—who grow rich off of our labor, and that those who have robbed us the most should pay the most. This can help us explain that maybe they shouldn't be allowed

to rob us anymore at all.

We combine this proposal with our stand against all expenditures for the capitalist instrument of oppression and war, their state.

We are for more government expenditures to help the working class, like public works to fight unemployment, unemployment benefits at union wages, a massive program of creating childcare facilities, raising social security to a living wage for older and disabled workers, etc.

These expenditures should come from the ill-gotten incomes of the rich—and the richer they are, the more they should kick in. After all, that's only getting some of our own back!

In this series of three articles about taxes, we found that to understand taxes we had to begin to delve into aspects of Marxist political economy. This is because to understand what any economic category is all about, whether taxes or any other, we have to dig into the true meaning of these categories that are to be found in the real social relations between classes of human beings.

The kind of economics taught in our schools stays at the level of considering these categories as things in themselves. Marxist political economy lays bare the dynamic of the social relations behind them, and helps workers figure out their own interests and their own way forward.

(Last of a three-part series)

November will be target month for sub drive

By BARRY SHEPPARD

With the subscription drive a little more than half over, we have fallen behind more than a week. Now is the time for all areas to focus their efforts and make this a drive to attain their goals.

We want to make November a target month, so that we will have the first two weeks in December to mop up. Each area is encouraged to set one week in November as a local target week, with projects for winning new readers and re-signing up old readers every day of that week.

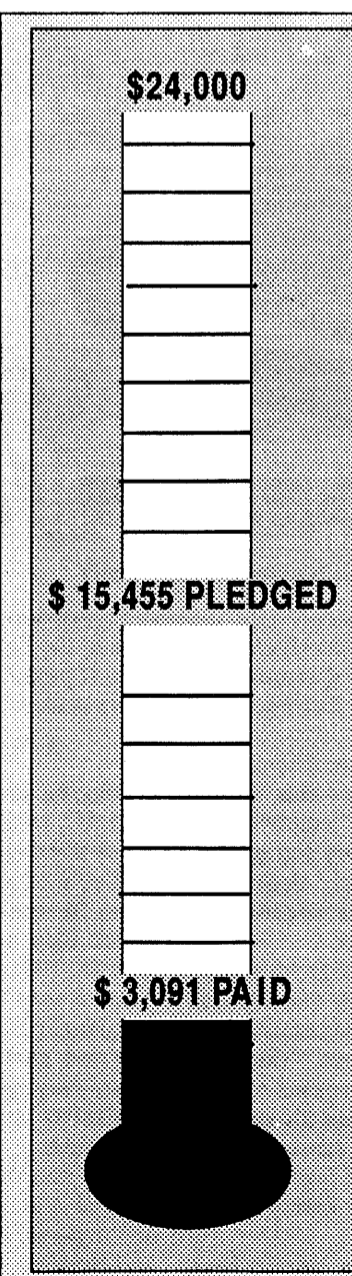
Readers will note two new areas on the scoreboard—Milwaukee and New Brunswick. The Milwaukee Revolutionary Socialist Group has pledged to gain 10 subscriptions, and supporters of Artwork in New

Brunswick, N.J. are adding their efforts to the drive.

Supporters in Baltimore already made their goal of 35, and decided to raise it to 50. Julia S. writes: "The enclosed subscriptions were gotten at a literature table which we set up at the 'Fells Point Fun Festival,' a very large community/street fair. People were attracted to our table by our posters, which included one on keeping abortion legal, and a Malcolm X poster. We also had a pro-choice petition on the table which brought people over. In addition to the 17 subs, we also sold 70 single copies, which hopefully will generate a few more subscriptions being mailed in."

Now is the time for all areas to make a special effort.

City	Goal	New	Renew.	Total	Pct.
New Brunswick	5	4	0	4	80%
Baltimore	50	37	2	39	78%
Detroit	10	3	3	6	60%
San Francisco	250	124	12	136	54%
Los Angeles	25	9	4	13	52%
New Haven	5	1	1	2	40%
New York	55	11	11	22	40%
Portland	15	6	0	6	40%
Boston	75	23	6	29	39%
Milwaukee	10	3	0	3	30%
Twin Cities	25	1	3	4	16%
Philadelphia	20	1	2	3	15%
Chicago	50	7	0	7	14%
Cleveland	15	1	0	1	7%
Bath	5	0	0	0	0%
Cincinnati	5	0	0	0	0%
Other	30	6	8	14	47%
Total	650	237	52	289	44%
Should be				345	53%



Fund drive will enable Socialist Action to move to new HQ

By SHANNON SHEPPARD

Construction has begun on new premises for Socialist Action!

We plan to move the national headquarters of SA, the San Francisco branch headquarters, the offices of the newspaper, and Walnut Publishers into a larger space by the first of the year.

This is a desperately needed move. All national departments have grown in the past year to meet new demands.

The volunteer newspaper staff is presently crowded into a tiny office stuffed with files of periodicals, new computing equipment that makes putting out *Socialist Action* much more efficient, and a laser printer that is used by all departments. The new space for the SA staff will be theirs alone, and is more than twice the size of the present cramped quarters.

The National Secretary at present works in a 6' by 11' office filled with files that are becoming more difficult to get to, let alone use. The National Organization Secretary shares a 6' by 18' office with Walnut Publishers and a working inventory of their books, the business office of SA (including its label printer and files), and part of the SA darkroom.

The San Francisco branch organizer works from a desk in a room that doubles as the branch meeting room and forum hall. In the same hall, the National Financial Director and the financial director for SA

have their desk (shared) and files.

And, we need to immediately bring in someone to help out as the national office secretary!

The new premises are in the same building complex as the present office, but are almost twice the size. The meeting hall will be just that. The branch organizer will have a separate office, and each department will have adequate office space where work can be done in quiet.

And, the new premises will be on the ground floor (presently we are on the third floor) which makes it possible to have a socialist bookstore with display windows facing the street.

All this will cost money, immediately, for the construction to fix up the place according to our needs, and for a long-term lease with increased rent.

The funds to carry out this project will come from our fund drive to collect \$24,000 by Dec. 15. As you can see from the thermometer, we have to get cracking on raising the pledges for this drive and collecting them. November must be the month we turn to this task with new effort.

Every amount helps. So far, we have gotten pledges from readers that range from \$5 to \$1000. Please make your contribution now.

The fight against racism and sexual harassment

Clarence Thomas versus Anita Hill. While most of the news media focused on the issue of sexual harassment and whether Thomas did or did not harass Hill 10 years ago, many in the Black community wondered if the whole sordid affair would be used by racists against Blacks in general.

Thomas himself raised the issue of "lynching" in response to Hill's charge of sexual harassment. He and others claimed that the old racist lie was again being spread about Black male sexuality. Some even said liberal whites were using Hill (a conservative Republican herself) to prevent a Black man from getting on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Hyperbole aside, there are some real issues underneath the Thomas-Hill affair. The most glaring is the attempt of the White House and Senate to cover up the charge of sexual harassment before it hit the public's eye. Of course, as polls indicated, most Americans assume that corruption (including the sexual kind) is commonplace in the capital.

Thomas is now sitting on the highest court in the land. He's made known his opposition to basic civil rights from affirmative action to the rights of women. He's pro-big business and anti-worker.

Yet the issue of sexual

harassment and racism is one that needs to be addressed. It got the least attention by the major media. But it was on the minds of most Blacks.

What is the relationship between sexual harassment and racism? Should Black women press their claims against Black men who harass them? Or should they "let it slide" so as not to give racists a handle to attack Black men and thus the Black nationality?

Few would deny that sexual harassment of women occurs. Or that many Black (and white) men harass Black women. The only issue is whether, because of racism, such conduct by Black men should be tolerated. To expose such sexism, the argument goes, opens the entire Black community to attack.

Here's a typical comment. "We have two African-American people pitted against each other," Raymond Anderson of Los Angeles told *The New York Times*. "It really doesn't matter whether Judge Thomas is guilty or innocent. It doesn't matter whether Ms. Hill has credibility or not. What the image is throughout the country, throughout the world, is that we are not credible, trustworthy people, but vulgar, shiftless... I could go on."

Blacks—men and women—are discriminated against in our society. Racism is used by the

employers and the government to keep all Blacks in second-class status. That's why the average income of Blacks is qualitatively less than for whites. That's why it is harder for Blacks than whites to get bank loans, to buy homes, and get jobs—no matter what our financial or social status is.

That's why racism is institutionalized throughout society. Even the growing Black middle class faces discrimination. Racism is very profitable.

Clarence Thomas and other Black conservatives are a byproduct of changes wrought by the civil rights movement. Before the defeat of legal segregation in the 1960s, the rulers did not need a Thomas. Today they do.

But racism is still prevalent. It is for this reason that many Blacks backed Thomas despite his views. They preferred a conservative who is Black rather than have an all-white U.S. Supreme Court. It is also why many Blacks became upset at Hill for exposing Thomas' sexism. They don't defend Thomas' actions but see Hill's charge as a "problem" for themselves.

In truth, sexism hurts the fight against racism, as it does the fight of workers against employers—the main promoters of racism and sexism. What we need most in the Black nationality and the working class as a

Which side Are You On?

By
Malik Miah



whole is solidarity and unity. One of the most important forms of solidarity is between men and women.

The onus is on men to support women's rights and to

oppose all forms of sexual discrimination, including harassment by the boss or a co-worker. Not to do so is to play into the employers' game, which is divide and rule.

The fact that women are more than 50 percent of the population (even higher in the Black nationality) should make this point obvious. Black women in particular are essential to building a new militant leadership in the Black nationality. For any Black man to believe that because racism is prevalent means we should look the other way or not expose sexism among ourselves, is only undermining the overall fight for equality.

No people can be free that treats women as less than equal. Affirmative action not only applies to oppressed nationalities but to women also. It is doubly so if you are Black and a woman. The lesson of the Clarence Thomas case is that sexual harassment exists among Blacks and must be vigorously fought. ■

Our readers speak out

In touch

Dear editors,

Please accept this \$8 for a renewal of my subscription. Your paper is keeping almost all of us in touch with the real world. I was inspired by the article by Dr. Neville Alexander.

A.S.,
Gloucester, Mass.

We have you

Dear editors,

Please start my sub with October. If the two series started in September's issue stand up to expectations, you will have me.

D.J.,
Princeton, Minn.

Crown Heights

Dear editors,

Chris Bieler's "Crisis in Crown Heights: How oppressed people are turned against each other is generally correct. But there were some later developments that he was not aware of.

He complained that "Black leaders missed an important opportunity to initiate an anti-racist coalition of a new kind in Crown Heights."

In fact, Samori Marksman of the African Caribbean Resource

Center, an ongoing Crown Heights forum, organized a meeting featuring Black and Jewish progressives. As one of the three Jewish speakers, I can say we were well received by the 420 Blacks in the audience.

Subsequently, I spoke at the Patrice Lumumba Coalition in Harlem on Black-Jewish relations, and on several Black talk shows. Every time, I was cordially received by the audiences.

On several of those occasions, Elombe Brath of the PLC explained to those Black audiences that all shouts of "Heil Hitler," etc., aimed at the Lubavitchers, was totally unacceptable, given Hitler's open hostility to Blacks.

The gist of what I told those audiences was:

a) The struggle in Crown Heights had to be focused on the clear favoritism shown the Lubavitchers, shown most graphically in the immediate case by the fact that the police have been providing an escort to the Lubavitcher rabbi on his weekly visits to his wife's grave, and have been doing so for 11 years, something we may be sure they do for no Black.

b) Professor Leonard Jeffries must be defended against all attempts to fire him as head of the African studies department at CCNY. The charges against him are false, and are nothing but a mask for attacks on multicultural educational reform.

c) Progressive Jews sharply distinguish themselves from the Jewish Establishment's hostility to affirmative action.

d) Every poll shows that the main point of contention between that Establishment and the Black community is Israel's

arming of South Africa.

This criminal policy must be fought, not merely by Blacks and progressive Jews, but by the entire left. To that effect, a committee to stop the Israeli arms traffic to South Africa is in the process of being organized. Given the unending attacks by the Establishment on even the most moderate leaders of the Black community over Crown Heights and Jeffries, we are confident that our new committee will find an immediate favorable response in the community.

Lenni Brenner
New York, N.Y.

USSR

Dear editors,

Bravo to the article on the USSR in the August issue! I am xeroxing it and giving it away.

D.B.,
Sacramento, Calif.

Save Our Cities

Dear editors,

I attended the Save Our Cities March in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, Oct. 12. The march was designed to initiate a series of events culminating in a large march on Washington on April 11, 1992, which is sponsored by the National Conference of Mayors.

Organizers had predicted that

at least 10,000 people would take part in the march. But only about 3000 attended. Most of the marchers came from Baltimore.

The speakers were mainly local (Baltimore) Democratic Party politicians, and the focus of their speeches was "George Bush, give us our money." Baltimore has suffered a 75 percent cut in federal funds during the last 10 years.

Julia Steinberg,
Baltimore, Md.

Protect the rich...

Dear editors,

Keep up the good work. We need to change the motto of

this country: "Protect the rich and greedy, and screw the needy!"

Warren E. Klaschus,
Laurel Md.

TV violence

Dear editors,

Movie and television violence could be contributing to a significant increase in serious crime by displaying illegal behavior that some viewers may imitate.

Preservation of a single life would be sufficient reason for the enactment of laws to prohibit violent entertainment!

Kenneth Berger,
Teaneck, N.J.

For forums, classes and other activities, contact the Socialist Action branch in your area!

Baltimore
P.O. Box 16005
Baltimore, MD 21218

Boston
P.O. Box 1046 GMF
Boston, MA 02205
(617) 497-0230

Chicago
P.O. Box 578428
Chicago, IL 60657
(312) 327-5752

Cincinnati
P.O. Box 20109
Cincinnati, OH 45220
(513) 751-1597

Cleveland
P.O. Box 6151
Cleveland, OH 44101
(216) 429-2167

Detroit
P.O. Box 1613
Detroit, MI 48231

Kansas City
P.O. Box 32543
Westport Station,
Kansas City, MO 64111

For information about other areas, contact the national office of Socialist Action at (415) 821-0458.

Los Angeles
P.O. Box 862014
Los Angeles, CA 90086
(213) 660-2891

Minneapolis
P.O. Box 4087
Cinkytown Station
Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 430-1476

New York
P.O. Box 20209 Ca. Fin.
693 Columbus Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10025

San Francisco
3425 Army St., Suite 308
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 821-0458

Why Romanian coal miners are rebelling against 'market' reforms

By GERRY FOLEY

Demonstrations in the Romanian capital of Bucharest at the end of September by thousands of furious coal miners from the Jiu valley highlighted the volatility of the countries where Stalinism is collapsing.

At the same time, they pointed up the basic dynamics at work. Only a year ago, the miners staged violent demonstrations in support of the National Salvation Front government, which had offered them a number of material concessions and promised to raise the living standard of the workers.

The government that was able to take power on the shoulders of the mass rebellion against the Ceausescu dictatorship in December 1989-January 1990 pledged expressly not to follow the example of the Polish regime, whose capitalist restorationist program had already resulted in a disastrous drop in living standards and mounting unemployment. The new rulers announced that they could not throw out of work any of the heroic Romanians who had risked their lives fighting Ceausescu's security forces in the streets.

In June 1990, Jiu miners attacked demonstrators in Bucharest who were opposing the National Salvation Front government under anti-Communist slogans. The workers clearly thought that the demonstrators, identified with the revived rightist parties—the Liberal Party and the Peasant Party—wanted to impose an anti-working class program.

Ironically, most of the anti-Communist demonstrators were students, organized by the new independent student organizations, which had initially been totally subservient to the National Salvation Front but had undergone a radicalization against the government.

Increasing alienation from gov't

This was part of a growing alienation of more and more of the population from the government, who saw it as a continuation of the Communist Party regime, despite strenuous attempts by its leaders to steal the thunder of the anti-Communist demonstrators. One of the principal theoreticians of the Front, Silviu Brucan, even plunged into an anti-Communist demonstration to raise the call for outlawing the Communist Party.

Despite a widespread uneasiness that the



Romanian miners march on the National Salvation Parliament in Bucharest on Sept. 26.

hated bureaucrats were still running things behind the scenes, the anti-government parties, with their pro-capitalist programs, failed to gain momentum. In the first general elections in May 1990, they got only a small percent of the vote, while the NSF won an overwhelming majority.

The largest opposition party was the party of the Hungarian minority, which got about 7 percent of the vote. The Hungarians were oppressed under Ceausescu, and it was not long before Romanian chauvinist attacks on them resumed, with more and more complicity from the National Salvation Front.

After its victory in the May 1990 elections on a program of defending the gains of the workers, the Front moved to implement the program of its pro-capitalist opponents. In October 1990, the NSF premier Petre Roman announced that market prices would be introduced within a year. Shortly before, the minister of the economy, Eugen Dijmarescu, had come out for dumping the factory managements elected by the workers in the wake of the uprising against Ceausescu.

April Fool's Agreement

In the middle of March 1991, the government signed an agreement with the EEC, and on April 1 (April Fools' Day), a new round of price increases was to go into effect. At this point, the Front began to crack under the pressure of working-class opposition.

The unions held a demonstration of 15,000 people demanding cancellation of the price rises and other market reforms. President Iliescu called for delaying the price rises. But, under the pressure of the international financial organizations, the government, headed by Petre Roman, resisted.

Opposition between Iliescu and Roman came into the open. Some splits occurred in the NSF. In August, the government introduced a new law on privatizations and drew up a list of 30 state firms to be auctioned off.

The Gross National Product has fallen already by 10 percent and industrial production by 20 percent, with inflation soaring over 100 percent and expected to reach 130 percent by the end of this year. Unemployment is officially predicted to go over a million by the end of the year. In particular, inflation has wiped out the wage gains that the miners made during the first phase of the new government.

This is the development that led to the Jiu valley miners' rebellion at the end of September. Once again it took a very violent form. Among other things, the miners commandeered two trains to take them to Bucharest. During clashes with the repressive forces, five people were reported killed and 130 wounded. But this time the rebellion was against the "neo-Communist" government, which had come to be seen as anti-working class. And this time the students demonstrated

alongside the miners.

The miners got expressions of support from some right-wing forces, such as the National Peasants' Party, presumably because they thought that any stick was good enough to beat a dog with—namely, the "neo-Communist" government—but capitalist restoration was also taking a beating. In fact, a representative of the World Bank, who was in Bucharest for negotiations with the government, got roughed up in the demonstrations. The international financial institution's proposed \$300 million loan was put on hold.

The ineffable Silviu Brucan was quoted in the *New York Times* of Oct. 3 as saying that the miners had spoiled everything: "Everything was going forward before the miners' riot. The most obnoxious effect will be that the West will turn its back on Romania."

Down with communism?

The governor of the Romanian National Bank, Mugar Isarescu, said of the miners that "they were shouting 'Down with Communism,' but all their demands were Communist-style demands."

The miners' demands were for a lowering of the prices of necessities, adjustment of wages to meet the higher cost of living, rehiring of 4000 miners laid off in the previous months, and participation of a miners' delegation in the negotiations for the formation of a new government. The miners also showed what they thought of the beauties of the market by attacking the new private shops in Bucharest that sell goods they cannot afford to buy.

Petre Roman claimed that the miners were seeking "the dissolution of all democratic institutions in this country. Romania has broken with Communism for too short a time for the old structures and mentalities to disappear."

The Jiu miners have a powerful tradition of rebellion. They mounted the only serious challenge to the Ceausescu dictatorship before the December 1989 uprising. They have now drawn a line against the anti-working class, pro-market policies of his successors. But the miners are only the vanguard of a working class that has gone a long way to reorganizing itself. It has built mass trade-union organizations that have carried out important strikes.

And in the semi-insurrectional conditions of Ceausescu's overthrow, they went through a major experience of self-management in the factories, which virtually no one on the left other than *Socialist Action* noted. (The left, generally, was distracted by reactionary ideological expressions from looking at the actual process of the reorganization of the Romanian working class.)

The Romanian workers still lack any political leadership of their own, any political party that represents their interests, but the conditions are clearly more and more favorable to a deepening of political discussion among the workers and youth and to the emergence of political groups that have drawn the necessary conclusions from the workers' rejection of the market reforms. It is important for revolutionists and working class militants outside Romania to be alert to this process and try to learn from it and aid it. ■

Stakes are high in Yugoslav civil war

By GERRY FOLEY

The conflict in Yugoslavia continues to escalate and to cast an ever-growing shadow over the entire region, to say nothing of possible ramifications of the great power intrigues for which it has offered openings.

Both the capitalist press and the Stalinists try to present it as simply a descent into tribalism, or "Balkanism," and all the parties are equally guilty. However, there is a clear right and wrong in this conflict, and the international workers' and socialist movement

has a stake in it, as well as a responsibility to the victims of the neo-Stalinist Milosevic government of Serbia, the largest of the six republics in the Yugoslav federation.

In order to save its dictatorship, the Serbian bureaucracy, like its Stalinist big brother in the Soviet Union, turned to chauvinism. It drove the other peoples in the federation to revolt. And now it is prepared to tear the federation apart in order to try to get a grip over the largest possible part of it, to trade a confederation of the Yugoslav peoples for a neo-Stalinist Greater Serbia.

The result is an escalating series of conflicts, more and more exacerbated by the ruthlessness and arrogance of the Serbian leadership.

The antipopular, terroristic nature of the Yugo-Serbian army's assault on Croatia has been highlighted most recently by the attack on Dubrovnik, the historic refuge and center of Croatian culture, now mainly a tourist area.

"For every military objective attacked or taken, a point vital for Croatia will be attacked." This was the

(continued on page 16)