

A Socialist ACTION



Defending
women's
clinics
See page 5.

Vol. 10, No. 8 AUGUST 1992 50 CENTS

General strike, mass actions mobilize millions in South Africa

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Millions of Black South Africans are engaged in a vast three-month campaign of mass action. The African National Congress (ANC) is the main sponsor of the campaign, along with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party.

The ANC has called the activities a Black "referendum" in support of ending white rule. "The disenfranchised have unmistakably voted with their feet for democracy and peace now," said ANC Secretary General Cyril Ramaphosa.

The high point of the mass action was a two-day nationwide "stayaway" on Aug. 3-4. It was the largest political strike in the country's history. According to Jay Naidoo, general secretary of COSATU, 4 million people responded to the strike call.

The strike was particularly strong in the big urban centers. An estimated 90 percent of the workforce participated in the Johannesburg region, 60 percent in the Western Cape, and (according to preliminary reports by the *South African Labour Bulletin*) 75 percent in Durban. But in the mining regions, the strike was less effective.

The day after the strike, on Aug. 5, thousands of Blacks marched on "the centers of white power" in cities all over the country. The largest demonstration was in the capital, Pretoria. Our correspondents report that close to 70,000 marched on the Union Buildings. Over 40,000 marched in Capetown on the same day.

"The campaign for peace and democracy must become a tidal wave," Nelson Mandela told the throng assembled in front of the Union Buildings, "An interim government of national unity is an urgent and critical step."

Lost momentum

An interim government by the end of the year is the major demand of the campaign. Other demands include elections for a constituent assembly and measures to end political violence.

In calling for mass action, the ANC and its allies were forced to respond to the widespread feeling in the Black townships that CODESA (the ANC's negotiations with the government) did nothing to alleviate the poverty and deprivation caused by apartheid. Unemployment is currently approaching 50 percent and prices on basic food items are skyrocketing.

This sense of urgency was reflected on the placards that many carried in the

demonstrations, such as "Mandela, give us arms!" and "Away with CODESA! The workers will decide!"

Despite the grassroots enthusiasm for mass action, however, the "tidal wave for peace and democracy" had been somewhat slow in gaining force. Original plans for a three-day general strike, including factory occupations, were cut back.

According to *The New York Times*: "The strike, which sponsors originally portrayed as a longer protest stunning the government into surrendering power, had been scaled back until it became more of a cathartic ritual aimed at letting off steam in the townships before a resumption of talks on the country's political future."

ANC rallies at the end of July had been relatively small. The size of the general strike and the Aug. 5 demonstrations took most observers—and even the organizers—by surprise. Three days before, the ANC had predicted that only about 15,000 would march in Pretoria.

The ANC and COSATU lost momentum in building the actions in part because they spent weeks dickering with top business leaders and church groups over plans to scuttle the general strike in favor of an employer-supported holiday. This widely publicized deal, which was aimed at kick-starting negotiations with the government, was called off at the last minute.

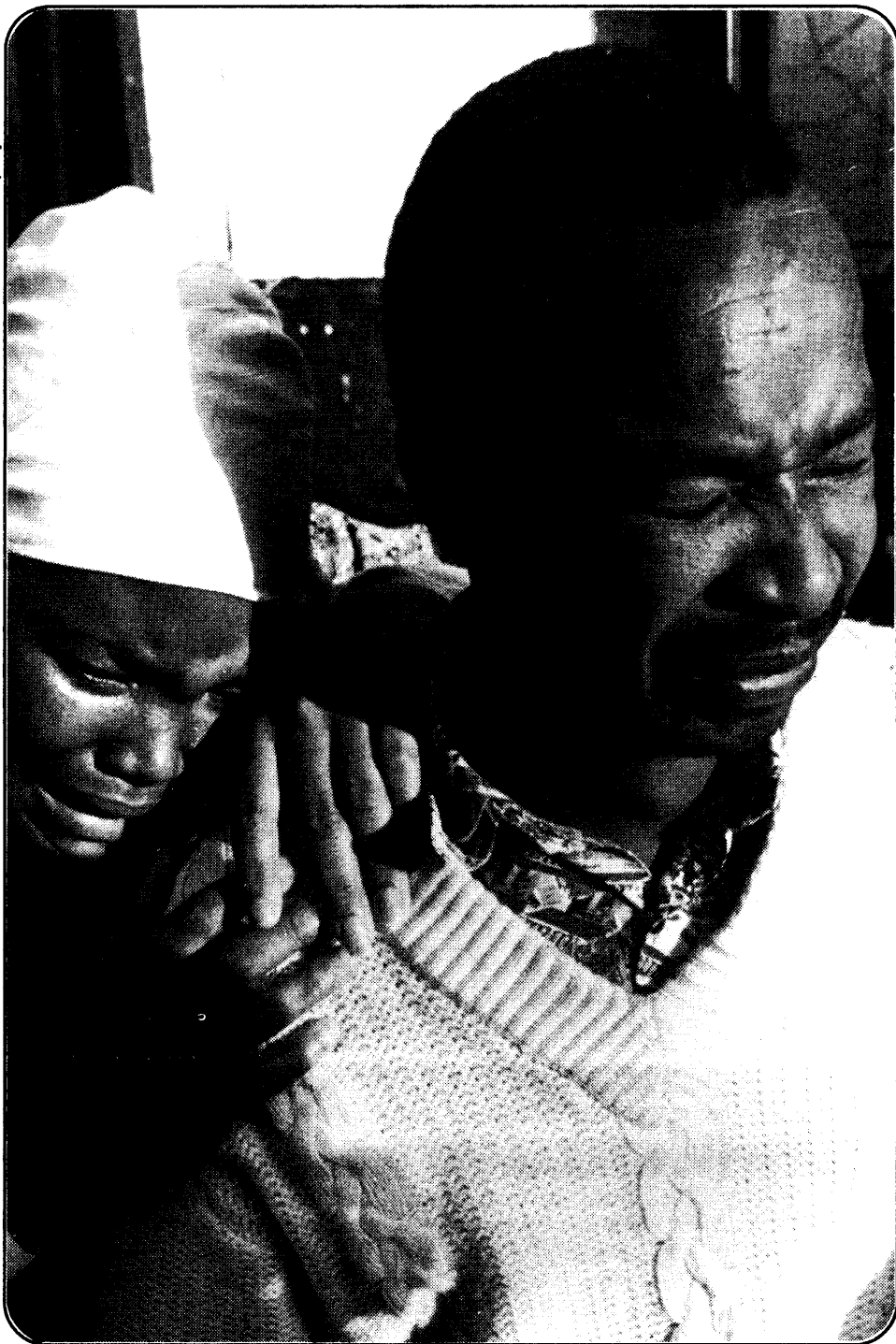
In the meantime, however, these seemingly friendly talks with the employers had generated a great deal of confusion—and even anger—among rank-and-file Black activists and trade unionists. Taking part in the talks, for example, were the corporate executives of big mining and metal concerns who were simultaneously offering their workers a pay cut.

The mass action campaign was also hampered by the fact that several Black liberation organizations did not take part. Major non-participating groups included the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Azanian Peoples Organization (AZAPO).

These groups do not support the ANC's demand for an interim government. They also point out that they were not consulted in planning the mass action. The ANC and its allies ran the entire mass action campaign in their own names, rather than attempting to build a broad united front.

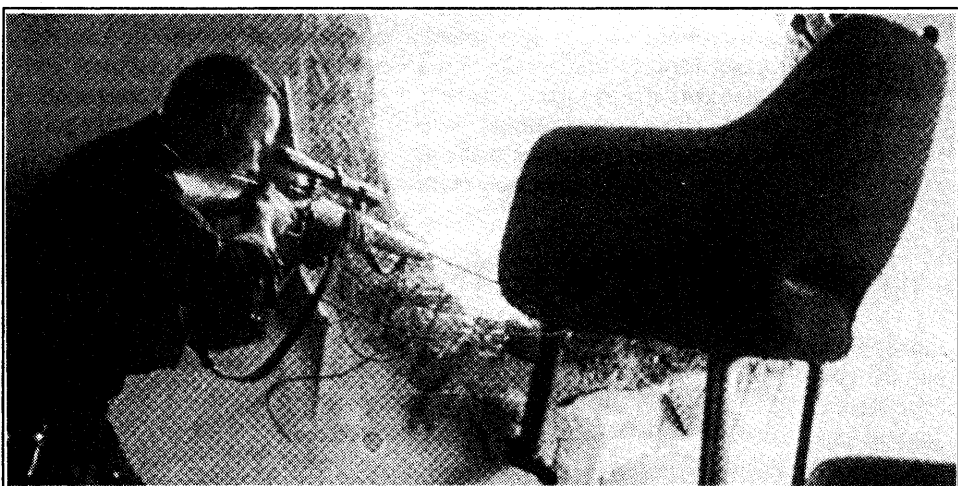
Even more significant was the fact that the National Confederation of Trade Unions (NACTU)—which claims jurisdiction over more than 700,000 workers—was not

(continued on page 8)



Two survivors of the Boipatong massacre where 42 Blacks were killed.

Who's responsible for the 'hell' in Yugoslavia?



A Serbian sniper takes aim in Sarajevo: What are the roots of the crisis?

By GERRY FOLEY

The threat of Western military intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina is escalating. On Aug. 6, President Bush called for a UN resolution to allow the use of force in delivering food and medicine to the population in the war-ravaged areas. In the same issue of *The New York Times* that reported Bush's appeal, an editorial called for even more ambitious military intervention.

The editorial ignored an important point made in an article in the same issue: "As

matters stand, any foreign aircraft or troops used to force relief supplies through would probably have to fire on Bosnian defenders as well as the Serbian forces besieging the city."

In fact, any Western military intervention will aim at disarming or crippling the forces fighting against the Great Serbian aggression in order to impose conditions favorable to the interests of the Western powers.

Already, Western pressure, according to

(continued on page 10)

What Socialist Action is all about



Fightback

By
Sylvia Weinstein

Socialist Action came toward the end of its ninth year with a national convention that started on July 29 and ended on Aug. 2. Our members are revolutionaries, many of whom have been engaged in all of the struggles of the American working people from the 1930s through today.

Socialist Action members were part of the struggles against racism and sexism, for the right to organize unions and to strike, and in opposition to imperialist wars.

At the present time, we are engaged in defending our health clinics against Operation Rescue. Some of the same people who beat the scabs down on the picket lines of the 1930s, are today up at dawn to defend our abortion clinics from the big-mouth minority who want women, especially teenagers, to return to "coathanger" and back-alley abortions.

Along with our home-grown

fighters, we had guests at the convention from Black South Africa, Europe, and Latin America. All of us have the same enemy—the capitalist class.

As revolutionary working-class socialists, we are enthusiastic about the future. We know that there are really two worlds, the world of the exploiters and the world of the exploited. As in our own land, every country has two traditions—that of the oppressor and of the oppressed.

Our America was born from the Revolution of 1776. Workers, farmers, and enslaved people, Black and white, took on the King of England and all his horses and men, and kicked their butts all the way back across the Atlantic Ocean.

Again, in 1861-65, our America fought and died to rid this country of the scourge of slavery. It was the poor, the oppressed and the exploited—along with the

slaves themselves—who did the fighting and dying. (The rich could literally buy exemption from the draft.)

Since that time, however, our world has witnessed one horrible war after another. Each time, the sons of working people are sent to kill the sons of workers of other lands. All the killing is done only to line the pockets of capitalists. And the technology of killing is made ever more efficient and extended to include women and children and other non-combatants.

Every day, moreover, tens of thousands of men, women, and children starve to death. Every day, increasing poverty means that millions are condemned by capitalism to malnutrition, outright starvation, and disease.

Despite fantastic advancements in science and technology, misery grows every day. It has reached the point where millions of people wonder whether the human race, and life itself, will survive on this planet.

Imperialism, with American capitalism at its head, is in each country based on a small minority of capitalists, landlords, and militarists who, thinking they own the Earth and everything on it, will stop at nothing—including nuclear annihilation, if necessary—to keep it for themselves.

But Socialist Action is confident that our world, the world of the exploited and oppressed masses, will ultimately prevail over the world of the capitalists. Our world includes everyone struggling for freedom; from Black Africa to Black America, from neo-colonialized Asia to Latin America.

Our world includes women everywhere who struggle for social and economic justice. It includes all who must battle for their daily bread. It includes everyone who marches against imperialist war; everyone who fights against the destruction of the balance of life on Earth.

Our world includes all true artists (i.e., artists who tell the truth). It includes the rap singers, the poets and painters. Those whose words and images give hope and enlightenment for the poor, and nightmares to the rich.

Our world does not include those who advocate political support for the enemy class. It does not include those who say, "Vote for the lesser evil even if it means holding your nose." It doesn't include those who preach that "workers and bosses are partners." It doesn't include those who preach servility and capitulation to the social vampires and parasites of the world of capitalism.

Our world will come to understand that when the exploited and

oppressed unite in a common struggle, we can change everything. And in the words of one of my favorite pioneer revolutionary socialists¹, we must:

"Throw out the profit and rent hogs, and increase the living standard of the people who do useful work.

"Assure freedom and democratic rights to all, not forgetting those who are denied any semblance of them now.

"Call back the truculent admirals from the seven seas—and ground the airplanes with their dangling bombs.

"Hold out the hand of friendship and comradely help to the oppressed and hungry people in the world."

But to accomplish this goal requires building a party that has absorbed the lessons of history. It is indispensable for bringing capitalist insanity to an end once and for all. That's what Socialist Action is all about. ■

¹ James P. Cannon, 1890-1974, was a founder and leader of the Communist Party up until his expulsion for opposition to Stalinism in 1928. He went on to be a central leader of the American and world Trotskyist (i.e., revolutionary Marxist) movement and its organizational expression, the Fourth International.

You can't wipe out cancer under capitalism



... and in this corner

By
Joni Jacobs

Shortly after her husband left her, Judy Brady discovered she had breast cancer. Many women would have collapsed after a double whammy like that, but not Judy Brady. After undergoing a bilateral mastectomy and a harrowing cycle of chemotherapy, Brady's cancer has been in remission for more than 10 years.

A diagnosis of breast cancer is among the most devastating news a woman can hear, and not just because of the health issues. This sick, sexist society measures the worth of a woman by the size of her bustline. A woman with small breasts is considered unattractive; a woman without breasts is considered a freak.

Compounding this fear are the staggering—and rising—risks of developing breast cancer. In 1980, women stood a one-in-14 chance of getting breast cancer. By 1991, that risk had risen to one in nine, while women in Los Angeles face a one-in-seven chance of developing breast cancer. According to the Women's Cancer Resource Center, 142,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 1991, and 43,000 died from it.

After Brady was diagnosed, she began searching for an explanation. She read a 1980 report from the National Research Council

called "The Effects on Populations of Exposure to Low Levels of Ionizing Radiation." As she recalls, "The first sentence of the section on breast cancer read, 'The female breast is one of the organs most susceptible to radiation carcinogenesis.'"

Then she looked at a map of the United States that showed the distribution of ionizing radiation producers. These include nuclear energy and fuel production plants, weapons production plants, and toxic waste dumps. Brady discovered that California—where she had lived all her life—has the highest number of heavy radiation producers west of the Rocky Mountains.

Discovering this link between ionizing radiation and breast cancer had a profound effect on Brady. It turned her from a cancer survivor into a cancer activist. Brady edited a book of articles on women with cancer entitled "One in Three: Women with cancer confront an epidemic." The opening essay in the book makes a powerful case against the collaboration of the government, the multinational corporations, and the American Cancer Society in the cover-up of a growing epidemic in this country.

The World Health Organization

estimated as far back as 1964 that 80 percent of cancers are caused by human-produced carcinogens. Today that estimate has risen to 90 percent of all cancers.

And yet the government's approach to cancer is that it is an individual problem, caused by genetics, diet or poor lifestyle choices, like smoking. While these are all contributing factors, they do not tell the whole story. Yet if you get cancer, more often than not doctors make you feel that it's somehow your fault.

Millions of dollars are spent to test chemicals in an attempt to regulate our exposure to harmful toxins. However, Brady points out, "There is no known 'safe level' of exposure to any cancer-causing agent. You can't be a little bit pregnant, and you can't be 'safely' exposed to a little bit of lethal poison." This is especially true considering the cumulative effect of thousands of toxins and carcinogens we're exposed to on a daily basis from many sources—auto exhaust, power line radiation, industrial waste, etc.

It's not particularly shocking to read about the denials of the government and the corporations about the harmful effects of pollution. As Brady says, "Given that the profit motive is the driving force of our economic system, it's not surprising to hear industry clamor that cancer is caused by the cancer victim."

Brady's exposure of the role played by the American Cancer Society (ACS), however, is shocking. Brady charges that the ACS—an organization formed supposedly to fight cancer—is actually a powerful collaborator in the national cover-up of cancer. Instead of warning about the harmful effects of industrial pol-

lution, the ACS turns the definition of "cancer prevention" into an admonishment to visit your doctor more frequently.

"The largest cancer organization in the world should logically be in the forefront of the environmental movement if it were truly about the business of fighting cancer," says Brady. But the ACS board of directors shares its members with other corporate entities, many of which are producing the very carcinogens that cause cancer.

The ACS also plays a leading role in setting the programs and policies of the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Both organizations appear to have serious conflicts of interest regarding cancer prevention and treatment. Brady reports that of the three standard drugs used in her chemotherapy treatment, two were made by companies that had officials formerly associated with ACS and NCI.

The ACS's record on opposing cancer-causing drugs and chemicals is horrendous. It opposed warning labels on high-risk hormone-containing drugs like Premarin, saying that warning of the cancer risks of such drugs would "interfere with the practice of medicine." It sided with the saccharin manufacturers against warning the public about the cancer risks of that substance.

Brady concludes that the ultimate cure from the ravages of cancer has nothing to do with doctors or drugs—it has to do with politics.

In my opinion, it has to do with rationally planning our industrial production. It has to do with putting the needs and health concerns of people before the profits of industrial polluters and fat-cat pharmaceutical companies.

Reading Brady's excellent book just gives me another reason to fight for socialism. We'll never wipe out cancer without it. ■

Socialist ACTION

Closing date:
AUG. 8, 1992

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Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly for \$8 per year by Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3425 Army St., San Francisco, CA 94110.

Second-class postage is paid at San Francisco, Calif.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Socialist Action*, 3425 Army St., San Francisco, CA 94110.

RATES: For one year (12 issues)—U.S., 2nd Class: \$8, 1st Class: \$18; Canada and Mexico, 2nd Class: \$12, 1st Class: \$18; All other countries, 2nd Class: \$15, 1st Class: \$30. (Money orders and checks should be in U.S. dollars.)

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

STUDENTS! Protest the cutbacks, defend your right to an education!

Education—from kindergarten to university level—is facing serious cutbacks. The crisis has resulted in huge class sizes, courses dropped from the university programs, and laid-off teachers and other school workers. Eighty percent of public four-year colleges have raised their tuition during the last year.

In California, a typical four-year course of study at a state university now will take five years to complete because of the scarcity of required courses. Whole programs, staffed by part-time untenured faculty, are threatened. At San Francisco State University, programs facing complete demise include music and women's studies, to name just two.

California's state universities and two-year community colleges are implementing big fee hikes at the same time that courses and services are being cut back. The state university fees have risen 60 percent in two years, and another 40 percent increase is contemplated.

For the past several years, universities have changed their hiring policies so that a huge proportion of faculty members are hired year to year on a part-time, temporary basis. In other words, these faculty are easy for administrations to lay off.

Public elementary and secondary school administrations use this same policy of trying to operate schools using more substitute and temporary teachers hired with one-year contracts and fewer full time, permanent employees.

Some big urban school districts, such as Chicago and San Francisco, use teachers hired on such a tenuous basis especially in the ghetto schools, adding to the educational insecurity of poor children. (For more

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information on the disastrous educational effects of such administrative "cost-cutting," see Jonathan Kozol's excellent book, "Savage Inequalities.")

Funds are wasted

The United States is still the wealthiest country in the world. Billions are flushed into the military machine while social ser-

vices of actual use to people—like education and healthcare—are being slashed. The problem is that the capitalist system is in trouble, and in order to shore up their troubled system, the corporate bosses are trying to boost their profits at the direct expense of working people.

Thus, the poor are steadily assuming the entire tax burden while the wealthiest

30,000 Americans pay little or no taxes. The corporations' share of the tax burden has dropped from 50 percent in 1945 to 6.2 percent in 1983. At the same time, real wages have declined, and all social services have been cut or threatened with cuts.

For example, new welfare schemes that cut payments for families that have new children while on welfare or for families who remain on welfare over six months, are now in place or soon to be, in several states, including New Jersey and California. And this attack on welfare coincides with increasing unemployment.

The education cuts must be seen in the context of the general capitalist crisis. What kind of a social system puts development of weaponry ahead of the development of the mind? What kind of a social system permits 1 percent of the population to own over 80 percent of all wealth and property? Obviously, a system that must be replaced.

But in the meantime, isn't there some course of action that students can take to defend their education? We think the answer to this question is "yes."

Students made a difference

During the Vietnam War, students across the United States, and indeed all around the world, played an enormous role in mobilizing the population to oppose the war and help bring it to an end. Students used the campus facilities to provide open educational forums on the war. These were the early teach-ins, where college professors debated representatives of the U.S. State department in front of huge audiences of students, many of whom participated in round-the-clock sessions.

Later, as the war escalated, the campuses became the organizing centers for whole communities. Campus facilities were used to produce banners, posters, and flyers to mobilize the community for anti-war action. Students were the vanguard of the movement which, in a brief time of five or six years, grew to encompass the entire population.

During the Gulf War, these organizing techniques were repeated, on a smaller scale, on many university and high school campuses. It will be even easier to use the campuses as mobilizing centers to defend public education.

Already, the educational crisis has had a direct effect on the working class as a whole. A huge portion of the population is sympathetic to student demands because they are either students themselves or the parents of students. The time is right for students to organize a mass action campaign in defense of public education, including demands for:

- A university education for everybody who wants one, to be fully paid by the government.
- Decent housing for all students and a salary adequate to student needs, safeguarded against inflation by automatic cost-of-living adjustments.
- Guaranteed jobs for students upon graduation.
- The right to utilize university facilities for students and professors to promote the organization of a mass action campaign in defense of public education for all.

These are just a few of the legitimate demands students can raise in the framework of a campaign in defense of public education. In order to succeed in such a campaign, students will need to organize not just themselves; they will need to participate in coalitions representing working people as a whole.

Such coalitions should include all student organizations; labor unions and professional organizations of teachers and other campus workers; community organizations and organizations of Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and others; women's groups; religious organizations; and every community organization that supports public education.

Students should resist a tendency to defend their own programs exclusively. All programs are under attack and an injury to one is an injury to all. Thus, music students should align with women's studies students, African American history students, and so on. Primary, elementary, and secondary school programs should be defended alongside college and university programs. Students unite!—The editors.

New women's organization formed

By
MOLLY SACHS

Here's some encouraging news: New women's rights groups and actions are springing up all over the place, and the activists involved are not willing to stop organizing for women's rights during the election period.

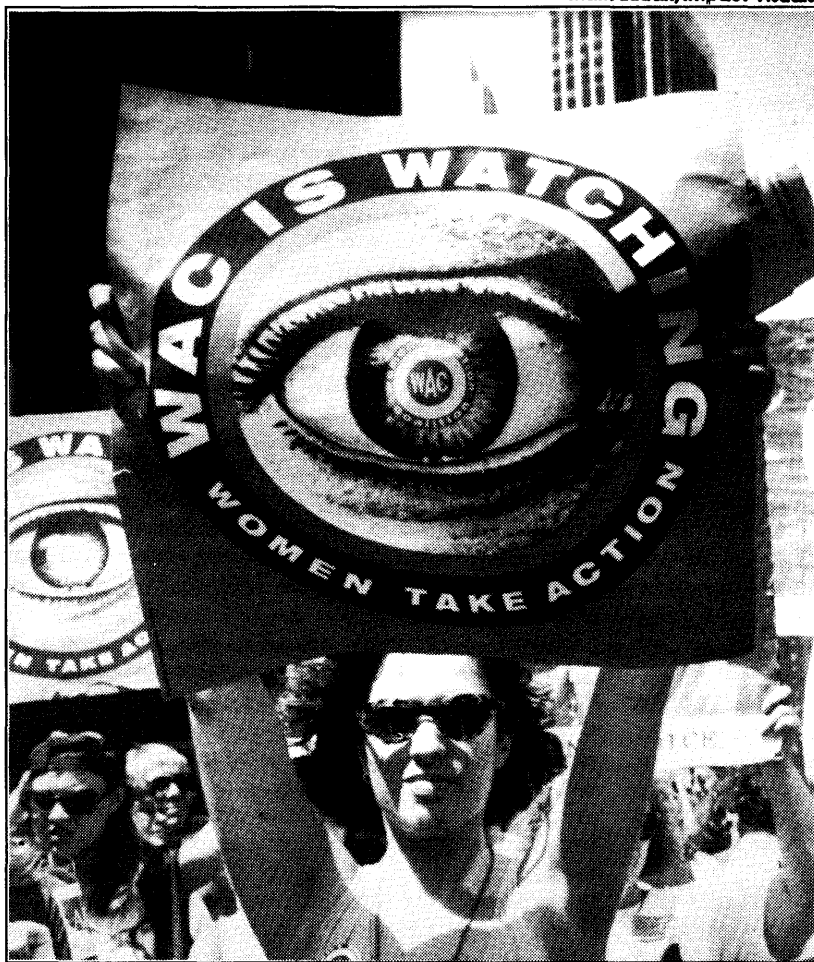
This writer had the good fortune to attend the first meeting of a new organization, the Women's Action Coalition (WAC). It took place in San Francisco, on Aug. 5.

Four to five hundred women packed the Southern Exposure art gallery, where the organizing meeting took place. Hundreds had to stand; there were only 200 chairs set up.

The new group, self-described as "an open alliance of women committed to DIRECT ACTION on issues affecting the rights of all women," began in New York City last January.

Organizers at the S.F. meeting reported that ACT-UP, the AIDS action group, is the inspiration for WAC's organizing style.

After a description of the New York organization and its committee structure, as well as a report and some discussion about direct action and what it means (which is many different things to different people), the first action was decided by unanimous vote—a picket line



Mark Ludak/Impact Visuals

demonstration Aug. 8 at the Bar Association convention currently meeting in San Francisco.

Last year the lawyers' organization failed to adopt a pro-choice resolution by a very narrow margin. This year, women inside and out of the association are determined to reverse that stand.

It is still unclear what strategies, ideas, and politics will govern WAC. The organizers were clearly more interested in the "direct action" tactic than any other considerations.

national demonstration of three quarters of a million in Washington, D.C.

Instead, NOW is throwing its resources into the election campaigns of several Democrats.

Another explanation is that NOW is organized in a highly top-down fashion, whereas the women want their movement to be organized democratically.

Women want to be in control of their own lives; it follows therefore that they would want to control their own organizations. ■

Bill Clinton: No friend of workers, oppressed minorities, and women

By MOLLY SACHS

Catherine Smith/Impact Visuals

"The most important family policy, urban policy, minority policy and foreign policy America can have is an expanding entrepreneurial economy," said Bill Clinton in his speech accepting the nomination of the Democratic Party as its candidate for president of the United States.

This, the other references to capitalism in his acceptance speech, and the call for a strong military, are the essence of the Clinton candidacy.

Clinton's actual record, as governor of Arkansas, is well known: Arkansas is a "right-to-work" (for less money) state. It is one of only two states (the other is Alabama) with no anti-discrimination civil rights legislation on the books.

Clinton interrupted his primary electioneering to fly back to Arkansas on Jan. 14 to witness the state's execution of Ricky Ray Rector, a brain-damaged African-American. He signed state legislation restricting women's right to abortion, including requiring parental approval for minors to get abortions. Now he's posing as the pro-choice candidate.

The clear message of Clinton's candidacy is that he would be a better administrator for the U.S. capitalist system than Bush and the Republicans. He said it himself: "What is our vision of our New Covenant? An America that says to entrepreneurs and business people: We will give you more incentives, more opportunities than ever before ... to create wealth in the new global economy."

But is creating more wealth for business in the "new global economy" of any concern to the majority of people in this country?

Working people have seen a steady decline of their real wages for the last decade. The governmental policies that have fostered this attack on workers' stan-



dards of living—killing the air traffic controllers' union, massive taxes for workers, new tax-breaks for the rich, cutbacks on social services used by working people—

can be blamed equally on Republicans and Democrats.

Clinton's so-called economic plan does not address the gross special tax giveaways

the rich receive (over \$150 billion this year alone for the wealthiest one percent).

The capitalist parties obviously can't solve the problems they helped to cause. Working people need their own party—a labor party—to fight for their interests in the workplace and in the government.

Women are experiencing a steady erosion of their rights to reproductive freedom and indeed to equal rights in all spheres. The Democrats and Republicans share responsibility (along with the Supreme Court, whose members they ratified) for the attacks on women.

Women cannot redress their inequality in the framework of the capitalist parties. They need a workers' party that can put the needs of women at the top of its priorities.

Black and Latino people likewise have no friend in Clinton. The Los Angeles rebellion brought forth no solutions from either capitalist political party. What's required is a massive program of public works (housing, mass transit, schools) to rebuild the cities; full employment at union wages; a shorter work week with no cut in pay to make sure everyone has a job; taxes on the rich, not working people; and an immediate conversion of all military production to production for human needs.

Clinton proposes cutting welfare but without having a plan for full employment. This is no solution at all. Furthermore, full employment is impossible in the capitalist system, which needs a large body of jobless workers to drive down the wages of the employed (and drive up the profits of the bosses).

Clinton's proposal for reducing the military budget is similar to Bush's. Both proposals are in the framework of keeping the United States poised for the new wars of aggression that both candidates support—like the U.S. war against Iraq. Clinton wants to cut \$50 billion more than Bush—a drop in the bucket for the U.S. military machine. The "New World Odor," under Bush or Clinton, still stinks.

The simple truth is that no political party or candidate can represent both the exploited and the exploiters, oppressed and oppressor. Anyone who says otherwise is not a leader but a misleader. A vote for Clinton (or Bush) is a wasted vote. ■

LTV and Ravenswood: A tale of partial victories, partial defeats

By MARIE WEIGAND

CLEVELAND—Hearings before federal bankruptcy Judge Burton R. Lifland on LTV's petitions to void its contract and pension agreements with the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) were slated to begin Monday, July 13. But instead of starting the hearing, Lifland ordered both parties to attempt to resolve their differences and report back to him the next morning.

On Tuesday, attorneys for both the USWA and LTV reported no progress in contract negotiations. LTV's attorneys asked the judge to limit testimony to 10 hours from each side. Steelworker attorneys stated it would take much longer for them to present their case. Judge Lifland asked both sides to present a list of their proposed witnesses and again ordered them to resume negotiations.

On Wednesday morning, attorneys for both the USWA and LTV again reported no progress in contract negotiations. Lifland delivered a stern lecture claiming they didn't recognize the seriousness of the situation, that they were facing the "melt-down" or possible liquidation of the company. He said the problem seemed to be that those negotiating didn't have the power to do so, and ordered the attorneys to bring in those with the proper authority.

The judge concluded by saying he was giving them one last chance to reach an agreement, and if they did not do so, he would begin the hearing Thursday morning. He added that he was sure neither party would be happy with his ruling in such a hearing.

"No concessions"?

After a marathon bargaining session, the USWA and LTV announced a tentative agreement Thursday morning. Details will not be formally announced until Judge

Lifland approves the terms and LTV steelworkers vote on the new contract.

Despite the USWA's stated "no concession" stance, this proposed agreement is a concessionary one. In exchange for a maximum \$25,000 buy-out, 218 jobs are eliminated. The company can unilaterally install expanded crafts (e.g. combining pipefitter and welder jobs). This will result in additional job losses.

Work rules are another area of concessions. Production workers will be required to do "minor" maintenance work. Both maintenance and operating units will be required to work on a continuous basis (i.e., elimination of any lunch, wash-up, or start-up times). The extent of these work-rule concessions will be fought out from local to local on the shop floor.

The agreement tries to force steelworkers into a new "managed care" program for health benefits. The first year, a cash payment is offered to anyone signing up for "managed care." If this bribe doesn't work, those wishing to continue their current healthcare coverage will pay a monthly fee. This fee increases over the life of the contract. The current deductibles are also increased in the third year.

Similarly, retirees who wish to maintain their current health coverage will pay higher deductibles in the third year. These healthcare cuts cannot be renegotiated when the proposed new agreement expires.

This proposed agreement—with no improvement in wages, holidays, or vacations—expires in June 1994. This also hurts other steelworkers whose contracts expire in 1993 by removing the possibility of a coordinated strike against all major basic steel companies.

The agreement includes real pension improvements. USWA spokespeople boast that the determination of the members forced the company to back down from its worst concession demands. The earlier "no concession" stand is handily

pushed aside.

Workers who had made their determination clear to the company are no longer "needed," as top-level negotiators hammer out a concessionary agreement. The Steelworkers bureaucracy views the mobilization of workers as a pressure tactic to be turned off as soon as "serious" negotiations begin.

Agreement at Ravenswood

While the LTV contract has yet to be approved, the results of this approach can be seen from the strike and lockout at the Ravenswood Aluminum Co. in West Virginia. For 19 months, Ravenswood steelworkers and their spouses reached out to other workers for support. Only 14 steelworkers were among the 1300 scabs crossing the picket line.

USWA spokespeople vowed to remain out one day longer than R. Emmett Boyle, the company's president and chief executive officer. Some Ravenswood steelworkers now complain that remaining out one day longer than Boyle became the union's focus. Thus when Boyle was forced to resign and the company agreed to resume negotiations, the union ended the very membership mobilization that had forced the company to the bargaining table. Needless to say, this had a demoralizing effect on the strikers and their families.

The part of the settlement most frequently criticized by Ravenswood steelworkers is a \$2000 per member settlement in exchange for dropping their back wage claims under their unfair labor practices suit. Many felt they had a good chance of winning this suit, where workers would have been entitled to an average of \$80,000 each. Steelworker officials justified this \$2000 settlement by stating they didn't want to force the company out of business.

The new agreement also resulted in job

losses. Some 200 steelworkers did not want their jobs back (e.g. workers who retired or moved during the strike). Instead of hiring new workers for these jobs, the company permanently eliminated them.

Although Ravenswood steelworkers considered elimination of all scabs an essential feature of the agreement, 104 workers who failed their back-to-work physical exams have been replaced by scabs. The union claims this is contrary to the agreement and will be pursuing it through the grievance procedure.

Job combinations and speed-up have increased. Work-rule changes in the new agreement further endanger workers' safety in an already physically dangerous industry.

Many workers are questioning the union's strategy. Not only are they expressing bitterness about being shunted aside once "serious" negotiations began, but they are also pointing to the need to stop scabs from entering the plant. They explain that a favorable settlement could have been reached much earlier if all production had been stopped.

At Ravenswood, the company failed in its efforts to oust the USWA and operate a non-union plant. At LTV, the company backed-off on its demands to completely gut wages, benefits, and working conditions. In both cases, the companies responded to the determination of the steelworker membership. However, in both cases, the bureaucracy thwarted this mobilization as soon as the company resumed "reasonable" negotiations.

Although the LTV contract vote has not yet taken place, LTV workers, like the Ravenswood workers, will most likely approve the agreement by a large margin.

Both agreements include enough positive features that they can be grudgingly approved by steelworkers who don't yet recognize the possibility of reclaiming their union from the bureaucrats who put the continued well-being of the companies ahead of that of steelworkers and their families. ■

Whatever happened to the Freedom of Choice Act?

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

The story of the Freedom of Choice Act of 1992 vividly illustrates the danger entailed in linking the fate of the pro-choice movement to the Democratic Party.

Ever since the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it would hear the case of the Pennsylvania abortion restrictions last year, the pro-choice movement leadership

COMMENTARY

assumed, and acted on the assumption, that the Supreme Court would void *Roe v. Wade*.

Because they expected that abortion would soon be illegal, the leadership of the abortion rights organizations (such as Planned Parenthood, National Abortion Rights Action League, NOW, and others) began to campaign for legislation—the Freedom of Choice Act. The announced intention of this bill was to enshrine the principles of *Roe* in law.

The argument went something like this: The Supreme Court will not act to protect women's fundamental

rights, so Congress must do it—by making the 1973 *Roe* decision the law of the land.

Some groups realized early on that Congress would not pass a law that really put *Roe* on the books, that is, preventing state anti-abortion laws. Some warned that women just might have to compromise in order to get such a piece of legislation passed. The compromises some of the pro-choice leadership were prepared to make included abrogating the rights of teenaged women to obtain abortions without parental consent.

While the negotiations on the wording of the Freedom of Choice Act were going on, and more and more restrictions were being added by Congressional sponsors of the bill, another compromise was in the works. The Democratic Party was promising abortion rights later, in exchange for support and endorsement now, for the Democratic Party ticket—Clinton, Gore, and others. Unfortunately, the women's movement leadership fell—hook, line, and sinker—for this false promise.

Meanwhile, restrictions have been added to the Freedom of Choice Act, and everyone now admits that Congress won't pass it during this session after all. And now the pro-choice and women's movements are completely mired in electoral work for the Democrats. The rationale seems to be that electing more pro-choice

Democrats to Congress will assure passage of a pro-choice bill that will be veto-proof sometime in the future.

But this is illusory. There is no such thing as a veto-proof Congress when it comes to the interests of the ruling rich.

The labor movement has something to say about the campaign to elect a "veto-proof" Congress. In 1976, while supporting Jimmy Carter, they were able to elect the majority they thought they needed for a "veto-proof Congress." But they still lost on pro-labor legislation because this so-called "majority" stabbed them in the back. In short, they were betrayed by their "friends."

Are American women condemned to repeat the same erroneous, self-defeating strategy?

Consider this: Presidential candidate Clinton is already on record in Arkansas in support of the very restrictions that are now being added to the Freedom of Choice Act of 1992. What can this mean for a principled pro-choice bill after the election? It doesn't look good.

How to get out of this mess? The women's movement must have an independent strategy to win reproductive rights. The movement needs to stay in the streets and deny support to any candidates of either of the two big-business parties. The only time these parties even pretend to care about women is election time. The rest of the time they act against the rights of women, oppressed minorities, and working people as a whole.

The death of the Equal Rights Amendment should have taught us this lesson years ago. So far, the story of the Freedom of Choice Act provides one more piece of damning evidence against giving support to the Democrats. ■

Anti-choice fanatics repulsed during Milwaukee showdown

By TINA BEACOCK and ROSIE CRUZ

MILWAUKEE, Wis.—"Move 'Em Out of Milwaukee" was the rallying cry for clinic defenders mobilizing to keep clinics open here. The Milwaukee Clinic Protection Coalition coordinated the defense efforts of NOW, NARAL, Planned Parenthood, and many other groups and individuals. Some, like a local Unitarian church congregation, became active clinic defenders for the first time.

Three groups, Lambs for Christ, Missionaries to the Pre-born, and Youth for America—who targeted Milwaukee for a six-week campaign to close down abortion clinics—were encouraged by several factors. These included the large Roman Catholic population, the closing of a clinic last year, (the Bread and Roses clinic), and, most important, the encouragement of city District Attorney McCann, who promised in advance not to prosecute the anti-choice commandos.

Their planned tactics included using children, some as young as seven or eight years old, to block access to the clinics. The Rev. Joseph Forman, a leader of Lambs for Christ most recently famous for thrusting a fetus under the nose of Governor Clinton at the Democratic Convention in New York, participated. They came to Milwaukee expecting that there would be no organized response.

But local pro-choice supporters had learned from the Buffalo, N.Y., experience. Leaders of Buffalo United for Choice were brought in to help organize a serious defense. Organizers called for 1000 clinic defenders a day to answer the anti-choice fanatics, and they have gotten that response from pro-choice supporters around the country since June 16.

Beginning at 5 a.m., defenders were deployed around the clinics, several rows deep. They stayed there for as many hours as necessary to ensure that every patient got into every clinic that was open. A telephone network and hotline kept defenders informed on where they were needed.

"Hey, hey, ho, ho, We kicked you out of Buffalo, Hey, hey, hee, hee, We'll kick you out of Milwaukee," was a popular chant. Defenders also used songs to counter the 900th chorus of "Amazing Grace," using pro-choice verses from the civil rights song "We Shall Not Be Moved."

Clearly the most effective discouragement to the clinic attackers was their almost complete failure to get anywhere

near the clinics to block doors or harass patients.

The role of the police and the press is worth noting. As mentioned above, the city District Attorney had promised in advance that no arrests would be made. An injunction was sought against the anti-choice forces, not by the clinics, but by the police department, to prevent, among other things, on-the-job back injuries to policemen!

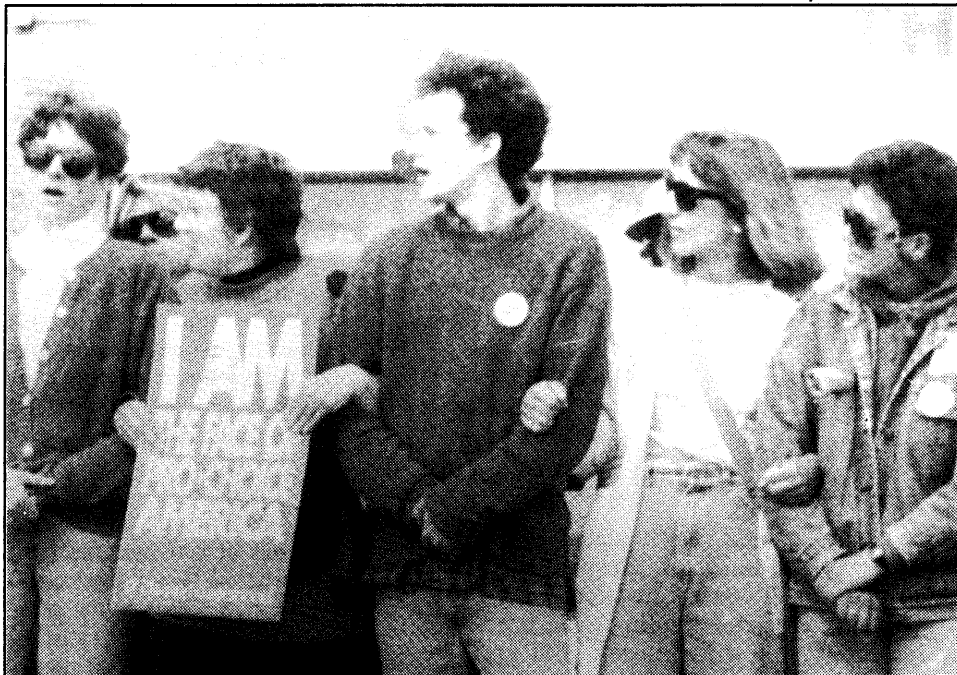
Initially, when the police showed up, they were cheered by clinic defenders. But their intervention gave the clinic blockaders

deploying shoulder-to-shoulder defense, or standing inside the clinic defenders' own lines of defense. This recalled a description, in *The New York Times* of the Buffalo clinic defense, where "the pro-choice lines were so solid, the police had to ask permission to cross."

In the first week, 326 anti-abortion blockaders were arrested, 118 of them children. The parents of these children, who cynically used them as clinic blockaders, were not cited until the campaign was into its second week.

What really made the difference in Mil-

Tina Beacock/Socialist Action



Milwaukee clinic defenders link arms to keep clinics open.

an opening. On the first day, the police arrived at the Brown Deer Clinic and cleared out the clinic defenders, opening the way for the anti-choice forces to block the doors. As Stephen Glynn, an attorney supporting the Clinic Protection Coalition stated, "If they let us do our job, this wouldn't have happened."

At another clinic, the following day, police saw-horse barricades replaced triple-lines of clinic defenders—opening another breach. Clinic defenders were truly perplexed, to say the least, as to why the police, on the basis of their injunction, were actually aiding the clinic blockaders.

But the pressure of the mobilization of massive numbers of defenders forced the police to adopt different tactics. When these reporters returned Saturday, June 20, the police were imitating clinic defenders,

waukee was not the police or the arrests. It was the fact that the anti-choice forces were consistently out-mobilized. The clinics stayed open and the blockaders were reduced to sitting in the streets. Frustrated at the clinic doors, the anti-choice groups began to discuss other tactics, like picketing doctors' homes.

All those interested in defending the right to abortion have to be ready to mobilize at the clinics. This is the decisive element of this fight.

Anti-choice forces are boasting that they will attract 10,000 supporters to Milwaukee on Aug. 8. While this is one more example of their frequently wild exaggerations, all pro-choice partisans in the area are being asked to turn out on that day. For information, call the Milwaukee Clinic Protection Coalition, (414) 283-1100. ■

New rise seen in movement to defend abortion clinics

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

One unintended effect of the Supreme Court's latest assault on women's right to abortion is the new wave of successful clinic defense organizing.

Less than one year after the Wichita, Kan., attacks—where Operation Rescue (OR) succeeded in denying women access to clinics—pro-choice organizers in Louisiana, a state famous for recently having adopted a draconian anti-abortion law, succeeded in keeping abortion services available and functioning. They successfully withstood a large-scale attack by OR, the Lambs of Christ, and hundreds of other anti-choice fanatics in a mid-July siege in Baton Rouge.

Ann Schiffman, Director of Louisiana Choice NARAL [National Abortion Rights Action League], told *Socialist Action* how it was done. A coalition that included groups such as NOW, League of Women Voters, and NARAL, was able to mobilize "well over a thousand" pro-choice defenders. Some 1500 defenders were trained in preparation for Operation Rescue's pre-announced attack.

The anti-abortion zealots numbered 2000 during their largest event, according to Schiffman. This was a pre-dawn 5 a.m. "ominous" parade of candle-toting anti-choice demonstrators singing "Our God is an Awesome God." However, not all 2000 were prepared to storm the clinic.

"Operation Rescue never made it to the clinic property," said Schiffman. She explained how the coalition had enlisted the aid of the city in erecting an eight-foot fence around the clinic. The assailants were unable to scale the barrier during their several attempts to storm the Delta Women's Clinic.

Clinic patients were escorted in for abortion services by pro-choice escorts and by police, including the Baton Rouge chief of police. Apparently, pro-choice organizers, like Schiffman, were able to convince the city authorities that Operation Rescue's criminal activities would cost the city far more hardship if they failed to act against them than if they prepared to stop them.

Abortion rights fighters should take heart at the Louisiana victory. If the woman-haters can be stopped there (and in 100 degree heat!), they can be stopped wherever else they raise their ugly heads. ■

Uncle Sam sabotages rail workers' rights

Beginning with the current issue of Socialist Action, "Which Side Are You On" will be a guest column for trade unionists around the country to write about labor issues and the workers' struggle.

By ART LeCLAIR

For the second time in a little more than a year, American railroad workers have seen their legal right to strike—and as a result, their ability to negotiate a contract—eroded by government intervention.

It has become quite clear to most observers that in the future, unless unions buckle under and agree to an inferior contract, a panel of federal "mediators" will decide what working conditions on the nation's railroads will be—as well as what improvements (if any) will be allowed in rail workers' wage and benefit packages.

Art LeClair is president and chairperson of IBEW Local 791, Amtrak/Conrail, in Boston, Mass.

If this practice is allowed to go unchecked, it will mark the definitive end to collective bargaining as we know it in the railroad industry.

As of this date, no ranking rail union official has had much to say about the situation we now face, other than to comment on how unfair it is. For the most part, rank-and-file rail union members are angry and want to fight back, but feel totally powerless.

At the same time as we were taking it on the chin in rail, Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, and a host of other leading union bureaucrats were agreeing to trade off all union workers' rights to strike in exchange for a "compromise" in the language of Senate Bill S-55 (Packwood Amendment), which, if passed into law, would have been devastating for working people everywhere. (See Nat Weinstein's article in the July *Socialist Action*.)

If this "compromise" had become law, union workers everywhere, regardless of the industry they are in, would have

been forced to rely on the same Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) mechanisms that rail workers have had to endure over recent years. The end result would be contracts written by the government to the advantage of the rail corporations.

The recently concluded mediations around the June 24 rail strike and lockout shouldn't fool anyone.

In these Congressionally mandated proceedings, the same process employed to resolve disputes in major league baseball was used to write contracts affecting thousands of railroad workers. Frankly, if they want to treat us like professional ball players, I wouldn't object to being paid like one.

This was nothing more than a curveball thrown by Congress that allegedly provides—according to Congressman Echert (D-Ohio)—a "level playing field for both labor and management."

Interestingly enough, these are the same words uttered by the "good" congressman last year in reference to the enactment of House Joint Resolution 222,

Which side are you on?

which ushered in the devastating recommendations of PEB 219 for more than 230,000 rail workers.

At best, a facade of fairness is erected to camouflage its real intent, namely to make certain that the nation's rail traffic is allowed to run unaffected by walkouts or job actions by the workers in their attempts to secure better wages and working conditions.

What is needed to turn the tables on this ridiculously one-sided process should be obvious. It is certainly clear in the minds of railroad workers from coast to coast.

We need to "return to the days of yesteryear," when a strike was a strike and not some publicity

campaign run by slicksters from Madison Avenue.

Unless we shut down the railroads—and shut them down tight—we are doomed to a repeat of the last year's disastrous events. Reliance on politicians from the Democratic Party is a fool's game. It's time we stopped playing it.

It is also high time that we get beyond the "fear" of court injunctions and restraining orders, too.

Without the ability to withhold our labor—for as long as is necessary—we are reduced to scrambling for the few crumbs that the corporations and their pals in Washington are willing to toss in our direction. Enough is enough! ■

By JEFF MACKLER

OAKLAND, Calif.—A unanimous and exhilarating July 11, 1992, contract ratification vote ended the seven week strike of five unions representing Summit Medical Center workers here.

The strike marked a victory for the labor movement. Over 1700 striking workers demonstrated that a professional union-busting operation could be defeated by returning to the elementary principles of solidarity that first made the American trade-union movement a formidable power.

Rather than being picked off one at a time, the five unions decided to take on the employer together. In addition, they called on the broad labor movement and Oakland's large Black community, as well as the community in general, for support.

While the result was modestly significant, and portends well for the future, it was still inadequate in relation to what is in fact needed to decisively demonstrate labor's power.

To regain a basic right of labor

The long and arduous Summit strike was a defensive battle aimed at regaining a right that had been partially lost in negotiations in 1985—the right to respect the picket lines of another striking union.

The strike took place in the context of a management effort to use antilabor legislation relating to corporate mergers—in this case the merger of two hospitals, Merritt-Peralta and Providence—to tear up a union contract.

Prior to the strike, management used this legislation, which effectively voided previous union contracts, to unilaterally impose layoffs and to threaten cutbacks in medical coverage. These openly hostile acts angered the workers and set the stage for the strike. The choice was clearly posed: Either lay down in the face of yet another employer takeback offensive or stand up and fight.

But there are important lessons to be learned, including the lessons of union mistakes that might have resulted in a less favorable outcome. These weaknesses must be frankly assessed to better prepare for the inevitable battles to come.

The most important weakness of the strike was the failure of the striking unions to decisively mobilize the strikers on the picket lines.

Of the 1700 strikers, only some 300-400 participated in any form of regular strike activity. Perhaps another 200-250 crossed the picket lines. The remainder were passive supporters. That is, they respected the picket lines, but generally remained apart from the struggle, staying at home or perhaps seeking temporary work elsewhere to make ends meet.

With only 300-400 active participants, and more often than not considerably less,

Lessons of the Summit strike: A critical assessment

Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action



strike to discuss key questions of strategy and tactics. During the course of the battle, only a small proportion of the union membership attended any kind of meeting.

The strike was largely directed by union staff people and officials, who, while committed to the effort and dedicated to the interests of the union and its ranks, had not taken the necessary steps to organize strike committees involving the rank and file.

This weakness was soon recognized by the union leadership, which saw no way to reverse it in midstream, even if they had wished to do so. It soon became obvious that a significant attempt to close down the hospital was not possible and that the union leadership would instead rely on a *potpourri* of tactics hoping that their cumulative effort would result in victory.

Activities build morale

The five unions proceeded to organize a series of activities designed to embarrass the hospital administration and win public support, while at the same time maintaining what amounted to informational picket lines at the hospital site.

This included a relatively ineffective boycott of Clorox products, since one of the hospital board members was a Clorox official. It included a concerted effort to bring Bay Area and nationally-recognized Democratic Party politicians to the picket lines to pledge their support and press the hospital to resume negotiations.

Various small-scale "Corporate Campaign" tactics of this kind were employed, ranging from boisterous leaflet distribution in management's corporate offices to similar activities at various events like a local corporate-sponsored golf tournament.

The unions were able to organize three larger demonstrations of 600-1200 workers, but these were designed more to showcase the support of Democratic Party politicians and union officials than to mobilize labor to actively defend the jobs of the strikers against a scab-herding corporation.

The strength of these demonstrations was in their capacity to involve new forces in the strike and to demonstrate the potential

for ongoing labor and community solidarity.

But their relatively small size also highlighted the fact that a significant majority of the union rank and file itself was absent. The bulk of the participants were from a small layer of area union officials, a number of activists from local radical and progressive social organizations, and a handful of union members and activists inspired by the courage of the strikers.

However, an important strength of the strike was in the openness of the unions to accept support from all quarters and to try to mobilize mass protests at the hospital site.

A "war council" was called by the leadership of the 1.8 million member California Labor Federation. But this meeting, held 90 miles away in Sacramento, in the context of an important budget crisis, attracted only a handful of officials whose combined efforts mobilized scarcely more than a few hundred at one demonstration at the hospital site.

The regular participation of the Alameda County Labor Council led to modest additions to the picketlines and to a number of well-publicized "militant" weekly activities that slowed down a few hospital operations for brief periods.

There were a host of other elements to the strike, each of which amounted to a small boost in a difficult situation. These included union pressure, which resulted in the Oakland City Council calling for a boycott of the hospital and in a number of articles in the local press clearly sympathetic to the strike's modest demands.

In the end, these small additions proved capable of rescuing a slowly weakening effort. The strike ended when a federal mediator, who was known to be a past associate of one of the striking unions, proposed settling the strike on terms acceptable to the union.

If this mediator's proposal had been less, it is not clear whether the ranks would have chosen to endure much longer. But one thing is certain: The favorable proposal could have only come about because the rank and file was determined to fight. At the time of the ratification vote, the ranks of the union were still determined to go another round.

As the striking unions prepare for future confrontations, including coming contract negotiations with the powerful Kaiser Hospital complex, which is organized statewide, the lessons of the Summit strike are being discussed and evaluated by all concerned.

The victorious unions have won new support by their courage and commitment. But their real power has yet to be employed. It will certainly be needed for the coming battles. ■

Pittsburgh Teamsters show the way in newspaper strike



Over 7000 strikers and union supporters march on the Pittsburgh Press Co. on July 26 to stop scab trucks.

By NAT WEINSTEIN

On July 26-27, an inspiring mobilization of thousands of pickets stopped strikebreaking owners of Pittsburgh's only two daily newspapers dead in their tracks. Over 600 striking members of Teamster Local 211, allied with 4500 newsboys and newsgirls, rallied to stop deliveries of the Pittsburgh Press and Post-Gazette.

The Pittsburgh Press Co., owner of both papers, had recruited scabs from as far away as Massachusetts, and had declared its intention to publish and distribute the two dailies in the face of the strike.

The drivers and the young newspaper distributors had been forced out on strike last May 17, when the owners attempted to eliminate the jobs of 450 drivers and most of the 4500 door-to-door distributors.

Striking workers, supported on the picketlines by at least a dozen unions and thousands of this Pennsylvania city's working-class population, ringed the Press

and Post-Gazette buildings. When scabs attempted to drive through the picket line, 500 strikers linked arms and blocked the trucks. The company's first attempt to deliver an edition of the two dailies since the strike began failed.

A sign of things to come

The bosses called off their strikebreaking effort after just two days of determined resistance by the workers of Pittsburgh and their allies. The working people of Pittsburgh showed, thereby, that the real economic power of American workers remains intact. They proved that union consciousness in this city is alive and well.

And when many newsdealers posted the union's "Stop the Press" signs and tens of thousands pledged to boycott scab editions of the two papers, it also showed that workers continue to have the capability of bringing the class as a whole and even sections of the middle class over to their side in the course of their struggle.

Of course, it would be wrong to overestimate the meaning of the Pittsburgh Press Company's setback. The city's rulers evidently sent a message to the strikebreaking company to pull back—for the time being, at least. This was partly evidenced when only 39 strikers were arrested and a court injunction limiting picketing was not seriously sought by Pittsburgh's capitalists.

Even Pittsburgh Mayor Sophie Masloff and U.S. Senator Arlen Specter, and other prominent capitalist politicians, called for the company to cease, for now, its attempt to run scabs through Teamster picket lines.

Clearly, in other times in this city—not to mention in other cities—the forces of law and order have not hesitated to use the most brutal measures for routing strikers when they judged it to be appropriate. They evidently feared that such measures could have provoked a much bigger response from the city's working-class population, making the game not worth the candle.

Moreover, the bosses have to reckon

with the new leadership of the national Teamsters union. President Ron Carey and his team were elected on a program promising no more givebacks to the bosses.

The strategists of American capitalism will not risk forcing the hand of the Carey leadership until they can better judge its likely response, and/or their ability to overcome a major labor counter-assault.

Bureaucracy will still betray

On the other hand, they certainly know that the top officialdom of the AFL-CIO, which is centrally involved in this strike, is ready to compromise away whatever workers win on the picket lines.

The ruling class also knows that the top AFL-CIO bureaucracy will not press labor's interests to the point of a showdown battle. They know that, to the contrary, the aims of the labor bureaucracy are restricted to maintaining some measure of what remains of the social contract between them and the American capitalist class.

In the case of the newspaper bosses, the decision from above ordering them to retreat was accepted by them because they well understood that it was only a tactical step in their own longer-term interests and those of their class as a whole.

No matter how this strike ultimately plays out, this demonstration of potential class power will send a message to working people everywhere, that a determined effort—even by a small local union—can mobilize sufficient assistance from sympathetic workers to keep struck job sites shut tight. It proves, too, that determined action can decisively tilt the balance of power in favor of working people.

This example also shows that while deepening unemployment works to the bosses' advantage, the other side of this coin is the growing consciousness that something is seriously wrong with this country's, and the world's, economic system.

Moreover, economic problems are further aggravated by what amounts to an accelerated unraveling of the world capitalist political order—from Yugoslavia to Africa, and from Latin America to the Middle East.

While no one can say when the developing economic crisis will tumble out of control, the workers of Pittsburgh have assured us that when it does, American workers will not roll over and play dead.

The only factor not guaranteed is the matter of effective working-class leadership. But in the course of the coming class battles, a leadership willing and able to lead American workers to victory will be forged. ■

By DAVID COOPER

LOS ANGELES—Over 4000 drywall workers have been on strike from the Mexican border to the border of Ventura County since June 1. These highly-skilled workers install 100-pound boards into home building frames at five cents a square foot—down from nine cents a decade ago. Earnings are about \$250-\$300 for a 60-hour work week, with no benefits. Many of these workers—almost all of whom are Mexican immigrants—have been in this industry for 15 to 20 years.

"There is no way we can support our families on \$250 a week with no benefits," said one striker. "When there was a building boom in the 1980s and the industry was making tons of money, they were squeezing us [even then]."

Said another striker, "I received a check for \$258. Other men helped me. They expect us to split our checks. They take advantage of us because we don't speak the language well."

The drywall workers' demands include union recognition, company-paid health insurance benefits, an increase in pay on piece work from the current five cents to the previous rate of eight or nine cents, and company-paid vacations.

The Building Industries Association of Southern California, which represents more than 600 builders and 1400 sub-specialty contractors, refuses to recognize the strikers' demands and is proceeding on projects with replacement workers. The building employers went to court and

So. Calif. drywall workers strike for union recognition

obtained court orders restricting picketing at many sites.

This has set the stage for increasingly militant actions by the strikers—through direct actions on the job sites. These actions have hit the home building industry hard. Many of the building projects are behind schedule due to the flying picketlines of the striking drywall workers.

One medium-sized contractor even expressed sympathy for the strikers' demands: "I understand why these guys are out on strike. I'm even sympathetic to a certain extent. Wages aren't what they should be. Even though we went along with it, it's the builders who've pushed wages down."

The Sheriff's Department, working hand in glove with the employers, has assigned a lieutenant, a sergeant, and six deputies to follow strikers full time from site to site.

On July 2, 149 strikers were arrested after they stormed a Mission Viejo building site. They were charged with attempted kidnapping (six scabs were forced off the job), theft of tools, and trespassing. It was the largest mass "felony" arrest in Orange County history. Bail for the arrested strikers was original-

ly set at \$50,000, but was later dropped to between \$10,000 and \$1000 as protests against the outrageous charges mounted.

An additional element to the harassment campaign of the police against the strikers' right to protect their jobs and win union recognition has been the intervention of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

When the 149 drywallers were arrested on July 2, the INS screened their names and flagged 88 of them as undocumented workers who will be deported to Mexico after their trials.

Local labor leader Mike Potts, executive secretary of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Orange County, could see the hypocrisy of the INS move. "It's ridiculous that Immigration sat back for years and let the development community work these people for nothing wages, and now they're going to act as strikebreakers for that same community. I wonder, if these people turn out to be illegal immigrants, if Immigration is going to ask them who's been employing them illegally."

However, the drywall workers remain undaunted. When 149 of the strikers were arrested, their wives and children went to

a drywallers' meeting and asked to stand in their husbands' place. "To stop us, they're going to have to make sure the whole family is arrested," said Pablo Lopez, a drywall worker from Anaheim.

Arrests have been made almost every day. On July 23, 69 strikers were arrested when police forced them onto the Hollywood Freeway.

A mother of four, whose husband was one of those arrested, said, "These are working men who are just looking for a better future for their kids. That's not a crime."

Almost half of the striking workers are from the same part of Mexico, a village called El Maguez. Their skills have been passed down from generation to generation. The Carpenters' Union has permitted the strikers to use their hall as a meeting place. The drywall workers will more than likely affiliate with the Carpenters' Union, but the labor movement has put them in a Catch-22 situation—the drywallers can't join a union until they have an employer!

This narrow, formalistic approach by local union leaders should be abandoned, so that these workers can have the full force of a union-sanctioned strike-support coalition. It is important now that the labor movement rally to support these valiant workers.

Their fight will determine the future for both union and non-union workers in the construction industry. But no matter what, as a number of their picket signs say, "Our strike will go on." ■

Our main aim is to overthrow the [apartheid] government.

Following are excerpts from an interview with Kwedie Mkalipi, a leader of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) in the Western Cape region of South Africa. The interview was given to Socialist Action Co-editor Michael Schreiber in Capetown on June 3, 1992.

"George," a member of the Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA), was also present, and asked several questions.

Socialist Action: How do you and the Pan-Africanist Congress view the national negotiations in CODESA [Convention for a Democratic South Africa]?

constitution. How would you contrast your vision of a constituent assembly with that of the forces that participated in CODESA—including De Klerk, for that matter?

KM: The taste of the pudding is in the eating. You must call for an election for the constituent assembly based on universal franchise for all South Africans irrespective of color, political ideology, gender—free of any barriers. We will then accept the call for a constituent assembly.

Today they speak of "guarantees." They want guarantees for the whites, for the coloureds, for the Indians, and so forth. We reject that. We want

SA: Do you call for "Black majority rule?"

KM: We generally use the word "African..."

SA: Which people do you include within the term "African?"

KM: Everybody. All people who owe allegiance to South Africa. Obviously, we cannot say that people who exclude themselves from us are Africans. The AWP [the neo-Nazis], for example. We're not going to force this concept on all the people.

SA: How did the slogan "Black majority rule" come about?

KM: It came from America. For all I know, I may be wrong on this because

state capitalism in as far as I'm concerned. The oppression that was taking place in the Soviet Union—the exploitation that was taking place over there at the expense of those poor countries—was also one of the causes of the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

But in spite of that, I still feel there is no answer to the economic problems of the poor without socialism. I'm still willing to be convinced that it is otherwise. I wish somebody could come and convince me that capitalism can solve these problems!

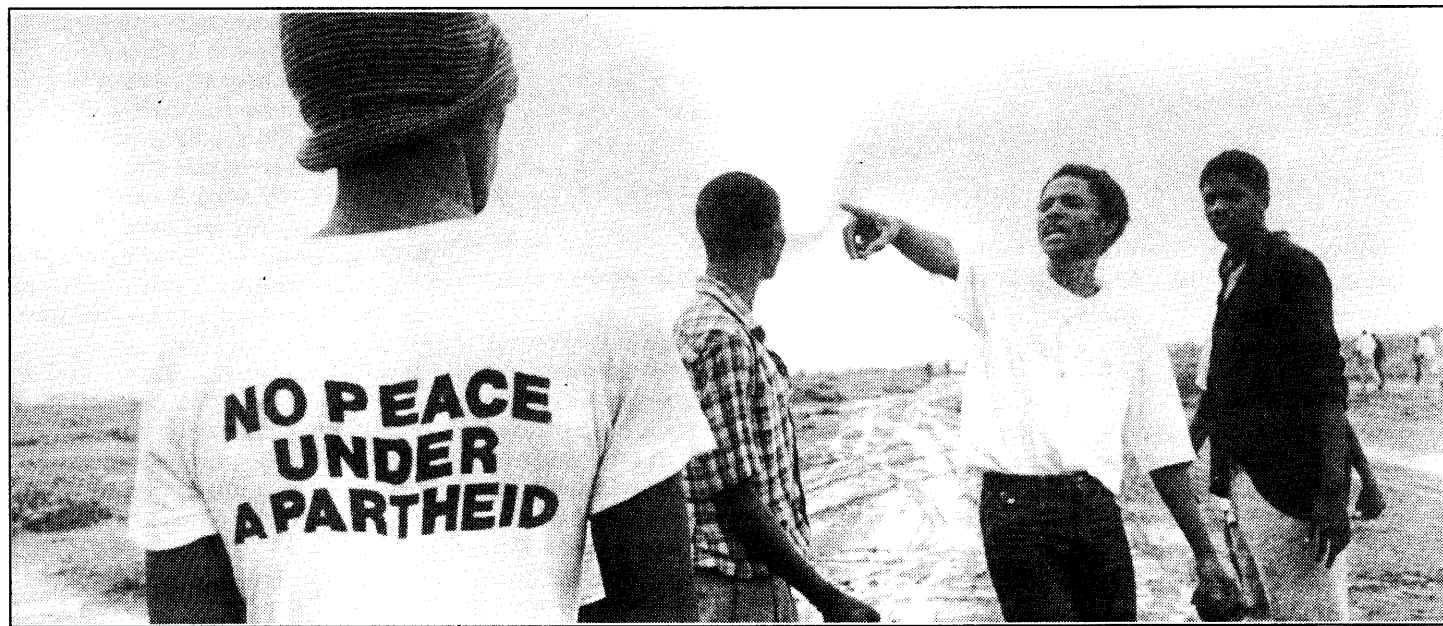
George: The PAC is committing itself to the overthrow of the regime. Yet the PAC recently met with representatives of the South African government in Nigeria. What is the strategy behind this?

KM: We don't want to just close doors and say we don't want to talk with them. We want to speak with them, but we know what we want. What we want from them is to hand over power. And if you think that the Afrikaner will just give you power, without your struggling to get it, you're just "waiting for Godot."

George: What report did you get from your comrades who went to meet De Klerk's representatives in Nigeria?

KM: Those guys said to us that they want to talk with us, but within South Africa. And we said, if you want to negotiate with us, you cannot expect us to accept that you become players and in addition become the linesmen—the ones who keep the score. You can't play the game, and then keep the score. ■

Next month: More interviews from the South African liberation struggle (AZAPO, NACTU, and COSATU).



Omar Badsha

Might the PAC participate in CODESA if it reconvenes in the future?

Kwedie Mkalipi: We have repeatedly said that we will not participate in CODESA. There are reasons for this. CODESA, in our opinion, can not give up the goods because CODESA is a group of various people coming with their various allies. You'll see on one side the Nationalist Party with its allies, those who belong to the Tricameral Parliament and those who belong to the Bantustans. All those people are in the pay of the South African government.

So those people, whether they like it or not, must obey their master's voice. If the master says no, then you'll hear a chorus of no's all over. Therefore, you can see that it's a prepackaged arrangement.

SA: Taking it up to date, the ANC is stressing the goal of an interim government. What is the position of the PAC on this project?

KM: When we speak of the interim government, which we in the PAC call the transitional authority, it's a method to help hand over power to the majority. And nothing else. It should not be taken as the government that will be ruling, because they will have no mandate for such a government.

Who will be the current government should be the first question. If one said to me, it is to be formed by the CODESA grouping—look, in that grouping is the ANC and its allies. It is the Nationalist Party and its allies. But what about the thousands and thousands of organizations who would be left outside?

SA: Would the PAC participate in the interim government as it is being spoken of by the ANC?

KM: No. No chance for that. We would participate in the elections, but we can not participate in something that is designed to be run by decree. It's totally unfair.

SA: The ANC is also demanding a constituent assembly to write a new

democracy to be practiced here in the same manner as it is practiced everywhere.

SA: What are the main campaigns that the PAC is working on at the moment?

KM: Our main aim, of course, is to overthrow the government. That means we must intensify the struggle in all its forms, including armed force. We can not enter an agreement with the regime to cease our military operations against it.

We have not agreed in any way that we will stop attacking the government politically. We are still committed to mass action, because we are aware that armed struggle by itself will not achieve much without the cooperation of the people of the country.

SA: Is the PAC growing, recruiting new members?

KM: Very much, but I must admit, we have declared time and time again that we are non-racist, yet we have very few white people in our ranks. Which is a great shame for an organization like ours. You can't be saying something, and then at the end of the day don't produce the goods.

We must do something to change the image that we have. One understands there's a slogan that comes from the PAC: "One settler, one bullet." That was an economic slogan in response to the ANC, which, for instance, would blow up empty telephone booths or place a limpet mine where it would not hurt anybody. So the slogan was devised by our army, that we would not waste our bullet, but use only one bullet for one white settler.

But you know, the slogan was taken over by mostly unpoliticized youth and became quite widespread. And it's become a very difficult thing to control because of the emotions involved in this. We are not that happy about it, but we're a democratic organization.

when it happened, I was in jail. But this movement arose in 1971, and with the influence of Black Americans, the Black Consciousness Movement then arose in South Africa. It aroused the feelings of the people. It came at a time when the people didn't know where to go to. So it was easier for them at that time to arouse the people with that slogan.

To say I'm oppressed because I'm Black—that was the concept behind all that. But to us, it's a difficult concept to maintain because we are not only nationalists, we are Africanistic. We regard everyone in Africa as an African. We cannot therefore afford to say people of that area are not Africans because they are not Black. Let's take, for example, the Egyptians or Algerians. We say that if Africans must be Blacks, we would exclude a large number of the people.

So the Black Consciousness Movement has been using this slogan "Black majority rule" with the justification that we're oppressed because we're Black. But we say, yes it is true, but let's take it further.

For all I know, the Afrikaner, as an oppressor, is also terribly exploited by international capitalism. Therefore, we cannot really at the end of the day speak of majority rule. We must speak in the final analysis of workers creating a power and taking over. But we cannot take that up now on the political level, because that could be subject to misinterpretation and a lot of confusion.

George: So you wouldn't call for "African majority rule" either?

KM: Not at all. We call for a "democratic society."

SA: Does the PAC consider itself a socialist organization?

KM: Yes. Our current policy is devised on socialistic principles. It is a terrible pity that the Soviet Union collapsed, although I hasten to say that was not the fall of socialism, but of

... General strike

(continued from page 1)

involved in the Aug 3-4 strike. NACTU informed its members, however, that they could engage in the strike action as individuals, in the interests of unity. And in quite a few regions, NACTU members and units did participate.

The Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA) took part in the general strike and mass action demonstrations, but under its own banners and slogans. These included: "Mass action is the road to the constituent assembly."

The demand for a constituent assembly speaks to the basic democratic idea that the oppressed masses should decide their own political future. It is a means of propelling the liberation struggle forward against the white minority government.

But a truly representative and democratic constituent assembly, an assembly of all the liberation organizations, can only come about by means of mass struggle. The demand for a democratic constituent assembly is—or should be—counterposed to the ANC's demand for "an interim government of national unity."

The Black freedom movement cannot achieve "unity" with the oppressor. The ANC leadership is mistaken in proposing to sit down in meetings with President De Klerk and his allies in the expectation that they will help prepare a constituent assembly.

The ANC is under great pressure to rejoin negotiations with the government. The United States, for example, sent Herb Cohen, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, to consult with both Mandela and De Klerk. Cohen expressed approval of the fact that the mass action campaign had increased the ANC's prestige. He stated that the campaign "might contribute to a solution if it gives a mandate to the ANC leadership to continue negotiations." (*Christian Science Monitor*, Aug. 5, 1992.)

The government is reported to have already agreed to new concessions, including the release of several hundred political prisoners and the key demand of an interim government by the end of the year. ■

'Interpreting the Freedom Charter today, we need to take into account ... realities'

Following are excerpts from an interview with Joel Netshitenzhe, a member of the national executive committee of the African National Congress and editor of *Mayibuye*, the ANC journal. The interview was given to *Socialist Action* Co-editor Michael Schreiber on June 10, 1992, at "Shell House," the national headquarters of the ANC in Johannesburg.

Socialist Action: The CODESA negotiations have been deadlocked for some time now. What is the next step forward?

Joel Netshitenzhe: Our orientation is that we don't want apartheid to exist for a day longer. We are going back to our people to use their position in industry, their position as workers, to pressurize the regime to accept a transition to democracy. This is the program of mass action that has been worked out.

SA: Is the mass action campaign, then, seen solely as a means to apply pressure toward restarting the negotiations?

JN: Mass action has always been part of our activity as the democratic movement. For all kinds of crises that people have—relating to working conditions, to electricity, to housing, and so forth. But in this instance, there are certain basic political demands that we have. We believe that an interim government should be established to oversee the process toward democracy, and that there should be an elected constituent assembly by the end of the year. On those basic demands, we'll engage in unprecedented mass action.

But at the same time, mass action around the local and sectoral questions of the people will continue. And there will also be mass action related to other detailed demands within the negotiations process. For instance, the issue in regard to the South African Defense Force, which is enforcing the killings of [our] people. Or what will happen to the South African Broadcasting Corporation—that is, the state media.

SA: What is the proposal of the ANC in respect to the Defense Force?

JN: Our basic proposal—in so far as Phase One of the interim government, the phase before elections—is that all the armed formations should come under joint control. You'll have sub-councils dealing with defense and law and order. Those multi-party structures should jointly control all the armed formations—the army, the police, the armed formations of the liberation movement, and any other armed formations that might exist.

Once we have had elections, we'll establish a comprehensive interim government. Then the issue of the integration of these various armed formations will be addressed. Ultimately, we want to establish police and a Defense Force that would be reflective of society as a whole—both in its policies and practices and in its racial composition.

SA: How would these "integrated" police structures operate during times of mass strikes, civil "unrest," or "states of emergency?"

JN: As far as issues of strikes or so-called unrest are concerned, the position of the ANC is that this is not a security question. Crises around wages or local problems give people the right to act in

order to achieve their demands. Given the changing political atmosphere during the last two years, those actions of the people will be peaceful. And therefore, there is no need for security forces to intervene in problems that need to be resolved in a political manner.

In so far as the state of emergency is concerned, it was discussed quite

between principle—as it would want to see ultimately realized—and the kind of, from time to time, tactical detours a body needs to consider in order to reach that final goal.

For instance, if everything were to go according to plan—would it mean that the day on which the ANC becomes the government all our principles would be

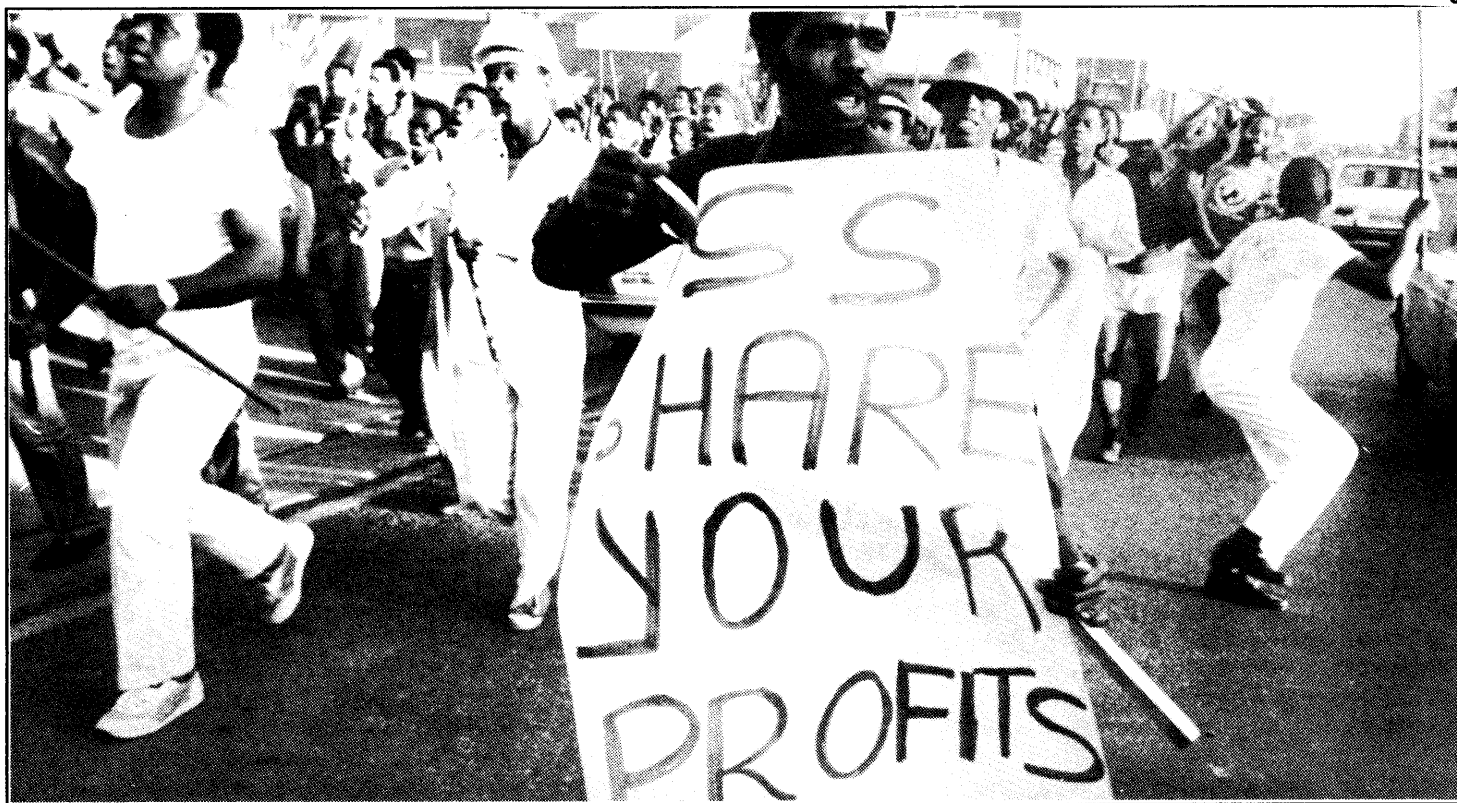
compensation to the owners, would you have sufficient resources for that?

Wouldn't it be better to use those resources for something else and find other ways of ensuring that the mining industry, for instance, is taxed in such a way that there is some redistribution of income?

There are many options as far as redistribution is concerned that need to be taken into account to realize the principles contained in the Freedom Charter.

SA: What interests does the ANC have in common with the South African

Paul Weinberg



"The policies decided at the recent ANC national policy conference identified nationalization as one option in order to realize the aspirations of the people. But it cannot be elevated to the level of principle."

extensively in one working group [of CODESA]. The position of the ANC, again, would be that if you handle the political problems that people have in a non-confrontational way, a state of emergency would not become necessary at all. That is our starting point.

But then situations could arise. You could talk about emergencies of a natural kind. If the drought that we're having now were to become even more extensive, then you would need emergency measures to avoid a major social explosion—caused by whatever problem.

And therefore, the agreement that was reached in the working group in CODESA ensured that the civil and political rights of the people are protected if that situation were to arise at all. And secondly, that the decision itself should be subject to a challenge by ordinary citizens.

SA: Does the ANC still abide by the provisions of the Freedom Charter?

ANC: We still stand on the Freedom Charter. But all policies are impacted upon simply by the development of society and changing realities. The Freedom Charter was adopted in 1955. When interpreting the Freedom Charter today, we need to take into account those realities.

The second point we need to make is that when working out policies, an organization or party must differentiate

realized? Obviously not. You would need time. In that sense, I'm saying, we remain with the Freedom Charter, but in its interpretation we take into account present-day realities.

The Freedom Charter is our ultimate objective, but it will not necessarily be realized on the first day on which the ANC becomes the government.

SA: In regard to nationalizations—

JN: And in regard to nationalizations in particular. The Freedom Charter has got certain demands, certain formulations: The wealth should be put back into the hands of the people—and the big companies, monopoly industry, the wealth beneath the soil. The question that arises is whether the realization of those demands would really mean, as a principle, nationalization.

The policies decided at the recent ANC national policy conference identified nationalization as one option in order to realize the aspirations of the people. But it cannot be elevated to the level of principle. You need to look at realities.

For instance, ask yourself a question: If you were to nationalize the mines today, would you have the skills and wherewithal to run them? Would you find yourself in a situation in which you have nationalized as a principle—and the mining industry collapses?

If you were to nationalize the mines, and this were to mean paying adequate

Communist Party, and what conflicts might arise in the future?

JN: As far as the common interests are concerned, I don't think it is necessary to go into detail on this. It has been said over and over again. Simply to say that the ANC and the Communist Party agree on the establishment of a democratic order in South Africa. They agree that the democratic order should be based on the Freedom Charter—and all kinds of other policies that have been discussed and realized. And we also agree on the ways and means of reaching those objectives.

The alliance we have is based on certain principled agreement. The question would then arise—if once that democratic order is established—would the relationship change?

I think necessarily it would change. So far as the ANC is concerned, the realization of the Freedom Charter is our ultimate objective. So far as the CP is concerned, the establishment of a socialist South Africa is their objective.

So perhaps what one would need to point out would be based on the premise that I laid out earlier on: The day after we establish an ANC government would not mean the Freedom Charter. It would begin a process to realize the Freedom Charter. And in that phase, my own reading of the situation is that the cooperation would continue.

Perhaps in a much later stage, when the Party would have put the issue of socialism as its immediate goal, there would be a divergence between them. There could be a separation, but that separation doesn't mean the alliance would be dead on certain issues on which there is agreement.

That is one option. Another possibility, some people say—crystal gazing now—is that as things develop in that way, and the ANC continues to reflect the interests of the working people in the main, there might be the possibility of the two coming closer together. But this doesn't necessarily mean for socialism or communism. ■

A leader of the Brazilian rubber workers' union, to which the martyred defender of the rain forest, Chico Mendes, belonged, spoke in San Francisco at a number of events in late July. On July 25-26, José da Silva Pereira, known as Zé Peruano, secretary general of the *Brazileira Rural Workers' Union*, spoke at the *Conference on Independent Political Action*, sponsored by the *Labor Party Forum*, where reporters for *Socialist Action* met him. Hayden Perry asked him the following questions.

Socialist Action: It seemed that Chico was left all alone, that his death came inexorably, like a Greek tragedy. It seemed as if the ranchers could kill anyone they chose.

De Silva Pereira: The reason that Chico seemed isolated was that the process of the workers' taking control of their union was a long one. We started with an opposition caucus in 1982. In Chico's time, only one local union was in the hands of the workers—his. But after 1990, we managed to unite, and we now control the bulk of the trade-union movement in the Amazon region.

We worked to build both the PT [Workers' Party] and the union movement in the area. For some time, the PT has controlled the government of the state, Acre.

SA: What is the relationship of the rubber tappers' union to the Brazilian trade-union movement?

DSP: The union that Chico Mendes led, which today has 3330 members, is affiliated to the CUT [Central Unica dos Trabalhadores, the federation associated with the Workers' Party (PT).]

SA: What is the relation of the tappers' union to the Indians?

DSP: We have to admit that our relations with the Indians today are not the best. But we have made a big step forward. Before, the problem was that the whites persecuted the Indians—they massacred them.

However, we came to realize that both the rubber tappers and the Indians were being attacked and manipulated by the landowners. So, now we discuss our problems, and relations are improving. We stand together against the repression.

SA: Has the union been able to improve the workers' conditions?

An interview with a leader of the Brazilian rubber workers

Jesus Carlos/Impact Visuals



DSP: In general, the organized workers are doing better. But in some cases, the plantation owners are trying to drive the tappers off the land. There has been a campaign to raise money in the United States for their defense.

SA: What effect has support from environmentalists had?

DSP: Pressure from environmentalists has helped to get the government to set up strategic reserves. There was some help to set up a rubber tappers' cooperative. But in general the campaigns of the environmentalists have been on the level of propaganda. They have not offered much concrete help.

The Amazonian region is vast, and a

great deal of aid would be necessary to show much impact.

SA: Is the World Bank continuing its project of supporting infrastructural works to bring in settlers?

DSP: Yes. But the local people are resisting. Besides, I don't think that there is much future for these projects. The Amazonian land is not really fertile. When it is cleared, it produces only for a year, and after that it is barren. The government is bringing in settlers, but it is not offering them any facilities.

SA: Have the cattle ranches been more successful?

DSP: Cattle are not really profitable in the Amazonian region. What is profitable

is rubber and other rain-forest crops, as well as fishing.

SA: So, why are they continuing to burn down the forest, when there are no great financial gains from this?

DSP: What the government and the estate owners want to do is to concentrate the ownership of the land. We are defending the strategic reserves. We know that one of the great values of the region is the potential medicinal plants it holds.

SA: In view of all the scandals, has the government put any limits on burning down the forest?

DSP: All of the governments that have authority over the Amazonian region, as well as the World Bank, talk about ending the destruction of the rain forest. But they are continuing it, and I have no hope that they will ever put a stop to it. The only hope is in building the trade-union movement and the Workers' Party.

The problem today is that the Workers' Party is capitulating. When the party developed in the 1980s, it had a good program—workers' control, jobs for all, nonpayment of the foreign debt. Now we are fighting to get the party to go back to its original program. It is essential that the workers have a party of their own, that they take power.

Before the PT, the workers voted for the national bourgeois parties, like the Republican and Democratic parties in the United States. They were all the same. The Workers' Party needs to go back to its working-class program.

SA: You are working in a very remote area. How can we keep the connection between the workers in Amazonia and in the U.S.?

DSP: We are visiting the United States more often these days, and people are beginning to understand that our problems are not just those of the peoples of the rain forest, but those of all people. In particular, we need financial help, because the price for the product we produce is very low. It is important for people here to organize campaigns in our defense.

José da Silva Pereira will be in California again in November at the invitation of the state AFL-CIO. He can be contacted at the following address: Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais Acre, TRAV. Xapuri No. 67, Brazileia, Acre, Brazil, CAP 69930. Telephone: 058-546-3970.

... Yugoslavia

(continued from page 1)

the British business magazine *The Economist*, was an important factor in a major defeat for the Bosnian and Croat forces fighting in the key Posavina area in northern Bosnia.

The British magazine pointed out that for the Croatian government "cutting Serb lines from Serbia to Serb strongholds in northern Bosnia and eastern Croatia was a crucial objective." The military stakes for Croatia in the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina have typically been ignored by the capitalist press, which has been trying present Croatia as equally guilty of aggression.

A simple look at the map will show that the tides of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina will be decisive in determining whether Croatia will be able to avoid being cut to pieces by Serbian forces.

The virtually untrained and unequipped Bosniak militias are still far from a match for the Serbian aggressors. In this situation, the retreat of the Croatian forces in Posavina (in northern Bosnia), under threat of Western sanctions, resulted in a disaster for the Bosniaks, who fled en masse in front of Serbian forces intent on "ethnically purifying" the area.

History of alliances

It should be noted also that there is a long history of alliances between the Croats and Bosniaks. The Serbs, who were in direct confrontation with Turkey before World War I, were more anti-Muslim. The violent ethnic conflicts in the pre-World War I and interwar period were between Serbs and Bosniaks.

It is clear now that the Muslim Bosniaks are a distinct nationality, and along with the Albanians, the most oppressed of the peoples of the former Yugoslavia. Whether the Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs

who live in Bosnia-Herzegovina could be considered part of the Bosniak nationality was still being debated in Yugoslavia before the present war.

It now seems indisputable that a section of the Croat population in Bosnia-Herzegovina and a smaller section of the Serbs have given primary loyalty to the new Bosnian state.

Nonetheless, given this complicated history of nation formation, it would not be surprising if Croat leaders remained dubious about the strength of Bosniak national consciousness. Moreover, the Common Market condition for recognizing Bosnian independence was local self-government ("cantons") for the various peoples of the state.

Whether the Bosniaks are recognized as a nation will depend on their ability to mobilize to defeat the Serb aggression. But it is in the interests of the Croats that they do, and thus become a strong ally against Serb expansionism. In the absence of that, Croatia's holding on to strategic areas in the region would be a poor compensation.

The Serbian "ethnic purification" campaigns are not a new phenomenon. The interwar Yugoslav state mounted concerted campaigns to force Muslims to emigrate to Turkey and to Serbianize various areas.

Under the German-Italian occupation during the Second World War, right-wing nationalist movements among all the nationalities, with encouragement from the occupiers, committed atrocities against national minorities living on the same territories.

Tito's partisans managed to emerge as the dominant force largely because they pledged to meet the aspirations of the various nationalities and at the same time convinced them of the need to unite against the fascist occupiers.

Stalinists abandon promises

In order to win the confidence of the peoples, the Communist Party had to change its line on the national question. It had pre-

viously denied that the Yugoslav peoples represented different nations, referring to them as "tribes." During the fight against the fascist occupiers, however it pledged to recognize their national aspirations, including those of the Albanians.

After the Communist Party gained power, however, these promises were quickly abandoned. A bureaucratic dictatorship standing above the nations sowed the seeds of the present conflict, as it manipulated these peoples to maintain its power. The Croatian national movement of 1971 was crushed by Stalinist methods. The Croatian party was purged, and leaders charged with "nationalist deviations" were jailed, including the current president of Croatia, Franjo Tudjman.

An "antinationalist" propaganda and intimidation campaign was whipped up. And then, in 1974, a constitution was adopted that offered from above all sorts of concessions to the national aspirations of various peoples, from the Bosniaks to the Kosovo Albanians.

The appetizers given to the Albanians in the Kosovo region of Serbia led, after frustration set in, to an upsurge demanding full national rights. The Serbian and Yugoslav authorities brutally suppressed it.

This conflict served as a preparation for Serbian strongman Milosevic's current aggression against the Croats and Bosniaks.

The reform-Stalinists' answer to such conflicts was to try to promote atomization of the populations. Individuals and self-managing collectives, they argued, should replace "tribes" as the basic units of society, and should be bound together by objective laws of the "social market."

However, as the regime was forced to allow independent organization, all the opposition parties arose on the basis of the various nationalities. In fact, the first challenge to totalitarian rule was a campaign in the mid-1960s in defense of Yugoslav Pan-Albanian political prisoners.

Thus, the standard commentary in the

world capitalist press that the collapse of the Stalinist regimes released the genie of national warfare is quite false. The totalitarian regime in Yugoslavia did not suppress national hatred but fostered it. What made it possible for a period to overcome ethnic conflict was a socialist revolution, the unity of the Yugoslav peoples against foreign occupiers, and their common economic exploitation.

In the Soviet Union also, national conflicts were overcome by a socialist revolution, which led to an unprecedented unity of peoples based precisely on fostering and not rejecting their national aspirations. The counterrevolutionary Stalinist regime, however, came to base itself more and more on the chauvinism of the dominant Russian nation, like Milosevic in Yugoslavia.

Under the alleged ethnic peace of the Soviet Stalinist regime, in the World War II period, entire peoples were outlawed, deported and decimated.

Long before the present conflict, national antagonisms were fanned in the Balkans by competing capitalist great powers, who often moved in the name of "humanitarian" considerations. The great powers of our day are not showing any better intentions. The attempt to assign equal or comparable guilt to all the parties in the conflict, the victims and the perpetrators of chauvinist aggression, is part of an operation designed to reduce the Yugoslav peoples to pawns.

If socialists fall into the trap of viewing all the nationalisms of the Yugoslav peoples as the same, they will play into the hands of the imperialist operation by giving credibility to the idea that the only solution can come from some "neutral" or humanitarian outside force.

The only solution is the defeat of the Serbian chauvinists by the Serbian masses themselves, who are more and more demonstrating their opposition to Milosevic's adventure, and by the mobilization of the peoples who are the victims of Serbian neo-Stalinist chauvinism. ■

GRACE CARLSON: 1906-1992

By JOSEPH RYAN

Grace A. Carlson, 85, a long-time socialist and labor activist in the Twin Cities, Minn., area during the 1940s, died July 7, in Madison, Wis.

Carlson was the first woman ever to run for vice president of the the United States, running on the Socialist Workers Party ticket in 1948. Prior to that, she ran as a socialist candidate for mayor of St. Paul, Minn., in 1942, and for Congress in 1940, 1946, and 1950.

She was the only woman among the 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party who were convicted in 1941 of "trying to overthrow the U.S. government." In reality, the socialists were framed up because of their opposition to U.S. entry into World War II. Carlson ended up serving 13 months in prison in 1944.

Although the U.S. Supreme Court later declared the law under which she was convicted—the Smith Act—unconstitutional, Carlson, a doctor of psychology, was blacklisted from employment for many years after her release.

While Carlson was a committed socialist fighter, she was also a devout Catholic, in spite of the fact that she had been excommunicated because of her political beliefs. In 1952, at the height of the McCarthyite witchhunt, she abruptly resigned from the Socialist Workers Party and returned to the Catholic Church.

Grace Carlson was born in 1906 in St. Paul, Minn., and earned her doctorate in psychology at the University of Minnesota in 1933. She taught psychology at the university and worked for the state Department

of Education as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. But the 1930s were a period of labor upsurge and Carlson became heavily involved with the trade-union movement. As a result, she became increasingly interested in socialist politics, which led her to join the Socialist Workers Party in 1936.

During the 1960s and '70s, she taught at a nursing school in Minneapolis and moved to Madison, Wis., after her husband, Gilbert Carlson, died in 1985.

In an article in the July 7, 1952, issue of *The Militant*, the newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, a poignant

appreciation of the pressures that forced Carlson to resign is given by party leader James P. Cannon shortly after her resignation:

"Grace Carlson is a victim of the reactionary atmosphere in general and the witchhunt in particular. Her sudden action in resigning from the numerically small and persecuted Socialist Workers Party for sanctuary in the rich and powerful Catholic Church is only the final effect of the many successive blows of persecution, poverty, and discrimination which had been inflicted upon her during the long time she fought on the side of the poor for the great ideals of socialism. ...

"When Grace Carlson came to the Socialist Workers Party in 1936 she held a good position in the Minnesota State Department of Education, received a good salary and was honored and respected in the Twin Cities circles of the rich and the powerful. ... Her decision at that time to

join with us in the service of the great ideal of socialism was a happy decision, as she stated at the time and repeated many times thereafter. We won her by our ideas and ideals and kept her for 16 years.

"We won her by persuasion, by arguments, and by the example of comrades putting service to a great cause above personal interest.

"The forces of reaction have finally broken her away from the socialist movement by a different method. They made Grace Carlson pay for her idealistic and self-sacrificing work for socialism.

"She had to give up her position with the Minnesota State Department of Education and drastically cut her standard of living. She had to sacrifice her honored position in the community.

"In 1943 she had to go to federal prison along with 17 other members of the party. On her return from prison in 1945, she had to register with the police department of St. Paul as an ex-convict.

"She was blacklisted from all employment in the Twin Cities. Sacrifice after sacrifice was imposed upon her. For 16 years, the powerful forces of reaction hammered and pounded at this woman until they finally beat her down, broke her spirit of resistance, and compelled her to leave the party which she had served so long and so honorably."

But despite her return to the Church, Carlson kept up a lively interest in politics.

"Over the last few years she would read for eight, 10, maybe 12 hours a day, watch [political talk shows] every night and have political arguments with whoever was willing," said her nephew, Raymond Schultz. "She liked discussions, but if they turned into arguments, that was OK with her, too."

In the end, Grace Carlson's spirit wasn't broken. According to her sister, Dorothy Schultz, "She was a socialist until she died." ■



Grace Carlson, flanked by Carl Skoglund (l.) and Vincent Ray Dunne (r.), two of her 17 co-defendants during 1941 Smith Act trial in Minneapolis.

By DAVID COOPER

Henry Graber, a lifelong union militant and revolutionary socialist, died on July 5 at the age of 88 in Long Beach, Calif.

The son of a German coal miner, he was one of the union activists who organized International Harvester for the Farm Equipment Union. Henry worked for 30 years at International Harvester as a sheet metal worker.

Henry joined the Communist Party during the ultraleft period (1928-1935). When the party decided to organize red trade unions, he resigned with a statement that workers had to be in the mainstream of the union movement.

In 1943, Henry joined the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). He was active in the party until 1953. He left the SWP because of its criticisms of Mao and the Chinese Communist Party.

He later admitted, however, that he had made a big mistake because, "No reform is going to come from the [Stalinist] bureaucracy."

Henry became a sympathizer of Socialist Action, and about six months before he died, applied for membership. "I want to die as a member of Socialist Action," he said.

For 12 years, Henry regularly attended Long Beach City Council meetings, denouncing the council for *not* helping the homeless, *not* demanding funding for the schools, *not* protecting the environment, and for *not* opposing the Gulf War.

A four-column obituary in the Long Beach *Press-Telegram* (July 9, 1992), gives a vivid description of Graber's interventions at the City Council meetings:

"At first he walked into the meetings with his cane, wearing a broad-brimmed straw fedora and black sunglasses. Later,

as emphysema and old age took their toll, he came in a three-wheeled electric cart, the fedora tilted to shade his weathered face from the sun.

"He'd get to the podium, hang his cane on his pants pocket, lean on the lectern and glare at the nine council members through his dark glasses. Then he'd give 'em hell.

"What have you done for the homeless this week?," he'd ask. "Have you thought about the homeless this week?"

Henry's favorite statement was, "The 'Republicrats' [Democrats and Republicans] support the corporate structure."

He ended every speech at the council meetings with the declaration, "Only a labor party can represent people and human beings. Only a labor party can be truly democratic." As a conscience for the



Henry Graber in his Long Beach home: "Then he'd give 'em hell" at the city council meetings.

working class at these city council meetings, where the interests of the rich take priority over the needs of the poor, Henry Graber will be sorely missed.

Henry Graber: "Have you thought about the homeless this week?"

George Novack: 1905-1992

George Novack, Marxist philosopher, author, lecturer, and intellectual, died recently. The following statement, to be sent to the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International, was approved unanimously by the Fifth Convention of Socialist Action.

See the September issue of Socialist Action for an appreciation of Novack's contributions to the socialist movement.

"The convention of Socialist Action has learned with profound sadness of the death of George Novak. He played an important historic role in the founding of American Trotskyism and in the formation of the Dewey Commission, which in its hearings exposed the frame-up nature of the Moscow Trials.

He was a political leader in close collaboration with James P. Cannon, and for many years after Cannon's death continued as a revolutionary leader in the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International.

A Marxist philosopher and historian, he was the author of many invaluable books and articles in these fields. Those who were fortunate enough to know George as a human being found him to be a good friend and a patient teacher, always ready to give an opinion on a manuscript or to supply information. His death removes a link with Trotsky and Cannon, but his work will live on. ■



Socialist Action holds 5th national convention

The fifth national convention of Socialist Action took place in San Francisco on July 29 - Aug. 2. Delegates from around the country strove to carry out a clear, patient debate in which all points of view would be considered and voted upon.

For four months, all branches of Socialist Action discussed the political positions to be adopted by the convention. Three minority currents put forward alternative platforms and received enough votes in the branches to obtain delegates at the convention. A fourth minority point of view, a tendency with no delegates, was given extended speaking time.

A majority of convention delegates were supporters of the written resolutions proposed to the convention by the outgoing national committee. Topics in the resolutions included South Africa, Cuba, the ex-Soviet Union, the African American struggle, and the women's rights struggle. A common thread throughout the majority position on these topics was revolutionary optimism in the face of the downfall of Stalinism and a willingness to clarify to the end the key tasks of socialists.

Those tasks are to build revolutionary parties in every country of the world, to recruit new members to Socialist Action, and to participate in every aspect of the class struggle—from the unions, to the feminist movement, to organizations fighting against the cutbacks of social services.

The organizational report detailed many party-building activities that Socialist Action will carry out this autumn. These include a national speaking tour of *Socialist Action* staffwriter Gerry Foley following his fact-finding trip to the former Soviet Union.

A public rally at the convention was held under the theme "Black Liberation from L.A. to South Africa." Two South African revolutionaries spoke. They explained why their group, the Workers Organization for Socialist Action, and Socialist Action in the United States should continue their close collaboration in supporting the South African freedom struggle.

Gulf War Marine resister Erik Larsen spoke to the rally, and actor Michael Lange gave a recreation of Malcolm X's speech, "Message to the Grass Roots."

Debate on South Africa

The South Africa resolution was the first to be debated. In fact, there were three competing documents and reports put to a vote.

The report of the majority of the outgoing national committee, presented by Michael Schreiber, assessed the new situa-

tion in South Africa that has arisen since the mobilizations of the Black majority forced the government to wipe most of the apartheid laws off the books and enter negotiations. In particular, Schreiber analyzed the mass action campaign recently called by the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies.

Schreiber's report placed these events within the theoretical framework developed by the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky in his theory of "Permanent Revolution."

Trotsky pointed out that in the underdeveloped world (such as South Africa) democratic demands—such as full suffrage, national rights, and agricultural revolution—will necessarily come to the fore in the struggle.

However, Trotsky argued, in the modern imperialist-dominated period, these tasks of the national democratic revolution can only be completely fulfilled when the working class has taken political power away from the capitalist class and established its own rule. In this way, the national democratic revolution and the socialist revolution are combined.

For that reason, Schreiber said, socialists in South Africa must utilize a transitional program of demands to guide the Black working class, step by step, to the understanding that they have the ability and the necessity to take power in their own name—much as the working people of Russia did in October 1917.

A counter-report was given on behalf of a resolution submitted by national committee members Barry Sheppard, Malik Miah, and Carl Finamore. This resolution stated that the socialist revolution in South Africa was a distinct stage that would only come at a later time, after the completion of the national democratic revolution.

According to this minority, the current struggle for a national democratic revolution is being led by the African National Congress. They said that socialists should support the ANC as long as it carries out the demands of its 1955 manifesto, the Freedom Charter, and that socialists should likewise embrace the Freedom Charter as their own minimum program.

A third report on South Africa, given by a delegate from Chicago, took an intermediate position in this dispute. This report agreed with many points made by the majority in regard to the combined nature of the revolution. But it proposed "critical support" to the ANC as long as it adheres to the Freedom Charter.

After a thorough discussion by the delegates, the majority report and resolution

were approved overwhelmingly.

The next big debate at the convention was over the political report. Jeff Mackler, speaking for the majority of the national committee, pointed to signs of a coming fightback by the American working class in response to the ruling-class attacks on its standard of living. Evidence of this may be found in such phenomenon as the recent victory of reformer Ron Carey in the Teamster elections and the development of reform movements in the United Auto Workers and other unions.

It appears that the relative stability that world capitalism enjoyed for several decades is coming to a close. In this country, the crisis calls out for a new class-struggle leadership and a break with the Democrats and Republicans.

The minority current led by Sheppard, Miah, and Finamore (which had formed a "faction") charged that Socialist Action lacked an orientation to the unions. They chose to ignore the fact that a majority of our members are trade unionists and that the organization as a whole has done exemplary support work in several important strikes and union battles.

Barry Sheppard also voted against the oral report and summary on the Soviet Union. In contradiction to the majority, he stated that we should be part of the "regroupment" taking place in the Committees of Correspondence (CoC)—the new offshoot of the Communist Party, USA. (See page 15 for more about the CoC.)

Debate on Black Struggle

Counterposed reports were also given on the Black liberation movement. The Sheppard-Miah-Finamore faction challenged the

majority's positive evaluation of the nationalist aspirations of African Americans as an expression of the class struggle in the United States. The majority resolution, on the other hand, reiterated the position that the Black struggle is a combined struggle for democratic rights and economic emancipation.

The reports and debates on the women's liberation movement did not present radically counterposed positions. The majority reaffirmed its commitment and activity in the women's movement and its position that the fight for an end to women's oppression is intimately bound up with the struggle to end class oppression through the struggle for socialism. The majority report presented numerous facts and statistics to show how world capitalism has fomented wars and other atrocities that are particularly brutal to women and children.

The main difference seemed to revolve around the faction's opposition to the majority's claim that feminists trained in the women's rights movement could help resolve the longstanding crisis of leadership of the working class.

Another hotly contested area had to do with a motion passed by the national committee plenum in April that attempted to ensure a democratic pre-convention discussion. The Sheppard-Miah-Finamore faction protested that the motion infringed upon their rights, but their claim was voted down by the convention.

Finally, 12 members of the Sheppard-Miah-Finamore faction walked out of the convention after the nominations commission failed to recommend electing more than three of them to the new national committee. Another smaller tendency based in Chicago also resigned.

Both groupings who left rejected the pleas of many delegates who called on them to remain in the party and to work together to build a strong united Socialist Action. The new national committee includes representatives of other minority positions in the organization.

For more on Socialist Action: Write to 3425 Army St., San Francisco, CA 94110. Phone (415) 821-0458.—The editors

Greetings from revolutionary artists

Mike Alewitz, from Art/Work, a political group of artists based in New Brunswick, N.J., gave the following greetings to the 5th National Convention of Socialist Action.

When the founders of American Communism decided to build a Bolshevik party in the United States, they didn't repeat, or try to repeat the project of building the [Russian] Bolshevik party in the United States.

They set out to build a uniquely American party. They began with the idea of building a combat party of broad concerns that was a tribunal of working people. A party that presented the agenda of the work-

ing class in its entirety.

And they had a very broad outlook on this. They viewed the growth of the working class and the entrance of the working class into world politics within the context of the development of modern capitalist society as a whole.

Furthermore, all of the great Marxists—Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky—and the founders of Trotskyism in the United States, viewed culture and cultural questions as central concerns of the working class movement.

This led Trotsky, Andre Bréton, and

(continued on next page)

Calif. politicians 'fiddle' while state goes bankrupt

By HAYDEN PERRY

For the first time since the Great Depression of the 1930s, state employees in California are receiving IOUs instead of paychecks. Income tax refunds are also being paid with dubious promissory notes. Merchants who have sold goods to the government must be satisfied with a promise to pay when the state has the money.

These IOUs, known as "registered warrants," can be cashed at local banks, but financial institutions are under no legal obligation to accept them. The banks, in effect, are making a loan to the state at five percent interest. In contrast, they make a lot more profit charging credit card borrowers as much as 20 percent interest.

In the first few days of July, the state controller issued warrants valued at \$307 million. It is estimated that \$2 billion in IOUs could be floated by the end of July. The banks question how many of these less profitable warrants they will absorb.

The most populous state in the country is broke. California shares with other states the ravages of the recession. In the last two years, 700,000 jobs have been lost. The unemployment rate stands officially at 9.5 percent. As business slows, tax revenues fall. Actual revenues are \$25 billion less than expected.

For fiscal year 1993, starting July 1, Gov. Pete Wilson proposed a budget of \$60 billion. As revenues dropped below estimates, however, an \$11 billion gap appeared between income and expenditure.

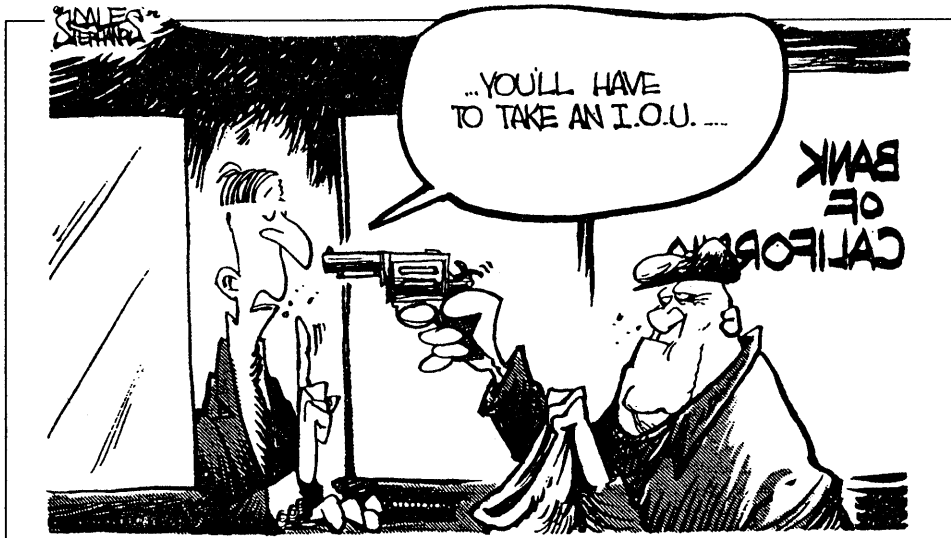
Like his fellow Republican in the White House, Wilson promises no new taxes. This leaves a situation where expenditures have to be adjusted to a reduced income. Belts have to be tightened all round.

People on welfare are experts at belt tightening, so Wilson proposes a cut of 25 percent in Aid to Families with Dependent

Children (AFDC). He also wants to eliminate dental care, podiatry, and other treatment from Medi-Cal services. He also strikes at the most frail adults by cutting nutrition programs 14.5 percent, and reducing funds to inspect the notoriously unhealthy nursing homes that proliferate

Gov. Wilson proposed that over \$1.1 billion be slashed from the education budget for 1993, with an additional cut scheduled for the following year.

This would deprive the schools of \$2.3 billion at a time when school districts are already laying off teachers and cutting



throughout the state.

The Democrats, who control the State Assembly, are also busy slashing the budget, or completely eliminating 21 departments or programs. Among these are the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, the California Arts Council, and the Disaster Assistance Program. "The only thing we can keep are essential services," said Democratic State Senator Dan Boatman, as he slashed programs for the poor. ("These are nonessential.")

At this point the Republicans and Democrats appeared to be traveling on parallel tracks. But suddenly they came to a head to head collision that has derailed the whole budget-making process.

essential services.

To make sure all age-groups share the burden, Wilson told 110,000 four-year-olds they must wait a year before starting kindergarten. Their older brothers and sisters in community colleges will see their fees rise from \$6 to \$20 a unit. Meanwhile four state colleges will turn away all new applicants this Fall.

The Democrats will accept a more modest cut in the school budget: something on the order of \$605 million. But they see political danger in cutting the education budget too far. In 1985, Californians voted to guarantee the schools 40 percent of the state budget. This promise is now being broken.

By refusing to accept Wilson's cuts, the Democrats brought the budget making process to a grinding halt. Wilson's \$2.3 billion cut cannot be pushed through a hostile Assembly, and the Democrats' proposal can be defeated by the governor's veto.

The state constitution dictates that the annual budget must be adopted by July 1. Without it the state cannot borrow money, and the federal government will not send grant and aid money. Running without a budget costs the state \$7.6 million a day.

In spite of this mounting crisis the governor and Assembly leaders have not even met for three weeks. They are playing a game of "chicken" for sordid political advantage. Who will blink first when angry voters get desperate?

Gov. Wilson told the *San Francisco Chronicle* he was prepared to continue the stalemate even after the banks reject the IOUs. He thinks the Democrats will blink first and give the governor what he wants.

As usual in fiscal crises, the poor lose and the rich gain. In the IOU debacle California's credit rating has fallen, raising the interest rate the state must pay on its bonds. This gives the wealthy who buy the bonds extra tax-free income.

Both Gov. Wilson and Democratic Assembly Speaker Willie Brown cry "No new taxes," but then impose them indirectly as "user fees." Admission to state parks costs more and license fees are increased. Then more of the burden of taxation is shifted to local communities and the poor.

Wilson proposes cutting \$1.7 billion in state aid to counties and cities. Then, he will give supervisors and mayors the power to add a 1/4 cent to the regressive sales tax—if the voters approve it.

This is the sort of maneuver state legislators like. It fakes taking the burden of taxation off property owners. And through special loopholes and exemptions, California's corporations have a lighter tax burden than most states. Even in this fiscal crisis, both Democrats and Republicans agree that they must maintain a "favorable business climate."

The crisis of the IOUs should tell California's working people that there is something terribly wrong when the stooges of the wealthy can plunge the "Golden State" into bankruptcy. ■

...Art/Work greetings

(continued from preceding page)

Diego Rivera in 1938 to issue a call for an artists' international, which would be an alliance of all class-struggle artists with the revolutionary movement.

There was a great tradition of collaboration between revolutionary artists and the working-class movement. Throughout American labor history, artists have walked side by side with revolutionaries. And it's in that tradition that we formed our modest little group, which we call Art/Work.

We're a group of artists, trade unionists, and social activists. We did a lot of work in support of the Pittston coal miners' strike. We have done support work for the Palestinian struggle. Our last big project was to organize a busload of artists who had a giant puppet of Rosa Luxemburg for a pro-choice demonstration in Washington.

Art/Work is not and does not aspire to be a political party. It's not a Trotskyist organization, it's not even a Marxist organization. It is a class-struggle group of artists, however, and that puts us in alliance with Marxist and Trotskyist individuals and groups.

Our historic task

Now, that being said about Art/Work, a number of people here have asked me about my impressions of the convention, and I would like to comment on the convention and what I have seen here. Think of it as sort of a "man in the street" appraisal of your convention.

First and foremost, you have established that the historic task facing humanity is the conquest of power by the working class.

And second, that the best method to do that—which so far has been thrown up by history—has been the construction of a revolutionary combat party to lead and organize the workers to take power.

This is not a popular conception in the world today.

Those groups, movement groups, which have been at the center of world attention in terms of political struggle, groups like the FMLN of El Salvador, or the FSLN in Nicaragua, or the ANC of South Africa, or many other groups, have a different conception of what their role in history is at this particular time.

This is not to say that these parties and groups are not composed of heroic individuals, of dedicated revolutionary-minded people.

But they have a different conception of how history will unfold. By and large, they do not believe that at this juncture of history it is possible for the working class to conquer power and build a society in its own name. That is just the plain fact of the matter. And so it makes organizing struggles very difficult sometimes.

In my opinion, their misunderstanding of this comes fundamentally from an illusion in world Stalinism. From a deep-seated belief among the leaders of these groups, that, in fact, if they took power, they could rely on world Stalinism to support and defend their revolution. And that was always an illusion.

While it didn't come as a surprise to us when Stalinism collapsed, to those people who believed they could count on world Stalinism to defend their revolutions and their struggles, the collapse of the Stalinist governments was a moment of despair for them. And basically they gave up the conception, those that had it, of workers taking power in their own name.

Stalinism is reactionary through and through. It exists as a petty bourgeois layer within the working-class movement. It is based on real privileges that exist in the world. It is a world-historic problem.

It does not go away when a government collapses, it does not go away when any individual is replaced by another individual.

It is only the working class and its struggles that can create progressive and revolutionary change. It is only the working class, driven by the misery of life under capitalism, who take the road of political

action, who can create revolutionary change and defend revolutionary gains. That is the source of it. And that is what has been the starting point of all organizations and all individuals who consider themselves revolutionary.

It is that great belief in the working masses themselves, not in Stalinist governments, not in officials of the labor movement, not in Committees of Correspondence, not in anything, only in the direct action of working people. And we have seen this time and again in the history of our own class in the United States.

"A nose for power"

I believe that Socialist Action has a "nose for power." And that's why I'm here. It's embodied in its name: it's for socialism, it's for action. And I'd like to just basically say that I think this convention has accomplished a great deal and has been very inspiring for me. Think of what this convention has accomplished.

I believe that Socialist Action deciding that the central task of revolutionaries is to continue to fight for the class independence of the working class in South Africa—to go forward with that is an important conquest of this convention.

Socialist Action defends the basic positions of the revolutionary Marxist movement that were decided as far back as the Chinese Revolution of 1927, when Trotsky and the Left Opposition basically put forward the idea—in opposition to the Stalinist policy—that you had to fight for class independence in the national struggles.

I think it was an important conquest of this convention to champion the struggles in Eastern Europe, regardless of the current consciousness of the leadership of these struggles. And I think it ties into another important decision of this convention, which is the unconditional defense of the Cuban revolution.

Finally, I think that the decision of Socialist Action to continue its party building activities, to continue to defend

the clinics, to continue to jump into union struggles, and to win people to revolutionary socialism is an important decision.

The question of war and peace

Most important was the role that Socialist Action played in fighting against the U.S. intervention during the Gulf War. Socialist Action attempted to build and unify a united, mass, working-class anti-war movement against U.S. intervention in the Gulf, and that is a conquest of this group that can't be taken away.

This question is the most fundamental question that faces revolutionaries today—the question of war and peace and what you do. And those of us who were in independent coalitions attempting to do this, looked at what each group did in that struggle, and there was only one group in my opinion that really had it right, right down the line, and that was Socialist Action.

And there will be more wars and there will be more military interventions, and there will be more Los Angeles-type rebellions, and there will be more strikes, and there will be more struggles. So we will have a chance to do this again.

As long as people continue to struggle, as long as the rising expectations of humanity continue to clash with the restrictions that capitalism imposes, then people will continue to struggle and will come to the right conclusions. We don't have to worry about that.

The revolutionary movement, in my opinion, does not have to worry about being small. But it does have to worry about not being a revolutionary movement! That is the central question.

And so to hear a debate that took place here, to hear the clarity that comrades have, is a very inspiring thing and can give us great confidence for the future...

So I applaud your convention, it's been very inspiring, I thank you for inviting me and allowing me to say these few words, and I look forward to working with you in the future. ■

Cop murder of 'Kiko' Garcia is the last straw for Wash. Hts. residents

Ricky Flores/Impact Visuals

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, N.Y.—The lessons of the Los Angeles rebellion are not being lost on the residents of this upper Manhattan neighborhood.

On July 3, an NYPD cop shot and killed José "Kiko" Garcia, a Dominican youth, on 162nd Street. By itself, there was little about this incident that was remarkable. Cops frequently kill Blacks and Hispanics, especially youth, in this city. But this time the anger of neighborhood residents against the cops, who are virtually an army of occupation, was furiously unleashed during five days of constant protests and confrontations with New York's "finest."

Police said they were chasing Jose Garcia because they thought he was a drug dealer. One cop, Officer Michael O'Keefe, cornered "Kiko" in the vestibule of a building between Broadway and St. Nicholas Avenue and shot him dead. O'Keefe claimed that Garcia had a gun.

But witnesses to the shooting told another version. The cops, they said, chased "Kiko" for no reason. He was unarmed, and they claim, "O'Keefe shot Garcia after he wrestled him to the floor." It was a case of cold-blooded murder.

"Fort Apache"

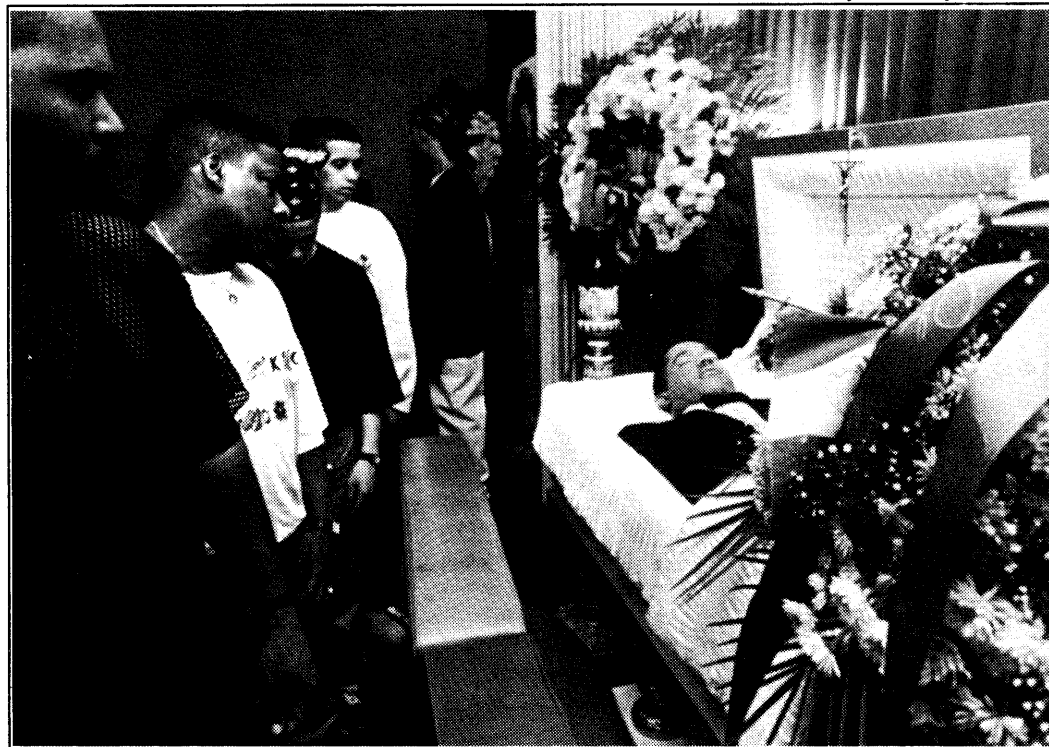
Washington Heights and Inwood, the neighborhood to the north, are largely Dominican in composition. On a typical summer evening, the avenues and streets are full of men and women, young and old, sitting on stoops and makeshift chairs and chatting or playing dominoes or keeping an eye on the kids.

Politics are dominated by political parties like the Dominican Workers Party (nationalist) or the PCD (Dominican Communist Party), and generally they only come alive when there is an election scheduled in Santo Domingo, the capitol of the Dominican Republic.

But the murder of "Kiko" on July 3 struck a chord of rage that had been building for a long time. Enraged residents pelted police with rocks and bottles. Some cars were overturned and set afire. Police helicopters buzzed the neighborhood, shining their floodlights everywhere.

During protests on Saturday, the Fourth of July, one man allegedly fell from a building. Residents say that he was thrown off the roof by the cops—a scene reminiscent of one in the movie "Fort Apache: the Bronx."

When I visited the neighborhood on July 6, I saw a car burning on 157th street on the other side of Broadway, and another up at 158th. A fire truck came by, firemen looked at the cars, and left. The trash cans afire in the middle of Broadway and the cor-



Friends, relatives, and community members view the body of 'Kiko' on July 6.

rugated cardboard boxes piled a few feet high were obviously feeble but instinctual attempts to build barricades.

At first, Mayor Dinkins and Archbishop O'Connor—faithful defenders of private property, law and order, and the police—came up to Washington Heights to appeal for "calm" and to promise an "investigation."

No one bought the line that Dinkins and O'Connor were trying to sell. Thus, City Hall moved to Plan B on July 7. Massive numbers of police were brought in. As I got off the subway after work, I counted over 60 cops on the four corners of Broadway and 157th Street alone!

Residents were compelled to retreat down side streets. Police helicopters disturbed the peace for what seemed like 24 hours a day. The occupation had begun, and would continue through the beginning of the Democratic Party National Convention.

Cop drug dealers

There was also a propaganda war going on. Rumors in the neighborhood included the charge that O'Keefe, the shooter, was in a group of cops in the 34th Precinct that called themselves "Local Motion." "Local Motion" members reportedly supplement their incomes by beating and robbing drug

dealers, and reselling the drugs on the local market.

The 34th Precinct, the subject of recent exposés, is known as the most corrupt and graft-ridden precinct in the city. And Officer O'Keefe, it turns out, has been under investigation for more than a year by the District Attorney and the Police Department of Internal Affairs for stealing drugs and money from dealers.

The cops were annoyed by City Hall's announcement of this investigation. They got 95 percent backing instead of 100 percent, and they were furious about it. The fallout from this friction was not over. The first week of August, Police Commissioner Lee Brown resigned, purportedly for personal reasons.

Whether or not O'Keefe was involved in selling drugs is almost beside the point. In the many communities of oppressed minorities in this city, the cops have been given free reign to impose their own rules and regulations. This is a prescription for renegades.

During the funeral for José Garcia on July 6, hundreds of demonstrators marched through Washington Heights, demanding community control of the police so that they could bring O'Keefe, who is on unpaid suspension, to justice. "We're tired

of being pushed around," was the general theme of the march.

Even the NYPD's much heralded anti-drug programs are really targeted at terrorizing youth, and not at fighting drug dealing. I remember last summer when the Tactical Narcotics Team (TNT) hit the 168th Street area. After the first day, a large number of the dealers moved down to 157th Street and operated unmolested. In the meantime, TNT was busy harassing, arresting, searching, and terrorizing the people who lived ten blocks north. When TNT finally went away, so did the dealers.

It is hard to assess the long-term effect of last month's events. There is certainly more awareness of the role of the police. A new organization, the Committee Against Police Brutality, has been formed. Obviously, the people of Washington Heights are tired of being pushed around by extortionists dressed in blue.

Daily Harassment

During the year I worked in Harlem/Washington Heights, I witnessed two cases of how the police daily harass and terrorize the local residents. Once I saw a white officer pull a Dominican motorist to the side of the road. The young motorist was frightened, showing the police officer his empty wallet. "No dinero! No dinero!" he kept saying.

I was riding on my bicycle at the time, and when I tried to move closer, the cop yelled at me, "What are you looking at! Move!" When I didn't move fast enough, he commanded his partner to chase me in their car. I got away, but I still worry about the poor unfortunate, broke, victim of a police shakedown.

The second event I witnessed concerned a young Dominican man who was learning to drive. A police van got stuck behind him and one of the cops went berserk. He opened the rear sliding door, cursing and ordering the driver to pull over. Then he jumped from the van and proceeded to pound on the driver's side of the car, screaming, "Get out!"

This outrageous intimidation drew a crowd of over 30 people—almost all Dominican. Seeing the growing crowd, the cop yelled at them, "Do you think you're at the movies? MOVE!" But nobody did, so the young Dominican driver was not injured by a cop who thought he could take the law into his own hands. Such racist police brutality is a fact of everyday life in Washington Heights.—DAWN REEL

Our readers speak out

Thank You

Dear editors,

I want to thank you for your newspaper and your writings. My wife and I heard Eric Larsen speak at Superior, Wis., during George Bush's oil war in Iraq. A young man had literature at a table. We gave him money for our initial trial subscription for *Socialist Action*. We have been subscribing ever since. We do appreciate it.

Frank Roemheld,
Bayfield, Wis.

Giotto

Dear editors,

In her critique of my essay, "Giotto: A Painter for the Masses" (July 1992 *Socialist Action*), Samia Halaby writes, "Balch considers a knight, a town dweller, nuns and the clergy as the humble people and does not once mention the masses or serfs."

Halaby has put words in my mouth that not only distort my meaning but that serve to advance her own "Marxist" views. As J.D. Bernal, himself a Marxist, makes clear in his book, "Science in History," it was the poorer townsmen who revolted against worldliness and excessive wealth. (See paragraph two of my essay.)

Poorer townsmen included "the illiterate poor," "the poor knight," "the simple man," and "the poor nuns of St. Clare," or "Clarisses," as they were called, but not just any town dweller. Francis's father, a wealthy merchant, was a town dweller but by no means a humble person.

As to Halaby's second point, that I do not mention the serfs, it is true that Francis did not work with the serfs, hence with all of the masses, yet the reasons for this are fairly obvious.

Since Francis spent most of his life in towns (Assisi, Padua, Arezzo, etc.), it was logical that his work would be concentrated there. Moreover, it is doubtful that he could have penetrated any of the large, carefully guarded

estates that occupied much of the Italian countryside, with their walled castles and manor houses.

The serfs, who furnished all the backbreaking labor required to cultivate the land, were bound to the soil under feudal law, and held in great contempt by the nobles they were obligated to support. Francis would not have lasted long in such a hostile environment, the stronghold of the feudal lords.

Franklin Balch,
Stevenson, Md.

'New Order'

Dear editors,

Thomas Paine observed: "A despotic government knows no principle but will. Whatever the sovereign wills to do, the government admits him the inherent right, and the uncontrolled power of doing."

"He is restrained by no fixed rules of right and wrong, for he makes the right and wrong himself as he pleases." ("Govern-

ment, Banks, Money," by T. Paine.)

Justice is the basis of a good law. We have not had that. However, during the Cold War period, we had one oppressive force opposed by another, and a pretension for law and justice by the oppressors. This was not much, but it created some loopholes for the underdogs to use to survive.

Now even this has been torn to shreds. Pax America, sick and triumphant, stands alone, unopposed, ready to further pacify the world with the sword of military aggression and the police state.

The Gulf War brought it all out into the open, but some Americans still want to hang on to the myth that the war was fought for them. They refuse to see the bully they empowered turning on them.

Now the triumph of "law by will" is even more brazen in its contempt of moral and legal restraints:

"The Supreme Court has ruled that foreigners may be forced to face trial in the USA, even if they

were kidnapped to get them here." (*USA Today*, June 16, 1992.)

In other words, "wherever you are, if I declare you an enemy, I'll get you. There's nothing now to insulate you from me." Why is it business as usual with us? Don't we see what's happening?

Going back to the Gulf War, why is Desert Storm, Phase II, the siege and genocide of Iraq, not an issue loudly raised, even though a new target, Libya, has been picked for the Iraq/Panama treatment?

Nearly 25 years ago, Malcolm X sought to bring the United States to justice before the World Court. Today, if we use it seriously, Ramsey Clark's War Crimes Tribunal can give us a start in overturning the progress tyranny has been making.

We can also challenge the siege of Iraq with a public outpouring of humanitarian aid. And if there is anyone else resisting this so-called New World Order, that should become *our* struggle.

Sam Kahl
Portland, Ore.

Stalinist cast-offs try to build new left regroupment

By GERRY FOLEY

The former Gorbachev wing of the Communist Party U.S.A. launched a project for building a new left organization in a July 17-19 conference in Berkeley, Calif. The new organization is called the Committees of Correspondence (CoC).

Since their split with the neo-Stalinist CPUSA, the reformers have sought to project the CoC as an all-inclusive regroupment of the "democratic left." Thus, the list of conference sponsors included a number of independent personalities. Some support to the conference was also given by Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

Links between Communist Party reformers and the DSA are longstanding. The last important split of reformers from the CP, the group led by Dorothy Healy of Los Angeles in 1973, in fact joined the New American Movement (NAM), which later dissolved into DSA. One of the principal speakers at the conference was Manning Marable, a leader of DSA.

A key component of the conference was the group around the magazine *Crosscurrents*. This network, which includes former leaders of the erstwhile Maoist Line of March organization, such as Irwin Silber, had managed over the past decade or so to regroup representatives of virtually all former U.S. currents associated with Stalinism. These ran the gamut from the Maoist and Albanian varieties to CPers like Carl Bloice who maintained a dual affiliation (both to the CP and to *Crosscurrents*).

The launchpad for the conference was the reform CP's historically strong base in the Bay Area. Thus, the opening plenary session was chaired by Gus Newport, former mayor of Berkeley. The conference was introduced by a Berkeley councilwoman reading a resolution of the city council welcoming the event. The message stressed the positive role "the left" had to play in U.S. politics. A number of professional Democratic Party politicians were in attendance.

The gathering was well publicized and featured prominent speakers. There were dozens of workshops on a great variety of subjects, ranging from the crisis in the world socialist movement to "spiritual traditions."

A large number of people attended—1300, according to one report. Over 300 people were said to have affiliated to the CoC during the conference itself.

Affiliation was easy and encouraged. It cost a small amount on top of the registration fee. Registrants were told that by paying another \$10 they could participate in the discussion on "structure."

International greetings

The opening rally of the conference made clear the political contours of the project. The speakers included representatives

of the Communist Party of El Salvador, the African National Congress (ANC), the Democratic Left Party of Germany (the successor of the old East German Communist Party), and the Vietnamese Communist Party. Greetings came from the South African CP, the Austrian CP, the CP of Spain, the CP of Canada, and the CP of Britain.

There were also greetings from the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the neo-Stalinist successor of the Hungarian CP; and from A. Buzgalin of the Russian Organizing Committee for a Labor Party, which in October is to merge with the Socialist Party of Working People led by Roy Medvedev, a reform-Stalinist successor group of the Soviet CP.

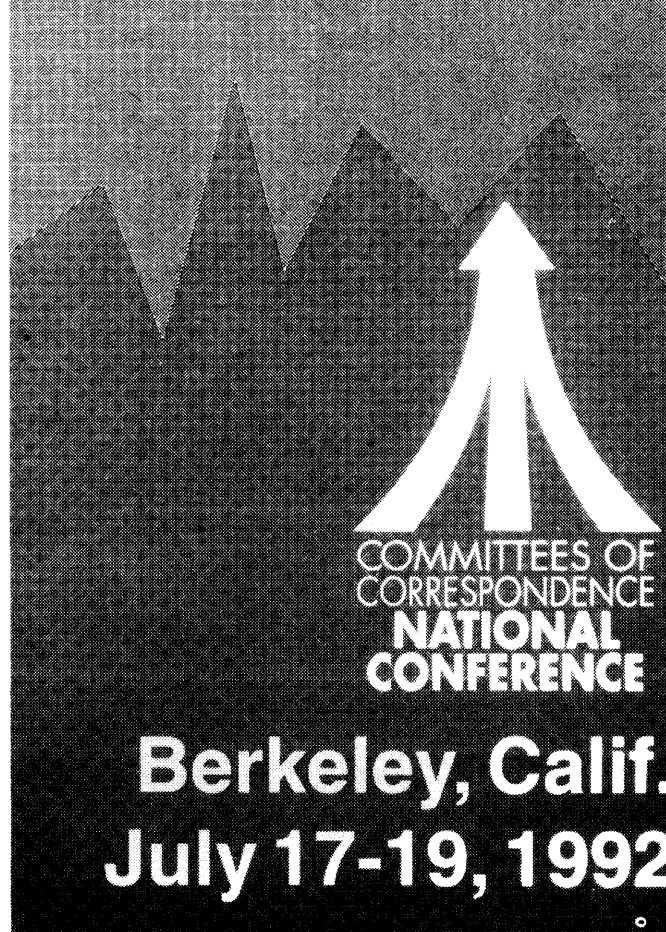
From the standpoint of the former CPers, the ANC representative was clearly the central speaker. At least half of them left after he spoke. (It was easy to tell who the ex-CPers were because they followed the standard Stalinist practice of functioning as a clique, all clapping together and getting up at various points to try to impell a standing ovation.)

The ANC speaker struck a sectarian note, stressing that the "inseparable" tripartite alliance of the SACP, ANC and COSATU was the *only* freedom movement in South Africa.

The Salvadoran CP representative delivered a long speech defending the peace accords with the right-wing government and the idea that "democracy" could be achieved without revolution. He also spoke as a leader of the Farabundo Martí Nationalist Liberation Front (FMLN). He explained that the FMLN hopes to enter the Salvadoran government in 1994 as part of a broad coalition including the Christian Democratic Party.

The most militant speech was delivered by Judy Rebick, a leader of the Canadian women's movement and a former member of the Canadian section of the Fourth International. She also presented an ultra-feminist line. She argued that the "Marxist notion" of the centrality of the working class had to be rejected, and that it

Perspectives for Democracy and Socialism in the '90s



had to be recognized that women and minorities, including the handicapped, were equally central.

In this regard, it was notable that in the workshop on the crisis in the world socialist movement, former CP official philosophers expressed their readiness to graft on New Left theories, including ultra-feminist ones, to what they considered still valid in the "old Marxism."

The key workshop was the one on the "Crisis of Socialism," which clearly meant the crisis of the ruling Communist parties, the world movement based on them, as well as the ideology of this movement. One of main speakers was Carl Bloice, former *People's Weekly World* correspondent

in Moscow. He stressed the importance of the workshop by saying that it included about a tenth of all those attending the conference.

In response to a question from this writer, Bloice deplored the neo-Stalinist alliance with Russian chauvinists and anti-Semites in the ex-USSR. He also said those who think that the situation in the former Soviet Union will soon be reversed "are smoking some pretty strong stuff."

The audience was predominantly late middle-aged and elderly, clearly former CPers. Most of those who spoke expressed revulsion at their experience in the CP, and at the same time rejected the concepts of democratic centralism, the vanguard party, and a definite Marxist program.

A Socialist Action member who defended the Leninist conception of the party was denounced as "more Stalinist than the old Communist Party."

Democratic Party orientation

There were a large number of representatives of Trotskyist groups present, all of whom opposed the line of supporting the Democratic Party. Their appeals fell on deaf ears. The organizers of the conference, the reform wing of the CP, was generally the section of the party most active in Democratic Party politics.

Many CoC speakers talked about an "inside-outside" approach to the Democratic Party, but the effect of this seemed mainly to provide a radical cover for an orientation to the Democrats.

At an evening rally, Bloice expressed revulsion at Clinton's candidacy, but avowed that he would undoubtedly end up not only voting for him but working for him.

One of the speakers at the evening rally, Ying Lee Kelley, described herself as a "Democratic Party hack," as she took the floor. She is an aide to Congressman Ron Dellums. At the same time, she enthusiastically defended the Chinese Stalinist regime.

The conference obviously attracted a layer of demoralized and dispersed leftists hoping to find a roof under which they could live without having to commit themselves to anything very definite, either organizationally or politically.

There were a number of trade-union functionaries who have long served as aides of "progressive" officials and have been deeply involved in Democratic Party politics.

The evening rally illustrated the fact that this well-financed and publicized conference drew a wide spectrum of the left. The great majority of those present were probably far from being committed to the CoC.

Whether the dispersed layers that attended, let alone fresh forces, will join it or be drawn into its periphery will depend on what initiatives it takes. In that respect, however, the organizers offered nothing.

Overall, the conference maintained the old reform CP framework, but watered down its content still more. The executive leadership elected was essentially the old reform CP leaders, such as Kendra Alexander and Carl Bloice.

The 30-member national committee, however, included some elements from other origins, such as former Socialist Workers' Party leader Peter Camejo, who got the fourth highest number of votes. ■

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The state of Black America: Separate and treated unequally

D. Michael Cheers

By JOSEPH RYAN

"Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal," by Andrew Hacker. MacMillan Publishing Co. \$24.95.

The more things change the more they seem to stay the same—or get worse!

This is the only conclusion that can be drawn from Andrew Hacker's controversial book, "Two Nations."

Hacker, a professor of political science at Queens College in New York, pulls no punches as he documents the institutionalized inequality Black Americans still suffer over 25 years after the historic civil rights victories of the 1960s.

In his preface to the book, Hacker gives the source for the title, "Two Nations," by appropriately quoting Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli's observation of the difference between the rich and the poor in Victorian England:

"Two nations, between whom there is no discourse and no sympathy, who are ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets." Hacker shows how this situation is what exists in America today.

A large portion of "Two Nations" is devoted to examining the different attitudes of Blacks and whites in this country. The author's conclusion is that Blacks face as much if not more racial discrimination than in the past.

But most astoundingly, the economic statistics and graphs presented in this book are what provide the most irrefutable evidence that Black America—despite some modest gains over the last 20 years—has been pushed even deeper into social misery.

In fact, in many categories, Blacks are worse off now than they were in 1960!

For example, the unemployment rate for Blacks has increased since 1960 not only in relation to whites, but also in total percentage. In 1960, the unemployment rate for Blacks was 10.2 percent; for whites, 4.9 percent. In 1990, the unemployment rate for Blacks was 11.3 percent; for whites 4.1 percent. In short, over the last 30 years the unemployment rate for Blacks has gone from double to almost triple of that for whites.

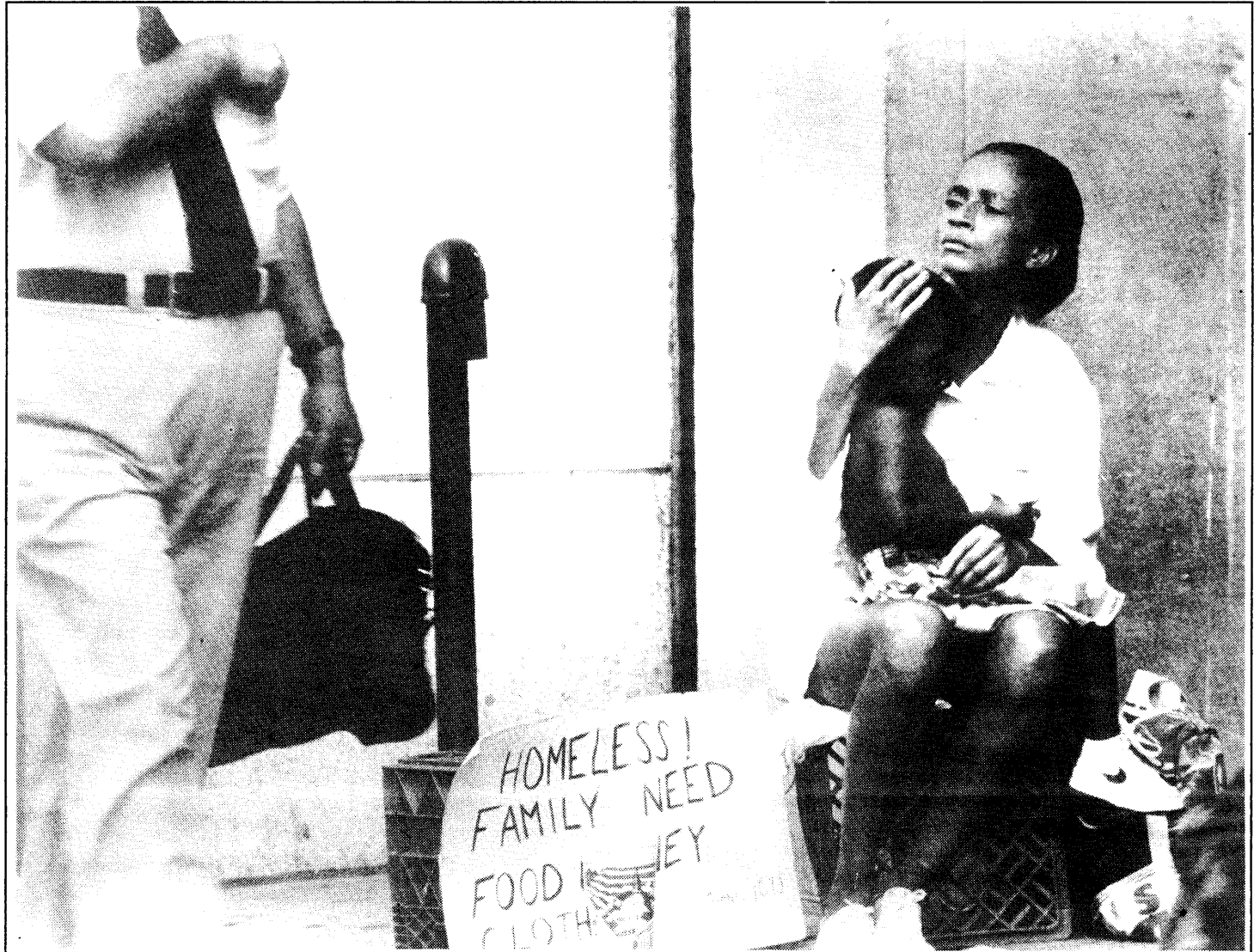
Between the years 1970 and 1990, the median income for Black families increased by only \$272. For white families, the median income increased by \$2434. Today, for every \$1000 earned by a white male worker, a Black male worker earns \$776—a paltry increase of \$22 towards parity since 1969.

While the standard of living for most working Americans has deteriorated over the last 20 years, for Blacks the current economic recession is more like the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Over 31.9 percent of all Black people, 44.8 percent of all Black children, and 29.3 percent of all Black families live below the poverty line. More than half—56.1 percent—of Black female-headed households live in poverty.

Black middle class

While a growing number of Blacks are getting poorer, Hacker documents a thin layer who have moved up the economic ladder to the middle class. Hacker denotes middle class by income, which means he includes higher paid workers in that category. For Marxists, however, there is a big



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households live in poverty."**

difference between workers—even highly-paid ones—and small business people, doctors, accountants, etc. Workers still sell their labor power to an employer—they are not self-employed—so their relationship to the means of production, indeed, their class consciousness, is qualitatively different.

As a result of the victories of the civil rights movement—overturning legal segregation in the South, securing voting rights, winning affirmative action programs—employment and professional opportunities opened up for a layer of Black people.

Modest gains were made in the number of Black lawyers, accountants, and managers, etc. For example, the number of Black lawyers increased from 1.3 percent of the profession in 1960 to 3.2 percent in 1990.

But by far the largest contingent in what Hacker calls this "middle class" layer (families with incomes over \$50,000 per year) are workers who have gained access to jobs that in the past were denied them.

Since 1970, there has been a 4.6 percent increase in the number of Black families in this category. But Hacker makes an important distinction here, stating that this doesn't mean "that many Black men and women have jobs paying at that level."

"Indeed," he says, "only 3.4 percent of all Black men make \$50,000 or more; most \$50,000 homes result from two or more sets of earnings... typically, the husband is likely to be a bus driver earning

\$32,000, while his wife brings home \$28,000 as a teacher or nurse."

"In contrast," Hacker states, "12.1 percent of all white men receive over \$50,000, and many more of them are the sole or dominant earners in their households."

On the other side of the economic ledger, Hacker points out that there has also been a 2.4 percent increase in the number of Black families that earn less than \$15,000.

Hacker's conclusion is that while there has been a slight economic stratification in the Black community, it has not qualitatively altered the downward slide of many more Black families.

Hacker's book is extremely valuable because it examines, with historical statistics, almost every aspect of Black life. He details gains—and setbacks—in education, housing, and healthcare. And he concludes that being Black in America is a hard job.

Compensation for being Black

In his book, Hacker related how he conducted an experiment with his white pupils to see what their reaction would be if they were suddenly to become Black. He told them that due to an "error" they would all be Black for the next 50 years of their lives, but that they could ask for compensation for this "mistake."

Hacker states, "When this parable has been put to white students, most seemed to feel that it would not be out of place to ask for \$50 million, or \$1 million for each of the coming "Black years."

While Hacker concludes that this reaction is a symbol of how much his students valued their white skins, the other conclusion should be that the white students realized how much of a handicap it is to be Black in America. Unfortunately, while Hacker does an exemplary job of exposing the cancer of racism, he offers no political or economic analysis or solutions.

When Malcolm X was asked what he thought was responsible for race prejudice in the United States, he answered, "Ignorance and greed. And a skilfully designed program of miseducation that goes right along with the American system of exploitation and oppression."

What Hacker fails to point out is that it isn't only white attitudes that are responsible for the oppression of Blacks. The ultimate culprit is an economic system that uses racism to super-exploit one section of workers.

Under this system, Black Americans will never achieve full equality. One, it would cost the ruling rich too much. And two, it would deprive them of the super-profits they reap by paying Blacks less than whites.

The crisis in the Black community today is the same crisis facing working people in general—the crisis in leadership.

But as the late Marxist philosopher George Novack wrote in 1967, Black Americans will play a role in future struggles out of all proportion to their numbers in the population:

"Because Afro-Americans are both an oppressed nationality and the most heavily exploited segment of the American working class [their] struggle is at one and the same time a nationalist movement for self-determination and a proletarian struggle against the capitalist possessors of wealth and power." ■