

TORCH

NEWSPAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE

JUNE 15-JULY 14, 1983

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 6 / 25¢



By ALBERT LARY

Salvadorean rebels are striking back hard at U.S. imperialism and its puppet regime in El Salvador. Before dawn on May 25, rebel troops of the Forces of Popular Liberation (FPL) overran an army guardpost at the Quebrada Seca bridge, 48 miles east of the capital of San Salvador. The 100-foot suspension bridge is a key link in the Pan American Highway through El Salvador. In the fighting, 44 government troops were killed and the bridge was completely destroyed.

Fourteen hours later the FPL struck again, this time in the capital itself. U.S. Naval Commander Albert Schaufelberger, deputy chief of the 55 U.S. military advisers stationed in El Salvador, was gunned down while waiting for his girlfriend on the campus of the University of Central America. He became the first

U.S. soldier to die in El Salvador's rapidly escalating national liberation war.

A message issued by the FPL the next day, and later authenticated by other rebel spokespersons, took credit for the killing and warned, "American advisers have invaded our soil and massacred our compatriots every day . . . The military advisers sent here will return to the U.S. in coffins." According to Alberto Arene of the Frente Farabundo Martí para Liberación Nacional (FMLN), the unified rebel army command, the killing of Schaufelberger, along with the attack on the Quebrada Seca bridge, marks the opening of a new rebel offensive designed to answer President Reagan's latest threats. The new military campaign has been named "El Salvador Will Win!"

As of now, the rebels seem to be doing just that. Their sustained efforts at

economic sabotage have crippled the country's systems of transportation, communication and electric power. Since the war began over three years ago, the FMLN has destroyed 60 major bridges, 800 buses, and virtually all railroad cars and locomotives. In addition to acts of sabotage, the rebels have become increasingly effective in large-scale battles and now operate openly in nearly every province.

On May 31, a rebel force seized and destroyed an important, and heavily-guarded, government radio relay station atop Cacahuatique volcano in Morazán Province. The all-day battle took place only 12 miles from the headquarters of the government's elite 1,200-man U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion. Although some reinforcements were airlifted in to the mountaintop battlefield (without success), most of the famed Atlacatl soldiers stayed in their barracks—

further indication of the isolated and defensive position which Salvadorean government troops have reached.

Hard-liners take charge of U.S. policy

The response of U.S. imperialist policy-makers has, in turn, hardened around a strategy of all-out military confrontation. On May 27, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders was fired. This was quickly followed by the removal of U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Deane Hinton.

"You don't handle Central American policies with tea and crumpets on the diplomatic circuit," snapped one Reagan aide when asked to comment on Enders' dismissal. This seemed quite an
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Victory to the Liberation Forces!

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AIDS hits prisoners at Auburn

Dear Comrades:

I am writing to inform you about my present situation in Auburn prison. As I explained to you in my previous letter, in this prison we are objects of the most terrible systematic repression. Two weeks ago a fellow prisoner was found dead and last night another died from a disease called AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). There are 19 more prisoners who have this disease, and they have been left without any kind of medical attention and without being confined to the prison hospital, but have been abandoned to their fate, even though

Freedom of the press curbed in Alabama

Dear Torch,

I am presently confined with much interest in your views. I would like to express gratitude for receiving the *Torch/La Antorcha*—which is educationally inspiring. Unfortunately, the subscription would have to cease within a month, due to a new policy on newspaper subscriptions, which is the result of a very petty mind without measure. Memos were given to all the prisoners, reading:

"The Department of Corrections has a new policy on newspaper subscriptions. You will have 30 days from this date to cancel your subscriptions to newspapers. Each institution will purchase five newspapers from the welfare fund and keep them in the law library. Any newspapers that arrive in the mail after this 30 day limit will be returned. Arrangements will be made for inmates in the cell-blocks who are not serving a segregation sentence to see a newspaper."

This notorious system is the outward expression of self-centered activities, which is inevitably rooted in falsehood. This falsehood is the soil and nourishment—which is thought—of greed, power and pleasure that encourages duality between our growth and relationship with each other as human beings. This present system supports and encourages a mind that always depends on an outside agency for its strength and security, but such a mind is a dead mind, because it sees no farther than its dependency and

they and the other prisoners asked for them to get proper care. In the same way, other comrades have died of various causes, but, above all, for lack of medical attention.

To all this are added the scientific experiments which are being performed on us—and which are gradually carrying us to the grave. If we are not killed by a disease created by those who experiment with our lives, then the system kills us and then they blame one of these diseases in order to justify our deaths to our families and before public opinion. There have been many of our comrades who have turned up hanged and they always succeed, the prison administration, in justifying these deaths.

Anything that happens to me issues from the penal system and, therefore, from the imperialist government of the U.S. If you wish to publish this letter you can, as well as the ones I am sending with them.

With you in the struggle,
Oliver Corporán
Auburn Correctional Facility
—Translated from Spanish

projections it has created. The more this mind succumbs to the system the less active it becomes in its own faculty.

Freedom is not of the system—it is the initiation of an attentive mind—which comes naturally when the factors of deterioration are understood without choice.

A friend,
Charles Chatman
Kilby Correctional Facility
Montgomery, AL

Costa Rica—middle class heaven?

Dear Torch,

Recently I returned from a one-week visit to Costa Rica, where I have many relatives. I talked to many of them about their country's political present and future, and wanted to share a few observations with you based on these discussions.

One cousin described the country as having nine "classes" and three races. The "classes" were poor, middle class and upper, each subdivided again into poor, middle and upper. The races are European white, which dominates the middle and upper classes but is very well integrated with the second group, Latinos, both of which are quite segregated from the third group, Blacks. This latter group derives almost exclusively from either slavery or Jamaican immigration, and dominates the eastern seaboard region.

As anyone who has studied Central America knows, Costa Rica has long been a stable country with many democratic freedoms, a high emphasis on education, and no military. Unlike many neighbors to the north, there is a large middle class which appears to undercut the accumulation of great wealth in just a few hands.

With the general background, let me address two areas of political ferment briefly. The first deals with the poorer class, which, with the country's economic problems of national debt and inflation getting continuously worse, seems ever more receptive to socialist ideology (and, with a huge influx of refugees and other foreigners of late, they are more exposed to outside ideas now than ever before). They are more and more seeing the class nature of their society, and are more

hostile toward the country's wealthy than ever before.

The second area is on the Eastern Seaboard, where the Blacks have organized into powerful unions, and have staged many strikes over the last few years. (Interestingly, it is usually white Costa Ricans who serve as leaders of all kinds here.)

In closing, I might add that not one middle class Costa Rican to whom I spoke predicted internal political problems in the future, but they all expressed hostility toward Nicaragua, which they feel is increasingly an enemy of the country. There's a nagging fear that Nicaragua might invade some of the northern provinces someday, but likewise a certainty that the U.S. would intervene on the Costa Rican side in that event. Only one person, a British citizen who's lived most of her life in this country, predicted that a class war might occur in the future.

In solidarity,
John W.

Greetings from Attica

Dear Torch:

I recently had the opportunity to read your publication and was very impressed. So impressed that I would like to order a subscription to the *Torch*. Presently I am incarcerated at Attica Correctional Facility, and I am grateful that you have extended special privileges to prisoners. Please accept my donation as a token of appreciation of a well worthwhile service.

Sincerely,
Milton Mills

Likes 'What We Stand For'

Dear Torch,

It has become necessary for me to change locations at this time. Therefore, I am notifying you so that you can remove my name from your subscription list. I anticipate that I will be "back on the street" sometime in early 1984. Assuming that we all make it that far, it is my intention to contact you once again so that I can receive your newspaper, at least.

I think "What We Stand For" is the most coherent and cogent political statement produced by the American left since the early days of SDS, and

you have my complete support. These are hard times for us all—particularly the left. In my own circumstances, I feel that there is little I can do except watch and wait. What Jane Alpert had to say about these places in her book, *Growing Up Underground*, remains true to this day.

Once I get out of "the belly of this beast," however, I may be able to do more. Until that time, I remain,
Yours in struggle,
Jess H. White
Federal Correctional Institution
Butner, NC

Workers exploited in USSR

Dear Editor,

Recently, I had the opportunity to read the Feb. 15-March 14, 1983, edition of your paper. I was very impressed, not to say the least. It would seem that the RSL has a truly Marxist orientation, rather than simply paying lip service to a particular aspect of Marxist ideology. I was particularly impressed with the article entitled "State Capitalism or Marxism" and its analysis of the SWP line.

I can certainly appreciate the RSL's position towards the USSR and its satellite countries. There is little doubt but that the masses are oppressed and exploited in these countries by the state. To view the situation which exists in these countries as being socialistic is an abuse of Marxist theory, not to say the least.

I am interested in receiving your paper on a regular basis. I am currently in federal prison, and am virtually penniless. I do occasionally receive some "outside" financial support, and when circumstances permit, I will gladly make a contribution. Sincerely,
Richard Loe

To Our Readers in Prison

The second and final annual renewal notice to our subscribers in prison has been mailed with this issue of the paper. Please make sure you fill out this form (printed on the back of the wrapper the paper comes in) and return it to us. This is the only way we can be sure that the *Torch/La Antorcha* is still reaching you and that you are still interested in receiving it.

If your paper stops arriving monthly, it may be because the renewal notice never got to you, or because you forgot to send it back to us. Let us know—as soon as we hear from you we will put you back on our subscription list. But we must receive a form or a letter to continue sending the paper.

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For subscription rates and information, see subscription blank in this issue.

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"Fight for Jobs, Peace and Freedom!"

August 28, 1963—August 27, 1983

A large protest against racist attacks, budget cuts and the war-mongering, feed-the-rich policies of the Reagan administration is scheduled to take place in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, August 27. The event—the "20th Anniversary Mobilization for Jobs, Peace and Freedom"—will commemorate the August 28, 1963, March on Washington at



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addresses demonstrators at 1963 March on Washington.

EDITORIAL

which the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made his now-famous "I Have a Dream..." speech.

The call for the march originated with Coretta Scott King, Dr. King's widow, last December. Mrs. King and Dr. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, are the co-chairs of the Mobilization, expected to be the largest civil rights demonstration in many years.

Originally, the organizers of the march planned to draw up draft legislative bills embracing the goals of "jobs, peace and freedom." A "New Coalition of Conscience" was to have waged a campaign to get the bills passed by Congress, with the campaign culminating in the August 27 march. But after several meetings of prominent Black leaders hosted by Lowery this past winter and spring failed to produce agreement on the proposed legislation, a decision was made to stage the march around vaguer goals.

'Millions are suffering'

Addressing the issue of widespread joblessness, the official call for the march states:

"Millions of Americans are suffering from the disaster of double-digit unemployment, and the groups affected most are Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, the Disabled, Women and Youth.... We call upon the American people... to seek with all deliberate speed the full employment objectives of the Humphrey-Hawkins Act, which is now the law of the land. We call for a new social contract between labor, industry and government."

On the issue of peace and the arms race, the march organizers "call upon both super powers and their allies to radically reduce and ultimately eliminate their nuclear arsenals as well as conventional weapons...."

And under the heading "Freedom," the convenors of the Mobilization: "... call for a national campaign throughout 1983 against hate and every form of class, racial, sexual, age and religious prejudice. We call upon the American people to renew their commitment to the cause of human rights and to resist the rising tide of extremism reflected in the rebirth of bombings and increased brutalities of the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi groups, and in some places, by the enforcement agencies."

The march call also declares its opposition to "corporate America's partnership with the racist apartheid regime in South Africa" and opposes "the militarization of internal conflicts, often

abetted and even encouraged by massive U.S. arms exports, in areas of the world such as the Middle East and Central America."

The march has been endorsed by hundreds of organizations and individuals, including: the AFL-CIO Executive Board and many of the largest AFL-CIO unions; the Congressional Black Caucus; the NAACP; the National Organization for Women; the A. Philip Randolph Institute; the National Baptist Convention USA; the National Education Association; and the United Auto Workers union.

Some of these endorsements mean more than others. The AFL-CIO endorsement, for example, is only "lukewarm," as Albert Shanker, the head of the American Federation of Teachers, told a New York City union meeting after he was criticized for not endorsing the march. The AFL-CIO Executive Board is apparently concerned because it opposes a nuclear freeze and supports both Reagan's arms buildup and his war in Central America, while the march itself is being built around more liberal positions on these questions.

Support march—oppose Democrats

One thing nearly all the organizers of the march have in common is that they are supporters of the Democratic Party. The list of organizations and politicians taking part is practically a roll call of the Democratic Party's major factions and groupings. In many ways, the August 27 march will be the opening rally for the Democratic Party's 1984 election campaign. Using the Mobilization as a starting point, most of the leaders of the organizations supporting the march will launch efforts to elect Democratic Party candidates next year.

Despite this, the Revolutionary Socialist League believes that all radicals and socialists should support and participate in the August 27 Mobilization—while at the same time opposing its use as a campaign rally for the Democrats. A militant movement of all workers and oppressed people—Black, Latin, Asian and white, women and men, undocumented and documented, gay and straight—is urgently needed to fight the attacks being carried out by the banks, corporations, the government and the ruling class as a whole. The 20th

Our problems do not come from the Republicans; they did not start three years ago when Ronald Reagan was elected president. The cause of our present situation is the entire political, economic and social system we live under—capitalism—a system in which the many work (if they are lucky) in order to enrich the few. Both the Democrats and the Republicans support this system. And they will both do what they think is necessary to defend it and keep it going.

The real program of the Democrats—not what they promise when they are out of power—is not too different from that of the Republicans. Their program isn't jobs, peace and freedom—it's inflation alternating with recession; it's budget cuts, wage concessions and unemployment; it's arms buildups and wars to defend the U.S. ruling class's ability to exploit the world; and it's discrimination, racist and sexist insults and a hypocritical moral code that represses women, children and gay people in particular.

Electing Democrats won't change this; it never has and it never will. But building a militant mass movement of all who are exploited and oppressed—one that aims to get rid of Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale, the Republicans and the Democrats, the capitalist class and the entire system, while it prepares us to take over and democratically run society in our own interests—can change things. This is what we believe socialists should be explaining to people in Washington on August 27. □

Reagan Undermines Civil Rights Commission

By WILLIAM FALK

Ronald Reagan has lashed out against the U.S. Civil Rights Commission for criticizing his attacks on the nation's civil rights laws. On May 25, Reagan dismissed three of the commission's six members and now seeks to replace them with people with views similar to his own.

The U.S. Civil Rights Commission was created by the 1957 Civil Rights Act. Its main purpose is to monitor and issue reports on the government's enforcement of civil rights laws. It also gathers and publishes civil rights-related statistics and writes occasional reports dealing with various forms of prejudice in U.S. society. The commission has no enforcement powers, nor does it supervise any other agency—yet, it is precisely the commission's relative lack of power and its bipartisan character (it is always made up of three Republicans and three Democrats) that has enhanced its moral authority over the years.

Since 1980, the commission has become increasingly critical of the Reagan administration. It termed Reagan's 1983 budget "a new low point in a disturbing trend of declining support for

(Continued on page 5)



High court bars tax exemptions for racist schools

On May 24, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Internal Revenue Service may refuse tax-exempt status to schools and institutions that claim to be religious, but whose religion is a cover for racist policies. The decision stemmed from an attempt by Bob Jones University of Greenville, South Carolina, and the Goldsboro Christian Schools of Goldsboro, North Carolina, to overturn a 1970 IRS regulation that religious organizations cannot receive otherwise routine tax exemptions if they advocate and practice racial discrimination.

The case received national attention last year, when the Reagan administration reversed the long-standing position of the Justice Department defending the IRS regulation. In the hue and cry that followed, Reagan verbally backed off his support for the fundamentalist, right-wing racist schools, but the government's position was so compromised that the Supreme Court appointed a prominent Black attorney, William T. Coleman Jr., to argue the case for withholding exemptions.

By a vote of 8-1 the court ruled that "racial discrimination in education violates deeply and widely accepted views of elementary justice"; that discriminatory educational institutions should not be "encouraged by having all taxpayers share in their support by way of special tax status." William Rehnquist, the lone vote against the regulation, limited his opinion to a discussion of whether the issue was under the jurisdiction of the high court or Congress.

The ruling is an undoubted victory for Black people and all who oppose the evil of racism that is a defining feature of U.S. society. But any rejoicing must be tempered with the knowledge that the right wing has lost only a small legal battle, while its army continues to grow in numbers and strength. Moreover, a process of "radicalization" is underway in the right-wing movement, in which many of its supporters, who previously believed that an electoral strategy could win the racist and reactionary policies they seek, are now looking to more violent, extra-legal solutions as advocated by the Klan, Nazis and other clandestine groups.

This shift was illustrated in the statement of Bob Jones, president of the university that bears his and his father's name, following the Supreme Court ruling: "We're in a bad fix in America when eight evil old men and one vain and foolish woman can speak a verdict on American liberties." Not only is

the current court one of the most conservative in recent years, but it was right-wing darling Ronald Reagan who appointed Sandra Day O'Connor, an apparently "vain and foolish woman," to that court.

—Susan Edmunds

South Africa executes three ANC members

On June 9, the South African government hanged three members of the African National Congress (ANC) for fighting to liberate the people of Azania (South Africa) from the racist apartheid regime. The three dead ANC activists, Simon Mogerane, 23, Thabo Motaung, 27, and Jerry Mosololi, 25, were all found guilty in the white ruling class's courts of taking part in attacks on police stations in 1979 and 1980.

Three other ANC activists were convicted of treason to the apartheid regime at the same time and were also sentenced to death. But the pressure of an international campaign for clemency for all six ANCers forced the South African government to make a gesture by commuting the sentences of Bobby Tsotsobe, Johannes Shabanbu and David Moise to life imprisonment.

Hours before the dawn executions, chapel bells rang throughout Soweto, the Black township of 1.5 million people outside Johannesburg. And, despite police harassment and bans on public gatherings, small demonstrations took place throughout the country.

Three days before the hangings, a 225-day trial for treason ended with the conviction of Oscar Mpetha, a widely-known 74-year-old trade union leader who was openly active with the ANC in the years before the government made membership in the organization illegal. He was convicted of inspiring other workers to revolt; he "added fuel to the fire," in the words of the judge.

The ANC has remained active

despite sharply growing government repression. On May 20, the military wing of the ANC set off a car bomb outside the headquarters of the South African Air Force. The powerful explosion killed at least 18 people, 10 of them white. There were also 70 injuries suffered by military personnel as well as over 100 injuries to civilians.

The bombings marked a change in tactics for the ANC, which had previously set off bombs only in uninhabited areas and never when Black passers-by were likely to be hurt. But in the face of South African assassinations of unarmed ANC members living in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Lesotho, the organization announced a "move from armed propaganda to attacks on military and police personnel." "Never again are our people going to be doing all the bleeding," ANC Acting President Oliver Tambo said.

A modest victory in the recent terrorism and conspiracy trial of trade unionists alleged to have connections to South Africa's other major liberation organization, the Pan Africanist Congress, was reported in the May 23 issue of *Africa News*. The trial came to a halt when the first prosecution witness threatened to testify if he signed a false statement after police torture, leading the government to fear that defense lawyer George Bizos would turn the trial into an internationally publicized examination of South African police methods, as he did with last year's inquest into the death of union leader Neil Aggett. As a result, the prosecution offered to plea bargain down to a minor charge of "possession of PAC literature," and the defendants accepted. This charge usually results in a suspended sentence—but in this case the judge gave out two-and-a-half and three-year sentences. The two most well-known defendants were Philip Dlamini, secretary of the Black Municipal Workers Union and Joseph Tholoe, vice president and founding member of the Media Workers Association of South Africa. Tholoe won Harvard University's Nieman Foundation award for journalism in 1982 and played an important part in reporting the 1976 Soweto student uprising.

—WF

Mass protests in Chile hit Pinochet regime

On June 14, hundreds of thousands of protesters in Chile poured into the streets to demonstrate against General Augusto Pinochet's military regime. The Central Workers Command—a coalition of labor unions—had called for a national day of protest to demand a return to democratic rule. Nearly all the country's political parties, as well as student groups, professional associations and other organizations, joined to organize the demonstrations. But the peaceful protest they called for spontaneously erupted into a massive and militant anti-government assault.

In Santiago, Chile's capital and largest city, working class militants blocked off entire neighborhoods from police by building bonfires in the streets. Police fired volleys of tear gas at the crowds but were too frightened to enter the working class districts.

In other areas of the city, demonstrators set fire to buses and government offices. Students at the University of Chile took over the campus, then fought with club-wielding police in the surrounding streets. Even well-to-do families in Santiago's Providencia district joined the protest by banging pots and pans—and were in turn tear-gassed by police. Similar protests were reported in Valparaiso, Tabuco and other cities. Over 200 people have already been jailed. As we go to press, clashes between demonstrators and security forces are reportedly still taking place and the number of detainees is rising.

After 10 years in power, the Pinochet regime is faced with an unparalleled economic and social crisis. The economy is falling apart—inflation is running at 30 percent, unemployment stands at 25 percent, and the country owes \$18 billion in foreign debts. Business owners, professionals

and farmers who earlier supported the government have now turned against it. Mass opposition to Pinochet showed up in May when thousands of people joined an earlier "national day of protest." The much larger and more militant June 14 demonstrations indicate that the day of reckoning for Chile's military rulers is not far away.

CIA plot against Suriname exposed

On May 31, ABC News revealed—and several U.S. congressmen confirmed—that during the fall of 1982, the CIA prepared a plot to overthrow the present government of Suriname and install in its place a pro-U.S. regime. According to the reports, the plan was cancelled after several congressional committees that had been informed in secret objected.

Suriname—often known as Dutch Guiana during its years as a colony—is located on the north coast of South America, just east of Venezuela and Guyana. The people of Suriname are of African, East Indian, Indonesian, American Indian and Dutch descent.

In 1980, five years after the country achieved independence, a civilian government was overthrown by junior army officers. Soon after this coup, both the U.S. (which buys most of Suriname's major product, bauxite) and the Netherlands (the former colonial power, which had pledged to give Suriname \$1.5 billion in aid between 1975 and 1990) established good working relations with the military men who ran the country. The U.S. started a military assistance program for the first time.

In 1981-82, however, a series of factional struggles within the military ended with Sergeant-Major Desi Bouterse taking over as the country's strongman ruler. After initially being hostile to all the country's left political parties (which include pro-Albania groups, pro-Russia groups, Fidelistas, Social Democrats, radical nationalists and many others), the now-Colonel Bouterse changed course. He formed an alliance with several left parties, established close diplomatic relations with Grenada and Cuba, and increased diplomatic contact with Russia. At the same time, he suspended civil liberties, took over the university and put down a demonstration of 3,000 students, jailed his uniformed opponents, arrested leaders of all five major trade union federations, and began "talking socialism."

In December 1982, 15 leading Bouterse opponents were arrested and shot. In February 1983 the government announced that the most prominent army leader who had led the 1980

coup with Bouterse had hanged himself in his prison cell.

Bouterse's course in Suriname has provoked opposition and provided scores of openings for the CIA to try to get rid of this new ally of their enemies in the Caribbean. Although the CIA claims the overthrow plans never got off paper, last November there were reports of a commando force of 70 being assembled in the Netherlands with a budget of \$6 million. In all probability this was the CIA group that was called off—at the last hour.

Thatcher's Tories win sweeping victory

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party won a landslide victory in national elections held on June 9. The Conservatives received 42 percent of the popular vote, winning 397 of the 650 seats in Parliament. Their 144-seat majority in Parliament is the largest won by any British party since 1945. The major opposition party, the Labour Party, won only 28 percent of the vote and 209 seats—its worst showing since 1922. A third grouping, the recently formed Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance, won 25 percent of the vote, but will hold only 23 seats due to electoral laws that penalize third

Reagan Undermines Civil Rights Commission

(Continued from page 3)

civil rights enforcement." It has also consistently criticized the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, which has failed to file a single suit for school desegregation in the last two years—but has intervened on behalf of adult white men who claim to have been discriminated against as a result of affirmative action.

"[The administration's] active opposition to all but the most limited and ineffectual forms of affirmative action ignores the entrenched nature and pervasive extent of race, sex, and national origin discrimination," the commission wrote in January.

In the same report, the commission infuriated the White House by suggesting that "perceptions that enforcement of civil rights laws is diminishing" and the "occasional failure of law enforcement agencies to respond aggressively" were among factors causing an increase in racist violence in the U.S. In March, the commission charged that the White House was obstructing its



South African Air Force headquarters in Pretoria was heavily damaged on May 20 by bomb planted by ANC.

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and farmers who earlier supported the government have now turned against it. Mass opposition to Pinochet showed up in May when thousands of people joined an earlier "national day of protest." The much larger and more militant June 14 demonstrations indicate that the day of reckoning for Chile's military rulers is not far away.

CIA plot against Suriname exposed

On May 31, ABC News revealed—and several U.S. congressmen confirmed—during the fall of 1982, the CIA prepared a plot to overthrow the present government of Suriname and install in its place a pro-U.S. regime. According to the reports, the plan was cancelled after several congressional committees that had been informed in secret objected.

Suriname—often known as Dutch Guiana during its years as a colony—is located on the north coast of South America, just east of Venezuela and Guyana. The people of Suriname are of African, East Indian, Indonesian, American Indian and Dutch descent.

In 1980, five years after the country achieved independence, a civilian government was overthrown by junior army officers. Soon after this coup, both the U.S. (which buys most of Suriname's major product, bauxite) and the Netherlands (the former colonial power, which had pledged to give Suriname \$1.5 billion in aid between 1975 and 1990) established good working relations with the military men who ran the country. The U.S. started a military assistance program for the first time.

In 1981-82, however, a series of factional struggles within the military ended with Sergeant-Major Desi Bouterse taking over as the country's strongman ruler. After initially being hostile to all the country's left political parties (which include pro-Albania groups, pro-Russia groups, Fidelistas, Social Democrats, radical nationalists and many others), the now-Colonel Bouterse changed course. He formed an alliance with several left parties, established close diplomatic relations with Grenada and Cuba, and increased diplomatic contact with Russia. At the same time, he suspended civil liberties, took over the university and put down a demonstration of 3,000 students, jailed his uniformed opponents, arrested leaders of all five major trade union federations, and began "talking socialism."

In December 1982, 15 leading Bouterse opponents were arrested and shot. In February 1983 the government announced that the most prominent army leader who had led the 1980

comp with Bouterse had hanged himself in his prison cell. Bouterse's course in Suriname has provoked widespread opposition and provided scores of openings for the CIA to try to get rid of this new ally of their enemies in the Caribbean. Although the CIA claims the overthrow plans never got off paper, last November there were reports of a commando force of 70 being assembled in the Netherlands with a budget of \$6 million. In all probability this was the CIA group that was called off—at the last hour.



British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher with her ally Ronald Reagan.

Thatcher's Tories win sweeping victory

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party won a landslide victory in national elections held on June 9. The Conservatives received 42 percent of the popular vote, winning 397 of the 650 seats in Parliament. Their 144-seat majority in Parliament is the largest won by any British party since 1945. The major opposition party, the Labour Party, won only 28 percent of the vote and 209 seats—its worst showing since 1922. A third grouping, the recently formed Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance, won 25 percent of the vote, but will hold only 23 seats due to electoral laws that penalize third

parties. Smaller parties took the remaining 21 seats.

Thatcher's government was returned to power despite policies that were responsible for one of the deepest and longest-running recessions in recent British history. Since Thatcher took office in 1979, the unemployment rate tripled to 13.3 percent, while industrial production and the living standards of all but the wealthiest British families declined sharply.

A major reason for the Conservative victory was that opposition parties offered no convincing alternative to the Thatcher government's policies. For its part, the Labour Party was torn apart by splits and internal power struggles. After a moderate leftist, Michael Foot, was chosen to lead the party in 1980, right-wing Labourites split off to form the Social Democratic Party in 1981.

—PB

Unsung (& unfound) hero

As Russian propaganda would have it, the nearly 100,000 Soviet troops that invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 and installed a puppet government headed by Babrak Karmal were a "limited contingent" who were "invited" into the country by the Karmal regime. And, the story goes, the guerrillas who are today resisting the Russian occupation are "bandits" and "mercenaries" who have no popular support.

But on May 18, at 2 p.m., Vladimir Danchev, a broadcaster on Radio Moscow's

English-language hourly news program, announced to a worldwide audience that Afghan tribal leaders had urged rebels "not to lay down their arms," but to "fight against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan." He repeated the story an hour later. At four o'clock, however, a different announcer came on the air with a rewritten story claiming that the tribal leaders had "voiced support" for the Babrak regime and told anti-government forces to "lay down their arms."

During his 2 p.m. broadcast on May 23, Danchev read another report about Afghanistan. In line with standard Russian propaganda, he announced that Afghans were defending themselves against "bands infiltrated from Pakistan," whom he described as "counter-revolutionaries." But in later broadcasts,

Danchev changed the wording and reported that Afghan tribes had "joined the struggle against the Soviet invaders." He also termed the Soviet troops "counter-revolutionaries," and declared that the Afghans were defending their country "against bands infiltrated from the Soviet Union."

Following his 5 p.m. broadcast on May 23, Danchev was taken off the air. Russian officials say he has been dismissed from his job and is "under investigation." While referring to Danchev's action as a "personal mistake," they also said he opposed the Russian troops' role in Afghanistan and was trying to create pressure for their withdrawal. On May 24, Vladimir Danchev disappeared after telling his housekeeper he was going for a walk. He has not been heard from since.

—PB

EVENTS

CHICAGO

JULY 6—Stop the Death Flights! Picket against Mexicana Airlines' death flights of Salvadoran refugees. Wednesday, 12:00 pm, Mexicana Airlines office, downtown on Adams between Michigan and Wabash. Called by Circle Campus Organizing Committee on El Salvador and Central America.

DETROIT

JUNE 18—Demonstrate Against U.S. War in Central America. Money for Jobs, Not for War! 12 noon, Grand Circus Park. March to Kennedy Square for 1 pm rally. Sponsored by June 18 Coalition. For more info, (313) 577-3451.

LOS ANGELES

JUNE 18—Stop Mexicana Airlines Death Flights! Mexicana Airlines office, 432 S. Broadway, 12-1 pm. Follow-up picket on July 30. Sponsored by Echo Park CISPEP. For more info, (213) 660-4587 or (213) 385-6029.

JULY 2-4, Tijuana, Mexico—Border Conference on Solidarity with El Salvador. To participate with the RSL, call (213) 385-6029.

SYRACUSE, NY

JUNE 22—Benefit for American Indian Movement leader Dennis Banks. Program includes Holly Near, Odetta, Cris Williamson and others. Wednesday, 7 pm, Landmark Theater. Indian crafts and food available before show. Reserved seats, \$6.50 and \$9.50. For info on tickets, call (315) 475-7979.

NATIONAL EVENTS

JULY 2, Washington DC—Emergency Demonstration: Stop the U.S. War Against Central America and the Caribbean! Rally at Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Demonstrate at "Independence Day" Ball. To march with the RSL, call (212) 695-6802.

Reagan Undermines Civil Rights Commission

(Continued from page 3)
civil rights enforcement." It has also consistently criticized the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, which has failed to file a single suit for school desegregation in the last two years—but has intervened on behalf of adult white men who claim to have been discriminated against as a result of affirmative action.

"[The administration's] active opposition to all but the most limited and ineffectual forms of affirmative action ignores the entrenched nature and pervasive extent of race, sex, and national origin discrimination," the commission wrote in January.

In the same report, the commission infuriated the White House by suggesting that "perceptions that enforcement of civil rights laws is diminishing" and the "occasional failure of law enforcement agencies to respond aggressively" were among factors causing an increase in racist violence in the U.S.

In March, the commission charged that the White House was obstructing its

work by refusing to give it data on the amounts of money spent on, and the numbers of employees devoted to, civil rights law enforcement.

Reagan 'cleans house'

Reagan's efforts to reshape the commission in his own image began in 1981 when he dismissed Chairman Arthur S. Flemming, a Nixon appointee who was Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under President Eisenhower. Reagan's first choice to replace Flemming was Rev. B. Sam Hart, a Black radio preacher from Philadelphia, who had the endorsement and politics of the right-wing Moral Majority. When the Hart nomination met with sharp opposition, Reagan then selected Clarence M. Pendleton Jr., head of the San Diego Urban League and a long-time pal of presidential adviser Edwin Meese III.

This past December, Pendleton complained to the White House that he was constantly being outvoted on the commission by a bloc of the three Democrats plus Jill S. Ruckelshaus, holder of one of the Republican seats and wife of the recently appointed administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, William D. Ruckelshaus.

"I said to them 'I'm commissioner over there but I can't get anything done because of them,'" Pendleton told the Washington Post. "You need to appoint more conservatives over there..."

On May 21, the White House leaked a story that the four troublesome commission members would be fired. Then,

four days later, Reagan made it official that the three Democrats would get the boot and announced he was nominating Morris B. Abram, John H. Bunzel and Robert A. Destro to take their places. Jill Ruckelshaus was spared, it appears, because of the impact of firing one Ruckelshaus for being too liberal so soon after hiring another for the purpose of improving the image of the EPA.

In addition to the three new commission members, Reagan announced that Linda Chavez, a Democrat, would become the commission's staff director, a position that had been left vacant for two years. All four newly-named Democrats oppose affirmative action programs, oppose the use of quotas to increase the number of Blacks, Latins and women hired into previously "restricted" jobs and oppose busing to achieve school desegregation. In fact, all four are sympathetic to the neo-conservative wing of the Democratic Party, the home of such Reagan administration luminaries as Jeane Kirkpatrick.

Until her appointment, Linda Chavez was assistant to the president in the office of Albert Shanker, the current president of the American Federation of Teachers and, as the head of the NYC teachers' union during the 1960s, a symbol of racist opposition to Black and Latin demands for local community control of the schools. Bunzel is currently a research fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, a right-wing think tank. Morris Abram is a lawyer and former president of Brandeis University. Robert Destro, nominated last year by Reagan for a seat on the Civil Rights Commission but

never confirmed by the Senate, is a law professor at the conservative Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

If Bunzel, Abram and Destro take their seats, five of the six commissioners will have been appointed by Reagan. "Administration officials hope," reported the Wall Street Journal, "that with the changes, the commission will be less critical of the president's civil-rights policies as the 1984 election approaches."

Much opposition to Reagan purge

Reagan's move has been widely denounced by Black organizations, Latin organizations, women's groups, organizations of disabled people—in fact, by groups from just about every one of the 17 official classes of victims of discrimination that the U.S. Civil Rights Commission is supposed to protect. "The commission is being raped," said Tony Bonilla, president of the League of Latin American Citizens.

Many organizations will be urging the Senate to reject the nominations. Other groups are going to court to challenge Reagan's right to fire commission members. A spokesman for Walter E. Fauntroy, Washington, D.C.'s non-voting member of Congress, said the purge adds urgency to the August 27 Mobilization for Jobs, Peace and Freedom. "One purpose of that march is to protest the Administration's rollback of civil rights and this move to pack the Civil Rights Commission is as good an example as you will find." □

Across the country, hundreds of thousands of lesbians and gay men will be marching in the streets in late June to celebrate Lesbian and Gay Pride Day. Unfortunately, there is little to celebrate this year. Gay people are facing a sustained assault on the few gains they have secured through a decade and a half of struggle. In our view, capitalism is demonstrating once again that it cannot and will not allow lesbians and gays to live free lives—openly and proudly gay. We believe that the only alternative to increasing misery under capitalism—not just for gay people but for everyone—is a socialist revolution.

To explain our view, we are printing below excerpts from the RSL pamphlet "Socialism and the Fight for Lesbian and Gay Liberation," by Paul Carson. For a copy of the full pamphlet, send \$1 to: RSL, PO Box 1288, NY, NY 10116.

Lesbian and gay liberation will only be fully achieved through the establishment of a socialist society.

By this we mean a society in which capitalist production has been done away with and the means of production are owned and democratically controlled by all those who work. Production will no longer be for profit; workers will no longer be objects whose only purpose is to create surplus value for the capitalist. They will be masters over the machines instead of being controlled by them. Under socialism, there will be no classes and the state will hardly exist.

Socialism will make possible the liberation of lesbians and gay men because it will eliminate the material and social basis for their oppression. Specifically, it will do away with the division of society into social classes and eliminate private property. In so doing it will do away with the need for the bourgeois nuclear family and the social/sexual roles it involves, which taken together serve to reproduce the class structure of capitalist society.

Why is this so?

In the first place, socialism will eliminate the material basis for social classes by doing away with the condition known as relative scarcity. . . .

At a certain point in history, technology and the productivity of labor reached a point where the people of a given society were able to produce a social surplus. This allowed a small minority of society to be freed from the necessity of working as long as the vast majority of people devoted their entire lives to physical labor. . . .

Relative scarcity gave rise to class society. In a variety of ways, usually by the conquest of neighboring peoples, a small section of society succeeded in establishing itself as a ruling class, forcing the vast majority to work, while it took care of the administration of society as a whole and devoted itself to war, cultural activities and consumption. It lived off the labor of the majority. . . .

Capitalism, like all other forms of class society, is based on relative scarcity. But in contrast to previous class societies, capitalism has created the technological possibility of doing away with relative scarcity once and for all. Capitalism has created modern industry and a powerful technology, a global economy and division of labor and an international working class. Taken together, these factors mean it is now possible to create conditions of complete material abundance. It is now possible to free the majority of people from the need to devote their entire lives to work—without causing social collapse.

This historic possibility, however, remains trapped and unfulfilled in the present form of society. Modern technology is extremely powerful and capable of accomplishing stupendous tasks. It is a potent tool created and developed by human beings. Yet under capitalism, technology is more important than human beings. Instead of being run by the majority of human beings, it runs them. This not only limits the potential of technology itself, but more importantly, it stifles, stunts, disorganizes and wastes the creative abilities of millions of people. This is because under capitalism, technology and all the means of production are owned and controlled by a tiny minority of people who use them not to fulfill the needs of humanity but to main-

Socialism and the Fight for Lesbian and Gay Liberation

tain and fortify their own position as the ruling class. . . .

SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

To realize the potential created by capitalism will require a socialist revolution, a mass social upheaval of working and oppressed people. In this revolution the workers and their allies must overthrow the capitalist class, smash the capitalist state, its army, police, prisons and bureaucracy, seize control of the means of production and set up their own state, a workers' state, or dictatorship of the proletariat. This state would own the means of production while it in-

factors contributing to racism, sexism, anti-gay prejudice and other divisions within the working class. As people stop competing over scarce goods and resources, the material basis for social classes and the state will disappear. . . .

The transformation we are describing would have a tremendous impact on all oppressed people in society. This would include lesbians and gay men: Over time, the bourgeois family would cease to function as it did under capitalism. As the economy is reorganized, all of the social and economic reasons that make the family necessary to capitalism would disappear. Since socialism would mean the elimination of private property and social classes, there will be no need for the family as a social vehicle to transmit property, along with class position

atmosphere of the entire society.

All kinds of attitudes will change. Instead of life being one big hustle where you have to step on your co-workers to survive, there will be an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. Under a true socialist society, variety would be welcomed. There would be a development of everyone's potential that we can hardly imagine today, in all areas of life—athletic, intellectual, creative, emotional and sexual.

In fact, sexual freedom would flourish. Under capitalism, gay sexuality is suppressed. How many people have both gay and straight sex but stay mainly with straight sex because it is less dangerous? How many people are acutely aware of lesbian and gay feelings but are afraid to act on them? Socialism will make it possible to eliminate all these pressures so that people can explore and develop their sexuality freely.

Over time, people will stop thinking of each other's sexuality in terms of categories. Everyone will view people's sexuality as an expression of their individual personality.

CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

Today the capitalist system is going into a deep international crisis—a crisis that threatens the very survival of the world. If we don't make a revolution, the world will be plunged into barbarism. The working class of the world will be driven to or below the starvation level. Nuclear accidents, chemical spills, and air and water pollution will make the world totally uninhabitable. Right-wing movements will develop massive numbers and strength, and the capitalists will look to fascism as the only way to discipline the working class. The danger of World War III will increase every year.

Within each country the capitalist class is trying to suppress the working class, decrease its political power and drive down its living standards. In the U.S. we can see the first results of these attacks today in runaway inflation and rapidly rising unemployment. Streets of major cities are filled with jobless youth—and their parents—while more and more factories lie idle. Many of these unemployed workers are forced to turn to crime to survive. The government is tightening its belt by cutting services that are essential to the working class, like healthcare, welfare, unemployment benefits, education and transportation.

We can expect that attacks on gay people will intensify in the coming years. These attacks are already being fostered by explicitly anti-gay right-wing movements, headed by people like Anita Bryant and Jerry Falwell, together with fascists like the Nazis and the Klan.

Meanwhile, the government is stepping up its repression of the working class as a whole, and of all oppressed groups, including gays. It is pushing for a return to the traditional "American values"—religion, patriotism and the family. It seeks to take away the social gains won by gay people in the past decade. Attacks on youth sexuality, abortion rights and sex education are part of an overall reactionary social trend which poses the gravest threat to gay people.

These threats and attacks can only be permanently ended through socialist revolution. When the working class takes power away from the capitalists, we will smash the capitalist state, the military establishment and the fascist movements and reorganize the relations of production. We will build a new society that is based on human needs and freedom, not on profits.

Socialism or barbarism. This is the choice facing the working class. It is the choice that faces lesbians and gay men. It is the choice that faces humanity. □

MARCH WITH THE RSL ON GAY PRIDE DAY!

ANN ARBOR

Lesbian and Gay Pride Week, June 19-25. A week of workshops, films and cultural events sponsored by the Ad Hoc Lesbian and Gay Pride Week Planning Committee & the Gay Liberation Front. For more information, call (313) 763-4186 or (313) 331-7757.

CHICAGO

March with the RSL in the Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade, Sunday, June 26, noon. Parade assembles at Halsted and Addison. To march with us, call (312) 334-5335.

LOS ANGELES

The RSL will be marching in the "Gays and Lesbians Against U.S. Intervention in El Salvador" contingent in the Christopher Street West/Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade. The contingent is being organized by the Gay and Lesbian Committee of the Echo Park

Chapter of CISPES, Sunday, June 26, 1983. Gather at 11:00 am at Crescent Heights and Fountain (West Hollywood). For more info, call (213) 385-6029 or (213) 660-1823.

NEW YORK

The RSL is participating in the Militant Stonewall Contingent, inflated by CRASH. The contingent has been endorsed by a wide range of groups, including: American Gay Atheists, Freedom Socialist Party, the Guardian newspaper, the Horatio Alger chapter of the North American Man/Boy Love Association, Lavender Left, Lesbian and Gay caucus of the New Alliance Party, the Lesbian and Gay Focus of the All-Peoples Congress, New York Prostitutes Collective, New York Working Group of the International Gay Association, Radical Women, Wages Due Lesbians, Wages for Housework Campaign, and the RSL.

The contingent will assemble at 11:00 am in the "movement groups" section of the Christopher Street Liberation Day March.

turn would be directly, immediately and democratically controlled by the working class and other oppressed people through mass, democratic institutions, such as workers' councils, factory committees, trade unions and cooperatives. Using this state as their weapon, workers and their allies among other oppressed groups would suppress the resistance of the capitalists and proceed to transform all of society.

There is every reason to believe that this will result in a huge growth in production. Every revolution in modern history has produced outbursts of creative energy by its participants.

Under capitalism, working people are little more than cogs in a gigantic capitalist machine and their creativity is suppressed. With a workers' state, working people will directly control the economy and plan production. They will become the most important part of the production process and their creativity will be unleashed. . . .

Moreover, because the driving force in production will be the creative energy of working people, instead of the accumulation of ever more capital, the need for individual repression will disappear. Far from being cogs in a machine, people will become masters of their own fate and the talents and resources of everyone—not just a select few—will be utilized to provide for everyone's needs. Furthermore, as conditions of abundance are attained, the individual struggle for survival which is characteristic of capitalism will be eliminated. This will have a profound effect on social relations. It will reduce competitive pressures and take away one of the

and social status, from one generation to another. Nor would the family be needed as a means to maintain and reproduce the working class. Instead of occurring through private families, the job of raising children and maintaining the individual members of society will be carried out by society as a whole. . . .

As a result, the family will just be one form of living arrangement, among many others, with everyone free to choose whatever arrangement they please. If a woman and a man want to live together with their children, that will be all right. But other arrangements will be just as respected—women with women, men with men, people living in large groups. . . .

As the economic and social basis of the family is eliminated, its narrow and restricted social and sexual roles will no longer be required. Society will have no need to socialize individuals to conform to the artificial social and sexual roles that are the norm under capitalism. There will be no obligatory "women's" and "men's" roles. There will be no distinct "women's" personality and "men's" personality. And the people who don't fit into the models and roles that capitalism demands will not be scorned, despised or discriminated against.

FREEDOM UNDER SOCIALISM

In the long run the transformation of the structure of society that we described above will be accompanied by a vast change in the values and the

Simpson-Mazzoli A Wolf in

Once again, the U.S. Congress is on the verge of passing a tough restrictionist immigration law. The new bill, known as the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill after its two sponsors, Republican Senator Alan Simpson and Democratic Congressman Romano Mazzoli, is very similar to one which reached the final stages of the legislative process before dying in the House of Representatives late last year.

Simpson and Mazzoli wasted little time in reintroducing their bill in the current session of Congress, and it has



Prisoners Stage Hunger

Forty-three prisoners at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) prison at El Centro, California, are in the second week of a hunger strike. They are protesting brutal treatment received from INS guards, and they are demanding improvements in overall prison conditions. The hunger strike began June 2 after two prisoners were beaten by guards, according to the Santana Chirino Amaya Central American Refugee Committee in Los Angeles.

One prisoner, Ulises Antonio Menjivar, was hospitalized following a beating and another, Carlos Alberto Arias, was also injured. Menjivar suffered a broken nose, facial cuts and severe chest

injuries. He held his punishment in violation of the federal law. Most Salvadorans are Guatemalans who are hunger supporters. Demand to end to INS medical

Right for Operation

atmosphere of the entire society. All kinds of attitudes will change. Instead of life being one big hustle where you have to step on your co-workers to survive, there will be an atmosphere of trust and cooperation.

Under a true socialist society, variety would be welcomed. There would be a development of everyone's potential that we can hardly imagine today, in all areas of life—athletic, intellectual, creative, emotional and sexual.

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Within each country the capitalist class is trying to suppress the working class, decrease its political power and drive down its living standards. In the U.S., we can see the first results of these attacks today in runaway inflation and rapidly rising unemployment. Streets of major cities are filled with jobless youth—and their parents—while more and more factories lie idle. Many of these unemployed workers are forced to turn to crime to survive. The government is tightening its belt by cutting services that are essential to the working class, like healthcare, welfare, unemployment benefits, education and transportation.

We can expect that attacks on gay people will intensify in the coming years. These attacks are already being stered by explicitly anti-gay righting movements, headed by people like Anita Bryant and Jerry Falwell, together with fascists like the Nazis and the Klan.

Meanwhile, the government is stepping up its repression of the working class as a whole, and of all oppressed groups, including gays. It is pushing for a return to the traditional "American values"—religion, patriotism and the family. It seeks to take away the social gains won by gay people in the past decade. Attacks on youth sexuality, abortion rights and sex education are part of an overall reactionary social trend which poses the gravest threat to gay people.

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Simpson-Mazzoli Immigration Bill — A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

Once again, the U.S. Congress is on the verge of passing a tough restrictionist immigration law. The new bill, known as the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill after its two sponsors, Republican Senator Alan Simpson and Democratic Congressman Romano Mazzoli, is very similar to one which reached the final stages of the legislative process before dying in the House of Representatives late last year.

Simpson and Mazzoli wasted little time in reintroducing their bill in the current session of Congress, and it has

been pushed rapidly through various congressional committees. Simpson's version was approved by a wide margin of the Senate on May 18. Mazzoli's somewhat different version is expected to come to a final vote in the House in July. If approved by both houses of Congress, the bill will go to a joint House-Senate conference committee to resolve differences in wording in the two versions. A final version could go to the president for signing into law by the end of the summer.

What is the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill? In

plain language, it is an attack on immigrants, refugees, unions and all working people. Its effect will be more racist discrimination, especially against Latinos, a weaker labor movement, more power for local police and the Migra, and a national ID system with endless potential for authoritarian control. To balance this repressive scorecard, the new law would raise immigration quotas for Canada and Mexico from 20,000 to 40,000 per year, and offer amnesty to a small percentage of undocumented immigrants already in the country.

documented immigrants currently inside the U.S. will even apply for amnesty. Of those, the great majority will be rejected if the new law is strictly enforced.

Finally, those who do qualify for Simpson-Mazzoli's amnesty will be forced to pay taxes for three to six years (depending on the version adopted) without the right to receive any form of federal aid.

National ID Card—Simpson's version gives the president three years to propose a system of uniform worker identification—probably a computerized data bank and counterfeit-proof cards. Mazzoli's version calls for the use of existing Social Security cards, state-issued IDs or passports as the required form of identification. In either case, workers would be required to show some document proving legal status before they could be hired.

Employer Penalties—This is supposed to punish bosses who knowingly hire undocumented immigrants, but the real punishment will fall almost entirely on workers themselves. Immigrants will be robbed of their ability to find legal employment, and the penalties for illegal employment are wildly unequal. Employers who violate the law will be given a warning the first time and small fines thereafter. A worker can be fined \$5,000 or given five years in prison the first time he or she is caught using false documents to obtain a job!

Other Provisions—The INS will get \$500 million more each year to enforce its new powers. Local police may be called upon to enforce federal immigration laws. Refugees will no longer be allowed to appeal deportation orders into the court system, opening the door to massive deportations of Salvadoreans and Haitians. The unlimited immigration quota now given to family members of U.S. citizens will be eliminated, leaving many families permanently divided and lowering the overall number of immigrants admitted each year.

'A blow to our class'

These are only some of the repressive features of the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill. Opponents are hoping it can again be smothered to death in the House of Representatives next month with hundreds of detailed amendments. This delaying tactic worked successfully last year, but the current session of Congress is not in its last days. It has several months to finish its work, and both capitalist parties seem determined to enact some type of stricter immigration law.

Scattered protest marches are helping to educate the public about the dangers of the law, but they are generally too small and too late to have a significant impact on Congress itself. This year the anti-immigrant Simpson-Mazzoli Bill is likely to become law. Undocumented immigration won't be stopped by it, and neither will the courageous daily struggles of millions of immigrants themselves. But in truth, passage of this law will mean a tremendous blow to our class and to our movement. We must redouble our efforts to organize immigrant workers in their own defense. □



Prisoners Stage Hunger Strike at INS Jail

Forty-three prisoners at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) prison at El Centro, California, are in the second week of a hunger strike. They are protesting brutal treatment received from INS guards, and they are demanding improvements in overall prison conditions. The hunger strike began June 2 after two prisoners were beaten by guards, according to the Santana Chirino Amaya Central American Refugee Committee in Los Angeles.

One prisoner, Ulises Antonio Menjivar, was hospitalized following a beating and another, Carlos Alberto Arias, was also injured. Menjivar suffered a broken nose, facial cuts and severe chest

injuries. Two INS guards reportedly held him while a third beat him, as punishment for taking a daytime shower in violation of prison rules. Four days later the two injured men, and a third Salvadorean prisoner, were moved to a federal prison in San Diego and charged with felonies.

Most of the hunger strikers are Salvadorean refugees, but at least seven are Guatemalan, three are Mexican, and two are from Costa Rica. On June 3, the hunger strike was joined by six supporters in Los Angeles.

Demands of the strikers include an end to INS violence at the facility, better medical attention, improved diet, and

freedom for refugees seeking political asylum in the U.S. Many refugees at the prison have claimed political refugee status, to avoid deportation back to the political oppression and atrocities which take place in their own countries.

This is not the first time the El Centro prison has been hit by protest and controversy. Immigrant rights groups have long called for an investigation into continuing reports of physical abuse and poor conditions at the facility, which houses about 300 undocumented immigrants. It is located in the Southern California desert, 200 miles southeast of Los Angeles, where summer temperatures often reach 110 degrees. □

'Amnesty' clause a fraud

Here are several key features of the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill:

Amnesty—Though the two versions of the law differ in details, the much-publicized legalization program is largely a fraud. Simpson would offer permanent resident status to undocumented immigrants living continuously in the U.S. since January 1, 1977. Temporary resident status would be available for those living here since January 1, 1980. Mazzoli's more generous version offers permanent status to undocumented immigrants living here since January 1, 1982.

But there's a catch—or several of them. To qualify, undocumented immigrants must pay a \$100 application fee and provide proof of continuous residency and current employment. This will eliminate all those who are unemployed, too poor to pay the fee, or those who may not have complete personal records, like rent receipts or tax returns, to prove continuous residency.

Then they will be fingerprinted and checked by the FBI. This eliminates all known political or union activists.

Anyone who has ever illegally received social welfare benefits such as food stamps, unemployment insurance, or disability while living here without documents will be automatically excluded. So will anyone ever convicted of a serious crime. An applicant with a very low income may be excluded as someone "likely to become a public charge." Known gay people will be excluded. An estimated 90 percent of all undocumented immigrants will not be eligible for this phony amnesty. Then, to add insult to injury, the names of all those immigrants who have applied and been rejected will be turned over to the Migra for deportation!

According to estimates of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) itself, not more than one-third of all un-

Why does RSL support struggles in Central America?

Dear RSL:

I received your letter and literature today and it couldn't have come at a better time. On Saturday, LACASA [Latin America & Caribbean Solidarity Association—Ed.] organized a march against Mexicana Airlines. What occurred is explained in the copy of the letter I am sending you. [See "Right-Wingers Attack 'Stop the Death Flights' Action in Miami," *Torch*, Vol. 10, No. 5—Ed.]

I do have a question for you. You are extremely critical of Latin American socialism (or socialism anywhere) to the point of saying they need new revolu-

tions. I do agree that their party run states are bullshit, but how do you then rationalize your obvious support of them against counter-revolution and U.S. interference? Is it in an anti-interventionist context? Please explain.

I am a boxer (it's a working class sport). I've worked out alongside 14 World Champions in Miami's 5th St. gym, including Ali (he needs to re-read Malcolm), since 1977. But the business aspect of the sport is bullshit and has caused problems with me turning pro.

In Solidarity,
Dennis Marsella
Dania, FL

We believe in the right to self-determination

Dear Dennis,

I hope this letter finds you in good spirits and in good health. Please accept my apologies for not writing you sooner. Your letters arrived in the midst of our work on the May issue of the *Torch/La Antorcha* and some additional projects further delayed my response. By now, however, you should have received the literature you ordered as well as the first bundle of papers. Please let us know if any of this hasn't reached you.

You asked about how the RSL approaches the struggles currently going on in Central America against U.S. imperialism, given the fact that we don't think that these struggles are creating or have created socialism. Let me try to explain our view.

We believe that the people of Central America (and everywhere else) have the

right to determine their own affairs, free from domination by and interference from U.S. imperialism. In other words, we believe that the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua have the right to self-determination. Throughout this century, the people of Central America have lived under the heel of the U.S.: U.S. corporations have plundered the resources of the area and exploited its labor; the U.S. military has installed and supported puppet regimes favorable to U.S. business interests; etc., etc. We support any and all struggles to end this foreign (imperialist) domination and to allow the peoples of Latin America to determine their own futures.

This support is not based on whether these struggles are or are not led by the working class/socialists, nor whether they result in the establishment of

socialism. In this sense, our support for struggles for self-determination and national liberation is unconditional—we do not demand that the people of a given country (or an oppressed nationality within a given country) recognize the need for socialism or throw off various bourgeois leaderships before we support their struggle.

We would support the people of El Salvador in their fight against U.S. imperialism even if that struggle were being led by an explicitly pro-capitalist, bourgeois force (as, of course, a sizable portion of the FDR-FMLN in fact is). Similarly, we would defend Nicaragua against all U.S. imperialist aggression even if the Sandinista government did not call itself socialist. (We defend Mexico, for example, against any efforts by the U.S. to bully it, determine its policies or, in extreme—but imaginable—circumstances, to militarily invade it.) This support is based on the right, the unconditional right, of all colonial and semi-colonial countries and peoples to independence and self-determination.

During the Vietnam War the RSL would have (and its members who go back to those times did) fully supported the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism—even though we did not believe that it would result in the establishment of socialism. At the same time, we would have pointed out the limits of a struggle in the hands of bourgeois forces and warned against having illusions in the "socialist" character of the NLF/North Vietnamese. (Unfortunately, the left wing of the anti-Vietnam War movement had just such illusions, the result being that many were later demoralized by subsequent events, not having expected them, while others became Stalinists as they increasingly sought to justify various atrocities as somehow being "socialist.")

Our support for struggles for independence and self-determination is not based simply on the democratic aspect of the question. Rather, we believe (this was Lenin's approach as well) that the throwing off of an imperialist/foreign power is progressive because it opens up the class struggle within the given country, i.e., it removes the illusion that all the evils of a society are external and lays bare the fact that the system itself—capitalism—is the root of the problem and that the local ruling class/bourgeoisie must also be gotten rid of.

Having stressed why we support such struggles, even under bourgeois leader-

ships, let me also mention why it is crucial, within that framework of overall support, to fight for the leading role of the working class within these struggles and for the need to have socialism as their goal. Struggles for self-determination and national liberation which result in the continued existence of capitalism can, at best, achieve their aims in a partial, incomplete and often temporary manner. The new ruling class will have little choice (never mind inclination) but to rely on/be subservient to imperialism. Thus, for example, a country like Nicaragua is trapped between dependence on U.S. imperialism or Soviet imperialism. It can pick one or the other—or try to balance them both off against each other—but, ultimately, the fate of the country is in the hands of imperialism.

The only way out of this is a perspective of permanent revolution—a struggle to extend the revolution worldwide in order to break the hold of imperialism. If Cuba and Nicaragua (or Angola, Mozambique, etc.) were truly socialist states, led by revolutionary, proletarian socialists, we believe they would have set as an indispensable task the organization of a worldwide revolutionary socialist party. The Bolsheviks under Lenin recognized that Russia could not break the hold of world capitalism/imperialism by itself and that only if the revolution spread to other countries could the gains of the October Revolution be secured and extended; they therefore made their primary task the building of a new, revolutionary international party—the Third (Communist) International. For all the talk about Fidel Castro's "internationalism," Cuba prefers to ally with all those friendly to Cuba—including many explicitly capitalist states as well as the Soviet Union, Jaruzelski's martial law regime in Poland, etc.—rather than to build an international revolutionary proletarian party.

Finally, and not least, only through revolutions led by working and oppressed people and resulting in societies actually run by these people themselves—socialism—can people be freed from the poverty, bondage and oppression common to capitalism in all its forms.

I hope the above has been helpful in explaining how we look at this issue. If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Comradely,
Rod Miller

P.S. I agree with you—Ali really does need to re-read Malcolm!

OUR VISION IS OF A FREE PEOPLE

Below we are printing a talk given in Los Angeles by RSL supporter Jessi Harp at a recent showing of two films, "Los Vendidos" ("The Sellouts") and "Chulas Fronteras" ("Beautiful Borders"). The films portray the lives of Mexicans and Chicanos in the U.S., the problems of crossing the border and the role of "la Migra." The talk has been translated from Spanish.

We live in a society, in a social and economic system, or rather under that system, called capitalism, which is based on property—where everything, objects and people, is somebody's property. And property is what is considered most sacred.

Industry, the banks, natural resources belong to the ruling class, that class of bosses and super-rich individuals who really control and rule the world. The workers, as well as the machines they

use, are property of their bosses. Undocumented workers are no more than property of their bosses, living day and night in fear of becoming the property of la Migra. A woman, if married, is considered her husband's property; if not, then she is everyone's property. Children belong to their parents, just like the furniture and the TV. And there is an infinite number of rules, laws and social customs which protect all this property for its owners.

The history of the human race is a history of class struggles, of battles and revolutions, of the oppressed—those who are owned—struggling for their freedom, fighting against those who oppress them. Many battles have been won, many governments have been overthrown; nonetheless, today we, the oppressed, are many.

All over the world, although there are

different societies, all have one very important similarity, and this similarity is the most basic, in that the economic and social system is based on property. In all countries the workers and the poor, the working class—the great majority of the people—are oppressed by a small elite, the ruling class of each country. Therefore all our oppression has its roots in the very foundations of the system under which we live.

In order to secure our real freedom we must overthrow this system. By means of a revolution we must knock down the borders, tear to pieces the rules and laws that hold us enslaved. We must destroy the state; we must completely destroy capitalist society, the ruling class and its government. And from the rubble we will be able to build a free society where there are no borders to divide us, nor bosses to command us, nor police forces,

to jail those who have done no harm to anyone.

We have a vision of a socialist society, a society where poverty does not exist, a world where a person is not judged according to skin color, or nationality, or sex or his or her manner of dressing or speaking.

Yes, we are dreamers—and builders of dreams. The working class, in union with the peasants and other oppressed people, must create many new things. Our dream is not to get power in order to dictate to the working class what it must create. Our vision is of a people without dictators—free—with the power in its hands to decide for itself, democratically, how to build the new society.

If you also dream of a just and free world—join us. Together we will be able to build a revolutionary party that can win it! □

Stop the Centr

(Continued from page 1)

unusual criticism to those who bered Enders from the Vietnam days when he targeted aerial for the U.S. invaders from his post in Kampuchea. Had the right-wing diplomat really gone communism"? And what about advisor Hinton, who previously U.S. so well in helping to destabilize and overthrow the radical Chilean government of Salvador Allende?

Their main crime, in Reagan's eyes, seems to have been a certain independence of mind and a view to range victory for imperialism in America requires a combination of human rights rhetoric, diplomacy, and military force. To and his inner circle of hardline U.S. policy in the region must be unified around only one line: military force.

Enders and Hinton were only prominent officials to get the U.S. embassy's chief of staff officer and his top assistant recalled along with Hinton. The head of the U.S. military advisory in El Salvador, along with Lt. Wallace Nutting, head of the U.S. Southern Command, based in U.S. ambassadors to Costa Rica and Guatemala are expected to be soon.

U.S. military role escalates

In addition to the diplomatic up, Reagan is moving swiftly to increase the U.S. military presence in Central America. On May 26 the Department announced plans to activate an old U.S. naval base at Castilla, on the Caribbean coast. The base will be used mainly for training center for Salvadoran troops. One hundred U.S. trainers will

SUPPORT B MEXICANA

An international campaign to stop the "Death Flights" is gaining momentum in the U.S., with active organizing now taking place in at least five cities. The target of the campaign is Mexicana Airlines, which is cooperating with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in the deportation of Central American refugees.

Each month, nearly 1,000 Salvadorans who have fled their government's terrorism are denied asylum in the U.S. and sent on Mexicana Airlines flights to San Salvador. "I'm sure you know that they are not received at the airport in San Salvador with open arms—but rather with disappearances, torture and death," said Don White, a Los Angeles organizer of the campaign.

The campaign against Mexicana Airlines was taken up by the Echo Park (Los Angeles) chapter of CISPES after it initiated last year against Mexicana Airlines and Pan Am forced both companies to quit taking Salvadorans deported by the INS. Only the Mexicana, which is owned by the Salvadoran government, become the "death flight" airline.

On May 21, Los Angeles organizers held their fourth demonstration against

Stop the U.S. War Against Central America!

(Continued from page 1)

unusual criticism to those who remembered Enders from the Vietnam War days when he targeted aerial bombings for the U.S. invaders from his diplomatic post in Kampuchea. Had this veteran right-wing diplomat really gone "soft on communism"? And what about Ambassador Hinton, who previously served the U.S. so well in helping to destabilize and overthrow the radical Chilean government of Salvador Allende?

Their main crime, in Reagan's eyes, seems to have been a certain independence of mind and a view that long-range victory for imperialism in Central America requires a combination of human rights rhetoric, diplomatic flexibility, and military force. To Reagan and his inner circle of hardline advisers, U.S. policy in the region must now be unified around only one line—that of military force.

Enders and Hinton were only the most prominent officials to get the axe. In El Salvador, the embassy's chief political officer and his top assistant are being recalled along with Hinton. So is the head of the U.S. military adviser group in El Salvador, along with Lt. General Wallace Nutting, head of the entire U.S. Southern Command, based in Panama. U.S. ambassadors to Costa Rica and Guatemala are expected to be replaced soon.

U.S. military role escalates

In addition to the diplomatic shake-up, Reagan is moving swiftly to increase the U.S. military presence in Central America. On May 26 the Defense Department announced plans to reactivate an old U.S. naval base at Puerto Castilla, on the Caribbean coast of Honduras. The base will be used mainly as a training center for Salvadorean soldiers. One hundred U.S. trainers will arrive



Deane Hinton, former ambassador to El Salvador, with Salvadorean air force officer. Hinton orchestrated U.S. intervention in El Salvador, but his independent views on how to defeat leftists—and his occasional criticism of right-wing terrorism—led to his dismissal.

soon (tripling U.S. military strength in Honduras) to begin teaching the first of some 2,400 Salvadoreans scheduled to pass through the base in the next six months. Another 1,200 Salvadorean cadets and officers are enrolled at the U.S. Army School of the Americas in Panama, while 525 more are being trained at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Another 25 U.S. military personnel are being sent to El Salvador as "medical specialists." Like the 55 U.S. trainers already there, these doctors and medical corpsmen are supposed to stay out of combat situations and provide only back-up support to government forces. But, as the death of Schaufelberger showed, the entire nation of El

Salvador can become a combat zone whenever the guerrillas choose to make it one. Twenty-five additional U.S. officers can do little to win the war for the Salvadorean army. But their presence is a provocative warning of the ability and willingness of the U.S. to escalate the war. More "advisers" are likely to be sent before the end of summer.

Democratic Party opposition to Reagan's war—which seemed so fierce only a few months ago—has now been significantly muffled. Reagan's threat to blame the Democrats for "losing El Salvador to the communists" has sent shudders through the pro-imperialist Democratic leadership. They want the

Demonstrate July 2!

Thousands are expected in Washington, D.C., on July 2 for a rally and march to "Stop the U.S. War Against Central America and the Caribbean." The demonstration, initiated by the People's Anti-War Mobilization, has been endorsed by a wide variety of groups.

The protest will begin at 2:30 p.m. at the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial. After a rally, demonstrators will march to the Shoreham Hotel, where Reagan and many members of his administration will be attending a gala "Independence Day Ball."

The demands of the demonstration are:

- Stop U.S. aid to El Salvador! U.S. troops out!
- Stop the U.S. war against Nicaragua!
- No military bases in Honduras!
- End all aid to Guatemala!

- Stop war threats against Cuba and Grenada!
 - U.S. military out of Puerto Rico, Panama and Haiti!
 - End racism, sexism and lesbian/gay oppression at home!
 - No registration—No draft!
- To march on July 2 with the RSL, call (212) 695-6802.

Wear Our Buttons!

\$1

Red & black on white or yellow.



Order from: RSL, PO Box 1288, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

stigma of El Salvador (be it a "loss" or a full-scale war) to be on Reagan's head, not theirs, come November 1984. The theme these days on Capitol Hill is "bipartisan compromise" toward Central American issues. Reagan is not getting all of the military aid money he asked for to defeat the FMLN and overthrow the Nicaraguan government, but he's getting most of it. We should not expect anything different from the Democrats, whose own record of intervention in the past 25 years includes armed invasions of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Iran—and the Vietnam War.

Public opposes Reagan war drive

Fortunately, most of the American public has so far resisted the patriotic war fever being pushed by the Reagan administration. A national poll taken in May by the Washington Post shows that the overwhelming majority of Americans want the U.S. to stay completely out of the Salvadorean war (69 percent), not send additional military equipment (70 percent), and stop trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government (78 percent). In another poll, a majority of those questioned by the Los Angeles Times said they think U.S. involvement in El Salvador is morally wrong (45 percent to 25 percent), not vital to U.S. interests (41 percent to 36 percent), and certain to lose in any case (35 percent to 24 percent). In the Post poll, a majority felt that Reagan will invade El Salvador if the rebels are not soon defeated, but the same people opposed such a move, by a margin of 6 to 1.

The key task of anti-war activists today is to turn this growing opposition to U.S. involvement in Central America into a highly visible, mass protest movement. In particular, we must explain the connections between the offensive against the people of Central America and the deepening attacks on working people in this country. The U.S. ruling class, particularly its liberal wing, remains haunted by the specter of renewed domestic protests on the scale of the Vietnam War era. Our job is to make this fear a reality. □

SUPPORT BUILDS FOR CAMPAIGN AGAINST MEXICANA DEATH FLIGHTS

An international campaign to "Stop the Death Flights" is gaining momentum in the U.S., with active organizing now taking place in at least five cities. The target of the campaign is Mexicana Airlines, which is cooperating with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in the deportation of Salvadorean refugees.

Each month, nearly 1,000 Salvadoreans who have fled their government's terrorism are denied asylum in the U.S. and sent on Mexicana Airlines flights to San Salvador. "I'm sure you know they are not received at the airport in El Salvador with open arms—but rather with disappearances, torture and death," said Don White, a Los Angeles organizer of the campaign.

The campaign against Mexicana was taken up by the Echo Park (Los Angeles) chapter of CISPES after campaigns it initiated last year against Western Airlines and Pan Am forced both companies to quit taking Salvadoreans being deported by the INS. Only then did Mexicana, which is owned by the Mexican government, become the INS's "death flight" airline.

On May 21, Los Angeles organizers held their fourth demonstration against

Mexicana, a picket line at the airport ticket counter. Over 100 people participated despite heavy police harassment. A line of mounted police kept the protesters across the street from Mexicana's entrance and partially hidden from public view. New picket lines are planned for June 18 and July 30, both at Mexicana's Broadway office in downtown L.A. (For information on all "Stop the Death Flights" actions, see the Events box on page 5.)

On May 24, the California State Executive Board of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) announced it was endorsing the "Stop the Death Flights" campaign. Local 660 of the SEIU is one of the Los Angeles area endorsers.

In Seattle, the Concilio (Council) for the Spanish Speaking, a leading Latino community group, has joined the Mexicana protest campaign. Among its early decisions was one to cancel all relations with Mexicana, which has been a regular major sponsor of the Concilio's annual September 16 Mexican Independence Day Activities.

In Chicago, a picket line at Mexicana's loop ticket office is scheduled for

Wednesday, July 6. The action is sponsored by the University of Illinois Circle Campus Organizing Committee on El Salvador and Central America.

In southeast Michigan, a coalition recently formed and is now conducting a leafletting and petition campaign. The group is discussing holding a picket line on July 22, timed to coincide with the last day of a New York-to-Washington, D.C., "Walk-A-Thon" by the Salvadorean Refugees Against Certification. Michigan-area coalition members include the Latin American Solidarity Committee of Ann Arbor, Detroit CISPES, Casa de Unidad, the Midwest Inter-Church Committee for Central American Human Rights, News and Letters, the All-Peoples Congress, the Revolutionary Workers League and the RSL.

A Miami "Stop the Death Flights" picket line in late April gained national attention after it was attacked by armed right-wing Cuban groups. The organizers, the Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Association, have not yet announced whether they will try to hold further "Stop the Death Flights" activities in the Miami area. □

PEOPLE

to jail those who have done no harm to anyone.

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If you also dream of a just and free world—join us. Together we will be able to build a revolutionary party that can win it! □

On April 30, 1975, Vietnamese national liberation forces entered Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam. The capture of Saigon marked the triumphant conclusion to the Vietnamese people's 30-year struggle to free their country from imperialist rule.

Since the victory, the history of Vietnam has been marked by economic crises and regional wars. Many of the problems facing the Vietnamese government stem from the devastation of the war. Others are caused by the continuing hostile policies of U.S. imperialism and its allies. The Nixon administration, for example, broke the promise it made in the 1973 peace agreement to provide economic assistance to Vietnam. Following the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea in 1978, the Carter administration pressured U.S. allies into cutting off virtually all the aid they had been giving the Vietnamese regime. Not least, the Chinese government not only halted its aid to Vietnam, but also invaded the country in 1979, inflicting heavy damage on Vietnam's northern provinces.

However, the Vietnamese government itself, led by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), also bears major responsibility for the difficulties confronting the Vietnamese people. This responsibility can be seen by looking at the government's response to three of the major tasks facing the country in the aftermath of the liberation struggle: eliminating the artificial division of the country into two separate states; repairing the destruction of the war years; and establishing Vietnam's post-war foreign policy, particularly its relations with other nations in Southeast Asia.

The article below is the second and concluding part of our series on Southeast Asia.

By PAUL BENJAMIN

The war that raged in South Vietnam from 1959 to 1975 was fought to unify the divided country and establish its complete independence from Western imperialism. Vietnam had been divided into two parts by the 1954 Geneva Accords that concluded an eight-year guerrilla struggle against French military forces and ended nearly 70 years of French rule. The Geneva agreement set up two "provisional zones of control" in Vietnam, one in the north controlled by the Lao Dong, the Vietnamese Communist Party, and one in the south under a puppet "independent government" set up by the French imperialists in 1949. The agreement expressly stated that this division was to be only a temporary measure, and called for the reunification of the country through national elections by 1956.

Unfortunately, the terms of the Geneva Accords were never implemented. The United States ignored the agreement, blocked reunification and replaced France as the real ruler of South Vietnam. In June 1954, the Eisenhower administration installed a puppet government led by Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam. With U.S. backing, Diem rejected reunification talks with the North Vietnamese government, canceled the elections and declared South Vietnam an independent state in 1955.

To consolidate his rule, Diem began a reign of terror against both Communist Party militants and various non-Communist groups who for one reason or another opposed his regime. In response, the VCP took up arms against the Diem government in 1959.

NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR

In the broadest sense, the war in South Vietnam represented a continuation of the national liberation war that

Behind the Turmoil in Southeast Asia PART TWO: CONFLICT AND CRISIS IN VIETNAM



had been interrupted by the Geneva Accords. Specifically, it was a revolt against the division of Vietnam into two parts and U.S. domination over the southern half of the country.

For many years after open fighting began, the war in South Vietnam was carried on mainly by the South Vietnamese people themselves, with relatively little material support from the North Vietnamese government. In 1965, for example, even Pentagon officials (who always tried to exaggerate the North Vietnamese role in the struggle) acknowledged that the National Liberation Front (NLF), which led the fight against Diem, commanded some 230,000 guerrillas and relied on the North Vietnamese government for less than 20 percent of its troops and supplies.

In addition, the war was originally led by organizations based in South Vietnam that included at least some elements independent of the North Vietnamese government. While both the NLF (formed in 1960) and its political arm, the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG—formed in 1969), were dominated by Vietnamese Communists, they included representatives of over 20 other organizations who to one degree or another had differences with the North Vietnamese leaders over the kind of government and society to be established in a united Vietnam. VCP members in South Vietnam also formed a specifically South Vietnamese Communist Party, called the People's Revolutionary Party, in 1961.

But by 1969, the North Vietnamese government's role in the war had escalated sharply, while that of the NLF had declined. The watershed was the NLF's 1968 Tet offensive—a series of all-out attacks by NLF forces throughout South Vietnam, combined with attempted insurrections in Saigon and other cities. The offensive represented a political victory for the liberation forces. It demonstrated the guerrillas' mass support, exposed Pentagon claims that the war was all but won and demonstrated to people in the U.S. that continued intervention would exact a high toll in lives and resources. It also gave a major boost to the anti-war movement in the U.S. and around the world.

Apart from these achievements, however, the Tet offensive shattered the NLF's military forces. According to Truong Nhu Tang, the PRG's Minister of Justice, "The truth was that Tet cost us half our forces. Our losses were so immense we were simply unable to replace them with new recruits."

As a result, after 1968 hundreds of thousands of North Vietnamese troops entered South Vietnam and played an increasingly dominant role on the battlefield. In fact, the final collapse of the

puppet South Vietnamese government came at the hands of the North Vietnamese army, rather than the NLF guerrillas or a popular uprising. And precisely because the North Vietnamese army emerged as the main instrument of victory against U.S. imperialism, the North Vietnamese government, and the Communist Party leaders who ran it, gained the power to dictate the future of South Vietnam.

PROBLEMS OF REUNIFICATION

During the war both the North Vietnamese government and the NLF/PRG leadership called for the eventual reunification of Vietnam. But they claimed to recognize that the special conditions in South Vietnam would have to be taken into account in the process of reunification.

In 1972, for example, Le Duc Tho, then North Vietnamese Foreign Minister, told Western reporters: "...we have declared clearly that the [North Vietnamese] government and the PRG have never wished to force a Communist government on South Vietnam." Tho called for a "National Reconciliation government" containing three groups: "one segment belonging to patriots, people who don't like the U.S. but who also may not support the PRG or DRV [Democratic Republic of Vietnam]; one segment belonging to the PRG; one segment belonging to the Saigon government."

Even after the collapse of the Saigon regime, VCP leader Le Duan called for the creation of "a national democratic regime" in South Vietnam, while both VCP and PRG leaders declared that reunification would come only after a lengthy step-by-step process democratically approved by the people of Vietnam.

Despite these democratic phrases, neither the people of South Vietnam, nor even the non-Communist elements in the PRG, were allowed any real voice in governing South Vietnam or determining its future. Instead, the North Vietnamese government and the North Vietnamese Communist Party immediately established effective control over South Vietnam. While the PRG nominally ruled the country, real power was in the hands of Military Management Committees, led by North Vietnamese army commanders and aided by tens of thousands of administrators from North Vietnam. The NLF's military forces were "unified" with the North Vietnamese army while the South Vietnamese CP was merged into the VCP and sub-

ordinated to its leaders. All other political parties were banned and their membership lists seized by the government.

In November 1975, the Hanoi government and the PRG scheduled elections for a single National Assembly to complete the unification of Vietnam. The elections themselves, held in April 1976, were less than democratic. A few non-Communist South Vietnamese politicians were allowed to run for office to preserve the fiction of "broad-based support" for the government. But the basic outcome of the elections had been determined in advance.

The army newspaper *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* revealed just what kind of "broad-based" assembly the elections would produce: "Our National Assembly is a unified bloc that will have absolutely no factions representing private or regional interests, no conflicting viewpoints or opposition organizations." This puppet assembly then formally proclaimed the unified Socialist Republic of Vietnam in July 1976.

The unification of Vietnam was certainly progressive, since it established a unified independent Vietnam. But the bureaucratic way it was carried out guaranteed that there would be continuing tensions between the Vietnamese government and the people in the southern part of the country. These tensions, in turn, would make it even more difficult for the government to resolve the many other problems it faced following the war.

The Vietnamese government's second task after the defeat of U.S. imperialism

was to overcome the devastation of the war and integrate the economies of the two parts of the country. It sought to accomplish these tasks through a campaign to "build socialism" in South Vietnam, summarized in the 1976-80 Five Year Plan and other measures.

The Five Year Plan called for collectivizing the land in the south—despite earlier promises to distribute land to the peasants—and for eliminating private banking. It also ordered the elimination of private trade in both North and South Vietnam. In addition, fully 10 million people—20 percent of the country's entire population—were to be moved into "New Economic Zones" in the countryside, mainly from the overpopulated cities in South Vietnam.

Through these measures the government hoped to secure its control over the people of South Vietnam, raise production and bring the increased surplus produced by workers and peasants throughout Vietnam into its own hands.

Vietnam's large ethnic Chinese (Hoa) population became a main target of the government's campaign. One reason the Hoa people were singled out was that Hoa merchants dominated the private merchant trade which the VCP sought to eliminate. But the Vietnamese rulers also persecuted tens of thousands of Hoa workers and farmers whose families had lived in Vietnam for generations. Even members of the Communist Party and army officers of Hoa ancestry were forced to move into "New Settlement Zones" or leave the country.

One *New York Times* story cited the case of Nguyen Van Minh, a VCP

Billboard in Hanoi salutes Ho Chi Minh, leader of Chinese independence struggle, and proclaims reunification of Vietnam. But reunification was carried out by undemocratic means that created deep bitterness among the people of South Vietnam toward the North Vietnamese Communists.



Storm in Southeast Asia Two: CONFLICT SIS IN

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In November 1975, the Hanoi government and the PRG scheduled elections for a single National Assembly to complete the unification of Vietnam. The elections themselves, held in April 1976, were less than democratic. A few non-Communist South Vietnamese politicians were allowed to run for office to preserve the fiction of "broad-based support" for the government. But the basic outcome of the elections had been determined in advance.

The army newspaper *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* revealed just what kind of "broad-based" assembly the elections would produce: "Our National Assembly is a unified bloc that will have absolutely no factions representing private or regional interests, no conflicting viewpoints or opposition organizations." This puppet assembly then formally proclaimed the unified Socialist Republic of Vietnam in July 1976.

The unification of Vietnam was certainly progressive, since it established a unified independent Vietnam. But the bureaucratic way it was carried out guaranteed that there would be continuing tensions between the Vietnamese government and the people in the southern part of the country. These tensions, in turn, would make it even more difficult for the government to resolve the many other problems it faced following the war.

The Vietnamese government's second task after the defeat of U.S. imperialism

was to overcome the devastation of the war and integrate the economies of the two parts of the country. It sought to accomplish these tasks through a campaign to "build socialism" in South Vietnam, summarized in the 1976-80 Five Year Plan and other measures.

The Five Year Plan called for collectivizing the land in the south—despite earlier promises to distribute land to the peasants—and for eliminating private banking. It also ordered the elimination of private trade in both North and South Vietnam. In addition, fully 10 million people—20 percent of the country's entire population—were to be moved into "New Economic Zones" in the countryside, mainly from the overpopulated cities in South Vietnam.

Through these measures the government hoped to secure its control over the people of South Vietnam, raise production and bring the increased surplus produced by workers and peasants throughout Vietnam into its own hands.

Vietnam's large ethnic Chinese (Hoa) population became a main target of the government's campaign. One reason the Hoa people were singled out was that Hoa merchants dominated the private merchant trade which the VCP sought to eliminate. But the Vietnamese rulers also persecuted tens of thousands of Hoa workers and farmers whose families had lived in Vietnam for generations. Even members of the Communist Party and army officers of Hoa ancestry were forced to move into "New Settlement Zones" or leave the country.

One *New York Times* story cited the case of Nguyen Van Minh, a VCP

member from Hanoi who fled Vietnam in 1979: "You have always been a loyal Communist, but isn't your grandmother a Chinese? The police were said to have asked. When Mr. Minh said that she was, he was given the choice of a boat or a resettlement area."

VCP POLICIES PROVOKE CRISIS

In practice, the government's policies led to disaster for the Vietnamese people. The government slashed rice rations—the population's main source of food—for five straight years, largely because southern peasants opposed collectivization of the land and fought back by producing only enough food for themselves.

Meanwhile, industrial production was cut in half, in part because of the imperialist boycott—but also because Hoa dockworkers and miners were driven off their jobs. Shortages of all sorts of goods developed following the crackdown on private merchants that began in March 1978.

By early 1979, the Vietnamese economy was a mess. In April, Hoang Tung, editor of the official newspaper *Nan Danh*, told Western reporters: "We are facing a crisis of all-round shortages. We have nothing." Shortly afterward, the theoretical journal *Tap Chi Long* admitted that "negative phenomena in our society, such as theft, corruption, oppression of the people," were increasing as all levels of the population, from farmers to party bureaucrats, fought to survive any way they could. And over 700,000 "boat people"—including many Hoas but also thousands of ethnic Vietnamese—fled the country or died trying to do so.

All this forced the government to reverse its policies. It largely halted the collectivization program and allowed farmers to sell a portion of their crops on the open market. It also encouraged the revival of private trade in the cities. These reforms were approved and extended at the VCP's Fifth Congress, held in 1982.

Although both agricultural and industrial production have improved since the abandonment of the Five Year Plan, the economy, in the words of Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, remains "barely sustainable." The annual inflation rate in Vietnam is estimated to be over 100 percent. Hundreds of thousands of young Vietnamese workers in the south have no jobs. And flourishing black markets have developed in Ho Chi Minh City and other towns in the region. In fact, many families depend on sales of cigarettes, clothing, medicine and other consumer goods on the black market—sent to them by relatives who fled to the U.S. and other Western countries—to survive.

LEADERS BLAME PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Today, the Vietnamese leaders find themselves confronted with a major dilemma over economic policy. Their attempt to "build socialism" in the south wrecked the economy and forced them to revive private trade. But the revival of private trade is eating away at the government's economic and social foundations not only in the south, but throughout the country.

Recent editorials in *Nhan Dan* warned that: "The free market has expanded in an unorganized manner, generating many negative phenomena." The editors complained that black market activities "have taken place with impunity in the face of bodies charged with market management such as the forces of state trade, taxation and public security."

It is not surprising that this dilemma

has provoked a number of splits, shake-ups and purges within the VCP. At the 1982 Fifth Congress, the party leadership was obliged to conduct a "self-criticism" of its economic policy failures. Party Secretary Le Duan told the congress: "In some fields, the shortcomings and errors in leadership and management have been the main cause of the onset and sharpness of the economic problems of the past few years."

The congress itself resulted in a major shake-up of the VCP leadership, including the dismissal of six Politburo members, five of the 10 members of the secretariat (which is responsible for implementing the Politburo's decisions), and 39 members of the Central Committee. According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "The official media also admitted serious disagreements on how to bring socialism in the south and how to adopt new material incentives systems without weakening the existing fabric of socialism in the north."

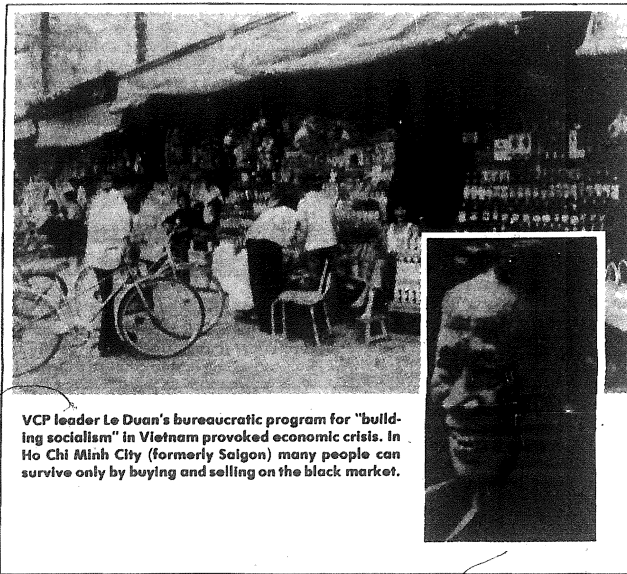
However, the major response on the part of the VCP leadership to the failure of the Five Year Plan has been to blame the party's largely peasant membership—which carried the brunt of the liberation struggle—for the leaders' own

ticized "the limited understanding displayed by the southern people in general, and the southern young people in particular, of the task of strengthening national defense."

Since then, the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea has only fueled such opposition. Southern peasants have strongly resented the requisitioning of their rice for the occupation troops, while draft dodging has been rife enough for the government to launch propaganda campaigns against military evaders. The Foreign Ministry has admitted that morale among the occupation troops is low.

ALLIANCE WITH RUSSIA

The Vietnamese rulers have paid an additional price for their expansionist policies in Southeast Asia: an increasingly tight, and not-quite-equal, alliance with Russia. In December 1978—just before the invasion of Kampuchea—the Vietnamese regime signed a defense treaty with the Russian government. Vietnam has also joined COMECON,



VCP leader Le Duan's bureaucratic program for "building socialism" in Vietnam provoked economic crisis. In Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) many people can survive only by buying and selling on the black market.

mistakes. In September 1979, Politburo member Le Duc Tho declared that many party members were incapable of leading the country because of age, incompetence, lack of technical training or corruption, and urged them to resign. To speed them on their way, the party leadership began issuing membership cards for the first time—and denying them to tens of thousands of veterans of the liberation war. Since then, as many as 300,000 members—out of a total of 1.7 million—have been shoved out and been replaced by intellectuals and recruits from the army.

The Vietnamese government's actions in a third major area—foreign affairs—have only added to the country's domestic problems. Most importantly, its military conflicts with other nations in Southeast Asia have exacted a heavy price from the Vietnamese people. The Vietnamese regime maintains an army of over one million troops. This is the fourth largest military apparatus in the world, behind only those of the U.S., Russian and Chinese governments! Nearly a quarter-million of these troops are stationed in Kampuchea and Laos, while fully one-half the national budget of Vietnam is set aside to maintain this enormous war machine.

Even the Vietnamese rulers have conceded that there is considerable opposition to their militarism among the Vietnamese people, particularly in the war-torn southern part of the country. As early as 1978, for example, VCP Central Committee member Pham Van Kiet cri-

the Russian-dominated Eastern European trade bloc.

To a degree, the VCP was forced into this relationship by the hostility of Western imperialism; the Western economic blockade left Vietnamese leaders little option but to seek aid from other quarters. Legitimate fears of Chinese expansionism also helped drive Vietnam into an economic and military alliance with Russia.

But in concluding such a bloc, the Vietnamese regime has now become an agent for Russian interests in Southeast Asia. The Russian government is clearly using Vietnam—particularly the Vietnamese army—as a lever against its Chinese rival. The Vietnamese leaders have granted the Russian military access to a major naval base at Cam Ranh Bay and to the Danang airfield within Vietnam itself, in return for Russian military aid and security guarantees.

Moreover, the Vietnamese economy is becoming increasingly dependent on Russian and Eastern European loans and economic aid. While much of this assistance has come in the form of economic grants, today the Vietnamese government owes \$1.4 billion to Russia and the other COMECON countries. In addition, Russia provides Vietnam with all its oil supplies—at heavy cost to the Vietnamese people. In 1981, the Russian government tripled the price of the oil it provides to the country. Russian advisers in Vietnam are also openly intervening in the direction of the Vietnamese

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economy, denying aid to projects they regard as unnecessary or inefficient.

The Vietnamese government has been forced to pay for this aid by providing the Russian and Eastern European governments with some of Vietnam's most precious resources—its workers. An estimated 7,000 Vietnamese are working in Russia, while some 30,000 are reportedly in Czechoslovakia. Reports from Vietnam indicate that many young workers in South Vietnam are eager to work in Eastern Europe to gain access to skilled job training, relatively high wages, and European consumer goods. But for most of them such hopes are an illusion. Vietnamese workers in Czechoslovakia have been placed in unskilled jobs, while up to two-thirds of their wages are held back to repay Czech loans to the Vietnamese government. Last winter 100 Vietnamese workers in Czechoslovakia went on strike for higher wages. The "socialist" government of Czechoslovakia shipped the strike leaders back to Vietnam.

The Vietnamese government, however, has become concerned that growing Russian influence in Vietnam may limit its own freedom of action. Thus, at the Fifth Congress, Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong, while admitting the need to obtain "maximum valuable aid from the Soviet Union," stressed that the government would fulfill its economic obligations to Russia "on the principle of reciprocity and not in an arbitrary and subservient manner."

The demotion of three VCP Central Committee members with close ties to the Russian government—the ambassador to Russia, his predecessor, and the head of the Vietnam-Soviet Friendship Association—also suggests tension between the two regimes. More recently, there have been signs that the Vietnamese government is afraid that the normalization talks between the Russian and Chinese leaderships that began last year might result in a deal that would limit or deny Vietnamese ambitions in Southeast Asia.

To gain more freedom to maneuver, both in diplomatic and economic affairs, Vietnamese leaders are accelerating their efforts to improve their relations with the Western imperialist powers—including the United States.

RENEWED DEBATES OVER VIETNAM WAR

The events in Southeast Asia since 1975 have provoked considerable discussion and debate within the U.S. At one pole, conservative politicians and writers are using the turmoil in the region as an excuse not only to condemn the Vietnamese and Kampuchean governments, but also to justify the U.S. war in Vietnam and U.S. imperialism generally.

Heading the conservative charge, Ronald Reagan acclaimed the Vietnam War as a "noble cause" during his 1980 election campaign. Another major right-wing "contribution" to this discussion was neo-conservative Norman Podhoretz's 1982 book, *Why We Were in Vietnam*. Podhoretz, a one-time liberal (a "socialist," even) and 1960s anti-war intellectual, now calls the war: "An act of imprudent idealism whose moral soundness has been so overwhelmingly vindicated by the hideous consequences of our defeat."

Various rightist military officers-turned-historians have charged that the U.S. was robbed of military victory in Vietnam by weak-kneed government policies. In a recent *New Republic* article, Colonel Harry G. Summers charged that former president Lyndon Johnson "unwittingly undercut American support for the war." Summers believes that, because Johnson feared an anti-Communist propaganda campaign

would endanger his liberal domestic program, "He deliberately avoided portraying the North Vietnamese as villains," and never "seriously tried to convince the American people of why their continued sacrifice was necessary." Another ex-military officer writing in the *Wall Street Journal* contended that Congress was responsible for the loss of South Vietnam because it cut back aid to "the valiant South Vietnamese army" in 1974 and 1975.

At the other end of the political spectrum, various left groups have condemned right-wing efforts to smear the anti-war movement and glorify U.S. imperialism's war in Vietnam. But in doing so, most of them have acted as blind apologists for the Vietnamese regime, doing their best to deny, excuse or cover up its oppression of workers and peasants in both Vietnam and Kampuchea.

Between these poles are large numbers of activists, in particular veterans of the 1960s anti-war movement, who identify closely with the struggles of the Vietnamese people but have been confused and demoralized by events in Southeast Asia. Some of these people recognize that the policies of the Vietnamese government are at least open to criticism. Yet, they are reluctant to make their own misgivings public, since they believe it is a socialist government that must be defended against capitalist attacks. Others may question the socialist claims of the Vietnamese leaders, but fear any criticism of their actions would play into the hands of U.S. imperialism. Still others don't quite know what to make of the situation in Southeast Asia.

VICTORY OVER U.S. IMPERIALISM

The RSL believes that the U.S. and international left owes it to itself and its supporters to investigate the situation in Southeast Asia and to come to grips with what has happened there. Of course, a key task of the left is to expose the right-wing's attempt to justify U.S. imperialism by rewriting the history of the Vietnam War. U.S. intervention in Vietnam was neither a "noble cause" nor a "mistake" in an otherwise progressive foreign policy. It was a calculated effort to protect U.S. imperialism by preventing the establishment of a unified and independent Vietnam. This effort failed because of the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese people—and because opposition to the war here in the U.S. as well as abroad became so strong that the U.S. rulers were forced to withdraw.

The defeat of U.S. imperialism in Southeast Asia was a major victory for oppressed people all over the world. In Southeast Asia itself, the peoples of the region freed themselves from nearly a century of imperialist domination. And by weakening U.S. imperialism generally, it encouraged national liberation struggles elsewhere. In the U.S., the struggle against the war strengthened the various movements of oppressed people as well as the left. It also imbued perhaps a majority of the people with lasting opposition to any further U.S. military adventures aimed at protecting tyrannical and corrupt stooges. Such opposition is a major factor today in the popular opposition to a "new Vietnam" in Central America.

STRUGGLE DID NOT LEAD TO SOCIALISM

While it is essential to defend the anti-war movement of the 1960s and early 1970s and oppose all efforts to resurrect the moral claims of U.S. imperialism, it is equally important to recognize that the governments that have come to power in Kampuchea, Vietnam and

Laos are not socialist. There were no socialist revolutions in Southeast Asia. The workers and peasants who were the shock troops in the struggle against U.S. imperialism did not seize political power and set up democratic, socialist governments under their control.

Instead, nationalist leaders organized in the Communist parties built and led largely peasant armies and used them as battering rams to drive out the imperialists and seize power for themselves. Since their victory, they have consolidated themselves as state-capitalist ruling classes in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, which base their rule on total control of the government, the army and the state-owned property.

Having defeated U.S. imperialism, the new rulers have become the oppressors and exploiters of the workers and peasants of Southeast Asia. And like all ruling classes, the new state-capitalist classes strive to defend and enlarge their power not only at the expense of their "own" people, but of the other ruling classes in the area.

One aspect of the tragedy in Southeast Asia is that the new governments have been incapable of fulfilling even the most minimal of their promises. Thus, the state-capitalist regimes have been unable to secure the political independence that the peoples of the region fought for. The Vietnamese rulers have reduced Laos to a client state, occupied by some 60,000 Vietnamese troops. They have conquered Kampuchea outright. At the same time, although the Vietnamese government would clearly like to maintain its own independence, it is in fact being gradually hemmed in, if not as yet openly threatened, by its present allies as well as by Western imperialism.

Moreover, the state-capitalist rulers of Southeast Asia, like more traditional pro-Western capitalist regimes in other Third World countries, have been unable to develop independent, self-sustaining economies. In Vietnam, state capitalism has produced a poverty-stricken, debt-ridden, inflationary economy that forces workers to seek low-paying jobs overseas because they cannot find work at home. This grim picture—with some slight changes—would be all too familiar to workers and peasants in Mexico, Jamaica, Turkey, Ghana—or, for that matter, to the people of almost any Asian, African or Latin American country.

Finally, the state-capitalist regimes of Southeast Asia have not brought peace to the poverty-stricken and war-weary people of the region. Instead, along with their patrons, the Russian and Chinese ruling classes, they have dragged them into new wars and power struggles for regional domination that have caused countless deaths and untold misery.

The international left is also paying a price for its largely uncritical support for the state-capitalist forces in Southeast Asia. Since all the new rulers call themselves "socialists," their policies have resulted in increasing cynicism and demoralization among those who believed their rhetoric and tried to defend their policies.

This is particularly true of militants in Southeast Asia itself, who have been most directly affected by the maneuvers of the new rulers. In Thailand, the Communist Party and its military arm, the People's Liberation Army (PLA)—which waged an armed struggle against successive right-wing regimes for 20 years—have all but collapsed. Since 1979, the insurgents' fighting strength has dropped from 11,000 militants to 4,000. Last December alone, some 2,000 PLA members took advantage of a government amnesty offer and turned in their arms. According to the U.S. radical newspaper, the *Guardian*, the disintegration of the Thai CP is at least in part the result of the slaughter in Kampuchea and the role of Vietnamese imperialism in Southeast Asia, both of which provoked internal splits and "indeed undermined popular confidence in socialism."

WHAT ARE THE LEFT'S GOALS AND VALUES?

In fact, the left throughout the world has been severely damaged by the events in Southeast Asia and by the failure of the overwhelming majority of left groups to come to grips with what has happened there. What is involved are the fundamental goals and values of the left. The left claims to be for peace, national independence, economic growth based on rational economic planning and freedom. What it uncritically supports and excuses are brutal state-capitalist regimes that launch new wars, enslave foreign peoples, ruin their own economies through bureaucratic policies and deny the most elementary rights to the people they have allegedly freed.

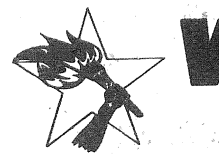
The events in Southeast Asia stand as a dire warning that the left needs to redefine what it means when it talks about socialism. We in the RSL agree with Marx and Engels that the liberation of the working class can be achieved only by the workers themselves. In our view, workers and oppressed people can achieve socialism only by rising up, smashing the capitalist state and taking power into their own hands, that is, by establishing new governments that they themselves directly and democratically control. Elites like those governing in Southeast Asia, which use socialist rhetoric to disguise their monopoly of political power and exploitation of the people, and which commit the most brutal crimes to maintain and extend their rule, have nothing to do with socialism.

If the majority of the revolutionary and radical left continues to insist that the state-capitalist regimes in Southeast Asia—and elsewhere—represent socialism, some form of workers' states or otherwise progressive "transitional societies," it will be digging its own grave—and ours. At bottom, these forces are helping to destroy the vision of socialism as a progressive and liberating alternative to capitalism, because the "socialism" they support is as oppressive as the capitalism they condemn.

It is not surprising that even the most oppressed workers are wary of leftists who come bearing such tainted "gifts." This is not just a result of ignorance and bourgeois propaganda. What kind of progress is the left really promising working people when it insists that these state-capitalist regimes are "progressive"? How can leftists hope to win workers to socialism when they excuse or remain silent over the butchery of Pol Pot, the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea or the persecution of the boat people in Cuba and Vietnam? How can they claim to support liberation for oppressed nations when they excuse or remain silent over the Russian invasion of Afghanistan? And how can they convince people that the left believes in workers' rule when leftists excuse or remain silent over the suppression of Solidarity in Poland?

By ignoring, denying or defending such crimes—or by insisting that the state-capitalist regimes are socialist regardless of their crimes—the left is providing ammunition for the capitalists. It is helping to spread the capitalists' contention that socialist revolution inevitably leads to totalitarian dictatorship, torture chambers and labor camps. And they are allowing the capitalists to pose—with some success—as the defenders of democracy and social justice in Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and throughout much of the world.

Until the left comes to grips with the true nature of the so-called "socialist" countries and what it itself means by socialism, it will never resolve its present crisis. To deal with this question will require hard work, a lot of difficult political and moral investigation and self-examination. A good place to start is to confront and tell the truth about the tragic events in Southeast Asia. □



1 The REVOLUTIONARY S LEAGUE is an organization to the fight for freedom world's people—freedom from hunger; from racism and all national, sexual, age and class oppression; from privileged rulers—freedom from capitalism.

We believe that this fight is necessary than ever. Today, the capitalist system is sliding deeper into a massive economic and social crisis. This crisis is in conditions as bad as or worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s. The ruling classes are to the crisis by bludgeoning the standards of the masses of people, curtailing our rights. Unemployment, wage-cutting, cutbacks in social and a beeping up of the repressive apparatus—the police, military, etc.—are all part of the capitalist system. The crisis is paving the rise of fascist groups eager for their genocidal solution on huge

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Thus the continued existence of the capitalist system is pushing us today to depression, fascism, and possibly total destruction.

2 We in the RSL believe that the alternative to all this is a five lies in the workers' farmers, peasants, unemployed, and other oppressed minorities women, lesbians and gay men, down-trodden and persecuted every society—uniting together to throw our common enemy, the capitalist system, and establish SOCIAL

This will require a REVOLUTION which the masses of people fight control of the governments, banks, transportation and communication factories, fields, mills and mines. Revolution would also have to smash the capitalists' state apparatus: the armed forces, their courts and political bodies (legislatures, parliaments, etc.) and mammoth bureaucracies, and other institutions class rule.

While such revolutions are likely to develop on a national basis, we believe that to be successful they must become worldwide in scope. □

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WHAT WE STAND FOR

Program in Brief of the Revolutionary Socialist League

1 The **REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE** is an organization dedicated to the fight for freedom for all the world's people—freedom from poverty and hunger; from racism and all forms of national, sexual, age and class-related oppression; from privileged rulers and wars—freedom from capitalism.

We believe that this fight is more necessary than ever. Today, the world capitalist system is sliding deeper and deeper into a massive economic, political and social crisis. This crisis is bringing conditions as bad as or worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s. In all countries, the ruling classes are responding to the crisis by bludgeoning down the living standards of the masses of people and curtailing our rights. Unemployment and wage-cutting, cutbacks in social services and a beefing up of the repressive apparatus—the police, military, prisons, etc.—are all part of the capitalist attack. As in the 1930s, the crisis is paving the way for the rise of fascist groups eager to impose their genocidal solution on humanity.

Internationally, the crisis will cause the battles among the different blocs of national capitalists to flare into full-scale wars, as each seeks to defend and increase its power, markets, investment outlets and control of natural resources against the others. Twice already this century the capitalists have fought devastating world wars, in which millions of people died. Now, with the development of huge nuclear arsenals capable of blowing up the planet hundreds of times over, human civilization itself hangs in the balance.

Thus the continued existence of the capitalist system is pushing us closer every day to depression, fascism, world war and possibly total destruction.

2 We in the RSL believe there is an alternative to all this. That alternative lies in the workers, small farmers, peasants, unemployed, national and other oppressed minorities, youth, women, lesbians and gay men—in sum, the downtrodden and persecuted people of every society—uniting together to overthrow our common enemy, the capitalist system, and establish **SOCIALISM**.

This will require a **REVOLUTION** in which the masses of people fight to seize control of the governments, banks, means of transportation and communication, factories, fields, mills and mines. A revolution would also have to smash the capitalists' state apparatus: their police and armed forces, their courts and prisons, their political bodies (legislatures, congresses, parliaments, etc.) and mammoth bureaucracies, and other institutions of capitalist class rule.

While such revolutions are most likely to develop on a national basis, we believe that to be successful they must become worldwide in scope. Capitalism is

an international system, with a world economy and a world market. Only through an international socialist revolution can the workers and their allies eliminate all capitalist oppression and have access to the human, natural and technical resources necessary to solve the problems confronting human society.

3 In place of the dictatorship of the capitalists, the RSL believes working and oppressed people can build a cooperative, humane world society. Run by workers' councils and other mass organizations of farmers, housewives, soldiers and specially oppressed groups, the new society would provide the fullest democracy for the vast majority of people, while ruthlessly suppressing the capitalists and those who seek to get ahead by stepping on the backs of others.

Although the destructive legacy of capitalism would be severe, a truly democratic, mass-controlled government could begin to reorganize society to fulfill human needs, not provide a privileged existence for tiny elites. Resources currently thrown into the military, for example, could be used to end hunger, build housing, schools, roads, etc. The workweek could be shortened, creating jobs for millions of unemployed people.

In ways such as these, the inequality and scarcity that lie at the heart of capitalism's dog-eat-dog competitiveness could be eliminated. People would increasingly have no reason to get over on others, and the material basis of classes, the state, racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry would disappear. Increasingly, everyone would have the time and opportunity to develop their full human potential; everyone would become truly **FREE**, able to control their own destinies.

This is our vision of **SOCIALISM**. It will not be easy to achieve. And it is not inevitable—people have to want it and fight for it. But we believe it is the only alternative worth fighting for.

4 Socialism does not exist anywhere in the world today. What is called socialism in countries like Russia, China, Cuba, Albania, Poland, etc., is state capitalism, a 20th century variation of traditional, private shareholding capitalism. In the state-capitalist (often called Stalinist) countries, as in the "regular" capitalist nations, a small elite dominates society, making all the decisions and reaping all the benefits. Working and oppressed people have no more control of the factories and other workplaces, the economy, the government or anything else than do workers in traditional capitalist countries. The state-capitalist ruling class controls the state apparatus and nationalized industry, while the workers are in the position of being wage slaves, chained to a giant capitalist machine.

In these countries—as in all the countries of the world—**REVOLUTION** is the only way to establish real socialism and win freedom for all working and oppressed people.

At a time when the struggle between the world's two main imperialist powers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., is being portrayed wrongly as one between capitalism and socialism, democracy and totalitarianism, the RSL believes it is more important than ever to take a clear stand in opposition to capitalism in all its forms and to fight for a revolutionary, libertarian vision of socialism.

5 In the coming period, as the capitalist crisis intensifies, we expect mass movements and mass struggles—both of the right and the left—to break out with increasing frequency around the world. The question is: Will these upheavals lead to fascist dictatorships, state-capitalist transformations, a new world war—or an international socialist revolution that puts all the capitalist garbage behind us?

The RSL believes that the last outcome can be brought to pass only with the active intervention and political leadership of a disciplined international revolutionary working class party. This party, and its sections in countries around the world, is needed to educate and organize workers and other oppressed people about the cause of their misery and the solution to it; to work in different movements and struggles to increase the class-consciousness and militancy of their participants; to combat reformist, social-democratic, state-capitalist, fascist and other leaderships that would derail mass, popular struggles and lead them to certain defeat; and to help unite the different forces oppressed by capitalism into a massive assault on the system.

The existence of revolutionary working class parties does not guarantee victory. But without them, the more-organized and powerful enemies of

socialist revolution will surely triumph.

The RSL considers the construction of a revolutionary party in the U.S. and around the world to be our main strategic task. In so doing, we reject any and all elitist notions that have come to be associated with such parties: that the party stands separate from and above the working class; that the party may use any method, no matter how base or dishonest, to gain leadership of the masses in struggle; that its goal is to form a one-party state within a supposedly socialist society. Our goal is a society where human beings can consciously shape their own existence; we see a revolutionary party simply as the vehicle through which this can be made possible.

6 The RSL identifies itself in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, particularly the pioneering theoretical work of Marx and Engels; the conception of the party, the stress on the importance of national liberation struggles and the anti-statism shown in *The State and Revolution* of Lenin; and the fight against Stalinism of Trotsky. But we also identify with the best of anarchism, particularly its libertarian spirit. And we hold in no less regard those leaders throughout the ages who have fought against various forms of exploitation and oppression: from Spartacus to Harriet Tubman, from Emiliano Zapata to Malcolm X.

We believe it is crucial for the left to rid itself of the state-capitalist baggage which it has carried far too long. To do so requires a careful evaluation of the theoretical underpinnings of the modern left, from Marx to the Russian Revolution to the current day. Only in this way can the best of our heritage—the fight against oppression and for revolutionary socialism—be preserved and the worst of it—an infatuation with technocratic planning and strong states—be discarded. Revolutionaries must be the vanguard in the fight for common decency and true freedom. It is to that fight the RSL is committed, body and soul. Join US!

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