

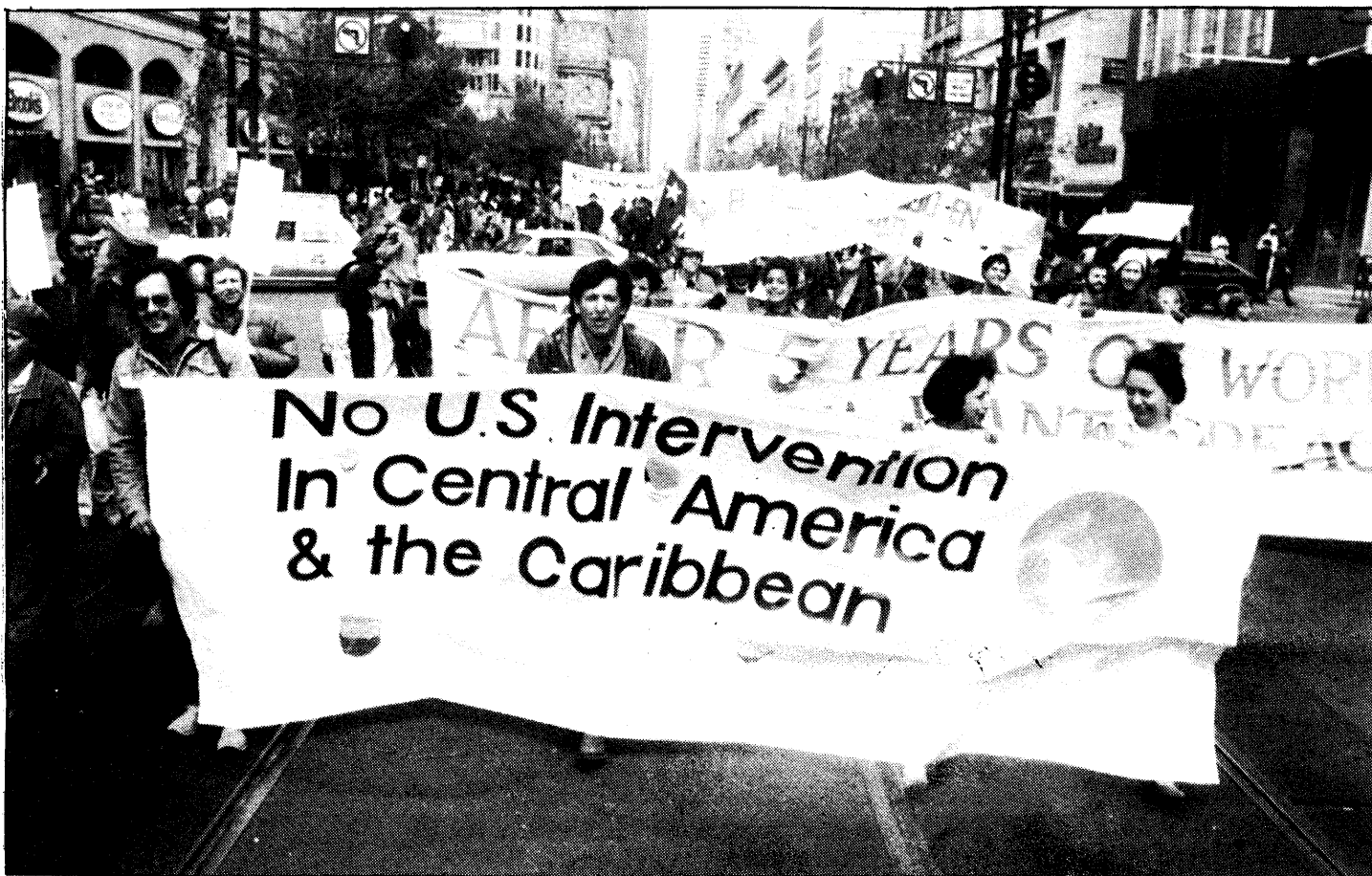
Socialist ACTION



**S. Africa
today:
See p. 11.**

APRIL 1987 VOL. 5, No. 4 50 CENTS

All out for April 25 antiwar protests!



By MAY MAY GONG

United States policy in Central America is "immoral, illegal and inconsistent with fundamental American values." So say various members of the Senate. But despite this "outrage," the Senate voted last month to release the final \$40 million installment of aid to the contras.

The Conragate scandal has only served as a temporary obstacle in the ruling class'

**Conragate:
The reasons for
the cover-up.
See pages 4-5.**

Unionists meet to tackle new immigration law

By GRETCHEN MACKLER and
HAYDEN PERRY

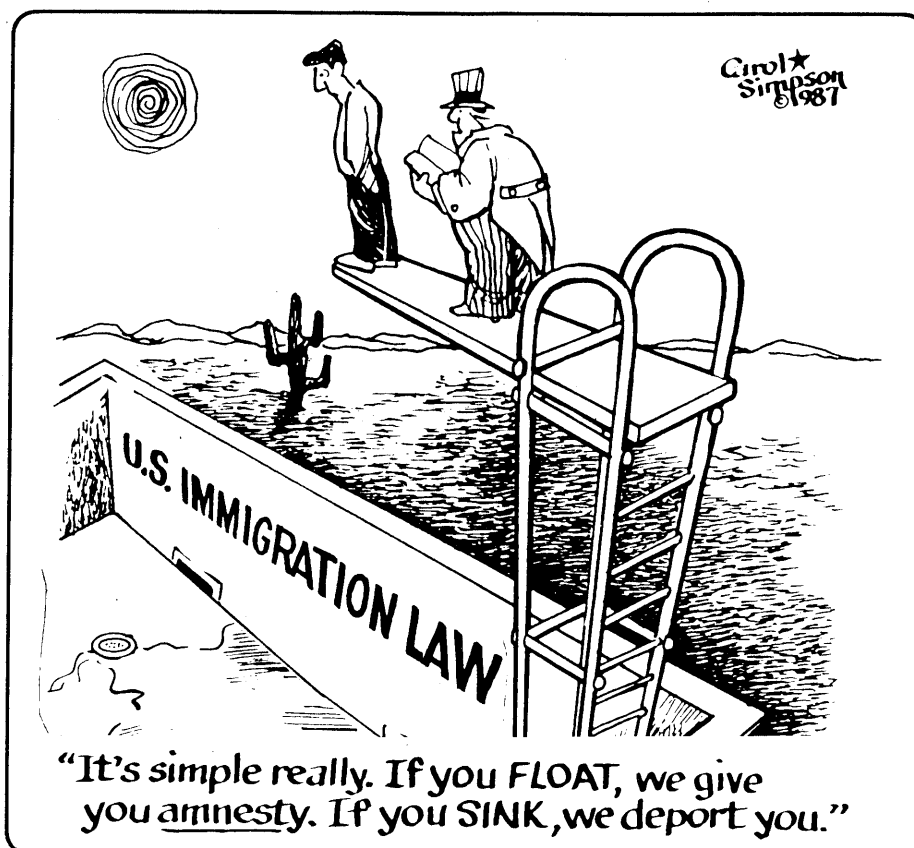
The Simpson-Rodino anti-immigration law does not take effect until May 1, but already foreign-born workers are being victimized.

Undocumented workers, and their children who were born here, cannot be certain they will still be in the United States a few months from now. They cannot even be sure that they will still have a job tomorrow.

Workers are being laid off—even before the law goes into operation—by employers who fear sanctions under Simpson-Rodino. Employers do not want to risk fines of from \$250 to \$10,000 that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) may impose. Better to play it safe and lay off even long-term employees.

Recognizing this threat to organized labor, over 100 trade unionists met on March 14 in San Francisco to consider means to defend their members. The meeting was sponsored by five AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils. Lawyers for

(continued on page 6)



scheme to overturn the Nicaraguan government. Certainly they are not about to let a little "bad PR" cramp their style.

Never mind that the overwhelming majority of the population believes that all contra aid should be stopped. Never mind that 53 percent of the American people don't believe a word the president is saying. For the U.S. government, the Nicaraguan Revolution and the example that it sets for working people everywhere must be stopped at all costs.

The need to get out the true antiwar sentiment of the American people is now more urgent than ever. The April 25 mass demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco will be a prime opportunity for all of us to do just that.

The march and rally in Washington, D.C., will demand an end to U.S. intervention in Central America and an end to U.S. support to apartheid in South Africa. Over 112 cities are already actively building the event.

The call for the Washington demonstration was issued by 24 international union presidents and 50 religious leaders. Never in U.S. history have so many labor officials come out in opposition to the interventionist policies of this government.

Featured speakers will include the Rev. Jesse Jackson; Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit; Mary Futrell, president of the National Education Association; Eleanor Smeal, president of the National Organization for Women; and Ed Asner, former president of the Screen Actors' Guild.

The West Coast will also be mobilized for April 25, with thousands of demonstrators coming to march in San Francisco from as far as Los Angeles, Seattle, Phoenix, and Hawaii. [See story page 3.]

Let's send our message loud and clear to Reagan and all his lying cronies: No U.S. Intervention in Central America, No U.S. Support for South African Apartheid!

The meaning of Gorbachev's reforms. See pp. 7-10.



The case of Baby M

By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

Wanted: White baby, male or female, good genes—excellent pay!

The exploitation of the working class by capitalism has reached a new extreme with the case of Baby M. Mary Beth Whitehead, mother of two children—Ryan, 12 years old, and Tuesday, 11 years old—agreed to serve as a surrogate mother for the sum of \$10,000. Ms. Whitehead agreed to undergo artificial insemination by William Stern, an upper-class professional man.

Mr. Stern's wife, Dr. Elizabeth Stern, is not infertile but has an illness that could possibly worsen if she became pregnant. Less than a week after giving

birth to the baby, Ms. Whitehead changed her mind, refused the \$10,000, and ran away with her new baby and two children to Florida.

The Sterns reacted with rage. They used their wealth and position to hire lawyers by the yard, private detectives, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, and "experts." All came into the courtroom to back up the claim of the Sterns against Ms. Whitehead, who had to make do with a court-appointed lawyer.

Meanwhile, the baby was snatched from Whitehead and turned over to the Sterns.

In the hearing last month in New Jersey Superior Court, witness after witness revealed every facet of Whitehead's life. "Experts" testified what wonderful parents the Sterns would make—given their income and upper-middle-class life-style—and contrasted that with the income and lifestyle of the Whitehead family.

Despite the power of the Sterns' legal team, they were unable to prove that Whitehead was anything but a very good parent to her two older children

and that they were a credit to her parenting.

Return the child!

In any sane society, Whitehead would have had her baby returned to her. She carried that child for nine months and refused the \$10,000 immediately after the birth of her baby.

The only thing contributed by Mr. Stern was his sperm. Evidently, that particular sperm was the only sperm he has cared about for many years, and I assume there is more where that came from.

After reading about this case in the newspapers, it is obvious to me that the child must be returned to its real mother, if justice is to be served. Just by their conduct in this case, the Sterns are unfit parents. They have displayed the most inhuman attitude toward the child and Whitehead.

If Mr. Stern truly loved this child he would offer to pay child support to Ms. Whitehead so the baby could be given the advantages he claims only he can afford.

Actually, the only thing claimed in the Sterns' favor is

that they could give the child a wealthier life. There was no proof offered that they would love, nurture, or care for Baby M any more than Ms. Whitehead.

Children for sale

More and more poor women are renting out their wombs in exchange for money. Wealth can buy anything and it can even purchase children. Unfortunately, many women are emotionally destroyed by this experience.

Even women who have adopted out their children often carry a psychological burden with them forever. Abortion is always a difficult decision for any woman to make, but to carry a child for nine months and then be forced to give it up is the most brutal sacrifice.

Women must be given a choice. If they want an abortion—for any reason—it should be made available to them. Also, if a woman decides to keep and raise her child, she must be given all that is necessary so that her and her child's needs—housing, food, and other services—are met.

Real choice means that a woman can either choose to carry

her child or can choose to abort. This would eliminate the "rental" of woman's wombs for wealthy people. By the way, you would never see a rich woman renting her womb to a poor woman.

Foster-care crisis

In the meantime, in the United States—the richest country in the world—there is a real crisis in the foster-care system. A report in the March 15 *New York Times* gives this picture:

"The [foster] children are now buffeted by countless rejections and severe stress. They often become angry, depressed, and violent. Few of them understand that they are the littlest victims of a system that, by all accounts, has been overwhelmed...It's gotten to the point where we're sending kids home to bad circumstances because foster care is such a terrible alternative."

We would look with horror upon animals that deliberately destroy their offspring. But we live in a destructive economic system. Capitalism is barbaric to its children. If we judge a society by the treatment of its young, then it is self-evident that this system must be changed. ■

By KATE CURRY

CINCINNATI—More than half of American teens are sexually active, but few use birth control. Each year, over a million become unintentionally pregnant. Forty percent take advantage of abortion services. Half-a-million teen mothers have and keep their babies.

Ours is the only developed nation in which teen pregnancy rates, now one in 10, have been on the rise. Black teens, 17 or younger, are eight times more likely to get pregnant than white teens. The 18 and 19 year olds are five times as likely.

What some term "an epidemic of children with children" costs \$16.6 billion a year in public funds. But that figure doesn't begin to reflect the human toll.

High teenage pregnancy rates mean high infant mortality rates. Teens frequently delay pre-natal care that could prevent premature births. Hypertension and anemia plague pregnant teens. Low-birth-weight babies are common. Their babies have double the risk of dying in their first year.

Children of teen mothers often have learning disabilities and are frequently victims of child abuse by their child-parents. Teen mothers attempt suicide seven times more than others their age.

Three quarters of pregnant teens never complete their education. Poor schooling coupled with sex discrimination in hiring can mean a life of poverty. Lack of daycare aggravates the problems of continuing education and getting a good job.

Sex education needed in schools

Although 85 percent of the adult population want sex education in the schools, only 10 percent of the schools have such programs. In-school clinics that provide contraception information in addition to routine medical services can

Why teenagers need a choice

reduce teenage pregnancies and keep students in school. Despite the success of pilot projects, only 61 such clinics are in operation around the nation.

Sex education is a part of good health care. Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund points out,

"All teens need decent, early, and consistent sex education, and the sexually active teens need access to contraception. But we need to provide decent education, not just sex education. Young people need hope for the future, and that means jobs and education."

We must maintain abortion rights to

ensure that young women have the health-care choices they need.

Pro-choice organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW) are fighting for full reproductive rights and education. Those who oppose abortion also block such programs as in-school clinics, sex education, and public childcare.

If you want to work for real solutions to the problem of unplanned pregnancies, please join the March for Women's Lives, on May 16 in Cincinnati. NOW members and pro-choice activists from Ohio, Kentucky, and other states in the Great Lakes region are mobilizing for the event.

Featured speakers include Sherri O'Dell, national NOW vice president; Bill Baird, a 20-year veteran of the fight for reproductive freedom; and Sally Bingham, writer and founder of the Kentucky Foundation for Women.

For more information, contact NOW, P.O. Box 14966, Cincinnati, OH 45214. Telephone (513) 251-7722 or 731-7520. ■



"YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY BE PREGNANT! I NEVER EVEN TOLD YOU ABOUT THE FACTS OF LIFE!!!"

The original of the above cartoon was donated to the National Organization for Women (NOW) by Jim Borgman of the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. Other celebrities donated autographed photos, TV scripts, books, and record albums. Martina Navratilova sent a pair of tennis shoes. The items were auctioned to raise funds for the pro-choice May 16 March for Women's Lives in Cincinnati.—K.C.

Socialist ACTION

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Socialist Action Educational Conferences

San Francisco May 8-9

"Socialism & Democracy" Forums and lectures on the new Soviet reforms, Black liberation in history, democracy in capitalist America, the Marxist view of future society. For more information call (415) 821-0458.

Chicago May 16

"Three lectures on the Middle East, Politics in the U.S., & the Fight for Workers Power" Speakers: Adam Shils and Ralph Schoenman. Cross Currents Hall, 3206 N. Wilton (Belmont & Wilton)

New York May 9

Three lectures: Hunter College. Call (212) 873-7523.

Grand Rapids May 9

Lectures and panels on anti-war and women's move'ts.

Conferences in other cities to be announced later.

Nationwide support mounts for April 25

Cleveland

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

CLEVELAND—On Feb. 23, Cleveland Typographical Union #53 hosted a press conference called by the Northeast Ohio Anti-Apartheid Committee (NOAC) to announce plans to send busloads of Ohioans to the April 25 march in Washington.

Labor speakers included William Withers, president of Cleveland Typographical Union #53; Frank Ritzinger, International Chemical Workers; and Deborah Bailey, organizer Hospital Workers 1199.

Religious speakers included Bill Corrigan, West Side Ecumenical Ministry, and Rabbi Bruce Abrams. Cleveland Board of Education President Stanley E. Tolliver also spoke. Also lending their support were representatives of various peace, solidarity, and anti-apartheid organizations.

NOAC has called a Town Meeting to help publicize the April 25 demonstration. This event will be held Saturday, April 4, at 2 p.m. at the Church of the Covenant. Speakers include Dennis Brutus, exiled South African poet; the Rev. Donald Jacobs, staff National Council of Churches; Elizabeth Franklin, representative of NOAC; Ray Miklethun, representative Cleveland Central America Network; and James A. Russell, United Mine Workers of America.

Approximately 20 buses have been reserved to take Clevelanders to the demonstration. These include buses reserved by AFSCME, CWA, and area churches. The Cleveland State University Student Committee Against Racism and Youth United to Oppose Apartheid, and a high school anti-apartheid group have both chartered buses. Four busloads of Oberlin college students are planning to attend. Buses will also leave from Akron and Youngstown.

A send-off rally is planned for Friday, April 24, at E. 22nd and Euclid. Anyone wishing to purchase a bus ticket, obtain fliers, or help should call (216) 429-2167.



New York

By CHRIS BUTTERS

NEW YORK—District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) has endorsed and is actively building the April 25 Mobilization for Justice and Peace in Central America and South Africa.

A labor-clergy breakfast, convened by DC 37 Executive Director Stan Hill, was attended by over 100 prominent labor and religious leaders in the New York area in February. This gathering has played an important role in drawing in new forces for the Mobilization.

Also, on March 2, over 100 DC 37 union officers, stewards, and rank-and-file activists heard Dave Dyson, national director of the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, and Stan Hill speak on the importance of a

massive labor turnout on April 25.

DC 37, consisting of over 125,000 members, is one of New York City's largest and most powerful unions. Its over 50 locals include hospital, school aid, park, library, clerical, court, construction, custodial, and technical workers. Fifty-five percent of its membership is Black. Many of its most active and militant members are women.

Members have posted leaflets at their workplaces while presentations have been given by stewards and rank and filers at local union meetings. Workers who would not otherwise be drawn into the work have done so because the union has thrown its powerful resources behind it.

Activists report that the most effective presentations in their locals have involved linking the fight against the government's pro-big-business policies abroad to their own interests as workers. Especially popular has been the Mobilization's demand, "Money for Jobs, Not for War!"

Cincinnati

By BILL O'KAIN

CINCINNATI—An active coalition has come together in this city to build the April 25 march on Washington. The coalition, which calls itself the April 25th Coalition, is a city-wide collection of religious, labor, student, and peace groups.

At the University of Cincinnati, the Central American Solidarity Organization has been formed. Through regular meetings, literature tables, and fund raising activities, it is attempting to send as many students as possible to Washington.

The most interesting development in the planning for April 25 here has been the formation of a labor subcommittee of the coalition. Through the efforts of the Molders Union, which has its national headquarters in Cincinnati, several other unions and union leaders here have been active in trying to broaden out labor's opposition to U.S. involvement in Central America and South Africa. This type of labor participation is new for Cincinnati.

The Molders Union has printed the first piece of literature about the demonstration. Other labor endorsers locally include the president of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, a representative of the Cement Masons Union, and Hospital Workers District 1199. Representatives of several other unions regularly attend meetings.

West Coast

By ADAM WOOD

SAN FRANCISCO—Support for the April 25 antiwar demonstration to be held in this city is growing throughout the Western states. Activists in California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington are actively organizing support for this march.

Seattle activists are sending bus caravans and planning a teen dance at a local high school to mobilize support for the march. A send-off rally is planned for April 24.

Sacramento activists have obtained the endorsements for the coalition from Bishop Francis Quinn and Mayor Anne Rudin.

In the Bay Area, 175,000 leaflets have been distributed, and Spanish-language and Black-community leaflets have been printed. Fundraisers have been held featuring Nora Astorga, the Nicaraguan ambassador to the United Nations.

One event with Nora Astorga was a reception at San Francisco State University on March 18. Organized by student activists, the reception attracted 400 people and packed the largest hall in the student union.

Students at campuses throughout California have played a central role in bringing new people and energy into the coalition. Buses are being organized from U.C. Santa Barbara, U.C.L.A., and U.C. San Diego—to name just a few. A contingent of all campus activists is being organized.

The labor movement has also pitched in. So far, six AFL-CIO central labor councils have endorsed the Mobilization in Northern California.

Some unions have organized large coalition fundraising events. The California Teachers Association, for example, put together a reception in Oakland on March 21. The statewide *California AFL-CIO News* published a front-page article on the demonstration in a recent issue.

Funds and volunteers are still needed. For more information, contact the Mobilization at 255 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103. Tel. (415) 626-8053.



Nicaraguan leader Nora Astorga

Los Angeles

By KATHLEEN O'NAN

LOS ANGELES—A kick-off rally of the Western States Mobilization for Peace and Justice in Central America and Southern Africa was held on March 16 here. About 150 people attended the rally, which was held at the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) hall.

The meeting heard greetings from ACTWU's general manager, Richard Rothstein, who reaffirmed ACTWU's support for April 25 and for the mobilization.

Mario Obledo, co-chair of the Western States Mobilization and past national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), spoke on the need for Hispanics to continue to become more involved in protests against U.S.

involvement in Central America and Southern Africa.

Obledo said, "It is almost unbelievable that in 1987 we (the government) are involved in helping terrorists in Central America, in Nicaragua, to get weapons to kill other people. Stop the killings! Bring Justice! On to San Francisco!"

The other keynote speaker was the Rev. James Lawson, Los Angeles president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Lawson spoke about the April 4 Coalition, which is organizing two weeks of teach-ins in the greater Los Angeles area, culminating in a rally on Saturday, April 4, at St. Vincent's Catholic Church (corner of Figueroa and Adams at 7:30 p.m.).

The speakers at that rally will include Father Luis Olivares, C.M.; Dolores Huerta, vice president of the United Farm Workers Union; Dr. Charlie Clements,

Medical Aid to El Salvador; and the Rev. Lawson.

More than a dozen teach-ins will be held throughout the area before April 4 and will focus on U.S. policy in Central America and Southern Africa and the domestic impact of these policies—as well as the need to build the April 25 action in San Francisco. For more information call (213) 295-KING.

Other speakers at the March 16 rally included Arnaldo Ramos, representative of the Salvadoran FMLN/FDR; and Bernard Walker, representative of the Free South Africa Movement.

More than 100 organizations, religious groups, and unions in Southern California have endorsed the April 25 action and are urging people to join the bus and car caravans leaving from Los Angeles. Bus tickets are \$30 round trip and can be obtained by calling (213) 225-6136.

Northern California LABOR
Vol. 39, No. 11 Mar. 13, 1987

Council backs April 25 mobilization

100,000 people are expected to converge on San Francisco April 25 for a West Coast demonstration against the Reagan regime's bellicose, misguided and inhumane policies in a demonstration sponsored by the Western States Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice. The event's been endorsed by the San Francisco Labor Council and numerous affiliates.

A companion demonstration is being held in Washington, D.C. the same day.

Demands of the Mobilization are no U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean; the end of U.S. support for South African apartheid; jobs and justice; and a freeze and reversal of the nuclear arms race. Demonstrations around the same four demands drew thousands of people to San Francisco in April of both 1985 and 1986.

Al Lannon, president of ILWU 6 and co-chair of the Mobilization, says contingents for this year's demonstration are coming from as far away as Phoenix, Seattle, and Hawaii, with this group being met at sea by the Peace Navy and escorted into San Francisco Bay.

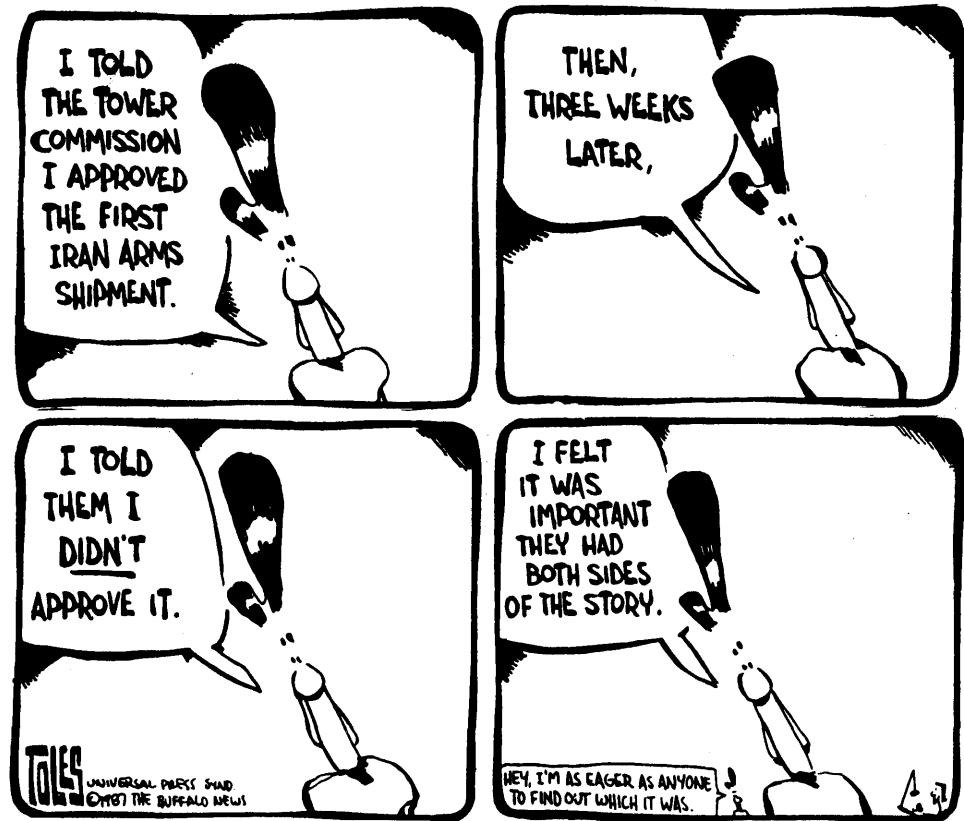
San Francisco Labor Council Sec.-Treas. Walter Johnson also serves as a co-chair of the Western States Mobilization.

The Mobilization needs both volunteers and financial contributions: call its office at 626-8053.



San Francisco Central Labor Council (AFL-CIO) and five other labor councils in Northern California have endorsed the April 25 protest.

Contragate: Cover-up needed to protect Reagan... and Congress



By NAT WEINSTEIN

"He sounded at times like a man who's sure he hasn't done anything wrong—and promises never to do it again." (from a *New York Times* editorial following President Reagan's March 4 speech to the nation).

The *Times* editorial aptly characterized Reagan's first major speech in response to the Iran-contra scandal. The editor of this most authoritative mouthpiece of the U.S. capitalist class then goes on to state the *Times*' main message to the nation's ruling establishment: "Nevertheless, for all the convolutions the president's message was clear: It was a mistake...I am responsible...We will obey the spirit of the law."

The *Times*' message is to the point: We accept your apology, dear President Reagan, and we pledge to help you give lip-service to "the spirit," if not the letter of the law. Just give us a little more to go on.

This theme repeated in national newspaper and television coverage follows the line signaled by the Tower Commission's report. This special board, which was headed by former Republican Senator John G. Tower of Texas, was appointed by Reagan himself to conduct an investigation of his National Security Council. The NSC was the main governmental agency responsible for the systematic evasion and outright violation of laws prohibiting military aid to the Nicaraguan contras.

The Tower report records evidence of lies, cover-ups and "disregard" for these laws. But former Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie, a Democrat and one of the Tower Commission's three members, summed up his panel's conclusions at a press conference on March 5. "There are obviously people whose performance was wrong," he said, "but that is something different than reaching a conclusion that it was criminal."

The Tower report is a signal that the U.S. ruling class has set out to bring this affair to an end as speedily as they can get away with. They are determined to prevent a lifting of the curtain covering up the illegal diversion of profits from Iran arms sales to the Nicaraguan contras. They intend, if they can, to reveal only enough to appear to have upheld legality and to forestall the deeply felt mass suspicion of a cover-up at the highest levels of the ruling class.

This means, too, that a top-level decision has been made to prevent the current fiasco

from ending—like Watergate—in the ouster of a disgraced president, which would cause even greater damage to the stability of American capitalism.

Contragate and Watergate

The Watergate affair derived from "a third-rate burglary" of Democratic Party offices by agents of Republican President Richard Nixon.

It was merely a crime committed by one faction of the capitalists against another—a "dirty trick" in the best tradition of capitalist politics. But there was no way the Democrats in that instance could also be implicated. This is what allowed the Democrats to pull all stops in their normal craving for political advantage.

The current administration's lawbreaking, however, is qualitatively different. The crimes against the Nicaraguan Revolution and people were endorsed by both capitalist parties almost from the moment Anastasio Somoza, the U.S. puppet dictator of Nicaragua, was overthrown. Contragate can yet implicate the Democrats in Congress—as well as the Reagan administration. This restrains them from following the Watergate scenario to the end.

Reagan's not-so-secret illegal financing of the contras is completely in accord with the criminal counterrevolutionary policy of Republican and Democratic lawmakers alike. Even during the ban by Congress of "military" aid to the contras, the same

Congress had voted \$30 million in "humanitarian" aid to feed, clothe, pay, and otherwise support the same murderous bandits. And later, of course, Congress also approved undisguised military aid as well.

But the real force powering the Contragate maelstrom is the failure of the contras' efforts to mount a serious threat to the Nicaraguan Revolution. On March 9, expressing the demoralization of the contras themselves, Arturo Cruz, the least discredited of the contra leaders, resigned after months of bitter infighting among them.

According to a *Times* report, "[Cruz] resigned because he found it impossible to carry out the fundamental reorganization that he believes is necessary to turn the Nicaraguan rebels into a popular resistance movement."

On the same day, confirming that the contras had indeed not changed, new reports of wanton killings of unarmed peasants were published. "The contras came in shooting, and we had no soldiers to defend us," said Dominga Solana, who worked at a cattle cooperative in Quisilala, Nicaragua. "They stole cattle and burned our houses," she said from her hospital bed. Her arm was shattered by a contra rifle bullet. And her mother and three others, at the cooperative, including a 15-year-old girl, were killed.

Other news reports in the same edition of the *Times* document the grotesquely inhuman contra actions, including the contra bayoneting of a 9-month-old infant and the execution-style killing of two elderly women after they were forced to lie on the dirt floor of their home.

Such news reportage, besides confirming the criminal character of the contras, suggests that the stage is being set for a more flexible anti-Sandinista policy. This could include a negotiated truce in exchange for concessions to imperialism. The contras, in this case, would be held in reserve as blackmail to wrench further concessions from the Sandinista government.

An editorial in the March 15 *New York Times*, for example, bemoaning the latest blows to hopes in the contras, asks: "Where now in Nicaragua?" Proposing that Reagan "abandon the illusion that [the contras] can win," the editor suggests he aim for "three main...attainable...goals":

- "Securing Sandinista agreement to keep Soviet and Cuban bases, advisers and missiles out of Nicaragua.
- "Securing an agreement that the Sandinistas will not export revolution across Nicaragua's borders.
- "Achieving a regional treaty to help protect and widen Nicaraguans' political rights."

The Times concludes that Reagan "could

rightfully ask his critics to support the use of force should the Sandinistas betray their security promises. But to claim that power, he must first accept that his choices are limited, and that the interest of all the Americas can be served by trying the path of negotiation."

"Protect the presidency"

The U.S. rulers, forced to readjust their counterrevolutionary policies in Nicaragua, must at the same time prevent the Iran-contra scandal from getting out of hand and deepening the crisis of confidence caused by the failures of their foreign policy.

For the last four months the most formidable governmental machine in the world, with all the potent investigative and police powers available to it, has not yet uncovered the trail of money from the Iran arms-sale profits to the secret contra bank accounts.

Of course, there cannot be any doubt that this information will ultimately be partially revealed. But not until after all loose ends have been trimmed and tied to prevent further unraveling...and further damage done to the capitalist political structure. The ruling class needs time, too, to pick appropriate fall-guys, and to guarantee that the selected patsies to be sacrificed will not, or cannot, spill all the beans.

The most likely candidates at this time appear to be Admiral Poindexter and Colonel North, both of whom were dismissed from their leading positions at the head of the NSC. They are likely to be the first sacrificial offerings to satisfy public outrage and protect higher responsible government figures in the administration and Congress.

It is likely, too, that the ruling-class

" Nothing good for American capitalism can come of a replay of Watergate... "

pendant for preparing for "deniability"—to protect the real decision-makers from responsibility when illegal policies fail—explains the illusion created that Poindexter and North were runaway, freewheeling, uncontrolled "cowboys."

Already Reagan himself seems to have upped the ante in response to a widespread concern that he is continuing to stonewall. On March 9 his daughter, Maureen Reagan, met with the press after she and other members of the Republican National Committee had just met with her father. She told them that her father was "royally angry" after he read the Tower report and learned the full story of his subordinates' actions. (He had said nothing like this in his speech in response to this report just three days earlier.)

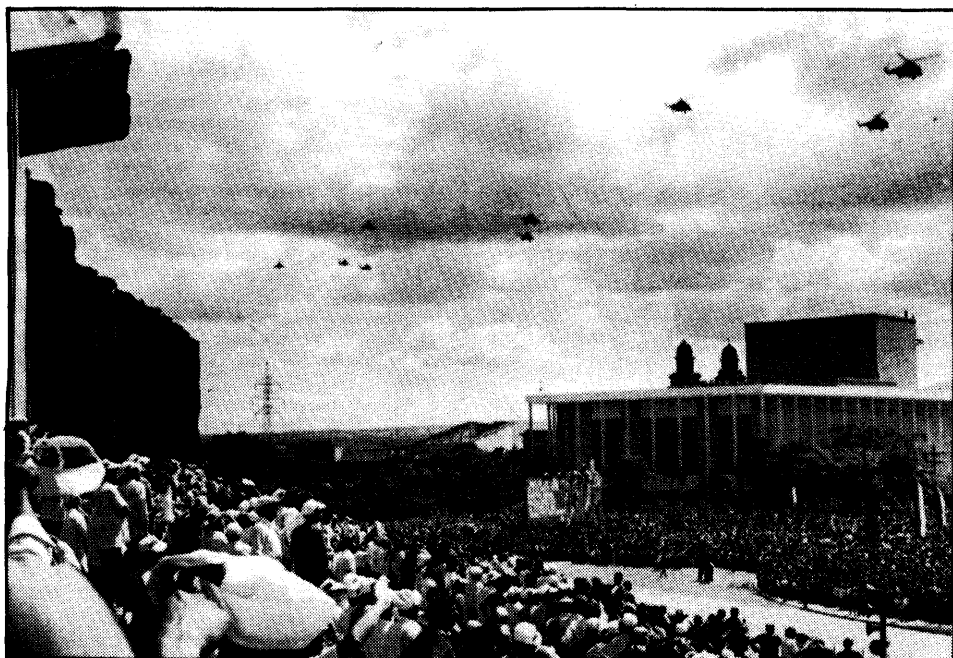
The president's daughter—and apparent confidant—went further. In a reference to Poindexter and North, Ms. Reagan said, "A member of the United States military who lies to the commander in chief is guilty of treason and should be court-martialed."

This more serious charge could cause more problems than it solves for Reagan and the capitalist government. If granted "immunity" in exchange for testifying before investigative bodies, the intended fall-guys could reveal more embarrassing facts than any of the rulers would like. The worst damage to the capitalist political structure would come from such disclosures. It could lead to serious criminal indictments against Reagan's surrogates, and fan the flames under Reagan himself.

This, in turn, could lead to the implication of the Congress in the scandal. It is hard to believe that Congress was unaware of Reagan's violation of the Congressional ban on arms to the contras.

It is not possible that such a complex operation could have been kept secret from the Congress. The illegal contra-supply

(continued on page 5)



Nicaraguans celebrate 25th anniversary of founding of FSLN.

(continued from page 4)

operation involved federal and military bureaucrats and officers, troops, ex-generals, a variety of arms dealers and intermediaries, and a horde of mercenaries operating the squadron of arms-delivery "companies" fronting for the U.S. government.

Too many people know. And when it comes to dirty work like illegal contra aid done in the interest of U.S. imperialist interests, such "secrets" freely circulate in the most casual of official Washington's luncheon conversations. If the Democrats are not careful, the Republican fall-guys could drag some of them down with them.

Nothing good for American capitalism can come of a replay of the Watergate scenario to its logical conclusion—Reagan's ouster. The culpability of Congress in Reagan's lawlessness is the threat that drives the bipartisan capitalist political establishment toward jointly containing the scandal within manageable bounds.

Arms for hostages

The investigators also seem to be having the greatest difficulty in finding out what the president knew about the arms-for-hostages adventure and when he knew it. It has become a favorite butt of political-minded standup-comedians' jokes.

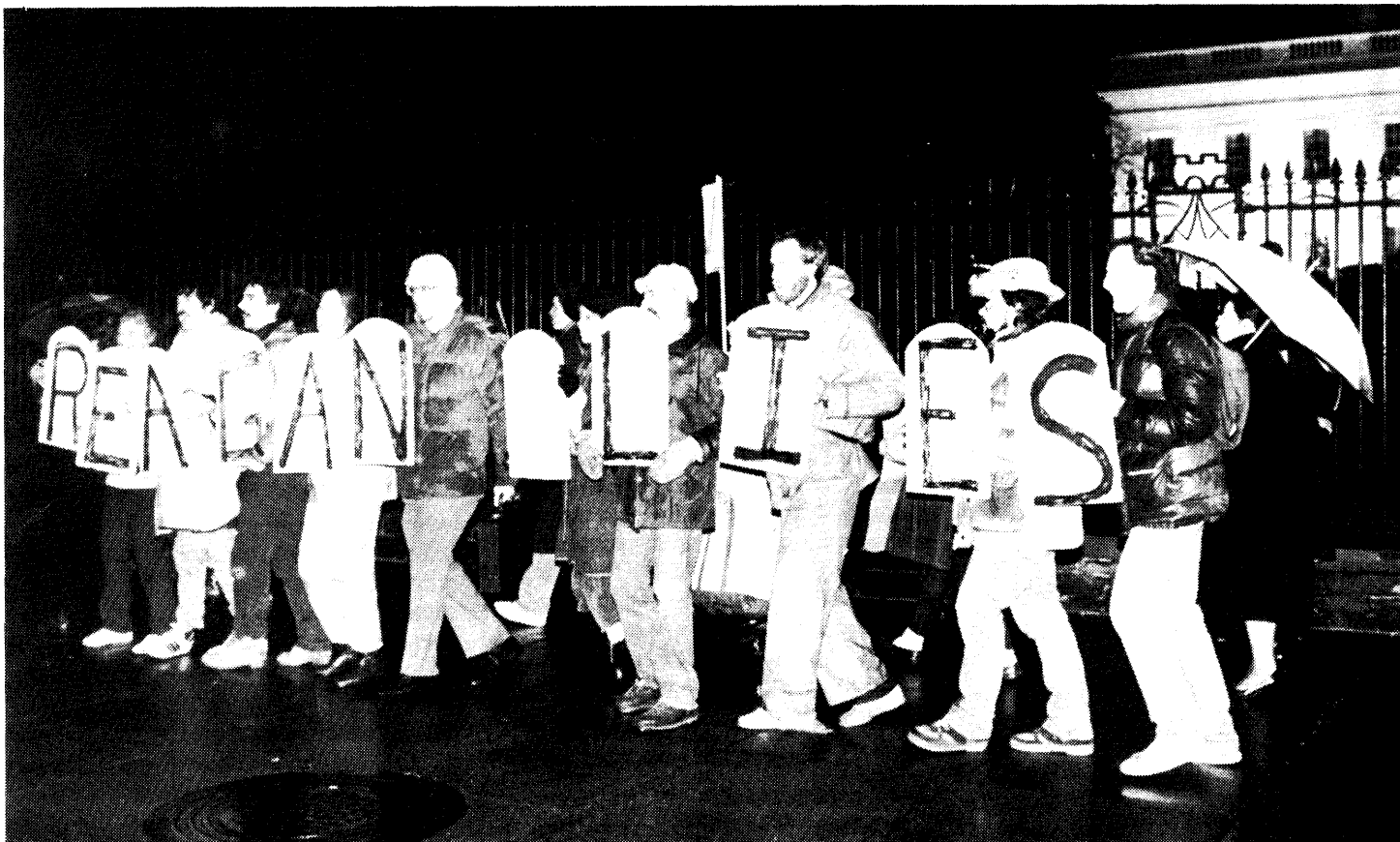
But whether the aim was to free hostages, or to re-establish contact with Iranian "moderates," is for the ruling capitalists only a practical question. Either or both courses of action in such situations are traditionally followed by governments when it suits their interests.

It is only Reagan's rhetoric that is compromised, not capitalist interests. And even the contradiction between what Reagan says and what Reagan does wouldn't have caused much of a stir had he succeeded in freeing a few hostages—just as illegal aid to the contras would easily be overlooked...if it worked.

It is not surprising, then, that when Reagan says he "forgot" when he approved the Iran arms deal, his political rivals conveniently accept it at face value. Those most anxious to make gains at Reagan's expense are able to sate their thirst for political advantage with cheap jibes at his age and mental competence—without more seriously destabilizing the capitalist ship of state.

And at a news conference, when Reagan disingenuously asked anyone to raise their hand who could remember what they did on a day months before, not one of the sharks in the room raised a hand. This ostensibly proved the credibility of his claimed loss of memory.

This debater's trick could have easily been exposed. But no one there, or in the news commentaries immediately afterward, asked Reagan why he couldn't refer to the minutes, notes, or other records of the official meetings to refresh his memory.



Impact Visuals/Rick Reinhard

Such media silence is deafening.

Of course the little matter of the missing minutes, or other records, no doubt crossed more than a few minds. No organized group, least of all a governmental body, can function without records of its decisions. But the loyal capitalist media allowed only the most cryptic references to the missing records to appear in news accounts and commentaries.

Some of Reagan's loyal friends, of course, must have privately raised the matter of the minutes. Evidently this led to Reagan's acknowledgment of this little problem in his March 4 "apology" to the nation a few days later. But he just brushed the matter aside in one non-explanatory sentence. "One thing still upsetting me, however," he said with a straight face, "is that no one kept proper records of meetings or decisions."

The Tower Commission, itself, is reported only to be puzzled by this alleged failure to keep records.

In any case, the focus on when Reagan approved the Iran arms deal is being given the most attention by the capitalist media because it is the least damaging side of this affair to their class interests. It has the advantage of permitting them to hammer away on their hypocritical and false claim of being in principled opposition to terrorism; a theme they have successfully sold to the American people.

At the same time it permits them to divert attention from—and play down—their terrorist assault against the people of Nicaragua, which they have failed to sell to the big majority of the American people.

How believable is Reagan's and his

class's "moral opposition" to terrorism; that is, the killing of innocent civilians? It didn't stop him from ordering the terror bombing of Libyan civilians who were expressly targeted by U.S. bombers. A raid which succeeded in killing and maiming many innocent people, including one of the Libyan leader's small children.

But Reagan's action is in complete accord with U.S. imperialist policy. How could anyone forget the U.S. atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which killed and horribly mutilated hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings. (Even by the standards of monster-sized terrorists, two cities incinerated would seem to be overkill.)

And contrary to the official rationalization of American imperialism, this singular act of frightful terrorism was not done to save the lives of American soldiers in the continuing war to defeat Japan. The bombs were dropped after the Japanese government had already sued for peace. Japan had proposed its surrender on condition that the Emperor not be deposed—a condition accepted in the actual treaty that ended the war!

U.S. imperialist terrorism

The only conceivable purpose of this seemingly mindless mass execution was to terrorize and intimidate the rising worldwide movement against imperialism with this demonstration of the unparalleled power of destruction in the hands of the new masters of the earth.

Just like the terrorist who kills one innocent hostage to demonstrate the will to carry out a threat, the U.S. terrorists killed

two cities to demonstrate the same determination. It makes the terrorism practiced by victims of imperialism, by contrast, pale to virtual insignificance.

So much for the chorus of moral indignation against Iran led by the most "moral" president of the United States.

American people can fight back

Now that direct U.S. military methods in Nicaragua have been temporarily set back, the ruling class must now seek, for the time being, to undermine and destroy the Nicaraguan Revolution by other means. The mass mobilizations scheduled to take place in Washington and San Francisco on April 25 can place further obstacles in the way of imperialist intervention in Central America.

It is certain, too, that mass outrage exacerbated by the Conragate affair promises to be expressed in the biggest protest demonstrations yet against U.S. capitalist policies.

The importance of such mobilizations cannot be overstated. The demonstrations tend to keep the poll-takers, who have been compelled to report the growing mass opposition to U.S. interventionist policy, honest. Making this opposition visible, too, foils the efforts of the most virulent capitalist apologists to discredit the polls and media reportage as the "inventions of a liberal-pinko conspiracy."

Perhaps most important, the mass mobilizations will reinforce the growing self-confidence among the millions of working people and their natural allies that they do have the power to change society. ■



Picket at Israeli consulate in San Francisco on March 13 to demand the release of Israeli activist Michel Warshawsky

Michel Warshawsky Israeli activist free on bail

By HAYDEN PERRY

After an international campaign involving letters, telegrams and picket lines, Michel Warshawsky, director of the Alternative Information Center (AIC) in West Jerusalem, has been released on \$50,000 bail.

Warshawsky was arrested on Feb. 16 and charged with "collaborating with Palestinian terrorists." The AIC was closed by the government.

For three years the AIC has printed and disseminated news from the occupied territories, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. A statement issued by the center at a news conference explained the situation:

"The Alternative Information Center operated openly. Our office was registered with the Ministry of Interior and its publications were submitted to the censor in accordance with censorship regulations. The door to the office was open to everyone, save for members of Kach, Gush Emunim or illegal organizations..."

"For three years the center provided news, translations and typesetting services to thousands of clients, including journalists, news agencies, consulates and embassies, public institutions and individuals interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict..."

"Our crime lay in providing Israeli, Palestinian and foreign journalists with accurate and up-to-date information on human rights violations in the occupied territories, and on social and political issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

The arrest of Warshawsky is the first time the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance of 1948 has been used to suppress an Israeli journalist.

Getting Warshawsky released on bail is a victory for all supporters of civil liberties. But the Israeli government has attached onerous and illegal conditions that must be reversed. Warshawsky must report three times a week to the police. He is forbidden to participate in any activities of the AIC, which still remains closed. He is also forbidden to write anything about his case.

No date for the trial, which is expected to take 10 months to a year, has been set.

International protests got Warshawsky out on bail. It will take more protests to get the Israeli government to drop all charges and to reopen the Center. Letters of protest should be sent to Avraham Sharir, Minister of Justice, 29 Salah A-din, Jerusalem, 91010 Israel. Please send copies to *Socialist Action*. ■



By ADAM SHILS

CHICAGO—Mayor Harold Washington won a comfortable majority in this city's recent Democratic Party primary. Washington received 573,962 votes (53 percent) against Jane Byrne's 504,275 votes (47 percent).

Washington now faces three major opponents in the April 7 general election: Tom Hynes, a representative of the old Daley forces on the Chicago First Party ticket; Ed Vrdolyak, the central leader of the racist bloc opposing Washington in the city council, on the Solidarity Party ticket; and Don Haider, a representative of Chicago's weak Republican Party.

Although nothing is certain in the

Washington campaign fails to push struggle forward

turbulent world of Chicago politics, it appears as if Washington will win the general election. The consensus here is that the racist opposition to Washington will be divided among the three white candidates, and that this will allow Washington a victory.

While there was an increase in racial tension during the election campaign, the atmosphere here is certainly not as charged as it was during the last campaign in 1983.

Washington has virtually the complete support of the Black community. However, this time around, there was not such an intense feeling of moral crusade in the Black community as there was during the last campaign.

"A referendum on racism?"

For a large number of white people supporting Washington, wearing the mayor's popular blue and white campaign buttons was seen as affirming a strident anti-racism. For their wearers, especially among students, the Washington campaign buttons became an anti-racist symbol, somewhat similar to the *Touche pas a mon pote* [Hands off my buddy] buttons of the French SOS-Anti-Racism movement.

Despite all these good intentions, this election was not a "referendum on racism." The Washington campaign was completely within the framework of the Democratic Party, which is a racist party.

Washington has gone out of his way to repeatedly stress his commitment to the Democratic Party, and he lambasts anyone who questions this commitment. He and his supporters, including Jesse Jackson, have vigorously campaigned for national Democratic Party support and called for party discipline to be taken against Democrats who don't support Washington.

Nor has Washington's campaign aided independent mass action or "created a better climate for struggles," as his left-wing supporters would say.

The boycott of Revlon by Operation PUSH is virtually the only protest activity going on in the Chicago Black community today. The lock-out of the *Chicago Tribune* workers lingers on without mass support being organized for the workers.

Washington's stance toward the recent decision of Sears & Roebuck to lay off 1800 workers at their westside plant is instructive. He talked privately with Sears & Roebuck executives and gained an "understanding" that only 800 workers would be laid off. Sears' bosses then turned around and said this was "inaccurate;" in reality all 1800 would be out the door!

There is simply no evidence from the Washington campaign to back up the assertions that Washington is straining to the limits his ties to the Democratic Party or that his campaign has increased the level

of independent social protest outside of electoral politics.

Hampers antiwar organizing

The draining of activists' energy into the Washington campaign has seriously weakened the antiwar movement here. In most of the country, coalitions building the April 25 demonstrations are gaining momentum every day. In Chicago the coalition's base has been relatively small and the coalition has been hampered by internal problems.

The reason for this weakness is clear. Many of the activists who normally build antiwar actions in Chicago have thrown all their time and resources into the Washington campaign.

Chicago Socialist Action is supporting the write-in campaign of Pedro Vasquez of the Socialist Workers Party for mayor. This campaign, unfortunately, has been organized in a very low-key way.

However, Vasquez clearly calls for working-class opposition to the Democrats, support for a labor party, and building independent mass actions such as the April 25 demonstrations. For these reasons his campaign merits support.

While many people in Chicago are forgetting this reality today, there is only one force that is going to bring about real social change—the independent action of the working class. ■

...Immigration

(continued from page 1)

unions and legal-aid organizations attended and exposed various threatening aspects of the new law.

The analysis presented by the speakers showed that Simpson-Rodino is basically an anti-labor law, an interference with employer-employee relations, and an intrusion into unions and their membership. Employers have to verify that their workers have legal status, but some companies have put this burden on the unions. They demand that hiring halls check documents and certify their members' citizenship status before they are sent on the job.

It is possible that unions will be liable for damages if they refer an ineligible worker. They must also keep files on the citizenship status of every member—files that are open to INS inspection at any time.

The way unions can fall into an INS trap was recounted by David Sicker, regional director of the AFL-CIO. Strikers at a plant with many undocumented workers called the INS to get scabs deported. Then the boss called the INS to deport undocumented strikers. Union campaigns in Southern California were sabotaged when employers called in the INS just before the workers were to vote on union representation.

"Unions have no place in enforcing immigration laws," said Francisco Garcia, a Mexican-American legal defense lawyer. Instead, he pointed out, unions are the best organizations to defend workers against INS-instigated firings.

The law provides a "grandfather" clause

which is supposed to protect undocumented workers who were hired before Nov. 6, 1986, when the bill was signed. But workers who have been on the job as long as six years are being fired. Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, Local 2, in San Francisco has forced several restaurants to rehire union members who were illegally fired.

Immigrants face Catch-22

Simpson-Rodino is presented as an opportunity for undocumented workers to achieve legal status. But according to Michael Calabrese, an official of the national AFL-CIO, the INS has designed the law to fail—to keep down the numbers. The rules are so complex that the refugee is constantly running into Catch-22 situations.

While waiting the many months required to determine his or her status, a refugee must have a job. But the INS says it will not issue work permits in these cases. So the refugee can stay temporarily, but may have to go on welfare. Here Catch-22 operates again. If applicants have ever been a "public charge," they may not be eligible, even if they meet every other requirement.

The Molders Union in California has filed suit to force the INS to grant work permits to refugees while their cases are pending.

Many refugees have given up hope for sanctuary in the United States and have headed for Canada. But Canada has tightened up its more liberal laws on political sanctuary. Refugees must now stay in the United States while their Canadian application is being processed. This means they might find themselves back in Central America if and when Canada finally says yes.

While all unionists condemned Simpson-Rodino, many speakers concentrated on ways union locals could help their undocumented members get through all the obstacles to legalization. Much time at the conference was devoted to details of the new regulations, many of which are not yet in final form. The INS is providing 30 days for public comment on its rules as they are promulgated.

One rule that has already raised protest is the \$185 fee for a single application for legalization. A man and his wife would be charged \$370, and each child a further \$50—up to a maximum of \$420 a family. Legal fees and the cost of medical

certificates could run the expense up to \$700.

Unions must do more

While admitting that undocumented union members need help, other speakers pointed to the danger of playing according to INS rules. A more militant stance of opposition was urged.

David Sicker, regional director of the AFL-CIO, called for a drive to organize the unorganized. "There is as strong a need for organization today as there was 40 years ago," he said. "We must be concerned also with the interests of the millions of workers who will not qualify for legalization. These workers can be organized if we respond to their concerns."

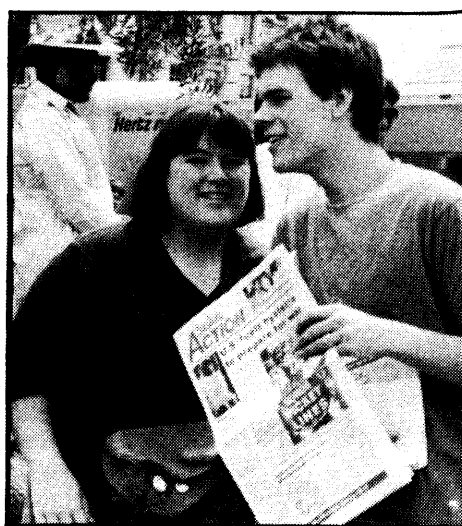
A weakness of the conference was that it was limited mainly to the nuts and bolts of Simpson-Rodino. No one challenged the

capitalist use of immigration control solely to regulate the supply of labor. No one raised the point that farm workers were given special status so that agribusiness could pay low wages. There was little emphasis on the right of asylum.

A number of demands that should have been considered at the conference include the following:

- That all refugees be granted asylum.
- That all immigrants now in the country be given legal status, the right to work, and the opportunity to acquire citizenship.
- That Simpson-Rodino be repealed, INS raids halted, and the U.S. borders opened to free passage.

It is hoped that such proposals will be considered by the labor movement at future labor/community meetings. ■



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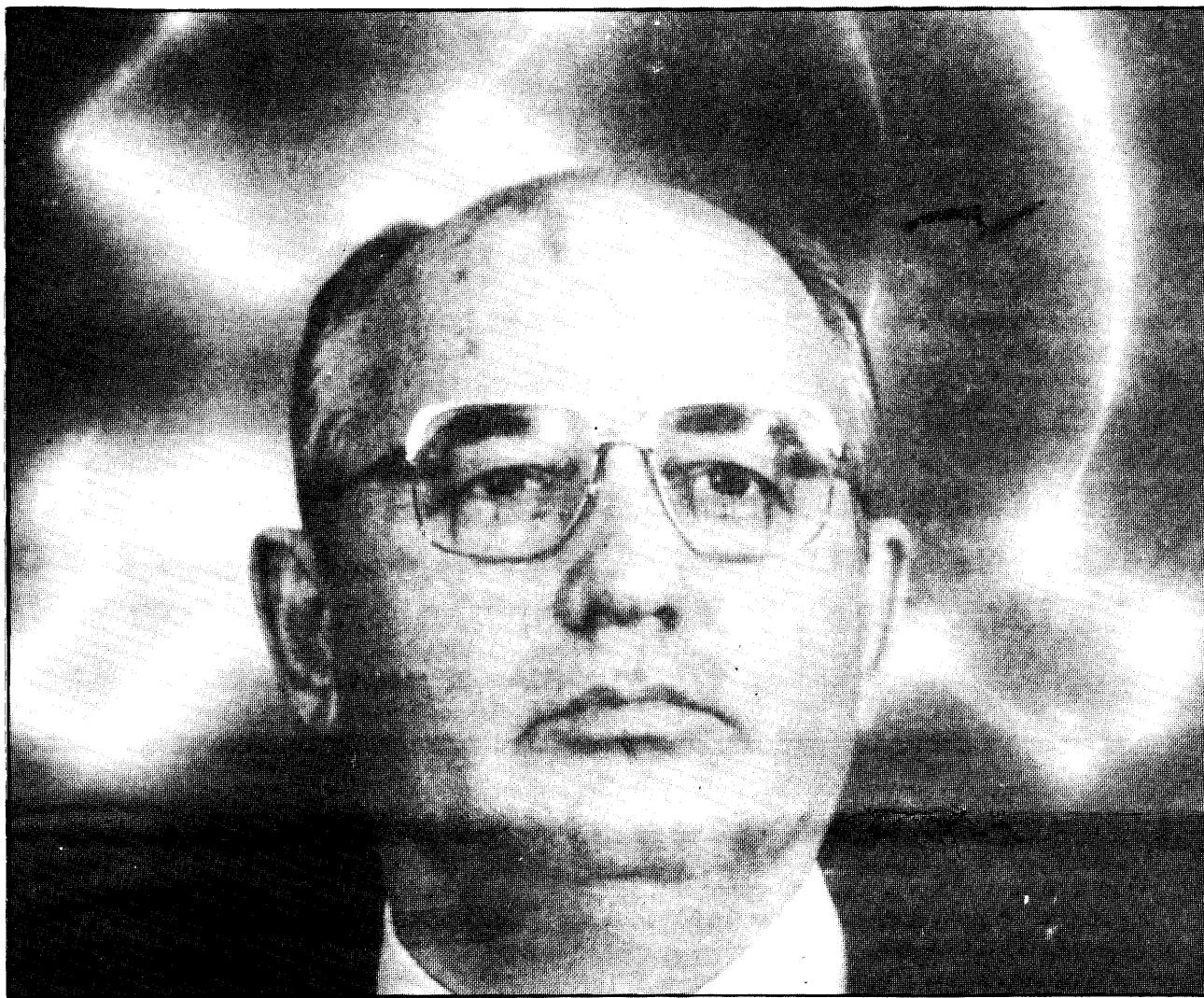
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International Outlook

The Soviet Union today:

What is the meaning of Gorbachev's reforms?



By ALAN BENJAMIN

Since becoming the Soviet Union's top leader in March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev has introduced a series of political and economic reforms aimed at pacifying the growing discontent of the Soviet working class. Gorbachev's primary concern has been to save the oppressive bureaucratic regime from a Polish Solidarity-type development inside the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev and the faction of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy he represents understand full well that the bureaucratic mismanagement of the economy, the corruption, the chronic shortages, the censorship, and the low standard of living are generating extreme unrest among the population.

A revealing article published in the Feb. 13, 1986, issue of *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the ruling Communist Party, indicates the extent of this popular dissatisfaction. The article quotes a series of letters from workers and party members.

"Purge the apparatus"

Ivanov, a worker at the Azot complex in Chtchekino, writes the following:

"I am convinced that between the central committee of the party and the working class there swarms a heavy and inert 'politico-administrative' layer that is afraid of radical changes...All that these people expect from the party are their privileges."

Another worker, N. Nicolaiev, who has been a party member in Kazan since the 1940s, is even harsher in his condemnation:

"If one talks about social justice, it is impossible to close one's eyes to the fact that the leaders of the party, the soviets, the unions, the economy, and even the Communist Youth often aggravate social inequalities by using all sorts of special restaurants, stores, and hospitals.

"Given that we have socialism in our country, there should be no special privileges. Let the administrators stand in line at the ordinary stores like everybody else. Maybe that way we'd get rid of the long lines which people are fed up with...The use of the law and a strict purge of the apparatus are indispensable."

By publishing these letters, the ruling Soviet

bureaucracy hopes to head off a popular outburst. It wants to show it is aware of the problems and anxious to do something about them.

This goal was openly avowed by Gorbachev in a speech to a closed meeting of Soviet writers on June 19, 1986. [For a fuller account of this meeting, see article by Frank Lovell in this section.] After detailing the great ills of the Soviet economy, Gorbachev stated, "We want to do something about all this and not remain with our arms crossed in order to prevent the process of change from taking place alongside us." (*Libération* [France], Dec. 26, 1986)

"House-cleaning" measures

In recent months, Gorbachev has loosened up censorship, released a limited number of political dissidents, and altered the form of electing party members. Through this *glasnost* (openness) campaign, he has hoped to enlist the support of the artistic and scientific intelligentsia, in particular, for his reform program.

These changes are certainly the most significant ones to take place in the Soviet Union since the Khrushchev era in the 1950s. But they are aimed at polishing the existing bureaucratic system in order to preserve it—not to change it.

For example, the principle of the one-party system has been stubbornly upheld. And though the KGB, the Soviet secret police, has seen some "house cleaning" of its most corrupt officials, Gorbachev in a speech to the January 1987 plenum of the party's central committee loudly praised it as an institution.

Most important, Gorbachev has opposed instituting any form of genuine workers' self-management in industry. Zhores Medvedev, a renowned Soviet dissident, stated in a recent interview published in the fall 1986 issue of *Labor Focus on Eastern Europe* that Gorbachev's changes "do not in any real sense amount to self-management." He continued, "He [Gorbachev] talks about self-management in the context of the need to restrict ministerial interference."

The right to strike, the right to challenge the decisions of the managers, and the right to directly elect and recall the top officials in the party and the state apparatus are still prohibited. Under Gorbachev's *glasnost*, the workers

can still not determine what they produce, how they produce it, and to whom their product is to go.

Allowing genuine democratic participation by the producers in elaborating and implementing the production plans would threaten the ruling bureaucracy. Gorbachev hopes to streamline the planning hierarchy, not to displace it.

Increasing labor discipline

Gorbachev and his wing of the bureaucracy want desperately to improve the economy. But because their overall goal is to preserve their privileges and monopoly on political power, they cannot allow the working class to make the fundamental decisions affecting production and distribution.

Moreover, because its foreign policy is based on "peaceful coexistence" with the major capitalist powers, the bureaucracy is an obstacle to the extension of the Russian Revolution and hence to the integration of the Soviet economy into a highly advanced worldwide socialist system.

Following the footsteps of Joseph Stalin, Gorbachev believes it is possible to "build socialism" within the boundaries of the Soviet Union alone. [See article on "peaceful coexistence" on back page of this section.]

Unable and unwilling to chart a genuine working-class, internationalist path for the Soviet working class, the Soviet bureaucracy under Gorbachev must instead resort to reactionary policies in order to attempt to resolve its growing crisis.

Gorbachev's policy is to raise labor productivity by making the workers work harder and better. Various capitalist market mechanisms are being introduced that will allow enterprises to fire workers. The threat of unemployment is the classic market means to discipline the labor force and increase productivity.

The recently introduced quality-control system is a direct threat to workers' bonuses, which can make up as much as 50 percent of their income. A work stoppage in 20 workshops of the Kamaz truck factory to the east of Moscow took place in December 1986 in protest of the reduction of production bonuses.

The increasing number of work actions reported by the underground press are certain to test the limits of *glasnost*.

Transmission belt of imperialism

Another important economic measure—one that if fully implemented could ultimately undermine the monopoly on foreign trade and the planned character of the Soviet economy—is the recent law which authorizes joint ventures with major capitalist industries. [See article by Frank Lovell for details of law.]

A sign that the capitalist class in the United States is aware of the importance of this law is given by Jerry F. Hough in a Feb. 13, 1987, op-ed article in *The New York Times*.

Hough, a staff member at the Brookings Institution, criticizes the U.S. press for "giv[ing] too much significance to a meaningless suggestion about a secret ballot in party elections, but ignor[ing] the simultaneous publication of a law on joint ventures based on foreign investment, which could be absolutely crucial."

Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the Russian Revolution who opposed the rise of the Stalinist clique in the Bolshevik Party, explained that the Stalinist bureaucracy acts as the "transmission belt of imperialist pressures" within the Soviet workers' state. He said it was the bureaucracy which at every step undermines the gains of the Russian Revolution.

For this reason, Trotsky called for a "political revolution" in the Soviet Union. By this he meant a revolutionary struggle of the working class that would defend the nationalized state property and remove the ruling bureaucratic caste from political power, thereby instituting genuine workers' democracy.

Trotsky's words ring as true today as when they were written 50 years ago.

Today, the fight of the Soviet workers against social inequality and political oppression will have to be waged against all factions of the Stalinist bureaucracy—including the "enlightened" Gorbachev faction—if the fight is to be victorious. ■

By FRANK LOVELL

The following article is reprinted in an abridged form from the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* (March 1987, No. 39), a monthly magazine published in New York by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency.

Lovell joined the Trotskyist movement in 1935. He was a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) from 1942 until 1983, when he and scores of other party members were undemocratically expelled for upholding the SWP's traditional Trotskyist program and heritage. Lovell is currently a member of the editorial board of the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*.

Current political developments in the Soviet Union are signs of economic instability and deep social unrest. They indicate sweeping changes in the economy and the society that are destined to evoke responses in the capitalist world from both the ruling class and the working class.

The ruling class has responded almost reflexively in all the major capitals of the Western world, sending signals to the Soviet bureaucracy that it is ready and willing to invest in industrial enterprises inside the Soviet Union provided capitalist property rights are recognized and protected.

Capitalist investment

In Moscow on Jan. 5, Yuri A. Kislenco, a top Soviet trade official, announced that U.S. and other foreign companies are being encouraged to enter into joint ventures with Soviet industries.

Kislenco revealed that negotiations with capitalist investors have resulted in a plan to protect their investments. According to a *New York Times* report, the plan provides tax exemption, independence from central Soviet economic planning, freedom to experiment with capitalist labor/management techniques, free access to both the Soviet home market and the world market, and joint ownership.

Kislenco said that a new law, "broadly worded," will allow foreign investors to hold a 49-percent equity in Soviet industrial facilities, and will describe tax regulations. He said such matters as labor-management relations, prices for labor and raw materials, and financing would be worked out in individual contracts for each joint venture.

Foreign investors that had signed agreements included 11 U.S. companies, among them the Monsanto



Bureaucracy fears development of Polish Solidarity-type upsurge by Soviet workers.

Company, Occidental Petroleum, and SSMC Inc. (Singer sewing machine). Fifteen others are in negotiations.

Kislenco said U.S. government restrictions on the export of advanced technology to the Soviet Union and on imports of joint venture products to the United States are serious obstacles to overcome.

If this joint-venture plan materializes as projected, it can undermine the state monopoly of foreign trade in the USSR and open up paths for reestablishing private ownership in the means of production—conceivably even threatening socialist property relations in the long term.

Bureaucratic waste

Such desperate measures are dictated by the terrible wastefulness and inefficiency of the bureaucratic apparatus, and by deep social unrest. These factors are also the stimulus for recent political reforms proposed by

Soviet bureaucracy immersed in tu



"Let the administrators stand in line at the ordinary stores... that way we'd get rid of the long lines which people are fed up with."

N. Nicolaiev—a worker from Kazan

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

A pledge to combat the inertia of the bureaucratic system is what brought Gorbachev to the top almost two years ago in the power struggle within the Soviet bureaucracy. He promised to drive out the bureaucratic drones and eliminate waste.

At a closed meeting of Soviet writers, on June 19 last year, Gorbachev exposed the crisis of the bureaucracy and the turmoil within it. What he said has not yet been published in the Soviet Union, but notes taken at the meeting have been published in Europe, first in Italy and later elsewhere. Excerpts first appeared in *The New York Times* on Dec. 22.

Even these snatches reveal the convulsive state of the bureaucratic regime.

Gorbachev told the writers that "a very profound and serious struggle lies ahead." Why?

"Take Gosplan [the government agency in charge of production plans]," Gorbachev said. "For Gosplan there exist no authorities, no general secretaries, no central committees. They do what they want. The situation they like best is for someone to come into their private office and ask for a million, for 20 tractors, for 40,000—to beg them."

Gorbachev said, "We have very many people who take advantage of their position. Nothing is exploited as much as official position."

He continued, "Our enemies...have begun a campaign against our leadership using all means, including terror. They write about the apparat that broke Khrushchev's neck, and about the apparat that will now break the neck of the new leadership."

"Disordered economy"

"The economy is very disordered," Gorbachev said to the writers. "We lag in all indices. In 1969 we had a problem in Stavropol—what to do with meat and milk. We were awash in butter. Today there is nothing. The relations between money and goods, income and goods have been lost.

"We have forgotten how to work. Not only that, we have forgotten how to work in democratic conditions. This is very difficult.

"Not a few people are drunks, profiteers, embezzlers, but mostly, of course, bureaucrats—those people who do not want to part with their rights."

What must be done?

"Those who think that we can restructure in a month or two are naïve!" he said. "This has taken shape over years and will demand massive efforts and titanic labors. If we don't involve the people, nothing will come of it.

All our plans depend on influencing the people."

Gorbachev invoked the Leninist tradition. "Why do I constantly sit with volumes of Lenin, looking through them, looking for approaches? Because it is never too late to consult with Lenin."

He talked about the meetings of the Politburo [of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union]. "There are clashes, arguments," he said. "For two, three years we postponed things, but now we want to act."

Bureaucratic dilemma

These revelations of Gorbachev grasp at the problems facing the Soviet bureaucracy. Yet the bureaucracy is incapable of reconciling these problems. It doesn't know how or where to act.

"The restructuring is progressing with great difficulty," Gorbachev said. "We have no opposition party. How then can we control ourselves? Only through criticism and self-criticism. Most important—through *glasnost* (openness). We're learning here, too.

"We're restructuring everything, from the general secretary to the rank-and-file communist. Democratism without *glasnost* does not exist. At the same time, democracy without limits is anarchy. That's why it will be difficult."

This is the terrible dilemma of every bureaucrat. They call upon the masses for help to make their system work. They speak in the name of democracy. But they don't want to give up their privileges. Proletarian "democracy," if properly controlled, is alright. But too much decision-making by the mass of people becomes "anarchy."

Deep ferment

Since Gorbachev made his appeal to the Soviet writers, a series of important developments occurred as the old year closed out

On Dec. 20, Gorbachev phoned the exiled dissident physicist Andrei Sakharov to inform him that his cruel exile to the isolated city of Gorky, where he had been kept under virtual house arrest since 1980, was ended. Sakharov was invited back to Moscow to resume his work as a physicist. Also Sakharov's companion, Yelena G. Bonner, was released and invited back to Moscow...

Almost simultaneous with the announcement that Sakharov and Bonner were released, the Soviet press agency *Tass* reported riots in Alma-Ata, capital of the Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan. Several hundred students were said to have been involved in anti-Russian rioting.

Roy Medvedev, the well-known author and critic of the bureaucracy, was reported from Moscow as having

Bureaucracy turmoil

speculated that the unusually frank report of the rioting may have been an excuse by the bureaucracy to begin a more extensive crackdown on political cronyism among ethnic Kazhaks and send a warning to ethnic minorities in other republics.

Another example of the palsied hand of the bureaucracy and efforts by the Gorbachev faction to "restructure" is the open discussion of public issues in the Soviet press.

This centers upon disputes, wrangles, and delays in the construction of hydroelectric power plants and irrigation projects. Such projects involve adjoining republics in the USSR and are complicated by conflicting national interests and cultural heritage.

Trotsky's heritage

In his efforts to cut a path through the welter of bureaucratic confusion and sloth, Gorbachev said he consults the writings of Lenin. He should also spend some time with the writings of Leon Trotsky, where the problems and dangers created by the bureaucracy are dealt with more extensively.

Lenin was only beginning to devote full attention to the alarming growth of the bureaucracy in 1923. He formed a bloc with Trotsky at that time to curb the bureaucracy which had already found its representative in the person of Joseph Stalin, who as general secretary of the party was protecting bureaucratic privileges.

Lenin died in 1924, before the struggle against the Stalin degeneracy could be organized, and Trotsky was left almost alone in the top leadership of the Bolshevik Party to continue the tasks that he and Lenin had set for themselves.

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In 1936 Trotsky, then in exile, wrote his most famous analysis and indictment of the Soviet bureaucracy, "The Revolution Betrayed." There he made a prediction:

"On the historic order of the day stands not the peaceful socialist development of 'one country,' but a series of world disturbances, wars, and revolutions. Disturbances are inevitable also in the domestic life of the Soviet Union. If the bureaucracy was compelled in its struggle for a planned economy to dekulakize the kulak, the working class will be compelled to debureaucratize the bureaucracy."

Much has happened in the last half century to confirm this...

Fissures in the bureaucracy

When Stalin, the blood-thirsty tyrant in the Kremlin, died in 1953, his heirs divided in a fierce faction struggle in which Khrushchev emerged the victor. Some other contenders were shot or otherwise disappeared.

In 1956, Khrushchev exposed some of the crimes of Stalin, "rehabilitated" some of the most prominent victims who had been murdered, and released thousands of others from concentration camps. There were signs at that time of a new awakening of intellectuals, students, and workers in the Soviet Union.

This anti-bureaucracy sentiment and striving for greater individual freedom extended to the states of Eastern Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, where mass uprisings occurred during this period and were brutally suppressed...

This series of developments within the Soviet orbit strengthened the hand of a regrouped right-wing faction in Moscow, fearful that relaxation of bureaucratic controls would lead to a genuine working-class revolution against the bureaucracy.

Khrushchev was removed from office in 1964, replaced by Brezhnev, the cautious and conservative bureaucrat. For nearly 20 years, dissidents were hounded, initiative suppressed.

By 1980, with the rise of the magnificent Solidarnosc movement of the Polish working class, it was clear that a new resurgence was in the making and that important sectors of the new socially powerful Soviet working class would sooner or later become affected.

That time has now arrived...When Gorbachev says, "the society is ripe for change," he knows what he is

talking about. He knows change is coming. He hopes to influence the direction of that change.

Today's realities

In a recent article on Soviet culture and the new *glasnost*—or political openness (*Dissent*, Winter 1987), Roy Medvedev tells about a popular play in Moscow, "The Dictatorship of Conscience," which he says takes up the contrast between Lenin's ideas and what has happened since his death.

One of the characters, called the "Outsider," is played by the author, who gets into the argument and invites audience participation. In one of the early presentations, a spectator argued:

"My grandfather was a socialist and a Menshevik. He was executed in the 1930s. We talk a lot about democracy these days. But experience tells us that there can be no real democracy as long as there are no opposition parties."

The Soviet people have learned, conversely, from one generation to the next that without an organized opposition there can be no democracy, not even the freedom to protest. But when this freedom is suppressed, forbidden by law or by an uncontrolled and illegal police apparatus, the opposition forms and develops underground.

Some efforts are now being made to control illegal arrests. A Jan. 8 report from Moscow (Philip Taubman, *New York Times*) says several high-ranking KGB [Soviet secret police] officials were dismissed for the illegal arrest last year of a Soviet newspaper reporter who exposed government corruption in a coal-mining region of the Ukraine.

The arrest was made in collaboration with and at the behest of the corrupt mining officials. The head of the KGB, Viktor Chebrikov, announced "additional measures to ensure the strict observance of law in the activities of the state security organs."

These "additional measures" are not specified. Nor is it known whether this comes as a result of the factional struggle within the bureaucracy or organized opposition to the bureaucracy—or a combination of both.

What is clear is that news of such developments, as its meaning begins to be better understood, is bound to have profound repercussions in the organized labor movement, and the radical and socialist movement, in all capitalist countries.

Destroying a crude amalgam

Workers in the United States, especially those in the conservative union movement, have been led to believe that the Soviet bureaucracy is an inevitable consequence of the 1917 workers' revolution against the czar. They are constantly told that the bureaucratic regime in the Soviet Union is communism. An uprising against the bureaucracy will destroy this crude amalgam.

But illusions about the Soviet Union and the bureaucracy among the working class of the capitalist world are more complex.

Millions of workers and peasants, especially in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, look to the Soviet government for military and financial help in their struggles against imperialist oppression.

They also look to the Soviet government for guidance, which is usually connected to whatever other assistance they may receive. This "political guidance" is the class-collaborationist politics of the bureaucracy, an extension of Soviet diplomacy which seeks "peaceful coexistence"

with the capitalist nations and is presently offering to open the borders of the Soviet Union to private enterprise and capital investment. [See article on "peaceful coexistence" on back page of this section.]

The revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracy by the Soviet working class will reestablish solidarity with the workers throughout the world and bring the full weight of the gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution behind the struggles for national independence and social transformation everywhere...

A program for the USSR

When Leon Trotsky drafted the transitional program for socialist revolution, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," in 1938, he included a section on the Soviet Union and the problems of the transition there.

This draft program was adopted later that year at the founding congress of the Fourth International and remains the basic programmatic guideline for that world organization.

At the time he wrote, Trotsky was acutely aware of the divisions within the Soviet bureaucracy and knew about the different factions. He understood and tried to explain that the privileged strata of Soviet society which the governmental bureaucracy serves and upon which it rests was not homogeneous. There were many divisions within it. These divisions were also expressed in the governing circles, as is the case today.

Trotsky entertained no illusions that the bureaucracy was capable of self-reform. Its grip on the economy and government could be broken only by a revolutionary uprising of the Soviet workers, according to his analysis.

The programmatic demands for the Soviet section of the Fourth International at that time included the following:

- 1) against social inequality and political oppression;
- 2) for the freedom of the trade unions and factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press;
- 3) return to the soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content...drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets;
- 4) legalization of soviet parties;
- 5) revision of the planned economy from top to bottom in the interests of the producers and consumers;
- 6) reorganization of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of the workers there engaged;
- 7) replace the reactionary international policy of the bureaucracy by the policy of proletarian internationalism. Down with secret diplomacy!

This section of the "Transitional Program" ended with a declaration: "There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses in insurrection—the party of the Fourth International.

"Down with the bureaucratic gang of Cain-Stalin!

"Long live socialist democracy!

"Long live the international socialist revolution!"

The best service the workers' movement throughout the world can render to the peoples of the Soviet Union today is to help ensure that these inspiring and prophetic words reach the ears of the Soviet workers. ■



Gorbachev's reforms are designed to try to involve workers to spur production in a crisis-ridden economy. To accomplish this, the bureaucrats are trying to walk a "democratic" tight-rope.

Soviet bureaucracy immersed in turmoil



"Let the administrators stand in line at the ordinary stores... that way we'd get rid of the long lines which people are fed up with."

N. Nicolaiev—a worker from Kazan

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

A pledge to combat the inertia of the bureaucratic system is what brought Gorbachev to the top almost two years ago in the power struggle within the Soviet bureaucracy. He promised to drive out the bureaucratic drones and eliminate waste.

At a closed meeting of Soviet writers, on June 19 last year, Gorbachev exposed the crisis of the bureaucracy and the turmoil within it. What he said has not yet been published in the Soviet Union, but notes taken at the meeting have been published in Europe, first in Italy and later elsewhere. Excerpts first appeared in *The New York Times* on Dec. 22.

Even these snippets reveal the convulsive state of the bureaucratic regime.

Gorbachev told the writers that "a very profound and serious struggle lies ahead." Why?

"Take Gosplan [the government agency in charge of production plans]," Gorbachev said. "For Gosplan there exist no authorities, no general secretaries, no central committees. They do what they want. The situation they like best is for someone to come into their private office and ask for a million, for 20 tractors, for 40,000—to beg them."

Gorbachev said, "We have very many people who take advantage of their position. Nothing is exploited as much as official position."

He continued, "Our enemies... have begun a campaign against our leadership using all means, including terror. They write about the apparat that broke Khrushchev's neck, and about the apparat that will now break the neck of the new leadership."

"Disordered economy"

"The economy is very disordered," Gorbachev said to the writers. "We lag in all indices. In 1969 we had a problem in Stavropol—what to do with meat and milk. We were awash in butter. Today there is nothing. The relations between money and goods, income and goods have been lost."

"We have forgotten how to work. Not only that, we have forgotten how to work in democratic conditions. This is very difficult."

"Not a few people are drunks, profiteers, embezzlers, but mostly, of course, bureaucrats—those people who do not want to part with their rights."

What must be done?

"Those who think that we can restructure in a month or two are naïve!" he said. "This has taken shape over years and will demand massive efforts and titanic labors. If we don't involve the people, nothing will come of it."

All our plans depend on influencing the people."

Gorbachev invoked the Leninist tradition. "Why do I constantly sit with volumes of Lenin, looking through them, looking for approaches? Because it is never too late to consult with Lenin."

He talked about the meetings of the Politburo [of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union]. "There are clashes, arguments," he said. "For two, three years we postponed things, but now we want to act."

Bureaucratic dilemma

These revelations of Gorbachev grasp at the problems facing the Soviet bureaucracy. Yet the bureaucracy is incapable of reconciling these problems. It doesn't know how or where to act.

"The restructuring is progressing with great difficulty," Gorbachev said. "We have no opposition party. How then can we control ourselves? Only through criticism and self-criticism. Most important—through *glasnost* (openness). We're learning here, too."

"We're restructuring everything, from the general secretary to the rank-and-file communist. Democratism without *glasnost* does not exist. At the same time, democracy without limits is anarchy. That's why it will be difficult."

This is the terrible dilemma of every bureaucrat. They call upon the masses for help to make their system work. They speak in the name of democracy. But they don't want to give up their privileges. Proletarian "democracy," if properly controlled, is alright. But too much decision-making by the mass of people becomes "anarchy."

Deep ferment

Since Gorbachev made his appeal to the Soviet writers, a series of important developments occurred as the old year closed out.

On Dec. 20, Gorbachev phoned the exiled dissident physicist Andrei Sakharov to inform him that his cruel exile to the isolated city of Gorky, where he had been kept under virtual house arrest since 1980, was ended. Sakharov was invited back to Moscow to resume his work as a physicist. Also Sakharov's companion, Yelena G. Bonner, was released and invited back to Moscow...

Almost simultaneous with the announcement that Sakharov and Bonner were released, the Soviet press agency *Tass* reported riots in Alma-Ata, capital of the Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan. Several hundred students were said to have been involved in anti-Russian rioting.

Roy Medvedev, the well-known author and critic of the bureaucracy, was reported from Moscow as having

speculated that the unusually frank report of the rioting may have been an excuse by the bureaucracy to begin a more extensive crackdown on political cronyism among ethnic Kazhaks and send a warning to ethnic minorities in other republics.

Another example of the palsied hand of the bureaucracy and efforts by the Gorbachev faction to "restructure" is the open discussion of public issues in the Soviet press.

This centers upon disputes, wrangles, and delays in the construction of hydroelectric power plants and irrigation projects. Such projects involve adjoining republics in the USSR and are complicated by conflicting national interests and cultural heritage.

Trotsky's heritage

In his efforts to cut a path through the welter of bureaucratic confusion and sloth, Gorbachev said he consults the writings of Lenin. He should also spend some time with the writings of Leon Trotsky, where the problems and dangers created by the bureaucracy are dealt with more extensively.

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Black working class will resist all attempts to perpetuate oppression and exploitation.

By ALAN BENJAMIN

At a recent forum on peace and disarmament in Moscow, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev stated bluntly that the Soviet bureaucracy was seeking "world stability" and "peaceful coexistence" with U.S. imperialism so it could devote more attention and resources to the Soviet Union's economic problems.

Speaking in the Great Kremlin Palace on Feb. 16, Gorbachev said, "Before my people, before you, and before the world, I state with full responsibility that our international policy is more than ever determined by domestic policy, by our interest in concentrating on constructive endeavors to improve our country."

"This is why we need lasting peace, predictability, and constructiveness in international relations."

Gorbachev, according to *New York Times* writer Philip Taubman (Feb. 16), indicated that "the Soviet Union wanted to resolve regional conflicts...and help fight terrorism."

A revealing illustration

One indication of what Gorbachev meant by helping "to resolve regional conflicts" is contained in a keynote report by leading Soviet theoretician Gleb Starushenko to the Second Soviet-African Conference of Peace, Cooperation and Social Progress held last year in Moscow.

The report, "Problems of struggle against racism, apartheid and colonialism in South Africa," spells out the political program advocated by the top Soviet leadership for the South African liberation movement.

A thorough assessment of this report is contained in an article titled, "From Moscow, a new slant on apartheid," which appeared in the Jan. 21, 1987, issue of the *International Herald Tribune*.

The author of the article, Collin Legum, writes the following:

"A leading Soviet theoretician has called for a peaceful solution of the conflict in South Africa and has said that the struggle against apartheid, in its present stage, is not irreversible. More remarkably he advocates far-reaching compromises to make it easier for the white minority to abandon apartheid and to reduce racial conflict..."

"[Starushenko's] report contains five suggestions that, in some respects, come closer to the views of President Pieter Botha than to the African National Congress or the South African Communist Party.

"He endorses 'the program of the anti-racist forces' for not insisting on a 'broad nationalization of capitalist property,' and lauds the readiness of those forces 'to give

"Peaceful coexistence": Gorbachev's policy toward South Africa

the bourgeoisie the necessary guarantees.'

"Second, he suggests that the ANC 'work on comprehensive guarantees for the white population that could be implemented after the elimination' of apartheid. Such guarantees, he says, would suit white liberals while neutralizing hard-liners.

"His third suggestion is the most remarkable: the idea of a parliament of two chambers—one based on proportional representation, the other with the right of veto based on equal representation of all four major racial communities [i.e., Black, mixed-race, white, and Indian]. This is close to proposals made by Botha advisers.

"Mr. Starushenko points to Kenya and Zimbabwe as countries where whites have been made to feel safe after independence. These countries, he says, show what might be achieved in South Africa by offering guarantees to the white and other minorities..."

"His proposals make sense in terms of Soviet Marxist analysis of the situation. Mr. Starushenko sees a two-stage struggle: Only after the 'liberation struggle' has ended can the struggle for the 'national democratic revolution' begin."

Dovetails liberal capitalist wing

In recent months, important ruling-class circles in Europe, South Africa, and even the United States have called for the gradual dismantling of apartheid and for negotiations with the African National Congress (ANC), one of the main components of the liberation movement.

This more lucid wing of the capitalist class is concerned that unless apartheid is modified in time, the struggle of the Black majority could radicalize to the point of threatening capitalist property relations in South Africa.

One concrete proposal that has received support from this capitalist sector—a proposal put forward by South African Chief Gatsha Buthelezi—is the creation of a two-chamber parliament in which all opposition forces, including the ANC, would participate.

With the Soviet Union's new political position on South Africa, it is clear that the African National Congress will come under increasing pressure to accept the policy of sharing political power with the so-called "progressive" elements of the white capitalist class. The international apparatus of the Kremlin wields great influence over sectors of the ANC, particularly its exiled leaders.

The policy of "peaceful coexistence" in South Africa would require the South African liberation forces to betray the national and social revolution in the interests of imperialist private property.

An impossible compromise

But such a compromise as advocated by Buthelezi—and now the top Soviet leadership—is an impossible one for the Black masses.

South Africa, compared to Kenya or Zimbabwe, is a very urban and industrial society. The majority of the employed South African population is made up of wage workers and their families.

A powerful Black South African working class, organized in mass-based trade unions, has risen up against apartheid and capitalist exploitation. It has championed the struggle for democratic demands—"One person, one vote"—with the struggle for better working conditions and trade-union rights.

And there exists in South Africa an important anti-capitalist tradition among political currents that grew out of the "Black Consciousness" movement of the 1970s—such as AZAPO (the Azanian People's Organization) and the National Forum.

The powerful Black working class can be expected to strongly resist any and all attempts to perpetuate imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation.

Why the Stalinists pursue this line

Gorbachev's Feb. 16 speech spells out clearly the policy, first formulated by Joseph Stalin, of "building socialism in one country." This policy is a betrayal of the program and strategy of the Bolshevik Party under V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

In 1917, the Bolshevik Party led the Russian workers to power and charted a strategy for socialism on a world scale. Only the socialist revolution could lead humanity out of the deadlock created by imperialism and imperialist wars, the party's program affirmed.

The Bolsheviks considered that the revolution in Russia was the beginning, not the end, of the world revolution. As long as imperialism continued to exist, the victorious Russian Revolution was not safe, they argued.

From the very moment of the establishment of Soviet power, the leaders of the revolution looked to the

working class of the West, to the advanced capitalist countries of Europe, to come to their assistance.

In 1919, the Bolsheviks founded the Communist International (or Third International) with the goal of advancing the world socialist revolution. They saw the Soviet Union as the advanced outpost of this struggle.

Within a decade after the victorious October Revolution, however, the Soviet leadership broke with the proletarian internationalism of the Bolshevik Party.

Under the conditions of a long civil war and the intervention of 14 imperialist armies, the leadership team assembled by Lenin and Trotsky was severely weakened and finally defeated by a rising bureaucratic caste headed by Joseph Stalin.

The democratic institutions of workers' rule were destroyed and replaced by the dictatorial rule of a monolithic party. The new bureaucratic caste amassed great economic privileges, which they would steadfastly defend against the Soviet working class.

Counterrevolutionary cooperation

After 1923, the process of bureaucratization became accelerated. Out of this development arose for the first time the theory of "building socialism in one country." Stalin argued that socialism could be built in the Soviet Union if there was no foreign intervention and if there was no war.

Thus, the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy was directed at subordinating actual revolutionary developments that threatened "world stability" and the status quo. The bureaucrats feared that the extension of the world revolution would spread into the Soviet Union itself and threaten their immense economic privileges.

"Peaceful coexistence," which looks to détente with the major capitalist nations, has been the bureaucracy's justification for betraying one revolution after another.

In the name of forging an alliance with alleged "progressive" capitalists, the Stalinist misleaders hold back and block the revolutionary struggle of workers and peasants against their capitalist rulers. They argue that if workers take over the factories and peasants take over the land, it would alienate the "progressive" capitalists. They misname this counterrevolutionary policy a "two-stage" revolution.

From Spain in the 1930s to Chile in the early '70s, the Stalinist parties dominated by the Kremlin have led the workers and peasants to bloody defeat.

In a speech to the United Nations in October 1985, President Reagan appealed to the Soviet Union to "contribute to solving regional conflicts throughout the Third World." The U.S. ruling class understands full well how the policy of the Stalinists meshes in with its own imperialist plans. Reagan's intransigence is designed to pressure the Stalinists into making even greater concessions to imperialism.

Gorbachev's response to Reagan has been to say "yes." The recent example of South Africa, where the proletarian revolution is on the order of the day, is a good illustration of the Soviet bureaucracy's counter-revolutionary foreign policy. ■

International VIEWPOINT

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3435 Army St. Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110

By CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN

With the recent clampdown on freedom of the press in South Africa, which gives the Commissioner of Police the right to prohibit the publication of anything he considers "undesirable," the apartheid state can definitely be classified as a police state.

This blanket of darkness makes it difficult to assess with precision the true state of affairs of what is happening. What follows is based on conversations with friends from South Africa and from information (although limited) received directly from that country.—C.v.G.

The State of Emergency passed in June 1986 had two objectives: First, to cripple the liberation movement. Second, to try to heal the disarray in the ruling class.

President P.W. Botha thought that his limited program of reforms would soften criticism from the "liberal" wing of South African and international capital. Sections of world capitalism are anxious to see a structural change that would do away with the racism of apartheid while safeguarding what they euphemistically call "free enterprise."

Botha also hoped that his self-imposed limits—the retention of segregation in education and living areas and the continued disenfranchisement of the Black (African) majority—would be sufficient to slow down the growth of right-wing Afrikaner politics. He has failed in both objectives.

In an attempt to resolve these contradictions, Botha decided to call a general election two years before it was due in order to get a fresh mandate from the white electorate. The immediate effect of this was further splits from the ruling National Party, emphasizing the disunity that is wracking the ruling class.

The whites-only elections for parliament are scheduled to take place on May 6. Of course, they have no validity for the Black masses.

A setback for the struggle

The emergency has dealt the liberation forces a severe blow. Thousands of national and local leaders have been arrested or detained without charges. The security forces are in the Black townships in massive strength.

The mood of euphoria that expected a quick victory and gave rise to such slogans as "no education before liberation" has largely given way to a realization that the state is still powerful, that the struggle will be prolonged, and that there will be setbacks as well as advances before the final victory.

These past two years have been years of militant struggle in the townships, in the schools, in the mines and factories, and in the countryside. They have also been the years in which the African National Congress (ANC) recovered and consolidated its position of preeminence in the national liberation movement.

Even if the ANC, as such, did not initiate all the activities in the schools and townships, there can be no doubt that the majority of the "comrades" conceived of themselves as supporters of the ANC. This is reinforced by government propaganda that credits the ANC with every act of violence and insurgency.

ANC assesses failures

In the "Statement of the National Executive Committee of the ANC on the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the ANC" (Jan. 8, 1987), presented by President Oliver Tambo, and in the accompanying "What Is To Be Done!" the successes and failures are frankly assessed.

In 1986, Tambo set his movement the task of further activating the underground army, Unkhonte we Sizwe, and of "drawing millions of our people into combat." Now he concedes that, "In this regard, we must say that we have not progressed as far as we can."

One of the failures that Tambo

Charlie van Gelderen is a long-standing activist in the South African freedom struggle. He now lives in Britain.

S. African unions, ANC respond to repression



Metal & Allied Workers Union women demonstrating during their annual general meeting in Durban shortly before police attacked, killing one and injuring many. Despite repression, unions survive and grow.

highlights is the failure to link up the cells of trained guerrillas sent into the country and the large number of discontented Black youths. In short, the call for a "People's War" could not be translated from propaganda into reality.

It could also be added that while the ANC (and other liberation organizations) have supported the building of alternative forms of popular government in the localities, the overwhelming armed power of the state has prevented the linking up of these local committees nationally into a genuine form of dual power. The slogan "Power to the People" remains exactly that—a slogan.

Trade unions unbeaten

The political wing of the liberation movement (the United Democratic Front [UDF] and the National Forum) has been dealt serious blows by the state of emergency. Meetings, rallies, and even mass attendance at funerals have been prohibited. Their leaderships have been arrested and their literature censored.

The trade-union movement, however, has shown a remarkable resilience. The main factor for this is the thoroughly democratic structure of the main trade unions as opposed to the highly centralized and bureaucratic leadership of the UDF.

Commemorating the first year of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), its general secretary, Jay Naidoo, recently stressed the increasing importance of the working class—which has not confined its struggle to the issues of wages and working conditions but played a leading role in national politics.

"Debates in COSATU have placed socialism very firmly on the agenda," Naidoo said. "The growth of working-class politics is clear. It is reflected in the methods and content of struggles being waged by democratic structures from village committees to street committees, from shop-steward councils to SRC's."

"More and more, these democratic structures are drawing the link between the oppression they are fighting and the overall methods of political control of the working class in our society. They are drawing this link not only in theory but in action."

"These organs of people's power are important for advancing mass struggle now; but they are also important to ensure that we really govern ourselves after change."

"We believe workers' experience of democracy in the unions is contributing to

building working-class leadership more broadly."

ANC skirts working-class role

In the 7000 words of the "Anniversary Statement," Tambo devotes only 150 to the role of the working class. In the tasks proposed for 1987, there is no attempt to coordinate the workers' struggle to that of the general struggle for people's power.

While the ANC makes the usual genuflection to the "leading role of the workers," it gives no content to this leading role. Almost the same importance is given to the call to white people to join the struggle against apartheid.

How different the position of Naidoo: "Workers are more directly confronting the issue of the distribution of wealth; tactics like sit-ins have also put the issue of control of the means of production on the agenda."

COSATU's Vice President Chris Dlamini also spelled out how the "leading role of the working class" must be given a succinct political program if it is to have any meaning:

"The unholy alliance of apartheid and capitalism has become obvious and concrete. One cannot expect to eradicate it simply by removing apartheid, nor can economic transformation come about merely by organizing workers into unions and demanding a living wage and good living conditions."

"What we are talking about is the total change of the present system in its entirety. This change can never be brought about as the result of a change of heart from Big Business or a softening of attitudes by the regime or when Thatcher discards her attitude. It will only come through the struggles waged by all progressive forces of our people."

"I am convinced that the links [of the trade unions] with all progressive organizations of our people need to be concretized now."

"United front" with the bosses?

In contrast to the ANC's statements, the South African white capitalists are becoming all too aware of the growing strength of organized labor and its effectiveness as leader and organizer of the struggle against apartheid. Many leaders of Big Business are becoming convinced that capitalism will not survive in South Africa if it does not distance itself from apartheid.

The Federated Chambers of Industry actually proposed that workers and

management should form a "united front" against the State of Emergency. COSATU gave them a dusty answer:

"We would not consider a united front with the employers because capitalism is protected by apartheid, often at gunpoint. How can workers who are fighting tooth-and-nail battles with bosses in their factories be expected to see them as allies on any level?"

"We believe we would weaken the growth of the working-class movement by entering a united front with monopoly capitalism. Instead, we have pressurized them to grant us rights in the factory that would allow us to regroup on our own terms. But their response has been fairly lame."

All available information shows that despite the severity of the repression, the struggle in South Africa continues—though, perhaps, at a slower tempo. Although handicapped by the denial of bases in neighboring states, there has been an increase in guerrilla activities within the country.

The state has responded to this, not only by direct military and police assault, but by organizing squads of counterrevolutionary vigilantes, the so-called Wit Doeke, so that the media can portray the struggle as Black against Black.

The Afrikaner-dominated state machinery now has no other option than a military solution. Despite the increased use of armed guerrillas, the liberation movement is not in a position for an all-out military confrontation with the state. This would indicate the need for a greater utilization of the industrial muscle of the organized workers than appears implicit in the ANC's strategy for 1987. ■

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Watsonville cannery workers approve contract, end strike

By HECTOR TOBAR

A long and militant strike at California's largest frozen-food company in Watsonville, Calif., is over—19 months after it began.

Members of Teamster Union Local 912 voted 543 to 21 on March 11 to approve a three-year contract with the former Watsonville Canning and Frozen Food Co., now known as Norcal Frozen Foods.

The contract provides for wages of \$5.80 an hour, almost \$1 an hour less than the workers received before the strike began. Among the workers the mood is one of relief that the long struggle is over, tempered by the fact that the new contract still contains a wage cut.

"Everyone looks happy inside there," one worker told *The San Francisco Chronicle* on her first day back on the job. "But we are a little worried about the money," she added. "During the strike my teenage sons got jobs and my mother helped us. That was the only way we could survive. We have still got a long way to go—and life will never be the same again."

About 1000 workers at the Watsonville plant went on strike in September 1985 when cannery owners proposed a 29-percent wage cut and the elimination of most health benefits.

The workers, about 80 percent of them Latina women, voted 545 to 6 to strike. The strike started with a high level of militancy and activity. But this mood was set back when a Watsonville court limited the strikers to four pickets at each plant entrance. Public demonstrations were also prohibited within 100 yards of the plant.

Arrests of strikers for the smallest violations of the injunction became common, and many strikers spent nights in jail. Harassment of the strikers spread to the community, where at least two strikers had their homes firebombed.

The long duration of the strike took its toll on the families involved. Many of the strikers who were Mexican immigrants were forced to return to Mexico to find employment and support from family members.

Outpouring of support

People from throughout Northern California responded to the strikers' difficulties with an outpouring of support. More than 3000 people marched in

solidarity with the strikers in October 1985, and other demonstrations followed. Donations of food and money came from throughout Santa Cruz County and the San Francisco area.

The end of the strike came with the demise of Watsonville Canning. Wells Fargo Bank began foreclosure proceedings

against the company when it was unable to keep up with payments on \$18 million in loans.

Norcal Frozen foods, a consortium of area growers owed \$7 million by Watsonville Canning, took over the insolvent company and almost immediately reopened negotiations with the union.



Watsonville workers at strike support rally in October 1985

E.D. Nixon: Trailblazer of civil rights movement

By MAY MAY GONG

E.D. Nixon, a major leader of the civil rights movement, died in Montgomery, Ala., on Feb. 25. He was 87 years old.

A 20-year field organizer for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Nixon was the driving force behind the anti-segregation movement in Montgomery when the bus boycott began in December 1955. The bus boycott was the first major protest to follow the Supreme Court ruling in 1954 that outlawed segregated schools and set the stage for the Black protests that led to the civil rights laws of the 1960s.

On Dec. 2, 1955, Rosa Parks, secretary of the Montgomery NAACP, refused to relinquish her city bus seat to a white man and was arrested for disturbing the peace and violating a city bus segregation ordinance. Nixon went to bail her out. "When they did arrest her, it was on one of those old Jim

The role of the Teamster leadership was in question throughout the dispute. Teamster officials only allowed the strike to get under way two months after the initial vote approving the strike.

Strike benefits, including \$55 weekly checks and boxes of free food, were cut one week before ratification of the new contract by Teamster officials. They argued that there was no longer a strike because Watsonville Canning no longer existed.

In another unusual move, union officials required a two-thirds vote to reject the proposed contract. Under this arrangement, the contract needed the support of only one-third of the workers.

Crow segregationist laws," he said. "I knew then that something could be done."

Nixon and Parks began to mobilize support for a Black boycott of the Montgomery city bus system. Nixon called on many of his fellow activists for help. One of them was the then 26-year old Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

By November 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court had declared the segregation ordinance of Montgomery unconstitutional. And on Dec. 21, 1956, Nixon and King boarded a city bus to symbolize the end of this victorious struggle.

Friends and admirers filled the small chapel in the Phillips-Riley Funeral Home in Montgomery to pay tribute to E.D. Nixon. His contributions to the civil rights movement will never be forgotten. At a time of increased racist attacks nationwide, Nixon's example is an inspiration to all those who are continuing the struggle today.

P-9 leader Floyd Lenocho: A fighter to the end

By JAKE COOPER

On Feb. 21, 1987, Floyd Lenocho died of a broken heart. Just one week before his death, the Hormel meatpacking company notified him that because of his work in the union, he was discharged and would not be put on the recall list.

Floyd could not believe—after putting in close to 45 years for Hormel—that he could be dismissed like this. His only crime was that he was a tireless fighter for the union and the working class and was loved by all in his community.

Floyd Lenocho touched almost every phase of life in Austin. He coached baseball and basketball teams, paying particular attention to the players with the least talent. He always tried to help those who needed the most help. Floyd was also an avid gardener, who usually shared the fruits of his labor with others in Austin.

Beginning in 1960, Lenocho held numerous posts in his union. He served as president of Local P-9 and as a member of its executive board. He was removed from the executive board last year when the international leadership of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) placed P-9 under trusteeship.

The funeral was held in the Catholic Church in Austin. There was an unmistakable air of sadness among the over 1000 people who attended. The P-9 workers of Austin had suffered such bitter blows from Hormel, the corrupt UFCW leadership, the governmental apparatus, and the bureaucrats of the labor movement that the death of Lenocho seemed almost too much to bear.

It was the largest funeral ever held in that church. Two of his children gave eulogies. They told of a caring, loving father whose entire life was devoted to ideals of

upgrading humanity and his struggle for human rights.

Former P-9 President Jim Guyette spoke of Lenocho's glowing record, his unselfishness, and his devotion to his union.

The following are some of Lenocho's last words from interviews:

"I can't believe that after 45 years as a working person, they can fire me for acting like a union man. If that's the truth, the unions are in damn sorry shape in the country.

"They told me I was fired for leafleting and for boycotting. In reality, all we were trying to do was get back what was rightfully ours. I feel better about myself now than when the strike started. I feel we are fighting for a just cause."

Floyd died at 62 years of age. He was a loyal fighter to the end.

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A message to our readers

Some of our readers have written letters asking about our relationship to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in this country. We are reprinting a statement adopted by the Political Committee of Socialist Action on May 5, 1986, to explain our views on this question.

Socialist Action was formed in October 1983 by individuals who had been undemocratically expelled by the SWP leadership. The SWP leadership broke with the party's democratic traditions. It resorted to bureaucratic expulsions of its members rather than allow the membership to carry out a democratic political debate on the central questions of revolutionary strategy which the leadership sought to discard.

The expelled members, organized today in Socialist Action branches across the country, sought to defend the historic program of the Trotskyist movement in the United States—the program previously defended by the SWP.

They also sought readmission into the SWP, with the democratic rights that were denied them, in order to fight for this program. They were denied readmission. Since that time, many people who were never in the SWP have joined Socialist

Action.

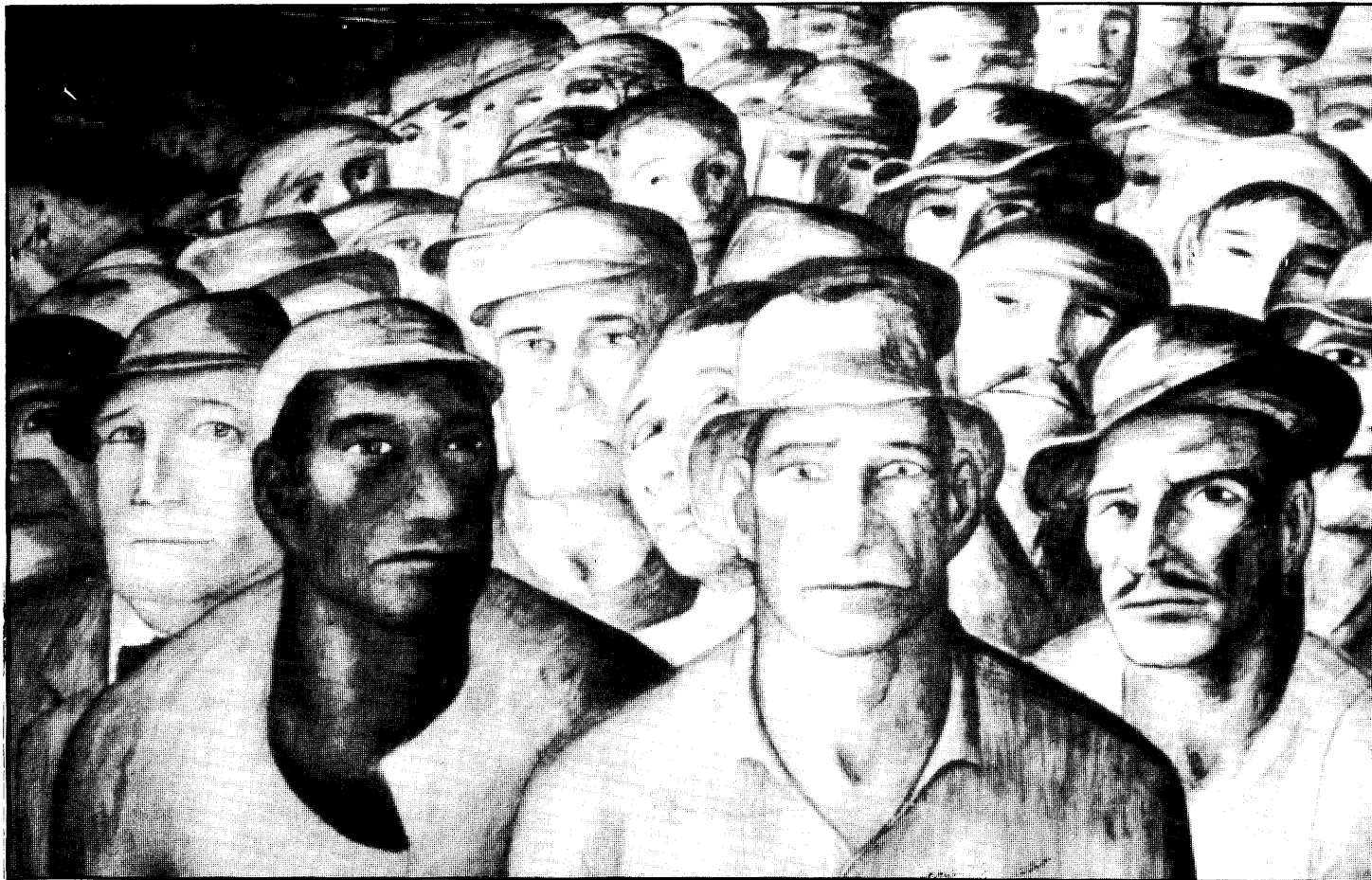
In the past, Socialist Action has used the term "public faction" to describe its relation to the SWP. This term followed the language used by the SWP's predecessor organization, the Communist League of America, which was formed by the early supporters of Leon Trotsky in the U.S. Communist Party who were expelled from that party in 1929.

The term "public faction" was never used to connote an organizational connection to the SWP. Socialist Action is not—and has never been—connected to the SWP.

Since its formation, Socialist Action has been in political solidarity with the Fourth International, as has been the SWP—but there is no organizational connection between the SWP and Socialist Action.

Socialist Action bases itself on the historic revolutionary program and practice of the SWP prior to 1979, the year which marked a turn by the SWP leadership away from its Marxist heritage.

The program and activities of Socialist Action are determined by its membership. All aspects of the program and functioning of the SWP are determined by its membership. Neither organization takes responsibility for the program or practice of the other.



New book fails to address problems facing unions

By MILTON ALVIN

Unions in Transition: Entering the Second Century, Edited by Seymour Martin Lipset, San Francisco, ICS Press, 1986, 506 pp.

This book consists of essays written by the editor and 17 other authors. Thirteen of the contributors are academics, one a former newspaper reporter, two union leaders, one a union activist, and one a representative of a management organization.

The heavy preponderance of academics is reflected in the nature of the contributions to the book. Approaches to the problems that face American unions as they mark the 100th anniversary of the formation of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) are made largely through the eyes of college professors, and not through the experience of union members.

What comes through is a dark thread of pessimism for the future of unions in the United States. The writers have noticed the decline in union membership and, in most cases, have drawn negative opinions on what the future holds.

Some of the authors even believe that unions, as they have developed over the years, are destined to disappear altogether. More than a few hint that this would be a good thing for the country. But here and there a more optimistic view is held, and there is some hope expressed for a turnaround.

Working-class history ignored

Most of the authors, either implicitly or explicitly, assume that workers and employers have much in common. In reality, the interests of these two social classes are fundamentally opposed. As a result, they are in constant struggle with one another over how the surplus produced is to be divided. This is what caused the workers to organize unions in the first place.

Another weakness in virtually all the essays is a neglect of the historical development of the working class.

In the 1820s, it was still illegal for workers to combine to form a union. Nevertheless, toward the end of that decade, some unions appeared on the scene, and the first workers' political parties were organized in about 50 Eastern cities. These parties functioned for several years and won reforms in several places.

The presence of workers' political parties helped the movement to form unions.

However, it was not until the Civil War

period that unions had any growth to speak of.

In the intervening years important reforms were won. The right to vote—previously confined to owners of property—was extended: Debtors' prisons were abolished. Public education became more available. Taxation was more equitably spread in the population, and an anti-slavery movement was launched.

Some of these changes were due to increased activity within the working class. During the Civil War unions grew. The victory of the North gave an additional impetus to union organizing.

About 50 years after the first unions were formed, there arose a movement for an eight-hour day. The movement took on greater significance in the 1880s. But it took another 50-year period before the eight-hour day was won. At that time, in the 1930s, the CIO and the AFL—then competing organizations—grew with unprecedented speed.

Organizing drives of the 1930s

Now another 50-year period has passed, and unions are not growing but declining. This is especially true in basic industries such as steel and auto—where the unions have lost hundreds of thousands of members.

But not everything is on the negative side. Past history is instructive here.

In the early 1930s, the beginning of the worst depression in American history, unions declined in size to about one-half of what they represented in the 1920s.

The year 1934, however, saw three great battles between the workers and the bosses. In the Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, the Toledo Auto-Lite strike, and the general strike in San Francisco, workers overcame earlier defeats and showed that victories were possible.

These events convinced John L. Lewis, head of the coal miners' union, and several other top labor leaders that unless they stepped in and organized workers, more radical elements would. They broke with the traditional policy of the AFL that believed unskilled workers were unfit to become union members.

The Committee for Industrial Organization (later changed to the Congress of Industrial Organization) was formed. Organizers and money were sent into the mass-production industries to form new unions based on the principle that all workers in a workplace should belong to the same union.

Mass-production workers poured into the new unions by the millions, swelling the

labor movement to five times its former size. This transformation was looked upon by many as a revolution—at least in part.

The long-range view

Anyone who tries to foresee the future of the union movement must look back to the experiences of the 1930s. This is the long-range view.

If it was possible and historically necessary then for semi-skilled and unskilled mass-production workers to be brought into the union movement, why can that process not be extended today to the millions of women, minorities, and youth who are relatively new to the workforce? This is an inevitable step, if the workers' movement is to survive.

There is also a short-range development that lends encouragement. The strike of the meatcutters against the Hormel company at Austin, Minn., is an example of how a small but determined detachment of the union movement can struggle for its aims.

The Hormel strikers have given an example of militant struggle that brought support from almost every corner of the union movement—despite opposition from the government and from the top leaders of their international union and the AFL-CIO.

A political arm for labor

Among the weaknesses of the present union movement, as some of the contributors to the book note, is the absence of a political arm that represents labor. This is contrasted to a number of countries in Western Europe where large workers' parties exist and reinforce the unions.

However, those who note the absence of

a labor party fail to state forthrightly that the blame for this should be placed at the doorstep of top union leaders, Stalinists and Social Democrats, all of whom—with few exceptions—have tied themselves to the Democratic Party. The exceptions have done no better by supporting the Republican Party.

Union leaders of the 1930s, such as John L. Lewis, made a contribution to unionism by helping to build the CIO. However, they gave back a good deal by keeping the unions in a coalition with the Democratic Party instead of forming a labor party. At that time, there was considerable support for the idea of workers forming their own party.

None of the authors deal with the main problem. That is the nature of the present union leadership, which does not believe that class struggle is the basis of the divisions in present-day society.

The most influential union leaders look to cooperation between workers and employers to solve problems. But this perspective is a utopia that can never come to pass. These leaders' class collaborationist views—and their resulting conservatism and unwillingness to struggle—make it impossible for them to lead the union movement out of the present crisis.

This leadership (more accurately a "misleadership") must be replaced by new people, those who are ready to lead a fight. If this looks like a big order, it is. But there is no other way out.

The new movement that will arise in the next period will take an independent stand in political activity. It will turn its back on the politics of those like AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, who is busy tying the unions to the Democratic Party.

Unions must fight

Kirkland contributes a chapter to the book. He stresses the importance of the problem of unemployment, but offers no program to deal with it.

For example, it would not have been out of place for Kirkland to say something about spending government money on construction programs—for much needed housing, schools, medical centers, and transportation—to create jobs. Kirkland is a supporter of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua, however, and that implies that federal money is needed for armaments.

Another contributor, Gus Tyler, assistant president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, places emphasis on the introduction of robots into the manufacturing process, and the danger this implies in eliminating jobs. But while he mentions reductions in working hours, he does so only in an example of robots displacing workers.

Kirkland and Tyler do not propose that unions fight for a shorter work week with no reduction in take-home pay. This is a measure that could create jobs that are needed now—without waiting for robots to throw millions more out of work. Their views seem to be more on the side of what may happen years from now than finding a solution to the problems that already exist.

All in all, the main lesson to be learned from the present situation in the unions is that the conservative bureaucracy that has been imposed upon them must be removed and replaced with fighters who are willing and able to lead the unions in resolving their problems.

Hormel strikers hold mass rally

By JAKE COOPER

AUSTIN, Minn.—One thousand supporters of the still-striking Hormel meatcutters wound through the streets here on Saturday, March 14. It was clear that these courageous workers have not given up the battle for their jobs and a decent contract.

Organized by the Austin United Support Group, the spirited march and rally drew unionists from across the country, including longshore workers from Los Angeles, autoworkers from Detroit and Pontiac, and mineworkers from West Virginia.

Also marching in solidarity were

meatcutters from Nebraska, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

Jim Guyette, former P-9 president and central strike leader, announced plans to extend the Hormel boycott to company subsidiaries Jenny-O and Dubuque Products. A four-part leaflet series is in preparation to support this effort. It will focus on Hormel's abysmal safety record and its plants in apartheid South Africa.

Fred Dube, representing the African National Congress, extended his organization's support. Other speakers included Cathy Zwarich, representing the TWA strikers; Phil Quik, of *Labor Notes*; and Pete Radcliff, of the Twin Cities Strike Support Committee.

In the mass media only "money talks"

By PAUL SIEGEL

In conjunction with the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution, *Socialist Action* is printing a four-part series of articles by Paul Siegel on the topic of democracy in America.

In the first two installments, which appeared in our February and March issues, Professor Siegel reviewed many of the struggles through which democratic rights were won in this country. Following the Civil War, he argued, the increase of wealth of the industrial capitalists made the United States more and more a society that was democratic only in form.

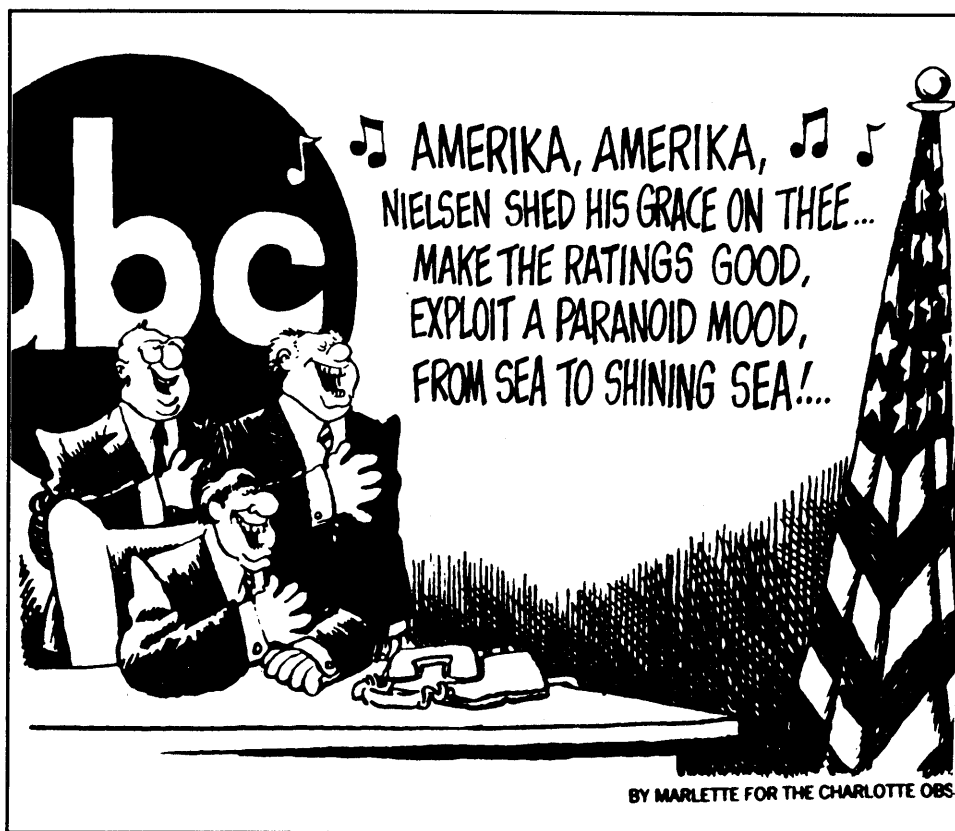
Paul Siegel is Professor Emeritus at Long Island University and the author of several books on political and literary themes. His newest book, "The Meek and the Militant: Religion and Power Across the World," is reviewed on page 15.

A Supreme Court decision once referred to the various forms of communication as providing a "marketplace of ideas." The phrase suggests a village fair at which humble artisans come to sell their products, and shrewd buyers are able to choose from a great array of wares.

Actually, communications have become highly monopolized, with small publications eking out a marginal existence. Only 4 percent of the cities in the United States have newspapers under more than one ownership.

Most large-circulation newspapers are owned by chains such as Gannett, Knight-Ridder, and Newhouse. If newspapers are not members of a chain, they carry syndicated columns and news services.

For most readers, the choice in the "marketplace of ideas" offered by the press is like the choice between McDonald's and Burger King. A very few newspapers, such



BY MARLETTE FOR THE CHARLOTTE OBS

get from sponsors. But, like competing politicians, there is really little difference between the networks.

Television presents events as disconnected happenings. It then calls upon "experts" to comment on the chaotic flow of images. Viewers are made to feel powerless in their bewilderment and dependent upon the "expert," who will tell them what to think and how to respond.

Although the viewer is often cynical about television—which one moment tells how his or her life will be altered by political events and another moment how it will be altered by buying the right deodorant—the authoritative voice of the "expert" has its unrecognized effect.

A biased vocabulary

The underlying assumptions in news accounts and commentary are indicated by such phrases as "our investments abroad" and "our markets." But most Americans do not either own anything or sell anything abroad.

A few huge corporations are identified with the whole country. It is taken for granted that what is good for them is good for the country, something that is by no means obvious, especially when "our boys" are sent to fight for "our interests."

The bias of the media is revealed in the use of the word "terrorist" for the Irish Republican Army and the Palestine Liberation Organization but not for the contras in Nicaragua. However, the misguided terrorist acts of the IRA and the PLO liberation fighters are far exceeded by the violence of the contras—who have systematically killed thousands of peasants, coffee-harvesters, and educational and health workers.

This bias is revealed, too, in the habitual use of the word "surrogate" to define the relation of Cuba to the Soviet Union but not to define the relation of Honduras to the United States—which uses Honduras as a base for the contras.

It is revealed, finally, in the habitual use of the word "satellites" for the Eastern European states but not for the Central American states. Romania, however, has a higher degree of independence than El Salvador has.

Despite the common assumptions that prevail, television stations make a great point of "fairness" and "balance." What this means is that the commentators on their programs run the gamut of opinion from A to B. The moderator of a panel of commentators implicitly suggests that the truth lies somewhere between A and B. The other letters of the alphabet are disregarded.

Radical critics of the status quo, including those with numerous books and

articles and impressive academic credentials, do not qualify as experts for television.

CBS and Gen. Westmoreland

Ultra-conservatives often inveigh against the "liberal media." They want to have as commentators only those of category A, not of category B. The difference between the ultra-conservatives and the media was indicated in the law suit by General Westmoreland—backed by these ultra-conservatives—against CBS.

The network had shown a documentary claiming that Westmoreland deliberately deceived Johnson about the strength of the Vietnamese during the war. Westmoreland's lawyers were able to show how CBS, by editing interviews, was able to slant them. They exposed the network's techniques not just on this occasion but in its general practice.

On the other hand, CBS was able to present such damaging evidence against Westmoreland that the doughty general had to beat a retreat and settle out of court for a CBS statement that praised him for his patriotism but did not retract the charge that he was a liar.

The issue, however, of how much Westmoreland deceived Johnson in the narrow interests of the military establishment is not of the first importance to the American people. What is really important to them is how they were deceived by Johnson aided by the military.

"Television presents events as disconnected happenings."

Johnson had been able to get Congress to pass virtually unanimously the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. The government used the resolution to unconstitutionally carry on an undeclared war—on the pretext that North Vietnam had sought to torpedo an American warship.

There was no evidence, as sober historians now acknowledge, that North Vietnam had really taken this action so obviously opposed to its own interest. But neither Congress, the "free press," nor the "liberal" TV commentators questioned the allegation then—or since that time.

Money talks in elections

Through the monopolized media and the

entire political set-up, money talks in the election campaigns. Sometimes it whispers insinuatingly so that people are influenced subliminally without realizing it. Other times it bellows. Radical parties are like soap-box orators in a public park where a competing powerful public address system drowns them out.

In addition to the free publicity the Republicans and Democratic parties get in the media, they buy 30-second TV "spots" that sell candidates the way commercials tell you that Fab is better than Tide or vice versa.

The same techniques—the hypnotic repetition of slogans and catchwords devoid of content, the killing of critical faculties through irrational appeals, the attractive packaging of the product—are used in selling politicians who have little different to offer from each other.

This was not what Thomas Jefferson meant when he spoke of an informed citizenry being the basis of a healthy democracy.

Election campaigns are not political processes in which the masses of people actively participate. They are like wrestling matches which leave a lot of people indifferent but which a lot of others find exciting to watch—even though they suspect that the grunts and grimaces are more acting than reality.

The culmination of the campaigns is the TV presidential "debates." Here the object is not to inform and reason. It is to project an image of knowledge, self-assurance, coolness under stress, amiability, patriotism, and so forth.

Americans are deceived

A Reagan official, speaking not for attribution, told a reporter (*New York Times*, Nov. 1, 1984), "You can say anything you want during a debate and 80 million people hear it." If the next day, reporters document what are charitably described as misstatements, he added, "So

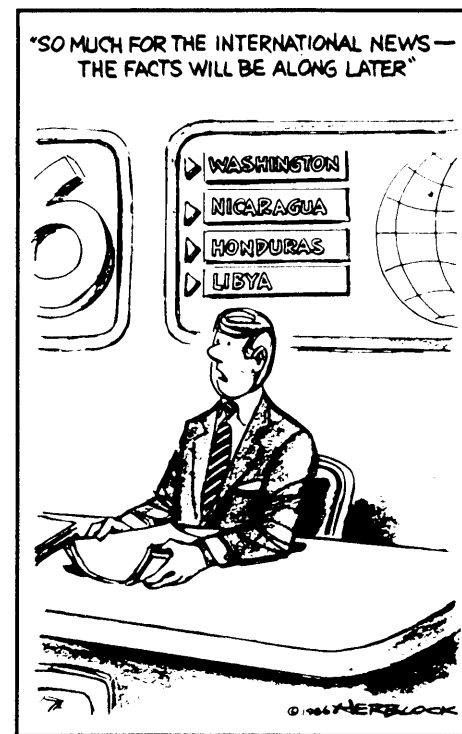


as *The New York Times*, provide more substantial fare—but they are written for an elite. One must know how to sift through them for significant facts and how to take into account their class bias and self-imposed restrictions.

The TV monopoly

Television, from which 80 percent of all Americans are said to get most of their news, is even more monopolized. Controlling shares of NBC, CBS, and ABC are owned by Chase Manhattan Bank, Morgan Guaranty Trust, Bank of New York, Bankers Trust, and Citibank—that is, by the Rockefeller and Morgan empires.

Eighty percent of the "independent" stations are network affiliates and get most of their programs, except for the nightly local news, from the networks. The networks compete for "ratings," which determine the amount of money they can



what? Maybe 200 people read it, or 2000, or 20,000."

Although Americans may be deceived by this lying and manipulation, they are also to one degree or another aware of it. This contributes to cynicism and a sense of powerlessness.

Many feel that it doesn't make much difference if they cast a vote. The poor especially have this feeling. In recent years, 60 percent to 65 percent of those eligible do not vote in congressional and state elections, and 40 percent to 45 percent do not vote in presidential elections.

Nevertheless, although the freedom guaranteed by the Bill of Rights and the right to engage in electoral campaigns are vitiated by the economic and political power of the monopoly capitalists, they remain conquests that must be defended.

The roar of the mass media is mighty and the sense of powerlessness is paralyzing. But especially in times of social crisis, life itself impels people in the direction to which socialists are pointing—the construction of a new and more genuine democratic order.

What will democracy look like in the socialist America of the future? I'll take up this question in next month's *Socialist Action*.

An original study of religion in history

By CLIFF CONNER

The Meek and the Militant: Religion and Power Across the World, by Paul N. Siegel. Zed Books, London, 1986. Available from Humanities Press, 171 First Ave., Atlantic Highlands, N.J. 07716. 229 pages. \$35 hard-cover, \$12.50 paperback.

Religion is basically a ruling-class conspiracy to keep the superstitious masses under control—right? That's what Marxists say—right? No, wrong on both counts!

It seems, however, that most people believe the Marxist view of religion to be purely condemnatory. Even leaving aside the right-wing hysteria about "godless communism," the general perception is that since

BOOK REVIEW

Marxists are atheists, they must more or less share the outlook of eccentric anti-religious crusaders like Madelyn Murray O'Hare.

Paul Siegel, a Marxist scholar, has produced a masterful refutation of this erroneous notion. He surveys the role of religion in human affairs over the past few thousand years and demonstrates that the Marxist view is anything but simplistic.

From the Jewish wars against the Roman Empire to the peasant wars of the radical reformation to liberation theology and Islamic radicalism today, religion has frequently served as an ideology of the oppressed in struggle against their oppressors. Religion, then, has not always and everywhere been a purely reactionary phenomenon; it has at times revealed a progressive and even revolutionary aspect.

An 18th-century view

The one-sided view of religion as a conspiracy of the ruling class, Siegel shows, is a product of the 18th-century Enlightenment. Voltaire, Holbach, and the other *philosophes*, by subjecting revealed religion to the test of reason, gave the greatest impulse to the liberation of the human mind from superstition since the birth of philosophy among the Ionian Greeks.

They were right on target for 18th-century Europe,



where religion was hardly more than a tool of social policy wielded by cynical rulers. But the *philosophes'* critique of religion in general was ahistorical; their focus on their own situation necessarily limited their understanding of religion's social role. It is the historical dimension that distinguishes Marxist atheism from the Enlightenment outlook.

If ever there were a movement of the wretched of the earth, early Christianity was one. Even through the distorted historical lens of the Gospels it is possible to detect traces of a fierce class hatred against the rich.

But Christianity's success as a mass movement led to a fundamental change in its character. It began to recruit rich people and wound up as the official ideology of the oppressor state itself—imperial Rome.

Siegel shows that this transformation from rebellious

sect to pillar of the establishment has been a typical pattern of development from ancient to modern times and in every part of the world.

As this would indicate, the scope of "The Meek and the Militant" is enormous. It examines the social roots of Judaism in nomadic desert tribes and of Christianity in the ancient Roman slums. From there, it follows the development of the Catholic Church through medieval times, into the Renaissance, and through the split that produced Protestantism.

And since religion was by no means a uniquely "Western" phenomenon, Siegel also traces the entwined development of Hinduism and Buddhism and the rise of Islam.

Religion and class struggle

The historical background is prologue to coming to grips with many puzzling questions about contemporary religion. Why is religion so strong in the United States when it has declined in other advanced capitalist countries, and what accounts for the political influence of the Religious Right?

Why, on the other hand, has a part of the U.S. Catholic Church become liberalized both theologically and politically so that it finds itself in conflict with the Pope? How is it that there are four priests in the Nicaraguan government while rightists have murdered priests and nuns in El Salvador and other Latin American countries?

Siegel shows how religion is acting as an ideological force in the class struggle today—not only in the advanced and underdeveloped capitalist countries, but in the post-capitalist countries as well. The role of the Catholic Church in Poland is only the most obvious example.

As for the Soviet Union and China, both have consistently violated the Leninist principles of freedom of religion. Lenin stood for a separation of church and state more thorough than that which exists today in the United States and Western Europe. At the same time, he advocated an ideological struggle against religion carried on by the revolutionary party.

The Castroists and the Sandinistas have come closer to putting these principles into practice than have the avowedly Leninist Soviet and Chinese Communist parties.

All of this would seem to be far too much for a 200-page book to tackle, but Siegel has managed, with his use of the historical-materialist method and with humor, to make sense of it all.

Be warned, however, that this introduction to a subject of almost limitless proportions may whet your intellectual appetite. In that event, the book's extensive bibliography will be of use in selecting further reading.

By CHARLES ANDREWS

Automation poses challenge to unions

Fully automated production has been a fantasy of factory owners since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. The advantages make the capitalists fairly drool at the mouth.

Just picture a factory full of machines and no workers! The machines never go on vacation, don't require coffee breaks, can operate around the clock, never talk back or strike, and are perfectly content to operate without pay-checks.

Rationalizing production has been an ongoing effort, especially since the introduction of the assembly line and Taylorism (time and motion studies) at the turn of the century. Even to this day, with the introduction of industrial robots and computer technology, the modern corporation still requires a sizeable manufacturing force and a large support staff of office workers.

An expansion of services and corporate functions has so far blunted the reduction in the manufacturing sector. But the capitalist class, faced with a structural crisis, is indeed planning a qualitative re-industri-

alization leading to a near-automation of the production and distribution sectors.

Present developments

As might be expected, labor-intensive industries such as the automobile giants are avidly pursuing what is known as Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM). Ford Motor, for example, has signed an agreement with Measurex Corp. to automate both the body and assembly lines of new cars and trucks.

General Motors has at present 40,000 "intelligent devices," but only 15 percent can communicate with a central computer. By 1990, using CIM, it hopes to eliminate the present computer Tower of Babel and consolidate operations under one system.

The Arthur D. Little Corporation estimated that, in 1985 alone, U.S. industry would spend \$33.4 billion on CIM with a

projected growth rate of 15 percent per year.

The projected development of CIM occurs in three stages. First are islands of automation. Second are fully communicable circuitry. And third is full automation from parts ordering and inventory to product delivery and follow-through. At present, fully 75 percent of U.S. manufacturing corporations are already at stage one, 25 percent are at stage two, and none (so far) are at stage three.

Unsold products?

Increases in productivity and even automation should lead to a shorter work week and a higher standard of living. But the reality under capitalism will mean layoffs and unemployment.

The CIM conception beautifully illustrates one of the contradictions of capitalism. Every capitalist knows that to sell products at a profit requires that working people have enough buying power to purchase the products.

Yet, individually, capitalists strive to restrict the number of workers and the wages at their particular company. The ultimate result of CIM would be lots of unsold products and an incurable economic depression.

The working class faces the need to energetically respond to such a development.

Various trade-union locals throughout the country have already called for a shorter work week and the elimination of overtime to create jobs. For example, Local 217 of the United Auto Workers Union in Cleveland, Ohio, explained in a 1975 leaflet that 44,860 jobs would be created in the Greater Cleveland area in basic industry if the work week were cut to 38 hours and overtime were eliminated.

But the demand for a shorter week must be linked to the demand for no cut in pay. Workers should not be made to pay for the unemployment and austerity caused by capitalism. Full employment and decent living conditions must be guaranteed for all.

The trade unions will have to wage a fight for a shorter work week at the same pay and control over the new technologies at the workplace!

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Socialist Action Forums

Cincinnati

"The Socialist Struggle for a World Without Wars"

Hear: Carl Finamore, Socialist Action Nat'l Cttee.
April 8: Univ. of Cincinnati
April 9: Xavier University
April 10: Oxford, Ohio
For exact times and places call: 272-2596

Los Angeles

"The Middle East Today: The Struggle of the Palestinian People"

Hear: Ralph Schoenman, author of "Prisoners of Israel"
Other speakers to be announced.
Friday, April 10, 7:30 p.m.
ILGWU Hall, 675 Parkview
For more info: call 250-4608

San Francisco

"Simpson-Rodino Law: An Attack on Democratic Rights"

Hear: Louise Wright, Pres. ACTWU #42; Bill May, National Lawyers Guild; David Kirschner, Socialist Action.
April 10, 8 p.m.
3435 Army #308, S.F.

Racist attacks, housing crisis spur Blacks to organize in N.Y.

By BRENDA BISHOP

NEW YORK—On Feb. 26, police officer Stephen Sullivan was acquitted of all criminal charges in the Eleanor Bumpurs case.

Over two years ago, Eleanor Bumpurs, a 66-year-old disabled Black woman, was shot to death by Sullivan while being forcibly evicted from her home. The long-awaited trial was a sham in which Bumpurs was characterized as the aggressor rather than the victim.

Her only "crime" was picking up a knife in self-defense against the armed assault on her home by rifle-wielding policemen.

For the hundreds in the courthouse who shouted "we say guilty," the verdict came as no surprise. Racist attacks against Blacks, both by white mobs and police officers, have been steadily increasing in recent years, but the perpetrators of these crimes are seldom, if ever, convicted.

The outrage of the community, however, is not confined to racist murder. Bumpurs had a right to a home—as does everyone. This right was violated forcibly, as it is for hundreds on a daily basis.

The fact that these issues did not come up in the Bumpurs trial was no accident. To have raised them would have been to indict the system that both condones racist murders of Blacks and condemns thousands to dilapidated housing and homelessness.

Housing crisis deepens

Through tax breaks and its land-use policy, New York City gives real-estate developers the go-ahead to build luxury housing and accelerate the gentrification of neighborhoods. At the same time, less profitable dwellings in poor and working-class neighborhoods are permitted to deteriorate—and are frequently abandoned.

In the last 15 years, some 310,000 units in the city have been lost to abandonment, arson for profit, and disinvestment by banks and insurance companies. Meanwhile, construction of low-income housing with federal funds has come to a virtual standstill.

The rental housing that is available is increasingly unaffordable. In the 1970s, rent rose 179 percent faster than income. Currently, two-thirds of the poorest New Yorkers pay more than 40 percent of their income for rent.

The situation is even worse for tenants on welfare, whose monthly shelter allowances are woefully inadequate to cover actual rental costs, forcing them to use limited food money for rent or to fall into arrears.

In this context, landlords are driven by profit to seek the eviction of thousands of tenants each year.

In New York, landlords have the right to sue to recover possession of rental property if a tenant defaults in paying as little as \$1 of his or her monthly rent. They can sue to evict tenants for no reason at all if the property is not rent-controlled. These landlords are provided with a specialized Housing Court with expedited procedures in which to do so.

Nearly 400,000 eviction proceedings were initiated by landlords last year alone, and 100,000 tenants were actually evicted by this process from 1981 to 1985. These statistics do not even account for the numbers of tenants who are harassed into vacating their apartments or are simply locked out.

With no affordable apartments available, people are forced to crowd into apartments



"The Bumpurs murder sparked a citywide movement to temporarily halt all evictions in N.Y. ..."

of friends or families—or are left homeless. Some 200,000 residents are believed to be doubled up, while the number of homeless has risen to 60,000.

Blacks and Hispanics hardest hit

Although Blacks and Hispanics are only 42 percent of the population of New York, they constitute around 70 percent of poor people living in the city. While Blacks make up only 26 percent of the renters in New York, nearly 54 percent of the tenants sued in Housing Court are Black.

The minorities' percentage of the homeless population is even higher. Of every five homeless families, three are Black and one is Hispanic.

In addition, gentrification and luxury developments have the effect of destroying communities through displacement. Tenant organizers and community activists often compare the situation developing in New York to that in South Africa. Manhattan is becoming an entirely rich, white bastion, while poor and working-class communities and all oppressed minorities are pushed further and further outside.

The Black community has not remained silent in the face of this deteriorating situation, but has begun organizing. The Bumpurs murder sparked a city-wide movement to temporarily halt all evictions in New York, as a first step in the fight to guarantee a right to housing.

A grassroots "eviction watch"

The Coalition for a Moratorium on Evictions is pushing for legislation which would prohibit evictions for any reason, pending a reorganization of the city's Housing Court and social-services system.

Not surprisingly, the Coalition is a grassroots network which has drawn its strongest support from those Black, Hispanic, and poor communities (in Harlem, the Bronx, and the Lower East Side of Manhattan) for whom the threat of forcible eviction and homelessness is most real.

The Coalition's tactics correspond to this reality. One of its primary undertakings has been to set up "eviction-watch" response systems in these neighborhoods.

Community residents are organized to picket outside the apartment about to be taken, to sit in, or to confront the marshal and prevent the eviction of a neighbor.

So far, almost every scheduled eviction against which the eviction watch was

organized has been thwarted, but use of the tactic has been limited.

The Coalition recognizes that only mass organization and agitation will be effective in securing a city-wide moratorium. Hence, it is publicizing the eviction watch and conducting training sessions in hopes of spreading the tactic more widely. Eventually, eviction watches may be coordinated with building-wide and neighborhood-wide rent strikes.

A call to "Organize!"

The Sullivan acquittal, while ending a two-and-a-half year battle in the courts, is likely to add to the momentum behind the growing movement for justice in the Black community. Outside the courthouse could be heard the call "Don't mourn, organize!"

This movement has already been galvanized by the Howard Beach attack. Significantly, a march against racist attacks on Jan. 21, which was associated with the Day of Mourning and Outrage, began at a notorious welfare hotel—the Martinique. Protestors wanted to dramatize the problem of homelessness and the lack of affordable housing in the Black community.

One of the key organizers of that march, the National African Youth Student Alliance, has been successful in organizing young people from the hotel into the movement.

At a recent forum on racially motivated violence held in Harlem, NAYSA leader Lisa Williamson called for the organization of tenant patrols as part of a larger self-defense effort in the Black community [see accompanying story].

The emergence of this militancy is a positive and encouraging sign. ■



Community speak-out in Harlem

By PETER ATWOOD

NEW YORK—On March 7, about 750 people attended a forum on racially motivated violence. The event was hosted by Wadleigh Junior High School in Harlem.

The school's principal pointed out that the school building is falling apart and is threatened with being closed down. It was clearly understood that increased racial violence goes hand in hand with deteriorating and closed-down schools and hospitals in the Black community, high unemployment among Black youth, and dire poverty.

Attorney C. Vernon Mason reminded the audience of what Malcolm X once said: "We live in America, but we're not Americans. And America is a racist society throughout—its police departments, its social services, and its school departments."

Theodore Kirklin, a former police officer, pointed out to the meeting, "We thought in the '60s that if we got more Black policemen, judges, doctors, lawyers, teachers, things would be better. We did

that and things got worse for us."

In the view of another speaker, the Rev. Herbert Daughtry, "The missing ingredient is unity." But what kind of unity? Lisa Williamson, a leader of the National African Youth Students Association answered: "Unity with principles, for the goals and interests of Blacks."

But this is far from being achieved. "The current Black leadership is the weakest leadership of any kind—white or Black," the Rev. Calvin Butts of the Abyssinian Baptist Church said. He added, "It's time to change the leadership and elect new people."

However, unlike Malcolm X, who said, "We should in no way identify with either party or sell ourselves to either party," the question remained open as to whom to vote for. Without any clear alternative, a call "to vote" is an implicit call to vote for the Democratic Party—whether the candidate be Jesse Jackson or Gary Hart.

Nevertheless, "things are happening," as Lisa Williamson put it. The mob violence in Howard Beach has galvanized people—especially the youth—into action against racist attacks. ■

Brenda Bishop is a tenants' rights lawyer in New York City.