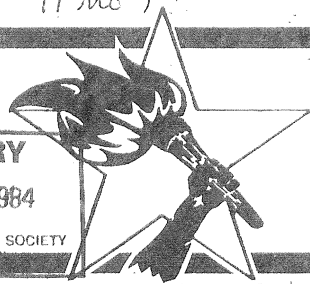


# TORCH

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NEWSPAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE

February 15-March 14, 1984/25¢

## THE JACKSON CANDIDACY:

*The U.S. presidential campaign has started. People are looking for a way to stop Reagan's attacks. Among the host of Democratic candidates, there is one who seems to be more charismatic, more radical and more concerned with the needs of oppressed people. Jesse Jackson says he has a way to stop Reaganism and turn the country around. Does he?*

*See centerfold, page 10.*



## Stop the Bombing of Lebanon!

The Reagan administration's imperialist intervention in Lebanon has suffered a humiliating, but not conclusive, defeat. On February 7, as full-fledged civil war threatened to break out in

Lebanon, Reagan announced plans to pull the 1,400 Marines stationed near Beirut out of the country and "redeploy" them on ships off shore. His decision came less than 24 hours after

administration spokespersons had sworn the U.S. would not "cut and run" in Lebanon, and had condemned a Democratic Congressional resolution calling for withdrawing the Marines as "aiding and abetting those opposed to peace in the Middle East."

The Reagan administration sent Marines into Lebanon in September, 1982, as a symbol of support for Lebanese president Amin Gemayel's rightist, pro-U.S. regime. But the Marine presence failed to intimidate either the Lebanese Muslim factions opposed to

the Gemayel government or their main ally, the Syrian government, which occupies large parts of the country. After over 200 Marines were killed by a bomb last September, the public, the Democrats, and substantial chunks of Reagan's own Republican Party increasingly demanded the Marines' withdrawal. Nevertheless, the administration, which likes to boast it hasn't "lost a country" since coming into office, insisted that the Marine presence was a test of "American steadfastness and

*(Continued on page 5)*

**U.S. Public Opposes Escalation but—**

**Reagan Expands War in Central America**

**See page 3**

**Minneapolis Rights Amendment Revives Pornography Debate**

**See page 6**

**SECCION EN ESPANOL**

## International lesbian/gay march planned

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We are writing to invite you to help us build an International Lesbian and Gay Conference and March on the United Nations, tentatively set for September 29-30, 1984. We invite you to participate in a planning meeting, scheduled for March 3-4, 1984, in New York City. A mobilization of Lesbian and Gay people and our supporters will allow us to raise personal and political issues on a local, national and international level as a unified community with many points of view and one single goal: **FREEDOM**.

We are all too aware of the limitations on our liberty to live openly as proud Lesbians and Gays. We are losing jobs, because our employers believe we're carrying AIDS, because of the general economic crisis, and because we are Lesbian and Gay. We are being denied housing and we are being beaten on the streets by our neighbors and the police alike. Our children are taken away from us. Locally, our Lesbian and Gay spaces are closing at an increasing rate, either for lack of money or because of community pressure.

Nationally, we are dying of AIDS while those with the disease are condemned. At the same time, the government has directly allocated more money for covert actions against Nicaragua than for research and medical care for Lesbian and Gay health-care needs. A Lesbian and Gay rights bill has still not been seriously considered by Congress; the military blatantly discriminates against Lesbians and Gays; and the Immigration and Naturalization Service is still mandated by Congress to refuse entry into the country to any Lesbian or Gay male.

Internationally, Lesbians and Gays are beginning to organize against their oppression in Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, South Africa, Indonesia and Peru. In other countries, Cuba and Haiti among them, repression of our sisters and brothers grows. In solidarity, the International Gay Association has declared 1984 to be the **International Year of Lesbian and Gay Action**.

We hope to use the UN as a focal point—in our March and Conference—to tie our struggles together. The purpose of the spring planning session is to discuss and decide, as a community and in a democratic fashion, what the March and Conference will be about, and to begin organizing for them. At the Planning Meeting we would like to put together a progressive liberation agenda and begin to build toward a mass mobilization. It is our hope that conference themes will emerge that foster dialogue and allow us to increase our

networking, organizing and visibility.

We are a group of individuals—women, men, people of color and whites—with experience in the Lesbian and Gay movement. We are excited and determined and we need your participation.

**In Struggle and Liberation,  
Lesbian and Gay  
Organizing Committee for 1984  
P.O. Box 1498,  
New York, N.Y. 10009**

## More on Selassie

Dear Torch,

Revolutionary greetings to you and your comrades.

Thank you for putting the mythical image of Haile Selassie in the U.S. and Caribbean in perspective. Your answer in the latest edition of *Torch* about the false image of Haile Selassie, and of Ethiopia I might add, is of great contribution to your readers. Not only was your reply objectively accurate, but it was also clear and concise in its content. We, as concerned as we are about the Eritrean struggle, know too well of the broad misconceptions held, especially among our Black brothers and sisters, of the reality of present-day Ethiopia. Please continue to enlighten your readers about the true facts concerning the Ethiopian government, the Eritrean struggle, the struggles of different nationalities within Ethiopia and the clear progressive and anti-imperialist stands of these opposition movements.

Thank you.

**In Solidarity,  
Araia Tsegai,  
Coordinator, Research and  
Information Centre on Eritrea,  
P.O. Box 1295,  
New York, N.Y. 10025**

## Victory for fired Detroit worker

Dear Editors:

In May of 1983, Cynthia R., a Black female employee of Merrill Lynch Relocation Management (Southfield, Michigan), asked her supervisor, Susan M., for the afternoon off in order to be at the hospital while her youngest son underwent surgery. When this request was refused, Cynthia asked to

see her personnel file. The struggle that followed allows us a glimpse into the workings of many major corporations—we see the pettiness and meanness with which they treat their secretarial employees, the "office help." Often the lowest paid, allowed the least amount of time off, they are essential to the work of all companies, yet they are treated with the least amount of respect.

Susan M. refused to let Cynthia see her personnel file. When Cynthia demanded this right, she was fired. Cynthia filed an EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) suit against Merrill Lynch Relocation Management and Susan M. In retaliation, Susan filed "assault and battery" charges against Cynthia.

These charges were based on lies. When the case came into District Court in December, Susan's witnesses contradicted her and each other. In fact, Susan's story on the witness stand was different from the version in her police report.

Three of Cynthia's former co-workers, including myself, came forward as witnesses and testified to Cynthia's ability to deal calmly with problems and Susan's tendencies to lose her temper.

On previous occasions, she had shown her temper when she did not "get her way." At least one other employee was "laid off" (fired) because of "personality conflicts" with Susan.

The jury deliberated less than 10 minutes before returning a not guilty decision for Cynthia. This was a small, yet important victory for all office workers, especially those of us working without union protection and at the whim of vindictive supervisors.

Sincerely,  
Miriam S.  
Detroit, Michigan

## Defend Russian peace activists

Dear Torch readers,

On December 8, four members of the Moscow-based Group to Establish Trust between the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. were physically barred from attending the trial of fellow activist Oleg Radzinsky. They were beaten by police and placed under house arrest. One of them, Dr. Olga Medvedkova, a geographer, is now being charged with "assaulting" three of her attackers and is facing one to five years in jail.

We are asking all who are concerned with the issues of peace and human rights everywhere to join us in protesting this outrage by joining us on a picket line on Saturday, February 25, 1:00 p.m., at the Soviet Mission to the UN: 136 E. 67th Street (between 3rd and Lexington Avenues) in New York City. We also ask supporters to send telegrams to the Soviet procurator: Procurator General Alex-

ander Rekunov, ul. Pushkinskaya, 15-A, Moscow, USSR.

Recent prosecutions of Michigan peace activists, who are currently being charged with conspiracy and face more than two years in jail, draw a frightening parallel. International solidarity in the face of government repression of those fighting for disarmament is all the more crucial in this difficult period.

**Ad Hoc Committee To Defend  
Olga Medvedkova  
339 Lafayette Street  
Room 202  
New York, N.Y. 10012  
Telephone (212) 505-6590**

## Ghanaian teacher writes

Comrades,

Thanks for continuing mailing me the revolutionary newspaper. I am sorry that I have not been able to communicate with you for some time now. I was once again attacked by sickness and had to be hospitalized again for three months. I've just been discharged from hospital and given some time to rest from job. Happily, some fellow teachers here had been opening my letters and reading the *Torch* during my hospitalization; and they have shown great interest in it. My hospitalization has landed me in heavy debt since even such basic drugs as chloroquine has to be bought by the patients themselves. In fact some patients even sleep on the bare floor since there are shortages of beds

and beddings. All these are happening in a Government hospital which is supposed to be the second most up to date teaching hospital in the country. In view of my present predicament I would very much appreciate any assistance, be it financial or in kind from any revolutionary worker in the U.S.A. Such assistance should be sent to me through the RSL and mailed to me.

I would also be very much pleased if through your paper I could get a pen pal in the U.S. I am a thirty-year-old man with teaching being my profession. Politically, I believe myself to be a Marxist and my hobbies are debating and reading political and economic books. The prospective pen pal may be either male or female and may or may not share my ideological stance.

I end with much greetings to you all, especially Rod. Thanks.  
Yours in the Struggle,  
A. S. N.  
Ghana

## Likes RSL Central America Supplement

Dear Friend,

Enclosing two dollars. Please send me five or six copies of the "Central American Revolution and the U.S. Solidarity Movement." I'd like to distribute copies to my friends. This supplement is the most reasonable and lucid presentation of the case for radical support of the Latin American revolution that I've seen so far.

I'd like to stop in and talk with you the next time I'm in New York.

Salud,  
M. C.  
Massachusetts

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# Reagan Expands War in Central America

By ALBERT LARY

U.S. President Ronald Reagan has chosen to make Central America the cutting edge of U.S. foreign policy. In his view, either the U.S. draws the line against communism in El Salvador, or the battle is lost for American-style civilization. That, incredibly enough, is the analysis underlying U.S. foreign policy decision-making today.

But this is not just Reagan's opinion. The report of the Kissinger Commission on Central America, issued to much media fanfare on January 11, strongly endorses his analysis. The 12 members of the Kissinger Commission were appointed by Reagan last year and charged with developing a bipartisan national policy for Central America. To this end, Reagan included in the panel several prominent Democratic Party members, including Robert Strauss, chairman of Jimmy Carter's 1980 reelection campaign; Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO union federation; and Henry Cisneros, mayor of San Antonio.

What the commission produced has all the appearances of the ruling class consensus which Reagan wanted. In fact the report was unanimously endorsed by the Commission with only a handful of footnote-sized dissents.

The report represents a calculated trade-off between conservatives and liberals on the Commission, each side getting and giving up something in return. But the real winner is Reagan. What he got was a bipartisan agreement on his analysis of the Central American crisis: that the U.S. has vital security interests in the region which are threatened by Soviet-Cuban expansion.

What he gave up to the liberals was vague concessions on human rights, a generous proposal on health, education and housing aid to the region, and some sympathetic talk about the "internal origins of the conflict." But the

concessions to the liberals mean very little. After all, it is the president himself who will implement the report, which will be used as nothing more than a cover for a wider war.

With his basic analysis endorsed by the panel, Reagan wasted no time in calling for a huge increase in military aid to El Salvador—\$179 million to be added to this year's budget and \$133 million more for 1985. This compares to the \$65 million in military aid to El Salvador approved by Congress so far this year. The money would go, in part, to purchase trucks, radio equipment, artillery, 22 new helicopters, and possibly new fighter-bombers. It would also build a major new training base inside El Salvador.

And the \$8 billion in humanitarian economic aid which the Kissinger Commission recommended? The president turned this proposal over to Congress, knowing full well it has no chance of being adopted in an election year, with a shaky economy and a \$200 billion budget deficit.

## Little support for Reagan policy

But Reagan still has to deal with the U.S. public, and they don't want a war. A Harris poll in mid-January showed that the U.S. people reject nearly all the Kissinger Commission's key recommendations: more military aid to El Salvador (rejected 76 percent to 17 percent); more economic aid (rejected 66 to 27 percent); continued aid to right-wing Nicaraguan contras (rejected 60 to 24 percent); more U.S. military maneuvers in Honduras (rejected 62 to 29 percent). Surprisingly, the president also has to convince U.S. military leaders of the need to escalate the war in Central America. Most of the top brass dread

the thought of another unpopular, Vietnam-style war and prefer to keep U.S. military strength uncommitted and ready for action elsewhere. But, one way or another, military aid to El Salvador is going to increase. The only question is: Can it make any difference in a war the U.S. has already nearly lost?

In the first ten days of 1984, U.S.-backed Salvadorean forces suffered their two worst defeats of the entire war. A major army base at El Paraiso, 36 miles from the capital, was seized by rebels and over 100 government troops were killed. Two days later, rebels drove away 200 troops guarding the country's

largest highway bridge and then destroyed it, severely limiting traffic into the eastern third of the country.

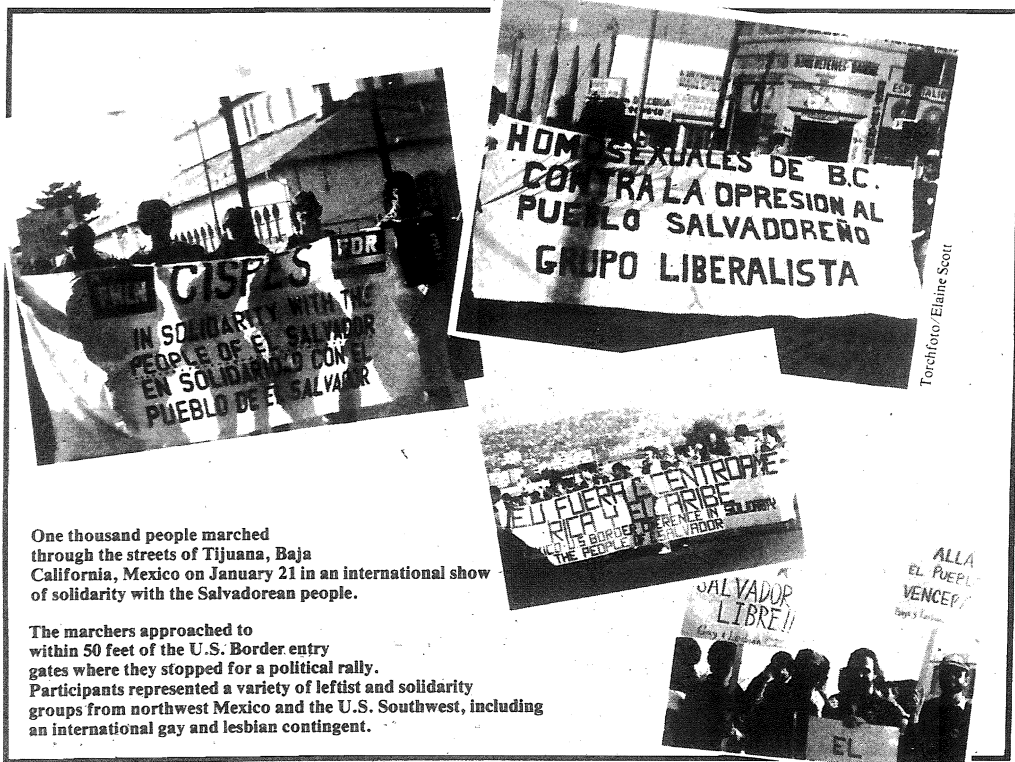
At the rate things are going in El Salvador, the regime could collapse very soon. Today, the forces of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) are stronger than they have ever been. Ground has been lost by the government, including most of San Vicente Province, where millions of dollars were spent only last year to "pacify" the area and stamp out rebel influence. Today, most of the U.S. experts are gone from San Vicente and the rebels are back in control, as they are in four other provinces. More money will not save the corrupt and demoralized Salvadorean army. In fact, the rebels seem to capture U.S. weapons from government troops about as fast as they are unpacked.

What, then, could save the day for U.S. imperialism? Only a massive invasion by U.S. combat forces, aided by troops from the neighboring puppet regimes of Honduras and Guatemala. Currently, thousands of U.S. troops are stationed in Honduras engaged in training maneuvers which are due to end in March. The Pentagon has announced, however, that at least 1,000 of them will remain indefinitely, in anticipation of more "maneuvers" later this year. Although almost no one wants a major land war in Central America, U.S. imperialism has very few options left.

Despite this, an invasion is probably not imminent. The Salvadorean rightist parties are busy with a U.S.-sponsored presidential election which takes place March 25. The U.S. presidential campaign runs until November, and will focus attention on the president's public image. Reagan, who is now trying to look peaceful, will not want to risk his reelection by starting a big unpopular war. Further, an increase in U.S. military aid, combined with a probable decrease in rebel activity as the spring rains begin, will also give the situation a less critical tone. We still have time to organize to prevent a more massive imperialist attack on the Salvadorean people. Intervention is not inevitable, but the present balance of forces in Central America cannot remain unchanged for long. □



Henry Kissinger (foreground) and AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland testify during February Senate hearing. Kirkland and other Democrats on the Kissinger Commission joined Republicans in demanding U.S. escalation in El Salvador.



One thousand people marched through the streets of Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico on January 21 in an international show of solidarity with the Salvadorean people.

The marchers approached to within 50 feet of the U.S. Border entry gates where they stopped for a political rally. Participants represented a variety of leftist and solidarity groups from northwest Mexico and the U.S. Southwest, including an international gay and lesbian contingent.



## Where has all the money gone?

Where has the money that Reagan has saved by cutting social service programs gone? Directly to the investment bankers and big-deal capitalists who lend the government money by buying government bonds and treasury notes.

In a statement released February 4, Kathy Ruffing and Paul Van de Water of the Congressional Budget Office said that if something close to Reagan's proposed 1985 budget is adopted, then total spending on "social welfare" programs for the fiscal years 1982 through 1985 will be \$110 billion less than it would have been if the January 1981 laws and regulations had been left in place. And if the new budget is adopted, then over the same period the interest payments on the government debt will total \$124 billion more than if the deficit had stayed at the January 1981 level.

Massive military spending carried out by Reagan and endorsed by nearly all Democrats in Congress (and all the Democrats running for president except George McGovern) are one chief cause of the huge government debt. Payments to holders of government bonds and notes now total over \$108 billion a year.

## Salvadorean airline takes over death flights

TACA Airlines is the new "death flight" carrier of Salvadorean deportees from the U.S., according to a coalition of Los Angeles refugee rights groups. TACA (Transportes Aéreos Centro Americanos) has taken over the controversial business under an agreement with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). INS figures indicate that an average of 250 Salvadorean immigrants to the U.S. are forcibly deported each month—back into the midst of a bloody civil war which has already claimed the lives of over 40,000 innocent victims.

Early results of a study being

Please note: The RSL New York City branch and National Office have a new phone number. It is (212) 206-8463.

conducted by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Immigrants' Rights show that one of every 50 Salvadoreans deported by the INS has subsequently been killed in El Salvador. This figure was reached by cross-checking INS lists of deportees against death lists kept by independent Salvadorean human rights groups. Although many refugee rights activists feel this figure may be too low, they welcome the study as the first scientific inquiry into the fate of the deportees. According to Peter Schey, director of the Center for Immigrants' Rights, "If the study establishes that even one out of 100 deportees is met with torture or death upon their return to El Salvador, that should both morally and legally be more than a sufficient basis upon which to temporarily suspend such deportations."

During the past three years, a series of protest campaigns has been successful in stopping other airlines from cooperating with the INS in these death flights. Militant picket lines, a consumer boycott and a media campaign which portrayed first Western and later Mexicana Airlines as gaining "blood money" off the INS deportation flights forced them to adopt policies against carrying INS deportees. As a result of these efforts, several other airlines have voluntarily signed statements agreeing not to accept INS deportees.

TACA has long been engaged in flying deportees from Mexico City to San Salvador after Western and Mexicana Airlines delivered them from Los Angeles. With the removal of Western and Mexicana from the "death flight" scene, TACA is now flying the victims directly from Los Angeles to El Salvador.

The coalition leading the TACA protests includes representatives from Echo Park CISPES, the Mexico-U.S. Border Commission in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, and three local Salvadorean refugee committees. It can be reached at (213) 660-4587.

## Davis workers defend their union

It took six months, but strikers at Southern California Davis Pleating Company have defeated the boss's effort to break their union. The strikers are members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and have been out since August 10. At that time, Davis made a series of outrageous demands and then broke off negotiations. Davis figured on recruiting scabs to keep his profits rolling in while



the strikers were forced into submission. His concession demands were a 20 percent pay cut, four fewer holidays, two weeks less vacation, and an end to the cost-of-living and seniority clauses.

But few workers crossed the picket lines and the union took the strike to the garment contractors who send work to Davis. Picket lines were set up at a number of supplier companies and several of them agreed not to send work to Davis for the duration of the strike. These picket lines didn't bring workers off the job, but they did keep trucks from making pickups and deliveries.

At the end of December, when it became clear that the strike wouldn't be defeated, Davis called the union to resume negotiations. But his new offer was still for 14 percent concessions, and the union felt this wasn't worth talking about. Then, on February 1, Davis made another offer which, although it still included demands for concessions, represented a major retreat on his part. Negotiations are continuing, and a settlement is expected soon.

While the exact outcome is not yet clear, it seems certain that the integrity of the union contract will be maintained. Wages and benefits at Davis are much better than in most non-union shops. Davis was trying to eliminate this difference but wasn't able to get away with it.

During the strike, contacts were established with Greyhound strikers and those at the McDonnell-Douglas aircraft plant in Long Beach (who were on strike from October to February). These are important beginnings to the broad labor unity that we need more every day. We can't afford the isolation and defeat of groups of workers one at a time. As part of this effort, supporters of the RSL have regularly attended the Davis picket lines.

We need a labor movement that is more unified and more involved in political issues like stopping U.S. intervention in

Central America. For this reason it is significant that a large number of Davis strikers formed a contingent at the November 12 march and rally against U.S. attacks in Central America and the Caribbean. Whether it is union-busting, imperialist intervention, the Simpson-Mazzoli anti-immigration bill, attacks on abortion rights or whatever, we need to keep fighting back against all the capitalist attacks.

—Steve Miller

## S.F. anti-gay assassin released

Anti-gay assassin Dan White was released January 6 from a California state prison, after serving barely five years for the 1978 double murder of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and gay Supervisor Harvey Milk.

Gay San Franciscans, still furious over the injustice of White's extremely light sentence and the nature of his anti-gay crime, responded with a spontaneous and noisy noon-time march of several thousand through the downtown business district. In a gay neighborhood near Market and Castro Streets, sit-down protesters blocked traffic for 30 minutes. A pre-planned 15-minute city-wide work stoppage was partially successful as thousands of gays and their supporters left their workplaces to blow whistles, beat on pots and pans and set off burglar alarms. In the evening, another large, planned rally was held on Castro Street.

When word reached Los Angeles that White would serve his one-year parole period there, a new round of protest began, though on a smaller scale. Two

hundred people marched in Hollywood January 12, then rallied again two days later downtown, demanding that White be removed from Los Angeles because he is a threat to the large lesbian and gay population in the area.

White has never expressed the slightest remorse for the 1978 murders, which were a politically motivated attempt by White (himself a former San Francisco supervisor and ex-cop) to carry out his campaign promise to rid San Francisco of "leftists and deviates." His victims were nationally-known liberal Democrats; Milk was also openly gay.

So far it appears that the state will not budge from its decision to keep White in Los Angeles for one year. His exact location is unknown, but he is apparently receiving some protection from police authorities because of the force of anger expressed by lesbians and gays. Many gays are quick to point out, however, that the real threat is not what they may do to White but rather what he may do again to unsuspecting gay victims.

With the special treatment White has received ever since his arrest in 1978, this system is sending a powerful message to other murderous bigots like him: Kill a homosexual and you, too, can get away with murder!

—A. Lary

## Haitian refugees left in limbo

The Reagan administration is preparing to grant legal status and the opportunity of citizenship to the more than 100,000 Cuban refugees who came by boat to Florida in 1980. But it is not going to make the same offer to the Haitian refugees



who also came to Florida by sea that same year. Both the Cubans and the Haitians were issued papers marked "Cuban/Haitian entrant—status pending" in 1980 as a result of an executive order by President Carter.

Now, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is citing a 1966 law that gives only the Cubans, who fled from the Castro government—which the U.S. is hostile to—the right to become legal residents. The Haitians, who fled from the repressive Duvalier regime—which the U.S. supports and bankrolls—are being left in legal limbo.

About 1,100 Cuban refugees from 1980, however, are still being held in an Atlanta federal prison and will not be allowed to apply for residency. These Cubans have been judged "inadmissible" for entrance to the U.S. by the INS. In many cases the reason is that they are gay—and were arrested in Cuba and convicted there of crimes of "moral turpitude."

Meanwhile, over 100 recently arrived Haitian refugees now imprisoned in the INS's Krome Detention Center in Miami are on a hunger strike. And on January 16, the Supreme Court refused to block the deportation of eight Haitians who applied for political asylum after sailing from their homes to New Orleans in July 1981.

## ... and Yuri drops off

Yuri V. Andropov, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, died on Thursday, February 9, at the age of 69. Andropov succumbed to the diabetes and kidney diseases that had plagued him for years.

Andropov's rule lasted only 15 months; he was selected General Secretary in November 1982 after the death of Leonid Brezhnev. And although he appeared to have consolidated his power fairly rapidly, it seems Andropov was only semi-functional for much of this time. His kidneys reportedly failed a year ago and he was not seen in public for many months.

Nobody, except perhaps the Soviet ruling class, should mourn the passing of this man. Andropov was the chief of the dreaded KGB (the Committee of State Security—Russian secret police) for 15 years. As such, he was responsible for the imprisonment, torture and executions of some large number of people in the Russian empire.

Andropov's previous work experience was equally humane. He was Russian ambassador to Hungary in 1956, when Soviet troops invaded

the country to prevent the Hungarians from liberalizing the state-capitalist regime the Russians had imposed after World War II. He was also reported to be a firm advocate of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

On the home front, Andropov was the chief proponent of the tightening up of Russia's domestic regime that occurred throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s. With Brezhnev increasingly feeble, it was Andropov, from his base in the KGB and Central Committee, who curtailed Jewish emigration and cracked down on Russia's tiny dissident movement. The practice of condemning critics of Russian society to mental institutions was Andropov's brainstorm.

In the brief months he was General Secretary, Andropov tried to use the police methods he learned at the KGB to try to solve the crisis of the Russian economy. Specifically, in an effort to curb the chronic absenteeism of Soviet workers, he ordered police raids on public baths and other establishments. He also launched a campaign to restrict the corruption that is rampant among the high-living Russian elite, an effort that recently led to the execution of two powerful bureaucrats. Although the growth of the Russian economy during 1983 was better than the miserable performance of the previous few years, Andropov's efforts have not touched the fundamental problems of the system.

Andropov's replacement is Konstantin U. Chernenko, a member of the Politburo and a secretary of the Central Committee. However, it is



Yuri Andropov.

not clear how long he will last in his new post. The Russian ruling class has never established an orderly way of transferring power; the passing of one leader has always led to intense bureaucratic infighting to see who will become the new Khozyain (loosely: "Boss").

In a transition period like the present, the fact that one man appears to be on top does not mean he will stay there. More concretely, Chernenko is old. At 72, he is the oldest man ever chosen to be General Secretary of the Communist Party and effective head of the Soviet Union. He may not have the strength to consolidate his power. It is also possible that Chernenko was chosen as an interim leader, to give the various bureaucrats and their respective factions time to improve their

positions.

There is another reason to believe that Chernenko's tenure may be brief. Chernenko was an old crony of Brezhnev and a member of the clique Brezhnev built around him when he was head of the Communist Party in Moldavia, which the Russians annexed from Romania after World War II. He is said to represent the Communist Party apparatus, in contrast to the military establishment or the KGB. Andropov's selection as General Secretary appeared to have been the result of a bloc between the KGB and the military tops against the party bureaucracy. While Chernenko appears to have acted like a loyal Andropov supporter during the past year, it is unlikely he has cut his ties to his old grouping.

Have the KGB and military chiefs decided to throw the top spot back to the party apparatchiks? Have the latter built a new alliance and now have a majority? None of this is clear. At all events, it is likely that the factional maneuvering has not ceased and, if it hasn't, Chernenko's hold on the top spot may not be permanent.

Whoever takes over, there will probably not be much change in the Russian scene. Of course, a political crisis is possible, but we suspect the Russian ruling class will be able to pick its new leader without overly rocking the boat. More important, there seems to be a consensus against any radical change in policy. Unfortunately for the Soviet people, this will mean that the economy will continue to stagnate, the Russian army will continue to be bogged down in Afghanistan and the massive military build-up will be sustained.

—RT

# Stop the Bombing of Lebanon!

(Continued from page 1)

U.S. influence," not only in Lebanon but throughout the Middle East.

This hardnosed line came crashing down with the near total collapse of the Gemayel regime in early February. Major fighting broke out between the Lebanese army and oppositionist Druse and Shi'a militias in Beirut on February 2. By February 4, Druse leader Walid Jumblatt and Shi'a leader Nabih Berri were calling for Gemayel's resignation, while Muslim members of Gemayel's Cabinet had left the government. Then on February 7 the Druse and Shi'a militias took over West Beirut, as Muslim troops in the Lebanese Army either refused to fight or went over to the opposition.

These dramatic events, which forced the Marines (and the British and Italian contingents of the "multinational peace force") off Lebanese soil, could lead to further defeats for U.S. imperialism. The linchpin of the Reagan administration's Lebanese policy is the U.S. inspired May 17, 1983 agreement between the Lebanese and Israeli governments. This pact gives the Israeli rulers virtual veto power over Lebanese government actions in southern Lebanon, and allows both the Israeli and U.S. military to carry out "intelligence-gathering" operations in Lebanon. It is bitterly opposed by both the Lebanese Muslim oppositionists and the Syrian government. They will demand its cancellation as the price for any kind of political settlement.

But the victories of the Lebanese Muslim/Syrian alliance are unlikely to

either resolve the country's internal problems or end imperialist intervention in Lebanese affairs.

As we go to press, intense negotiations over the future of the Gemayel regime are going on among all the country's political factions. (A history of these factions and their entangled relations with each other appeared in the December 15 issue of the *Torch/La Antorcha*.) There is little ground for believing that any political settlement will lead to lasting political stabilization in Lebanon, any more than all the settlements of the past have done. And there is always the chance that negotiations will break down completely, leading to full-scale civil war between Muslim and Christian factions.

Continuing instability in Lebanon could open the door for renewed imperialist intervention, and even to the partition of Lebanon. In particular, thousands of Israeli troops still occupy southern Lebanon. On February 11, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir warned that if the Lebanese government cancels the security arrangements of the May 17 accord, "We will have to take care of these arrangements unilaterally with the aid of other parties." In other words, the Israeli rulers will attempt to permanently occupy southern Lebanon if the Lebanese authorities in Beirut refuse to cooperate with them.

Above all, U.S. imperialism is continuing to play a major role in Lebanon. It is not at all clear when the Marines will leave Lebanon. While they may soon be withdrawn, the U.S. Sixth Fleet

remains stationed off the Lebanese coast. The guns and carrier-based aircraft of the Sixth Fleet, rather than the Marines, were always the real muscle behind U.S. support to Gemayel. Reagan coupled his announcement of the Marine withdrawal with an escalation of the fleet's role, saying U.S. ships and planes would attack any "units behind Syrian lines" that fired into the Beirut area. U.S. warships then fired over 700 shells into Muslim or Syrian positions over the following two days,

the largest U.S. naval bombardment since the Vietnam war. In other words, the administration is hardly giving up its efforts to impose an imperialist settlement in Lebanon. Moreover, the withdrawal of the Marines may in the long run work to the advantage of the administration; it eliminates the major cause for popular opposition to its Middle East policy, and gives the administration badly needed maneuvering room to reverse its recent defeat in Lebanon. □

## EVENTS

### DETROIT

February 17—Picket line to protest the threatened cutoff of funding for abortions by the Michigan Medicaid program. At the Right-to-Life office, Woodward Ave. just south of I-94, 4-6 pm. Sponsored by Detroit Reproductive Rights Coalition.

### LOS ANGELES

February 24—Stop TACA Airlines Death Flights! Friday, 4-6 pm, in front of the TACA office, Hilton Hotel, Figueroa & Wilshire, downtown L.A. For more information, call (213) 660-4587 or (213) 385-6029.

### NEW YORK

February 25—Defend Russian Peace Activist Olga Medvedkova! Saturday, 1 pm, at the Soviet Mission to the UN, 136 E. 67th St. For more information, call (212) 505-6590.

March 3-4—National Planning Session for a Lesbian and Gay Conference and March on

the United Nations. Registration (\$10) on Friday, March 2, Washington Square Church, 151 W. 4th St., 11 am to 7 pm. Saturday session: NYU Loeb Student Center, 566 La Guardia Pl., 10 am to 6 pm. Sunday session: Beth Simchat Torah, Westbeth, 155 Bank St., 10 am to 6 pm. Sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Organizing Committee for 1984. For more information, call (212) 206-8463.

March 4—Benefit for LGOC. Dancing and lesbian and gay performance works. Sunday, 7 pm to 2 am, the River Club, 419 West St. (at Little West 12th). Tickets: \$5 in advance, \$6 at the door. For more information, (212) 206-8463.

### SAN FRANCISCO

March 23—Panel discussion: "What is the Class Character of the Soviet Union?" Friday, 7:30 pm, California State Bldg., Auditorium 350, McAllister. Speakers from several left groups including the RSL. For more information, (213) 385-6029.



# A Talk to Mexican Gay Activists

## THE LESBIAN AND GAY MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.

*Below we are printing a talk given by RSL supporter Franz Martin on August 13 at a conference of the Grupo Libertalista in Tijuana, B.C., Mexico. It was published in the September 15-November 14 issue of La Antorcha.*

Movements don't arise out of thin air. They have their origins, their roots, in society, in the history of a people, a class or a section of the population. Oppressed people don't rebel with the first blow they suffer. On the contrary, the oppressed have historically accepted their oppression for years, for centuries—oppression and misery—oppression that can't be imagined—until consciousness, confidence and the knowledge of struggle develops among them.

This is how the modern political movement of gay or homosexual people in the U.S. arose. I am not going to speak of the first wave of gay struggle, which occurred in Europe in the last years of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. This is for another occasion. Nor am I going to speak about the first steps, primitive and clandestine, taken by the U.S. gays in the hidden period before the public movement of today. It is enough to remember that the history of our people is long and complex, full of examples of both opposite aspects: oppression and resistance. For now, I will limit my commentary to the most recent history, the history I have lived through and therefore know best.

### Stonewall Rebellion

We begin with June 28, 1969. New York City. A bar named Stonewall, very ordinary, like hundreds of others in the country. The customers: workers, men and a few lesbians, some transvestites, several nationalities—Black, Anglo Puerto Rican. A night like thousands of others, with only one difference: this night the Stonewall is a target of a police raid. And this night the Stonewall's customers are ready to resist. Outside the Stonewall, the world is in an uproar. It is the '60s. The Vietnam War, rebellions and demonstrations by students and workers in Paris, in Chicago, in Tlatelolco. Massive Black rebellions—in Los Angeles, Detroit, Washington. Women on the march demanding abortions, contraceptives, equal pay. It is the epoch of protest. The system is shaking. Everything seems possible.

And are we to believe that the gays, the lesbians, prostitutes and everybody else inside the Stonewall Bar are not affected by this spirit? Of course they are affected.

When the police attacked the bar, on June 28, arresting the customers under various pretexts, insulting the drag queens, trampling everyone's dignity—something happened that was very unexpected, very surprising, very new. The crowd of lesbians and drag queens counterattacked. With bottles, cans and stones the oppressed counterattacked. And the cops, surprised and afraid, withdrew from the battle, fleeing into the bar (the bar now empty of customers) and blocked the entrance to protect themselves so the infuriated population couldn't get in. And then what did the homosexuals do? They tried to set the bar on fire with the pigs inside.

The fury of the people spread through the community. From other doors—bars, apartments in the neighborhood, more people came out into the street. The attack on the Stonewall was a spark. The rebellion blazed on for three days. A few days later, a photo of the front of the Stonewall revealed, amid the destruction and burning, a legend written above the door: "This is our territory. We will fight to defend it." The words were an echo of the heroic people of Vietnam. 1969. The concept of liberation, of a political and militant struggle, had arrived in the gay community.

The spirit of Stonewall spread rapidly. Within a year militant gay groups could be found in every part of the country—in the auto factories in Detroit, in the universities, in the left parties, professional associations, unions, etc.

A multitude of movement papers flourished, the great majority with a radical, and at times revolutionary, line. Their main target: the system, a system defined as profoundly anti-gay, a system that functions by means of a wretched alliance of bosses, cops and priests.

There was so much to do! We felt as if we had woken up from a long nightmare. Our emotions, hidden for so many years, opened to the world, and broke out the courage to avenge ourselves—avenge ourselves for each blow, each insult, for each tear.

We attacked the institutions of the system furiously—the laws that condemned us to jail for loving, the churches that condemned us to hell, the psychiatrists that called us sick, the libraries that hid our books, the press that ignored us, all the macho, sexist attitudes—attitudes that support the current system.

Our demands: Respect. Self-determination. Freedom. Freedom to live openly, to dress as we please, to dance together, to kiss in public. We demanded equality, but not simply equality within the existing system. Many, perhaps the majority, of those first militants of the gay movement rejected the

possibility of winning equality in a society like the U.S., a society fundamentally unequal and oppressive. For us, the goal was not equality of oppression (we didn't want a life like the repressed and frustrated heterosexuals), but equal rights to struggle alongside other oppressed groups, together changing society.

It was a radical, anti-authoritarian, liberationist vision. In this way, again, the influence of the world movement of those days—the youth movement, the feminists, the anti-war marchers, the hippies—could be seen.

Another example to emphasize this point: The first gay group formed immediately after the Stonewall rebellion adopted the name "Gay Liberation Front." In the U.S. these words—"front," "liberation"—are very provocative. They call to mind rebels, outlaws, subversives. And the first militants of the gay movement adopted these words consciously. "Yes," we said, "we are subversive because this system doesn't let us live. Better to smash it, to begin again, to construct a new society with new values."

That period, the period of the radical and liberationist gay movement, lasted a maximum of four years. As I explained before, the gay movement did not grow up in isolation. It was part of a general wave of political activity. And when this general movement decreased, the radical gay movement (as a part of it) decreased at the same rate. And in its place appeared a more moderate gay movement, more respectable and less political. This moderate current dominated the gay community during the 1970s and, even now, with certain limited exceptions, continues as the dominant voice of North American gays. This new orientation represents itself as more realistic. It is opposed to provocative or confrontational tactics. It is opposed to the idea that the existing system is incapable of

freeing gay people. On the contrary, this moderate orientation declares that the aim of gays is to adapt ourselves to the system, not to change it.

Of course nobody suggests a return to the closet. The effect of the Stonewall rebellion and the first years afterwards still has a force that guarantees a minimum of militancy and visibility.

But the liberationist vision almost disappeared. Instead of struggle in the street, instead of unity of the oppressed, instead of political opposition to the powerful—there was a separatist, electoralist and reformist strategy. According to the new leaders of the movement a U.S. homosexual man has nothing in common with an undocumented heterosexual immigrant, or with Blacks in the ghetto, or with transsexuals who want to change their sex, much less with subversives on the left, Vietnamese, Salvadoreans, etc.

It was a deep change in the direction of our movement. Suddenly, we found homosexuals in electoral campaigns for mayor, for Congress, almost always in the Democratic Party, which is one of the ruling parties in the U.S.

We found lawyers, doctors and other professionals—even cops—coming out and organizing in associations to defend their interests. In the large cities, they opened Service Centers for the Gay and Lesbian Community, with medical clinics, listings of available jobs, psychiatric counseling, literature, etc. Many books, magazines and newspapers were published representing the new public interest in the theme of homosexuality. A few radio stations offered special programs for the gay community.

In many ways these changes appear positive. No doubt, gay people, now out of the closet, were not going to return to being hidden as before. But the negative is the new orientation to, and the predominance of, the middle class in the movement. The gay lawyers, doctors,

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Socialism and  
The Fight for  
Lesbian and  
Gay Liberation

By Paul Carlson

A Revolutionary Socialist League Pamphlet #148

administrators and political candidates very quickly took advantage of the gains won by the militant movement. And also very quickly, they forgot the main lessons of the radical movement: That gay people won much in little time precisely because they struggled and threatened the system with the fury of those at the bottom. The Stonewall fighters were neither middle class professionals nor Democratic politicians. They were the fucked-over people, unrespectable and valiant because they had nothing to lose.

But to the new leaders of the movement, this lesson was a curiosity of history. And they, the defenders of the system, understood very well the need to capture and channel the energy of the gay community in a safe and legal direction.

### What kind of movement do we need?

Not all gay people accepted the new direction of the movement. Some joined left revolutionary parties in order to continue their radical aims. Others tried to drop out of the system by withdrawing to the country or to the woods, forming small utopian communes in order to develop a pure gay culture or a kind of spiritualism.

Nevertheless, the dominant ideas denied the necessity of radical social change. The distance the liberationist project had lost in favor of the new moderate approach is best illustrated by the strike that divided the Gay Service Center in Los Angeles in 1975. This center, founded by a group of militant gays in the turbulent years after Stonewall, little by little acquired a broad credibility and respectability, until, in 1974, it received almost a million dollars from the federal government to increase its social services. With that much money, a struggle broke out in the Gay Center. The workers (some 20) demanded a voice and a vote in the major decisions—how to spend the money, how to organize new services, etc. The management of the Center said “NO.” The workers declared their intention to unionize. The next day (which was May Day) all the workers were fired. The strike that followed lasted six months and divided the gay community along class lines.

What should we defend? The concept of a neutral service, a respectability which brings government dollars at the cost of independence? Or the concept of workers' control, the right to join a union? Five years earlier the whole movement would have defended the workers. In 1975 the strike was lost. I don't want to paint a completely negative scene. We have seen a few explosions of militancy and political activity in recent years, although they are the exceptions.

For example—in 1977, when the singer Anita Bryant launched her evangelist, anti-gay campaign, the community responded with large demonstrations. This abusive representative of God met with protests everywhere. These included a physical attack during a press conference when Anita Bryant got a pie in the face in front of the cameras. While she cried, there was much laughter among others. Finally the poor woman gave up her blessed campaign and fled to an isolated village, to recover her faith. Six years later she is still recovering.

Another successful effort in 1978 stopped an anti-gay bill in California, which would have prohibited the employment of gays in public schools. Some very militant protests took place in New York City and to a lesser degree in other cities against the production and showing of the anti-gay film

“Cruising.” And, most significant of all—a massive rebellion of the gay community in San Francisco, in May 1979, against the light sentence given for the murder of Harvey Milk. Milk was an official of the city of San Francisco and a moderate gay leader. (We have some slides taken during the rebellion which we will show later.) These are the most memorable events of recent years. But, as I said, they are exceptions.

Now the U.S. gay movement is continuing its moderate and reformist course. This is a reflection of the lack of political activity and aggressiveness in the whole society. As I said in the beginning, we gays don't live in a separate world. Our movement is a wing of the broad movement of all the oppressed. Without a political struggle in general, there are very few gay people who will rise up in protest.

Some small groups, such as our Gay and Lesbian Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, do international solidarity work, but I tell you frankly, the response is not great.

Recently the terrifying worry about the threat of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)—a disease which primarily affects gays—has disoriented many activists.

I finish, as is traditional, with a balance of the short history of our movement in the U.S. The mere existence of the movement has changed the political life of the country. The demands of the first years, although far from being won, have added new concepts and new terms to politics. We, together with the women liberationists, have explained the connection between the personal and the political, sexuality under a capitalist system and the urgent necessity for total liberation.

The current controversies inside the movement deal primarily with questions of sexuality: sex between adults and youths; sadism and masochism; transsexualism and the right of people to choose their own sex or identity; pornography (or rather, erotic art); and of course, the unknown consequences of the disease AIDS. It's a shame that we don't have more time to go more into these topics.

Today, gay people in the U.S. obviously enjoy many more freedoms than before Stonewall. But we are still far from liberation. Sex between men or between women is still illegal in half the country. And where it is not illegal, we still suffer harassment and false charges by the police. Individual violence is an

immense problem. In spite of the gay colonies or ghettos, such as Castro Street in San Francisco, West Hollywood in Los Angeles or Christopher Street in New York City, the majority of gay people don't have the freedom to walk in the street without risking arrest or violence.

The right-wing evangelists and fascist groups have singled out gays as their principal enemy. And these groups are growing.

Will the movement go more deeply into the analysis of sexuality and the social system? Will gay liberation identify with other liberation struggles—such as national struggles, workers' and women's struggles, etc? Can we influence the political struggles in Central America, so that gays will come out of the revolutions with more freedom than before, and not with less?

There are many questions. And I don't have the answers. I only know that we either go forward or backwards. There is neither neutrality nor stability in the political struggle. I am not telling you that we will win. But I am telling you that we will continue to struggle. We must do it, because this struggle is for more than some reforms. It is for life. □

—Translated from the Spanish by A.L.

## MINNEAPOLIS RIGHTS AMENDMENT REVIVES PORNOGRAPHY DEBATE

By IAN DANIELS

For a number of years there has been a heated controversy in the women's and lesbian and gay movements about the nature of pornography. The controversy has centered around two main questions: “Is pornography a central part of the oppression of women?” and if so, “How is pornography best fought?” The latest flare-up of this dispute began last December as two well-known lesbian anti-pornography activists, Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon, helped the City Council of Minneapolis, Minnesota, draft an amendment to that city's Civil Rights Ordinance that would make pornography illegal on the grounds that it constitutes discrimination against women.

Defining pornography as “the sexually explicit subordination of women, graphically depicted, whether in pictures or in words,” the amendment lists a series of characteristics of pornography deemed to be discriminatory, including the presentation of women as sexual objects or commodities; the presenting of women as objects who enjoy pain, humiliation or rape; the presentation of women's body parts such that women are reduced to those parts; the presentation of women as whores by nature; and the presentation of women in scenarios of degradation or injury in a context that makes these conditions sexual.

This approach is significantly different from past attempts to outlaw pornography, which concentrated on the “obscene” and hence criminal/illegal nature of pornography.

The amendment narrowly passed in a City Council vote on December 30, though it was subsequently vetoed by Minneapolis Mayor Donald Fraser on January 5. While the mayor's veto was sustained by the Council the following week, the amendment has been sent back for revision and may come up for a vote again in an altered form. Whether or not this particular amendment resurfaces, the issues and controversies sur-



rounding it will continue: Feminists, civil libertarians, and the city's lesbian and gay community have been left bitterly divided by the two months of debate over the proposed new law.

### Issues in the debate

The central motivation for the amendment is contained in a key passage of the amendment's text: “Pornography is central in creating and maintaining the civil inequality of the sexes. Pornography is a systematic practice of exploitation and subordination based on sex which differentially harms women.... The bigotry and contempt it promotes, with the acts of aggression it fosters,

harm women's opportunity for equality of treatment....”

This analysis is based on a theory developed by a wing of the feminist movement over the past few years. In this view, a key part of fighting sexism in society as a whole is eliminating pornography from society, and challenging the right of the pornography industry to make money off what is seen as the victimization of women. This position further suggests that pornography inspires men to commit acts of sexual violence against women. While the anti-pornography feminists reserve special venom for “specialized” and extreme hard-core pornography, they include on their list such magazines as *Playboy*, *Penthouse* and *Hustler*.

Armed with this analysis, many women's groups have picketed porno  
(Continued on page 9)



The following article, the third in an on-going series on the Soviet economy, discusses the chronic crisis of Russian agriculture.

By W.E. SCHWEIZER

With the harvest over and winter setting in, Russian consumers can possibly look forward to eating better than the severely limited, starchy diet they have endured for several years. After four dismal harvests, this year's crop is expected to total 200 million metric tons of grain. (A metric ton is approximately 2,200 pounds.) However, this is still 38 million tons short of what was planned; since the beginning of the latest five-year plan in 1981, grain production has fallen a total of 170 million metric tons below target.

Despite this year's improvement, Russian agriculture remains one of the sickest and least productive sectors of the Russian economy. This is reflected in the average Russian's diet, of which 44 percent consists of potatoes and grain products, and only 8 percent of meat and fish. By contrast, the average U.S. diet contains only 26 percent potatoes and grains, and 21 percent meat and fish.

During the severe shortages of the past several years, protein-rich foods such as meat and dairy products almost entirely disappeared from stores, especially outside the large cities of European Russia. In Novosibirsk, shops simply closed down their meat departments. Elsewhere, residents of outlying areas frequently chartered buses to travel as much as 100 miles to a major city to buy meat, milk, produce, and other dairy products. One bakery in downtown Moscow even began demonstrating "Fifty ways to make tasty dishes from old bread."

### Crash programs fail

This near-permanent crisis in agriculture also comes despite massive increases in investment over the last 20 years. In the early '60s, Khrushchev embarked on a crash program to increase production by plowing up virgin lands in eastern Russia. His successors, Brezhnev and Kosygin, launched mammoth chemical fertilizer projects. All the while Russian factories turned out tens of thousands of tractors and other farm machines, giving Russian agriculture the potential to be wholly mechanized. Altogether, the Brezhnev regime poured over 20 percent of its total investment budget into agriculture. (For the U.S., the figure is about 5 percent.)

Yet all of this has yielded very little. The harvests over the last three years have been no bigger than those of the mid-'60s. Compared to the U.S., although the levels of mechanization and fertilizer production are similar, Russian productivity has lagged far behind. Whereas one Russian peasant can feed him or herself and four others, one U.S. farmer can feed 49 others. Moreover, 20 percent of the entire Russian labor force still works in agriculture. For the U.S., the comparable figure is 3 percent.

As a result, the Russian government continually has been forced to import food to feed its own population. Since the beginning of the latest five-year plan, the Soviet Union has imported 110 million metric tons of wheat and corn. (By contrast, as late as 1971 the Soviet Union actually exported grain.) These imports of food severely strain Russia's foreign exchange reserves, which the government has generally tried to use for imports of advanced technology.

## A Reply to the SWP and Line of March

### Part 3

# The Economic Crisis in the Soviet Union



### Waste and corruption

For much of the Left, the crisis in Russian agriculture presents a big problem. Believing that the Soviet Union is some sort of socialist society or workers' state, they have to distort explanations of the crisis to fit their theories. For example, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) last spring ascribed the food shortages in Russia to the country's harsh climate and poor roads, storage facilities, and other infrastructure. While it is true that these are factors, even the Russian leadership knows better. Before he died, Brezhnev himself took issue with using bad weather as an excuse:

"Experience of many years has shown that we have weather unfavorable for agriculture almost every other year," he stated. "Consequently, it should be viewed not as an exception, but as quite a natural phenomenon for our climate."

The backward and decrepit agricultural infrastructure is not an isolated problem as the SWP implies. It is a direct result of the nature of the economic system in Russia—state capitalism—which is based on the alienation and exploitation of the Russian workers and peasants.

The system cripples Russian agriculture in a number of ways. First, with a self-selecting bureaucracy running the economy in its own interests, and with the peasants deprived of any power or even say-so, mismanagement, waste and corruption abound. Examples are as common as the lines in front of the food

shops. Many appear right in Pravda and Izvestia:

- Sheep farmers in the Mariskiy region were ordered to adopt new industrial techniques to raise and slaughter sheep for meat, despite the fact that the sheep were bred for their wool. As a result, thousands of sheep got sick and died, causing shortages of both meat and wool.

- Only 5 percent of canned goods consist of tomatoes, fruits and preserves, despite the fact that these are staples of the Russian diet. On the other hand, state warehouses ooze with tomato paste because the bureaucracy built a lot of tomato-paste-producing machinery and gave out special subsidies to promote paste production.

- Despite more-than-adequate output from fertilizer plants, much of their product is not used. In the Volga River valley, hardened mounds of fertilizer chemicals as much as 10 feet high dot the countryside. On one state farm near the village of Shirino, the peasants burn the fertilizer to hide the fact that they are not using it from the authorities. Yet in other areas of the Soviet Union, six million acres of rye and barley land have been taken out of production in recent years because of shortages of fertilizer.

- Similarly, despite ample production of tractors and other equipment, much of it stands rusting out in the weather for lack of adequate maintenance facilities, storage sheds, or spare parts. Other machinery is simply shipped to the wrong area—for example, flax-threshers are sent to regions which grow no flax.

- Mounds of vegetables pile up and rot because there are no storage facilities or good farm-to-market roads. Much of the protein value of hay—an important animal feed—is also lost in

this way. Altogether, the Russian journal *Questions of Economics* estimated in 1980 that as much as 20-30 percent of every harvest is lost because of improper handling of the crop.

### Peasants hate system

The second way the set-up of Russian society has messed up agriculture in Russia is that it has deprived the peasants of virtually any incentive to produce. In the Russian Revolution and the following Civil War (1917-1920) the peasants seized the land from the old landlords. The Bolshevik government under V.I. Lenin sanctioned this, which won it the active or at least passive support of the majority of peasants. In 1929-33, however, seeking to consolidate its control over the peasants and prepare for its massive industrialization drive, the state bureaucracy that had grown up in the 1920s under J.V. Stalin took back the land and herded the peasants onto so-called "collective farms." This "forced collectivization" resulted in the death of an estimated eight million people as the peasants fought to retain the land they had won. The peasants, not surprisingly, have never forgotten this, and view the government and the Communist Party with sullen hostility. Deprived of control over the so-called collectives and, as recently as 1974, forbidden to leave the farms without written permission, the peasants carry out party and state directives as little as they can get away with.

As if this weren't enough, the state further destroys the peasants' incentives to produce by paying them extremely little for the crops they grow. Most peasants in the USSR are members of the "collective" farms, which are in fact run by the Communist Party. Each farm consists of vast fields which are tilled by the farmers as a group, along with small private plots. Each member of the collective must work on these fields a minimum number of days each year, and may work more if he/she wants to. A certain amount of the crop grown on these fields, usually grain, must be turned over to the state at prices set by the latter. The money received from the state goes to cover the costs of growing the crops, such as buying seed or fertilizer, or perhaps put in a fund to buy some machinery. Whatever is left is distributed to the peasant families in proportion to the amount of days they worked on the collective fields. While this may seem reasonable enough, it isn't; the state sets prices so low that they barely enable the collectives to cover their expenses and sometimes are not sufficient even for that.

### Farm productivity low

The reason things are arranged this way is because the state wants to try to maintain a high rate of exploitation of the workers in industry. One way to do this is to keep wages down. But if workers being paid abysmal wages are to be able to work, they must be able to buy food at extremely low prices. The government keeps food prices down largely by setting the procurement prices of the required deliveries of grain from the collectives at an extremely low level. But this ultimately backfires. Since the peasants receive so little for their labor, they have no reason to work very hard on the collective fields. As a result, productivity on these fields is extremely low and Russian agriculture is a disaster area. The proof that the peasants aren't lazy is the fact that productivity on the tiny (one to three acres) privately-held plots, on which the peasants grow food for their own use and for sale on the free

(Continued on next page)

# The Pornography Debate...

(Continued from page 7)

movie theaters and dirty book stores, and have sought various legal actions against publishers and distributors of pornographic material. In many cases, anti-pornography feminists have succeeded in winning some legal action, including the closing down of certain theaters or stores. In other cases, these groups have used "direct action" techniques, invading and trashing the offending establishments.

Civil libertarians, on the other hand, have opposed many of the anti-pornography campaigns on the grounds that they represent a violation of first amendment rights. They argue that banning pornographic materials, or restricting what stores may sell and theaters may show, sets a dangerous precedent for the censorship of other material.

Adding to the controversy, right-wing religious groups have waged their own campaigns against pornography, not on the grounds of fighting sexism, but of upholding and enforcing so-called moral standards. In many cases, these organizations have allied themselves with women's groups fighting pornography. While the religious right was conspicuously silent during the Minneapolis debate (leading some observers to suggest that such groups have learned when to keep their mouths shut not to jeopardize legal action they support) the law would certainly have been welcomed by those who oppose pornography from a religious point of view.

Further complicating matters, government campaigns against pornography stores have often been covers for actions against gay males and/or prostitutes. Many dirty book stores act as meeting places for gay men or as relatively safe tricking sites for prostitutes and, as such, are seen as threats to the heterosexual, family-oriented status quo. (In fact in one case, a campaign against pornography in New York's Times Square area, organized by feminists opposing sexism, resulted in the closing of one dirty bookstore—which was frequented almost entirely by gay men.) In a similar vein, there is good reason to believe that legislation against pornography would eliminate not only straight porn (that which is most often judged to be inherently sexist), but that used by and designed for gay men and lesbians. Thus, it is not clear whether the target of the anti-porn campaigns is only certain kinds of explicit sexual materials or explicit sexual material in general.

## Sexism and smut

There is no easy answer to this controversy, where fighting sexism, the rights of gay people, the right of everyone, straight or gay, to sexual expression and opposition to government repression and censorship all seem to conflict. Nevertheless, in our opinion, the strategy of the anti-pornography feminists and the Minneapolis amendment is wrong, and fraught with danger.

While most pornography is indeed sexist, it is important to recognize that sexism is profoundly embedded in all levels of our society. Erotic literature and film is not the cause of sexism or the oppression of women; it is a reflection of the status of women in society. Further, most pornography does not deal with the extreme, such as rape and dismemberment of women for male enjoyment—though such material certainly exists.

Moreover, it is far from clearcut, as the supporters of anti-pornography legislation argue, that pornography inspires men to treat women in an



Andrea Dworkin.

oppressive manner. The reality of our society is that most men treat most women in an oppressive manner. Pornography is not at the root of this, nor will the elimination of pornography solve this. In fact some studies show that pornography has a "catharsis" effect. That is, it serves as an outlet for fantasies of dominance and submission (which most everyone has at one time or another) rather than as the inspiration to carry out these fantasies in a non-consensual way.

(There is another discussion here, beyond the scope of this article: while Dworkin and MacKinnon seem to argue that any sexual submission is sexist, others disagree. One lesbian group, Samois, has developed a theory around the sexual practice of "S/M" (sadomasochism). They define S/M, including controlled consensual violence, as "a form of sexuality based on the consensual exchange of power" and see this as a valid and potentially educating form of sexual expression.)

Whatever the function and nature of sexuality and pornography, in a society that is built on sexism, the problems of rape and the oppression of women cannot be solved by singling out pornography as the main enemy.

Beyond this, one of the most dangerous aspects of the Minneapolis amendment and similar methods of fighting sexism is their reliance on the state to control printed materials and to legislate "morality" or anti-sexism. While the civil libertarians often ignore the question of sexism, their concerns are valid. To give the state power, in one instance, to decide what is proper sexual material for people to consume is to allow it to begin the process of determining what people may read in general.

A parallel can be drawn with the strategy of fighting the right wing with such slogans as "Ban the Klan." Overall, the history of the relationship between the fascist movement and the state has been, at best, one of covert cooperation. To ask the government to ban the right wing is tantamount to giving the government the power to ban organizations of the left and working and oppressed people.

As the instrument of a sexist system, the state is hardly interested in combating one of its major foundations. The state's concern is maintaining its control and authority over people's lives. Giving a sexist, puritanical and heterosexist state the power to determine what sexual expression is proper will have a distinctly non-progressive outcome.

The feminist movement has long argued that rape is not a crime of sex but of violence. The linking of violence back to sex through pornography risks confusing the issue once again. Chances are if a woman is beaten and raped by her husband, it is not caused by the pornography he may use, but by some deeper sexism. Concentrating on the real problem of violence against women

through education, self-defense training, strengthening laws against rape and woman-abuse and fighting the roots of sexism in the capitalist system speaks far more directly to the issues than calling on the state to suppress pornography.

## Debate splits lesbians, gay men

Perhaps the most unfortunate by-product of the debate in Minneapolis, however, is renewed discord among those who have an equal stake in the elimination of sexism and heterosexism from society. The pages of Minneapolis's lesbian and gay paper, *The GLC Voice*, have been filled lately with diatribes, overreactions and a pervasive mutual hostility between lesbians and gay men.

Gay male contributors to the paper,

justifiably feeling that the proposed law threatened their interests, have often passed the line from disagreement with supporters of the amendment to sexism itself. (In one article, editor Tim Campbell gives a disgustingly misogynist portrayal of the amendment's authors.) Meanwhile, women writing to the paper, justifiably concerned with sexism and violence against women, have gone to anti-sexual extremes. Public harassment has also occurred—in one case, feminists angered by the paper's stand spray-painted Campbell's apartment building.

What is needed is to step back and take a look at what and who the real enemy is. It is not pornography, which, sexist as it may be, serves a sexual function for women and men, gay and straight alike. The enemy is the sexism inherent in society and the government that perpetuates it. If a reflection is bad, don't break the mirror, change the reality. □

## March 8 Is International Women's Day



During the "Little Steel" strike in 1937, courageous women like these took the law into their own hands to fight off police attacks on picketers and back the strikers' demands for better conditions in the steel mills.

## Russian Agriculture...

(Continued from previous page)

farmers' markets, is much, much higher. Although these holdings suffer from the same harsh climate as the giant collective and state farms, they manage to produce 24 percent of the Soviet Union's farm output on only 3 percent of the land. The peasants in Russia know how to farm well when they want to; the best fruits and vegetables in Russia are produced on these plots.

To correct the mess that it created, the state capitalist bureaucracy is reorganizing itself, as well as trying to induce the peasants to work harder. A key element of its plan is a system of "collective contracts" with small groups of peasants. By giving these groups slightly more

freedom to operate, the authorities hope to inject the high productivity of the small private plots into the dinosaurian structure of the collective farms.

However, the bureaucracy has also made it clear that it will not give up its hold over agriculture: It will not give the peasants the land, will not give them any say and will not change its basic policies. The state will continue to control the markets for the crops, and the supplies of fertilizer, machinery and credit. The peasants will have no more real control over their lives and no more incentive to produce than they had before. As a result, the bureaucracy will be free to continue mismanaging and wasting resources, and the crisis in Russian agriculture will go on. □

By PAUL BENJAMIN  
and  
DARRYL CLARK

Jesse Jackson's campaign for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination is arousing interest, enthusiasm and a good deal of controversy. The campaign has struck a responsive chord among many Black people—and among some whites—while shaking up the Democratic presidential race and the traditional Black leadership alliance. Jackson himself is being praised as the leader of a revived Black movement who has worked out a realistic strategy for a Democratic victory in November. He is also being condemned as a political hustler who is handing the election to Reagan.

Jackson's campaign is controversial because he is a Black leader calling for the empowerment of Black people on all levels of U.S. politics. He is neither the first Black person to run for president, nor the only Black leader calling for mass voter registration to maximize Black people's impact at the polls. But his campaign is the first serious effort to link the two by calling on Black people—and to some extent other oppressed groups—to mobilize behind a Black presidential candidate.

Jackson's quest for the presidential nomination clearly appeals to many Black people who are fed up with having to choose which white candidate does them the most good—or the least harm. More broadly, Jackson's popular support indicates that Black people are coming out of a period of retreat and are looking for ways to mobilize against increasing corporate, government and right-wing attacks. It reflects a growing understanding that Black people cannot rely on the courts, commissions and white liberal politicians to protect them from these attacks, but instead must build their own political alternative. For many, the Jackson campaign offers an attractive-looking strategy for unifying the potential power of Black people and winning a share of real political clout on a national level.

We welcome the impulse towards Black pride, self-determination and political power reflected in widespread support for Jackson. Nevertheless, we do not support the Jesse Jackson campaign. In our opinion, the Jackson campaign is not a step forward for the Black liberation struggle that can win real gains for Black people. Instead, it represents an effort to channel all the frustration and anger building up among Black people into "respectable" activity within the Democratic Party—where they pose no danger to the capitalist ruling class.

In order to explain how we reached this conclusion, in the following article we will take up some of the major questions raised by the Jackson campaign. These include: 1) Who is Jesse

Jackson and what does he stand for? 2) What is the Jackson campaign trying to accomplish? 3) Can the campaign win real gains for Black people? and 4) Will the Jackson campaign help build a mass movement?

### Who is Jesse Jackson and what does he stand for?

Jesse Jackson was born in 1941, the son of a poor family in South Carolina. He often mentions several early experiences as key elements in shaping his career. Jackson says the circumstances of his birth—he was born out of wedlock—and the humiliation he suffered fired him with a desire to succeed in life. And he says the racism he experienced as a youth and as a student at the University of Illinois first led him into the civil rights movement.

Jackson became a civil rights activist after transferring to a Black university, the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State College. Later, he became one of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s aides in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), playing a prominent role in King's 1966 Chicago campaign, in the 1968 Poor People's Campaign in Washington D.C., and as head of Operation Breadbasket, a SCLC economic selfhelp project based in Chicago.

In 1971 Jackson left the SCLC and formed People United to Save Humanity (PUSH—now called People United to Serve Humanity.) PUSH, based in Chicago, has carried out several local and national campaigns over the past 13 years. The most important of these are PUSH Expo, a trade fair for Black businesses; the PUSH Trade Bureau, which promotes Black businesses and organizes boycotts of major corporations to win franchises, management positions, and jobs for Black people; and PUSH-EXCEL, founded to promote Black students' "self-image and work habits."

While Jackson has never laid out an overall political program, the defining elements of such a program have been present throughout his career. He is obviously more radical than most of the other Democratic candidates—it's hard to imagine Mondale, let alone Glenn, leading protest marches or embracing Yasir Arafat.

But Jackson has never been, and never claimed to be, a revolutionary. Although the words have changed, his message has always been the same: that Black people must work within the established system to achieve their goals. He made this clear at the Martin Luther King Memorial March in Washington D.C. last August 27, telling the crowd:

"We can use the ballot to bring about change and transition through elections and not bloody revolution."

Despite his fiery rhetoric, Jackson has become more and more moderate since he first became politically active. In 1968, he was known as a militant who favored marches and confrontations, and who was one of the few SCLC leaders able to "rap" with the Black youths who were rebelling all over the country. But in the mid-1970s Jackson toured the country in a PUSH-EXCEL campaign telling Black students that since the civil rights movement had now "opened the door" for Black people, students had no one to blame but themselves if they did not succeed. During the 1980 Miami rebellion, Jackson was all but run off the streets when he tried to convince Blacks protesting against the police murder of a young Black man to stay home.

Moreover, Jackson has always been a conservative on social issues such as education, abortion, women's libera-

political and financial base among socially conservative Black business and church leaders.

Finally, there is plenty of evidence that Jackson is a political opportunist and camera hound who has been more concerned with inflating his own reputation than with winning real gains for Black people. After King was murdered in 1968, Jackson tried to catapult himself into position as King's heir by organizing press conferences on his own and appearing at them in a bloodstained shirt, implying he had cradled the dying movement leader in his arms. Other SCLC leaders deny Jackson was anywhere near King when he was assassinated and to this day resent his effort to capitalize on King's death.

Similarly, while PUSH's boycotts of major companies like the Coca-Cola Corporation and Burger King have gained national publicity for Jackson, they have actually achieved few benefits for Black working people. As a rule, Jackson and other PUSH leaders do not

# JESSE JACKSON'S CAMPAIGN: WHAT WE THINK

tion, and lesbian/gay rights. In 1977, for instance, he warned that events like the "racial upheaval" of the 1960s, the Vietnam war, Watergate, "outlandish clothes" and "decadent" popular music were all contributing to the "rejection of authority" by Black youth. He called for a return to "discipline" in the schools, including suspensions and corporal punishment (just as Reagan and the New Right do today) as the solution to the country's educational problems.

In fact, one of Jackson's first actions after announcing he was running for the Democratic nomination was to visit Jerry Falwell, the New Right demagogue who heads the ultra-conservative—and racist—Moral Majority. The purpose of this visit was to open a "dialogue" on economic and social issues. Although Jackson has given verbal support to women's and gay rights since becoming a candidate and has picked up some endorsements as a result, many feminists and lesbian/gay activists remain unconvinced of his commitment.

Jackson's strategy throughout his career has been to build a political alliance with the Black middle class, rather than building a mass organization of Black working people. PUSH's early campaigns in Chicago were designed to win support from the Black business community. Jackson even moved PUSH's offices out of a poor Black neighborhood on Chicago's West Side to the Hyde Park-Kenwood neighborhood where the Black middle class is concentrated in order to cement this alliance. And Jackson's stands on abortion and gay rights are at least partially calculated to maintain his

follow up the covenants they sign with white corporations to see whether they have carried out promised hiring and job training programs. Jackson simply says he is a "change agent" who leaves implementation of his programs to others.

It also appears that some Black business owners who gained franchises from PUSH-led boycotts did so only after they agreed to kick back funds to PUSH. Jackson reportedly told some business associates, "If you want to play, you have to pay." While Jackson has won national recognition through these campaigns, he has never built a mass base in Chicago; many Black people there know his real record and see through his claims.

Of course, despite these failings, Jackson is no worse than other politicians, church leaders and business people. Consequently, the recent press stories that have singled out Jackson's political and financial activities for attacks are hypocritical and racist. The highly publicized financial "irregularities" attributed to PUSH are small stuff compared to the slush funds and financial gimmicks routinely used by other candidates, not to mention "respectable" banks and corporations.

In particular the headlines over PUSH's "Arab Gold"—contributions from the Arab League—are contemptible. Many other organizations, including, for instance, ruling class citadels like Harvard University, have accepted Arab contributions without a word of criticism. And everybody knows other politicians—particularly white politicians—have sold themselves over and over to the banks, corporations, Israel, South Africa and other bourgeois



Jesse Jackson (second from left) with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, 1968. Jackson's reputation as a militant grew out of his role in the 1960s civil rights movement.



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But however hypocritical the attacks may be, it remains true that Jackson is not the honest and uncorrupted leader of Black people—and disciple of Martin Luther King Jr.—that he pretends to be.

### What is the Jackson campaign trying to accomplish?

Jesse Jackson's primary goal in entering the presidential campaign is to ensure Ronald Reagan's defeat in November by mobilizing Black voters that neither the Democratic Party, nor the other candidates, can bring out on their own.

Specifically, Jackson argues that: 1) The Democrats need a massive Black voter turnout to beat Reagan; 2) the other Democratic candidates cannot mobilize Black voters because they are

Jackson combines his "empowerment" strategy with occasional criticisms of the other Democratic contenders and the party leadership as a whole.

Despite all this, Jackson's campaign is explicitly designed to build support for the Democratic Party's candidate in November—most likely the white, conservative and dull Walter Mondale. This is why the Democratic Party leaders, after some initial hesitation, have welcomed his entry into the race (while continuing to oppose election rule changes that would give Jackson—and Black people—more clout in the party and thus could alienate white voters).

Ann Lewis, the Democratic National Committee's political director, speculated in November 1983 that "He'll reach 300,000 to a half-million unregistered Blacks, mostly young men, that we couldn't reach any other way." And in a recent poll of hundreds of Democratic national, state and local officials, fully 88 percent believed that Black voters who turn out for Jackson in the

cracy, share the ruling class's basic assumptions about the world and U.S. society.

In other words, they believe that the United States ruling class should run the world. They think working people, Black people, women and just about everyone but themselves aren't capable of making their own decisions and need someone to do it for them. They have a dog-eat-dog mentality that says only those with the biggest teeth deserve wealth and power and that those who have it have earned it. They assume that only the winners should define morality and justice, while those on the bottom deserve to be there because they are inferior, lazy or degenerate. In sum, the Democratic leaders are loyal to the capitalist system and U.S. imperialism.

Where the Democrats differ from the Republicans is over tactics used to maintain this chamber of horrors. Specifically, since the late 1800s the Democratic Party has played the role of a kind of safety valve in U.S. society. It has carried out a variety of social reforms whenever necessary to head off rebellions by farmers, workers, Black people, and other groups. And it has opened up the capitalist ranks to tiny elites rising up out of oppressed ethnic or social groupings. Through such measures the Democrats have been successful in drawing independent movements into the party where they can be controlled, rendered harmless to the system and eventually dissipated.

This is what happened to the Populist movement of the 1890s, the labor upsurge of the 1930s, the Black and anti-war movements of the 1960s and the women's and gay movements of the 1970s.

The material basis for the Democratic Party's ability to play this role was the prosperity of U.S. capitalism, based both on industrial supremacy and the loot gathered from a global neo-colonial empire. But this basis was seriously weakened by the series of recessions and imperialist defeats U.S. capitalism suffered in the 1970s. To secure their domination, the U.S. capitalists and their agents in both major political parties must attack the living standards, organizations and political rights of all working and oppressed people at home and abroad.

In fact, the fundamentals of what is now labeled "Reagan's program" were put in place by the Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter. By 1980 Carter had shifted from his earlier policies, and had begun to emphasize increased military spending and cuts in social programs. And after Reagan replaced Carter and vastly expanded these attacks, the Democrats in Congress helped implement them.

The proof of the Democrats real program is not what they say they will do, but what they have actually done in

those cities or states where they control the government. Here the record shows that like the Republicans, Democratic officials have supported the capitalist attacks and have tried to suppress working people's efforts to defend themselves.

For example, it was a Democratic governor, Bruce Babbitt—elected on a pro-labor platform—who sent in the National Guard to break a strike by copper miners in Arizona. Democratic governors in Montana and Michigan ordered state police to suppress militant actions by striking construction workers. And it is the Democratic administration of Mayor Ed Koch in New York that is trying to cover up the racist killing of a young Black man, Michael Stewart, by the police.

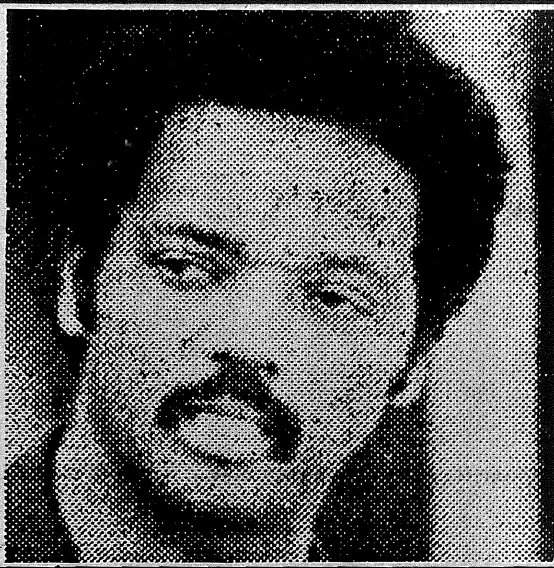
Similarly, the Democrats have no alternative to Reagan's militaristic foreign policy. The Democrats were not even able to pass a resolution calling on the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Lebanon because so many of them support Reagan's policy in the Middle East. Democratic members of Congress who loudly condemn Reagan's Central America policy voted millions of dollars in military aid for the Salvadorean butchers and the ultrareactionary Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries. They also lined up behind the invasion of Grenada. And the Democratic members of the House who voted for a nuclear freeze resolution (only after agreeing to water it down to insignificance) later backed the MX missile, the B-1 bomber, and other nuclear hardware for the U.S. war machine.

The Democrats' lack of a political alternative has produced a political and moral crisis for the party. Reagan has gained a level of respect even from people who despise his politics because he appears to believe what he says and appears courageous enough to carry out unpopular policies when he thinks it is necessary. In contrast, the Democrats come across as spineless careerists who don't believe in anything and shift their political convictions according to the latest opinion polls. Even those who may support the Democrats as a "lesser evil" have lost respect for their ability to provide any leadership for the country, and consequently are less likely to turn up at the polls.

This is where Jesse Jackson comes in. Precisely when illusions in the Democrats are beginning to break down, precisely when people are beginning to look for alternatives to the Democratic leadership, Jackson's campaign is aimed at making the Democratic Party look better.

Jesse Jackson is an outsider who claims to be leading a crusade, not rehashing old promises. His background as a movement leader and minister give him a moral authority that is lacking in

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white, too conservative, and dull; and 3) a Black candidate in the primaries like himself—an exciting speaker with a movement background and few ties to the discredited Democratic leadership—can inspire Black people to register and lead them to the polls in November.

Jackson's strategy hinges on his ability to convince Black voters (and potential voters) that they have something to gain by supporting his campaign. Most people realize that Jackson is not running to win the nomination, let alone the presidency. Accordingly, he is promising that his candidacy itself will enable Black people to win more power, by opening up the primaries and forcing the Democratic Party to revise election rules that deny Black voters representation at the National Convention.

Jackson also argues that if Black voters line up solidly behind him, the Jackson delegates at the convention will have more chance to influence the party's campaign platform, and could possibly act as power brokers in the selection of a presidential candidate. In addition, Jackson maintains that a voter registration drive inspired by his campaign will empower Black people on the local and state level by contributing to the election of more Black officials.

More broadly, Jackson claims that his candidacy will help Black people—and all oppressed groups—by forcing the party as a whole into more progressive positions. He asserts he will "redefine the internal debate" by raising issues that the other candidates ignore. And he advocates forming a vaguely defined "Rainbow Coalition" which Jackson himself usually describes as "reviving the progressive wing of the Democratic Party." In accordance with these themes

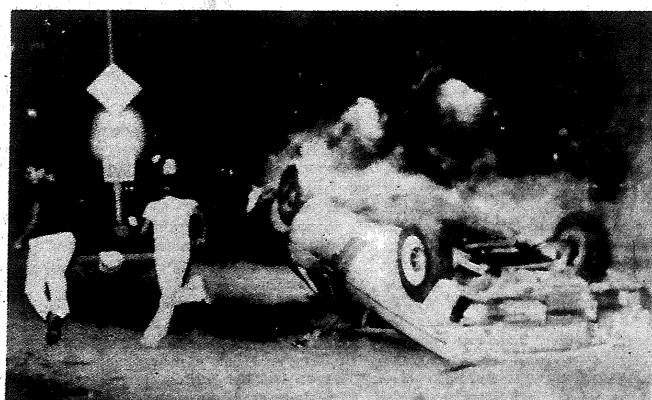
spring primaries will also vote for Democratic candidates in the fall.

### Can Jesse Jackson's campaign win substantial gains for Black people?

It is true that Jesse Jackson's campaign is getting many Black people to register to vote and is encouraging them to get involved in the "political process." But this does not necessarily add up to significant progress for Black people. Since Jackson is telling people to register and vote Democratic, the real question in determining what the Jackson campaign means for Black people is: "Is the Democratic Party a vehicle for winning gains for Black people?" The basic assumption of Jesse Jackson's campaign is that the Democratic Party is such a vehicle. We believe, on the contrary, that it isn't.

The Democratic Party is a capitalist party. What does this mean? Among other things, it means that the party's finances, and its policies on most major issues, are controlled by the same corporate interests that run the rest of the country. It means that Democratic Party politicians listen first of all to interests like the oil lobby, the utility lobby, or the defense lobby before casting their votes.

But money isn't everything, even for politicians. Even more important, Democratic party leaders, candidates and the heads of entrenched Democratic interest groups like the labor bureau-



Rebellion in Miami, 1980. Black youth took to the streets to protest freeing of cops who killed a Black motorist. Jackson was booed by demonstrators when he told them to go home.

(Continued from previous page)

the other candidates. Interviews with potential voters show that it is precisely Jackson's ability to convey a sense of values, rather than his specific positions on any issues, that people find attractive about him. Jesse Jackson, alone of all the Democratic candidates, is breathing life into the Democratic campaign, convincing people that the party can in fact provide an alternative to Reaganism.

But despite his promises, Jackson's campaign will not change the policies and basic nature of the Democratic Party. While his campaign may help elect more local Black officials, and thus win more influence for Black politicians within the Democratic Party apparatus, this will not do much to defend Black people.

We support Black people's efforts to gain control of their own communities. But there is all too much evidence that supporting Black candidates who are loyal to the Democratic Party does little to win concrete gains for Black people. Today the capitalists are using Black politicians to enforce social cutbacks and union-busting campaigns that white officials could not carry out without risking Black urban rebellions. Mayors Coleman Young in Detroit and Marion Barry in Washington D.C., to name only two, have taken the lead in driving down wages and eliminating jobs for mainly Black city workers.

(We might also point out that the assumption that Black elected officials would automatically form a bloc against the white Democratic Party leadership is a myth. Mayors Coleman Young, Andrew Young of Atlanta, Tom Bradley of Los Angeles and Wilson Goode of Philadelphia have all endorsed Walter Mondale.)

In reality, Jackson is not even trying to bring about a fundamental change in the Democratic Party. The truth is, Jackson has already surrendered the most effective weapon Black people have against the Democratic Party leadership. The only real hold Black people have over the Democratic Party is their ability to refuse their support, either by organizing an independent party or by staying home on election day. But Jackson has said repeatedly that he will not form a third party and run in the November elections if he fails to win the Democratic nomination. Instead, he has pledged to support the Democratic candidate, regardless of who it is. Even after the Democratic National Committee rejected Jackson's very moderate proposals for revising the election rules and allowing more elected Black delegates at the convention, Jackson pledged his loyalty, saying he would "rather have a broken heart than a broken party."

When all is said and done, Jackson is telling Black people what they have been told for years—that Blacks must limit their political aspirations to what is acceptable to the Democratic Party leaders. These political bosses are under no real pressure to adopt more progressive policies because Jackson is promising to bring out the Black vote no matter what they do.

In fact, now that Jackson is actually campaigning, he is not even carrying out his promise to put forward a left alternative on specific issues facing the Democrats. Instead, he has been moving to the center in order to look more respectable.

For instance, on the Middle East, Jackson, who once condemned Zionism and supported the Palestine Liberation Organization, now supports making Israel "the commercial center of the Middle East," avoids mentioning the PLO, and claims "You can embrace Yasir Arafat without embracing his politics." Jackson also supports continuing to send aid to the butchers in the Salvadorean military, hinging such support on "human rights progress" and calling for a negotiated settlement. This is exactly the position Democrats have

been using for three years to cover up their support to U.S. imperialism in Central America. Jackson's proposed "freeze" on military spending actually increases the defense budget to take account of inflation. And it is linked to demands that U.S. imperialism's junior partners in Western Europe—the British rulers who went to war with Argentina and the French rulers who currently have troops in Chad and Lebanon—build up their military apparatus even further.

### Can the Jackson campaign build a mass movement?

There are numerous people, particularly those in left groups, who concede that Jesse Jackson is a pro-capitalist politician and share our assessment of the Democratic Party. Nevertheless,

**"Both parties (Democrat and Republican) are controlled by the same people who have abused our rights, and who have deceived us with false promises every time an election rolls around."**

— Malcolm X, assassinated February 21, 1965



many of these people are supporting the Jackson campaign in the belief that it provides an opportunity to build a radical mass movement in this country.

We are as anxious as anyone to organize a radical mass movement in which Black people play a leading role. But we believe such a movement can be built only by telling the truth. Those who recognize that Jackson is a political opportunist but who do not say so, who recognize that Jackson is hustling votes for the Democratic Party but do not say so, who know the Democrats will betray Black people but don't say so, and those who admit all of this but say it doesn't matter because Jackson is Black—are not doing Black people, or anybody else, a service.

A movement that relies on popular illusions in Jackson, rather than honestly assessing his campaign, is like a house built on sand. It will fall apart when those illusions are stripped away by reality, perhaps as soon as Jackson starts openly backing Mondale instead of building an effective movement against Reagan and the entire ruling class.

Those who hope to use the Jackson campaign to build a mass movement need to examine exactly who is using who in the Jackson campaign. If Jackson were to lead a third, indepen-

dent party campaign based on the publicity and organization built up through the Democratic primaries, such a campaign would have the potential to generate a movement combining electoral action with other forms of protest. Such a campaign could develop into an alliance of Black people, Latins, women, gays, workers and progressive groups that would deserve serious consideration regardless of its formal label or Jackson's own reformist politics.

But Jackson has no intention of organizing such a campaign. He has not only opposed a third party race in 1984, but is not even building a political apparatus that could serve as the basis for a third party in the future. Jackson's goal is to draw people into supporting the Democrats, not to lead anyone out of the Democratic Party into a party independent of the capitalists.

Similarly, if the Jackson campaign were to organize mass protests demanding jobs, opposing U.S. intervention in Central America and the Middle East, or

structive political participation [and] curtail the potential for civil disorder." We suspect that those who support Jackson in order to "curtail the potential for civil disorder" have a better idea of what his campaign is really doing than those who think it will help build a radical movement.

### If people don't support Jackson, what can they do?

We must build a militant radical movement against the capitalist/imperialist attack on working and oppressed people in the U.S. and throughout the world. Only such a movement, that knows what it wants and where it is going, that has no illusions in the capitalist system and its institutions and refuses to tie itself to the Democratic Party, can have a significant impact on the political course of this country.

To build such a movement requires systematic educational and organizing work. We must bring the truth about all aspects of the world crisis of capitalism to Blacks and all working class and oppressed people. This means informing people about what is going on in Lebanon, Central America, South Africa, etc. and explaining why the U.S. supports reactionary regimes and suppresses people's rights to be free of foreign domination.

It means explaining that the ruling classes, in the United States and throughout the world, aim to solve the crisis through a massive assault on the living standards, political rights and organizations of the majority of the world's people. And, it means explaining that the arms buildup and the threat of nuclear holocaust result from the efforts of all capitalist countries, especially Russia and the United States, to expand their power and spheres of influence at the expense of the others.

In the U.S., building a movement means explaining that the capitalist attacks on Blacks, Latins, women and gays, on workers and oppressed people are supported by both capitalist parties. We must show why the Democrats are not a real alternative to the Republicans and warn that the capitalist attacks will continue, no matter who wins the elections, until working people have the strength to resist them.

Building a movement means supporting, participating in and organizing mass struggles against all facets of the capitalist offensive. This includes strikes, mass demonstrations, boycotts, rent strikes. While this is being done, it is crucial to build unity among all working class and oppressed people, explaining the common cause of their oppression and the need to unite to fight the common enemy. In other words, we must build an authentic Rainbow Coalition, not a rhetorical one.

We believe that a mass popular movement can be strong only if it is a class conscious movement; if the people in it understand who their friends are and who their enemies are. We must therefore expose the notion that any oppressed group in a Rainbow Coalition can win real and lasting gains by ignoring the needs of their sisters and brothers in other oppressed groups or by tying themselves to one or another segment of the capitalist class. It is because misleaders like Jackson (and his counterparts in other movements) have tied working people to the liberal capitalists and their political stooges for years that the ruling class has been able to carry out an offensive against us—while the progressive movements, the unions and the left are in disarray.

Jesse Jackson's campaign is only the latest version of a betrayal that has gone on for decades. We must label it for what it is if we are to begin building a coalition that can achieve self-determination and freedom for Blacks and all oppressed people. □





# WHAT WE STAND FOR

## Program in Brief of the Revolutionary Socialist League

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

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

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

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

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

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

While such revolutions are most likely to develop on a national basis, we believe that to be successful they must become worldwide in scope. Capitalism is an international system, with a world economy and a world market. Only through an international socialist revolution can the workers and their allies eliminate all capitalist oppression and have access to the human, natural and technical resources

necessary to solve the problems confronting human society.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

to fight for a revolutionary, libertarian vision of socialism.

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

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

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

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

**6** As an organization based in the U.S., it is our special task to fight U.S. imperialism's domination and exploitation of the peoples of the world, and to support working and oppressed people of all countries in their struggles for self-determination and freedom. We stand for the immediate and unconditional independence of all U.S. colonial holdings: Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the islands of the Pacific. We also demand the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops and military installations in the Caribbean, Central and South America, Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East—everywhere. Within the U.S. we support the right to self-determination for Native Americans, Blacks, Latinos of the Southwest, and other oppressed groups.

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

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

### Where to find us:

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