

Soviet workers win giant victory by defeating coup

BY GEORGE BUCHANAN

Working people in the Soviet Union won a giant victory when their resistance toppled the August 19 coup.

Tens of thousands in Moscow, Leningrad, and other cities took to the streets to defend their hard-won rights when the coup was publicly announced. In the process they further enlarged the space to practice politics they have won in recent years, gaining greater confidence to act in the future.

The coup was organized by top officials of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's government. The officials sought to reverse the trend during the past four years of the loosening of police-state controls over the population and aimed to push back working people's ability to organize, speak out, and wage strikes and protests.

The coup leaders also moved to halt the rapid disintegration of the Soviet Union as it

was consolidated under Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin in the 1920s — as an *involuntary* federation of republics held together under the boot of the totalitarian regime. They aimed to slow the drive toward a new, looser federation under the domination of the Russian republic headed by Boris Yeltsin.

But the coup's failure has accelerated the very process they hoped to curtail. It was prompted by the growing crisis of the regime. None of the various wings of the privileged stratum have a solution to the country's economic and social crisis. They fear the social explosions this engenders.

A palace coup

Class conflicts that will sharpen as the crisis deepens will end up in the working class organizing a political revolution to sweep away the parasitic social layer that now holds the reins of power in the workers' state.

On the evening of August 18 Gorbachev was detained in the Crimea and the palace coup was under way. The next day the plotters declared the president to be "ill." The coup leaders made clear their intentions against working people by announcing a six-month state of emergency in selected parts of the country, including Moscow, Leningrad, and the Baltic republics. Soviet Vice President Gennady Yanayev was installed as president in Gorbachev's place. An eight-person State Committee for the State of Emergency included Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov, Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov, and Interior Minister Boris Pugo.

The Committee deployed troops to take over broadcasting facilities and closed down all newspapers not directly under their control. It introduced curfews and banned all

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Part of huge crowd celebrating end of coup in Moscow.

5,000 rally in Wichita; protest rightist offensive against democratic rights

BY ESTELLE DEBATES
AND KATE KAKU

WICHITA, Kansas — Five thousand supporters of women's right to abortion rallied at Woodard Park here August 24. Supporters came from across the Midwest and throughout the country.

The "Speak Out for Choice" rally was called by the Pro-Choice Action League (PCAL), a local coalition. The event was called in response to the rightist mobilizations and assaults on abortion clinics in the city organized by Operation Rescue. Thousands of rightists have converged on Wich-

ita, engaging in sustained street confrontations in what they call the "Summer of Mercy" campaign to "rescue unborn children."

Speakers included Patricia Ireland, president-elect of the National Organization for Women (NOW); Kate Michelman, executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL); Eleanor Smeal, past president of NOW and presi-

dent of the Fund for the Majority; Jane O'Brien Reilly, coordinator of Catholics for Choice; Lynn Mara Paltrow, senior staff counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union; Ann Stone, chairperson of Republicans for Choice; and Donna Wells, national legislative liaison for Business and Professional Women. Most of these top officials of women's organizations had previously

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Brooklyn traffic accident touches off social explosion by Black youth

BY JAMES HARRIS

NEW YORK — A traffic accident in which one child died and another was seriously injured has ignited a social explosion in the predominantly Black working-class community of Crown Heights in Brooklyn.

Reacting to oppressive conditions, inequality, and racist harassment at the hands of the police, Black youth took to the streets waging pitched battles against more than 2,000 police.

As the conflict unfolds a number of prominent middle-class Blacks and right-wing forces are vying to place their political stamp on the struggle. Some openly promote anti-Semitic or racist viewpoints.

On August 19, police say, Yoseph Lisef lost control of his car and ran onto the sidewalk in Crown Heights. The car crashed into Gavin and Angela Cato, two 7-year-old cousins whose parents are from Guyana. Gavin died as a result of the crash. Angela, who received critical injuries, is hospitalized.

Lisef and the other individuals in the car are Hasidic Jews of the Lubavitcher sect who live in the Crown Heights area. The sect has established its world headquarters there.

Later that same day a Hasidic man was found stabbed to death. Since then, the big-business media and city administration have

portrayed the conflict as one between Blacks and Jews. This campaign seeks to paint Black workers as anti-Semitic and to deflect the focus of the protests away from the city government.

Of Crown Heights' 300,000 residents, 80 percent are Black, many of Caribbean origin. About 10 percent are white, 9 percent are Latin, and about 1 percent are of Asian origin.

When the accident occurred, the first emergency vehicle to arrive on the scene was from a Hasidic ambulance service called Hatzolah. By all accounts, the emergency service workers in this vehicle did not even look at the two children but concerned themselves with the Lubavitcher men in the car. Eyewitnesses say the men had to be prevented from immediately leaving the scene.

A fact in dispute is whether the Hatzolah ambulance workers left before the city Emergency Medical Services (EMS) vehicle was on the scene helping the two children.

City and police officials say that another ambulance had arrived before the Hatzolah one left.

This police account is rejected by every eyewitness to the incident talked to by this reporter. All state the Hatzolah ambulance

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Labor's fight against rulers' offensive

Solidarity Day III takes place at a time of deepening world capitalist economic crisis. Aiming to shore up their declining profit rate, the employers have embarked on a sustained offensive against workers' standard of living, rights, job conditions, and organizations.

The impact of this crisis has posed the question for millions: What kind of labor movement do we need? How do we build fighting organizations that can beat back the employers and extend solidarity to those in struggle around the world?

Important labor battles in the United States over the past few years show the determina-

EDITORIAL

tion of many unionists to resist the bosses' attacks and the desire to join in fights that break out.

From rail workers fighting for a decent contract this past April to Steelworkers striking against union-busting in Ravenswood, West Virginia; from the miners' strike at Pittston to the rank-and-file Machinists' battle against Eastern Airlines, working people have fought back. While not a general pattern by any means, these struggles gave a glimpse of the potential to utilize union power.

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Militant/Paco Sánchez
Supporters of abortion rights in Wichita protest rightist offensive.

The economic and political crisis in the Soviet Union
'International Socialist Review' — pages 9-16

Cops, drugs, gangs debated in Des Moines



Militant/Margrethe Siem
Socialist candidate Sara Lobman calls for ending police harassment of working-class youth.

BY ANDREW PULLEY

DES MOINES, Iowa — A wide-ranging discussion has broken out here following the drive-by slaying of 16-year-old Darryl Grady June 25. Under the guise of fighting gang violence and drugs, the Des Moines police have stepped up the harassment and victimization of working-class youth.

The shooting, which has been linked to drug trafficking, spurred a week-long series of daily marches organized by Black community activists. From 80 to 100 people marched each night.

Solutions proposed by march organizers ranged from demanding more jobs and educational opportunities for young people to calls for more police patrols in the Black community. At the final rally, Mayor Pat Dorrian and Police Chief William Moulder were billed as featured speakers.

The Sunday, July 14, *Des Moines Register* printed a symposium of different views after the marches. Moulder wrote, "Solutions do not arise from negotiation with criminal gangs — not in Iraq, not in Des Moines."

Evelyn Davis, a well-known Black community activist, took issue with Chief Moulder and others who support an increased

police presence in the Black community. She wrote in the *Register*, "When we speak of gangs it bothers me . . . they are our children and they will be our future."

"Every day in my neighborhood there are at least four to five incidents where the Des Moines police are called, and most of the time all they do is ride on by," Doris Bailey wrote to the *Register*. "The other part of the time, they stop and pull their guns, threatening to shoot and kill our youth. What a choice!"

Dead-end jobs no answer

Connie Cook, a city council member, proposed a \$94,000 summer jobs program as a solution to drug use and gangs. It is now in effect.

Vicki Douglas responded in the *Register*, saying, "Giving these kids dead-end jobs like painting park benches and moving just reinforces their belief that this is what they can expect from life."

The city program for a handful of summer jobs stands in contrast to another program expanding police repression and spying. The police department has organized a new unit called "Special Complement Against Thugs" (SCAT).

Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Des Moines, released a statement saying, "Moulder's words evoke the U.S.-led slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi working people. Moulder's words point to more brutal clubbings like that of Rodney King by Los Angeles cops, the recent beating of a handcuffed prisoner in Ft. Worth, Texas, the June killings of teenagers by New Jersey police, and the beating of Mark Curtis by Des Moines police."

In her campaign statement, Lobman explained, "The rulers' goal in launching a campaign 'against drug use and youth gangs' is to legitimize increased police repression. My campaign says: Stop police brutality!"

End cop harassment and spying!

"The drug trade is big business. It thrives in the capitalist system, which is based on exploitation, greed, racism, and private profit. The authorities don't target the real criminals — the capitalist drug barons. They target the victims of the drug trade — workers and youth."

The socialist called for "free medical treatment on demand for drug users. Possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia should be decriminalized so that users can come forward and seek help without fear of persecution."

"The capitalist rulers portray the victims of drugs as an 'underclass' who are themselves to blame for their addiction," Lobman said. "They try to pit other workers against those trapped in drug use in order to weaken and divide our class."

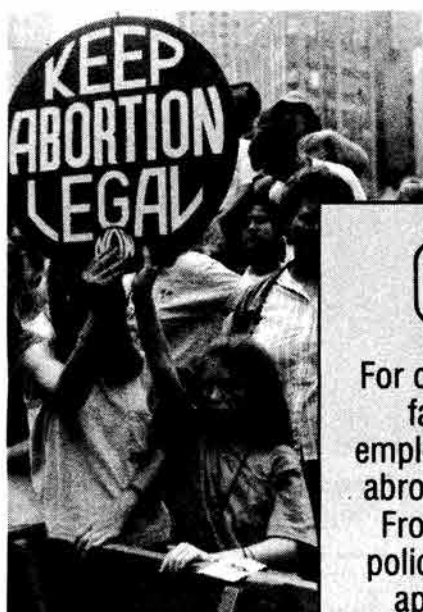
Dehumanizing treatment

"It is the dehumanizing treatment working-class youth receive under capitalism — from police brutality, to racism, to the indifference and abuse of employers, landlords, teachers, and social workers — that robs a section of our young people of their self-worth and makes them prey to the drug barons."

"As long as capitalist rule exists, significant sections of working-class youth will be victimized by drugs," the socialist candidate explained. "What they need is to become part of a living social struggle that gives them confidence and self-respect, a fighting working-class movement that champions the demand for jobs, for affirmative action, for education, a movement based on the human solidarity that the capitalist system seeks to undermine and destroy."

"It's in the course of fighting in this kind of movement that youth will reject drugs and the violence associated with them and become part of the struggle for socialism."

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General Electric workers discuss new contract

BY STUART CROME
AND RUSSELL DAVIS

Workers at General Electric (GE) have been assessing the recently ratified contract between GE and 14 unions that are part of the Coordinated Bargaining Committee that negotiated the contract. In July, the majority of the membership voted in favor of the contract proposal with about 21 percent voting against.

The International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE) represents some 37,000 of the 64,000 unionized workers at GE. With 74 of its locals voting, 71 of them approved the contract by a majority. Two locals were opposed in the majority and one local was evenly split.

The proposal agreed to by the Coordinated Bargaining Committee called for a 3.5 percent wage increase over the first year of the contract, a 2.25 percent increase over the next year, and another 2.25 percent increase in the third year. The proposal included a \$1-a-week increase in medical insurance payments for dependents, a lowering of the starting pay rate from 75 percent to 70 percent of full pay, and an increase in the required time for tier progression from 30 months to 36 months.

The wage increase does not reflect what working people need to meet the rising cost of living, nor will it compensate for the growing cuts in social services taking place throughout the United States.

The acceptance of multi-tiered wage structures heads in the direction of deepening inequalities and divisions in the workplace.

At GE's aircraft engine plant in Evendale, Ohio, some workers and leaders of the local union expressed the view that this concession will not affect "anyone we know." Some workers said that GE won't be doing that much hiring over the next few years and therefore this is not a major issue. A few workers in Seattle expressed the view that new hires should be paid less because they have less "experience."

The lower wage for new hires was a big concern of many workers, however, and many of those who voted against the contract

cited this as their main reason for doing so.

The rights and living standard of workers at GE have not been strengthened by this round of contract negotiations or the new contract.

The fact is, GE has had high profits and cannot claim poverty. Many workers saw this and voted against the contract for this reason.

The union leadership did next to nothing to organize a real fight for a contract that could have advanced the position of workers. Discussions, rallies, picket lines, and a host of other actions aimed at winning a better contract was a course that could have helped to increase the confidence and combativity of the union membership.

Instead, top IUE officials who negotiated the contract recommended workers accept it as the best that could be won without a strike.

The last two contracts in 1985 and 1988 contained a series of concessions — many of which remain in place.

The approach of the union officials was to reach agreement with GE without rocking the boat — at the expense of the interests of the workers.

Local 201 of the IUE, which organizes the work force at the GE plant in Lynn, Massachusetts, had voted against the past two contracts. This time, the majority voted for it. Steve Thorne, the manager of Human Resources for GE in Lynn, was quoted in the local press as saying, "We want to continue to change the perception of Lynn . . . as opposing all contracts."

Local 201 President Kevin Mahar said, "I think there's been a change in the philosophy on behalf of the company . . . We're trying to work harder than ever to secure more work together, and we will. But that doesn't mean we won't disagree on issues such as pensions and wages."

Continued discussions on this contract can help provide workers at GE an opportunity to discuss how to fight back against the growing attacks on our rights and living standards by employers and their government.

Russell Davis is a member of Local 201 of the IUE in Lynn, Massachusetts; Stuart Crome is a member of Local 1002 of the IUE in Seattle, Washington.

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UN body backs Puerto Rico independence

Calls for self-determination; plebiscite proposal debated at hearing

BY DOUG JENNESS

UNITED NATIONS — On August 15 the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization adopted a resolution reaffirming "the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence."

In testimony prior to the vote, numerous organizations debated the outcome of a move by Washington to impose a plebiscite in Puerto Rico on the political status of the U.S. colony.

The resolution, which was sponsored by the Venezuelan delegation, stated that the committee "trusts that the United States Congress will adopt as soon as possible the legal framework to enable the people of Puerto Rico to exercise their right to self-determination, through popular consultations, in accordance with the principles and practice of the United Nations."

The committee voted to "keep the question of Puerto Rico under continuing review."

The vote on the resolution by the 25-member committee was 9 for, 1 against, 10 abstentions, and 4 not voting. The representative from Côte d'Ivoire, a West African country, was absent from the vote.

The delegations voting in favor were from Chile, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, the Soviet Union, Syria, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

The delegate from Norway, the only member of the imperialist North Atlantic Treaty Organization on the committee, voted against. The representatives from Afghanistan, Bulgaria, China, Congo, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia either abstained or registered that they weren't voting.

The resolution was similar to the first one that the UN decolonization committee adopted on Puerto Rico in 1972. That vote 19 years ago came as the result of a major effort by the Cuban delegation. Since 1976 the committee has each year reiterated its support for Puerto Rico's right to independence.

In December 1973 the UN General Assembly adopted a report from the decolonization committee affirming Puerto Rico's right to independence and asking the U.S. government to prevent U.S. firms from violating "the economic, social and other rights" of Puerto Ricans. The vote was 104 in favor, 10 abstentions, and five against. The United States, Britain, Portugal, South Africa, and France voted against.

The U.S. government doesn't recognize these resolutions, including the 1973 General Assembly vote. It contends that they don't supersede a General Assembly resolution adopted in November 1953. That resolution stated that the UN Charter provisions regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories "can no longer be applied to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico." Up until then Washington had been required under the UN Charter to transmit information about Puerto Rico, which the UN labeled a "non-self-governing territory."

The 1973 resolution didn't explicitly rescind the 1953 vote and restore the requirement that Washington submit information on Puerto Rico.

Under pressure from pro-independence sentiment inside Puerto Rico and the anti-colonial revolt internationally, the U.S. Congress established the Commonwealth status for the Caribbean island in 1952. This was hailed by Washington and its supporters in Puerto Rico as a "free association" between the two countries. They used this new status to claim that Puerto Rico is not a colony and Washington is thus no longer subject to UN requirements.

Under the Commonwealth setup, Puerto Ricans can elect their own government and are exempt from U.S. taxes. But the U.S. Congress controls the island's currency, foreign policy, military, communications, trade, and can overrule Puerto Rico's legislature if it adopts measures not deemed consistent with U.S. laws.

Testimony at United Nations

Before this year's vote the decolonization committee heard testimony on Puerto Rico from representatives of more than 50 organizations. Most speakers denounced the Commonwealth as a continuation of Puerto Rico's colonial status. One current argued in

favor of making the island the 51st U.S. state. The other major trend advocated independence for Puerto Rico.

Proponents of both views addressed the proposal initiated more than two years ago by President George Bush for a plebiscite on Puerto Rico's status.

Many of the pro-statehood advocates lamented the defeat of the plebiscite measure last February in a Senate committee. They had hoped that the U.S. Congress would permit the consultative vote, giving them an opportunity to try to show at the ballot box that statehood now has majority support on the island. The plebiscite would have given voters a choice of registering their opinion in favor of independence, statehood, or continuation of the Commonwealth status.

Some proindependence groups opposed Washington's referendum move, pointing to the fact that the plebiscite process itself would be a violation of Puerto Rico's right to self-determination. Organized by Washington, it assumed U.S. imperialist control of the island and the continued presence of U.S. military forces and federal police.

Several documents and statements fleshed out how the plebiscite, under these condi-

tions, would not be a step toward self-determination.

One pamphlet, *Puerto Rico: From the Crisis to a Plebiscite, August, 1990-91*, was distributed at the decolonization committee hearings by the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. It stated that from the moment the plebiscite was announced, "important proindependence forces of Puerto Rico warned that a plebiscite that did not comply with minimal requirements such as the recognition of the colonial status of Puerto Rico and pertinent international law on the issue, would have no validity whatsoever."

The Center for Constitutional Rights and the Puerto Rican Institute of Civil Rights presented a statement to the UN committee declaring that the proposed plebiscite legislation "failed to provide for a transfer of powers prior to the conduct of a status referendum, it refused to guarantee the continuity of Spanish as the official language of Puerto Rico, did not permit the Puerto Rican people to determine who was eligible to participate, and was not self-executing."

The plebiscite proposal was first raised by President Bush in February 1989, a few weeks after his inauguration. In an address to a joint session of Congress, he sandwiched the pro-

posal in between several domestic measures.

"I have long believed that the people of Puerto Rico should have the right to determine their own political future," Bush said. "Personally, I strongly favor statehood. But I urge the Congress to take the necessary steps to allow the people to decide in a referendum."

Three parties in Puerto Rico backed the proposal for a plebiscite. They were the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP), which tends to be aligned with the Republican Party; the procommonwealth Popular Democratic Party, which is linked to the Democratic Party; and the Puerto Rican Independence Party, which belongs to the social-democratic Socialist International.

Plebiscite killed

After months of hearings and debate over various drafts of a bill for the plebiscite, it was killed in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Feb. 27, 1991.

Most U.S. business interests with big investments in Puerto Rico vigorously campaigned against the measure. This included the powerful Puerto Rico, U.S.A. Foundation, which is an alliance of major pharma-

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Italian government deports nearly 18,000 Albanians after many abuses

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

After treating them little better than animals, the Italian government deported nearly 18,000 Albanians who had arrived in early August aboard several old freighter ships in search of employment.

Only about 1,000 Albanians have been allowed to stay in Italy pending review of requests for political asylum.

Many of the refugees originated from Albania's capital, Tirana, the country's largest city with a population of several hundred thousand. They were fleeing Albania's deteriorating economic situation and spreading social crisis brought about by years of brutal Stalinist misrule.

"It is a catastrophe," Briseida Mema, a journalist in Tirana, told the *New York Times* of the situation in Albania. "There is no bread in the bakeries, no milk. There is a shortage of salt. Fifty thousand are unemployed. Thousands of others are getting only 80 percent of their wages."

Rather than finding jobs, the refugees found a hostile Italian government. Artan Peza, a student from Albania, explained, "We still did not believe when we came here that the Italians would turn us back. We didn't think it was paradise. But we thought if you were a good worker, you would find a job."

Treated 'like dogs'

When they arrived, however, thousands of the immigrants were rounded up and held in the Victory soccer stadium in Bari, Italy.

The Albanians were given only bread and water. There was no bedding, sanitation, or shelter from the sweltering heat. "There is very little food. The minimum. The Italians don't help us," said Ferit Dobrolisht, a detainee at the stadium.

"On the first day the food was thrown to us like dogs," Artan Peza said, "and whoever was the strongest got food. On the second day, the bottled water they gave wasn't enough."

To prevent them from escaping, some men were given bread only in return for their belts. Discarded apparel piled up next to a bread line of huddled thin people outside the stadium.

Many refugees began to collapse from the heat and lack of food and water. "For four days, I have not eaten," said Castrop Metani, a tractor driver. "There is no food in Albania, no work, nothing." Outside the stadium, others cried in Italian, "Water, water!" and "Food, food!"

As refugees began to protest the inhuman conditions and others attempted escape, police answered by firing tear gas, drenching them with water from fire hoses, and shooting at the crowd, injuring some. "Some of these people are no more than criminals and hoodlums who came on the ship with the more



Albanians seeking asylum in Italy. Said one: "We didn't think it was paradise. But we thought if you were a good worker, you would find a job."

deserving ones," said a police official as justification for the cop brutality.

While many refugees were interned at the stadium, others were stopped before they could get past the ship's dock.

At least four other Albanian ships, reported to be off the coast of southern Italy, were prevented from docking by authorities. Several hundred refugees aboard two other ships trying to land at Sicilian ports were diverted to the island country of Malta.

Debate and criticism erupted in Italy over the government's handling of the refugees. Italians began to gather outside the stadium to see what was happening. "How can we treat these people like this, on the ground, begging," one man shouted to soldiers.

The Rome daily *La Repubblica* chastised the government for "behavior that shows lack of foresight, preparation and improvisation." Pope John Paul II commented, "No one can remain indifferent before the dramatic scenes of men, women, and entire families." No aid beyond kind words to the Albanians was reported from the Vatican, though.

Italian Deputy Prime Minister Claudio Martelli defended the government's policy. "We absolutely will not tolerate a new clandestine immigration from Albania after that of recent months," he said, referring to 24,000 who fled Albania to Italy in March. Half of those refugees remain in Italian camps and shelters.

The Italian government also called on other countries to provide more aid to Eastern European countries to prevent the further flow

of refugees.

"Europe must realize that it will have, as an internal problem, the question of the Maghreb, the question of the Adriatic, the question of Eastern Europe," said Interior Minister Vincenzo Scotti.

U.S. aid meager

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker made promises of economic assistance through the Agency for International Development last June during a visit to Albania. The result was a meager several thousand pounds of powdered milk earmarked for Albania. It is not clear whether or not it ever arrived.

The only other aid from the United States has been 280,000 pounds of leftover food from the U.S. military stationed in the Persian Gulf.

Interior Minister Scotti expressed concern that Italy provide more economic aid to Albania or "we will find ourselves in front of increasing problems of public order in our country."

In an August 13 trip to Albania to discuss the refugee problem, Italian President Francesco Cossiga promised \$115 million in emergency assistance, mostly for food. But the government also made it clear aid would be contingent on Albanian officials helping take responsibility for transporting refugees back to Albania.

The Albanian government responded to the latest flight of people by placing all ports under military control and halting all passenger trains.

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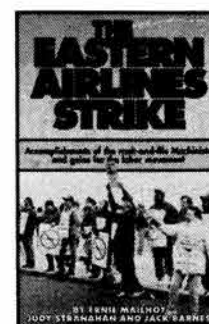
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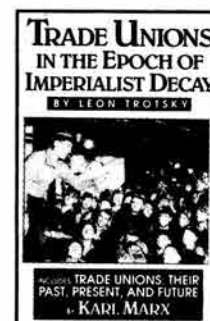
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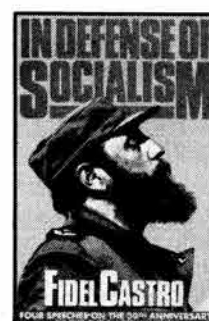
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40,000 Kurds protest killings by Turkish police

BY SEVDA BEYOĞLU
AND BOBBIS BEYOĞLU

ISTANBUL, Turkey — Tens of thousands of Kurds took to the streets in the city of Diyarbakir July 10 to protest police killings and state of emergency measures imposed by the Turkish government in 13 provinces in the country's eastern region. Out of a total population of 52 million Kurds, most of them in the region bordering Syria, Iraq, and Iran, an estimated 14 million live in Turkey.

An estimated 40,000 Kurds participated in a funeral in Diyarbakir for Vedat Aydin, leader of the People's Labour Party (HEP). Aydin was found dead three days after being taken from his home by the police. According to the autopsy, four bullets were lodged in his head, two in his feet, and his skull was smashed.

Police set barricades, preventing thousands from attending. Aydin's coffin was covered with the red, green, and yellow Kurdish flag. Demonstrators protested the killing and raised demands for their national rights.

As the funeral march proceeded the police suddenly began shooting into the crowd, throwing tear gas and savagely beating people with their clubs. In an attempt to fight back, many young people threw stones at the police. The funeral turned into a massacre.

Official figures put the number killed at 14, with 107 injured and 361 arrested. At press conferences, leaders of the Socialist Party (SP), the HEP, and others put the figures as high as 1,000 wounded, with 500 people listed as "missing."

Among those severely wounded by the police were the president of the HEP and several HEP members of parliament. One of

them said, "If in Turkey they can beat those elected to represent the people by sending special security units and police forces you can only imagine what they can and are doing to the people."

In a letter to Turkish President Turgut Özal, the International Press Institute denounced the beating of 15 reporters by the police and called for "severe punishment of those responsible."

Mercan Aksüt, a student, explained that "this is the first time that the Kurdish people in a democratic, organized way have stood up. There is not a village in the region that is not living under the threat of death."

Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz blamed "separatists and anarchist troublemakers" for the massacre and emphasized his government's opposition to the Kurdish struggle for national sovereignty by saying that "patriotic Turkey will remain united as a nation and as a country."

In an effort to stop the spreading protest from reaching other cities, the Turkish government began a new wave of repression. In the city of Mardin, HEP leader Selahattin Özcelik was kidnapped July 20 by police. Abdul Muhsin Melik, also an HEP leader, was arrested in Urfa for his participation in the protests at Diyarbakir.

Throughout southeastern Turkey, the army and special security troops are extensively deployed in the streets. Police have erected barricades in a number of cities, interrogating those entering and leaving. Kurdish music tapes, recently legalized, are once again being confiscated by police.

The president of the Turkish Human Rights Organization (IHD), Nevzat Helvaci,

charged that its office in Diyarbakir was bombed and members of the organization were wounded by explosives placed in their cars.

Struggle for national rights

The events in Diyarbakir mark a turning point of the struggle of the Kurdish people in Turkey for their national rights. This struggle has been given impetus by the fight of the Iraqi Kurds for autonomy in the wake of the imperialist war against that country.

With the agreement of the Turkish government, U.S. and allied troops are now

stationed in the Turkish city of Silop, in the southeast. They are forming a rapid deployment force called "Ready Hammer," supposedly designed to protect Kurds in Iraq from Saddam Hussein's army. France, Britain, Holland, and Turkey — in addition to Washington — have announced they will commit troops to this force, which will be equipped with heavy artillery and helicopters, and backed by the U.S. air base at Incirlik.

Kurds in Silop have already charged the U.S. and allied forces with using helicopters to aid the Turkish army in its war against independence fighters.

UN backs Puerto Rico independence

Continued from page 3

ceutical and electronics corporations. Among them are Eli Lilly & Co., Johnson & Johnson, Merck & Co., Pfizer Inc., Squibb Corp., and General Electric.

With some polls in Puerto Rico showing increased sentiment for statehood, these corporate interests were concerned that even a nonbinding referendum could give momentum to this demand. These business interests are staunch backers of the Commonwealth status because their subsidiaries in Puerto Rico have unrestricted access to U.S. markets and are able to make big profits without having to pay any taxes. Statehood would put an end to these lucrative benefits.

Retention of the Commonwealth status is supported by the big majority within U.S. ruling circles, and there is no serious motion toward making Puerto Rico a state. President

Bush is no exception. He was able to firm up his party's relations with the PNP and curry favor among Puerto Ricans by calling for a plebiscite and statehood, knowing full well that the referendum would be squashed in Congress.

Some voices in the U.S. capitalist class argued that refusal to permit the plebiscite was short-sighted and may cause political problems. The *New York Times* editors, for example, warned in a March 7 editorial that ignoring Puerto Rican self-determination "is the surest way of arousing latent nationalism among resentful islanders. In a warning signal, Puerto Rico's Senate voted Monday [March 4, 1991] to make Spanish the island's sole official language, a largely symbolic portent. By giving Puerto Rico back-burner treatment, Congress risks a front-burner mess."

'Militant' supporters gear up for sales drive

BY RONI McCANN

NEW YORK—Eight teams of *Militant* supporters fanned out to working-class neighborhoods here August 24 to talk with working people and youth about the world events taking place in the Soviet Union; the stakes for labor in the battle against the rightist assault in Wichita, Kansas; the social explosion in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn; and other political developments.

"The *Militant* is the only reliable source of news for working people who want the facts and a clear perspective based on our class interests, not those of the ruling minority of rich capitalist families, their government, and their apologists," said Meryl Lynn Farber to supporters of the socialist press gathered for a Saturday morning kickoff meeting.

Farber is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for city council in District 2 in Manhattan.

"We want to urge workers and youth we meet today to subscribe and get the paper every week. This is the only way to get a working-class perspective on the explosive events in the Soviet Union and the gains scored by working people there in defeating the attempted coup, which was aimed at closing down the political space they've won over the past year," said Farber. She also pointed to the paper's coverage of labor struggles and fights by working people in South Africa, Cuba, and elsewhere.

"Doing this will help us gear up for the international subscription drive that begins August 31," Farber said. On that day supporters of the socialist press in nine countries

will launch a drive to sign up 6,200 new readers: selling 3,660 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 800 to the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, 140 to the French-language quarterly *L'Internationale*, as well as 1,600 copies of the *New Internationalist* Marxist magazine available in three languages. The sales campaign will run through November 2.

In New York, sales teams hit the streets in Spanish Harlem, midtown Manhattan, Crown Heights in Brooklyn, and other areas. Over the course of the day supporters sold more than 50 copies of the *Militant* and 1 subscription; 3 subscriptions to the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*; and a copy each of the Marxist magazines *Nueva Internacional* and *Nouvelle Internationale*.

Joining the effort were 12 members of the Young Socialist Alliance. The New York chapter has taken a goal of winning 60 new readers during the subscription drive. At its recent national convention the revolutionary

socialist youth organization decided to make the sales drive its main campaign for the fall.

Big kickoff at Solidarity Day event

On the first weekend of the subscription drive in the United States, tens of thousands of unionists will pour into Washington, D.C., for the AFL-CIO-sponsored Solidarity Day III march and rally. Traveling all night on union buses, union-chartered planes, and in carpools, *Militant* supporters will arrive from around the country to participate in the events and sell the socialist press.

The demonstration is a big opportunity to raise political ideas with thousands of thinking workers and unionists, engaging in discussions about world events and the road forward for the labor movement in the face of the employers' offensive. Central to the socialists' efforts will be winning hundreds of new readers to the *Militant* and kicking off the subscription drive with a bang.

Militant supporters will invite everyone to

an open house scheduled after the rally, featuring talks by socialist candidates and a firsthand report from Wichita, Kansas, the scene of an ultrarightist offensive against the democratic rights and political space of working people that centers on a women's right to choose abortion.

Great response to 'Militant' in Wichita

Supporters of the *Militant*, including many members of industrial trade unions and the YSA, have been in Wichita for more than a week helping to defend the abortion clinics under attack; getting firsthand coverage for the paper; and talking with working people.

At a Wichita rally August 24 in support of abortion rights more than 300 participants bought copies of the paper and 10 subscribed. During the course of one week more than 800 *Militants* were sold in Wichita and 43 people subscribed to the socialist press. Five young people joined the YSA.

Cuba requests United Nations General Assembly place U.S. trade embargo on its agenda

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

UNITED NATIONS — Cuba has requested that the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly place on its agenda an item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

The UN General Assembly will convene here September 17 and the agenda will be discussed and decided during the opening week of the new session. According to Ricardo Alarcón, Cuba's Ambassador to the United Nations, even if the United States government is able to garner enough votes to prevent the General Assembly from placing the item on its agenda, the delegates will still have an opportunity to consider the substance of the issue in the process of discussing and adopting the agenda.

Calling the more than 30-year-old U.S. trade embargo against Cuba "a flagrant violation of the principles of sovereign equality of states and non-intervention in their internal affairs," the Cuban delegation to the UN asked the General Assembly to consider the embargo as a matter of priority "so that decisions may be taken which will help to end this unjust and illegal situation."

In 1962 the U.S. government imposed on Cuba what has become probably the longest and tightest trade embargo in history. "From the beginning, the embargo had a political motivation," Alarcón said in an interview. "It was retaliation for the Cuban revolution's sweeping agrarian reform," and other social policies that Washington opposed because they hurt big capitalist interests in the United States.

A memorandum being placed before the General Assembly by the Cuban delegation notes that "for more than 30 years the Government of the United States has been pursuing an aggressive policy against Cuba with the declared aim of imposing on it the political social and economic order which the United States authorities consider most fitting." The economic, commercial, and financial embargo has been one of the essential elements of this policy that has included direct military action, the threat of nuclear annihilation, countless acts of sabotage and plans to assassinate Cuban leaders — all documented in detail in the U.S. Congressional Record.

Today the embargo "continues to include a total prohibition on Cuba's acquisition of food stuffs, medicine and medical supplies and equipment of United States origin," the memorandum notes. Despite the attempts of the U.S. government to strangle it, the Cuban revolution has realized unprecedented achievements in the fields of health, education, food, employment, housing and social

protection for the entire population. But the efforts and sacrifices of the Cuban people to accomplish these advances "have been unjustly and excessively compounded by the embargo," the Cuban memorandum emphasizes.

One example cited by Alarcón was the fact that when Cuba faced the challenge of stopping the spread of a dengue epidemic in 1981 they were unable to buy medicine readily available through the World Health Organization because it was produced in the United States. They had to obtain the medicine from Japan at greater expense and only after a delay that cost the lives of children in Cuba who were desperately ill.

The U.S. Congress is currently considering legislation that would substantially tighten the trade embargo by making it illegal for foreign subsidiaries of U.S. corporations to trade with Cuba. The Mack amendment — named after its sponsor U.S. Senator Connie Mack of Florida — could affect up to 10 percent of Cuba's trade in hard currency if signed into law by President George Bush. Last year a similar amendment was attached to a bill vetoed by Bush for other reasons.

Cuba hopes that putting the spotlight on the illegality of the U.S. embargo through a debate in the United Nations General Assembly will reinforce the position adopted by Britain, Canada, and other U.S. allies who benefit from the trade opportunities created by the U.S. embargo. Those governments publicly oppose the Mack amendment as an attempt to impose U.S. law and trade policies on other countries and have urged Washington to reject the measure.

Alarcón called particular attention to the fact that there is much discussion of changing international relations in the world today and talk about attempting to restructure relations on the basis of cooperation and reduction of tensions.

"The U.S. government has dropped its trade sanctions against South Africa," he noted, mild as they were by comparison to the embargo in force against Cuba. "Yet they are attempting to intensify the embargo against Cuba."

By bringing this question before the UN General Assembly, Alarcón noted Cuba is calling attention to the fact that U.S. policy is based on "the most flagrant violation of the norms of coexistence among states as set forth in the UN Charter."

Sales Drive Goals

Areas	The <i>Militant</i>			<i>Perspectiva Mundial</i>		<i>New Int'l*</i>		<i>L'inter*</i>		Total	
	Goal	Total Sold	% Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
UNITED STATES											
Atlanta	90	0	0%	12	0	56	0	2	0	160	0
Baltimore	85	0	0%	12	0	40	0	3	0	140	0
Birmingham, Ala.	110	0	0%	5	0	43	0	2	0	160	0
Boston	125	0	0%	30	0	53	0	7	0	215	0
Chicago	163	0	0%	40	0	70	0	2	0	275	0
Cleveland	85	0	0%	10	0	25	0	2	0	122	0
Des Moines, Iowa	126	0	0%	17	0	40	0	2	0	185	0
Detroit	102	0	0%	10	0	30	0	2	0	144	0
Greensboro, NC	55	0	0%	10	0	14	0	1	0	80	0
Houston	75	0	0%	20	0	30	0	2	0	127	0
Los Angeles	160	0	0%	90	0	107	0	3	0	360	0
Miami	86	0	0%	30	0	44	0	5	0	165	0
Morgantown, WV	80	0	0%	3	0	30	0	2	0	115	0
New York	225	0	0%	80	0	110	0	10	0	425	0
Newark, NJ	140	0	0%	50	0	70	0	5	0	265	0
Omaha, Neb.	86	0	0%	12	0	25	0	2	0	125	0
Philadelphia	65	0	0%	20	0	35	0	2	0	122	0
Pittsburgh	75	0	0%	3	0	35	0	2	0	115	0
Salt Lake City	135	0	0%	24	0	54	0	2	0	215	0
San Francisco	160	0	0%	65	0	72	0	3	0	300	0
Seattle	80	0	0%	30	0	27	0	3	0	140	0
St. Louis	125	0	0%	8	0	40	0	2	0	175	0
Twin Cities, Minn.	145	0	0%	18	0	55	0	2	0	220	0
Washington, DC	100	0	0%	18	0	55	0	2	0	175	0
U.S. TOTAL	2,678	0	0%	617	0	1,160	0	70	0	4,525	0
AUSTRALIA	22	0	0%	7	0	10	0	1	0	40	0
BELGIUM	4	0	0%	1	0	7	0	10	0	22	0
BRITAIN											
London	90	0	0%	7	0	70	0	3	0	170	0
Manchester	55	0	0%	3	0	40	0	2	0	100	0
Sheffield	55	0	0%	3	0	40	0	2	0	100	0
Other Britain	10	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
BRITAIN TOTAL	210	0	0%	13	0	150	0	7	0	380	0
CANADA											
Montréal	65	0	0%	20	0	50	0	30	0	165	0
Toronto	75	0	0%	15	0	35	0	5	0	130	0
Vancouver	70	0	0%	15	0	30	0	5	0	120	0
CANADA TOTAL	210	0	0%	50	0	115	0	40	0	415	0
FRANCE	5	0	0%	5	0	5	0	15	0	30	0
ICELAND	20	0	0%	0	0	4	0	0	0	24	0
NEW ZEALAND											
Auckland	75	0	0%	9	0	25	0	1	0	110	0
Christchurch	53	0	0%	2	0	12	0	1	0	68	0
Wellington	50	0	0%	3	0	14	0	1	0	68	0
Other N. Zealand	4	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
N. Z. TOTAL	182	0	0%	14	0	51	0	3	0	250	0
SWEDEN	45	0	0%	20	0	15	0	3	0	83	0
TOTAL	3,376	0	0%	727	0	1,517	0	149	0	5,769	0
DRIVE GOALS	3,660	0	0%	800	0	1,600	0	140	0	6,200	0

* Single copies of *New International*, *Nueva Internacional*, and *Nouvelle Internationale*; subscriptions to *L'Internationaliste*

Books on Cuba from Pathfinder

Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism

By Carlos Tablada

Examines Guevara's contributions to building socialism. Guevara explains why the "dull instruments" of capitalist methods can only lead away from new social relations based on growing political consciousness and control by working people. 286 pp., \$16.95

Available from Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 20. Or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please add \$3.00 shipping and handling for first title, \$.50 each additional title.

Social explosion hits streets of Brooklyn

Continued from front page

took off well before the city EMS ambulance arrived and that the children were left untreated by any emergency service people for up to 10 minutes. They also say that hostility directed toward the driver of the vehicle that hit the children was mainly because he was attempting to leave the scene of the accident.

"Everybody knows that you help kids before adults," said Samantha, a social worker who lives in the building where the accident occurred. "You can't treat those people in the car and leave the children on the ground like that. It took about five minutes for them to treat the kids after they took the driver away. If the men had just gotten out of their car and helped those kids, none of this would have happened."

"The car skidded, making a turn, and hit the kids," said Ottly, a 17-year-old high school student who witnessed the accident. "A couple of minutes later the Jewish ambulance came. A Black cop told the ambulance workers to take away the driver and his passengers. That was the last straw. Everybody started fighting. People were yelling, 'He ran a red light! They should arrest that guy.'"

Each day since, residents have held demonstrations and protests. Some have erupted into street battles with the police. The vast majority of those demonstrating are Black. Their central demand is that the driver of the car be arrested.

Massive show of force

The response of the police is not to arrest the driver but to mobilize a massive show of

force against the neighborhood's youth. Streets leading into Crown Heights are blocked. Groups of 50 or more cops stand at all the major intersections, aiming to quell any protest.

The police have arrested and beaten residents of the community in an indiscriminate manner, prompting more protests and fightbacks. By August 23, 180 had been arrested. More suffered police beatings.

"I have permanent nerve damage here," said John, holding up his heavily bandaged arm. "What am I going to do now?" A 22-year-old college student, John said he was "grabbed and beaten with a police club" as he came out of a subway exit on Eastern Parkway. Until that point he had not been involved in any of the protests.

"Police beat my kid. They beat up plenty of kids," said Naomi Chin to the *Amsterdam News*, a Black weekly. "My kid was in a store. He walked out and a cop grabbed him and took him to the 71st precinct. I was there for four hours before I could even see him. While I was waiting, I saw at least four teenagers go out the back, bloody, and they looked as if they could hardly walk. It was a disgrace."

Cops are also reported to have beaten Gavin Cato's father when he was attempting to rescue his son.

Unequal treatment

Much of the anger of the Crown Heights residents is focused on the role of the police, their daily brutality, and their role in enforcing the unequal relations between the Hasidic com-



Militant/Derek Bracey

Part of massive police deployment aimed at quelling protests

munity and the Black residents in the area.

In numerous interviews youth explained incidents of daily police abuse of Blacks while cops do not mete out the same treatment toward Hasidics.

Heavy police presence in the Crown Heights area is common even during relatively normal times.

"You feel like you're in jail here," said 19-year-old Dermont. "I was hassled by them for drinking a wine cooler on my own stoop just the other day," said another young man with Dermont. They also complained that armed patrols organized by the Hasidic group do the same thing. "We can't walk down Kingston Avenue without being chased by the patrols but the cops don't do anything to them. They don't get arrested," Dermont said.

The Lubavitcher headquarters is located on Kingston Avenue. The armed force that the Lubavitchers maintain to patrol the area goes well beyond the Jewish community into the rest of Crown Heights, Black residents say.

Blacks report the Hasidic community receives special treatment by the cops, has greater control of community development funds and other services from the city, and is buying up property to drive Blacks out of the area.

Since the onset of the rebellion, Mayor David Dinkins, middle-class Black figures, anti-Semitic groups and individuals, and ultrarightist and reactionary groups such as the Jewish Defense League and the Guardian Angels have begun to function in the area.

While speaking to a rally on the fourth night of demonstrations and protests Dinkins was literally driven from the community in a hail of rocks and bottles.

Other middle-class Black figures such as Alfred Sharpton, Sonny Carson, attorneys Alton Maddox and Colin Moore, the rap group X-Clan, and Lenora Fulani, a leader of the New Alliance Party, have also oriented to the protests. These individuals have tried to shift the focus of the demonstrations away

from placing demands for justice on the city government. Instead, they aim their fire at the Hasidic community.

Individuals and outfits with overtly anti-Semitic stances have gravitated to the protests, hoping to get a hearing. In the polarized atmosphere many in the community echo their anti-Semitic remarks. This has become a factor in the rebellion.

Derek Bracey, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for city council from Brooklyn's District 33, spoke with residents of the Crown Heights area.

"We should demand that the cops immediately halt their massive mobilization in Crown Heights. They should be ordered by the mayor to cease their beatings and jailings," said Bracey. "Their actions in this community will not bring justice, only more victimizations."

"The city government bears direct responsibility for this incident," Bracey said. "It reeks of the double standard applied by the city administration and the cops when it comes to Blacks in Crown Heights. The outrage by youth at the city's handling of this incident is justified. The actions of the cops show they really aren't concerned with justice at all, but serve only to act as punishers of the working class."

Bracey said the anti-Semitic demagoguery "only weakens the struggle being waged by Black youth for justice in this case. It makes the struggle less able to reach out for allies in Crown Heights, including in the Hasidic community, and in the labor movement around the country. It sets back the ability to explain conditions we as Black youth and workers face to the broadest numbers possible."

"Anti-Semitism is a way of weakening the struggles of working people," he said. "Leaders in the Black community should speak out against it whenever it is raised."

Ed Warren contributed to this article.



PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

OSBORNE HART

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes the works of working-class and communist leaders who have made central contributions to the forward march of humanity against exploitation and oppression. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 20.

The July 24 visit of Nelson Mandela to Jamaica offered a special opportunity to make Pathfinder books, especially those featuring the speeches and writings by the African National Congress (ANC) President, available to working people and youth on the island and throughout the Caribbean.

Pathfinder organized a promotional trip to coincide with the ANC leader's visit to the island's capital of Kingston. Mandela also visited Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela during his tour.

In Jamaica, Pathfinder representatives visited bookstores, libraries, and book wholesalers. The library and bookstore on the University of the West Indies Mona Campus — the main campus of the three UWI branches in the Caribbean — also received a visit.

Sales and orders for various titles totaled 1,500 books and pamphlets. The most popular titles sold were Mandela's autobiography, *The Struggle Is My Life*, and *Nelson Mandela: Speeches 1990*, 'Intensify the Struggle to Abolish Apartheid.'

The increased interest in these and other writings by Mandela was noted in an article on the eve of the ANC leader's visit in the *Daily Gleaner*, Kingston's major newspaper.

Other Pathfinder books and pamphlets were sold as well. The writings of slain Grenadian prime minister, Maurice Bishop; leader of the Cuban revolution, Che Guevara; Burkina Faso's Thomas Sankara; and Malcolm X were among the most popular.

A large book wholesaler in Jamaica, which distributes to 400 bookstores, grocery stores, pharmacies, and hotels, ordered a number of books by Malcolm X.

Malcolm X Talks to Young People topped the list.

Another distributor called the Bookshop, with three outlets on the island, will be organizing a "Banned Books Month" this fall. The Bookshop's promotion and review of books banned in Jamaica, the Caribbean, and other countries will include a number of Pathfinder titles. Pathfinder titles by Mandela and Maurice Bishop were outlawed in Grenada in 1988 by the U.S.-imposed government.

Several Jamaican bookstores purchased a total of 14 copies of *New International*, the Marxist magazine distributed by Pathfinder. Of particular interest were *New International* issues 5 and 6, featuring "The Coming Revolution in South Africa" and "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop" respectively.

The trip to Jamaica was the second by Pathfinder in three years. A future column will report on Pathfinder's 10-day trip to Mexico during Nelson Mandela's visit there.

While in Venezuela, Mandela received a copy of the Venezuelan edition of *Nelson Mandela: Intensifiquemos la lucha*, a collection of Mandela's speeches in Spanish. The Venezuelan edition was produced by Nueva Sociedad, a publishing house that purchased the rights to reprint the Pathfinder book for the occasion of Mandela's visit.

An edition of *Intensifiquemos la lucha* was also published in Argentina to coincide with Mandela's visit to that country. The publication of the two editions will aid in the widest possible distribution of Mandela's words in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The recently published second edition of the Pathfinder book *Out Now!* is available to members of the Pathfinder Readers Club at a 25 percent discount through September 1 at Pathfinder Bookstores around the world.

Pathfinder reprints in August include: *The Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky, *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* by Rosa Luxemburg, and *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877* by Philip S. Foner.

Soviet, Wichita events highlight need for fall Party Building Fund

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

Tens of millions of working people and youth around the world closely followed the rallies and street actions in the Soviet Union that brought down the August 19 coup. Many want to learn more about a working-class road forward out of the economic and social crisis into which Stalinism has led the Soviet Union.

Here in the United States supporters of the *Militant* have been hitting the streets with the socialist press and Pathfinder books in response to the ultrarightist offensive in Wichita, Kansas. They have joined with others who want to publicly respond to the street mobilizations aimed at pushing back abortion rights and opening a broader assault on political space and democratic rights.

These two examples of political developments of class struggle in the world highlight the importance of the Socialist Workers Party 1991 Party Building Fund.

Wide distribution of the *Militant*, Spanish and French publications *Perspectiva Mundial* and *L'internationaliste*, and the Marxist magazine, *New International*, is of vital importance to working people and youth who want to get the facts and a working-class perspective on these and other class conflicts today.

In order to maximize a rapid response by the socialist movement to such political developments, a party-building fund of \$150,000 was kicked off August 15 to aid in financing the ability of the party to reach out to fighters who can become part of the communist movement and the worldwide struggle for socialism. So far, \$131,714 has been pledged to the fund.

Supporters of the party-building fund in many cities are adopting local goals as part of a nationwide effort to insure the fund will be completed on time, by December 15, and in full. A scoreboard listing the goals will appear in next week's *Militant*.

By beginning to collect pledges now, each area can strive to be at the top of each week's scoreboard.

Every contribution helps build the kind of revolutionary working-class party needed today! *Militant* readers are encouraged to send in contributions to the fund.

I pledge: \$1,000 \$500
\$250 \$100
\$ (other) to the Socialist Workers Party 1991 Party Building Fund.

Send checks or money orders to Socialist Workers Party 1991 Party Building Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Soviet workers win victory against coup

Continued from front page

rallies, street marches, demonstrations, and strikes.

The biggest troop deployments were in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Troops seized radio and television stations and telephone centers there. A Soviet general was placed in charge of all three Baltic states.

Tanks were deployed throughout Moscow, including units aimed at the parliament of the Russian republic.

The coup leaders pledged to continue Gorbachev's economic and social course, based on the vain hope of integrating the Soviet Union into the world capitalist economy through introducing progressively greater market mechanisms into the economy.

They also promised to hold a "nationwide discussion" on a new treaty negotiated in recent months between Gorbachev and top officials of most republics of the Soviet Union.

Coup leaders crudely appealed to working people, who have been the foremost victims of the deepening economic crisis. The State Committee for the State of Emergency declared that providing food and housing was their "prime concern." This would be achieved, they said, through an immediate return to "labor discipline and order," thinly-disguised code words for the intensification of labor under the threat of the whip.

The plotters unsuccessfully sought Gorbachev's public support for the state of emergency declaration and the handing of power to the vice-president.

State of emergency ignored

Key to the coup's failure were the mass protests that erupted in defiance of the curfews and banning of demonstrations. Resistance centered around the parliament building of the Russian republic in Moscow, where Russian President Boris Yeltsin denounced the coup as unconstitutional.

A crowd of 5,000 surrounded the Russian parliament August 19, the day of the coup announcement, erecting barricades and maintaining a round-the-clock vigil. By the next day the protest had swelled to 50,000. Demonstrators fraternized with troops, some of whom turned their tanks around to help defend the parliament building.

Hundreds of thousands demonstrated in other cities, including 200,000 in Leningrad and 400,000 in Kishinev, capital of the Moldavian republic. Coal miners went on strike in several regions.

The coup leaders had counted on being able to prevent major protests through instilling fear into working people, through the state of emergency, but this was their biggest misjudgment.

As David Remnick reported in the *Washington Post*: "Countless people interviewed on the street said they were ready to die on the barricades before they would leave the



On first day of coup, Soviet people fraternized with soldiers.

country to the KGB and the leaders of the coup.

Gorbachev's power weakened

With the collapse of the coup after barely two days, Gorbachev returned to Moscow, but to a shell of his former powers. He was heckled as he addressed the Russian parliament. The relationship of forces had tipped decisively towards Boris Yeltsin, head of the Russian republic.

Mass celebrations broke out at the coup's defeat, with outrage expressed against those identified with the crackdown. A crowd of 50,000 marched through Moscow, toppling the giant statue of Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the KGB's founder, from the front of the KGB's headquarters.

Statues of Lenin and other Soviet leaders were similarly removed in Moscow and the Baltic republics, where troops were withdrawn not only from positions seized in the coup but from the Lithuanian broadcasting center, which had been seized in January. Big outpourings accompanied these events as well.

Yeltsin used the coup failure to aggressively pursue his goal of shifting power from the federal structure to the Russian republic. This shift was expressed in the new treaty, which had been due to be signed on August 20, replacing the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with a new "Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics."

The treaty's provisions place most economic resources in the hands of the separate republics, who are also empowered to collect taxes, passing on a share to the central government. This last measure stuck in the throats of whole layers of the bureaucracy situated in the central state apparatus. They recognized that their place at the trough of the social surplus the ruling stratum reserves for itself would be greatly diminished.

Although the coup blocked the treaty's signing, Yeltsin said he considered it already

in force and declared the Russian republic economically sovereign and in control of all its resources. Since the coup, Yeltsin has said the treaty needs still further "adjustments" to permanently weaken centralized power before it can be signed.

Gorbachev bows to Yeltsin

Gorbachev immediately named replacements for the ministerial posts held by a number of the arrested coup leaders. He was quickly forced to bow to Yeltsin's demand that the entire Soviet cabinet be dismissed. A new committee of Yeltsin supporters was named instead.

Yeltsin also moved to curb the power of the Communist Party (CP), the organization that has been a central part of the machinery of bureaucratic rule for more than six decades. Yeltsin closed its offices on Russian territory and banned its newspapers.

The party was built through massive struggles of working people in the early part of the century. Called the Bolshevik party, it led millions of toilers in the revolutionary struggle that toppled the czar and, late in 1917, established the world's first workers' and peasants' government.

The revolution rapidly expropriated the capitalist class and nationalized industry and banking. Land was distributed to millions of peasants. The early gains of the revolution, with the important exception of the nationalized property relations, were reversed through a counterrevolution by a bureaucratic layer that grew and prospered off the shortages and isolation the new state faced.

Stalin turned the CP into an instrument of bloody repression in defense of the bureaucracy's privileges and social position. It has since earned the well-deserved hatred of workers in the Soviet Union and revolutionary-minded fighters the world over.

The day after Yeltsin's move on the CP, Gorbachev himself announced his resignation as the party's General Secretary and the dissolution of the Central Committee. Upon returning from the Crimea he had told the Russian parliament the CP still had an important role to play. But, as in other things, the Soviet president was running to catch up with the accelerated demise of his powers. Gorbachev also decreed that all Communist Party property would be taken over by the Soviet parliament, and ordered an end to all political party activity in the governmental apparatus, including the military and security forces.

Regimes in many of the republics made new assertions of independence, in many cases also taking action against the local Communist Party. In Vilnius, Lithuania, party leaders fled their headquarters in Soviet army personnel carriers. The Latvian parliament banned the Communist Party, and ordered criminal proceedings against its leaders. The Russian republic has now declared that it recognizes the independence of all three Baltic republics.

The president of Uzbekistan, who had supported the coup, resigned from the leadership of the party. In Kazakhstan the president banned all political party activity in government, the courts, and police. The Ukraine parliament declared independence from the Soviet Union.

Russian domination

Despite Yeltsin's declarations of support for the independence of the Baltic republics, whatever new federation emerges will be very much under Russian domination. The

Russian republic contains vast resources, more than half the present population of the Soviet Union, and three quarters of its land area (see box).

Yeltsin's rhetoric throughout the latest crisis showed his commitment to the interests of the rulers of Russia before all else. "This entire plot... was aimed in the first place against Russia, its parliament, its government, its president. But all of Russia stood up to its defense," he declared at the August 24 funeral of three victims of tanks advancing on the parliament. "Russia has saved the world," he told a crowd of 100,000 a day earlier.

Two days later Yeltsin issued a statement declaring that Russian officials had the right to review the borders of any neighboring republic wishing to leave the union. These republics would not, the statement said, be allowed to take areas with heavy Russian populations in them.

When Gorbachev addressed the Russian parliament, Yeltsin announced that they had agreed that the next federal prime minister and vice-president would be nominated by the Russian republic, and that the prime minister would always be a Russian citizen.

Nor are Yeltsin's social and economic policies fundamentally different from those of Gorbachev. A long-time CP leader who only resigned from the party a year ago, he represents the same social forces — the privileged ruling caste — but rests his power on the Russian republic in contrast to Gorbachev's base in the now declining federal machinery.

Yeltsin supports perestroika

Yeltsin advocates a version of Gorbachev's "perestroika," a pragmatic response to the deepening economic stagnation. It involves the use of market-oriented mechanisms with the aim of stimulating production. Among the pro-Yeltsin figures on the new committee appointed by Gorbachev to take charge of the national economy is Grigory Yavlinsky, known for his advocacy of a more rapid course in this direction.

But further steps toward implementing capitalist measures through making Soviet enterprises "profitable" must entail further attacks on workers' already declining living standards. Indications of what can be expected in the near future came from Yavlinsky's assistant, Sergei Zverev, who remarked hopefully, "People who stood three nights in the rain to protect Yeltsin are ready now to accept sacrifice."

Until now, Yeltsin has not had the authority to implement his preferred policies. But his new-found power now makes him the central organizer of the bureaucracy's drive against the social and economic conditions of working people.

While the impending completion of the new treaty was the immediate trigger for the coup, this treaty did not represent a fundamental threat to bureaucratic rule, but rather a realignment of power from the center to the republics, a restructuring of the ways in which the bureaucracy in all corners of the Soviet Union derives and defends its parasitic privileges.

For this reason the coup, while supported by some central KGB leaders, was not backed by the secret police as a whole, long one of the bureaucracy's main weapons to defend its position. The KGB is positioned in the structures of the republics as well as the union, continuing to function in Russia under Yeltsin, for example.

Yeltsin's course, like Gorbachev's, is doomed to failure because no wing of the ruling stratum can reverse the economic decline and establish a stable regime. Working people in the Soviet Union have shown they are unwilling to submit to the police-state measures used to keep them out of politics since the Stalinist counterrevolution.

As they deepen their resistance they will reach out to struggles around the world and be influenced by revolutionaries and communists — from Malcolm X to the leaders of the Cuban revolution.

Through battles to defend nationalized property relations and resist the concrete measures needed to restore capitalism, they will forge a communist vanguard capable of leading tens of millions in a political revolution that will sweep away the weakened caste and rechart the road forward to socialism.

Facts about Russian Republic



Boris Yeltsin's effort to create a Russian-dominated federation of republics is based on the massive size, economic, and military weight of the Russian Republic. With a population of 150 million, it is the largest on the European continent. Russia's territory is 30 times the size of France — the next largest country in Europe. It encompasses more than 75 percent of the land area of the Soviet Union as a whole. Forty-six percent of Soviet agricultural output comes from Russia. The vast majority of Soviet military force lies within the republic — including the biggest army in Europe and a massive nuclear arsenal.

Protest of coup is example of why workers defend nationalized property relations

BY GREG McCARTAN

The resistance on the part of working people that brought down the August 19 coup in Moscow highlights the difficulties for imperialism of achieving its long-sought goal of restoring capitalism in the workers' states.

Many top officials in Eastern European countries where capitalism has been overturned, some figures in the Soviet ruling stratum, and the big-business media in imperialist countries often say the nationalized property relations can be quickly done away with and basic industry returned to private hands.

Both the opposition from the big majority of working people to returning industry to individual capitalists and resistance by workers to concrete measures that must be taken to force them to revert to selling their labor power have proved to be the stumbling block to any "peaceful" transition back to capitalism.

What working people defend is the remaining giant historic conquest of the 1917 Russian revolution led by V.I. Lenin's Bolshevik Party: the expropriation of capitalist property in industry, banking, and wholesale trade; a state monopoly of foreign trade; and a planned economy.

Despite the bloody betrayal of the revolution by the Stalinist regime and decades of subsequent bureaucratic administration of the economy, the nationalized property relations remain.

The drive by imperialism to restore capitalism began as soon as the workers' and peasants' government led masses of fighting workers and peasants in a giant revolutionary struggle to expropriate the capitalist class.

Attempts to defeat the Soviet working class in war and drown the remaining conquests of the 1917 revolution in blood have included a counterrevolutionary civil war in the early years of the workers state and the massive invasion by imperialist Germany during World War II. Both were defeated through enormous sacrifice of millions of toilers in the Soviet Union.

Although top officials in the Eastern European and Soviet workers states have repeatedly announced ambitious "market reform" programs and their intentions to sell off basic industry to private capital, each has backed off when faced with the social explosion such moves would engender.

Majority favors nationalized industry

A Times Mirror poll conducted in May found that 76 percent of those surveyed in the Russian republic favored continued state control of basic industry. The figure rose to 86 percent in the Ukraine. The poll found substantial majorities also favor continued nationalization of banks, schools, electric utilities, health care, the telephone system, buses, and radio and television.

Only a small minority responded positively to establishing a "free-market form of capitalism such as found in the U.S. and Germany."

White House officials in Washington were given the results of the survey before it was published.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev "has a very big job ahead of him of convincing his people that they should go to a free-market economy," said Marlin Fitzwater, President George Bush's press secretary, in response to the poll.

"That has been the biggest problem from the beginning," Fitzwater said. "There is no private sector ethic in the Soviet Union."

In an early August interview with the *New York Times*, Vladimir Shcherbakov, Gorbachev's deputy prime minister in charge of planning, assessed the obstacles in the way of the regime's attempts to integrate the Soviet economy into that of world capitalism.

"Most difficult of all will be to make each individual socially responsible for himself, for his family, for the level of one's own life so that a person has no illusions," he said. "Changing this will take a generation."

In Poland and Czechoslovakia, where mass upheavals toppled the Stalinist parties, the pro-imperialist individuals who lead the governments there have had an equally hard time making inroads into nationalized property. Each concrete measure they propose that heads in the direction of working people having to sell their labor power once again to private capitalists meets resistance.

The Czechoslovak "market reform" program has resulted in the state selling off 3,000 businesses to private buyers, but nearly all are shops and other small businesses. Industry and banking have yet to be touched.

The Azoty chemical works in Poland is another example of how few inroads have been made into nationalized industry and why the working class defends those property relations.

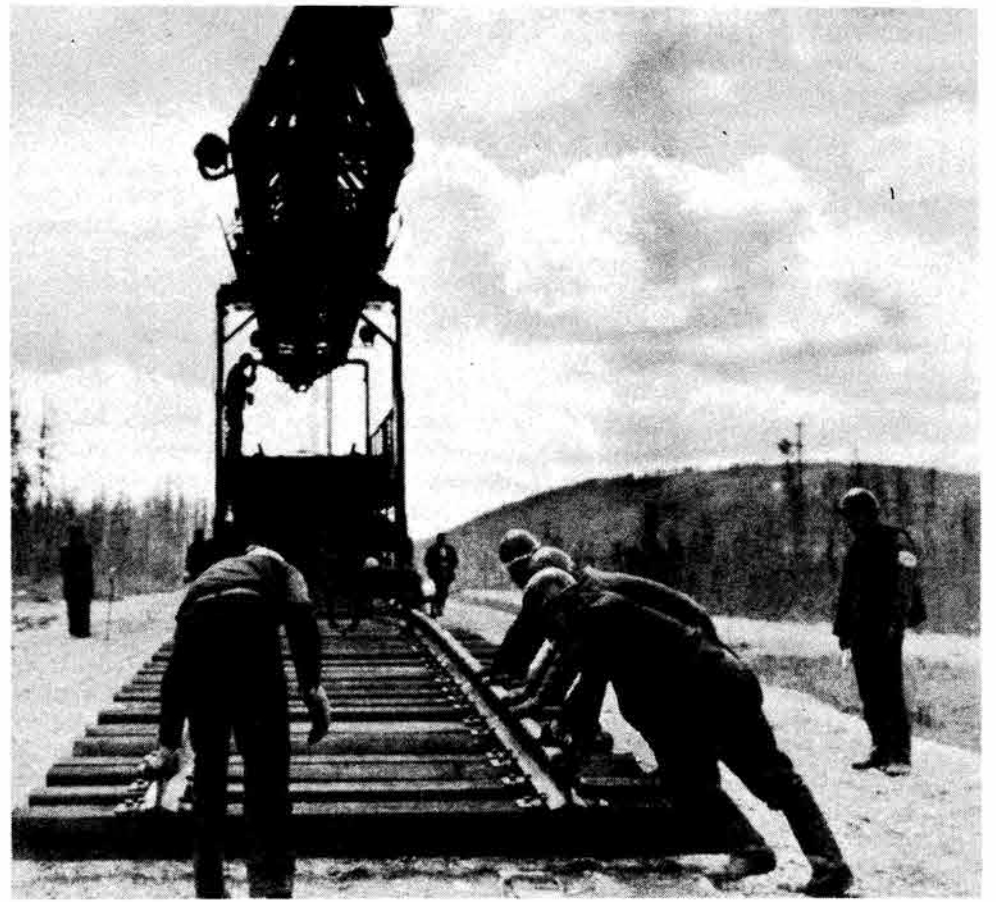
The factory "still conducts functions so typical for a socialist enterprise," Polish Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki complained in an interview with the *New York Times*.

"They have an indoor skating rink, a very nice swimming pool, culture center, soft drink bottling plant, and a very nice laundry," he said. "They maintain 1,000 free factory apartments, heat 80 percent of the town, and still make a profit."

Bielecki proposes the speedy sale of factories like the chemical plant to private investors, but admits he faces opposition.

Under Polish law factory managers must submit every decision for review by an employee council. The council has the power to suspend the manager if it disagrees with the proposed course.

A U.S. Central Intelligence Agency report



Workers building railroad in Siberia

recently noted "Warsaw's reluctance to force insolvent state firms into bankruptcy for fear of political and social consequences."

Henryka Bochniarz, the head of the new Polish Ministry of Industry and Trade, announced in August that "after so many years of a state-steered economy, it is impossible to have no intervention at all."

A plan to try and sell off about 25 percent, or 400, of the state-owned industrial firms, with a goal of 50 percent within three years, was killed by the lower house of parliament.

Bochniarz said the plan was not feasible anyway. "The plan is not accepted by the president or parliament, and the concept is changing." She said a target of 100 plants would be more likely, but it might be better to simply restructure them and keep the firms under government control.

Imperialist differences over aid

In the aftermath of the Soviet coup, differences between the major imperialist powers — debated only weeks before at the Group of Seven meeting in London — resurfaced over the pace and extent of loans to the USSR. Commercial banks in imperialist Germany and France, have already loaned more than \$27 billion to the Soviet Union. In contrast, loans from commercial banks in the United States add up to \$500 million.

"The aid from the West must be as massive as the aid from Germany has been so far,"

German Economics Minister Jürgen Möllemann said after the coup. "The past few days should have provided enough motivation."

Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher singled out the United States and Japan as countries that could afford to pay more. "Germany's economy, also burdened with the high costs of German unification, can no longer support such massive outlays," explained William Schmidt, writing in the *New York Times*.

Half of the Soviet Union's \$40 billion in commercial debt comes due within a year. Because most of these funds are owed to German and French capitalists, Washington and Tokyo have little interest in seeing new loans simply recycled in Moscow to pay off their competitors.

President Bush has held to Washington's stance of opposition to any funds to bail out Gorbachev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin. "There's just a lot of things that have to happen" before Washington will consider increasing economic aid, he said August 24.

The lack of interest by U.S. banks in making loans to the USSR was highlighted in July. No U.S. banks participated in a \$600 million loan to the Soviets for grain purchases, even though Washington guaranteed the repayment of almost the entire loan and half of the interest. Eventually four banks in Europe stepped in to make the loans, reportedly under pressure from their governments.

Chicago Steelworker fights company frame-up, firing

BY SUSIE WINSTEN AND RICK YOUNG

CHICAGO — Union and political activist Maria Barahona has been framed up, threatened with criminal prosecution, and fired from her job at Precision Scientific in Chicago where she has worked for almost four years. Precision Scientific is organized by United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 5488.

Barahona, 23 years old, was falsely accused August 21 of splashing acid in the face of another worker.

Precision Scientific has a record of harassment and frame-ups of union activists. This is increasing as the February 1992 expiration of the union contract nears. Barahona, the recording secretary of Local 5488 and a member of its executive board, is currently fighting eight write-ups she received in a single day only a month ago.

The company denied Barahona union representation in the meeting where they made

their false charges. Two police officers, however, appeared promptly. The cops told her she was not being charged with a crime, but could be at any time. The company then placed Barahona on a 10-day suspension pending discharge.

The company's frame-up story is already unraveling. Since acid is not used anywhere in the plant's production process, the company now claims that hot water was thrown at the worker. It is only the company's word that the alleged victim named Barahona as his attacker.

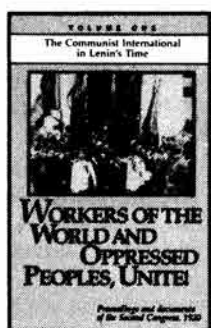
At the time of the alleged attack, the young union activist was with several coworkers in another part of the plant. Barahona, who is also a member of the Young Socialist Alliance, was inviting these coworkers to an August 25 benefit for Mark Curtis, a Des Moines union activist who was framed up and jailed on false charges of rape.

USWA Local 5488 is fighting Barahona's frame-up and firing.

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International Socialist Review

Supplement to the Militant

September 1991

The economic and political crisis in the Soviet Union

What road forward for working people?

Introduction

This issue of the *International Socialist Review* features excerpts from the political resolution adopted by the 1990 convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

Major sections of the third section of that resolution, "World capitalism has suffered a historic defeat in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union," are reprinted below. The section is an invaluable aid for workers and youth seeking to better understand the roots of the social and economic crisis in the Soviet Union today and the road forward for working people there.

The resolution takes as its framework the deepening economic crisis of world capitalism; workers' resistance to the resulting employer-government assault on their organizations, standard of living, and rights; and the steps needed to forge communist parties in the world capable of leading working people in the fight for socialism.

This segment of the historic curve of capitalist development, announced by the October 1987 crash of stock markets from New York to Tokyo to Bonn, is marked by the decline of imperialism. Capitalism today is not only marching humanity toward more wars but at the same time stumbling toward a depression and world social crisis.

It is in this world that the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union are fighting to defend and extend the political elbowroom they have to organize, discuss and debate, and interact with struggles that emerge internationally.

In 1917 the mass revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants, led by the Bolshevik Party under V.I. Lenin, established the first workers' and peasants' government. They then utilized that new power to deepen the revolutionary struggle, resulting in the expropriation of the capitalist class and nationalization of industry, banking, and wholesale trade. This laid the basis for the establishment of a planned economy and state monopoly of foreign trade.

Based on workers' and peasants' councils — soviets — the new state power began organizing to meet the enormous political, economic, and military challenges before it. The Bolsheviks knew that the success of their revolution depended on workers in other countries, especially in the advanced capitalist countries in Europe, also concluding successful anticapitalist revolutions as part of the worldwide struggle for socialism.

As the resolution explains, the roots of the social and economic crisis today lie in the counterrevolution carried out in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin in the 1920s and 1930s. During those years the failure of the revolutionary struggles in Europe, growing international isolation of the Soviet state, and years of civil war and shortages led to the growth of a bureaucracy, backed by a police apparatus that defended the privileges and social position of the rising petty-bourgeois layer. It drove the working class and its communist vanguard out of political life through force and violence. It turned the Communist Party into an instrument of state repression and extended its counter-revolutionary political perspectives and practices internationally.

Consolidating its hold on the reins of government, the bureaucracy took the form of what can best be described as a caste. The ruling stratum does not own industry and banking either collectively or as individuals. Instead, its privileges as a stratum, and not as a new exploiting ruling class, are derived from nationalized property relations — the central conquest of the 1917 revolution that remains despite the political usurpation of the working class by the Stalinist regime.

This bureaucratic layer is a parasite on the body of



Rallies, demonstrations, and fraternization with Soviet troops prevented consolidation of August 1991 coup. Coup leaders sought to limit ability of workers and farmers to organize and participate in politics.

nationalized property. Far from leading the transition to socialism, it acts as a brake on the economy, blocking the deepening of workers' political consciousness and the conquering of culture and technique.

The best analogy to the situation faced by workers in the Soviet Union is with the trade unions in imperialist countries today. The unions are the largest organizations of the working class. They arose out of bitter struggles against the employers and remain the main obstacle to the ruling rich in their offensive against the working class.

But the potential power of the unions is sapped by the labor officialdom, a bureaucratic layer that sits on top of the workers' organizations. These labor fakers live off the dues base of the unions, giving themselves enormous salaries and extensive perks.

They hamstring the fighting capacity of the unions by tying them hand and foot into collaboration with the employers and their government, strangling democracy within the unions, and blocking off attempts by workers to reach out in solidarity with strikes, social protests, and revolutionary struggles around the world.

The labor tops are threatened by rising labor struggles. A renewed and fighting union movement will sweep away this petty-bourgeois layer, restructuring a leadership that emerges from the ranks.

Working people in the Soviet Union, having defeated the coup, are now emboldened to press ahead in their fight for democratic and political rights and their battles against the terrible social and economic crisis into which the Stalinist regime has led the country.

Through this battle they will gain experience, reach out to struggles around the world, and come into contact with

and be influenced by revolutionaries and communists. They will forge a communist party capable of leading workers and their allies in a political revolution that will sweep away the parasitic ruling stratum. Having reconquered political power workers and peasants can once again chart a revolutionary road forward as part of the fight for world socialism.

World capitalism has suffered a historic defeat in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union

A. The construction of socialism is a revolutionary political task of the working class

1. It is the conscious organization of the production and distribution of goods and services so as to advance the transformation of working people into new human beings, into socialist men and women, as they organize to transform their social relations and conditions of life and work.
2. The tasks shouldered by the working class in this stage of its historic line of march, as it strives to overcome scarcity through progressively raising the productivity of labor, are:

a) To reduce the scope of bourgeois norms of distribution,

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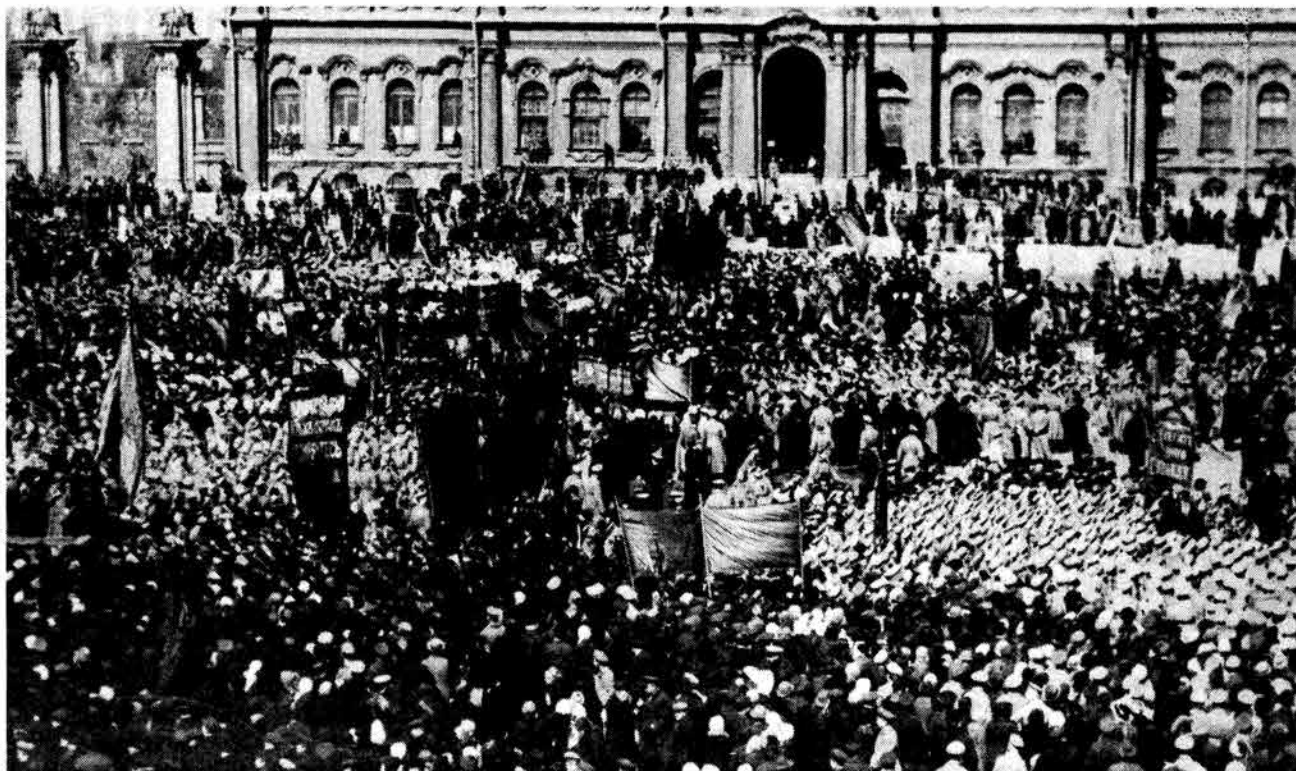
which are inherited from the capitalist mode of production and continue to exist during the opening of the historic transition to socialism, striving to progressively narrow economic and social inequalities from the outset;

- b) To shift the balance in productive activity from wage labor — inherited from capitalist social relations and maintained in the opening of the transition period — toward voluntary labor freely given for common social advancement — which will progressively become the foundation of work under socialism;
 - c) To raise the educational and skill level of working people; increase the proportion of administrative tasks of production and distribution conquered by the working class as opposed to being reserved to a specialized layer of administrative personnel (tasks such as organization of the work process and discipline, quality control, financial accounting, inventory and stock controls, etc.); narrow the social division of labor by assuring that more and more scientific tasks, separated from but necessary to production, are carried out by workers themselves; and reduce wage differentials;
 - d) To strengthen the worker-peasant alliance and narrow the social differentiation between city and countryside, promoting the growing voluntary cooperative labor of urban and rural working people in producing and processing food and fiber and in preventing destruction of the environment;
 - e) To progressively reduce the deeply entrenched social inequalities inherited from capitalism that are rooted in the oppression of women, racist discrimination, and national oppression;
 - f) To increase the conscious, organized political control by working people over economic and social planning and management, recognizing that reliance on mechanisms and blind laws reinforces commodity fetishism and bourgeois ideology, reversing rather than advancing progress toward socialism; and
 - g) To make proletarian internationalism the most fundamental guide for political activity and priorities; to guide the workers' state as one component of a federation of soviet states in becoming, whose expansion is necessary not only in order to reach socialism but also to prevent the bureaucratization and corruption of any single workers' state.
3. Proletarian internationalism is essential if workers and farmers are to consolidate the foundations of a workers' state and on that basis advance toward socialism.
- a) The construction of socialism can take place only as part of the fight to bring new revolutionary victories

The construction of socialism can take place only as part of the fight to bring new revolutionary victories worldwide, while pushing back the world imperialist system.

worldwide, as part of fighting to extend the socialist revolution while pushing back the world imperialist system of exploitation and domination.

- b) The alternative perspective of "socialism in one country," advanced by the Stalinist faction in the USSR, is reactionary, a variant of the "national" socialism that has been and remains at the heart of all class collaborationism.
 - c) A proletarian internationalist course requires active solidarity with all battles against national oppression, imperialist subjugation, and capitalist exploitation, as well as active efforts to aid revolutionists around the world in becoming communists in the course of their struggles.
4. The advance toward socialism requires organized communist leadership of the working class.
- a) Building socialism is a more difficult task than the revolutionary conquest of power from the bourgeoisie, requiring much more political consciousness and proletarian discipline.
 - b) The communist party and its leadership must renew and deepen their working-class composition by conscious steps to proletarianize the party. They must be continually incorporating broader layers and new generations of vanguard workers and peasants, taking special measures to draw in oppressed nationalities, women, and fighters with experience in internationalist missions. The entire party membership must be involved in leading voluntary social labor.
5. Nationalized property in a workers' state, established by expropriating the bourgeoisie, has no *automatic* bias toward socialism.



May Day demonstration in front of Winter Palace in Petrograd (later Leningrad) prior to Bolsheviks taking power. Conquest of state property is necessary to open door to workers taking society into their own hands and transforming themselves.

- a) The expropriation of capitalist property in industry, banking, and wholesale trade, a state monopoly of foreign trade, and a planned economy are necessary, but they are not sufficient conditions for the toilers to build socialism.
 - (1) These revolutionary conquests of the workers and farmers break the domination of production and exchange by the form of the law of value dominant under capitalism: the establishment of prices of production through the competition of large capitals, determining an average industrial rate of profit.
 - (2) Under capitalism prices of production regulate the social allocation of labor, raw materials, and production goods, and guarantee the reproduction of bourgeois social relations and distribution of income.
 - (3) Wealth appears under capitalism as the accumulation of commodities, regardless of their origin, and regardless of their contribution to the needs and interests of the great majority of humanity, the workers and farmers. Their value is registered on the market.
 - (4) Private property in the means of production and exchange blocks the possibility of conscious planning of social and economic priorities by working people.
 - b) The construction of socialism is not an engineering task of administering state property and planning, regardless of how committed and socialist-minded the administrators might be.
 - (1) The conquest of state property is necessary to open the door to workers taking the productive mechanism of society into their own hands and beginning on that basis to reorganize and transform social labor, in the process transforming themselves. But the conquest of state property does not then guarantee this advance.
 - (2) The advance toward socialism depends on a communist political course of the working class and its nonexploiting allies — the course advocated by Che Guevara; explained by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels; followed by the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of V.I. Lenin in the early years of the first Soviet republic and first four congresses of the Communist International; and continued by the communist opposition led by Leon Trotsky.
 - c) A workers' state is a transitional society, not a form of socialism.
 - (1) The establishment of a workers' state opens the transition from capitalism to socialism as part of the world struggle against imperialist and capitalist exploitation and oppression.
 - (2) A workers' state can go forward toward socialism, or backward toward laying the social basis for capitalist counterrevolution. The capacity to advance toward socialism depends on: communist leadership of the working class movement; deepening politicization of an increasingly working-class vanguard leading the transition; and advances in the world revolution.
 - (3) During the transition period in a workers' state the class struggle becomes more restricted, but it continues as long as the law of value continues to operate and the world market continues to exist. Anti-working-class prejudices, in all forms and manifestations, continue to be generated and must be consciously combated.
 - d) To approach the construction of socialism in any other way fosters the development of bloated and privileged petty-bourgeois social layers and their relatively rapid consolidation into a counterrevolutionary parasitic caste.
6. The foundations of a workers' state, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, are state property, a monopoly of foreign trade, and economic planning, established through the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. On these foundations, the working class can organize more rapid economic and social development and create new social relations of production.
- a) To advance toward socialism on the foundation of these conquests following the October 1917 revolution required:
 - (1) the consolidation and extension of the worker-peasant alliance; and
 - (2) the construction and proletarianization of a mass communist party.
 - b) These two conquests were destroyed by the successful political counterrevolution carried out against the working class during the late 1920s and early 1930s by the petty-bourgeois social caste organized by the Bonapartist Stalinist apparatus.
 - c) The state-property foundations of the proletarian dictatorship survived, however, precluding:
 - (1) the peaceful evolution of the Soviet workers' state into capitalism or its absorption by finance capital into the world imperialist system; and
 - (2) peaceful coexistence between imperialism and the workers' state, regardless of the class-collaborationist course of the bureaucratic caste.
7. The bloated bureaucracy that over time becomes the self-expanding petty-bourgeois caste is able to maintain its social position and privileges not because it is historically necessary — it is not a new class — but because it is able to rely on the Bonapartist regime's massive apparatus of repression, above all its secret police.
- a) The origin and social necessity of the specialized administrative apparatus — out of which the bureaucracy grew — lay in the lack of experience of the Soviet working class in managing the economy and administering the state.
 - b) The origin of the repressive police component of this apparatus lies in the scarcity facing the victorious Bolshevik revolution (sharply exacerbated by the famine and devastation from years of civil war and imperialist aggression) and the ensuing struggle for the basic necessities of human existence.
 - (1) As lines for consumer goods were policed, distribution was administered to ensure that the bureaucracy never had to do without; the resultant police apparatus developed as the fundamental pillar of bureaucratic rule.
 - (a) The apparatus gained further opportunity for plunder by assuming the role of defender of the "nation" in response to hostile pressure from the imperialist rulers.
 - (b) Through the organization of "distribution" and "defense" by the police and officer corps, the Stalinist regime assumed a Bonapartist character. That is, the apparatus — appearing to stand above an atomized society divided between the working

masses (whose interests lie in state property) and the crisis-wracked petty-bourgeois caste with its bourgeois outlook and orientation — emerged as the guarantor of the parasitic consumption, perks, and privileges of the bureaucratic caste.

(c) The Bonapartist regime is also needed to arbitrate between the different wings of the decomposing caste.

(2) The power and privileges of the caste are maintained through police methods, escalated by the Bonapartist regime to systematic mass murder if needed. These methods rolled back the use of democratic rights and political space by the toilers and their allies to levels below those conquered in struggle by workers and farmers in many bourgeois states.

(3) This evolution of the bureaucratic caste comes into sharper and sharper conflict with any possibility to draw the producers into an indispensable directing role in the development of a planned economy.

c) A Bonapartist regime is the *only* form of rule possible for the bureaucratic caste.

8. The caste is petty bourgeois in its social character and bourgeois in its attitudes and aspirations.

a) It is not a privileged section of the working class (although it absorbs a layer from the working class), but a social stratum with interests alien to those of the workers and peasants.

b) This petty-bourgeois caste — not small nonexploiting property holders — is the transmission belt into the workers' states of imperialist pressures and bourgeois values: contempt for workers; racism, national chauvinism, anti-Semitism; reactionary views on women and family; fear of unfettered scientific experimentation and international debate; philistinism at best and bureaucratic terrorism at worst in relation to the arts and artistic creation; anti-internationalism; and even anti-communism.

c) The growth of this petty-bourgeois layer deepens class divisions and social differentiation in the workers' states.

(1) The petty-bourgeois caste is a massive social layer (numbering tens of millions in the Soviet Union) that consumes a large proportion of the national income.

(2) The members of the caste are not capitalists; that is, they are not property owners accumulating money as capital.

(3) While the caste cannot pass on property, its core comes to comprise a hereditary stratum, the *nomenklatura*, that does pass along its prerogatives and privileged standard of living to sons and daughters.

(4) The most fundamental social conditions of workers and peasants increasingly diverge from those of the privileged caste, e.g.:

(a) food, housing, transportation, medical services, child care, literacy, access to higher education, recreation;

(b) infant and maternal mortality rates and life expectancy;

(c) differential and discriminatory access to safe, effective, nonbrutal contraceptive methods that protect a woman's right to privacy in sexual

matters (multiple abortions as the only available method of birth control for millions of working women in Soviet Union; the subordination of a woman's right to choose to shifting "population policies" of the caste, as in Romania); and

(d) differential exposure to the results of environmental devastation.

(5) The most extreme degree of social and economic differentiation in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is between the European republics, especially Russia, and the republics peopled by various oppressed nationalities, especially those in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan) and the Transcaucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia).

B. The fight for national self-determination: the only road toward a world without borders

1. In bringing to power and consolidating a workers' and peasants' regime, the socialist revolution opens the beginning of the end of the centuries-old history of national oppression, divisions, and enmities.

a) The fight against national oppression is always intertwined with radical agrarian reform to liberate the rural toilers from:

(1) precapitalist forms of exploitation, by expropriating

Socialism is possible only on the basis of guaranteeing the right of national self-determination for all oppressed nations and nationalities.

the landlord classes and abolishing all forms of feudal and semifeudal rents, including compulsory labor duties; and

(2) capitalist exploitation under the rents and mortgages system, by nationalizing the land, guaranteeing the right of peasants to till the soil, and ensuring them adequate means to do so (low-interest credit, seed, fertilizers, tools, and cooperative production and marketing facilities).

b) The advance toward socialism is possible only on the basis of guaranteeing the right of national self-determination to all oppressed nations and nationalities, as well as forging a voluntary federation of workers' and farmers' republics.

(1) The socialist revolution sounds the bell of "nation time" for oppressed nations and nationalities.

(2) This was the course of the Bolshevik leadership under Lenin's guidance following the October 1917 revolution.

(a) As the October victory in Russia gave an impulse to revolutionary uprisings elsewhere throughout the old tsarist empire, the communist leadership began to forge a voluntary federation of the various republics organized on the basis of soviet power — whether the dictatorship of the proletariat had been established (as in Russia, the Ukraine, etc.); or where it could not yet be established but revolutionary workers' and peasants' governments had come to power (as in most of

the Central Asian and Transcaucasian republics).

(b) Lenin insisted on a *Union* of Soviet Socialist Republics, not a new "Soviet" nationality with patriotism used as cover for maintenance and expansion of Great Russian chauvinism and bourgeois nationalism; not a new "socialist nation-state" suppressing minority nationalities; and not a federation limiting itself to formal equality, but one that took affirmative action to develop the economies and culture of the oppressed nations in order to close the historical gap in social and economic conditions between them and the formerly oppressor Russian nation.

(c) National self-determination, like other democratic rights, is subordinate to defense of the workers' state in face of counterrevolutionary assault and imperialist aggression. The denial of national rights, however, weakens rather than strengthens the defense of a workers' state. The Soviet republic's policy on national self-determination and its revolutionary agrarian reform were key to mobilizing the peasantry and the victims of tsarist national oppression behind the workers' struggle during the Civil War against the combined military forces of imperialism and the domestic landlords and capitalists.

(d) Defense of the workers' state itself is subordinate to initiatives by the revolutionary leadership of the state to advance the world struggle for national liberation and socialism (e.g., transfer of crack Cuban troops and equipment to Angola to win the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, preparations to aid the FMLN, Panama).

(3) The Communist International adopted the Bolsheviks' course on the right to self-determination as the foundation of communist policy on the national question. [See the "Theses on the National and Colonial Question" in Pathfinder's forthcoming edition of proceedings of the Second Congress of the Comintern.]

2. The Bolsheviks' policy on national self-determination and voluntary federation began to be reversed in the early 1920s by the political course of the emerging bureaucratic caste, led by Stalin. In 1922 Lenin opened a political battle against this course, but Stalin's reactionary policies prevailed following Lenin's death.

a) Stalin's course was intensified and institutionalized with the consolidation of the caste's counterrevolution in the early 1930s. The "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" reemerged in fact as a prison house of nations inherited from tsarism and imperialism.

(1) The USSR was no longer a voluntary federation, but a "Soviet" super-state.

(2) The resurgence and domination of Great Russian nationalism within this "Soviet" state obliterated proletarian internationalism.

b) In the wake of World War II, the Stalinist regimes imposed on the newly established workers' states in Eastern and Central Europe served as agencies for the national oppression of these countries by the caste in the Soviet Union. The USSR's invasions of Hungary in 1956 and of Czechoslovakia in 1968 were gross violations of national sovereignty and weakened all the workers' states involved.

c) The invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet troops at the end of 1979 violated national sovereignty and set back the struggle against imperialist-backed counterrevolution there.

d) Far from ending national oppression and narrowing national divisions, Moscow's policies — from Stalin through Gorbachev — have reinforced oppression and exacerbated divisions. Each additional year that national aspirations have been suppressed by murderous force, the more explosive the inevitable uprisings for self-determination and independence have become.

e) Once Stalinism had transformed the Soviet Union into the opposite of a voluntary federation of workers' and peasants' republics, its break-up had to come: it was inevitable, a precondition to a new advance of the worldwide struggle for national liberation and socialism, thus historically progressive.

f) The Soviet bureaucracy's oppression of the Eastern and Central European workers' states, including through the use of police repression and military force, began to be shattered in 1989. That also is a precondition to a new advance of the world revolution.

3. Communists and other revolutionists support the right to national self-determination unconditionally.

a) Mass struggles for national rights in the oppressed republics of the USSR, regardless of their initial leadership, reflect not imperialist-inspired counterrevolution, but the aspirations and interests of workers and farmers.

b) Given the break in communist continuity in the Soviet Union and European workers' states, national struggles

Continued on next page



Soviet tanks destroying buildings during 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. The USSR's invasion of Czechoslovakia and of Hungary in 1956 were gross violations of national sovereignty that weakened all workers' states involved.



Mass demonstration in protest of attempted coup. Workers in Soviet Union took to streets to defend hard-won political space.

Continued from previous page

there cannot begin with revolutionary proletarian leadership and are today taking place under petty-bourgeois leadership.

- c) Only through the fight for and conquest of the right to national self-determination can space open to develop communist leadership of the toilers in the oppressed nations; to open the road once again toward a voluntary union of soviet republics; and to forge links with anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggles worldwide.

C. The castes' bureaucratic planning and management in the workers' states inevitably degenerate toward a system worse than capitalism

- 1. Despite relatively rapid initial industrialization and urbanization in a deformed and degenerated workers' state,

Stalinism is not a distorted, very bad form of socialism and communism; instead, it is their counterrevolutionary negation.

the rate of labor productivity growth soon peaks and decelerates toward economic stagnation and irreversible crisis.

- a) This is a law of development of these states, demonstrated by the experience of both the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.
- b) Not only will these regimes never catch up with the most industrially advanced capitalist countries in labor productivity and living standards, they will continue to fall further and further behind.
- 2. Even under Stalinist domination, these workers' states were capable of promoting industrialization and urbanization of countries that were relatively backward economically for up to several decades.
 - a) This growth was accomplished largely by means of employing nationalized property, centralized planning, and the monopoly of foreign trade resulting from the expropriation of the bourgeoisie to accomplish in a shorter period of time what the bourgeoisie achieved historically through what Marx referred to as the "so-called primitive accumulation of capital":
 - (1) the transfer of surplus labor power from countryside to city for factory and construction work;
 - (2) holding the living standards of the peasantry and agricultural modernization to the minimum in order to finance industrialization (in Germany and Czechoslovakia, the caste was able to build on an already developed industrial base inherited from capitalism);
 - (3) construction of a basic infrastructure of electrifi-

cation, transportation, and communication; and

- (4) opening of new lands to cultivation, mining, and forestry.
- b) Using these methods, the Stalinist regimes were able to promote relatively rapid growth of industrial output through their "Five Year Plans."
 - (1) With no capitalist business cycle (the domination of prices of production set through the competition of industrial capitals having been broken by expropriation of the bourgeoisie), the Soviet Union continued to expand industrial output throughout the Great Depression of the 1930s.
 - (2) This fact gave rise to another Stalinist rationalization of the course of the Soviet bureaucracy: "Stalin industrialized a backward country and turned it into the world's number two industrial power. Without that course, even with its excesses, the Soviet Union could not have survived the German imperialist onslaught during World War II."
- c) Even during this period of extensive growth, bureaucratic planning and management methods were a brake on development. They destroyed rather than encouraged working-class initiative. They undermined communist attitudes toward work.
 - (1) Moreover, this period was marked by the brutal forced collectivization of the peasantry, which permanently blocked off the modernization of agriculture. Forced collectivization shattered the worker-peasant alliance, which can be based only on the increasing participation of workers and exploited peasants in economic and political decision making.
 - (2) Without deepening communist consciousness, growing workers' control and management, and a strengthening worker-peasant alliance, there is no way to reorganize labor, modernize production in industry and agriculture, and produce quality goods in the transition from capitalism to socialism.
 - (3) Such a course, however, is anathema to the layers of managers and technocrats in the caste, since it threatens the monopoly of power and social division of labor on which their privileges are based.
- d) The degenerative character of bureaucratic planning was already clear by the end of 1930s with slowing growth in the USSR, but the Stalinist regime got a new lease on life from the Soviet Union's victory over imperialist aggression in World War II and the character of the more primitive economic tasks posed by postwar reconstruction. The onset of the crisis of the Stalinist regimes was announced once again under Khrushchev at the beginning of the 1960s and has worsened in accelerated bursts since that time. This crisis is irreversible.
 - (1) The "market reforms" and agricultural reorganizations under Khrushchev and in the early years of the Brezhnev period, while resulting in temporary gains in this or that sector, not only failed to reverse the general decline but ended up accelerating the

crisis with devastating consequences for the living conditions of working people.

- (2) Under Gorbachev's *perestroika* policies, economic and social conditions have already gotten and will continue to get worse overall, not better.
 - (a) *Perestroika* is not a plan or a program: it is the pragmatic response by a section of the caste to the crisis of bureaucratic rule.
 - (b) What is striking is not how radical *perestroika* is, but how constrained the government has been in face of the workers' response. After three years, the regime has implemented none of the central measures proposed by the "perestroika planners."
- (3) This is also the lesson of all the "market reforms" and related schemes in the Eastern and Central European workers' states.
- (4) Such a crisis is equally inevitable in China and Vietnam, but is currently less acute despite their much lower level of economic development and living standards. This is because the weight of agriculture and the size of the rural population in these countries means that the methods that fostered the initial urbanization and industrialization of other deformed and degenerated workers' states have not yet been exhausted.
- 3. Stalinism is not a distorted, very bad form of socialism and communism; instead, it is their counterrevolutionary negation. The deepening crisis in the Soviet and Eastern European workers' states shows the dangers of:
 - a) confusing Stalinism with communism;
 - b) crediting the gains of the dictatorship of the proletariat to its betrayers; or
 - c) confusing what are in fact the inevitable results of decades of sabotage by the growing parasitic layers and their Bonapartist regimes with the irreplaceable economic foundations of the workers' states.

D. Regimes of permanent crisis in deformed workers' states

- 1. By the end of the 1930s the evolution of the Soviet workers' state under domination by the caste, and of Stalinist policy in the Soviet Union and worldwide, had:
 - a) Guaranteed the outbreak of the second world imperialist slaughter through organizing a series of devastating defeats of workers and farmers, in particular:
 - (1) the disastrous course of the Stalin-led Comintern and Communist Party in Germany, paving the way for fascism to triumph without united working-class armed resistance;
 - (2) the collapse of the class- collaborationist Popular Front in France, giving way to capitalist Bonapartism and the crushing defeat of the working-class movement;
 - (3) the betrayal during the Spanish Civil War, murdering revolutionary-minded workers and opening the road to Franco's coming to power; and
 - (4) the Stalin-Hitler pact, organizing the slaughter of Polish and German communists and revolutionary-minded workers and politically disorienting vanguard workers who still looked to the Soviet Union, thus paving the way for the German imperialist invasion of the USSR;
 - b) Put a question mark over the survival of the conquests of the October revolution due to:
 - (1) the disastrous consequences of forced collectivization;
 - (2) the reversal of Leninist policies on the national question;
 - (3) mounting state terror against workers and peasants (including millions directly murdered);
 - (4) bloody purge trials, including of the top Soviet army officer corps, on the eve of the German imperialist invasion of the Soviet Union;
 - c) Dispersed, demoralized, corrupted, and murdered enough of the workers' vanguard worldwide to block the development of mass revolutionary parties under communist leadership. As a result, by the outbreak of World War II, aside from the nuclei of communists in a number of countries who said "no" to the reversal of Leninism and survived despite Stalin's assassins, *there was not a single revolutionary current worthy of the name anywhere in the world.*
- 2. The Stalinist counterrevolution broke communist continuity in the deformed and degenerated workers' states.
 - a) By World War II the communist organization in the Soviet Union had been so decimated as to preclude its revival, even under the impact of postwar revolutionary victories in Yugoslavia and elsewhere.
 - b) The communist consciousness that survived in the Soviet Union among the generation that made the October revolution had eroded over the decades.

- c) In more recent decades, communist continuity in the Soviet Union even among individuals has been altogether broken.
- d) There is no communist, no Marxist, no proletarian political vanguard in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, or China today.
- e) New communist parties in these deformed and degenerated workers' states can and will be forged, but only through deepening class-struggle experience and as part of a broader advance of the world revolution.

3. Given this reality, political revolution is not on the immediate agenda in the Soviet Union and other deformed and degenerated workers' states, nor has it been for at least three decades.

a) Under such conditions, it became inevitable:

(1) that the Stalinist regimes would not be overthrown in a communist-led political revolution, but would first have to be torn apart by the popular masses in the face of a profound crisis, as is now happening; and

(2) that only then could the possibility of political life open up, out of which forging a communist leadership could be accomplished.

b) Cuba is the only workers' state where it today remains possible to combat bureaucratic abuses, tendencies, and crimes and to halt the consolidation of a privileged social caste through politically revolutionary means. This is true:

(1) because a communist leadership exists in Cuba; and

(2) because that leadership is part of a broad layer of workers and peasants who are consciously communist and proletarian internationalist.

c) What opens up with the disintegration of the Stalinist regimes is not a political revolution, but the opportunity for workers to reconquer political space similar to that taken by working people along with the rights they won during bourgeois-democratic revolutions.

(1) The disintegration of the Stalinist parties and weakening of the bureaucratic regimes create the possibility for the working class and the workers' movement to fight to develop, to politicize, and to start being open to the influence of revolutionary struggles the world over. It is along this road of struggle that the beginnings of a communist movement can be forged.

(2) The governments that are coming into existence throughout Eastern Europe are not a qualitative break from their predecessors. They are petty-bourgeois regimes that are bourgeois in orientation.

(a) They are staffed not only by holdovers from the nomenklatura itself, but incorporate new layers from the intelligentsia and middle classes in these countries.

(b) While being prepared to march alongside these forces in actions aimed at busting up the previous secret-police regimes, communists oppose all the new governments, which are anti-working-class

politically, as were the Stalinist apparatuses they are replacing.

(3) In spite of the fact that no revolutionary proletarian organizations exist in the deformed and degenerated workers' states, communist nuclei — in addition to speaking for the interests of the working class in the democratic and anti-bureaucratic struggle — put forward a communist program.

(a) They advance the perspective of the revolutionary political regeneration of the economics and politics of the workers' state.

(b) They point to the example of revolutionary Cuba and the revival of communist leadership through the extension of the world revolution.

(c) They advocate the restoration of genuine soviet democracy through institutions of struggle forged by the workers and toiling farmers in the course of their battles.

d) The popular explosions against the Stalinist regimes became inevitable in the deformed and degenerated workers' states at the point when broad layers of working people, youth, and the middle classes recog-

There is no communist, no Marxist, no proletarian political vanguard in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, or China today.

nized and began acting on the basis of the following political realities:

(1) Imperialism had been weakened enough over the postwar decades that a serious threat of invasion of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was no longer credible. Workers in Eastern Europe do not feel militarily threatened by imperialism.

(a) They have absorbed the significance for their own struggles and national sovereignty of the nuclear parity of the United States and the Soviet Union.

(b) They sense that the post-Vietnam antiwar opposition in the United States is a barrier to any sustained military invasion by Washington.

(2) The evidence became unambiguous in the 1980s that the Stalinist-dominated bureaucratically planned economies — despite earlier periods of rapid industrialization — were mired in irreversible economic stagnation and social crisis.

(a) This was not just a matter of the lack of material goods and deteriorating social welfare.

(b) The Stalinist knout could no longer force workers and peasants to produce under conditions of accelerating social inequality, bureaucratic abuse, and alienation (let alone to exercise creativity and initiative in their work).

(c) Corruption, arbitrariness, and lack of integrity in all social relations — the violence done to human culture in the broadest sense — was so deep-going that to continue living in the old way became increasingly intolerable.

(3) The Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union was less and less willing to pay the political price, abroad or at home, for militarily intervening to crush popular uprisings in the Warsaw Pact countries. Working people in the Eastern and Central European workers' states drew the lessons from:

(a) the Polish workers uprising in the 1980s, where not only did no Soviet troops intervene (as they had in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968), but where the martial law crackdown of the Polish Stalinist regime itself failed to crush the resistance; and

(b) the Soviet regime's 1989 withdrawal from Afghanistan, where the decade-long occupation had created a worsening debacle and led to intensifying social unrest within the USSR itself.

4. The events of 1989-90 are a verification of the communist prognosis that the workers' states, even those deformed from birth by Stalinist domination, would prove stronger than the bureaucratic castes.

a) The petty-bourgeois caste is not a historic ruling class.

(1) It has no historic economic role in a mode of production.

(2) This bloated layer continues to expand further and further beyond the size of an administrative bureaucracy socially necessary to the tasks of production. It blocks any motion toward establishing new social relations of production in harmony with and leading toward a new mode of production implicit in the nationalized-property foundations of the workers' states.

(3) It is a parasitic cancer weakening the workers' states and their economic foundations.

b) In contrast to the regimes of the stronger capitalist ruling classes, the Bonapartist regime is weak, brittle, and unstable. These regimes have disintegrated with startling rapidity. Their explosion began after only 60 years in the Soviet Union and even less time in Eastern and Central Europe — mere blips in social history.

(1) The bureaucracy will not give up its positions without a fight. The ruling oligarchy takes whatever measures it can to preserve bureaucratic rule and privilege, including the sacrifice of entire wings of the nomenklatura in order to salvage the rest, and the incorporation of new layers into the ruling stratum.

(2) The measures taken by these regimes have not historically stabilized them. The governments have proven to be not only regimes of crisis, but regimes of permanent crisis.

(3) Gorbachev's counterreformation, embarked upon in response to the events in Poland, and his deep-

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- ening Bonapartist course will accelerate, not resolve, the crisis in the USSR.
- c) The workers' states themselves have been shown to be enormously stronger than the castes and their police regimes.
- (1) The workers' states survive and can only be overthrown in battle with the working classes.
 - (2) "The social revolution, betrayed by the ruling party," Trotsky explained in 1936, "still exists in property relations and in the consciousness of the toiling masses." [*Revolution Betrayed*, p. 255]
 - (a) More than half a century later, the first part of this assessment remains unchanged: the proletarian property relations still exist in the Soviet Union, as well as in the other deformed workers' states.
 - (b) While the socialist consciousness of the toiling masses has been obliterated since the 1930s, and not even a nucleus of a communist vanguard exists today, bourgeois trade-union consciousness and the assumption by the working class of the right to a historically defined minimal social wage remain the first obstacle that will lead to massive struggles in the workers' states against the reimpementation of capitalism.
 - (3) A counterrevolution to overturn the workers' states and their nationalized property foundations cannot be carried out internally, but would require direct imperialist involvement to succeed and consolidate.

E. Disintegration of Stalinist parties

1. With the exception of the Communist Party of Cuba, not one Communist Party in the world is either communist or revolutionary.
2. The Stalinist parties in the deformed and degenerated workers' states are not political parties, not voluntary associations of the vanguard of a social class organized for participation in political life. They are machines for the defense and advance of the petty-bourgeois social caste.
 - a) They are not "conservative" or "bureaucratic" workers' parties, but instead a "job trust" of the privileged middle-class layers in the bureaucratic apparatuses of the state, economic enterprises, trade unions, the party itself, writers' associations, and other institutions.
 - b) The disintegration of these apparatuses in 1989 and 1990 has been rapid and explosive.
 - (1) The Communist Party has already been mortally wounded in the Soviet Union.
 - (a) Gorbachev's Bonapartist moves have elevated the state apparatus and posts over party structures.
 - (b) The Communist Party has been swept from dominant positions in the Baltic states and seriously weakened in other republics.



Mikhail Gorbachev. Ruling oligarchy will not give up positions without fight. It is willing to sacrifice entire wings of nomenklatura in order to salvage the rest.

- (2) The Communist Party, or its renamed successor, has lost its monopoly control of the regimes in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany. The CP has been formally dissolved in Romania, and is coming apart along national lines in Yugoslavia.
- (3) Party apparatuses throughout Eastern Europe have lost material resources, land, buildings, their press monopoly, and so on. Most have dropped the word "Communist" from their names and are attempting to take on vaguely Social Democratic or more explicitly nationalist trappings.
- (4) These CPs have lost massive numbers of members over the past year, as:
 - (a) membership has become an impediment rather than a ladder to individual social and economic advancement; and
 - (b) the apparatus's leverage to coerce other layers of the population to retain membership has broken down.

F. Ours is the epoch of world revolution; the dictatorship of the proletariat has proven stronger than counterrevolutionary Stalinism

1. The growing vulnerability of the international capitalist system and shattering of illusions in the stability and longevity of the counterrevolutionary Stalinist apparatuses underline the character of the epoch in which we are living in the closing decade of the 20th century.
2. This is the epoch of the world revolution: the epoch opened by the Bolshevik-led October 1917 revolution and its international extension, not the epoch of its degeneration and demise.
 - a) It remains the epoch of the establishment of the first dictatorship of the proletariat under communist leadership, the epoch of those workers and exploited farmers who:
 - (1) made or sought to emulate the October revolution;
 - (2) opened the struggle for national liberation and socialist revolution as a worldwide fight; and
 - (3) made possible the forging of the Communist International — the first truly world revolutionary leadership — under a proletarian banner.
 - b) The task today remains to organize the world's toilers to move forward to the completion of the revolutionary overthrow of imperialism and the victory of the socialist revolution the world over.
3. 1990 is not, as most "opinion makers" would have it, the opening of the decade of the triumph of capitalism and bourgeois democracy, socialism having proven to be economically unworkable and politically totalitarian.
 - a) The irreversible crisis of the regimes of the parasitic castes explodes the myth — originating in the mid-1930s and widely held in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois circles since then — that the Stalinist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union gave rise to a new stable

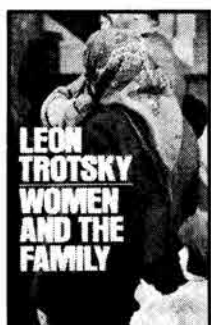
historic form of production and oppression.

- (1) Proponents of variants of this view have often presented the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union, and later those in Eastern and Central Europe, as virtually impregnable: a new, centuries-long social system based on unremitting repression.
- (2) Some predicted its gradual convergence with an increasingly totalitarian world capitalist system — both based on growing domination by small elites over toiling populations more and more marked by their depoliticization, mediocrity, consumerism, and cultural philistinism.
- b) Nor is the world heading into an era marked by permanent, expanding, and perfecting bourgeois democracy.
 - (1) The openly bourgeois presentation of this claim — trumpeted loudly over the past year — is a rationalization for intensifying capitalist exploitation and oppression of working people the world over. In fact, mounting worker and farmer resistance to the consequences of the operations of capitalism will be met by the rulers with increased assaults on democratic rights and political space in the coming decade.
 - (2) A radical petty-bourgeois version of this scenario became prominently associated in the second half of the 1980s with spokespersons for the dominant leadership of the FSLN in Nicaragua, as well as by those who look to them elsewhere in the Americas and worldwide.
 - (a) They have presented the Nicaraguan revolution as a "third road" between capitalism and communism — a third road that could obtain social reorganization and economic development by avoiding, not leading, the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat.
 - (b) This middle way has been justified by the prognosis that the world — both "East" and "West" — is heading into a period of broader democracy, the humanization of foreign policy based on détente and eased international tensions, and a convergence through the "mixed economy" of market socialism with a more humane capitalism.
 - (c) "Sandinista" Nicaragua was portrayed as being in the vanguard of all these trends, standing against conservative and recalcitrant forces both in the "imperialist camp" (Reaganism as opposed to the Rainbow Coalition) and the "socialist camp" (Cuba's rectification process vs. Gorbachev's more "enlightened" perestroika and glasnost).

The exploiters have not been able to resolve the growing stagnation and vulnerability of world capitalism.

- (d) The defeat in Nicaragua deals a blow to this ideology in the workers movement. It is a petty-bourgeois ideology — anti-working-class and anti-Marxist at its core — whose thrust is to demand backing from the toilers to make "everything better," not to organize and mobilize the workers and farmers to advance the social revolution and build a revolutionary party.
- c) The course of the past seven decades, reaffirmed by the events of the past year, also belie the Stalinists' claim that this is the epoch of "peaceful coexistence," "peaceful competition between social systems," the bureaucratic construction of "socialism in one country," or — more recently — the spread of "universal human values."
 - (1) It is not true that revolutionary struggle by the workers and peasants against imperialism increases the danger of war.
 - (2) Advances in the world struggle for national liberation and socialism push back and weaken imperialism, including its political capacity to make war.
 - (3) While Washington continues to rely on the Stalinist regimes as a counterrevolutionary buffer against the conquest of power by the world's toilers, the Soviet government under Gorbachev is in its weakest position since the rise of Stalin to throw up obstacles to revolutionary anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggles.
- d) It is also not true, as claimed by many bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political forces (both in the imperialist countries and in the workers' states themselves), that the breakdown of the Stalinist regimes opens a new era of "democracy" in Eastern and Central Europe.
 - (1) Either the working-class in the deformed workers' states will — through more or less protracted struggles — produce a communist vanguard that can lead

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the popular masses in winning the fight to establish soviet democracy, workers' and peasants' democracy; or capitalism will eventually be reimposed in blood at the hands of imperialist aggressors aided by domestic counterrevolution.

- (2) There is no possibility of a stable, classless "democracy" in the deformed and degenerated workers' states serving the needs and interests of "the whole people."

4. It is imperialism that has suffered the greatest blows from the accelerating crisis of the Stalinist regimes, which have served as its most reliable instrument for the transmission of capitalist values into the workers' states and more broadly into the international workers' movement.

The world in the making will see more Malcolm X's, more Maurice Bishops, more Che Guevaras.

a) Despite the barbarities of imperialism in this century — from Hiroshima to the Nazi death camps to the saturation bombing of Vietnam — and despite the mass slaughter of working people and their vanguards by the international Stalinist murder machine, neither the exploiting classes nor their Stalinist collaborators have stopped the workers and peasants from rebounding and continuing the fight for their rights and a decent life.

(1) If workers and farmers are unable to resolve the capitalist-caused crisis facing humanity, and to defend the mighty conquests of our class since October 1917, then imperialism will impose bloody defeats through fascism and war. While victory for the workers and exploited farmers depends on the construction of communist leadership, the direction of twentieth century history has been toward weakening the hold of the world's final empire, the imperialist system of exploitation and oppression.

(2) The exploiters have not been able to resolve the growing stagnation and vulnerability of the world capitalist system; impose crushing defeats on the working people and labor movements of a single imperialist country; overcome the political obstacles to their capacity to carry out sustained wars; prevent rebellions and fights for liberation by workers and peasants of the colonial and semicolonial world; or, since 1917, restore capitalist property relations to a single one of the countries where it has been overturned.

(3) The revolutionary internationalism of the Cuban government and Communist Party and the deepening ANC-led struggle to bring down the apartheid regime represent the wave of the future — marked by class struggles, popular revolutions, national liberation movements, and civil wars — not the last vestiges of a bygone era.

b) The advances registered by the toilers of Eastern and

Central Europe in 1989-90 against oppressive Stalinist regimes have already begun to bring fighting humanity closer together.

(1) In the most immediate sense, the walls between struggles by working people in the Eastern European workers' states and capitalist Western Europe have begun to crumble.

(a) This tendency has already developed the furthest in the intertwining of the prospects and struggles of workers in East and West Germany.

(b) A similar logic could be seen in the explosive struggle in Soviet Azerbaijan, which drew toilers from the USSR, Iran, and Turkey toward a common struggle.

(2) The possibility is opening for workers and farmers in Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union to be brought into the world revolution; to learn about, solidarize, and link up with fighting workers and farmers in Europe, North America, and throughout the imperialist world, as well as with revolutionary struggles from South Africa to Cuba and worldwide.

(3) The course, direction, and outcome of the battles that have opened in the deformed and degenerated workers' states depend on their interlinkage with developments in the world class struggle, and vice versa.

c) The drawing together of struggles by working people the world over opens the way toward winning more and more revolutionists to become communists, toward rebuilding proletarian leadership and an interna-

tional communist movement.

(1) The world in the making will see more Malcolm Xs, more Maurice Bishops, more Thomas Sankaras, more Nelson Mandelas, more Che Guevaras.

(a) They will continue to be thrust forward through struggle toward the renewal of communist leadership.

(b) They will more and more recognize communism as the opposite of Stalinism and Social Democracy, as a road toward overthrowing world capitalism, not accommodating with it.

(c) They will more and more be seen by vanguard workers in all countries as part of the leadership of a common world struggle.

(2) With the breakdown of the massive Stalinist obstacles to politicization of toilers in the deformed and degenerated workers' states, prospects are opened there — for the first time in many decades — for layers of them to begin being influenced and inspired by the example and by the writings and speeches of these and other revolutionary and communist leaders.

d) Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, and Guevara were not visionaries. They were revolutionary fighters, as well as scientists who generalized the hard-learned experiences along the only road forward for the workers of the world: the road toward the dictatorship of the proletariat, opening the transition to socialism and the communist future of humanity.



Che Guevara participating in volunteer labor in early years of Cuban revolution. Drawing together of struggles by working people around world opens door to more revolutionists becoming communists.

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Why U.S. imperialism lost the cold war

Introduction

The following excerpt is from the article, published in *New Internationalist* no. 7, "The working-class campaign against imperialism and war," by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The article is based on talks given by Barnes in Washington, D.C., on November 17, 1990, and in New York City on December 1.

The talks were presented as the U.S. government and its allies headed toward a full-scale assault against the Iraqi people.

As the imperialists amassed hundreds of thousands of troops in the Arab-Persian Gulf and put in place a massive arsenal, members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance went on a campaign to tell the truth about the war moves and to build antiwar actions.

As part of the preparation of working-class fighters and communists, Barnes explained that the coming war stemmed from the weakness of imperialism. The war would not solve the imperialists' problems, he said. Instead it would make them worse.

"Only with a clear understanding of the U.S. rulers' objectives and problems can communists maintain an independent and steady working-class campaign against the growing danger of a war being organized by Washington," Barnes said at that time.

One of the problems the imperialists faced, and still face today, is the crisis in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The following comments were made in response to a question raised during the discussion period.

The full article was first published in the December, 1990, edition of *International Socialist Review*, a supplement to the *Militant*. Thousands of copies were sold leading up to and during the war. Reprinted by permission. Copyright © 1991, 408 Printing and Publishing.

Jack Barnes

That brings us to the second part of the question: Didn't U.S. imperialism win the so-called Cold War?

The answer is no. Week after week, month after month, the evidence keeps getting stronger.

At the end of November 1990 a conference was held in France of the heads of state of the United States, Canada, and thirty-two European countries — including imperialist powers, all the Eastern European governments (except Albania, but they'll be there soon), and the Soviet Union. With great ballyhoo they signed a "Charter of Paris for a New Europe." These thirty-four strokes of the pen, we are told, put a formal end to the Cold War — and, I guess, opened the prospects for a "new world order" (although that term is less popular in Europe, where it has some bad echoes

from the 1930s and early '40s).

But the truth is, what's shaping up in Europe for the capitalist ruling classes is a debacle, not a new order. As recently as several months ago it was common to hear on television and to read in the financial pages of major newspapers, or in magazines like *Business Week*, the *Economist* of London, and *Newsweek*, how the West German capitalists were on their way to becoming the world's dominant economic power as a result of the unification with East Germany. This was supposed to give a united Germany a big investment and trading edge with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This was going to be a way forward for world capitalism, a powerful locomotive of sustained growth.

Today, however, the hosannas are fading. The German and other Western European ruling classes are looking at Eastern Europe as if it's a massive brood of poor relations who've dropped in to visit and overstayed their welcome. And this is not just a manner of speaking; it's literally true. Today, the preoccupation of the capitalist rulers throughout Western Europe — who supposedly won the Cold War a year ago — is how to forestall massive migrations of working people from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe seeking to flee the rapidly deteriorating economic and social conditions there.

In place of the Berlin Wall that was knocked down a little over a year ago — an act supposedly symbolizing the "new

Continued on next page

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world order" — capitalist governments are today talking about erecting a new political wall dividing Western Europe from everything to its east. The aim of this new wall — consisting of immigration restrictions enforced by border cops, roundups, and deportations — is to prevent freedom of travel, freedom to look for jobs, freedom to live and work where you choose. To prevent the very freedoms promised to working people just a few months ago. (The appearance in what was previously West Berlin of T-shirts with the cynical and reactionary message, "Bring back my wall," is an omen of these coming restrictions.)

It is now clear, as communists have recognized from the outset, that no stable regime has been or will be established soon anywhere in Eastern Europe or in the Soviet Union itself. The remnants of the ruling bureaucratic castes, and those privileged layers who to a greater or lesser extent have supplanted (or incorporated) them at top governmental levels in some countries, will seek to maintain whatever degree of centralized power they need to keep themselves in command. They will maintain strong police, military, and semimilitary forces to preserve their power in the face of growing economic, social, and political instability.

These regimes and the privileged personnel who administer them continue to bank everything on their hopes of being integrated more and more into the world capitalist system. They have no other plan for a way out of the economic and social crisis in these countries.

At the same time, none of these countries is any closer today than they were a year ago to reestablishing stable capitalist property relations in the basic means of industrial production and wholesale trade, or to winning acceptance of the social relations of production that must accompany them. The very efforts of the ruling groups to maintain themselves in power, and to ensure their continuing access to the comforts made possible by the labor of workers and farmers, creates constant obstacles to achieving the conditions necessary for the restoration of capitalism.

Most decisively, the working class itself in these countries will have to be fought and defeated before the capitalist system can be reimposed. One of the first major strikes of workers in what was formerly East Germany broke out recently. It was a strike of railway workers protesting massive layoffs planned by the government and demanding wage parity with railway workers in the western part of the country. The determination of the regime of Chancellor Helmut Kohl to make German workers pay for the fiasco in that country will not meet with ready acceptance either. There have been strikes, farmers' demonstrations, and other protests in Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and elsewhere, as the privileged ruling layers seek to make working people bear the brunt of the crisis and of the increasing reliance by these regimes on capitalist market methods.

Accelerating disintegration of Soviet Union

The crisis in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics continues to accelerate, including the pace of the disintegration of the so-called Soviet Union itself. The USSR hasn't been soviet nor heading toward socialism for decades. It hasn't been a workers' republic since the late 1920s either. Now it threatens to cease being a union as well. In fact, it may be the most misnamed country in the world.

The communist course of the Bolshevik leadership in the opening years of the Soviet republic — a course that guaranteed the right of national self-determination to the oppressed peasants and workers in the tsarist prison house of nations — was reversed by the Stalinist counterrevolution in the late 1920s and '30s. A new prison house of nations was erected by the Stalinists, not only in the Soviet Union but to a greater or lesser degree within each of the Eastern European workers' states as well. Today that involuntary "union" is coming apart.

The economic and social crisis in the Soviet Union is worsening as well. Shortages of food and other basic necessities are growing more acute. Demonstrations and defensive strikes continue to occur to protest the devastating consequences on working people of this downward spiral.

In the face of this mounting instability, we should be prepared for the Gorbachev regime to deepen its Bonapartist course and to lash out with increasing violence and repression against resistance by workers and farmers.

Gorbachev has already unleashed murderous assaults on oppressed nationalities, so far almost entirely against those in non-European parts of the Soviet Union such as Azerbaijan. The central government has also used economic sabotage and blackmail against the national aspirations of the peoples of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Most recently, under the cover of populist demagoguery against price-gougers and profiteers, Gorbachev has set the stage to legitimize the organization and unleashing of paramilitary thugs against food protests, strikers, or others who can be labeled as "economic saboteurs." He has prepared the way for more aggressive use of the militarized police units.

How long Gorbachev himself will be able to survive this deepening social and political crisis, however, is still to be determined. It's hard not to believe that late at night Saddam Hussein doesn't get satisfaction out of thinking that even with his own prospects, he may well outlast the treacherous

Gorbachev.

It's not only Gorbachev and the Stalinists who decry this outbreak of demands for national self-determination in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. The editorial writers for the *New York Times* and many other ruling-class mouthpieces have also warned of the destabilizing consequences for the world capitalist system of a breakup of the Soviet Union and the nationalist forces that this development could accelerate elsewhere in the world. A few days ago, *New York Times* senior columnist Flora Lewis wrote an article under the headline, "The Bane of Nations." Speaking of the "new partition threatening Europe," Lewis cited approvingly the warning of an unnamed high-ranking "Western leader" against "the risk of a new 'fragmented Europe of tribal states.'"

But growing demands for national rights are inevitable today. They are the consequence of what capitalism and imperialism have wrought over the past century. They are the consequence of what the Stalinists carried out by reversing in blood the Bolsheviks' efforts to forge greater internationalist unity among toilers of all nations and nationalities through an uncompromising fight against national chauvinism and oppression.

Capitalism and the imperialist system reproduce and deepen economic and social inequalities among peoples of different regions, nationalities, skin colors, languages, and so on — more sharply than ever during periods of economic crisis and decline such as today. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and of the regimes in Eastern Europe inevitably lead to an explosion of national demands by peoples long oppressed by more powerful nations.

There will be an upsurge of the demand for national rights as the old world order continues to come apart. It's important for the communist movement to stick strongly to what we've said many times before: that the national question will not diminish in today's world but will increase; and that the uncompromising championing of the right to national self-determination of oppressed nations and nationalities is a precondition for any successful revolutionary advance toward socialism and proletarian internationalism.

This right must be assured not only to those who are a nation in the economic and social sense. It must also be guaranteed to all those driven down by capitalism and imperialism who, through struggle against that oppression, come to recognize themselves as a people or a nationality. Certainly that is one of the lessons learned from Lenin and the Bolsheviks that was reinforced by the Nicaraguan revolution and the central place in it of the autonomy process among the Black and Indian peoples of the Atlantic Coast.

Regimes of permanent crisis

What exists throughout Eastern Europe, and in the Soviet Union itself to an accelerating degree, are regimes of permanent crisis, with a disintegrative aspect to all of them. Far from being a boon to the imperialist economies, this threatens to place new economic pressure and strains on the world capitalist system.

So the answer is no: the imperialist ruling classes of the

United States and Europe did not emerge as the victors from the Cold War. In fact, they have suffered a historic defeat with the ongoing disintegration of the Stalinist parties and weakening of these bureaucratic regimes. This is the case because this process was not accompanied by a decisive defeat of the workers; by the "appearance" of capitalist property relations; or by an increase in the number of revolutionary-minded workers who look to the Soviet regime and thus can be politically misled by it. Just the opposite has occurred.

The Cold War was imposed on the imperialists in the years following World War II by their inability — due to the international relationship of forces — to carry out by means of a hot war, a shooting war, their goal of restoring capitalism in the Soviet Union and other countries where it

None of these countries is any closer today than they were a year ago to reestablishing stable capitalist property relations.

had been overturned. They were not strong enough to do so right on the heels of World War II, in part because of organized resistance by U.S. GIs to being used as cannon fodder in China or Eastern Europe rather than being demobilized and sent home.

The U.S. rulers' failure to achieve their aims in the 1950-53 Korean War was another relatively early test of the limits on what Washington could accomplish through direct military might. Rather than rolling back the overturn of capitalist property relations, the war actually accelerated the deepening of the anticapitalist revolution both in Korea and in China.

So during what came to be called the Cold War, the U.S. rulers had a standoff with the privileged castes in the Soviet, Eastern European, and Chinese workers' states. The capitalist ruling classes watched the Stalinist regimes break the revolutionary continuity of the workers' movement in those countries, demobilize and demoralize working people, turn them away from internationalism, and isolate them from struggles by workers and peasants around the world. This was deeply in the interests of the imperialists.

The counterrevolutionary castes sought stable relations with imperialism. They aided revolutionary struggles against imperialism and capitalist rule only to the degree necessary for their own defense and diplomatic leverage. In fact, Stalinist political corruption and miseducation — the Soviet Union's universal export, the "invisible goods" that came along with the aid — became the biggest obstacle throughout the world to forging revolutionary leaderships capable of organizing workers and farmers to defeat their class enemies and carry through to the end the uprooting of imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation.

Throughout this period, Washington and its allies continued to wage hot wars, launch armed aggression, and organize mercenary armies throughout the Third World — in Korea, Vietnam, Algeria, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, to name just a few well-known examples. Meanwhile, they hoped that what became known as the Cold War — that is, the pressure exerted on the workers' states through the transmission belt of the bureaucratic castes — would weaken these states sufficiently that they could at some point in the indefinite future be toppled militarily and capitalism restored by force of arms.

As we've seen over the past year, however, that's not how things turned out. The brutally repressive regimes that had blocked the workers and farmers of these countries from entering into politics and acting in their own class interests are crumbling. The regimes that have replaced them are in irresolvable crisis. And the imperialists have no prospect of restoring a stable capitalism, or even reasonable social equilibrium, without a fight against the toilers — a fight whose consequences they cannot foresee.

The crisis will deepen in all these countries. It will get worse. The assaults on the living standards, on what workers and farmers in these countries have come to recognize as social rights, will intensify.

But working people will resist these attacks. And through these defensive battles workers in these countries will find ways to link up with fights by other workers, not only elsewhere in Europe but around the world — an opportunity they were denied for half a century by these regimes.

Permanent crisis and instability, mounting struggles by workers and farmers — that is what will mark the months and years ahead in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The outcome, like everywhere else in the world, will be determined in struggle.

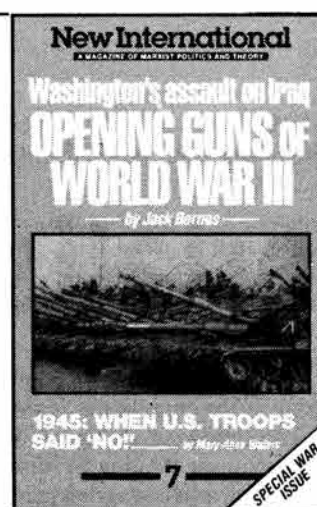
Moreover, the Stalinist misleaders — not only in these countries but in the imperialist countries and throughout the Third World — are less able than ever before to disorient and betray revolutionary workers who look to them under the illusion that their policies point the road out of oppression and exploitation and toward socialism.

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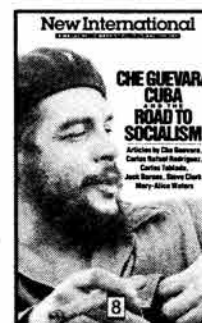


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Thousands rally in Wichita protest

Continued from front page

resisted mobilizing any public response to the rightist street actions.

"Keep your laws off my body," read one sign in the enthusiastic crowd. Many held homemade signs protesting the rightist mobilization against the clinic.

A large number of participants were young; many saw the protest as an important response because few such counter-demonstrations had been held in the city.

"The people of the Soviet Union defended their freedom with their lives and their bodies against tanks, with Yeltsin. And we're going to go toe-to-toe with these bullies," Patricia Ireland said of the rightists.

"We won't go back, we're going to keep saying it in the streets, in the courts, in Congress and in the voting booth," she continued.

"From Washington, D.C., our hearts have been with you... Dr. Tiller, Judge Kelly, you're our heroes," said Kate Michelman of the director of one of the embattled Wichita clinics and the federal judge who has ordered the rightists to stop blocking entrance to the clinics.

Many in the crowd chanted "impeach Joan Finney," referring to the Governor of Kansas who has spoken in support of Operation Rescue. "When officials we elect side with terrorists, we must hold them accountable," Michelman added.

Eleanor Smeal said that Operation Rescue is a "pathetic little footnote in history... and the feminist movement is the strongest social movement for justice in the world today."

"We are grateful for Judge Kelly and the federal marshals, but if there were no judges or marshals, we alone would stand here," she said. "We are not some pathetic bunch of people, but an abused majority."

"Everywhere I've been, people wish they were in Wichita. The next time we go to Tiller's clinic let's make it so that they have no place to stand," Smeal said to a standing ovation and applause.

Peggy Jarman, PCAL's main spokesperson, urged abortion rights activists to not confront the rightists. "I think everybody



Part of pro-choice rally of 5,000 in Wichita.

Militant/Sam Kolis

has a job to do, and the police and marshals need to do their jobs."

At the same time as the pro-choice rally was taking place a "Rural America Speaks Out for Life" tractorcade was held nearby. About 300 farm trucks, tractors, cars, and vans drove throughout the city blocking traffic. Many in the tractorcade were small farmers from Kansas.

Forces backing the ultra-rightist mobilization held a "Hope for the Heartland" rally at the football stadium at Wichita State University on August 25. Some 25,000 attended.

The rally began with the singing of the national anthem and a prayer. Speakers included nationally known religious and political leaders; Pat Robertson, who ran for

the Republican nomination for President in 1988 and is founder of the Christian Television Network; Bishop Eugene Gerber; and Joseph Scheidler, executive director of the Pro-life Action League.

Nineteen organizations including Physicians for Life, Pro-life Action Network, Wichita Area Pro-life Clergy, Concerned

Women for America, and American Family Association organized the event.

"August is the month when oppression collapsed in the Soviet Union," Pat Robertson said. "August is also the month when a federal judge was able to suppress brutally the constitutional rights of innocent children and those who would protect their lives."

Referring to the over 2,600 rightists arrested for blockading the clinics, he said they were "not lawbreakers or criminals" but heroes.

Robertson spoke on a common theme developed by the rightists that they are the abolitionist movement of today. He compared the Dred Scott decision, which declared that slaves were property, to the 1973 Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. "The unborn child has no right, and is property that a woman might kill at her pleasure," he said.

Robertson explained that the greed of the slaveowners led to a "bloody civil war" and could happen again if *Roe v. Wade* is not overturned.

Several local leaders addressed the rally, including Pastor Lincoln Montgomery who leads the largest Black congregation in Wichita.

The organizers of the "Hope for the Heartland" rally announced plans to continue their rallies here. These have been held every night for the last 30 days and have regularly drawn 500 people. Many who attend are working people from the area.

They said they plan to make "Wichita the first abortion-free city in America, then Kansas and America."

Intensive 'Militant' sales by supporters in Wichita

BY MARY ZINS AND CHRIS REMPLE

WICHITA — In response to the rightist offensive on abortion clinics here, supporters of the *Militant* from around the country mounted an intensive sales effort in the Wichita area beginning August 16.

Members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) from New York, railworkers from Chicago and Salt Lake City, oil workers from Houston, a laid-off coal miner from St. Louis, members of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) and Socialist Workers Party, and others engaged in lively discussions with students and working people, selling hundreds of copies of the weekly socialist paper. The team also helped get out the word about the August 24 mobilization to support abortion rights and condemn the rightists' assault.

Most workers and students in the area support the right to abortion. An even bigger majority oppose Operation Rescue, the right-wing outfit organizing the street mobilizations at the clinics.

On August 19, 27 workers at the IAM-organized Boeing plant bought copies of the *Militant*. Hundreds more eagerly took copies of a statement issued by the YSA urging support for the August 24 "Rally for Choice."

As word spread about the *Militant*'s support of a woman's right to abortion, several workers returned to buy a paper. Others refused to take the YSA statement. "I'm on the other side," one said.

Between August 17 and 23 the team sold 21 12-week subscriptions to the *Militant*, two copies of *Perspectiva Mundial*, and one copy of *L'Internationaliste*.

A young woman from Wichita State University (WSU) told team member Kathleen she felt "frustrated because nobody is doing anything" in response to the rightist assault. She subscribed to the *Militant* and said she would cancel her plans to go out of town for the weekend in order to attend the demonstration.

The 35,000-student campus was in the midst of registration and many expressed a similar sentiment. Students purchased 152 *Militants* and 8 subscriptions. Several bought 2 copies in order to give one to a friend.

The month-long assault on the abortion

clinics has resulted in a sharp polarization here. One young worker at the Beech Aircraft plant wore the red ribbons that signify support for Operation Rescue. He stated that he had started going to their nightly rallies and was "learning a lot," although he did not plan to be a part of the assaults on the clinics. Since becoming interested in the right-wing operation, he has begun to rethink his earlier opposition to the U.S.-led war against Iraq.

A middle-aged woman in a racially mixed neighborhood responded angrily to Willie Mae Reid, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Houston. At the gate to her yard the woman told Reid to "get off my property."

'Glad you're here'

Many more workers though, thanked salespeople for bringing the *Militant*. A worker at the Vulcan Chemical plant said, "I'm glad there is finally someone pro-choice out here." One new subscriber told a team member, "It makes me mad that anybody would tell me what to do with my body. They've gone too far."

The team sold 120 *Militants* and one subscription at various plant gates.

An IAM member who subscribed took leaflets to distribute at her plant. A student at WSU said the rightist offensive "isn't just about abortion. There's something wrong with this country. I think it goes back to the Indians and slavery. That was all for money, just like today."

The *Militant* is becoming a real part of the political discussion in the city. When the team returned to the Boeing plant August 21, and then again two days later, workers bought 42 copies of the paper and one subscription. Several who had bought the paper said they would be at the August 24 rally. "The *Militant*!" a packinghouse worker told the plant gate team at Ohse Meat Products. "I got that paper last night. You came by my house."

"I'll buy that paper because it's pro-choice," an older worker at the Cessna aircraft plant told YSA national chairperson Estelle Debates. "I'm prochoice and I guess I'm a little militant too. So it sounds like a good paper to me."

One hundred attend socialists' open house following pro-choice action

BY MICHELLE ALLEN

WICHITA, Kansas—One hundred people attended an open house sponsored by the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party following the August 24 mobilization in support of abortion rights here. Workers, students, and farmers interested in hearing the socialists' view on the right wing's assault on Wichita and developments in the world class struggle turned out for the event.

YSA National Chairperson Estelle DeBates opened the meeting. "Today, as well as for the past week, several members of the YSA and SWP have been selling the *Militant* and building today's action. We're here because we're fighting organizations who go where the action is."

The open house featured SWP National Committee member Kate Kaku; Al Duncan,

SWP candidate for State Assembly in the 28th District in Newark, New Jersey; Kevin Dwire from the Mark Curtis Defense Committee in Des Moines, Iowa; and Michelle Allen, a YSA member from Omaha, Nebraska.

Kaku explained the stakes involved in fighting the ultrarightist assault. "We can't vote Operation Rescue out of Wichita; we can't rely on the courts, the cops, the government. As always, we can rely only on ourselves to defend our rights. Rights like abortion were won through struggle on the streets in mass action and that's how they'll be defended."

SWP candidate Al Duncan said he didn't come to Wichita "to get votes. I came because this is the central fight in U.S. politics today. I'm going to take back what I've learned here and explain to my coworkers, those fighting against police brutality, and others that to advance our fight in New Jersey we must help defeat the right-wing offensive in Wichita."

Several young people responded to an appeal to join the YSA.

Four new members signed up at the open house. Cindy, from Lincoln, Nebraska, came to the rally with YSA members from Omaha. "I see the YSA as a vehicle toward liberation," she said of the revolutionary youth organization.

"It is time to take a stand against political tyrants and corporate dictatorship," said Chris, a Wichita State University (WSU) student. Chris and his friend Robert met the Mark Curtis Defense Committee at the rally and immediately helped staff its table. They both joined the YSA at the open house, along with another WSU student, Shaun.

Cynthia, a 17-year-old clinic supporter, had joined the YSA the previous week after meeting a YSA member at the clinic. After the open house, she stated, "This is the best day of my life. We're going to have a YSA chapter in Wichita!"

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Freedom and Justice for the Puerto Rico Hartford 15. Demonstration and Rally. Fri., Aug. 30. March to Betances Park (South Green), 4:30 p.m. Rally at Federal Court Building, 450 Main Street, 6 p.m. Tel: (203) 296-3963.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Grand Opening: New Atlanta Pathfinder Bookstore. Sat., Sept. 7. Report back and discussion on Solidarity Day II march. 172 Trinity Ave. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Rally and Demonstration. "Defend Abortion Rights. Stop the Gag Rule." Sept. 7, noon. 8 S. Michigan Ave. Sponsor: Emergency Clinic Defense Coalition.

Ultrarightist offensive in Wichita targets abortion and broad rights

Group's aggressive street mobilizations threat to working people

BY KATE KAKU
AND JOHN STUDER

WICHITA, Kansas — Shortly after noon on August 20, 200 rightists stormed the Women's Health Care Services clinic here run by Dr. George Tiller. After a few rightists blocked the car of a woman seeking treatment at the clinic, dozens then leapt over the gate and metal fence surrounding the medical facility. Hundreds more barricaded the entrance.

To get over the gate, the rightists broke through a line of Wichita cops and U.S. marshals. The charge was stopped by authorities before the mob broke into the clinic.

The assault was launched after five hours of speeches, singing, and praying designed to whip the crowd into a frenzy.

This is the latest move by some of the thousands of ultrarightist cadres from across the country who descended on Wichita to lay siege to democratic rights through aggressive action in the streets. The operation, called "A Summer of Mercy," is directed against three clinics that perform abortions and is being led by a group called Operation Rescue.

Some 2,400 rightists have been arrested since the siege of the clinics began July 15. Many have been arrested more than once.

Rightists and the media portray what is happening in Wichita today as a battle limited to abortion rights. While aimed at intimidating women from exercising their right to choose abortion, the rightists are flexing their muscles against working people as a whole and testing the relationship of forces. They seek to use blows dealt here as a lever for a wider attack on the civil rights, broader democratic rights, political space and other social gains won in struggle by working people.

Both the statements and actions of the rightists show the character of their offensive, the broader aims and objectives of the assault, and why the labor movement and its allies need to mount a countermobilization against this threat.

"George Tiller and men like him in this country are going to be cut down," said Operation Rescue leader Phillip Vollman, exhorting the crowd outside Tiller's medical office. "No clinic staff can stop it. I'm telling the marshals and judges — get out now before it's too late. We are responding to a higher law than the laws of man. People in this nation are going to rise up. George Tiller, your days are numbered. Your family is in danger."

Two weeks earlier Vollman had said of the street confrontations: "If you think this is going to go away, you're mistaken. It's going to increase, it's going to get worse. We will not be denied."

"The operation includes intervening directly on behalf of preborn children and their mothers, to create social tension and social change," Operation Rescue National Secretary Keith Tucci said when launching the attacks. He added that the operation is "undaunted by court actions. A rescue is not a protest. We rescue babies. We're doing it to rescue mothers and fathers and babies from what a mother is about to do. We think we have a biblical mandate."

Discussing the campaign, another Operation Rescue leader told the *Wichita Eagle*, "Violent action has taken place in cases where there were lower stakes."

Rod Aguillard, a Baptist minister from Reserve, Louisiana, said the actions are justified because "you don't win a defensive war."

Speaking in the name of "Christianity" and "American values" these forces say their "mission" places them above the law. Operation Rescue leaders have followed up their threats with violent attacks and mob action.

"The violence that they show against women is horrendous," Peggy Jarman, spokeswoman for Tiller and leader of the Pro-Choice League (PCAL), said in an interview. "They use psychological terror tactics and they are pros at it."

After the storming of the clinic, Jarman was followed home by a carload of thugs. Jarman added that a week ago rock salt was poured over her lawn.

Vicki Shingleton, a precinct committee-

woman for the Democratic Party and a volunteer clinic escort, added that she had been pushed against the wall, breaking three of her ribs, when rightists attempted to bust into a clinic August 17.

After the storming of Tiller's clinic, Shingleton was also followed. Rightists chased her into her home, breaking her front door, screaming, "Save the babies!" They left when she called the cops.

On July 17 rightists stormed an evening service at the church Tiller belongs to and took over the service. One rightist grabbed the church organist's hands to stop her from playing while others denounced the worshippers. The rightists left before the police arrived.

Death threats

After repeated efforts by Operation Rescue to physically prevent women from getting treatment at the clinics, Federal Judge Patrick Kelly handed down an injunction to keep the clinic gates open. Kelly and his wife were then physically confronted on their

education." Terry supports home schooling and opposes homosexuality and all forms of birth control.

Terry told a July 21 Operation Rescue rally that if he were U.S. president he would "spend more time saving American babies than Moslem Kuwaitis."

Few Blacks and Latinos are seen in Operation Rescue's actions. "I know you don't see a lot of Black people out here now," one Operation Rescue participant acknowledged. "But we extend our hand to everyone. We love them, too."

On July 27, a Black woman walked out of a Wichita clinic and was confronted by the rightists.

"Even back on the plantation, the masters let you people live," one white woman shouted in her face. "Even massa let you live."

The rightists are overwhelmingly middle class in composition. Steve Brunk, who said he was "in it for the long haul and extremely committed," described himself as a real estate

said he was with the National Caucus of Labor Committees, a fascist-like group led by Lyndon LaRouche. Major said that the LaRouchites are recruiting to their own anti-abortion action group, the Club of Life.

The real character of the siege of Wichita is the subject of political debate. In a July 24 editorial, the daily *Wichita Eagle*, which says it opposes Operation Rescue, wrote that the group's actions are "in the grand tradition of civil disobedience and non-violent resistance that is the cornerstone of peaceful change."

"Those who condemn the presence in Wichita of 'out-of-state agitators,' however, should remember it was 'out-of-state agitators' who provided much of the support for Dr. King," the paper's editors wrote.

"There is something noble, then, about the willingness of the Operation Rescue protesters to suffer for their beliefs, to put their very lives on the line if necessary," the editorial added. "In the process, they hope to change the world, and in some ways they are doing just that."

'A thug for Jesus'

A counterposed view was advanced by *Eagle* editorial writer Randy Brown in a column entitled, "The tinpot terrorist named Randall Terry."

"You have seen his efforts compared to the works of Martin Luther King, Jr., and perhaps Gandhi," Brown wrote. "That's buffalo bagels."

"He's a thug for Jesus, and that can be the worst kind."

"He's on a mission from God. For him there is no law and no reason, there is only his version of the truth," the type of conviction that has produced "countless bullies, despots, cutthroats and villains, from the Crusades to the conquistadores to the Ku Klux Klan."

"Millions of people have been tortured, raped and murdered by folks on a mission from God."

This view is echoed by Lee Harrison, a Black clinic escort volunteer from Kansas City, who said, "I was born in Mississippi, and if these people had it their way, I'd still be out in the cotton field."

Not like Selma

"They compare this to Selma, but they're not being trampled by horses and shot up by cops. Cops treat them with kid gloves, there's no comparison," Harrison said. "All they are are Klansmen without the sheets. I grew up with people like this and they can't tell me how to live and how to think."

The *Eagle* and other media insist on describing the rightists as "protesters." After reviewing videotapes of dozens of arrests, and listening to dozens of explanations from Operation Rescue personnel declaring themselves above the law, Federal Judge Kelly told the *Eagle* that he considers them "out-laws," and said, "I don't refer to these people anymore as protesters."

The fight to destroy Tiller's medical clinics is not a new fight. In 1986, the clinic was bombed, causing almost \$70,000 in damages. Three days later, Tiller put a hand-lettered sign up on the damaged building saying: "Hell, No, We Won't Go!"

This spring members of the Wichita City Council, backed by Mayor Robert Knight, proposed a new city ordinance that would have severely restricted abortion rights and made it the policy of the city that life begins at conception.

Seventy-two speakers debated the proposal for over six hours at the council's July 2 meeting. The ordinance was defeated by a vote of 4-3.

Mayor, governor back rightists

The next week, Operation Rescue announced its siege.

Once the right-wing mobilizations began, they won the political support of Mayor Knight, members of the city council, and Kansas Gov. Joan Finney. Both Knight and Finney addressed an August 2 rally organized by Operation Rescue, praising its actions.



Militant

Operation Rescue speaks in the name of 'Christianity' and 'American values.' While downplaying their violence and rightist views, their broader program and street tactics show incipient American fascism.

front lawn at 6 a.m. by Operation Rescue participant Richard Beemer. Kelly has received numerous death threats.

Operation Rescue has tried to portray its movement as a legal, single-issue, anti-abortion crusade, a "Christian movement based on scripture." They have attempted to downplay their violence and their rightist political views, and conceal the source of their financing.

However, in their broader program and street confrontations, a face of incipient American fascism can be discerned.

Randall Terry, founder and director of Operation Rescue, said in a 1989 interview in *Mother Jones*, "Our diehard enemies are almost all totally feminists. Radical feminism gave birth to child-killing."

"Radical feminism, of course, has vowed to destroy the traditional family unit, hates motherhood, hates children for the most part, promotes lesbian activity." Terry pointed to Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, who he called a "whore," saying that she was "an adulteress, and slept all over the place, all over the world, with all kinds of people."

Terry has said that he wants to reform all of culture — "the arts, the media, the entertainment industries, medicine, the sciences,

and business broker, as well as a church elder.

Others say they were white collar aerospace workers, salesmen, accountants, housewives, fundamentalist preachers, or unemployed.

Full-time rightist cadres

Many are full-time cadres for the right-wing movement, veterans of numerous protests at clinics where abortions are performed.

The operation has attracted a number of former cops. One of those arrested July 27 for blockading the clinic was Dennis Anderson, a former lieutenant on the Wichita police force and former boss of many of the cops on duty during the blockades. Chet Gallagher is a former cop from Las Vegas, Nevada, who was arrested for trying to fight his way into the clinic. The *Eagle* reported that he threw himself into the gate like "a human battering ram."

One leader of Operation Rescue, Joseph Foreman, said he didn't know where he got his spending money. He said that his wife received checks in the mail that covered his expenses. Others had similar stories.

The siege has attracted other political ultrarightists, who have joined the action and are vying for recruits. Joe Major, who described himself as a white collar employee,

City authorities consistently refused to deploy the forces necessary to open access to the clinics and stop the assaults. On July 24, for instance, city cops took more than 24 hours to clear the entrance. Clinic workers, forced to wait at a residence down the block, protested the delay and the cops' kid-glove treatment of the rightists.

The treatment of the rightists arrested during assaults stands in sharp contrast to police conduct against union strikers and progressive political activists. For Operation Rescue, the cops stop making arrests to allow prayers to continue, hand water to those arrested, loosen their cuffs to assure their comfort, wipe dirt from their clothes, and pat them on the back.

In the first public opposition to the right-wing mobilization, 1,500 people came to a July 15 rally sponsored by the Pro-Choice Action League. Operation Rescue held a rally the same day, drawing 1,500, many from other parts of the country.

Frustrated with the reluctance of city officials to keep access to the clinics open, Tiller requested that Federal Judge Kelly order the clinic entrance cleared. Judge Kelly agreed July 24, and on July 30, he ordered U.S. marshals into the city to enforce the order.

Kelly and city officials pulled the cops and marshals off the clinic entrances August 1, saying they had been assured by Operation Rescue leaders that they would allow access to the medical offices.

The next day the rightists announced they intended to defy the judge's order. Operation Rescue leader Randall Terry, released from jail after promising not to resume his blockades, told a right-wing rally he had "no premeditated plans to break the order, but I belong to God. If God or the Angel Gabriel tonight tells me to go down there and to block access, then that's what I'll do."

Governor Finney addressed an August 3 Operation Rescue rally of 1,500 right wingers, telling them, "I commend you."

After more assaults and hundreds more arrests, Judge Kelly issued further orders August 6 to keep the clinics open. Randall Terry responded, "The man is out of control. He sees himself as the savior of the child-killing industry."

Judge Kelly urged supporters of abortion and democratic rights to keep out of the streets. "You've heard this week maybe the pro-choice folks will come in and resist. I've begged them to stay away and have faith in the court."

The U.S. Justice Department filed a brief in court August 7, on the side of Operation Rescue, arguing that the federal judge had no legal basis to stop the rightists' mobilization.

National and local groups that support democratic rights were besieged with calls



Militant

Rightists blockade Wichita clinic. City mayor and governor of Kansas gave political backing to assault.

urging action in response to the ultrarightists.

"Our phones have been ringing off the hook with people asking, 'What can I do? Do you want me to come to Wichita?'" Pat Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women, told a Washington, D.C., rally. Peggy Jarman of the Wichita PCAL said that dozens of people called their offices every day.

Local groups here have come together to call a Speak Out for Choice Rally on August 24.

Broader attacks

The rightist offensive in Wichita takes place in the broader context of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis and resulting class polarization. The employers and their government are on a drive to weaken or bust unions, lower workers' standard of living, and push back political and democratic rights as the only way to increase their profits and try and restore their competitiveness on the world market.

This is true here in Wichita as well. There are more than 20,000 aerospace workers who work for Boeing here and thousands of others at Cessna and Beechcraft. Boeing workers were forced on strike for several weeks in 1989.

Datton Wilson, a Black youth, was killed by a cop in Haysville, a suburb of Wichita, in December 1990. Wilson's family and prominent Black figures in the city have organized a campaign, including petitions and demonstrations demanding that the cop be prosecuted.

The Latino community in Wichita is growing, according to Rosa Molina, director of the Centro de Personas Mayores. "Many are attracted by the meat-packing industry and hopes of getting jobs in aerospace," she said in an interview.

On June 9, three workers were killed when they attempted to clean the filter over a 30-foot tall blood tank at the National Beef Packing company in Liberal, Kansas.

A drive by the United Food and Commercial Workers to organize the 1,550 workers at the plant is underway. Two leaders of the organizing drive, Adrian Marquez and Isidro Muñoz were fired July 18 for refusing to work in unsafe working conditions.

The growing economic and social crisis and resulting class polarization are spawning ultrarightist probes against workers' rights. Incipient American fascist forces are testing issues, political openings, and sources for funding.

The siege on Wichita is the first offensive of these forces.

American Fascism in 1930s

Today's ultra-rightist operation has historical precedents.

During the 1930's Charles Coughlin promoted himself as the "radio priest." Using religious rhetoric and radical demagoguery, Coughlin sought to rally farmers and small businessmen who faced bankruptcy, unemployed, and layers of the oppressed angered by the sight of a handful with riches in the midst of depression into blindly obedient

shock troops and build a mass movement. He sought financing and political backing from big capitalists who became convinced that the brutal destruction of the labor movement would be necessary to maintain their rule.

Operation Rescue's leaders, and the other ultrarightists attracted to Wichita, are vying for the same role today.

Since the ultrarightist siege began last month, there has been little countermobilization by forces seeking to defend abortion rights and oppose the broader threat to political space and democratic rights implicit in the ultrarightist street offensive.

Some defenders of abortion rights have urged that there be no public effort to counter the assaults on the clinics. They argue that the defense of political rights should be left to the cops and the courts.

Twenty organizations held a press conference hosted by the YWCA on August 19 to announce the establishment of Wichita Voices for Choice.

When asked why the groups had waited so long to come together, George Gardner, a minister, told the press, "We decided we would not make things more difficult for the police. We chose to be passive activists."

"The streets are not the place where this should be decided," he added. "We've got to look to the legislative and political arenas."

Because of such statements and the lack of mobilizations to counter the right wing, little has been done to answer its antiwoman, antidemocratic propaganda. This has caused confusion among many working people about whether abortions are a simple medical procedure or the "murder of a preborn child."

Over the last five weeks, the letters page of the Wichita *Eagle* has been filled with volumes of letters discussing the siege, mostly from rightists who are organized to use the space for propaganda purposes.

Labor, Black leaders abstain

Labor leaders and Black community figures call the issue "divisive," one that should be avoided. Pat Lehman, a leader of the International Association of Machinists, the city's largest union, and president of the Wichita/Hutchinson Labor Federation, said she supports abortion rights and spoke at the July 15 demonstration. However, she claimed that to raise the question in the unions — especially in a "right-to-work" state like Kansas — would set the labor movement back.

Hundreds of people, from Wichita and around the country, have reacted with outrage at the rightists' taking over the streets and the violent assaults. Dozens call or visit the Pro-Choice Action League office daily, looking for ways to help.

While some passers-by honk in support of the rightists, others shout at them, yelling, "Get a job!" "Go home!" and "Fascists!"

On August 11, four weeks after the siege began, the *Eagle* and TV station KAKE conducted a poll. Of those questioned, 78 percent said they opposed the actions of Operation Rescue. A full 88 percent said they support legalized abortion. Of the 23 percent

who said their view on the abortion question had been affected by the siege, two-thirds said they were pushed more toward supporting a woman's right to choose.

The reaction against the rightist mobilization in Wichita has produced a differentiation in the ruling class. Bourgeois politicians are now taking steps to distance themselves from the violent tactics of the rightists.

Operation Rescue leader Randall Terry flew to Kennebunkport, Maine, August 17 to attempt to meet with President George Bush.

Bush refused, telling the press that his advice to Operation Rescue was: "Don't violate the judge's order and stay within the law."

Republican Sen. Robert Dole of Kansas also distanced himself from the siege.

Governor withdraws from rally

Kansas Gov. Finney had agreed to speak at "Hope for the Heartland," a rightist rally scheduled for August 25. Martha Walker, press spokesperson for the governor, said in a phone interview that Finney has now declined the invitation.

A number of local clergy opposed to abortion rights announced that they were holding meetings to discuss taking antiabortion activity in Wichita away from Operation Rescue because of their disagreement with its tactics.

In its August 20 editorial, the *Eagle* said, "It's time for local leaders to take full charge and strongly invite Randall Terry and his people to leave."

This differentiation is reflected in the rightists' political rallies preceding their attacks. While they used to praise the cops as a tactic to win them over, they increasingly harangue the police and U.S. marshals now, demanding they break ranks and join the assault on the clinics.

With their eyes on the 1992 elections, Bush and other political figures have become convinced that an uncontrolled rightist campaign goes beyond their interests today. Given the continued majority support for abortion rights, they have pulled back.

Nonetheless, the rightists have already succeeded in showing their strength and capacity to mobilize and to win state support. They have scared off some women seeking abortions at these clinics. With no significant response yet organized by supporters of democratic rights and the labor movement, this marks a setback to abortion rights, one that hits the rights of working-class women and young women the most.

There are big stakes in this fight and others like it that will arise as the economic crisis deepens and ultrarightist outfits become emboldened. Through street assaults, they will attempt to push back strikes, social protest actions, public meetings of vanguard working-class organizations, Black rights fighters, and others.

By taking the lead, the labor movement can mount effective countermobilizations in face of such offensives. The deep sentiment in Wichita opposing the aims and methods of the rightists shows the potential for such a course.

For further reading

Education for Socialists Series

Countermobilization: A Strategy to Fight Racist and Fascist Attacks, by Farrell Dobbs. \$5.

What is American Fascism? Writings on Father Coughlin, Mayor Frank Hague, and Sen. Joseph McCarthy, by James P. Cannon and Joseph Hansen. \$6.

Fight Against Fascism in the U.S.A.: Forty Years of Struggle Described by Participants, by James P. Cannon et al. \$7.

By Leon Trotsky

Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It. 31 pp. \$2.

The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany. 479 pp. \$27.95.

Available from bookstores listed on page 20 or from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, New York 10014. Please add \$3 for postage and handling for first title; \$.50 each additional title.

ACLU takes legal action to defend fired meat-packer

BY BRAD DOWNS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed charges with the federal government August 20 against Esskay, Inc., on behalf of Bob Miller, a meat-packer fired by the company last spring.

Esskay/Mash's ham smokehouse and packaging plant in Landover, Maryland, is charged with discriminating against employees who "look foreign" and for firing Miller when he brought this discriminatory practice to the attention of his union, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Local 27.

A few weeks before workers were to vote on their first union contract, the company began demanding that all workers who "look foreign" present green cards ("Alien Registration Cards") each day in order to gain entrance to the plant. Some workers who misplaced or forgot their cards were sent home and lost several days pay. Miller phoned a union official to urge that the local respond to this assault by the company.

Miller said he thought the checks were meant to intimidate workers during the negotiations. "I complained about this practice because I think it's important for workers and union members to defend each other, whether or not they are the direct target of a discriminatory practice. Company discrimination against any worker weakens the whole union," Miller explained.

Two working days later the plant manager summoned Miller into his office and interrogated him about his opposition to the company policy and demanded to know Miller's nationality. Miller, who had furnished all legally required documentation when he was hired, declined to answer the company's question about his nationality, was fired and escorted out of the plant.

Esskay is a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods Inc. of Smithfield, Virginia.

Both the company policy and the firing of Miller are violations of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. The act prohibits an employer from demanding excessive documentation of citizenship status from an employee. IRCA also prohibits an employer from engaging in intimidation or retaliation against an individual for complaining about a violation of the act. Susan Goering, legal director of the ACLU of Maryland, believes that these charges filed with the U.S. Justice Department are the first challenge under the retaliation provision of the Immigration Reform Act.

"This practice has a chilling effect on Esskay workers, many of whom are foreign born. If they tell about an illegal act, they get fired," said Goering.

Two workers from the Esskay plant attended the press conference to show their support for Miller's fight. Many coworkers also expressed hope that Bob would win. Miller is demanding his job back with full back pay.

Hilda Mason, a member of the D.C. City Council, spoke at the press conference announcing the complaint. "I believe that Bob Miller was right to protest to his union the discriminatory practice of the employer in checking immigration cards daily and that it was wrong to fire him for such action," Mason said. "I believe the union members in the District of Columbia are going to be directly affected by the decisions in this case."

In support of the lawsuit National Council of La Raza (NCLR) President Raúl Yzaguirre stated, "This is a classic example of the treatment that Hispanics are facing throughout the U.S." The NCLR is a national umbrella group of some 150 Hispanic organizations.

Andy Shapiro of Ross, Dixon and Masbach, the law firm retained by the ACLU to represent Miller, announced at the press conference that charges will soon be filed with the National Labor Relations Board.

Guillermo Chávez, program associate of the United Methodist Church, together with a representative of the Capitol Hill ACLU, spoke at the press conference in support of Miller's case.

In addition to the *Sun*, the *Washington Times*, the *Prince George's Journal*, the D.C. radio station WTOP, and the Baltimore ABC affiliate WJZ carried stories on Miller's case.

Brad Downs is a member of UFCW Local 400.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

The Militant Labor Forum is a weekly free-speech meeting for workers, farmers, youth, and others. All those seeking to advance the fight against injustice and exploitation should attend and participate in these discussions on issues of importance to working people.

At the Militant Labor Forum you can express your opinion, listen to the views of fellow fighters, and exchange ideas on how to best advance the interests of workers and farmers the world over.

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Defending Abortion Rights: Report from Wichita. Speaker to be announced. Sun., Sept. 8, 5:30 p.m. 111 21st St. S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

FLORIDA

Miami

Mass Mobilizations in USSR Block Coup: A Defeat for Capitalism, an Advance for Workers Worldwide. Speaker: Tom Fiske, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Aug. 31, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020. **Stop Right-Wing Vigilante Attacks in Wichita: Defend Democratic Rights.** A panel discussion. Sat., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

The Coup in the Soviet Union: The Crisis of Stalinism and the Revolutionary Road Confronting Workers. Speaker: representative Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (301) 235-0013. **Battle in Wichita: Women's Rights and the Working Class vs. the Right Wing and the Government.** Panel discussion. Sat., Sept. 14, 7:30 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (301) 235-0013.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Wichita, Kansas: Battleground for Women's Right to Choose: Eyewitness Report. Speakers: Sarah Ullman, Socialist Workers Party; Neil Callender, chairperson Boston Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Right-Wing Assault in Wichita: The Stakes for Working People. Eyewitness report from Wichita. Speakers: Al Duncan, Socialist Workers Party candidate for State Assembly, 28th A.D.; Karen Kopperud, SWP candidate for State Assembly, 28th A.D.; James Brash, Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Eyewitness Report from Wichita, Kansas.

Protest the Right-Wing Assault. Speaker: Estelle DeBates, Socialist Workers Party, just returned from Wichita. Sat., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. 191 7th Ave., 2nd floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 675-6740.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

What the Coup Attempt Reveals about the Crisis in the Soviet Union. Speaker: Nels J'Anthony, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Aug. 31, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

BRITAIN

London

The Fight against Racism and Police Bru-

Grenadian prime minister commutes Bernard Coard's death sentence

BY JAMES HARRIS

On August 14 Prime Minister Nicholas Brathwaite of Grenada commuted the death sentences of Bernard Coard and 13 other people convicted of murdering Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and five other central leaders of the Grenada revolution in October 1983.

The sentences against Coard's counter-revolutionary gang had been handed down by a U.S.-orchestrated propaganda trial organized to slander the name of the defeated revolution.

In 1983, Coard, then Grenada's deputy prime minister, placed Bishop under house arrest and led a clique of army, government, and party officials in a coup that overturned the workers' and farmers' government. Led by the New Jewel Movement, the workers and farmers regime had governed the Caribbean island since taking power in 1979.

Coard's destruction of the revolutionary government and assassination of its leadership politically traumatized the Grenadian masses, rendering them disoriented and virtually defenseless before imperialism. On Oct. 25, 1983, the U.S. government took advantage of this situation and invaded the island with thousands of U.S. Marines and Army Rangers.

In the aftermath of the invasion, U.S. occupation forces and the capitalist class in Grenada combined to turn back the considerable gains won by the working masses during the revolution.

Under the revolutionary government, democratic rights were vastly expanded as the workers and farmers took command of their destinies for the first time. Union membership increased. Mass organizations of youth, women, and farmers were created and working people participated in shaping government policy.

The Grenadian leadership also reached out in solidarity to other revolutions in the region — principally those in Cuba and in

Nicaragua, where a revolutionary workers' and farmers' government had also taken power in 1979.

CANADA

Montréal

Soviet People Overturn the Coup D'Etat: A Victory for All Working People. Speaker: representative, Communist League. Sat., Aug. 31, 7:30 p.m. 6566 boul. Saint-Laurent. Donation: \$4. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

Postal Workers Confront Ottawa: The Stakes for All Workers. Panel discussion. Sat., Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. 6566 boul. Saint-Laurent. Donation: \$4. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

Recognizing the significance of the three revolutions Fidel Castro said at the time, "One needs a sense of history and of realities to understand the merit of the Sandinista revolution, the merit of the Grenadian revolution. Grenada, Nicaragua, and Cuba are three giants rising up to defend their right to independence, sovereignty, and justice, on the very threshold of imperialism."

The revolutionary course set by the Bishop government and its determined efforts to chart a course independent of U.S. imperialism and in the interests of Grenada's workers and farmers earned it the enmity of the U.S. government. However, Washington did not consider itself in a position to attack the island until the Coard clique had already dealt the revolution a death blow.

After the invasion, Coard was placed under arrest. Washington, working through its newly installed subservient regime, placed Coard and the other leaders of the coup on trial — cynically dealing yet another blow to Grenadian sovereignty. The Coard gang was falsely portrayed as "hard-core Marxists" through the trial, in a move to identify genuine communists and anti-imperialist fighters with Coard's brutal methods and discredit the Grenada revolution.

The trial and the death sentences were an attack on democratic rights in Grenada and throughout the Caribbean. Their purpose was not to dispense justice but to be a propaganda tool against the conquests of the revolution and tarnish its example in the eyes of the world's working class. The Grenada government sought to use Coard's unpopularity to extend the use of the death penalty as another means of intimidating working people in the region.

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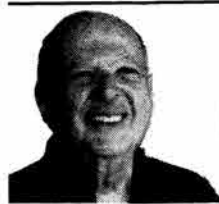
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Free-market athletics — "Every one of these kids is probably going to be a multimillionaire in two years If we're spoiled and



Harry Ring

arrogant, so be it. The days of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts living in the village are over. We're going to stay in the best properties available to us." — Sports official William Wall on why the U.S. Pan Am basketball team took off from Cuba for

three nights at a luxury Miami hotel.

Something different — Diver Mary Ellen Clark was asked if U.S. athletes were advised not to wear identifying clothing while walking Cuban streets during the Pan Am games. No need, she responded. But she recalled that during the Olympics in Los Angeles, they were told not to wear red or blue "because these are gang colors." Clark added, "There's no problem like that in Cuba."

What more do they want — After Arturo Jiménez was killed by a deputy sheriff in the Ramona Gardens housing project, Los Angeles city council member Richard Alatorre showed up. Even though the

project is in his district, skeptics said Alatorre's visit there was his first. Not so, responded an aide. "He's been there many times. Every Christmas he does a toy giveaway."

Wrong class — On New Zealand TV, the jobless father of an impoverished family was asked how he felt about the new government budget which may up unemployment by another 100,000. Another guest, multimillionaire Sir Robert Jones, took umbrage at soliciting the view of such folk. "He's unemployable," Jones asserted, "a no hoper . . . look at his hair!"

Boys will be boys — In Windsor,

Canada, ten city cops and two Mounties got drunk in a downtown parking lot. One cop downed seven beers and drove home. En route, he fired five shots, one of them apparently into the home of the mayor. The cop was charged with possessing a weapon dangerous to the public peace and suspended with pay.

Skip the pause that refreshes — A new line of beverages has hit the Japanese market. For openers, there's "Hard Work," featuring a shot of sugar and Vitamin C. For those chained to a desk, there's "Daily Work," which assertedly stimulates the mind. And, for those who make it through the day, there's "After Work."

"From sea to shining sea" — "Contamination from sewage and storm water runoff resulted in 2,400 beach closures in 10 states during the past two years, a survey by the National Resources Defense Council revealed." News item.

That will do it — The American Medical Association opened a \$1.75 million ad campaign to counter the notion that doctors are uncaring and greedy.

Something missing? — Yep, the photo that adorned this column for more than a decade. The current one features the writer's new vision-improved contact lenses.

New racist beatings: Los Angeles cops at work

BY JUAN VILLAGÓMEZ AND BRUCE VALDE

LOS ANGELES — Police brutality has continued against residents of the Ramona Gardens housing project where Arturo Jiménez was killed by county deputy sheriffs. Jiménez was shot August 3 while attending a lawn birthday party at the mainly Chicano housing site.

On August 14, David Tovar, 39, a city bus driver and salsa musician, was stopped by two members of the Los Angeles Police

Department. He and a friend, Armando Avilés, were walking toward a gas station near Ramona Gardens to buy some transmission fluid.

The cops asked where they were from. When Tovar responded that they were from Ramona Gardens, the cops did a computer check from their patrol car and arrested Tovar for an outstanding traffic warrant.

Tovar told the *Militant* that he was then pulled into an alley and beaten while handcuffed.

As the cops beat him, Tovar said, they made it clear that it was in retaliation for a deputy who was knocked unconscious after Jiménez was killed.

Tovar suffered three fractured ribs. He was treated at a nearby hospital where the cops took him when they realized he couldn't breathe normally.

Tovar said he was not allowed to use the toilet later on at the jail because, a cop told him, "you are a dog."

Tovar is convinced the cops intended to

beat more people at Ramona Gardens. "I was beaten because I'm from here," he said. "The police must be stopped from doing this."

There have been a number of meetings at Ramona Gardens where residents and Chicano organizations have gathered to press the demand for an independent investigation of the killing of Jiménez.

Participating organizations have included the Mexican-American Political Association and the Chicano Moratorium.

At the last meeting there were 50 people including representatives of groups in the Black community, among them the coalition that sparked the fight for the ouster of Police Chief Daryl Gates after the beating of Rodney King.

There have also been two Saturday pickets at the sheriff's station with about 100 people joining in each.

In another incident involving the sheriff's department, Keith Hamilton, 33, was killed.

Hamilton was mentally ill. His family had called the sheriff's department for help in coping with him when he refused to take his medication.

When the cops confronted the ill man, they kicked and beat him and then shot him nine times.

They claimed they fired when they saw him reach for a knife.

His family said he didn't have one and a neighbor who witnessed the killing told authorities that after Hamilton was shot two cops left the scene. When they returned, one of them placed a metallic object by the body.

Hamilton's family says they never would have called the cops if they had realized what the outcome would be. They are calling for an investigation.

British march hits cop killing of Black youth

BY HELEN WARNOCK

WELLINGTON, England — Four hundred and fifty people demonstrated here August 17 to protest the killing of Ian Gordon, a 24-year-old-Black youth, by police August 12.

Previously a student, Gordon had suffered a mental breakdown and was known by both residents and police to carry a toy pistol. Police claimed that Gordon was attempting a robbery along with an accomplice, who did

not materialize.

Cops chased Gordon a half mile through town, where marksmen shot him dead. Police said Gordon shouted, "You're dead, you're dead," before they opened fire. Eyewitnesses report Gordon shouted, "It's only a toy, it won't hurt you." Both cops involved in the shooting remain on active duty.

Leading up to the demonstration the police and big-business media worked to intimidate those who wanted to join in the protest. The

normally busy town center was boarded up and shops were closed for the day. Buses from Birmingham and Manchester were turned back by police. But despite heavy police presence, including officers from other areas, the demonstration passed off without incident. Many residents lined the protest route as a mark of respect for Gordon. After a formal wreath-laying ceremony by the family and local dignitaries at the site of the shooting, the protest proceeded to the police station.

The protesters, Black and white, young and old, carried signs saying, "We want justice, not a cover-up." Many chanted, "What did he say? It's only a toy. What did they do? Shoot to kill."

One student protester said, "I thought in this country you were innocent until proven guilty. I'm here because you've got to stand up and speak out against things like this. It's no good sitting on your backside getting angry at the T.V. You have to stand up and be counted."

Canadian Natives challenge gov't restrictions, quotas on fishing

BY ROBERT DEMOREST AND NED DMYTRYSHYN

MUSQUEAM RESERVE, British Columbia — "The salmon resource belongs to us to do what we want with it," stated Waii Seeks, a hereditary chief of the Gitksan Wet'suwet'en nation.

He was one of many leaders from seven Native nations in British Columbia (B.C.) who came to celebrate First Nations fishing rights here July 1, Canada Day.

The day-long event, called a Potlach, was

attended by some 2,000 people. Native and non-native. A leader of the Musqueam Indian Band explained the event's purpose was "to demonstrate that B.C. First Nations have an aboriginal right to fish, a right that lawfully takes precedent over federal fishing regulations."

The right, he said, was guaranteed by a 1982 constitutional act and affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada last year when it dismissed a charge against Musqueam fisherman Ron Sparrow for fishing with a net longer than allowed under the regulations. The Musqueam people and the B.C. First Nations say their right gives them the authority to sell their fish as well.

The department of fisheries often arbitrarily decrees fishing quotas, which is seen by the Native population as a violation of the spirit of the Supreme Court decision on Sparrow and of their aboriginal rights. For example, last year the allocation for commercial fishery was 14 million salmon, for sports fishery 2.2 million, and Natives were allowed 800,000 "for traditional purposes."

On May 31, 1991, the Supreme Court of Canada, in a 6-0 decision, found that Indians cannot be prevented from fishing except for conservation purposes.

The Musqueam people and their supporters faced powerful opponents in the landmark Sparrow case — the first major test of the aboriginal rights provision of Canada's constitution. Lined up against them were the federal government; the provincial governments of B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Québec, and Newfoundland; and 15 B.C. fishing organizations, including the coast's largest canneries and the province's sport fishing organizations.

The decision registered the gains of the deepening of the Native struggle all across Canada and the growing support for Native rights from a majority of working people.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT
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September 5, 1966 Price 10c

New York Times reporter William Beecher wrote from Saigon Aug. 28 that the top U.S. military strategists there were already thinking in terms of 600,000 troops as a goal to be reached in the next 18 months. The October draft call of 46,200 is the biggest since the Korean war.

Present U.S. casualties have passed the 30,000 level. The 20,000 level was reached in the first week of May. As of Aug. 20, there were 4,660 combat deaths reported and 25,342 wounded. A listing of an additional 930 "noncombat" deaths as of July 28 was given in the Aug. 8 *U.S. News and World Report*.

This included 176 deaths in helicopter "accidents," 121 deaths in fixed-wing aircraft "accidents," and 633 deaths resulting from "disease and other causes."

THE MILITANT
Official Weekly Organ of the Socialist Workers Party

September 6, 1941

During the last five months I have had the opportunity to witness conditions in a typical

American colonial possession, Puerto Rico.

The entire island is indelibly stamped with the mark of American imperialist exploitation. On first coming into the harbor at San Juan, the leading city, I was struck by the extreme appearance of poverty and the filthy living conditions of the workers in the Puerta Tierra section, the portion of the city one sees on leaving the ship.

Whole families live together in one-room shacks crowded on muddy streets that are foul with sewage, refuse and pools of stagnant water. Swarms of children play amidst this filth or hang around the gin-mills, begging "Give me a penny" from American tourists and seamen.

The longshoremen who came aboard the ship were all barefooted. They hung about the galley for left-over scraps from the crew's tables. These longshoremen are among the highest paid workers on the island.

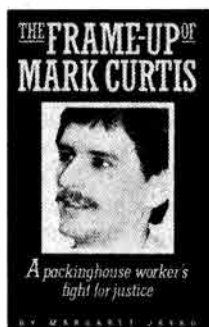
Hundreds of prostitutes rove the streets and "night clubs" on the waterfront. The only industry which employs women is the garment industry, which pays wages of between nine and twelve cents an hour.

It doesn't take long to see that the much-vaunted "self-government" on the island is a joke. The people are "permitted" to elect local officials and a general congress. This is just a matter of form. The real government is embodied in the island governor appointed by the Washington administration with power to overrule any decisions of the local officials and the congress.

from PATHFINDER

The Frame-up of Mark Curtis by Margaret Jayko

This pamphlet tells the story of Mark Curtis, a unionist and fighter for immigrant rights, who is serving a 25-year sentence in an Iowa prison on trumped-up rape charges. 71 pp. \$5.00.



Order from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. (Please include \$3.00 for shipping; \$.50 each additional copy.)

The Soviet workers' victory

Working people and fighters for democratic rights should have no hesitation in identifying with the battle waged by hundreds of thousands of people against the coup in the Soviet Union. Through their actions on the barricades and in the streets working people have widened the space open to them and gained greater confidence for the struggles to come.

Opposing the coup and identifying with those in the streets in no way means extending one iota of political support to Boris Yeltsin, or Mikhail Gorbachev who simply represent various wings of the bureaucracy.

Yeltsin plans to drive ahead with market-oriented reforms which will further deepen the economic crisis suffered by workers and farmers; he seeks the same sacrifices and "labor discipline" that the coup leaders wished to impose by force; and his regime is set to impose new forms of Great Russian domination on the multitude of oppressed nationalities in the Soviet Union.

The crumbling of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) following the coup's defeat is also an event worth celebrating. Since the counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin in the 1920s the CPSU has been an integral part of

the bureaucratic machinery designed to guarantee the perks and privileges of the parasitic ruling caste. As such the CP was a tool of anti-working-class terror — at home and abroad. It has misled millions of revolutionary-minded workers around the world.

The murder machine of Stalin and his successors drove workers out of politics for more than six decades. By repulsing this coup, working people in the Soviet Union have taken a giant step toward once again finding their way, through struggle, to their own organizations and revolutionary leadership.

In the course of the fights to come they will debate ideas, link up with fellow fighters around the world, and absorb the revolutionary experiences of the world working-class movement. They need to deepen their struggle and reconquer political power.

The sight of hundreds of thousands of ordinary people routing this coup will inspire fighters everywhere to link up with their brothers and sisters in the Soviet Union in a common struggle against oppression and exploitation.

Urge parole for framed unionist

The latest attack on jailed union activist Mark Curtis is a major assault on his fight to win parole, and should be met with an accelerated campaign to urge Iowa authorities to release him from prison.

Curtis, a meat-packer active in his local of the United Food and Commercial Workers at the Swift (Monfort) plant in Des Moines, Iowa, was framed by Des Moines police on phony charges of rape and burglary. A longtime political activist, he was fighting alongside fellow union members to defend 17 immigrant coworkers targeted by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for deportation when he was framed.

Curtis has been imprisoned in six different Iowa jails since September 1988. On July 17 of this year, authorities transferred Curtis to the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility from the John Bennett facility in Fort Madison, claiming overcrowding.

Upon arrival at Mt. Pleasant, Curtis was pressed by prison officials to enter the Sex Offenders Treatment Program. To participate in the program, a prisoner must admit guilt to a sex crime, and agree to *abandon any legal appeal* of a conviction.

But Curtis has nothing to admit. Since day one of the frame-up, he has maintained his innocence, and has waged a legal fight and worldwide political campaign against his conviction. Officials knew before they transferred Curtis that he would not confess to a crime he didn't commit, and thus could not participate in the program.

On August 6, Curtis was transferred from the Mt. Pleasant prison to the Iowa Men's Reformatory at Anamosa.

These moves by Iowa authorities had one purpose — to

break Mark Curtis. Curtis' counselor at Mt. Pleasant, Andrea Wright, admitted as much when she told him the move to Anamosa was for "refusing" to join the program. Prison authorities had accepted his transfer to Mt. Pleasant in order to get Curtis to admit guilt.

Curtis has served one month shy of three years — longer than the average inmate convicted on the rape charge he was framed on. In addition to the thousands of prominent individuals and organizations that have endorsed the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, the committee is waging a campaign to have letters sent to the state parole board urging it to grant parole at Curtis' November hearing. Already, 150 prominent individuals have sent letters requesting that Curtis be paroled. Leaders of civil rights, union, human rights, and other organizations have joined in the effort.

Now is the time for hundreds more letters to pour into the offices of the Iowa parole board. Prison authorities' actions have raised the stakes in Curtis' fight for parole.

The slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all" is especially important as tens of thousands of union members are converging on Washington, D.C., to discuss how to answer the attacks on working people by the employers and their government. Supporting fighters like Mark Curtis — victimized for striving to unify the working class — is an indispensable part of advancing the entire labor movement. Winning justice for Curtis will help prevent the bosses and the government from intimidating all those who fight. Everyone who can should send letters addressed to the Iowa State Board of Parole and financial contributions to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.

Labor's fight against offensive

Continued from front page

Central to charting a course forward is championing the interests of all working people and their allies. The labor movement remains crippled and isolated as long as it narrows its focus to the immediate economic concerns of those who now happen to be covered by a union contract.

Political developments in the past few months alone show the character of the broader assault against democratic and political rights:

- A woman's right to choose abortion. Court rulings and government legislation have chipped away at working women's access to safe, legal abortions. This right has also been challenged in the streets of Wichita by ultrarightist actions.

- Affirmative action. Court rulings seek to push back past gains in preferential access to jobs, education, and housing for women and oppressed nationalities. The recent debate in Congress over implementation of quotas was merely a cover for refusing to take any action in defense of affirmative action, an important weapon to break down the divisions within the working class.

- Police violence. Evidence of the daily brutality meted out by the cops is surfacing in cities around the country. From New York to Los Angeles, city governments are defending the cops, hoping to cover up the true role of the police: to keep workers in line through force and violence.

The ruling rich extend their drive abroad as well. Millions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America remain under the ball and chain of an unpayable debt to banks in imperialist countries.

Working people in the semicolonial world face the advanced symptoms of capitalism's declining world order: soaring unemployment and inflation, rising numbers of deaths from curable diseases, deterioration of their country's infrastructure, and much more. Workers in these countries are faced with similar challenges — and the same enemy — as working people in North America.

Divisions within the working class are the central obstacle to waging a united fight against the employer-government

offensive: divisions between the employed and unemployed; between native and foreign born; divisions based on sex and race; and those across existing national boundaries.

To deepen these divisions and justify their assaults at home and wars abroad the big-business media, capitalist politicians, and the labor officialdom consciously seek to confuse working people about who "we" and "they" are. "We," they say, are the workers and employers together, who have at least some "common" interests, or the interests of "all Americans" against the Japanese, against the Iraqis, or peoples in other countries.

But working people have no common interests with the billionaire ruling families in this country. The United States, like every capitalist country, is class divided. "We" are the working people and the oppressed world over. "They" are those who profit from the exploitation and oppression of the vast majority of humanity.

Only by advancing an international program of action, aimed at uniting working people around the globe, can an effective fight be waged to press forward the interests of the working class and the oppressed.

Demanding the cancellation of the onerous and unpayable debt imperialism uses to bleed working people in the semicolonial world; defending and strengthening affirmative-action programs; and fighting to reduce the workweek without a cut in pay as a means to spread the available work are three fundamental points around which the labor movement can and must fight.

Inevitably we must fight to bring an end to the system of capitalism which breeds union-busting, lowering of wages, social devastation of layers of the working class, racism, the oppression of women, and imperialist war.

This means charting a course of revolutionary struggle aimed at wresting power from the hands of the employing class and establishing a government of workers and farmers. Such a government would be a fighting instrument in the hands of working people and join in the worldwide fight for a socialist future.

American fascism: lessons from past labor battles

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Operation Rescue's violent street mobilizations against abortion rights and broader democratic and political rights in Wichita, Kansas, have prompted workers to learn more about labor's past experience with ultrarightist challenges in order to chart a course of action against this threat today.

Despite efforts to cloak itself in the mantle of a "civil rights" movement exercising its right to "civil disobedience," Operation Rescue's program and its use of confrontations in the street reveal the face of incipient American fascism.

Two publications that are useful for a grounding in earlier experiences with fascist outfits in the United States are *What is American Fascism? Writings on Father Coughlin, Mayor*

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

Frank Hague, and Senator Joseph McCarthy and Countermobilization: A Strategy to Fight Racist and Fascist Attacks. Both are part of the Education for Socialists series published by the Socialist Workers Party and distributed by Pathfinder (see ad on page 19).

What is American Fascism? reprints articles written at the time of confrontations between workers and followers of Charles Coughlin, the "radio priest" active in the late 1930s; Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City, New Jersey, who sought to bust up the CIO with his cops and goon squads during those same years; and Joseph McCarthy, notorious for spearheading the witch-hunt in the labor movement in the 1950s.

Included is a 1939 pamphlet by SWP leader Joseph Hansen titled "Father Coughlin: Fascist Demagogue." Hansen strips away Coughlin's demagoguery to lay bare his true face as a labor-hater, Jew-baiter, and fascist. "We must not repeat the mistakes of the labor movement in Italy and in Germany which permitted forgers, sidewalk spielers, and sideshow adventurers like Mussolini and Hitler to take power," he warns. "The first lesson to learn is not difficult: LABOR MUST DEPEND ON ITS OWN STRENGTH. Labor must have its own political party. Labor must have its own defense guards."

Another article in this collection, also by Hansen, is titled "McCarthy — A 'Bourgeois Democrat'?" It is taken from a discussion in the SWP in 1954, during which a minority in the party argued that McCarthy was merely a "bourgeois democrat," and that, in fact, all capitalist politicians were "potential fascists."

"If a regime that rules in principle through democratic forms is threatened by the rise of a fascist movement (which is committed in principle to the destruction of democratic forms), it would be a fatal error to consider the liberal regime as potentially fascist," Hansen notes. "And it would be just as fatal not to recognize the real character of the fascist movement and to consider it only 'bourgeois democratic.'"

"In this contest between the liberals and the fascists, should the working class abstain with a curse on both their houses?" Hansen asks. "We defend the democratic forms against the fascist threat. We do so by attacking the liberals for capitulating to the fascists, for performing their own historic function of paving the way for the fascists, for betraying the people to McCarthyism. We fight to replace them with working-class politicians at the head of an independent labor political movement capable of defending labor's rights and gains and of stopping McCarthyism."

Countermobilization: A Strategy to Fight Racist and Fascist Attacks is the record of a discussion in 1975 between leaders of the Young Socialist Alliance and Farrell Dobbs and other SWP leaders. The YSA at the time was deeply involved in the fight against racist forces trying to overturn school desegregation in Boston and related struggles against rightists, who often cloaked their provocative actions in "free speech" garb. The YSA leaders sought the party's guidance in how best to counter these kinds of threats.

Dobbs had been a leader of the Teamsters union in the 1930s and had ample experience in confronting the fascist formations that attempted to block labor's march at that time.

One of the points he makes in the discussion concerns the role of the cops in protecting the fascists. The ruling class, he notes, seeks to "protect the rights of the fascists while at the same time using fascist forces to try to keep others from exercising those rights. One of the forces used to implement this is that most malevolent of all the repressive instruments of capitalist rule, the police forces."

"The police structure is of a character that makes it a breeding ground for fascists. You don't only have an army of capitalist cops that represses opponents of capitalism; you have a ripe recruiting ground for fascism itself."

"The line of the police is to defend the exercise of formal democratic rights of the fascists, on the one hand, and not to 'see' the violations of the democratic rights of the fascists' victims . . . In any kind of confrontation between antifascist and fascist forces, the basic line of the cops is to protect the fascists in any way they can and to join in the victimization of the antifascists."

Steel and hospital strikers rally in Pennsylvania

This column is dedicated to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

Working people around the world are involved in skirmishes over speedup, forced overtime, layoffs, or attacks on health and safety benefits. Some unionists faced with steep takeback demands, lockouts, and union-busting moves by the employers have gone on strike to force the bosses to back down.

ON THE PICKET LINE

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines to let other *Militant* readers know about what is happening at your workplace or in your union. If there is an interesting political discussion going on at work, we would like to hear about that, too.

More than 100 striking members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) set up a human blockade and stopped a railroad car set to make a delivery to the struck Cooper Power Systems plant in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, August 2.

The 900 Cooper Power workers, organized into three locals of the USWA, walked off the job July 9. The company, currently operating with management personnel, produces transformers and circuit breakers and is the largest employer in Washington County.

Prime issues in the strike include company demands for concessions in medical benefits and pensions. This follows a \$2.90-an-hour cut in wages accepted by the union in 1985.

Since their August 2 victory in blocking the rail car, workers have established a permanent picket line on the rail line to the plant.

On August 4, some 400 unionists rallied in Canonsburg in solidarity with hospital workers on strike against Canonsburg Gen-

eral Hospital.

The 162 hospital workers, organized by District 1199P of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), have been on strike since April 4. They have reached out to the labor movement in southwestern Pennsylvania, organizing four large demonstrations.

There have been 156 arrests of strikers and supporters attempting to block entrance to the hospital. Canonsburg General claims it has hired 52 scabs as permanent replacements since the strike began. Hospital busi-

ness is 40 percent of what it was before the strike.

Issues in the strike include copayment of medical benefits, contract length, and wages, along with the use of scabs.

In addition to the USWA and SEIU strikers, the August 4 rally participants included members of the United Mine Workers of America, International Association of Machinists, Teamsters, Firefighters, United Electrical Workers, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, and teachers union.

On August 9, striking hospital union members voted unanimously to accept a mediator's proposal to return all strikers to the jobs that had been given to scabs in exchange for submitting unsettled economic issues to arbitration. The hospital announced that a petition to decertify the union had been filed with the National Labor Relations Board.

John Engelhardt, vice-president of 1199P, said in an interview, "We want to get the strike settled. Arbitration is not ideally the way we would choose to do that. But if it's only over economic issues, we think we'll do okay."

The hospital board has not responded to the union's proposal.

At the Hialeah, Florida, plant of Kuppenheimer, a component of the clothing giant Hart/Marx, a speedup campaign is under way.

The pay of most garment workers is calculated by the number of pieces

of clothing cut, sewn, or pressed. This gives the company many options to increase exploitation through changes in how an operation is performed, use of "quality control," and the manipulation of rates through fake "time and motion" studies to hold down wages and outright cheat workers.

These pressure tactics lead to daily disputes between supervisors and separate groups of workers, each responding to what is usually treated as an individual problem.

Recently an argument between a supervisor and a presser resulted in a three-day suspension for the worker. The fact that the presser, Fernando, was a shop steward in the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) put many workers on their guard immediately.

"After they said I was suspended," Fernando explained, "I called the ACTWU international representative who arranged to meet with management right away. Meanwhile, I waited for him in the factory cafeteria and told union members what was going on." This simple action in appealing for solidarity was too much for management. In front of shocked workers, the police were called in and Fernando was hauled outside.

When Fernando reported for work after the period of suspension, the company informed him that it had not yet decided to let him return. At this point the company's campaign to intimidate the work force blew up in its face. As word spread from department to department, work stopped.

The company gave in and reinstated the pressing department shop steward to his regular position. This victory of union power has been felt by all workers, who had never halted work in the whole plant like this before.

July 15 was a high point in the month-long strike of Brewery Workers Local 1010 of the Teamsters union against G. Heileman Brewing Co. in Baltimore. On that day more than 100 strikers and a handful of supporters attempted to block the main entrance and stop trucks from

entering or leaving the plant.

Strikers kept the gate blocked for several hours. Unionists walked the picket line and backed the cops off even after they were reinforced by a bus load of Baltimore County police.

The strikers appealed for solidarity in statements to reporters, encouraging "all you union members out there" to stick together and not buy any Heileman's beer. Finally the cops, who had escorted both the truckers and the scabs through picket lines since the first day of the strike, reopened the plant.

The 250 brewery workers walked out of the plant when their three-year contract expired July 1. Workers voted 142-79 for a new three-year contract July 27. They had last struck the plant in 1985, when after 14 weeks they returned to work, accepting the same contract rejected earlier.

Workers at Heileman wanted to gain back concessions they had made throughout the 1980s. They earn about \$13.00 an hour in a two-tier pay scale where workers start at about \$7.00. This is from 70 cents to \$1.50 an hour less than at other Heileman plants.

The company had offered a 50-cents-an-hour raise over three years while the union was seeking \$1.50 to reach parity with the other plants. The union finally agreed to 70 cents for the three-year package.

The company wanted to raise health plan deductibles, but under the new agreement no changes were made. The new contract lengthens the probationary period from 45 to 60 working days.

The national Cotton Garment Agreement affecting 8,000 to 9,000 garment workers in the United States, expires August 31. The workers are organized by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU).

Hard hit by plant closings and layoffs, the number of workers directly covered by the agreement has been drastically reduced by nearly 10,000 since 1988.

The bulk of the remaining unionists covered under the national agreement are approximately 5,000

workers in six Cluett & Peabody shops in Georgia and Alabama. Arrow Shirt is the principal brand name of Cluett and has the largest share of the men's dress shirt market in the United States.

During the current negotiations, ACTWU officials threatened to bolt the national talks to negotiate separately with Cluett. ACTWU Southern Regional Board Director Bruce Raynor notified Cluett July 23 of the intent to leave the national agreement if a new Import Agreement could not be resolved by August 15. Separate negotiations between ACTWU and Cluett were set for Birmingham, Alabama, on that date.

ACTWU officials have projected plant closing restrictions as the top priority in the next contract. Management closed three Cluett sewing plants in the last year and two more are scheduled for shutdown. A special union meeting of Local 365, which organizes the Cluett plant in Austell, Georgia, was called to ratify leaving the national agreement.

Unionists were told that "the sewing jobs are going to Costa Rica." Cluett sends cut parts to be sewn in a plant in San José, Costa Rica, and has begun increasing production there. While some workers expressed skepticism that leaving the national agreement to negotiate particular "plant closing restrictions" would really stop layoffs, the proposal passed, 39-16.

Twenty-five members of Local 365 participated in an informational picket line in front of the Austell plant August 8. Signs carried at the picket were "Save Our Jobs, No Imports" and "Save Our Union." Similar actions took place the same day at the five other Cluett & Peabody plants in Georgia and Alabama. The six locals have also asked their members to refuse overtime leading up to the August 31 expiration of the contract.

Sandi Sherman from Pittsburgh; ACTWU Local 694 member Brett Merkey from Miami; Edwin Fruit from Baltimore; ACTWU Local 365 member Jeff Jones from Atlanta, Georgia; and ACTWU Local 622 member Chris Rayson from Morgantown, West Virginia, contributed to this week's column.

LETTERS

From Burkina Faso

I am honored and pleased to send this note to you. I also want to convey to you all my support for your publication, which won me through the diversity of its news and also through the quality of its analysis of the problems posed on our planet every day.

I learned of the existence of your publication thanks to a passenger on the bus that took us last week from Ouagadougou to Ouahigouya. Thanks to this passenger I was able to read two issues.

I would like to have a poster of the man who won me through his intelligence and his courage: Captain Thomas Sankara, the primary leader of the August 1983 revolution in Burkina Faso. I would also like to know how I may obtain your worthy publication.

A student
Ouahigouya, Burkina Faso
West Africa

Editor's note—We welcome the news that the *Militant* is finding its way to revolutionary-minded youth in Burkina Faso. Information on receiving a subscription to our paper appears on page 2. For literature by and about Thomas Sankara, we recommend contacting Pathfinder publishers at 410 West St., New York, New York 10014 or 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England.

Pathfinder publishes Thomas

Sankara Speaks, the English-language collection of Sankara's writings. The collection has also just been released jointly with the L'Harmattan publishing house in a French-language edition, titled *Oser inventer l'avenir, or Dare to Invent the Future*.

Retreat vs. revolution

It seems as if almost every organization that stands for or pretends to stand for the rights and interests of the working class is in headlong retreat today.

From revolutionary organizations in Nicaragua and El Salvador to the big labor unions associated with the AFL-CIO here in the United States, all seem to feel, under the misleadership of their executives and chairmen, that the correct path is to attempt to accommodate themselves with the wolves at the door. However, when they open the door to shake hands the wolf grabs them and promptly begins to devour them beginning with the outstretched hand extended in friendship.

A prime example of the effectiveness of this program would be Gorbachev's activities in the USSR, where the more "Gorby" grovels at the feet of his antagonists in the "Group of 7," the more they raise the ante. The old adage "give them an inch and they'll take a mile" is especially applicable here.

What I am driving at is this is

why it is so refreshing to read of the examples of the steadfast position of the Cuban Revolution; the strength and determination of those who brought Lorenzo and Eastern down; and the biting, inspirational comments of Doug Jenness in his column "Learning about Socialism." All of this is contained every week in the *Militant*; and this is why I will continue to subscribe to this paper. Now, more than ever I need it.

You will find enclosed a check for \$50 to cover us for another year's subscription to the *Militant*, as well as for the prisoner's fund.

I thank you and keep up the good work!
Ed Meredith
Caneyville, Ky.

State terror in Turkey

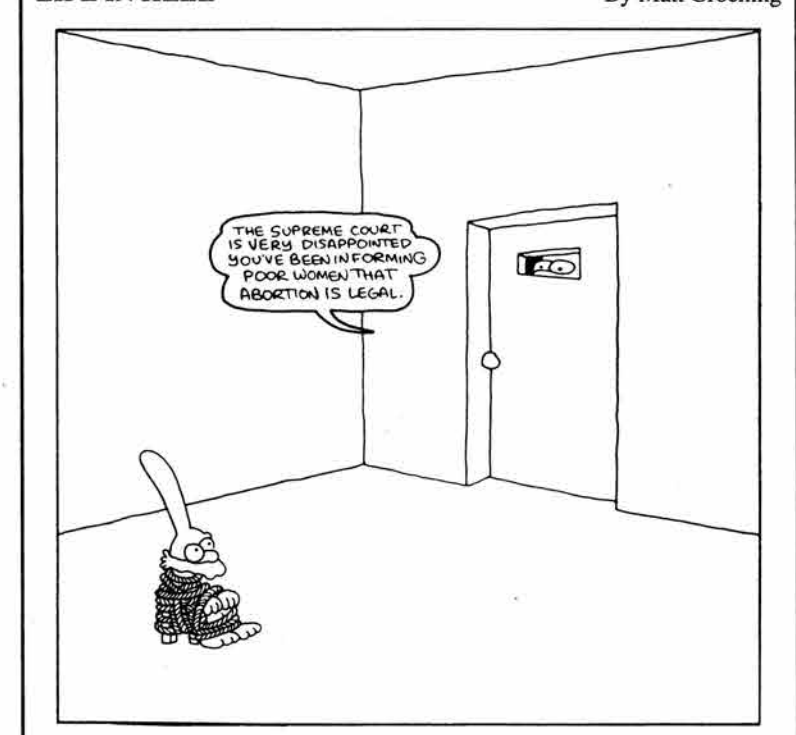
Since the passing of the "Anti-Terror" Law in Turkey in April 1991 there has been a rapid increase in state terror. People are being abducted from their homes, shot, tortured, and executed by special counterinsurgency units.

The aim of this new "State-Terror" Law, which led to recent massacres, is to violently suppress the Kurdish people, to suppress their desire for freedom, and to eliminate any progressive and revolutionary movement or opposition in Turkey and Kurdistan.

We ask that you send urgent

LIFE IN HELL

By Matt Groening



protest messages to Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, Office of the Prime Minister, Basbakanlik, Ankara, Turkey. Demand that the Turkish government give an account of the killings, unlawful arrests and disappeared people. Demand the immediate repeal of the "Anti-Terror" Law. Send delegations to Turkey and Kurdistan to establish the truth about human rights violations.

Solidarity Committee with Turkey and Kurdistan
London, England

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Postal workers strike in Canada

BY SUSAN BERMAN
AND MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — At 12:01 a.m. Saturday, August 24, 8000 members of the Toronto local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), sporting "No retreat, no surrender" buttons, walked off the job.

They were greeted by dozens of afternoon shift workers outside the Gateway and South Central mail sort facilities in Toronto. Cheers and chants of "No scab mail" met the night-shift workers as they walked out.

Picket lines were put up in about 10 other cities, including Halifax, Nova Scotia; Montreal, Quebec; Ottawa, Ontario; and Victoria, British Columbia. The union officials have decided to hold a selective strike, saying they may call a total walkout if union demands are not met.

The 46,000 members of CUPW include sorting-plant workers, post office employees, letter carriers, and drivers. The union has been working under a contract that expired in July 1989. These are the first negotiations since a government-imposed fusion — still resented by layers of the union — merged five different unions into the CUPW at the beginning of 1989.

Nationally, eighty-two percent of the CUPW voted to go on strike against Canada Post, a Crown Corporation notorious for its attacks against the union. The union

has four central demands.

First is a three-year contract with 7.9, 7, and 6.5 percent wage increases each year plus a cost-of-living adjustment of 17 cents an hour. With no increase since 1988, wages have fallen behind inflation. One letter carrier in Toronto explained in an interview that he now takes home \$50 less a month than he did in 1988. Postal workers earn an average of \$14.24 an hour as reported by Canada's *Globe and Mail*.

The CUPW is also demanding Canada Post convert some part-time, casual, and overtime work into 2,677 full-time jobs as well as end the contracting out of work.

According to the union, the proportion of part-time positions in the post office has increased 145 percent since 1983. Jim Lawrence, vice president of the Toronto local, explained that since 1989, 300 full-time posts have been eliminated and 600-700 part-time jobs have been established in Toronto.

Since 1986, Canada Post has closed 53 urban and 1,100 rural post offices across the country, with the stated goal of shutting down the entire network of public post offices by 1996. This means the loss of 14,000 jobs, replaced by minimum-wage positions in postal "franchises" opened in drugstores and other commercial outlets.

Third, the union is demanding that Canada Post cease harassing and firing workers, es-

pecially around sick leave. The rate of firing is 35 per month across the country, as compared with 5 per month between 1981 and 1984.

Finally, postal workers are demanding that Canada Post allocate \$42 million a year to expand door-to-door delivery to 400,000 households in small communities.

According to CUPW president Jean-Claude Parrot, Canada Post's last contract proposal included a \$3,600 signing bonus and increases of "less than 3 percent a year over a four-year contract."

The stakes in the postal workers struggle are high. This battle is the first major challenge by a section of the labor movement to a series of wage controls and wage freezes recently imposed on public servants across the country by the federal and several provincial governments.

In the weeks leading up to the strike, Canada Post has promised its big-business clients that it will use its 15,000 managers and nonunion employees to more "vital mail" in the eventuality of a strike action.

CUPW answered with a public commitment to continue to deliver unemployment, social welfare, and pension checks during a strike.

Scab hiring

Despite repeated denials of such a move, Canada Post began hiring scabs through subcontracted companies. An anonymous "national company" published an ad in the Montreal daily *La Presse* for 2,000 temporary part-time workers in the Montreal area to do work that involves "filing documents."

In the days leading to the strike, there have been scab-hiring sessions in several Toronto-area hotels. One striking CUPW member said he was offered a job at \$22 an hour by a driving company if he "didn't mind driving across a picket line."

Canada Post was planning scab operations from Air Canada cargo depots at the Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal airports. Air Canada withdrew its lease offer after the Vancouver Airport Council of Unions, representing the three unions at the airport, threatened action in support of CUPW.

On the first day of the strike the company tried to move the mail in several cities including Toronto. Five strikers were arrested there and in Ottawa, but attempts to move the mail were unsuccessful in Toronto.

At about 1:00 a.m. management at the mail center picket line tried to move a tractor trailer. Strikers blocked the driveway at the

side entrance of the plant, raising picket signs and chanting, "Go back, go back." After a ten minute standoff, the trucker retreated back into the plant to the satisfaction of the strikers who victoriously chanted, "No scab mail tonight."

Several police cars arrived minutes later from a nearby station. Then two scab trucks appeared and the pickets regrouped. The trucks roared across the street stopping literally inches from the picketers. After another tense standoff, the trucks backed across the road and parked in the police station parking lot.

In Scarborough, one picketer outside a Canada Post truck distribution center had her foot run over by a scab truck driver.

Federal workers pledge solidarity

On August 9, CUPW and the 170,000 member Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) signed a pact of solidarity in which both unions pledged to beef up each other's picket lines in the event of strikes.

About 110,000 PSAC members could go on strike against the federal government on September 1. The union rejected Ottawa's move last February to impose a wage freeze on them and a 3 percent ceiling on wage increases in each of the next two years.

The government has made clear that it will not hesitate to adopt back-to-work legislation in case of a PSAC strike.

Postal worker Marcel Vallier, who works at the Ville St-Laurent mail sort center in Montreal, said at a union rally of several thousand union members the first morning of the strike, "We are in the line of fire. What we win will be very important for the whole labor movement."

The decision to hold a selective strike has been debated in many locals. The officials' tactics would have locals now on strike returning to work, with locals in other cities then setting up picket lines.

At the Montreal union meeting strikers decided by a margin of 60 percent that they would remain on strike and not return to work as planned.

This resolve was expressed by many strikers on the picket lines across the country. At the same time, several said they were concerned that the federal government will legislate them back to work after a few weeks as it did in 1987 against the pre-fusion CUPW.

Ned Dmytryshyn from Vancouver and Maggie Trowe from Montreal contributed to this article.

British coal miners' branch strikes to protest firing

BY PETE CLIFFORD
AND MARK WEINSTEIN

SHEFFIELD, England — Members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) struck the Frickley colliery near here for three weeks in August to protest the sacking (firing) of a mine worker.

Union members voted 71 percent in favor

of the strike which began August 5 and solid picket lines kept the colliery closed down.

British Coal's area director intervened at Frickley, insisting on sacking the miner for sleeping while underground.

"This is the first time that a man discovered asleep has been treated this way at this pit," a union branch statement said.

Branch secretary Steve Tulley explained that the miner "was on day shift. He'd been up all night with a sick child. When he sat down to have his meal break, he did what thousands of others have done and simply nodded off."

Tulley said another union member at the nearby Denby Grange colliery was fined £300 the previous week for sleeping, adding the vote in favor of the strike "shows how strongly people here feel. It could happen to anyone."

At a mass meeting on August 10 union leaders mapped out a campaign to explain the fight throughout the Yorkshire area. Twelve thousand leaflets with facts on the firing were distributed in the following days to miners in the area. "Today it is a member of the NUM Frickley branch," the leaflet read. "Tomorrow, and purely by chance, it could be you. We ask for your support."

The strike at Frickley became a big topic of discussion among miners throughout Yorkshire. Union members at the Bentley colliery walked off the job for two days in support. But the majority in most locals decided against similar solidarity actions.

Frickley miners faced a daily fine of £175,000 if they led an "unofficial" action as defined by the government's antiunion "employment laws." This includes striking without holding a secret ballot to sending pickets to collieries in the surrounding coalfield.

Given this situation, miners at Frickley decided in an August 24 meeting to end the strike and return to work. The case of the sacked union member will now be taken up at an industrial tribunal.

Tulley said in an interview after the meeting while the local "may be disappointed with what has happened, whatever the outcome of this case we're not prepared to let British Coal walk all over our members."

Mark Weinstein is a member of the Maltby branch of the National Union of Mineworkers in the Yorkshire Area.



Militant/K.C.Ellis

PHILADELPHIA — Kathy Mickells, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Philadelphia, is running on a slate with socialist candidates for city council Maureen Coletta, member of the United Auto Workers; Stephen Frum, a student at Temple University; and Francisco Picado, a garment worker. Supporters turned in 5,584 signatures July 31 to place the slate on the ballot.

Mickells, a refinery worker and member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, said the candidates would present a "working-class perspective and a program to confront the crisis facing workers here and around the world."

You are invited to a Socialist Campaign Open House following Solidarity Day rally

Place: Washington Court Hotel, 525 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C.

Time: 2:00 to 6:00 p.m., August 31

Speakers: James Warren, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago in spring 1991, member United Steelworkers of America Local 3247
Kate Kaku, National Committee member Young Socialist Alliance, Socialist Workers Party

Sponsored by Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers 1991 Campaign