

POLITICS

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New Leadership, Democracy and Solidarity Needed Can the Decline of the Labor Movement Be Stopped?

By SUZANNE FORSYTH DORAN

By now it is fast becoming old news that American labor is in worse shape today than it was 60 years ago. In 1932, three years before passage of the National Labor Relations Act legalized the right of working people to organize unions and bargain collectively,

the year 2000 five percent or less of the private sector will be unionized, the lowest level since the labor movement began in the late 19th century.

There has been a lot of speculation in both the mainstream and left press that this decline is inevitable because changes in the economy have eroded labor's traditional base of membership—shrinking jobs

however, Canadian unions have moved from representing 25 percent of the work force to 32 percent while facing similar economic trends. And in fact, most of the gains in terms of union membership in the last 20 years in the U.S. have been among workers in the service sector, primarily women.

Unions have declined in part because the right to organize and bargain collectively—won only after major union victories during the 1930s—has been systematically subverted. Workers face the prospect of being fired, harassed and otherwise intimidated by virtually unrestrained employers. At least one in 20 workers who wants to join a union is fired. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), ostensibly created to protect workers' rights, delays conducting elections and certifying victories, and hasn't hit employers who violate labor laws with

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May 8 rally at San Francisco International Airport protesting United Airlines' plan to sell off union jobs.

about 15 percent of the private sector work force belonged to unions. Today only about 12 percent does. An often quoted prediction says that if current trends continue, by

in basic industry while the service sector expands—and because of the labor movement's supposed lack of "relevancy" to today's workers. During the last 30 years,

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We are entering the worst capitalist crisis in over 60 years. The collapse of the Soviet Union only exacerbates this process. Sudden and severe international and domestic conflicts are inevitable as the rich compete with each other for control of markets and resources, tightening screws on the poor to raise profits. The bulk of the economic and social burden falls immediately and most heavily on the working people and oppressed of the world. In the United States, increased attacks on working people in general are disproportionately affecting women, African-Americans, Latinos, Asians/Pacific Islanders, Native American Indians, and youth.

Only a consciously organized and militant mass response can resolve the deepening crisis in the interests of the immense majority of humanity. The key is independent political action by the working class. We need to break out of the framework of the two party system controlled by the rich. Activists for In-

dependent Socialist Politics (AISP) seeks to rebuild the socialist movement in the United States through collaboration and democratic discussions with other activists and groups fighting for fundamental social change. We are activists in trade unions, feminist groups, Black, Latino and Asian groups, student groups, and other movements for social change.

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South Africa's "Creeping" Civil War

By CAROLINE LUND

South Africa is in the throes of a mighty upheaval.

The downtrodden Black majority is pushing forward toward a democratic, non-racial society, amid intense debate over strategy and tactics. The first one-person-one-vote election in South African history could take place within a year.

A "creeping" civil war exists, with the white supremacist regime fostering police terror, random violence, assassinations, and anti-social behavior to disrupt the democratic movement. More than 40,000 murders have occurred in the past two years,

95 percent of them unsolved. Tensions appear to be near the breaking point, as young Blacks taunt police, demonstrators march on police stations, heavily armed white supremacist groups like the Afrikaner Resistance Movement publicly flaunt their weapons, and the government threatens a return to emergency repressive measures

The world capitalist recession has hit South Africa with a vengeance. Unemployment is around 48 percent and inflation is at 20 percent. Even white working people are feeling the pinch. The harsh struggle for survival fosters a breakdown of social solidarity. The union movement is suffering from the employers' assault. The trade union federation COSATU has for the first time lost members—some 75,000 over the past two years, due to mine and plant closures.

Within the liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC) has led the drive toward a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa, through mass actions as well as negotiations with the white supremacist government headed by



At a community meeting in Kiskamahock the Imfingu people hear a report back from negotiations with de Klerk about returning to land from which they had been forcibly removed.

F.W. de Klerk. The gains wrested from the regime so far (repeal of apartheid laws and repressive legislation, release of political prisoners, return of exiles, and the multi-party negotiations process) have already brought important changes to South Africa (see accompanying story by Marina Carman).

Growing polarization

As the racist regime sees its days are numbered, polarization has occurred, among Blacks as well as whites. The Black elite in many of the bantustan governments, which were set up as pillars of the white regime, are siding openly with the racist government.

Chief Mangosutho Buthelezi of the KwaZulu bantustan, for example, has engineered a bloc between his Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the white supremacist Conservative Party and Afrikaner Volksunie.

The IFP-white supremacist bloc demands that South Africa be carved into various Black and white autonomous regions with a weak, federated central gov-

ernment. This would preserve a South Africa shaped by white supremacy and Black tribal divisions. In May, thousands of white farmers, led by a group of military and police officials, rallied around demands for a "white homeland".

The ANC is attempting to forge the broadest possible front to destroy apartheid and begin reconstructing a new South African nation based on non-racial, non-tribal democracy.

ANC perspective

Its Strategic Perspectives document, adopted last November, begins with the assessment that the

liberation movement does not now have the capacity to overthrow the apartheid regime through a revolutionary seizure of power. Therefore, it states, the most realistic course is: "a negotiations process combined with mass action and international pressure which takes into account the need to combat counter-revolutionary forces and at the same time uses phases in the transition to qualitatively change the balance of forces in order to secure a thorough-going democratic transformation."

"The fundamental goal of the national liberation struggle," states the document, "is the transfer of power to the people as a whole and the establishment of a united, non-racist, non-sexist and democratic society. This should not be confused with the immediate objectives we set for ourselves in each phase of the transition. At the same time, we should ensure that the immediate objectives we pursue do not have the effect of blocking our longer-term goals."

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I've Come To Tell You How Good Things Are

Matt McCarten is the President of the New Zealand New Labor Party and the Chair and central organizer of the Alliance.

The New Labor Party was formed in 1989 after the ruling Labor Party embarked on a "free market" economic policy, beginning a process of attacks on the union movement and privatization of New Zealand's economy. The party split with McCarten, who was secretary of the Trades Council of the Labor Party, leading a significant section of unionists out of the Labor Party. An alliance was formed between the New Labor Party and Mana Motuhake, the movement of the indigenous Maori people of New Zealand for self-determination.

When the National Party won power, they accelerated the process of union-busting and economic grief for workers and indigenous people begun by the Labor Party precipitating a more general search for answers on the part of the progressive movement. McCarten, who is a Maori, took the initiative in forming a broader alliance with the Greens and two smaller parties, the Liberals and the Democrats. The Alliance has captured the imagination of those who want change in New Zealand. As we go to press, the latest polls show the Alliance leading in the three way race for the November national elections.

This speech was given April 22 in San Francisco at the Women's Building to a forum co-sponsored by the SF Greens, GreenTalk Series, San Francisco Committees of Correspondence and the SF Green Party. It has been edited for space and clarity.—ALEX CHIS

Before I start, Greetings from New Zealand, but particularly from the Green Party in New Zealand. Every time I talk to any group that has Green Party members in it, I give international greetings from the Green Party in New Zealand!

I haven't been to the northern hemisphere before, but from all the interviews I've had on radio and in the media, they always expect me to tell how terrible things are in another part of the world. I haven't come to tell you how terrible things are, I've come to tell you how good things are. There is a country in the world where progressive forces, which involve ordinary people from all walks of life, are actually taking back their community against the forces which seem to have some malicious joy in beating them back. In New Zealand we've had the problems that other countries have had, but the difference in New Zealand is that we're organizing a mass base of progressive forces from every movement possible, from the peace movement, a huge environmental movement, the Women's movement, the Maori movement, minority groups, the Gay and Lesbian movement, the Trade Union movement, the unemployed movement have all come together around a common

By MATT McCARTEN

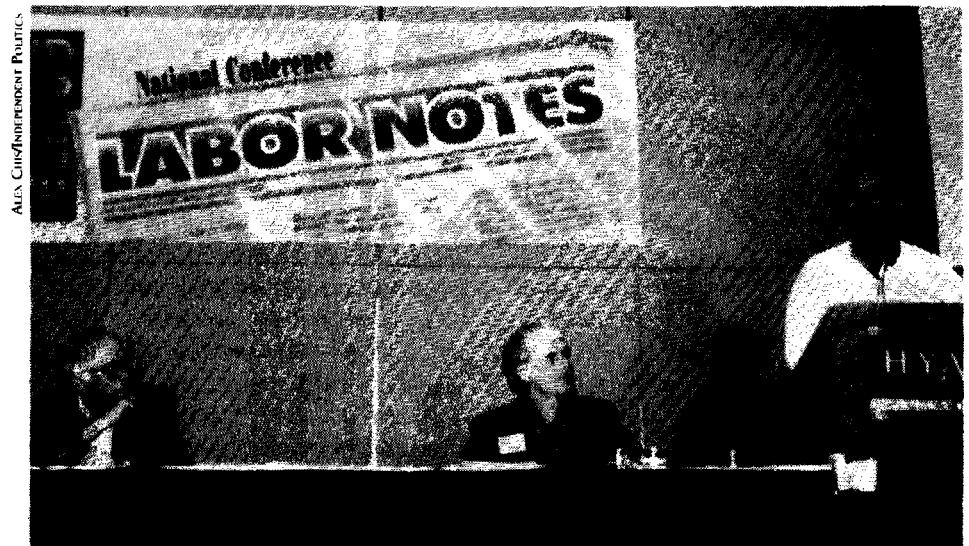
program, have built a mass base and are doing very well.

The Alliance is made up of the Green Party, the New Labor Party, Mana Motuhake, [and two smaller parties]. The Green Party speaks for itself, what forces make that up. The environmental movement is very strong. For example, the Greenpeace organization in New Zealand, with a population of just over three mil-

lion, is 180,000 members. There are two other environmental movements with over 100,000 members.

Maori people, who have always been oppressed—every indigenous people that has been colonized has been oppressed—make up 15 percent of our country. What happened in the mid-seventies is Maori people said no longer will we become victims, we will organize ourselves, and a movement of Maoris was formed called Mana Motuhake, which means self-determination through pride. We organized our community to be a real force in New Zealand politics.

In the Alliance with the Green Party is the New Labor Party, which I am the president of. It is a party in which two-thirds are unemployed. We are a party of poor people, of what you would call the underclass. We are a mass party of workers and we represent that constituency. So the Alliance brings us the Greens, indigenous people and labor. And that is a connection which hasn't been done before. We have ordinary New Zealanders. We have no business backing at all. All our funding comes from our own members and our own supporters by raising money the hard way and we're proud of



Matt McCarten, Chair of the New Zealand Alliance and President of the New Labor party, addressing the Labor Notes National Conference in Detroit at its opening session Friday night, April 23. Also pictured (left to right) are U.S. Congressman Bernie Sanders and Kim Moody, Executive Director of Labor Notes.

it, because we won't be accountable to outsiders. We aren't going to buy our way to victory, we are actually arguing and discussing. We'll win by convincing people of our ideas.

One of the exciting things for us is that we are a very new organization. We've only been around [as the Alliance] for 18 months now. What we have is a whole block of people who are searching. We are coming together to see what we have in common. And one of the interesting things has always been that labor and the environment were at odds. Members had always been trained that if you protect the environment you would somehow lose

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1100 Labor Activists Meet

This was the seventh Labor Notes conference and the largest. Held every two years in Detroit under the sponsorship of *Labor Notes*, a monthly magazine published by the Labor Education and Research Project, the conference brings together activists in the union movement from around the United States and even the world with participation this year from Canada, Mexico, Japan, Sweden and other countries. Among the speakers this year were Ron Daniels, Campaign for a New Tomorrow; Elaine Bernard, former chair of the New Democratic Party (British Columbia); Bernie Sanders, Congressman from Vermont; Bob Wages, President, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW); Juan González, New York Newspaper Guild; and Matt McCarten, President of the New Zealand New Labor Party.

There were over fifty workshops and union meetings with topics such as the Mexican Labor Movement: Labor Rights as Human Rights, A Shorter Work Week, Environmental Racism and Stopping Sexual Harassment. *Labor Notes* regularly reports on the struggles for a fighting, democratic labor movement. Subscriptions are \$15/yr. to *Labor Notes*, 7435 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, MI 48210.—ALEX CHIS

Matt McCarten Addresses Labor Notes Conference New Zealand Alliance Leader Tours the United States

By ALEX CHIS

The highlight of Matt McCarten's U.S. tour was the Labor Notes Conference in Detroit, April 23-25 where he spoke to an audience of over 1,100 on the conference's opening night. His account of how the Alliance, a coming together of labor, Greens and the indigenous Maori population was created, received warm applause.

He explained that the Alliance had already won elections in Auckland, the largest city in New Zealand, and ended his talk with a story of a recent strike there. On a Monday the police had broken up a strike of Maori and other Pacific Island workers, hospitalizing several workers and arresting many more. Early the next morning the Alliance mobilized, with hundreds of people coming to lend support. The police also mobilized, about 250 of them in full riot gear, and they proceeded to advance on the strikers. They stopped short realizing that at the head of the workers' demonstration were Alliance MPs (Members of Parliament), mayors, and other city officers, part of the 78 officials the Alliance recently elected in Auckland. The police were not up to bashing MPs heads; they withdrew and told the owner that they could do nothing more. The workers had a settlement that afternoon, winning all their demands. That story of how the Alliance uses its elected officials on the front lines drew enthusiastic applause from the Labor Notes conference participants.

McCarten's tour, which was sponsored nationally by the Committees of Correspondence (CoC), began in the Bay Area, where the City Councils of Berkeley and Oakland passed proclamations welcoming him. He spoke to audiences in San Francisco [see speech in this issue], Berkeley and Stanford. He also addressed members of Local 2 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE), the Alameda County Central Labor Council, the American Indian Youth conference,

and the International Indian Treaty Council.

From the Bay Area he went to Detroit to participate in the Labor Notes conference, where he spoke to the People of Color caucus with Ron Daniels and participated in the Committees of Correspondence Hospitality Suite. Then it was on to Chicago where he spoke on area campuses, including Loyola and the Parkside and Urbana campuses of the University of Wisconsin. He addressed an International Forum on Indigenous Rights, did a radio interview with Studs Terkel, and spoke to a city-wide forum at the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union hall co-sponsored by Greenpeace, Labor Party Advocates and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

In his one-day stop in Pittsburgh, McCarten had a Labor Breakfast, addressed a campus meeting, a city-wide meeting, and spoke with a group of people from organizations who are doing independent electoral politics in the Pittsburgh area. From Pittsburgh, McCarten went to Washington, D.C. where he had a brown bag lunch at the Institute for Policy Studies co-sponsored by Greenpeace, a reception organized by the D.C.-area CoC, and meetings with U.S. government representatives including Sen. Robb, chair of the Senate Asia/Pacific subcommittee. A meeting with Jack Odell and others from the Rainbow Coalition got into the mechanics of forming and working in an independent alliance such as the one in New Zealand.

From D.C. McCarten flew to Los Angeles where he had a campus meeting, a meeting with the Greens and the Socially Responsible Singles and a city-wide meeting at the HERE Local 11 hall. His last speaking engagement of the tour was a meeting in Salt Lake City at the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union hall

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Behind the Bosnia-Herzegovina Crisis

By MALIK MIAH

The major Western imperialist powers are debating how to stop "ethnic cleansing" (mass expulsions, rape and murder) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a republic in the former unified Yugoslavia. There is no agreement. Washington favors direct military action to stop the Serbian nationalists. The European powers say such intervention would lead to an escalation of the conflict. They argue for more diplomacy.

Meanwhile Slavic Muslims are being slaughtered, raped and deported from their historic homes in Bosnia by both Croatian and Serbian nationalists.

Should the West send troops to Bosnia? Should the arms embargo be lifted? Or is the tragedy so complex, as most European governments argue, that only a diplomatic solution (the Vance-Owen solution of cantonization of Bosnia) be pursued?

Support the Bosnians

Both President Clinton's call for imperialist intervention and the "too complex" line argued by London, Paris and Bonn should be rejected. Working people must take the side of the Bosnian people seeking to maintain the multi-ethnic character of their region. We must stand with the anti-chauvinist Bosnians who are Serbian, Croatian and Muslim and reject Great Serbian and Great Croatian nationalism.

It is noteworthy that the Western press is very quiet about the Bosnian Serbs and Croats who oppose the reactionary nationalist regimes in Croatia and Serbian-controlled Yugoslavia. It reflects the hypocrisy of the imperialist powers who today blame the Serbians for the violence in Bosnia even though the same powers yesterday encouraged these reactionary nationalists to fight the former communist regime and push for capitalist restoration. What we see are the chickens coming home to roost.

The collapse of Yugoslavia was not inevitable, nor is the current tragedy in Bosnia. It can be explained and under-

stood. The Serbs, Croats, and Muslims have not always hated and fought each other. There was no historic blood feud as the nationalist Great Serbians, Croats and the Western powers claim.

Modern Yugoslavia's roots go back to the last century when the South Slavic peoples of all ethnic origins united to resist foreign domination. The first "Kingdom of Slovenes, Serbs and Croats" (later called Yugoslavia in 1929) was formed



after World War I with the collapse of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. The southern Slavs fought against foreign domination. They continued during and after World War II. The Partisan Movement led by the Communist leader Tito organized a successful anti-capitalist socialist revolution.

Yugoslavia from its earliest beginnings was a multi-ethnic state. The Serbs, Croats, Slavic Muslims (Croats and Serbians) and other ethnic groups lived together peacefully. Tito's Yugoslavia in fact explicitly recognized the national differences of the various republics of the federal state. There was a conscious mixing of the populations and cultures, including mixed marriages. And the rights of Serb minorities in Croatia and Albanians in Serbia were all protected.

Bosnian Serbs and Croats, like their cousins in other parts of Yugoslavia, were not chauvinists.

While the violence has changed that for many, it was not written on a sacred wall. There was no genuine socialist leadership based on respect for all ethnic communities' rights to counter the reactionary nationalists who took power from the Stalinist rulers.

Collapse of Command Economy

The current crisis and breakup of Yugoslavia is a result of the same process that occurred in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The Yugoslav state fell apart because of the crisis of the Stalinist "self-management" system and its bureaucratic top down command economy. The system had worked for 40 years because it had allowed the standard of living of the masses to steadily improve until the late 1970s even though there were few democratic rights.

When the economy began to collapse in the late 1970s and early 1980s, reactionary nationalists used ethnic chauvinism to push pro-capitalist and rightist solutions. It was easy for the Serb nationalists, for instance, to blame Croatia (a more developed region) for the problems of the country. Instead of a democratic Yugoslavia, the nationalists (who in most cases were former leaders of the Communist Party) in Serbia pushed for a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. Croatian nationalists responded by calling for Croatia for Croats—that is, an ethnically pure region where the other minorities would be pushed out.

The European powers, led by Germany, responded by supporting an independent Croatia and Slovenia and quick recognition of other republics. This killed the possibility of a democratic multi-ethnic Yugoslavia and meant the stronger republics would seek to incorporate "their" people from other republics into their "nation." *The imperialist policy toward Yugoslavia's move to free-market capitalism encouraged separatism and thus the war of ethnic cleansing.*

Not surprisingly, former Stalinist turned super-nationalist Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic and his Croat counterpart Franjo Tudjman have the same objective: consolidate political power for their "nation" against all others in the Balkans. Their counterparts in Bosnia even met in 1992 to discuss how to carve up Bosnia only for Serbians and Croats. They agreed that the Muslims had to be cleansed from their historic land.

The purpose of the so-called Vance-Owen peace plan is to accept the status quo with a face-saving formula. The formula is that Bosnian Serbs and Croats get most of the Muslim land they occupy, but they must allow the Muslims to control some areas.

The imperialists and their new ally Russia can live with ethnic cleansing. What they fear is a major Balkan war that spreads to Hungary, Albania, Greece, Turkey and across Europe.

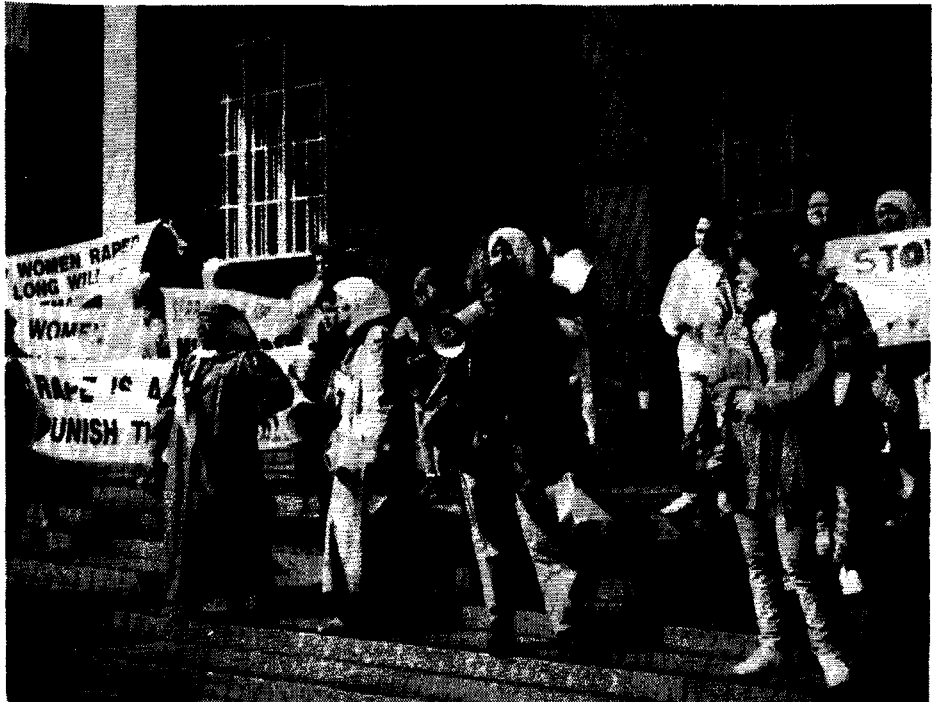
Even though Washington is now backing the Vance-Owen plan, it is not so sure this status quo containment policy will work. But this difference with the European allies is primarily tactical. (Not surprisingly, after Bosnian Serbs overwhelmingly rejected the Vance-Owen plan by referendum in May, Washington and its European allies, including Russia, now call for placing Bosnian Muslims in "safe havens" – i.e., apartheid-type reservations – which is *de facto* acceptance of Serb and Croat control of conquered territory.)

What must be done? Working people and socialists in the United States need to get out the truth about the situation in Yugoslavia and explain the roots of the conflict. We must expose the hypocrisy of the imperialist powers and explain why direct military intervention will not protect the interests of Muslims and other minorities from Great Serbian and Great Croatian chauvinism.

The arms embargo to the Bosnian defenders must be lifted. The reactionary nationalists have weapons. Supporters of the Muslims and a multi-ethnic Bosnia don't.

No to Great Serbian and Great Croatian nationalism!

No to imperialist military intervention!
For multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina! ▼



February demonstration at the San Francisco Federal Building by Muslim women protesting the rape of women in Bosnia.

Women Protest War Crimes Against Women in Bosnia

By CLAUDETTE BÉGIN

There is growing solidarity among women of all religious and ethnic backgrounds protesting the crimes against women in Yugoslavia. Several public denunciations of these crimes have occurred in San Francisco this year.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) sent out a call in February to its local chapters to organize protests demanding an end to the rape and murder of women in Bosnia and other regions of former Yugoslavia. While planning for a protest at United Nations Plaza, leaders of the San Francisco and East Bay NOW learned that a group of Muslim women were planning a protest of their own at the federal building in San Francisco. A march from the NOW rally to that protest was organized.

Some 150 people gathered at the two protests to hear speakers denounce the rapes and "sex camps" in Yugoslavia. The protesters demanded an end to the arms

embargo on Bosnia, for an international war crimes tribunal to commence immediately and for an immediate opening up of the detention camps for investigation. Many of the demonstrators had attended the convention of the International Association of Muslim Women the previous week where several groups of women decided to organize a protest. All the speakers at their rally were women. Their message: "We don't want the U.S. to intervene. We just want the right to defend ourselves."

A group of Serbian chauvinists attempted to disrupt both demonstrations. The Serbian nationalists also tried to shout down the speakers. But unified chanting by the crowd quickly silenced them. Fierce individual debates raged on. Passersby were even drawn in.

In Washington, D.C., NOW President Patricia Ireland issued a statement to the national media calling for an international war crimes tribunal and an end to the arms embargo. ▼

"We will resist, we will win!" A Report Back from Cuba

"Resisteremos, Venceremos!" "We will resist, we will win!"

I returned from a recent trip to Cuba in May convinced that this is not only a slogan but a reality. The Cuban revolution can survive the dangerous situation it faces today. Those of us who have watched with dismay the defeat of the Sandinistas, the racist riots in Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union too easily brace ourselves for another disaster. That is not the attitude in Cuba.

The Peace for Cuba delegation I traveled with was headed by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, distinguished author Alice Walker, and American Indian leader Dennis Banks. We took \$75,000 worth of medicine and two ophthalmological neurologists to help confront the crisis. We were shown the Cuban medical system and good causes for optimism.

Cuba does face the most serious challenge since its Revolution in 1959. The United States tightened the economic blockade with passage of the Torricelli Bill last year, periodically threatens Cuba with military war games and bombards the island with propaganda broadcasts daily. The collapse of the Soviet Union means that Cuba can no longer obtain fair prices

By DIANE WANG

for its goods. The island is living on about 22 percent of its former income with its international purchasing power falling dramatically. The recent "storm of the century" did some \$1 billion worth of damage and destroyed vital crops.

The same leadership that led a handful of fighters in the Sierra Maestra to take power from the dictator Batista 34 years ago does not find these odds against Cuba overwhelming. They have charted a careful course to develop Cuba's economy despite the intensified U.S. blockade and are deepening the revolutionary commitment of the Cuban people.

Medical research and exports

While the United States and Soviet Union devoted billions of dollars to weapons and space exploration, Cuba has spent the bulk of its research money on the development of medicine. As a result, Cuba has developed a highly sophisticated biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry.

The Finlay Research Institute, which we visited, demonstrates the tremendous economic potential. Concepcion Campa Huergo, the Institute's director and a

member of the Council of State, is the discoverer of the only vaccine effective against men-

ingitis B. Finlay is heads a national program of research, development, and production of vaccines at 20 centers. They produce vaccines against meningitis, rabies, measles, rubella, hepatitis B, diphtheria, polio and tetanus.

The center is now developing vaccines against hepatitis A and C, as well as an effective vaccine against cholera and even against parasitic infections. Other Cuban centers have developed a remarkable epidermal growth factor that dramatically speeds the recovery of burn victims and PPG-40, a by-product of sugar cane that effectively lowers cholesterol.

This work is a tremendous potential for export and income. UNICEF and most developing countries cannot afford the exploitative prices charged by U.S. pharmaceutical firms. At a recent international gathering in Bogota, Columbia for example, Cuba offered 50 million vaccines necessary for a massive neonatal tetanus program at a reasonable price.

Even in the Special Period, as the current course of rationing and tight budgeting is called, medical research is given a priority. "We are not simply dealing with a business," the Finlay directors explained, "but with life and death."

Selling sun, rum and cigars

Cuba is also expanding its tourist trades from Canada, Europe and Latin America to attract foreign currency. The elegant Comodoro Hotel where we stayed, for example, earns \$20 million each year for Cuba.

Many progressives in the United States shudder at the tourist trade, pointing to the evidence of prostitution that has reappeared, the tensions and corruption that seem like an inevitable consequence. But an interview with the director of the Hotel Comodoro, as well as discussions with our tour guides, bus boys and waitresses convinced me that again we underestimated the Cubans.

Rogelio Rodriguez, the Comodoro's director, responded firmly when I asked



Alice Walker, foreground, and Ramsey Clark, right, with doctors at the William Soler Pediatric Hospital in Havana, open boxes of donated medicines.

whether Cubans tried to get jobs in the tourist industry so that they would have access to foreigners and their money. He admitted that there might be some who are so self-centered, "but that is not the human quality of our youth," he insisted. "They are the creators and bearers of our revolution."

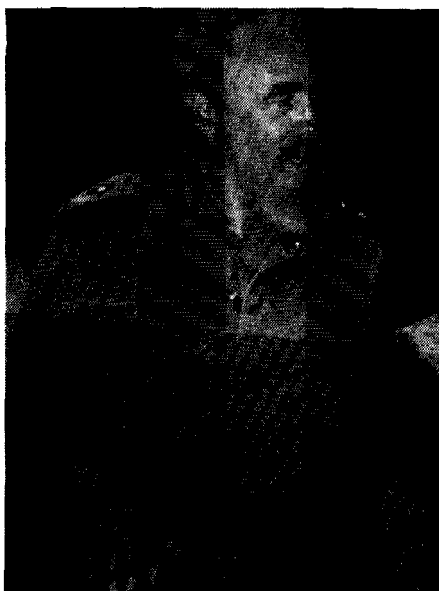
As evidence, he pointed out that the hotel personnel pool their tips, sharing it among all the workers and donating a portion for public health. After the storm, the hotel's workers showed such all-out dedication to repair the damage that the hotel was ready for business one week later, earning an award from the Confederation of Cuban Trade Unions and a visit from Cuban president Fidel Castro. The workers also donated \$6,000 to help in Cuba's reconstruction. The hotel has active branches of the trade union and the Union of Communist Youth. In the last year, nearly one-third of the 650 workers have participated in the volunteer farm production plans. "Others would like to go to the countryside and help," Rodriguez said, "but we cannot spare them from their job right now."

Food production plan

Cuba's main priority is feeding all its people. Despite the crisis, Cuba has been able to guarantee a diet of 2100 calories a day to everyone by rationing rice, beans, bread and other essentials. But the lack of concentrated feed has drastically cut the milk and meat production. While Cuba used to provide milk for all children, now it can only assure milk to children under seven years old and those on special diets.

In response, Cuba has mobilized its citizens. The Committees to Defend the Revolution organized in all Cuba's communities maintain small garden plots to help supplement people's supply. But most importantly, people are volunteering to go to the countryside for periods ranging from two weeks to two years to increase farm production.

We visited a state farm outside Havana, one of eight that provides most of the food for both the city and province of Havana. Along with the 1,400 regular workers, the farm now has 10 contingents of volunteers. Three contingents are made up of those



The delegation also met with Fidel Castro.

who come to work for two weeks. The other seven contingents at this one farm are made up of 2,400 volunteers who are devoting two years to food production. These people work 11 days and then go home to the city for three days. The results have been dramatic: food production at this one farm has increased from 24,000 to 55,000 tons a year.

The farms have responded to the Special Period with other innovations. While two years ago this farm relied entirely on oil-fueled machinery, they now have 268 oxen to help instead. They have found a good fertilizer in sugar cane fiber to replace imported chemicals. In fact, Cuba is now using 120 products from sugar cane.

The high spirit of these contingents was expressed by one older Afro-Cuban woman we spoke with working in a kitchen. "How long are you here?" we asked. "I'm staying until the Special Period ends!" she answered.

Above all, Cuba is maintaining the values it established with the Revolution. Cuba still commits its resources to helping those most vulnerable. Despite the serious food situation, AIDS patients are still guaranteed a diet of 5,400 calories a day. The psychiatric hospital still has a full-time orchestra that plays in a pavilion for patients and live musicians to assist in psycho-ballet. Instead of dismissing cultural efforts as luxury, Cuba still devotes resources to institutions like Casa de las

Americas, which nurtures not only Cuban artists but artists from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Human solidarity, generosity, an eagerness to provide everyone with a productive and spiritual life—these remain the standards of the Cuban Revolution.

This course was definitively approved in the last Cuban elections held a few months ago. Cuba changed its electoral methods to provide for direct election to the National Assembly and to assure nomination of candidates from the grassroots communities. Dissidents in Cuba and right-wingers in Miami turned the election into a referendum by mounting a strong campaign urging people to nullify their ballots (a democratic possibility we do not have in the United States). Despite their loud campaign, with more than 95 percent of the voters casting ballots, only seven percent chose to nullify. The huge majority of Cubans voted "yes" for the revolutionary leadership and path.

As Sergio Lopez of the Cuban Institute for the Friendship of the People's explained, "There is quite a difference between people who complain and who want to change the system. There are some who don't share our socialist ideals, but when the gunboats come, they ask to help defend the island."

The Cubans are doing everything possible to defend the Revolution against the New World Order. Olga Alonso, who formerly lived in Germany and saw what reunification meant, summarized the Cuban attitude very well. She described to me how many of her German friends from the Communist Party and government there had committed suicide in the face of reunification. "But we Cubans would never commit suicide. We will never give up fighting," she said.

That should be our attitude as well. Here in the United States, we should organize solidarity and material aid. Most of all, we must recommit ourselves to doing all we can to protest, challenge and end the criminal U.S. blockade. ▼

Diane Wang is Financial Secretary of Local 1-326 Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union in Rodeo, California and a longtime Cuba solidarity activist.

Bankruptcy and Monopoly in the Skies

By CARL FINAMORE

Commercial aviation in the United States got off the ground in 1925

when Congress authorized mail delivery by private carriers. Both American Airlines and United Airlines trace their origins to the first federal contracts awarded. Things really took off in 1927 after Col. Charles Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic. Airlines grew at lightening speed, aided by unprecedented advances in technology, primarily resulting from military research paid for by tax dollars.

Today, however, all the major airlines have fallen on hard times. A March 1993 Merrill Lynch report confirmed "that in the last three years the U.S. airline industry has lost over \$7 billion, more money than the industry has earned in its entire history, and that 20 percent of the industry's capacity is now operated by carriers under protection of the U.S. bankruptcy courts."

Top executives use this nose dive in profits to pressure concessions from a work force that already gave up billions of dollars in wages and benefits during the 1980s. Recently, many airlines have either imposed wage reductions, like Delta and US Air, or have demanded unions negotiate major give-backs, like United and Northwest. These carriers claim that lowering labor costs is the only way they can survive. At least that's what we're told, or should I say sold.

Here's some facts. Most financial analysts predict an upturn in both passenger traffic and profits in the immediate future. United Airlines, for example, experienced a 17 percent increase in March this year over the revenue passenger miles it flew in March of last year. Even Merrill Lynch with its gloomy current assessment pegs 1994 industry profits at over \$400 million. Boeing also confidently observed that the losses incurred in the last three years could be halted by merely adding \$5 to the price of every ticket sold.

In other words, despite recent huge losses, the mega-carriers are well positioned to reap big profits as the market rebounds. This means companies have to act quickly against labor. "If strength is

coming back to the industry, it's going to make bargaining more difficult later," says former US Air Inc. chairman Edwin I. Colodny (*Business Week*, April 12, 1993).

The corporate myth that high wages and benefits are wrecking the industry just doesn't fly. In fact, labor costs have decreased from 37.3 percent to 33.8 percent of operating costs between 1980 and 1990. Fuel costs decreased even more



May 8 rally at San Francisco International Airport.

dramatically during that decade, dropping from 31 percent of total operating costs to 17.7 percent.

The airline crisis is management made. It is primarily a result of monopolistic attempts by the majors to squeeze out their competition. And to a large degree they have succeeded. Starting with around 36 percent of the market in 1985, the Big Three—American, United and Delta—cornered almost 60 percent of the market by 1992. To accomplish their goal, these mega-carriers expanded by an astounding 40 percent from 1989 to 1992. Management's ambitious expansion plan was based on the false premise that Eastern, Pan Am, Midway, American West, TWA, Continental and even US Air, would crash and go out of business.

As it turned out, the latter four survived leading to excessive passenger capacity and half-empty airplanes. A fierce wave of fare wars ensued which lowered

profits even more. Reversing engines, virtually every airline except profitable no-frills

Southwest Airlines, has embarked upon a substantial capital reduction plan which involves laying off employees and cancelling or postponing new plane deliveries. From 1990 to 1991 alone, about 55,000 U.S. and Canadian airline workers have lost their jobs.

And still the carriers claim they need more from the workers. One major union is not buying it. The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) represents 26,000 mechanic, ramp, utility and kitchen employees of United Airlines. The union has so far resisted extreme management pressure to reopen their contract which extends to November 1994. The company is deadly serious. United Airlines CEO, Stephen Wolf, was sired by corporate raider and Eastern Airlines union-buster Frank Lorenzo. So it came as no particular surprise when Wolf issued an ultimatum threatening to sell off large assets involving thousands of union jobs unless the workers caved in to demands for a substantial 25 percent reduction in wages and benefits. Still the union hung tough and said no to concessions.

Instead, the IAM organized nationwide job site protests in May. The actions took place in 12 locations and received especially enthusiastic support in the San Francisco Bay Area where almost half of United's 26,000 IAM work force is employed. Many of these workers have either witnessed or directly experienced concession bargaining at airlines like Frontier, Republic, Flying Tigers, Continental, TWA, Pan Am or Eastern—all of whom imposed major wage and benefit cuts and then either went out of business or declared bankruptcy, leaving tens of thousands of workers without jobs.

The next few years of struggle will decide whether history will repeat itself. ▼

Carl Finamore is a ramp worker for United Airlines at San Francisco International Airport and Chair of the Shop Stewards of IAM Local Lodge 1781.

Labor Movement

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meaningful penalties.

Anti-labor federal policies began long before the recent Reagan-Bush offensive against working people. After World War II, the power of labor was on the rise. The country experienced a nationwide strike wave involving eight million workers in two years. Union membership rose to a high of 35 percent in 1945. The representatives of big business in Washington responded with the use of the anti-Communist Smith Act to purge socialists and other radicals from the unions, and the Taft-Hartley Act, which outlawed many of the most powerful tactics unions had used during the 1930s and 40s: mass picketing, secondary strikes of "neutral" employers and sit-down strikes. The Taft-Hartley Act also allowed states to pass "right to work" laws, denying unions the ability to use dues check-off and the closed shop, where union membership is required for employment.

Poverty becoming the "American Way of Life"

The decline of union power has meant falling wages and more low-wage jobs. Real wages have fallen 20 percent since the early 1970s, widening the gap between rich and poor as the American economy stagnates and social services are cut further and further. Since 1973, wages have dropped from \$437 per week (in 1991 dollars) to \$355 per week. According to *Fortune* magazine, 25 percent of the 13 million new jobs created during the 1980s were low wage jobs, averaging \$250 per week. Only 18.9 percent of the new jobs created in 1979 fell into this category. In 1979, 43 percent of new jobs had pension benefits and 23 percent had health care benefits. By 1988, 38 percent had pensions and just 15 percent offered medical care.

In real-life terms this "trend" by employers is illustrated by the February 1993 announcement by Bank of America of its intention to reduce more than 80 percent of its work force to "hourly" or "part-time" status with no job security, reduced part-time pay and no health or other benefits.



Cesar Chavez Memorial

Approximately 500 people, primarily young Latinos, participated in a Grape Boycott picket line and candlelight march through San Francisco's Mission District to honor the late Cesar Chavez on May 7.

Bank of America's rationale for this ruthless attack is that it needs a part-time work force for "flexibility," and that no-benefit, poverty wage employment is the current "trend" in the U.S. B of A doesn't require the same level of "flexibility" from its top management. Five of the *San Francisco Chronicle's* 1993 "100 Top Paid Executives" work for B of A.

Despite all the rhetoric about making supposedly unproductive, overpaid American workers "competitive" with the workers of other countries, we may soon "enjoy" a lower standard of living than many other industrialized countries. Even during the current worldwide economic crisis, European workers are still ahead of their American brothers and sisters in terms of wages and benefits. Germany's workers are nearly 40 percent unionized and earn 47 percent more in wages than U.S. workers. Back in North America, 35 percent of Canadian workers are unionized and hourly wages are seven percent higher than here. In those countries, the higher level of union organization and direct participation of the labor movement in the political process through labor party candidates results in national health care,

legally mandated maternity leave, better unemployment and pension benefits, legally mandated longer vacations, free or very low cost higher education, and sometimes a bigger say in how work places are managed.

The key to social change

In spite of the current weaknesses of the labor movement both in terms of membership and leadership, activists must be sensitive to the problems of the working class. The majority of people still live from paycheck to paycheck. The most exploited and oppressed people in society—women, Black, Latino and other national minorities—are overwhelmingly members of the working class. Economic issues can be the unifying factor across divisions of racism, sexism and homophobia. The working class is the primary agent of social change simply because it is the largest segment of society with no material interest in the status quo, and because of the key role that workers play in running society.

The labor movement must be seen by political activists and the organized left

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Labor Movement

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as the *primary* social movement. Even while unions lose ground, the majority of working people still strongly believe in them. In a recent poll of union and non-union Americans, 79 percent said they favor laws protecting workers who want a union from being fired or otherwise punished by their employer, and 60 percent believe unions have been good for working people.

Capitalism has been in economic crisis since at least the 1970s. As socialists, we must be within the rank and file of organized workers if we are to be part of new struggles as they arise. The answer is not for socialists and radicals to become staff members or union representatives and hope to influence the labor movement from the top down. Most union officials become part of the bureaucracies which control most unions. No matter what their original background or ideals, there is an incredible pressure to preserve their privileged status once they gain office. This agenda separates their interests from their own membership's interests because union officials benefit by maintaining the stability of labor relations with employers at the membership's expense. They generally end up policing the rank and file rather than building workers' confidence in themselves and their power.

For this reason, political activists must also struggle for the democratization of the unions and return them to the rank and file. Now is the time. The employer offensive is causing a crisis within the unions as the labor bureaucrats continually demonstrate their inability to organize their own members or defend, let alone advance, workers' interests. In 1972, there were 443 strikes. In 1989 there were only 43 strikes because in today's atmosphere, unions are so afraid of losing. During the 1950s, unions gained one percent of the work force each year, and won 80 percent of NLRB-run elections. Now unions lose over

50 percent of NLRB elections.

Democracy is the beginning

Most labor officials still choose to keep the peace with employers rather than risk the union treasury, the union building, their offices, their desks—no matter what the consequences to the people they supposedly represent. To them those things are the union. Because these short-sighted labor officials stand in the way of developing organization and struggle, internal fights for democracy and leadership accountability are in most cases a necessary pre-condition to changing the unions into fighting organizations. Democracy within the unions is a key issue in transforming the unions into militant instruments for social change.

The current conflict between Southern California drywallers and the Carpenters union, reported in the May issue of *Labor Notes*, is a depressing example. Although the agreement with the drywall contractors signed by the Carpenters contained many of the drywallers' demands, it also contained major concessions the drywallers did not agree to. The Carpenters union does not require a rank and file vote on contracts. There is a provision that says 50 percent of workers called back can be scabs. But the drywallers maintain that nearly 90 percent of the workers hired back are scabs and that the Carpenters union officials are allowing laid-off, mostly Anglo carpenters to take the jobs meant for the strikers. Justice for Drywallers says

that the Carpenters leadership has ignored them and if they don't change their policy, "We will leave for another union."

The role of Teamsters for a Democratic Union was key to Ron Carey's victory as international president of the Teamsters. Its continued expansion and involvement is necessary if the Teamsters union is truly to be transformed. Movements for change are developing in more and more unions—from industrial unions, such as the United Auto Workers and United Food and Commercial Workers, to the large service employee unions like the Communication Workers of America and Service Employees International Union. Virtually all of these reform movements tie democratizing the unions' internal structures to reversing labor's retreat in the workplace.

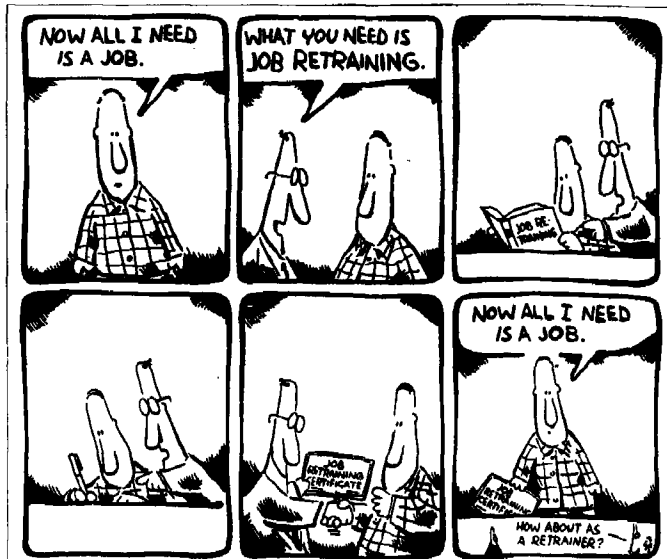
Socialists must become rank and file leaders

Few progressives and virtually no one in the labor movement disputes the dire need to organize the unorganized, both to strengthen the labor movement and to lessen the brutal exploitation of many workers. But in order for this to happen the unions themselves must be transformed. Mass organizing requires militant unions with power and determination. This is why as socialists we are more effective working as rank and filers within the unions to transform them rather than attempting to organize the unorganized ourselves. Unions need to be reformed in

order to become *capable* of waging this sort of struggle. First we must organize the organized.

The history of the labor movement shows us that successful organizing is based on union power. Unionized rank and file workers have the greatest potential for radicalization because they are forced by circumstance to struggle against the system, and they have the means through their organization to do it. The greater the militancy and strength of any union, the more likely it is to be capable of waging real organizing efforts.

It is also important to target



Tom Teles
The Buffalo News
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those industries in which the workers are more likely to organize and fight back, such as mining, trucking, auto, steel, telephone, teaching, and public employees in large urban areas, because of their economic and political power and their tradition of struggle.

Labor needs a new face

There is another side to the revitalization of the labor movement that has to do with its politics and spirit. During the 1930s, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) represented a social movement to many working people, students and intellectuals, combining their everyday economic struggles with their aspirations for social justice and dignity. Today unions are portrayed as "special interests" who only look out for their own dues-paying members. Labor activist and writer Dan La Botz has characterized these conflicting conceptions of the labor movement as "union as crusade v. union as insurance company" stating "unions are not about service, but rank and file power."

We must emphasize the word *movement* in labor movement and offer the oppressed and exploited majority an alternative vision based upon solidarity and the best interests of all society. The movement must encapsulate the aspirations of the other progressive social movements in order to do that. This is a critical issue because the face of the working class has changed. Labor cannot grow, cannot succeed unless it represents the workers as they actually are—54 percent female, and multi-ethnic. The *majority* of American workers will soon be non-white. Being pro-union must also mean being anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic and internationalist.

Championing issues such as single-payer health care will unite organized and unorganized workers across race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation and age. Were the labor movement to stand for civil rights and support women's fight for equality and actively participate in these struggles, those who have been excluded from the labor movement in the past may then look to it for support.

There are signs of change, and we need to be a part of these new developments.

Trade unionists belonging to lesbian and gay groups in New York, San Francisco and Boston, for example, are planning a June 1994 conference aimed at bringing their groups together into a national organization. An AFL-CIO reception for gay and lesbian union members was held in conjunction with the April 25 march for gay rights in Washington, DC. This was only the second time that gay and lesbian union members had been hosted by the

Australia and the Pacific Islands. David Arian, president of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union representing workers on the West Coast of the United States and Canada, explained the necessity of the conference: "We cannot keep fighting on a national front when the employers are becoming multi-national. Increased cooperation [is] necessary because of globalization of major shipping companies and the increased



Massive March for Gay Rights

As part of the historic march on Washington, DC for Gay and Lesbian Rights on April 26, 1993 gay, lesbian and bisexual couples, trios, etc. protest the U.S. government's acknowledgment of only heterosexual legally married couples by publicly marking their unions in chalk on the street in front of the IRS building. The march drew an estimated one million participants for the largest civil rights demonstration in U.S. history.

AFL-CIO—the first time being during the 1987 gay rights march. Right now the three established regional groups planning the conference are the Lesbian/Gay Labor Alliance founded in San Francisco in 1974, the Lesbian and Gay Labor Network organized in New York in 1986 and the Gay and Lesbian Labor Activists Network of Boston also formed in 1986.

Another positive development is an increasing awareness of the need for international solidarity among workers. In San Francisco, the first Pacific Rim Dockers Conference was held in April among representatives of waterfront workers from North and South America, East Asia,

concentration of economic power in fewer and fewer hands."

Labor can turn itself around, but it won't happen unless there are changes from the bottom up. Socialists and progressives must be a part of this process by becoming an integral part of the unions and participating in the developing rank and file movements for democracy, militancy and solidarity.

Suzanne Forsyth Doran is a member of Local 29 of The Office and Professional Employees International Union in San Francisco.

Part-Timers in Double Bind

By MARY DORAN

I am 25 years old and I still work part-time. I have two part-time jobs. I work in a San Francisco restaurant waiting on tables during the day and afterwards I am off to my night job at UPS. Many of the people I work with would like full-time jobs but it seems that part-time work is the wave of the future and the curse of my generation. Right now one quarter of working Americans, about 30 million people, are employed on a part-time basis. Only 15 percent of these workers have medical coverage, and less than 30 percent have a pension plan. The ability to skirt health and welfare costs is a major incentive for business owners to hire part-time workers.

People often think of part-time work as something everyone has to do these days to pay their way through school and after graduation they are expected to move on to permanent full-time jobs. Too often it doesn't work out that way. Many of us have found ourselves stuck in permanent part-time jobs.

The restaurant industry has always been notorious for giving their staff just enough hours to not have to offer their employees health insurance. The restaurant I work for is no exception. Out of a staff of 25, only five work enough hours to be eligible for the health plan offered to us. No one actually receives the health plan because it is too expensive. In fact, two of the five full-timers receive MediCal because they cannot afford the health plan that is being offered by the restaurant.

This might be forgivable if we were all students, transitional workers or on a health plan through our parents or through school. But this is not the case. Presently there is only one student working at the restaurant. The rest of us are permanent part-time workers and some of us are supporting children.

We do "get by" most of the time. There are ways of getting health care. One thing about working part-time is that you can find time to sit in the "free" clinic all day waiting to see a doctor. If you cannot get in at the clinic there is always the General Hospital Emergency Room as long

as you don't feel too silly going there for something as simple as a sore throat or a bladder infection. So that is what we do along with hoping nothing serious happens to our health.

Of course, sometimes something does come up. One man I work with has \$900 worth of dental work that needs to be done. If he had even the most basic dental plan he probably could have prevented the oral problems he has from becoming so expensive. But who can afford to go to the dentist with no insurance and working only part-time?

At UPS, my night job, we are union and part-timers get full-time benefits. There are 165,000 UPS Teamsters and 53 percent are part-timers. The average yearly pay for the part-time workers at UPS is only \$8,000 a year! UPS, like restaurant work, is one of the jobs that is thought of as a job people do to get through college. It is supposedly transitional. Unfortunately, many of us have not been able to make that transition into full-time work. It is not because we are not trying to. UPS fills its full-time work force with its part-time workers. If a part-timer wants a full-time job, they put their name on a waiting list and those full-time positions are filled based on seniority. Because less people are leaving their jobs, I've been told I could be on that list for two to three years. I've heard that it used to be one could get a full-time job less than one year after signing up for one.

With UPS workers' contract coming up for renewal this August, part-timers working there are nervous about losing their full-time benefits. Northern California is the last place where part-time workers at UPS have the same medical plan as the full-timers. In the rest of the country part-time workers are covered under the company health plan, which includes co-payments for medical and dental care. Considering the size of UPS with over half its employees being part-time, they had better expect a fight if they try to take the benefits away. I am hoping that they won't try, being concerned about the bad press

Bank of America got for cutting their part-timers

hours and taking away their health plan. A little bad press won't break Bank of America or UPS but it does put public pressure on them. Fortunately, at UPS we have collective bargaining and keeping our benefits is at the top of our agenda as well as creating more full-time jobs.

And for the first time ever part-timers have a representative on the negotiating committee. I hope that the part-timers at UPS will set an example for all part-time workers everywhere. Just because someone doesn't have a full-time job doesn't mean we don't need or deserve health care. At UPS we are not going to let them take our health plan away and I hope part-time workers across the country will start fighting for benefits that all workers deserve. ▼

McCarten Speech

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jobs, and that turns the labor movement against the environmental movement. But we've found that when we listen to people the needs and wishes are the same.

We are perceived as the progressive force in the community. We're attacked by the mainstream media every day they can get away with it. That's O.K., because we're building a different movement, we are not going to actually play their game. And that's where our strength is because what we did was we ignored the traditional media. What we did is we went out and knocked on every home. We used people power and went out and actually talked to people about the issues.

Most of our movements have the general vision of what we want. But then we have to have the discipline of how we put it together. What if we were elected—next week? That's the question that we have to ask ourselves—it actually happens! And we say it's no good talking slogans, now we had to say what we would actually do. The city I come from of a million people, Auckland, in the election results, we got 42 percent, and have 78 elected officials, two mayors, and we now control the re-

gional government. So, its all very well saying we're going to do something, now we were in a position that we have to do it!

The other side of the thing which we are doing which doesn't happen anywhere else is we judge all our policies and our ideas against three criteria. One, it's got to make economic sense; it's got to be economically sustainable. The capitalist system always does that, and it's a discipline on us. So it's got to make economic sense, but what makes us different is two other criteria. What is its social cost? Is it socially useful? Is it good for people? What are the pluses, what are the minuses? It is no good us promoting things which are economically useful but not socially useful. Is it good for people? Politics should be to help people. It shouldn't be there to oppress them. The third thing that we judge on is, is it environmentally sustainable? All our policies have to measure up. It is a very strict criteria, a discipline on us. All our policies meet this criteria.

One thing we do with our policies is say this is how much it will cost. It is very difficult for the incumbent establishment people to actually attack us, to put down our proposal. We do our homework, we say where the money is, how much it's going to cost. Then we say where the money's going to come from and that's a new thing for progressive forces. We tell them who's going to be taxed and how much. Nothing's free, and what we say is we will be honest. We tell people what it's going to cost and what's in store, so when they elect us there are no nasty surprises. They elect us on our ideas, this is what we will have to meet.

And all our candidates sign a public pledge that they will implement this policy or they will resign. We give them strict criteria and they actually put down, "We will implement this because we believe in it." Then every month, in Auckland, our elected officials turn up and they give reports on their progress and how they implemented it. When you've got five or six hundred, or eight hundred activists, all there, well I wouldn't defy a group of that number. They give reports and give respect to those forums. People aren't answerable to a party boss, or a party

It is no good promoting things which are economically useful but not socially useful. All our policies have to measure up.

structure; what they are answerable to is to the things they promised the people. We don't break promises! Our candidates are accountable to this platform. We have actually dumped elected officials who have not carried out the program in good faith. People don't mind that you're having difficulties, but you're still trying to do it. But people who have actually ducked on our policy have been dumped by the local people. Because people aren't going to put up with it; it's the new politics. That's what is different.

We've got thousands of people now, active in governing and knocking on doors—one out of four houses in New Zealand. When we knock on their doors we say, "We support you." One in 20 people actually join us. That's not bad when you get five percent of the population actually joining you, or giving money, or giving support, turning out for meetings. It is a wonderful feeling, to be part of a mass movement.

It is an exciting time in New Zealand today because we've already done wonderful things. They tried to bankrupt Auckland before we took over. They left us with a debt, they passed legislation by the central government to force us to sell off the ports, the sewerage, the water, the public transport, electricity—you name it. We ran on a program that the people are in charge. We will defy you if we are elected, we will not sell! Because how can you have an environmental program if you don't own the resources. You can't have it; you're just a mere regulatory body. Ownership of the resources like the shores, the harbors and the land—if you don't have that how can you actually be effective in carrying out decisions, decisions that are made by those who own it?

So what we've done is we've retained public ownership. What's more, we haven't gone bankrupt, because we had the people

on our side. We haven't made one worker redundant [unemployed]. We haven't sold. Not only have we made nobody redundant, have not sold off any of the properties, we actually haven't had a rate increase either. People start to realize that you can do all these things.

And these problems are throughout the world. The problems of poverty, repression and injustice and indigenous peoples' rights, self-determination, and the economic question belonging to the people, and all those issues, you can't just solve them in one country. That was the question last night—what will you do if there is international pressure. Of course we can be defeated [by U.S. interests] but we're winning the hearts and minds of people. That's how we will do it—bring them to our side. Ordinary people, if you win those, then you can stand anything.

That is our belief and it's a very exciting time and I always caution on the way that we may get it wrong. But at this time, it is right. You just have to have faith in people, we've just got to continue on. We scared the other two parties like you've never seen. That's fine. We were told that if we win, it will be the end of civilization as we know it. We've started out to do something and we're going to do it. We think we are going to do wonderful things in New Zealand. ▼

McCarten Tour

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co-sponsored by Labor Party Advocates.

Everywhere McCarten went his message that it is possible to build an alliance of workers, the unemployed, people of color and the environmentalists, and that such an alliance can actually win was warmly received. Many people signed up on mailing lists for the CoC and the Greens and went away with more enthusiasm and hope that we can do in the United States what they're doing in New Zealand. ▼

Alex Chis was the National Coordinator of the Matt McCarten Tour and is a member of the Steering Committee of the Northern California Committees of Correspondence.

Why U.S. Economy Is In a Job-Less Recovery

By BARRY SHEPPARD

The present anemic recovery following the recession of 1991 has yet to see any major reduction in unemployment. Major corporations continue to cut their work forces, not in response to the particular phase of the business cycle, but for deeper, structural reasons. At the end of last year, a *New York Times* survey showed that one-fourth of the largest companies planned to get rid of substantial numbers of their workers in 1993 whether the economy was growing or contracting.

Most of these workers will not be able to find new jobs that pay as well or have as good benefits. Real wages continue to drop as a result of this and other aspects of the capitalist offensive against the working people that has been going on since the 1970s. This drop in real wages means a drop in demand for consumer goods, which itself slows the economic recovery. Also, demand for goods produced in the U.S. on the international market is weak, due to slowdowns in Japan and Germany.

Writing in the April issue of *International Viewpoint*, Maxime Durand summarizes the situation in the main advanced capitalist countries: "1992 was another year of weak growth, hardly better than the poor results of 1991. However, there was no generalized recession on the lines of 1980-82 in the sense that all the big countries did not see a decline at the same time. The sharpest falls have been seen in the flagship countries of neo-liberalism and the balance sheet of the policies pursued in Britain and Canada is both economically very bad and socially catastrophic. The USA stabilized its economy after the decline of 1991, France and Italy saw a small amount of growth while Japan has encountered a sharp check and Germany has slowed down."

Looking at the reasons for this, she writes, "The main dimension of the present slowdown is in fact lack of sufficient outlets provided by demand by wage earners." By "demand" under capitalism, we should remember that what is meant is not "need," but need combined with the money to buy.

Roots of the crisis

For two decades or so, world capitalism has been on an offensive against the wages, living conditions, rights and organizations of working people. This offensive represented a shift in policy prompted by a new world situation. The post-Second World War boom came to an end in the 1970s. During that boom, which was based on rebuilding Europe and Japan and new technologies emerging from the war, competition between capitalists was diminished, as there appeared opportunities for productive investments for the capitalists in all the advanced countries. This was also the period of American dominance of the world market.

But by the 1970s, this dominance was being increasingly challenged. In certain fields, German and Japanese industries especially, achieved higher productivities than those in the U.S. Competition sharpened. The world market could not absorb all the goods that could be produced by the competing capitalists. There was more capacity to produce steel, for example, than the market could bear. Vast closures of steel mills hit the world, including here in the U.S. There are still "too many" automobile plants—if they all produced what they could, there would be a glut on the market.

The intensification of international capitalist competition has had a number of effects. One is a race to spread investments abroad, including in competitors' countries. Another has been to seek low wage countries to build plants that service the businesses in the advanced countries. This much talked about "globalization," however, is not a sign of decreasing competition, but the opposite. It is a result of, and intensifies, capitalist competition, as all must participate in the scramble to seek lower production costs.

The development of three large trading blocs, dominated by the U.S., Germany and Japan, is another consequence. Within these blocs certain barriers are eliminated, but between them hangs the threat of trade wars, in spite of the intertwining between them. Maxime Durand explains:

"1993 was supposed to be a golden year for Europe, with the opening of the great market and the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty [on European integration]. In reality, the panorama is radically different. Europe is bogged down in unemployment and the road proposed for its unification has turned out to be a deadend. The European Monetary System (EMS) is more than just in crisis; it has been smashed to pieces as the [British] pound, the [Italian] lira, the [Spanish] peseta and the [Portuguese] escudo have burst out of the monetary corset and been devalued.

"There has been ever more evidence of a rise in protectionism in recent months, including the deadlock in the GATT negotia-



tions on world trade, the unilateral measures taken by Clinton, the new wave of industrial restructuring and transfers of plants which have been in the headlines recently. The cacophony of interest rates, which have started to fall in the United States and Japan but are drawn upwards by the pull of high interest rates in Germany adds another element to the apparent chaos."

But the major effect of the end of the postwar boom has been the offensive against working people everywhere. This has taken the form of attacks on wages, both direct wages and the "social wage" working people have won through past struggles—unemployment insurance, social security, education, etc. Faced with an overall declining rate of profit in this situation of increasingly intense international capitalist competition, the capitalists have sought to raise their profits by lowering their biggest cost: the price of labor. Durand points out:

"The conventional wisdom which leads most of the globe's countries to attempt to push down wages to be able to sell more to others here reveals its limits and contradictions. It does not take a Nobel Prize-winner to understand that such policies, which seem reasonable [from the capitalist viewpoint] for each country taken separately, must add up to an overall slowdown in growth.

"This contradiction has emerged in a context marked by both a very high degree of internationalization and an absence of regulatory institutions. The much talked about globalization means that today there are ever fewer economic sectors which can escape competition from the furthest corners of the globe and that technical progress bears directly on economic activity.

"Of course we should not over-estimate the potential to transfer economic activity to the former Soviet bloc or the Third World; low wages are not the only element in competitiveness, there is also a need for technically trained and equipped work force. And there are even more weighty obstacles to the wholesale moving of industries, including social resistance and the need to remain close to markets.

"The rise in unemployment must, therefore, not mainly be laid at the door of competition from low-wage countries. It is in the first place the outcome of wage austerity policies pursued in the rich countries themselves."

While some production is being shifted to low-wage Third World countries, the employers are using other tricks. One of these is "contracting out." What this entails is a corporation "hiring" an independent contractor to perform a job formerly done by the corporation's workers. Of course, this doesn't work from the capitalists' point of view unless the amount paid to the independent contractor is less than that formerly paid to its workers. And that can't happen unless the independent contractor pays his workers far less than the corporation paid its former workers.

Usually, what contracting out means is getting rid of unionized workers, in favor of the non-union independent contrac-

tor, who pays low wages and few benefits, if any. This is one way the average wages of workers in real terms, taking into account inflation, have dropped in the United States this last decade and a half.

Jane Slaughter, writing in the May issue of *Labor Notes*, points out that "contracting out is the trend of the 1990s. Temporary employment grew 10 times faster than overall employment between 1982 and 1990. Taken together, temporary, contract, and part-time workers now make up a quarter of the work force."

At the same time that the employing class in the advanced countries has been waging war against "their own" workers, they have been squeezing the workers and farmers of the poorer dependent capitalist countries with a new and unheard of ferocity.

All this has been done under a new ideological offensive that is known as "neo-liberalism." This is sometimes confusing to Americans, who are used to the word "liberal" meaning New Deal type economic policies. What is meant by the "neo-liberal" term is the Reaganite-Thatcherite propaganda that the economy will be all right if the "free market" is just left alone—that is if taxes for the rich

are cut, if social services for the working people are cut, if the government takes more aggressive action against the unions, etc.

The results so far of this offensive were summarized by the Marxist economist Ernest Mandel in a recent lecture [See story, "Balance Sheet on World Capitalist Offensive", page 18—Ed.].

Will Bill Clinton reverse these trends?

Many working people voted for Clinton as a way of hoping for change from the Reagan-Bush years. But can there be change away from the neo-conservative policy under his administration?

In the May issue of *Labor Notes* referred to above, Jane Slaughter comments: "Every newspaper, every politician, every corporate executive, every manager, and many labor leaders are talking about 'competitiveness.' Improving America's competitiveness, or their firms' competitiveness, is *the* goal of the 1990s. Bill Clinton is determined to be the 'competitiveness President.'"

She goes on to point out that by "competitive" these people are talking about *profits* in the world environment of intensifying international capitalist competition which impels the employing class to attack the working people of the whole world. The neo-conservative and neo-liberal (use whichever word you want, it's the same thing) policy flows from this situation world capitalism finds itself in.

Clinton's main plan for the economy is to reduce the budget deficit. If only the deficit is brought under control, then we will have prosperity down the road. Ross Perot has helped popularize this idea, and actually helps Clinton perpetrate this swindle.

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The major effect of the end of the postwar boom has been the offensive against working people everywhere.

For the message of Perot and now Clinton is that in order to get prosperity in the future, *working people have to sacrifice even more than they have already*. Of course "everyone" is supposed to join this sacrifice, but you can bet your last dollar that the "sacrifices" of the rich won't cut into their lifestyles too much.

In other words, Clinton's program is an *austerity* program, following the Reagan-Bush line. As we have seen, the goal of this program—driving down of wages even further—*holds back* economic recovery.

Clinton isn't crying too much over the fact that his measly \$16 billion stimulus package was shot down by the Republican filibuster. He can say he "tried," as he gets down to raising taxes and cutting services for working people.

Compare this proposed stimulus package with Japan's recent one—which added over \$100 billion—to Clinton's proposal. Maxime Durand explains the difference: "In this recessionary context, we have to grasp the reasons which militate against the implementation of programs to stimulate recovery. The two main reasons are the absence of any coordination of economic policy [internationally] and the weight of public debt. Ten years of free market policies have failed to clean out public finances except in Japan, which therefore has been able to use public spending to stimulate growth. However, elsewhere, there are growing budget deficits. On this front, [neo]liberal policies have failed in one of their central objectives." ▼

Balance Sheet on World Capitalist Offensive

The following is an excerpt of a lecture by Marxist economist Ernest Mandel given at the New York Marxist School in February. The full text was printed in the April issue of Bulletin in Defense of Marxism.

By ERNEST MANDEL

Since the mid-seventies there has been a worldwide offensive of capital against labor and the toiling masses of the Third World. This offensive expresses the sharp deterioration of the relationship of forces at the expense of the workers on a world scale. It has objective and subjective roots.

The objective roots are essentially the sharp rise of unemployment in the imperialist countries from 10 million in to at least 50 million, if not more. The official statistics are all government statistics and they're all fake. In the Third World countries at least 500 million are unemployed. For the first time since the end of World War II unemployment is rising massively in the bureaucratized post-capitalist societies, too.

The subjective roots lie essentially in the total failure of organized labor and mass movements to resist the capitalist offensive. In many countries these organizations have even spearheaded it: France, Italy, Spain, and Venezuela, just to name a few; there is a whole list of these countries. This has undoubtedly made resistance to the capitalist offensive more difficult.

But all this being said, one should not underestimate the concrete impact of pseudo-liberal—in reality neo-conservative—economic policies on world developments. These policies, codified by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and symbolized by the governments of Thatcher and Reagan and their many imitators in the Third World countries, have been an unmitigated disaster.

Under the pretext of giving priority to monetary stability, the fight against inflation, and balanced budgets, social expenditure and the expenditure for infrastructure has been ruthlessly cut. This has resulted in a world-wide rise in social inequality, poverty, disease, and threats to the environment. From a macro-economic point of view it is increasingly counterproductive and irrational. From a macro-social point of view it is indefensible and odious. It has increasingly inhuman results which threaten the very physical survival of the human race.

I should point out the basic cynicism of the neo-conservative ideological offensive which accompanies the conservative economic policies. The neo-conservatives say that they want to reduce state expenditure drastically. In reality, state expenditure has never been as high as in the 1980s and the early 1990s under the neo-conservatives. What really happened was a shift away from social and infrastructure expenditure to military expenditure, which for that period can be estimated at three trillion dollars, and to subsidies to business. The bailing out of bankrupt and near bankrupt financial institutions, like the savings and loan associations in the United States, as well as the huge interest payments on the steeply rising public debt, belongs in that category.

The neo-conservatives say that they stand for universal human rights, but in reality, given the unavoidable mass reactions against these antisocial policies, neo-conservative governments increasingly undermine and attack democratic liberties: trade-union freedom, the right to abortion, freedom of the press, freedom to travel, and so on. They create the appropriate climate in which extreme right-wing tendencies—racism, xenophobia, outright neo-fascism—can arise.

The worldwide growth of poverty is disastrous. In the Third

State expenditure has never been as high as in the 1980s and the early 1990s under the neo-conservatives.

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A Single-payer Plan— Not Managed Competition Universal Health Care For All

By ALAN HANGER

South Africa and the United States remain the only two modern industrial societies that lack universal health care for all their citizens. For South Africa, the African National Congress has pledged to change this situation.

In the U.S. there is no decisive movement fighting for this fundamental human right. Nevertheless, the situation has become a crisis and embarrassment, with some liberal capitalist politicians offering a solution [see box].

The U.S. spends twice as much on health care per person than Canada, Japan, Sweden, Germany and England, all of which have a national health system covering all citizens. Yet 37 million Americans have no health insurance, and 75 percent of those are workers and their children. An additional 50 million have health insurance so inadequate that a major illness would financially bankrupt them. In 1992, 80 percent of all striking workers went out to preserve their health benefits. Even those who have insurance may have their premiums rise 200-300 percent, or be canceled altogether if they become ill.

Health costs and lack of care have become so distorted that President Clinton has appointed a special commission headed by his wife Hillary Rodham Clinton to come up with a plan to meet some of the needs of Americans without jeopardizing the profits of hospitals, health care corporations, the drug companies, and especially the insurance companies. To prevent input from workers and their allies into a schema designed to preserve profits, the President's health task force has been meeting in secret. The plan that will come out of this process is termed "managed competition."

Managed competition, also known as "pay or play," tries to preserve the myth that the capitalist market which guarantees huge profits to doctors, drug companies, and the insurance industry can, if slightly modified, be the most efficient means of organizing health care in the U.S. Employers would be forced to provide a minimum medical plan or pay into a public health insurance fund that would cover uninsured workers. In theory, by pooling health costs in large insurance funds and forcing doctors into large health maintenance organizations, health care can be delivered to all citizens efficiently. The drug companies, the American Medical Association (AMA), and the insurance companies see this as their last chance to stave off a truly efficient health system based on the Canadian model of health care known as the "single payer plan." Even parts of the union bureaucracy

are supporting the managed competition model.

The debate in the United States has thus coalesced into a struggle between the managed health care model and the single payer plan. As we look at these plans, we see that managed competition can not address the key issues of universal access and cost.

Universal Access

Universal access to health care for all citizens is the key issue in health care reform. The single payer plan would guarantee health coverage to every citizen and legal resident of the United States. This coverage would not be tied to employment or participation in a managed care plan. Its humaneness and efficiency is tied to the fact that everyone is guaranteed access to the same health care financed by one payer—the government.

Managed competition, on the other hand, will lead to a system of universal access to separate but unequal health care. The unemployed and working poor would be lumped in health insurance pools similar to Medicaid which would degrade into

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The McDermott Bill A Single Payer Plan for the United States

The American Health Security Act of 1993, the McDermott Bill is a single payer plan for the United States that was introduced in Congress in March 1993. Its primary sponsors are Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Washington), Senator Paul Wellstone (D-Minnesota) and Rep. John Conyers (D-Michigan). The bill would create the American Health Security Program which would:

- Cover all U.S. citizens and legal residents for all medically necessary services, including inpatient and outpatient care, prescription drugs, long term health care, mental health and substance abuse treatment, vision and dental care, and preventive care.

- Eliminate co-payments, deductibles, and out-of-pocket expenses.

- Offer a free choice of doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers.

- Administer health care through the states under standards set by a National Health Security Board with cost guidelines set by a national health care budget.

- Finance costs by a combination of payroll and income taxes and state matching funds with the individual health premium set at five percent of personal income taxes.

- Control costs by setting fees for doctors, giving hospitals a budget, and monitoring expenses.

Universal Health Care

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inferior health care because funding would not keep up with increased costs. The rich would be able to purchase plans that give them superior health care.

The single payer model recognizes the fundamental humanity of equal health care for all; it would not be possible to buy a better level of health care even if you were willing to pay for it. Managed competition only grants the right of access to minimal health care, but allows those with money to buy special treatment. All parties in Canada from the Tories (similar to Republicans) to the New Democratic Party (a Labor party) have come to accept the fundamental right to universal access to equal health care. Perrin Beatty, a Tory with cabinet portfolios from Minister of National Defense to Minister of National Health, describes the fundamental difference in philosophy between the systems:

"The irony to me was that, having grown up in our system, it never struck me that anybody would feel it was appropriate to buy better service or that someone could jump the line as a result of having money. In Canada, we believe deeply that just as equal treatment under the law is essential, equality in terms of service for health care is a human entitlement. It's not something that comes to you as a result of your ability to earn money. The thought that you would have unequal treatment based on an individual's ability to pay

was something that was so alien to me in reading it that it forced me to go back and re-examine, I suppose, the principles of our own system. It made me realize that these principles that we take so much for granted in Canada are not taken for granted everywhere else."

Even on a philosophical level, it is clear that a system that has the maintenance of profit as its underlying principle fails on the moral test.

Quality of Care

The single payer system operates as social insurance, guaranteeing everyone the three criteria that are needed to make health care available for all: quality, availability, and cost control. Since every citizen participates in the health system on an equal basis, everyone has a stake in the system delivering the highest, most cost effective level of health care. Debates on introducing costly new technologies, holding down costs, or fixing delays and problems are decided by health boards and representatives, who are elected. In contrast, managed competition preserves the current system where health care changes and modifications are determined by insurance companies, health corporations, and drug companies making choices based on what is most profitable for them.

By making equal health care without co-payments or deductibles available to all, support from the whole population is guaranteed. By tying health care to the job or medical health group under managed competition, an individual will have different care

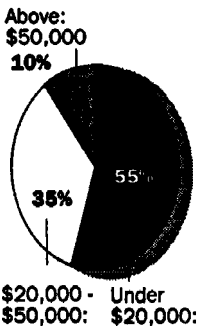
The single payer plan is so clearly superior that the comparison with the Canadian plan puts "managed competition" to shame.

Health insurance in the U.S.—who doesn't have it

A profile of the 36.6 million Americans who lack health insurance, based on industry analysis of the government's 1992 Current Population Survey, the most recent available:

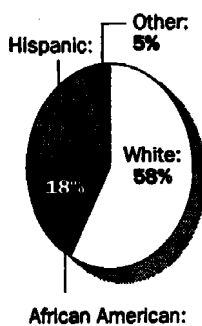
Most uninsured people are poor...

Percent of uninsured people by family income level in 1991



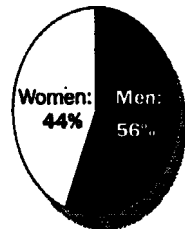
...white...

Percent of uninsured people by race or ethnic group:



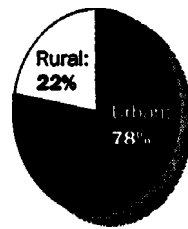
...male...

Percent of uninsured people, by sex:

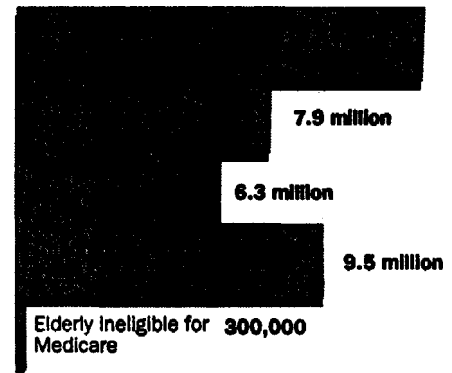


...live in cities...

Percent of uninsured people who live in urban or rural areas:



...and are workers and heads of families



SOURCE: Employee Benefit Research Institute

depending on their job or health situation. There will be no incentive to provide quality care for all because those with money will join health cooperatives, or use private insurance, that will provide better care. This will soon degenerate into two unequal medical populations—the poor and the wealthy. Everyone must have the same health care or the quality of care will not be the best care available.

Administrative Costs

Under managed competition, large purchasing cooperatives are supposed to hold down costs, with market forces allowing people to switch to the lowest cost plan. In reality, this keeps the current massive administrative waste in the system. It is estimated that as high as 22 percent of total U.S. health care costs are spent on administration—billing, marketing, accounting, and other forms of paper pushing. There will be fewer insurance pools under managed competition, but the billing and administrative overhead will have to continue.

In Canada, administrative overhead is only 3 per cent. That difference is enough to pay for every one of the 37 million Americans without access to health care and still have enough left over for providing long term care! Managed competition may be more efficient than the current free market system, but can not be as efficient as a single payer plan, as evidenced by Medicare and Medicaid which only spend 2.7 percent on administrative costs.

The three intertwined elements of health care availability, quality, and cost control cannot be achieved without making medicine social insurance, not social profit. A managed competition model will build in profit much like occurs with military contracts, and we're all familiar with the \$800 toilet seats. Instead of the catalyst being the need to earn profits, the driving force of the Canadian system is the medical need of the patients! A revolutionary idea indeed.

Availability of Care

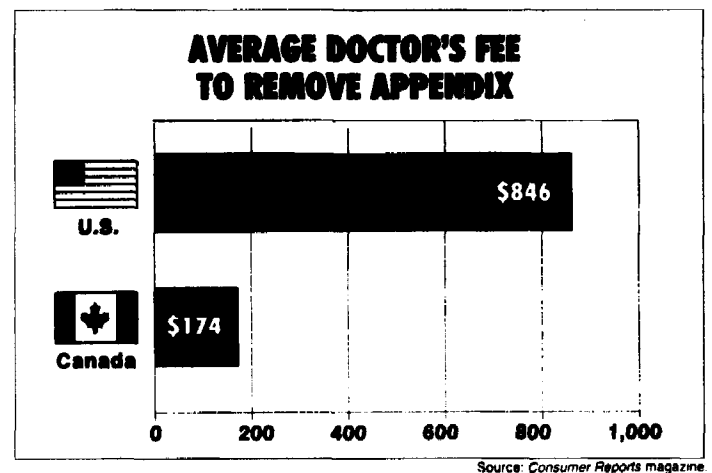
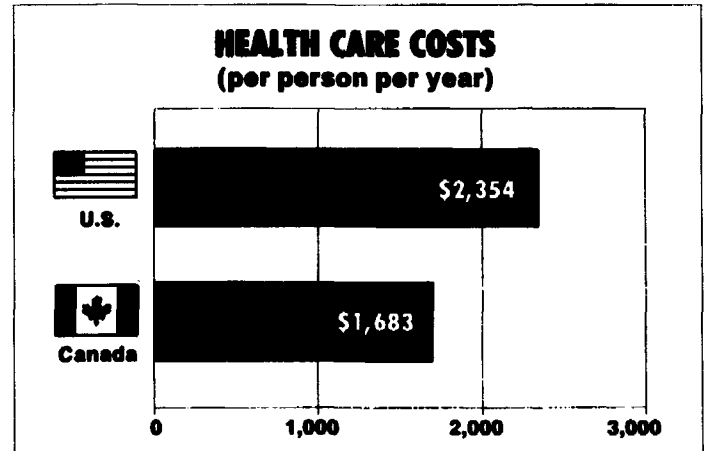
Canadians select the doctor of their choice as many Americans do today. There is no third party approving, or disapproving, the treatments selected by doctors. People don't wait until they are very sick to obtain treatment because there is no co-payment or deductible.

Of course the Canadian plan is not perfect, and many countries in Europe have even better plans. There is limited dental care and there can be long waits for some operations. There are also attacks on the Canadian plan now, to weaken it and bring it closer to the American system, which guarantees huge profits for "health care" corporations, that is corporations who make big profits from human misery. But the single payer plan is so clearly superior, especially for the poor and unfortunate who in the U.S. often have no insurance, that even the comparison with the Canadian plan puts "managed competition" to shame.

Managed competition will force Americans into large insurance plans, or HMOs, where the ability to choose one's doctor

will be severely limited. To keep the profits of these HMOs healthy, deductibles will be imposed to keep people from using the health system. To hold down cost, doctors will be restricted in the procedures that they can use. Deliberate delays and long waits will become the norm in an attempt to discourage people from using the system.

In Canada, the doctors are not restricted in their daily practice. They do not have to answer to insurance companies who are seeking to limit their medical liability, or HMOs which are looking at the bottom line. The only relationship to the government



is a financial one; they are paid by the single payer, the government.

It is not known how Clinton's health plan will deal with job changing and pre-existing conditions. Under a single payer plan, people have more freedom because they can change jobs without worrying about losing their health coverage, or having to leave their family doctor for one prescribed by an HMO. Additionally, since everyone is covered, those with pre-existing conditions can move or change jobs without losing their health care. Many Americans with cancer, AIDS, or other long term ailments have their lives further restricted because they're tied

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to their health care plan.

Cost Reductions

Costs are reduced in a single payer plan by overall budgeting controls and planning. Planning introduces new equipment in an orderly way to provide services without costly duplication, induced by companies selling health equipment or hospitals trying to compete with another hospital. There is an excess of beds in hospitals because there is no plan to have only as many hospitals as needed.

Managed care plans to cut costs by holding down the wages of health care workers, not by controlling the profits of the health care industry. Most health care unions are in favor of a single payer plan because the emphasis is on quality health care. Wages of nurses, para-professionals, aides, janitors, or even doctors are not what makes American health care so expensive. Emphasis on specialized medicine rather than preventive care, huge drug profits, insurance company profits, lack of planning and duplication of facilities make U.S. care the most inefficient. The U.S. spends more for health care than elsewhere in the world but gets the least for the dollar.

If managed competition continues to preserve obscenely high drug prices, major cost savings will not be realized. About 20 percent of every dollar of the \$55 billion dollars spent on prescription drugs annually goes to promote and market them! Of this \$10 billion sum, \$3 billion dollars is spent on sales representatives alone. Advertising and promotion consume approximately \$13,000 for every doctor practicing in the U.S.

Costs of health care will not be held down by restricting care. Rather than trying to limit costs by capping coverage on disor-

ders such as Alzheimer's disease, nursing, or custodial care, all medically necessary care must be provided under the health plan. There would be no rules discriminating against anyone on the basis of occupation, health history, place of residence, marital status, sexual preference, or ability to pay. Coverage would be universal and portable. Managed competition at best can only deliver on comprehensiveness; moving to another job, or state, will require a change to a different insurance cooperative.

Cost savings in health care can be achieved through emphasis on more preventive medicine, rather than restricting access with co-payments and deductibles. President Clinton proposed a comprehensive immunization program to prevent disease, but recently backed away from a full program because it would reduce the profits of companies making vaccines.

Costs are also reduced with a shift to preventive care because more doctors become general practitioners than specialists. Currently most U.S. doctors become specialists, earning more than twice what a general practitioner earns.

We will not know the details of Clinton's managed competition proposal until July, but based on general features of the managed competition model, workers will pay more for less health care coverage.

Managed competition is supposed to keep costs down and make health care more efficient, but unless it challenges the idea that corporations and insurance companies have a right to make a profit from human sickness, it will only build in the current inefficiencies and inequalities. Universal health care is a right that can only be achieved under a single payer plan where the goal is quality health care for all. ▼

Workers' Solidarity, Not Competition Raise the Standard of Living of the Masses

The following is one chapter in the "Program of Action of the Red International of Labour Unions," written in 1921. The chapter is called "The Standard of Living of the Masses." The Red International of Labor Unions consisted of trade unions around the world which looked to the example of the workers' revolution in Russia, in the early years when the leadership of the Soviet Union was honest, revolutionary and democratic.

At that time, working people around the world faced an offensive by the employers against their rights, wages, and working conditions, much as we face today. Union struggles faced great difficulties. The reformist leaders of most unions were too cowardly to even put up a fight to defend the current standard of living of the workers. They fell for the employers' line that wages must be cut to make the company "competitive."

The Red International of unions countered with its program of



struggle for the elementary needs of the workers by any means necessary—even if this struggle must lead to social revolution against the whole employer-dominated system of capitalism.

This revolutionary union program is relevant today, when workers face very similar conditions.—ED.

The struggle presently sharpening in all countries is developing in reaction to wage reductions and deteriorating working conditions. The workers may well be backward, and reformist illusions may well be widespread among the working masses, but the constant deterioration in working conditions is provoking a muffled feeling of protest in them.

Threatened with a decline in their standard of living, not only the reformist organizations but even the Catholic unions and the state employees unions, which have always been further to the right than reformist socialism, are in opposition to the ruling classes and the state. The struggle of the working class pivots around the questions of wages and working conditions. We would be committing a serious error if we ignored this great mass movement under the pseudo-revolutionary pretext that it is merely

over a question of money. This anarchist contempt for the basic needs of the mass of workers uses revolutionary packaging to cover a reactionary content. We are not revolutionary if we are not with the masses in their struggle. It is characteristic of our time that the struggle for the preservation of established conditions goes beyond the limited framework of unionism, in that the workers face the organized employers and the bourgeois state.

Only those raising the masses to the level of communist awareness in the daily struggle are worthy of being called revolutionary. It follows from this that the revolutionary unions must focus their attention on the capitalists' attempts to reduce wages and worsen working conditions. But we must not limit ourselves to just demanding the re-establishment of the former working conditions. In all countries, these former conditions were below the needs of the workers. We must not only defend the former conditions but continually aspire to better ones. This is why raising the standard of living of the masses must now be one of our practical tasks. The working class was weakened tremendously during the war; the percentage of sickness has increased greatly in all countries and infant mortality has gone up considerably. The results of the war will be felt for years to come and this is why we must restore the standard of living of the masses and never accept its reduction as has happened in almost all countries.

As they reduce wages and worsen working conditions, the employers and their ideologues argue that this is necessary because of the growing intensity of competition in the world market and in the interests of industry and the national economy. The workers of the Allied countries have fallen into a trap of their own making. At present, destitute Germany is, if not the

supplier of cheap labour, the supplier at least of cheap merchandise. The collapse of the value of money and the impoverishment of the mass of workers of Germany and Austria has made the transfer of orders to these countries very profitable for the capitalists of Britain, France and the USA. Many Americans are closing their factories and transferring their orders to German companies. Profiting from the reduction in cost of manpower, certain British entrepreneurs are even ordering machinery and other goods from Germany. Naturally the world market determines wholesale prices and this in turn influences working conditions. But the unions that base all their policies on competition are very wrong. They are making the working conditions of the

workers depend on forces which are beyond their control. The French, English and American workers who reached agreements with their own bourgeoisie are at present the victims of their own "victories," since the lowering of the standard of living of the German workers automatically brings about a lowering of that of the English, French and American workers.

A big difference between the wages in the various industrialized countries cannot last long. A leveling-out results according to the

average of the lowest wages. Capital looks for manpower at the cheapest price. If they do not find any in their own country, they order the items and commodities from outside the country. This shows that the theory of economic patriotism created during the war, and still cultivated, is nothing more than a dish especially cooked up for the people. As for the ruling classes, they are patriotic only when it is to their advantage and brings them definite profits. Even if these profits increase to the detriment of national production, no employer would be disturbed by the fact. Capital is international. Its country is where there are great profits to be pocketed.

All these questions about competition in the world market, though they are important, cannot play a decisive role in the workers' determining their own standard of living. Revolutionary workers cannot base themselves on the question of which exploiter, their own or the foreign, receives the most profits. They must always take as their starting point the fact that the competition between national capitalisms has always existed and will always exist and can only be eliminated by social revolution. The lowering of the working masses' standard of living so that national capitalism does better in the world market is a capitalist tactic supported by leaders of the reformist unions. The connection between the reformist unions and national capitalism is so strong that as soon as there is a crisis in the world market, the leaders of the reformist unions take it on themselves to look for ways of reducing expenses in order to meet competition, either by increasing productivity or by some other means. It is true that this aid, given to the bourgeoisie to

The competition between national capitalisms has always existed and will always exist and can only be eliminated by social revolution.

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Capitalist Offensive

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World it has become a historical catastrophe. According to official United Nations statistics, more than 60 countries with a total of more than 800 million inhabitants have suffered an absolute decline of per capita domestic product between 1980 and 1990. In the poorest of these countries this decline is on the order of 30 to 50 percent. For the poorest layers of these countries' populations the figure oscillates around 50 percent. Per capita domestic product in Latin America in 1950 was 45 percent of that in the imperialist countries. In 1988, it fell to 29.7 percent.

Decades of modest rise in public welfare were wiped out in the course of a few years. What this means concretely can be illustrated by the example of Peru. According to the *New York Times*, more than 60 percent of the population of Peru is undernourished, 79 percent live below the poverty level, which is quite arbitrarily fixed at \$40 a month. Even college educated civil servants earn only \$85 a month. That is not enough to pay for a month's car parking in that country.

If one takes into consideration the social differentiation inside the Third World countries, the situation is even more disastrous. The poorest inhabitants of the poorest countries have today a daily food intake which equals that of a Nazi concentration camp of the 1940s. A report of the United Nations World Health Organization prepared for a December 1992 conference estimated that half a billion people suffer from chronic hunger in addition to several hundreds of millions of people who suffer from seasonal malnutrition. Nearly 800 million people in the Third World alone suffer from hunger. If you add to that figure the number of hungry people in the post-capitalist and imperialist countries, you arrive at practically one billion people suffering from hunger on this planet. And this is when there exists an overall situation of overproduction of food.

While real wages have actually declined in the USA, the number of people having gross annual incomes of one million stable dollars has risen sixty fold. That of people getting between sixty thousand and one million dollars has risen from seventy eight thousand to two million, but there is literally not a single worker among this new rich.

The perverse effects of neo-conservative policies on the world economy are likewise evident. Both the growing poverty of the Third World and the growing Third Worldization of sectors of the population in the imperialist countries constitute one of the major brakes on any significant expansion of the world economy.

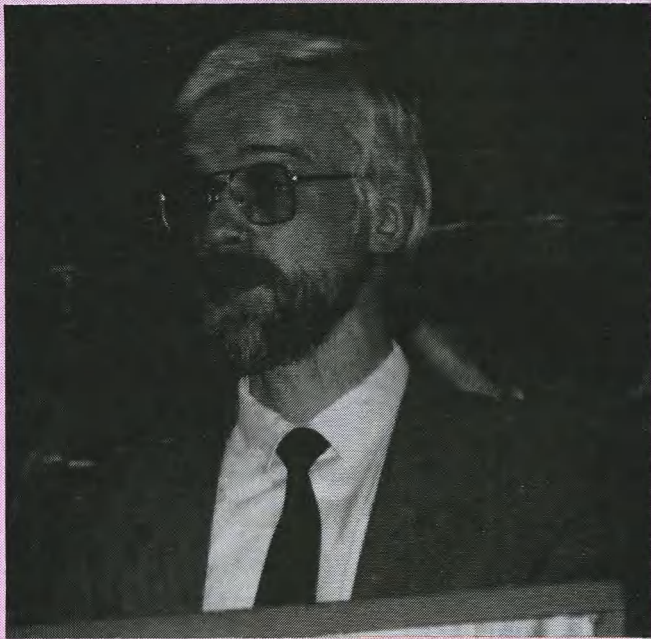
Third World debt has led to the scandalous development of a net flow of capital from the south to the north, with the poorest part of the poor countries subsidizing the richest part of the rich countries.

In all the university departments dealing with development

policies, in all countries in the world, it is considered a truism that the most productive investments are those for education, health care, and infrastructure. But if you cross the corridor into the sub-department of economics called public finance, then you suddenly hear that a balanced budget is more important than investment in education, health care, and infrastructure, and that there have to be ruthless cuts in these budgets in order to stop inflation.

It should be stressed that psuedo-liberal, neo-conservative policies are being applied within the framework of a capitalist-dominated world economy. Two important conclusions can be drawn from that basic fact of life. First, that much of the ranting

ALEX CHIS/INDEPENDENT POLITICS



Russian Union Leader Tours San Francisco Bay Area

Vladimir Kondratov, a leader of the Party of Labor, Deputy to the Moscow Soviet, and Executive Board member of the General Confederation of Trade Unions of Russia, speaking to a San Francisco Bay Area audience at the ILWU Local 6 hall on March 19. Kondratov's tour of the Bay Area was co-sponsored by Activists for Independent Socialist Politics.

about the alleged superiority of the so-called market economy are just eyewash. Market economy in the pure or near pure form does not exist and has never existed anywhere. Second, it can be concluded that any alternative economy policy applied within that same framework, like the neo-Keynesian policies now proposed by a growing number of international institutions and leading capitalists, will not result in any basic change in all these horrible realities which we have outlined. ▼

Workers' Solidarity

Continued from page 23

assure it high dividends at all times under all conditions, is accompanied by verbal protests against reductions in wages. After these verbal protests the negotiations start and the leaders of the unions consent to wage reductions of 10, 15 percent and more. These wage reductions and the absence of even the slightest desire to struggle are the characteristic of the tactics of most of the present leaders of reformist unions. If this tactic continues to be applied, collaboration between the bourgeoisie and unions can only grow, obviously at the expense of the mass of workers.

Up until now, collaboration has meant that the workers have received only minute crumbs of the billions pocketed by the employers. Now that the profits have gone down slightly, the employers are attempting not only to take away those crumbs, but also to make the full weight of the crisis bear down on the backs of the workers. To resist this tactic the revolutionary unions must bring the broad masses into the struggle. In all unions, regardless of the composition of their leadership, the questions of the standard of living must be raised. We must unite the broad masses of workers, including the most backward, into a single front in the practical struggle for an increase in wages and improvements in working conditions. On these purely economic and practical grounds, revolutionary unions and supporters of the Red International of Labor Unions must prove that they are the firmest and most perseverant defenders of the interests of the whole working class; in every country we must draw up and popularize a series of measures for the im-

provement of working conditions. We must create a program of practical demands around which all workers can be united. We must apply this program using revolutionary methods and unmask the present union leaders who neither want to, nor know how to concretely defend the basic vital interests of the mass of workers.

It is certainly possible that in organizing resistance to worsening working conditions revolutionary unions will suffer defeats, but these will be only temporary defeats, suffered during the struggle and not because we gave up. Every concession given out of good will towards the employer, any giving up of the resistance must be denounced in a most determined and energetic manner. Raising the standard of living must not remain an abstract slogan, but must be the practical slogan of the sharpest struggle. And when revolutionary unions have brought the largest number of workers into the struggle to raise their standard of living, when they have succeeded in influencing the workers that are in the reformist unions and in tearing them away from the control of their leaders, then the struggle to raise the standard of living can play a great role in preparing for social revolution.

Social conflicts have reached such a sharp point in all countries that it will not be difficult to show the workers the link between the raising of their standard of living and the struggle for workers' power. A concrete economic program, elaborated in a specific social and political context, if applied with revolutionary methods, will necessarily unify the broad masses in the struggle against the ruling classes and will prepare the workers to take economic and political power in their respective countries. This implies that the workers' struggle to raise their standard of living should serve as the starting point of the larger struggle to destroy exploitation itself. ▼

We must unite the broad masses of workers into a single front in the practical struggle for an increase in wages and improvements in working conditions.

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Kendra Alexander: A Life Dedicated To Socialism

By BARRY SHEPPARD

Kendra Alexander, a leader of the Committees of Correspondence (CoC)

on both the national level and in Northern California, died in an accidental fire in her home in Berkeley, California on May 23.

Because of the central and unifying role she played, her loss will be felt throughout the CoCs.

Former leader of Communist Party

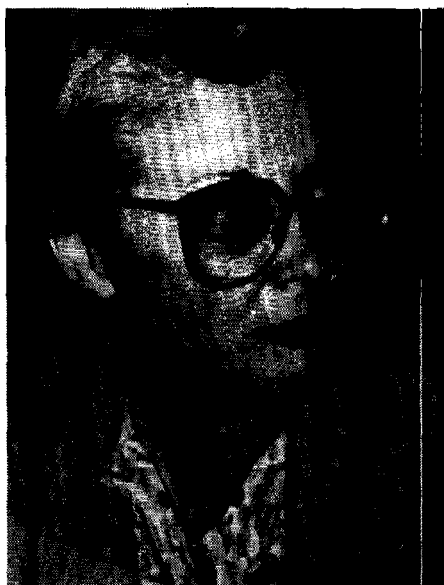
Kendra had been a leader of the Communist Party, USA, until its convention in December, 1991. Leading up to that gathering, differences had developed in the CP over the events in the former Soviet bloc. As Angela Davis explained in her eulogy for Kendra at a memorial service in Oakland, California, it became clear to a section of the CP that there were serious problems with political and economic democracy in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

It also became clear that there were serious problems inside the CPUSA concerning internal democracy. Kendra was one of the leaders of the Initiative movement to democratize and renew the CP. At the December 1991 convention, everyone associated with the Initiative movement was dropped from all levels of national leadership.

In March of 1992, Kendra helped lead Northern California Communists to a fateful decision. After lengthy open discussions, Northern California members voted in their overwhelming majority to leave the CP, and to join in forming the CoCs.

National Co-Chair of Committees of Correspondence

A National Conference on "Perspectives for Democracy and Socialism in the 90s" held in Berkeley in July 1992 formed the CoCs as a national left activist organization that opened its doors to all who saw the need for a new organization to work toward a renewal of the socialist movement in the United States.



Kendra Alexander

Kendra was elected as one of five national co-chairpersons at that conference.

I first met Kendra in her home last September, when I raised with her the desire of people who had founded *Independent Politics* to join the CoCs and help to build it through discussion and activist work. Most of us had come from the Trotskyist tradition, and we knew there were others who had the same origin, such as Peter Camejo, who were already members and leaders of the CoCs.

Kendra welcomed our participation.

In the course of working to build the Committees, I began to learn some things about her.

One was that she was completely committed to holding a free and open discussion in the Committees. She helped see to it that all opinions were heard and reflected on leadership bodies and in assignments to activist work.

She said on more than one occasion that she herself was overcoming anti-democratic or "verticalist" practices found in the CP (something all of us who came from different traditions have to deal with also to one degree or another).

At the same time, she was concerned

that some groups, including some who claim to be Trotskyist, appeared to have joined the CoCs as a

raiding operation. She knew these groups weren't really trying to help build the CoCs whatever their political viewpoint, but she was wary of taking any measures that could have the effect or even the appearance of limiting the discussion.

She also didn't claim to have all of her own political positions worked out. She was a real participant in the unfolding discussion that is beginning in the CoCs nationally and locally about what kind of organization it should be.

A major concern she had was the need to reach youth, especially African-American youth and other people of color, if the CoCs were to consolidate and become viable. She knew there were no easy answers, but kept this necessity in the forefront.

Friendly and warm

In the brief time I knew her, I had many occasions to go over to her house. The door was almost always unlocked, and the house was used for all sorts of meetings.

She and her husband, Franklin, always were friendly, warm and hospitable. If you were hungry, you could always get something, and if you were there at mealtimes, you would be invited to enjoy some of Franklin's excellent cooking.

Like many of her generation of African Americans, Kendra's first political activity was in the civil rights movement. As a teenager, she worked with the Congress on Racial Equality during the Freedom Summer of 1965, fighting to integrate lunch counters and register Black voters in Jonesboro, Louisiana.

Returning to Southern California, where she grew up, she enrolled at Los Angeles State College. There she joined the DuBois Clubs, a socialist youth organization associated with the Communist Party. She joined the CP, and helped form the Che-Lumumba Club of Black revolutionary activists in South Central Los Angeles.

Recently she stated that she became a

communist because she became convinced that Black liberation could only be won through socialism. This was true of others who joined different socialist groups. Another who joined the CP, after being recruited by Kendra, was Angela Davis.

Alexander and Davis traveled to Cuba together as part of the Venceremos Brigade in 1969 to work on the huge effort to harvest 10 million tons of sugarcane.

A lifelong communist

When Angela Davis became the victim of the famous government frame-up on murder and conspiracy charges, Kendra moved to the San Francisco Bay Area to head the defense effort. The successful campaign to free Davis established Kendra in the party ranks as a leader. She was elected to the CP National Committee in 1972, and became Organizational Secretary of the Bay Area District in 1973.

At a recent press conference, Kendra said, "I do not regret that I belonged to the Communist Party nor do I regret that I left it. The struggle to make our country a better place to live will always remain my life's work."

Unlike many who go through negative experiences in one socialist group or an-

other, Kendra did not become cynical or disillusioned. She remained a communist with a small "c" as she helped launch the new project of the CoCs.

I regret that I knew her for such a short time, but am grateful for the time I did. ▼

South Africa

Continued from page 3

Toward this end, the ANC projects an historic one-person-one-vote election within a year. From the election would emerge a sovereign constituent assembly charged with drawing up a democratic constitution.

Election results would also shape an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), which would reflect proportionally the parties that gain significant support. This IGNU would continue to govern until elections were held under the newly adopted constitution, which would have to take place within no more than five years.

The ruling National Party has countered with a proposal for a "power-sharing government," in which each party would have veto power.

In the negotiations, the ANC and its

allies are also fighting for a multi-party Transitional Executive Committee, which would organize the first elections, establish fair access to the media, and set up a joint command of the police and military during the election campaign period. In the long run, the ANC demands reorganization of the security forces to integrate the armed wings of the liberation organizations and to reflect the whole of South African society.

There is general agreement on this course within the ANC-led alliance, which includes the ANC Youth League, the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the trade union federation COSATU. But debate is intense within the liberation movement over how much to compromise in order to stay true to the fight for democracy and justice for the majority while at the same time winning support from, or at least neutralizing, forces under the influence of the racist regime.

The ANC Youth League, reflecting broader discontent, has criticized the secrecy of some of the negotiations and calls for all talks to be open to public scrutiny.

The Youth League has also opposed the

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Assassination of Chris Hani

Chris Hani was assassinated in April by a member of the neo-Nazi, white

supremacist Afrikaner Resistance Movement. Also charged in Hani's murder was



Conservative Party leader Clive Derby-Lewis, who is part of an international network of ultra-right organizations. Hani was general secretary of the South African Communist Party and a central leader of the ANC. The reaction to his murder showed the tremendous anger of the Black masses and the great moral authority that has been won by the liberation movement. Six million Black workers refused to work on April 14, and 80,000 attended his funeral. The religious ceremony, conducted by the Bishop of Johannesburg, and accompanying speech by Nelson Mandela and tribute from Cuba's Fidel Castro, were carried live over government-sponsored TV and radio. The ANC has projected a campaign of mass actions through the end of May demanding early elections and multi-party control of the armed forces.—CAROLINE LUND

South Africa

Continued from page 27

continuation of the Government of National Unity following adoption of the new constitution. It believes the majority party should be free to implement its program with no interference by minority parties.

The South African Communist Party (SACP), on the other hand, emphasizes the need for a clear cut concession on this point. A resolution of its central Committee states:

"While the proposed interim government of national unity and subsequent government of national unity and reconstruction will still fall short of a full ma-

majority rule dispensation, they begin to introduce elements of majority rule into government. In the circumstances of the present situation, the package is a compromise which can open the way to a process of full transfer of power to the people."

The statement goes on to say it is important "to be honest with the people about this package, neither underrating the significant advance its implementation will make, nor concealing the real limitations and potential dangers."

The SACP presently has some 45,000 members.

ANC leader Pallo Jordan has expressed fear that the ANC's long-term goals could

be compromised by too many concessions to the de Klerk regime.

Jordan wrote in an article in *New Nation*: "The ANC alliance... has the national liberation of the most oppressed and exploited as its central objective. This necessarily includes the dismemberment of the racist state as a priority.

"Since a transfer of power to the oppressed cannot co-exist with the retention of power by the oppressor, it is a final showdown. Historically the ANC's strategy was to harness every conceivable instrument of struggle into a multi-pronged offensive which would draw the broadest front of opposition to the apartheid regime into active struggle. In these terms the ANC always posed its objectives as the seizure of power."

Jordan warns of the dangers of simply "reorganizing" the South African security forces: "If... the officer corps and ranks of the SADF [South African Defense Forces] and SAP [South African Police] are likely to be opponents of a democratic order, I would have thought that underlined the need to have them vacate these strategically important posts as soon as possible.

"The gravest danger to a transition and the democratic order is precisely such potential fifth columnists. Every repressive military formation that has been coddled by the democratic forces has not had its teeth drawn, instead it has taken courage from such leniency."

Objective problem

There remains, however, the objective problem that the liberation forces are absolutely outgunned by the highly armed, efficient, and motivated South African security forces.

Outside the ANC-led current stand the smaller Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO).

The PAC refused to participate in the two previous rounds of multi-party talks held in 1991 and 1992, called CODESA I and II (for Convention for a Democratic South Africa). Despite its famous slogan of past years, "One settler one bullet," the PAC is participating in the current talks.

According to Frank Noakes, correspondent for the *Australian Green Left Weekly*, the PAC "thinks the ANC lead-

South Africa — 16 Years Later

Following are excerpts from an article in the March 24 issue of the Australian Green Left Weekly. The introduction reads: "Marina Carman's family left South Africa in 1977 and returned for their first visit in December. Here she describes what she found."

The one word that hits more than any other and around which everything else seems to circle is: change.

There can be no doubt that change has occurred. There is no longer official segregation. Blacks can go to the same schools, hospitals and beaches, live in the same areas and use the same services as whites. They can move through the country and cities freely, purchase land and join the now legalize liberation movement.

There has been a massive influx of Blacks and Coloureds into the numerous high rise apartment blocks that surround the central business districts in cities such as Johannesburg. The streets of the city center are lined with stalls selling just about everything imaginable, and the crowds along the streets and in city center shopping malls are almost entirely Black.

The ANC slogan, "Mass action for democracy. Occupy the cities" on a poster I brought back with me, takes on a strange meaning as the whites retreat to decentralized suburban shopping malls and houses in the suburbs. In the country, one can also see the increase in Black landholdings, although the percentage of land in Black hands is still pitifully low.

Just as clear are the limits of the change that has occurred. Prejudice and privilege are still the driving force behind white attitudes. Distrust and deference are still all too common among Blacks. Apartment houses are run down. The cities are dirty and violence is rife. Public transport is sparse and dangerous to use. The signs of violence and poverty are everywhere: alarms on cars, broken shop windows, beggars, news each day of new deaths.

Squatter camps and the townships still house a significant proportion of the Black population in abject poverty and are growing daily.

The benefits of change have their price, and not all can afford to pay. Those who can have emerged as the new Black and Coloured middle class—living in mansions, sending their children to previously whites-only schools. These gains do not change the dire situation of the majority of the Black population.

When asked their hopes for the new South Africa, whites I spoke to separated into those who seemed to have a genuine wish for a new future and those who claimed to support change while hoping to avoid the worst. This idea of non-participatory change is unfortunately pervasive among whites.

The struggle for liberation is not over, but it continues to grow in strength daily. When I visited the ANC, the waiting rooms were crowded with new members or people turning to the ANC for support in its new and powerful position.

ership is on the wrong track altogether."

Noakes quotes PAC General Secretary Benny Alexander: "The PAC does not have the capacity to stop the interim government, but the PAC does have the capacity to discredit it. We are not going to take part in this government.

"The interim government is an attempt to co-opt the oppressed and prolong the life of the racist parliament and the National Party.

"The regime wants us to join this interim government of theirs and work with them for a period of five years, so we too can fail and we too can have the wrath of the people. We must also become ministers of labor and be unable to give jobs and come on national TV and appeal to workers to understand and have the workers rise up against us. We too must become ministers of education and fail, because things are going to get worse. That's a trap, a five year trap."

AZAPO has refused to participate in any talks so far. Reporter Noakes quotes AZAPO Deputy Secretary General Lybon Mabasa as saying:

"The present negotiations, as we see them, are not trying to empower the oppressed and exploited, but actually to reinforce the power of the regime and the elite within our community. We are saying that there should be no secret deals, there should be no negotiations behind the backs of our people, no negotiations where the government is both player and referee.

"AZAPO holds the view that the regime is not going to willingly hand over power; that the process of the transfer of political power is always dependent on the capacity of those who are struggling against those who hold power. With that in mind, AZAPO still maintains that the struggle needs to be carried out even more rigorously than it has been carried out before."

These groups' criticisms of the ANC's line have found resonance among Blacks, especially youth, who are frustrated by the difficulties of the struggle to overthrow apartheid. But the PAC and AZAPO have absolutely no answer to the National Party and other white forces who say "We want to negotiate a transition to a non-racial democracy."

In the coming year leading up to the elections, the ANC projects waging the

biggest campaign it has ever organized. International solidarity will be crucial in aiding the candidates of the ANC and its allies for the constituent assembly.

Great difficulties face the liberation movement. The ANC estimates that 70 percent of African Blacks can't read or write. Polls have shown that if elections took place today, 50 percent of the Indian population would vote for the ruling National Party. (Indians comprise 4 percent of the South African population.) ANC supporters will need to go door to door, educating, discussing, inspiring the people.

The ANC has always been conscious of the importance of its struggle internationally. In February it hosted a solidarity conference attended by 900 delegates representing 106 organizations from five continents.

It appealed for aid in raising the \$65 million it will need to run its election

campaign. Material aid is also needed—IBM-compatible computers, fax machines, cars, TVs, and button-making machines.

In his message to the conference Nelson Mandela said: "These are complicated and difficult times, for which there are no pat answers. Before we have even attained our freedom we are experiencing an incipient counterrevolution. After so much sacrifice by so many, we have the obligation to prevent disintegration into a Yugoslavia.

"And one of the ways to do this is to hold free and fair elections, where every South African will vote, for the first time, for a government of their choice.

"We know that you will march this last mile with us, will work with us to win a resounding victory in these elections. We know you will help us reconstruct South Africa in the vision of the Freedom Charter, as a country that belongs to all its people, Black and white." ▼

Mandela on ANC's Strategic Perspectives

Following are excerpts from an interview with Nelson Mandela in the ANC journal Mayibuye, as reprinted in the March 3 Green Left Weekly.

What impact has the ANC's new Strategic Perspectives on negotiations had on the process? What does it entail?

I think it has had a very healthy impact. We must remember that the essence of the Strategic Perspectives document is to ensure the transfer of political power from a minority government to the people as a whole. It is based on the acceptance of the principle of majority rule and the total elimination of all forms of apartheid and minority rule.

At the same time the document takes into account the realities of our situation. We totally reject a forced coalition as the government demands. At the same time we realize the importance of a government of national unity, both during the interim period and when a democratic government has been installed.

We would like to forestall the possibility of a counter-revolutionary onslaught on the democratic government which will be established. We think we have a very good chance of achieving that objective if we are able to form a government of national unity as a result of a decision of

any majority party which will emerge after the general election.

So this document, therefore, stands for the principle of majority rule, which is observed in all democratic countries.

The party that emerges strongest in the election, especially if it has the overall majority, should be called upon to form the government. That party is then free to invite other political parties with a significant following to join the government. We therefore think that the democratic government which will be installed in that way will be in a position to have a firm hold on the levers of power.

We also hold the firm view that the army, police and civil service should be restructured to serve the interests of democracy and reflect, in their composition, South African society as a whole.

But we are also saying that individuals currently serving in these machineries will not simply be thrown into the streets. Some retrenchment packages might have to be considered.

All these proposals of the ANC should held allay fears of some sections among whites. The proposals can contribute to breaking their resistance to the transition.

But the essence of our approach remains the achievement of democratic majority rule.

Workers and Peasants Need Our Solidarity

An American Unionist Visits Vietnam

By CARL FINAMORE

I went to Vietnam to see how foreign investment is affecting the economy and the everyday lives of workers. In my first visit to Vietnam, I had only enough time for a five day stay in the capital city of Hanoi. But my whirlwind stopover in late May was exceptionally fruitful because of careful organization by my hosts, the Vietnam-U.S. Association and the Confederation of Labor who welcomed me as "the first American trade unionist to visit Vietnam."

In 1986 Vietnam began its "Open Door" policy of inviting foreign investment. A full range of goods from every part of the world are now for sale in the huge three-story government department store and in thousands of small private stands which line the streets of Hanoi. Despite the destructive U.S. trade embargo, a lot of American consumer items imported from Singapore and Hong Kong appear on fashionable store shelves and make-shift street corner table stands.

Prices are extremely low compared to the U.S., but all but the most basic items are beyond the reach of workers who earn an average of \$250 per year. Most Vietnamese in the capital city appear undernourished, but fruits, vegetables, meats and fish are bountiful in all the markets.

Vietnamese government officials proudly informed me that over \$3 billion has been invested by hundreds of firms from over 34 countries in the last several years. In 1991 alone, for example, these



In a modern candy factory in Hanoi, co-owned and managed by Japanese investors and the Vietnamese government, these women workers get paid according to how many kilograms of candy they wrap.

operations accounted for an output of \$100 million, 70 percent of which was targeted for export. While this still only represents four percent of Vietnam's production, it is a growing sector.

Behind Growing Investment

But why are foreign capitalists investing in Vietnam?

Because Vietnam has substantial offshore oil deposits, has rich agricultural land, and has an untapped market of 68 million people. Over 21 percent of foreign investment has gone into oil and natural gas exploration, 28 percent into farming and the food industry, 26 percent for service and tourist operations and 10 percent for transport, communications and postal services (1992 government figures).

Some of this investment has been in operations that were previously state owned. Privatization of state property has also occurred in agriculture. Collective farms enthusiastically offer family-size plots to former members of communes in exchange for a large share of their private production. Excess crops are then profitably sold on the free market.

Government authorities told me that the new "free market" incentive system made it possible for Vietnam to export rice for the first time in its history in 1992.

A Low Wage Magnet

Trade union officials understand that in addition to oil and mineral deposits, the country's extremely low wage base is another gold mine for investors.

In my discussions, labor leaders recognized the pitfalls of economic development in impoverished Thailand where Japanese capital opens up one new operation every day on a wage base of \$5 a day. That paltry slave wage is still approximately five times what the average Vietnamese enjoys.

I also mentioned the toxic wasteland, which is the poisoned legacy of the *maquiladoras* on the U.S.-Mexican border. Mexican and Thai workers have not seen their wages increase beyond \$5 a day and, in fact, governments in those two countries ensure it stays low.

Vietnamese trade union officials told me that there have been several strikes as a result of extremely poor working conditions and lower than minimum wages. In one case cited, the foreign investor was "convinced" by worker protests to raise the yearly salary to \$600 a year, more than twice the national average.

Most joint ventures of the Vietnamese government and foreign private capital are not unionized. The government-controlled Confederation of Labor has represented 4.5 million workers in the state sector, but is just now beginning to target the private sector for organizing campaigns.

Labor officials steadfastly refused to describe their relations with management as antagonistic or adversarial. Instead, they described the relationship as "cooperation to ensure production and workers' rights." I was informed that 90 percent of enterprise managers are themselves Communist Party members.

The dilemma facing Vietnamese de-

October 1917: Coup d'etat or Social Revolution — The legitimacy of the Russian Revolution

by Ernest Mandel

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velopment is whether the government will respond to the concerns of the workers when they conflict with the needs of foreign investors to make a profit. Vietnamese workers have a big job ahead to organize in this sector.

In our contacts and solidarity links with unionists in Vietnam, American trade unionists can help these workers in their fight to see that foreign capital and technology is used to uplift their society and not just line the pockets of investors. ▼

Carl Finamore is a delegate to the San

Francisco Central Labor Council from the International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 1781.

[The Vietnamese General Confederation of Labor has asked Finamore to announce a special fully-loaded tour package of \$65 per day to U.S. trade unionists interested in enjoying an unique cultural and political experience. You can take advantage of this exceptional opportunity by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to *Independent Politics* with your phone number and choice of tour dates—Editor.]

Two Different Views on Film Construction Workers' Lives

By ADAM WOOD

The glamorous life of the construction worker is not a common subject for Hollywood films. But two new independent films shed some light on different aspects of the jobs that, after agricultural work, employ the majority of working people in this country.

"Mac" is a film by John Turturro about his father, a carpenter. Some may recognize Turturro, who stars in the title role, from his work in several Spike Lee films and from the award-winning "Barton Fink."

The artistic potential of work

Mac is a craftsman from the old school. His work is truly his creative outlet and he takes pride in its quality. He rejects the idea that art and work must be separated and tries to unite them in the houses and other structures he builds.

The film begins with Mac and his brothers working for a typical cheapskate contractor. The top priority is to keep expenses down, no matter what the effect on the quality and safety of the project. Mac has a confrontation with the boss over this but grudgingly goes along with the program.

Finally, Mac reaches his breaking point. He quits, starts his own business with his brothers, and brings most of his co-workers with him. Wasn't that easy! Of course, this was a more realistic option during

the post-World War II boom in which "Mac" takes place than it is in today's depressed economy.

Mac is now free to follow his own ideal of quality craftsmanship, but not without paying a price. The pressure of coming up with capital, competing against cut-throats like his former employer, and his own compulsive personality combine to twist him into an aggravated, over-stressed, isolated man. He gradually drives away most of the people that care about him to pursue his dream alone.

"Mac" depicts a man who understands the potential of work for human beings. Work can be an opportunity to consciously shape your own environment, for good or bad. It offers a chance to give meaning and purpose to life. But the film also shows the roadblocks to such fulfillment in a society where the only point of work is to create wealth owned and controlled by someone else—a society which stifles creativity and flushes it completely out of the regular workday.

The Negative Side

"Riff Raff," a film about non-union construction workers in England, starts from this negative side of the work experience and goes down from there. The film was directed by Ken Loach and written by Bill Jessie, a former construction worker who died at the age of 48.

"Riff Raff," unfortunately, is a lot closer to the experience of most construction

workers than "Mac." It follows the life of Stevie, a laborer hired to help convert a hospital into luxury condominiums. Nobody on this job is looking for fulfillment, just a regular check with a false name to supplement their unemployment benefits. These workers don't have enough money to rent an apartment, much less start their own business.

Stevie and his co-workers are slaves to the boss. They deal with the humiliation the only way they can, through humor. When you can't beat it, laugh at it. "Riff Raff" has scenes and characters familiar to anyone who has worked in construction. Multi-storied scaffolding held together with bailing wire, experienced workers fired with no notice, and the never-ending struggle to find a place to go to the bathroom that won't suffocate you with stench.

Work is a nightmare in "Riff Raff." The tension builds until the final act of revenge and destruction that would give Mac a heart attack. The workers in this film feel no personal attachment to the work they've done because everything around them tells them that they don't count, they're expendable. It is a true picture of the ridiculous world we live in.

Both films deal with some of the racial and ethnic tension that exists on jobs, but neither deal directly with racism and the historical problem it has been in construction. The Black workers in these films are relegated to peripheral roles, usually as victims. With no women workers in either film, the issue of sexism on the job is not even touched. Racism, sexism and craft prejudice among construction workers have been the major obstacles preventing their trades from playing a major role when other workers have gone into motion for progressive goals. This has also helped the employers drive the building trades unions into the weak status they are in today.

The strength and humor of these two films far outweigh their weaknesses. I recommend seeing both for different perspectives on the working experience today, and if you are not in construction, to see what you are missing. ▼

Adam Wood is a member of Painters' Union Local 4 in San Francisco, California.

Why Army Intelligence Spied on African-Americans

By MALIK MIAH

In the 1960s, those of us active in the civil rights movement knew that the FBI was spying on us. We knew that the cops and other government agencies served to protect racists and other bigots who harassed Black Americans as we demanded our human rights. The government, of course, denied any such wrongdoing.

But in the 1970s, we learned that the government had established a special COINTELPRO Program (Counter Intelligence Program) targeted at the Black community. According to a memo sent to agents by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, "The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters. . . ." Another FBI document stated the program's key goal: "Prevent the rise of a 'messiah' who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement."

Many of us were labelled "paranoid" for claiming the government was violating our Bill of Rights. When the operation was revealed, some thought maybe

the program was a maverick project of an out-of-control Hoover. Most of us knew otherwise, and now we have proof that Hoover was simply continuing a policy begun by Army Intelligence in 1917. It turns out that the U.S. military organized a major program of spying on Black Americans including the maternal grandfather of Martin Luther King Jr.

Massive Spy Operation

Stephen Tompkins, a reporter for *The Commercial Appeal* in Memphis, Tennessee, spent 16 months investigating intelligence operations in this country by the U.S. military. He calls their operation the "largest domestic spy network ever assembled in a free country."

What did Tompkins discover? On May 3, 1917, the Secretary of War Newton Baker ordered Lt. Col Ralph Van Deman to crank up the Military Intelligence Division. In a June 2, 1917, memo to Baker, Van Deman targeted four prime domestic foes:

- The Wobblies (Industrial Workers of the World)
- Opponents of the World War I draft
- Socialists
- "Negro unrest"

Van Deman tied "Negro unrest" to German influence and declared that "The Black church will always be a target of

our enemies." Not surprisingly Martin Luther King's grandfather, the Rev. A.D. Williams, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church and first president of the Atlanta chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), had an army file opened on him in 1917. King's father, Martin Sr., successor at Ebenezer, also entered the army's files.

King Jr. became a special target of army intelligence and the FBI. Army officers followed and photographed King at a prayer march in Arlington Cemetery and during a church sermon the next day in February 1968. The pictures were later used by officers as targets for dart practice. Less than two months later King was murdered in Memphis while supporting striking sanitation workers. A Green Beret special unit was then operating in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

What role did Army Intelligence have in King's assassination? Tompkins said his newspaper "uncovered no hard evidence that Army Intelligence played any role in King's assassination." But it's safe to say that the whole story hasn't been told. Is it really likely that a lone gunman, James Earl Ray, acted alone without Army and FBI knowledge? It is clear from the COINTELPRO and now Army documents that King, Malcolm X, Black Panther Party leaders and other prominent Blacks were targets.

In 1917 the Black church and NAACP, the main civil rights organization, were seen as "communist-inspired" and a threat to national security. By the 1920s, Army Intelligence's spy network had saturated the South. In the 1960s the Army used U-2 planes to photograph civil rights protests in Birmingham, Alabama. By 1968 it had 304 intelligence offices around the country and "subversive/national security dossiers" on 80,731 Americans. It also had 19 million personal dossiers lodged at the Defense Department's Central Index of Investigations.

In 1917 Van Deman and the War Department declared "Negro unrest" was provoked by Germany and foreign enemies. In 1967 Hoover and the FBI said King "preached the message of Hanoi and Peking." The fight against racism and for full equality will always be seen as "subversive" by the powers that be. ▼

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