

INDEPENDENT

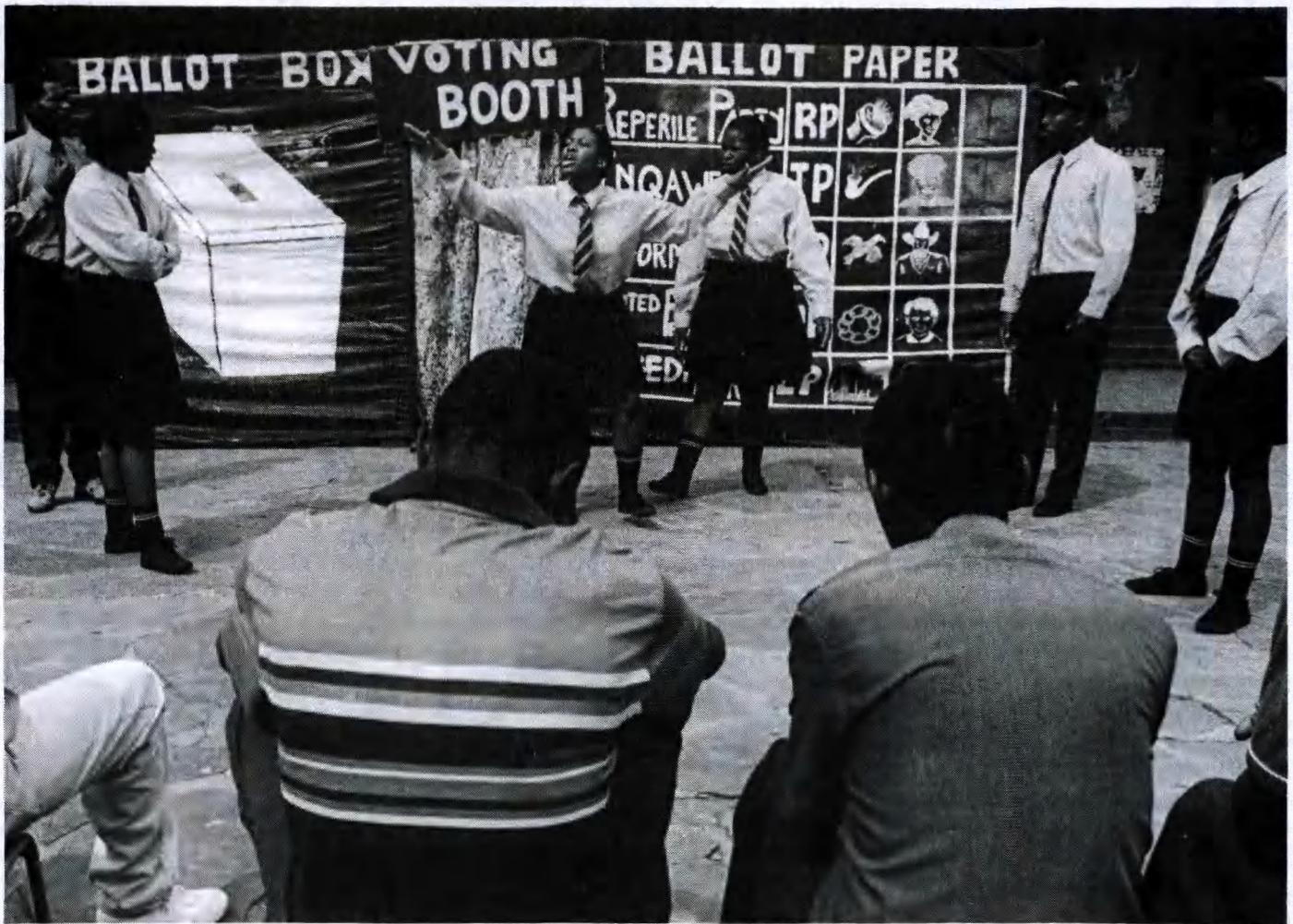
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POLITICS

A Socialist Magazine of News and Political Analysis

Number 6 Spring 1994

SOUTH AFRICA'S HISTORIC ELECTIONS: A VICTORY FOR DEMOCRACY



INSIDE:

- ▼ SINGLE PAYER HEALTH INSURANCE
- ▼ FOCUS ON ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

- ▼ CHIAPAS REBELLION
 - ▼ THE WORLD AFTER STALINISM
-

CONTENTS

IS SINGLE PAYER HEALTH INSURANCE SOCIALIZED MEDICINE? By Alan Hanger.....	3	SOUTH AFRICA: THE DAWN OF FREEDOM By Caroline Lund.....	14
ANTI-POOR CAMPAIGN IN NEW YORK CITY SUBWAYS By Kurt T. Hill.....	4	WE HAVE WON THE RIGHT TO VOTE ANC Election Manifesto.....	15
CLASS WARFARE IN DECATUR, ILLINOIS By Caroline Lund.....	5	WOSA CALLS FOR A MASS WORKERS' PARTY By Malik Miah.....	20
HANDSHAKE FAILS TO BRING PEACE By Malik Miah.....	6	THE BROTHERHOOD OF LIES By Caroline Lund.....	21
WATER AND OCCUPATION By Nancy Brown.....	8	LINKS International Journal of Socialist Reviewal.....	24
ISRAEL: LAND-GRAB MANIA By Dalia Habash.....	9	THE WORLD AFTER STALINISM By Barry Sheppard.....	25
ECONOMY OF AUTONOMY Interview with Majed Sbeih.....	11	RUSSIAN CONFEDERATION OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALISTS Interview, Part II.....	28
BEHIND THE CHIAPAS REBELLION Zapatista Speech and Interview.....	12	THE REFOUNDING OF RUSSIAN LABOR REVIEW By Renfrey Clarke.....	30
COVER: A voter education play is performed for township residents outside Pretoria, South Africa. Photographer: Gisèle Wulfsohn/Impact Visuals		WHY THINGS BURN Theatre Review by Rich Lesnik.....	32

Rebuilding the Socialist Movement

Workers and farmers face an uncertain future. The drive for profits is putting working people out of work around the world.

The workers in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe now face a similar fate as their brothers and sisters in the capitalist world. Their governments are both pro-capitalist and anti-communist. Few voices are defending socialism.

In the United States, as in all advanced capitalist countries, employer and government attacks fall disproportionately on the discriminated oppressed people of color, women and youth.

Only a consciously organized and militant response can defend the oppressed and exploited, here and abroad. The key to bring about fundamental change is mass mobilization and leadership by working people around three basic ideas: *solidarity, democracy and independent political action.*

Solidarity: Active support of the democratic rights of people of color, women, youth, the disabled, gays and other victims and outcasts of society. Solidarity means complete support to national liberation struggles from Asia, Africa, the Pacific to the Americas and Europe.

Democracy: The right to pick our own leaders and make our own decisions. Democracy means the majority rules—from the bottom up, rank and file control. But it also means respecting the rights of minority points of view.

Independent political action: A break from the framework of the two-party con game of the rich. Labor needs our own voice and party. Class collaboration is a death trap for working people.

Activists for Independent Socialist Politics (AISP) seeks to rebuild an independent socialist movement in the United States. The traditional left and progressive groups have failed. We seek collaboration and democratic discussions with other activists and groups who agree with the three basic principles outlined above.

AISP members are political activists in trade unions, feminist organizations, Black, Latino and Asian groups, student groups and other movements for social change.

We believe there can be no socialist future unless the working class and environmental movements unite as one.

If you agree with this approach to politics and want to help us rebuild an independent socialist movement in the United States, contact Activists for Independent

Socialist Politics. Send \$15 to join, or for more information, write to:

AISP, P.O. Box 8376, Berkeley, CA 94707



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Is Single Payer Health Insurance Socialized Medicine?

On April 27 more than 1 million signatures were turned in to county registrar of voters across the state of California to place an initiative on the November ballot to install a Canadian-style single payer health care system in the state. The 1,064,000 signatures collected represented 57 percent more than needed to qualify. The fight begins now to win the vote—Editor.

In California, and nationally, the movement to eliminate insurance company profits and to control costs in medical care has been attacked from the right as being socialized medicine, and from the left as not being socialized medicine. Is government sponsored single payer health insurance socialized medicine? If not, why should it be supported by progressives and workers?

The Postal Service argument

Republicans such as Robert Dole and Newt Gingrich, and Democrats Jim Cooper and John Breaux charge that single payer is socialized medicine that will lead to faceless bureaucrats running health care, and that situation will deteriorate—like in the former Soviet Union. Their favorite argument against single payer is: if you like the U.S. Postal Service, you'll like single payer. This is their defense of a health system that abandons tens of millions of Americans because it is not profitable to cover everyone.

The major problem with the Postal Service is the fact that workers and consumers don't run the Postal System. Almost all the profitable package business is left to private companies such as UPS and Federal Express.

If the Postal Service were privatized, as right wing ideologues demand, the postal service would get worse, not unlike the U.S. health care system. Rural areas would lose mail service because urban areas would not be subsidizing mail delivery, much like the lack of coverage for millions of rural Americans owing to insufficient profits for doctors and the medical industry.

By ALAN HANGER

Additional millions would lose postal delivery because they could not pay for delivery, like the 39 million citizens who are unable to pay for health care today.

While the comparison of single payer with the Postal Service is a demagogic attempt to play on the proverbial errors of the Postal Service, a single payer system is not even as socialized as the U.S. mail. *Single payer is not socialized medicine, but socialized insurance.*

The fire-fighting system in most communities is more socialized because fire fighters are government employees. Doctors and medical workers, on the other hand, would work for themselves or private companies rather than for the government. Payroll taxes on employers in the health system are analogous to property taxes that are paid for fire districts.

Some theoreticians on the right say that even the fire systems should be privatized because "the market is inherently more efficient." This could lead to a scenario where a fire in one building is left to spread to a larger area because of unpaid private fire company fees.

This scenario is similar to the current spread of TB, beginning with people who cannot afford medical treatment, which is due to underfunded public health programs. If you can't pay, you get no treatment.

This scenario is similar to the current spread of TB, beginning with people who cannot afford medical treatment, which is due to underfunded public health programs. If you can't pay, you get no treatment.

Socialized medicine

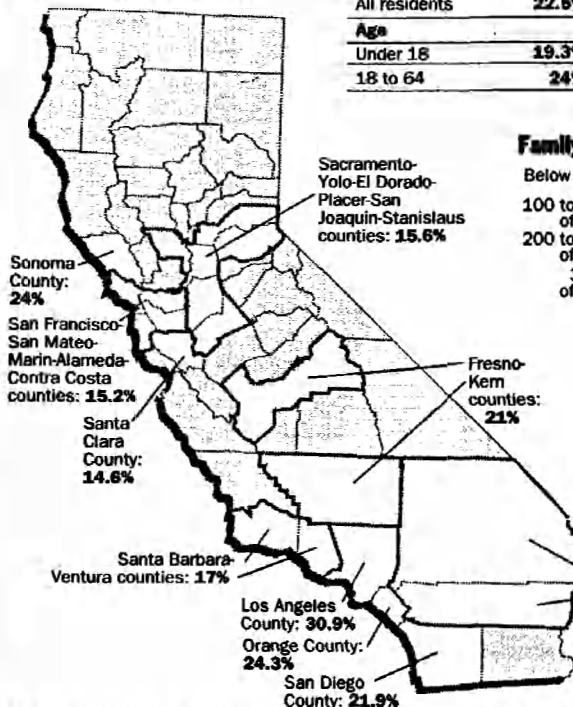
The single payer system is not socialized medicine. Socialized medicine would provide free universal health care for all Americans regardless of employment, nationality, race, sex or citizenship. Health care would be treated as a right, not a privilege. The system would be based on

Continued on Page 5

THE UNINSURED IN CALIFORNIA

Percent of residents under 65 who have no private health insurance, Medi-Cal or Medicare.

The uninsured in California counties



Category	Pct.	Category	Pct.
All residents	22.5%	Work status of adults	
Age		Full-time employees	18.5%
Under 18	19.3%	Other work	37.5%
18 to 64	24%	Nonworkers	28.1%

Family income, ages 18 to 64

Below poverty level	48.4%
100 to 199 percent of poverty level	43.1%
200 to 299 percent of poverty level	24.7%
300+ percent of poverty level	11.3%

Race/ethnicity

Latino	38.5%
African American	20.1%
Asian	19.3%
White	14.9%

NOTE: Accuracy of percentages ranges from plus or minus 0.9 percent to plus or minus 3.4 percent depending on sample size. Figures are derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys for 1991 and 1992.

Anti-Poor Campaign in New York City Subways

By KURT T. HILL

Rudolph Giuliani had been mayor of New York City one week when the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) announced a mean-spirited crackdown on panhandlers and peddlers working the city's subway system. The Manhattan Quality of Life Plainclothes Task Force has been ordered to make arrests to combat "aggressive" or "recidivist" poor people.

While the Boobs in Blue have regularly ejected and issued summonses to panhandlers, the results have been "disappointing" to MTA bureaucrats because begging has not been deterred. With the new "get tough" attitude toward the poor, the Giuliani regime is seeking to use the Public Authorities Law to strengthen repression. They want to systematically enforce rules against begging and peddling, "offenses" punishable by a fine of \$50 and/or up to 10 days in the city slammer.

"The Transit Police have worked with the office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau to assure that panhandling arrests can be smoothly processed," purred John Cunningham, the MTA's Press Secretary.

"The District Attorney has cooperated with us in this effort and we appreciate that very much," remarked MTA Chief Pig Michael O'Connor. "We're now in the process of reaching out to the other district attorneys' offices in the city"—to make the anti-poor crackdown a city-wide effort.

The MTA has embarked on an extensive "public information" campaign with posters, flyers and PA announcements designed to stifle any charitable feelings New Yorkers still have for poor people, and to promote selfishness as a "civic duty." Thousands of palm cards have been distributed by MTA personnel at subway stations, and a new poster placed in subway cars.

Giving: no way to help

The palm card proclaims: "Giving money to panhandlers is no way to help the homeless and the needy.... The police are doing all they can to keep out

panhandlers and peddlers. But they can't be everywhere at once. They need your help. The best way to help end panhandling is not to give... The courts have held that begging anywhere in the subway is against the law. Make sure that it doesn't pay. *Don't give money to panhandlers.*" (Emphasis theirs.)

Even more disgusting than the selfishness dripping from the palm card is the new poster. Designed as a cartoon "thought balloon," a subway rider sitting in front of it unwittingly becomes part of the anti-poor campaign by "thinking" such charitable thoughts as: "Uh, oh. Oh pleeeze don't come stand in FRONT of me ASKING for money. GREAT. Now the whole car's staring... Look, I feel bad. I really do. But HEY, it's MY MONEY... SORRY, NO money from me."

The MTA claims their "studies" have "shown" that many riders are "confused" about subway rules and "uncertain" of how to channel their compassion for people in need. Presumably, the anti-poor campaign will clarify for them what feelings they should have when confronted by beggars in the world's richest city.

Bi-partisan attack on homeless

Apparently the new mayor and his advisers believe that New Yorkers are so dumb they can't put two and two together. While the city authorities have announced their intention to defy a 1980 court order mandating shelter on demand, the Demopublican's favorite "liberal," Governor Mario Cuomo, is pushing an even tougher stand.

While the Giuliani regime would eject homeless people from the shelter system after 90 days, Cuomo recently introduced legislation to cut off reimbursement after 60 consecutive days for families living temporarily in hotels and motels. Introduced in mid-January as part of the Governor's proposed budget, the measure will pressure city officials to stop placing

homeless families for long periods of time in short-term housing—but without providing permanent housing for them. The State of New York provides 25 percent of the cost

for hotel or motel rooms, with the city and the federal government picking up the rest of the tab.

Opposition growing

Dozens of activists turned out January 27 at New York University Law School to attend a "StreetWatch" city-wide training program. Called by the Coalition for the Homeless, the meeting was geared toward establishing a pilot project of four street patrols to monitor police harassment of homeless people.

The meeting began with an overview of "sweeps" of the homeless by city authorities and private security services in the recent past. Organizers discussed possible new strategies by city authorities, including an even higher level of cooperation between the administration and private security forces hired by local Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in harassing homeless people for so-called "quality of life crimes."

Speakers outlined the links between police, BIDs and community boards in creating the anti-poor campaigns. A student from New York University reported on last summer's "Operation Silent Night," a series of "sweeps" sponsored by the Village Alliance, the major BID in Greenwich Village.

Coalition organizers projected the creation of four pilot StreetWatch teams to patrol the Penn Station area, the Grand Central Station corridor, the 53rd Street to 11th Avenue area, and the subways. Each team would record information about the harassment they witness, which may be used in a class action lawsuit against the harassment to be filed in the near future. ▼

Kurt T. Hill is a member of Activists for Independent Socialist Politics in New York City and the founder of the Anarchist Caucus in the Committees of Correspondence.

Class Warfare in Decatur, Illinois

By CAROLINE LUND

Decatur, Illinois, a city of about 90,000 inhabitants, is the center of a war between corporations and the labor movement.

I visited Decatur for two days in February to attend a meeting of the New Directions caucus of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union and to get a firsthand update on the struggle of the unions there.

Decatur is an industrial town. I got a tour with Larry Solomon, president of UAW Local 751 at the Caterpillar plant, which is the second-largest in the country. We passed factory after factory—A.E. Staley Co., Archer-Daniels-Midland Co. (ADM), Firestone. The huge Caterpillar plant is surrounded by a new, barbed-wire-topped fence with sliding gates. A stench of food processing hangs over the city. You see signs in people's yards: "This family supports the locked-out workers at A.E. Staley Co."

Tough times for labor

The 760 Staley workers, members of Allied Industrial Workers (AIW) Local 837, have been locked out by the company since June 1993. The 1,760 Caterpillar workers in Decatur went on strike for five and a half months last year over company concession demands. They went back to work last April, when the company threatened to permanently replace them, and have been conducting a work-to-rule campaign for a decent contract ever since.

During these tough times for the labor movement it is inspiring to talk with these union fighters in the AIW and UAW in Decatur. The rank and file is fired up and involved, together with their entire families. The Caterpillar and Staley workers see their fates as intertwined. Caterpillar workers have donated about \$30,000 in plant-gate collections to the locked-out Staley local.

The corporations see to their own common interests as well. Food-processing giant ADM has built a three-and-a-half-mile pipeline from its plant to the A.E. Staley plant to supply Staley with

starch slurry in case of disruptions due to the union struggle.

Bob Hull, vice-president of the Staley local, explained, "The company tells us we have to be competitive with ADM, which has only 400 workers while we have over 700. But then they told us ADM has built this pipeline so that if we went on strike, we wouldn't slow them down a bit."

I was talking with Hull and Caterpillar worker Kenny Rogers in the packed bar in the back of the AIW union hall. Hull said that unemployment compensation will run out for the Staley workers after three more checks.

"And we only got unemployment after

Single Payer

Continued from Page 3

need instead of profit. Preventive services, such as pre-natal care and immunizations, would be emphasized. There would be no cost to workers for this program, which would be paid for through the elimination of military expenditures and with very steep taxes on the rich.

But single payer does address several needs within the universality of a single tier of quality care for all. Citizens could not be refused coverage because of race, sex, or income. Health care would be accessible to everyone, including those without jobs and those with pre-existing conditions. Preventive medicine would be a primary means of controlling costs, as well as a way to keep everyone healthy.

The capitalist system of medicine would not be overturned under single payer, because the profit motive in research, high-tech equipment, and doctors' fees would not be eliminated, merely controlled. Doctors would still practice private medicine, though they would have to negotiate their fees.

The program would be mostly government- and employer-financed, with only 2½ percent being borne by working people directly. But workers would not have to

the lockout because we rallied at the capital building, 2,000 strong, which had never happened before," said Hull.

Rogers added: "We busted into senators' offices to make our demands. When the secretary would say, 'Let me see if the senator is in,' we said, 'we'll see if he's in,' and marched right into the office."

The weekend I was in Decatur some 800-900 unionists and their families turned out to a public meeting to hear Marty Levitt, author of the book *Confessions of a Union Buster*. After years of a career as a union-busting consultant, Levitt is now spilling the beans about the low-down tactics of his former employers.

"For the two hours of that meeting you could have heard a pin drop," said Bob

Continued on Page 31

pay co-payments or deductibles for treatment. The majority of Americans would pay less under single payer than they are currently paying now. Hospitals and clinics would still operate in the confines of the capitalist market, but would be subject to a global budget for cost control.

Since single payer doesn't institute socialized medicine, why should socialists support it? From this discussion it should be clear that the health care of all working people would improve dramatically with single payer. Socialists have always supported reforms of the capitalist system that would move working people forward both materially and ideologically.

If we are able to win single payer government administered and controlled health care in the U.S., people will have a concrete experience to counter the myth of "market efficiency" that is being fostered by capitalists. It will be much easier then to organize the working class around collective struggles for the common good.

A vigorous and active support for the single payer health reform struggle will be supported by all socialists to whom socialism has not become a religion. It is a positive step towards socialized medicine. In fact, it will not be possible to ever win the latter without first fighting for single payer reform. ▼

The February 25 Hebron massacre of at least 29 Palestinian worshippers by a racist Israeli settler brought to the world's attention that peace is not around the corner in the Middle East.

Israeli settlers continue to carry Uzis and attack Palestinians, while the Israeli government and army do nothing. Worse, Palestinians are suffering even more repression since the massacre. The Israeli regime is tightening their economic noose around the necks of all Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. In response to suicide car bombings carried out by Hamas, a militant Islamic group, government officials in early April announced plans to close off the

FOCUS ON ISRAEL & PALESTINE

Occupied Territories and bring in thousands of foreign workers to take over many jobs held by Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza.

What happened to the historic peace agreement? It is still on, according to the government. The new repression is to make sure the Declaration of Principles (DOP) signed by the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in September is carried out!

The DOP, however, is not what the Palestinian people had hoped for. So far, DOP has not brought the Palestinian people any closer to self rule, much less to genuine self determination. The Israelis refuse to grant even a figleaf of autonomy to the Palestinians.

Yasser Arafat, the head of the PLO, is now facing a growing revolt within his ranks. His inner circle is getting smaller and smaller.

From Oslo to Cairo

A review of the major events since last summer helps explain why the Palestinian people are no closer to genuine national rights than they were prior to the historic handshake between Arafat and

Israel refuses to recognize Palestinian national rights Handshake Fails to Bring Peace

By MALIK MIAH

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

In August the PLO and the Israeli government completed secret negotiations on the DOP in Oslo, Norway.

On September 13 in Washington, D.C., under the watchful eye of President Clinton, Arafat and Rabin signed the Oslo Agreement and shook hands. This led to cheers in Palestine. Israel had finally recognized the separate existence of the Palestinian people.

The plan, once implemented, would grant Palestinians limited self-rule in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area. Israeli troops would withdraw and the PLO would set up its own administration. The first phase would begin in December and be completed by April 13.

The DOP also stated that the Gaza-Jericho First plan was to lead over a five-year interim period to complete self-rule. In December 1995 talks would start on the permanent status of the West Bank and Gaza, the status of Jerusalem and the future of the Jewish settlements.

What's the record? Israel has failed to meet any of the Agreement's self-imposed deadlines. First, the December date went by. Then the April deadline passed. On May 4, PLO leader Arafat and Israeli prime minister Rabin signed a "definitive" accord for Palestinian self-rule. However, the so-called final agreement does not require total Israeli military withdrawal from the Occupied Territories or grant genuine self-rule in Gaza and the town of Jericho.

Not surprisingly, there were no celebrations. As one Gaza resident explained, "We celebrated back in September and nothing happened afterwards. This time we'll wait until we see that it's real."

Is it likely? No, because the Israeli government is afraid to cross the most explosive element in the Occupied Territories: the Jewish settlers. As long as the

settlements exist, there will be Israeli control and more violent conflicts.

Supposedly, over the five year interim period, all security arrangements between Israel and the PLO would be settled and the 130 Jewish settler communities (about

120,000 people) would either agree to co-exist with Palestinians under PLO control, or volunteer to leave.

This utopian scheme, however, was never agreed to by the settlers. Baruch Goldstein, the butcher of Hebron, told friends before his Ramadan slaughter that he was going to do "something big" to destroy the pact. Goldstein, like many Israelis, opposed any concessions to Palestinian rights. He was for the historic Zionist goal of total "ethnic cleansing" of Palestinians from what is called "biblical Israel."

The Rabin regime does not dispute the Zionist objective in the Occupied Territories. It was a Labor Party government that built the first settlement in 1967. But Rabin sees the Oslo Agreement as a way to contain the Palestinian struggle, to split its leadership and defeat the most militant elements. He is dead opposed to genuine autonomy for the Palestinians.

After the Hebron massacre, Rabin slapped the settlers' hands with threats and arrested a few of the most extreme racists.

The Palestinian resistance, on the other hand, continues to face live bullets. Land confiscations never stopped and new settlements are being built.

Credibility problem for Arafat

The failure of Israel to control the settlers and meet the DOP deadlines is a major blow to Arafat, who went out on a limb to sign the Oslo Agreement and shake hands with Rabin. When Arafat submitted the DOP to the PLO Executive Committee, the Committee was sharply divided. Only 14 out of 18 members were present, and only eight voted in favor. Since then, a number of PLO leaders in the territories and outside have attacked Arafat for "selling out" the Palestinian cause.

The Hamas group and other opponents

among the Palestinians are regaining the political initiative. Arafat is clearly on the defensive. The PLO chairman had to be circumspect in his denunciation of suicide car bombings carried out by Hamas members inside Israel. But he continues to pursue the DOP.

On February 9 Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres signed the Cairo Agreement, which addresses the implementation of security arrangements based on the DOP. This is clearly an agreement between the victors and the vanquished. While the PLO had previously agreed to full Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, except within the settlement proper, the Cairo Accord allows Israeli troops in the areas surrounding the settlements. Israel also divides Gaza's territory into three non-continuous blocks. Israel will continue to control the three roads that cross Gaza.

What about Jericho? The PLO wanted self rule in the entire Jericho area of 350 square kilometers. Israel said only the town of Jericho, meaning 25 square kilometers. The final agreement says the PLO will control 54 square kilometers. Most importantly, the border passages to Jordan and Egypt will remain in Israeli hands. As Palestinian political activist Ali Jaddeh from the Old City of Jerusalem told the Israeli left magazine *Challenge*, "Authority on the border crossing is the key to the political authority in the area. Unfortunately, the authority in charge of border crossings will be Israeli. Where is the Palestinian authority when Israel has veto power on any person who wants to come into the territories?"

Issues concerning taxes, customs and currency will remain basically in Israeli hands. Settlements and land confiscations will continue and the Jerusalem area is untouchable.

In other words, no fundamental elements of Israeli occupation will change significantly under the DOP as it is now being implemented.

Why did Arafat sign?

As it becomes clearer day by day that the DOP is not a step toward real Palestinian national rights, the resistance to it grows. It is not only Hamas, but past



Palestinian youth protesting in Gaza

supporters of Arafat and the PLO who are going back into the streets.

But the obvious questions are: Why did Arafat sign such a bad deal? And why has he stuck to it even as its real nature becomes clear?

Arafat believed the DOP was the best chance at getting a foothold for the Palestinian people to achieve their goal of national self determination, that is, creation of an independent state. He had hoped to show the world that the Palestinian people could run their own area and that this would be the first small step toward genuine independence.

The world, including most of the left, correctly applauded that heroic effort. The relations of forces in the world (especially with the demise of the Soviet Union) and in the region are such that the PLO did not have much choice except to make an historic compromise.

The problem, however, is that the compromise is almost entirely one-sided. It is obvious the Israeli rulers have no intention of granting the Palestinians real autonomy.

Worse, Israel wants to use Arafat as a weapon against his own people. The Environmental Minister of Israel, Yossi Sarid, put it succinctly during the Cairo meetings: "Israel negotiated with itself since the Palestinians have nothing to give.

We should twist Arafat's hand, but be careful not to break it since we need Arafat strong enough to suppress Hamas."

No peace without self-determination

The Palestinian people are losing faith that the DOP will ever move them toward self-rule. The DOP has already failed to prevent the Hebron massacre. Israeli atrocities occur daily. More massacres can be expected.

The road to genuine peace, it is now clear, cannot travel through the Oslo, Washington and Cairo capitals.

A just peace must begin with two basic principles: First, the total Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, including the full dismantlement of the Jewish settlements. And, second, a recognition of the inalienable right of Palestinian self determination.

While this solution (formation of two independent states) will not resolve the issue of land confiscation in pre-1967 Israel or the rights of the Arab Palestinians who live and hold second-class citizenship inside of Israel (some 20 percent of the population), it is a transitional step toward the only permanent way to establish peace—the creation of a unitary state of Jews and Palestinians living as equals—that is, a democratic, secular Palestine. ▼

Israel, Palestine and the Struggle Over Resources Water and Occupation

By NANCY BROWN

By now no one should be surprised that very little progress has been made toward realizing the stated goals of the accord signed last September between Israel and the PLO.

Palestinian self-rule is not something Israel wishes to see. Aside from the obvious disregard for Palestinian human rights every day in the occupied territories (the mosque murders in Hebron are a chilling example), there is the matter of control and ownership of resources. The desire to maintain control supplies a fundamental motivation for oppression. As long as there is a scarce supply of water, the occupation is likely to be actively enforced.

FOCUS ON ISRAEL & PALESTINE

War over water resources

Indeed, the evidence suggests that the "Six-Day War" in 1967—in which Israel gained control of the Syrian Golan Heights, the Jordanian West Bank and Jerusalem, and the Egyptian Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula—was actually a war over water and other resources. Israel's public justifications for the occupation have been weighted toward the question of military security. This tends to distract attention from the realities of life in the desert. The security of a water supply provides perhaps the most basic reason to maintain control of the West Bank and other areas, for an infinite period.

A look at a map of the region will indicate that major surface water supplies were appropriated in 1967. The most obvious of these is the Jordan River, which has since been reduced to a trickle because of its diversion to Israel. Later on, Israel gained control of the Litani River in southern Lebanon. But most maps don't indicate the underground sources of water, which play a vital role in the conflict. In the West Bank there are three major aquifers, which are used heavily by Israel.

The Jordan River and the aquifers have

been steadily declining under Israel's control. Military edicts imposed since 1967 tightly control water procurement, allocation and use. Israel uses around 90 percent of the total supply, although based on population the Palestinians should, in fairness, receive 25 percent. Of the Jordan River itself the Palestinians on the West Bank get none. From the underground water on the West Bank, Palestinians are allotted a mere eight percent.

There are over 700 wells in Gaza and the West Bank, some of which are old, shallow, or in need of repairs. A 1967 law prohibits Palestinians from drilling new wells or making existing holes any deeper. On the western side of the nearest West Bank aquifers, the Israelis drill deeper or at an angle to reach the water, which depletes the aquifer and contaminates shallower wells with salt. As of September 1991, over half of the wells in Jericho were dry.



Israel now controls the Jordan river on the West Bank and the Litani River in southern Lebanon, which are sources for previously inaccessible water supplies.

In Gaza the problem is at a critical stage. Sea water is seeping into the aquifer. Some scientists predict that within five years agriculture in Gaza will be impossible.

The salinity could eventually reach Jerusalem, and the damage is irreversible.

Ban on tree planting

Israel's administration of the territories includes a maze of laws (most are actually military edicts) which control every aspect of Palestinian life, such as the procurement of water, as mentioned. A de facto prohibition against tree-planting went into effect in 1967 (a permit is required and impossible to obtain). But the common practice of planting trees in Israel is well-known, especially in the American Jewish community. "Planting a tree in Israel" was a common fund-raising theme in the 1960s.

Without any background information this sounds like a good policy, but once you realize that some of the land on which conifers are planted once supported Palestinian orchards, the project has a different ring to it. And considering the planting prohibition on the eastern side of the hill, plus the numerous occasions when the Israeli military forces uproot trees in the occupied lands, an imbalance emerges. The geography of the area, combined with the practice of denuding the eastern slope while greening the western (Mediterranean-facing) slope, means that more rainfall is attracted to the western (Israeli) side. This effect may or may not be part of a policy, but it is the result of the practice of occupation.

Irrigating the desert

Israeli agriculture must be examined to understand how it was possible to "make the desert bloom"—a famous phrase which has been used to justify Zionist policy and the occupation.

Being a technologically advanced society, Israel is able to extensively irrigate its farms, and as a result, many water-hungry products are grown, such as cotton, citrus, strawberries and lawns. Irrigation is used on 49 percent of Israeli land, while

less than six percent is irrigated on the West Bank. Traditionally dry-farmed crops such as figs and olives are commonly cultivated by Palestinian growers, who pay a premium for water. Israeli growers receive water subsidies in the neighborhood of \$250 million a year, according to one estimate. (In the western United States, this type of policy keeps many growers from using water-saving practices or planting less thirsty crops.)

In addition to farming practices in Israel, domestic and recreational uses also guzzle this precious resource. It is astounding to see a multi-acre swimming and water-sport facility just a few miles from bone-dry landscape. Home water-saving devices and policies have not been common, and especially not available to Palestinians. For example, a recycling program was applied for, but Palestinians were denied permission to employ it unless the recycled water went to Jerusalem and the settlements.

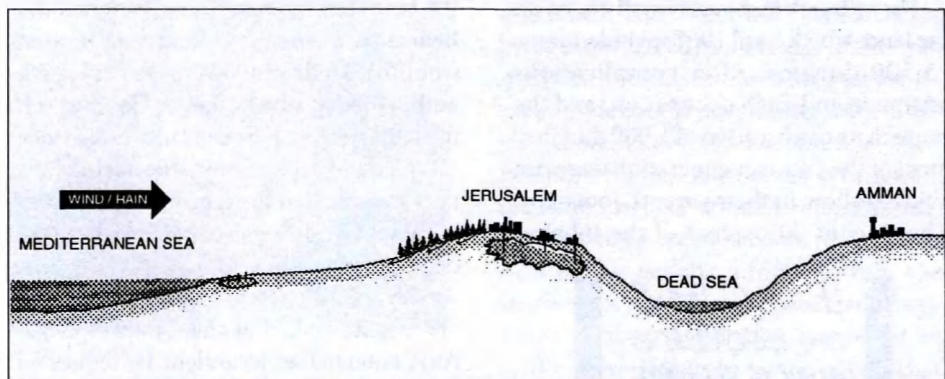
Israel is currently searching for more sources of water, such as in Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, and the Nile River.

Regional and global climate changes are bound to affect supply. And if international deals are arranged to ship water from these regions, conflicts could arise when availability slips.

Although efficiency and cooperative efforts would go far to solve the problem of water supply in Israel and Palestine, the occupation stands in the way. Land and water rights have not been addressed

yet in the "peace process," and the Israeli government will avoid doing so as long as possible. The United States, with its billions in aid, could change this, but so far has chosen not to try. ▼

Nancy Brown visited Israel and Palestine with a fact-finding delegation in 1991. She is responsible for the design and graphic production of Independent Politics.



Israeli practices take advantage of air currents and geography to maintain control of water resources. Trees planted on the windward side facing the sea tend to concentrate rainfall, while uprooting trees growing on the eastern slope helps to reduce rain. Aquifers in the West Bank are mined from encroaching settlements, causing Palestinian supplies to dwindle.

Israel: Land-Grab Mania

The following article is taken from the January-February, 1994, issue of Challenge, a magazine of Israeli-Palestinian coexistence, published in Jerusalem.

By DALIA HABASH

The Israeli authorities have been confiscating Palestinian land at an unprecedented pace since the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DOP) in Washington this past September. Approximately 37,065 dunams (one dunam equals approximately one acre) have been confiscated in the Occupied West Bank in the past three-and-a-half months (36,490 dunams in the month of December alone). The DOP mentions neither land nor confiscation, leaving the Palestinians confused about the present status of their land.

The prevailing impression, however, is that Israel feels the need to grab as much land as possible, especially in areas which

it has no intention of relinquishing to any autonomous Palestinian authority. These areas, which are not negotiable in the Israeli view, include Greater Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley, and much of the land adjacent to the Green Line [the pre-1967 Israeli border].

Beit Liqya, a village of 8,000 inhabitants that borders the Green Line west of Ramallah, recently felt the effects of this policy. Beit Liqya is a quiet place full of intriguing stories, but also of pessimism. The signing of the peace accord proved this attitude to be realistic.

On the morning of September 1, 1993, 13 days before the signing of the accord, some of the villagers went to work their fields in the southern part of the village which borders the Green Line, and were startled to see Israeli bulldozers busily digging away on their property. As the soldiers forcibly removed the villagers, they gave the stock reason for their activity: military purposes. The land, the soldiers

said, is now declared a closed military area. When the villagers protested that they depended on this land and had been cultivating it since 1933, a military policeman responded that the State of Israel had allowed them to farm there for the past 26 years out of kindness.

The Beit Liqya residents weren't sure what the policeman meant by this—was he saying that Israel claimed ownership of this land since they occupied the West Bank in 1967? And if that is true, why had they waited 26 years to make their claim public? What the residents did know is that they had just lost 2,000 dunams of their land, a devastating blow to a village with an already high unemployment rate.

The village of Beit Liqya has been neglected and underdeveloped at least since Jordanian rule. There is no running water or telephones in the village, and just a few streets are paved. The village consumes between 50-60 tanks of water a day, which they purchase from the nearby settlement, Mevo Horon, at 30 sheqels [\$1 equals

Continued on Page 10

Land Grab Mania

Continued from page 9

approximately 3 sheqels] a tank. There are one or two wells, but these cannot serve the whole village. A few houses are newly built, and on the roofs of three houses rest large satellite dishes, each one serving three houses and enabling the occupants to watch about 30 European television channels.

The villagers had traditionally lived off the land, which until 1967 included some 15,500 dunams. After complications arising from Israeli occupation, and the immediate confiscation of 1,000 dunams, most of the younger generation were not able to follow in their parents' footsteps. Thus, about 50 percent of the inhabit-

FOCUS ON ISRAEL & PALESTINE

ants of Beit Liqya had to find work as laborers in Israel. After the closure of the Occupied Territories was imposed in March 1993, only about 40 percent of the workers in the village were given permits to enter Israel. Then came the signing of the DOP in September, and the military closure of 2,000 dunams, and the number of workers given permits declined even further, to 30 percent of those who had been allowed into Israel since the closure.

After their rude awakening on September 1, the villagers met in the local mosque to decide what to do. This meeting spawned a four-person committee, which immediately sent a representative to the Jordanian Liaison Office for the Occupied Territories in Amman. They requested the documents that would establish the rightful owners of the land in Beit Liqya. The Jordanian authorities refused to give them access to the documents. According to committee member Nimr Abd Hussein, whose land was included in the September 1 confiscations, "They accused us of wanting to sell the land to the Israelis."

"The officials," Hussein continued, "may have been wary because of two unrelated

instances just after the 1967 occupation, when Palestinians sold land to Israelis: one in the village of Deir Treif, and another concerning a group who obtained forged documents about land in Jericho, then sold this land to Israelis."

Failing to get anywhere in Jordan, the committee members headed back to the West Bank where they went to the finance director at the Civil Administration in Beit El. Hussein showed them the deeds to the land, but the part that concerned the Beit Liqya confiscated land was "erased from the deeds in 1953 by the Jordanian authorities. We had a piece of land which my father and I have been cultivating since 1933, and when I asked for the documents, they told me that the registration number is there, but it doesn't specify what plot of land," Hussein said.

The committee then approached lawyer Usama Halabi at the Quakers' Legal Aid Center in East Jerusalem. He requested that they obtain aerial photos to prove that the land has been cultivated since 1933. The committee members were only able to find photos since 1987, but weren't successful in getting access even to these photos.

Halabi then discovered the cause of some of the confusion—the land concerned straddles the Green Line separating Israel from the Occupied West Bank, in what is known as no man's land. That is why, when the Jordanians designated the Beit Liqya land as part of no man's land in 1953, they erased the owner's names from the deeds. When Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, the status of the entire buffer zone, amounting to hundreds of thousands of dunams, became contestable. Was the no man's land to remain as such, was it to become part of the West Bank, or part of Israel?

Regardless of its legal status, the villagers of Beit Liqya continued to cultivate the land. An 1858 Ottoman Law still valid in the West Bank states that if a person cultivates a plot of land for more than 10 years, and in the meantime no one else claims ownership, then that land belongs to the person cultivating it. Since neither Jordan nor Israel made a formal claim to the land until now, it should remain as Beit Liqya property.

But lawyer Halabi also realized that Beit Liqya's case had further political implications. It is adjacent to the future city, Modi'n, the largest of the planned Seven Stars, which is being built in Israel along the Green Line (the cornerstone was laid in late December, 1993). This city is part of a vast project aimed at settling hundreds of thousands of Israelis along the Green Line, making it nearly impossible to re-establish the line as a border, and in fact pushing it eastward into the West Bank. According to Halabi, the border is being pushed eastward in the Hebron area as well.

Halabi directed the committee to Faisal Hussein's office in East Jerusalem, which until now has not been of any assistance. The villagers are still in limbo, not knowing what to do.

Left with no other options, there is talk in the village of creative resistance to the confiscation. According to Hussein, the Israelis will most likely uproot the villagers' crops and replant the land with pine trees, and some villagers would like to respond in kind by then uprooting the Israeli trees.

Whether the villagers will succeed in any of their attempts at resistance, no one can say, but these 2,000 dunams, like thousands of other dunams across the West Bank, have been lost to the State of Israel. As the days pass and the Israeli version of peace becomes increasingly clear, villages such as Beit Liqya see less and less chance of survival. ▼

CHALLENGE

A Magazine of Israeli-Palestinian Coexistence

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Interview with Majed Sbeih

Economy of Autonomy

The following interview is taken from the November-December, 1993, issue of *Challenge*, a Jerusalem-based bimonthly English-language magazine written by Israelis, Palestinians and others. The introduction is by *Challenge*. See ad on page 10 for subscription information.

Economics occupy an important place in the vision of a new, peaceful Middle East. Whereas Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres describes an ideal of inter-relationship between flourishing economies, Israeli Finance Minister Abraham Shohat insists that the emerging Palestinian economy will remain linked to Israel. For another view of the economic effects the Declaration of Principles will have on the region, *Challenge* interviewed Dr. Majed Sbeih, who holds a PhD in economics from the University of Sofia, Bulgaria, and is the director of the Center for Labor Research in Ramallah.

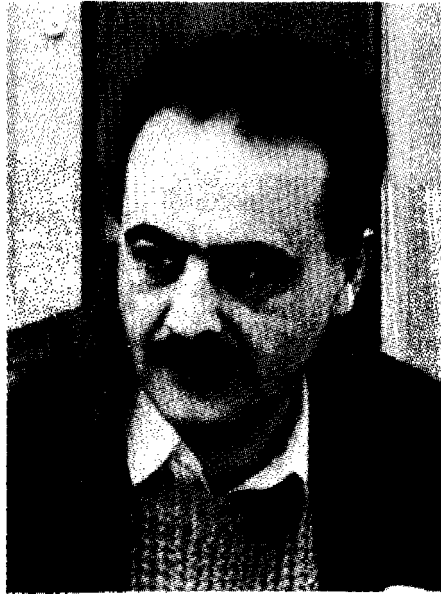
Q: Foreign Minister Peres declared that he is not interested in an Israeli takeover of the Palestinian economy. Should we take his statement seriously?

A: A comparison of the two indicates that the economy of the Occupied Territories is underdeveloped and dependent, whereas the Israeli economy is technologically developed and industrialized. It is objectively impossible to have a relationship of equality between two such economies. The classic terms of trade between underdeveloped and developed economies—that of cheap-labor commodities and agricultural products in return for high-tech, high surplus value products—will apply here as well.

Q: What were the economic details of the Oslo agreement between Israel and the PLO and what are their implications?

A: The agreement has a clear line dividing the major economic spheres, which will remain under Israeli control, from the secondary ones, which will be handed over to the autonomy. The Palestinian autonomy will be given control of education, health, social services, tourism, and direct taxation, while the main economic spheres such as industry, agriculture, foreign trade, customs, and indirect taxation will remain outside Palestinian control.

CHALLENGE MAGAZINE



Majed Sbeih

At the same time, the agreement points to an Israeli-Palestinian partnership for developing the transportation and electricity infrastructure for industrial development in the Occupied Territories, as well as joint enterprises for investment in industrial ventures.

Q: From your answer we get the impression that the Palestinian economy will develop through this agreement. Is that true?

A: We must distinguish between two different terms—economic growth and economic development. The new conditions may enable some economic growth due to investment in infrastructure, namely, an increase in individual income. But in spite of a certain rise in the standard of living, the lack of a national policy for industrial development will mean the economic structure remains underdeveloped.

Q: What are the necessary conditions for economic development?

A: The main condition for economic development is political independence. Political independence means economic independence. Without economic independence, it is impossible to control the national resources, to define national economic goals, or to create a policy for the development of a national economy,

which would serve first and foremost the interest of the Palestinian people.

The Oslo agreement leaves the Israelis with the say in the most important spheres of our economy, thus making it impossible to create an independent economy.

Q: What will be the character of the new Israeli-Palestinian partnership?

A: We are facing a strategic change in the relationship between Palestinian capital and Israel. The Occupied Territories are being transformed into a bridge to the Arab markets, and this is the main goal for Israel of selectively developing infrastructure there. Israel will use the new partnership with the Palestinians to penetrate the Arab markets. In their role, Palestinian capitalists are to become junior partners to the Israelis, profiting from the services they will be giving to Israeli capitalists. Arab customers are very sensitive to the label "Made in Israel." Now that Israeli products will be labeled "Made in Palestine," this problem can be overcome. Such commodities will be a product of Israeli know-how and components manufactured by cheap Palestinian labor. This division of labor favors the Israeli investors, leaving the Palestinian partners with marginal profits.

Q: On the Palestinian side, who is going to profit from this agreement?

A: The implementation of the agreement will generate a new, tiny partnership with the Israelis. This new parasitic bourgeoisie will profit as the intermediary between the Arab markets and the Israeli producers and capital. They will engage in speculative investments such as real estate, services and trade, areas which secure high profits but are void of productive investment whatsoever, especially in industry. This new layer will have vested interest in enforcing the dependency, leaving no room for industrial development, which is the basis for a healthy, productive economy.

Q: How will the anticipated foreign aid influence the Palestinian economy?

A: This economic aid has a very dangerous aspect. In extremely underdeveloped economies such as ours, a huge

Continued on Page 12

Mayan Zapatista Tells Story of Uprising Behind the Chiapas Rebellion

Following are major excerpts from a statement by, and interview with Luis, a Mayan soldier in the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN are the Spanish initials). They were made at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, at the end of January of this year. Luis was invited to Evergreen by the Labor Education and Research Center. They are reprinted with permission.

The EZLN stunned the Mexican government and the world with its uprising in the state of Chiapas on January 1, the day on which the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect. The uprising was met with fierce repression and massacres by government troops.

Testimony to the power of this upsurge of the downtrodden came from New York Times reporter Alan Riding, who wrote: "...as a former correspondent who knew Mexico in the 1970s and 1980s, I was quite unprepared for what I found when I traveled here [Mexico City] this month [February]. Somehow, a few hundred Tzotzil, Tzeltal and other Indians from Mexico's poorest state had achieved in a few weeks what opposition parties had failed to do in years: they had thrown the entire political system into disarray and given Mexico a hefty shove toward becoming a real democracy."

As we go to press, the Mexican government has agreed in negotiations to far reaching reforms in the state of Chiapas. It remains to be seen whether the ranks of supporters of the EZLN will halt their struggle or whether the reforms will actually be carried out.

You may be asking, why the massacre? The indigenous of Chiapas have been the owners of the land for thousands of years. The Spanish came and took over our land. They have been always running over our rights and that has been the history of Mexico. We have been killed, beaten, and kidnapped. They rape our women and they kill them. They kill our sons, our parents and our brothers.

That is why the first of January we decided to start fighting against the government of [President] Carlos Salinas.

Carlos Salinas represents the corruption in Mexico. He wants to lie to everyone. He tells everyone that in Mexico everybody lives well. In Mexico we have enough bread. We have enough water, enough power, enough clothes, we are in paradise. That is why the Zapatistas are a bunch of crazy men. Only crazy people will challenge the government.

But I am here to tell you today the truth. And this is the truth: The Chiapas indigenous people do not have land. We don't have land to cultivate our corn, beans, squash. Besides that, whenever we go and knock on the doors, when we ask the government, we want land, sir, we want justice, we want technical help on our cultivations, we ask for justice for those

who are imprisoned unjustly, this is the answer of the government: bullets and more bullets. The answer of the government is to identify those leaders who have the courage. After they are identified, the government goes at night and they kill them. And then after they are killed the government puts a weapon in their hands and says that they are the criminals.

I came from Chiapas [January] 4th. I am not a commander of any kind, I am a soldier [zeltal]. And I got into this for conviction, for necessity, because I didn't have any other way. This is the last resource for a man and that is how I got into this. Every man who has dignity, who has shame. I grab my machete and started fighting. I am an Indian and so I left with them.

A lot of us already lost our lives—approximately 500 deaths. Salinas is offering right now, he is offering forgiveness and he is offering amnesty. We don't think that this is the right way.

Because if we put an example right now, if any of you come here and ask for bread, and if we beat you up, if we break your bones and we leave you next to death, and then we stand up and tell that person we just beat up, there is no problem, we forgive you.

According to our indigenous people we have the right, we want our rights, we want respect to our dignity of man. We fight for the land that Zapata fought for. He fought for the poor people. He never sold himself. That is the only image of a clean revolutionary that we have in Mexico. Everyone else sold himself for a plate of beans, for food, for money, for land, even for women they sold themselves.

The Zapatista movement is very noble, is very clean, because it comes from the indigenous people. We, the Chiapanecos indigenous, when we give our word, we do it for the truth. When you are talking to an indigenous, you are talking to a man.

Salinas doesn't know anything but to lie to people. He never tells the world that

Economy of Autonomy

Continued from Page 11

amount of money could create a big bureaucratic apparatus which would use the money to feed itself rather than investing in development. Bureaucracy is one of the main obstacles to economic growth. We have quite a few examples of this in the Arab world. Lacking political independence, we do not even have a statistical bureau, or an economic center for control and planning of our national resources, in order to make the most of such aid. Under the present conditions this aid might serve to enforce dependency and bureaucratism rather than help to build our economy.

Q: To summarize, how would you describe the new relationship between Israel and the Palestinian Autonomy?

A: Israel is striving to end the old forms of direct colonialism. We are entering a new phase—the neo-colonial phase. In the new regional division of labor, Israel becomes the center, relegating the Arab countries to the periphery. Tel Aviv is to become the Metropolis; Damascus, Riad and Rabat—the Provinces. Industry, trade, tourism, and services will be transformed for this purpose. The infrastructure in the Occupied Territories, such as roads and electricity, will be connected to the Arab networks, thus binding the Arab world to Israel, and through Israel, to the Western, developed economies in Europe and North America. ▼

he sent airplanes and that he sent bombs and massacred us. He is the president of the rich ones, he is a murderer of his people. I think that the man who has the dignity to call himself a man can't kill his own people.

We, the indigenous people, have afforded 500 years of misery and injustice. Maybe many of you won't understand that, but I tell you one thing, many of the indigenous people in Chiapas don't have food, we can't speak Spanish, and many of us don't have shoes.

When the indigenous are conscious of their rights they will ask for them. I think everywhere in the world we ask for our rights and they are not respected. Everything else is a lie but the struggle for the Zapatista. Forgive us if we are mistaken.

But if we are right, support us. Right now, with money, with clothes, with letters to Salinas and Camacho [the government negotiator]. Mexican Army out of Chiapas immediately. No more massacre. Viva el ejercito Zapatista! Viva for the indigenous people who are dead!

I invite you to cultivate the seed of truth, the seed of the indigenous people once you leave here.

Question: Do you have a relationship with the struggle in Guatemala?

Luis: Our identification with the Guatemala struggle is that they are Indians, just like us. We are Mayans, Xotxiles, Tojolavales, Soques, Lacandones and other indigenous groups. Those groups are direct descendants from the Mayan culture.

Q: The relationship between the indigenous people and the non-indigenous people within the Zapatista Army?

Luis: There is 90 percent indigenous people in the Army. We have friends in different states which are one percent.

Q: Is it a national movement?

Luis: It is an indigenous movement.

Q: Is the Bishop Ruiz correctly representing the Zapatistas?

Luis: I want to leave this clear: if we

are being represented by mestizos or cazlanes we will not go anywhere. They have to appoint indigenous with the capacity to talk. I know from my grandfather, from my ancestors, what they told me, the land is ours. I want to see that land is returned to us. Not for those who come with me, for they are experts in Chiapas. But they spent 30 years in Mexico or in Harvard University. Like Salinas, he has a master's degree from Harvard, but he knows nothing about the indigenous.

This is why I insist, if you really want to help us, insist on creating a group of indigenous people to make sure that the land is returned to us.

Q: Is the main goal of your struggle for the land?

Luis: Everything started because of the land.

Q: Do you know the PRD [Revolutionary Democratic Party]? The media says that you have allies in the Revolutionary Democratic Party.

Luis: False. That is one of the lies of Salinas. He even called us foreigners. He called us Guatemalan and Salvadoran. As if injustice had a name. When we decided to show the facts we decided to just get together with indigenous people.

We don't have anything to do with [PRD presidential candidate] Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, he is a politician and a professional. He condemned us first, one or two weeks later he comes to our rescue. "He is a fisherman in a wild river."

Q: What is the role of the women in the Zapatista Army?

Luis: Just like every woman in the world, the most fantastic of all, they carry the weapons and they shoot the soldiers, even taking care of us so we don't get killed.

Q: How many people actually have been killed?

Luis: Approximately 500. It is not an official number. We believe we have 500 dead among guerrillas and soldiers.

When the indigenous did not have a job they would fight with the soldiers. And they were the first who got thrown into the fight against the rebellious.

I would like to make a comment before I leave. I want to prove to you that Salinas knows how to lie. He says that there are no more poor people in Mexico. And he is not lying. They are all dead. Another thing about Salinas is that he is promising us land and the only land he is promising us is one meter in the cemetery. ▼



Indigenous Tzotzil women at a refugee camp in Chiapas, victims of land feuds involving the government, landowners, the church and indigenous peasants.

South Africa: The Dawn of Freedom

By CAROLINE LUND

As the historic elections began in South Africa on April 26, Nelson Mandela stated: "Today is a day like no other before it. Voting in our first free and fair election has begun. Today marks the dawn of our freedom." These elections were not like elections in the United States or other capitalist democracies, where half the people don't even vote because they don't think it matters. The voting by Blacks in South Africa was a mass action to affirm their dignity and determination to take control of their country.

Victory for humanity

The majority of the population, which is nonwhite, are now citizens for the first time. Half a century of white supremacist rule has been overturned. This is a huge victory for humanity.

The stage is now set for a deepening of the struggle.

The color line has been formally abolished. Now the line between rich and poor, exploiter and exploited, will come to the fore more clearly.

The legacy of apartheid is criminal: Black per capita income is one tenth of that of whites. Nearly half are unemployed and about the same percentage can't read. One fourth live in shacks. All the best land has been taken by whites.

The April elections unleashed a powerful thirst for freedom, for jobs, housing, education, land, and the right to start a small business.

This is what the platform of the African National Congress (ANC) (see following pages) promises. It is a program to bring the nonwhite population into full participation in a capitalist mixed economy of both private and public enterprises.

This platform is not as radical as the historic program of the ANC, the "Freedom Charter," adopted in 1955. In particular, the Charter projected: "The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole."

And it promised that "all the land [shall be] re-divided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger..."

The current platform does not mention nationalization of any industries. It does not project a broad land reform but does promise special courts to restore land previously owned by Blacks who were dispossessed following the apartheid Land Act of 1913.

Avert civil war

These compromises were made by the ANC in an attempt to achieve majority rule without a civil war and destruction of the economy through a flight of capital. *U.S. News and World Report* noted that even with the ANC's conciliatory stance, "Capital is...believed to be flowing out of the country at a rate that,

should it continue, will surpass last year's record high of \$4.5 billion, or almost 5 percent of the entire economy."

The compromises by the ANC, and their allies in the South African Communist Party, were also no doubt influenced by the collapse of the Soviet Union, which put wind in the sails of proponents of "market economies" worldwide.

For the next five years, the ANC, with Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa, will lead a transitional power-sharing "government of national unity." Former supporters of apartheid, such as

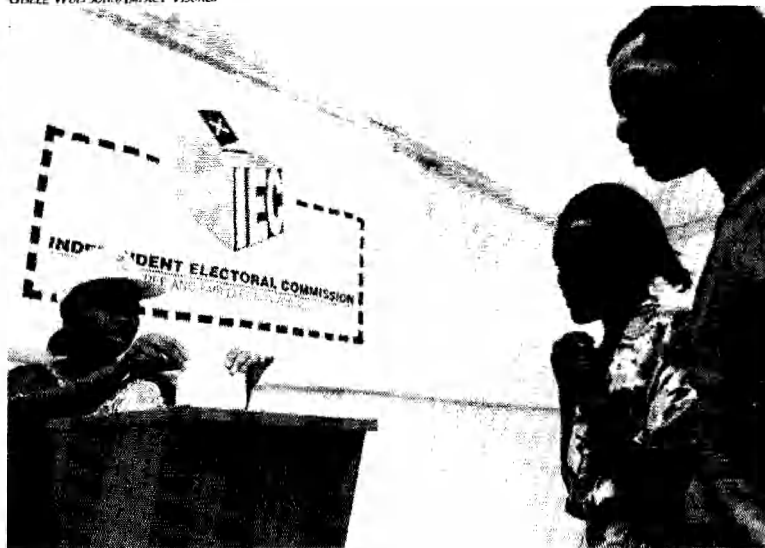
the National Party, will not have veto power, however. After five years, the ANC projects a traditional majority government without inclusion of minority parties.

The ANC's strategy of compromise to buy time for more fundamental change has so far worked. Through a combination of mass mobilizations and negotiations, the ANC was able to smash the anti-election alliance forged between far-right white supremacists and dictators in the so-called Black homelands created by the apartheid regime.

The white supremacists split, with one wing participating in the elections. The "homeland" dictators crumbled, one by one, under the force of strikes and mutinies by workers, students and police.

Many in the anti-apartheid movement worldwide (including this writer) had thought that apartheid could not be abolished in South Africa without a revolution to overthrow the white supremacist state. This turned out not to be the case.

GISELE WULFSON/IMPACT VISUALS



Citizens of Johannesburg participate in a mock election and voter education at a pre-election "voting station."

Continued on Page 19

Historic Turning Point for the South African People We Have Won the Right to Vote

We reprint below the "Election Manifesto of the African National Congress," the main liberation organization of the South African people.

Together We Have Won the Right for All South Africans to Vote.

On 27 April, for the first time in our history, all of us will stand tall and proud as equal citizens in our common home.

South Africa's first democratic elections are about our common yearning for freedom, peace and a better life for all. They are about a past of oppression and despair and a future of hope and democracy.

There are those who would like us to believe that the past doesn't exist: that decades of apartheid rule have suddenly disappeared. But the economic and social devastation of apartheid remains. Our country is in a mess.

To eradicate the serious problems caused by apartheid, South Africa needs a government with the political will to meet the challenge. A government that understands the needs of the future because it understands the neglect and division of the past. We need a government that puts people first.

Proud of Our Past—Confident of the Future

When the African National Congress set out its vision for a non-racial society on 8 January 1912, we did not know how long it would take to achieve it. What we knew was that we would not rest until these ideals were realized.

For over 80 years, the ANC has led the struggle to bring about a South Africa that belongs to all the people.

The ANC is a home for all South Africans. Our strength flows from our roots among the people. That is why we inspired people's resistance during the darkest moments. That is why we initiated and led the negotiations process. Our program reflects years of people's struggles and is informed by their aspirations.

A Clear Plan

To build a better life for all requires clear goals and a workable plan. Any solution to the crisis of apartheid needs an approach which rises above narrow interests and harnesses all our country's resources. It requires:

- a democratic society based on equality, non-racialism and non-sexism;
- a nation built by developing our different cultures, beliefs and languages as a source of our common strength;
- an economy which grows through providing jobs, housing and education;
- a peaceful and secure environment in which people can live

without fear.

These are the principles which guide us as we work together to build a new society. The detailed framework is contained in our Reconstruction and Development Program.

The ANC is ready to govern: we are ready to listen. In developing our policies over the years, we have consulted widely, most recently in People's Forums. We have also discussed with role players in the economy, education and other areas.

While others throw up their hands in despair or point fingers, we want to roll up our sleeves and tackle the problems. We are aware that eliminating the mess created over decades by the National Party will not be easy. But we know that you can make a difference. If we all work together, we are capable of achieving even more.

A Government of the People

One of the most urgent challenges facing South Africa is the adoption of a new democratic constitution. In the Constitutional Assembly, whatever our majority, the ANC will strive through consultation and debate to reach national consensus.

The ANC has always stood for basic democratic principles which include:

- a constitution and Bill of Rights which guarantee human rights for all, including the right to a minimum standard of life;
- the right of all people to elect a government of their choice in regular, free and fair elections in a multi-party democracy;
- democratic government at provincial and local levels, with the powers and resources to meet people's needs;
- an independent judiciary and constitutional court protected from any government or party political interference;
- freedom from discrimination on racial, gender or any other ground;
- freedom of association and the right to worship.

A Good Beginning

Through negotiations and struggle, the ANC has ensured that South Africa's new constitution will be drafted by democratically-elected representatives.

We firmly commit ourselves to the Constitutional Principles agreed to in multi-party negotiations as a basis for drafting a new democratic constitution.

The interim constitution is an important first step towards democracy. However, the new democratic constitution and Bill of Rights need to be truly democratic. The challenge is to make democracy a living reality.

Continued on Page 16

ANC Election Manifesto

Continued from Page 15

An Open Society

The ANC will strive for an open society that encourages vigorous debate. People must be free to express their views without fear, including criticizing the government of the day. Freedom of the media will be essential for a flourishing of democracy.

Unity in Diversity

All South African languages will have equal status. No one culture will be promoted over another. Traditional leaders will be accorded the status they deserve in line with the principles of democracy. Freedom of religion and worship will be a basic right: Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews and all others—none will be discriminated against.

A New Style of Government

Government administration exists to serve the people. It must be answerable to them. The ANC will encourage private citizens to use the independent Public Protector to investigate corruption, dishonesty or violation of rules of conduct on the part of government officials—those found guilty will be dealt with. Forums representing government and workers, business, education and other groups will be strengthened to help in policy formulation. In government, the ANC will continue the tradition of People's Forums—meetings in which ordinary people can voice their opinions.

Improving the Quality of Life

Democracy means more than just the vote. It must be measured by the quality of life of ordinary people—men and women, young and old, rural and urban. It means giving all South Africans the opportunity to share in the country's wealth, to contribute to its development and to improve their own lives.

For years, our economy ran for the benefit of the minority, with opportunities and facilities limited to a few. While all parties speak of improving the quality of life, only a government that represents the majority can be trusted to do this.

Jobs and Better Incomes

The millions of people without jobs will be at the top of the ANC government's agenda. In establishing a dynamic and growing economy we will employ various means to create more jobs and opportunities.

A Growing Economy

As a legitimate government, the ANC will be able to work with others to create an environment of peace and stability, boosting investor confidence. The international community is already responding positively to our call for massive investments.

A new trade and industry policy will focus mainly on job creation, strengthening our manufacturing capacity and industries that export goods.

Our economic programs will take into account the need for sustainable development which does not destroy our natural resources. Tighter controls will be introduced to preserve our environment for future generations.

Public Works Program

An ANC government will immediately start a national public works program which will address community needs and create jobs. Through this program alone we will aim to provide employment and training for about 2.5 million people over the next 10 years, building roads and providing water, electricity, schools, clinics, housing and meeting other needs.

Opportunities for Small Business

Our program will create more job opportunities by making it easier for people to start their own businesses. An ANC government will change licensing laws, provide training and access to loans, and, in particular, assist women. The government will give the small business sector some of its contracts to help them grow.

Workers' Rights

The ANC is committed to full rights for all workers in both public and private sectors, including domestic and farm-workers, to organize, bargain collectively and be represented by trade unions. The democratic government will:

- outlaw all discrimination;
- protect and extend hard-won employment standards, maternity and child-care rights;
- introduce Adult Basic Education and more opportunities for specialized training for workers and the unemployed, especially youth and women;
- promote centralized bargaining and strong trade unions;
- guarantee the right to strike;
- raise and enforce standards of health and safety.

A Just Tax System

An ANC government will ensure that South Africa has an efficient tax system. The income that ordinary people earn will not be lost through unfair taxes. We will:

- end VAT on basic foods like flour, milk and sugar;
- reduce income taxes on people earning under R4,000 a month [one dollar equals 3.5 rands];
- end unfair taxation of women, married and single;
- ensure through efficient collection that every business pays its fair share.

Ending Rural Poverty

In addition to opportunities which our program will open for rural people, an ANC government will introduce a rural development program.

Most people in the rural areas—the majority of whom are women—live in poverty. Central in the development program will be job creation through industrial development and opportunities for small business, alongside land reform. We will focus on provision of water, clinics, schools, toilet facilities, electricity, telephones and roads.

Land Reform

South Africa belongs to all who live in it. To make this a reality, an ANC government will:

- guarantee women equal rights to land and special assistance;
- assist small farmers to get access to training, credit and markets;
- encourage large-scale farming, and ensure security of tenure and all basic rights for farm workers;
- restructure development agencies and marketing boards to serve the farmers and consumers;
- guarantee victims of forced removals restitution, which should be carried out fairly through a Land Claims Court;
- use state land in the implementation of land reform.

Opening the Doors of Learning

An ANC government will make education a priority. The challenge is immense, but it will not require finding more money. We need to ensure that the R23 billion set aside is used for the benefit of all.

For too long, the NP [National Party] government has denied too many people the right to education or the proper conditions for learning and teaching.

Emphasis will be placed on teacher training and upgrading and improving their conditions of service. Above all, we will encourage a culture of learning and teaching, and introduce a new curriculum which promotes both technical quality and humane ideals.

An ANC government will:

- introduce one education system that provides 10 years of free and compulsory education for all children;
- start utilizing all existing school facilities;
- provide more classrooms and repair and modernize inadequate facilities;
- double the number of free textbooks within one year;
- allow mother-tongue instruction and education in the language of choice;
- provide a national bursary and loan system;
- provide adult literacy programmes;
- assist youths who have not been able to complete their education;
- focus on ways of providing pre-school educare;
- give special assistance to women.

Housing and Services for All

A roof over one's head and reasonable living conditions are not a privilege. They are a basic right for every human being.

For over two decades, the National Party stopped the building of houses for Africans in the urban areas. Influx control and a lack of urban planning have resulted in a crisis that is at the very root of many of our social problems. Women were denied the right to own houses. Decent family life has been denied to millions of people.

We will focus on the 7 million squatters and the homeless, and the upgrading of townships. We will upgrade hostels to meet the needs of the residents as part of a program to eliminate the apartheid migrant labour system. The ANC will work with building societies and other banks and financial institutions to ensure that people have the loans and means to build their own houses. Consumers will be protected from fly-by-night building contractors and unfair lenders.

Housing plans will take into account the need for people to stay close to where they work and the need to build efficient transport systems and to provide recreational and other basic facilities.

The ANC will ensure democratic, efficient and open local government which works closely with community structures in providing affordable housing and services.

We have calculated that, within five years, the new government can:

- build one million homes;
- provide running water and flush toilets to over a million families;
- electrify 2.5 million rural and urban homes.

Health: Caring for All the People

South Africa has more than enough health resources to care for all its people.

Under apartheid, these resources were used to care for a small portion of society on the basis of race and wealth. Deaths of young babies through poverty-related diseases has reached levels that no self-respecting nation can tolerate.

The aim of the ANC's health policy is primary and affordable health care, to ensure that all South Africans are guaranteed basic treatment.

Prevention will be the priority, and resources will be directed especially at rural areas and poverty-stricken communities.

An ANC government will, in its health program, do the following:

- promote safe motherhood and play a major role in caring for the nation's children through programs of immunization, nutrition and free health care for children under five;
- introduce measures to make medicines more affordable;

Continued on Page 18

ANC Election Manifesto

Continued from Page 17

- direct major resources at combating TB, AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases, cancer and other plagues;
- facilitate the integration of traditional health practice.

Welfare and Pensions

A caring approach to children, senior citizens, the disabled and victims of violence will be central to our welfare policy.

An intensive program will be devoted to homeless children.

All people deserve to grow old in dignity and with security. Government will assist in the provision of facilities for the aged. Pensions and grants due to people will be assured and allocated through post offices, banks, building societies or other outlets which are easy for rural people to use.

In consultation with the disabled, the ANC will eliminate discrimination against them in the provision of services and jobs. They will be assisted to develop their full potential. Attention will be given to the removal of obstacles which make access to places of work and learning difficult.

Eliminating Discrimination—Affirmative Action

It is not enough to talk of equality. Especially when the vast majority of our people have been left behind by a system that excluded them by law and deprived the country of the contribution they could have made.

Opportunities must be opened to all who were discriminated against as Africans, Coloreds and Indians, as women, the disabled and as people staying in rural areas.

This will not be done at the expense of others; nor lead to a lowering of standards. Special emphasis will be placed on their training and upgrading so they can rise to higher levels in business, civil service, skilled jobs and other areas.

South Africa as a whole will benefit if all levels of society represent the broad spectrum of its people. It is essential to the growth of our economy and the flourishing of our culture that more people are skilled and that they feel part of the national effort.

Making the Plan Work

We know that financing and implementing the program of reconstruction and development will not be easy. But it is an opportunity to set the economy on a path of sustained growth and development.

By putting people first, we will be investing in jobs, housing and education at the same time as helping our country grow. More jobs and higher incomes will bring the government more revenue for expenditure on basic needs in future years.

An ANC government will increase public expenditure and encourage the private sector to put money in productive ventures. We will establish a reconstruction fund and seek beneficial in-

ternational aid and loans.

Our objective is to use resources more efficiently and not to increase the tax burden. Large sums of money already go to education, health and other areas. But the results are poor. Money has been used on a racial basis and squandered in corruption and bureaucracy. This will be done away with.

Peace and Security for All

Our country needs peace. We need an end to the violence against communities and to the abuse of women and children. We must end the culture of violence created by apartheid. This hope and prayer of the overwhelming majority must be realized.

As the organization that represents the victims of apartheid we understand the difference between a government that intimidates, and one that cares. We all deserve to live in a safe environment. Together with communities, an ANC government will ensure that criminals are dealt with to the full extent of the law.

What is required is:

- a government that represents all the people and implements a program to create jobs;
- a government committed to dealing firmly with violence and crime and one that does not simply point fingers;
- a program to promote political tolerance, respect for the country's constitution and laws, and peaceful ways of handling political differences;
- a gun control program to minimize the number of guns in the hands of individuals and to eliminate gun smuggling;
- a police force accountable to the communities in which it is based;
- a program which emphasizes rehabilitation instead of vengeance.

Security Forces

All security forces will be reformed to reflect the national and gender character of our country. They will be non-partisan, professional, uphold the constitution and respect human rights.

A new volunteer army will deal with the defence of the country and not internal political matters. It will also be used for productive purposes and upgrading skills of the youth.

Criminal behavior in these forces will not be tolerated. Those serving today will be encouraged to continue, in line with the new culture. Like other civil servants, security personnel will be guaranteed their pensions on retirement or resignation. They will also enjoy fundamental human rights.

Equality Before The Law

For the anti-crime measures to succeed, it will be necessary to have a court system that broadly reflects society's racial and gender composition and provides fairness and equality for all before the law. Detention without trial will be done away with. The system of justice will be made more accessible, cheap and

fair to everyone.

Taking Our Rightful Place in the World

The ANC and its leaders enjoy recognition and respect worldwide as upholders of democracy and human rights. An ANC government will take South Africa fully back into the world.

South Africa will play its part in the worldwide campaign for democracy, human rights, peace and nuclear disarmament. It will accede to all international agreements which protect human rights, including the rights of women and children, and it will co-operate fully with human rights groups.

An ANC government will work for just economic and social relations between the developed industrial nations and the developing countries. We will encourage relations between South Africans and the peoples of the world in fields such as sport, culture and tourism.

Our Region and Our Continent

Our destiny is intertwined with that of Southern Africa. An ANC government will build closer co-operation and economic integration in the region. We will take active part in the Southern African Development Conference and other regional institutions on the basis of equality.

An ANC government will build extensive links with countries of Africa and work with other states to ensure that the continent is not ignored by the rest of humankind.

South Africa will become a full member of the Organization of African Unity, United Nations, Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth and other international bodies.

A Pledge

These policies of the ANC lay the foundation for us to work together to change South Africa for the better.

The ANC recognizes the depth of our country's crisis. We are convinced that political will, an environment of peace and stability and a technically sound program are the sure foundation for reconstruction and development.

The ANC pledges to spare no effort to realize these ideals. We are ready to tackle the problems.

Above all, the ANC believes that the plan will succeed only if it is based on the active participation of all, a tradition we will carry into government. Together as South Africans—men and women of all colors, young and old, urban and rural—we have the power to build a better life for all.

Together let's change South Africa. So that, once and for all, our country can know peace and security. So that we can join the rest of humankind as a proud and united people working together for a better world.

Now is the time!

God bless South Africa! ▼

The Dawn of Freedom

Continued from Page 14

Decades of anti-apartheid struggle culminated in the 1980s with a campaign to "make the Black townships ungovernable." This, together with international economic sanctions, convinced the white ruling class that apartheid was no longer good for capitalism.

Former South African President F.W. de Klerk said in an April interview, "...if we hadn't done what we'd done [get rid of apartheid], then I'm convinced that maybe before the end of 1990, the whole of South Africa would have been in flames."

Although the faces in government will now change, the army, police, prison administration, civil service, and owners of the country's wealth remain largely unchanged. The police and army harbor elements that have secretly funnelled guns and intelligence to terrorist anti-democratic forces.

Political equality to social equality

The ANC and the South African people now face an even greater challenge than winning an end to apartheid. The task is now to use their newly-won political rights to fight for economic and social justice for the majority of the people—that is, for such concrete gains as clean water, toilets, roads, jobs, housing, land, education and health care.

A 16-year-old Black youth told a *New York Times* reporter, "Without land reform we can't start out fresh. And that is what the youth are watching for, the issue our forefathers struggled for in the three centuries since the land was first taken from us."

Even the ANC's limited social program (of jobs, housing and education for the majority within a capitalist system) will run into fierce opposition from the rich and powerful whites who still control the wealth of South Africa.

Through their economic power and control of the media, the rich will try to manipulate elections, buy off candidates, sow racial and ethnic divisions, and convince the mass of the people that they are powerless to change social and economic inequality.

The movement will divide

The anti-apartheid movement will now differentiate. Some currents will be satisfied with gaining privileges and perks for themselves within a class-divided society. Others will continue the fight to bring social and economic power into the hands of the exploited and oppressed majority—Black, white, Colored and Asian. A division has already arisen between the ANC leadership and the 750,000-member Congress of South African Trade Unions. COSATU refused to accept a moratorium on strikes during the election period.

The caliber of leadership of the struggle in South Africa is outstanding in the world today. Certainly the freedom fight in that country will continue to be a beacon of hope to the oppressed and exploited internationally. ▼

Alternative to ANC and SACP Strategy WOSA Calls For a Mass Workers' Party

By MALIK MIAH

In addition to the African National Congress and the ruling National Party, there were a number of other parties on the ballot. One of the most significant was the Workers' List Party. Initiated by the Workers' Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA), it put forward a number of social and political demands that it says would represent a real break with "apartheid-capitalism" in South Africa.

WOSA rejected the ANC-led electoral alliance and the ANC's support for a five-year "Government of National Unity." WOSA said such a government would "include racists" (representatives of the National Party) and thus could not solve the fundamental problems faced by workers.

For a Mass Workers' Party

"WOSA will campaign under the banner of a Workers' List for an Independent Workers' Party (WLP)," it explained when it launched the Workers' List. "The workers' list is a list of demands of the working class, but the WLP would also put forward a symbolic list of candidates who will fight for these demands."

A central demand in the Workers' List election manifesto is for a "Constituent Assembly which is based on grassroots structures." It adds: "A genuine constituent assembly could be no more than a stepping stone to a workers' government, which will be under the control of mass organizations. We want to build a mass workers' party, one of whose tasks will be to assist in the establishment of factory, township, village and other forms of worker action committees. These committees will become the beginning of workers' rule of society."

The manifesto states: "We believe that only a workers' party will be able to carry forward the struggle of the exploited and oppressed masses of South Africa. (Other parties) cannot (solve the crisis) because they accept the capitalist system."

The longer the unity lasts, the better it is for the democratic process.

The idea of a mass workers' party and workers taking power in South Africa is not rejected by the South African Communist Party (SACP) or other socialists who support the ANC alliance. The issue is: when and how this will occur, that is, what strategy to follow to get there.

The South African Communist Party, the main ally of the ANC, sees the road to workers' power and socialism through uprooting apartheid first, establishing democracy—that is, supporting the ANC and the transitional government that will come to power after the April elections.

WOSA counters that as long as capitalism exists, real democracy is not possible. "Democracy is not about voting every five years," the manifesto states. "Democracy is about controlling the fruits of our labor, about deciding what to produce and how to produce it and how to live." WOSA calls for "socialist democracy."

Dangerous situation

The SACP and other socialists recognize the political problems and challenges before the liberation leadership. They do not believe nonracial democracy is the same as socialism and the end of capitalist exploitation. But the fight for socialism can only take off once the old system of apartheid is destroyed. The formation of a government of national unity that in-

cludes the National Party of de Klerk (a necessary compromise by the ANC-led forces) reflects the relationship of forces today. For example, the ANC does not now have the power to abolish the apartheid police and army. The military and police force will continue, in the main, to be under the control of the current white oppressors.

SACP leader Jeremy Cronin, in an interview prior to the elections with the *Green Left Weekly* of Australia, noted this contradiction: "The ANC," he said, "is doing something that on paper is quite a dangerous thing. It is fighting elections, which it is going to win—if it wasn't going to win, it wouldn't be such a dangerous thing—without security cover. We are reliant on de Klerk's army and de Klerk's police force to preserve law and order in a quite fraught election campaign, and immediately after that election campaign."

The ANC is a broad-based alliance with many currents. There are already divisions between sections of the trade union leadership and the overall ANC leadership. There will be those in the new regime who will press for workers to "hold back" their demands. The left-wing elements will press for quick implementation of the ANC election manifesto, particularly as it pertains to workers' rights and interests.

But the longer the unity lasts, the better it is for the democratic process and thus for the workers and farmers of South Africa (the overwhelming majority of popular forces) to increase their strength vis-à-vis the right, which has not given up.

Cronin, who is also editor of the *African Communist*, writes in issue No. 136: "The South African Transition process combines elements of a negotiated democratization with a decolonization process. The process challenges a number of paradigms and assumptions. It has, not surprisingly, touched off an ongoing theoretical debate within the movement, stock-taking of its national liberation and Marxist traditions."

WOSA's strategy for change and its call for a mass workers' party is part of this debate and discussion in the South African left. ▼

U.S. Interest Section in Cuba The Brotherhood of Lies

Reference: H18422 693 4
Subject: Update on the
Cuban Refugee Program

By CAROLINE LUND

The following is a communication labeled "top secret" from Joseph Sullivan, head of the U.S. Interests Section (USINT) in Havana, Cuba, addressed to the U.S. Secretary of State, the CIA, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). It was published in the March 16 issue of the English-language *Granma International*, a weekly Cuban newspaper.

An article, "The brotherhood of lies," by Luis Baez Delgado accompanying the secret document says it was "leaked to us by friendly hands."

The document, says Baez Delgado, "is irrefutable proof not only of the lies and fabrications that are invented and promoted against the Cuban Revolution, but of the absolute honesty and justice which has always characterized us."

He continues: "Throughout the course of these 35 years, Cuba has affirmed time and again that in this country there has not been one single political assassination, not one single person tortured, nor one single person disappeared and no one can prove the contrary."

It is clear why this document was made top secret. Though written by enemies of the Cuban Revolution, the document testifies to the following:

- The vast majority of people wanting to come to the U.S. from Cuba are not fleeing political persecution but are seeking a more affluent life style and escape from the dire economic situation in Cuba. The harsh economic conditions in Cuba today are largely a product of the blockade imposed against Cuba by the U.S.

- The so-called "human rights groups" in Cuba are for the most part in business (literally) to get people entry into the U.S. as political refugees. Some do this by actually selling "testimonials" vouching for a person being a human rights activist.

- Despite all the resources at the disposal of the U.S. Interests Section, the CIA, and the INS, these agencies cannot (when speaking frankly to each other) find any serious evidence of repression, torture, or jailings in Cuba for political reasons.

In the introductory article in *Granma*, Baez Delgado writes: "Those who have

Applications by human rights groups members are marked by general and imprecise descriptions of alleged human rights activity, lack demonstrable evidence of persecution, and do not meet the basic criteria for processing in the program.

devoted their lives and struggles for belief in ideas don't persecute or imprison ideas, as others have done. Those who believe in principles respect them. Those who fight for dignity and self-respect will never be its executioners, but its most faithful defenders."

He continues: "Why doesn't the Immigration and Naturalization Service use [its] resources for real refugees like the Haitians or the millions of Latin American immigrants who are discriminated against or persecuted within the United States?"

He closes with a 1989 quote from Cuban President Fidel Castro: "We learned revulsion and hatred toward all signs of violence against prisoners in our struggles against the tyranny. And those were the values which carried us to victory, those are the values which have kept us here. I think that history will assume the responsibility of writing the truth..."

This secret document provides some of that truth, which the U.S. rulers don't want our people to know about.

The secret document about US-Cuba "refugee program"

From: US Int. Sect. Havana
To: Sec. State, Washington
CIA
INS

Date: January 94

I. OVERVIEW

The processing of refugee applicants continues to show weak cases. Most people apply more because of the deteriorating economic situation than a real fear of persecution. Cases presented by human rights activists proved particularly difficult for USINT officers and INS members. Although we have tried hard to work with those human rights organizations on which we exert greater control to identify activists truly persecuted by the government, human rights cases represent the weakest category of the refugee program.

Applications by human rights groups members are marked by general and imprecise descriptions of alleged human rights activity, lack demonstrable evidence of persecution, and do not meet the basic criteria for processing in the program. Common allegations of fraudulent applications by activists and of the sale of testimonials by human rights leaders have continued in recent months. Due to the lack of verifiable documentary evidence, as a rule USINT officers and INS members have regarded human rights cases as the most susceptible to fraud.

II. ASSESSMENT

The decrease in the number of political prisoners led the State Department and the INS three years ago to work together in expanding the categories for processing in the Cuban Refugee Program. Professionals dismissed from their jobs, human rights activists, and members of religious faiths suffering persecution were introduced as new categories, with processing guidelines developed for each to ensure a fair consideration of cases.

During later INS visits, USINT made a deliberate effort to include cases from all of the categories. As an average, it included ex-political prisoners, religious members, human rights activists, and other cases.

We continue to select for prescreening only cases of probable INS approval. The

Continued on Page 22

USINT in Cuba

Continued from Page 21

approvals reflect the careful analysis of cases and the good understanding between USINT officers and INS visiting members.

Although USINT has tried to cover cases in line with the processing criteria, it has nonetheless preserved its flexibility to present cases that may fall short in some areas but represent an interest to US.

A deteriorating Cuban economy has provided incentive for new economic migrants to seek the refugee program. Additionally, the expansion of the categories has contributed to an increase in the number of applicants.

It is brazenly acknowledged now by some of the reintegrated ex-political prisoners that they apply for refugee status as a means to escape the deteriorating economic situation, and not because of a current fear of persecution or harassment. Others seem to have been pressed to request refugee status by their adult children hoping to leave with their parents. Most of these adult children of elderly, often retired, ex-political prisoners do not meet the criteria for refugee status in their own capacity.

Regrettably, the general quality of many of the applications is poor. Few of the ex-political prisoners accepted now as refugees would have been accorded such a status in previous years. As a rule, they have served much shorter sentences compared to the early entrants in the program. Most played lesser roles in counterrevolutionary groups, accepted political reeducation in order to have their sentences reduced, and later abandoned political activity to reintegrate into Cuban society.

A significant number of applications have also been received from individuals charged with attempting to illegally exit the country. With the depolitization of "illegal exits" by the Cuban government, sentences for such charges were reduced. INS has generally regarded "illegal exits" as lacking political content.

The generally low quality of the cases, including those in the 1991 new categories, has not kept USINT from continuing to rely on documentary evidence (i.e., legal documents, dismissal notices, prison re-

lease letters) to determine the inclusion in the refugee program. Yet, this is not the case with most human rights applicants.

We have recorded an increase in the number of human rights cases since 1992. However, this increase did not stem from a higher level of human rights activity, membership, or government repression. The majority of cases rarely contain any demonstrable evidence of persecution and frequently give only minimal, hardly credible, evidence of participation in human rights activities.

The testimonials of human rights leaders generally carry vague descriptions of

It is brazenly acknowledged now by some of the reintegrated ex-political prisoners that they apply for refugee status as a means to escape the deteriorating economic situation, and not because of a current fear of persecution or harassment.

human rights activity, such as the moral support of family members of political prisoners. These descriptions accurately show the low-level activity and nonconfrontational attitudes of most human rights groups.

On the other hand, almost none of the [human rights] cases show proofs of house searches, interrogations, detention, or arrest. The activists usually claim persecution by State Security, but they rarely can provide properly documented evidence of it. In some instances the applicant claims to have been subject to harassment without arrest. Interviewing officers end up having to rely virtually on what activists tell them.

The general trend has been one of lack of evidence to prove that the person is actually an activist, which leaves the category open for virtually everyone. Young men caught in illegal exit attempts

since the economic downturn in 1989 have tended to submit applications as human rights activists. Human rights leaders have told USINT officers that they know that most of their members joined only to take advantage of the refugee program.

Since the inclusion of human rights activists as another category, we have kept a flexible and responsive approach to them. Human rights leaders such as Paula Valiente, the Aspillaga brothers, and others have received proper and quick consideration. A similar treatment has also been given to simple activists. In cases where the activist's supporting evidence is weak, but commitment to US is otherwise clear, prescreening officers have given the applicant the benefit of the doubt.

The leader of one group said that several people left his organization when they knew that it does not give testimonials to members. He complained of pressures from members to obtain strong testimonials of their human rights activity.

The latest INS visits have witnessed repeated incidences of fraud and allegations of fraud by human rights activists. USINT has attempted to address the problem through a revision of internal procedures to identify strong human rights cases. In addition, it met with heads of human rights organizations to determine the objectives, size and other aspects of the major human rights groups. USINT restricted as well the testimonials accepted from the groups to those from leaders we trust, aware that

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past divisions within human rights groups have produced allegations of unauthorized and fraudulent issuances of testimonials.

To our regret, not even these steps have prevented allegations of fraud and bitter recriminations among top human rights leaders. Shortly before the INS December visit, Gustavo Arcos and Jesus Yanez of the Comite Cubano pro-derechos humanos accused Aida Valdes of selling fraudulent avals [endorsements]. She, in turn, accuses Arcos and Yanez of similar practices for economic profits.

This situation increases the general concern regarding the danger of relying on the testimonials. The deep rivalries and infighting among the human rights groups make it simply inevitable for the recurrence of charges of fraud not to prevail.

Prominent activists have confessed their worries that the refugee program is robbing them of the few dedicated members while at the same time it has become a magnet for opportunists. During a meeting with USINT and the INS, Felix Bonne, the head of the group Corriente Civica, called the refugee program "the primary focus of many human rights leaders and organizations."

The involvement by some of the best-known human rights leaders in Cuba in these serious allegations clearly illustrates that our refugee program has become a divisive and increasingly controversial focus of attention for many human rights groups, whose leaders appear almost ob-

essed with the program. USINT has even received appeals to give human rights organizations a formal role in the refugee program.

Out of the 225 cases presented by USINT to INS during its December visit, 47 claimed involvement in human rights activity, although many fell into other categories, like professionals dismissed from their jobs and persons attempting to commit illegal exits. Although this was our best effort to work with human rights groups to present the strongest cases, interviews clearly showed the weakness of most cases.

Of all 47 human rights cases, only one

The USINT will maintain the flexibility to present cases that may not meet all of the criteria but that given their nature may prove useful for US interests.

claimed a total of more than 30 days detention over the last five years for human rights activity, and even he could not provide evidence of the detentions. The rest in general only claimed house searches or a few undocumented summons to police stations. Most activists have only vague descriptions of their involvement in hu-

man rights groups. And only 19 were finally approved.

Despite being only 20 percent of the total, human rights cases represented more than half of the denials. The overall refusal rate for the December visit as a result was 22 percent. This rate, although significantly higher than in past INS visits, has on the sideline the advantage of hopefully resulting in a higher level of activity by the groups.

CONSIDERATIONS

In the face of a general decline in the quality of the cases, including those involving ex-political prisoners, USINT will need to work harder in identifying the best cases. With a view to help in this effort, it will introduce additional changes in the processing of cases.

The problems encountered in the processing of the bulk of the human rights cases point to the need for USINT to continue its close work with the INS to select strong cases.

However, the USINT will maintain the flexibility to present cases that may not meet all of the criteria but that given their nature may prove useful for US interests.

Given CIA's expressed interests in the subject of human rights, and its greater involvement with and better knowledge of the different groups, we suggest a closer cooperation with USINT in line with our common goals.

—[Joseph] Sullivan

**The Committees of Correspondence
National Convention
July 22-24, 1994
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The CoC is a new left organization for progressive politics and socialist renewal. Its founding convention is open to all members and friends. For more information contact the Committees of Correspondence, 11 John Street, Room 506, New York, New York 10038. (212) 233-7151, or in Northern California: CoC, 522 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 863-6637.

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International Journal of Socialist Renewal **LINKS**

The following is the introduction to a new international magazine for socialist renewal and regroupment. The new journal was launched at an "International Green Left Conference" held in Sydney, Australia, March 31 to April 4. Over 800 people registered for the gathering that included over 50 speakers. International participants included: Dulce Maria Pereira from the Brazilian Workers Party; Sonny Melencio, Vice-president of Makabayan, a new mass socialist formation in the Philippines; Dr. V. Karunaratne, General Secretary of the New Socialist Party, Sri Lanka; Luciana Castelina, member of the European Parliament, and Party of Communist Refoundation, Italy; and Susan George, author of *How the Other Half Dies*. Carl Bloice, Peter Camejo, Mike Wyman and Malik Miah (all members of the Committees of Correspondence) attended from the United States.

LINKS is a new international discussion magazine. It is a magazine for the post Cold War left, a magazine that rejects the Stalinist distortion of the socialist project, a magazine that takes into account ecological questions, a magazine that is taking steps to unify and bring together the forces for socialism in the world today, a magazine that aspires to unite Marxists from different political traditions because it discusses openly and constructively.

It is determinedly socialist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist, a response to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and a recognition of the continuing and urgent need for a socialist solution to the crimes and contradictions of rampaging capitalism.

LINKS will not be oriented to academic Marxists, as many existing theoretical magazines are, although it will have academics among its contributors. Its main contributors and readers will be active socialists, those involved in the day-to-day struggles, especially those involved

in the vital tasks of building organizations and parties.

The magazine will not present a single line. It will be pluralist, open, and very much a discussion forum. There will not be a regular editorial, but there will be certain parameters. LINKS will be developing and marking out the space for genuine socialism.

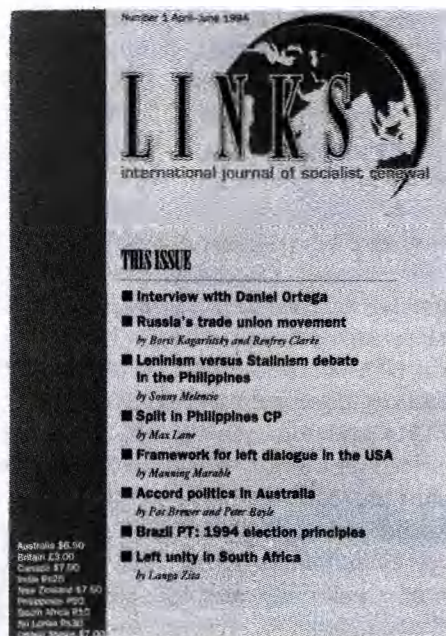
LINKS hopes to not only bring together active socialists from different countries and different continents, but to unite socialists coming from different traditions—the tradition of the pro-Moscow communist parties, Trotskyist parties, Maoism, the left wing of national movements, left forces breaking with social democracy, and activists from social movements who have come to realize the need for a party. We all come from different backgrounds, and often still have different viewpoints, but are united in:

- our socialist convictions of the need for fundamental social change;
- the need for a democratic, non-authoritarian socialism; and
- the need for a socialism that's green, feminist and anti-racist.

LINKS will carry discussion and debate pieces from around the world. It will solicit original articles from contributing editors and supporting parties, and from anyone who wishes to make a useful contribution to the debate. It will reprint documents and discussion pieces from different parties, as well as relevant articles from other magazines.

Being an English-language magazine, English-speaking countries will be the primary focus, both for distribution and editorial content. But we also need input from other countries, so that the magazine will be able to reflect and participate in the debates taking place among left forces around the world. We want the magazine to develop a genuine political dialogue. Part of its task will be to arrange translations of key documents and articles from the socialist press in non-English speaking countries.

We invite debate—in the form of comment, articles and letters. We need your ideas, contributions and support if LINKS is to succeed as a real forum of discussion for the renewal of the socialist



project around the world. ▼
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Marxism Today: Why It Remains Relevant

The World After Stalinism

Second of a two-part series

In the last issue, we looked at some of the effects the collapse of the regimes of Eastern Europe and of the Soviet Union have had upon the world relation of forces—effects that are negative from the point of view of the working people of the world.

We also noted that the collapse of Stalinism was a very positive outcome that in the long run would help enable the international socialist or communist movement to rebuild, to return to its roots and make a fresh start.

But the immediate impact of these events has been to discredit socialism, because of the identification of socialism with Stalinism. This is not only true among the masses of working people. It also has affected people from the socialist movement, including former pro-Moscow and pro-Beijing activists, who, while perhaps rejecting the crimes committed under Stalin's regime, nevertheless identified Stalinist ideas and practice with socialism.

The Stalinist cancer that developed in the world's first workers' state has finally killed the patient. Instead of coming to grips with this fact, some former socialists are blaming the patient for the cancer, and have fled Marxism.

What is Marxism?

In a polemic with someone, Frederick Engels wrote the following, shortly before he and Marx wrote the *Communist Manifesto*:

"[This person] imagines communism is a certain *doctrine* which proceeds from a definite theoretical principle as its *core* and draws further conclusions from that. [He] is very much mistaken. Communism is not a doctrine but a *movement*; it proceeds not from principles but from *facts*. The Communists do not base themselves on this or that philosophy as their point of departure but on the whole course of previous history and specifically its actual results in the civilized countries at the present time. Communism has followed from large scale industry and its consequences, from the establishment of the

By BARRY SHEPPARD

world market, of the concomitant uninhibited competition, from the ever more violent and universal trade crises, which have already become full-fledged crises of the world market, from the creation of the proletariat and the concentration of capital, from the ensuing class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Communism, insofar as it is a theory, is the theoretical expression of the position of the proletariat in this struggle and the theoretical summation of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat."

Marxism is not a blueprint of a better society, which seeks to impose itself upon

The working class, in order to fight for its own interests, must overcome its fragmentation and divisions, and mobilize its strength.

reality, reshaping reality to suit itself. Such schemes are doomed to remain schemes, even if they have a positive aspect of criticizing wrongs in the present capitalist society.

Marxist theory has nothing to do with such utopian schemes. In fact, its "theory" is not "theory" in the sense of such a blueprint, but a scientific analysis of "previous history" and especially of capitalism. It is based on *facts*, as Engels said.

Since Engels wrote those words, capitalism has developed much further along the lines he suggested. Capitalism has penetrated almost all corners of the globe. The world market has grown apace. The concentration of capital in a few hands has increased grotesquely, with hugely rich families in the advanced capitalist countries dominating not only their own working people but the workers and peasants of the whole world. Industry is not only large in scale but it crosses country borders. Thousands of peasants in the

Third World are being driven off their lands and into the cities, and they join the ranks of the propertyless every day.

Competition has not been ended by the growth of monopolies and transnational corporations, but has been increased as huge blocks of capital form alliances against others. Indeed, this competition became so fierce it led to two world wars in this century, and is again intensifying.

And the class struggle between workers and capitalists becomes increasingly an international struggle.

There are many aspects of Marxism's "theoretical summation of the conditions of liberation of the proletariat." Basically, it is as follows: The working class, in order to fight for its own interests, must overcome its fragmentation and divisions, and mobilize its strength. The workers as individuals are weak against capital, but collectively they are strong enough to win. Increasingly, this unity must be achieved on an international level, as capital is international. This truth, summed up in the fighting words of the *Communist Manifesto*: "Workers of the World Unite!," is being brought home to workers in the United States in a new way, as a result of U.S. capitalists building factories in low-wage countries.

This unity begins at first on the level of a single trade, with the formation of unions. It has spread to more inclusive unions in whole industries, and to federations.

But the formation of unions is not enough for the workers to win. They come up against the power of the state, which the capitalists control. To fight this power, they must form political parties, with the goal of taking the state power themselves. And "by degrees," as the *Communist Manifesto* says, workers must wrest from the capitalists the means of production, place them at the disposal of society as a whole, and build a new society on an international scale without classes and exploitation.

But this is not a straight-line development. Competition and divisions fostered by capitalism within the working class

Continued on Page 26

Marxism Today

Continued from Page 25

upset unity.

The class struggle is a *battle*, including a battle of ideas, where the capitalists have the initial advantage through their domination of education, the press and the pulpit.

Sometimes this battle reaches the point of revolution, counterrevolution and counter-revolutionary war.

And sometimes the workers lose, whether in a strike or in a revolution.

The fall of the USSR

The collapse of the regimes in Eastern Europe and the USSR was not the failure of "the socialist model." It was the final product of a counterrevolution that began under Stalin in the 1920s against the Russian revolution, in the context of the failure of working people to take power in the advanced capitalist countries.

The failure of the revolution to extend into the heartlands of capitalism had both objective and subjective intertwined causes, beyond the scope of this article. But one factor was the counterrevolutionary role played by Stalinism on a world scale, which helped tilt the balance against working people on more than one occasion.

However, the collapse of the bureaucratized workers' states in the Soviet bloc is a defeat. World capitalism has succeeded in establishing regimes there which are unashamedly on the road to capitalist restoration.

The instrument of this transformation was the privileged bureaucracy itself. It actively ruled over the workers in their name. It was anti-democratic. This sector is, by and large, still dominant in the new regimes. Russian President Boris Yeltsin is a good example.

Should socialists have therefore called for the crackdown by the military against the pro-democracy mass demonstrations of 1989-90 in the name of "saving" the workers' states?

I think not; rather the opposite. The Stalinist rot had turned the workers themselves against these states. Without the support of the workers—even that

We must be with the masses on the road forward... That means fighting for a return to real socialism, which is based upon democracy. Socialism without democracy is not socialism.

contradictory and partial support which previously existed under the oppressive Stalinist regimes—no workers' state can exist. These states could not be "saved" by Stalinist crackdowns. Any such crackdown would have *accelerated* the motion towards capitalism by the Stalinist bureaucracy, by giving it a freer hand.

Moreover, the masses raised a demand for *democracy*, the key to breaking out of the dead end of Stalinism. Socialists had to support them in raising this demand, without sharing the illusions of Western-style "democracy" and capitalism, illusions bolstered by Stalinism itself. But the bankruptcy of Stalinism became identified with socialism. Socialism became equated with dictatorship and denial of democratic rights, environmental destruction, ethnic oppression and big-nation chauvinism.

Our job is not to lament the dead carcass of the Stalinist regime, or to come to its aid against the masses during its death throes, or to hold out the vain hope that it could rise again and turn the clock back to 1980.

We must be with the masses on the *road forward*, not backward. That means fighting for a return to real socialism, which is based upon democracy. Socialism without democracy is not socialism.

Fighting for democracy in the former Soviet bloc remains a key immediate task. In their drive to restore capitalism, these regimes must come into conflict with the working people, and must break their resistance to that restoration. That could mean a dangerous move toward new dictatorships, as can be seen in Yeltsin's authoritarian drive, as well as in more sinister forces to his right.

Working people need support as they resist the dismantling of the positive fea-

tures of the former workers' states, such as universal health care, housing subsidies, the right to jobs, and free education, and as they resist right-wing attempts to push back women, and the burgeoning evils of national chauvinism and fascist racism.

The final collapse of the USSR was an important, deeply felt episode in the struggle between the world capitalist class and the world's working people. But it no more disproves Marxism or socialism than does the defeat of a strike or the elimination of a trade union. Marx didn't invent the class struggle, or its particular forms under capitalism. He helped *explain* it, he *took sides* in that struggle, he helped explain what we have to do to win it.

The collapse we have been talking about at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, has taken place in an overall situation of a change in the relation of forces to the detriment of the workers on a world scale.

The end of the 1970s saw certain victories. The workers and peasants of Iran threw out the hated Shah and his U.S. backers. In tiny Grenada a revolutionary government took power. A long struggle in Nicaragua culminated in the overthrow of the American-backed Somoza dictatorship. Revolution was on the rise in El Salvador.

The lack of a working class party with roots in and support among the masses in Iran meant that the clergy was able to wear out the democratic and working class thrust of the revolution, and place it in a stranglehold that destroyed it.

As the Soviet bureaucracy increasingly saw its future tied to that of imperialism and capitalism, it was more reluctant to challenge the aggressive counter-revolutionary interventions of U.S. imperialism. This was true in Central America and the Caribbean, and was a factor in the overthrow of the Grenadian revolution, the disintegration of the revolution in Nicaragua under the U.S.-backed counter-revolution, and the situation faced by the revolutionists in El Salvador. Combined with errors by the leaderships in those areas, and the outright perfidy of the Bernard Coard group in Grenada, the lack of a significant challenge to U.S. interven-

tion spelled defeat for the working class.

The complete collapse of the Soviet Union was foreshadowed by its abject support of Washington's war in the Persian Gulf, that video-game slaughter designed to show the world Washington's fancy weapons and its will to use them when it can get away with it.

The working people of the world, including in the advanced capitalist countries, took a severe beating in the 1980s. The class struggle, far from ending or even abating, has been heating up. But unfortunately, it has been the capitalist class which has generally been on the offensive, and dealing blows to the living standards, rights and organizations of working people.

This has been a decade of growth in unemployment and underemployment. Even in the advanced countries (and it has been worse in backward and exploited capitalist countries), higher-paying and better-organized jobs are being systematically eliminated. Low-wage, temporary and part-time work is on the rise.

This unemployment weighs down on the workers. Those employed fear for their jobs—there are millions out there ready to take them at lower wages and worse conditions. Workers are threatened by the practice of moving factories to low paying countries.

Resistance by workers has occurred. But the defensive battles have generally been defeated. In this country we can point to the breaking of the air traffic controllers; the defeat of the heroic meatpackers in Minnesota; the defeat of the paperworkers, and others since the early 1980s.

There have been partial victories—the coal miners have held onto many of their gains, although the United Mine Workers' Union is numerically much weaker than a decade ago. Eastern Airline workers failed to save their jobs but did force the airline industry's main union-buster, Frank Lorenzo, out of the industry.

But there have been no victories of sufficient scope to galvanize the majority of the workers to begin a massive fightback against the capitalist offensive.

What is to be done?

First we must recognize reality. Working people have been dealt blows. Our

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class has been dealt blows. It does no good to pretend that there are still workers' states in the former Soviet bloc. We can't deny that Stalinism has made socialism look like a failure to many. Nor should we fail to realistically assess the difficult situation in which the world's working class finds itself.

But at the same time, we must find ways to join the fight of working people on every front, for that fight exists everywhere, from democratic struggles to the factory floor. We enter the class battle at its current level, on the side of the workers and oppressed, and go from there, patiently generalizing that struggle, linking it with future struggles and with the struggle of working people across the planet.

We join the battle as it exists. As Marxists, we have a theoretical understanding of the place of today's battles in the long march of working people. We don't *confuse* today's battles with tomorrow's, however, because to do that keeps us from joining the struggle where it is today. We seek to become citizens of time, and to know our place in it.

And, we take heart when our side strikes some blows.

Cuba stands and still fights for socialism. The revolution has not been crushed and Washington still hesitates to attack militarily because it knows that the masses of Cubans will put up a hell of a fight in defense of the revolution. We can make a difference by fighting the U.S. blockade.

The peasants in Chiapas, Mexico, apparently haven't heard of the end of the class struggle, or that they are supposed to be docile slaves until the end of time. We can never know where or when the oppressed and exploited will find the organization, will and leadership in them-

selves to suddenly enter on the world scene and challenge the privileges and prerogatives of the rich.

Every few decades the French seem to jump into the act. In 1968, France saw the greatest general strike in history. This past year we have seen the airline and airport workers, standing together in unity, defeat government attempts to drive down their living conditions and organizations in massive and physical battles. Then this spring, students and youth by the hundreds of thousands smashed a government attempt to lower the minimum wage for workers under 25 years old to 80 percent of the current minimum wage. The government gave in, fearing a repeat of 1968; its weakness can impel other groups of workers to resist.

The South African masses are poised to end apartheid as a legal system, a victory brought about by mass struggle. This will open new arenas of battle as the oppressed peoples of that country seek to deepen and extend their victory.

Marxism will emerge again

Marxism, or communism, arose out of the class struggle as it developed in capitalist society. Since that struggle continues unabated, Marxism will arise out of it again, even if all Marxists alive today dropped off the face of the earth. But it will make its comeback more quickly—and we don't have all the time in the world before capitalism succeeds in poisoning the world or a nuclear confrontation gets out of hand—if Marxists today can find their way to each other and link up with the class struggle.

We need to be patient. We are in a period of left regroupment and socialist renewal. All kinds of people from different backgrounds on the left are seeking answers to what went wrong in the Soviet Union and what socialists can do now.

We will be aided in rebuilding a new communist movement by the collapse of Stalinism as an ideology. It is no longer a material force in the world, but a discredited system that poisoned socialism. Cleansed of this poison, we can move forward, providing we base ourselves on the living movement of the working people of this earth. ▼

Interview, Part II

Russian Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists

This is the conclusion of an interview done by Alex Chis of Independent Politics in Moscow in November

1993 with three activists of the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (KAS): Vlad Tupikin, Mikhail Tsovma and Nikolai Muravin. The first section (see IP #5) covered events through 1989.

Alex Chis: What has been the work of KAS since 1989?

Vlad Tupikin: In 1990, the KAS-KOR information agency was created. People were trying to get links with the emerging workers organizations and trade unions.

AC: This was the time when there was a big miner's strike?

Mikhail Tsovma: Yes, after the miner's strike in 1989, there was this process of creating independent trade unions and we tried to get in contact with them. This was also the time when there were a lot of street actions, demonstrations, pickets, distributing literature, etc.

For example, on May 1 we participated in a demonstration at Red Square. There were 500 people there with a black flag.

There were attempts to create independent groups with participation of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, which were not successful. But there were a lot of anarchist newspapers, 30 of them throughout Russia. Some published only one issue, or stopped soon. They were in Siberia, Thoms, Kharkov, several in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities. This was like the peak of social and anarchist activities, 1989-1990.

In May 1990, we started KAS-KOR, in an attempt to reach out to the workers and to try to propagate syndicalist ideas, but also to gather information and try to establish informational links between different organizations. For some time KAS-KOR was very successful with that.

1990-91 period

VT: 1990-1991 was the beginning of decline of public activities. People were quite tired of politics and the social and

political activities were centered around the newly elected Russian parliament and support to [Russian President Boris] Yeltsin and we didn't fit in this picture. The newspapers were giving much more information than they did before and were quite cheap. Many people started to buy regular newspapers instead of *samizdat* [underground publications]. Almost all *samizdat* publications ceased to exist. This was a crisis of many of the editorial groups like *Obshchina*.

Some kind of reemergence of activities occurred during the coup d'état in August 1991 and anarchists also participated in the struggle against the dictatorship. Of course we were not defending Yeltsin but just did not want the Communists and party bureaucrats to come back.

After the August coup d'état, the official trade unions started some changes of the structure and leadership and tried to find a new face for themselves. They proposed people from KAS-KOR and KAS to do their newspaper and for some time we worked on this paper. The paper was quite radical and interesting. Different people had the opportunity to speak through this paper—the Greens, the Party of Labor, anarchists, socialists. This was successful for some time but then we became redundant and were not politically correct. So step by step we were kicked out.

AC: When did that period end?

MT: This started in August 1991 after the coup and for about half a year we were making the paper with no ideological restrictions.

VT: Little by little we were pushed out of making decisions and finally they just cleaned some people out. Not only anarchists, but also some Marxists had to leave because their articles were too communist.

Now KAS is quite a small organization but still it has groups in various regions, Russia mainly. Before, it was the only

anarchist federation and all different anarchists joined it. Now it is a mostly homogeneous anarcho-syn-

dicalist organization. People are involved in working with different trade unions and worker's organizations. In KAS-KOR we tried to establish information services for these organizations. We do not want to support either old or new unions because we are critical of both. We just want to propagate the ideas of the rank and file independent workers movement and we want to propagate socialist and anarchist ideas among the workers.

In different places KAS activists are involved in working with trade unions and making publications. In Thoms 7, they have a very good experience of fighting against *nomenklatura* privatization of the enterprise and fighting for better working conditions and salaries and maybe in some time they will create an independent union.

AC: What is Thoms 7?

MT: Thoms 7 is a secret city near Thoms. There was a big nuclear blow-out there. Thirty percent of the plutonium in Russia is made in this city. They have an anarcho-syndicalist group and a publication there and are active in the fight against privatization. They try to create an independent union.

In Baikalsk (at Lake Baikal) one of our activists is involved in independent union activities. There is a big factory there. They created a union recently of about 270 people. This guy is the chairman of this union.

AC: How large is this factory?

VT: There are several thousand people in this factory. In comparison with that the union is rather small but there was a pre-strike readiness in this enterprise and out of 11 people on the strike committee, four were from this union. This shows the popularity of this independent union is quite big. Of course it is very hard for local workers' groups to be big, because the activity of workers in general is not

so big. That's why there are so few independent unions and they are now quite bureaucratic because of this lack of rank and file activity. The old trade unions continue to exist because nobody appears willing to change them, but maybe in some time this will change.

AC: What types of newspapers are available for workers?

MT: Generally there are two kinds. There are the local workers' newspapers, all different types—those that belong to independent trade unions and those sponsored by the AFL-CIO because it is very active in trying to get control over the new workers' unions. Then there are newspapers of leftist groups. They speak about workers but they are party newspapers of political sects. They are not very popular.

Evolution of anarchist ideas

AC: Could you talk about your ideological genesis? You were Marxists or socialists and read Bakunin. But because in fact there were widespread numbers of people that went to anarcho-syndicalism or anarchism, there must have been more general reasons than people reading Bakunin and *Obshchina*. It looks more like a social phenomenon. Can you comment on that?

MT: Vlad thinks that the evolution of his ideas is quite characteristic for many anarchists and leftist sectors here.

VT: We were all victims of the official Communist propaganda, and from early childhood we were taught that the values of freedom, equality, brotherhood and collectivism are very good and this is the real humanism. But life in the Soviet Union and the practice of the CP showed us that the world we lived in was constructed according to different principles. So there were two choices, either to devaluate all these values which were officially propagated, or to try to change the world we live in to bring about these values.

So for many of us it was not much different how to call these ideas—humanism, social democracy, Trotskyism.

Later when we got access to different tendencies in socialist thought we discovered that maybe anarcho-syndicalism was the closest one because we were anti-communist, meaning that we were not communist we were collectivist-socialist, and we thought that some of the origins of Communist totalitarianism can be found in Marx and Engels and in the practices of different communist parties. That's why we adopted the ideal of decentralism, federalism and the freedom of individuals, but we didn't stop being socialists.

Also for every social activist or person who tried to make his own estimations of the situation in this country it was obvious the repressive nature of the state. All these attempts to think for yourself were crushed from the very beginning. That's why we were very anti-statist because we just saw how the state was.

At the same time, we did not believe in Western democracy. As historians, the people who founded the *Obshchina* group knew that there were different kinds of social experience, like Russia in 1917. It was obvious to us that parliamentary democracy in the West is based on money and big business and this was not the ideal that we wanted. We also studied the experience of the Russian revolution. For us it was the experience of a country which for about a year lived without a state. There was a system of soviets, direct democracy, workers' self management. We tried to get what we could from this. We were rather critical of some of it but for the most part this was a big inspiration for us.

Elections

AC: What is your position in general on elections?

VT: We had many discussions about participating in elections in 1989. There was the election of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, which we boycotted. The year after, in 1990, there were elections of the Russian parliament and of the local soviets. Of course we boycotted the parliament elections but we participated in the local elections.

AC: Why do you say of course?

MT: It's not a dogma for us that anarchists should boycott elections, but for us it's obvious that parliamentary democracy is not what we want and is just run by the propaganda machine, the state and the major party. So we boycotted those. We felt that by participating in the local elections we could propagate our ideas to a wider circle of people. There were some people who were not elected because of illegal manipulations during the elections.

AC: What about the elections in December 1993?

MT: In Moscow and Khabarovsk we know that anarchists will boycott the elections because we have information on how this coup d'état was made, how it was done with provocation from the government and people who stand around Yeltsin. People in the other regions of Russia, they have just the media picture of what happened, a big distortion. Nothing to do with reality.

We are trying to gather information to analyze the situation and communicate it to the regions and give them an alternative picture of what happened because we were all witnesses of these events and know what it was in fact. We think people will want to boycott these elections because it is the only honest position, after they get the information. We think we should either boycott this election or make fake campaigns, like the Subtropical Russian Movement for the Banana Republic, just showing this regime what it is.

There is a person trying to participate in the elections. He chose the university district. Maybe among the students there are more people with common sense who understand what it is about and will vote for him. He needs only 4,500 signatures to get registered as a candidate. This guy is not an anarchist but is a long time activist, one of the former dissidents and informal lecturers. He has the same attitude as we do of this regime.

There are people previously in these liberal, democratic and human rights

Continued on Page 30

KAS Interview

Continued from Page 29

groups who are trying to understand what this Russian democracy is about. They know the coup d'état was a great distortion of democracy and human rights, that there is no free press in this country. They as honest people come to the same opinions.

VT: There is now a debate on participating in these elections. Some people think that as many oppositionists as possible should be elected to show Yeltsin that it won't be a pocket parliament and that there are other opinions in the society. Many people who think that are people that just want to be elected and care only about their own political career. This won't change much in the situation.

Yeltsin's coup

AC: What was the position of KAS on Yeltsin's coup, and specifically, on defense of parliament [in September 1993]?

MT: We saw that this had nothing to do with democracy and were quite satisfied with the situation when there was a parliament and president that fought each other and there was some freedom in the society. Now if somebody wins, whether parliament or Yeltsin, it's a distortion of human rights and of freedom. Of course, parliament could not have won because Yeltsin was supported by the Western guns and big business.

We didn't go to defend the parliament because we knew what kind of people gathered there and that this parliament was not defending the interests of people. The deputies themselves said they are in 90 percent agreement with Yeltsin's economic policies. These neo-liberal policies would destroy the Russian economy, leave millions unemployed, and are an anti-popular economic policy. Of course we cannot support this policy. But the main thing was to oppose Yeltsin's dictatorship.

AC: While you don't and did not politically support the parliament, you would have preferred that parliament not be

overrun by Yeltsin. In a sense, you defended the idea of the Russian parliament.

MT: The exact position is that we called for peaceful resolution of this political conflict because we did not want millions of people to get involved in this and get killed and maybe the best decision was to reelect both Yeltsin and parliament. Of course we would not have participated in the election, but for the sake of democracy it was the best variant. Unfortunately

there was not much popular support for this.

The population was just manipulated by the media and from that point of view this coup d'état was 90 percent media-organized. It was very characteristic because before all political changes to a great degree were based on force—army, police, and stuff like that. Of course, in this coup d'état the use of force was involved but the main part was the control of public consciousness. ▼

The Refounding of Russian Labor Review

We would like to thank Against The Current for permission to reprint the following article on KAS-KOR by Renfrey Clarke. Readers who have followed KAS-KOR's progress will be interested in the latest developments. ATC is a bimonthly left magazine published in Detroit. Subscriptions are \$18/one year. Write: ATC, Center for Changes, 7012 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI. 48210.

In ATC 48, Alex Chis and I reported on the vital work undertaken by the young militants of the KAS-KOR Labor Information Center. KAS-KOR was born after the miners strikes of 1989, to fill the critical information gap among workers in struggle across the breadth of the former Soviet Union. Although their numbers were small, their reach was immense—a weekly radio program with a potential audience of 300 million, a weekly bulletin about workers' struggles and a quarterly English language journal, *Russian Labor Review*. Their work was the dream of Western leftists. As of this writing, KAS-KOR is no more, a victim of dwindling financial resources, internal conflicts, the current demands of the political situation in Russia, and the antics of the AFL-CIO. Renfrey Clarke, a frequent contributor to the work of KAS-KOR, explains, KAS-KOR's crisis and demise.—Susan Weissman (Susan Weissman teaches Russian politics at St. Mary's College of California.)

By RENFREY CLARKE

MOSCOW—Many people in the international left and labor movements were impressed last year to see and read a new English-language publication from Moscow—*Russian Labor Review*. Sponsored by the Labor Information Center KAS-KOR, *Russian Labor Review* was published by an editorial group that included both Russians and foreigners. Two issues appeared during 1993, with a long series of articles examining the Russian labor scene from a democratic left perspective.

Early in 1994 the scheduled third issue failed to appear. The key problem was a deep crisis within KAS-KOR. Like all independent organizations in the Russian labor movement, KAS-KOR had found itself under acute financial pressure dur-

ing 1993. Trade unions were less and less able to pay for the information which KAS-KOR collected and distributed. Hard currency income gained from research work for Western organizations bought less and less, as the Russian government pursued "strong ruble" policies. By early 1994 all of KAS-KOR's projects, not simply *Russian Labor Review*, were under threat.

KAS-KOR's financial difficulties were compounded by growing political problems within the organization as the needs of the Russian labor movement changed and new tasks presented themselves. When KAS-KOR was founded in 1990, one of the critical needs of labor activists was for reliable, detailed information on the struggles of other workers—the kind of information the still-censored official press was denying.

New situation

By 1993, this situation had changed radically. A good deal of information on labor struggles could now be had from mass media sources. The key need of worker activists was no longer simply for information, but also for analysis—for explanations of where the interests of workers really lay in the swiftly changing battles of Russian politics.

As an information agency, KAS-KOR needed to develop swiftly into a sophisticated labor movement "think tank." This was a tall order for the center's young activists, who were brought together by their shared commitment to the labor movement. They lacked a developed basis of political agreement, and had limited experience.

Dissensions multiplied, and at the beginning of 1994 KAS-KOR suffered a number of splits. An ominous development at this time was an effort by the Russian-American Foundation for Trade Union Research and Education, an agency set up and funded by the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), to draw the KAS-KOR structures under its umbrella.

By mid-February this effort had been successful. Three of KAS-KOR's 10 or so original activists had set up a new information agency funded by the AFL-CIO, including the former KAS-KOR radio program.

Current issue in progress

The *Russian Labor Review* editorial group, a number of whose members had resigned from KAS-KOR during January, was left with one computer, some video equipment, and the journal. But if the group's resources were slight, its members were nevertheless determined to press ahead.

A third issue of *Russian Labor Review* is now approaching the layout stage. A new association—as yet unnamed—is being formed to act as the journal's official sponsor.

The new association will try to answer the political needs of workers by creating an independent forum for analysis and debate on issues affecting the Russian labor

movement. On the international plane, this work will be carried out by *Russian Labor Review*. Within Russia, it will be the task of a soon-to-be-founded Russian-language journal of labor movement news and commentary.

The new journal will aim to be lively, inexpensive, and open to a broad range of contributors from the progressive side of politics. KAS-KOR may have passed from the scene, but its best activists are back in action and facing up to new challenges. ▼

Subscriptions for Russian Labor Review are \$30 for 4 issues for individuals, \$50 for institutions to P.O. Box 8461, Berkeley, CA 94707.

Staley Workers

Continued from Page 5

Hull, "because what he described is exactly what's happening in the entire central Illinois." The meeting was sponsored by a dozen different unions in the area.

Through company closures, downsizing, and union-busting, the "good middle-class jobs" are disappearing, said Hull, who has 38 years at Staley. "I have 14 different nieces and nephews who have had to leave Decatur to find jobs," he continued, noting that the population of the city has decreased by 12,000 in the past 10 years.

Caterpillar local president Solomon spoke of the difficulties in fighting a company with Caterpillar's vast resources. The company has bombarded the workers with letters to their homes, commercials in the media, and 28 full-page ads in the Decatur daily over the past two years.

"It's been hard to get the sympathy of the community because we have the best pay and benefits of any workers in the area," said Solomon. He thought the Staley workers (who make several dollars an hour less than Cat workers) had done a better job of winning public opinion by immediately answering all company attacks.

On the other hand, Solomon said the in-plant campaign at Caterpillar was going well. Union leaders have started holding union meetings at lunch time inside the plant to maximize participation.

"Sometimes we'll get over 100 people to gather around as we stand on a filing cabinet or on a pickup bed," he said.

Also, a three-day union walkout over a firing last November made a big impact on the company. "Since the walkout," said Solomon, "the company has bent over backward to make the union people happy—allowing them longer breaks and even naps."

"Our union hall is only two blocks from Staley," continued Solomon, "so this keeps our guys kind of revved up because they realize all labor is under attack, not just at Caterpillar."

Rank and file leads

The involvement of the rank-and-file was emphasized by Staley worker Mike Griffin, who was the first of many workers fired before the walkout for their militant union activity. Griffin said he tells his union leaders, "If you don't want to fight then get the hell out of my way!"

Griffin says he takes a serious attitude toward his regular picket duties. "I make sure that each and every person who enters that plant goes in with a bad conscience," he stated, "This is psychological warfare!"

The Staley workers continue to hold mass meetings on Tuesday nights at the union hall, involving spouses and families in the struggle. Some 100 workers have become "road warriors," taking the union's story across the country and seeking solidarity. Twice a week free food is given out at the union hall. About 30 families with special hardships have been "adopted" by other union locals. Union members get \$60 a week from their international union. Staley cut off all health care benefits three days after the lockout.

Both Staley and Caterpillar workers expected to launch major offensives in their struggles this spring. They realize they must do something decisive to move things forward. The stakes are high in Decatur for the entire labor movement.

To send contributions or request information, contact: Allied Industrial Workers Local 837, 2882 North Dinneen, Decatur, IL 62526, phone: (217) 876-7006, or United Auto Workers Local 751, 2365 E. Geddes Ave., Decatur, IL 62526., phone: (217) 428-7706. ▼

Why Things Burn

By Marlane Meyer. Directed by Roberta Levitow. Produced by San Francisco's Magic Theater.

By RICH LESNIK

In this new play, Marlane Meyer prods the audience to ponder the roots of violence, bigotry, misogyny and general social disintegration as our culture plunges down toward the 21st century. The "answers" she comes up with would certainly be troublesome to many in the organized left, considering the prevailing dogma that ascribes all sociopathic behavior to a decaying and decadent social and economic system, etc., etc., etc. You get the picture.

Many, however, including those who are survivors of this simplistic approach and who are searching for ways to confront the agony that seems to be spreading out of control all around us, will find this new play a refreshing, if troubling, experience.

Waiting for the play to begin, the audience listens to songs from 60s rock groups about fire, burning and violence. The set is open, spare, and waiting to be occupied by the characters. Dominated by a stair-

way that seems to ascend to nowhere, and lighting that shadows everything, we wait for this play, dubbed a "dark comedy" by the producers, to begin.

After initial blackout, the rising lights reveal Lester, a balding, middle-aged, discouraged man, speechifying on the inherently low nature of human beings. We find out as the play progresses that Lester's son, Lon, has joined him in "the club," a Klan-type skinhead group. Much to Lon's mother's consternation, they are embarked on a campaign of violence and arson. They're about to leave for a meeting.

So. Dad's a Nazi, mom's an alcoholic "poet" who is fascinated and revolted by the hatred around her, and Lon—well, Lon's sort of caught in the middle.

When he returns from the meeting, Lon finds his mother dead on the floor, with the implication that after he left, his father killed her in a rage. He then leaves on assignment for an unnamed city to embark on an arson campaign in concert with other skinheads, around the time of riots and social unrest (suggesting L.A. after the Rodney King verdict).

We then meet Lon's mother's sister and her husband, who house him, and provide much of the humor in this otherwise dark and thoughtful, if somewhat horrifying, drama. We also meet a ragtag group of young people who seem to be filled with more self-loathing than any other kind of hatred. What ensues is a tragic

series of interactions that highlight the origins of sociopathic behavior in family violence and hatred. It is at times difficult to watch.

Particularly disturbing is Sonny, played by Cintra Wilson. A young woman whose entire persona has been ravaged by drugs and abuse, she finally succumbs to self-hatred and hopelessness by killing herself. Lon has just beat her, blaming her all the time for "bringing out the beast" in him.

Cut to the chase. Lon returns home with his aunt and uncle to confront his dad with mom's murder. The closing scene reaches a thoughtful and provoking conclusion, which serves as a starting point for thought on the question of "blame." Lester, after recounting his life's disappointments and tragedies, and lamenting being left alone, after all this, asks, "Who decided that this is how I should end up, all alone? Whose decision was that?" Lon, with a mixture of distaste, sadness and hope, says, "You did, Dad. You did," as he ascends the opening scene's staircase.

The temptation here is to launch into a simplistic, if provocative discourse on the various networks of connections between family, economy, politics, and society. I choose, though, to take a somewhat different tack.

The reductionist thinking characteristic of "scientific" politics misses key areas—the gray areas—in discussing any question like the roots of violence and sociopathology. In seeking to trace behavior to its ultimate roots, individuals—indeed, whole classes—are absolved of responsibility for their behavior, and, more importantly, for seeking ways to stop it. "There are no solutions to social problems," we are told. Or, "until society is changed fundamentally, people will behave this way." Remember "the only solution is revolution"?

Well—all true, in a sense. In a more profound sense, though, there is a deeper truth. It all begins with personal responsibility, so eloquently portrayed in "Why Things Burn." I recommend this play without reservation. I welcome the discussion this brings up, and look forward to creative solutions, political and personal, that are brought forward as we seek to find our way through and out of social collapse. ▼

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