

POLITICS

A Socialist Magazine of News and Political Analysis

Number 4 Fall 1993

Why the PLO Recognized Israel

A new historic era opens in the Middle East

By BARRY SHEPPARD

The agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) marks the end of an historical period of Mideast politics.

Following the establishment of Israel under the aegis of the Western imperialist powers shortly after the second world war, overall Arab policy has been to seek the elimination of the colonial-settler regime and the return of Arab lands seized by it. While this policy has been honored more in the breach than in practice, espe-

cially in the last two decades, by the Arab regimes, it remained a goal of the Palestinians and as such was paid lip service to by those regimes.

With the PLO recognition of Israel, the existence of the heavily armed and U.S.-backed Jewish state is accepted as an accomplished fact to which all Arabs must accommodate.

The origin of the conflict

After the second world war, the colonialist project to create a Jewish state in Palestine received a powerful impetus

among Jews worldwide who hoped that the establishment of such a state would be a guarantee against any repetition of the horror of the Holocaust unleashed by German imperialism under the Nazi regime. Jews worldwide were encouraged to build this new state by emigration to it and through supporting it politically and financially.

But the irony of the Zionist project was that it was directed not against German imperialism, or the other major capitalist countries which turned a blind eye to the plight of the Jews under the Nazis, but against the people who lived in the land that was colonized—the Palestinians. They had to be displaced and crushed for the

Continued on Page 6

School Privatization Threatens California

The Voucher Vulture

By GRETCHEN MACKLER

California will be the fourth state to face a school voucher initiative. Oregon, Colorado and Pennsylvania have successfully defeated similar propositions. It is now California's turn, in November 1993, to reject this measure as well.

A broad coalition including the NAACP, the AFL-CIO, Association of Retired Persons, PTA, League of Women Voters and the California Teacher's Association (CTA), will be campaigning heavily to get out the vote and soundly defeat the right wing agenda to privatize public education.

For the past two years this initiative has been on the scene, requiring immense political activity and money, first in a fight

to prevent ballot status, and now to campaign against its passage. When the dust finally settles after election day, close to \$20 million will have been spent on this battle and we don't expect the fight to be over. We can assume these same reactionary forces will continue their onslaught against the public school system.

Why California

Several key factors have made California a fertile field for the united attack of the privatization and fundamentalist movements: continued growth of the student population, especially the immigrant group now totaling over a million; the impact of the state's budget on school

Continued on Page 31

INSIDE:

DISCUSSION ON NATION,
STATE AND CITIZENSHIP PAGE 8

TOWARD AN INTERNATIONAL
RED GREEN MOVEMENT PAGE 16

STRIKE WAVE IN RUSSIA PAGE 28

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|--|----|--|----|
| A WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS Caroline Lund..... | 3 | ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM GETS UGLIER Alex Chis..... | 21 |
| MALIBU GRAND PRIX WORKERS ORGANIZE Geddy Lee Roth..... | 4 | THE LOGGER AND THE ENVIRONMENTALIST Carl Anderson..... | 23 |
| WILL A HANDSHAKE LEAD TO SELF-RULE? Nancy Brown..... | 5 | ARE WE WORKING TOO MUCH? Alex Chis..... | 24 |
| WHY MARTIN LUTHER KING'S DREAM OF FULL EQUALITY FOR BLACK AMERICANS IS NOT A REALITY Malik Miah..... | 8 | OUR REVOLUTION CANNOT SELL OUT OR SURRENDER Fidel Castro..... | 25 |
| INDONESIA'S KILLING FIELDS: GENOCIDE IN EAST TIMOR Sunil Sharma..... | 12 | THE CRISIS IN EUROPE, EAST AND WEST Catherine Samary..... | 26 |
| BURMA: KAREN PEOPLE FIGHT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION Interview With Frank Barbieri..... | 14 | STRIKE WAVE SWEEPS RUSSIA Renfrey Clarke..... | 28 |
| THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY James O'Connor..... | 16 | WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING IN RUSSIA? Alex Chis..... | 29 |
| SHOULD FEMINISTS BE IN FAVOR OF POPULATION CONTROL? Claudette Bégin..... | 19 | LESSONS FROM A FORMER COMMUNIST Ralph Forsyth..... | 30 |
| WHY THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT MUST BE BASED ON JUSTICE AND MULTICULTURALISM Southwest Organizing Project..... | 20 | SAVE OUR OCEANS Jan Snipper..... | 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

INDEPENDENT **POLITICS**

Independent Politics is a socialist magazine of news and political analysis founded in 1992. It is published quarterly by members and supporters of Activists for Independent Socialist Politics. Signed articles reflect the views of their authors and publication of an article does not necessarily mean agreement with its content. Unless otherwise stated, all materials in *Independent Politics* may be reproduced with acknowledgement. Please send reprints.

© *Independent Politics* 1993

Closing News Date: September 30, 1993

Editor: Malik Miah

Editorial Committee: Alex Chis, Claudette Bégin, Suzanne Forsyth Doran, Alan Hangar, Mo Harry, Barry Sheppard, Lee Artz (Chicago), Kathleen O'Nan (Los Angeles)

Business Manager: Alan Hangar

Design and Production: Blue Dog Design

Printing: Howard Quinn, a union print shop

All correspondence and requests for subscriptions, single issues, or bundles should be mailed to:

Independent Politics, P.O. Box 55247, Hayward, CA 94545-0247, Telephone/Fax: (510) 430-1893.

End Poverty and Unemployment, Not Immigration A World without Borders

By CAROLINE LUND

The recession won't let up. Unemployment plagues the country. Education and health care systems are in crisis. Social services are being slashed while taxes on working people keep rising.

What or who is to blame for these gigantic problems? And how can we solve them?

Politicians at the service of big business—Democrats and Republicans alike—are blaming illegal immigrants.

Under siege?

In August Republican California Governor Pete Wilson published an open letter to President Bill Clinton. He claims California is "under siege" by "massive illegal immigration" from Mexico. Wilson called for ending all health and education benefits to illegal immigrants and their children. He also demands a constitutional amendment to deny citizenship to children born in the U.S. whose parents are illegal immigrants. He proposes that Congress create a "tamper-proof" identity card for all legal immigrants.

Democrats Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer (senators from California) have jumped on the bandwagon. The two toured the California-Mexico border August 17 with Attorney General Janet Reno and watched while border guards captured illegal immigrants.

More than 3,000 people a day attempt to cross the Mexican border into the U.S., trying to escape hunger and unemployment. Some 1,500 to 2,000 succeed in crossing. According to the Center for Human Rights Studies and Promotion, 200 bodies of would-be immigrants were found in the Rio Bravo (on the U.S.-Mexico border) in the first 10 months of 1991 alone.

One dollar toll

Feinstein has proposed a one dollar toll on all border crossings into California to finance beefing up the border patrol. She recently wrote an article saying that 1.3 million Californians are out of work, while some 1.3 million illegal immigrants live in the state. The conclusion? You guessed

it—illegal immigrants are taking "our" jobs.

Senator Boxer has proposed mobilizing the National Guard to seal the U.S. borders.

California is estimated to have absorbed around one third of all legal immigrants to the U.S. in the past 10 years, as well as about half of the refugees and half of all illegal immigrants. In the Los Angeles-Long Beach metropolitan area, one-third

The gap between the rich and poor countries is widening. It is this gap that produces immigration, as working people seek a way to survive.

of residents are foreign-born. In Miami 45 percent are foreign-born, in New York City, 27 percent.

The immigration phenomenon is worldwide, as mainly poor people from poor countries attempt to escape unemployment, poverty, and war by going to the rich, industrialized countries. The United Nations Population Fund estimates that more than 100 million such immigrants exist around the world.

The tide of immigration has increased dramatically in the past decade. For example, up until the mid-seventies, migrants into the European countries numbered around 30,000 a year. From 1980 to 1992 some 15 million migrants poured into Europe.

Europe blames immigrants too

In Europe, just as in the U.S., hysteria is being whipped up against immigrants in an attempt to blame them for the

growing misery caused by capitalist recession and social welfare cutbacks.

Germany has revised its constitution, getting rid of a provision promising asylum to "people persecuted on political grounds."

France now denies automatic citizenship to children born in France of non-French parents. The Greek government recently rounded up 25,000 Albanian immigrants and expelled them from the country.

Nine European countries have banded together in an agreement to jointly strengthen their outside borders and to cooperate via common computer records to keep out immigrants. Anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic violence is on the rise in virtually every European country.

The big-business media and politicians promote the big lie that immigrants are to blame for the deteriorating living conditions in the richest countries. The truth is that most immigration is caused by unemployment and poverty in the Third World countries.

The capitalist system, which dominates the world economy, is responsible for dividing the world into rich countries and poor countries. Three quarters of the world's population lives in abject poverty because their countries' economies are dominated by the rich countries. According to the U.N., in 1990 the debt of Third World countries to the rich countries stood at a staggering \$1,319 trillion. The net outflow of capital from the poor countries to the rich countries contributes to the increasing misery of millions.

The gap between the rich and poor countries is widening. It is this gap that produces immigration, as working people seek a way to survive.

The big corporations and their politicians propose to make the U.S. and Europe into fortresses against immigration by the poor of the world. Working people of the U.S. and Europe can never defend their jobs and living standards by joining in this racist campaign. The immigrants are not our enemy; rather, they can become allies in the struggle for jobs, decent wages, health care, housing and education for all. ▼

Malibu Grand Prix Workers Organize

On April 8, 1993, the cashiers, mechanics, pit attendants and shift supervisors at the Malibu Grand Prix in Redwood City, California, voted in the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local Lodge 1546 by a margin of 20 to 4.

This organizing campaign victory is significant because of who works there and what Malibu's business is.

Malibu Grand Prix

Malibu employees' ages average around 19 years old with a minority in their 30s, 40s and 50s. Most come from working-class families living in East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Redwood City. Many are immigrants or children of immigrants from Mexico, Central America and the Tongan Islands in the Pacific.

Malibu Grand Prix, Inc. and Malibu Castle Golf and Games, are a 17-year-old chain of amusement parks profiting from family entertainment. The main attractions are scaled-down formula race cars. Customers pay approximately three dollars to race a sixty-second lap around a half-mile race track. Other attractions include miniature golf, video game arcades, baseball batting cages and fast food restaurants.

This growing, 40-location, multinational corporation is a highly profitable business. The Redwood city race track (one of four Malibu locations in the San Francisco Bay Area) grosses over \$1.75 million per year while maintaining a net, bottom-line profit margin of 40 percent. Getting back forty cents for every dollar is a capitalist's dream. Such profits are usually hidden from most people; the poor wages and dangerous working conditions are the only obvious indicators of corporate greed.

High turnover rate

Malibu's policy of hiring youth part-time with no benefits, no significant raise program and little opportunity for promotion, is typical in this industry. These jobs have a high employee turnover rate. Who can really put up with a pimple-faced manager pushing the company policy

By GEDDY LEE ROTH

manual down your throat all day long for the minimum wage?

Initially, I was surprised by the number and extent of "unusual" grievances from the crew — a pregnant 19-year-old cashier denied a leave of absence for health reasons, intense individual verbal harassment by management, a cash payment requirement for using company windbreakers in the 40-degree winter nights, and sending workers home when they reported to their regularly scheduled shifts.

These problems add to the standard Malibu work environment — intense, constant noise from race cars, video game arcades and shop operations. Track personnel are forced to work eight hours a day in a cloud of poisonous and smelly two-stroke engine exhaust. (Two-stroke automobiles are illegal in the US because of excessive exhaust emissions.)

With constant overwork due to understaffing, physical threats and attacks by violent, intoxicated patrons, it is no wonder that Malibu employees are considered old-timers after nine months of employment. At \$5.50 per hour, a 50 percent discount on a \$2.00 hot dog is the only pay-back for such pathetic



The intimidation campaign by Malibu Grand Prix failed as low-paid workers voted to be represented by the Machinists union.

working conditions.

No faith in bargaining

The employees had little success and no faith in one-on-one bargaining with management. One mechanic finally called the San Mateo County Labor Council, having no idea of what unions were about. "I thought labor unions were like the Kiwanis, Rotary Club or the Elks Lodge," he explained. "After I understood what unions were about, I just can't believe they don't advertise on the TV. 'Hate your job? Tired of crummy pay? Dial 1-800-ATTACKK to begin building democracy on the job!'"

Most Malibu workers were on the verge of quitting and wanted quick, systematic changes. Some wanted the boss fired, others wanted to go out on strike, while many were scared of how organizing would affect their use of Malibu as a work history reference. Most were concerned they would be fired, lose hours, or be locked out, harassed and spied upon.

As a collective force they saw little protection from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Nonetheless, 70 percent of the workers signed "YES" on a union recognition petition within the first week of its distribution.

Organizing committee formed

A shop floor organizing committee was created to prepare and protect the workers from management's tactics to prevent unionization. Once the company was notified by the NLRB, management bribed one or two workers to spy on others, threatened and harassed vocal union supporters, and stalled all attempts to set negotiating dates. They also asked workers to trust them and not listen to the "greedy, dues-hungry" union representatives.

It is not surprising that the company has offered no improvements in either economic or non-economic conditions.

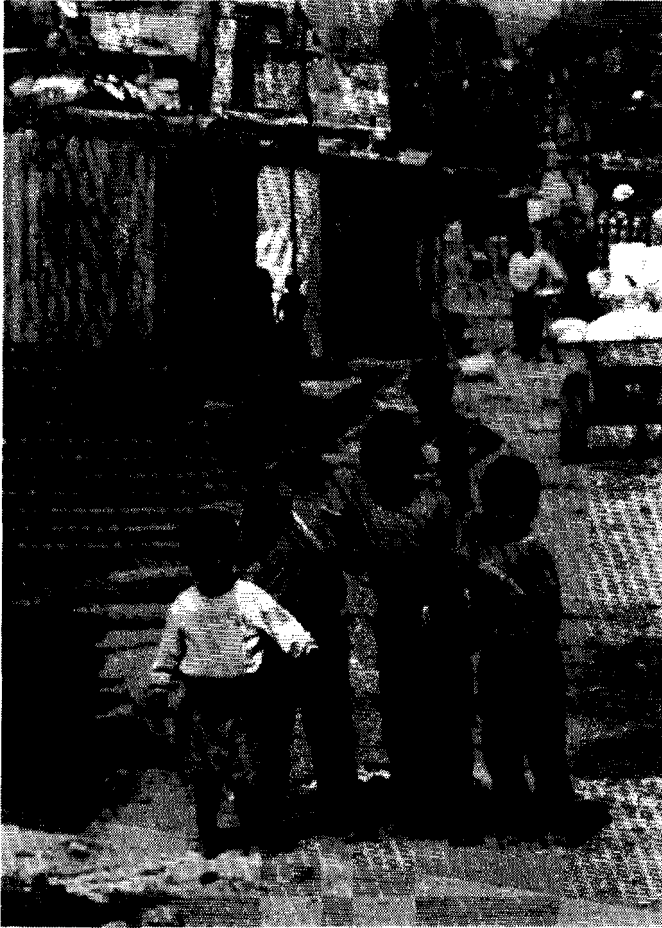
While many have quit over the slow negotiations and management harassment, most employees remain determined to win a decent contract. ▼

Geddy Lee Roth is a pseudonym of an employee at Malibu Grand Prix.

Brutal Life in Occupied Palestine Will a Handshake Lead to Self-Rule?

By NANCY BROWN

NANCY BROWN



Jabaliya Refugee Camp residents in Gaza live in a polluted environment. They have not been allowed to build a sewer system, and raw sewage runs through the unpaved streets in open trenches, at far left.

for the Palestinians who live on the wrong side of the "green line" (Israel's pre-1967 borders), and for Palestinian citizens in Israel as well. Those whose livelihoods depend upon traveling even the short distance from a town such as Bethlehem to

Jerusalem (about 5 miles) are prevented from making a living. People requiring medical care are affected by the closure, as are students, family members separated from one another, worshipers, or anyone (of Arab descent) needing to carry out the most mundane tasks of daily life.

The closure, though it is a relatively recent blanket policy, is not really new. Under occupation, citizens of the West Bank and Gaza routinely are subjected to the sealing off of individual homes, streets, and entire towns for security purposes. During the Gulf War, curfews were instituted over vast areas which restricted people to the insides of their houses for weeks on end. If a resident tried to go to the market, to school, to the hospital, or to a neighbor's house during such a curfew he or she could be shot on sight, which did occur.

Under military occupation, confiscation of Palestinian land and resources, demolition of homes, closing of schools and universities, arrests and beatings,

torture of prisoners, expulsions, and limits on speech and expression are common occurrences as well.

Israel, a well-armed expansionist state, backed by the economic and military might of the US, and operating daily out of fear of its neighbors, has subjugated an entire population. Now in its 26th year, the occupation has engendered deep fear and mistrust throughout the region, on all sides of the conflict. The government has demonized the largest and most representative organization of the Palestinians, namely the PLO. The current agreement, a long-overdue recognition of the PLO and the reality of Palestinian existence, has materialized, but will it set into motion respect for human rights, cooperation, or a Palestinian state?

Diverse views

In 1991 I was able to meet with residents and officials—including Palestinians and Jews—in Israel and the Occupied Territories, where we discussed issues relating to the occupation. Though some denials were expressed, the fact of the human rights violations and other forms of control was not generally disputed. The population of Israel is divided in its opinion of the occupation, though the mainstream tends to accept it as a necessary evil, believing it protects their security. There are groups who actively work to stop the occupation, while some—like many settlers—feel their mission is to take over the West Bank entirely.

In addition to a number of cooperative efforts between Palestinian and Israeli individuals, there is a peace movement within Israel. Its effect has been somewhat marginal up to now, though there may be a surge in popularity of liberal-type groups (such as Peace Now) since the signing of the agreements. Some of

Continued on Page 6

This fall a striking change is occurring in the Middle East. For the first time in 100 years the leadership of Israel and Palestine have shaken hands in agreement. The words spoken by Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat have crossed an enormous ideological gulf toward each other and toward the possibility of peace.

The road to Palestinian self-determination has to start somewhere; meanwhile, life under occupation grinds on.

Harsh realities

The day the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy agreement was signed, the occupied territories remained closed. More precisely, the inhabitants of Gaza and the West Bank are prevented from entering Israel and Jerusalem. Instituted by the Rabin Government in March, the segregation is supposed to protect Israeli citizens from violence.

The reality of this closure is very harsh

Occupied Palestine

Continued from Page 5

tion to the conflict. That phrase is likely to be on more lips in the coming months.

The Palestinians — students, labor leaders, doctors, educators, scientists — expressed the desire for a peaceful coexistence with Israelis while enumerating their hardships under occupation. A common view was that Israel's best chance for security lies in peace with her neighbors.

From a Palestinian viewpoint, the history behind previous and current refusals to recognize Israel's legitimacy is pertinent. The establishment of Israel as a state in 1948 created hundreds of thousands of refugees. Palestinians living in refugee camps since that time still carry the keys to their homes (now in Israel) to which they long to return. To many of those displaced and disenfranchised, even a two-state solution would be a legitimization of their wretched position as nonpersons, their land stolen and their lives disrupted for 25 years by the occupation.

The Gaza and Jericho experiment

Gaza and the town of Jericho on the West Bank — located on the outside edges of the territories — are where self-rule is supposed to begin. The selection of Gaza is controversial because it is an area with the least allegiance to the PLO, which may compromise attempts to defuse the *Intifada*, as promised. The *Intifada* in any case was a spontaneous grassroots uprising, begun in Gaza, and though it became more organized and militant, it was not run by the PLO.

However, it may be fortunate for Gaza to be selected, because it is probably the worst off of any community occupied by Israel, and could only benefit from the withdrawal of military control. Its selection has also focused world attention on its extreme economic problems, severe hardship within the refugee camps, and environmental deterioration, which cry out for aid.

While the world watches and judges the Palestinians' early attempts at autonomy, critical problems have yet to be addressed. Over half of Gaza is occupied

by about 4,000 Jewish settlers. The remaining population of 800,000 Palestinians squeeze into the rest of the eight-by-twenty-five-mile strip, the most densely populated region in the world. The settlers are armed, and surrounded by fortifications. Water-intensive practices deplete the water supply, which in many areas is becoming contaminated by salinization. So far the exact meaning of self-rule and its implementation has yet to be spelled out. And of course the closure of the territories continues. ▼

New Historic Era

Continued from Page 1

project to succeed.

Through a series of wars in 1948, 1967, 1973 and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Israel was established and expanded its area of control, creating a vast expulsion of Palestinians to neighboring Arab lands and beyond.

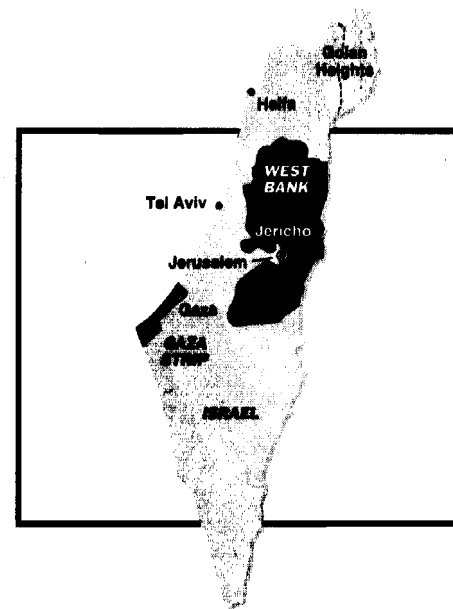
Palestinians who remained in the new Israeli state after the 1948 war were dispossessed and forced into second class citizenship through the overtly racist practices of the state.

Palestinians who remained in the Gaza strip and the West Bank of the Jordan river, occupied by Israel after the 1967 war, have been subjected to denial of all citizenship rights under the jackboot of the Israeli military dictatorship there ever since.

Arab resistance to the establishment and expansion of the Israel settler-colonialist state, which was financed and armed by the West, with Washington's role becoming paramount after 1967, was expressed in the stance of the Arab countries that the settler-colonialist regime was built on the illegitimate and illegal usurpation of Arab land and displacement and subjugation of the Palestinian inhabitants of that land.

The voice of the Palestinians began to be projected in an increasingly coherent way with the emergence of the Palestine Liberation Organization as an independent force following the 1967 war. Its goal was to end the colonialist project and restore the rights and lands of the Palestinians.

Recognizing that Jews had, however, immigrated to Palestine, the PLO in the early 1970s proposed that the Israeli



colonialist state be overthrown and replaced by one in which both the Palestinians and Jews would be equal citizens in a "democratic secular Palestine" that would not give special status to either nationality or to any religion.

Israel and its imperialist allies naturally labelled the PLO as "terrorist" and sought its destruction.

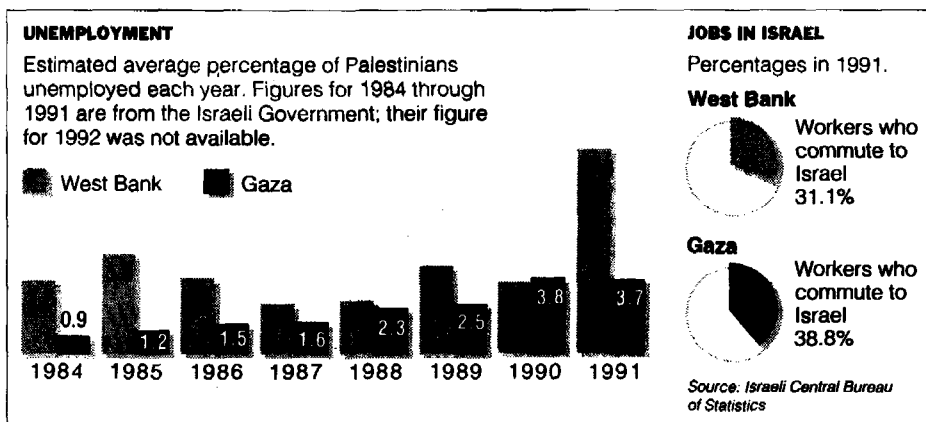
By explicitly recognizing Israel, and renouncing any further struggle to overthrow it, the PLO now abandoned its original aims.

An unnamed Palestinian official quoted in the *New York Times* summed up the situation to a reporter: "Do you want me to say [the Israeli-PLO agreement] is a great thing? It hurts. For me it means the consolidation of our historic defeat in 1948 when we lost Palestine. With this accord we may get back 17 percent of Palestine, but there are no other choices. We had to break the deadlock. We had to start somewhere. This is what I'm for."

A changing world order

To understand how this situation came about, we should place it in the context of the changes in the relation of forces on a world scale that have had a particularly sharp expression in the Mideast.

The disintegration and collapse of the Soviet Union and the regimes in East Europe has given imperialism a freer hand. However bureaucratically deformed these workers states and their policies were, they nevertheless gave material support to national liberation movements like the



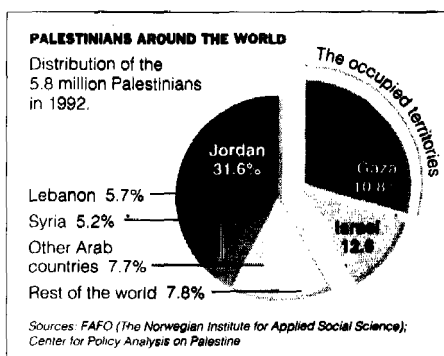
PLO, and were a check on imperialist war plans in many instances.

For example, in hindsight it is easier to see that the Soviet support given to Bush's war against Iraq, support which was key to building the political coalition behind Washington's war effort, was more than a "betrayal" of international solidarity. It was one of the last acts of a regime that was rushing headlong into attempting capitalist restoration through abject subservience to Washington.

The result was the triumph of the U.S. and increased U.S. military and political power throughout the Mideast. If the Soviet Union had opposed Washington, no such coalition and massive bombing of Iraq would have been possible.

Washington drove home the point through the Gulf War that it would tolerate no Arab country being able to build up a strong enough military to threaten either the monarchies in the oil-rich states or Israel. This eclipsed any hope that any of the Arab regimes would again attempt to mount an attack against Israel.

In actuality, this has been true since the 1973 war, and was expressed in the separate peace Egypt made with Israel shortly after. But the Gulf War drove home the point with a vengeance.



The Palestinian masses instinctively were against the U.S. and the oil sheiks in the war, sensing that their own interests were at stake. Saudi Arabia and other states, which had helped fund the PLO, used this as an excuse to cut off their aid to the PLO.

The PLO had previously used such money to at least partially administer to the day-to-day needs of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

With no support anymore from the disappeared Soviet bloc, with no perspective of rekindling any real attempt to overthrow Israel on the part of the Arab regimes, with virtually no funds, the PLO was forced to "accept our historic defeat in 1948 when we lost Palestine" and try to get the best deal it could for the Palestinian people in that context.

The initial stages of the accord will include gradual introduction of Palestinian control in the West bank and Gaza over internal functions, and the gradual withdrawal of the Israeli military.

Exactly how this works out in practice remains to be seen. But the prospect of ending the military occupation is a victory for the Palestinians.

By recognizing the existence of the Palestinians, and of their right to govern themselves, the Israelis have made a retreat. The die is cast for the abandonment of the project to incorporate the West Bank (which the Zionists call "Judea and Samaria") into Israel. Israeli expansionism is coming to an end.

The Israelis, for their part, will gain the ending of the Palestinian *intifada* — the six-year campaign of continual public resistance to the Israeli military jackboot. The *intifada* could not in and of itself end that occupation. But it kept the brutal

pression in the eye of world public opinion, which discredited Israel even in the eyes of its supporters. In this sense, the accords are a victory for the *intifada*.

New Israeli policy

The conflict in Israel over the accords reflects the conflict between the old Zionist goal of continual Israeli expansionism to eventually include all the territory "from the Nile to the Euphrates," and the new prospects opened by the accords and the eventual recognition of Israel by the Arab regimes.

This new policy was expressed by one of the members of the Israeli cabinet right after it voted to accept the accords. He said the way was now open for Israel to become the "Singapore" of the Mideast.

While the analogy with Singapore has its limits, Israel has developed into the strongest economy in the Mideast. Peace with its Arab neighbors means that it can become economically dominant over them, in the context of American hegemony.

Israel hopes that the Arab countries will become a market for its goods, an arena for Israeli investment, and a source of cheap Arab labor and raw materials. In short, a neo-colonialist policy will replace the old direct colonization, including in the West Bank and Gaza.

What is next

In the context of the changed relation of forces on a world scale and in the Mideast with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent victory of the U.S. in the Gulf War, the existence of Israel more and more becomes an historical accomplished fact. There is no prospect of changing this fact in the mid-term future, which in itself will mean an entrenching of Israel. The fight against Israeli and Western neocolonialism must therefore take this new situation into account, and a new strategy developed on this basis.

Of course, this must be developed primarily by revolutionists in the region, based upon their real experiences and the concrete issues that develop. An immediate task around the world will be to monitor the inevitable Israeli reneging on granting democratic rights to the occupied territories, and to support the Palestinian struggle to extend those rights in practice. ▼

Why Martin Luther King's Dream of Full Equality for Black Americans Is Not a Reality

A REPORT ON
NATIONALISM

The following article is adapted from a talk by Independent Politics editor Malik Miah on August 8, 1993, at the Solidarity summer school held in St. Louis. Solidarity is a socialist organization that seeks the regroupment of the revolutionary socialist left in the United States. For more information write to Solidarity's national office at 7012 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210, or call (313) 841-0160.

By MALIK MIAH

On August 28, tens of thousands of people marched in Washington, D.C., for "Jobs, Justice and Peace." Another 3,000 turned out in San Francisco. Supported by the major civil rights organizations and all of organized labor, the march marked the 30th anniversary of the great civil rights protest of 1963 where 250,000 people, most of them Black, heard Martin Luther King, Jr. give his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. King's "dream" was that the death of Jim Crow legal segregation would quickly lead to full equal rights for African-Americans.

At the 1993 march, the main speakers were middle aged. This was in sharp contrast to 1963, when Martin Luther King, Jr. was 34 years old and John Lewis, from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, was 23. Lewis, now a congressman from Georgia, spoke again in 1993.

Trotting out recycled, middle-aged "statesmen" of the civil rights movement points up the stagnation of the movement. The leadership of the 1993 commemoration were not the young people who protested the beating of Rodney King. They are in the main out of touch with the real day-to-day problems of working and unemployed Blacks.

King had no illusions about racism in America. But he firmly believed that a color-blind capitalism could work for Blacks as it had for whites.

Yet the passage of major civil rights laws, beginning in 1964, did not mean the government took the initiative to eradicate racism. In fact, Blacks had to pressure the government, courts and employers to take even baby steps against discrimination in employment, education and housing. King quickly concluded that the time for marching was not over, and that renewed protests must focus on making the new laws effective.

Even though King maintained his liberal views on the capitalist system and its potential for Blacks, he began to oppose many of Washington's most anti-people policies. In 1967, for example, he came out against the U.S. war against the Vietnamese people. He said the Vietnamese were fighting oppression just like African-Americans had been doing for decades.

In 1968 King launched a "poor people's campaign" to pressure the White House to aid all working people, not only Blacks. And in 1968 King made his final trip to Memphis to support the

Black sanitation workers who were on strike. It was there that he was assassinated.

Thirty Years Later

Thirty years after the Great March on Washington there have been some important changes for the oppressed Black nationality. Jim Crow legislation is gone. Blacks can vote and live almost anywhere we choose, if we have the dollars to purchase a home. Black entertainers are some of the highest paid in the industry and are hailed by whites as well as Blacks.

Of course, there is still *de facto* segregation. There is red lining, inferior schools, and job discrimination.

Rightist forces still propagate hatred. The last 12 years especially has seen racist attitudes promoted by rightist politicians to win elections. The likes of Pat Buchanan and Ross Perot get a following, as do the open Klan bigots like David Duke.

But the overall attitudes of whites towards Blacks is better today than pre-1963. Most whites reject racism.

Black self-confidence is also much higher than in the 1960s. Black pride and dignity is common. Yet as most articles in the Black press report and many polls show, there is a high degree of anger, pessimism and resignation among the Black poor and sections of the middle class who have hit a concrete ceiling. There is a growing belief that things are going backward, not forward. The future looks bleak. No one really believes that King's "dream" of achieving full equality is on the horizon. The slogan of the Los Angeles rebellion, "No Justice, No Peace," is much more a prevalent view in the Black community.

What explains this pessimism? Particularly if legal segregation is dead and whites as a group are less racist than the 1950s? Economic reality. The powers that be pit the poor against the poor, and Blacks remain at the bottom of the ladder despite some real gains for a layer of the Black community.

The income gap between African-Americans and white Americans, for example, is wider today than in 1963. This is despite the growth of a historically large Black professional class and a layer of better-paid workers in technical and semi-skilled jobs. The poor have gotten poorer.

There are greater class divisions among Blacks. The poor can't escape the ghetto; the middle class and better-off workers can. Under Jim Crow that wasn't possible.

At the same time, there has been some real progress for the Black nationality as a whole. In 1956 there were 280 Black elected officials, mostly on a local level; today there are 7,552. In 1963 the number of Blacks below the official poverty rate was 51 percent; in 1991 it was 32.7 percent. The high school graduation rate in 1964 was 25.7 percent; in 1991 it was 38.7 percent.

Yet the impoverished layer of the Black community is worse off. According to a 1990 report by the Sentencing Project, some 23 percent of all Black men aged 20-29 are in prison, on probation or on parole. This compares to 6.2 percent of whites. For every social category, Blacks are significantly worse off than whites.

The average statistics don't show the ebb and flow of Black life. Things were steadily improving from the late 1960s through the 1970s. But in the 1980s the Reagan-Bush offensive against all working people, including the use of racism to win the support of misguided whites, led to many reverses in civil rights gains. The anti-worker, anti-Black attacks were led by the White House, but they were joined by the courts and employers.

Congressional approval of the 1991 Civil Rights Act reversed some of the worst Supreme Court rulings on civil rights. But the Civil Rights Act leaves intact many of the reverses of the 1980s, particularly affirmative action decisions based on class-action discrimination. The ruling class message is clear: legal equality is one thing; full equality is another. "Yes," to the first, "No," to the second.

There is a void of leadership in the Black community, and among working people as a whole to challenge the status quo. There is deep pessimism and resignation in the Black community about our future. There is, at best, a false hope that Clinton and the Democratic Party will bring some change. That's why the 30th anniversary march was a look to the past and not a plan of action for the present and future.

The result of the pro-capitalist perspective of top labor movement officials has been setback after setback. Less than 12 percent of the private sector work force is organized into unions, and the percentage is declining.

In the Black community, the youth are more likely to read Malcolm X or just say "No!" than to see their future in Jesse Jackson, the Congressional Black Caucus, or one of the many Black mayors.

One hopeful change is the choice of Ben Chavis as the new executive director of the NAACP. Chavis has a life-long record of struggle against racism, and may push the NAACP toward fighting for social change. He's already opened the organization to all ethnic groups and has moved the NAACP into an activist mode.

But few in the Black community believe an equal society is on the horizon. The propaganda blaming immigrants (who are mainly people of color) for the economic crisis confirms the problem. There is a general fear among all working people that times will just get harder. Capitalist politicians will continue to appeal to

backward whites with racist demagoguery until a militant new leadership based on the most oppressed arises.

What about the Black middle class? They see their future in capitalism. They don't like the racism. But they are not ready to risk their comfortable economic position to lead a fight in the interests of the community as a whole — as they had to under

Jim Crow.

That's why the new leadership — not just the foot soldiers — of the Black community will have to come in the main from the working class. It will be from those community leaders, particularly the youth, who have little to lose and the most to gain: those who are just making it, on the edge of falling back into homelessness.

The aging liberal leaders of the Jim Crow era will not lead the necessary fight to end *de facto* racism and bring about full equality. That requires a movement that challenges the political rule of capitalism itself. The best of these liberals, like Ron Dellums of California, will oppose that type of showdown. They will vote for jobs programs, even for a national health plan, but to take on the capitalist state — never. They will compromise to keep their positions, as they have for the last 30 years.

The immediate period ahead of us will be one of more setbacks for labor and erosion of civil rights gains, until the crisis of working-class leadership is resolved. The tie between organized labor and Black rights' groups are thus more knotted together than ever before in American history.

Any gains we make can and will be reversed by the capitalist rulers if the oppressed and exploited don't have the strength to push forward. We never stand still. We either go forward or backward. That's a basic lesson of history.

Review of American History

Review of American History

After the victory of the Union forces in the Civil War, the door was open to bring about true equality between Black and white Americans. (I leave out Native Americans, who were slaughtered by the European colonizers.) Full citizenship for the freed slaves was supposed to be guaranteed under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Real steps toward equality were taken at first. But the door was quickly closed. For example, Blacks never got the land to work. White homesteaders got 160 acres; Blacks none.

The capitalist class instead opted to use color to prevent the unity of poor whites and Blacks. The result was the defeat of Radical Reconstruction, and the rise of Jim Crow segregation, that is, American apartheid. The law of the land—in contradiction to the constitutional amendments—was to deny Blacks the vote, encourage lynching, and enforce total segregation. Americans? Not if you were Black. Only white skin gave you those rights and privileges.

Continued on Page 10

The immediate period ahead will be one of more setbacks for labor and erosion of civil rights gains until the crisis of working-class leadership is resolved.

Equality for Blacks

Continued from Page 9

Formal citizenship, which Blacks won in 1865, did not mean the forging of an "American nation" that was nonracial and color-blind. Even white women had more rights than Blacks, even though women couldn't vote until 1920.

Nation, state and citizenship

It is important to seriously look at the "American Nation" question in light of what's going on in Eastern Europe and Asia since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the break up of Yugoslavia.

The discussions in South Africa on these questions are also of pressing importance.

Is there an American nation? I say no. People of color may be citizens of the United States, i.e., have the right to vote. But there is no American nation.

When most people speak of Americans they mean "white" Americans. When they mean other people, they say "Black American." American whites are a nationality. They are forged from whites from all over the world.

Other Americans are hyphenated: "Asian-Americans," "Native Americans," "African-Americans," "Mexican-Americans," etc. This is so even if you have lived here several generations.

There is no true American nationality. We are citizens of a multi-ethnic or multi-national United States.

If this wasn't so there would be no battles between Blacks and whites and other minorities and whites throughout American history. Blacks are more than a racial caste; more than a subsection of the American nation. The battle has been to forge a new American nation. The capitalists—who are white—have actively fought that concept of "nation."

The historic battle of all national or racial minorities in this country has been to become simply "Americans" with no hyphen. *Racism, as used by capitalism, has prevented that from happening. And will until capitalism is replaced by socialism.*

Black political activists have debated the question of how to achieve full equality since the end of slavery. The majority sentiment has been that Blacks fight to become "Americans." This basically conservative stance aims for Blacks to become integrated into the capitalist state as equals to whites.

The right of self-determination for oppressed nations has always been the basis for how Marxists look at conflicts between national groups. Marxists in the U.S. have supported the right of Blacks to self determination—that is, the right to achieve full equality either in a multinational state, a new nonracial American nation, or if demanded, in a newly-created independent Black

homeland. We have advocated Black community control of schools, social services, and police. The key issue is the right of the oppressed people to decide how to overcome their national oppression.

Capitalism in the imperialist epoch, however, cannot allow self-sufficient, independent nation-states to arise from the oppressed nationalities. The capitalists want workers from the former colonies for their fields and factories, as we see in Germany, Japan and the U.S. But they don't want these workers to have equal rights.

The imperialists carved up their former colonies without regard to preserving existing national boundaries. The Kurds' homeland was split among several countries. Most African countries are multi-ethnic by design. Every Asian country has many ethnic minorities.

Even the non-capitalist countries, the workers' states, ignored national rights. Stalin realigned regions for political reasons, even though he gave lip-service to national rights. Stalinist policy is a big reason for the lack of solidarity between peoples in the former Soviet Union today.

Thus the nation and state are not identical in most cases. States can be of one people. But more often than not they will be composed of several people. The best example of the modern multi-national state is India. Gandhi had hoped to forge an Indian nation much as Nelson Mandela wants to do in South Africa. But it hasn't happened in India yet.

The root cause of the failure to forge new nations out of many ethnic traditions is imperialist policy. It is imperialism which is opposed to national unity and diversity. Such unity would weaken imperialism's ability to rule.

This brings home a point that Lenin made about nations and nationalism. Nation-states are a modern development. Prior to the imperialist epoch, nations and states were generally identical. Bourgeois nationalism mobilized the people to end feudal relations. It was in the interests of workers and peasants for feudalism to be overthrown and replaced by capitalism.

But bourgeois nationalism as an ideology was never an answer for workers and peasants seeking to end their class exploitation. For the oppressed nation the issue is first to end the rule of the oppressor nation, and second, to decide the social relations of the classes of the oppressed nation. In the imperialist epoch, history has shown that the pro-capitalist forces within the oppressed nation will not go all the way to end oppression at the expense of their own power in the new nation-state.

In 1913, Stalin wrote: "A nation is formed only as a result of lengthy and systematic intercourse, as a result of people living together generation after generation." (I would add, as equals.) This remains true despite Stalin's dismal record on national is-

sues in the former Soviet Union, after his break with Marxism in the early 1920s.

Forming a real nation was Tito's goal in the Yugoslav workers' state. Croats and Serbs and other peoples over the years began to identify themselves as "Yugoslavs." Many Bosnians identified themselves as Bosnians first, and Serbs, Croats and Muslims second, even after the collapse of the old state. The Serbian and Croatian chauvinists see such a multi-ethnic republic as a threat to establishing their own Great Nationalist fiefdoms.

Nevertheless most Yugoslavs did see themselves in ethnic terms first. They were citizens of Yugoslavia but Serbs as well.

Yugoslav nationalism was progressive because it sought to break down historic ethnic divisions. The nationalism of Serbs and Croats, on the other hand, has reactionary aims: to displace other peoples from their land. Neither the Croats nor Serbs were oppressed by the Yugoslav state.

Yugoslavia is an example of how forging a new nation out of many ethnic groups can go backward. Nation and state are not always the same. Nor is holding citizenship the same as full equality. Yugoslavia also shows the betrayal of bureaucratic socialism (i.e., Stalinism), in undermining ethnic rights and fueling big-nation chauvinism.

South Africa example

South Africa is a country going in the opposite direction from Yugoslavia. The Black majority is on the verge of taking over their country for the first time in modern history. The clear direction is to end white minority rule and forge a new nation out of the many ethnic groups. But that outcome will not be accomplished easily, precisely because of the warped social relations fostered by the combination of capitalism and apartheid. Africans are divided among themselves, and non-whites even more so. Whites are much more unified.

Winning universal political rights and the end of apartheid will not guarantee the creation of a new South African nation. There will be a new South African state—one with a multi-national character for the foreseeable future.

To quote Stalin again, "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."

The new South Africa will begin as a multi-ethnic state. It will grant, for the first time, citizen rights to all its people. But it will not be a new nation overnight. It will take generations for that to happen, and, I would add, it will happen only when capitalist relations are replaced by socialist ones. (In fact, the only country where this process is taking place is in socialist Cuba. The new Cuban nation is neither white, mulatto or Black.)

To achieve socialism in South Africa, the country must first end apartheid and white rule. A democratic, nonracial South Africa is the requisite first step on the road to socialism.

As our experience shows, as long as capitalism exists, full equality and democracy for the oppressed is not possible.

In the United States, ending Jim Crow segregation was the only way to lay the basis for future working class unity. As long as Jim Crow was the law of the land, a socialist revolution could never succeed; Black and white working-class unity based on mutual respect and equality would be impossible.

In South Africa, overturning apartheid and establishing universal democratic rights is similarly a prerequisite for the fight for socialism. As our U.S. experience shows, as long as capitalism exists, full equality and democracy for the oppressed is not possible. The forging of new nations out of many ethnic groups will not happen under capitalism. National divisions will always be encouraged by capitalism. Racism will be one of their key weapons of rule.

To say that forging a nation in today's world is difficult does not take away from the progressive dynamic of the struggles of oppressed people. Yet we must be sober about nationalism.

The failure of liberalism and reformism over the last 30 years in the U.S. must be recognized. The Black liberal elites can't play the progressive role they played in the period of Jim Crow. They don't suffer enough. Their base is the middle class professional layers, not the unemployed youth in the ghettos. The future lies with young rebels who will lead new anti-racist and workers movements. ▼

Striking Coal Miners Tour San Francisco Bay Area



Two striking coal miners from Southern Illinois toured the San Francisco Bay Area September 11-17. On September 14 they toured the USS-POSCO steel mill in Pittsburg. Miner Steve McGriff is pictured taking a collection. Steelworkers signed a banner in support of the miners and gave over \$1200 in donations. The miners have been on a selective strike since May.

U.S. Complicity in state terrorism Indonesia's Killing Fields: Genocide in East Timor

By SUNIL SHARMA

The late American anarchist Emma Goldman once wrote, "The most violent element in a society is ignorance." This could not be any more evident than in the case of the ongoing genocide in East Timor. Very few Americans have ever heard of East Timor and even fewer would be able to locate the half-island nation on the map. This is not at all surprising considering the fact that media coverage of East Timor has been virtually nil; this silence directly relates to the fact that the U.S. is complicit in the genocide in East Timor.

East Timor is a half-island nation located approximately 400 miles north of Darwin, Australia, and just to the south of the extensive archipelago, Indonesia. An estimated 200,000 people, approximately one-third of the pre-invasion population, have died since Indonesia invaded East Timor in December 1975. In order to understand the story of East Timor and U.S. complicity in the illegal occupation of East Timor, it is important to look at the history of East Timor.

Decolonization

The people of East Timor are mostly small scale tribal farmers. From the late 16th century until 1974, East Timor was a Portuguese colony. On April 25, 1974, a coup launched by the Armed Forces Movement (AFM) in Portugal toppled the fascist Caetano/Salazar regime. The new Portuguese government decided to withdraw from all of its colonies, including East Timor. During the period of decolonization, a number of political parties emerged in East Timor, including FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor) which had the overwhelming support of the East Timorese people.

Indonesian propaganda has constantly labeled FRETILIN as a "communist" group, a line which the US media has often parroted. Most observers, however, viewed FRETILIN's social reform program as "moderate, based principally on the establishment of agrarian cooperatives (rather than land expropriation) and mass

education," in the words of Australian journalist Jill Joliffe.

By the early part of 1975, cooperatives had been set up throughout the country. This, coupled with FRETILIN's successful literacy campaigns, aroused the hostility and fear of the repressive Indone-



East Timorese villagers.

sian government. For Indonesia, the idea of an independent, successfully developing, left-wing East Timor was an unacceptable prospect. Indonesia feared that a successful East Timor would be an inspiration to separatist elements within Indonesia (e.g. Aceh and West Papua). Therefore, Indonesia began to draw up invasion plans for East Timor.

By July 29, 1975, election results from local councils announced that FRETILIN had won approximately 60 percent of the popular vote. This was a landslide victory over FRETILIN's nearest rival, the UDT, who gained 20 percent of the vote, while the Indonesian-backed APODETI party garnered less than 5 percent of the vote.

Civil War and Independence

In August 1975, the UDT, after having met with the Indonesians in Jakarta after the failed elections, launched a coup which embroiled East Timor in a bloody civil war. In less than a month, FRETILIN easily defeated the UDT. An estimated 300 people

were killed in the fighting.

Indonesia was now launching military incursions into East Timor from its bases in West

Timor. (West Timor, like the rest of Indonesia, had been a Dutch colony until Indonesia declared Independence in 1945.) Indonesian naval vessels started to bomb coastal towns and villages.

FRETILIN called upon Portugal, whose colonial administrators fled East Timor when the brief civil war broke out, to return to East Timor to finish the decolonization process. Portugal never returned. When it became obvious to the Timorese that their pleas were not going to be answered, FRETILIN, on November 28, 1975, declared East Timor an independent state.

East Timor's independence lasted for only eight days.

On December 7, 1975, one of the most atrocious crimes of the 20th century took place. In the early morning hours, Indonesia launched a full scale invasion against Dili, the capital of East Timor. After heavy naval bombardment, Indonesian paratroopers landed by the tens of thousands. Indonesian troops more than outnumbered the Timorese population of Dili.

Between 50,000 to 80,000 East Timorese, including many ethnic Chinese, were killed in the first three months of the invasion alone. Most of the Timorese civilians fled into the mountains with FRETILIN. Though Indonesia had anticipated a quick and easy victory, this grassroots resistance movement remained strong over the past two decades.

The United States and the United Nations

On December 6, the day before the invasion of East Timor, President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger were in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital. Indonesian forces originally planned to invade East Timor on the 5th, but decided to postpone the invasion until they were clear on what the US position would be. Ford and Kissinger gave the Indonesian military regime the green-light to invade

and requested that the invasion wait until after they left Indonesia. Less than fifteen hours after Ford and Kissinger left, Indonesia invaded East Timor.

Some 90 percent of the weapons used by the Indonesians in the invasion were American-made and supplied. By the end of 1977, the war had reached such a point of severity that Indonesia had literally depleted its weapons arsenal.

This was only a temporary problem, however, as "human rights" president, James Carter, authorized a dramatic increase in U.S. arms sales and exports to Indonesia. This included counter-insurgency helicopters and aircraft that the Indonesians had not yet possessed. These new counter-insurgency weapons enabled the Indonesians to extend the war into the mountains where the population had fled. With this increased flow of arms, the killing reached genocidal levels in 1978-79.

Immediately after the invasion, the United Nations Security Council passed two resolutions (384 and 389) condemning Indonesia's aggression, affirmed the East Timorese people's right to self-determination and ordered "the Government of Indonesia to withdraw without delay all its forces from the Territory." The U.S. abstained from voting on the resolutions, and employed arm-twisting tactics to persuade other countries to either veto the resolutions or to abstain.

Eight General Assembly resolutions, similar to the two Security Council resolutions mentioned above, were also passed. The U.S. vetoed every one of them. Thus, the U.N. has never been able to implement these resolutions.

War Crimes

With the aid Indonesia received from Carter in 1978 and successive administrations, the Indonesian army used napalm, other chemical weapons, and scorched earth campaigns to destroy crops and other food sources. This was to starve the Timorese out of the mountains. As starving Timorese came down from the mountains to surrender or look for food, the Indonesian army massacred the majority of them. Many Timorese were rounded up



and forced into detention camps, where tens of thousands were killed.

The Indonesian army purposely denied many of these interned people food, resulting in widespread death, disease, and malnutrition. The International Red Cross, denied access to East Timor for almost four years after the invasion (a war crime in itself), visited some of these detention center in 1979 and described the situation as worse than an African famine.

Thousands of women have been raped by Indonesian soldiers, and many Timorese women were subjected to a forced sterilization program. Military offensives continued well into the late 1980s.

Meanwhile, approximately 200,000 Indonesians, often poor and oppressed people themselves, have taken over much of the Timorese people's land under the (usually forced) Indonesian transmigration program.

On November 12, 1991 Indonesian troops opened fire on a crowd of unarmed demonstrators at a funeral procession in Dili. What made this massacre different from others was that it was carried out in front of Western journalists, including two American journalists.

As a result of growing grassroots pressure following the November 12 massacre, Congress cut off \$2.3 million in military education training aid to Indonesia. However, \$110 million in weapons were sold to Indonesia last year, and over \$80 million in weapons is slated to be delivered to Indonesia this year.

Indonesia also continues to receive approximately \$5 billion a year in eco-

nomic aid from a World Bank consortium, of which the U.S. share in 1992 was \$83 million.

Since Indonesia invaded East Timor, the U.S. has provided Indonesia with well over \$1.5 billion in weapons and military aid. Indonesia has often conceded that their invasion and occupation of East Timor could not have been possible without the military and diplomatic support of the United States. This adds up to nothing less than shameful complicity in genocide on the part of the U.S. The ongoing genocide in East Timor is a glaring example of the United States' hypocrisy. U.S. policy has been shaped by the fact that Indonesia is one of its major trading partners and "friendly" allies in Southeast Asia.

The lives of East Timorese people have been traded for U.S. interests. As U.S. citizens, we have a moral obligation to uncover and respond to our government's involvement in the genocide in East Timor. As anthropologist Shepard Forman eloquently states, "I cannot help but think that the destiny of the East Timorese is also a measure of our own humanity." ▼

Sunil Sharma is a student of music and philosophy at Sonoma State University in Northern California and an activist/speaker for the East Timor Action Network. Nationally the Network can be contacted at: P.O. Box 1182, White Plains, NY 10602, (914) 428-7299. In the SF Bay Area: East Timor Action Network/Bay Area, P.O. Box 210547, San Francisco, CA. 94121-0547, (415) 387-2822.

Frank Barbieri, a free-lance photographer who frequently travels in Southeast Asia, talked with Mo Harry of Independent Politics about the Karen minority of Burma in March of this year. Barbieri uses the old name "Burma," the name currently used by rebel groups inside the country, instead of Myanmar, the name given to the country by the military junta now in power.

Burma has been embroiled in varying degrees of civil unrest since the British decolonized the nation after World War II. A hasty transition to home rule in 1947 left many of the minority ethnic groups that make up Burma outside the main constitutional power structure dominated by the majority Burmans. The largest such group was the Karen. Traditional animosity between the Karen and the Burmans was brought to a head as they fought on opposite sides in WWII — the Burmans allying with the Japanese and the Karen with the British.

When Britain pulled out of Burma they left the arbitrary borders of colonization, ignoring territorial claims by minority ethnic groups that had been dormant under the "peace" of subjugation to the British empire. Immediately following the war, reconciliation between the Karen and the central Burmese government proved impossible as they fought many small skirmishes over disputed territories.

The Karen, based along the border of Burma and Thailand, have now been fighting for autonomy for 46 years and in that time the situation has deteriorated for all the country's citizens. Under the dictatorship of General Ne Win, Burma went from being one of the most prosperous Southeast Asian countries to currently being on the United Nations list of "least developed countries." What Ne Win called the "the Burmese Way to Socialism" in fact proved to be the rule of the military elite.

The political and economic crises that define Burma came to a head in 1988 when a mass uprising around the country against military dictatorship triggered a brutal crackdown. Thousands of people were killed as the army fired directly into crowds of "pro-democracy" demonstrators. Ne Win quickly established the State Law and Order Restoration Committee (SLORC) which rules today, ignoring the overwhelming victory by opposition forces in the 1990

Burma's military rulers face growing opposition Karen People Fight for Self-determination

FRANK BARBIERI



Inside Karen-occupied territory in Burma.

elections.

What is left of the pro-democracy movement has joined with many of Burma's ethnic minorities to fight SLORC under the auspices of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), whose main contingent is the Karen.

Independent Politics: How large is the Karen minority and how does it compare to the Burmese population?

Frank Barbieri: It varies depending on whose estimates you believe. There are different kinds of Karen and it gets really complicated. There are so many ethnic minorities that circle Burma that there's a lot of gray area between them. The Po Karen are the ones who are heavily involved in the insurgency and number at 3 to 4 million. The 13 minorities added up are about the same population as the Burmans who count 35 million.

IP: How does the central Burmese gov-

ernment view and treat the Karen and why? **FB:** There is traditional hatred. The Karen and the Burmans have never liked each other even before British colonial rule, which actually kept them separated in their states. The Karen feel that the area that is central Burma, called the Irrawaddy Delta, and along the Thai-Burmese border, is their traditional land. In fact it is, and the Burmans traditionally occupy more North-Central Burma.

British de-colonization

What happened when the British de-colonized — pulling out in two years and instituting a parliamentary system — was that they handed all the power to the largest ethnic group: the Burmans. The Karen felt that they didn't get their rightful land and were pushed out by the Burmans.

The Karen side of the story is that the Burmans pulled several tricks to gain more

land to try to get the Karen out of the Irrawaddy. There are many stories of how the Burmans would march into Karen towns in the Irrawaddy at night and yank Karen out to do military service or for summary execution. After the British left in 1947, the Burmans started consolidating their grip on the country and the Karen have really retreated to the border.

IP: How were you able to visit where the Karen live since it's under military attack by the central government?

FB: The Karen are fighting an interesting war. Though they are fighting an insurgency, they are set up as a state entity. They control a certain amount of land and they administer that land under the Karen National Union (KNU). They operate schools and do military training. Within that defended zone, or liberated area inside Burma, it has been relatively safe and heavily defended.

Beginning of armed struggle

IP: When did the current Karen-Burmese military struggle begin?

FB: In 1988 when the democracy movement got started by the Burmese people. There were mass executions of Burmans by the government. That's when the DAB got started, made up of Karen, other minorities, defecting Burman citizens and exiled elected officials from the 1990 elections which the central government declared null and void. It is also made up of Burman students who fled the 1988 massacre. Things have really started heating up this past year.

IP: Does the DAB have a particular ideological framework?

FB: Their basic dictum is to establish democracy in Burma and their plan for that is to re-institute the elected members of parliament from the 1990 elections and then establish a federated state in cooperation with all ethnic minorities.

IP: How does their view of the governmental system they want differ from what exists?

FB: The people who control the government now are a military junta who took control in 1990 when the elections took place which were an overwhelming victory for the National League for Democracy led by Aunn San Suu Kuu, a Nobel

Peace Prize laureate of 1991. She has been under house arrest in Rangoon for about two years. After the elections, the military junta used the ethnic minorities conflict as an excuse to maintain their grip on the country. They basically said, "We cannot transfer constitutional power to the elected representatives until our internal situation is stabilized by crushing the ethnic insurgents."

Role of women

IP: What is the role of women?

FB: Women play a very important part as in many war zones, while men are typically out fighting and women do the support service. But the Karen take it a step further. They have within the KNU the Karen Women's Organization (KWO) and they field female troops if they want to fight and they empower women to have a voice in the Karen leadership. They also do cottage industry promotion — trying to get refugees and Karen women in Katholei (the Karen state) to get involved in cottage industries to raise money for the revolution, to support their families, and to try to get Westerners interested.

IP: What is the living standard of the Karen?

FB: It's hard. Subsistence farming. Constantly on the run, not knowing what will happen from one day to the next; if the Burmese army is going to roll into your village and kill the women and children and conscript the men into the military. Or steal their rice stores. They have no stable life and can have none until the overall situation changes. They never know when something's going to happen.

IP: Do most of the minorities in Burma get along?

FB: They've set aside traditional differences in order for a greater goal and are devoted to subjugating themselves to a federated state.

IP: Militarily they work together?

FB: Yes, they do operations together. In 1992, Manerplaw, the base of the DAB and the KNU almost fell to the Burmese. It was in shelling range. Other minority groups sent troops to defend it. They are working within a cooperative environment.

IP: You mentioned that some Burmese students had joined the fight to defend

the Karen. How did this come about?

FB: The students are having a hard time. Back in 1988, when the demonstrations for democracy were really starting in Burma, the students were a main part of that movement, so they bore the brunt of the government crackdown. Many were killed. Estimates range from 400 to 6000 dead.

The students get quite a bit of attention from the international community. They formed the All Burmese Student Democratic Front, which is a military organization that trains students and fields troops under the direction of the Karen.

Need international solidarity

IP: Do you see an end or climax to the struggle soon?

FB: No. The submission to a federated state would be the best case scenario but I don't know if that's going to happen. There is still much traditional animosity between the Burmans and the Karen created by 45 years of hard war. But if everyone can agree to establish a federation where every group had a voice, maybe instead of externalizing frustration with weapons they could be externalized verbally; being able to talk things out. But there is a lot of hate circulating around the region.

IP: Is there anything people interested in helping the Karen can do?

FB: There are many ways. Monetary donations or teaching English, math or geography in refugee camps. There are several organizations that send supplies to them regularly. If you want to send positive prayers, that helps, too. The Burma Foundation accepts clothes, medical supplies, and other donations. And boycott Pepsi. They are trying to establish a bottling plant there and basically all the money from it goes right into the pockets of the military junta. Pepsi calls it "constructive engagement" with Burma, but their support of the government is detrimental to the people of Burma. Levi's actually pulled investments out of Burma due to pressure from the Burma Foundation. ▼

For more information on how you can help the Karen of Burma, contact the Burma Foundation in your area.

Toward an International Red Green Movement Think Globally, Act Locally?

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the geopolitical and ideological upheavals this has caused have altered the nature of class struggle throughout the world. Without the Soviet Communist Party, communist parties in the rest of the world have lost legitimacy and their claim to leadership of the working class. The basic tension between capital and labor remains, but the traditional means of addressing working class and minority grievances have necessarily changed. Without either a model or a support base — the two possibilities that the Soviets offered the working classes of other countries — those demanding economic and social justice must confront capital with new forms of organization and struggle.

The following article by the editor of Capitalism Nature and Socialism (CNS), James O'Connor, discusses the limitations of the slogan "think globally, act locally," and some of the ways that these limits might be overcome. "Think Globally, Act Locally?" was first published in the December 1992 issue of CNS and has been slightly edited for length.

By JAMES O'CONNOR

The radical shift in geopolitical centers of power since the late 1980s has coincided with the steady movement of capital toward globalization and the long-run decline in the rate of world economic growth. These two trends intensified just as socialism lost much of its international prestige, and "free market" dogma reigned supreme among the world's economic technocrats, East, North, and South.

As capital restructured itself globally, centralizing power in transnational enterprises and banks, it sought logically to reduce labor, energy, and raw material costs as well as the turnover time of capital. The slow growth rate led the manipulators of multinational capital to intensify the exploitation of labor. Over the past decade, world unemployment has risen and the inequalities in the division of wealth and income grew ever more dramatic. Tens of millions of people were cast out of work places, villages, homes — and even nations.

The social impact of this trend has been devastating and, inevitably, resistance developed, but without the traditional "red" experience or the methods that derived and drew their power from the existence of a communist international based in the "super power" Soviet state.

Simultaneously, those who control the great conglomerates and houses of finance, who decide what and where to produce, have attempted further to stem the declining rates of growth and profits by externalizing more of their production costs onto the environment. As air, land, and water, and the various life forms sustained by these elements, bore the brunt of capital's newly globalized practices, a shift occurred in the class struggle as well. With ecological destruction and the advent of a global environmental crisis, the local community and the NGO [non-governmental organizations] emerged as green movements paralleled (and sometimes coincided with) labor struggles as a force of resistance to capital.

"Reds" have increasingly adopted one or another of the "green"

discourses, and "greens" have leaned more and more to the left. More labor unions and social democratic parties are taking on green issues, especially with regard to workplace and community environmental health. More grassroots environmental groups are raising the issues of social and economic justice. And more left green parties (the best-known of which is the German Greens) have sprung up in more countries. The outlines of a red/green movement are not visible, in the North and South, and consist of a range of organizations, movements, and ideologies from the most sectarian to the most politically open and fluid.

Is an international red/green movement possible?

The question arises, is it possible to organize an international red/green movement, a coordinated response to global capital, to initiate new democratic, ecologically rational, and economically and socially equitable ways of life? To link economic, social, and ecological issues theoretically and practically in ways that would further alternative development paths and visions of the future? To overcome capital's strategy of divide and conquer, which pits labor against environmentalists, urban workers against small farmers, men against women, majorities against oppressed minorities, and, last but not least, the North against the South?

A positive answer to these questions requires that greens (and reds) not only "think globally, act locally," but also "think locally, act globally," and, ultimately, "think and act both globally and locally."

For some years, the slogan "think globally, act locally" has facilitated the U.S. and other peace movements, anti-nuclear campaigns, and even solidarity movements. For greens, "think globally, act locally" means "think about the effects of what you are doing on the global environment." Indeed, each locality can make a small dent in the global depletion of resources by organizing recycling programs; reduce ocean pollution by demanding tertiary treatment of municipal wastes; and save energy by subsidizing solar heating and discouraging the use of cars — to take three examples. The world over, bioregionalists push for

more economic self-sufficiency and less disruption of hydraulic cycles; local anti-nuclear groups and toxic waste campaigns fight for source reduction; and green city and village movements seek mass transit and high density housing, and the use of local biomass for food and energy and the redistribution of water supplies to small farmers, respectively. These examples demonstrate that green thinking is widespread, and also that more local green movements have adopted regional, national, and international perspectives.

Global-thinking or global-strategy?

The basic problem with the greens is that they offer no means to transform the "local" into the "global." The green movement has no method for thinking about the ways that the local is constituted by the global nor about many related questions (for example, the meaning of "site specificity," which greens define in terms of ecological systems and physical space rather than the scale of reproduction of "local" material and social existence). Greens also discount the growing centralization of economic and political power, hence that "local environments" are increasingly the victims of global economic and political restructuring and change.

The chasm between the good intentions and unintended bad effects of local actions thus tends to widen. The toxic waste struggles in the North are good examples. One of their unintended effects is to increase the export of poisons to the South and internal colonies in the North (but they may also inspire and link with other localities and acquire global dimensions). Local recycling programs are a more intricate example. Newspaper recycling weakens the market for wood pulp, hence has the unintended effect of stimulating paper and pulp companies to cut costs by ecologically damaging forestry practices or postponing technological improvements that reduce the volume of poisons released in rivers. Recycling programs also fall prey to the capitalist discourse on waste and recycling, which privileges economic over social and ecological aspects (e.g., high value aluminum cans were first targeted for recycling in the U.S.). Acting globally entails understanding the unintended effects of green practices, which means addressing how and why these arise in the first place — namely, as a result of national and international economic and political forces.

"Thinking globally, acting locally" can help greens feel better about themselves and their lives (it is an ethical as well as practical slogan) but may lead to a self-deception — substituting global thinking for global strategy. The basic reason? Reds historically addressed the social relations of production and power, and ignored the relations between society and nature; greens privilege the latter to the detriment of the former. "Green" often may be read as a simple historical inversion of "red."

If the slogan "think globally, act locally" is turned on its head, greens might be forced to develop their discourse on environ-

mental destruction and reconstruction in the direction of a global politics. Most localities are fragments of the division of labor on a global scale, which is why the question—how does world capitalism constitute localities?—is so important. Instead of posing a dualism between the global and the local, greens can try to grasp the way that localities exist only in relation to one another and also in the totality of the international economy.

"Think globally, act locally" also must take into account that particular localities define themselves, or acquire self-definitions, both cultural and environmental, in ways that are also constituted by world capitalism. The life of tropical forests, and the value that greens place on these forests, depend not only on the conditions of production in forestry in the South and North, but also on the totality of the world supply and demand for timber and lumber products, which, in turn, depends on a complex set of inner connections between profits, interest rates, and debt; the global construction industry; labor struggles; environmental actions to save tropical forests and old growth trees in the North; and technical changes in the forest industry. To return to the example of local newspaper recycling, its effects depend on a generalized discourse on reducing waste, recycling in other communities, and price structures that may or may not equate the cost price of recycled paper and the prod-

ucts of paper and pulp mill (today more "recycled" newspapers are destined for landfills than for paper mills). The potential for solar energy in a particular locality depends not only on local climate but also on the class and racial compositions of the community, the rate of exploitation of fossil fuels, the state of inter-imperialist rivalries in the oil-producing and consuming countries, the monopolization of solar energy by the giant utilities, and other structures and processes which are dimly understood, including by solar activists.

"Act globally" has another meaning, given the uneven and combined development of capital and social and ecological destruction, and the vast inequalities between the North and South. Capital in the North has always acted globally toward the South, with the purpose of extracting cheap raw materials, energy, and labor power — as nationalists and revolutionaries in the South have long understood. Today, green movements in the South understand the danger of growing economic marginalization and social segregation and increasingly act globally toward the North. This is especially true when they hear the advice of many well-meaning NGOs in the North to emphasize sustainable community agricultural models, the revival of indigenous technologies, and debt for nature swaps, which, in effect if not intention, legitimize the existing division of labor and misery between North and South in terms of the "common fight" for a better environment.

"Reds" have increasingly adopted one or another of the "green" discourses, and greens have leaned more and more to the left.

Continued on page 18

Think Globally

Continued from Page 17

For example, at the Global Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil last summer, when some big Third World countries confronted the "small is beautiful" proposals by Northern NGOs with the demand for equitable transfers of technology to help build safe and sustainable industrial projects, the gap between NGOs in the two parts of the world widened as much as that between First and Third World governments.

World economic bodies must be made accountable

"Acting globally" implies the awareness of strategic thinking and actions not only against the ecologically and socially disastrous practices of a particular corporation or industry but also the global institutions whose decisions affect the lives of hundreds of millions of people. The key targets are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the new regional linkages (the European Commission, North America Free Trade Area, and Japan's informal financial empire in Asia). Their policies regarding Third World debt and "economic adjustments," infrastructure investment, and the rules governing world and regional trade have created immeasurable ecological harm and human misery.

"Act globally" means to make the IMF

and other undemocratic world economic bodies accountable for their policies and programs, and to demand that future policies be geared to the needs of the people of the world and the globe's fragile ecologies, rather than to the interests of central banks, Treasury Ministries, and privately owned financial monopolies.

Greens could help to revive the militant demonstrations organized in Germany against IMF and World Bank policies two years ago. They could demand that the IMF become an elected body — as a step toward democratizing the supply of money — which would limit the damage the world bankers and Treasury Ministers could do to people and nature. Such a notion of political struggle against the pillars of world capitalism would require a new kind of environmental movement, a red green movement, which is in tune with the struggles and needs of women and oppressed minorities and nationalities in the North as well as the South.

This is a challenging and difficult task. But what are the alternatives? If green politics is bereft of a global strategy, local struggles and ecological alternatives will continue to "succeed" — meanwhile generating more bad unintended side effects and also failing to reach into the centers of power of global capital. A global strategy should not devalue local movements and actions, but rather politically valorize them — to raise the political stakes in a world conjuncture in which the ecological and human stakes increase every day, and in which profit and power become more centralized and undemocratic.

In fact, there is an international movement. Millions of people engaged in social and ecological struggles in dozens of countries understand the local connections between problems of land use, transportation, water supplies, air pollution, soil degradation, congestion, health, and poverty, including the particular local gender and ethnic/racial dimensions of these problems. Tens of thousands of activists grasp the central role of global capital and the dominant international institutions in creating havoc for people

and nature. Hundreds of scholars have studied the ways that particular localities are constituted by global capital and international politics.

However, most local groups have little knowledge of similar groups in other parts of the world — a fact partly remedied at the Global Forum in Rio — hence cannot even speculate about, much less seize, opportunities for strategic and tactical alliances. Most activists for whom the destructive roles of the IMF and other international institutions are crystal clear are not in contact with one another. Most scholars who understand that particular "locals" are constitutive parts of the "global" do not read one another's work.

To develop and strengthen linkages between local groups, activists, and red green intellectuals and scholars around the world calls for an international movement — a "fifth international." This new international would possess a deep understanding of both ecology and capitalist economy; its "line" would "celebrate differences" as well as commonality; its purpose would be to develop an international focus and coordinate a global political strategy.

To build such a movement requires more than putting aside sectarian politics and "correct line-ism," meanwhile pooling the experience and knowledge acquired from two decades of green struggles. It also depends on acknowledging that the rulers of capital and the international economic institutions themselves understand that they face global environmental problems, and that their economic future depends on renewing or remaking the earth's ecological foundations; hence that we are in for a long period of sustainable development rhetoric and restructuring of the conditions of production. An international red green movement must address this capitalist rhetoric and restructuring, and develop strategies and tactics that are critical and militant enough to redress the horrible inequalities in the world and the terrible destruction of global ecologies. What is there to lose? What is there to save? The questions answer themselves. ▼

CAPITALISM, NATURE, SOCIALISM

A quarterly journal of socialist ecology. For subscriptions write to:

Guilford Publications, Attention
Dept L, 72 Spring St. New York,
New York, 10012

\$20 per year

Should Feminists Be in Favor of Population Control?

By CLAUDETTE BÉGIN

A woman's right to choose when, if, and how to have children is at the core of the women's movement. And yet increasingly, as concern grows about the scarcity of resources and poverty here in the U.S. and in Third World countries, population control as an argument is gaining ground within the ranks of the feminist movement.

Population control is advanced as a solution to environmental disaster, poverty and famine. The problem of feeding the starving masses of Bangladesh or Somalia seems beyond the resources of even rich countries like the U.S., with its own homeless population. Poor people in the Third World and welfare recipients and immigrants within the U.S. are seen as somehow stupid, since they keep having so many babies they cannot feed.

Advocates of population control make the assumption that it is population growth, especially in Third World countries, that is endangering the world's resources. Let's look at that argument.

What affects population growth?

In developed countries, decline in the population growth rate followed an increase in the standard of living of most of the population. Population control advocates, however, promote programs in the Third World that only teach or force reproductive control without addressing the economic factor. This has not worked effectively.

In fact, reduction of population growth has been most remarkable in countries where not only the standard of living for all but especially the status of women have first been substantially improved. Walden Bello of Food First cites the example of Kerala in *Population and the Environment*: "The Indian state of Kerala ... reduced its fertility rate by 40 per cent between 1960

and 1985... 'Fair price' shops have kept the cost of rice and other essentials like kerosene within the reach of the poor... Expenditures on public health are high and health facilities... serve both the rural and urban populations... At the same time, greater education for women has apparently led to greater control over reproduction. The literacy rate for females in Kerala is two-and-a-half times the all-India average."

Women in poorer countries have more children because that's their job. The family must provide all the social services for its members up through old age. To break that cycle, women must be freed from these social burdens.

Does over-population ruin the environment?

The typical picture painted by advocates of population control is of an environment literally eaten up and chopped down by the masses of people in the Third World. But is this picture based on reality? As Bello also points out, "Thailand provides a good illustration of how, in many Third World countries, it is not population growth but the impact of Northern overconsumption that is the principal engine of ecological degradation."

Despite its fertility rates being reduced by half since the 1960s, Bello adds, "irreversible erosion is setting in in the country's rural Northeast, where close to half of the region's 53 million acres are severely eroded, partly because of the effects of unrestrained deforestation provoked by Japanese demand."

Who uses the world's resources?

Do their out-of-control populations keep underdeveloped countries from improving their standards of living? Consider some very relevant and startling facts:

- 80 percent of the current consump-

tion of the Earth's resources is accounted for by the 20 percent of the world's population that resides in the North. Hence the sense of plenty in the North, and scarcity in the South.

- The average Swiss person pours 2000 times more toxic waste into the environment than the average Sahelian farmer.
- If levels of consumption and waste do not change, the 57 million Northerners who will be born in the 1990s will

The average Swiss person pours 2000 times more toxic waste into the environment than the average Sahelian farmer.

pollute the Earth more than the extra 911 million Southerners. Slower population growth in the Northern countries is outweighed by overconsumption of resources.

- Africa is far less populated than Europe. Countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands are among the most populated per square mile.

What does this mean?

Once we have become aware of this basic information and it really sinks in, limiting population growth in poor countries loses its luster as a solution. Whether population control advocates like it or not, balancing the North's use of resources becomes the essential factor, both for population and the environment.

How can we accomplish this? Will dependence on the "new world order" do it? Hardly. We can expect more of the same: spoiling of the world's environment, extraction of resources, and export of wastes, which inflicts poverty and ecological horrors on other countries.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) set out an agenda for Third World countries. That agenda includes development of resources for the benefit those outside their borders, payment of exorbitant interest on loans to

Continued on Page 22

Why the Environmental Movement Must Be Based on Justice and Multiculturalism

The May/June 1993 issue of *Sierra*, magazine of the Sierra Club, contains a valuable round table discussion on the relationship between the traditional environmental movement and the environmental justice movement.

The latter movement is based on a loose coalition of labor, civil rights, church and community groups led by people of color. The environmental justice movement arose in response to "environmental racism," a term coined by Ben Chavis, the current executive director of the NAACP and former head of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice (CRJ).

A milestone CRJ report published in 1987 demonstrated that the single most significant factor in the siting of toxic hazardous-waste facilities nationwide was race. A subsequent report, by the National Law Journal, noted that polluters of Black neighborhoods were fined only half as much as polluters in white areas. "Racism," Chavis told the participants of the round table, "has always been used to justify the rape of the environment and the rape of people, and to

deprive them of economic rights."

The main environmental movement, however, has been led by whites. The so-called "Group of Ten," the major environmental organizations, failed to address the issues of race and class. The Sierra Club, to its credit, responded by calling for more people of color to join the "Group of Ten" and take leadership positions.

"The Letter That Shook a Movement" (excerpts reprinted below) played a big role in getting the Sierra Club and other groups to deal with the issue of environmental racism. Written by the Southwest Organizing Project in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on March 15, 1990, it was sent to: the Sierra Club, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Friends of the Earth, The Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation, Izaak Walton League, and National Parks and Conservation Association. *Sierra* is the official magazine of the Sierra Club. Send \$15/year to Sierra Club, 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

"The Letter That Shook A Movement"

We are writing this letter in the belief that through dialogue and mutual strategizing we can create a global environmental movement that protects us all.

For centuries, people of color in our region have been subjected to racist and genocidal practices, including the theft of lands and water, the murder of innocent people, and the degradation of our environment. Mining companies extract minerals, leaving economically depressed communities and poisoned soil and water. The U.S. military takes lands for weapons production, testing, and storage, contaminating surrounding communities and placing minority workers in the most highly radioactive and toxic work sites. Industrial and municipal dumps are intentionally placed in communities of color, disrupting our cultural lifestyle and threatening our communities' futures. Workers in the fields are dying and babies are born disfigured as a result of pesticide spraying.

Although environmental organizations calling themselves the "Group of Ten"

People of color are clearly an endangered species. Issues of environmental destruction are issues of our immediate and long-term survival.

often claim to represent our interests, in observing your activities it has become clear to us that your organizations play an equal role in the disruption of our communities. *There is a clear lack of accountability by the Group of Ten environmental organizations towards Third World communities in the Southwest, in the United States as a whole, and internationally.*

Your organizations continue to support and promote policies that emphasize the cleanup and preservation of the environment on the backs of working people in general and people of color in particular. In the name of eliminating environmental hazards at any cost, across the country industrial and other economic activities which employ us are being shut down,

curtailed, or prevented while our survival needs and cultures are ignored. We suffer from the end results of these actions, but are never full participants in the decision-making which leads to them.

We...call upon you to cease operation in communities of color within 60 days, until you have hired leaders from those communities to the extent that they make up between 35 and 40 percent of your entire staff. We are asking that Third World leaders be hired at all levels of your operations...Also provide a list of communities of color to whom you furnish services, or Third World communities in which you have organizing drives or campaigns, and contacts in those communities.

It is our sincere hope that we can have a frank and open dialogue with your organization and other national environmental organizations. It is our opinion that people of color in the United States and throughout the world are clearly an endangered species. Issues of environmental destruction are issues of our immediate and long-term survival. We hope that we can soon work with your organization in helping to assure the safety and well-being of all peoples. ▼

General Chemical Poisons California Residents Environmental Racism Gets Uglier

By ALEX CHIS

On July 26 in Richmond, California, a predominantly African-American industrial city in the San Francisco Bay Area, more than 7,000 pounds of sulfuric acid fumes poured from a leaky General Chemical railroad car for three hours, forming a corrosive cloud that sent up to 20,000 people to the hospital. Although one of the worst accidents in Contra Costa County's history, it was far from unique. Michael Belliveau, the Executive Director of the California Citizens for a Better Environment (CBE) stated in a hearing on the spill on August 10, "Over the last five years, more than ten other major chemical releases and explosions have killed one person, severely burned four people and exposed thousands more throughout the County."

The hearing revealed that at least 500 railroad cars containing 80 million gallons of hazardous chemicals are stored on tracks throughout Contra Costa County and nearly 127 million pounds of 50 different acutely hazardous chemicals are in storage at any one time at 129 industrial plants and public facilities. More than 39 million pounds of extremely hazardous chemicals are stored in the Richmond area alone.

Local residents charge racism

How do local residents feel about this situation? "We are expendable. Our lives are not important. They feel that they can continue to trample on our human dignity." These comments from Henry Clark, the Executive Director of the West County Toxics Coalition and a resident of North Richmond, the area hardest

hit by the toxic release, reflect the general mood.

Michelle Jackson of Neighborhood House in North Richmond underlined this in her testimony. "This racism was blatant when African American females were taken to the fire station and asked to take off all their clothes while white firemen watered their naked bodies down with waterhoses ... This racism was blatant when residents [who were taken over 30 miles away for care]...were left to find their own way back to North Richmond... This racism was blatant when nobody, absolutely nobody came to North Richmond to do an environmental check on the elderly, children, families, and residents with prior documented respiratory problems."

The 1989 CBE report "Richmond At Risk: Community Demographics and Toxic Hazards from Industrial Polluters," documents this environmental racism, finding that the toxic hazards in the Richmond industrial zones were located adjacent to 14 neighborhoods where 70 percent to 90 percent of the residents were

African-American.

Who protects the community?

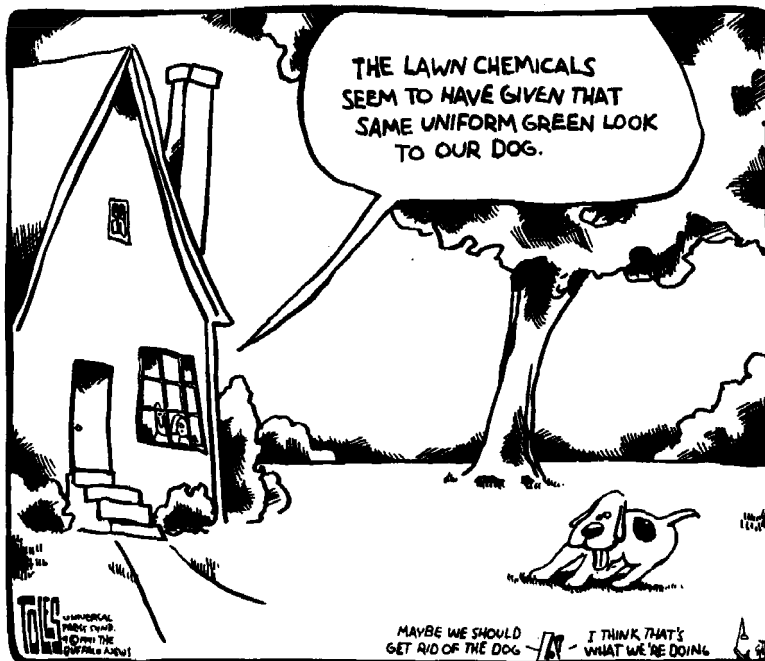
The August 10 hearing shed light on the fact that rail cars can easily fall — or more correctly, be forced by the chemical companies — through regulatory loopholes. Federal agencies cover cars in transit, but expect them to be unloaded within 48 hours of arrival, and do not cover cars used for storage. California requires notification to the county Health Department for cars staying over 30 days but Barbara Masters of the county Hazardous Materials Division admitted that even this reporting "doesn't happen very often."

Michael Leedie, of the West County Toxics Coalition and CBE, said at an August 17 County Board of Supervisors meeting that of the 129 hazardous chemical facilities in the county, only two have county-approved plans in place for preventing chemical disasters. "That's outrageous for the kinds of materials we have stored." His report points out that General Chemical has only three engineers overseeing prevention efforts and the county has only an eight-member response team for accidents. He recommends that more prevention workers be funded by raising fees on industries "because they're the ones causing the problem." Unfortunately the county has consistently sided with industry in their claim that Contra Costa County cannot mandate prevention actions.

Are there any solutions?

Are there any solutions?

A start to a solution was highlighted in an article in *The Bay Guardian* three months before the accident: "Activists want to open up plants like General Chemical in Richmond." CBE's Belliveau points out, "the public is being shut out of chemical disaster prevention and emergency response



Continued on Page 22

Environmental racism

Continued from Page 21

planning. At-risk community members and workers must be fully informed of chemical hazards and empowered to join as equal partners in government and industry decision-making regarding hazardous materials."

His report also highlights the essential role played by the unions in the industry,

pointing out that union training programs prevent accidents, while many non-union contract workers have little safety training. The trend of using undertrained, non-union workers and reducing maintenance may be causing more accidents.

Belliveau sums up, "The General Chemical toxic gas cloud was a tragic wake-up call. It was no 'accident', it was a statistically predictable event. Nor was this an isolated event... The July 26 release must

serve as a tragic and costly warning; with another chemical there could have been dead bodies in the streets of Richmond." ▼

For more information, readers are referred to CBE for the 1989 report and Belliveau's testimony, and the West County Times for news coverage.

Population control

Continued from Page 19

already-rich Northern banks, austerity programs imposed on populations, and an end to self-sufficient and sustainable systems of production (because they don't bring in enough cash). This is a totally anti-environment, anti-people agenda. Countries are forced to sell their resources cheaply while their own people's standard of living plummets and starvation results.

Where should feminists stand?

Feminists with an environmental consciousness clearly must reject a simplistic solution of population control. Our job is to put the spotlight on the corporations that are raping the environment and impoverishing most of the world. As women we should join forces with the progressive part of the environmental movement and fight to help the people of the world control and share resources equitably and manage our ecosystem in an environmentally safe way.

We should support struggles for self-determination, where people are fighting to take control of their own lives and countries. These struggles and their victories enhance the lives of our sisters and provide them the basis for empowerment. They must be free to make choices beneficial to the entire human race and the environment.

Population control is not the answer. Empowering women is a better solution for humanity and the planet. ▼

For the article by Walden Bello or more information on the problems of development, population and the environment, contact Food First, 398 60th St., Oakland, CA 94618; (510) 654-4400.

The Choice is Clear. Single Payer.



| Single Payer | Managed Competition |
|---|---|
| Choice of Doctor, HMO, or Health Care Provider | Choice of insurance plan, with limited choice of provider |
| Cover everyone now for what we're spending on health care | Spend \$90 billion more each year* |
| Non-profit public administration (cuts out insurance companies) | Retains \$72 billion/year in insurance company administrative waste |
| Comprehensive benefits, including long term care | Bare bones benefits package, likely to exclude long term care |
| Equal care for all | A multi-tiered system with substandard care for many Americans |

* Congressional Budget Office Report., February 1993.

As Clinton begins his drive to guarantee the health of insurance companies and medical profits, you can contact one or more of the following organizations that are fighting for health care for all Americans - a single payer plan.

Neighbor to Neighbor
2601 Mission Street, Room 400
San Francisco, CA 94110-3111
(800) 366-8289
San Francisco (415) 824-3355

Health Access
1545 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 431-3430

Health Crisis InfoSheets:
NEA
Collective Bargaining/
Compensation Division
1201 16th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036

California Physicians Alliance
230 Bosworth Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 333-2348

The Vote Health Coalition
337 17th Street, #204
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone (510) 452-2366
Fax (510) 452-2436

The Logger and the Environmentalist

Showdown At Opal Creek by David Seideman, Carroll and Graf, 1993, 406 pp., \$22.95.

By CARL ANDERSON

The tragic devastation of Oregon's old growth forests serves as the backdrop of what should have been a fascinating book. *Showdown At Opal Creek* by David Seideman chronicles the friendship and rivalry of George Atiyeh, a bush pilot and environmentalist, and Tom Hirons, a chain-smoking logger, in their battle over the preservation of 37,725 acres of old growth at Opal Creek near the logging town of Mill City in the Oregon Cascade mountains.

Seideman misses an opportunity to humanize one of the country's fiercest environmental struggles by drawing wrong conclusions and bogging himself down in the irrelevant hippie past of the protagonists. At times he reveals more through his ignorance than his intentions, particularly when he romanticizes working people and reports without comment the rampant sexism in the workplace.

The story, however, needs to be told. Of the dense forests that once covered western Oregon and Washington only 2 million acres, 10 percent of the old growth, still remain. The methods employed by the timber corporations on both public and private lands amounts to an environmental catastrophe of immense proportions. Clear-cutting vast tracts of land leave denuded mountainsides with no vegetation to stop erosion. Rivers become polluted from the run off, nothing can grow and only "moonscapes" remain.

A tool that environmentalist George Atiyeh uses is to take visitors up in his plane to view the results of the clear-cutting. Exposed are the "scenic corridors" along highways that hide the clear-cuts from the public. "It's like Hollywood false fronts on a movie set," states Atiyeh.

The timber corporations and independent loggers like Tom Hirons maintain that cutting old growth is necessary for jobs in the northwest and loggers have taken up the cry of "jobs not owls." The truth is that automation and poorly managed resources are the real culprits, not environmentalists and the spotted owl. Between 1977 and 1988 lumber production in Oregon and Washington rose 17 percent while automation cut back jobs by 19 percent, a trend that continues.

Unfortunately, Seideman's solutions for the economic devastation facing the workers of Mill City border on the absurd. Although tourism is obviously an option for the logging towns in the scenic Cascades, Seideman suggests that "A franchise along the lines of Denny's stands a good chance of packing in crowds...a Best Western might thrive." What a visionary.

The author, and many environmentalists, fail to realize that logging offers workers something that most working class occupations in corporate America can't. Loggers are able to work as a team, plan out and execute difficult projects and see, at least partially, the results of their work. While that's no justification for looting

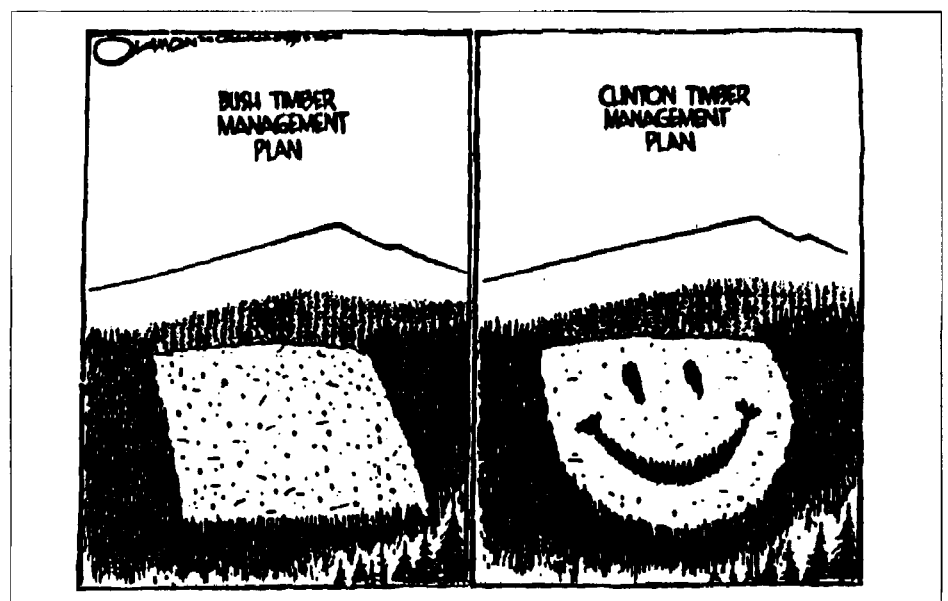
the wilderness it is understandable that washing dishes at Denny's is a poor option for a "faller."

The sagging economy and environmental wars have taken a heavy toll on the timber towns. Alcoholism and domestic violence are rampant, and the few social service agencies in logging country are overwhelmed.

Both the environment and the logging communities end up victims of the corporate greed fueling the country's logging practices. One company town was wiped off the map in 1984 when Boise Cascade could no longer extract a profit from the area's depleted forests. Building by building was methodically demolished until Valsey, Oregon ceased to exist.

Showdown At Opal Creek ends inconclusively with the fate of the Opal Creek old growth up in the air and the author plaintively hoping that Bill Clinton and Al Gore will save the day. Unfortunately the Clinton administration has only succeeded in extracting concessions from mainstream environmental organizations. The "Clinton Plan" will open the few million acres left of old growth to logging. With Clinton, as under Reagan, the old growth forests remain in imminent danger of being destroyed forever. ▼

Carl Anderson writes on environmental issues for News For A People's World.



Shortening the Work Week Are We Working Too Much?

By ALEX CHIS

While many American citizens are out of work, others are forced to work longer and longer hours. Why?

In *The Overworked American* (Basic Books, 1991), Juliet Schor points out that capitalism greatly lengthened the work day, with an American now working about 25 percent longer than the medieval average. The *Left Business Observer* of February 1993, points out that Marx's *Capital* also reviews the forcible lengthening of the workday from the 14th to 19th centuries, and quotes Marx: "After capital had taken centuries to extend the working day to its normal maximum limit, and then beyond this to the limit of the natural day of 12 hours, there followed, with the birth of large-scale industry in the last third of the 18th century, an avalanche of violent and unmeasured encroachments."

In the 19th century, movements began for the 10-hour day, and had some victories. But the continued extraordinary length of the working year in the mid-19th century (about 75 percent longer than today) led to movements to further shorten the working day. These culminated in mass strikes and protests in the major industrial cities of the U.S. on May 1, 1886. Out of this movement came international May Day, and the demand of the eight hour day became its main slogan. This was won generally in the 20th century, but the capitalists have been whittling away at this for some time.

Modern Overwork

The average American in the paid labor force is certainly overworked, and the trend is to increase that overwork. But in Japan we see the most fully developed stage of this trend, where a special word "karoshi" has been coined to describe the phenomenon of death by overwork. The book *Karoshi, When The "Corporate Warrior" Dies*, by the National Defense Council for Victims of Karoshi (Mado-Sha, Tokyo, 1990) has some frightening

stories and statistics.

In the pamphlet *Unfair Dismissal in the Hitachi Musashi Plant, Resistance to Zangyo [overtime work] and Karoshi* (Joint Committee of Trade Unions Supporting Tanaka Case Against Hitachi, Tokyo, 1992) the question "Why do Japanese workers have to work so hard?" is answered, "A principle reason for the unwilling sacrifice of Japanese workers lies in the weakness of the labor unions. Not developed as industry-wide organizations, Japanese unions are forced to accept large-scale layoffs and low wages. Therefore, overtime pay becomes critical for Japanese laborers to make a living. As housing, education and indispensable goods are unbearably high in Japan, a relatively high nominal wage provides only subsistence-level living for most Japanese laborers, even with overtime work."

Why capitalists like overtime

But why force people to work overtime, when others don't have a job? To most people, that just doesn't make sense. But capitalists aren't most people. What makes sense for them is only the bottom line, what makes them the most money. It costs money to train new workers, and to pay them whatever benefits have been negotiated. The capitalist makes a cold calculation—how much does it cost to pay overtime versus hiring a new worker?

Overtime pay is calculated only on the base wage, not on the base wage plus benefits, so even if the overtime rate is an extra 50 percent, as is the norm in the U.S., the capitalist isn't really paying 50 percent more, since he doesn't have to

pay 50 percent more on vacation time, sick days or health. He only pays 50 percent more of the basic wage.

In Japan, the situation is much worse. There the overtime rate is only an extra 25 percent. So there is almost no incentive to hire new labor, since overtime is almost the same as straight time for the capitalist, and he doesn't have to pay to train someone new. The book *Karoshi* points out, "...that it would cost employers in the manufacturing industries 24.1 percent less to depend on overtime labor than to hire additional labor, and that the cost of additional employment would remain higher unless the overtime premium were raised to 62.5 percent."

What can be done

The labor movement has been the only force that has checked capital's hand, from the eight hour day movement, to demanding of high premiums for overtime work, to demanding safe working conditions. If the labor movement is weak, work can be piled on a worker until the (s)he drops dead.

The labor movement not only has a responsibility to the employed worker, to insure hours of work and wages for her to have a secured life of her own outside work, without having to work overtime, it also has a critical responsibility to the unemployed worker. When there is unemployment, overtime forced on some means no jobs for others. Since the only thing the capitalist understands is money, workers have to fight in their contracts not only for decent wages but for premiums for overtime work; and no mandatory overtime. If the capitalist can't force overtime on a worker, he'll have to hire from those that need work, and thereby create more desperately needed jobs. ▼



Revolutionary Cuba Stands Up to Washington and Defends Socialism

Our Revolution Cannot Sell Out Or Surrender

The following excerpts are from the July 26, 1993, speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro, at the closing ceremony of the 40th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Barracks that launched the Cuban revolution, victorious 35 years ago. Castro discusses the steps the revolution has been forced to take since the collapse of the Soviet Union. His speech is taken from the August 11, 1993, English-language issue of Granma International.

By FIDEL CASTRO

Today we must save the nation, the Revolution and the gains of socialism, which means defending our right to continue building it in the future. We will never be prepared to renounce this. This is what we mean when we say socialism or death.

As we were explaining at the [Sao Paulo] Forum [a group of left and progressive Latin American and Caribbean parties and organizations who were meeting in Havana at the end of July], we have to make concessions now. We've had to divide up the map of the island and call for international bids so that foreign companies may explore and drill at their own risk. Of course, we'll have to share with them some of the oil that they find. When the USSR existed we did our own exploration, we did our own drilling and the oil was all ours.

Today life, the dramatic world situation, this unipolar world, obliges us to do things we would never have done if we'd had the capital and the technology to do it.

It's not that we thought that foreign investment was absolutely inconceivable, I think that within the tenets of socialism, even trying to build the most perfect socialism possible, there can be merit in foreign investments, where the foreign entrepreneur provides the capital, the technology and the market or any part of these three aspects. Sometimes you may have a natural resource and can't develop it for lack of capital.

We have immense resources for tour-

ism: wonderful beaches, unpolluted seas. In this industry you can invest large amounts of money, just a part of which, if we had it, could be invested in other things which are profitable, more convenient for the country. In other words, I'm not saying dogmatically that foreign investment should be banned. I think that

The dramatic world situation, this unipolar world, obliges us to do things we would never have done if we'd had the capital and the technology to do it.

there are occasions under normal circumstances in which foreign investment, for the reasons that I have explained, can be beneficial. But what capital do we have now? A minimal amount.

Some of the new investments are entirely ours. This is particularly the case in pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, the research centers we are building with our own resources and some tourist installations that we are building on our own. However, if we want to rapidly develop our tourism potential we need foreign capital.

Why Foreign Tourism Is Necessary

We would have liked to be less dependent on tourism. For 20 years the Revolution worked to promote national not foreign tourism. If we had the oil that Kuwait or other countries have we would have developed tourism almost exclusively for the enjoyment of our own nationals. Present circumstances, however, oblige us to develop tourism mainly for the enjoyment of foreign tourists and to try and

obtain hard currency in order to resolve more urgent problems than tourism for Cubans.

I was saying that we are prepared to do whatever is

necessary to save the nation, the Revolution and the gains of socialism. This means that we're not going to be dogmatic, neither dogmatic nor crazy. Some have gone from dogmatism to madness but as we've never been dogmatic, there is no reason for madness. We will not pursue dogmas or do crazy things; we'll just take the necessary steps. Now we have to sharpen and increase our intelligence but success depends on the people, the people's support and the people's understanding.

Unpopular Measures

Some of these measures are unpopular, we don't like them. We have become so used to equality and rightly so. We have become so used to equity that we suffer when we see someone enjoying a privilege, as it doesn't cross our minds. Well, of course there will be some who have privileges not enjoyed by others, because they have relatives or a friend, or someone who sends them money. It would be ideal for each and every person to receive that money, but the people will be getting an appreciable part of this money for their most vital needs.

We want to arrange things so that what is used by the speculators today becomes a source of income, so that all commercial profits, in the form of remittance from other countries or whatever channel—investments, tips, tourism, and so on—go directly into the national economy for everyone's benefit. ▼

Against the Current

7012 Michigan Avenue
Detroit, MI 48210

A political magazine of news, commentary, and analysis.

Published bimonthly.

Subscriptions:

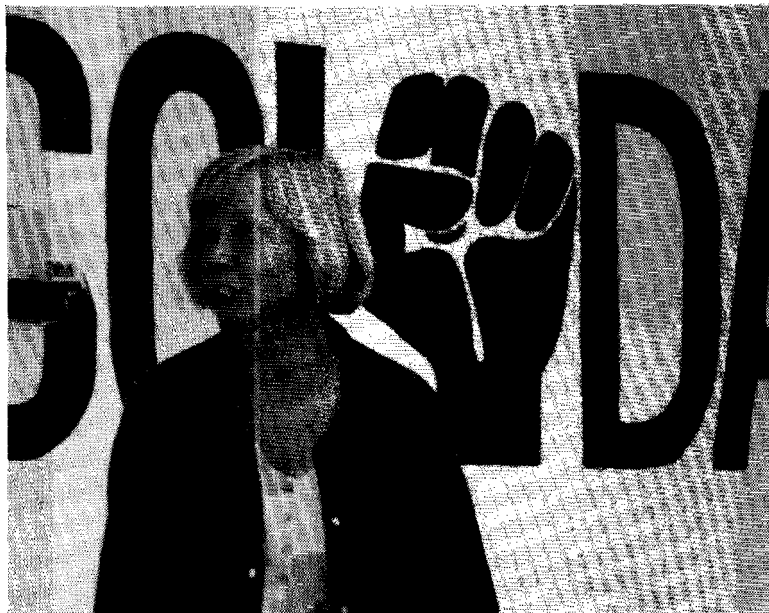
\$18 / one year

\$30 / two years

\$25 / one year overseas

No Way Out Through Capitalism The Crisis in Europe, East and West

CLAUDETTE BÉGIN/INDEPENDENT POLITICS



Catherine Samary speaking at August 1993 Solidarity Summer School in St. Louis.

Catherine Samary, an economist and a research associate at the Institut du Monde Soviétique et d'Europe Centrale et Orientale in Paris, has spent many years studying the economies of the East European states, especially Yugoslavia. The International Institute for Research and Education has just published her "Fragmentation of Yugoslavia, an Overview" in their Notebooks series [see ad next page]. A regular contributor to International Viewpoint, she gave this talk as part of a panel on "The Current World Order" at the Solidarity Summer School this August in St. Louis. Independent Politics would like to thank Solidarity for permission to use this talk, and especially Betsy Esch of Solidarity, who transcribed the talk in time for us to meet our deadline. It has been edited for space and clarity.

By CATHERINE SAMARY

If we look at the period 1989-1990 we can see in both Europe's dominant illusions in the thinking of most people. On the Eastern side the illusions were that to get out of the crisis meant democracy [capitalism] and efficiency. At the end of the eighties, in the middle of the long term crisis which all of the capitalist countries were in, Western Europe was having a period of growth. And they had the perspective of European integration, the perspective of Maastricht and economic and political integration, the perspective of a unified market, though this was in the context of a whole decade of austerity which had already changed the relationship of force between the working class and the bourgeoisie.

So what the people in Eastern Europe saw, the dominant idea, was that capitalism, even in spite of crisis, was efficient. Their picture of capitalism was mainly Europe and Britain. And on the Western

side of Europe at that time people also had a very optimistic view, for political reasons, with the collapse of the Berlin wall and the disappearance of so-called socialism, but also for economic reasons that the collapse of this system would mean

*The crisis itself
creates limits, but the
nature of the system is
behind the difficulty.*

the opening of a new market and conditions for investment which would provide a cheap, but quality, labor force. So from the perspective of the long term crisis in capitalism this was perceived as a way out. Today, three years later, there is complete disillusion on both sides.

Increasing crisis

There is not a way out of the crisis in Eastern Europe through capitalism. On the contrary, capitalist mechanisms increase the crisis in Eastern Europe and there are specific reasons for this. One

person described it by saying "We thought we were going toward the West but we found that we are going toward the South." There is going to be huge unemployment, inflation, which never existed, and of the Third World kind like in Russia where it is something like 2,000 percent. In the ex-Yugoslavia it takes a million dinars to have one dollar.

On the Western side there was a rush to go into the East which doesn't exist now. The crisis in Eastern Europe appears to increase, not to reduce the crisis in Western Europe. German unification is a very good symbol of that. The Maastricht agreement is in complete crisis and the project of both an economically and politically unified Europe has col-

lapsed. This is in combination with the situation of Eastern Europe which has brought huge immigration and huge instability like the war in Yugoslavia.

First phase failure

So we could say that the first phase of this project for them has been a failure. The first phase can be characterized by the liberal recipe: capitalist restoration through privatization. What are the reasons for this failure? One set of reasons are linked with the crisis itself. The second set of reasons are linked with the system itself.

Look at the crisis. If you want to open a stock exchange you can set up a stock exchange, it can be called the stock exchange, it can look like the stock exchange, it can smell like the stock exchange but it will not be a stock exchange if you do not have anyone who is ready to buy. And such intense inflation is not positive for the development of a market.

So the crisis itself creates limits, but the nature of the system is behind the difficulty. When you say privatization you have to ask who will buy? The problem is

that without a real bourgeoisie, there was no capital accumulation. If you took the amount of private savings and compared that to the number of factories to be privatized, even at the lowest price the maximum money available can only buy 20 to 30 percent. And when I say available I don't mean that those people are ready to do it.

A lot of people would like to become bourgeois but that is not sufficient. You have to have some money. And even for those who do have money you also have to have the social conditions for it. They are confronted with world capitalist competition and with the political problems connected to turning yourself into a bourgeoisie.

Capitalists want hard currency

In terms of creating a market, the capitalist system is not interested in need, it is interested in demand. And it is interested in hard currency not in zlotys. For a Western capitalist to go there he needs to see that there is some hard currency. How can you have hard currency in Eastern Europe? Two ways. One is exports. The second is credit. Let's start with exports. In Eastern Europe the products that they could export, like agriculture, are precisely the same products that the Western capitalists want to protect. And this is a big contradiction for them. Okay, so credit. Well, there is a huge monetary crisis. The banking system, that is the private creditors, are not so eager to give credit to countries that are not so stable.

So, government credit. A Marshall Plan. Well, sure this would be the idea, but the United States has such a problem in confronting its own crisis that they are not ready to give such an amount of money to the East. On top of that it's not only a question of the amount. The problem to be solved today is very different from the problem that had to be solved in Western capitalist Europe at the end of the Second World War.

Political balance sheet

What are the political aspects of the balance sheet? On the one hand there was a collapse of the so-called socialist system and it seemed that it meant the triumph

*Where dominant forces
are reactionary we see
people attempting to use
nationalism as a substitute
for class struggle.*

of capitalist society. In fact the capitalist system is very, very weak and very, very ill. It has not got itself out of its own crisis which is a deep structural crisis and has lasted many years. Even compared with the past, the ways out of this international crisis are not so clear.

Certain aspects of the collapse open possibilities of rethinking for all of us about the nature of these systems and the political questions they raised. Not to be too optimistic, but this did permit more democratic openings within those systems, the ability for free speech, more publications, etc. But the problem is that it is not only a collapse of the Stalinist or bureaucratic system, it is also a crisis of what had been a real revolution, the October Revolution, and a crisis of what had been a resistance to capitalist rule.

Many people in the world, although they live with the crisis of capitalism and will become more critical after the failure of this first stage, also have no clear alternatives. The relationship of forces between classes at the world level, and the restructuring of the capitalist system which brings with it new forms of intervention and new methods like the IMF and the World Bank, means that the bourgeoisie

has its own tools with which to intervene and the working class does not. Its institutions — the unions, the parties, the politics — are collapsing.

Capitalists, workers in trouble

In the world we see a very sick capitalism and a very weak workers' movement. It is a very barbarian capitalism which is developing. You have the development of very reactionary trends. We will see probably a trend toward less privatization and more state and national protection and nationalism as an ideology. I differentiate very carefully between national demands and national rights that we defend and nationalism as an ideology and the forces that are using the national question for their own purposes. Where dominant forces are reactionary we see people attempting to use nationalism as a substitute for class struggle.

In Western Europe we are also confronted with the contradictory situation this collapse has brought us. Last June in Paris we had an international gathering with people coming from all different countries and CPs. We could not have imagined this years ago and it was very good. But we also have to confront this with the size of the crisis and the objective conditions. We see a left way, a non-narrow view. But also trends that are capitalist, nationalist, reactionary. Like Le Pen in France. So that is the contradictory situation in this barbarian world. And we have to resist. ▼

The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: An Overview

by Catherine Samaray

Historical background, documents, and analysis on why the war was not at all inevitable, that it is not the irresistible consequence of "centuries-old hatreds", that it was wanted by forces who needed it to establish their power.

\$10 60 pages

Order from:

AISP
P.O. Box 8376
Berkeley, CA 94707

Help Us Get It Together

Independent Politics needs graphic production and circulation assistance. If you can do page layout on a Macintosh or can help with distribution, please call Malik Miah or Alan Hanger at:

510-430-1893

Russian Workers Moving Into Action

Strike Wave Sweeps Russia

By RENFREY CLARKE

The following article was written prior to Boris Yeltsin's September 21 presidential coup dissolving the parliament. The 65-million-member Independent Trade Unions of Russia condemned Yeltsin's power grab, and continues to organize against his regime.

MOSCOW—Since the end of July, the Russian government has been challenged by the largest wave of strikes since the coal industry struggles of 1989-1991. Even more impressive than the size of the actions has been the range of workers involved—the broadest since the 1917 revolution.

Once again, coal miners have been in the front ranks of the labor movement offensive. But the groups that have moved into struggle include timber workers, defense industry workers, television and radio employees, public transport workers, health workers—and even weather forecasters.

An important new feature has been the mounting of coordinated regional strike actions. In the Primorye Territory on the Pacific coast, a general stoppage on August 10 brought an estimated 600,000 workers out in protest against crippling increases in electricity charges.

Unions oppose government

Probably the most crucial new development, however, has been the shift by the leadership of Russia's mass trade union federation to direct, active opposition to the government. After lengthy efforts at collaboration with the Yeltsin regime resulted only in broken promises, leaders of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) several months ago began developing a "Plan of Collective Action." This is intended as a coordinated strategy for the defense of workers' rights, aimed at maximizing the labor movement's political and legal strengths and culminating, if necessary, in massive strike action later this year.

Since President Boris Yeltsin launched his campaign of pro-capitalist "reforms" in January 1992, workers in Russia have

seen their secure and modestly comfortable living standards replaced, in many cases, by stark poverty and the threat of starvation should illness or unemployment strike. Until recently, however, protests were astonishingly muted. The government's argument that the pain of "shock therapy" would in time be followed by stabilization and recovery—an argument plugged relentlessly in the pro-Yeltsin mass media—was broadly accepted.

It is fair to say that this belief was shared by most trade union leaders—and not only in the small, outspokenly pro-government "free" union movement. Until well into 1993 the strategy of the FNPR, which covers a large majority of Russian wage workers, was concentrated on the Tripartite Commission set up by Yeltsin as a forum for consultation between the government and representatives of employers and labor.

Russian public loses patience

By early this summer, however, the willingness of the Russian public to give the government's strategies "time to work" was running out. The conviction was spreading that "shock therapy" could produce only catastrophe followed by stagnation. In a poll taken early in August, only 26 per cent of respondents indicated that they "approved of the policies of the president." Union leaders, meanwhile, were listening attentively to economists who used orthodox Western theory to produce damning criticisms of the government's "market fundamentalist" approach.

By this time as well, large numbers of union activists had come to see Yeltsin and his ministers as anti-worker and persistently treacherous. The president routinely ignored his pledge that major policy initiatives would be discussed in advance on the Tripartite Commission. As time went on, direct demands by the

FNPR for talks with government leaders were increasingly snubbed. The regime also systematically violated legally binding wage agreements. In a practice

clearly designed to bolster its "tight money" policies, the government provided finance for the payment of wages months late, often failing to provide the full sum.

Workers move

During the early summer, the FNPR leadership was forced rapidly to the left—as much as anything else, by the fear that unless the union movement mounted a coordinated campaign, workers would move spontaneously into struggle in a chaotic process that would lead to exhaustion and defeat.

The initial stages of the fight-back did, indeed, consist mainly of spontaneous sectoral struggles. In late June coal miners conducted spirited pickets of government offices in Moscow, demanding prompt fulfillment of the industry wages agreement. Timber workers, who had been in a state of "pre-strike readiness" since May 25, followed up with pickets early in July.

The first massive and coordinated action was a one-hour warning strike on July 29 by workers at more than 100 defense complex plants in the Urals region, demanding that the provisions of the law governing the conversion of military to civilian production be met in full. On August 9 coal miners in Rostov Province in southern Russia held a regional stoppage that shut down 38 pits for 24 hours. Workers at a number of coal enterprises in Western Siberia halted shipments in sympathy.

On the Pacific coast, the two-hour stoppage on August 10 shut down at least 360 enterprises in almost all the cities and towns of the Primorye Territory. Thousands of workers took part in angry public meetings. A coordinating council has now been set up to organize "united actions" by workers of the Russian Far East. On August 12, designated by the Agrarian Union and the Union of Agro-Indus-

trial Complex Workers as the "Day of Defense of the Peasants," farm workers demonstrated in a number of Russian cities.

Coal miners critical

As in previous years, the critical group of workers in the new round of struggles is likely to be the experienced, relatively well-organized coal miners. On August 12 a leadership plenum of the Independent Union of Coal Industry Workers declared a state of pre-strike readiness, promising a Russia-wide coal strike on September 6 unless the government met its obligations under the sectoral wage agreement.

The situation in the coal enterprises is complicated, however, by divisions within the work force. Most coal face workers are members not of the Independent Union of Coal Industry Workers, which is affiliated to the FNPR, but of the Independent Union of Mine Workers (NPG). The NPG, which arose in 1990 out of disillusionment with the "official" union structures, has in the past given strong support to Yeltsin. In a recent interview, NPG Deputy Chairperson Sultan Mamedov declared his union's "fundamental disagreement" with any attempt to force the resignation of the government.

Have the NPG ranks left their leaders behind in this respect? Russians are likely soon to find out. Yeltsin, to say the least, should not be confident.

Strike committees set up

Throughout August, unions have worked with encouragement from the FNPR to set up regional and sectoral strike committees. In close touch with the rank and file, these committees have been assigned a key role in the FNPR's "Plan of Collective Action."

As explained in an article in the newspaper *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* on August 11, the plan involves a vigorous drive to build an all-Russian conference of strike committees, to be held in Moscow in mid-September. Yeltsin, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, and parliamentary speaker Khasbulatov will be invited to attend, in order to defend their actions and hear the views of workers.

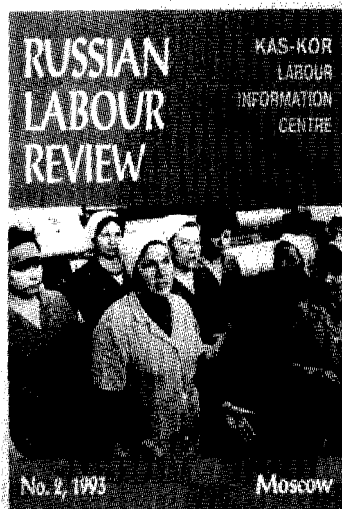
Simultaneously, a Supreme Court suit

Continued on Page 30

New Magazine Fills Need What's Really Happening in Russia?

By ALEX CHIS

Anyone who has to rely on the major media to understand what is happening in Russia is under a severe handicap, and unfortunately those of us who don't read Russian have had few other sources of information. The establishment media pays little attention to the labor movement in Russia, pre-



ferring as it does here, to focus on "major" personalities, trying to pretend that the mass of people don't really have any impact on events. But that doesn't mean nothing is happening—far from it.

Russia has a huge working class that also has something to say about the future of the ex-Soviet Union. [see "Strike Wave Sweeps Russia," on the previous page.] But apart from occasional articles in left-wing journals, often written from outside Russia, there has been little real information. (A major exception is the *USSWIC Bulletin*, which focuses on the Russian labor movement. See *IP* #1.) That has all changed with the publication this year of a new quarterly magazine from Moscow, with Russian, French and English editions.

The *Russian Labor Review*, a project of the Kas-Kor Labor Information Center, an independent center in support of the workers' movement in Russia [see *IP* #2, p.14], has just published

its second issue. The amount of concrete information it contains about the political situation in Russia and the labor movement will come as a breath of fresh air to anyone who wants to know what's happening in the ex-Soviet Union.

Reports from participants

This magazine makes it easy and enjoyable to follow the workers' movement in Russia. Instead of dry academics or government double-talk, it features articles by workers and participants in the political struggle. The first issue contains "We Struck for the Sake of the Passengers," an interview with the leader of the air traffic controller's union and "Russian Social Democrats: Crash Before Takeoff" by Boris Kagarlitsky.

The articles in the new magazine of course don't ignore Yeltsin, Rutskoi, and other government officials, but they also don't make it appear as if these men are the only players in Russia, as the American media often does. Along with an article on Yeltsin's defeat at the Eighth Congress, by Renfrey Clarke, the second issue contains articles on the Donbass coal strike which rocked the Ukraine in June 1993, written by an activist from the Confederation of Anarcho-syndicalists, and on privatization in Lithuania, by the former acting chairman of the Lithuanian Workers' Union.

An eleven page section on labor history in the 56 page second issue focuses on "Novocherkassk 1962: The Unknown Story of Workers Uprising Against Stalinism." With eight pages written by Piotr Siuda, a participant in the events, this offers many in the west the first look at this mass uprising of workers against Stalinism.

Russian Labor Review is essential and enjoyable reading for everyone that has even the slightest interest in the workers' movement or the ex-Soviet Union. Subscriptions are \$30 a year to *Russian Labor Review*, Dept. A, P.O. Box 170191, San Francisco, CA 94117. ▼

Lessons From a Former Communist

The Kid from Hoboken, An Autobiography by Bill Bailey, 1993, 424 pp.

By RALPH FORSYTH

Lewis Carroll once said "All that matters is what we do for each other." If this is true Bill Bailey matters a lot to us and to future generations. In the Prologue of his compelling book, *The Kid from Hoboken, An Autobiography*, Bailey addresses the central issue of his life, why he had "this great urge to right the wrongs of an insane society." He concludes his autobiography by describing his personal philosophy "to witness an injustice and do nothing—that is the biggest crime."

Bailey was certainly not just an armchair socialist. In fact, he felt ill at ease with abstract political philosophy and the finer points of Marxian theory. His whole life has been consumed with the immediate struggles of union organizing (in various maritime and longshore unions and among Hawaiian field workers) and "antifascist" activities (ripping the Nazi flag off the German ship *Bremen* in 1935, fighting in the Spanish Civil War and in the Merchant Marines during WW II).

The autobiography is divided into three books, each with from 19 to 26 short chapters or vignettes. Book One describes Bailey growing up in the horrifying slums of New Jersey and New York City. He left home as a teenager riding boxcars, living in hobo jungles and panhandling. Especially dramatic are his brushes with the law, in which he documents sadistic cruelty by the agents of the ruling class.

Book Two becomes more political; Bailey, as a mostly unemployed sailor, is quickly recruited by union activists to join the Communist Party (CP). He describes the initial strikes in Baltimore, Maryland, and Norfolk, Virginia, and the 1936 Pacific Coast Maritime strikes; his assignment to help plantation workers in Hawaii and to organize a CP branch; and briefly, his journey to Spain and a battle in the Spanish Civil War.

The last book is much more scattered, describing his WWII adventures and his political and personal hardships during

the McCarthy era of the 1950s. Finally, Bailey describes his disillusionment with CP politics; the last straw being the occupation of Hungary by the USSR in 1956.

The CP meant a lot to Bailey. It seemed to give him a purpose in life and the mechanism to fight for his ideals. At one point he wonders how he would have turned out "had it not been for the Communist Party making me take a good look at myself and setting me on the track to make something of myself."

However, doubts about CP policies and politics nagged Bailey throughout his years in the Party. He naively accepted the CP propaganda that the USSR was an utopian land of "milk and honey" where the working class was in control and there was "no unemployment, no police repression, no exploitation." He was told the only problems were caused by "a guy named Trotsky" who was bent on destroying the new nation with support from the capitalist countries.

Reality, of course, began slowly to erode this dream world. In the early 1930s Bailey was organizing East Coast seamen in Norfolk, Virginia, while sleeping on the headquarter's floor and panhandling his meals. An older comrade expressed disgust with the growing bureaucracy in the CP who were treating professional revolutionaries with contempt while the leaders were "well-fed fat asses..."

Bailey, apparently, did not outwardly protest because the Party "code" dictated that to question CP decisions "was to exhibit 'a lack of Communist discipline.'" This "code" actively discouraged any full-time members from marrying or even becoming permanently attached, a policy that caused Bailey no end of personal anguish.

The major disillusionment that Bailey had with CP politics occurred during WW II when he felt the Party leadership had turned to class collaboration and an alliance with "progressive capitalism." Bailey notes, "The class struggle as defined by Karl Marx was about to be swept under the rug, and perhaps Marx with it."

Despite the CP's many betrayals, Bailey felt his support for the revolution and his loyalties to his comrades was an overriding

factor in continuing his agitational activities in the CP until 1956. Thus, Bailey's experiences and concerns were similar to many radicals in different socialist parties and in different countries; experiences which extend to the present. The study of the events, which Bailey so powerfully describes, provides a fertile ground for learning new lessons about socialist organization and politics. ▼

Russian Workers

Continued from Page 29

will be launched, calling high officials to book for their failure to implement wage agreements and for other breaches of labor legislation. Assuming that the government does not meet its obligations in the meantime, the union movement by mid-October will have in its hands both the political and legal weapons it needs for unleashing a concerted campaign of strikes.

The unions' demands, needless to say, will not be purely economic. As FNPR Deputy Chairperson Vasily Romanov told journalists in mid-August, "if the government continues to ignore the demand of the trade unions that it sit down at the negotiating table, one of our slogans will be the call for the resignation of the present cabinet."

Yeltsin, of course, has his own plans for the coming autumn—above all, a clash with the parliament that he hopes will sweep the legislature into oblivion along with the present constitution. But like most totalitarian fantasies, this leaves the population out of account, or assigns them the role only of applauding spectators.

The developments in the Russian trade union movement during the past months suggest a quite distinct scenario, in which the main obstacle to the president's ambitions is not the "conservative, Soviet-era" parliament, but millions of angry, mobilized workers. That is an opposition of a very different caliber. ▼

Renfrey Clarke is the Moscow correspondent for Green Left Weekly, who we thank for this article. He also works with Kas-Kor Labor Information Center in Moscow and writes for Russian Labor Review. You can contact Green Left at P.O. Box 394, Broadway NSW 2007, Australia.

Voucher Vulture

Continued from Page 1

impact of the state's budget on school budgets; and the organized religious right.

The state suffered a loss of \$76 billion to war contractors as part of Clinton's deficit reduction package, resulting in over 300,000 lost jobs, and an education budget slashed by two billion dollars. Cuts in

lieving the problems of the inner cities, unemployment, crime and hunger will be reversed by enacting a constitutional amendment that would further erode the diminishing resources of urban schools.

Proponents of the initiative are advocating in their radio plugs that "rich people have the opportunity to attend private schools and so should the poor."

The \$2,600 amount designated as the

to cover some 500,000 students already in private schools, students who have never generated public school allocation money.

Who runs voucher schools

Voucher schools could be any franchise, fringe group or cult, for that matter, which could attract at least 25 students. Teachers or administrators in these voucher schools would not be required to have a college degree, a credential or any defined standard of education; the schools themselves would not be required to meet the safety and health standards of the public schools. There are no requirements for voucher schools to teach full courses in math, reading or other subjects.

While this amendment is being touted as a matter of choice it is technically the voucher school's choice. The voucher goes directly to the school. The wording of the initiative carries a discrimination clause but omits factors such as gender, religion, IQ and ability to pay.

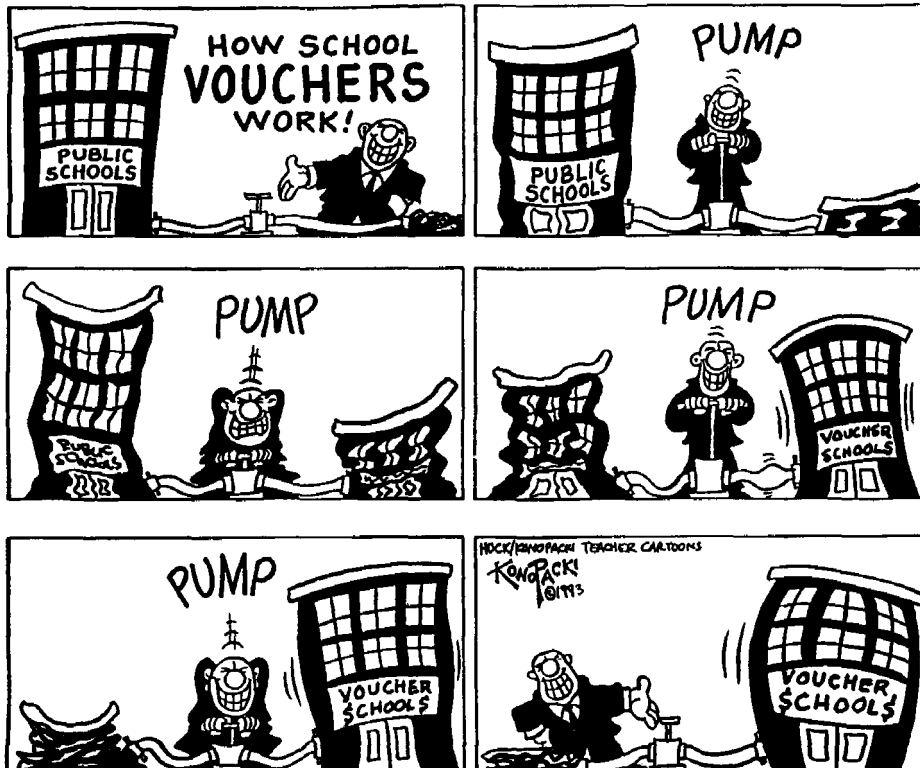
What we can do

If there ever was a need to unite the urban communities, the time is now. Working people, trade unions, parents and concerned citizens together with the students need to examine the shortcomings of their schools. Obvious areas to address would include: demands for increased funding, a challenge to the state's regressive tax system, decisions about the curriculum, expansion of health care programs and development of programs which utilize the schools more fully.

The problems of education aren't the fault of teachers, students and their parents. Children are being shortchanged by the decrease in funding when students need more services not fewer. How can critics blame the schools for not providing a decent education when funding for California's schools has dropped so precipitously over recent decades.

Any serious attempt to correct the public school system must go beyond the schools and into the greater issues involved: hunger, homelessness, poverty, unemployment and the economic discrepancies between the rich and the poor. ▼

Gretchen Mackler is a state council member of the CTA/NEA for the city of Alameda.



welfare have boosted the number of children who live 20 percent below the national poverty level to 1.7 million.

The organized religious right has a goal of being elected to every local school board in the state.

What vouchers will do

Unfortunately, many viewers of this battle see opponents of the voucher movement as upholders of the status quo and insensitive to the needs of parents who desperately want to improve the education of their children. They mistakenly believe that "voucherizing" education will be the magic bullet to transform the landscape of our public school system.

What's frightening about this initiative is its shoddy attempt to divert many well-meaning working-class people into be-

lieving the problems of the inner cities, unemployment, crime and hunger will be reversed by enacting a constitutional amendment that would further erode the diminishing resources of urban schools. Not only does this initiative not address a guaranteed improvement in the quality of a public education, but it attempts to create an illusion of increased power of the poor, giving them an equal footing with the rich. The average cost of sending a child to a private school in California is in the range of four to six thousand dollars a year.

This proposition, as worded, does not seek to bring more taxes or general fund money to the schools. It says nothing about improving class size or teacher's salaries or even repairing or constructing school buildings.

If proposition 174 should pass it would become a constitutional amendment. It would slash \$3 billion from public school funds immediately, providing vouchers

From S.O.S. to S.O.O. Save our Oceans

By JAN SNIPPER

What happens when a sailor blows the whistle on the Navy?

Aaron Ahearn of Santa Cruz has been through this experience.

In February of this year, while serving as a Fireman's Apprentice on the USS Abraham Lincoln, Ahearn was assigned to janitorial duties including throwing 200 bags of garbage, plastics, grease and oils into the ocean daily. He also saw raw sewage, computers, paint and furniture thrown into the San Diego and San Francisco Bays.

As a former surfer and swimmer, Ahearn knows the danger of hepatitis that could result from such dumping. These offenses were more than he could take. After unsuccessful attempts to challenge this dumping process, he left on unauthorized leave.

While there was a warrant out for Ahearn's arrest, he came to the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz for advice. They explained to him what the possibilities were for his future with the military and he decided to go public. He talked to the media—including the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, CBS and national news commentators—about the huge quanti-

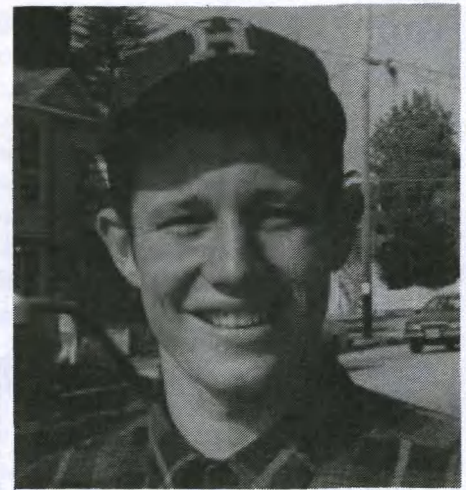
ties of waste he and others had seen tossed into the seas. He said his Navy recruiter had promised him he'd be trained as a welder and instead he was contributing to the death of the oceans.

Ahearn's appeals reached sympathetic audiences everywhere. Organizations came forward to help him get out his message—the Surf Rider Foundation/SC, Coastal Advocates, Greenpeace, Save our Shores, students from the University of California at Santa Cruz and other Navy veterans who shared his concern about polluting the oceans.

Ahearn voluntarily returned to the Navy at the end of April. He was formally charged with two counts of AWOL and intentionally missing a troop movement. The maximum penalty for this could be six months in jail and a dishonorable discharge. One week after he surrendered, he was injured in a motorcycle accident enroute to a CBS News interview in Santa Cruz, sustaining severe leg injuries. If he is discharged, he could also lose his medical benefits.

Meanwhile his ship went on to the Persian Gulf where airstrikes on Iraq and ocean dumping continues.

Support continued to grow for Ahearn's actions on behalf of the environment. On July 13, his courage was commended by the Santa Cruz City Council, which passed a resolution "in support of Aaron Ahearn and his stand refusing to dump plastics, toxins and raw sewage into the ocean while on duty on the USS Abraham Lincoln".



Aaron Ahearn

The resolution also stated "the Navy's practice of disposal of wastes at sea are inconsistent with and may be in violation of State, Federal and international maritime law".

On August 15 a rally was held in the coastal town of Santa Cruz, 70 miles south of the base. It was held to get out information about Ahearn's plight, environmental issues and the rights of GIs when faced with orders in violation of international law and personal moral judgment.

Supporters gathered at the Alameda Naval Station early on the morning of August 16 for Ahearn's hearing to show their support his actions of conscience. At the hearing Ahearn pled guilty and was sentenced to 35 days in prison, a reduction in rank to Seaman Apprentice, and a \$500 cut in pay. He will face a discharge hearing in the near future.

In Santa Cruz a fund for Ahearn's legal and organizational needs has been established. He plans to work on behalf of the environment when he is discharged from the Navy.

Erik Larsen, Marine veteran, Gulf War resister and military counselor spoke to Ahearn when he came to the Resource Center for Nonviolence. "There are more GIs and Navy veterans who are concerned with toxins and chemicals." Larsen told Ahearn, "They see Aaron as a hero. These people are asking 'what can we do as veterans to stop this from happening?'"

For more information contact the Aaron Ahearn Fund and the Draft and Military Counseling Services of the Resource Center for Nonviolence, 515 Broadway, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, tel.(408) 423-1626. ▼

SUBSCRIBE

Please clip and mail to: *Independent Politics*
P.O. Box 55247
Hayward, CA 94545-0247
Telephone/FAX: (510) 430-1893

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Organization/Union _____ Telephone _____

I want to SUBSCRIBE to Independent Politics for \$8.00 for 4 issues (including \$ _____ postage).

I want to SUBSCRIBE at the \$15.00 international rate.

I want to SUBSCRIBE at the \$24.00 institutional rate.

I want to join Activists for Independent Socialist Politics. Enclosed is \$15 (including \$ _____ subscription).

I want more information.

I want to support your efforts. Enclosed is \$ _____ contribution.

Keep me informed of your activities. Enclosed is \$ _____ for mailing costs.

