

workers world

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD UNITE!

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Bank failures unmask true state of economy

Reagan's press agents paint rosy picture but Texas collapse tells another story

By Robert Dobrow

The capitalist economy is like a giant oak tree that seems strong and formidable from a distance. But getting closer you can see that there are no leaves on the branches and bark is falling off the trunk. Closer still and one sees that the roots are rotting and diseased.

Last week the Reagan administration took credit for some good news in the national economy. The stock market went up. Unemployment went down. Exports and new orders continued to expand in July.

But other developments, which were downplayed in the media, show that the profit system isn't as bright and rosy as administration press agents would have us believe. The federal government, for instance, announced it was bailing out a huge Texas banking conglomerate, the First Republic Bank of Dallas, which was hemorrhaging so fast it threatened to disrupt the economy of the Southwest.

The feds will pump some \$4 billion into the ailing bank, making it the second largest bailout in U.S. history after the 1984 rescue of Continental Illinois of Chicago. The government's Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) lost \$1 billion as a result of the Continental fiasco. It expects to lose almost \$2 billion from First Republic Bank. And that is only a spit in the ocean compared to what

banking insiders fear are the potential losses coming soon.

The Comptroller of the Currency says that more than one of three Southwestern banks have been losing money over the last two years. Banks are failing at a rate not seen since the Great Depression. And while the media attention is focused on the big financial institutions like First Republic Bank, most of the insolvent banks in the Southwest are small, with \$1 billion in assets or less. And there are hundreds of them.

Even these commercial banks are doing good compared to the savings and loans banks—called thrifts. Estimates of what is needed to save the thrifts, where millions of people have accounts and many their life savings, range from \$60 billion to \$100 billion.

The FDIC and FSLIC (Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation) are supposed to insure bank deposits of up to \$100,000. But their operating budgets are just a fraction of what would be needed in the case of a full-scale bailout. The result would be a huge increase in the federal deficit with higher taxes and/or increased inflation. In plain words, the masses of people would be forced to bail out a handful of rich bankers.

U.S. banks, long considered the solid foundation stones of the world capitalist economic order, are in serious trouble these days. Giants like

Citicorp, Morgan Guaranty and BankAmerica used to be the undisputed kingpins of capitalist high finance and industry.

But a newly released report shows that of the world's top 25 banks not one is from the U.S. Most are Japanese, West German, British and French. Of course, U.S. banks, backed up by U.S. military muscle, are still spread across the globe sucking out super-profits from the exploited labor in oppressed countries and financing right-wing, anti-worker dictatorships from south Korea to El Salvador. But their relative decline compared to their imperialist rivals is significant.

Even more important, the U.S. banks are plagued by incurable troubles caused by the instability of the capitalist system both at home and abroad.

The banks squeezed enormous profits out of Third World countries for decades. Now there is no more blood to be squeezed from the stone and bad loans to countries like Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and the Philippines are costing U.S. banks about \$10 billion a year.

The banks financed the biggest oil and energy boom this country has ever seen throughout the post-World War II period. They pumped and pumped and made stupendous profits. Now there is over-production and oil-producing states like Texas, Okla-

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Vets Peace Convoy delivers aid to people of Nicaragua

By Dee Knight
Managua, Nicaragua

August 1—The Veterans for Peace convoy rolled across Nicaragua's northern border at 7 p.m. July 27 to cheering crowds and warm embraces. For more than two months the convoy has traveled an odyssey of thousands of miles in its effort to break the U.S. embargo against Nicaragua. On the last 150 miles to Managua they were welcomed by smiling Nicaraguans all along the way.

Delegates of the peace convoy told how they were prevented from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border numerous times. They were maced, beaten and clubbed by U.S. police, then arrested and jailed overnight. About half the original participants had to return to their jobs and families before the convoy could reach its destination.

But the delegates agreed that the convoy was an enormous success. As they travelled through hundreds of cities and towns across the U.S., they galvanized public opinion against the embargo. The convoy even journeyed to Washington, D.C., where they surrounded the White House after their first efforts to cross the border were frustrated.

The 41 delegates who completed the odyssey with 21 of the original 39 vehicles brought with

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Vets convoy crosses border into Nicaragua on July 28.

Cops, FBI thugs picket Willie Nelson over support for Leonard Peltier

By Mahtowin

When hundreds of cops, prison guards and FBI agents swarmed Rhode Island's Warwick Musical Theater to protest a concert appearance by Willie Nelson July 29, they were countered by a gathering of 125 New England-area Indians and their supporters.

Rhode Island police had called for a boycott and picket of the concert performance by country singer Willie Nelson because Nelson had appeared in a benefit last October for Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier, whom they characterized as a "cop-killer." Peltier, a Lakota/Anishnabe leader of the American Indian Movement, has been imprisoned for over 12 years for supposedly killing two FBI agents in 1975 in a shootout at Pine Ridge Reservation.

Proven FBI misconduct in his trial, including perjured evidence, suppressed evidence and coercion of witnesses, has led to an international outcry for Peltier's release. Freeing Leonard Peltier is as important to Native people in the U.S. as freeing Nelson Mandela is to the people of South Africa.

In the spirit of truth

Native people in New England as well as other supporters of Peltier refused to let the cops' vicious slanders against Peltier stand uncorrected. The Rhode Island Leonard Peltier Defense Committee was formed so that the public could have access to the truth about the case rather than just the lies of the police that were so widely publicized through the Rhode Island media.

Tony Youngwolf, a Mesica from

Mexico speaking for the group, thought it was no coincidence that the cops' protest of the Nelson concert came at a time when the cops are being investigated for corruption and improper arrests and seizures.

An attorney from Peltier's defense team, Lew Gurwitz, told Workers World that "most of the police probably don't even know the facts of Leonard's case. This is a kneejerk reaction to someone shouting 'cop-killer.' Clearly there were improprieties in this case. They are saying that they are opposed to justice and a fair trial, that they are opposed to Amnesty International and numerous international leaders who have called for justice for Leonard Peltier."

Members of the local Peltier Defense Committee, the All-Peoples Congress and the Mobilization for Survival, as well as other supporters, came together outside the concert site to distribute leaflets on Leonard's case.

Despite being outnumbered 4-to-1 by the cops, 125 women, men and children gathered in a sacred circle, listened to an inter-tribal drum, and participated in a pipe ceremony in honor of Peltier. Among the Native nations represented were: Pequot, Nipmuc, Narragansett, Wampanoag, Mohawk, Tuscarora, Passamaquoddy, Apache, Nez-Perce, Winnebago and Ojibwe and Indians from Mexico and Guatemala.

Nelson backs down

The police threatened to picket again the following night, and Boston police threatened to picket a Nelson concert scheduled for July 31 in

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Action in support of Leonard Peltier outside Willie Nelson concert.

Disabled protesters demand to ride the RIDE in Boston

By Brian Shea
Boston

July 27—Over 100 disabled people and their supporters turned out today at a demonstration at City Hall Plaza to demand that the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) live up to its legal obligation to provide equal access to the public transportation system.

The specific focus of today's action was the RIDE, the MBTA's door-to-door service used by approximately 11,000 people with disabilities in the Boston area. The RIDE is used predominantly by wheelchair users, to whom the buses, trolleys and subway are mostly inaccessible.

Since July 1 when the RIDE was given to a new contractor there have been hundreds of incidents, including failed or missed pickups, as well as several accidents resulting in severe injuries to RIDE users. Today's rally was part of a response by disabled people to the lack of regard for their community by both the MBTA and the new RIDE subcontractor, Transportation Management Systems, Inc. (TMSI).

Transit authorities are mandated by law to provide van service in addition to making the buses, trolleys and subways accessible. For years transit operators and multi-million-dollar corporations like GM and Grumman have sought to side-step their legal obligations under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act by providing the least and worst paratransit services they could get away with in exchange for little or no fixed route access. Historically this has meant that door-to-door van services have been contracted out by many regional transit operators to the lowest bidder in-

stead of being operated as part of a transit system.

Many transit operators, including the MBTA, have used this device to save money at the expense of disabled people by undercutting standards for service, driver training and wages. Separate non-union subcontractors have also been a means for withholding a full commitment to accessible transportation.

The injuries and missed trips that have been documented are in fact a direct result of the hiring of inexperienced drivers, dispatchers and schedulers as well as a failure to provide adequate training in the operation of wheelchair lifts, disability awareness and sensitivity, or pick up locations. The more experienced workers who were with the previous RIDE contractor were "invited to apply" for their jobs by the new contractor, with up to \$2-an-hour cut in pay with no benefits.

The main demands of today's demonstration were the removal of the RIDE contract from TMSI, the provision of RIDE drivers with proper training, pay and job security commensurate with their responsibilities to the disabled community, the support of the drivers' right to organize and the direct operation of the RIDE by the MBTA.

Speakers included James Brooks, Disabled Peoples Liberation Front; Connie Panzarino, Boston Self-Help Center; Charlie Sabatier, Boston Office of Handicapped Affairs; and this reporter, representing the Disabled Focus of Workers World Party, who read a statement from Bob Traynham, Workers World candidate for State Senate First Suffolk District, in support of the demands of the disabled community.

Coalition fights takeaway budget in San Francisco

By Ron Holladay
San Francisco

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors rubber-stamped Mayor Art Agnos' 1988-89 budget on July 27. The 3 a.m. vote came in the face of organized community outrage.

The new budget will result in \$150 million in cuts in desperately needed services as well as fare and fee increases. Earlier some of the cuts had been beaten back by opposition organized by the Committee Against Budget Cuts, library users, health providers and city unions. But when the Board of Supervisors, hidden away in their chambers at 3 a.m., finally voted on the budget, the only change was the dropping of a tax increase on parking lot operators. The final vote on cuts in badly needed transit services found all of the Supervisors falling into line with Mayor Agnos and voting for the cuts.

"We all know that big business makes billions of dollars in profits in this city off of us, the workers and customers. They're subsidized by the city services we are being asked to pay more for, and they never pay their share," said Stephanie Hedgecoke, spokesperson for the Committee Against Budget Cuts—All-Peoples Congress and candidate for the Board of Supervisors, at a loud rally on the City Hall steps the day before the vote.

The rally was a combined effort of the All-Peoples Congress and the Vehicular Residents Association (VRA). The VRA represents those facing eviction and arrest for using their vehicles as homes. They turned out to condemn the mayor's betrayal. He had earlier promised to work toward setting up a city-run vehicular resident's park, but then reneged.

"We resent that homeless people are being considered the litter of the 1980s," said Jim Rhoads, board member of the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council, and a vehicular resident.

Meanwhile, San Francisco residents face a future with cuts in already inadequate health and transit services. The average wait in San Francisco General Hospital's emergency room for problems that are not life threatening will go from six to eight hours. The only bus line that provides direct service from many low income neighborhoods to San Francisco General is being cut, meaning that ill people will be forced to transfer and wait for up to an hour for another bus.

The supervisors have passed the budget. However, the struggle is far from over. To get involved, call the All-Peoples Congress—Committee Against Budget Cuts at (415) 821-6545, or write and send contributions to APC, 2489 Mission St. #28, San Francisco, Calif. 94110.

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Business: (212) 255-0352 Telex: 6501176920

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Editor: Deirdre Griswold
Technical Editor: Lallan Stein
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, Joyce Chediak, Robert Dobrow, Gary Wilson; Contributing Editors: Monica Moorehead, Carmen Roundtree, Sharon Shelton, Andy Stapp; Political Prisoners: Leslie Feinberg; Special Supplement: Shelley Ettinger; Technical Staff: Pat Chin, Mark Doran, Ken Franson, Marsha Goldberg, Katy Rosen, Steve Schultz; Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Petra Guerra, Teresa Gutierrez, Santiago Manque-Milla, Rosa Maria de la Torre, David Perez, Lucinda Sintierra, Octavio Vargas, Angela Vera; Darkroom Staff: G. Dunkel, Fabian, Susan Rotgard

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WWW PHOTO: BILL BATEMAN

Dukakis signs budget with anti-gay foster parent rule

By Phebe Eckfeldt
Boston

While Massachusetts governor and Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis was out campaigning, telling everyone he was the candidate for all the people, here in his home state he secretly attacked the lesbian and gay community.

Dukakis signed the Fiscal Year 1989 state budget that had a provision tacked onto it stating that the Department of Social Services (DSS) would lose funding unless it complied with his policy of prohibiting lesbian and gay people from becoming foster parents. The DSS could lose \$8.3 million in funds. This hidden aspect of the budget was given no publicity and was not revealed until July 28, two weeks after the law was signed.

Lesbian and gay people have vigor-

ously protested Dukakis' bigoted foster parent policies, instituted 3 years ago. Boston lesbian and gay groups have stated they feel the clause was snuck through and shows Dukakis' contempt for lesbians and gay men.

Kevin Cathcart, Executive Director of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders said, "We will challenge the budget amendment just as we continue to challenge the policy. This new development proves the point that we have been making for 3 years—the Massachusetts foster care policy sets into play a ripple effect that perpetuates homophobia."

Activists from MASS ACT OUT and the Gay and Lesbian Defense Committee are organizing to protest the provision and the Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance participated in a press conference denouncing Dukakis.

State jails Tawana Brawley adviser, criminals still free

By Monica Moorehead

As we go to press, Rev. Al Sharpton has been released from an Albany, N.Y., jail cell after threatening to go on hunger strike.

August 2—The racist persecution against Tawana Brawley, her family, lawyers and advisers by the local and state authorities continues unabated. The latest episode occurred this past weekend as the Rev. Al Sharpton, the Brawley's family adviser, was sentenced along with ten others to 15 days in jail following their conviction on a disorderly conduct charge.

Sharpton and the other defendants, including singer-activist Pete Seeger, were arrested this past April 4 at a demonstration held in downtown Albany to show support for the Black teenager and to denounce Gov. Mario Cuomo for the insensitive, racist manner in which the Brawley case has been handled. What was their so-called crime? Obstructing traffic outside the state capitol.

Cuomo has been most adamant in denying the Brawley family the right to a special prosecutor of their choice. The Brawley family and her supporters feel that a special prosecutor would be key in helping to bring to justice the racists who sexually assaulted and tortured Ms. Brawley for four days last November in Wappingers Falls.

No one arrested for the crime

The latest convictions are but another example of how the capitalist state, i.e., the courts, police and the media, have collaborated in a conspiracy to once again portray the victim of a racist and sexist crime, like Tawana Brawley, as the criminal. Not one person has been arrested or even been brought in for questioning for this brutal atrocity even though the teenager has identified her assailants.

Yet Glenda Brawley, Tawana's mother, could be arrested and jailed at any time for refusing to testify before a grand jury. Ms. Brawley's lawyers, Alton Maddox and C. Vernon Mason, have been viciously ostracized by the bourgeois press and racist establishment and threatened with being disbarred for advising Ms. Brawley not to testify until the accused criminals have been brought into custody.

Attorney Mason commented on the convictions, "I cannot recall a nonviolent demonstration in which persons were tried, convicted and sentenced to jail in recent years. It's sort of a step backwards for the state generally into the kinds of reactions that we saw in the South recently, that kind of drastic reaction to a nonviolent protest."

Police Court Judge Thomas Keegan obviously could not restrain his biased glee as he sentenced Sharpton and the others to jail. He was caught laughing at the defendants as he lifted his tie in the air in a gesture mocking a self-hanging and using his hands to simulate the pounding of nails into a coffin. This is justice and democracy in action, U.S. style.

AIDS activists dispute NYC's revised statistics

By Leslie Feinberg
New York

Twelve AIDS activists were arrested inside the New York City Department of Health on July 28, while hundreds angrily protested in front of the building. The demonstration, organized by ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), was a swift response to a press conference held last week by City Health Commissioner Dr. Stephen Joseph.

Dr. Joseph released figures to the media July 19 which halved the previous estimate of 400,000 New York City residents now infected with AIDS. Joseph told the press that the reduction was based on a new estimate slashing the number of New York City gay and bisexual men believed to be HIV-antibody positive 400%—from 250,000 to 50,000. This was based on the city's new conjecture that only 100,000 gay and bisexual men live here.

Outraged AIDS activists—lesbian, gay and straight—countered that this was an attempt by the city to cut its responsibility in the AIDS crisis in half and to attempt to make it seem that the New York City gay community is much smaller than it really is.

This week posters appeared around the city headlined, "Missing—



July 30 march for justice for the Latino community in New Jersey.

Record heat and boiling anger over cop killings in Perth Amboy, N.J.

By Teresa Gutierrez
Perth Amboy, N.J.

About 500 people marched in the streets of Perth Amboy, N.J., on July 30 to protest a wave of police brutality in this majority Third World city. In record heat of 103 degree weather, protesters marched through the community to demand justice for all those who have suffered at the hands of the racist, brutal cops who patrol this city.

The demonstration came in response to the killing in June by an off-duty cop of a Mexican national, Carmen Coria, and the brutal beating of his brother, Mateo. Upon the news of yet another killing and beating at the hands of the police, the righteous anger of the masses exploded in three days of a virtual rebellion in this city, where the mainly Latino population took over the streets of Perth Amboy. This industrial city in New Jersey has a population of 45,000 people, 50% of whom are Latino and 10% of whom are Black.

A coalition of Puerto Rican, Dominican and other forces came together and called for the demonstration that took place July 30. What began as a small gathering quickly mushroomed into a large demonstration as youth after youth, parent after parent, joined the march to demand that the killer cops be punished for their crimes. Protesters also demanded a full community investigation into the murder July 24 of a Black man in the Perth Amboy jail who was obviously killed at the hands of the guards. While the police claim that Eddie Crawford committed suicide in prison, the evidence shows otherwise.

Police try to intimidate protesters

Prior to the demonstration, a repressive air dominated the city as officials viciously red-baited community organizers in an attempt to scare off participants. The police also prevented demonstrators from marching in the downtown section of the area to further undermine the organizing efforts of the community.

Lucio Velez, Chairperson of Latinos por los Derechos Humanos (Latinos for Human Rights), the coalition that organized the demonstration, called on the spirited crowd to "stay alert," and to pay attention to the politics of the situation and remain vigilant of police actions. A roar came from the crowd as he denounced the role of the mayor of the city. He added, "No longer do we want leaders who live on their knees, but those who will fight for us." He thanked all those who had helped in the organizing, especially those who helped from areas outside of New Jersey.

Cops treat people like dogs

Lydia Cruz, also from the organizing coalition, denounced the police as they "kill our people as if we were dogs."

Other speakers included Santiago Manque Milla from the All-Peoples Congress who stressed the importance of unity of all the oppressed and said that taking over the streets was justified in response to police murders, as the "streets belong to the people." Also speaking was Tom Soto from the Puerto Rican Committee Against Repression, Ydanis Rodriguez from the Union of Dominican Youth and many people from the community as well. Demonstrators vowed to continue the struggle against the repressive, racist character of the Perth Amboy government that has a long history of police repression against the majority Third World people of this city.

The national question in the light

By Sam Marcy

August 1—For many months now the capitalist press in the U.S. has acclaimed General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, using such adjectives as “innovative,” “imaginative,” “adroit,” “skillful,” “flexible,” and their favorite one, “pragmatic.” This presumably is to distinguish him from the “dogmatic,” “inflexible” and “conservative” leaders in the USSR.

However, on July 21, the New York Times, in a front-page story, took a different tack. Gorbachev, said the Times in a bold headline, had joined the “hardliners” by his and the Soviet Presidium’s insistence on barring the annexation to Armenia of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

What a quick turnaround!

The imperialist press generally has shown considerable bias in its reporting of the Azerbaijan-Armenia dispute over the autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Armenians have been quoted far too frequently and the Azerbaijanis very little, indeed—for the most part in inconsequential phrases here and there.

The U.S., immediately upon the outbreak of disorders in Azerbaijan and Armenia last winter, set up a task force in Europe to assist in processing the immigration of Armenians into the U.S. This is certainly in startling contrast to the willful and cruel way in which the U.S. has barred the door to Haitian immigrants fleeing political terror, as well as to Guatemalans and Salvadorans.

The imperialist bourgeoisie may be entirely mistaken in its speculation regarding Armenia. Its interest in the conflict is worth bearing in mind, however, while awaiting developments.

Soviet constitution on boundaries

In the meantime, it is necessary to state that the decision of the Soviet leadership rejecting the appeal of the Armenians for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh was the only possible way out, at least for the moment.

The Soviet constitution states that no boundary lines may be changed without the voluntary agreement of the republics involved. To have

agreed to a unilateral change of boundary lines in plain defiance of such an explicit constitutional provision would have brought on chaos among the many nationalities of the Soviet Union. It literally could open the door to the dismemberment of the USSR as a multinational socialist state.

This may be putting it in extreme language, but once any of the republics is given the green light to unilaterally change its boundaries, this could break down the sovereignty and independence of all the others.

Of course, boundaries could be changed by voluntary agreement after a period of socialist growth and class solidarity. Even the resettling of populations is possible in order to settle old boundary disputes or new ones that have developed in the many years since the Revolution. There were several instances of such agreements in the early years of the Soviet Union and after the Second World War.

It cannot be repeated too often that the USSR is a truly great, multinational state with more than 100 nationalities scattered all over its vast territory. The fact that until now, through all the decades since the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the early 1920s, there hasn’t been a major outbreak of violent nationalist struggle must attest to the highly progressive, indeed most revolutionary national structure of the Soviet government.

One merely has to contrast the situation of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (the Caucasus region) as it was before they became independent republics of the USSR at the time immediately after the First World War when the imperialists had a major influence and control.

“The drawing of boundaries was another source of difficulty for the government and a constant cause of friction among the three republics,” writes Richard Pipes in his book “The Formation of the Soviet Union” (Harvard University Press, 1974, page 208).

“The population of Transcaucasia was intermingled to such an extent that it was impossible to divide the area along ethnic lines without doing violence to one or another of the

groups inhabiting it. The Azerbaijani-Armenian frontier was especially troublesome, not only because the relations between those two peoples were at their worst following the mutual massacres of 1918 but also because the districts which they inhabited could be least successfully separated: Moslem and Armenian villages, located side by side, often used the same regions for cattle and sheep grazing,” he continues.

“Since districts inhabited by a mixed Armenian and Azerbaijani population were generally claimed by both sides as their own, throughout 1919 and 1920 there were quarrels and occasional wars between the two states. They seriously weakened the internal stability of the republics and injured their prestige abroad. The main bone of contention were the Zangezour, Nakhichevan and Karabakh districts.

“The territorial aspirations of the Azerbaijani government were of considerable magnitude. In an official petition presented to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, it claimed not only all of Eastern Transcaucasia but also Daghestan, Kars and Batum—an area comprising 60% of Transcaucasia and a portion of the North Caucasus as well. Since neither Georgia nor Armenia were willing to concede these claims, the relations between Azerbaijan and its neighbors remained constantly tense,” Pipes says.

Thus the imperialists virtually confessed their inability to solve the national question in the Caucasus in a peaceful way.

This doesn’t mean that after the establishment of the USSR there was not a considerable residue of nationalism, but this must be examined in its historical context to see what can be learned from it that will shed light on the present situation.

The bourgeois view, of course, is that the struggle between Armenia and Azerbaijan is either a purely nationalist one or a conflict of religions

(Armenia Christian, Azerbaijan Moslem). It goes without saying that the bourgeoisie blame the social character of the Soviet Union as a socialist state as the basic cause of the conflict and in particular the earlier leaders of the USSR.

Gorbachev’s July 19 speech

General Secretary Gorbachev spoke on the national question to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on July 19, and his talk was distributed in translation by Tass news service and reported on in the New York Times of July 21. How did he explain why there should be a struggle over the little enclave called Nagorno-Karabakh located in Azerbaijan and in which the majority of the population is Armenian?

If an opinion of his views can be formed from this talk, it is altogether disappointing. His talk was mostly an attempt to blame so-called “irresponsible nationalist elements” in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. He talks of bribery and corruption, but these are only surface manifestations that don’t go to the root of the problem.

“Protectionism [i.e., clique struggles or rivalries over turf],” he said, “bribery, and the shadow economy are rampant in the republics. Perestroika has uncovered all that. . . .

“Certain clans who would like to keep all the main spheres of life in their hands have developed there. . . .

“Nagorno-Karabakh was used from both sides as a pretext to stir up nationalist sentiments, bringing them up to the nationalist form in order to conceal the really difficult, crying problems.

“But look, comrades, how passions are to some extent running out of control now: there appear slogans of anti-socialist, anti-Soviet and anti-Russian character. . . .”

If this continues, he said, “it will strike out everything that has been created for many generations, poison the public mentality with nationalist venom and thereby spoil relations between the peoples for many, many years to come.

“Is this what they are after in Azerbaijan and Armenia?”

What about responsibility of Soviet leadership?

As can be seen from this talk, the essence of his position is to put the blame squarely on irresponsible, nationalist and anti-socialist elements in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. In particular, he blames (without naming them) the so-called conservative elements, those who are opposed to perestroika, as being responsible when he says that elements in both republics use this issue as a pretext to stir up national sentiment.

One thing is very clear from this talk: he absolves the Soviet leadership of any responsibility and avoids even a mention of the possibility of negative effects of the economic reforms (not the democratization process), nor does he pose the question as to whether the reforms could possibly have accentuated pre-existing national animosities. He doesn’t explain why over all these decades there has been no nationalist uprising — certainly none that we here in the West heard of, and it is certain that had there been one, the capitalist press would have ferreted it out and magnified it to the nth degree.

Unfortunately, Gorbachev doesn’t

—Banks

Continued from page 1

homa and Louisiana are facing a severe crisis. The collapse of the oil economy led to a collapse in the real estate market. Bad energy and real estate loans have hit home hard for the banks.

The bankers’ drive for ever-greater profits was responsible for much of the speculative frenzy on the stock and bond markets throughout the 1980s. When that bubble burst on Oct. 19 it sent shockwaves throughout Wall Street of which the after effects are still to be felt.

The problems facing the banks are not the type of difficulties that will be affected by whether a Bush or a Dukakis gets into the White House. These are problems fundamental to the economic system of capitalist production based on exploitation of workers and the drive for profits. That system can no longer provide for people’s needs. It generates crises, poverty and homelessness, militarism and racism. The economy is not bright and rosy, it’s rotting away from within. It takes a major bank collapse, or plant shutdown or market crash, to bring the ugly reality to the surface for all to see.

Banking’s Towering Inferno



of the Soviet economic reforms

Armenia and Azerbaijan

draw on the rich historical lessons of the Soviet Union. He doesn't go to the roots of national chauvinism. His is a bourgeois liberal approach to the national question, invoking morality instead of revolutionary communist internationalism.

Fortunately, this rich history is available, and can be found in some detail in the proceedings of the Tenth and Twelfth Congresses of the Party, not to speak of all the works by Lenin on the national question. The Tenth Congress laid the basis for the Party's position on the national question; the Twelfth Congress in particular carried forward all the prior discussions and resolutions.

Leninist view of national question

Gorbachev makes no reference to the many documents from this early period of the Soviet Union which gave such lucid expositions of the national question and described the situation of the republics and the federation in clear language, without any equivocation.

His explanation is in sharp contrast to the approach the Party took to the national question right after the Revolution, when national antagonisms were exacerbated by the introduction of drastically needed economic reforms.

The New Economic Policy (NEP) was inaugurated by Lenin in 1921 as a temporary measure. It was a step backward toward market relations made necessary by the devastation of the imperialist war, counter-revolution and intervention. It was meant to get the economy of the country back on its feet after a period of terrible shortages, wide dislocation, economic sabotage by the bourgeoisie and also widespread famine. The whole idea was to supersede NEP as soon as possible with overall socialist planning of both industry and agriculture.

The partial return to capitalism was done in order to win over the peasantry to support the industrialization efforts of the USSR, so that the country could get out of the disastrous economic situation into which the imperialists and the counterrevolutionaries had plunged it.

Lenin more than anyone, while arguing that this return to some of the features of capitalism was an absolute necessity under the circumstances of post-war economic collapse, warned of its great dangers and pointed out where this could lead. And in fact, before it was abandoned in favor of the first five-year plan, it brought about the enrichment of the traders and merchants, the so-called nepmen or middlemen Lenin called the new bourgeoisie, as well as a much greater differentiation between poor and rich peasants. All the evils of capitalism began to resurface, including unemployment.

But the great merit of the NEP period was that it had given the young Soviet state a breathing spell for reconstruction. Having achieved that, it was necessary to go forward. By what means this should be done then constituted the axis of a new political struggle in the Party.

What relation does today's perestroika have to this earlier Soviet period?

As has become well known by this time, there is today a strong and overriding tendency of the radical reformers in the USSR—who are in real-

ity bourgeois liberal reformers—to clamor for the restoration of those aspects of Lenin's New Economic Policy which directly dealt with opening up the USSR to the capitalist market, establishing joint ventures with the imperialist bourgeoisie, privatizing light and medium industry and even loosening control over the nationalized sector.

The most prominent ideological leader of this trend today is the economist Nikolai Shmelyov. He has been one of the most blatant and uninhibited in proclaiming the need to return to the New Economic Policy of the early 1920s (see our article and analysis, WW, May 26, 1988).

For example, in the *Novy Mir* of June 1987 (No. 6), Shmelyov denounced the abandonment of the NEP: "If we do not admit that the rejection of Lenin's New Economic Policy imposed severe difficulties on the building of socialism in the USSR, we will doom ourselves once again as in 1953 and 1965 to half-measures. . . ."

Gorbachev himself has stated that he agrees with Shmelyov's analysis "of the state of affairs in the economy . . . as it actually exists today," but disagrees with other aspects of it, such as Shmelyov's flagrant insistence that "some unemployment is necessary" in the USSR, which Gorbachev says would be against socialism (*Pravda*, June 22, 1987).

It's not altogether wrong to define the so-called radical economic reformers, such as Abel G. Aganbegyan, Leonid Abalkin Patyana Zaslavskaya and others, as the Shmelyov tendency. Their views are generally shared by many of Gorbachev's leading supporters.

1923 resolution on national question

Let us see then how the national question, as it pertained to Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, was analyzed in a resolution adopted by the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in April 1923. The resolution is entitled "National Factors in Party and State Development." (The full text of the resolution is included in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, a collection of articles by Joseph Stalin with additional documents, pages 279-287, International Publishers.)

The resolution is very important because at that time Lenin was still alive and it was adopted unanimously, with the agreement of the entire leadership of the USSR. Even though there had been considerable intense debate on a number of other issues, the position on the national question, as formulated and adopted in this resolution, won the support of all the groupings.

The resolution deals, of course, with local chauvinism, but it shows that the origins of such chauvinism lie in national oppression, that is, the oppression by the Great Russians. Bear in mind that this resolution was passed at a congress of the Russian Communist Party—and that it was criticizing first and foremost the great power chauvinism of the Russian nationality.

The Congress also thought it very important to point out that the New Economic Policy had exaggerated

and made very acute what remained of local antagonisms. The resolution shows how inequality fostered by economic oppression, from both the Great Russians and the imperialists, inflamed local antagonisms.

First, the resolution says that the heritage of czarism consisted "in the first place, in the survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism, which is a reflection of the former privileged position of the Great-Russians. These survivals still persist in the minds of our Soviet officials, both central and local; they breed in our institutions, central and local; they are receiving reinforcements in the shape of the 'new' Smenovekh Great-Russian chauvinist spirit, which the New Economic Policy tends to accentuate." (Our emphasis.)

It should be remembered that this was written in 1923 when Lenin was still alive and had great influence in shaping the positions taken by the Party. Lenin was the architect of the New Economic Policy, and also the inspirer and architect of the nationality position of the USSR as embodied in the various resolutions of the Party.

Party recognized dangers in NEP

It's important that at a time when the New Economic Policy was scarcely two years old, note was immediately taken by the leading party of the USSR, the Russian party, that the New Economic Policy was reinforcing chauvinism, above all the chauvinism of the Great-Russians.

In other words, the turn towards small-scale commodity production and so on, the turn toward private initiative reinforced the worst features of the old czarist regime—national oppression.

The resolution goes on: "The situation in a number of the national republics (the Ukraine, White Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkestan) is complicated by the fact that a considerable section of the working class, which forms the main support of Soviet government, are by nationality Great-Russian. In these districts the alliance between the town and the countryside, between the working class and the peasantry, encounters a powerful obstacle in the form of the survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism. . . . Thus, the first immediate task of our Party is to wage determined warfare on the survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism. . . ."

"The equality of legal status of the nations won by the October Revolution is a great achievement for the peoples, but it does not in itself solve the whole national problem. . . ."

"The causes of this actual inequality [of the nationalities] lie not only in the history of these peoples, but also in the policy pursued by czarism and the Russian bourgeoisie, which aimed at converting the border regions into areas exclusively producing raw materials and exploited by the industrially developed central districts.

"To remove this inequality in a short space of time, to eliminate this heritage in a year or two, is impossible. The Tenth Congress of our Party has already pointed out that 'the elimination of actual national inequality is a lengthy process involving a stubborn and persistent struggle against

all survivals of national oppression and colonial slavery.'

"But eliminated it must be at all costs. And it can be eliminated only if real and prolonged assistance is given by the Russian proletariat to the backward peoples of the Union in their economic and cultural advancement. . . . [T]his assistance must, in accordance with the resolution of the Tenth Congress, be rendered simultaneously with the struggle of the toiling masses against the local and foreign exploiting upper strata, which are gaining in strength in connection with the New Economic Policy, and for the consolidation of their social positions. [Our emphasis.]

" . . . This heritage consists, lastly, in the survivals of nationalism among a number of peoples which have suffered the heavy yoke of national oppression and have not yet managed to rid themselves of old national grudges. . . . [I]n some of the republics the population of which is made up of several nationalities, this defensive nationalism often turns into aggressive nationalism, into the outright chauvinism of the stronger nationalities directed against the weaker nationalities of these republics. Georgian chauvinism (in Georgia) against the Armenians, Ossets, Adjarians and Abkhazians; Azerbaijanian chauvinism (in Azerbaijan) against the Armenians; Uzbek chauvinism (in Bokhara and Khorezm) against the Turkmens and Kirghiz, Armenian chauvinism, and so on—all these forms of chauvinism, which moreover are fostered by the conditions of the New Economic Policy and by competition, are a great evil which threatens to make certain of the national republics the scene of squabbling and wrangling." [Our emphasis.]

In Lenin's day, it was ABC for the Party to recognize that the revival of bourgeois economic competition almost immediately aggravated national antagonisms notwithstanding the urgency of making a broad necessary retreat in order to take the long step forward to build socialism. Should it not be clear that three-and-a-half years of the economic reforms have aggravated the national animosities in the USSR as exemplified by Armenia and Azerbaijan today?

Was it not the bourgeois aspects of perestroika that stimulated and accentuated local nationalism? Was it not an act of Great Russian chauvinism to have replaced Dinmukhamed A. Kunayev, the first secretary of the Communist Party in Kazakhstan and himself a Kazakh, with a Great Russian, Gennadi V. Kolbin, in 1986?

There was justification for perestroika when the proletariat was a minority of the population, when it was exhausted by a revolutionary struggle to save the Soviet Union. Is there any justification for the introduction of economic reforms that are so perilously analogous to the negative aspects of the New Economic Policy? With virtually one voice, the whole international bourgeoisie keeps cheering for each new step in the direction of the NEP-like bourgeois reforms, only they are never satisfied and keep on goading the USSR leadership to go further and further. Should not the lessons of Azerbaijan and Armenia be cause to pause and reconsider?

EDITORIALS

A pig's last slurp

Anyone following the news throughout July on Attorney General Ed Meese would likely believe that this sultan of sleaze is now powerless, waiting for retirement. In fact, they'd consider him lucky to get off without a jail sentence.

But as August begins in this year of drought, here's Meese again, doing what the Reagan administration in general and he in particular have done so well. He's making another giveaway to the already rich.

This time the beneficiaries of Meese's generosity are the Western agribusiness monopolies. And he's giving them water. Not a glass of water, nor a gallon of water, but whatever water is available in the federal wilderness areas.

In technical terms, Meese simply drafted a letter to Interior Secretary Donald Hodel. In it, he said he agreed with an Interior Department finding that the federal government had no implied or automatic rights to the water it might require for managing its wilderness areas. He added that the Justice Department would not assert such rights in any future litigation.

This decision will be contested in courts. But if it goes through, it means that big private agribus-

ness could suck water resources off the federal wilderness areas. This would kill plant life associated with wetlands, fish and other wildlife. It would be another ripoff of the public wealth by private business.

Debby Sease, a Washington representative of the Sierra Club, a nationwide conservation group, described the decision as "a public resource giveaway of monumental proportions. First, this administration gave away public land, then public coal, oil and gas," she said, "and now they are going to try to give away the water."

While all administrations, Republican and Democratic, have been pro-big business, the Reagan gang have been most unashamedly so. In their waning days, they seem to be trying to give away to the rich whatever is left. How else can you explain the audacity of someone like Meese? After all, in a more rational society, he should be in jail breaking rocks. Under Reagan capitalism, he's turning vital water over to his wealthy cronies.

Shultz flops in Guatemala

The Reagan administration got a stinging rebuff in its attempt to line up the countries of Central America against Nicaragua. Secretary of State George Shultz went to Guatemala to meet with the foreign ministers of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, trying to get these countries to go along with U.S. interventionist plans.

So cocksure was Shultz that he sent his messenger to Central America to precede him with a pre-

pared "joint" communique already written out for the ministers to sign. The document was a hysterical diatribe against Nicaragua. One senior U.S. official described it as "a virtual declaration of war." Shultz arrogantly expected the foreign ministers to pen their names to the statement without even a peep of protest. After all, that's how Washington did it 60 years ago. Then it was enough for a U.S. consul to arrive in a South American capital, with a warship waiting in the bay, for a foreign government to quickly accede to Yankee demands.

But 1988 is not 1928. And countries that the U.S. likes to think of as puppets and servants like to think of themselves as sovereign and independent. The representatives of Guatemala and Costa Rica, faced with their own internal problems and working-class discontent, told the U.S. representative that they would not sign the document. They said they would not join in with the U.S. in denouncing Nicaragua even if it would provoke political reprisals from Washington, which they said they expected.

"If we sign this statement," said a Guatemalan official to the New York Times (July 31), "we are saying that our foreign policy is being set by the United States. We would be losing our independence."

The Sandinista government has called the Shultz trip "a desperate offensive," which indeed it is. As Shultz, Reagan and their fans on Capitol Hill thunder about the "isolation" of Nicaragua, the reality is just the opposite. Millions throughout Latin America see Washington as the destabilizer, the war party, the aggressor. Their sympathies are with the Nicaraguan workers and peasants who are courageously trying to build a new country amidst the hardships of imperialist intervention and war.

Workers World volunteers petition for ballot status

Independent party must jump big hurdles to reach voters with socialist message

By Leslie Feinberg

Schoolchildren are taught that this is a land of opportunity in which any kid, rich or poor, can grow up to be president. Elections, so the story goes, are the expression of the "popular will."

But never mentioned are the stumbling blocks to keeping representatives of working and poor people off the ballot. Ignored are the intrigues, backroom deals and manipulations such as those used against Jesse Jackson throughout his campaign.

Also rarely mentioned is the ordeal that an independent candidate has to go through for the basic democratic right just to be on the ballot!

So you want to be president?

In order to secure the right to have an independent party's name merely printed on a state ballot, it is necessary for that party to hit the streets to get thousands of signatures of registered voters on petitions and then complete complex and tedious technical paper work, all within the constraints of a rigid time framework.

First, an independent candidate needs to find the money and skills just to have thousands of petitions printed. And then he or she needs expensive, hard-to-obtain books which are necessary to look up each signer's election district and assembly district. Next, supporters must pound the pavement to get the necessary hundreds of thousands of signatures of registered voters.

Someone running for president on the California state ballot would need 128,340 signatures of registered residents. Maryland stipulates 60,000. In Oregon an independent party must get 51,578 signatures; in North Carolina, 44,535.

And if that's bad, Florida demands 56,318 signatures for ballot status for

president and 168,000 to run for state offices—and then the state charges ten cents to verify each signature!

John Anderson, the Republican presidential candidate who decided to run his own campaign in 1984, spent over \$1 million just to get his name on the ballot across the country. What working class people have that kind of money to shell out?

Picky, picky, picky!

Keep in mind that the numbers of signatures specified by each state may not be sufficient to pave the way to the ballot. It doesn't hurt to double the number of signatures as a cushion in case the state nit-picks and throws out a lot of the names.

The Board of Elections can go over the petitions with a fine tooth comb, using all kinds of restrictions about voter registration to invalidate signatures. The very fact that a person can't sign unless she or he is registered in the state discriminates against undocumented workers.

And what about people who have moved from another state and haven't registered yet? Why shouldn't they be able to sign?

There are also numerous people in every state who haven't bothered to register because they have been bored to death by Republican-Democratic politics. Along comes a party that piques their interest by offering a revolutionary alternative, and these people can't even sign in support of a party they'd like to see on the ballot!

The state requirements are so formidable that some parties have even decided not to run candidates this year, stating as their reason the near-impossibility of gaining ballot status.

Happily, this is not the case with Workers World Party!

Ain't no stoppin' us now, we're on the move!

Workers World Party refuses to give up the election podium to the big business-backed Democratic and Republican parties. And the boulder of

petitioning, which is meant to block independent parties from running in the race, is being rolled aside through collective hard work.

In Massachusetts, Workers World has already completed ballot status requirements for State Senate candidate Robert Traynham.

In Washington state, Workers World has already completed petitioning and held a state convention on July 23 in order to place Larry Holmes, Gloria La Riva and Jim McMahon, Workers World Party's Presidential, Vice Presidential and local congressional candidates, on the ballot.

In New Mexico, where the state claims that 500 people must be registered in a party's name in order to sign petitions, Workers World has filed 900 signatures for presidential and vice-presidential candidates and has protested that absurd prerequisite.

Keep up the good work!

In Ohio and New York, petitioning is energetically underway. New York mandates 20,000 signatures—in a period of six of the hottest weeks of the summer, when many residents are away on vacation. In order to circumvent a Board of Elections challenge, it's preferable to get almost 40,000.

And so, from Buffalo to Rochester to New York City, Workers World Party members and supporters are going out every day—on lunch hours, after work, during vacation time and on weekends—to attain the right of a revolutionary working class party to be on the election ballot.

At shopping malls, public parks, concerts, subways and street corners, many of the people who have signed these petitions have expressed shock that being on the ballot is not already a right and have encouraged petitioners to keep up the fight to win ballot status.

Workers World in Ohio. The heat was oppressive. One hundred degrees. The kind of summer weather better suited for a day at the beach or an afternoon in an air-conditioned movie theater. But for Workers World Party petitioners, there was work to be done. Getting Workers World Party candidates on the Ohio presidential ballot.

And those petitions were hot, too! They gathered up some 3,500 signatures in just one week, with petitioners reporting a strong response to WWP's campaign for jobs and decent wages. At an AIDS benefit, a sign that read "put lesbian-gay rights candidate on the ballot" brought people to the campaign table to sign on.

Alan Roth



WW PHOTO: ALAN ROTH

U.S. suffers setback in Mideast war policy

Palestinian uprising forces Jordan's Hussein to give up claims to West Bank

By Joyce Chediak

August 2—King Hussein of Jordan announced on July 31 that he was relinquishing all claims to the West Bank to the Palestine Liberation Organization. While the PLO has not yet issued a statement and has called an emergency meeting of the Palestine National Council, its congress in exile, to discuss this development, some things are clear.

Hussein's statement is a victory wrenched from this reactionary monarch by the nine-month-old Palestinian uprising shaking the West Bank

and Gaza Strip. It is also a significant blow to Washington's plans for a pro-imperialist settlement in this oil-rich area of the world.

The Reagan administration has responded by sending Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy to Amman for clarification. Washington, which refuses to recognize the PLO, the chosen leadership of the Palestinian people, calls for Jordan to represent the Palestinian people in any peace talks.

For Hussein to say that "Jordan is not Palestine" and "we respect the wishes of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to secede from us in an independent Palestinian state" would have been inconceivable just ten months ago. In November, an Arab League meeting in Amman, Jordan, all but wrote off the Palestinian struggle and the PLO, and encouraged Hussein to assert himself as the spokesperson of the Palestinians.

What changed all this was the amazing uprising on the West Bank and Gaza Strip which, defying the most brutal Israeli repression, stated

its ultimate goal to be the creation of an independent Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO. The Hussein statement, wrested from him by this mass struggle, is an indication of the strength of a whole people in motion.

The king's announcement is a recognition of public opinion in the West Bank which, in addition to opposing Israeli occupation, has also come out strongly against Jordanian administration there. Militant youth greeted Hussein's announcement with joy.

As Daoud Kuttab, a Palestinian journalist and commentator from East Jerusalem put it, "The king finally understood he had no support in the West Bank. He read the writing on the wall and bowed to the inevitable."

Who is Hussein?

Who is Hussein and what does he represent? The country of Transjordan was actually created in the 1922 by European imperialists when they made the borders to the nations in that area to meet their own colonial needs, not to reflect the realities of the people living there.

The arid country with a small, largely nomadic population was hardly a viable state. With Britain's help, it became the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan in 1948, and its population was swelled by Palestinian refugees escaping Israeli terror.

London created a Jordanian throne and set upon it Abdullah ibn-Hussein, a man who was not even from the area but was the son of the sharif of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. In 1950 this British collaborator annexed the West Bank and declared himself the "king of Palestine." Abdullah was assassinated in 1951 when it was widely felt that he was collaborating with Israel. This was Hussein's grandfather.

Hussein has continued on the path of collaboration with imperialism. He reigns over 2.8 million people, 70% of

them Palestinian. He rules by the harshest repression.

In 1970 at a time when the PLO was based in Amman, Hussein used U.S.-supplied arms to launch a bloody attack on the resistance movement, killing or wounding 20,000 in ten days. Israel remained on alert, just in case assistance was needed.

With this kind of record, it is no surprise that Washington and elements in Tel Aviv have pushed to have Hussein, and not the PLO, speak for the Palestinian people. They would like a Palestinian Bantustan to be administered by Jordan and guarded by Israel.

But Hussein has problems of his own. Could Hussein deal with the 900,000 West Bank Palestinians currently engaged in a prolonged revolt which, at least in part, is aimed against Jordanian administration? Could it be that right now Hussein considers the West Bank too hot to handle and wants to cut his losses?

Whatever the motivation, Hussein is not to be considered out of the picture as a tool for a pro-imperialist settlement. Some say that he is telling the PLO to sink or swim.

Nor is it clear precisely what measures the Jordanian regime will take. So far it has canceled a U.S.-backed \$1.3 billion development plan, which is regarded as mostly a way to undermine the PLO's leadership, and has dissolved the lower house of the Jordanian parliament, with its token representation of the West Bank. Will Hussein withdraw the \$50 million annually that goes to pay the 18,000 in West Bank who are part of the Jordanian administration? Will he revoke the Jordanian passport, which is held by West Bank residents? Will he close the bridges between Jordan and the West Bank?

What is clear, however, is that Hussein will not in any way help the Palestinian uprising unless forced to by that mass resistance.

—Vets Convoy

Continued from page 1

them 30 tons of food, clothing and medicine for Nicaragua's children, in addition to the trucks and buses which they will leave here. Another 300 tons of aid, collected as the convoy travelled across the U.S. will arrive soon by boat.

"These are the weapons Reagan says threaten the security of the U.S. government," President Daniel Ortega told the welcoming crowd in Managua on Friday as he held up samples of the peace convoy's cargo. "This is real humanitarian aid," Ortega said, "not what Ronald Reagan persists in giving to the contras."

President Ortega thanked the delegates—25 men and 16 women from all over the U.S.—for a "true and beautiful act of brotherhood by the North American people, who don't want war." The delegation's beaming faces reflected the words of Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto, who said they brought "love, tenderness, respect and solidarity to Nicaragua from a great people harassed by its government's disinformation and the repressive apparatus of the Reagan administration."

Children gave flowers and red-and-black Sandinista scarves to the delegates. A group of recent combat veterans presented them with olive-green shirts and caps. Wounded war veterans awarded them with headbands symbolizing honorary membership in their organization.

'A joint struggle'

"We're not going to permit Reagan to choose our friends for us," convoy coordinator Raul Valdez told the crowd, adding that the peace convoy's difficulties were tiny compared with Nicaragua's suffering. Valdez, of Chicanos Against Military Intervention in Central America (CAMILA) of Austin, Texas, said, "We need to wage a joint struggle, because the money Reagan sends to the contras comes from our taxes and is taken away from our children's education."

"We're ready," Valdez said, "to organize all the North American people to stop the war against Nicaragua and also struggle for a change in our country."

Asked later if the group expected legal reprisals when they return home, as the Reagan administration has threatened, Valdez commented that "it's a possibility—they've made mistakes before." He said the repression against the peace convoy has helped educate the U.S. public about Reagan's war policy, and the group is prepared to continue this education process.

Rev. Walker of NYC shot by contras in Nicaragua

Rev. Lucius Walker of New York City was shot and wounded Aug. 2 inside Nicaragua when the boat he was on was attacked by contras.

Walker was leading a peace mission of the Inter-Religious Task Force of Community Organizations focusing on cooperatives and church communities on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast. He was attacked while on a riverboat from El Rama to Bluefields.

After receiving treatment for his wounds in Managua, Walker held a press conference to place the blame for this attack squarely on the White House. He said that when his group returns to the U.S. on Aug. 6 it will escalate its campaign against the U.S. war on the people of Nicaragua.

—Peltier

Continued from page 2 that city.

At a press conference July 30, Nelson affirmed his belief that Peltier wasn't given a fair trial and said that he would do another Peltier benefit concert if needed.

Unfortunately, Nelson didn't stop there. He went on to emphasize that he really supported law enforcement and noted that he was an honorary member of the Texas Rangers, an infamously racist outfit which has been responsible for the murders and lynchings of thousands of Latino and Black people. Nelson then offered to do a joint benefit concert to raise money for both the American Indian Relief Fund and a statue in honor of police that the national Fraternal Order of Policemen wants to erect in Washington, D.C. The cops called off any further pickets of Nelson's concerts.

Responding to this, Tony Youngwolf said, "Willie Nelson made his own decision. Our position remains the same. We were able to raise a lot of awareness in Rhode Island about Leonard's case, and we hope to be able to continue to do so."



Honor Cuba, Nicaragua. "Long live the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions" was the banner prominently displayed at the front of a Workers World Party forum in New York City July 29 celebrating these two important victories. The evening's event featured a bold, vivid and colorful slide show portraying life in socialist Cuba by Pat Chin, who, four years ago, visited Cuba with the Venceremos Brigade, which has annual solidarity visits by North Americans to Cuba, and by Susan Rotgard, a participant in this year's brigade.

A comprehensive overview about life in Cuba and the differences with life in the U.S. was given by Mahtowin, a member of the 19th contingent. Teresa Gutierrez gave a rousing solidarity talk, reaffirming Workers World Party's support for Nicaragua, besieged by the U.S.-contra war. Pictured above are the speakers, back row from left, Sara Flounders, Pam Kirkland, Mahtowin; front from left, Pat Chin, Teresa Gutierrez, Susan Rotgard.

Kathy Durkin



Pista de aterrizaje militar siendo construida por tropas estadounidenses en Honduras cerca de la frontera con Nicaragua, 1986.

Comando sur poder hostil

Serie especial de estudios políticos

Nuestro colectivo tiene el gusto de informarles que como parte de nuestro trabajo educativo sobre diferentes aspectos de la situación política, económica y social a nivel mundial, empezamos una serie de artículos con un estudio realizado por el investigador centroamericano Raúl Leis, sobre el Comando Sur, tomado de "Cuadernos de Pensamiento Propio", que recogen las investigaciones de los centros afiliados a la Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales (CRIES), y son editados en Managua, Nicaragua.

Comando Sur: eje estratégico

Más de cuatro millones de efectivos integran el personal que maneja la poderosa maquinaria bélica estadounidense. La octava parte -medio millón- se encuentra distribuida en 1.500 bases e instalaciones militares en 32 países del mundo, situados en todos los continentes. Los navíos estadounidenses de guerra cruzan todos los mares y océanos, sus aviones supersónicos atraviesan los espacios aéreos en labores de espionaje, maniobras o combate. Más allá de los 2.338 cohetes de cabeza nuclear múltiple ubicados en rampas de lanzamiento, el aparato bélico alberga infraestructura y logística para guerras convencionales y de contrainsurgencia.

Junto al Potomac

El centro nervioso de este complejo es un edificio fincado junto al río Potomac en Washington: el Pentágono. Treinta mil empleados pululan por 27 kilómetros de pasillos de esta instalación, sede del Departamento de Defensa de los Estados Unidos.

El 17 de enero de 1961 el entonces presidente saliente de los Estados Unidos, General D. Eisenhower, bautizó acertadamente al Complejo Militar Industrial, como el componente esencial del poderío imperial estadounidense. Una simbiosis del ejército, banca e industrias enlazadas al ejecutivo y legislativo, expresan la composición del poder en ese país. El presupuesto estatal para la defensa se liga íntimamente a los monopolios privados, creando un cordón umbilical entre capital y armamentismo. Más de cien supermonopolios atienden dos tercios de los pedidos totales del Pentágono; de esta cantidad 15 reciben más del 40%. Otras 500 empresas satisfacen el 15% de las demandas. El resto es cubierto por 50 mil empresas contratistas. Dos ejemplos sirven: la General Dynamics destina el 80% de su producción a las necesidades bélicas y la Boeing Co.—La más grande constructora de aviones—dedica el 60% a los mismos fines.

Pero los beneficios no son solo de una vía. La maquinaria castrense salvaguarda en orden interno e internacional del sistema capitalista y el liderazgo imperial en ese sistema. Asegura y controla la posición de dominio. Con respecto a los mercados, las fuentes de materia prima y la geopolítica estratégica para la perpetuación de la hegemonía.

La Administración Reagan asegura la continuación del modelo de dominación, pero con nuevas modalidades estratégicas:

1. Impulsa una política exterior que busca integrarse con la perspectiva militar de dominio del orbe.
2. Pugná por el restablecimiento pleno del poderío militar de los Estados Unidos, visualizando la superioridad militar en todos los campos como su eje de relación con el campo socialista y el resto del mundo.

Triángulo de la intervención

En un aspecto más geográfico el Comando Sur se integra a una coordinación regional en función de las Fuerzas de despliegue Rápido, FDR; y de logística, entrenamiento y coordinación a través del triángulo militar norteamericano en el Caribe. Esta coordinación fue muy bien explicada en 1981 (Strategic Studies Institute, por el puertorriqueño Rodríguez Berruf, 1984) cuando una alta instancia militar recomendó el "aumento de la presencia militar directa en la región, unificación de los comandos para que reflejen la realidad que Centro América y el Caribe son una entidad estratégica única y mejoramiento en el entrenamiento de las fuerzas regulares".

Dotados de esta concepción de entidad estratégica única, se definieron tres ejes del triángulo militar:

1. El Comando Unificado del Caribe o U.S Caribbean Force en Key West, Estados Unidos:

Este comando tiene su antecedente en el Joint Task Force on Caribbean and Central America, creado por Carter en 1979 como parte de las FDR para esta región. En la actualidad dicen tener más de 30 mil soldados y equipos navales sofisticados como el aerodeslizador LACU 30.

2. El Comando Naval de Puerto Rico: Anteriormente la isla fue sede del Comando de Defensa de las Antillas, que realizaba maniobras marinas y fue trasladado a Key West en 1981. El Comando Naval incluye en la actualidad más de 3.000 tropas.

3. El Comando Sur, con sede en el área del Canal de Panamá: Integra una de las vértices del triángulo, pero tiene funciones continentales y un conjunto de maquinaria bélica mucho mayor que los otros países.

Otros componentes menores, pero no menos importantes de la coordinación regional, son la Eastern Caribbean Guard (creada en 1982), con sede en Barbados y responsabilidad en los mares de St. Vincent, Dominica, Antigua y Saint Kitts, y la base de Guantánamo, Cuba. Por la situación centroamericana, Honduras ha ido adquiriendo las características de un eje de la coordinación, por lo que ya puede comenzarse a hablar de un cuadrángulo militar de Estados Unidos en la región.

Todos estos componentes cuadruplican la región mesoamericana y caribeña al nivel de un subconjunto de las FDR, que permitirían aún más agilidad en la intervención masiva en la segunda fase de la estrategia de reacción flexible.

La próxima semana seguiremos con la segunda parte de este estudio.

Fracasa plan de agresión contra Nicaragua

Por Carlos Vargas

Centro-América: Los cuatro gobiernos centroamericanos rechazaron la petición por parte de los Estados Unidos de hacer un fuerte pronunciamiento en contra de Nicaragua, acusando a estos de no haber cumplido con los acuerdos de Esquipulas II, según publicó el New York Times el 2 de agosto. El pronunciamiento acusatorio debería hacerse el lunes 1 de agosto en una reunión de los cancilleres de los países centroamericanos (exceptuando el de Nicaragua) con el Secretario de Estado norteamericano, George Shultz en Guatemala.

Un enviado especial de Washington, Morris D. Busby fué a centroamérica con el propósito de intimidar y presionar a estos gobiernos en su cruzada de agresión en contra del gobierno popular nicaraguense. En respuesta a todo esto, el presidente guatemalteco Vinicio Cerezo aludió a la credibilidad y neutralidad de su país mantenida por dos años, tras el derro-

camiento de la dictadura militar en Guatemala. Mientras que su homólogo costarricense Oscar Arias, que fué el constructor del plan de paz Esquipulas II, declaró que los problemas de la región deberían solucionarse dentro del marco centroamericano, sin la ingerencia de los Estados Unidos, rechazando con esto los planes agresivos de la administración Reagan.

A la respuesta negativa de los gobiernos de Guatemala y Costa Rica, sobre la petición estadounidense, el gobierno norteamericano aumenta las presiones sobre estos dos países. En un comunicado del 2 de agosto, emitido por el partido Demócrata Cristiano del presidente Cerezo, advertía de que si Guatemala no se unía al plan en contra de Nicaragua, los Estados Unidos tomarían represalias económicas en contra del país. Esto demuestra el interés único de la administración Reagan, de encontrar una excusa para seguir apoyando a la contra somocista, y continuar la guerra de agresión en contra de Nicaragua.



Manifestación popular por el asesinato de Carmen Coria en Perth Amboy

Por Santiago Manque-Milla
Perth Amboy, N.J.

El sábado 30 de julio se llevó a efecto una manifestación en contra de la brutalidad policial y el racismo imperante en Perth Amboy, además para exigir justicia por el asesinato de Carmen Coria, crimen cometido el 6 de junio por el sargento Allen Fuller miembro de la policía del condado, se demandó esclarecer también la muerte de Edward Crawford mientras este se encontraba detenido en un establecimiento policial.

A pesar de las presiones ejercidas por el alcalde del condado George J. Otowski, apoyado por la prensa de la localidad que trataron de impedir que esta marcha de protesta se llevara a efecto, declarando que esto generaría violencia y disturbios, la comunidad latina por su lado apoyada por el resto de las comunidades se hizo presente en las calles de Perth Amboy demostrando un grado de disciplina,

orden y militancia que desmintieron rotundamente lo aseverado por el alcalde de dicho condado.

La comunidad exige que el fiscal Alan A. Rockoff agilice la investigación sobre la muerte de Coria y empiece un encausamiento por asesinato contra el sargento Fuller, quien se encuentra en libertad y continúa cobrando su salario sin que las autoridades pertinentes le hayan impuesto ninguna clase de sanción. Dejando en claro con esto que el fiscal que lleva adelante esta pesquisa no tiene ningún interés de esclarecer dicho crimen, demostrando así el carácter racista de la justicia que hoy impera en Perth Amboy.

Sin embargo el compromiso de las comunidades del condado fue que las movilizaciones tendrán que continuar hasta que haya verdadera justicia para Carmen Coria, Eddy Crawford y los demás miembros de la comunidad de Perth Amboy afectados por la brutalidad policial.