



# REVOLUTION

Organ of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

25¢

Vol. 2, No. 5



March 1977

## UWOC Hits Benefit Cuts Calls Mar. 5 Demo in DC

As the March 27 deadline draws near for the expiration of the two federal unemployment extensions, the campaign to stop these cuts has started to pick up steam. The outrageous character of this attack, which would result in unemployment benefits being cut from 65 to 39 weeks, has infuriated more and more workers and struggle has grown among both employed and unemployed, as word of the cuts has spread.

In light of this the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) along with rank and file organizations are mobilizing broadly in the East and Midwest to bring hundreds of employed and unemployed workers to Washington on March 5 to demand no cuts in these extensions. This demonstration will be a key blow in this struggle, bringing the anger at these proposed cuts right up to the doors of Congress and the White House. It follows the Inauguration Day demonstration sponsored by UWOC which saw 350 unemployed, employed youth and veterans protest these cuts. There will be more actions if these cuts are not stopped.

Since Inauguration Day UWOC has been concentrating on local actions. In Birmingham UWOC organized a big car caravan letting people know about the proposed cuts. In Michigan 50 people demonstrated at the State Capitol in Lansing against a proposed state law that would deny unemployment benefits to those who are fired or quit, connecting this with the federal cuts. In Milwaukee UWOC has gone out to local plants in the area to build support for the campaign and to collect money for the bus trip to Washington on March 5. In the New York, northern New Jersey area UWOC has been holding public meetings to discuss the attacks on the unemployed. In the Bronx, Manhattan, and parts of northern New Jersey, 25-30 people have come to each of these to speak bitterness at being unemployed and to take steps to fight the extension cuts.

On February 22, when the Unemployment Compen-

sation Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee in the Senate opens public hearings, UWOC is on the official agenda to speak and plans to confront them face to face with the anger of the unemployed. Simultaneously other UWOC chapters around the country plan to have actions in connection with the opening of these hearings.

### More Unemployed Joining Fight

As the struggle grows around these attacks many new people are starting to get active for the first time. The proposal to cut the unemployment extensions is a very serious attack, especially after someone has lost their job and already gone in debt up to his ears. For many it is the straw that has broken the camel's back, raising the very real specter of not being able to buy food or pay the rent.

UWOC has striven to speak to this anger and give it a form of expression. For example, in their dramatic poster for the March 5 demonstration, which in New York City, for example, has attracted whole groups of readers where it is posted near subway stops and unemployment centers, says in part: "From layoffs to plant closings, from crisis in the cities and now the gas shortage, we have been talked to for years about 'sacrifice' and 'the spirit of hard work' as if these qualities are the ticket to a good life. Yet millions of us are idle because our labor can't make a buck for some boss and our will-

ingness to work has been no guarantee of a job." At the unemployment centers and in meetings in some areas UWOC is giving these posters to interested people, who in turn have put them up in their windows, with posters starting to pop up all over housing projects, apartment buildings and other places.

The struggle against these extension cuts is also being spread to employed workers and has met enthusiastic support, especially when the link between the attacks on the unemployed and the attacks on the employed has been drawn sharply. Not only has UWOC raised money at plant gates in many parts of the country for the bus trip to Washington on March 5, but rank and file organization in their plants have helped build the struggle. At the Ford Metuchen plant in New Jersey, for example, active workers got a resolution passed by the local condemning the proposed cuts and supporting the actions of the unemployed.

By dragging the issue into the open and demonstrations like the one coming up on March 5, UWOC and organizations of employed workers are helping to create the conditions for even greater resistance to the cutoffs. As the March deadline nears, the working class is stepping up the fight to stop the capitalists' attempts to crush the unemployed and drag down the standard of living of the whole working class. If the ruling class doesn't back down on these benefit cuts, there will be hell to pay because workers are determined that this is one abuse that the capitalists just won't get away with. ■



UWOC mobilized unemployed in Washington during Carter's inaugural parties. The fight against federal benefit cuts has been kicked off all around the country.

## Fans Hatred of Oppression

# Millions Discuss, Debate *Roots*

Last month's televised showing of *Roots* was more than a television series—it was a major social event. In the subways and on the shop floors, in living rooms, in taverns and coffee shops from coast to coast people discussed and struggled over the film and over the questions of society in the U.S. today that *Roots* gave rise to.

What did *Roots* do? While in form it was the dramatized account of the history of the family of its author, Alex Haley, its significance lay in the fact that it shed light on a whole epoch in the history of the country and took on a whole series of well constructed lies and myths that have been carefully woven around the slave period over the decades.

In recent years there have been a few superficial "exposures" of the slave system and the history of Black people which portray the slaves as passive and promote the "quiet dignity of the oppressed." But generally when the slave system has been dealt with

at all in the popular media it is to paint a nostalgic—and totally false—picture of the pre-Civil War South in which the slavemasters are chivalrous, cultured and benevolent, and the slaves, to the extent they figure in at all, are meek, dumb, happy and obedient. The facts surrounding how slaves got to America in the first place is one of the "unmentionables" of official history. From childhood we have been bombarded with a picture of Africa consisting of cannibals and semi-humans, with the clear implication being that Africans were probably better off being kidnapped and dragged off in chains to Christian civilization.

*Roots* deals a heavy blow to this fiction. The trapings of the slavemasters' culture is shown to be but a thin veil covering a brutal regime of the whip and the auction block. The onus of barbarism is correctly placed on those who made fortunes in the trade in human flesh, while the victims of their piracy are portrayed in a sympathetic light. The resistance of the slaves is both

portrayed and supported. In short, *Roots* takes the side of the oppressed and condemns the oppressor.

It is this that gives *Roots* its significance and explains its tremendous impact on the American people. This is not mainly because of some abstract interest on the part of the masses in setting the historical record straight. Rather it is because the slave system left deep scars on present-day society, principally the continuing national oppression of Black people. The whole web of cover-ups, apologies—even glorifications—of slavery, which *Roots* effectively takes on, is part of the superstructure of this continuing oppression.

Because of this, the discussion and controversy over *Roots* was bound to go beyond an assessment of its artistic or historical merit, and focus on broader social questions. Were Black people "free at last" as the movie contended when the author's family arrived in Tennessee? Where do whites fit into the picture, are they responsible for the oppression of Blacks? How is it that such a vicious system could come into being and why did it fall? Why hasn't the truth about slavery come out before? What is the solution, the way out, of the oppression of Black people today? Does the position of workers of different nationalities have any similarity with that of slaves in the past? These, and similar questions, were hotly contested around the country.

Alex Haley does not directly address most of these questions in his work. Nevertheless, the way *Roots* presents the past has a bearing on how those who read the book or saw the series will look at them. Without belittling in the slightest the overall positive effect of *Roots*, it must be understood that there is much in

Continued on page 12

# Rank & File Take On UMWA Elections

Four years ago, in late 1972, coal miners knocked down the hated Tony Boyle machine that had put their union, the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA) at the beck and call of the coal operators for years. This June, new international elections are scheduled in the UMWA with the contract due to expire less than six months later. Among those running for president are two of the main figures in the 1972 Miners for Democracy (MFD) campaign, President Arnold Miller, and Secretary-Treasurer Harry Patrick. And the split in the ranks of the former MFD bigshots goes further. Mike Trbovich, another active figure in the 1972 campaign, has thrown his support to Lee Roy Patterson, a veteran of the old Boyle machine.

Heated discussion is beginning to stir in bathhouses and union halls throughout the coalfields over what these elections mean and what, in fact, have been the results of the last election which brought Miller and Patrick to power. In the course of these discussions, many miners express disgust at all these so-called choices, and there are forces beginning to put forward and organize around the position that, unlike the last election, the rank and file has nothing to gain in supporting any of the candidates in this year's election. Under today's conditions there is no way support for Miller, Patrick or Patterson can strengthen the position of the rank and file in the struggle in the UMWA or in their battle with the coal bosses, who have publically expressed the hope that the election will strengthen the control of the hacks over the membership.

## 1972 Miller Campaign

So great has been the disgust of many miners with Miller's treachery since '72 that some feel the efforts to dump Boyle were wasted—"at least we *knew* Boyle was a crook." But the fact is that although it would be difficult to name a single good thing that Miller has done since he took office, the MFD campaign and the defeat of the Boyle machine still stand as big victories for the rank and file.

The upsurge of rank and file rebellion began well before 1972 but Boyle, hand-in-hand with operators and the federal judges they owned, used his entrenched position to try and betray or crush outright different battles that erupted. Boyle stopped at nothing, even the cold-blooded murder of those who challenged him, but the miners continued to fight, building various organizations like the Black Lung associations and the MFD.

In this situation of virtual revolt, candidates who came forward to challenge Boyle seriously had to raise the issues around which miners were moving and even base themselves on the organizations that were built. Thus the Miller campaign could be taken up as a battering ram to help topple the Boyle machine and more. Through it the rank and file could, and to a considerable extent, did, popularize and force concessions around important issues like Black Lung and pension rights. Reforms were won in the union's structure like real regional autonomy and the right to ratify contracts. All this helped advance the miners' struggle to a new level, on which the mighty strike battles of the last three years have been waged.

Because it saw these possibilities, the Revolutionary Union, which played a major role in the formation of the RCP, supported the Miller campaign while consistently pointing out that the miners could not rely on Miller or any other leader as a "saviour." Only the miners themselves could defend and advance their interests. This was all the more true because there were capitalist forces also working to achieve their goals through Miller's victory. They felt that Boyle was just too hated and exposed to control the miners, and they hoped Miller would do a better job.

The line of "critical support"—support based on advancing the interests of the rank and file—has proved correct in both its aspects. Since winning office Miller and Patrick have opposed and attacked the miners every step of the way as they used their posts as stepping stones out of the working class.



Striking coal miners at Stern Mining Co.'s Justus mine, McCreary, Ky. Miners' battle against coal bosses has sharpened, despite UMWA leader's efforts to block it.

They moved quickly to dissolve the Miners for Democracy organization claiming that with them in office, the miners no longer needed any rank and file organization. More recently, Miller put it straight out from his point of view: "The revolution is over." Miller and his cohorts have undercut efforts at organizing the unorganized like the Brookside Kentucky drive, pushed through the 1974 sellout contract with its anti-wildcat clauses, worked overtime to smash the wildcats of 1975 and last year over the right to strike and against federal injunctions, hounded rank and file militants and then drew up a "10 Point Program to End Wildcats" that define the job of the union hierarchy as enforcing the contract against the unruly membership in order to insure uninterrupted production!

Lee Roy Patterson is not as well known as Miller and Patrick and he likes it that way. Last fall he said he would "lay low" until the right time to start a campaign blitz. He's got plenty of reason to hide, too. As a member of the International Executive Board who was originally appointed by Tony Boyle, he has opposed every reform and gain the rank and file fought for, just like Miller, whose services to the company are better known. He voted for the Ten Point Program too, and agreed with its use to suspend rank and file activists and refuse legal and financial help to locals facing injunctions or fines.

His big disagreement with Miller, other than the main one of whose fat butt should be in the president's chair, is that the union is not being run enough like a business, not bringing in enough money. In his election campaign he is pushing a "super-autonomy" gimmick—divide the union into semi-independent kingdoms under the name of districts. This is nothing more nor less than a bid for support from other executive board members and district bigwigs whose power and treasuries it would increase and won't do one thing for the miners themselves.

The fact that none of the three candidates have anything to offer UMWA members becomes crystal clear when one listens to such mouthpieces for the bosses as the Bituminous Coal Operators Association and *Coal Age* magazine. They sound like a bulldog confronted with a choice between three T-bone steaks. Their basic outlook was stated by one industry executive in *Coal Age*: "We'd welcome a good strong union that had control over its men."

They aren't too pleased with Miller's inability—despite his willingness—to keep things running smoothly but, "should Miller win the election he might be able to regroup the diverse UMWA forces and control the union." Patterson is a friendly face from way back, and while Patrick may talk tough on occasion, behind his militant words, they recognize an "able leader" by capitalist standards.

## Different Conditions, Different Tactics

It is not too difficult to see that the situation in the miners' union today is radically different from that in 1972. Then a combination of factors—the entrenched Boyle machine, the rank and file upsurge, the positions Miller was forced to publically profess, the grassroots nature of the organization Miller pushed himself to the top of—made active participation in the MFD campaign a tactic the rank and file could and did use to advance their struggle.

Today such a combination of conditions do not exist and support for any of the would-be top dogs would only weaken and shackle that struggle. The same principles applied to the very different circumstances call for different tactics than in the last UMWA elections.

The coal operators and the capitalist class in general are particularly gratified by the decision to change the election date, moving it up to June, several months in advance of the contract. A strike in the industry is widely expected when the contract runs out this winter (except by the likes of Miller who says he sees "no need" for one) and the operators hope a new administration with a "popular mandate" will be better able to put over a sellout. One government official summed up in *Coal Age* what the capitalists expect as a result of the voting, "Moving the election up helped, but it will only help shorten the strike not prevent it."

This shows the respect, not to say outright fear, the bosses feel for the militance and determination of the miners.

Even with three turkeys runnings, this election can be an opportunity to build that militance and determination. Some miners feel that if they don't vote for one of the main candidates there's nothing else they can do. But this isn't true. The fight against this election sham can help to *build* rank and file organization, struggle and understanding about the path forward.

Across the coalfields, miners will go to campaign meetings, not just to sit back and listen to what the candidates have to say, but to force these "heroes" into the open. Pinning these labor fakers down, demanding explanations of their company positions on arbitration, or absenteeism, or Black Lung and pensions will help to expose them for what they are. Putting them on the line for their use of union office to sabotage struggles and attack the membership with suspensions and the rest of the 10 Points will weaken their ability to get away with sellouts.

If the rank and file can jam them hard enough, real concessions can be won. Using every opportunity, including these elections, the rank and file can gain a clearer vision and stronger organization for the battles ahead.

In fact, one of the things this election underlines is the need to strengthen rank and file organization, like the Miner's Right to Strike Committee, which was built in the course of struggle over the last few years. Founded in preparation for the 1974 contract, it has helped to lead the miner's struggles since, particularly the 1975 right-to-strike wildcat. Members of the Committee have also worked in other rank and file organizations that have come together to build specific battles, like the District 17 and 29 Miners to Stop the Injunctions, which helped spread and strengthen the 1976 anti-injunction wildcat. Now the Miner's Right to Strike Committee is calling for an ad hoc meeting to make plans to unite the broadest possible number of miners to fight for a good contract in 1977.

The point of such organizations is not to replace the union but to make it a fighting organization. Even though the top officials don't have the membership under their control—and are fighting each other for the chance to do it—at the same time rank and file organization is still young and only beginning to sink roots. As a result the rank and file is not yet strong enough or organized enough to run an election campaign which would be sufficiently powerful to challenge the likes of Miller and company, and fuel the miner's struggle. At the same time the rank and file *is* strong enough to take on every piece of treachery by these sellouts and will grow stronger in these battles.

Beyond the elections and the struggle to make the union a fighting organization, groups like the Miner's Right to Strike Committee can strengthen the miners' ability to take on every battle faced by the working class and other sectors of the people. Rank and file organizations which take an active part in the battles of the miners on every front, which say, right up front, that the workers and the rich class which lives off out labor can *never* have common interests and which fight these battles as part of this class fight—these groups provide a key organizational basis on which miners can push ahead.

Rank and file miners have learned a lot from the strikes and campaigns of the last decade. Many have developed the understanding that everything the rank and file has achieved—every reform, every freedom to organize—was won through the determined struggle of the rank and file. In every fight against company attacks, miners have come up against not only the bosses but against the whole owners' system—their laws, their courts, their politicians and their agents in union office.

Numbers of miners are beginning to see that workers have nothing in common with the owners; that the struggle for a better life is a struggle between our class and their's. Thousands of miners have learned not to pin all their hopes on individual leaders, but to organize themselves and forge their unity. Increasing numbers of miners are seeing that the rest of the working class is up against the same enemy miners are. Many are counting less on "help" from capitalist politicians.

In the course of the battles of recent years, the miners have made important strides in expanding the scope of their actions and in building their understanding and organization. Faced with these advances the coal capitalists hope to strengthen their hand through these elections no matter which candidate wins. The rank and file have other plans. ■

## Revolution

*Revolution* is the organ of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party of the USA (RCP, USA). It is published monthly. All correspondence to the Party should be sent to RCP, USA, P.O. Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654.

# Soaring Gas Bills Spark Struggle

New York: 100,000 workers laid off, schools closed, two people die when heat is shut off;

New Jersey: 275,000 laid off, plans to evacuate people from coastal areas;

Georgia: 75,000 laid off, 2,700 people evacuated;

Pennsylvania: 340,000 laid off, all schools closed;

Ohio: 400,000 laid off, schools closed, emergency housing prepared for mass evacuation.

These were some of the proportions the natural gas "shortage" reached in the early part of February. All these hardships and more were caused by the "Higher Profits, or No Gas" blackmail of the major gas companies. Nationwide more than two million workers were laid off for a time as the gas companies—true to the dictates of profit, the body and soul of all capitalists—were refusing to produce and distribute adequate supplies of gas without deregulation and higher prices.

Many workers still on the job were expected to work in near freezing plants, while the capitalists cut back on heating fuel to keep their machines running. In many cases people were sent home without pay because of lack of fuel. Several industries tried to get out of paying supplementary unemployment benefits (SUB), blaming the layoffs on the weather and claiming that they didn't have to pay for an "act of God." In Ohio, Governor Rhodes carried out this theme, calling for two days of prayer. But people weren't in much the mood for "freezing on their knees."

When the capitalists weren't trying to blame God, they were trying to pass the buck to each other. The companies who were laying off were saying they had no part in it and shouldn't pay. The utility companies said they couldn't supply the gas because they couldn't get enough from the pipeline companies. The pipeline companies blamed the oil companies, who produce the natural gas, and they all talked about America's "energy crisis" and implied that somehow we were just running out of fuel.

But it makes no difference how much the capitalists

finger each other, the outrageous misery people have suffered this winter is an indictment of their whole system. All around the country the anger that people felt: over lost wages, cold factories, school closings and pleas to "dial down," were expressed in demonstrations and demands that fuel prices not be increased.

In one incident in Chicago, a group of elderly people went to demand that the Illinois Commerce Commission not increase their gas rates. When they got the run-around, they tried to march up to see the governor, who was in the same building. When they were told the governor was "eating lunch," demonstrators shouted, "We all want to eat lunch and be able to heat our homes too!" One elderly man shouted, "I fought your war. You cut my pension. And now you're trying to cut off my fuel. I'm not taking any more!"

## Impossible Choice

Hundreds of incidents like this occurred throughout the country. In Texas, where people are supposed to be fortunate because there is no shortage, gas prices have shot up 500% in the last five years because there is no regulation on gas sold within the state in which it is produced. Hundreds of people demonstrated in cities such as San Antonio and were fighting this attack which has, among other things, forced thousands of families to sell their homes. The implications for people throughout the country of the impossible choice they are being offered is clear. Either no gas because the gas companies won't produce it at affordable prices, or the threat of no gas because you can't pay the bill.

While higher gas bills have hit hard at all people, the effect on some has been devastating, for example an 89 year old woman in Louisville living on social security of \$190 a month and faced with a \$120 gas bill. Among older people this is no isolated case these days.

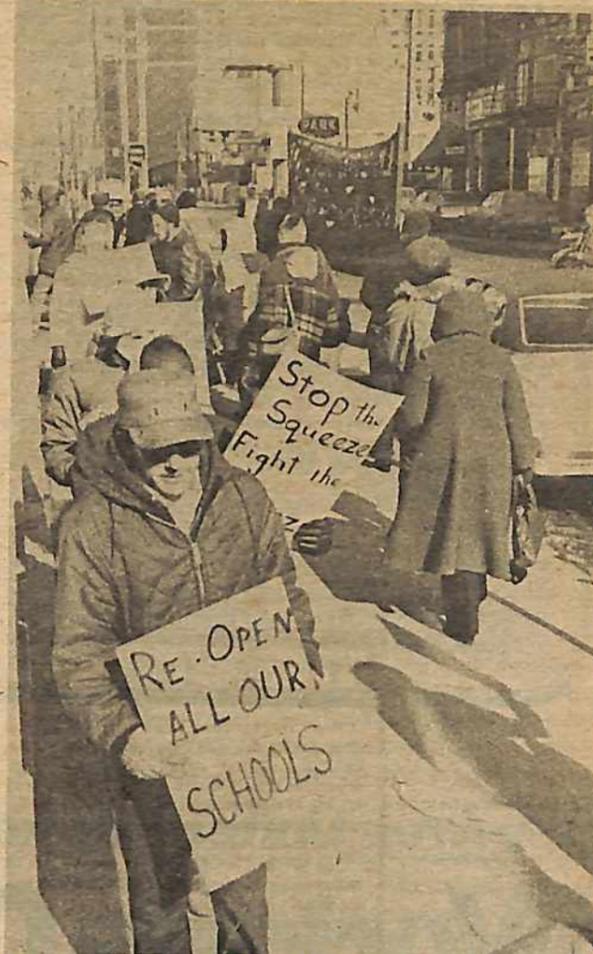
Welfare mothers have been demanding increased payments to pay for their heat, which in some cases has become more expensive than rent. Parents in Ohio organized themselves demanding that schools be reopened and safely heated. In Cleveland a Fight Don't Freeze Committee was formed, organizing and building people's demands, "Enough Gas at Prices We Can Afford! No Loss in Pay from Layoffs! Keep the Schools Open! Not One Residence Cut Off!"

Demonstrations jumped off in early February in Cleveland and Cincinnati and Dayton, which was especially hard hit. The chants "Higher Heat! Lower Prices! We Won't Pay for Your Profit Crisis!" and "They Shut Our Plants! They Shut Our Schools! That's What Happens When Profit Rules!" sparked a lot of enthusiasm and interest among people. Leaflets handed out generated numerous calls from people interested in fighting back and set work places buzzing as they were circulated hand to hand.

Demonstrations and posters in New York and Philadelphia declared "We Won't Be Frozen Out!" In Mil-

waukee, workers at one plant downed tools to get the heat in the plant turned up and then the next day walked out again, despite threats by the company that they would be disciplined. The sparks of struggle there are being built through a petition and grievance procedure to win pay for the eight hours lost due to the walkout.

People everywhere are fed up with this situation, tired of the higher and higher gas prices and are looking for and organizing ways to fight back. People are determined to fight the impossible choice they have been presented with by the gas companies. The bourgeoisie's solutions of turning down the heat and "if you want more gas, you're going to have to pay the price" have stoked people's anger, which in some places has already forced concessions in the form of rebates on gas bills and deferred payments. In this situation there is a tremendous opportunity to agitate around these outrages, build the fight to beat back these attacks, and in the process deepen people's understanding that the capitalist system itself is the barrier to meeting our needs and is at the root of the problem. ■



Demanding "Enough Gas at Prices We Can Afford" and saying "To Hell with the Gas and Oil Companies Profits," these workers in Ohio reflected the outrage millions of people feel over skyrocketing fuel bills.

# Gas Blackmail And What's Behind It

As the coldest winter in a century clobbered much of the country, the arctic weather was being held responsible for a near paralysis of industry and commerce in large sections of the Midwest and East. People in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, New Jersey and several other states were threatened by the loss of heat to their homes, hundreds of schools were closed and millions of people were thrown out of work.

Oil and gas companies and the government said that the frigid temperatures and the dramatic increase in natural gas consumption had created a dangerous shortage of natural gas and made it impossible to meet all needs.

## Why?

It is not because there is not enough gas under the ground and waters of the U.S. Even figures from the oil companies, the only ones available, admit that what they call proven reserves (the amount companies have drilled into, measured and are "reasonably certain" they can sell at a profit) are adequate for at least 11 years. And scientists of the U.S. Geological Survey estimate that the vast majority of natural gas existing in the U.S. has not even been explored or discovered yet.

It is not because there is a lack of knowledge and technology available to recover this natural gas. The machinery and know-how necessary to produce adequate fuel supplies to keep homes and schools warm and the factories running were created years ago. Technology exists to produce natural gas and oil under even

the most adverse conditions. Oil companies have drilled close to six miles into the earth, constructing wells that use as much steel as a 14-story building. It is possible to build drilling platforms in the Gulf of Alaska to pull natural gas from below the waters in sub-zero temperatures in the midst of waves up to 100 feet high.

It is not because the means to transport this natural gas to homes and plants is not adequate. The use of natural gas skyrocketed after World War 2 when the government sold thousands of miles of pipeline built with tax money to private industry for next to nothing. In all, over 265,000 miles of large pipelines now crisscross the country, capable of transporting large volumes of natural gas to every state.

Then why is there a shortage?

## Why the "Shortage?"

A lot of people instinctively felt that the big oil companies, who control about 75% of natural gas production in the U.S., were just holding back on supplies in order to force natural gas prices up.

Evidence to support this fact was not long in coming. Carter and the Congress took emergency action to alleviate the shortage. What this boiled down to was a temporary lifting of prices on interstate gas shipments.

All of a sudden there was more gas available. Where did it come from? It turns out that gas produced and sold in the same state is not subject to government

price regulations. Natural gas pumped in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Kansas, the main onshore gas producing areas of the country, was selling at a considerably higher price than gas shipped between states or gas produced on federal lease land in the Gulf of Mexico. So the oil companies had been refusing to sell this gas outside those states at the lower regulated prices.

The concrete implications of this deregulation for the masses of American people were pretty stark. Gas bills in Texas have gone up 500% in the last five years. The *New York Times* reported on some of the effects of these astronomical boosts in San Antonio: "Tens of thousands of acres of farmland could not be planted because farmers could not afford the natural gas needed to run their irrigation pumps. Thousands of families sold large homes and bought smaller ones...Many, unable to pay the costs of home mortgages, taxes and higher utilities, were forced to sell their homes. Some had to crowd into houses or apartments of relatives. Thousands turned to private and public relief agencies."

Natural gas now supplies about 30% of the nation's fuel. Virtually all of it is produced domestically. From 1947 until 1968 the production of natural gas every year outstripped use, as did the discovery of new sources. But since 1968 known reserves of gas (known to exist in producing fields and profitably recoverable with present technology) have declined sharply and the actual production has been cut back from 5% to 8% a year in the last couple of years.

Exxon, Texaco, Mobil, Shell and the rest of the gas producers have been quite explicit about the reason for the decline in discovery and production in the face of rising demand. As a report by the Federal Energy Administration regarding domestic oil production put it: "Future oil production is mainly a function of its anticipated profitability compared to other opportunities for investment." Mobil Oil has been running ads in the newspapers flaunting the fact that they and other producers have been warning for some time that there would be a shortage if the profitability of domestic gas production did not increase.

In other words, the reason that there is a shortage is because natural gas, like most everything else produced by man's labor under capitalism, is a commodity

Continued on page 18

March 8 is International Women's Day. This is a working class holiday, a holiday which was born in the struggles and strikes working women were waging in this country over sixty years ago and now celebrated by many millions of people around the world.

International Women's Day is a holiday of struggle—a holiday directed at uniting the ranks of the working class, men and women, against the rulers of this country and all tyrants everywhere.

By celebrating and further developing the great contributions of women to every major battle of the working class, every battle will gain in strength.

Through the fight against the oppression of women and the special abuses and burdens women face, and by linking this with the working class' overall fight to liberate itself, more women can be brought into the struggle and the workers movement can become even more conscious and united in its revolutionary cause.

For several years now International Women's Day has been celebrated once again in this country as part of the workers movement that is now arising. As part of building and strengthening this movement, events will be held in early March in cities all across the U.S.

"The Stronger the Role of Women, the Stronger Will Be Our Movement"—this main slogan of the celebrations this year expresses what International Women's Day is all about. In the face of the very real attacks that are coming down on working women, such as the increasing gap between the pay of men and women workers, the cutbacks on daycare, the Supreme Court decision undermining maternity leave and so on, we will also raise the slogan "Beat Back the Attacks on Working Women." "Equality and Unity, Not Division and Oppression" is the call, the stand and the future of the working class, pitted against the oppression and the divisions between men and women which are fostered by the capitalists to keep women down and keep all workers in chains.

The more women in their millions are drawn into the struggle, and the more the workers understand and unite against each and every one of the capitalists' abuses including the conditions they force on women, the better we'll be able to fight them and the sooner will come our victory. ■

## Celebrate International Women's Day



**"The Stronger the Role of Women, the Stronger Will Be Our Movement"**

**"Beat Back The Attacks on Working Women"**

**"Equality and Unity, Not Division and Oppression"**

## Bay Area United Workers Organization

# Workers Conference Make Changes, Plans

"Usually, when 200 workers are together, it's because we're having to slave for some boss. But today it's different. We're here because we want to be." The 200 workers the speaker was addressing gathered in Oakland, California on January 30 for a day long conference called by the May 1st Workers Organization (M1WO). The conference summed up advances that the M1WO had made over the last three years in building the struggle of the working class in the San Francisco Bay Area and also the understanding, developed in that struggle, of certain limitations in the organization.

At the meeting the group restructured itself forming sections made up of workers in particular industries, united in an overall areawide organization. Members of several active rank and file caucuses in different workplaces announced their decision to bring their groups in to form the cores of some industrial sections. Along with the other changes, the meeting voted to adopt a new name, the Bay Area United Workers Organization, and laid out plans for new campaigns.

Banners hung around the hall testified to the participation in recent months of the M1WO and the caucuses in the struggle against the scheduled evictions at the International Hotel. This participation helped lay the foundation for the conference. Many of the workers involved had met tenants from the I-Hotel and the whole Chinatown-Manilatown area at M1WO meetings and discussed the issues and the progress of the fight. They took the battle up as a class battle, one that counterposed to the "lawful right" of the big landlords to their profits the need of the people for housing, that showed in practice who could be relied on—the masses of people or the fast-talking mayor and sheriff.

At one point, M1WO joined with the Workers' Committee to Fight for the I-Hotel to stage a demonstration that began with 500 people and grew to 2500, with workers carrying banners signed by co-workers at plant gates—90 at the Seamen's Hall, 100 at the Longshore, as many from two postal facilities. A fight to pass resolutions of support, backed by petition campaigns, took place in many union locals and was successful in over

half a dozen.

### Major Battles in Society

The I-Hotel fight was a good example of what organizations like the new UWO must and can do—help bring increasing numbers of workers into the front lines of the major battles not only of working people but other strata among the masses.

Before the I-Hotel fight, the M1WO had taken part in other battles—around the police murder of Tyrone Guyton, support for the Rucker electronics, Jung Sai garment and molders' strikes, campaigns like the "Rich Off Our Backs" Bicentennial actions. In some of these earlier fights, and more so around the I-Hotel, individual caucuses took some part in the struggle.

However, too great a separation existed between the M1WO and those rank and file organizations workers had built in the plant. It was in summing up the results of this separation that certain limitations that had faced the M1WO were understood.

The form the May 1st Workers Organization had generally taken was that of occasional mass meetings which discussed the main campaign under consideration or underway at the time. News was also heard of other struggles. As a result the tendency was for a relative handful of communists and the most advanced workers to take part in a consistent way in the campaigns—preparing meetings, giving direction to the various activities and demonstrations and regularly summing up the struggle. This meant that those workers, sometimes large numbers of them, who only attended the big meetings or took part in the actions had no regular form in which they could fully discuss their questions and the problems of the struggle, deepen their understanding of what they had learned and how best to mobilize other workers. The initiative of broader and broader numbers of workers could not be fully released around these important campaigns.

Also resulting from its lack of a base at the shop level, M1WO was not in a good position to fan all the im-

portant sparks of struggle that erupted in the shops and take part and draw lessons from them. That this was an important task was shown by the positive experience, for example, of the Rucker strike, when a group of strikers began to get together frequently with some of the most active M1WO members on an ad hoc basis as well as attending the big meetings dealing with the strike and other issues. In these discussions, strikers and the others exchanged experiences and ideas in order to hammer out questions of strategy and tactics, the significance of the strike in its relation to other struggles and the current level of the workers movement.

By the same token the isolated and individual caucuses often tended to focus exclusively on the battle in the particular shop or union and failed to draw the broader lessons from these struggles and maximize gains in understanding and organization. This made it more difficult for workers in M1WO to bring the campaigns into the caucuses and shop floor and clarify their relation to the day-to-day struggle.

### Rooted in the Plants

To break through these limitations, the conference called for the organization to become rooted in the plants, forming sections out of some of the caucuses and uniting these, as well as individual workers in attendance, in an areawide workers organization, an organization whose watchword is "Workers Unite to Lead the Fight Against All Oppression."

This decision provides the basis for the United Workers Organization to have a lively and independent existence and constantly draw in more workers. In addition to periodic mass meetings of the whole group, regular steering and section meetings will permit workers to discuss attacks both in the workplace and in society as a whole, to go into the various tricks and disguises the ruling class comes up with to put over those attacks. By discussing the ideas and opinions of their fellow workers, the UWO members will be able both to understand the questions confronting the workers movement better and to develop methods to unite the greatest number of people in battle.

### Preparations and Questions

The entire process of building the conference helped clarify these questions. Meetings of caucuses and other discussions were held with workers getting into some pretty lively struggles over how they saw the purpose of this kind of organization. Important questions were raised: How can we take up the fight against all the different abuses when we have our hands full fighting the bosses on the job? Won't it be harder to unite

Continued on page 19

# Crime: Scourge of Masses, Child of Capital

It's bad enough to slave all day for some boss in order to bring home a paycheck that barely covers the cost of living. It's bad enough to go to the grocery store and have to pay through the nose to keep a family alive or to watch the utility bill eat up any reserves there might be. But to have to fear walking in the streets, to have to fear that what few belongings one might have will get ripped off—this is rubbing salt into the wound.

People's outrage at crime is tremendous—and for good reason. A little girl is kidnapped from school, raped and left to freeze to death. Someone is killed for a few dollars. Cars are stripped while sitting in front of people's houses. Unemployment checks and welfare checks are stolen out of the mailboxes of those who face starvation without them.

And as crime mounts, the whole society seems to be falling into decay and degeneracy. Hard drugs saturate our neighborhoods and are pushed to our kids in school. Whole neighborhoods seem to fall apart. Families split apart at an increasing rate. Pornography and decadent films are everywhere.

What the hell is the source of this mess? Why are crime and general social decay increasing? Do things have to be like this? Do our kids have to grow up and face something even worse tomorrow?

These are indeed big questions which demand an answer. They are questions which demand that we take a cold, hard look at the system we live under.

## Capitalism Breeds Crime

The root cause of crime is capitalism, the system based on profit. The capitalists have built society in their own image, putting themselves on a pedestal as the example of what to be. And what does this mean? To grow fat by living off someone else's labor is the highest value. To look out for number one, step on the other guy to get to the top is to be admired. On the other hand, to work for a living, especially in a factory, to be a productive member of society—this is the lowest status in society, something to be avoided at all costs.

These values are an inseparable part of their class society, which at its heart is based on the legalized robbery of the working class and masses of people around the world by a small handful of parasites. The capitalists themselves are the biggest criminals and robber barons the world has ever known. Their society, where even the prisons are "schools of crime," necessarily is a vast breeding ground for millions of other criminals, twisted into the image of the rulers.

In addition, especially during its inevitable crisis, capitalism casts millions of working people out in the streets, spits them out like useless machinery, and even drives large numbers of the petty bourgeoisie into bankruptcy. Out of this some workers become so destitute they occasionally resort to robbery in order to survive until work opens up. But out of this process also grows a whole social strata of broken down, degenerated cast-offs—the lumpen proletariat—a social scum turned by the system into parasites, leeching off the blood of the working class.

The capitalists try to blame crime on Blacks and minorities, stirring up racial divisions and spreading the lie that Blacks and whites can't live together. But this negates the fact that Blacks and minorities themselves are the most frequent victims of crime. And the reason crime is the highest in Black and minority communities is exactly because capitalism holds these people in the worst conditions, with unemployment, poverty and general oppression much higher than in society as a whole.

The same is true for youth. Our rulers point the finger of blame at youth saying crime is due to "permissiveness" and a breakdown of the family. But it is the strains of the crisis of capitalism, the general decay and degeneracy of society, that rips families apart. Sure, petty crime and even more serious crime is high among youth—one recent study reported that one third of all Illinois teenagers had committed a "serious" crime. But this isn't because parents don't get worried sick about their kids getting involved in crime. In fact it is a hell of an indictment of the capitalist system. Look at what the system offers them: a future where young people are unemployed at a rate of up to 50%, a chance to join the Army and die fighting for imperialism's overseas investments and interests, or for those lucky enough to get a job, a lifetime of being a wage slave. This is the cause of the high crime

rate among youth and it is something just about all teenagers must face no matter how good a job their parents do in bringing them up.

## The Capitalist Solution

The capitalist rulers of this country keep saying they have solutions to the problem of crime, but they all come down to one thing—tightening their grip on the people's necks. They try to use crime to strengthen their state apparatus. Just give them more police with more leeway to bend things here and there. Allow their judges to throw away the key and stop the "revolving door of justice" saying that a criminal is arrested and put back on the streets almost immediately.

## Crime Permeates Society

Since the whole system is based on the robbery of the labor of the working class and private ownership, crime permeates every level of society. As the famous quote from Woody Guthrie's song goes: "Some rob you with a six gun, some with a fountain pen." In their drive for profit, companies murder and maim hundreds of thousands of workers a year on unsafe machinery, steal industrial secrets from each other and sell the cheapest, shoddiest products the market will bear. The oil companies threatened to cut off the heat to millions in the midst of arctic weather until their higher prices were forthcoming, extortion on a scale the Mafia would never dream of. An investigation found one half of Chicago's car repair garages cheated their customers by charging for unneeded repairs. And, as is well known, corruption and bribery among politicians, police and judges goes right to the top.

Most of this, generated in a million ways by the daily working of the capitalist system, is never even considered a crime or if so is usually overlooked. Why? Because the legal system is set up to protect private property and the present relations of production. Laws are written by the capitalist class to serve the capitalist class. That's why it's not illegal for the capitalists to lay thousands off, speedup jobs, etc., but it *is* illegal for workers to take over a plant, for example, to fight against such attacks.

How is this legal system, set up to protect and serve these property relations, going to crack down on crime? Sure the cops may crack down on some particular cases of criminal activity, especially if it is creating a disruption in their orderly business of making profits. After all, the ruling class has to give some semblance of keeping order in society to give credibility to its rule. But the kind of criminal activity they might bust will be crime on the lowest level. And even many of these arrests are punishment for not paying the proper bribe or serve to wipe out the competition so the bigger syndicates can move in or consolidate their control.

Instead, what strengthening the police and courts will mean is more repression against the masses of peo-

ple.

## "Law and Order" in Detroit

Detroit, a city with one of the highest crime rates, is a good example. Late last year, after a front page press campaign against crime in general and street gangs in particular, the city government passed a curfew requiring all persons age 17 or under to remain off the streets after 10 PM. Supposedly this was a crime prevention measure. But its effect was mass repression against youth throughout Detroit, especially in Black and minority neighborhoods, with the city's jails and courts filling up with teenagers arrested in many cases for nothing more than "jaywalking."

Of course the vast majority of teenage youth in Detroit are not dangerous criminals, even though high unemployment and the bleak future the system offers do drive some to crime. Yet they are the ones who are made to take the brunt of the "anti-crime" campaign. At the same time the real criminals, including the Mafia in Detroit which deals in drugs, gambling, prostitution, extortion, etc., infiltrates the police department and influences or controls numerous judges, continues to do business as usual. Now with the curfew, not only do people have to deal with rising crime but also an even more vicious police force attacking their kids and beefing up the occupation of their communities.

Just as in Detroit, the police and courts everywhere are weapons in the hands of the capitalist class directed against the working class and masses of people. During a strike they do the dirty work for their masters, passing injunctions against the strikers, riding shotgun to give scabs a safe conduct through the picket lines. In working class and minority communities it is the police and courts who are called out by the landlords to carry out evictions, called upon by the politicians to raise extra money for the government through tickets and fines, called upon to keep "order" in the neighborhoods by harassing and arresting kids, and brutalizing, even murdering, many.

Police and courts exercising "more unlimited power" on behalf of the bourgeoisie will not solve crime. Rather it will mean more repression of the masses of people. Under the cover of fighting crime they will justify more Detroit-type curfews to freely harass and arrest youth. They will take even greater leeway in breaking into our homes. They will unleash even greater terror against Black and minority communities. They will pass even more measures like the death penalty and the proposed S-1 Bill which, among other things, would make it a felony to interfere with *any* government function (even a public hearing) by "noise."

## The Working Class' Answer

Capitalism is utterly incapable of solving crime and as long as their system continues it will spread like cancer in a dying society. But when the working class rises up in revolution, overthrows capitalism and establishes socialism, it can wipe out the great bulk of crime in a short period of time.

This has been the experience of all socialist countries. Before the revolution in 1949 Shanghai, China was known around the world as a haven for dope, prostitution and gambling. Today, after nearly 30 years of socialism, crime has shrunk to the point where people leave their doors unlocked and walk the streets at night without a second thought. In Vietnam crime and prostitution were so rampant under Thieu's U.S.-backed regime that it virtually became Saigon's main business; after the revolution it was dealt a shattering blow (which is one reason Saigon's Mafia got out of the country so fast, many coming to the U.S.).

Continued on page 14



Peoples' hatred of crime is twisted by the capitalists to justify repression in the "law and order" buildup. Youth are a special target of Detroit cops in an ongoing campaign of terror and harassment.

## Soviets Seek to Edge Out U.S.

# Argentina— Masses on Move

Argentina, like most other Latin American countries, is now run by a military dictatorship backed up by imperialism. But while the U.S. imperialists consider Latin America their private backyard, neither this fact nor the military junta's brutal repression against the people have prevented the USSR from trying to sneak its own snout in so that it too can chew on Argentina like a piece of meat. In fact, while both superpowers participate in the plunder of the country enforced by the military regime, each is quietly trying to push out the other so that it can have Argentina to itself.

One reason why Argentina hasn't been much in the news lately is that both the American ruling class and its Soviet counterparts (and their supporters the world over) have no interest in drawing people's attention to what's going on there, because both bear heavy responsibility for the government's crimes against the people.

In the past year, thousands of Argentines have been found dead on country roads or washed up on river banks and beaches. The majority of these people killed anonymously by secret government forces have been workers and leaders of the workers movement, as well as students and many others who defied the junta. There is no press censorship, but reporters and publishers who print these facts get killed themselves. Thousands more have been murdered "legally" in what usually gets reported as "shootouts with subversives" or "attempted escapes by subversives under detention." Tens of thousands are officially held prisoner in military camps and civilian jails; thousands more have simply disappeared.

While trying to drown in blood the workers and others whose struggle is bad for business, the junta has opened the country completely to foreign investors so that they can take advantage of this situation, and there's been a boom in the Argentinian stock market. After all, if the government can keep wages at \$80 a month for auto workers who make the same Fords or Plymouths that cost more to make elsewhere, obviously there's a lot of profit to be made.

Many of those taking advantage of this situation are American monopolists who've long grown richer in Argentina. Since the overthrow less than a year ago of the Peron government which had erected some barriers to the U.S. capitalists, the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund has given vast sums of money to the Argentinian government, alongside huge loans from American private banks. These loans aren't to open up new business, but simply to pay back previous loans which tie the Argentinian government to the U.S. Some companies, like the big U.S. oil corporations, are back in business, owning operations from drilling to gas stations, while others, like the Big Three U.S. auto companies, never left.

But other imperialists are also trying to cash in on the better possibilities for profit created by the new military dictatorship. The Soviet Union has become Argentina's main trade partner. While the U.S. imperialists have had to depend on their own grain exports to hold down their balance of payments problems, the USSR has become the chief buyer of Argentinian wheat and cattle. These products have been the pillar of Argentina's economy and the landowners and wheat and cattle brokers have been among the most powerful partners of foreign imperialism in Argentina. The junta's Economics Minister himself—who says he prefers British servants because Argentinians are "good for nothing"—is from one of the biggest landowning families. The new government has declared its intentions and shown by concrete policies that these agricultural exports are to become even more central to Argentina's future.

Another area of the economy in which the government plans big expansion is the export of aluminum. This requires the development of mining and hydroelectric power, which generates the electricity necessary to make aluminum. The USSR has supplied the credits to build new dams, including a huge project on the river Plata which separates Argentina and Uruguay, as well as selling Argentina the electric generators.

This economic penetration, which can't help but make Argentina more dependent on the USSR, is not limited to trade and credits given to the government. Argentina's state owned companies which controlled 40% of the economy under the previous government are being turned over to private hands. Many of these are being gobbled up by U.S. and European interests to which some of these enterprises formerly belonged before they were nationalized. Others are being turned

over to a group of big businessmen with ties to the USSR.

### Shady Deals

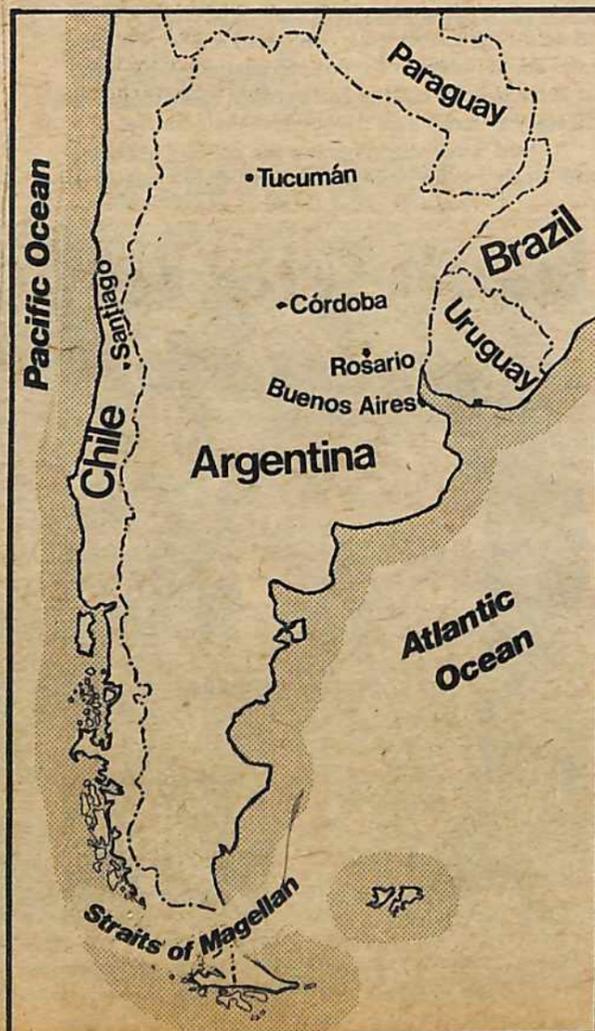
For instance, there is the case of Jose Gelbard. Several decades ago he was in charge of the Communist Party's "resource commission" which handled raising money and making contacts with businessmen. Since then, he has gone from little more than a pushcart peddler to a member of the board of directors of many corporations and banks. Under the Peron government which fell last March, he was Minister of the Economy and the main public booster of Argentinian-Soviet trade ties. He headed up Argentina's trade delegations to the USSR and its bloc, negotiating \$4 billion in trade between Argentina, Eastern Europe and Cuba.

Although powerful opposition from some forces in the junta have forced him into exile, he has maintained his position on the board of directors of the private aluminum company created largely with government funds and other new corporations born from government enterprises. Another figure who often appears on these lists of board members is Eduardo Escasany, until recently president of a Czechoslovakian-owned bank in Argentina.

The question of how these men suddenly came into possession of huge amounts of capital and why the growth of their companies into a real force in Argentina's economy has been backed by some forces in the junta, especially the Army, has raised some big questions about hidden Soviet economic penetration taking place alongside its more open moves.

Certainly the Argentinian Communist Party, which has been able to maintain legal operations while other organizations have been driven underground, has long been used as a tool by foreign imperialism. Although it was once a revolutionary party which led the struggles of the working class, by the 1940s this party had already abandoned the revolutionary road. It made a bid for support from British and U.S. imperialists who opposed the nationalist Peron government of 1944-55, then later, with the emergence of a new capitalist ruling class in the USSR, hooked its fortunes to the Soviet social-imperialists.

Today the CP gives the military junta headed by Army Lt. General Jorge Videla what it terms its "critical support," while using whatever influence it has among the masses today to spread the idea that the main enemy in Argentina is not the bloody Videla dic-



tatorship but rather the danger of a U.S.-sponsored coup such as the Pinochet dictatorship in neighboring Chile which cut the USSR out of the picture entirely.

### Strange Silence

Certainly it's a suspicious fact that the Soviets and their puppets in Latin America like Fidel Castro have issued thundering denunciations of the repression taking place under the military government entirely controlled by the U.S. in Chile and Uruguay, while ignoring the equally horrible crime being committed in the country that lies between Chile and Uruguay—Argentina. The revisionists in Argentina and worldwide have squealed when the Argentinian CP has been stuck—in armed attacks from some government forces which reflect the struggle and jockeying within the junta. But they've had little to say about the overall repression in Argentina, using their influence to focus attention on the U.S.'s crimes in Chile—and trying to make the revisionists there look good in the process—while their influence has worked to keep what's going on in Argentina from becoming more of an issue.

The U.S. capitalists haven't dared raise the question of Argentina in public because they themselves are up to their elbows in Argentinian blood. Still they've expressed some displeasure over the growth of Soviet imperialism's influence there in ways that are unmistakable. Last year Kissinger first announced and then cancelled a trip to Argentina. Then Ford's Treasury Secretary William Simon visited Chile and Brazil while snubbing Argentina.

But of course the U.S. government is 100% in favor of the Videla junta's policies which have been directed at repressing the revolutionary movement of the working class and "stabilizing" conditions for profitable foreign investment. And the U.S. still has enough economic clout and enough strong friends in the Argentinian military (especially the Argentinian Navy, which the U.S. has cultivated for many years) so that the American imperialists hope to push out their rivals entirely.

Argentina is a prize for the superpowers not only because it's one of the richest nations in Latin America, but also because of its strategic location in the South Atlantic. Whoever controls the Straights of Magellan (around the tip of South America) can limit others' ability to transfer warships between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Furthermore, big ports, if they were constructed as has been proposed, could be used as naval bases to harass or protect shipping in the South Atlantic and the Cape of Good Hope (around the tip of Africa), through which much of the West's oil tankers pass.

Because of the stakes involved in this superpower contention over Argentina, it involves not only economic and political jockeying but also guns. The U.S.-supported factions in the military have sent death squads to murder many pro-Soviet figures (along with their many other victims); while the USSR, along with reaching into the military, has courted some petty bourgeois "guerilla warfare" groups who have taken up arms against U.S. imperialism. Overall this contention makes the situation extremely unstable and both sides are preparing for bigger battles.

### Mass Struggle

But there is one thing that these imperialists and their flunkies are united against, which is creating far greater instability for the junta—the fact that the masses of Argentinian people have fought like hell against imperialism's rule and today are advancing their struggle despite extreme repression.

The working class—which is by far the largest class in Argentina—has not yet been able to repeat the giant mobilizations of hundreds of thousands of workers that it carried out in the last few years until the Videla junta took over. During the first few months of the junta, some unions were taken over by government-appointed military officers, others were banned outright and the repression included the arrest and/or murder of many shop stewards and a flat ban on all political activity. But as real wages fell by half under government wage controls on the one hand, and on the other the workers developed an understanding of the situation and rebuilt their organizations, the workers movement again began to advance.

First there was a brief longshore job action, then, in September, 20,000 auto workers were able to carry out a two-week long strike. In October and November 36,000 power company workers refused to work despite threats of arrests in a strike against the firing of 260 stewards and union officials, and other strikes followed. These actions won some wage concessions, but the government wouldn't budge on demands that it free its prisoners and other political demands. Slow-downs, "work to rule" actions (where workers insist on carrying out all job rules to the letter and therefore get much less work done) and other forms of collective job actions have become very widespread. On February 14 the electrical workers struck again to demand the release of their leaders and troops moved in to occupy the power plants.

Along with the clandestine rebuilding of the workers' mass organizations, there have been some advances in

Continued on page 17



Holding high a banner proclaiming: "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom," Saigon workers celebrate the liberation of their country from the bloody grip of U.S. imperialism.

# Vile Letter Attacks Vietnam

"Peaceniks Denounce Vietnam!" The press was ecstatic. Over 80 people, who identified themselves as having been "actively engaged in opposition to the war suffered at America's hands by the Vietnamese people," circulated a letter last December that accused the government of Vietnam of violating the human rights of the Vietnamese people. The group included well-known figures like folksinger Joan Baez and Daniel Ellsberg of Pentagon Papers fame. They charged that the government with holding 300,000 political prisoners, suppressing the Buddhist Church and practicing a "gross disregard of human life and human rights," comparable, they say, to that of places like Chile and Iran. The letter even breathed new life into the tired old charges that the Vietnamese are withholding information on American GIs listed as missing in action (MIAs), a charge which even the U.S. government has had to back off of lately.

This totally reactionary piece of trash served as welcome grist for the continuing efforts of the U.S. ruling class to slander Vietnam and to cover their own attempts to sabotage and undermine the Vietnamese revolution. The letter attempts to lend the authority of the anti-Vietnam War movement to the same lies the bourgeoisie has been peddling since being driven out of Indochina.

When the long-predicted "bloodbath" failed to emerge, the U.S. ruling class resorted to manufacturing other slanders against the Vietnamese people. They have used their much ballyhooed concern for the MIAs as justification for blocking Vietnam's rightful admis-

sion into the United Nations. And they have tried to make people forget their countless crimes and atrocities in Indochina by pointing to so-called outrages by the new governments of the liberated countries there.

The signers of this scurrilous document (which was based on information supplied by Theodore Jacqueney, a former agent in South Vietnam of the well known CIA front, the Agency for International Development) proclaim that their statement flows from their concern for human rights and fear that "the tragic historical pattern in which liberators gain power only to impose new oppression" is indeed taking place in Vietnam.

Thus, they chime in with the cry constantly promoted by the bourgeoisie: that it is futile for people to rise up and throw off their oppressors, that human nature inevitably leads to one group of society exploiting another. They put themselves forward as "ethical witnesses" who must maintain their "credibility" by pointing out these abuses wherever they exist.

## "Human Rights"

What are these "human rights" they seek to defend? The right of capitalists to live as parasites off the masses of people? The right of some to limitlessly pursue whatever idle pastimes and pursuits they wish regardless of their contribution to society, while living off the labor of the masses? The right not to participate collectively in the development of society, to pimp off the labor of others? The right to sabotage and undermine the struggle of the masses to build a country free

from the rule of a degenerate capitalist class and their agents? Whatever their intentions, these are the "freedoms" their letter supports, for it is these freedoms the Vietnamese revolution is seeking to wipe out. The signers of this attack on Vietnam talk about "human rights" as if they existed as mystical and abstract categories. In fact, in class society there are no abstract human rights—every right is stamped with the brand of a class.

Today the victorious Vietnamese revolution faces the difficult task of rebuilding from the tremendous destruction and chaos caused by the war and U.S. occupation—by the imperialist efforts to exercise their "rights" in Vietnam. The Vietnamese are faced with the task of smashing the shackles of feudalism and capitalism, of creating a society run in the interests of the great majority of people, where the rights of the exploiters and oppressors are restricted with the aim of eliminating exploitation and oppression. This is as much a part of the revolution as the armed struggle which preceded it.

The U.S. imperialists are still waging a war to sabotage, undermine and defeat this revolution. U.S. agents and paid infiltrators in Vietnam continue to use the effects of the social decay and economic dislocation that resulted from decades of imperialist rule in the south to carry out attacks on the efforts of the Vietnamese to rebuild their country. The CIA is sponsoring armed bands, some the forces of various religious sects, to rebel against the new government. And the old ruling class and its agents remain in Vietnam, desperately determined to regain power. They have sabotaged factories and used their hidden wealth to hoard food. But they have no "human right" to freely try to wreck all that the Vietnamese people fought so long to win. Such attempts must be suppressed in order to consolidate the victory won and to move on to develop society further. This letter does nothing but promote the attempts of the U.S. imperialists to turn back this victory. As Mao points out, "A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another."

The new government faces the enormous task of not only rebuilding a devastated country in the face of continuing imperialist efforts at sabotage. They have to re-educate tens of thousands of Vietnamese who took the side of the U.S. invaders and their Vietnamese puppets, former officers and professional soldiers, police, business men, landlords, criminals, prostitutes and so on.

The goal is to win these people over to supporting the struggle of the masses of people to rebuild the country on a new basis and to make them useful members of society. In re-education centers many such people have learned the causes of the war and the differences between the old regime and the new popular government. This is what the U.S. imperialists call "concentration camps," and what the signers of the letter protest as people "imprisoned or otherwise detained."

Although by signing this letter they took an objectively pro-imperialist stand, there are some important distinctions to be drawn and some lessons to be learned from the role these people played in the past and are playing now.

Some, like Paul Jacobs, who was an infamous stoolie who testified against the workers movement in the 50s, are long time scum and scabs who have always tried to parade around in a radical garb, only to criti-

Continued on page 15

## Ashby Leach Trial Actions Set



The trial of Ashby Leach starts March 14. Leach, a veteran of Vietnam who took over the Chessie headquarters (the country's third largest private railroad) after a five year battle to get his GI benefits from the company. He demanded that Chessie extend all benefits of the GI Bill to its employees who are veterans and that past employees who've been cheated of these benefits be reimbursed. The takeover and the campaign launched around this case represent the anger felt by millions of vets at this system which uses vets once and throws them away. Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and the Ashby Leach Defense Committee, which have been building nationwide support and are sponsoring a national speaking tour, have called for demonstrations in Cleveland on March 12-14.

The following is a schedule of events:

- (1) People's Tribunal—Put Chessie on trial, Saturday night, March 12.
- (2) Demonstration and rally—Free Ashby Leach, Sunday, March 13.
- (3) Vets encampment—Sunday night, March 13.
- (4) March to the courthouse, trial begins, March 14.

For more information call *The Cleveland Worker*, (216) 741-3796.

*Ashby Leach speaks at Cleveland support meeting.*

## Steelworker aids Runaway Fight

# Workers Take Over Star Sprinkler Plant

Steel workers in Philadelphia struck an important blow at the Star Sprinkler Company and its plans to run away to North Carolina. On Friday, February 11, Star workers and steel workers from other plants in the area shut down the plant and took it over, chaining the doors and standing strong inside for over an hour and a half against the company who tried frantically to end the occupation.

The takeover at Star happened in the context of one steel plant after another closing in Philly. Plant closings in the Philadelphia area have become a broad social question with articles in the newspapers almost daily. Massive steel layoffs have hit Philly and steel workers have fought for their jobs as Phoenix, Allen Wood, Nicholson File and Midvale were laying off big or closing. Thousands of other steel workers fill the unemployment lines. Guys from all these plants have met and said, "We've got to make a stand. We've got to pull steel workers together from all these plants and stop our jobs from running away."

While this was going on Star Sprinkler workers had tried for months to save their jobs. When the news of the closing, planned for March, came out in November, workers started to look for ways to fight. Attempts to use their local, United Steelworkers of America (USWA) No. 14589, to pull them together were squashed by their president, Hoffman, who had been running the local like it was his private property for years. When workers contacted District Director Carsello to intervene to keep Star open, Carsello said that there was nothing that could be done. The Action reporter from the local TV even refused to come out; in Philly the Star Sprinkler shutdown was just one of many news items. An attempt to involve local politicians failed too.

Workers at Star Sprinkler refused to give up and began on their own to take up the fight. Stubs from paychecks and messages urging the workers in North Carolina to unionize were packed in crates being shipped to the North Carolina plant. The paystubs showed workers in North Carolina that they were being paid only one half the wages of the workers in Philadelphia.

Star Sprinkler employs about 250 older Polish men and women. These workers have a long history of standing up. Ten years ago they organized into the United Steelworkers of America, beating back the company's attacks and forging unity between men and women, who the company had tried to divide. Twice in the last ten years active fighters ran slates for union office and twice they were disqualified by President Hoffman. The last attempt by rank and file forces was to run a slate for the International Union convention in Las Vegas. Again they were taken off the ballot.

### The Rank and File Uses Sadlowski Campaign to Strengthen Forces

The recent struggle against the runaway began to speed up during the Sadlowski campaign for USWA president. People around the national rank and file *Steelworker* newsletter went to Star to hook up this fight against the runaway with the fight being waged at Phoenix Steel and Allen Wood and the battle against massive layoffs in USWA District 7. Beginning with leaflets on Sadlowski, the January 20 Inaugural Day Unemployment Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) demonstration in Washington, D.C. against unemployment benefit cutoffs, *Steelworker* members started to unite with active Star workers.

On the basis of discussions with Star workers, and knowing their sentiments, the *Steelworker* decided to take a bold move. On the Friday before the USWA election the *Steelworker* took the fight into the plant to leaflet and do some soapbox speaking as the Star workers gathered by the time clock. This action caught the management with their pants down and they didn't say a word as it was clear to all the tremendous support the speakers had. One woman who supported what was said spoke up herself and urged her fellow workers to unite with the guys from the *Steelworker* and to take up this struggle. Members of the *Steelworker* said it was time to take a stand and that the workers should seize the plant, pointing to the Rheingold Beer workers who took over their plant a few years ago in New York City. But no one was really prepared or organized to do it and at 3:30 the workers began punching out. A few workers stayed to get down on how to build the struggle and plans were made for a meeting after work on the day after the elections.

Star Sprinkler Local No. 14589 had nominated the union machine candidate Lloyd McBride for USWA

President and Hoffman was going all out for him in the election. A battle developed during the week when workers posted *Steelworker* leaflets about the UWOC demonstration and in favor of Sadlowski on their machines and all over the plant. Hoffman and the foremen would rip down the Sadlowski flyers and workers would put them back up. The manager threatened the guys in the shipping department saying he had gotten phone calls from the North Carolina plant complaining that they kept receiving *Steelworker* newspapers and leaflets in crates and that it had better stop.

Layoffs continued during this period at a high rate. And by the time the union elections occurred only 125 workers were still there. Even so, Sadlowski won in the plant 84-18. One worker said, "I wasn't even going to vote. But when Hoffman kept coming around calling Sadlowski a commie and yelling about those outsiders from the *Steelworker* I decided to vote for Sad-

## GM, UAW Bigwigs Buddy Up To "Honor" Flint Strike

On February 11 there was a gala event in Detroit. The United Auto Workers and the General Motors Corporation sat down together at the St. Regis Hotel for a jointly sponsored reception and dinner. They commemorated, of all things, the Great Flint Sit-down Strike and the signing of the first contract between GM and the UAW.

Invitations were sent out to nearly 200 top union and company officials. Among those attending were GM Board Chairman Thomas Murphy, his good buddy UAW President Leonard Woodcock, UAW Vice President Irving Bluestone and GM Labor Relations Vice President George Morris, Jr. Included in the wining and dining were some of GM's old negotiators from the Flint days, like retired Vice President Louis Seaton.

What do you suppose they talked about over their expensive cuts of beef or toasted to with glasses full of fine wine? Maybe they joked about how the company got the National Guard called out and how the soldiers set up machine guns trained on the workers. Or maybe they got a chuckle out of how the rank and file auto workers had to fight the labor traitors heading up the AFL just to get their union organized.

It's certainly a tribute to the Flint sit-down strike that in 1977, forty years later, both the company and the union must tip their hats in gesture to this struggle. The sit-down strike marked one of the proudest moments in the history of the UAW and the entire working class. For 44 days rank and file auto workers occupied a number of key GM plants and with the active support of thousands of workers from other industries had beaten back one attack after another to win recognition of their union. The victory at Flint was a powerful spark and aided the struggle for unions in other industries.

And even at this dinner the rank and file made its presence known. Outside the hotel auto workers from Auto Workers United to Fight (AWUF) unfolded a banner saying "Company Unionism Won't Kill Real Spirit of Flint Sitdown" and proudly displayed blown up pictures showing the tremendous mobilizations of the working class that won the strike forty years before.

But inside the St. Regis the company and the union toasted the fond courtship they have developed over the years, cooperating in trying to shackle the auto rank and file. So the whole event brought back different memories than those of Flint, like of Walter Reuther who said one time, "I say about these fellows,

lowski." Hoffman told the Sadlowski observer, who worked with the *Steelworker* during the election, "These people are stupid. Sadlowski won't get them jobs. But McBride is getting me a job."

Star workers saw their own strength grow in the campaign as they struck a blow at Hoffman's grip on the local and helped build their unity which showed itself in the takeover. On Wednesday, February 9, members of the *Steelworker* went into the plant, soapboxed and leafletted, summing up the big Sadlowski vote there and agitating for a plant takeover. They called on workers to come to a meeting in a nearby bar.

Six Star workers came to the meeting, joined by steel workers from four other plants and a few members of the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC). After a lot of struggle the meeting decided unanimously to take over the plant. While there was much cynicism from some of the Star workers on whether folks would stick together, they laid out that they had to get this company to stop from running away and that they should try it. On Friday, leaflets went out at steel and other local plants calling for an afternoon rally to oppose the closing. The Star workers went back into the plant and got down with other active workers in preparing for the takeover.

At one o'clock on February 11, Friday, steel workers from a number of plants, along with a few members of UWOC, entered the plant and joined Star workers. Production stopped, doors were chained and padlocked, barricades were put up and the workers from around the plant were organized to join a rally-meeting going on in the center of the plant. UWOC members on the out-

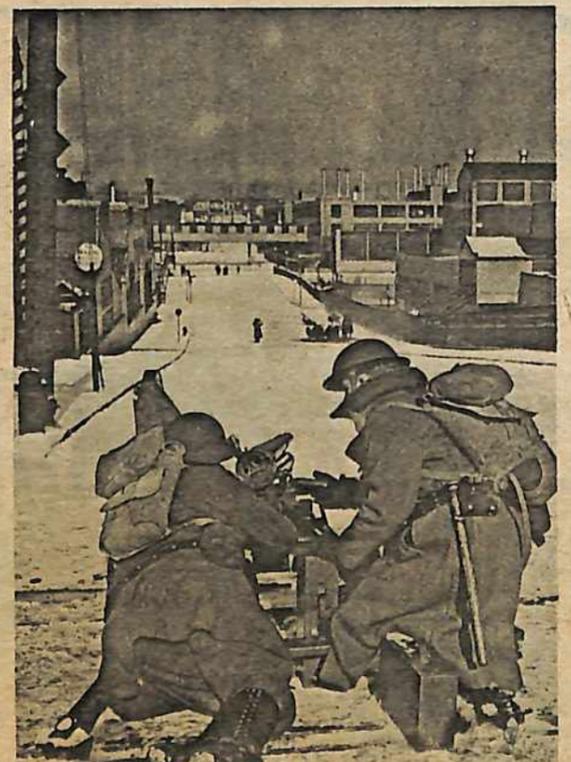
Continued on page 14

I don't begrudge them one penny they get, not one penny." Everything about the dinner said that the workers and capitalists have common interests, that "sure, things were hard back then and there were some knockdown-dragout fights like Flint. But today things are different."

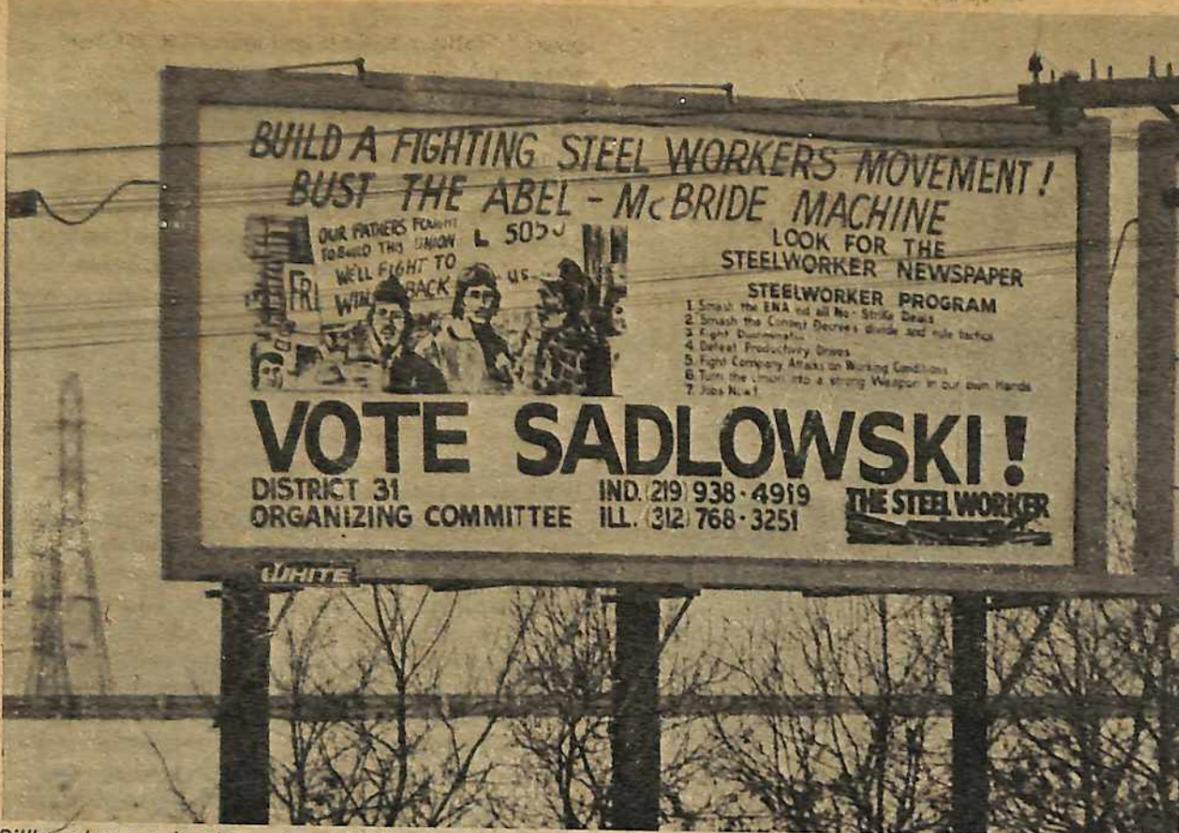
In 1937 when the workers' representatives at Flint sat down with the GM owners it was to take the battle raging around the occupied plants to the negotiating tables, to demand that GM recognize the union or the workers would keep them shut down till hell froze over. Today, things are different. Now, the UAW leadership and the auto companies have worked out a mutual understanding and union officialdom is a "responsible voice." What the rank and file auto workers are realizing is just who the UAW leaders are responsible to.

Things certainly have improved quite radically for the UAW celebrants at St. Regis Hotel. Heading up the top offices of the union might not be quite as lucrative as heading up GM, but the union treasuries they do control and the social position they occupy seeking, as they say, to influence and get along with business and government, puts them in direct opposition to those who face the grinding speedup and overtime on the plant floor.

But they had better be careful in how far they go in reviving the memory of the struggle at Flint. It might be remembered that the working class had to fight both the capitalists and the traitors heading up the AFL at that time in order to organize by industry and not craft. It might also be remembered that at Flint the rank and file relied on its own strength and not some slick negotiators, the courts, and especially not cooperation with the company. In fact one of the most famous statements from Flint, made by the sit-down strikers in response to court injunctions ordering them to leave the plants, was "Damn the injunctions, damn the courts, damn the Army and damn General Motors." A similar sentiment can also be directed towards their dinner. ■



GM's National Guard machine gunners covering "No Man's Land" in 1937 Flint Strike.



Billboard put up by the rank and file District 31 Organizing Committee outside U.S. Steel's giant Gary Works. It ran down the Steelworker's 7-point program for building the rank and file struggle against the steel bosses.

## Forward from Sadlowski Campaign

# Steel Demo Kicks Off Contract Fight

As contract talks opened up between the United Steel Workers (USWA) and 10 major steel companies on February 14 with a "sound-off" in Washington, D.C. where the union and management put out their basic negotiating positions, there were about 75 steel workers picketing outside chanting, "No Right to Strike, Can't Even Vote, Get Your Damn Hands Off Our Throats" and "sounding off" with the basic position of the rank and file.

Although it's too soon to analyze all the returns, it's been announced that in the February 8 election for USWA President the pro-company machine of I.W. Abel and his hand-picked successor Lloyd McBride beat challenger Ed Sadlowski. But while it's also still too early to thoroughly sum up the battle that took place around the election, it is already clear that the rank and file was able to overcome obstacles even within the Sadlowski campaign and make some gains in the course of it so that conditions today have grown more favorable for the rank and file to put up a real fight around this contract.

Abel is now negotiating the basic steel contract for 338,000 workers in the steel mills under the so-called Experimental Negotiating Agreement under which the union has signed away the right to strike, so that whatever issues haven't been agreed on by April 27 will go to binding arbitration. The workers in this industry don't have a single thing to say in the official ratification process of their contract, which is in the hands of the union leadership.

But as the Washington demonstration called by the *Steelworker* national newsletter makes clear, the dirty deal that management and its friends are trying to put over is far from being sewn up. In turn, whatever happens around the contract in basic steel will have a lot of effect on what happens around this year's contracts of USWA members in can and nonferrous metals and on local steel contracts, as well as the battles of the five million other workers whose contracts are up this year.

Workers in basic steel have never had the right to vote on a national contract and there hasn't been a national strike in 17 years. Because of this many steel workers look at the whole thing with a certain amount of cynicism, saying, "I wonder how we're going to get shafted this time." On the other hand, as the steel companies have tried to restore the falling profitability of the industry by stepped-up job combinations and eliminations, harassment, forced overtime and worsening safety conditions, there has been a relative upsurge of struggle.

As the pickets in Washington said in one of their chants, "1973, you sold us out then—we're fighting you now because you'll do it again." This first step in building a nationwide movement to fight for the interests of the rank and file in the contract negotiations included steel workers from all over the East Coast and Midwest. The actions in this campaign are

aimed at uniting with the sentiments of the masses of steel workers who know damn well that the USWA leaders will try to screw them in this contract, while at the same time fighting to overcome the sense of "well, what can you do?" that has held people back from entering into active struggle.

After the demonstration there was a meeting called by the *Steelworker* and led by rank and file workers who've come to the forefront of struggles in steel mills in the East and Midwest to discuss the question of turning the contract into a battle against the companies. After some lively debate, it was generally agreed that the sellout being cooked up had to be met head-on and that just entering the battlefield that the rank and file had been kept off of so long would itself be a step forward. It wouldn't be easy, people agreed, but thousands of steel workers chained by the ENA and company unionism in the face of company attacks are looking for a way to fight.

### Pole of Resistance

The demonstration itself was the first step in phase one of the campaign, helping to establish a pole of resistance among steel workers to the contract sellout that the two-headed monster (the company and their union flunkies) are trying to bring about. Along with the national TV coverage this action received, leaflets in many areas are helping to fan the spark. The idea behind phase one of this campaign is to develop and flesh out concrete contract demands in the course of building the battles now going on in the mills and develop the rank and file's ability to fight for its interests around the contract. Whenever Abel or Lloyd McBride, or any other company men on the company or union payroll come around to try to get the rank and file to swallow a sellout, they'll be met with picket lines, and other actions, as the rank and file builds and organizes its resistance.

Although specific contract demands will take shape in the course of the battle, steel workers at the Washington meeting presented the main issues facing the rank and file today: 1) Smash the ENA and make the right to strike over local issues a reality. 2) End joint company-union productivity commissions and the attacks on jobs. 3) Better and broader protection for people laid off including no overtime in any plant where there are layoffs. 4) Strengthened safety and health provisions, with special emphasis on the workers facing brutal conditions in the coke ovens. 5) The contract must deal with the question of ending discrimination and make the company and not the workers pay for discrimination in the past. 6) Extended wages and benefits and better pensions.

It's not yet known what the companies and the union heads are going to come up with, but there's every reason to believe it'll be bad for the rank and file. Abel has been making a big deal about how this contract should be a step towards insuring "a guaranteed job for

life" for steel workers. This may sound good, but from the union's side it's all been just talk while the companies have made the specific proposal that, in return for agreeing to that idea in principle, the union should give up any real wage demands and expect to see a drastic reduction in company payments of SUB (supplementary unemployment benefits) to laidoff steel workers.

At any rate, since the rank and file has no say in the matter (as far as the rules of the game are concerned) it's pretty likely that whatever they cook up by April 27 will be a sellout and the agreement will go down without any chance for the membership to say no. At that time, as phase two of the contract battle begins, steel workers will be able to use the contract program developed during phase one as a standard to judge the contract by. At the Washington meeting plans were made to mobilize for union meetings to deal with the question of repealing any sellout contract and as part of carrying out a campaign to raise the demand that the contract be scrapped.

Steel workers plan to take out petitions repudiating the contract, to print up ballots and hold elections in locals where this is possible whether the union leadership likes it or not. The demand will be that the Basic Steel Conference of the union reject the contract and send it back to be renegotiated.

It was also agreed at this meeting that steel workers should take up the local contracts in their plants as part of this overall battle. While the emphasis should be on the contract in basic steel (which is the only contract not submitted to a vote and negotiated under the ENA), it was decided that the struggle should be built among can, aluminum and nonferrous workers who are in the USWA as well. The can contract which had been scheduled to expire in the spring was extended until October, after the canning season is over, and it looks like the union leadership plans to try to jam an ENA down the throats of can workers as well.

### Build Off Victory in Basic

Although all the results aren't in yet, it seems clear that McBride and the Abel machine that backed him were voted down in basic steel. This puts a big hole in their claim that the ENA and other measures they've stood for represent the interests and will of the rank and file who've had to suffer the consequences of these policies. The defeat of Abel and McBride in basic steel weakens their ability to pull off a sellout by claiming that they have a "mandate" from the membership and it puts the rank and file in a better position to resist.

The whole question of building the workers movement in steel has become a lot more real for many more people in the last few months through the course of the battle fought around the union elections which were held February 8. McBride couldn't even run on the issues because he was on the wrong side on every one of them—from jobs, working conditions, dues increases, the Abel machine's dictatorial rule over the rank and file, the ENA and the phoney Consent Decree against discrimination to the whole question of company unionism. The challenger in this election, Ed Sadlowski, ran a campaign that took a stand, though often vacillating, on most of these issues and to some extent tried to draw strength from the growing anger of the rank and file.

By using the Sadlowski campaign as a way to take on the Abel machine and develop the struggle of the rank and file, steel workers were able to popularize their demands and mobilize around them, to raise the understanding of the rank and file as to the nature of the fight, to organize their ranks, strike some blows at the stranglehold of the machine in the union and create better conditions for further battles such as the contract struggle which is now breaking out.

Many of the workers at the Washington demonstration had come forward in the election campaign in which the *Steelworker* and people grouped around it had been a relatively small but active and expanding force. Through taking out the campaign to elect Sadlowski and smash the Abel machine, people around the *Steelworker* were able to make contacts with a great many other steel workers, linking up what had been relatively isolated struggles in various steel mills and shops and helping to develop among the workers a sense of an overall movement building up against the companies and their henchmen.

By taking up these local struggles, using the Sadlowski campaign to help link them and bringing out the united demands of steel workers, some important gains were made in the organization of the rank and file. People from the *Steelworker* joined the Sadlowski Fight Back committees, and other forms of organization were developed as well, such as the District 31 Organizing Committee in the Chicago-Gary area. A conference to build organization in Districts 27-28 (around Cleveland) which was held during the course of the election battle brought together a number of local steel workers.

### Breaking Down Divisions

Another advance that was made through the work of people around the *Steelworker* during the Sadlowski campaign was to begin breaking down the divisions within the union between workers in basic and those in steel fabrication shops. One of the main weapons

Continued on page 20



Los Angeles: One of many actions in recent years that have fought the capitalists' intensifying campaign of repression and deportation of immigrant workers.

# New Law Attacks Immigrants

In the last few months there has been a wave of propaganda on the TV, radio and newspapers about "the illegal problem" and how there are six million "illegals" in this country taking jobs from Americans and contributing to all sorts of ills from high welfare rolls to the housing shortage. Along with this propaganda campaign a new law has been passed which opens the door to yet new attacks on foreign-born workers in the U.S.

The basic effect of the federal bill known as the Eilberg Law which went into effect January 1 is to make it much harder for those immigrants already in the U.S. "illegally" to get their legal papers and get out from under the constant threat of deportations.

First, the law eliminates a provision which until now has helped many immigrants get papers once they had a child born in the U.S. (which automatically makes the child a U.S. citizen). Now parents who have a child born in the U.S. can't use this to help get papers unless the child is at least 21 years old.

Second, the Eilberg Law eliminates another provision which allowed some immigrants to get legal papers once in the country by showing steady employment in certain types of jobs and skill classifications.

Third, the law places an immigration quota of 20,000 per year on each country in the western hemisphere, instead of the old practice of restricting only the total number of people from all countries in the western hemisphere. Since the majority of immigrants in the U.S. are from Mexico, this will hit especially hard at them.

This law makes it easier for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and other police agencies to harass and try to terrorize foreign-born workers in general, both those with and without papers, and to carry out deportations. In the last few months the INS carried out two particularly outrageous large-scale raids and mass arrests of spectators at soccer games in Watsonville, California and Washington, D.C. On the border with Mexico, "la Migra" (as the hated INS is called) beat a Mexican student to death after allegedly catching him entering the country illegally. Even these kinds of attacks have not been enough for some representatives of the ruling class who have demanded even more widespread search and seizure operations everywhere that people speak foreign languages in this country.

Yet the fact is that the 800,000 deportations carried out in 1975 and all the harassment and deportations of the last year have not reduced the number of immigrants without papers, nor were they ever meant to do that.

There are whole industries which couldn't last a day without the labor of "illegals" such as California's farming and canneries, the garment industry coast to coast and so on. For years the capitalists have kept the borders relatively open and hired on as many "illegals" as they could, while doing their best to make it as hard as possible for these workers to ever get their papers.

The harassment and raids being carried out by the INS aren't meant to empty the factories of "illegals" but to make it harder and more dangerous for them to struggle against the especially bad wages and working conditions that the bosses force them to endure. And yet the capitalists have the hypocrisy to say that undocumented workers get low wages because of their "willingness" to

work for so little! In fact the bourgeoisie is continuing to deny papers to immigrant workers in order to maintain them as "illegals" and thus try to force them to take work where they can get it at whatever wages they can get and especially to keep their mouths shut and not fight back.

## Divide and Conquer

There is another purpose behind the raids as well—stir up confusion about the real source of unemployment and other problems and to divide the working class, both in particular struggles and overall. Anyone who's ever been on strike in any industry where immigrants work has seen the bosses' efforts to break the struggle by trying to get "illegals" as scabs and/or by trying to set native-born workers against "illegals." This kind of maneuvering to set workers against each other goes on in a thousand different ways on the shop floor in these industries where the bosses have been able to take advantage of the conditions immigrants face to keep these industries generally unorganized and low-paid. They turn around and blame these conditions on the immigrants themselves.

This is the kind of scummy trick that the bourgeoisie and their partners (including the top AFL-CIO hacks) are trying to carry out on a bigger scale. George Meany and others of his ugly ilk have been among the loudest crying out that it's the "illegals" who are responsible for so many Americans being out of work—a line of logic that lets those sellouts off the hook.

To hear some of these people talk, there really isn't any basic problem behind unemployment at all. The real problem is illegals and a few "loose ends." Eight million jobless minus six million "illegals" leaves only two million unemployed and most of them are unskilled youth anyway, they say. This magic trick is supposed to make reality disappear in a cloud of smoke, as though there were no economic crisis which has led to layoffs in all sorts of industries without regard to the nationality of the people that work there. It's pretty easy to see why New Jersey Congressman Peter Rodino—the great "liberal" from a state with double digit unemployment—would push a bill to outlaw giving jobs to workers without papers, in order to take the heat off himself and try to convince workers that this is the way to deal with the problem. That's why George Meany and other representatives of the capitalists in political and union office support Rodino's bill. But their reactionary line of deporting some people so that those who were left would have less competition for existing jobs is a strategy for dividing the class into smaller and smaller—and weaker—pieces.

In addition to these political purposes, the capitalists also have some hard economic reasons for deportations. Many times the owners themselves will call the Migra to raid their plants to save on a week's pay, to save on unemployment insurance, or just to discourage struggle. As anyone who's been there knows, these raids on plants or on people going to work usually come because there's about to be a layoff, not because the bosses plan to hire someone else to take these workers' place.

Today, in the midst of deepening crisis, the point made in the *Communist Manifesto* stands out starkly: the bourgeoisie "is incompetent to assure an existence

to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him."

There is a huge "surplus" of workers—not because there's no work to be done but because their employment can't bring a profit. The capitalists don't want to spend money for unemployment insurance or welfare and they also want to defuse the "social dynamite" and the danger of political explosions that the huge and growing number of unemployed threaten to bring about. Deportations are a way of reducing this number, while the propaganda that accompanies the deportations is meant to diffuse that dynamite by causing divisions among the workers.

But the bottom line is that the capitalists won't and can't stop bringing in immigrants to slave away in their sweatshops and plants. The same crisis that leads to layoffs also has led to even more cutthroat competition between capitalists and more than ever the only way many of them can compete is keeping down their costs by hiring as cheaply as possible and keeping the biggest possible club over the workers' heads. They need more than ever to have workers desperate for work and constantly harassed and threatened so that these capitalists can squeeze out the extra drop of blood that makes the difference between success or bankruptcy. This is why the capitalists haven't really moved to cut down on the number of immigrants very much yet (although they may as the crisis deepens), but mainly have concentrated on keeping most immigrants "illegal" and harassing them even more.

## A Result of Imperialism

Even if the capitalists did find it in their interests to restrict the flow of foreign workers to the U.S., they could never shut it off. The fact that U.S. investment dominates countries like Mexico has created increasingly huge pools of unemployed workers and ruined many peasants there. U.S. imperialism has wrecked the economy and U.S. companies have even bought up the best land and are using mechanization to throw people out of work.

As long as imperialism dominates other countries and leaves many of the people of these countries with no choice but to starve or go where there is work no matter what the hardship and risk, there will be a constant flow of immigrant workers. This is why there are so many immigrant workers not only in the U.S. but also in European countries like Germany and France—especially workers from North Africa and poorer European countries like Portugal, Spain, Greece and Italy.

There will be immigrant workers and the capitalists will try to keep most of them "illegal" as long as the capitalist system stands. As long as their system exists the capitalists will always try to use the low wages they pay immigrants as a club to bring down the wages of other workers and try to use the divisions they've created to hold down the struggle of the working class.

The strategy offered by Meany and others of trying to "keep American jobs for Americans" is really a strategy for leaving the working class more divided and unable to deal with the situation it faces.

The only way forward is for the working class to unite its ranks firmly and as broadly as possible, not only in the sense of carrying out a united fight against the bosses and their agents in struggles like strikes and so on, but also by taking up the struggle for those demands which will make it easier for immigrant workers to struggle side by side with other workers in the common battle. That's why it's so important to take up the fight against measures like the Eilberg Law and all harassment and deportations of immigrants, and why it's important to take on the bourgeoisie's propaganda campaign around this question. ■

## Subscribe

### Subscription Rates:

U.S.—six months, \$2; one year, \$4; one year by first class mail, \$11.  
Canada—one year, \$6.50; by air mail, \$11.  
Other Countries—one year, \$7; by air mail, \$18.

Bookstore rates available.

Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for a \_\_\_\_\_ subscription.

Begin with \_\_\_\_\_ (month) issue.

Surface \_\_\_\_\_ . Airmail \_\_\_\_\_ .

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be part of a monthly sustainer program for REVOLUTION. I will contribute \_\_\_\_\_ \$5, \_\_\_\_\_ \$10, \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 a month (or more \_\_\_\_\_) for one year. This includes a one-year subscription.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please make out checks or money orders to RCP Publications, at P.O. Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654

# Political Turmoil Spreading In Spain

From one end of Spain to the other in January tremendous numbers of people struck and demonstrated against government repression. For a year now, the Spanish people have been told that they are to have the democratic rights they've long demanded—a few today and a lot more "soon." Yet when the people do something to fight for their interests—like the workers' strikes in October—or when they demand some real changes, like in the demonstrations demanding the release of all political prisoners in December—the police and the army are sent out to drive them back with bullets. All the while the people are told to be content with the government's vague promises of some kind of parliamentary elections sometime this year.

Before his death brought cheers the world over at the end of 1975, the hated fascist dictator Francisco Franco appointed as his successor the man he had made king of Spain, Juan Carlos, hoping that in this way the regime would be able to last. But, even as Franco lay on his deathbed, there was such a massive rebellion against Francoism from the people that Spain's capitalist rulers were forced to begin to cook up new deceptions in an attempt to convince the people that, now that Franco's gone, the government represents the interests of "all Spaniards." But while King Juan Carlos and his ministers—all former jackals who got fat off the droppings from Franco's table—now go around parading as so-called "modern European democrats" and acting as though they'd never known any Francisco Franco, the nature of the government hasn't basically changed, either in form or in class content.

All these maneuvers could not hide nor pacify the antagonism between Spain's ruling capitalist class and those they rule over. In October Prime Minister Suarez introduced a so-called austerity program which included a wage freeze and permission to employers to lay off and fire even more freely than ever. Strikes against these government measures broke out in October and built all through October and November despite heavy repression. Municipal workers walked out in Madrid and the government sent in the army to run the buses. Miners in Santander took over a mine shaft to make sure their strike couldn't be broken. On November 12, a million workers hit the bricks all over Spain, especially those in heavy industry. Police arrested hundreds and brought some leaders up on charges of "sedition," an accusation that has led to a lifetime in jail for others in the past.

As before in Spain, the government's repression worked to expose the brutal nature of the ruling class and inspire millions to stand up to these outrages. In January many thousands of people took part in a wave of demonstrations demanding that the government release all the hundreds of political prisoners it holds immediately—exposing the "partial amnesty" of the regime.

Two demonstrators were killed—a young woman student hit in the head with a police smoke gas cannister and a young man shot dead by a police-protected group called "Guerrillas for Christ the King." A few days later, five lawyers associated with the strike movement were machine-gunned to death in their office by "the Anti-communist Apostolic Alliance," another group which police claim ignorance of but have long backed to the hilt. In angry response, at least a half a million workers shut down the factories and other worksites cold. The funerals drew in hundreds of thousands of people enraged by what the government had done.

The government was forced to reveal itself even further, trying to stamp out the flames its own crimes had brought about. Using the kidnapping of a general as an excuse, the Prime Minister announced the suspension of two of the few democratic rights which do exist in Spain—now the police would no longer need warrants to search people's homes nor would they have to bring any specific charges against the people they arrested. Plus, the police were granted an extra \$60 million to boost their forces.

## Carrot and Stick

Even while it makes brutal use of the stick, the Spanish ruling class is trying to restore "order" by using the carrot as well. The demands of the people for

Continued on page 20

## O.L., Where Are You?

It has come to our attention that the October League, while busily ducking and hiding from a debate with the Revolutionary Communist Party on the tasks of U.S. revolutionaries around the international situation, has been spreading some new concoctions.

They have dared commit nothing to print on the subject of course. But in Los Angeles, for example, while jumping up and down to denounce the recent conference held there on the international situation, some OL representatives dished up the interesting fantasy that the RCP has refused to agree to conditions or ground rules for such a debate and is thus preventing it from happening.

Once again the October League is serving as a living monument to the principle that there is no absolute limit to opportunism—just when you think they have reached it, they push on into the unknown.

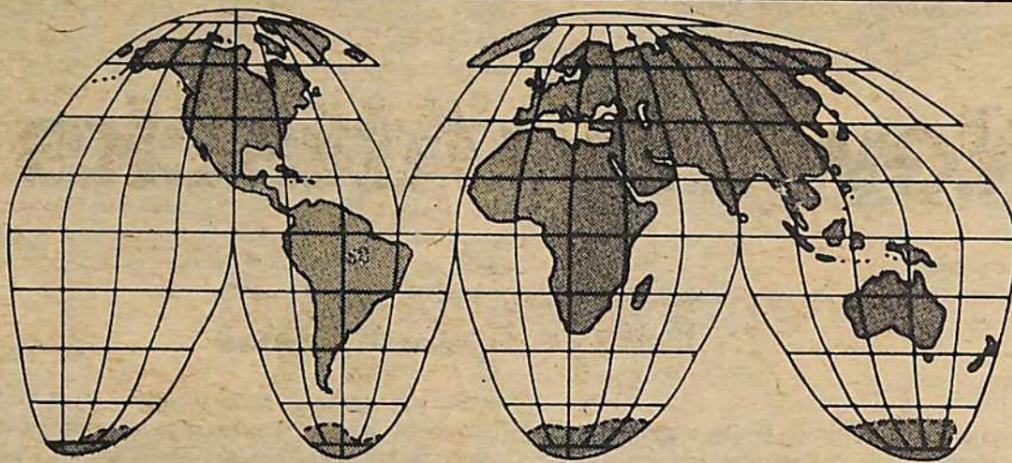
Well, dear October League leaders, since you insist on making such a hullabaloo out of ground rules, we will make public the proposals which you as well as

we know that we submitted in discussion on the question.

The debate should be a one evening affair limited to the subject of the present international situation and the correct line and tasks of U.S. revolutionaries around that question. There should be a statement by each side, followed by rebuttal. Then there can be questions from the audience with the opportunity for both sides to reply. Final closing statements by each side would then be given. In regards to the location, we suggested New York. Additional arrangements could be easily worked out.

Meetings to further discuss these proposals were set up. But the appointments were missed by the OL. Messages and phone numbers have been left for them, but still no answer.

We are looking forward to hearing from the October League on this question, hopefully in some other form than squeaky rumormongering, but given past practice we are not holding our breath.



## International Situation

# 500 Attend LA Conference

On the heels of the success of last November's Conference on the International Situation, held in New York City, plans were laid to have a similar type of conference on a local scale in Los Angeles where, because of the 3000 mile distance, only a few people were able to go to New York. In mid-February these plans came to fruition when over 500 people from Southern California gathered to discuss the vital questions facing the American people about the world situation today.

Conference participants included many students, former anti-war activists, teachers, scholars, older people who had participated in the people's struggle for a long period of time, and workers who had more recently come forward in the class struggle. Sponsors included Associated Student Body of the L.A. City College, the Black Student Association of UCLA, Black Student Association at Trade Tech, Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars at UCLA, Union of Marxist Social Scientists at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB), People's College of UCSB, the Revolutionary Communist Party, the Iranian Student Association, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the Revolutionary Student Brigade, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War and numerous individuals, including 15 professors from several campuses.

The conference organizers made big efforts to involve broad numbers of people and forces. 20,000 leaflets were distributed and hundreds of groups were contacted. The large turnout is testimony to the growing interest in the questions discussed. But at the same time there were some forces who held back from participating out of narrow and sectarian interests. Some of those who have taken strong positions on the international situation, for example the New American Movement and circles within the National Lawyers Guild refused to put forward their views publicly.

Because of this sectarian attitude on the part of many of those who hold clear (although in the RCP's opinion, wrong) positions, the different tendencies did not come out as sharply delineated as at the New York Conference. This also reflected the fact that the public struggle and discussion of these questions has been limited in the past.

The Conference opened with presentations by Raoul Fernandez, a professor from the University of California at Irvine, Roger Dittman from University of California at Fullerton, and Mary Lou Gomez of the Revolu-

tionary Communist Party.

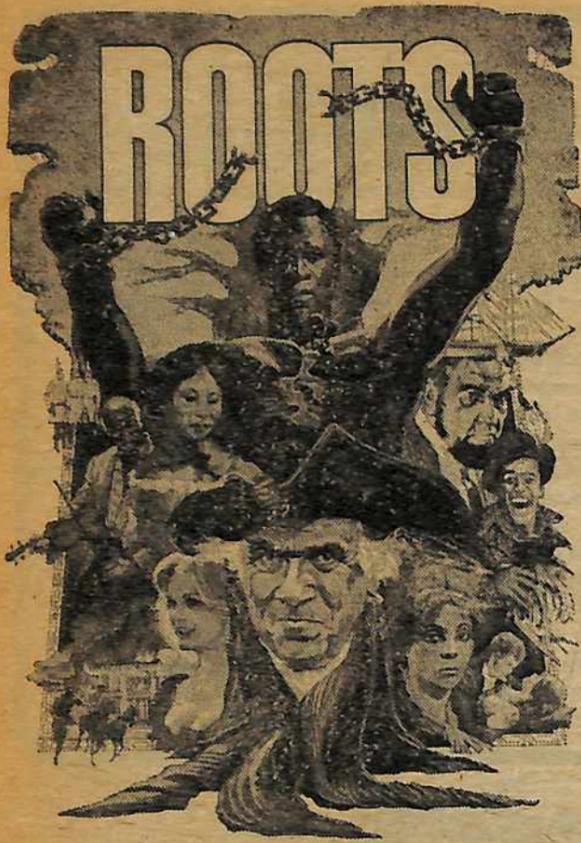
Fernandez summarized many of the characteristics of World War 1, World War 2 and the Vietnam War. He stressed that there was a need for more scientific study of the international situation and that it was rapidly changing. But while claiming that the USSR is the "main source of war," he did not take a position on exactly what the tasks facing the American people were in relation to the international situation.

Dittman, on the other hand, did put forward a more definite position. He argued that the U.S. was clearly the main danger to the world's people. While criticizing the Soviet Union for being "revisionist" and playing "power politics," he claimed that they often played a positive role in world affairs, giving the example of Angola, of all things.

Mary Lou Gomez summarized key aspects of the line of the RCP on the international situation: that both the U.S. and the Soviet Union represent the main enemies of the world's people, and that the contention between them is leading toward world war, while factors for revolution are also on the rise; and that in this country the working class must direct its struggle toward overthrowing its own ruling class in the context of an international united front against imperialism, aimed particularly at the rulers of the two superpowers. She sharply contrasted this view to the line of some U.S. forces that the USSR is the main danger in the world today, or its opposite, that the U.S. is the sole main enemy of the world's people, both of which amount to lining up with one or another of the superpowers.

Later on, workshops were held on particular aspects of the present international situation. In these and in small groups throughout the course of the day there was enthusiastic and lively struggle and discussion.

The conference was an important step in clarifying the understanding of the different political lines and their implications, in the Los Angeles area. A number of people, who when first approached about the conference didn't see the pressing need to discuss these issues, came away realizing their great importance, and, as was the case for the great majority of the 500 who attended, are determined to deepen their own understanding of the international situation through further struggle and study, while actively participating in the struggle against imperialism. ■



## Roots...

Continued from page 1

Haley's presentation that can lead away from drawing revolutionary conclusions.

### Role of Labor

In *Roots* Haley concentrates his fire on the superstructure of slavery, that is, the laws, customs, ideas, etc. that grew up on the basis of the slave system and in turn enforced it. He lashes out at the enforced illiteracy, the rape of slave women, the humiliation and degradation. While he exposes the profit motive of the slaveowners, what does not come through clearly is that all of this existed to serve the fundamental feature of the slave system—the squeezing of wealth out of the back-breaking labor of the slaves. Indeed, the heart of daily life for the great majority of slaves, being driven virtually every waking hour in labor to produce the cotton and other export crops of the old South, is hardly pictured at all in the television series. This problem is exaggerated by the fact that most of the characters in *Roots* were either domestic servants or had a particular skill like chicken raising or blacksmithing and were not field hands as were the majority of slaves.

In the book, for example, Haley contends that the worst feature of slavery was that it prevented the slaves from "knowing who they were," by which he means their African heritage and their family background. But while the splitting apart of families and the forcible eradication of their African heritage are certainly vicious crimes, they were perpetrated precisely to further a still greater crime—the robbery of the labor of the slaves, forcing a whole people to spend their entire lives as outright property, slaving in poverty to enrich a small handful of others.

Not only is understanding the essence of slavery as a system of the exploitation of labor important for an accurate picture of the slave system, it is absolutely critical for understanding how slavery came about in the first place and how it was integrally connected with the whole development of capitalism. It also makes clearer what is in common between slavery and the position of workers in this country today.

### Bound to Capitalism

In *Capital* Marx points out how slavery and the slave trade were key components of the rise of the industrial capitalist. "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production." He goes on to point out later, "Whilst the cotton industry introduced child-slavery in England, it gave in the United States a stimulus to the transformation of the earlier, more or less patriarchal slavery, into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the veiled slavery of wage-workers in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world." This historical fact is a powerful weapon for exposing the capitalist class and building the unity of working people of all nationalities.

Contrast, for example, Marx's approach with the way in which Haley addresses the question of unity between Black and white. Haley certainly does not blame white people as a whole for the oppression of

Black people, and includes a commendable (and historically based) account of a white family making common cause with ex-slaves during the Reconstruction period. Since the objective, material interests of the majority of whites in uniting with the freed slaves isn't shown, the whole example comes off somewhat strained. The audience is left to draw the possible conclusion that the white family was acting *against* its own interests, out of some sort of philanthropic spirit.

The lack of a materialist point of view comes out in various ways in both the book and the television series. In particular, it comes out in divorcing the question of freedom from the material conditions of life and especially the material conditions of labor and production. This is particularly true of his treatment of tribal Africa which forms an important part of *Roots*. To the extent that Haley's portrayal of African society knocks a hole in the chauvinist image built up by missionary movies, Tarzan stories and trash like Rudyard Kipling's proclamation of the "white man's burden," it is a positive contribution. But by romanticizing tribal life, *Roots* misses the mark.

The basic message that comes through in Haley's description of an African village, especially when contrasted to horrors that face his family later, is that African people were *free*. Watching the first television episode you sense that in this primitive village society there is no division into classes and no exploitation of man by man. There is certainly a great deal of truth in at least this latter aspect of Haley's picture. For, in the history of all peoples, there was a period before the emergence of classes when society was based on people working together communally to produce the necessities of life (a stage referred to as "primitive communalism"). This fact itself is a blow against the capitalist lies that it is "human nature" and the "natural order of things" for some people to live off the labor of others.

### Tribal Society and Freedom

But what comes out only slightly in Haley's book, and not at all in the televised version, is the extent to which people in primitive society are enslaved, not to each other but to *necessity*. Because the methods and means of producing things were so backward, society was almost completely at the mercy of disease, periodic famine and a life of intense labor to scratch out the barest existence. Under such circumstances, *freedom* is tremendously limited. It is hardly a way of life one would care to go back to.

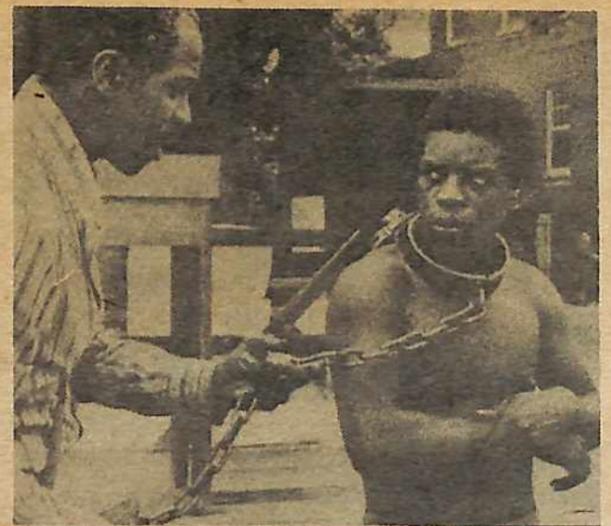
In fact in the book Haley describes some of the developments within tribal society that lead to its breakdown, for example the earliest forms of a type of patriarchal slavery, trade between different villages and tribes, private property in the form of individually owned herds of goats, etc. (most of which is also missing from the television series). In dealing with the rudimentary development of slavery within the African village he describes, Haley essentially takes the position of *apologizing* for it by stressing its extremely primitive nature—that slaves lived at almost the same standard of living as those who owned them, that they participated fully in the life of the village, etc.

But what Haley does not understand is that tribal society (assuming, for the sake of argument, it doesn't come into contact with more advanced forms of society) *inevitably* is replaced by the slave system. This is the actual process of development of society, as can be seen by the relatively independent development of the slave system in ancient Egypt, Greece, India and China, for example.

This type of ancient slavery was different in many aspects, of course, from the slavery existing in the United States which was (as pointed out in the quote from Marx cited earlier) a "system of commercial exploitation," which meant driving slaves to produce for the needs of the capitalist world market. The advance from primitive communalism to ancient slavery was progressive in the sense that it enabled the development of civilization, increasing the freedom of society as a whole to harness the forces of nature, thus laying the basis for society to advance *beyond* this. Furthermore, everywhere in the world primitive communal society was just that—primitive: it was characterized by a low level of material, cultural and ideological life and for this reason tribes often went to war, with the victors generally killing the captives.

When society developed to the point where someone's labor could produce a surplus beyond his own survival needs, such captives were often not killed but made into slaves. This was an historically progressive step, not only from the point of view of the development of mankind as a whole, but even for the individual slaves, who at least were better off than if they had been killed.

The danger in Haley's idealist view of tribal life and freedom is mainly in its implications for the future. Under today's conditions the struggle for freedom can mean only one thing: the fight led by the working class to eliminate the exploitation of man by man and, by overthrowing and wiping out the fetters placed on society by the misery ridden and outmoded capitalist system of production, enable the masses of people to use their collective labor, unshackled from the blind



One of the most powerful sections of the TV version was the 2nd episode's portrayal of Kunta Kinte's consistent and intense efforts, from the very moment he was brought ashore, to break his chains of bondage and escape.

necessity of working to enrich a handful, to constantly expand society's mastery over nature.

### Pan Africanism

This is certainly not the conception of freedom presented in *Roots*. Not only is freedom presented somewhat detached from the question of exploitation, at times it takes on an almost mystical quality, especially when it is portrayed as regaining "freedom" as it existed in Africa. This can feed a tendency toward Pan-Africanism, a political current that has cropped up from time to time among sections of Black people.

Pan-Africanism holds that everyone of African origin, be they in the Caribbean, Africa, the United States or anywhere else, comprise One African People. While Blacks throughout the world do share part of a common heritage, this view negates the actual historical development in these areas. In the U.S. this means, among others, failing to come to grips with the actual conditions of oppression of Black people in this country—the development of a separate oppressed Black nation in the South and their history over more recent decades of being driven into the industrial centers of the North and South where Blacks have, in their great majority, become part of the multinational U.S. working class, while continuing to suffer oppression as a nation.

Politically, Pan-Africanism basically tells Blacks in this country that their liberation hinges principally on developments in Africa. While Pan-Africanism has played a certain progressive role in bringing people into struggle—especially against imperialist domination of Africa and against some aspects of the national oppression of Black people in this country—as a fully developed political line it steers the struggle of Black people in this country *away* from attacking the source of their oppression, the capitalist system of wage-slavery, and drives a wedge between the Black people's struggle and the struggle of the U.S. multinational working class.

Pan-Africanism is also a dead end for the struggle in Africa as well, in that it ignores the fact that nations and states have arisen in Africa itself on the basis of different material and historical conditions, are at different levels of development, and have different internal class relations; as a result of all this, the tasks facing



"Roots" portrayal of a white family siding with Blacks was a moving sequence. But while it reflected an important part of the reality of Reconstruction, it failed to bring out the material interests that united former slaves and white sharecroppers.

the people in Africa, while certainly sharing common features, differ from one country to another.

#### Network's Role

Clearly ABC TV's motivation in producing the series was not to focus public attention on the abuses of slavery, but to line their own pockets and make a coup in the Nielson ratings. The fact that ABC had difficulty in rounding up sponsors and charged rates far below those usually charged for audiences of huge magnitude, indicates that many capitalists were squeamish about the film. Still, the fact that the series appeared on television at all shows that the film, by itself, does not lead to revolutionary conclusions—or it would have been killed, profits or no.

There is no doubt that ABC and the rest of the capitalist class grossly underestimate the hatred of the masses for oppression. Precisely because *Roots* did bring out such a huge swell of hatred for slavery and became such a mammoth topic of debate and because its effect was to further the idea that it's right to resist oppression, the capitalists and their representatives in the mass media stepped into the fray to cover up the positive thrust of *Roots*, its exposure of a system of exploitation and its support for the oppressed, to build up all that was secondary, peripheral and wrong in *Roots*. Television reports and newspaper articles abounded on the subject of tracing one's own family tree and tried to concentrate attention on Haley's remarkable detective work in tracing the history of his family.

But what makes Haley's search into his family origins something more than the scholastic exercise the bourgeoisie would like to reduce it to, lies partly in the fact that the search itself immediately confronted obstacles that were themselves a telling exposure of the national oppression of Black people. As was shown dramatically in *Roots*, Black people were systematically forbidden to read, write or keep records, their families were torn asunder when they stood in the way of the master's profits and their African heritage was systematically stomped out. While there are certain weaknesses in Haley's approach of focusing on individual life stories—especially in portraying the resistance of slaves to their oppression (almost exclusively in the TV version) as individual and not showing the organized, collective rebellion—on the whole his approach is quite moving and effective.

#### Two Views of History

What the capitalists are seeking to do is divorce the form of Haley's book (a study of family history) from its content. To the extent that studies such as Haley's (and the whole movement for Black studies on the universities, for example) succeed in uncovering the history of resistance and struggle which the rulers have tried to stamp out and reveal the origin of the oppression of Blacks, they aid the struggle to eliminate that oppression. But the capitalists want to treat history simply as a matter of curiosity (which the study of family trees in fact is) and not something to be learned from in the struggle for a better future.

Haley himself seems torn between two assessments when it comes to assessing the significance of his own work. On the one hand he offers the history of his family as the common property of the twenty-five million Blacks in this country, and concludes his book by hoping that it will "help to alleviate the legacies of the fact that preponderantly the histories have been written by the winners." On the other hand, he tends toward presenting the study of the heritage of Black people as a sort of culmination of their struggle, and in numerous interviews and speeches (which are currently number one on the lecture circuit) he claims the study of familial and cultural heritage is a sort of cure-all for Americans of all nationalities, even claiming it could provide an answer for the restlessness of the youth!

Besides trying to turn the interest generated by *Roots* into harmless reconnoitering through old birth certificates, the capitalists have also resorted to their typical divide and conquer techniques. There have been more than a few examples of the bourgeoisie trying to direct the anger of Blacks, brought to the surface by the television series, at ordinary white people, while trying to make whites feel that they were being blamed for slavery. A typical trick was a Milwaukee "man in the street" TV interview in which the responses were carefully edited to make exactly this point, with all the Blacks saying the series made them hate whites and all the whites saying they found the show objectionable.

Though the Milwaukee interview was clearly a bourgeois distortion, what is true is that the showing of *Roots* hit at a raw nerve in American society—the oppression of Black people. Because this oppression is an objective fact, and because of the centuries old attempts of the bourgeoisie to foster social antagonisms that grow up on the basis of the real inequality and oppression that exists, it is hardly surprising that *Roots* did bring some of these conflicts to the surface, especially since the story did not point a clear direction forward. As a result some have suggested that the principal social effect of *Roots* is to divide Blacks from whites.

#### Unity and Division

Such a view not only fails to correspond to the facts (for the majority of white working people who saw *Roots* reacted positively to it) but has potentially dangerous implications. Because oppression and inequality exists, people will fight against it and writers will write about it. This is of course a very good thing, and must be united with.

To expect—or even worse, demand—that all who rise to expose and fight national oppression be fully class conscious or scientific would be grossly sectarian and would have the effect of furthering divisions that exist within the ranks of the people, and cutting off from the working class its most powerful ally in revolutionary struggle, the resistance of the oppressed nationalities.

What is necessary is for the working class, through the



Haley's description of the slave rebellions and conditions in the ship passage from Africa is extremely powerful and historically accurate. In describing the horror and profit motive of the slave trade, it depicted it in a way that millions of Americans had never seen before. The common reaction among people, Black and white, was anger and hatred of oppression.

## Postscript

After writing the above article, we read the remarkable review of *Roots* entitled "Roots' TV Series—Which Class Does It Serve?" in the February 14 *Call*, the newspaper of the October League, which is worthy of comment—if nothing else. In their review they make the astounding discovery that the class outlook of the author, Alex Haley, is bourgeois. If they had restricted their comments to proving this obvious fact, perhaps they could have printed a mildly interesting scholastic article, which itself would have been a great improvement for the *Call*.

But all of their dancing up and down about Haley's outlook and going out of their way to point out that Haley is making a lot of money off his book (obviously), that he spent 20 years in the Coast Guard and was a member of the Bicentennial Commission (all of which, by the way, is done completely one-sidedly, leaving out for instance that he co-authored the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*) is to justify the whole argument of their article: that *Roots* served the bourgeoisie.

In their review OL gives the following criterion for evaluating *Roots* saying, "to really understand *Roots* we must look at its class viewpoint. Which class does it serve and from what point of view does it look at this history? We must ask, does it portray this history as it really took place? What does it include and what does it skip over? Finally, what are the lessons that it offers the viewers? Do these lessons serve to further the struggle or to cripple it? Who does it show as the friends and enemies of the oppressed people?"

Certainly these questions are relevant "to understand *Roots*," and in their pitiful and one-sided attempt to answer them they do stumble on many of the real weaknesses in *Roots*—that the "masses of Black slaves are portrayed as the objects of history rather than the makers of it," that it blurs "the economic and social causes of slavery," that "the extreme hardships and sunup to sundown toil" is not shown, etc. However, most of what we learn from OL's list of crimes is that Alex Ha-

lealey is not a Marxist-Leninist and that Nat Turner, Malcolm X and W.E.B. Dubois had a revolutionary stand and Haley doesn't.

But, to borrow a phrase from the October League, what does their review include and what does it skip over? What questions do they pose and what do they omit? Since OL set out to prove not just that Haley isn't a Marxist-Leninist or even a revolutionary nationalist but that *Roots* serves the bourgeoisie, one would expect even the October League to assess the television series principally on the basis of its social effect and not on the ideology of its author.

Ironically, the only two points that OL makes about *Roots*' actual social effect are that "130 million people viewed *Roots* and are discussing it daily" and that "to some degree, it has awakened pride and awareness in a society where Black people and all working people are usually portrayed in the most degrading manner," hardly convincing proof that it serves the ruling class.

To the October League's series of questions we would like to add a few of our own: Does *Roots* instill in people a burning hatred for the system of slavery? Is its overall effect among the masses to encourage or discourage resistance to exploitation and oppression? In the main, does it build up and strengthen or does it attack and expose the ways in which the ruling class tries to justify its oppression of Black people? In short, is it a good thing or a bad thing that 130 million people watched it and were influenced by it to one degree or another? The answers to these questions, in our opinion, are obvious.

These types of questions, questions of the actual effect on the class struggle must be the starting point for assessing it. Avoiding such questions, the questions of the real way the masses of people took up this show and the basic message they got from it, makes a mockery out of OL's criticism of Haley for not proceeding from the point of view that the masses are the makers of history.

These are the same types of considerations that led genuine communists in 1974 to criticize the *Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, a television movie of the life story of a fictional Black woman whose life spanned the period between slavery and the modern civil rights movement. Unlike *Roots*, the overall effect of *Jane*

Continued on page 14

## Takeover...

Continued from page 8  
side started a support picket.

In ten to fifteen minutes the plant was mostly locked up tight and no production was going on. The struggle went on with a few workers who were not completely won to the takeover. President Hoffman attacked one of the speakers from the *Steelworker* saying he was an outsider and to get out. He said he was the president of his United Steelworkers of America local, not the guys from the *Steelworker*. Hoffman was told that it was traitors like him that had taken the union away from the rank and file and had held back their fight for jobs. Everyone started yelling at him raising one abuse after another about how he had sold out the rank and file over the years. Workers exposed that his only answer to layoffs at Star Sprinkler had been to use his influence to get another job for himself at SKF, another steel plant in Philadelphia, even though other steel workers were still on layoff at that plant. Hoffman's accusation boomeranged; he was the *real* outsider, outside the working class, carrying out the dictates of his masters. Hoffman left the meeting by himself, isolated, and joined the management in their office frantically calling the

police.

Banners saying "Star Sprinkler Workers Sound the Alarm, Fight for Every Job;" "The Workers United Will Never Be Defeated;" "Fight the Runaway, Fight for Every Job;" were hung from the walls and the machines inside. As workers met and struggled over why and how they had to all stick together and better organize the takeover, management tried to get a handle on the situation. They had heard about the takeover from the leaflets, but never for a minute thought about it as a real possibility. They kept ringing the back to work buzzer, expecting, perhaps, that the workers were like trained seals and would run to their machines by reflex. That was met by derisive laughs and catcalls.

The workers had done it! Standing tall, one worker after another, in small groups and in the larger meeting, talked about how they should all stand together and see the takeover through.

After the workers held the plant for an hour and a half, the managers got cops in through one office door. One attempt to stop them failed as two steel workers were arrested trying to chain the cops into the manager's office.

Once the cops came into the plant the rank and file tried to mobilize themselves to take them on. The cops tried to identify and isolate steel workers from other plants by getting the Star workers to go back to their jobs. But because of the unity that was built up everyone refused. Active workers made sure that the one or two who started back to their machines were brought

reaction, and to cooperation with the police—all of which will not end or even decrease crime, but only help the capitalists increase their terror and repression against the masses of people.

An example of this was a group organized by Anthony Imperiale in Newark, N.J. at the height of the Black liberation struggle. While Imperiale used people's anger around crime as the basis to organize people, he directed their thrust against Black people. Under the cover of making the streets safe they roamed the streets of Newark's North Ward looking for Blacks to beat up and letting it be known in a big way that that's who their guns were aimed at.

But Imperiale's group of vigilantes turned reality on its head. At the same time they aimed their blows at Blacks, the Mafia continued to operate in the North Ward, shipping drugs into Newark's Black communities, creating the junkies who came back into the North Ward looking to rip people off. Since then Imperiale has become a state senator, standing solidly against money going to improve schools for Blacks, open housing and an end to discrimination—some of the very conditions which give rise to crime. By separating the fight against crime from the system that causes it, Imperiale struck a blow for reaction, aiding in the suppression of the masses and prolonging the system responsible for crime.

Crime is only one problem out of the many facing people today which include rising unemployment, deteriorating housing, rotten schools, etc. It is interconnected with these problems and is to a large degree caused by them. Clearly the struggle against crime needs to be tied in with the struggle against these other problems and against the capitalist system which causes them all.

### Crime During the Depression

This is exactly the lesson to be drawn from the Great Depression when crime decreased substantially even though unemployment and poverty increased to massive proportions. During this time the attacks by the capitalists were met by a wave of struggle by the masses of people. Out of this developed community organizations and unity in which one person looked out for the other, making it much harder for criminals to operate.

But the big drop in crime during this time is due to an even more important reason. In these struggles millions of unemployed and youth, who might otherwise have turned to crime, directed their anger at the capitalists. In these struggles these people's lives took on a new hope and purpose and, instead of accepting the life of unemployment and crime the system held out, many fought proudly in the service of the people. Helping build these struggles and aiming them at the real enemy was the Communist Party, USA, at that time a genuinely revolutionary party, bringing to many people an understanding that one day the working class will throw off this class enemy and build a bright future under socialism and communism.

Crime is not something that will plague society forever, something our children have to face, and their children after that. Society is capable of much more than decay and decadence. Nor is doing something about crime today an impossibility. The road forward lies in grasping that the capitalist system is the root cause, just like it is the cause of other problems in society. By building a struggle that aims to overthrow capitalism and replace it with the rule of the working class, socialism, which is the transition to a completely higher stage of society, communism, the working class can move towards the final end of the evils of this system, including crime at all levels of society. ■

back and won to staying with the group. Even Hoffman was afraid to finger the "outsiders" and the foremen couldn't say for sure who worked there and who didn't.

An argument developed between the cops and the workers. Star workers told the cops they were on strike and to get out. The cops pleaded for the Star workers to have a *regular* strike outside and to please leave the plant. The plant manager refused to enter the plant even though the police promised to protect him.

Finally, after trying to talk the police down and with more and more of them arriving, active Star workers snuck their fellow workers from the other plants and the UWOC members out through windows. Only two additional workers were caught and arrested. When these two women workers were grabbed, five Star workers told police that if these two were being arrested then they should arrest them too. One woman from Star said, "I'm calling my husband and telling him that I'm going to be in jail for the weekend." But the cops refused to arrest any of the Star workers.

The plant never went back into production that day. Bail money was collected outside the gate and many workers came out to a couple of bars after they were escorted out of the plant early by police, receiving pay for the whole day. At the bars they met with people from the *Steelworker* to sum things up. Fearful of the effect of this struggle, the Philadelphia media blacked out news of it.

The struggle is continuing as the company is still trying to close the plant completely by March 31. Leaflets have gone out telling the other workers in the Philly area about the takeover and the rank and file forces are mobilizing for the next action to fight the Star Sprinkler runaway. ■

## Crime...

Continued from page 5

Overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism will enable the working class in power in the U.S. to settle accounts with those who have preyed off it. With the masses mobilized, the police, along with the other armed forces of the bourgeoisie, will be smashed, replaced by the organs of armed power of the working class. The Mafia and other professional crime syndicates will be smashed and their members, and especially leaders, severely punished. Big time pimps and pushers, no longer protected by the police, will be put on public trial to face the people they have leached off for years.

At the same time the legs on which crime has stood will be kicked out from under it. People will be involved in a way never before possible in planning and running society, in its social life. Society will be completely reorganized, the productive forces put to use to meet people's needs rather than the capitalists' profits. As this happens, unemployment will be very quickly eliminated. Those cast off into a life of crime by the workings of capitalism will be reeducated and given jobs. Prisoners will be given a chance to be truly rehabilitated and to lead a productive life. At the same time, the working class will enforce the socialist principle "He who does not work, neither shall he eat."

The bourgeoisie's decadent culture will be cast aside, replaced by proletarian culture in which the bright future of the working class will be shown. The crimes of the capitalist system, including how it is the real source of crime, will be spotlighted.

Then, as the working class begins to transform all of society and move towards communism, the entire basis for crime and the occasional instances of crime will gradually fade away. Class distinctions will be eliminated step by step. The ideas and outlook enforced by the exploiting class, such as "look out for number one" and "get ahead by stepping on the next guy," will die out, replaced by the working class' outlook of cooperation and working in the interests of the whole society and the understanding that only with this outlook can society advance. With communist society crime will be nothing more than a bitter memory from the old society.

### What Should People Do?

There are some people who will say "This is easy for you communists to say but we've got to deal with this problem right now." A lot of people would like to get a gun and go take care of the pusher on the corner like Charles Bronson did in the movie *Death Wish*.

In cases where this has in fact happened, and word of it spread, it has been greeted with overwhelming approval. There have been a few instances of some burglars living to regret it when neighbors caught them breaking and entering. Also in many apartment buildings residents get together and work out a schedule so someone is always in the lobby watching those coming in the front door.

But while many of these attempts to develop resistance to crime are important, especially in the context of getting people in a neighborhood organized, they can hardly be considered more than a holding action. Even more, if crime is dealt with as a question apart from the system that causes it, these kinds of actions open the door to vigilantism, to being misdirected away from the real source of crime down avenues of

## Roots...

Continued from page 13

*Pittman* was to promote passivity in the form of the quiet dignity of the oppressed. The October League, on the other hand, wrote in the May 1974 *Call* (in an article that is more than a little amusing to read in conjunction with their *Roots* review) that "*the Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* was an excellent document of a hundred years of struggle in the mass movement for racial equality from the viewpoint of a participant. It was both informative and engrossing." All this without *one word* of criticism. Wasn't it the wishy-washy and passive character of the show that resulted in the fact that it had no striking effect on the masses of people, while *Roots* will be remembered for years?

OL's 1974 review, written when they were in their heyday of unabashedly trailing reformism and liberalism of all varieties, has in common with their dogmatic and seemingly "left" *Roots* review, the characteristic that neither proceeds from the actual effects on the working class struggle in evaluating works of culture.

Lenin pointed out that the concrete analysis of concrete conditions is the "living soul of Marxism." This certainly applies to analyzing works of art and their social impact. How does the content of a book, for example, interact with the experience and the understanding of the masses? What questions does it raise, what answers does it give or imply? Marxist-Leninists must certainly bring the light of scientific class analysis into the discussion and ideological struggle that something like *Roots* engenders among the masses. But only on the basis of this type of concrete analysis is it possible to formulate correct criticisms of shortcomings, inaccuracies and wrong answers that will be of any use to the masses in advancing their struggle and steering clear of pitfalls.

OL's whole approach in reviewing *Roots* substitutes dead dogma for living Marxist-Leninist analysis. By standing the world on its head and trying to determine "which class does it serve?" primarily on the basis of its "class viewpoint" abstracted from the actual battles between classes raging in society, they arrive at a fundamentally wrong answer to their own question. Apparently the October League believes that it should direct its "main blow" at those who, while having a bourgeois world outlook, expose aspects of the oppression of the people and strike a chord of anger and hatred for this oppression in the hearts of the masses. Despite all the constant prattling about "liquidating the national question," OL insists that the answer to their question "which class does it serve" is provided by their discovery that the class viewpoint of *Roots* is bourgeois. Has the OL forgotten that, as Lenin said, "The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 412, Lenin's emphasis)

In attacking the main thrust of *Roots* and thus opposing its overall positive social effect, the "Marxist-Leninist" October League stinks compared with the bourgeois Haley. ■

## Beat Back Price Hikes

# Egypt Hit By Mass Rebellion

The Egyptian people have once again risen up in anger against the government, ruling classes and foreign imperialists. On January 18 hundreds of thousands of workers and students rioted in Alexandria, Cairo, Suez and other cities against President Sadat's announced decision to remove government subsidies and raise the price of food and other basic necessities.

In the largest and most violent demonstrations since the overthrow of the monarchy in 1952, demonstrators attacked government buildings, posh nightclubs and American cars, symbols of imperialist domination in Egypt. Sadat was forced to rescind the subsidy cut-offs and restore food prices to their previous, already inflated level. But he also attempted to impose new measures of repression, signing a decree banning strikes and demonstrations and making violators subject to life sentences at hard labor.

The Egyptian economy is in shambles. Inflation is close to 50% a year. The country has a huge debt and a growing balance of payments deficit. This year it is estimated that the government will require \$12 billion in foreign loans for payments on earlier loans, to cover necessary imports and to meet the budget deficit. Egypt's imports are almost three times as great as exports, including the import of a large percentage of its food consumption.

Egypt is the most populous and agriculturally fertile Arab country. But her 38 million people live in wretched poverty, many on the border of starvation. Cairo's population has doubled to eight million people in the last 15 years and the city completely lacks adequate housing, transportation and jobs. There are four million unemployed in the country. The average per capita income is \$5 per week and the minimum wage is \$16 per month. Reports in several foreign newspapers referred to the government food subsidies as the thing that "allowed Egypt's people to keep eating."

When Sadat appealed to the U.S., the International Monetary Fund and the government of oil-rich Saudi Arabia for increased loans, they ordered him to cut back on government expenditures and to implement austerity measures as a precondition for further aid. In particular they demanded a halt to the \$1 billion a year government subsidies for flour, bread, tea, cloth, cooking gas, sugar and rice. Sadat tried to explain this to the Egyptian people: "We cannot go on spending 170 pounds for every 100 we are earning. Sooner or later the source that gives us this money will refuse to do so. It would be alright if we spend the extra 70 pounds on building factories. But we are spending them on food (!)." Egypt, however, has been unable to either expand its industrial development or produce enough food to feed its people.

The root cause of the continuing lack of development, the chaos of the Egyptian economy and impoverishment of the masses of people has been the domination of that country for centuries by colonial and imperialist pow-

ers, including Britain, France, the U.S. and the USSR.

The Nile Delta is among the best farmland in the world and it is a potential source of great wealth. But Egypt has long been kept in an enforced state of backwardness by foreign powers. Because of the whole relation between Egypt and the imperialist countries that compels them to grow cotton for export instead of planting crops necessary for domestic consumption, Egypt cannot feed its people. The imperialists have attached special importance to Egypt because of its large population, political influence in Africa and the Middle East, and its location astride the Suez Canal.

The British ran Egypt as a "protectorate" for 70 years after the breakup of the old Ottoman Empire that stretched from Turkey to Northern Africa. After 1952 when Gamal Abdel Nasser led a military officers' coup overthrowing the reactionary feudal monarchy of King Farouk, the new government began a series of steps resulting in the nationalization of the Suez Canal and many other imperialist assets, breaking Egypt loose to some degree from this control and plunder.

But after the joint British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt in 1956, the Soviet Union stepped in with offers of aid, taking advantage of both Egypt's military situation and economic difficulties. At that early date, the socialist cover of the Khrushchev revisionists was still quite intact, and they were still in the process of restoring capitalism. Seeking a foothold to push out the older imperialists, their terms for "aid" were more favorable than those of other imperialists. In the next 17 years the Soviets poured in military aid and advisors and gave loans to the Egyptian effort to develop state controlled industry and agriculture. But the Soviets charged dearly for their so-called aid and these imperialists gained an increasing stranglehold over Egypt.



January uprising in Egypt. The Egyptian people have an inspiring history of resistance and rebellion against imperialist plunder of their country and the repressive actions of their own ruling class.

## Letter...

Continued from page 7

cize and attack developments in the movement of the people of the U.S. against U.S. imperialism. Others, like New York City Council President Paul O'Dwyer, are open spokesmen for the U.S. imperialists.

But this insidious letter itself is an attempt to appeal to a pacifist or humanist outlook that was held by a significant current in the anti-war movement of the '60s and '70s. The fact that some well known exponents of this outlook put their names to it merits taking a closer look at what motivated these people to oppose U.S. aggression in the first place and what, exactly, their outlook is.

There were those, like certain members of pacifist organizations who signed this document, who always seemed to be motivated more by the dogmatic and singleminded promotion of their own "philosophy of non-violence" than by any real desire to oppose the aggression of the U.S. imperialists against the people of Indochina. They are the ones who would get up at anti-war meetings or rallies and blather away about non-violence in opposition to the struggle to stop U.S. aggression. Seldom, if at all, were these people involved in mobilizing masses of people. At best they would perform acts of "moral witness" or "protests against violence" with their own little bands.

But there were many more who shared a similar humanist or religious pacifist outlook who did not really support the goals of the Vietnamese revolution, but directed their opposition to the U.S. imperialists and threw themselves into the effort to mobilize massive struggle against it.

Overall, what characterized these people was a petty bourgeois horror at the effects of the class struggle between the imperialists and the masses of oppressed people. They wanted to see an end of the effects of this struggle, but could seldom distinguish what the real causes were. This led most of them to take a progressive stand in uniting to oppose the war and call for the end of U.S. aggression. But their political moralism could often and did easily lead them to say that while the repression and exploitation, the violence and brutality of the imperialists is wrong, so is the attempt by the masses of people to use whatever means necessary to oppose their domination and fight for their liberation. In their opposition to "war in general" and its effects, they could be led to opposing the just war of a people fighting aggression. This is why some of these people could be hoodwinked into signing this imperialist inspired document, although a few, like the Catholic priests Dan and Philip Berrigan, withdrew their endorsement.

These people can be united with to the extent that they objectively take a stand in opposition to imperialism. But they can never be promoted as leaders of the struggle, as the revisionist Communist Party and the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party did in the anti-war

The Egyptian cotton crop, its main export, was mortgaged to the Soviet Union. The \$4 billion Egyptian debt to Moscow is a significant part of Egypt's current debt problems.

In the name of supporting the struggle against the Israeli Zionists, the USSR sold their weapons at a high price. After the Egyptian army suffered a humiliating defeat in the June, 1967 war launched by Israel, the Soviets tied replacement weaponry to tight financial and political terms, including the maintenance of the "no war, no peace" relationship with Israel. This aid was put to use, however, in 1968 when Soviet equipped and trained riot squads were used, after an Israeli bombing raid into upper Egypt, to crush an uprising of Egyptian students protesting capitulation. In the 1973 war, the Soviet Union refused to supply replacement parts and weaponry necessary for the Egyptian advance into Israeli-occupied Sinai peninsula.

Now that Sadat has sent the Soviets packing (Soviet military and technical advisors were expelled in 1972 and in 1975 Egypt abrogated the 15 year friendship pact it signed with Russia in 1971), the USSR is blaming all of Egypt's problems on its swing to the West, just as the U.S. pointed the finger at the Soviets when they had a stranglehold on Egypt.

### U.S. Demands Pound of Flesh

The last twenty years have only brought greater misery and suffering for the masses of Egyptian people. The U.S. imperialists, like the Soviets before them, are pushing relentlessly to make the masses of people bear the burden of Egypt's economic crisis and to force them to submit to imperialist political domination.

But time and again the masses have risen up against their ruling class and the foreign imperialists. They are tired of economic chaos. They are tired of foreign domination. They are tired of capitulation to Israel and the sellout of the Palestinians' just struggle. They are angry at the brutal exploitation and oppression that is their daily life. Over many years, the Egyptian masses have been a powerful force behind every action against imperialism and they have been just as powerful in battling every reactionary move on the part of their oppressors.

The massive popular uprising that blocked Sadat's latest "austerity move" is part of a continuing, militant struggle of the Egyptian people. It is proof that, in the long run, events in the Middle East will not be determined by agreements between reactionary rulers like Sadat or by the superpowers, but by the masses of people. ■

movement.

The fact that so many hundreds of thousands of people in this country were united in active opposition to U.S. imperialism's war in Vietnam, including many who shared the outlook of the signers of this piece of garbage, is testimony to the breadth and depth of that movement. And many who were initially drawn into opposing U.S. aggression in Indochina on the basis of a similar moralism or humanism learned a great deal in the course of this struggle.

Most importantly, many came to understand that imperialist wars and exploitation cannot be ended until the capitalist system is smashed and the class of capitalist exploiters is eradicated. There can be no peace between exploiter and exploited, between slaves and slavemaster. Real peace can only be the result of the just war carried through to victory by the masses of people against their oppressors and carrying the struggle through to the eventual elimination of class society from the earth.

As the struggle of the working class and the masses of people against the capitalists grows, millions of people will be drawn into and united with in this struggle as they were in the anti-war movement of the 60s. It would be wrong to refuse to unite with all who can be united with at any given point in this struggle. But this letter is an object lesson in the fact that, while extending such a hand of unity in struggle to those influenced by such an outlook, it would be foolhardy and disastrous to fail to struggle against this view exerting leadership in the struggle against imperialism, or to fail to isolate enemy agents. ■

# ISA, RSB Actions Hit At Shah's Repression

The Iranian Student Association (ISA) is rallying, holding numerous press interviews, carrying out demonstrations and hunger vigils across the U.S. to bring to the attention of the American people the continuing struggle of the Iranian people against the reactionary regime of Iran and the brutal repression by the Shah. On February 15, a group of supporters and members of the ISA and the Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB) took over the Statue of Liberty, chaining themselves to the crown, and hung two huge banners written in blood red letters: "Free the 18" and "Down with the Shah," in protest of the most recent arrests in Iran of 18 patriots who are being held without trial and being tortured. A few days later on February 17, 100 students, again including the ISA and the RSB along with the Greek Students' Association and other U.S. students held the President of Queens College in New York City in his office for four hours demanding that a contract between Queens College and the National University of Iran be severed.

The Statue of Liberty action coincided with a trip made by an international delegation, a commission of inquiry, that is in Iran to inspect the conditions of the political prisoners. The commission was denied the right to see the prisoners, which comes to no one's surprise. The Shah of Iran is a vicious reactionary, who, enforcing the interests of U.S. imperialism and Iran's big exploiters, oppresses and exploits the masses of people. For years, the Shah has used his Gestapo-like secret police, the SAVAK, to try to crush the resistance of the masses in Iran and to attack and harass Iranian students in other countries.

Membership in the ISA is illegal under Iranian law. Punishment is severe and often results in death. If Iranian students are deported they face harsh repression at the hands of the Shah and the SAVAK. The action at the Statue of Liberty was taken to publicize these injustices. Two of the demands of the Statue of Liberty action, "Free the Iranian Political Prisoners" and "Let the Delegation in to See the Prisoners," pertain to what is going on inside Iran now. The third demand, "Stop the Deportation Proceeding Now," was aimed at both the Shah and the U.S. government which works hand-in-glove with the Shah and allows the SAVAK freedom to roam the U.S. harassing members of the ISA. As was reported in the December 1976 issue of *Revolution*, 92 members of the ISA were arrested in Houston when they protested at the French consulate, demanding freedom of two leaders of the World Confederation of Iranian Students who are facing trumped up charges of shooting an Iranian diplomat in France. Many of these 92 are still threatened



*Iranian students demonstrate in Washington, D.C. ISA and RSB occupied the Statue of Liberty February 15 to dramatize the bloody repression of the reactionary Shah of Iran and U.S. harassment and deportations of Iranian students.*

with deportation.

The U.S. bourgeoisie has long propped up the repressive apparatus of the Shah's regime. The U.S. has sent thousands of military advisors to Iran and is helping them build the largest espionage network in the Middle East. And now a computer network is in the process of being set up at Queens College to keep track of progressive Iranian students in the U.S. A contract was signed by the Chancellor of the City University of New York and the President of Queens College in April which set up a liaison arrangement between Queens and the National University of Iran. A joint institute at Queens was established which would train "scholars" to work in Iran, to teach Persian, to do scientific research and establish a computer program which, as the University said, would help Iranian students obtain jobs when they returned to Iran. But this computer program was exposed in the *Village Voice* and the *New York Post* as an arm of the SAVAK to keep track of dissident Iranian students in the U.S. In what was the biggest political demonstration there in years, the 100 ISA members, RSB members and others picketed and leafleted the Queens campus, discovering a lot of opposition to the program when it was taken out to the students. They went up to the president's office and held him at bay for four hours demanding that the University sever all ties with the National University of Iran.

Three important victories resulted from this confrontation. The first was that the President promised a signed letter declaring Section C of the contract null and void. Section C pertains to keeping lists of Iranian students. Second, the University agreed to provide funds and resources for the ISA to hold an educational program on the campus, flying members to it, providing rooms, paper for leaflets, and publicity about the program. And third, there would be a student referendum on the campus around the questions of whether the whole contract should be continued.

RSB and ISA members, in talking with students,

pointed out that while the elimination of Section C was a victory, the University would attempt to say that now that the most objectionable section is removed there's nothing wrong with the rest of the contract and it should not be abrogated. The students made clear that Section C wasn't enough. It was not just a question of getting rid of that one section, because the whole contract serves to build up, support and legitimize the Shah and gives his regime an outpost in the U.S.

In the course of the struggle the RSB aimed fire at President Carter's farce of "speaking out for human rights" in areas under the domination of the Soviet social imperialists, while the U.S.'s own empire is propped up by the force of such vicious reactionaries as the Shah.

The ISA and the World Confederation to which they belong has contributed to the struggle for revolution in Iran, and because of this the Shah is stepping up the campaign to break the resistance inside and outside Iran. The U.S. bourgeoisie is more than willing to give the Shah, who in fact was installed in a CIA instigated coup in 1953, and his SAVAK freedom to do their work in the U.S. because they realize that revolutionary upsurge could overthrow the Shah which would end a source of high profits for the U.S. ruling class, and result in the loss of a valuable tool in maintaining and extending U.S. military power in the Middle East.

As it was said in the press release at the time of the Statue of Liberty action, "The Iranian students desire a land free of foreign domination and free of the Shah's dictatorial rule. These students are standing up as a part of the broad people's struggle in Iran. The American students are joining in this fight. The American people have no interest in dominating other countries as the American rulers do, instead their very interest is in joining with other people to fight against our own rulers who perpetuate the same misery in this country as well as abroad." ■

## Publications

- War and Revolution. Seven articles from *Revolution*. 50¢.
- The Mass Line. Three articles from *Revolution*. 25¢.
- Elections '76: Capitalists' Desperate Deceit vs. Workers' Growing Struggle. 15¢.
- Auto and the Workers Movement. 75¢.
- 200 Years is Long Enough! 50¢.
- CUBA: The Evaporation of a Myth. Reprinted from *Revolution*. In English and Spanish with footnotes in English. 50¢.
- Our Class Will Free Itself and All Mankind. Speech by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the RCP, USA on the occasion of the founding of the Party. 75¢.
- Programme and Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. \$1.

Bulk rates available on request. Please prepay all orders to RCP Publications, PO Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654.

The pamphlets *How Socialism Wipes Out Exploitation* and *The Party—Invincible Proletarian Vanguard* are no longer in print. The pamphlets *200 Years is Long Enough!*, *Classes and Class Struggle* and *Correct Line Achieved Through Study, Struggle, Criticism* are in very short supply and soon will be out of print. Supplies of these pamphlets should be ordered accordingly.

(The following publications were originally published by the Revolutionary Union and adopted by the Party)

- How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union and What This Means for the World Struggle. \$2.50.
- The Chicano Struggle and the Struggle for Socialism. \$1.

The following reprints are in both English and Spanish:

- Revolution: Only Road to Women's Liberation. 25¢.
- Proletarian Dictatorship vs. Bourgeois "Democracy." 10¢.
- Classes and Class Struggle. 10¢.
- Correct Line Achieved Through Study, Struggle, Criticism. 10¢.

Enclosed is \_\_\_\_\_ for the materials checked.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

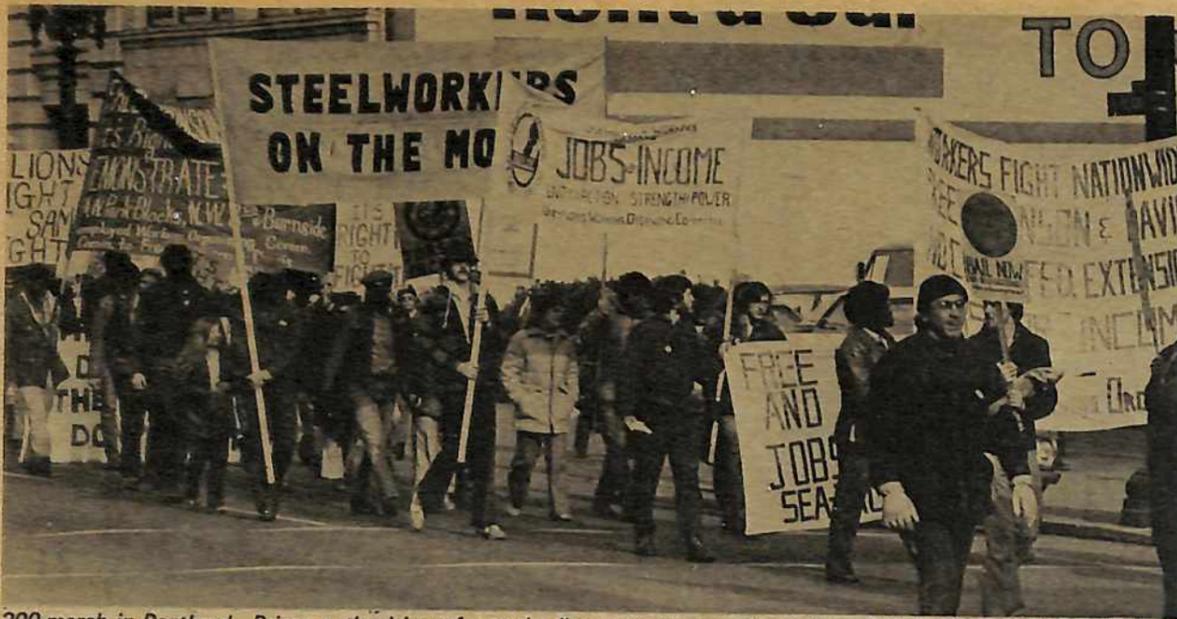


Volume 1, Number 1  
October 1976

## the COMMUNIST

*Theoretical Journal of the Central Committee  
Of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*

- Commodities, Capitalism, Class Divisions— and their Abolition with the Achievement of Communism
- Social-Imperialism and Social-Democracy, Cover-Up of Capitalism in the USSR  
(or How Martin Nicolous and the October League Have "Restored" Socialism in the Soviet Union)
- Bourgeois Democracy and the U.S. Working Class
- On the Character of World War 2
- Bourgeois Right, Economism, and the Goal of the Working Class Struggle



200 march in Portland. Prison authorities refer to the "community arousing nature of their crime." Damn right! Bornson and Davis' action and the growing campaign to free them has given focus to widespread anger over unemployment.

# Protest Marks Year Of Campaign To Free Davis And Bornsen

On Saturday, Feb. 5, more than 200 people marched through the streets of downtown Portland marking one year of growing struggle to free Tom Bornson and Lonnie Davis. At the same time rallies were also being held in Boston and Los Angeles. Sponsored by the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) and the Committee to Free Bornson and Davis, these actions were powerful statements of the growing numbers and organization behind the campaign to free these two workers.

On Feb. 6, 1976, Tom Bornson, his wife Mary, their six children and friend Lonnie Davis took over a Portland food stamp office demanding food stamps and medical care for their sick and starving family and press coverage so their story would reach other working people. (See Dec. 1976 *Revolution*) For their part in the takeover, Bornson and Davis were sentenced to prison terms of 9 and 7 years respectively. One year later, thousands of people across the country have lent their support to the battle to win their freedom, while at the same time demanding Jobs or Income and making clear that as far as the working class is concerned, "It's Right to Fight!"

## Campaign Growing

At the Portland action bright banners caught the attention of passing shoppers, and the speeches, songs and chants were heard by hundreds of people in the downtown mall area. Many stopped to take leaflets, and more than 50 stopped to listen to the rally with a number showing support and joining in. As one older unemployed worker said: "This is great! I was part of the hunger marches back in the '30s. Working people getting together—that's the only strength we've got." The demonstration's size, militancy and class character represented real gains that are being made in building this fight broadly among the masses of working people, despite determined efforts by the bourgeoisie to intimidate people from coming to the demonstration and to prevent it from happening at all.

The growth and development of the campaign to free Bornson and Davis has been a hard fought campaign waged blow for blow from the very beginning, when packed courtrooms and militant picket lines greeted their trials last spring. The first victory was won in August when, four days after more than 125 people marched in Portland, Tom Bornson Jr. was freed on only one year probation for his part in the takeover. Since then, it's been one battle after another—against press slanders, for appeal, bail and parole. And while these battles haven't all been won and these two workers remain in jail, the campaign has broadened, become more organized and more determined to win freedom for Bornson and Davis.

In early December, UWOC called for a nationwide campaign in almost every major industrial city. Since that time thousands of signatures have been gathered demanding that these two workers be released from prison. In Dayton, Ohio, 1200 signatures were collect-

ed in a few short weeks, while in Cincinnati unemployed workers marched in 10 degree weather to popularize this fight.

Throughout the Northwest, and particularly in Portland, there has been a significant increase in activity and in the positive response people have shown to the campaign. A slide show was seen by hundreds of people and a number either joined the Committee or came to the demonstration after seeing it. In one low income housing project, door to door canvassing was done with the result that a number asked to be put on the Committee's mailing list and a few joined the Committee. During the first two weeks in January, more than 1600 mailgram signatures were sent in to Oregon Gov. Straub demanding bail while appeals were being heard. There has been a great increase in the numbers of letters of support being sent to Lonnie Davis from all over the country. Letters to Gov. Straub have also greatly increased and the growing controversy has forced him to respond. Writing back to an unemployed worker in Seattle, Straub continued the vicious lies and slanders that the bourgeoisie have used from the start. First he calls Bornson and Davis lazy welfare cheats. Then he says that Lonnie Davis had a jury trial, when in fact Lonnie was railroaded through without one. He ends the letter saying, "I don't have a vindictive attitude in this case...however it is necessary to attract the attention of persons like Bornson and Davis [meaning the unemployed] to the unacceptability of conduct such as I've described, no matter how aggrieved they feel about the system." Obviously what is "unacceptable" to the Governor is fighting back.

## Rulers Try to Stop Demonstration

As plans for the first anniversary demonstration developed, the bourgeoisie's attacks sharpened. They did their utmost to stop the demonstration, sending one of their flunkies in to tell Tom: "This demonstration is the biggest thing yet. We want it stopped. It's got to be stopped." To back up their threat they put pressure on Tom and Lonnie in several ways. The week before the demonstration, Tom's family was given an eviction notice telling them to be out of the house by Feb. 12. Tom's custody hearing (which determines how the sentence is to be served) was postponed twice and his mail was either delayed or blocked altogether.

Lonnie Davis, who had been promised a 12 hour pass to visit Mary Bornson and the family on Jan. 15, had the pass revoked at the last minute. The prison authorities said that Lonnie didn't qualify for the pass because of the "community arousing nature of the crime." Ironically, and despite the cruelty of this act, they had put their finger on the very reason why they didn't want Lonnie out talking to other working people if only for a few hours and why they were so determined that the first anniversary demonstration not take place. It isn't that they're scared to death of several hundred people getting together and demonstrating, but that Tom and Lonnie's action and the campaign for their freedom was giving focus to the widespread anger around unemployment and had aroused workers to get organized and to fight back for jobs or income to live on until there are jobs.

As the demonstration came closer, the attacks stepped up. Negotiations for a parade permit dragged on until two days before the demonstration with the city initially forbidding the march from entering the downtown transit mall (where the streets are usually packed with weekend shoppers). Instead the city suggested that the march skirt the downtown area and rally in a park far removed from any people. But the Committee and UWOC stood fast, insisting on the original request, and won.

On Feb. 4, the day before the demonstration, UWOC sponsored a picketline outside the food stamp office where the takeover had occurred to build for the demonstration. The were met by just about every county cop on duty. Cops were on the rooftops and in the windows of nearby buildings taking pictures—trying to

intimidate people. One unemployed worker on parole, after hearing about the cameras, had second thoughts about coming to the Saturday demonstration. But after talking to his wife, they both came to the demonstration more determined than ever, "We can't go around half scared—we've got to get organized!"

## Importance of Bornson—Davis Case

As more and more workers face a situation with no jobs and no income to live on, and with the bourgeoisie trying to cut off federal unemployment benefits extensions at the end of March (See February *Revolution*), the bourgeoisie is forced to use whatever means they can to try to keep the unemployed from fighting back. As the Portland UWOC speaker made clear, "More than ever they must make that example [of Bornson and Davis] stick. Why? Because as many as one out of six industrial workers are out of work, because the number of unemployed out of work for longer than 6 months has doubled since last November. Because the rich have a plan to cut off federal unemployment extensions forcing tens of thousands into the same place as the Bornson family and Lonnie Davis."

In this situation, the importance and significance of the campaign to Free Bornson and Davis is clear. By saying loudly and clearly—It's Right to Fight! Jobs or Income Now!—workers are rallying to build a movement to free these two workers from the capitalists' prisons and fight for the things they need.

This point was driven home by a letter written to Tom from a member of the Trenton, N.J. UWOC chapter, portions of which were read at the demonstration. The letter tells of a demonstration held on January 28 at the Trenton unemployment office to demand no cut-backs in federal unemployment extensions. Seven UWOC members were arrested for "creating a disturbance." The letter concluded by saying, "while we were in jail the thought of what you [Tom Bornson] said came back to us, 'do you think you have enough jails to hold all the Tom Bornsons there are out there?'" As the committee speaker ended her speech in Portland, "after one year of struggle we have a message to give to the rich class—you ain't seen nothin' yet!" ■

# Argentina...

Continued from page 6

the understanding and orientation of the workers movement, which for years has fought largely under the banners of Peronism. Juan Peron was a representative of the country's national bourgeoisie (mainly small and medium industrialists in competition with foreign capital and the landowners) who was able to take power in 1944 when German U-boats cut off Britain, then the master of Argentina. In order to take on these powerful enemies, Peron had to rally the working class behind him by making concessions to many of the workers' demands as well as by raising the flag of national liberation. Since the overthrow of Peron by U.S. imperialism in 1955, Peronism has dominated the workers movement and other progressive sectors of society.

In 1973, the extremely powerful growth of the working class movement in Argentina and that country's economic and political crisis created the conditions for Peron to once again take office as President. But although the working class won some real gains at first, the Peron government (and the national capitalists who backed it) proved incapable of standing up to the threats and promises and pressures of all kinds marshalled against it by the U.S., Soviet and other imperialists, and it began to give way to their demands. At the same time, faced with mounting economic trouble, it tried to shift an increasingly heavy burden onto the working class.

Soon the workers movement, though still mainly pro-Peron, found itself mobilizing in its millions to protect its interests against Peron's widow who replaced him when he died shortly after taking office. She herself was ousted by the military after having been a virtual prisoner in office with no real power while the military sorted out its rivalries and prepared its moves. Since then the dropping of almost all restrictions against foreign capital and foreign imports has pushed the national bourgeoisie still harder up against disaster.

But the experience of the Peronist government and the overall experiences of the Argentinian working class since it exploded into rebellion eight years ago have provided the basis for large numbers of workers to see the necessity of the working class itself and in its own interests heading up the struggle of Argentina's people in a united front against imperialism of all kinds.

No matter what happens in the battle between the superpowers over the country, there is no way that they can "stabilize" things there. The working class in this country demands that our rulers get their filthy hands off Argentina and stands with the Argentinian people in their struggles to free their country from all enemies and oppressors. ■



Workers weren't about to keep the machines running and the profits flowing while AO Smith Co. in Milwaukee kept them working in the cold. They walked out. Demonstrators above are demanding pay for time they refused to work in frigid temperatures.

## Gas Crisis...

Continued from page 3

produced for sale by exploiting the labor of others. This is what determines its production, and not the use it has for hundreds of millions of people to heat their homes and keep the factories running. Capitalists are in the business of making profits. If profits are not forthcoming, neither is the gas or oil. All this not only makes sense according to the logic of the capitalists, it is required by the very nature of the capitalist system.

At the present time, indeed over the last few years, a great deal of public furor has focused on the whole question of energy production in the U.S. The oil companies are accused of making "windfall profits," while they themselves plead poverty. Much talk and numerous hearings and investigations have taken place in efforts to establish a "national energy policy" but all attempts to do so have come to nothing. A few years ago people were forced to wait hours in line just to get gas for their cars, and this winter lack of gas meant tremendous hardship and even the threat of catastrophic disaster was held over the heads of millions. All of this is a reflection of the deepening crisis of capitalism coming out in spasmodic dislocations in the economy and vicious bloodletting between different sections of capital. In order to fully understand all the hullabaloo about "regulation" and "deregulation" and the reasons for the gas shortages it is necessary to go into some depth into how the basic laws of the capitalist system are working themselves out.

### Falling Rate of Profit

The profitability of the oil industry has been a real problem for the capitalists who control these companies as competition between them and the amount of capital needed to support deeper drilling and more elaborate extraction processes drives up total investment required and tends to lower their rate of profit. That's why, for example, Mobil Oil invested \$800 million in purchasing Montgomery Ward Corporation in 1974 rather than increase its domestic oil and gas production. It's the same reason that oil companies have increased the import of oil from the Middle East, despite cries about dependence on foreign oil. The cost of exploration and production there is still cheaper and more profitable.

There are certain counteracting measures which the capitalists use to offset the decline in their profitability, including intensifying the exploitation of the working class and obtaining cheaper raw materials (e.g. oil from the Middle East). And the monopoly position of many industries (oil and steel for example) allows them to achieve a higher rate of profit by forcing higher prices. But the tendency toward a declining rate of profit is a driving feature of the crisis faced by the entire capitalist class. The way this comes down between the oil companies and the rest of the capitalists in the current "energy crisis" is at the heart of the conflict over the "regulation and deregulation" of natural gas prices.

The profits of the capitalist class come from the unpaid labor of the working class, the value that workers produce over and above what they are paid for their labor power. The capitalists are constantly driving to force more surplus value from the working class to maximize their profits. But the greater the growth of constant capital (plants, machinery and other equipment, raw materials, etc.) relative to the surplus value squeezed out of the labor of the workers, the lower the rate of profit. Since competition between the capitalists forces them to continually invest in more constant capital relative to the number of workers they employ, the rate of profit of the capitalist class as a whole tends

to fall.

While this tendency affects the whole capitalist class, it manifests itself unevenly in different branches of industry, and is particularly sharp in those industries, like energy production, where a high proportion of capital is invested in constant capital and not in the hiring of workers.

Energy production is highly mechanized and employs a relatively small number of workers. Between 1970 and 1973 the capital needed to support energy production amounted to about 24% of the capital invested in U.S. business as a whole. And estimates of the capital needed to produce energy between 1975 and 1985 range up to a third of the total capital needed by private business in that period.

But the capitalist system could never function if the rate of profit for each individual capitalist concern was determined simply by the amount of surplus value they can squeeze out of the workers they themselves employ. If this was the case, the rate of profit would be tremendously higher in labor intensive industries like garment, while those with a huge investment in constant capital (referred to by Marx as having a high *organic composition of capital*) would have an extremely low rate. Since investment flows to where profits are highest, the obvious result would be no oil companies, railroads, steel plants, etc.

### Sharing the Loot

But of course the capitalist system does not work this way. Steel, oil, railroads and other industries with a high ratio of constant capital are not only vitally necessary to capitalist production as a whole, these industries generally tend to realize a substantial rate of profit. Basically this is because, as capital flows from less to more profitable investments, competition in what are at one point more profitable areas intensifies. This tends to promote a greater investment, increase the supply of those commodities and drive prices down below their actual value. At the same time, commodities in less profitable areas tend to become more scarce, thus driving their prices above their value and increasing the rate of profit in those industries.

The resulting anarchy characterizes capitalist investment and their whole system of production as capital rushes first here, then there, always seeking to squeeze more profits out of the labor of the working class. It is also the process that results in the formation of an *average rate of profit* for the capitalist class as a whole.

Marx puts it this way:

"Now, if the commodities are sold at their values, then, as we have shown, very different rates of profit arise in the various spheres of production, depending on the different organic composition of the masses of capital invested in them. But capital withdraws from a sphere with a low rate of profit and invades others, which yield a higher profit. Through this incessant outflow and influx, or, briefly, through its distribution among the various spheres, which depends on how the rate of profit falls here and rises there, it creates such a ratio of supply to demand that the average profit in the various spheres of production becomes the same, and values are, therefore, converted into prices of production." (*Capital*, Vol. 3, pp. 195-6)

This process of the averaging out of the rate of profit between different branches of industry takes place in the context of each capitalist always striving to maximize their own profits at the expense of others. But as Marx further points out:

"As soon as capitalist production reaches a certain level of development, the equalisation of the different rates of profit in individual spheres to general rate of profit no longer proceeds solely through the play of attraction and repulsion, by which market-prices attract or repel capital. After average prices, and their corresponding market-prices, become stable for a time it reaches the *consciousness* of the individual capitalists that this equalisation balances *definite differences*, so

that they include these in their mutual calculations. The differences exist in the mind of the capitalists and are taken into account as grounds for compensating." (*Capital*, Vol. 3, p. 209, emphasis in original)

The capitalists begin to expect that they and the capitalists they deal with must all receive a "reasonable" rate of profit. This provides a framework for their calculations, their deals and various regulations they establish.

This again, as Marx says, "...is based on the conception that the capital in each sphere of production must share *pro rata* [in proportion] to its magnitude in the total surplus-value squeezed out of the laborers by the total social capital; or, that every individual capital should be regarded merely as a part of the total social capital, and every capitalist actually as a shareholder in the total social enterprise, each sharing in the total profit *pro rata* to the magnitude of his share of capital.

"This conception serves as a basis for the capitalist's calculations, for instance, that a capital whose turnover is slower than another's, because its commodities take longer to be produced, or because they are sold in remoter markets, nevertheless charges the profit it loses in this way, and compensates itself by raising the price." (*Capital*, Vol. 3, pp. 209-10, italics in original)

What all this amounts to is parcelling out the surplus value extracted from the working class as a whole among the different capitalists and branches of industry according, more or less, to their capital. The capitalists have an upside down perception of this. As they see it, their profit comes from the capital they invest and their profits are in proportion to the amount of capital invested.

While each is out to maximize his profits, to the extent that they can see beyond their noses they notice that the realities of the workings of their economic system require some longer term plans, such as underwriting risky areas of investment and some basis for calculating the prices they will have to pay and the profits they and other capitalists can "reasonably" expect. Why? Because they have perceived that it will work out this way anyhow and with a much greater turmoil and dislocation of the whole economy without some sort of "conscious" efforts to compensate various branches of industry.

This was the basis for the regulations on the price of gas and other fuel in the first place. It was an attempt by the capitalist class as a whole, acting through its government, to enforce an "equitable" division of the surplus value of their class as a whole. Industrial users of natural gas (who consume the great bulk of all the gas produced) would be guaranteed gas at a certain price, preventing the oil and gas companies from using their monopoly position to jack prices out of sight. And the gas companies would be guaranteed a "reasonable" (i.e. average) return on their investments. Of course, all along there were sharp fights over prices and profits.

Regulation had nothing to do with any concern for the 40 million Americans who heat their homes with natural gas. In fact they pay a rate far above that paid by industry, a policy in which the oil companies and industrial users are in complete agreement. Residential users consume 40% less gas than the 196,000 industrial users, but they pay 20% more in total revenues than these capitalists do.

### Crisis Intensifies Cutthroat Fight

All these efforts of the capitalists, while they can temporarily mitigate some of the built-in contradictions in their system, especially when things are going relatively well for them, are but doomed attempts to bring order into a system that is not based on any rational order and planning, but governed by blind laws. Even

Continued on page 19



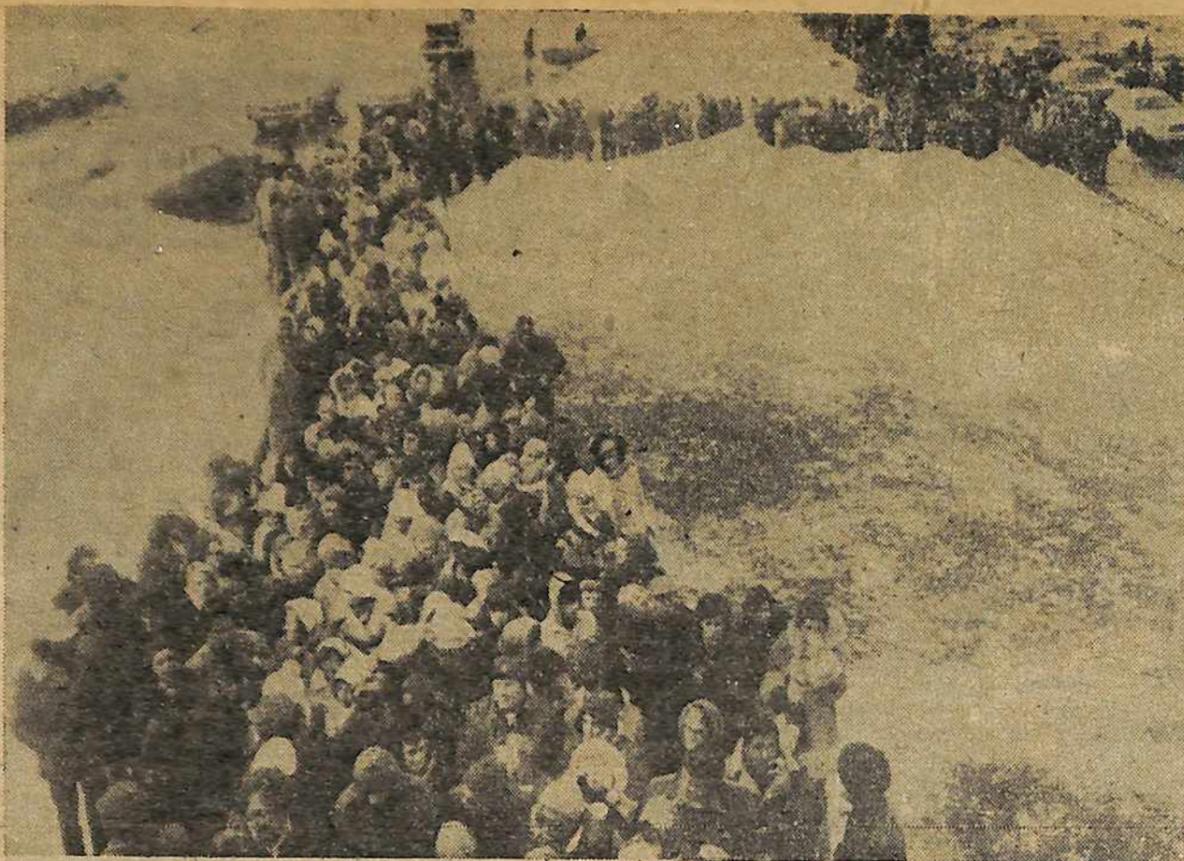
## Programme and Constitution of the RCP, USA

175 pgs \$1

The Programme of the RCP summarizes the present situation facing the working class in its struggle and points the road forward. It is a concentration of the Party's basic aims, strategy and tasks as the Party of the working class. It sets forth to the working class the goal of its struggle—revolution, socialism and ultimately communism—and the means to achieve this historic goal. It is a guide to action.

The Constitution of the RCP summarizes the basic Programme of the Party and sets down its basic organizational principles which enable it to carry out its tasks and responsibilities as the Party of the working class.

Pre-pay all orders to RCP Publications, INC. PO Box 3486 Merchandise Mart, Chicago, Ill. 60654



When 5000 people in snowbound Buffalo, NY turned out to get desperately needed food stamps, the city lined them up for hours outside in the cold. Laidoff, facing phenomenal bills, they were in no mood to be pushed around. When the city called the cops and told them to disperse because it couldn't handle them all, people were furious. They refused to budge and battled the cops. Two people suffered heart attacks because of the city's outrageous and criminal actions.

## Gas Crisis...

Continued from page 18

in the "best of times" cutthroat competition reigns and society is constantly plagued by the anarchy of capitalist production.

But the process of dividing up the overall surplus value seized from the working class takes on new dimensions as the capitalist system becomes enmeshed in deepening crisis and the falling rate of profits puts the squeeze on the whole capitalist class, as has happened in recent years. The struggle over prices and profits takes on the character of a fratricidal war for survival.

That is precisely what is happening now, as the oil and gas companies are demanding, in effect, a greater share of the surplus value seized by other capitalists by forcing them to pay higher prices for gas. But increased energy costs, which are already a substantial part of the industrial users' constant capital, mean an even lower rate of profit for them.

The oil companies are saying openly that price regulations must go to make domestic gas production profitable enough, or they won't provide the gas. The government, which must serve as an "executive committee" of the capitalist class to mediate disputes between them, has been increasingly unable to reconcile the conflicting interests of the oil companies and other sections of capitalists. That is what is behind the much bemoaned inability of the government to come up with an "energy policy."

These contradictions also explain why there has been a certain amount of exposure of the oil companies around previous oil price hikes and a public pointing of the finger at the oil companies' greed. But it is not a question of just greed, and the exposure of the oil companies in the media and by politicians is not because any part of the capitalist class is concerned with the prices the masses of people will have to pay. In fact the only thing they *can* all agree on is the need for the masses of people to bear more of the burden of their crisis—in ways like heating bill hikes, school closings, layoffs, etc.

The fight over regulation is the political reflection of contradictions between different sections of capital, contradictions that arise not out of the "greed" of one set of evil capitalists but out of the very laws of the capitalist system of production.

The failure of the oil companies to produce adequate amounts of natural gas and their refusal to make natural gas in Texas and the other producing states available except at higher prices certainly amounts to blackmail and extortion. But above all it is a graphic exposure of a system that makes threatening whole sections of the country with freezing to death not only "good business" but a natural and logical outcome of its workings.

The oil companies have used the misery and suffering caused by the shortages and bitter cold this winter to whip up public support for this deregulation. By threatening people with a cutoff of gas, they are trying to force them to accept an increase in prices, and be thankful that they are getting gas at all. They did the same thing with petroleum and gasoline prices in 1973-74.

### Prices Soar

Despite the moaning and groaning of the gas com-

panies since these regulations were first put into effect in 1954, their interests were well represented on all of the regulatory agencies. Even with regulation the price of natural gas has been allowed to increase rapidly in recent years, while supplies have diminished. The regulated price of natural gas has jumped from 19 cents per 1000 cubic feet in 1969 to \$1.42 in 1977, while gas production fell by 20%. Their legal cover for this was a scheme engineered by the Supreme Court in 1968 authorizing the Federal Power Commission (FPC) to allow the industry to increase the price of natural gas whenever figures showed that the rate of new discoveries had decreased. So the companies decreased their rate of discovery and production of gas and the FPC increased the price ceilings.

And there is no end in sight. As far as the oil companies are concerned, partial deregulation can only be a temporary solution. And in a sense they are right, because their declining rate of profit can only be counterbalanced if they can continue to raise prices. This will not only mean constantly higher energy costs, but tremendous inflation in the prices of everything, as the rest of the capitalists blame the oil companies and try to pass on their increased costs. It will mean the lowering of the standard of living of the working class, of which this winter's utility bill is only a beginning, and a deepening of the overall crisis which will bring more unemployment and intensified exploitation and oppression of the working class.

People cannot and will not accept these endless attacks. The capitalists will try to drive people into the dirt for the sake of their profits. They always pass the buck, industry blaming the utility companies, utility companies blaming the pipeline companies, pipeline companies blaming the oil companies and on and on. And they all scream about an "energy crisis" and a "shortage of resources." But it is *their* class and *their* rotten system that are to blame for the miseries people face.

The whole "energy crisis" is a rotten fruit of the capitalist system of exploitation. If it were not so criminal, it would be simply ludicrous. Every move the capitalists and their government take to try to alleviate a current crisis is like a pathetic attempt to stick their thumb in whatever hole in the dike seems to be most menacing at the moment. Meanwhile the foundation crumbles at an increasing rate. The future under capitalism can only bring more shortages and more convulsions, each bringing still greater suffering for the masses of the people.

### Doomsday Predictions

The capitalists themselves, in their tortured attempts to "explain" the energy situation to the public, let on in distorted ways that something is fundamentally wrong. Often this comes out in "doomsday" reports about how the earth is running out of natural resources like fossil fuels, that there is just no way that the world can go on with production and a standard of life even as it exists now, let alone advance.

But this is just the despair of a historically obsolete class trying to describe its own approaching doom as the doom of the whole world. What they are admitting with these types of scare stories is that their system stands as an obstacle to developing the productive forces, to the further advance of society.

The ridiculous proposition that world society has reached its ultimate peak is nothing new. The aristoc-

racy of feudal times predicted society would go to hell when their own world of pomp and idle luxury based on the ownership of land was being shattered by the capitalist revolution.

The cry that fossil fuels are running out is one that has reappeared from time to time (according to U.S. government reports issued in 1909, for example, we ran out of oil decades ago). Once before the capitalists even declared that the world's fuel source was on the verge of extinction. At that time, in the mid-19th century, oil for lamps and other purposes came overwhelmingly from the fat of whales. As whaling greatly reduced the whale population, the capitalists predicted all the dire consequences that would result from the lack of whale fat. As everyone knows, the world has survived without an abundance of whale fat.

Why? Because at that time the capitalist relations of production were, in the main, capable of greatly advancing the productive forces. The drive for profit and the needs of capitalist production led to the discovery and use of petroleum on a vast scale.

Today the same capitalist relations of production, in which the drive to squeeze ever more wealth out of the labor of the workers is its heart and soul, stands as a barrier preventing society from further harnessing nature. Once this obstacle is removed by the revolution of the working class, there is no limit to the sources of energy in nature that, through the collective labor of society, can be harnessed step by step. And the convulsions, dislocations and robbery that plague us today can be replaced by the development of resources to meet people's needs. ■

## Conference...

Continued from page 4

lots of workers around this kind of organization, especially where communists play an open role?

In these discussions and in the conference workshops and plenaries, workers addressed the questions head-on. One worker got up and said that he'd originally favored keeping his caucus focused only on issues in his workplace, "but I found the bosses won't let you do it that way." No group of workers, no union, no particular nationality is an island untouched. Everyday the capitalists grind down the masses of people and drive the workers harder, everyday they use their tools like union bureaucrats, politicians, the media and so on against those they rule. The more that workers come up against this, the more potential there is for them to understand the broader nature of the fight they face and the need to unite with others and build it.

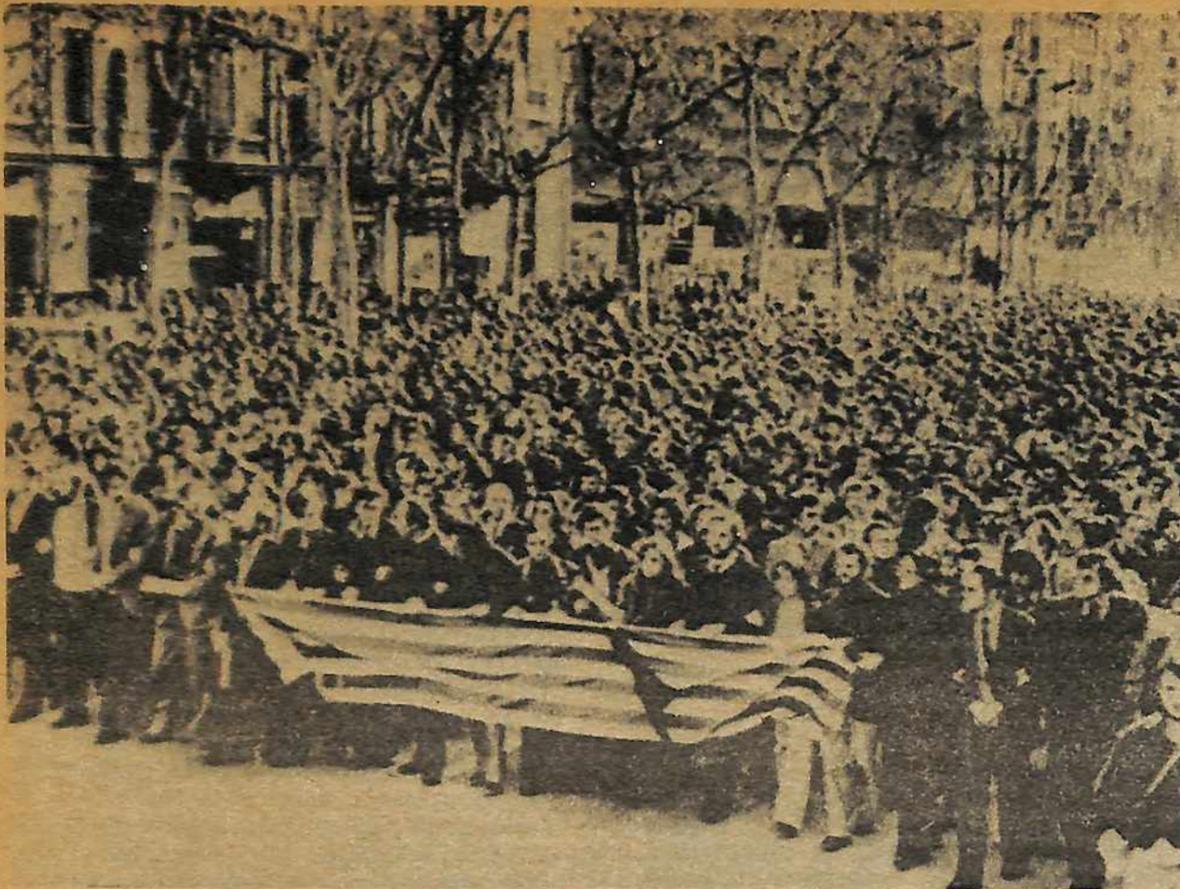
Muni drivers spoke of their experience in the city strike last year where the government and media went all out to divide city workers from their class brothers and sisters. They had just seen three mechanics who were crushed to death after being ordered into dangerous underground cables accused of their own deaths because of "negligence." Experiences like these had convinced them that they needed classwide solidarity to build their fight.

The conference ended with more than a new name and a new idea about how the United Workers Organization should be structured. There is a strong steering committee to help lead the group in setting forth on its new course. This steering committee was not born with a snap of the fingers at the meeting, but had been forged to a great extent through the work of preparing the conference over the previous months. Some industrial sections have already been formed, including in the post office and among Muni drivers. Still others are in the works and there is a great potential for the UWO to help workers create sections where presently no organization exists.

One of the important lessons learned at the conference was the importance of its areawide character and its ability to provide organization and leadership to workers in places where organization does not yet exist.

Those attending the conference also agreed that the best way to ensure the success of the new UWO was to build it in the same way it had grown before—in the course of struggle. Discussion focused on possible campaigns for the group to take up and ways to carry them out. A number of resolutions were passed by the body. One called for supporting and seeing through to victory the struggle at the International Hotel. A second called for support for San Francisco city workers, whose contracts start coming up in April and who face new anti-strike propositions on June's municipal election ballot. Another mandated the building of support in the unions for the battle of the unemployed against the cutoff of unemployment insurance benefit extensions.

The May 1st Workers Organization made important contributions to the struggle of the proletariat in the Bay Area. The spirit of unity and excitement, as well as determination to dig in and do the necessary work, that characterized the whole conference, show that the Bay Area United Workers Organization is bound to move forward from this foundation and become an even better vehicle to build the role of the working class in the fight against all oppression. ■



Many thousands demonstrated January 27 against the repression of the Spanish regime with a banner of the Spanish Republic, long a symbol of resistance to Franco's fascist dictatorship.

## Spain...

Continued from page 11

democratic rights and the growth and organization of the workers movement—including the fact that six out of every ten workers went out on strike sometime during the last year against their bosses and the government that stands behind them—has forced the bourgeoisie to consider abandoning Franco-style rule and moving toward some sort of parliamentary set-up. Their hope is to change as little as possible, with as little disruption and as much continuity as possible for the government under King Juan Carlos, to throw out only just enough concessions to confuse and divide the masses and regain the initiative.

But especially because after two generations of fascist rule the bourgeoisie has few political figures who aren't completely despised by the people, it has had to count on the help of the so-called "opposition." Most prominent among these forces is the phoney Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and the Communist Party, a totally revisionist outfit which won broad influence because it once led the fight against Franco but long ago betrayed this struggle and now stands as a prop helping to hold up the wobbly regime of Franco's heir, the King. Without such forces to spread the illusion that Spain's rulers have changed and that now the way forward for the people is a "reconciliation," as the CP calls it, with those who've unleashed so much terror against the people, these maneuvers wouldn't have any chance at all.

In November the Spanish Cortes—the so-called parliament appointed by Franco—was persuaded by the King's Prime Minister to agree to dissolve itself so that its members could run for election in a new parliament some time in 1977. A national referendum was held to approve the plan. The referendum was presented as the beginning of a new day because it was the first time Spaniards had been allowed to vote on anything since Franco overthrew the Spanish Republic in 1939 with the aid of Italian and German troops.

As it turned out, this referendum held in December was a joke—if you voted no, you voted for unadorned Francoism, and if you voted yes, you voted for Franco's hand-picked heir, the King. With this referendum as its birth certificate to make it "legitimate," the government announced that it now represented the will of the people and the people should stop making demands and wait for the government to hold parliamentary elections.

The referendum was widely boycotted, especially in the regions inhabited by the Basques and other oppressed nationalities which have long borne the government's heaviest repression. This forced the government to make some new concessions—for instance it legalized the Basque language, which had been outlawed—but the overall success of the referendum was limited because some parties of the "opposition"—especially the CP—which half-heartedly criticized the referendum in some of its publications actually worked to convince people that the referendum represented a step towards the satisfaction of the people's demands. In return, it's expected by many sources, including the U.S. bourgeois press, that the CP will be made fully legal any day now and will be able to run in the parliamentary elections.

Even among an opposition full of forces that have made a living negotiating compromises with the government and trying to get the masses to abide by them, the Spanish CP has distinguished itself as willing to break ranks with their opportunist partners and try to make even better deals for itself with the government.

The CP is not alone in this jockeying for position. The government has all but given the PSOE a pump to inflate itself with. It was the first "leftist" party for whom the doors of legality were opened. The PSOE's first legal Congress held in December was attended by heads of state and representatives of the "socialist" parties of Germany, France and Britain. The capitalists of these countries all have substantial investments in Spain, and they hope to use the same kind of social democrats who've served them so well in their own countries (such as the British Labor Party) to oversee their interests in Spain.

The Spanish revisionist CP cut off almost all ties with the USSR years ago. The rift between this CP and the USSR is so deep that the Soviets tried to set up a rival, pro-Soviet revisionist party. Last year CP head Carillo met with Kissinger to assure him that the Spanish CP wholeheartedly supports NATO and the rest of U.S. imperialism's interests in Spain. But there is still some question among some U.S. and Spanish capitalists as to whether the USSR might not still exert some pressure on the CP, and the USSR has shown its continuing interest in Spain by opening up talks about extensive trade relations with the Spanish government. In February Spain and the USSR restored diplomatic relations.

The Spanish CP has done its best to prove its loyalty

## Steel Contract...

Continued from page 9

that Abel was able to use to pull in a lot of votes for McBride was the strength of the Abel machine in fabrication and the greater isolation of fabrication workers which made the issues much less clear than in basic. Many basic officials didn't dare come out for McBride, while everywhere local fabrication hacks backed McBride. But this didn't go unchallenged.

For instance, through going to various plants with leaflets and playing up some real issues like the role played by company unionism, people from the *Steelworker* joined up with workers in a small fabrication local in New Jersey who'd just been shafted with a sell-out contract, and the workers in turn were able to use the election campaign to help unite and hit their local president. Another example is the Star Sprinkler shop in Philadelphia (see article this issue) where steel workers who'd been giving out pro-Sadlowski leaflets focusing on the issues joined up with workers in the plant to organize against the plant running away and in the process gained the initiative against the pro-McBride local union hack who'd held back the struggle.

All this underlined the real importance of taking up the Sadlowski campaign, and of doing it in a way that kept the initiative in the hands of the rank and file. Although the interests of the rank and file and those of Sadlowski coincided in going up against the Abel machine, the way Sadlowski's campaign was run from the top failed to mobilize the maximum strength possible

and to give free samples of its collaboration with the Spanish capitalists and their U.S. backers. Whereas until recently the CP went along with actions against the government (in its own way and for its own purposes), in the last few months, as the possibility of being invited to take part in the feast at the top becomes increasingly real, the CP has publicly called for a truce between the masses and the government.

For instance, in the recent massive outbreaks after the murder of the five lawyers, the CP put itself at the lead of many of the mass marches. Aided by the fact that the police tolerated them there while arresting others who came forward who are less "cooperative," CP marshalls did their best to prevent chanting, singing or anything else that would turn the funerals into militant political demonstrations. In fact, a CP leader, Simon Sanchez Montero, emerged from the Justice Department before one of the funerals saying, "We want to convert these vile murders into a reconciliation for all Spaniards," and then had the nerve to try to lead the thousands of mourners in shouting "Long Live Spain"—a slogan now being used by Juan Carlos himself as a refurbished version of Franco's slogan "Arriba España" (Up With Spain).

In the late autumn strike movement, the CP tried to convince workers to just stay at home and not demonstrate or do anything else that might lead to "possible confrontations" with the police. The CP justifies this by saying in effect that only in this way can the masses hope that Spain's rulers will give up representing the people.

But the truth is that this repression, which the bourgeoisie has used to stay in power for a long time in Spain, has also put the bourgeoisie itself in a bind. The masses of people are outraged at the jailing of political prisoners, at the lack of even the rights to belong to political organizations and unions or to demonstrate, at the oppression of Spain's minority nationalities and so on. The government has tried to split the mass movement and cool it out as much as possible by making a few small concessions, and especially by more and more openly tolerating the "loyal opposition" and increasingly coming to count on its work.

But for the people the question of rights is not a question of something abstract nor of appearances. The Spanish bourgeoisie has denied these rights in order to hold the people down, and the masses of people, especially the working class, are demanding these rights as part of their fight for their interests and against the exploitation and oppression that Spain's capitalists and their foreign backers have heaped upon them. The regime's reforms have not satisfied and can't satisfy the demands of the people, and more and more people have consciously taken up the struggle to overthrow the regime outright.

Two generations ago all the big capitalists of the world collaborated to bring in the Franco dictatorship to help suppress the "germ" of revolution that Spain's working class threatened to spread throughout Europe and elsewhere. Since then they've tried to wipe out all protest in Spain. But the movement of the working class and the masses of people has again emerged powerfully and revolutionary organization has once again developed despite the revisionists' treason. The experience of these dark years and this growing movement have given rise to a deep desire for revolution and socialism among workers and other sections of the people. ■

in this fight. From the beginning at the USWA convention last August when Sadlowski refused to go along with rank and filers who wanted to take on Abel on the convention floor, there was a constant fight against the line of building the campaign from the top down, relying on alliances with local officials to build his own machine and treating the rank and file as little more than vote getters, contributors and poll watchers rather than as a force to be mobilized to take up the campaign as part of fighting for their own interests.

Opposing moves to organize the most active and advanced workers around the issues as the key force to reach out broadly, leading forces in the Sadlowski campaign did their best to restrict their role, claiming that they would alienate the rest of the steel workers. For this reason they tried to limit activity to pure campaign politicking and refused to back such actions as the demonstration in Chicago against McBride and the Pittsburgh demonstration to free Local 3059 which the Abel machine had put in receivership. Because this approach didn't really deal with the question of changing things that steel workers face, even many workers who generally favored Sadlowski didn't bother to vote.

But despite the fact that the election results seem to indicate a defeat for Sadlowski—the rank and file has made important advances in establishing a pole of resistance to the companies and company unionism in the industry. As a leaflet put out by the *Steelworker* to build for the D.C. demonstration put it: "We propose that steel workers across the face of this country unite together to promote our interest, to make this contract a battle, to win what can be won from the companies, to build the rank and file movement stronger. We have scored victories in the past; we have made advances in the Sadlowski campaign; let us move more determined and united to make the contract a real battle." ■