

A Socialist ACTION

2ND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

DECEMBER 1985

50 CENTS

VOL. 3, NO. 12

Union battles defy concessions tide



Food-packing workers in Watsonville, Calif., have been on strike for three months against a proposed cut in wages and benefits. The S.F. Labor Council is sponsoring a support rally Dec. 7 at Union Square.

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

The fighting spirit of unionists across the country against the employers' concessions demands has been demonstrated forcefully in a series of current strikes.

In Los Angeles, 12,000 Teamsters and 10,000 meatcutters are on strike against the multi-billion dollar food industry, which is demanding a two-tier wage system, a wage freeze, a reduced guaranteed work week, and job cross-crafting.

In Boston, 3400 hotel and restaurant workers are getting ready to strike on Dec. 1 against the hotel owners' outrageous takeback demands. The union is actively reaching out to other unions and to community groups to help solidify a broad base of support for the strike.

Meanwhile, in Minnesota, the Local P-9 packing-house workers are in the fourth month of their strike against the Hormel Packing Co.'s union-busting attempt. The striking workers have continued to stand strong, largely due to the outpouring of support from the labor movement organized by the Strike Support Committee.

In all three cases, the concessions demanded by the employers represent a serious attack on the workers and a death-threat to the unions themselves.

Concessions don't save jobs

Chrysler's three takeaways between November 1979 and January 1981 began the current concession epidemic. Backed by the federal government, Chrysler won support for concessions by claiming the only alternative was bankruptcy.

At first, many workers believed that concessions were a necessary, temporary evil required to get "their" companies

(continued on page 4)

Marcos calls elections in futile effort to save Philippine regime

By SEAN FLYNN

Bending to strong pressure from the United States, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos recently announced presidential elections to take place on Jan. 17, 1986.

Marcos' call followed an Oct. 19-22 visit from Reagan emissary Sen. Paul Laxalt and the Oct. 30 Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony of Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage and Assistant Secretary of State Paul Wolfowitz.

The two officials stated that without reforms in the political, military, and economic structure of the country, the Philippines could fall to the Communist Party led New People's Army within three years.

The U.S. government backed up these vocal warnings to Manila by stalling payment by the International Monetary Fund

of \$453 million in loans barring moves toward reform. At the same time, an editorial in *The New York Times* invited an "enlightened military" to take charge of the country.

On Nov. 12, Wolfowitz responded to Marcos' election call, telling the Senate committee that unless the Jan. 17 poll was "credible," it would only further undermine the regime. This is especially so since the voting will come on the heels of the expected exoneration of Marcos associate and former Philippine Army Chief of Staff Fabian Ver and other high military officials for the August 1983 assassination of prominent oppositionist Benigno Aquino.

Complying with Washington's directive, Marcos on Nov. 15 put off the election until mid-February. Four days later, the IMF released the previously stalled loan.

The Reagan administration's actions

underscore the turn in U.S. foreign policy away from a dictator who, in 1981, was

(continued on page 17)



Unions form federation in S. Africa

Almost 900 delegates from 36 Black and non-racial unions met in Durban, South Africa, last month to form a new independent trade-union federation.

The new Congress of South African Trade Unions will represent over 500,000 workers in auto, chemical, steel, food processing, and other strategic industries. Almost half are in the National Union of Mineworkers.

It will take about three months, according to Congress spokespersons, to restructure the component unions into some 13 amalgamated industrial unions.

At a Nov. 29 rally at the founding convention National Union of Mineworkers General Secretary Cyril Ramaphosa said that the new federation can serve as a "political rallying point" for Black workers in their struggle against the apartheid government.

For more coverage of events in South Africa, see pages 13 and 15.

Nov. 2 peace conference sets goals

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

There was standing room only at the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice conference held Nov. 2 at San Francisco State University. Over 400 union members, students, peace and anti-apartheid activists registered for the event, exceeding the conference organizers' expectations.

The conference provided new evidence that the diverse organizations of the protest movements will be able to put aside their differences and unite in the spring of 1986 for massive street demonstrations against U.S. foreign policy in Central America and South Africa, against nuclear weapons, and for jobs and justice at home.

These were the issues discussed at the Nov. 2 conference and the four themes of the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice--a broad coalition with heavy labor participation.

Naomi Tutu-Seavers, daughter of South African Nobel Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu, was the featured speaker and recipient of several awards for her work on behalf of South African refugees through the Bishop Tutu Refugee Fund.

The audience was visibly moved by

(continued on page 8)

Nov. 2 conference highlights. See FORUM, pp. 9-12



Closing news date: November 24, 1985

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Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly for \$6 per year by Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Second-class postage is paid at San Francisco, Calif.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Socialist Action*, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Rates: 12 issues for \$6.00; Canada and Mexico \$12.50; \$30.00 airmail for all other countries; \$14.00 surface mail for all other countries.

Signed articles; by contributors do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialist Action*. These are expressed in editorials.

'New right' does more than pray over abortion

By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

"To no form of religion is woman indebted for one impulse of freedom, as all alike have taught her inferiority and subjection"--Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902.

Once again women's rights are being used as a scapegoat by the government and the church to organize a right-wing movement in this country. The campaign against abortion rights has become a tool for the right wing in the United States. Capitalism needs a submissive working class--and where better to start than by bringing women under the thumb of the government and the church?

The "New Right" is a coalition of political, religious, and big business organizations who agree on cutbacks of domestic spending for health and human services, increased military expenditures, and elimination of anti-discrimination protection such as affirmative action for women and minorities. They oppose labor unions, workers' rights, and comparable worth.

The "New Right" is also for the preservation of the family--as they define it. Of course, abortion and contraception do not fit into their picture of "the family."

First--on the legal front--came the Hyde Amendment, which cut funds for abortion for poor

women. But when the "New Right" couldn't get enough out of the courts or Congress they resorted to acts of terrorism. Ever onward do these Christian soldiers march!

Since 1982, more than 33 abortion and health clinics have been bombed. Anti-abortion forces have recently called for a "Year of Fear and Pain" for women who seek abortions and for health care workers who provide them.

This will mean increased harassment and violence.

On Nov. 6, two major abortion cases came before the U.S. Su-



preme Court. Lawyers asked that the Court uphold laws in both Pennsylvania and Illinois that had been thrown out by lower federal courts. Both laws required physicians performing late-term abortions to use procedures designed to promote the survival of fetuses that have developed enough to live outside the womb.

Opponents of the laws argue that they were designed to discourage abortions and that they would endanger the health of women undergoing late-term abortions. The Illinois law, say opponents, required doctors to endorse the state government's theory of life.

The Illinois law also required physicians who prescribe contraceptives that prevent the fertilization of eggs to tell their patients that these are "abortifacients" that "cause fetal death." The law did not specify what contraceptive methods it had in mind, but the most common is the intrauterine device (IUD).

The Pennsylvania law required physicians to keep certain records for the state and to give women seeking abortion specified information concerning risks and alternatives. Kathryn Kolbert, of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, told the Court that the information is medically irrelevant and "designed not to inform the woman but to persuade her" not to have an abortion.

The Reagan administration submitted a "friend of the court" brief last July asking that the Supreme Court throw out its Roe vs. Wade ruling of 1973, which made abortion legal. The brief called the 1973 decision "unworkable and in violation of 'states rights.'"

Anti-abortion measures

Two anti-abortion initiatives are slated for the 1986 election ballot in California. The first, scheduled for the June election, would amend the state constitution to prohibit the use of taxpayers' dollars, "to compensate...any person, agency or facility for the performance of any medically induced abortion."

Abortions when necessary to prevent the pregnant woman's imminent death from physical injury, etc., are permitted if the legislature so authorizes.

The second major provision of this proposal provides for the "funding for physical care and medical treatment for unborn and prematurely born children and for

care and developmental resources for disabled and handicapped children." This funding, however, will only last for three years. After that the children and parents are on their own.

The second ballot initiative, scheduled for November 1986, is much simpler. It says, "No public money shall be spent directly or indirectly for the killing of innocent human individuals from fertilization until natural death."

This initiative does not include abortion in case of the imminent death of the mother. I suppose the "pro-lifers" feel that any woman who may die in childbirth does not deserve to live anyway.

Across the nation those who believe in the "right to choose" are stepping up their activity. The National Organization for Women has called for massive demonstrations on March 9 in Washington, D.C., and on March 16 in Los Angeles.

Women must begin to organize; no more silence. "Organize, don't agonize!" must be our slogan. ■

Hazardous to your health

Best medicine for cancer prevention?—A new society

By STEVE ZIPPIN

Cancer prevention is not a medical or a personal problem. It is a political problem. The first and most important step we can all take to minimize our cancer risk is to *organize and educate*. At the same time, everyone should have the information necessary to make informed choices about diet and lifestyle.

Much has been written recently about the effect of diet on cancer risk. Evidence from both animal and human dietary studies indicates a much lower cancer rate for individuals on a low-fat, high-fiber diet. Whether fiber helps by moving fats through the intestines more quickly or has some direct protective effect is unclear.

The single most important lifestyle choice you can make is to never start smoking, or to stop if you already smoke. Lung cancer has long been the leading cause of cancer mortality in men. This year it has become the largest cause of cancer mortality for women as well.

Other "lifestyle" factors are less easy to control as an *individual*. How many of us can freely choose where we live and work, particularly when we have jobs and families?

Is someone who grew up in New Jersey, is raising a family, and has a job in a chemical plant there really free to give up that job and move? How useful to that person is the knowledge that New Jersey has the highest overall cancer mortality rate

in the United States?

Similarly, the water we drink is a personal lifestyle choice only in the most abstract sense. In New Orleans, the drinking water is contaminated by toxic wastes dumped into the Mississippi River by dozens of industries. The "choice" to drink it or buy bottled water is not available to lower-income families.

Although there are choices we can make that will lower our cancer risk, ultimately the problem is a social one. "We must be willing to accept the reality that a *significant* reduction in exposure to environmental carcinogens will result only from organized political action," according to Samuel Epstein, author of "The Politics of Cancer."

Hazards on the rise

This point is underscored by recent Labor Department statistics showing a big increase in accidents and illnesses in the workforce. And this increase accompanies the Reagan administration's gutting of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA—the agency formed to protect workers from hazardous work conditions and substances) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA—the agency responsible for regulating environmental hazards).

A vigorous campaign for federal regulation of hazards, a campaign controlled by the workers themselves, at the workplace, is desperately needed.

Many unions have health and safety committees that can be useful areas of action. There is a growing awareness, as well, of the risks in non-industrial workplaces, and clerical workers' unions have begun to raise safety questions.

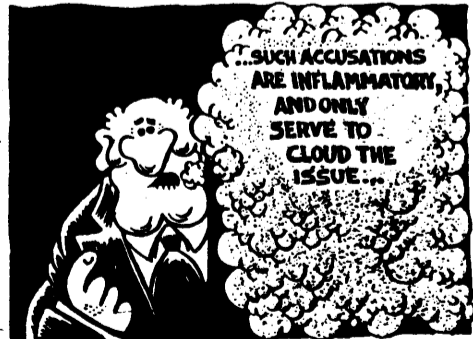
In high-tech offices there are a number of chemical hazards from solvents, asbestos, and even fumes from the furniture. Since most office workers are women, this is an

issue for feminist groups as well.

Conservative think-tanks like the Heritage Foundation have been pushing the notion that a "risk-free" society is both impossible to attain and harmful to attempt. Without risk there is no growth or initiative, and stagnation results, they say.

The question to ask is, risk for whom? Loan guarantees for banks that took bad "risks" are OK. Handouts and bailouts for big business are OK. But *we* are expected to face an ever-increasing cancer risk to keep society running.

We need to create a society where the risk to peoples' lives is minimized, not the risk to private profit. We need a society where challenge comes from discovering a cure for cancer or improving children's education, and risk comes from mountain climbing or freely chosen sports instead of from environmental carcinogens. Working to change society is the best medicine. ■



N.Y. courts OK nukes and KO democratic rights

By CLIFF CONNER

NEW YORK—In the scales of American democracy, a few judges apparently outweigh the entire electorate of New York City. Three New York State courts ruled—unanimously—that the antinuclear Navyport referendum could not appear on the November ballot.

This outrageous decision denied the right of millions of New Yorkers to have a voice in an issue of life-and-death importance: whether some 360 Tomahawk nuclear missiles—each 15 times as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb—should be bobbing around in our harbor.

More than 100,000 registered voters had signed petitions to put the referendum on the ballot. Hundreds of thousands more were looking forward to having their vote against the Navyport counted.

But a single judge—backed by two other courts on appeal—knocked it off the ballot by ruling the referendum unconstitutional. "Isn't that ironic?" commented one petitioner who had gathered hundreds of signatures. "We're taught that the constitution was designed to *guarantee* our democratic rights!"

The reasons given for the ruling were so specious that even the *New York Times*—a



booster of the nuclear Navyport project—felt obliged to take its distance. A *Times* editorial pointed out that the courts are supposed to rule on a law's constitutionality *after* it is adopted, not before. By timing their ruling to fall just before election day, however, the judges managed to avoid further challenges.

If the courts had waited until after the election, it would have been too late to avert the very thing the nuclear policymakers feared most. What they wanted to avoid at all cost was having a majority vote, in the nation's largest city, repudiate their nuclear war strategy. Imagine how damaging that would be, coming on the eve

of the Geneva talks, to Reagan's "bar-gaining stance."

The Pentagon, the White House, the Koch administration, and their subservient judges joined in a bipartisan coalition to successfully do away with the referendum. But at a price. They were forced to do it in such a blatant way that many tens of thousands of New Yorkers knew they'd been cheated. The incident underscored the essentially undemocratic way in which major social decisions are made.

The cancellation of the referendum is itself indirect evidence that it would have won a majority on election day—or at least that those who arranged to quash it were

afraid it would. There is also some direct evidence to that effect.

The coalition that organized the ballot drive conducted a pre-election opinion poll, using scientific sampling techniques, and found that 48 percent would have voted "Yes" (that is, against the Navyport), 37 percent would have voted "No," and the rest were undecided. Perhaps more significant, 88 percent believed that the issue should be put to a democratic vote.

Sources within the Koch administration revealed that the mayor carried out a secret poll of his own and came up with similar results.

The organizers of the ballot initiative—New York Mobilization for Survival and others—have claimed victory, and this is by no means empty bravura. The campaign was successful on its own terms—that is, it raised the issue and created a public debate.

The Navy and Koch had planned to sneak the nuclear port into New York and present it as a *fait accompli*, but they were prevented from doing so. Before the campaign not one in five New Yorkers was aware of the Navyport plans. Now not one in five is unaware—and most are against it.

In spite of not being allowed to prove it at the polls, there is a general understanding that New Yorkers do not want the nuclear fleet in their harbor. Navy and city officials know that they can proceed with their plans only in the face of massive opposition. Organizers of the anti-Navyport coalition have vowed to organize that opposition and keep up the pressure. ■

Boston hotel strikers tackle two-tier terror

By ART LECLAIR and ROGER SHEPPARD

BOSTON—As most of us are savoring our Thanksgiving turkey and preparing for the upcoming holiday season, 3400 members of Local 26 of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union are getting ready to strike on Dec. 1.

By a vote of 97 percent, conducted Nov. 20-21, the hotel workers authorized their negotiating committee to call the strike. Voting began at a rally attended by over 1500 workers at Arlington Street Church in Boston.

"We will never sign a Judas contract. This union's soul is not for sale," said Dominic Bozotto, president of Local 26 and of the 70-member negotiations committee.

The major hotel owners (Aetna, John Hancock, and Prudential life insurance companies) are riding the crest of the concessions wave, demanding outrageous givebacks from these already grossly underpaid workers. The insurance companies are demanding a two-tier wage structure where new hires would receive 75 percent of the regular salary. In total, the package would amount to a loss of \$4000

per worker over the life of the contract.

On Oct. 30, a full five weeks before the strike deadline, 500 members of Local 26 and their supporters rallied in front of the John Hancock Tower to demonstrate their resolve in the face of the bosses' attack.

In 1982 Local 26 organized a successful struggle to defeat a similar concessions package. This year the local's leadership is employing a strategy of involving the entire membership in the contract process. The union is actively reaching out to labor, church, and community groups to help solidify a broad base of support.

The process is a difficult one given that there are six to eight language groups represented in the local. Nonetheless, the Bozotto team has once again turned this union into a solid fighting machine. In rejecting the notion of concessions, Bozotto has stated the importance and necessity of fighting for "substantial wage increases across the board."

Bozotto and Local 26 came to the forefront of the labor movement in Boston two years ago when they played an exemplary role in the Amalgamated Transport Workers Union (ATWU) strike against Greyhound. Local 26 opened its



Rally of 1500 workers on Nov. 20 at Boston's Arlington Street Church

arms and its doors to the ATWU strike committee. Its offices became the official strike headquarters. Many of the lessons learned during that struggle will surely pay dividends as Local 26 prepares to hit the streets.

In response to the greedy demands of the owners, the membership of Local 26 has presented its own demands for justice and dignity. In an attempt to force the nego-

tiations, Bozotto has threatened, if necessary, to hold a sit-in inside the Hancock Tower.

After experiencing the vitality and spirit exhibited by the brothers and sisters of Local 26 at their rally, one cannot help but come away with a renewed sense of purpose and optimism. As one worker told us, "My contract is my insurance policy." Truer words have never been spoken. ■

We're two years old and taking some big steps

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We're two years old. And like most two year olds, we're growing, learning, and taking big steps forward every day.

Thanks to you, our readers, we've surpassed our goal of 225 new long-term subscriptions to *Socialist Action*. And we're close to our \$10,000 fund drive goal, which ends on Dec. 2. Close to \$12,200 has been pledged, and over \$8500 already collected.

Socialist Action branches have brought in most of the new subscriptions through sales to other antiwar activists, students, and workers. Single copy sales in Minnesota grew considerably as a result of our coverage of the Hormel strike. One hotshot Twin Cities salesperson sold 45 of the November issue himself.

The Cincinnati branch of Socialist Action, in the course of the subscription drive, sold 34 subs and set up campus groups of Students for Socialist Action at four colleges.

We appreciate the comments and suggestions we're getting in letters and calls from our readers. Your opinions are helping us shape the paper and broaden its appeal.

And we've kept our part of the bargain.

This month, you see the fruits of our fund drive. This paper was produced for the first time by our own computerized typesetting equipment—purchased with the funds collected so far in the drive.

In next month's *Socialist Action* we'll offer the second issue of *International Outlook*, our theoretical supplement. This will include documents from South Africa on the debate over revolutionary strategy, as well as articles on Chile and Eastern Europe.

The funds still to be collected in the remaining weeks of the fund drive have been earmarked for a project we feel is overdue—publishing inexpensive pamphlets offering a strategy for the antiwar movement, the struggle for women's rights, and much more.

We are also researching the possibility of re-issuing some of the classical works of revolutionary socialism. You might have guessed that we're a pretty optimistic group. With the world revolution for socialism on the rise, we have every reason to be. If you haven't yet made your contribution to our fund drive, it's not too late!

...Concessions

(continued from page 1)

through difficult financial times.

But workers soon found out that concessions do not save jobs. However, they were so unprepared to deal with the bosses' continual takeback demands that a wage freeze or slight cut came to be regarded as a victory.

Many labor officials excuse sub-standard contracts by saying "the courts are killing us" and it's impossible to get a favorable National Labor Relations Board ruling these days.

Yet, this is nothing new. Workers have never been able to rely on the courts or government agencies to protect their interests.

In 1978, the federal government backed down on an order requiring striking coal miners to return to work. The miners refused, expressing their determination to stay out until an equitable agreement was reached.

When Wheeling-Pittsburgh tried to move steel to meet customers' orders, steelworkers didn't worry about legal niceties. They knew their livelihood was at stake and acted accordingly, physically preventing the steel from being moved.

Transforming the unions

As setback after setback is registered, some members have come to question whether the trade unions are still capable of defending their interests—or whether it's not time for a "new AFL-CIO" to restore labor to its former power. This has led some rank-and-file activists to turn their backs on existing trade-union structures.

Despite their best intentions, such efforts are doomed to failure. Workers formed into trade unions to defend their wages, benefits, and working conditions. Despite all the weaknesses of their current leadership, these organizations still offer the best defense against the bosses. Rather than work outside the existing trade unions, opponents of concessions must work to force these organizations to act on behalf of their membership.

Solidarity is the obvious answer to the attempts to play one group of workers off against another. Whenever a group of workers is forced on strike, it's important that other workers turn out in support—helping on the picket line, attending rallies, organizing material assistance, and helping in educational efforts to inform community residents how the strike affects them. This is what the packing-house workers at Local P-9 in Austin, Minn., have done so successfully.

No politician ever gave workers anything. Whatever they won, they achieved through their own struggle. Tremendous union resources continue to be wasted in the vain hope that the Democrats are somehow better than the Republicans.

The labor movement must end its reliance on the politicians of the two big-business parties and form a labor party based on the trade unions. Such a party

could campaign for a law making concessions illegal and demanding that all workers receive a living wage. Any company which demonstrated its inability to provide safe working conditions and a living wage could be nationalized under the control of the workers working there.

Does this doom workers to suffer defeat after defeat until such a long-term fightback strategy is implemented? No, workers have shown that by standing up to the bosses and fighting back, some of the company's demands can be beaten back.

Even such serious concession settlements as the Wheeling-Pittsburgh agreement were much better than what would have been forced on the workers without a fight. The fightbacks of the Greyhound bus drivers, United Airlines pilots, Wheeling-Pittsburgh steelworkers, and others also had another important result.

Thousands who had never before been

involved in their unions actively demonstrated in defense of their rights, proving the power of the workers to shut down production and force the company to back down from supposedly non-negotiable positions.

Unlike the demoralizing experiences of accepting losses without a fight, this will strengthen the membership's resolve and better prepare them for future battles.

An effective fightback that can turn the concessions tide, however, will require a strategy that as its first priority does not subordinate workers' interests to profits. ■



Strike Support Committee delivers food to striking Hormel workers in Austin, Minn.



Socialist Action/Lynn Henderson

Big battle breaks out in L.A. grocery strike

By DAVE CAMPBELL and DAVE COOPER

LOS ANGELES—A major class battle is shaping up in Southern California as 12,000 Teamsters, representing drivers, warehouse and office workers, and 10,000 meatcutters, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, are on strike against the multi-billion dollar food industry in California.

What began as a selective strike against a relatively small supermarket chain, Vons, with 164 stores, immediately escalated into a major confrontation with national implications, as the Food Employers Council (FEC), representing the collective power of the California food industry, locked out union workers at eight major chains covering 1125 stores which serve nearly 12 million consumers.

Workers at Safeway, Lucky, Albertson's, Ralphs, Alpha Beta, and Hughes stores were sent packing by the bosses of an industry whose tentacles control virtually every aspect of food production in this state—from ownership of the land and food producing machinery to the trucks, warehouses, granaries, and stores.

"When you strike one of us, you strike all of us," said Bob Voigt, a representative of the strike-busting Food Employers Council.

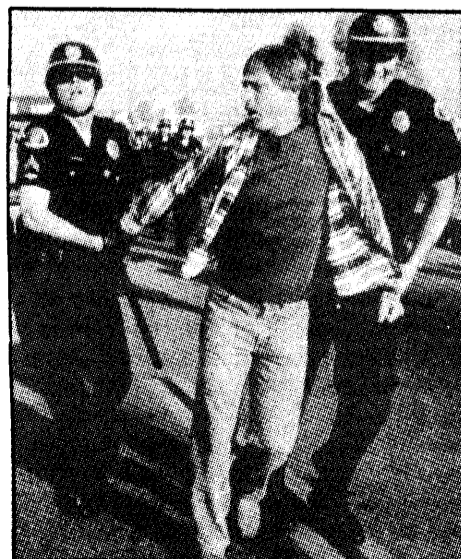
The FEC is not new to labor battles. In past battles in this industry, strikers have been beaten and killed as they sought to defend their basic rights. The FEC, a bitter example of the organized strikebreaking will of California capitalists, has used scabs and paid thugs, cops, court injunctions, and every other means at their disposal to impose a defeat on the union workforce.

The FEC is no second-rate opponent.

Armed with virtually unlimited financial resources, the FEC made it clear from day one of the strike, Nov. 5, 1985, that they were prepared to challenge the union on all fronts.

When union members assembled at the major food distribution centers to set up initial picket lines, they were challenged by scab drivers who drove through the lines as if there were no strikers present. In one instance, a striker was pinned to the grill of a scab-driven truck and dumped onto the loading dock.

When the strikers indicated their displeasure at such treatment, teaching a few scab drivers that union members know how to defend their lines, they were met by cordons of police—50 or more in one incident—who escorted the scab trucks through the lines. In the course of the battle a number of strikers were sent to the hospital. The scabs and cops have also suffered a few injuries.



L.A. striker arrested by police

While the FEC organizes to hire strike-breaking thugs and scabs who are eager to attack union pickets, they seek the aid of friendly publishers who control the local press. They run full-page advertisements seeking to blame the bosses' violence on the workers. The FEC is offering \$100,000 rewards for those who turn in allegedly violent strikers.

No ordinary strike

This is no ordinary strike. The employers, in what has been a profitable industry for decades, are seeking to force major concessions from both the Teamsters and UFCW. In addition to a two-tier wage system, the right to sub-contract work to non-unionized companies, and the right to establish new non-union warehouses, the FEC is demanding a three-year wage freeze.

The FEC is demanding that the guaranteed 40-hour week be cut to 20 for the meatcutters. At the same time, they want to introduce a new category of worker, a "meat clerk," into the industry who would presumably perform some 70 percent of the tasks currently done by journeymen at almost half the current hourly wage of \$13.48.

Daniel Mitchell, director of the UCLA Institute of Industrial Relations, an employer-oriented state agency, commented, "You're seeing an intent to change the relationship and the balance of power. It's not business as usual."

According to Joe McLaughlin, FEC president, "It isn't poverty" that is motivating the employers. Last year every chain involved in the strike/lockout showed a hefty profit. Vons posted profits of \$26.3 million; Safeway \$185 million; Lucky Stores \$94.6 million; and American Stores, the parent company of Alpha Beta, \$185.5 million. The supermarkets' return on their net worth was 14.88 percent last year, according to UFCW officials, up from 13.65 percent a year earlier.

"In business today we can't be complacent," says union buster McLaughlin. "That's really what's behind this," he said, referring to the string of union-getting

demands the FEC is pressing.

Following an initial show of union power on the picket line, the bosses secured court orders drastically reducing the number of pickets at the distribution centers, the key points of employer power. To date, the union has declined to challenge these injunctions, leaving the scabs relatively free to make their deliveries.

Fighting resolve

The strikers have opened one effective new front in their battle. They sent squads of strikers into a number of supermarkets to "encourage" union clerks to respect their picket lines.

While there are varying estimates as to how many of the 16,000 non-striking clerks, who also belong to the UFCW, are currently honoring the picket lines, it is clear that the strikers hope to clear the supermarkets of all union workers.

UFCW officials, who have generally not taken a clear position calling the clerks out of the struck stores, estimate that nearly one-third are respecting union lines.

This would bring the total number of striking food workers in Southern California to some 27,000.

In an initial show of solidarity, the Harbor Coalition, a group of 19 Los Angeles unions that has mobilized to support striking workers in the past, held a demonstration of 500 on Nov. 15 at two struck supermarkets.

On Nov. 22, about 300 people picketed Vons support in Harbor City in a solidarity action sponsored by the Coalition. David Arian, president of ILWU Local 13, told the pickets that the militant tactics used by labor in the 1930s and '40s would be needed now to defend workers' standards of living.

The quick victory the employers expected has not come to pass. But to ward off the kind of blow the food magnates seek to deliver, the full power of the labor movement will be required. The striking workers have demonstrated they are up to the fight. It remains to be seen whether the broad labor movement will be mobilized to win this fight. ■

UTU officials derail in contract disaster

By J.D. CRAWFORD

United Transportation Union (UTU) President Fred Hardin announced on Oct. 29 the ratification of a four-year wage-rule agreement with the major rail carriers in the United States.

Except for slight changes in the procedure to eliminate the job of fireman in the rail industry, the new contract is identical to the proposed agreement that failed in a ratification vote last July.

The contract, which contains sweeping wage-rule concessions, is an unmitigated disaster for all rail workers. Traditionally the agreement signed by the UTU (the largest of some 12 rail craft unions in the United States) sets the pattern for the entire industry.

Some of the more damaging provisions of the new contract include the elimination of the distinction between road and yard work. This provision alone will cost thousands of jobs and go a long way toward eliminating the craft of switchman (those rail workers assigned to do yard work).

Without any consultation with the other unions affected, the contract requires road and yardmen to take over and do the work

J.D. Crawford is a brakeman/switchman at Burlington Northern Railroad.

of other crafts, such as carmen and operators.

In road service, the basic day (the number of miles a crew has to run before it is eligible for overtime) is increased by 8 percent. This constitutes a significant wage cut.

The contract also provides for the elimination of cabooses on some trains. And it sets up a special committee to revise downward the health and welfare package.

Work without contract

On the basic question of wage rates, this is possibly the worst contract the UTU has ever signed in its history. UTU members are to receive a 10.5-percent increase over the four years of the contract. But even this does not tell the whole story.

UTU members have been working without a contract since June 1984, a total of 16 months. Unfortunately, this has become common practice in the rail industry. But in the past this period was covered by a retroactive wage increase paid shortly after the new contract was ratified.

For the first time there is no retroactive wage increase. Instead, members will receive a one-time lump sum maximum payment of \$565. In effect, the 10.5-percent increase is not over four years, but over more than five years.

However, the bulk of even this meager

increase will appear only in the last months of the new contract. From July 1, 1984, when the last contract ended, to Jan. 1, 1987 (a period of two-and-a-half years), UTU members will obtain wage increases whose grand total amounts to 4.5 percent.

But possibly the most dangerous aspect of the new contract is the extension of the two-tier wage system. All new hires will start at a pay rate equal to only 75 percent of the rate for present employees. This rate will increase 5 percent a year for five years and then be frozen at 95 percent. This will mean that future union members will never make the full rate of pre-1985 employees.

This will surely create a potential for division and bitterness between new and old members doing the same work for unequal pay. It will also result in increased action by management to get rid of the more costly high-seniority employees.

Vote late, vote yes

Those not familiar with UTU contract ratification procedures may be mystified as to how such a contract could possibly be approved.

Rank-and-file members of the UTU do not have the right to vote on their contracts. They do not even directly elect the 400 general chairmen who do vote on the contract.

But the real kicker comes in the way the votes are counted. Any general chairman's ballot that is not received, or not received in a "timely fashion" at UTU international headquarters in Cleveland, is counted as a "yes" vote.

This is very convenient. General chairmen who may wish to report to an irate membership that they voted against the contract, but also wish to remain in the good graces of the international officialdom, can just arrange for their ballot to arrive a day late.

When the contract was originally voted down in July, 91 ballots, almost 25 percent of the total vote, were reported as not received in a "timely fashion" and automatically counted as yes votes for ratification.

Despite this, the contract was overwhelmingly rejected. It was the first time in the history of the UTU that a proposed international agreement was defeated. The breakdown on the October ratification vote has yet to be made public.

The defeatist mind-set of the UTU international officialdom was dramatically revealed in the Oct. 5 issue of the *UTU News*, whose masthead by the way is "Progress through Unity."

This issue was received by members just days before the second ratification vote—which if rejected again would have posed the likelihood of an immediate nationwide rail strike. The issue contains not one word on preparing the membership for such a strike—a strike that could have developed into the most crucial in the UTU's history.

Instead the bulk of the issue was given over to a heated attack on the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) and its president, John F. Sytsma. Hardin refers to President Sytsma and the BLE officialdom as "drafters of rape and greed" and authors of "many poisonous, traitorous, detrimental suggestions and ideas."

In all my years of reading the *UTU News*, I have never seen rail owners and management described in such terms. On the contrary, despite sharply escalating attacks on rail workers and rail unions, they are more often than not spoken of in almost gentlemanly terms. Apparently the real heat and anger is to be reserved only for fellow trade unionists.

Union cannibalism—no solution

What specifically provoked Hardin's wrath was a series of proposals called the "Lake Erie Plan," which was floated by the BLE officialdom to top rail management after the UTU general chairmen voted down



the present contract proposals last July.

The "Lake Erie Plan" is a very bad set of proposals. But in truth it is no worse than the contract Hardin just helped ram down the throats of UTU members. In point of fact the two proposals share much in common.

They both agree to sharp reductions in train crew sizes. They both agree to the elimination of cabooses on most over-the-road trains. They both agree to the elimination of the distinction between yard and road work. They both agree to infringement on the work of other crafts. And they both agree to a drastic extension of the two-tier wage system.

The BLE plan differs only in calling for the new sharply reduced train crew to consist of an engineer and an assistant engineer, rather than a brakeman or conductor.

The similarity between these plans is no accident. Hardin, Sytsma, and their underlings believe that the only course of action is to eventually concede to all the demands of the carriers and the National Mediation Board (NMB).

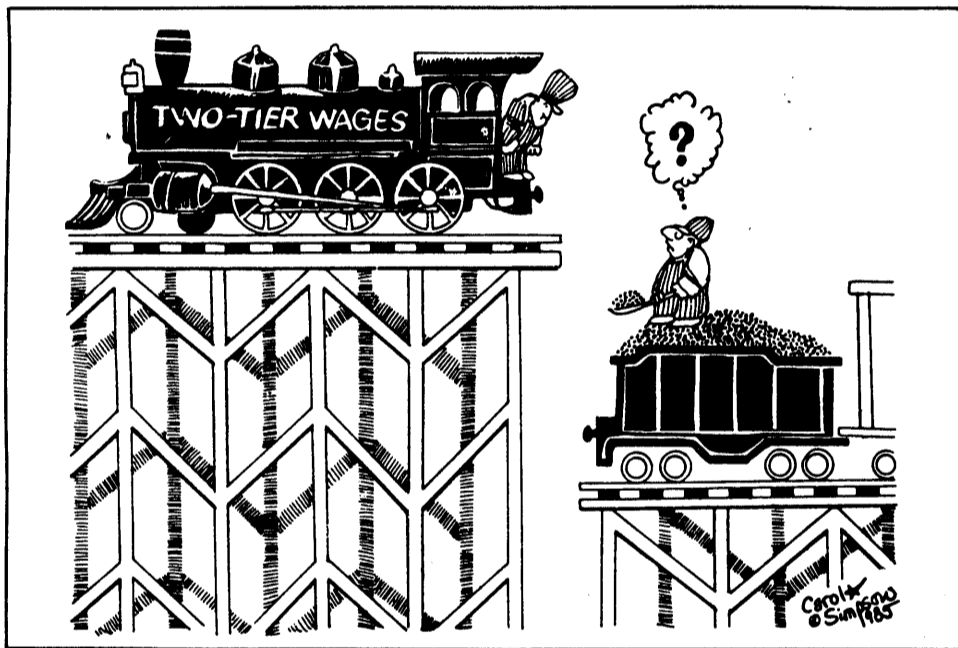
They also both understand that the present course is going to lead to a sharp reduction in rail jobs, which will also mean a sharp reduction in per-capita dues to the international.

It is this fact that leads to the only real difference of substance between Hardin and Sytsma. Their solution to the attack of the carriers and the government is a kind of union cannibalism.

If this was all that was happening in the rail unions, it would indeed be a pessimistic picture. However, that is not the case. Among the rank and file there are stirrings that make it clear they do not agree with Hardin and Sytsma's views.

One such development is the Intercraft Association of Minnesota (ICAM), which began on the Burlington Northern. They are convinced that a winning fight can be organized against the carriers. They are also convinced that one key to winning is solidarity between and among all the rail unions.

More will be written about these significant and hopeful developments in a future issue. ■



Chicago rail workers' dim view of contract

By TINA BEACOCK

CHICAGO—For the second time in three months, United Transportation Union (UTU) members of locals 528 and 577 on the Chicago Northwestern (CNW) railroad met here in October to discuss the proposed national contract.

Despite a campaign of intimidation by Chicago Northwestern, and pressure from the international union, members decisively rejected the concessionary contract. But the prospect that the contract would be ratified by the UTU general chairmen left some real questions for rail workers here. [The local membership does not vote on the contract. Only the votes of the local chairmen count. See article by J.D. Crawford—The Editors.]

Back in July some one hundred members of the two UTU locals had met to discuss the contract. They heard UTU General Chairman Markgraf outline his opposition to the proposal. The vote in the two locals, by which the local chairmen were to be bound, was about 90 percent against the proposed pact. They also voted unanimously to send a letter to UTU President Fred Hardin rejecting this "horrendous contract."

The letter said the contract would mean a substantial pay cut, eliminate craft divi-

sions, reduce benefits, and devastate work rules. "In short," the locals concluded, "it would be a total disaster."

The contractual changes dovetail with the Chicago Northwestern's plan for "rationalization," which includes laying off some 1500 employees. Chicago Northwestern demanded the contract changes to make it more competitive, despite a 54-percent rise in profitability since last year.

When the contract wasn't ratified, Chicago Northwestern's management, in preparation for a strike, began a sustained campaign against the rail workers. This included spreading rumors that the UTU strikers would be fired and permanently replaced, openly training company officials for UTU jobs, and sending letters to other craft unions threatening a possible lockout.

UTU members are now saddled with a contract they did not support. But the experience of the last few months, when a contract was voted down for the first time in quite a while, brought some questions into sharp relief.

Union democracy, including the right to vote on the contract, is an elementary requirement for defending one's bread and butter. One can only wonder what the fate of this settlement would have been had it been where it belongs—in the members' hands.

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By NAT WEINSTEIN

The AFL-CIO convention, meeting in Anaheim, Calif., at the end of October, approved a gamut of resolutions presented by the top leadership. One of those was for the protectionist "Buy American!" campaign, which was unanimously approved by the delegates. It was a symbolic demonstration of the political bankruptcy of the labor bureaucracy.

The *California AFL-CIO News* reported that "a parade of delegates took the floor to speak for the resolution." One delegate sought to dress up the "Buy American!" slogan by adding the phrase "Buy union!" But these slogans inherently contradict each other.

In reality, the protectionist policy favors U.S.-made products, whether union-made or not. The effect of a tax on foreign-made products is to mainly reduce imports from those producers with the highest production costs—primarily unionized producers with the highest wage levels.

The operative slogan, "Buy American!," in practice would favor non-union/low-wage producers, which would tend to negate the "Buy union" slogan.

The effective working-class approach to competition from producers with lower wage levels has traditionally been to support efforts by workers in every country to achieve the highest living standards.

But the "Buy American!" campaign, itself, is a sham. No reasonably informed person believes that protectionism can produce more jobs for workers in modern industrial countries. It is widely understood that protectionism is a two-way street, so far as major capitalist competitors are concerned, and would precipitate a trade war like the one that led to the 1929 depression—and a vast increase in unemployment.

Poor excuse for a solution

Why, then, do the labor bureaucrats, who are not uninformed, advance this poor excuse for a solution to unemployment?

First of all, the bureaucrats are well aware of the demands that the workers' movement has advanced in the past to fight the effects of capitalist unemployment. During the 1930s the shorter work-week, with no reduction in pay (the five-day, 40-hour week), was fought for and won in big labor battles.

The labor movement also forced the government to institute massive public-works programs to provide jobs and badly needed housing, schools, mass transit, etc. Unemployment insurance at union wages, and for the full period of unemployment, was another measure fought for—although only a minimal version was won.

But the labor bureaucrats today are dead-opposed to such solutions. They know that these can only be won at the expense of private profit. They also know that it would take a massive mobilization of the working class to wrench these demands from the bosses and their government.

They are in deadly fear of being caught in such a struggle between an aroused rank and file, on one side, and a ruthless capitalist class, on the other. The call for a protectionist trade policy goes in the opposite direction. It signals the AFL-CIO's commitment to the profit interests of their capitalist "partners."

The "Buy American!" campaign is not new. But it is now being given center stage in order to fend off growing criticism from the ranks, who are beginning to demand a course of action in defense of their interests. The bureaucrats hope that blaming lower-paid foreign workers for labor's woes will appeal to the most conservative and chauvinist sentiments of a sector of the working class.

The AFL-CIO convention also approved

AFL-CIO's 'Buy America' policy won't buy jobs

a report on *The Changing Situation Of Workers and Their Unions*. In this document, the bureaucracy alleges that the trend toward a workforce with a smaller proportion of industrial workers is the primary cause of labor's difficulties.

The document also lists a series of so-called new tactics that are intended to paper over the fundamental failure of the AFL-CIO to provide a strategy to answer the attacks on the unions.

An alibi for setbacks

The real program of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy in the current crisis is to bail out U.S. business at the workers' expense. The top labor officials hope that the U.S. capitalist economy will eventually be restabilized by giving in to concession demands.

They yearn for a new period of economic expansion and prosperity, at which time, they imagine, the concessions given away will be returned by grateful capitalists. But this is a delusion.

Chrysler Corp.'s recent action forcing auto workers out on strike illustrates the folly of this delusion. Enjoying the highest profits in years, due to the auto workers' ill-advised sacrifices, Chrysler has refused to give back what it took away—much less share its prosperity with its employees.

Democratic Party "friends"

The "Buy American!" campaign is intended to reinforce the illusion of parallel interests between workers and bosses.

Lane Kirkland, in this spirit, reaffirmed AFL-CIO support to the Democratic Party. He promised to continue "supporting the friends of labor and opposing the enemies of labor."

Kirkland, nevertheless, couldn't help touching on the open secret of the Democratic Party's anti-labor record, complaining, "But it is getting harder and harder to tell them [i.e. Democrats and Republicans] apart."

His real concern, however, is that the union ranks can no longer tell "friend" from foe and increasingly refuse to follow union endorsements in the voting booths. The trend continues for workers to abstain or vote their perceived interests as atomized members of an ambiguously-conceived "middle class."

Kirkland hopes the "Buy American!" campaign will get out the votes to elect protectionist candidates and strengthen the labor bureaucracy's bargaining position for gaining a better deal from capitalist candidates.

But even this limited aim is unrealizable. The capitalist politicians understand full well that the AFL-CIO's protectionist policies will only further atomize and demoralize the working class. While they gladly accept the help offered by the labor officialdom, there is no need for them to offer the labor bureaucrats any concessions.

More thinking workers are coming to understand that labor's problems are not primarily objective but that they derive

from the class-collaborationist strategy of the labor misleadership.

It is becoming ever more apparent that the inescapable price of an alliance with a sector of the bosses is the sacrifice of this or that sector of the workers and their natural allies—this time the Blacks, that time the women, another time the younger or older workers...ad infinitum.

A class-struggle program

The class-struggle methods that were so magnificently successful in the 1930s and 1940s are gaining new currency among layers of new fighters. A broad movement for a fighting program is inevitable.

Along with the previously mentioned measures against unemployment, such a program should include a repudiation of no-strike pledges, which are nothing less than a commitment to scab on someone else's strike.

It should include a call for defiance of anti-picketing injunctions, which violate basic democratic rights. If honored, court limitations on picketing will lead to the smashing of major strike confrontations and ultimately the union movement as a major force in American society.

A class-struggle program should include the principle of the escalator clause, pegging all wages to the real cost of living.

A fighting workers' program must give unqualified support to the rights of oppressed nationalities and women and others whose democratic rights have been attacked.

Internationally, the labor movement must express its solidarity with the struggles of workers and farmers everywhere; from Central America to Poland and from England and Ireland to the Philippines and South Africa. The labor movement has a special responsibility in the heartland of imperialism to vigorously oppose U.S. intervention against the world's toilers.

Finally, a class-struggle left wing must fight to break the union movement from the capitalist parties and to form an independent political party based on the unions. This would provide a general political form for the struggle for workers' interests and, ultimately, a workers' government.

But along with a new strategy, the unions need new leadership. This will come from these new fighters emerging from the still episodic fightbacks. They will join with the best of the union officials who have remained close to the spirit of the rank and file in constructing a class-struggle, left wing of the American labor movement. ■



Union ranks sponsor concessions meeting

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

On Oct. 19, about 50 workers gathered at the USWA Local 1397 hall in Homestead, Pa., to hear plans for the founding conference of the National Rank-and-File Against Concessions scheduled for Dec. 6-8 at the Mart Plaza Holiday Inn in Chicago.

John Tirpak, Vice President USWA Local 1223, which represents workers at the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Yorkville, Ohio mill, described the tentative settlement agreement: "Under normal circumstances it would be a pleasurable experience to say we have a tentative settlement. Under these circumstances, I believe it's a eulogy... Our pay check won't shrink much but it's at the expense of things my grandfather and father and others like them fought for."

Pete Winkles from UFCW P-9 in Austin, Minn., described their strike against the George A. Hormel meat pack-

ing plant. He said this plant has the technology of the 21st century and management attitudes of the 18th century.

Workers at Hormel gave 16 major concessions in 23 years—only to see all management's promises broken. Unsafe working conditions and speed-up have led to a 119-percent increase in major lost time injuries. Over 33 percent of the work force suffers a lost-time injury each year. Saying the fight is really for their children's future, he described the efforts to win support for their struggle throughout the Midwest.

Two miners described the strike at A. T. Massey by saying, "A.T. Massey really wants the biggest concession of all: no union." They warned that if A.T. Massey is successful, it will set the standards for the coal industry.

Darrell Becker, president of Shipbuilders Local 6 at Dravo in Pittsburgh, said he was proud to be on the same platform as steel

workers, coal miners, and meat packers because the corporations are working together and it's about time workers do the same.

Ron Weisen, president of USWA Local 1397, ended the meeting by announcing U.S. Steel's intention to shut down more Mon Valley facilities. Urging those present to attend the national conference, he said, "We're under attack and it's going to get worse." ■

Bay Area labor delegation report on FENASTRAS 17th Congress:

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

Ann Coughlin, president OPEU Local 29
Ignacio De La Fuente, Molders 164
Al Lannon, president ILWU Local 6
Ellen Starbird, Santa Clara Labor

- Dec. 11, 7 p.m.—Oakland
IAM Hall, 8130 Baldwin St.
with Bob Johnson, CISPES & CTA
and Margy Wilkinson, AFSCME 10
- Dec. 12, 7 p.m., S.F.
ILWU Hall, 255 Ninth St.
with Carl Anderson, SEIU Local 14
and Carl Finamore, OCAW 3-126
- Dec. 15, 1 p.m., San Jose
Casa Del Pueblo, 200 S. Market

Debate on Central America jolts AFL-CIO convention

On Oct. 28-31, the AFL-CIO held its biennial national convention in Anaheim, Calif. One of the most publicized events at this convention was the heated debate over U.S. policy in Central America between the supporters of Lane Kirkland, the federation's president, and members and supporters of the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador.

One day before the opening of the convention, one of Kirkland's representatives met with top officials of the UAW and AFSCME, two of the 25 national unions in the National Labor Committee, to draft a "compromise resolution" on Central America.

This resolution opposes a military solution to the conflicts in the region. At the same, however, it calls on the Sandinistas to negotiate a "political solution" with the *contras*, thereby granting these ex-Somocistas their long-sought political legitimacy.

The resolution also continues to support U.S. military aid to the brutal government of Jose Napoleon Duarte in El Salvador. It stipulates that such aid is contingent on "demonstrable progress in curbing human rights violations," but leaves such a determination to none other than Lane Kirkland and the U.S. State Department.

The drafters of this resolution, which gave up considerable ground to the Kirkland line, undoubtedly hoped that little or no discussion would be necessary on the convention floor, given that an agreement had been worked out.

But to the surprise of most observers and participants, an unexpected, unprecedented debate broke out over Central America. While the "big guns" in the National Labor Committee (the UAW, AFSCME, and ACTWU presidents) remained silent on the compromise resolution, a sharp debate was opened up by other Committee members who were obviously disappointed with the worked-out agreement.

Soon, secondary-level union officials joined in the floor fight and a three-hour debate was underway; a debate that reflects the intense opposition among the ranks of the labor movement to U.S. intervention in Central America.

Socialist Action is publishing below an on-the-spot report from labor correspondent Mark Carlson.

By MARK CARLSON

ANAHEIM, Calif.—There were the usual stale speeches, but this year a breath of fresh air blew into the AFL-CIO's biennial convention, which met here Oct. 28-31. It came in the form of a wideranging, often heated debate on the convention floor over the federation's policy toward Central America.

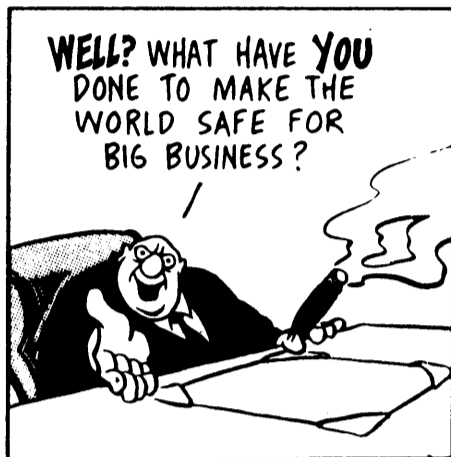
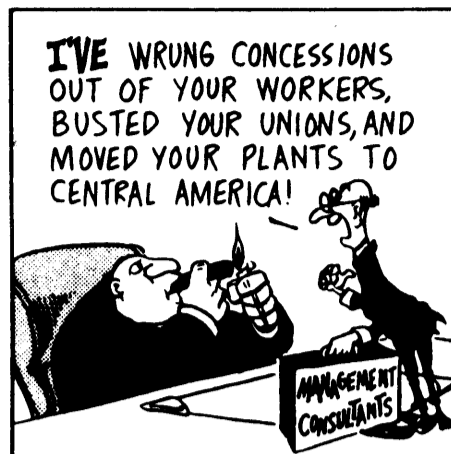
The debate was prompted by a growing roster of union officials who oppose the AFL-CIO's cheerleading for Reagan's military game plan in Central America. They are organized in the National Labor Committee for Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, which is led by 25 union presidents.

The debate began with a bang when Ken Blaylock, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, took the floor as the first speaker. The resolution dealing with Central America (No. 34), Blaylock argued, ignored the *contras'* "war of terror" in Nicaragua, not against military targets, but "against the people of that country."

With Reagan and Coors

The resolution failed again, he said, to confront the right-wing terror against unions and the civilian population in El Salvador. He told of a conversation with a military authority in El Salvador, who boasted of their policy of "sanitization." Blaylock knew what he meant. He said he saw "miles and miles and miles of homes destroyed" by the military.

Blaylock said he was not speaking



against the resolution, but against its serious shortcomings. He said he did not support the restrictions recently imposed on unions in Nicaragua, but insisted that we should be talking about why our government is always "on the side of rich dictators living behind high walls?" His conclusion: "If Reagan and Coors [the Coors family is one of the largest private financiers of the *contras*] are for it, then we'd better be against it."

Ed Asner, outgoing president of the Screen Actors Guild, said he also supported "this weak resolution." But he didn't mince words in his well-received remarks, branding support for the *contras* as "unforgivable." "Where were our voices when the United States destroyed an oil depot and mined the harbor in Nicaragua?" Asner asked those who condemn the Sandinistas as "left-wing dictators."

Asner spoke sharply against the Kirkland leadership's failure to protest the death-squad terror in El Salvador. He said, in response to those who rationalize support for President Duarte in El Salvador, that repression and censorship have gotten worse since 1984.

Asner said it did not make him proud to read in *Business Week* [Nov. 4, 1985] that the AFL-CIO spends almost as much on foreign policy as it does on domestic

programs. Much of the funding for the federation's international programs, which in Latin America work through AIFLD, comes from the National Endowment for Democracy, a congressionally funded foundation started by conservative Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). "I don't want Hatch's money for the union," Asner said. "I don't want to see the high ideals of the labor movement sullied by these policies."

"Resolution should be spat out"

Two of the sharpest attacks on the resolution came from Jerry Brown, secretary-treasurer of the Hospital and Health Care Employees Union, and Ed Clark, of the New Bedford and Cape Cod Labor Councils in Massachusetts. Brown and Clark were the only delegates to vote against the resolution.

Brown blasted the "unconscionable and vicious war" the United States is supporting in Central America. He said that regardless of what the Sandinistas do, we must oppose any U.S. military involvement in Central America. He criticized the resolution for its failure to learn the lessons of the last 20 years. "Why should labor be the shock troops of the Cold War?" Brown asked. "This resolution is lukewarm, we should spit it out."

Clark tore apart the myth of "progress"

in El Salvador. The land reform program was "a joke" and the human rights situation "extremely depressing."

Clark said he deplores the restrictions on union rights in Nicaragua, but pointed out that Nicaragua is not the "totalitarian nightmare" Reagan says it is. Clark said those eager to repeat stories of deprivation and hardship in Nicaragua should not forget that 40 percent to 60 percent of Nicaragua's budget goes to fight the *contras*.

"Which side are we on?" Clark asked the delegates. For his part, the answer was clear—"No aid to El Salvador, No aid to the fascist *contras*."

In defense of Kirkland

Unmoved by all this was Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, who led the way for the defenders of the federation's Central America policy.

He shamelessly claimed that "our policy has helped human rights" in El Salvador. Shanker tried to paint a rosy picture of land reform, democratic elections, and curbing the death squads as the reality in El Salvador. Nicaragua, by contrast, was on its way to a "full dictatorship," Shanker claimed.

Some of the other speakers who lined up in defense of Kirkland's policy were Dan Gustaffson, head of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, who ranted about the "100-percent Marxist state" in Nicaragua. Gustaffson's excited speech seemed designed to reassure Kirkland of his loyalty, after he recently and confusedly raised his hand in favor of an opposition resolution put forward at the state convention of the Minnesota AFL-CIO.

Lane Kirkland spoke at the debate's conclusion, saying that he greatly resented the "mischaracterizations" of the resolution as being in league with Reagan and Coors.

He claimed that this was a "liberal" resolution. "We are not in league with Reagan, Coors, Hatch," Kirkland protested. Further, Kirkland demanded, where would this guilt-by-association place the defenders of the Sandinistas? He then took an apparent swipe at Asner, saying that eloquence should not necessarily be confused with accuracy. It was clear that Kirkland was more than a little annoyed.

Running through the course of the debate was a connection that many unionists cannot help but make these days. And that is that those who are financing the *contra* war against Nicaragua, the death squads in El Salvador, and union busting in the United States are one and the same.

For the first time in decades, a real debate erupted at a national convention of the AFL-CIO. A debate that vigorously challenged the U.S.-sponsored war in Central America. Unlike in the past, the war-mongers can no longer presume that the labor movement will be on their side in future military adventures.

One thing is for sure. U.S. foreign policy in Central America makes it a safe bet this debate won't be the last. ■

... El Salvador labor

(continued from page 20)



FENASTRAS head Hector Recinos (left) arrives in San Salvador airport escorted by U.S. labor delegation. See in photo above Carl Finamore, OCAW Local 3-126, and Al Lannon, president ILWU Local 6.

FMLN. The two young men are, in fact, Boy Scout leaders who were involved in a food drive.

We were told that it was urgent that immediate action be taken before confessions could be extracted through torture. Forced confessions are used to keep people in prison indefinitely without the right to due process.

These repressive circumstances often lead to spontaneous responses from the unions to win early release of captured unionists. Seven hours after the Centeno incident, 6000 communication workers answered the call of their executive committee for a strike.

The workers reported to work but they did not perform their duties. This is often the strike tactic in El Salvador because picket lines are vulnerable to police attack. Phone, telex, and telegraph services were all affected.

[On Nov. 16, about 40,000 government employees joined the telecommunication workers in the largest national strike against the Duarte government. They demanded higher wages and greater

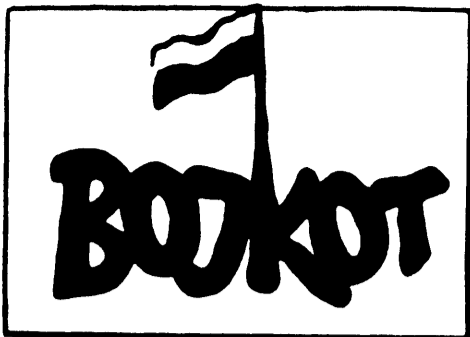
benefits—The Editors.]

The North American delegates informed the U.S. Embassy of the capture of the two Boy Scouts, but the public affairs office just repeated the unfounded charges made by the police. The U.S. delegation then told the local papers that it was going directly to the prison to determine the physical condition of the two young men.

We arrived at a fortress guarded by a tank and dozens of nervous teen-aged troops armed to the teeth. We spoke with their superiors, who refused to allow us to see the Centeno sons but gave the father a written certificate indicating they were in good health.

Not reassured, we went to the press and obtained widespread attention. As a result, the archbishop of San Salvador stated he was beginning an investigation. But, the next day, the father and mother saw their two sons and reported that they had obviously been drugged because they did not recognize their parents.

As we left San Salvador, the strike was still in progress and the Centeno youths still in prison. We promised to tell their story far and wide, hoping to help mobilize public opinion to stop U.S. funding for the crimes of the government in El Salvador. ■



By ALAN BENJAMIN

Parliamentary elections, which Solidarity had urged workers to boycott, were held in Poland on Oct. 13. Solidarity denounced these fraudulent elections, which allowed a "choice" only among candidates selected by the ruling party.

Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski claimed an "overwhelming victory" for the Polish bureaucracy, stating that 80 percent of the voters had gone to the polls. Normalization had finally been established in Poland, Jaruzelski stated.

The underground publications of Solidarity, however, have a different assessment of recent events in that country. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, one of the largest underground papers, devoted its Oct. 17 issue entirely to unmasking the claims made by the government.

Based on carefully established "parallel controls" at the voting places, the leadership of Solidarity was able to determine that voter participation nationally was, in fact, between 60 percent and 62 percent. In Gdansk, Warsaw, and other major industrial cities, the turnout was closer to 50 percent. In Warsaw, participation was 20 percent lower than during the 1984 municipal elections.

Tygodnik Mazowsze also documented dozens of cases where the security police had threatened to cut off irrigation rights and farm equipment to farmers if they did not vote.

But most important was the wave of government repression unleashed against

Polish 'elections' set stage for austerity, repression

the organizers of the boycott campaign. Jacek Kuron, Janusz Onyskiewicz, Zbigniew Romazewski, and most of the other 100 signers of Solidarity's boycott appeal were imprisoned for two weeks prior to the elections in what a government statement called a "preventative measure to ensure public order."

In Szczecin, Gregorz Ostrowski, a member of the Committee for the Defense of Law and Order, was arrested for distributing leaflets calling for a boycott of the elections. He could be sentenced to three years in prison.

Clemency and "reforms"

Eager to portray the ruling party as "reinvigorated" after the elections, Gen.

Jaruzelski decided to step down from his post as prime minister and to offer a limited amnesty to some of the 368 of-ficially held political prisoners.

The new prime minister, Zbigniew Messner, declared in his first address to the new parliament that his government's priority was to "intensify the process of structural change in the economy" and to seek new credits and capital investment from the Western capitalist powers. Poland currently owes \$28 billion to the imperialist banks.

The Nov. 12 *New York Times* applauded these measures, which it claimed are geared "to permit the adoption of more market-oriented economic approaches on what

some of his [Messner's] advisers suggest will be the Hungarian model."

The Hungarian model includes membership in the International Monetary Fund, the reprivatization of major sectors of the economy, layoffs and unemployment for industrial workers, a loosening of state control of the monopoly over foreign trade, and other similar measures.

[Beginning with our next issue, we will be publishing a three-part series on the dangers to the workers' states posed by the economic "reforms" implemented in Hungary and projected in Poland and elsewhere--The Editors.]

As part of its attempt to revamp its image internationally--particularly for the Western banks--the Polish bureaucracy decided on Nov. 10 to offer clemency to many of the detained political prisoners.

But the new decree establishes clearly that people who had been freed in earlier amnesties and then jailed again--or those considered "socially dangerous"--would not be released from prison.

These include the best-known political prisoners like Adam Michnik, Bogdan Lis, and Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, who were recently sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison for advocating a 15-minute general strike against food price hikes last February.

Frasyniuk, in fact, was badly beaten up by the guards at the Leczyca prison for endorsing the elections boycott campaign. He was placed in solitary confinement for 14 days and deprived of visitors and mail for three months.

But whatever the self-serving proclamations of normalization issued by the ruling bureaucracy, it is clear that Solidarity and the movement for workers' self-management has not been defeated. ■



... Nov. 2 conference

(continued from page 1)

Tutu-Seavers' determined assertion that "We are not struggling to reform apartheid. We are struggling to dismantle it." [See excerpts of conference speeches in the "FORUM" section of this issue.]

William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, gave a blistering attack on the U.S. war economy, peppered with statistics such as: "Just half of the proposed increase in military spending for fiscal year 1986 could lift every U.S. kid out of poverty next year."

Jane Gruenebaum, national executive director of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, spoke optimistically about educating the American people to oppose nuclear weapons and weapons testing.

Other featured speakers at the conference

included Keith Johnson and Dave Dyson, labor leaders fresh from the debate at the AFL-CIO convention, where, for the first time in 40 years, the federation backed off from its enthusiastic support for U.S. State Department policy.

"No more young men to die"

Both Johnson, president of the International Woodworkers of America, and Dyson, coordinator of the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, spoke of their fact-finding trips to Central America and the importance of having begun the discussion in the AFL-CIO.

Johnson, speaking of his trip to Nicaragua, said, "I want to state very clearly that every single trade unionist we met with, whether pro- or anti-Sandinista, was opposed to American support to the *contras*."

He branded the *contra* leaders as former Somoza National Guardsmen and proposed that "Every member of Congress ought to be required to stand and listen while the peasants of Northern Nicaragua describe the realities of the *contra* war."

Dyson, who spoke eloquently against the U.S. military role in El Salvador, ended his talk with an emotional appeal, "No more young men to die in an old men's war!"

Edgardo Garcia, president of the Nicaraguan Trade Union Coordinating Council, was warmly received by the audience who rose and chanted in rhythmic unison, "No Pasaran!" [They shall not pass--referring to the *contra* invasions from across Nicaraguan borders.]

Garcia traced the deplorable conditions for workers under the old Somoza regime and the advances made with the Sandinista revolution. He explained the state of emergency as a measure the Nicaraguan government was compelled to take "in defense

of our safety and livelihood in Nicaragua."

The state of emergency was an issue where conference speakers clearly disagreed. However, all opposed U.S. intervention and placed the blame squarely on the United States for the situation in Nicaragua.

John Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO; Mario Obledo, ex-president of the League for United Latin American Citizens; Walter Johnson, secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco Labor Council; as well as other labor officials, student leaders, and community activists and elected officials also addressed the conference sessions and workshops.

"In the streets again"

Friday evening, prior to the Nov. 2 event, a benefit for the Mobilization and for the Bishop Tutu Refugee Fund was held at Grace Cathedral. Participants at the benefit

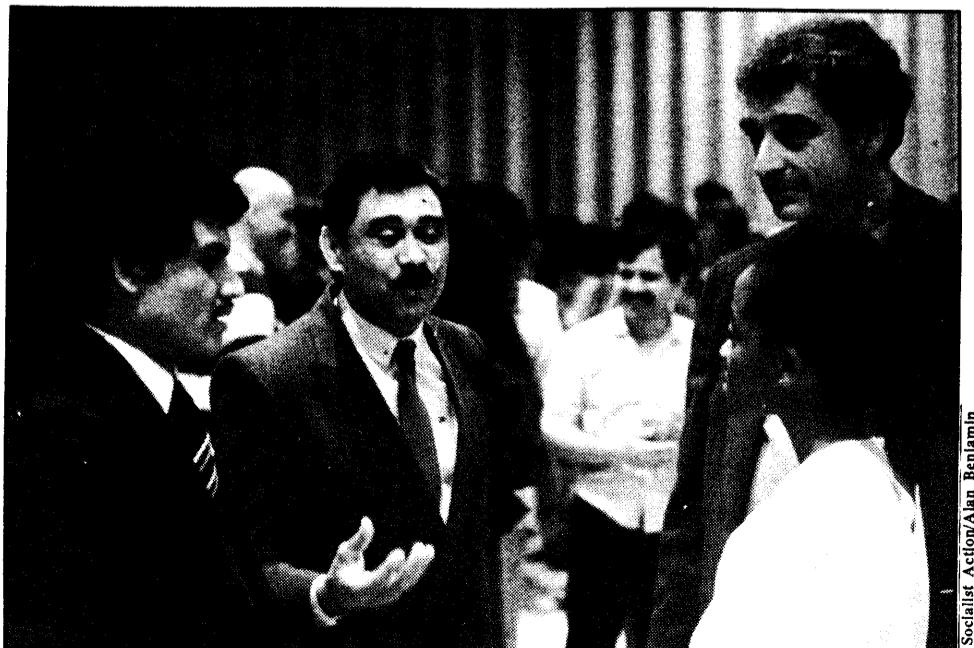
included author Alice Walker, Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul and Mary), Debbie Allen (of "Fame"), Edgardo Garcia, and Naomi Tutu-Seavers. Over 250 people attended and several thousand dollars were raised.

A theme that elicited broad agreement among the diverse conference speakers was the urgent need to mount massive street demonstrations next spring as a means of uniting, in action, the antiwar, anti-apartheid, and anti-nuclear protests and of linking these foreign policy issues with the demands for jobs and justice at home.

Al Lannon, president of Local 6 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and spokesperson for the Mobilization, wrapped up the conference with this injunction: "We will be in the streets again next April and again after that and again and again as we did in the '30s and '40s and the '60s and now in the '80s until we have peace, jobs, and justice." ■

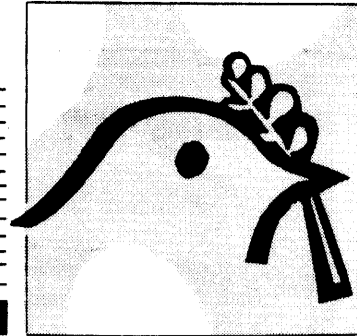
Bishop Tutu Refugee Fund

The Bishop Tutu Refugee Fund raises funds for the medical, clothing, and educational needs of South African refugees. There are an estimated 750,000 living in refugee camps in surrounding African countries. Most of the refugees are between 18 and 24 years old. Funds can be sent to: Bishop Tutu Refugee Fund c/o Capitol Region Conference of Churches, 30 Arbor Street, Hartford, Conn. 06106. All checks should be made out to the Capitol Region Conference of Churches (earmarked "Tutu Fund").



Speakers at the Nov. 1 reception/benefit at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral. From the left: Edgardo Garcia, CSN coordinator in Nicaragua; Roberto Vargas, Nicaraguan cultural attache; Jeff Mackler, of the Mobilization; and Naomi Tutu-Seavers, chair of the Bishop Tutu Refugee Fund.

Socialist Action Forum



Speakers blast warmakers, plan spring protests



David Dyson, speaking on Central America panel at Nov. 2 conference. Other panelists are (from left) Pat Norman (behind podium), Al Lannon, Robert Heffetz, and Mario Obledo.

On Nov. 2, 1985, the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice sponsored an antiwar conference at San Francisco State University [see story page 1]. More than 400 people met to discuss organizing against U.S. foreign policy in Central America and South Africa, against nuclear arms, and for jobs and justice at home.

The conference featured three major presentations:

- Can the Nuclear Arms Race be Stopped? Is a Peace Economy Possible?;
- Organized Labor and Central America: A Dialogue;
- The South African Freedom Struggle and Organizing Mass Protests in America.

This issue of FORUM offers our readers some highlights from the major presentations at the conference. The conference represented a significant opportunity for unionists and activists to share their views on the conference themes and to help plan for a massive demonstration in the spring of 1986.

We are presenting the following selections, which have been abridged and edited for space, as a contribution toward the goal of building a more informed and united antiwar movement around the four conference themes--The Editors.

Al Lannon:

'We will be going back into the streets next spring'

The following are excerpts from the introductory and concluding remarks to the Nov. 2 conference by Al Lannon. Lannon, president of Local 6 of the International Longshore and Warehouse union, was one of the four co-chairs of the Spring Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice that organized a march of 50,000 on April 20, 1985.

David Dyson:

'No more young men for an old men's war'

The following are excerpts from David Dyson's presentation to the Central America panel. Dyson is the union label director of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the coordinator of the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador.

There's a scene in the movie *Missing* where Jack Lemmon confronts the ambassador to this unnamed Latin country and says, "Mr. Ambassador, what are we doing down here anyway?"

And the ambassador turns to him in that cool diplomatic tone and says, "We are here protecting American interests." And I began to wonder about whose interests he is talking about.

Texas Instruments Corp. is moving out of Texas so fast that they're going to have to change their name to El Salvador Instruments, because that's where they're moving.

And they're going to what's called a free-trade zone north of the city of San Salvador, where the primarily young women spend tremendous hours under miserable conditions putting those little chips in calculators and computers. Depending on the piece-rate, they make about 32 cents an hour. And those calculators and those computers are not sold in Central America, but are sold back here at top dollar.

Now it looks like this crowd is old enough to have some parents in it. And if you are a parent like I am you know about the product Huggies, which is made for North American babies' bottoms.

They're made in a free-trade zone in El

Salvador by the Kimberly-Clark Corp. Now Kimberly-Clark, which is headquartered in Wisconsin, used to be the sponsor of the *Lou Grant* show on television, until the star of that show started to speak out on Central America. And then lo and behold, Kimberly-Clark withdrew their sponsorship.

We tried to visit Kimberly-Clark when we were down there. They were real happy to have us until they found out we were labor people and then they literally slammed the door in our face.

But before they did, they stuck out through the crack in the door a little brochure which we read with great interest. And it talked about how Kimberly-Clark really liked the climate in Central America. And they weren't talking about the weather! They were talking about jailed trade unionists and bombed trade-union halls and dead trade unionists.

So in 1981 we put together the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. We started with nine courageous international unions and presidents. In the last few years we have grown to a force of now 25 international unions that have said "No" to the Reagan administration's policy and "No" to the AFL-CIO when it goes along with that policy.

We've taken two delegations of union presidents down there--one in '83 and one in '85. On the trip in '83, we tried to get into Mariona prison, which is the home for whatever political prisoners are left alive in El Salvador.

We have the only video-taped record of what life is like for political and trade-union prisoners inside Mariona prison. It has been shown on television in England.

It has been shown on Mexican TV. And I hope that someday it can be shown on TV in this country as well.

Now we just came up the pike, some of us who are here, from Anaheim, where we had a small meeting down there with the AFL-CIO. There was an inevitable, historic clash between the pro-Reagan and the anti-Reagan forces in the U.S. labor movement.

We came up with a compromise resolution that did not please us, but that allows us to fight another day. Despite everything else it says, for the first time in history, it says that the AFL-CIO is against military solutions in the Nicaraguan region.

I don't know about everybody else's deductive reasoning, but I take that to mean no aid to the *contras*. Now what followed the resolution was perhaps even more important, and that was the debate, led by Ken Blaylock of the American Federation of Government Employees and Ed Asner of the Screen Actors Guild, among others. It was one of the first major debates on foreign policy in the last 40 years of AFL-CIO history! And I can guarantee you that from this point on it won't be the last.

Never again is the AFL-CIO going to be

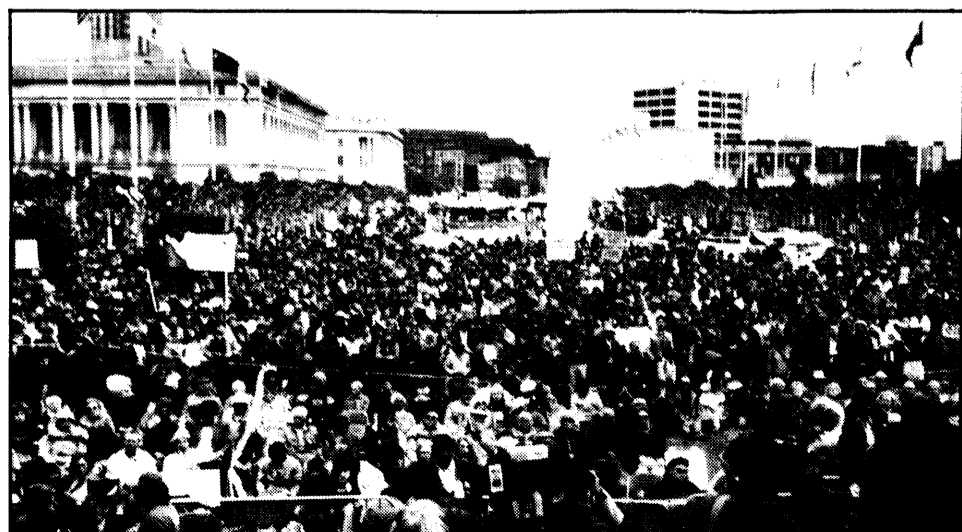
(continued on page 12)

From the introduction: We work together with respect for each other's different points of view, but united on four points: No U.S. intervention in Central America; End U.S. support for apartheid; Freeze and reverse the nuclear arms race; We want jobs and justice, not war. Those four demands brought 50,000 people into the streets of San Francisco last April.

We know that national policy can be influenced and can be changed by mass demonstrations, by the democratic expressions of legitimate protest. The issues are still with us and worse. And we will be in the streets again next April and again after that until we have peace, jobs, and justice...

From the conclusion: Edgardo Garcia [leader of the pro-Sandinista labor federation of Nicaragua] has sent a message that I want to share with you. He says that he supports the Mobilization's efforts to build unity and build the organization. He says he hopes that the Mobilization would promote a fact-finding mission to go to South Africa and Central America. He hopes that the level of commitment at this conference continues on an annual basis.

We appreciate that message. And, yes, we'll be going back into the streets next April.



April 20, 1985, rally of 50,000 in San Francisco

Jane Gruenebaum:

The following are excerpts from the brief presentation at the pre-conference reception on Nov. 1 by Jane Gruenebaum, national executive director of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign.

We are proud to be part of this mobilization as the world focuses on the issue of nuclear disarmament and watches an act in Geneva. We will be working daily and have been working daily to bring to the attention of the American public what true peace means.

It means not only an end to the nuclear arms race, not only the elimination of nuclear arms, but it also means justice in South Africa. It means an end to intervention in Central America. It means jobs for Americans at home. It means an end to racism at home. It means peace, jobs, and justice. And that's what we're all here to work for.



Socialist Action/May Gong

Edgardo Garcia and Naomi Tutu-Seavers join hands at Mobilization's Nov. 1 pre-conference reception at Grace Cathedral.



Socialist Action/Don Mahoney

Naomi Tutu-Seavers:

The following are excerpts from the presentation by Naomi Tutu-Seavers to the panel on the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Tutu-Seavers is the daughter of Nobel Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu. She is also the chairperson of the Bishop Tutu Refugee Fund.

Today I wanted to say a couple of things. One is kind of nice, and that is to say thank you to the labor unions, the churches, all the people who have worked in this coalition, for the work that they have done in bringing the issue of apartheid to the forefront in this country.

Another thing that I want to say, however, is that while we are exceedingly grateful for the support you have given us, I would also like to issue you a challenge.

In fact, I'm not the one issuing it. Rev. Falwell issued it. He came back from South Africa and said he was going to raise \$1 million for apartheid. I was hoping some people in the solidarity movement

would say, "Jerry, for every dollar you raise, we in the solidarity movement will match it and double it."

There are over 750,000 South African refugees living in surrounding nations. And most of these people are between the ages of 18 and 24. These people are young people forced to flee the oppression of apartheid.

And they are not only living in exile, trying to survive day to day. They are also trying to prepare themselves for a free South Africa. And we do all know in this room that South Africa will be free.

The only questions that we now ask are how and when. Dennis Brutus talked about a time when he was on Robben Island, and said to one of the guards, "Can you people really believe that you are going to be able to hold us in bondage forever?" This guard said to him, "The Americans will never let us fall."

The message that you have sent through your solidarity actions to the people in my

William Winpisinger:

The following are excerpts from the presentation by William W. Winpisinger to the panel on the nuclear arms race. Winpisinger is the president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO.

Welcome to the BIG LOTTO! Or as *Business Week* is prone to call it, the casino society. And that's what our country is today, without a shadow of a doubt: one big, gigantic, pie-in-the-sky, genuine brass-coated, military lottery game and craps shoot.

You know it's true in politics. The 20 biggest weapons contractors poured \$3.4 million into congressional campaigns alone in 1984. And god knows how many millions more were poured into the campaign of Ronald Reagan.

And I think it's equally true in economics, where the nation's leading right-wing prophets, like Milton Friedman and George Gilder, see everything in terms of a child's world of choices. A mound of Swiss chocolates for the few and a mound of feces in the bean patch for all the rest of us.

The liberals sit around and duel each other with their desk-top computers, coming up with high-tech solutions that sound amazingly like the craps-shoot of the 1920s that brought us first the Great

Depression, and shortly thereafter, the Great War.

Take the federal deficit for instance. The current fiscal deficit is so gargantuan that the actual numbers just numb my mind. It goes beyond anything that I can reasonably comprehend: \$2 trillion dollars. And this from a bunch of wackos that want a constitutional amendment or a constitutional convention to make a balanced budget the law of the land. And I'm here to tell you that if they get their constitutional amendment, they'll have to repeal it.

By 1986 the daily interest on the debt is going to be \$387 million a day. That is \$141.3 billion dollars a year, paid in



Socialist Action/May Gong

John Henning (left) and William Winpisinger on anti-nuclear weapons panel

interest on that debt. And who gets that interest? The big banks, the big insurance companies, their managers and their shareholders, the rich and the super-rich.

The interest paid on the national debt, and most state and local government debt too by the way, is their bread and butter, their profit, their guaranteed annual income. And the higher the interest rates, and the greater the debt, the more they get.

These are the folks that spent most of my lifetime railing against that very federal debt. Some of you may be old enough to remember when President Kennedy's federal deficit was \$3 billion, and all the right-wingers and fiscal conservatives wanted to impeach him for that kind of a debt.

Now I know why they were so damned upset. In their book a mere \$3 billion is small potatoes. They think they're doing all right now with \$387 million a day. Is it therefore a small wonder that so many capitalists from around the world have quit investing in the production of hard goods and utilitarian services, and quit investing, in many cases, in their own economies and developing economies around the world?

They can make a bigger and quicker buck by simply buying a piece of the U.S. debt. And that's why the United States is now indebted to more off-shore capitalists and foreign interests than ever before in our history. Our foreign debt is now larger than that of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and the other debt-ridden countries of the world.

In the meantime, those who are buying into the U. S. debt and the military buildup had better hope that they are buying a piece of the world's economic locomotive and not a chunk of its caboose.

I don't know how much longer the jury's going to be out before we find out which is which. This year 51 cents of every federal income tax dollar collected will go to pay

for military goods—past, present, and future.

Bankrupting Soviet economy?

When Mr. Weinberger and Mr. Shultz, the Bechtel boys, get talking, they're often heard saying that by escalating this arms race, we will wind up bankrupting the Soviet economy. I've asked them about this point blank and been told "yes."

Bankrupt the Soviet economy? Our chronic and long-term unemployment right now is running at an official rate of 10 million, and in reality, a rate of 15 million. And very few of these people have any access to health care or hospital care, or any other kind of the emoluments of a normal life.

Currently less than a third of all of those who are unemployed are receiving unemployment compensation because the social budget has been whacked so badly to pay for our military budget.

Twenty-five million senior citizens go to bed every night anxious and insecure about their social security payments, wondering if they'll have enough to pay for the de-

"The warfare state does welfare. It heaps welfare

ductibles in health care co-insurance schemes. Medicare payments have been increased and services cut to help pay for the military budget.

This administration crows that the ranks of poverty have decreased by 1 million, but they forget to tell you that this is after an increase of 10 million during Reagan's first

country is that the American people should not be counted as supporters of the racism and the oppression in my country.

We want the right to determine how our country will be governed. We want the right just for families to live together. We want the right not to watch children die year after year of hunger in a country that exports food.

We want the right for our children to be given the kind of quality education that exists in South Africa, but from which Black children are barred. That's all we're asking.

We are drawing close to midnight. And if the world community doesn't listen to our pleas, our country is for the dogs.

I think it is important that everybody remember the struggle in South Africa is a struggle for fundamental human rights. It is a struggle for self-determination. It is a struggle to be allowed to have a say in the running of our country. It is a struggle for majority rule.

We hear about President Botha, this poor man who is stuck in the middle. We hear about how he is trying to move forward, but he can't move fast enough for the Blacks and he is moving too fast for the whites.

Botha is willing to give up those things that don't address the fundamentals. Just a few weeks ago the big announcement was that now Black South Africans will be allowed to hold dual citizenship. This is supposed to be a great step forward.

That's no step forward. In accepting dual citizenship it means Black South Africans will have to accept the concept of the *bantustans*. That means that 13 percent of the land is all that is set aside for the majority and 87 percent of the land is so-called white South Africa's. You can only become a citizen of South Africa—if you are Black—by becoming a citizen of a *bantustan*.

It doesn't matter if they change the color of the paint of the *bantustan*, it is still the *bantustan* policy. We are not struggling to reform apartheid. We are struggling to dismantle it.

I would like to thank you all for your support. I hope that your winter offensive isn't the end. I hope to see you out there in the spring and onward until South Africa is free.

Edgardo Garcia:

The following are excerpts from Edgardo Garcia's presentation to the Central American panel. Garcia is the president of the Nicaraguan Trade Union Coordinating Council (CSN), the pro-Sandinista labor federation.

The first thing that must be understood about Nicaragua is that we are in a state of war. It is a war of aggression from the north and the south. And it is not only a military war. It is also an economic war.

At this time we have only \$300 million in export earnings, but we need \$1 billion to cover our import needs. We are a country with hunger. Nonetheless, Under-Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Elliot Abrams declared on Oct. 11 that there was a need for more U.S. pressure against Nicaragua.

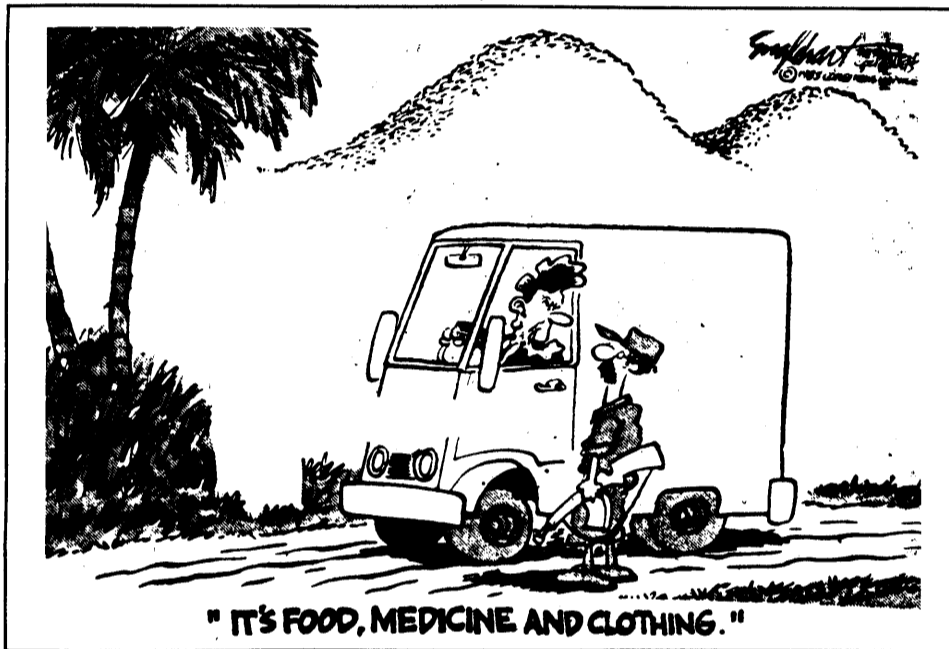
Despite the U.S. economic embargo against us; despite its refusal to remove U.S. troops from our borders; despite its bombings of our major means of pro-

duction and communication; despite its increased economic and military support for the Somocista troops; despite all this, Mr. Abrams says that even more pressure is needed against Nicaragua!

I was speaking to some friends here who said that during the past two months there was no information about Nicaragua on the news. They said they were surprised to hear about the declaration of a state of emergency in our country. Why was this state of emergency declared so suddenly, I was asked.

I said to them and I say to you now that

"The state of emergency was not enacted lightly."



four years. Forty percent of our population still lives in poverty or on its ragged edge, including one out of every four children who go to bed hungry every night.

Ninety-five million citizens in this country have been drafted, conscripted if you will, into poverty and want so that this government can pay for its military budget.

Ponder this: Over a five-year period more U.S. kids die from poverty than the total number of U.S. battle deaths suffered in the Vietnam War. And then ponder this: Just half of the proposed increase in military spending for fiscal year 1986 could lift every U.S. kid out of poverty next year.

Too many of our own people are underfed and undernourished here in the United States. The continent of Africa is experiencing famine. South America and Southeast Asia are ravished with starvation. Global unemployment stands at somewhere between 30 percent and 40 percent.

The free market, private enterprise system can't deliver the food where it's needed. Right-wingers won't give food away. They can deliver millions of small arms, bullets, mines, missiles, propaganda

Doesn't promote general welfare on the generals."

leaflets, and police riot equipment to the tiniest nations in the world and to the tinniest of the tin-horn dictators, but they can't deliver food or civilian goods and jobs.

I think it's time we put this whole crazy right-wing military crapshoot into some kind of a perspective. Now the world is

spending \$100 million an hour on military weapons and military conflict. Every two seconds somewhere on the globe a child dies from malnutrition or preventable illness. That's the trade-off that's being made.

Meanwhile, the 10 largest weapons makers reaped a 25-percent return on equity last year. Contrast that, if you will, with

the 12.8-percent return rate for all of U.S. manufacturing. In the case of the weapons manufacturers, most of them never paid a dime in federal income taxes. In fact, some of them made millions in weapons profiteering, and got a tax refund.

And what's more, if Messrs. Reagan and Regan get their way, that phony tax reform plan they are pushing right now will give

those corporate Rambos another round of free lunches.

The warfare state doesn't promote the general welfare. It heaps welfare on the generals. You've got the military generals, then General Dynamics, General Electric, General Pinochet—the list is endless. It goes right on down to General Singlaub's private army of outlaws in Nicaragua...

Pat Norman:

The following are excerpts from Pat Norman's opening speech to the Nov 2. conference. Norman, one of the chairpersons of the conference, is the director of the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Health Services.

We are here to coalesce in the fight against the attempts to systematically strip us of all of the rights gained over the past eight decades.

This administration has tried to end the Voting Rights Act, so that Southern Blacks must again begin to protect themselves against the threat of violence. We see cutbacks in legal aid and have seen severely limited services to all those people who need to protect themselves legally.

We protest the loss of human services. We protest the high unemployment rate that keeps falling only because more and more people are actually put off the rolls of

the unemployed.

Due to the losses of health care, our seniors get reduced medical benefits. The infant mortality rate has risen, particularly among Blacks and ethnic minority children. It has reached an all-time high in this land of plenty. We also see decreases in education funds as a direct attack on poor people and minorities, who cannot afford the education.

And what we see happening to women is a direct attack against women's rights.

In fact it's really remarkable—they're trying to bury the Equal Rights Amendment, take away reproductive rights and sex education, family planning, even the counseling that goes along with it. And now they have struck down women's rights to equal access to jobs and even to comparable worth.

Our coalition members are really very sensitive people, and they protest the abu-



Pat Norman

sive treatment of people with AIDS.

We in this coalition protest blaming the victims of this government's actions for the ills of this country.

Now, you know, we talk a whole lot about coalitions but I want you to be real clear. All of the members of the coalition do not agree on every issue. We are learning that this is the nature of the coalition and that in order for us to continue we must agree to disagree.

We also know that each of us cannot win by ourselves and we must cooperate. We must use the points of agreement to educate ourselves and to defeat our common enemies.

The following are excerpts from Keith Johnson's presentation to the Central America panel. Johnson is the president of the International Woodworkers of America, AFL-CIO.

I'm here today with you to let you know that we in the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador do not support the policies of this administration. I want to talk about why.

I'm no expert on Central America and have never pretended to be. I'm a trade unionist. I went to El Salvador and Nicaragua with the National Labor Committee because I thought it would be good to see these countries with my own eyes and make up my own mind.

Right around the first day of our trip [in February 1985], we made a visit to a refugee camp in San Salvador. It's called San Jose de Montana. It's on the grounds of a seminary run by the Catholic Church. Today there are more than 1000 people in that refugee camp--mostly women and children.

You could tell the new arrivals in the camp by the look of despair and fright that still showed on their faces.

We met with three of the elderly women, all of them recent arrivals. They were from a province called San Vicente. Their village had been caught between aerial bombardments, on the one hand, and

Keith Johnson: 'Nicaragua has a right to self-determination'



Keith Johnson

assassinated for the sin of believing that workers have the right to speak up for justice and dignity.

I think of these fellow trade unionists when I read that democracy is on the rise in El Salvador. I think of them.

I believe we should look past the public relations campaigns so skillfully orchestrated and ask ourselves what is happening to workers and to their unions. We did that

passed neighborhoods that could only generously be described as slums. No running water, no electricity, no indoor plumbing in many cases. Managua is not a city, in the way you or I might think a city should be.

What they didn't get and still don't have in Nicaragua is jobs, housing, a decent standard of living. It's beyond my knowledge to state that the life of the average working person in Nicaragua has ever been easy, but I can surely claim that the *contra* war is only making matters worse.

Something like half the total Gross National Product of this tiny, poor country goes for military defense. That's money that could go toward constructing a more humane society.

It's as if Ronald Reagan does not want to permit any improvements in the lives of the common people, and the *contra* war is the way to make sure this doesn't happen in Nicaragua.

Some of us wondered if the hardship of the daily life would generate support for the *contra* cause. I want to state very clearly that every single trade unionist we met with, whether pro- or anti-Sandinista, was opposed to American support to the *contras*.

The reason is simple. Unlike the hot-shot strategists who madly planned this war in Washington, the people of Nicaragua suffer its effects. They know well who the leaders of the *contras* are--former associates of Somoza. The *Wall Street Journal* recently identified 46 of their 48 field commanders as ex-National Guardsmen.

We travelled up to a farm near the Honduran border on our last day in Nicaragua. We stood where the cotton-processing shed used to be. I say "used to be" because it was destroyed in a *contra*

attack a few months before our visit.

That's not all that was destroyed, however, in that attack. One farm worker described to us how his wife and children were murdered in the assault; shot and killed by the men Ronald Reagan describes as freedom fighters.

Freedom fighters who cut the throats of innocent men and women and children! Every member of Congress ought to be required to stand and listen while the peasants of northern Nicaragua describe the realities of the *contra* war.

I believe that the Nicaraguan people, like Americans, or Canadians, have the right to self-determination and that perhaps they really mean it when they say "Free homeland or death."

Finally, I want to say a few words about the state of emergency recently declared by President Ortega of Nicaragua. I think it's a grave mistake. I think it should be opposed. I'm against the suspension of civil liberties, and the suspension of the right to strike and hold meetings freely strikes me as especially counterproductive.

But let me quickly add at the same time that I recognize that Nicaragua is under terrific attack and that this is the major reason the leaders have chosen this path of action.

I want to conclude by re-emphasizing to each and every one of you how important it is that you educate yourselves on this issue and then do what trade unionists do best, and that is to organize.

As Dave Dyson told you earlier this morning, we had an historic meeting in Anaheim, Calif., this past week. It was historic because for the first time, to my knowledge, we had an open and lively debate on the floor of the convention about foreign policy issues.

The resolution was passed with some amendments prior to coming to this forum. I don't want to stand here and tell you it was a good resolution, but it gives us something to work with and something to work toward. It won't be easy but we can bring sanity to the labor movement and American foreign policy. It will take all of us and I want to tell you that we should all be proud of the part each of us plays.

"Hot-shot strategists in Washington planned this war, and the people suffer its effects."

ground sweeps by army troops, on the other.

Each of these women had lost several family members. We asked one woman why she thought the Army was shooting at her. She replied, "Because the Army hates poor people."

I couldn't help but wonder if this was the enemy. What was it about this old woman that the U.S. government is so afraid of?

I remember sitting in the U.S. Embassy a few days later at a briefing. At one of the meetings, a lieutenant colonel from the [U.S.] Air Force, a friendly fellow named Nick, spoke with some pride of the great strides made by the Salvadoran Army and Air Force over the last year or two.

He talked about the surgical air strikes that "sanitize" an area. Ken Blaylock [president of the American Federation of Government Employees] asked him to describe exactly what he meant by "sanitizing an area." But I'm not sure the answer we got would have made much sense to the women back at the refugee camp--the women who had to live through these "sanitizing" air strikes.

This lieutenant colonel also told us that by the end of this year, "we'll have this thing wrapped up." Well, it's getting on to the end of the year and the war in El Salvador is continuing. It's continuing largely because the Reagan administration and its congressional allies are pursuing a policy that is militaristic--not diplomatic--in its emphasis.

They want and seem to believe they can win a military victory over the rebels, not a political settlement. The logic in Washington is straightforward--wipe out the guerrillas and the problem will be solved.

Military lunacy

I'm here to tell you that this sort of militaristic approach to the conflict in El Salvador--and Nicaragua for that matter--is lunacy. The war in El Salvador did not begin because a couple of Cubans took a hotel room in San Salvador and started issuing orders to the workers and peasants in that country. The war is the result of decades of tremendous social inequality and repression.

North Americans have short memories, but let us at least remember that the war in El Salvador heated up only after the great repression of 1979 and 1980, when literally thousands of people were murdered by the rightist death squads. Many of those killed were our union brothers and sisters,

and there is both good news and bad news.

The good news is that unions are organizing more freely and more effectively. They have taken to the streets to demonstrate their demands, and that is always a healthy sign. There has even been an increase in strike activity in both the public and private sectors.

The bad news is that the workers and the leaders who engage in these actions still do so at the risk of their lives. We were told by a couple of young trade unionists that they did not stay more than two nights in any one home for fear of their lives. Some 40 labor activists have been arrested, tortured, disappeared, or murdered this year alone.

There is no reason for us to believe the simple-minded press releases of the Reagan administration when it comes to the progress of democracy in El Salvador. We need only remind ourselves of the hospital strike in June when President Duarte sent in the Army and assault helicopters to break the strike.

Realities of *contra* war

Apart from the war, the central fact of life in Nicaragua today is poverty. On the drive from the airport to our hotel we

... David Dyson

(continued from page 9)

handed over on a silver platter, like George Meany did to Lyndon Johnson on the issue of Vietnam. The State Department has always taken the AFL-CIO for granted on its foreign adventures, but from now on it's got to look elsewhere for its palsies.

So for anyone who wants to know why Central America is a labor issue, I want to tell you. In 1983 we had a meeting with the head of the U.S. advisers, Colonel John Waggstein--cowboy boots, baby-blue *guayabera*, aviator glasses, and one of those riding crops. There wasn't a horse within 50 miles.

So we talked to him down in the war room at the Embassy with his boots up on the table. And we said, "Colonel, if the commander in chief were to call you and say, 'Wags, my back's against the wall. Do we go in or do we pull out?' What would you tell him?"

And he said, "Well you know, I'm a veteran of Vietnam. I'm a veteran of the



Participants at Nov. 2 antiwar conference in San Francisco

Congo. I'm a veteran of Bolivia." And he was too. And he said, "There's two conditions you've got to have for a successful incursion." (They are always using medical language--incisions, incursions, sanitary.)

He said, "You've got to have the support of the people in the country. We ain't got that here. These people hate this government. You've got to have, on the other hand, the stiff upper lip at home so when the boys start coming home in body bags you have resolve on the home front. I don't think we have that either."

So we were starting to feel a little



encouraged. And we said, "Does that mean, colonel, that you would tell the president you advise against an invasion?"

And he said, "Not so fast. You know we've got a few aces left up our sleeves. You know the B-52s can be out of their airfield in south Texas and over these controlled areas, over these rural areas of Nicaragua, and we can put these people back past the Stone Age to the the Paleozoic Age. And those big silver birds can be cooling down in their hangars in Texas before one senator, one congressman, even wakes up the next morning in Washington, D.C., for their morning jog."

And if that happens, brothers and sisters, we're going to have the sons of unemployed workers in this country dropping death on the impoverished workers of Central America. And it seems to us on the Labor Committee there's only one way to say "no". And that's to say "no"!

And to say it with your pens and your pencils, and your typewriters, and your voices, and your bodies, and in jail if need be. No more aid to the *contras*. And no more young men to die in an old men's war!

Capitalism and apartheid: The deadly connection

By ANN ROBERTSON

When liberals attempt to analyze South African apartheid, their diagnosis inevitably revolves around morality. The crux of the problem, they say, is that the white South African oppressors exhibit a deficiency in moral fortitude.

Their remedy is simple: Expose these poor deprived sinners to a progressive climate of ideas, and repentance will be forthcoming. In the meantime the rest of the world is counseled to exercise patience.

There is no mention of capitalism in this profound analysis—except to bestow on it the highest praise. See how much the Black worker has benefited, they say. After all, don't many Black workers migrate to South Africa from adjoining countries in order to reap the benefits of advanced capitalism?

The development of apartheid in South Africa, however, cannot be understood in isolation from the development of capitalism.

Capitalism, in its early mercantile form, was responsible for the first white settlement in what is now South Africa. In 1652 a Dutch settlement was established at the Cape by the East India Company to supply Dutch trading ships returning from the East.

The present Afrikaner segment of the population is largely descended from these settlers. Their language, Afrikaans, is derived from Dutch. In search of richer grazing and farm lands, they gradually migrated into the heartland of the country, murdering or enslaving the indigenous population as suited their convenience.

But Britain too was concerned with protecting its trade with the East and in 1795 seized the Cape from the Dutch and established a second white ethnic community. True love has not always inspired the relations between these two groups. For example, the British, as an advanced capitalist country, found it advantageous to abolish slavery and did so in 1834—much to the consternation of the Dutch farmers.

Growth of industrial capitalism

The discovery of diamonds (1867) and gold (1886) paved the way for a thorough transformation of the South African economy from a pastoral society to an advanced capitalist outpost.

In the first place, the mining industry initiated the exploitation of the Black worker through the institution of wage labor, which is the basic worker-owner relation of capitalism. The emergence of large numbers of workers with money to buy food, in turn, nudged the farming industry into the capitalist network by offering a motive to produce a surplus to sell to this new working class.

Consequently large-scale capitalist agriculture evolved between 1870 and 1920. Finally, industrialization swept the country between 1910 and 1940, thanks largely to the profits supplied by the mines.

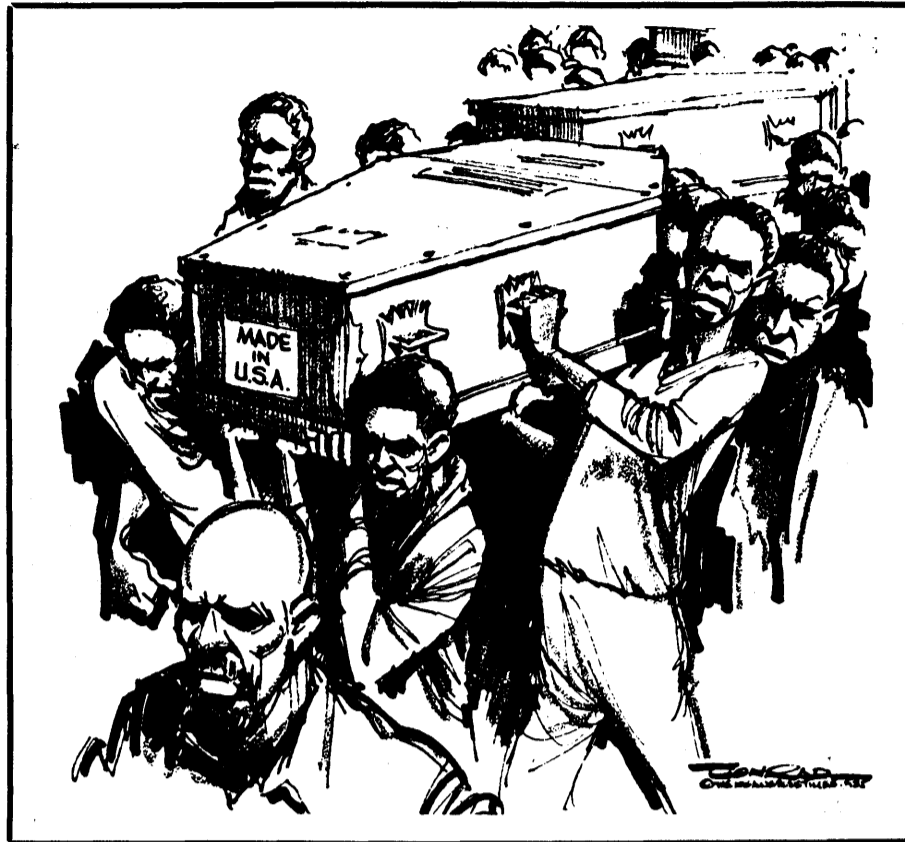
The pace of industrialization increased after the Second World War, spurred by huge investments by foreign and multinational corporations. More Black workers were brought into the heart of the white South African economy.

Today Black workers account for over 70 percent of the workforce and they are solidly entrenched in the most important industries. In mining, for example, where approximately 600,000 are employed, 90 percent are Black. In construction 80 percent, in auto 71 percent, and in metal manufacturing 75 percent are Black.

"Integration" into the workforce

"Apartheid" is an Afrikaans word that means "separation" and is the rallying point of the white minority government. But this unremitting cry for apartheid is simply a hypocritical, two-faced lie, for no member of the government nor any white businessman wants unqualified apartheid.

During the hours of 9 to 5 these people



are, in fact, the staunchest supporters of integration—i.e. integration of Black workers into the economy as a means of securing one of the highest profit rates in the world. They even welcome the Black worker into the intimacy of their homes—not, of course, as honored guests—but as domestic servants. Genuine "separation" is pursued only after work hours.

The South African capitalist class has historically nurtured and fueled the development of apartheid because of the abundant profits it has reaped.

In 1913, for example, the Natives Land Act was passed, which prohibited most Black people from owning land outside a rigidly prescribed area comprising 7.3 percent of the total land in the country. Although the area was extended to 13 percent in 1936, exceptions were eliminated and the number of Black renters on white farm land was reduced.

The law was tightened in 1954 and 1964, imposing an increased restriction on the number of Black renters. One million of them were removed from white rural land between 1963 and 1973.

Capitalists approve pass laws

Pass laws, which were a means of allocating the appropriate proportion of Black labor to industry and agriculture, were introduced as early as 1760. The laws have been gradually strengthened through the years. In 1952 they became applicable nationally and for the first time included all Black women as well as men.

In general no Black person may remain in a white area more than 72 hours unless granted special permission—which is given only if he or she is needed to perform a job.

This law was further tightened in 1968: If he has a job, a worker can leave what the white minority government calls euphemistically a "homeland" or "Bantustan,"

but his family may not accompany him. He must spend most of the year living in a barracks within commuting distance of the work place, seldom visiting his family.

The "homelands" are territories within the country, totaling only 13 percent of the land, that have been reserved for Blacks—over 80 percent of the entire population. Under the government's strategy, all Black people, even though they were born and lived in a township adjacent to a white city, would be assigned citizenship to a "homeland" organized on tribal and ethnic grounds.

The white government has offered "independence" to all of these "homelands" so that, as one government minister joyfully exclaimed in 1978, "There will not be one Black man with South African citizenship."

President P.W. Botha has recently floated the idea of a kind of "dual citizenship" in South Africa, in which Blacks would still be refused the right to vote. Meanwhile, the Black workers would continue to carry the South African economy on their backs, as they are employed increasingly in the key sectors of the economy.

Blacks consigned to poverty

Apartheid laws have produced unmitigated destitution for the vast majority of the Black population. Forty-six percent live in the "homelands" today where, because of overpopulation, soil erosion has made subsistence virtually impossible for most of the inhabitants.

In the Transkei, for example, 83 percent of the men leave the "homeland" for work within the white-owned economy. The death rate among young children is horrifying—over 20 times that of white children.

About 29 percent of the Black population lives in townships, i.e. segregated communities adjacent to white metropolitan centers or other work areas. The township of Soweto, which has a population of 1.25 million, suffers a severe housing shortage. Only one-fifth of the houses have electricity, 85 percent lack bathrooms, and two-thirds lack running water.

Moreover, over 30 percent of the children under 12 are undernourished. These statistics are not surprising when coupled with the fact that 80 percent of the African workers in South African and British-controlled firms are paid below the poverty line.

This is the first part of a two-part series on capitalism and apartheid in South Africa.

Anti-apartheid youth say more than anger needed to build new society

The following are excerpts from the editorial of the latest issue of Arise Yukani, the newspaper of Action Youth, the youth organization of the National Forum Committee.

The National Forum Committee is a mass coalition that was formed in 1983. It includes a number of important mass organizations in South Africa, such as the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), and the Cape Action League.

The stepped-up repression resulting from the state of emergency has not dampened the combative spirit of the townships.

The capitalists in South Africa and abroad are very uneasy about the situation in South Africa. They know that the 1985 revolts have radicalized the progressive forces of our nation. They know that a radical and united liberation movement threatens their profits.

The imperialists would like to defuse the situation as quickly as possible. They want a return to "order" and "normalcy," which for us means more oppression, exploitation, poverty, ignorance, and famine.

On the one hand, Reagan, Thatcher, and Kohl support the methods of Botha and Gatsha Butelazi [leader of Inkatha, the conservative Zulu organization], which are camouflaged behind pleas of reforms.

On the other hand, the liberals like [Edward] Kennedy, support the liberals inside and outside the parliament, both

Black and white, whom they see as the saviours of the nation.

But even though their strategies may differ, their goals are the same. All of them speak about dialogue, negotiations, constructive engagement, national convention, etc., in order to save capitalism. For our

part, we continue to reject all these negotiations and national conventions.

We believe that more than anger and spontaneous mobilizations will be necessary to pave the way for a new society. What is needed is for the rank-and-file organizations to come together, democratically elect a common leadership, and put forward a clear program in opposition both to apartheid and capitalism.

Forward toward the Workers Republic of Azania!





Peru unions launch new party—the Workers Party

their country. But they support our work and sent greetings.

S.A.: What decisions did the conference reach?

Ona: The conference approved the formation of the PT. Resolutions were approved on the national and international situation. The programmatic theses were approved. And the statutes of the party were approved.

We also elected the party's first National Executive Committee, which is made up of 25 people. The PT's president is Alejandro Taza, the general secretary of the Electro-Lima Workers Union. The party's secretary general is Maximo Paz Calle, leader of the National Mineworkers and Metalworkers Federation. Victor Cuadros, president of the mineworkers' union, is the editor of our monthly newspaper.

S.A.: What is the importance of the adopted resolutions?

Ona: These resolutions clearly spell out our position in favor of independent, working-class politics in Peru and internationally. It is a position in opposition to the current government of the APRA, a government that represents the interests of the capitalist class.

Our goal in Peru is to forge a political instrument for the working class in alliance with the peasantry and all the exploited sectors for the purpose of seizing political power. Our objective is the transformation of the economic and social structures of this country, for the destruction of the capitalist system, and the creation of socialism.

We have also established an international line in solidarity with all people who are struggling for their liberation—against imperialist domination. Our goal is to genuinely put into practice proletarian internationalism.

First and foremost is our defense of the

Nicaraguan Revolution against the brutal imperialist attacks. We affirmed our solidarity with the struggle of the Salvadoran people and their leadership, the FMLN. We also expressed our solidarity with the Chilean and Bolivian people; with the Polish working class; and with the Black masses, who are struggling to bring down the apartheid system.

S.A.: Your solidarity with the Polish working class against the bureaucratic regime is extremely important. Unfortunately, this struggle is often overlooked or even attacked by revolutionary movements in Latin America and elsewhere.

Ona: Yes, we think that the struggle of the Polish workers is a central struggle for the international working class. They are fighting to establish a regime that will be

responsive to the interests of the working class. They are fighting to build a society where all forms of oppression will be eliminated.

S.A.: Have any sectors of Izquierda Unida [Left Unity or IU, an electoral coalition comprising most of the Peruvian left and sectors of the capitalist class] shown interest in your work?

Ona: Of all the political currents in the Izquierda Unida, only companero Ledesma was at our conference. Ledesma is coming closer to us politically and collaborates with our newspaper, *El Trabajo*. But IU as a front did not send greetings. Nor did we expect them to. We view this electoral front as reformist and class-collaborationist.

This front is currently tail-ending the government of Alan Garcia. IU has forgotten about doing political work within the mass movements. They have no revolutionary perspective to transform the country.

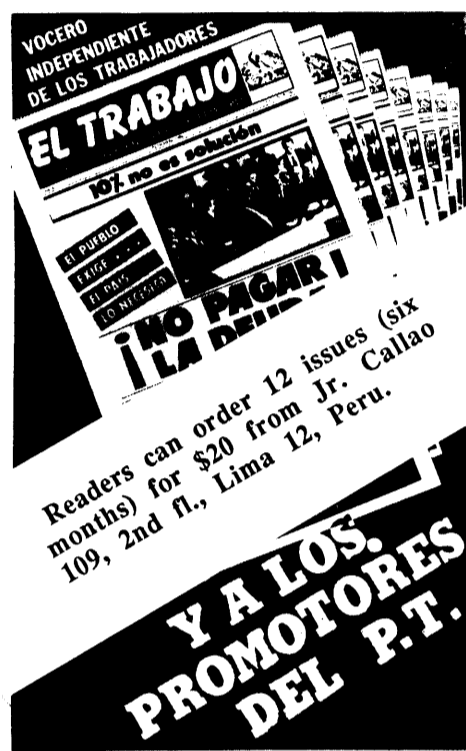
S.A.: What about the rank and file of IU; in particular the trade unionists?

Ona: To the extent that the PT has not yet developed as a concrete alternative to the paralysis and conciliationism of IU, it is likely that large numbers of rank-and-file unionists will remain in IU.

At the level of the ranks of IU, there is a profound discontent with the policies that are being promoted by the leadership. We are confident that before long our party will attract these ranks.

S.A.: Do you feel that the Brazilian and Peruvian workers' parties are examples for working people in other countries of Latin America?

Ona: Definitely. In our opinion, the conditions exist for the formation of similar parties in other countries. And as far as Peru, we feel that we have a considerable political space opened up before us given the capitulation of IU to the current APRA government. ■



The following is an interview with Dr. Jose Ona, the legal adviser of the Peruvian National Mineworkers and Metalworkers Federation (FNTMMP) and a member of the National Executive Committee of the newly formed Peruvian Workers Party (Partido de los Trabajadores/PT). The Peruvian PT was founded at a delegated conference in Lima on Nov. 1-3. [For more background on this party, see the October 1985 issue of *Socialist Action*.]

Like the Brazilian Workers Party, the Peruvian PT represents an important development in the Latin American workers' movement. It is based on the major independent unions of that country—a number of which have memberships in the tens of thousands. The phone interview was conducted on Nov. 6.

Socialist Action: What was the outcome of your founding national conference?

Jose Ona: The conference was a resounding success. There were over 100 full and fraternal delegates from the entire country and dozens of invited guests from national and international workers' organizations.

Genaro Ledesma, the president of the FOCEP [the Workers, Peasants, Students and Poor People's Front] was at our founding conference. Also present was a mass organization called Fuerzas Populares. They sent a representative, the secretary general of the National Glassworkers Union, Hector Garcia.

There were representatives from international organizations, including the MIR of Venezuela. We received greetings to our conference from the Brazilian Workers Party and from Lula personally. [Lula is the president of the Brazilian PT--The Editors.] They were unable to attend, however, because they are in the middle of an electoral campaign.

Greetings were also sent from the Nicaraguan FSLN. They also were unable to attend because of the war situation in

Socialist Action sends greetings

The following message was sent by the Political Committee of Socialist Action to the founding conference of the Peruvian Workers Party.

We appreciate your invitation, but regret not being able to attend your founding conference. We send you revolutionary greetings, wishing you a successful conference and hoping your decisions will lay the basis for the building of an authentic workers' party in Peru.

For Socialist Action, the formation of mass-based workers' parties in Latin America has a special significance. In the United States, the working class does not as yet possess its own independent political expression. For us, the struggle to help the workers build a labor party based on the trade-union movement is a central political task.

The building of mass workers' parties in Brazil and now Peru—despite the great differences in our respective countries—contains many rich lessons for workers in the United States.

Peru PT's stance on Castro's debt policy

The October 1985 issue of *El Trabajo*, the monthly newspaper of the Peruvian Workers Party, contains a one-page article that exposes the so-called anti-imperialism of Alan Garcia, Peru's new president, on the issue of the foreign debt. Garcia has proposed that the Latin American countries earmark a certain percentage of their export earnings to repay the debt to the imperialist banks.

The following are slightly edited excerpts from this article that deal with the Peruvian PT's position on Fidel Castro's campaign to cancel the debt. Victor Cuadros, president of the national miners' federation and a leader of the PT, attended the July 1985 Trade Union Conference Against the Debt in Havana, where he presented a motion along these same lines.

Fidel Castro has launched an intense campaign for the Latin American nations to cancel their debts to the foreign banks.

This campaign has been an effort on the part of the Cuban leadership to explore the possibilities of common action, on a continental basis, against the policies of plunder and famine imposed by imperialism through the International Monetary Fund.

No one who claims to be loyal to the interests of the Latin American people can attack the various initiatives undertaken by Fidel. This is what large sectors of the Latin America workers' movement have clearly understood as they prepare to mobilize on Oct. 23 in a Continental Day of Action to demand the non-payment of the foreign debt.

Alan Garcia, whom *Newsweek* has called the "new John F. Kennedy of Latin

America," has, however, attacked the Cubans' campaign with arguments taken straight from the anti-communist arsenal of McCarthyism.

At the United Nations and in the press, he has stated that the foreign debt must be honored and repaid. "All Peruvians," he affirms, "are responsible for the foreign debt." It is for this reason that Garcia has begun a real "diplomatic war" against the Cuban leadership and against its campaign to cancel the debt.

Whatever our differences with certain aspects of the policies of the leadership of the Cuban Revolution, we must understand that this leadership expropriated imperialism, reorganized society on new foundations, and began the construction of socialism. And it did all this only 90 miles

off the coast of Miami!

The Cuban Revolution is a deep thorn in the imperialists' side. It points the way forward for all the countries oppressed by imperialism.

For our part, we believe that in addition to not paying the debt, there is no reason why we should offer the imperialist banks a solution to their crisis [a reference to Fidel's proposal to bail out the banks through a 10-percent cut in the U.S. military budget--The Editors].

We also believe that the call for a new international economic order must be given a clear content of rupture with the imperialist order [a reference to Fidel's call to link the cancellation of the debt to the 1974 United Nations resolution on the New International Economic Order--The Editors].

Yet despite these differences, we believe that the proposal of the Cubans to launch a Continental Day of Action Against the Debt is positive. To attack this proposal is ultimately to play into the hands of the imperialists. ■

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The latest issue of *International Viewpoint*, a biweekly news magazine published under the auspices of the Fourth International in Paris, contains articles on Nicaragua's emergency measures, the Sinn Fein Congress in Ireland, and the fate of the Iranian movement. The preceding issue of *IV* (no. 86) contains a statement adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on Oct. 5, 1985, concerning the rejection by the SWP (USA) of the organizational demands of the Twelfth World Congress to reinstate back into the party all expelled members from the SWP. Copies of back issues can be ordered from Socialist Action, 3435 Army St., S.F., CA 94110.



Brazil's Workers Party stirs intense debate in S. Africa

The Brazilian Workers Party (PT) has been the subject of an intense debate on strategy that is taking place among trade union and political activists in South Africa. We are reprinting below extracts from two articles from the debate.

The first is taken from a two-part article by David Fig of the International Labour Research Group that was published in the July and August issues of *FOSATU Worker News*. It is one of several articles that the Federation of South African Trades Unions (FOSATU), a non-racial federation of over 100,000 members, has published on the Brazilian PT.

The editors of *FOSATU Worker News* introduce the article by stating: "It is important for workers in South Africa to see how other workers are fighting their struggles so that we can learn from other countries."

We also reprint below a portion of an article by Ruth Nhere, "The Dangers of Legal Marxism in South Africa," which was published in the Second Quarter 1985 issue of *The African Communist*, a journal reflecting the views of the South African Communist Party (SACP).

This article is one of several that the SACP has directed toward FOSATU on the question of independent working-class pol-

itical action. In an article in the Second Quarter 1983 issue of *The African Communist*, numerous quotations from Lenin were utilized to refute FOSATU General Secretary Joe Foster, who had maintained that "workers must strive to build their own powerful and effective [political] organization."

The SACP charged that such an organization would be seen as a rival to the Communist Party itself and to its close ally, the African National Congress: "Dare [FOSATU] ignore either the confusion and

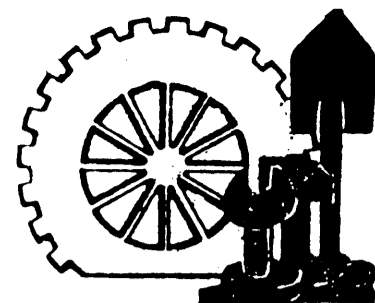
division it will sow in the ranks of the working class if it sets up a new 'workers' movement' in competition with or alongside the still-living Communist Party?"

But the roots of the SACP's anxiety lies deeper. The mass-based Brazilian Workers Party, which some FOSATU leaders look to as a model for South Africa, raises explicitly pro-socialist demands. The SACP, on the other hand, expresses scepticism that the South African working class can be mobilized in the near future toward the overthrow of the capitalist system.

As SACP leader Jack Simons writes in the June 1985 issue of *SECHABA* magazine, the organ of the African National Congress, "there is a Congress realization that most peasant-workers, who form the bulk of the working class under apartheid, are not yet class-conscious enough or ready for the adoption of a socialist solution."

The Communist Party prescribes that the struggle be limited during the current stage to the aim of replacing the white apartheid regime by a "democratic state." The big industrial monopolies and banks would be nationalized, but the capitalist system would remain.

To that end, the SACP calls for building a "popular front" around a political platform that could unite "all classes and strata



Last month FOSATU joined other independent unions to form the new Congress of South African Trade Unions.



whose interests are served by the immediate aims of the national democratic revolution."

The popular front was first advanced by the Communist Parties under Stalin in the 1930s. Its effect has always been to subordinate the demands of the workers to the goal of reassuring pro-capitalist forces participating in the front that their property and privileges would remain intact.

Leaders of FOSATU, on the other hand, insist that the trade-union movement maintain its independence while collaborating with other forces on specific actions against apartheid policies.

For example, the union refused to become a member of the United Democratic Front (UDF), a mass coalition that includes members of the SACP and the ANC in its leadership, on the grounds that the UDF is "an alliance that includes the enemies of the Black working class under the leadership of the bourgeoisie"—The Editors.

... FOSATU airs view on role of labor party

The man with the beard stood in front of the crowd and began to speak.

"Friends and fellow workers," he said, "it's not enough for us to struggle so hard against the employers. Our fight is also against the military who are ruling our country. We cannot change the situation of workers in Brazil without challenging the government, and bringing in a government of workers who will understand our needs."

"For many years, the military prevented us from organizing, but now they are speaking of 'reform.' We must take advantage of this to organize. None of the legal political parties talk about the needs of the workers and the poor. What we need, friends, is a political party to put forward our political demands. We need to form a Workers' Party to take our struggles forward!"

The crowd of workers cheered loudly and began to chant the name of the speaker over and over: "Lu-la, Lu-la, Lu-la!"

Lula [current president of the Workers' Party] and his fellow leaders showed workers that for the first time in many years the unions could become instruments of the workers' struggles.

But they also realized that with the backing of their membership and the support received from the community, they could not reach their goals by sticking only to the economic struggles on the factory floor.

They also needed to struggle for political rights and political power. That led them to the idea of organizing a political party. They decided to call it the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores).

Role of the working class

Lula and his friends thought that it was a good time to create a party for workers. The workers would lead the party, but they also encouraged others to support them.

They remembered that during the strikes, workers received support from people who were not in factory jobs—like teachers, health workers, students, the unemployed and the popular sections of the church. So they invited support from these groups, bearing in mind that most of the party's leaders would be industrial workers.

The leaders must be elected by delegates from the branches. The leaders should respect what was decided by the majority of the members. Everything should be decided

by conferences.

By arguing for socialism, the Workers' Party showed that it was interested to see a fairer system in Brazil, where workers shared more in the wealth of the country, where inflation did not rob them of their food and wages, and where they had a direct say in the running of the country.

So the election campaigns were a good chance to explain that there was an alternative to the capitalist system.

Brazil has two communist parties, both of which are illegal. They could not run their own candidates in elections. So, instead they gave their support to the

PMDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party]. They felt that the Workers' Party represented only the "narrow interests of workers," while the PMDB represented a large variety of interests which together would make up a stronger force against the military government.

The Workers' Party argued that the PMDB was not a party which spoke up for workers. It was a party which represented the views of the bosses. So it was difficult to see that workers would benefit by giving it support. The whole history of Brazilian politics showed that the workers had never benefited much from supporting parties which had no worker leadership.

Inside the unions, the Workers' party supporters also argued that it was wrong for the supporters of the two communist parties to give their backing to the stooges and yes-men of the government who were put in charge of some of the unions. ■



Lula, the president of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT), leads procession of candidates for Nov. 15 municipal elections in 13 cities. The PT obtained 15% of the vote nationally—or about 3 million votes. Its candidates obtained 20% in Sao Paulo, 38% in Vitoria; 40% in Goiania. In Fortaleza, the Northeast's largest city, PT candidate Maria Luiza was elected mayor.

... S. Africa CP scoffs at 'workerist' views

Advocates of the "workerist line" hotly deny that their arguments negate the role of a class political party. However, they argue that "as yet there are no specifically political organizations (at least in developed form) of the working class in South Africa" [quoted from the *Social Review*, December 1983 issue].

These sentiments have been echoed by some of the FOSATU leadership.

Some of them have become fascinated with the example of Brazil. A recent article on this country in the *South African*

Labour Bulletin [May 1984 issue] attempts to draw parallels with developments in South Africa.

In Brazil, they record, mass militant trade unionism has led to the birth of a political party which "rapidly developed amongst workers, the unemployed, grassroots sections of the church, progressive youth, and left intellectuals..."

The author mentions almost as an aside that this party "has drawn much hostility from the supporters of the illegal Brazilian Communist Party...which claims (my

emphasis—R.N.) that, historically, they form the party of the workers.

Brazil also features in the study program drawn up by the academics involved in FOSATU's educational work and is discussed in the FOSATU journal. Here the issues are more simplified and—in case the worker readership should get the wrong idea—the Brazilian Communist Party is not mentioned by name:

"It was the workers in metal and textiles in Sao Paulo who started to organize the unofficial unions. Every year since 1977 workers have struck in support of recognition and better wages..."

"Out of this the Workers' Party was started in order to represent workers in the planned elections. This was met with great opposition from the state, other political parties, and the official trade union leaders." [FOSATU Worker News, September 1983]

Perhaps the authors of this type of material are aware that resort to open anti-communism will not win them support amongst the organized working class. However, their attempt to ignore the programs and even existence of the ANC [African National Congress] and the SACP amount to the same thing.

This isolationism or political non-alignment will in the long run prove their greatest weakness in their attempts to use the trade-union movement as a vehicle for the creation of a "workers' party." In the meantime, our class enemies, the bourgeoisie, must be watching these stirrings of ultra-leftism and petty-bourgeois ideology with some relish. ■





Jesus Criollo

An incisive look at ten years that shook Mexico

By BILL WILNER

The Mexican Revolution, by Adolfo Gilly, Verso Editions, 1983, \$11.50.

For most Americans, indeed for most people on the left, the names Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata conjure up images of banditry. These images have been carefully fostered by the U.S. media in harmony with the official histories written by the apologists for the ruling class in Mexico.

The Mexican ruling class has a long memory and it can never forget and will never forgive Pancho Villa, the peasant general leading a peasant army, for destroying the Federalists' army at Zacatecas. Equally slighted are the accomplishments in the area of land reform by Zapata and the peasantry of the state of Morelos.

Adolfo Gilly, a revolutionary socialist and columnist for the Mexico City daily newspaper *Uno Mas Uno*, published this landmark history in 1971 while he was still serving a six-year sentence for allegedly smuggling weapons to Guatemalan revolutionaries. Going through 16 editions in Spanish under the title, "La Revolucion Interrumpida," the book finally appeared in English in 1983.

The early part of the book traces the capitalist development of Mexico in the latter part of the 19th century and the first 10 years of the 20th. It details the efforts of

the rising industrial bourgeoisie to supplant the landed oligarchy and to channel the revolutionary impulses of the masses within the boundaries of a purely bourgeois revolution.

After dictator Porfirio Diaz was overthrown in 1910, the failure of the new leaders—first Madero and then Huerta—to deal effectively with the issue of land reform led the peasants to rise throughout most of Mexico.

Unfortunately, the Mexican working class was very small and immature at this time and unable to offer leadership to the peasantry. The peasantry never formulated a national program and never developed a national perspective for ruling the country.

The revolutionary forces divided into two segments. One segment, the "conventionist wing" headed by Villa and Zapata, represented an anti-capitalist orientation favoring true land redistribution under what was known as the Ayala Plan.

The other segment was headed by Venustiano Carranza, a long-time senator during the rule of Diaz, who represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and the landed oligarchs. This segment also contained a petty-bourgeois conciliationist wing, represented by the future Bonaparte of the revolution: Alvaro Obregon.

Although the forces of the peasant revolution controlled most of Mexico in December 1914, their power—except for that of Zapata in Morelos—was

shattered in less than eight months after a series of violent battles involving tens of thousands of men.

With this series of defeats, the Northern division of Villa ceased to exist and Villa and his most loyal followers were forced to engage in guerrilla warfare, not laying down their arms until 1920. Villa was assassinated in 1923, after publicly declaring his ability to muster a large body of men in support of an impending uprising against Obregon.

Revolution in Morelos

In what Gilly refers to as "one of the finest and historically most important episodes of the Mexican Revolution," the Morelos peasants began to implement the true essence of the Ayala Plan, liquidating the latifundio and establishing agrarian commissions to distribute the land. The sugar mills and distilleries were nationalized without compensation and placed under peasant administration.

Like the people of Paris before them, the people of Morelos created a commune and prepared to defend their commune against the full weight of the bourgeois state. Despite the loss of half its population, Morelos fought on until 1919. On April 10 of that year, Zapata, in whom the hopes of the Morelos peasantry rested, was murdered.

It is important to note the activities of the fledgling working class and its leadership at this time since it foreshadowed the course of the Mexican proletariat.

The majority of the working class responded to reforms promised by the Carranza-Obregon forces. The workers' leadership under Luis Morones—who later became a shameless profiteer—sided with the bourgeoisie against the peasantry forming what were known as "red battalions." When the working class attempted to assert its rights in 1917, it was mercilessly crushed by Carranza.

The final image of the revolution—dramatically depicted by Gilly—shows the Mexican Bonaparte, the one-armed Obregon, riding on horseback into Mexico City in December 1920. He is flanked by two riders. On one side of him is riding General Genovevo de la O, a trusted subordinate of Zapata. On the other side of him, is riding General Pablo Gonzalez, the butcher of the Morelos peasantry during the civil war there.

This book is an exciting narrative and a trenchant analysis of the most important events to happen in Mexico in the 20th century. Without knowing the Mexican Revolution, our understanding of current Mexican realities is severely circumscribed.

In the final analysis, it will be the collective revolutionary experience of the Mexican people combined with a program of socialist revolution that will lead to the establishment of the just society for which so many Mexicans died in the second 10 years of our century. ■

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Even before the September quakes, Mexico's economy had begun to shatter. The country is in debt to foreign banks to the tune of \$96 billion and must use more than half of its foreign-exchange revenue to pay the \$12 billion a year in interest payments.

Despite three years of austerity—in which the real wages of Mexican workers tumbled 40 percent—the bankers have tried to draw the economic noose even tighter. On Sept. 19, the same day as the first earthquake, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) threatened to refuse more loans to Mexico unless the government took further steps to limit public expenditures and to lay off workers in the nationalized industries.

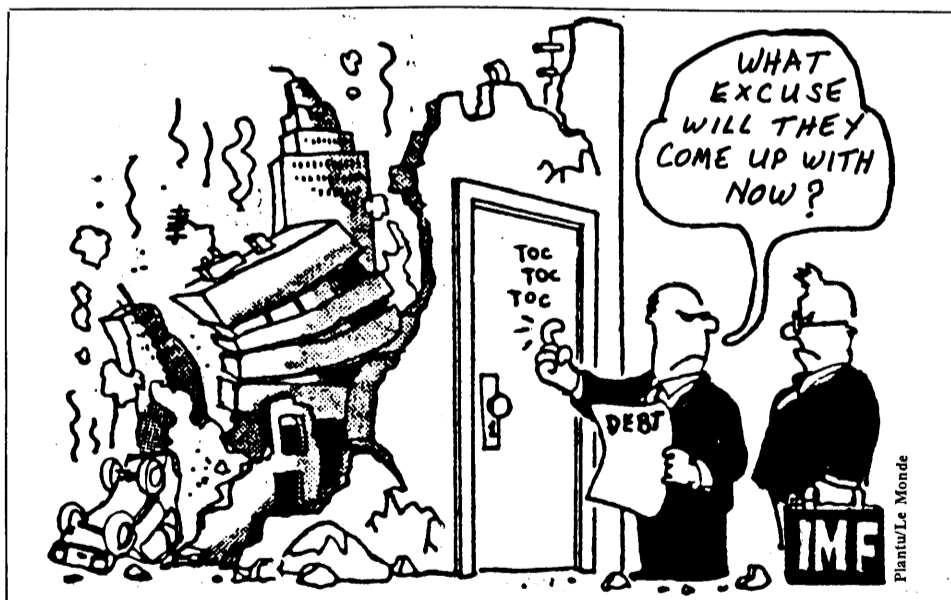
Ricardo Pascoe, one of six deputies in the national legislature from the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT)—the Mexican section of the Fourth International—recently spoke about Mexico's economic crisis during a lecture tour of the United States.

"At this point we are in an absolute morass," Pascoe reported to a meeting in Los Angeles. "During the last 13 years, Mexico has paid \$70 billion in interest on its debt, but the principal continues to grow. It's absolutely impossible to pay the debt."

Pascoe said that neighborhood organizations that arose to help victims of the earthquake have discussed the debt crisis in their meetings. "After a great deal of debate," he said, "agreement was reached in the movement that it was necessary to not only demand houses and water and health services, but to also demand that the Mexican government not pay the foreign debt."

Most left-wing parties in Mexico, however, call for a limited "moratorium" of

Mexico still on shaky ground with bank debt



debt payments. Pascoe stated that the PRT is "the only party in the parliament that has come out with a position for the annulment of the debt."

"It is a curious phenomenon," Pascoe said, "because at the Latin American Conference Against the Debt held last July in Cuba, the Mexican Communist Party [the PSUM or Unified Socialist Party of Mexico] was insisting on the idea of a moratorium. But the PRT happened to agree with Fidel Castro's idea of annulment."

The Reagan administration recently put forth its own proposal to ensure that Mexico and other Latin American governments keep making interest payments. The new turn in policy is an acknowledgement that

without some moderation of the debt crisis, there is a "risk of setting fire to the powder keg that threatens the whole continent," in the words of Brazil's President Jose Sarney.

U.S. Treasury Secretary James A. Baker advanced the government's plan in October at a joint meeting of the IMF and the World Bank. He suggested that their policy toward the debtor countries be changed from one that demands austerity to one that would supposedly foster industrial growth.

Baker said that the U.S. government would pressure commercial banks to step up their loans to Latin America in order to help service on-going payments on the debts as well as to foster new foreign investment. The commercial banks would offer \$20 billion over a three-year span, and

the World Bank would kick in another \$9 billion.

The Latin American countries, in return, would be expected to institute "sound economic policies," including lowering taxes on big business, allowing the market to set foreign exchange rates, and returning nationalized or state-regulated industry to the control of private investors.

Business Week magazine reports that the large U.S. commercial banks "have expressed support for the plan in theory. But they wonder how debtor nations can be forced to live up to their side of the bargain."

For their part, Mexican government officials express dismay at the amount of money to be made available under the Baker plan. Baker's entire \$29 billion offer equals the amount that Mexico and Brazil will pay this year alone in interest on their debts.

If the Baker plan were implemented, the Latin American countries would only mount up new debts—thus postponing and worsening the crisis. But the Mexican government refuses to call for the only step that can solve the crisis—a complete annulment of the debt.

This is not surprising. The ruling capitalists throughout Latin America—even the so-called progressives who rule Mexico—long ago demonstrated their inability to sever ties with imperialism and chart a course in the interests of the oppressed masses.

Nevertheless, mass pressure forced the government to approve a series of public debates on the debt—a proposal that the PRT had put forth in the legislature. At the first debate—last month in Tijuana—representatives of trade unions and peasant organizations were included among those who shared the floor with government officials. The debate was televised to the general public. ■

... Marcos' election call: Futile face-saving try

(continued from page 1)

praised by Vice President George Bush for his "adherence to democratic principles and to the democratic process" and in 1982 was welcomed to the White House with open arms.

Social cost of dictatorship

Washington's about-face is not a belated reaction to the social cost of the Marcos dictatorship.

Since martial law was declared in 1972, 100,000 have been killed by the army and 65,000 detained. The 53 million Filipinos are burdened by a \$26 billion foreign debt and over 20-percent inflation.

Unemployment stands at 30 percent, and 700,000 youth enter the job market each year. Seventy percent live below the government's poverty line. From 1972 to 1980 alone, workers' wages went down by 36 percent.

Dispossessed peasants have made Manila a city of over 10 million, 40 percent of whom are squatters. The government admits that 30 percent of the Filipino people suffer from malnutrition. In Manila, infant mortality now stands at 13 percent.

U.S. interests

Washington's primary concern is not even the \$3 billion in direct U.S. investment. Rather, with the reemergence of the Cold War, the United States seeks to ensure the security of Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Base, its two largest military installations outside of North America.

Since the liberation of Vietnam and the fall of the Shah of Iran, these bases have become the forward springboard for defending imperialist interests throughout Asia, the Western Pacific, and the Indian Ocean.

The United States is paying some \$900 million rent for these bases, and will spend another \$1.3 billion to renovate them. Not surprisingly, a recent high-level conference at the U.S. Armed Forces War College



People's War lies in its discounting of the urban struggle, in particular that of the urban workers.

Nonetheless, while the CPP's primary emphasis continues to be rural guerrilla war, it has recognized that the extension of market relations have undermined the peasant economy, transforming the working class from 15 percent of the population in 1968, to some 37 percent today.

The party's reevaluation of and partial

been at the mercy of Western commodity markets, and many of its factories, plantations, and mines are owned by U.S., Japanese, and multinational capital.

Following independence, a moderate nationalist current of thought gained acceptance within the Philippine bourgeoisie which espoused a strategy of "import substitution industrialization" to loosen the imperialist grip. The strategy aimed at creating a national-industrial base that would manufacture many of the formerly imported products consumed by the Filipino people.

Unfortunately for its proponents, this scheme foundered due to the inadequate markets of this poor agricultural country. Industrial production stagnated throughout the 1960s, aggravating unemployment at the same time that more and more displaced peasants migrated to the towns.

By the late 1960s, the economy's failure to meet the demands of the population had sparked labor and student upsurges. Despite this record, the import-substitution strategy continues to be put forward by the moderate anti-Marcos opposition.

Export-oriented industrialization

In the late 1960s, Ferdinand Marcos represented a segment of the capitalist class that sought to revive the stagnant economy by reorienting it toward export, copying the "capitalist miracle" of South Korea and Taiwan.

These capitalists aimed to attract foreign investors, using the incentive of low wages combined with tariff and duty-free "export platforms." These economic zones would manufacture garments or electrical components for sale in the industrial West.

Martial law was imposed in 1972, not simply to extend Marcos' hold on power, but also to facilitate the reorientation of the Philippine economy, an aim encouraged by the multinational corporations and the World Bank.

Restructuring the economy resulted in the bankruptcy or relative impoverishment of a section of Philippine capital. This resulted from successive devaluations of the peso and the end to protectionism, both concessions made to attract foreign capital.

This fact—and general unease over the drift of the economy in recent years—explains the present rift within the Filipino

bourgeoisie between the moderate opposition and the Marcos wing.

Jealousy is another factor. Not surprisingly, the restructuring of the economy under conditions of dictatorship helped enrich Marcos and his cronies, who soon had monopolies over the export of coconuts and sugar, and many industries. The Marcos coterie rapidly became the richest layer in the country.

Reorienting the economy also required crushing the mass movement—hence the need for martial law, the banning of strikes, and mass detention. The need to maintain this dictatorship against rising resistance led to the four-fold expansion of the armed forces to 250,000, and an invitation to the officer corps to share in the spoils.

So the army has garnered more and more economic and political power, and has become closely bound to Marcos' personal regime. The formal end of martial law in 1981 changed nothing.

Export-oriented industrialization led to an initial growth spurt, and industrial exports rose from 16 percent of the economy in 1972 to 32 percent by 1980. But this strategy depends on the growth of foreign markets, which began to contract with the 1974-75 international capitalist recession and the erection of trade barriers in the industrialized countries.

Meanwhile, the price of Philippine sugar, coconuts, and copper plummeted on the world market, while those of oil and manufactured imports continued to rise.

In the epoch of imperialism, the import of foreign capital has always been a key source of funds necessary for even one-sided development in the semi-colonial world. Since the 1970s, however, foreign capital has taken on a more openly parasitic role. The banks now dispense loans to pay off past loans, all of which are now guaranteed by the semi-colonial state.

To cover the trade shortfall and stave off the bankruptcy of his cronies, Marcos was forced to mortgage the country. The foreign debt, \$2.2 billion in 1972, rose to \$11 billion in 1980 and \$26.5 billion by 1984. A \$925 million loan package in 1985 earmarked \$730 million for payment of the interest on earlier loans.

The road to revolt

This is a debt borne by the masses. If in 1972 the upper 10 percent of the population extracted 30 percent of the national income, in 1982, this share had risen to 42 percent. In the same period, the earnings of the lower 70 percent fell from 48 percent to 31 percent.

In the countryside, the trend toward a plantation economy geared for export has destroyed the tenancy system inherited from the Spanish. Today, fully 50 percent of the non-tenant landless peasantry are plantation workers. Millions more have been forced into the cities. It was the accumulating social dynamite from these processes which finally exploded with the assassination of Benigno Aquino in 1983.

In Part Two of this article, which will appear in our January issue, the author will examine the political response of the anti-Marcos opposition to the challenge posed by the economic, political, and social disintegration of the Philippines.

"Marcos is now persona non grata to all but Rev. Falwell, who calls the Philippines a paradise. Perhaps rivaled only by S. Africa?"

reiterated the importance of defending them, and of ensuring the existence of a pro-U.S. regime in Manila.

Unfortunately for the United States, the Marcos regime has, in the aftermath of the Aquino assassination, been transformed from the best bulwark of North American interests in the region, to a millstone which threatens to drag the country into the abyss of revolution. And since the United States is likely to intervene to protect the bases, the Philippine struggle takes on special importance for U.S. antiwar activists.

The threat of revolution is reflected by the rise of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its New People's Army (NPA).

The CPP emerged in 1968 as a Maoist formation recruited from the nationalist student movement and dedicated to carrying out a peasant-based People's War. It was the only component of the current opposition to advocate the overthrow of the neocolonial state before martial law, and its relationship to Maoist China was severed after that country recognized the Marcos regime.

The NPA was launched in 1968. Today, the CIA estimates that it numbers 16,500 regular troops in 59 of the 73 provinces of the country.

Peasant war has historically played a crucial role in undermining semi-colonial bourgeois states. But solely relying on peasant war does not guarantee ultimate victory. The weakness of the strategy of

turn toward work in the cities is reflected by the rising acceptance in the left wing of the mass movement of demands put forward by the New Democratic Front [the broad political coalition associated with the CCP]. This is particularly the case among unions and slum-dweller organizations in the umbrella coalition BAYAN.

In addition to the NPA, the Marcos regime continues its war with the Muslim Moros of Mindanao. Some 60 percent of the Philippine army is fighting the Moro National Liberation Front and the NPA in the southern provinces.

So the Philippine revolution combines many struggles—that of peasants for land; of Moros for self-determination; of the great majority against U.S. imperialism and dictatorship; and finally, of the workers and peasants against a capitalist system incapable of meeting their basic necessities of life.

It is important to underscore this last point and to dig below the surface of a struggle which at first glance appears to be simply one between democracy and dictatorship.

Economic roots of crisis

Marcos and his regime are the product of calculated choices made by a section of the Filipino bourgeoisie in the early 1970s. Formal independence for this former U.S. colony did not alter North American domination of the Philippines. From independence to the present day, its primary exports—sugar, coconuts, copper—have



Is India today a distortion of Mahatma Gandhi's legacy?

By DAN LABOTZ

An Indian Dynasty: The Story of the Nehru-Gandhi Family, by Tariq Ali. G.P. Putnam's and Sons, New York, 1985, \$17.95.

Mahatma Gandhi led India to its independence from Britain after 30 years of intermittent campaigns of militant civil disobedience, or what he called *satyagraha*, meaning "truth-force" or "love-force." The notion that a radical transformation of society might come from a peaceful movement based on the power of love was an idea that appealed to millions. And, at least on midnight of Aug. 15, 1947, the moment when India achieved its independence, it seemed that it had worked.

But almost immediately the country was plunged into a massive communal war between Moslems and Hindus. "Many millions were killed," wrote V.S. Naipaul, "and many more millions expelled from their ancestral land: as great a holocaust as that caused by Nazi Germany."

If freed by love, India was soon ruled by money, by a powerful group of capitalists and the corrupt Congress Party. If conceived in peace, India was immediately at war with Pakistan. If it escaped British imperialism, it was still part of the world market and attractive to the multinationals, as shown so tragically in the catastrophe at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal. Democracy gave way to dynasty, and briefly in the mid-1970s to dictatorship, as Indira Gandhi arrested 100,000 opponents.

What went wrong in India? Is India today



Jawaharlal Nehru (left) with Mahatma Gandhi

selves, their villages, and their country."

Such were Gandhi's politics as he entered the most important era of his life, as - suming leadership of the Indian movement against British imperialism.

In India, the Moslem Khilafat Movement and the Congress Party, which involved both Moslems and Hindus, were being pushed into a confrontation with the British by a mass movement from below. To stop the movement, the British parliament passed the Rowlatt Acts on March 18, 1919, which gave the colonial government unlimited powers of repression.

Gandhi called for a general strike devoted to prayer and fasting for March 30. "Within a few days," writes Ali, "a creeping general strike had paralyzed political India."

There were demonstrations and clashes, and British atrocities in the Punjab, including torture. The worst atrocity was the massacre in the Jallianwalla Bagh

imperialism, including the demonstrations in 1921 against the visit of Edward, Prince of Wales, continued to lead to violent confrontations.

When in one incident at Chauri Chaura, near Gorakhpur, police attacked peasants with pistols, the peasants chased them back to the police station, set fire to it, and burned the police to death. Three Congress volunteers, two Hindus and a Moslem, were hanged by the government.

As a result of that incident, at that crucial moment, Gandhi on his own initiative called off the movement—and in so doing called off the Indian Revolution. It was a decision that altered the course of Indian and world history.

Fears losing control

Why did Gandhi stop the movement? "Gandhi knew," writes Ali, "that if peasant struggle became dominant and the workers started agitating for class demands, the nationalist movement would be seriously weakened. He calculated that it was far better to call it off rather than permit it to get out of control."

At the same time in the 1920s and 1930s, Jawaharlal Nehru was developing into a key political figure, and one often at odds with Gandhi over the strategy and goals of the movement.

Nehru became attracted to the Stalinist Soviet Union in the mid-1930s, declared himself a "socialist," and said he wanted to see the end of social classes in India. As a result, though he was a wealthy bourgeois, he became suspect among other Congress leaders because of his radical views.

Gandhi understood that Nehru helped to strengthen the Congress by keeping many socialists within it. But the party was really controlled by industrialists like G.D. Birla and J.R.D. Tata. It was Gandhi as charismatic leader, mystical symbol, and astute politician who held together the socialist workers and the capitalist indus-

BOOK REVIEW

trialists, the poor peasants and the rich landlords.

Gandhi set all of these forces in motion once again in 1930 with the campaign against the Salt Act. The movement continued to grow through the 1930s and by 1940 India again entered a pre-revolutionary situation. When World War II broke out, Nehru told Churchill that India would fight fascism—but only as an independent state. Churchill rejected India's demand for independence.

While Gandhi nominally opposed supporting the British in the war, he actually worked to prevent the Congress from disrupting the British war effort. Nonetheless, a revolutionary movement was developing. Subas Chandra Bose, a highly respected Indian leader, joined forces with the Japanese to win India's liberation from the British. He organized an Indian National Army among Indians who were Japanese prisoners of war and formed a government in exile.

On Aug. 7, 1942, the Congress Working Committee passed the historic "Quit India" resolution, calling on the British to leave the subcontinent. Demonstrations occurred and the British arrested 60,000. Somewhere between 1000 and 10,000 people were killed.

The movement grew as the war ended. "Throughout 1946 India teetered on the brink of revolution. There were mutinies in the police and in the army, while on Feb. 1946, 20,000 naval ratings from 11 shore bases in Bombay and all the ships in the harbor hauled down the Union Jack," writes Ali. In Bombay a general strike broke out in solidarity with the mutineers.

At the same time communal violence erupted, in which a minimum of 250,000 Indians were killed. The colony became ungovernable and the British agreed to independence.

Finally, at midnight on Aug. 15, 1947, India was free—and in Gandhi's way. The pacifist had insured that the Indian civil service, police, and army were still intact. The capitalists still owned their factories. The landlords controlled the land.

Gandhi's Hindu prejudices had kept the movement from joining Hindu and Moslem. The caste system with its "untouchables" still stood. Women were still in a state of subjection. Such was the Mahatma's peaceful revolution. Shortly before he was assassinated, Gandhi approved India's first war against Pakistan.

The dynastic Nehru-Gandhi regime with all of its corruption, which is the central subject of Ali's book, is not some distortion of Gandhi's politics. It is the result of them. As V.S. Naipaul has written, "the irony is that both tyranny and political sterility were insured by the very success of Gandhi."

Gandhi worked to prevent the Congress Party from disrupting the British war effort.

some terrible distortion of Gandhi's ideals and experience? Or is it rather the result of the policies he pursued?

Tariq Ali's *An Indian Dynasty* gives us an opportunity to re-examine this question with his comprehensive account of the rulers and regime that arose from the struggle for independence. Though Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi are at the center of Ali's book, it is Mahatma Gandhi and his relation to Nehru which remains the most fascinating and important aspect of this history.

While Ali's book really begins with the events of 1919, Gandhi's political career had begun in South Africa years before, where he had led a fight for the civil rights of Indians. Already the outlines of his political method were clear: While he fought for civil rights for Indians, he never challenged the system as such, accepting the empire, capitalism, and bourgeois democracy.

When the British fought the Boers from 1899 to 1902, Gandhi supported the British. When the Zulu war broke out in the first half of 1906, Gandhi joined the British Army as a medic because, he said, "the British Empire existed for the welfare of the world."

When World War I broke out, he again organized a medical corps and also recruited for the British Army. More than half a million Indians fought for the British Empire during this war. In a recruiting speech Gandhi said, "If they fall on the battlefield, they will immortalize them-

garden in Amritsar, where 40 soldiers opened fire on 20,000 people, killing hundreds.

India was in a revolutionary mood, and a determined leadership and organization might have succeeded in challenging British rule. "Popular anger and outrage had spread," writes Ali, "but Gandhi wanted a movement that was strictly non-violent. He was determined to build a bridge between those who favored some form of armed struggle and those who saw the future as being determined by a slow process of reform."

But the rising movement against British

Lifestyles of the rich and noble

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

On Shakespeare's stage, it took the role of a king or queen—or at least a duke or duchess—to voice the great moral issues of the day. But to our television heroes, both nobility and morality come easily. It's a rule of thumb from "Dallas" to "Dynasty" that TV characters need be merely filthy rich to be "noble."

Last month's "North and South" miniseries on ABC television was able to handily transpose the rich-folks formula to a kind of antiwar theme, if I get the message. And all this in a romantic setting of mint juleps and cottonwood trees.

You know the plot if you've thumbed through John Jakes' novel "North and South" in the supermarket check-out line: It's the story of two families—the Hazard family, who are noble Pennsylvania munition-makers, and the Main family, who are noble South Carolina slaveowners.

Young Orry Main drinks too much because one sister is marrying a noble Yankee officer, and another sister is marrying a noble racist politician, and Orry himself is in love with a drug addict—who is noble nevertheless.

...As I see it

In the final moment of the drama, as the music swells to a crescendo, George wonders whether *anything* could have been done to avert the impending Civil War. Orry swallows. "Maybe," he replies, knowing only too well that if anything had been done (such as freeing the slaves), television viewers could not tune in next spring for "North and South II," which promises nifty battle scenes.

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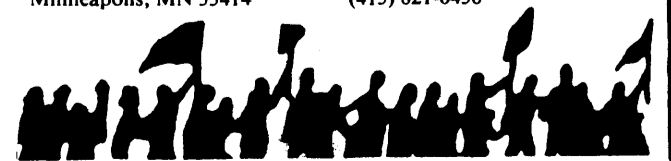
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Chile Solidarity Conference

The First Solidarity Conference with Chile and Latin America, organized by the National Network of Solidarity with Chile, will take place Jan. 11-13 at the Sala Victor Jara in San Francisco.

For more information about the conference, call (415) 648-6285, or write to P.O. Box 40568, S.F., CA 94140.

'Sun City' record roars its musical protest

By MARK HARRIS

Every two-and-a-half minutes a Black South African is arrested for violating any one of the 317 laws that, by definition, only a Black person can violate. These laws ensure privilege, power, and profit for the white minority, but at the cost of what those in public relations might call a colossal "image" problem.

One way that the apartheid government has tried to counter its international isolation is by bringing well-known entertainers to Sun City, a \$90 million gambling and resort complex located in the so-called independent nation of Bophuthatswana.

Of course, Bophuthatswana is controlled lock-stock-and-barrel by the apartheid government in Pretoria. And there is not a nation on earth that doesn't know that.

The same cannot be said, however, for some well-known entertainers. Many stars, such as Linda Ronstadt, George Benson, John Denver, Rod Stewart, Frank Sinatra, and others have been lured to perform at Sun City by astronomical salaries, despite the cultural boycott called by the United Nations of South Africa, including Sun City.

Performing at Sun City, however, will not be such an easy thing to do since the release of the "Sun City" single and LP by Artists United Against Apartheid. Written by Little Steven Van Zandt, former lead guitarist for Bruce Springsteen's band, "Sun City" delivers a roaring denunciation of apartheid and Ronald Reagan's "constructive engagement" policy.

"Sun City" packs a wallop not only in its message. It is a hard-driving, pounding rock song. The lyrics and the artists who sing on the single version are as follows:

Relocation to phony homelands (DAVID RUFFIN)
Separation of families I can't understand (PAT BENATAR)
23 million can't vote because they're black (EDDIE KENDRICKS)
We're stabbing our brothers and sisters in the back (BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN)
I ain't gonna play Sun City (CHORUS)

Our government tells us we're doing all we can (GEORGE CLINTON)
Constructive engagement is Ronald Reagan's plan (JOEY RAMONE)



Meanwhile people are dying and giving up hope (JIMMY CLIFF, DARRYL HALL)
This quiet diplomacy ain't nothing but a joke (DARLENE LOVE)
I ain't gonna play Sun City (CHORUS)

Bophuthatswana is far away (RUN DMC)
But we know it's in South Africa no matter what they say (KURTIS BLOW, RUN DMC DMC, AFRIKA BAMBAATAA)
You can't buy me I don't care what you pay (DUKE BOOTEE, GRANDMASTER MELLE MEL, AFRIKA BAMBAATAA)
Don't ask me Sun City cause I ain't gonna play (LINTON KWESI JOHNSON & ALL RAPPERS)
I ain't gonna play Sun City (CHORUS)

It's time to accept our responsibility (BONNIE RAITT)
Freedom is a privilege nobody rides for free (RUBEN BLADES, JOHN OATES)
Look around the world baby it can't be denied (LOU REED)
Why are we always on the wrong side (BOBBY WOMACK)
I ain't gonna play Sun City (CHORUS)

Relocation to phony homelands (JACKSON BROWNE, BOB DYLAN)
Separation of families I can't understand (PETER GARRETT)

RECORD REVIEW

23 million can't vote because they're black (NONA HENDRYX, KASHIF)
We're stabbing our brothers and sisters in the back (BONO)

The album includes two versions of "Sun City," and other tracks: "Let Me See Your I.D.;" "The Struggle Continues;" "No More Apartheid;" "Revolutionary Situation;" and "Love Over Gold." Other artists appearing on the album include, to mention just a few, Keith Richards, Ron Wood, Ringo Starr, Pete Townshend, Gil Scott-Heron, Miles Davis, and Herbie Hancock.

Van Zandt emphasizes that the record "isn't another one of those benefit records. South Africans don't want our charity or our pity. They want our support and our government to have a policy that positively affects their lives."

To make his point, the album includes a fact sheet that bluntly describes the grim reality of apartheid. The fact sheet says apartheid is "not only a system of racial domination—it's also a system of economic exploitation. Apartheid is no more—or less—than a system of modern slavery."

"Blacks are used as cheap labor to dig out the gold, diamonds, and strategic minerals that have made white South Africans rich. This low-cost, dependable, and controlled labor system has also made South Africa a very attractive investment to foreign corporations and banks. U.S. corporations, banks and individuals alone have more than \$15 billion invested in South African apartheid."

"The story of apartheid in South Africa is the story of a white minority that runs a government opposed to the legitimate needs of a majority of Black people...They are demanding the abolition of apartheid, not its reform."

All the proceeds from "Sun City" will go to *The Africa Fund*, a trust established to aid political prisoners and their families, South African exiles, and anti-apartheid groups in the United States.

It's heartening to see a resurgence of social commitment on the part of so many artists. Ringo Starr told Van Zandt that the Beatles were asked to perform in South Africa 20 years ago, but refused because of their disgust with the apartheid system.

To my knowledge, though, this musical statement goes far beyond even the most political music of the 1960s. As Arthur Baker, the producer of "Sun City," said, any artist asked to play Sun City can no longer plead naivete. "They'll have to go on record," Baker said, "as either being for freedom and justice or being a racist."

Our readers speak out

Good novel

Dear editor,

It was good to read Mark Schneider's perceptive review of Sergio Ramirez's difficult but rewarding novel, *To Bury Our Fathers*, in the October *Socialist Action*. Despite the book's merits, it has received scant attention in this country, even from the left press.

Readers may be interested in other material by Sergio Ramirez in English. *Playboy* (April 1985) published a short story, "Even Charles Atlas Dies." An interview with Ramirez on literary topics is included in Margaret Randall's new

book, *Risking a Somersault in the Air: Conversations with Nicaraguan Writers*.

Joseph Auciello
Boston

For real?

Dear editor,

The "Hazardous to your health" column is an excellent addition to *Socialist Action*. Enclosed is a

We welcome letters from our readers. Please keep them brief. Where necessary they will be abridged.

photocopy of a journal, "Chemology" (you may already be familiar with it) that could be of interest.

I am particularly fond of the banner slogan they use: "Published by the Chemical Manufacturers Association to promote a clean environment." Are they for real?

A reader

Inaccurate?

Dear editor,

Enclosed is a check to renew my subscription to *Socialist Action*. I also want to take this opportunity to voice my disagreement with a recent article condemning the April Actions steering committee for its failure to endorse a fall antiwar mobilization.

Your article stated that the national steering committee supported work within the Democratic Party at the expense of building a mass movement. My understanding is that in fact a whole series of actions throughout the fall were endorsed.

This afternoon I attended a local demonstration that was part of one of the campaigns supported by the April Actions steering committee. It involved civil disobedience at an airforce base and was part of the Pledge of Resistance's nationally coordinated *El Salvador Actions*. It was an exciting demonstration and will probably play an important role in building the Philadelphia area anti-intervention movement.

While you may have disagreed

with the tactical and strategic decisions of the April Actions steering committee, I am disappointed that you did not at least portray their views accurately.

Suzanne Blanc
Philadelphia

A response

Dear Suzanne,

Your letter refers to an article I wrote in the August issue of *Socialist Action*.

The refusal of the April Actions' leadership to *initiate* nationally coordinated fall actions is something they themselves have made quite clear. The June proposal from the Administrative Committee reads, "This Fall the Actions for Peace, Jobs and Justice would concentrate on strategic support for *already initiated* (their emphasis) actions being organized."

As a result, the fall actions were mostly small protests, lacking the national coordination that could have focused the energies of the whole movement.

A political reliance on the Democratic party is another stance

which the April Actions is not reluctant to admit. In an August 1984 newsletter, the founders of April Actions explained their refusal to sponsor fall anti-intervention activities because "In the next few months, more and more of our energy and resources will be devoted to efforts to bring about the timely retirement of the current administration."

And today, their continuing focus on capitalist electoral politics, by reorganizing the Rainbow Coalition, explains their unwillingness to push ahead with their previously announced plans for spring 1986 national actions.

Carl Finamore
San Francisco

A correction

An article by Henry Austin on the United Auto Workers strike against General Dynamics Corp, published in the November issue of *Socialist Action*, stated that 5000 members of Local 1200 were on strike. The article should have referred to the 5000 strikers as members of several different UAW locals, not just Local 1200—The Editors.

Ray Sparrow 1914 - 1985

Ray Sparrow (Art Sharon) died on Nov. 16 of a heart attack. He was 70 years old. He will be remembered by all who knew him and by history as a revolutionary leader who fought all his life on the side of the oppressed for the socialist future of humankind.

Sparrow joined the Trotskyist movement in 1934. At the time of his death he was a member of the Socialist Workers Party. He was also a subscriber to *Socialist Action*. A fuller account of his life and contributions will appear in the next issue of *Socialist Action*.

In celebration of Sparrow's life, family, friends, and co-workers are sponsoring a public memorial



Courtesy of David Sparrow

meeting. It will be held on Sunday, Dec. 15 at 4 p.m. at the hall of ILWU Local 6, 255 Ninth St., San Francisco.

U.S. unionists witness Salvadoran labor upsurge

By CARL FINAMORE

The following is a report on the FENASTRAS convention, which was held in San Salvador on Nov. 5-9. FENASTRAS is one of three major union federations in El Salvador. It has 23 affiliated unions and a membership estimated at 100,000 workers.

Finamore, a member of the San Francisco Bay Area trade-union delegation, represented Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union Local 1-326 as an observer at the FENASTRAS convention.

Other Bay Area unionists included Ann Coughlin, president OPEU 29; Al Lannon, president, ILWU local 6; Ignacio De La Fuente, business manager, Molders 164; Ellen Starbird, staff organizer, Santa Clara Central Labor Council; Carl Anderson, SEIU local 14 and S.F. CISPE; Margy Wilkinson, AFSCME district council 10; and Bob Johnson, California Faculty Association.

The North American unionists escorted Hector Recinos from Mexico City to the San Salvador convention site. Recinos is the exiled general secretary of FENASTRAS who had been imprisoned from 1980 to 1984 for his role in the electrical workers' strike of 1980, which shut off power to the city. Recinos' wife and daughter have been missing since 1980.

SAN SALVADOR—This capital city has a population of 2 million in a country of slightly over 5 million people.

The city streets are in serious disrepair, lined by old, single-story stucco buildings cracking from age, and teeming with street vendors, who are among the 40 percent unemployed barely living off the sales from their small stands.

In the finer section of town, the wealthy vainly attempt to shield themselves from the desperation, poverty, and squalor common to most in El Salvador. Here, sprawling haciendas are obscured by 12-foot-high walls of concrete and stone, often guarded by heavily armed private security guards.

At first glance, infrequent visitors to El Salvador may consider the accusations of government human and civil rights violations to be exaggerated. The regime in El Salvador has attempted to revamp its image through a U.S.-sponsored public relations campaign.

A recently leaked confidential memo of a meeting of the Chiefs of Mission of the U.S. Armed Forces in Central America held in Panama on Sept. 8-10, 1985, states: "We have finally gotten people to believe that El Salvador is a reforming society and that the guerrillas do not represent the Salvadoran people. We need to continue to encourage this belief."

Certain steps have been taken, therefore, to create the impression that the Duarte regime has largely eliminated the abuses openly practiced during the 1980-83 reign of the Death Squads.

For example, though large numbers of troops are stationed around government buildings and even occupy others, the military is remarkably absent from the city streets and market places.

And, it is true, public events like the four-day FENASTRAS convention, which was attended by 400 delegates and held in a mid-city hotel, would have been unthinkable a few years ago. There is also a growing number of union demonstrations, with 85 strikes and job actions this year.

Faced with growing inflation and unemployment; with 20 percent of the population receiving only 2 percent of the country's income; and with an average wage of \$4.50 a day, the working class in El



Hector Recinos, FENASTRAS head, placing wreath at tomb of Archbishop Oscar Romero.

Salvador is fighting back as a matter of survival.

The next stage in the struggle will be the contest between the working class, which is recovering from the bloody repression to rebuild its organizations and leadership, and the ruling class, which is torn by the dilemma of how to halt this development without resorting to the destabilizing reign of terror that eroded its domestic and foreign support.

Attending the FENASTRAS convention turned out to be an excellent way to determine the real extent of repression faced by unionists in El Salvador.

Last year, 200 delegates attended FENASTRAS' first public convention in several years. At that time, five international guests attended, including only one from the United States.

Since that convention, three leaders of FENASTRAS have been assassinated, with 38 other documented cases of unionists being captured, disappeared, or killed. FENASTRAS therefore invited a large number of international guests this year, hoping a security screen would be provided by the foreign observers.

Over 50 international guests, including 35 from the United States, attended this

convention. It proceeded without disruption and even included major singing, dancing, and "teatro" performances.

It would be a big error, however, to mistake the new openings, which have been won by the unions in strikes and through international public-opinion campaigns, as a sign of a reversal of the government repression.

None of our FENASTRAS guides, for example, would take us outside the San Salvador city limits. None would accompany us to escort Recinos back to the heavily guarded airport for his flight to Mexico City, where he had to opt for another period of exile.

We were also told that the major leaders of FENASTRAS move from their living quarters frequently and go underground for several weeks after every major union public action.

We also spoke with the financial secretary of the water works union, which has been on strike since May. This unionist was just released from eight days in prison. He had been forced to stand in a cell with six inches of water and to go four days without food. He was accused of obtaining supplies for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) because he was gathering food and clothes from the church and unions for the strikers.

In a Sunday visit to a large textile union hall, the newly elected executive committee described the company-union mentality of the previous leadership. Yet, despite that conservative stance of the union, its offices had been bombed twice in the last two years.

And as we were leaving El Salvador, our hosts informed us that two members of a national human rights commission had been captured and disappeared just prior to our arrival.

Political strike

But probably the most dramatic episode disproving the myth of democracy and trade-union rights in El Salvador was the capture of Humberto Centeno and his two sons at 6 a.m. on the morning of our arrival. Humberto Centeno is the national and international secretary of the telecommunications union, ASTTEL, an affiliate of FENASTRAS. His sons, Jaime and Jose, are 15 and 20 years old respectively.

The unionists in El Salvador often use the word "captured" to describe these incidents because, as in the Centeno case, they involve illegal kidnappings by unidentified armed men.

Centeno was almost immediately released but his sons were charged with supplying food and supplies for the rebels of the

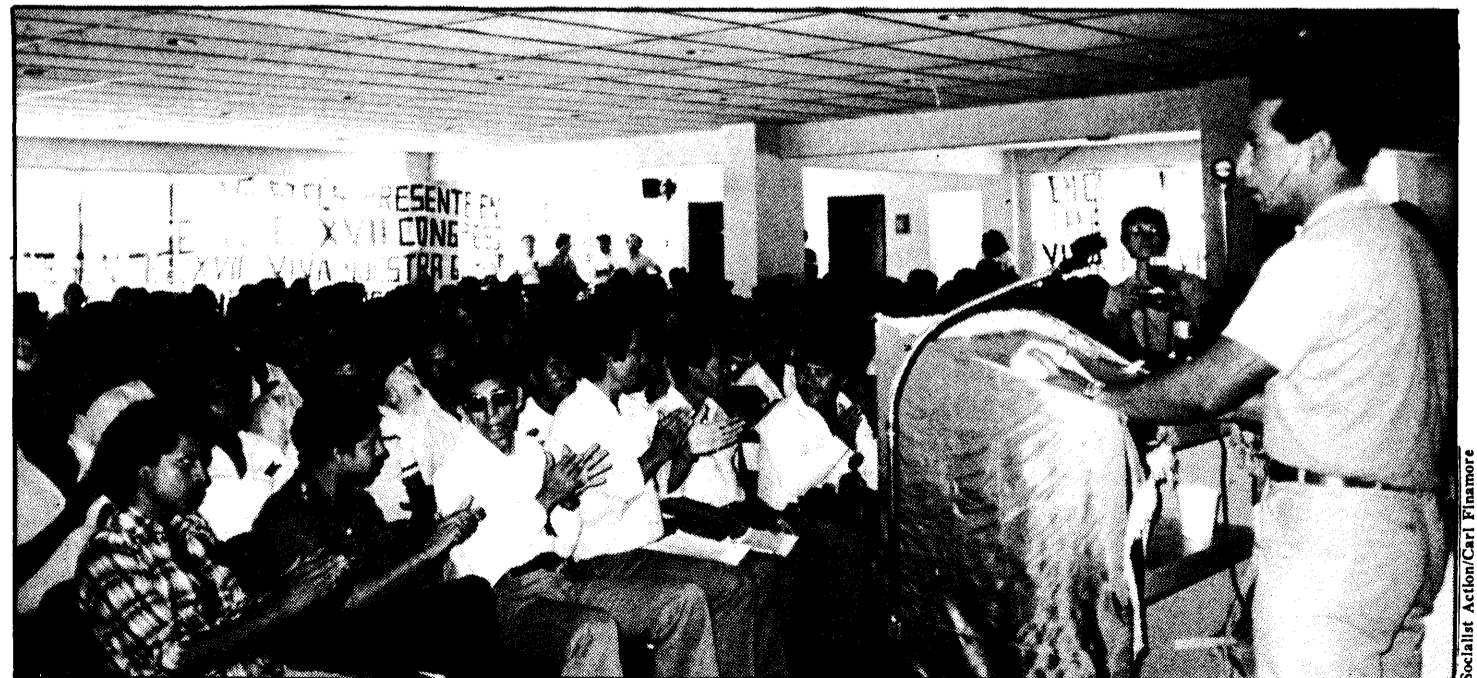
(continued on page 7)

The FENASTRAS platform

FENASTRAS' platform of struggle, adopted by the federation's 17th national convention, includes the following demands:

- A sliding scale of wages;
- Trade-union freedom, dialogue, and negotiations to attain peace;
- The right to strike and the demilitarization of all work places;
- The abrogation of all anti-labor legislation and decrees;

- The respect of all democratic freedoms, such as the right to assembly, organization, and expression;
- The release of all political and trade-union leaders;
- The return of the exiled Salvadorans;
- The punishment of all those found guilty of crimes against the people;
- An end to U.S. intervention in El Salvador and the respect of national sovereignty.



Ignacio De La Fuente, International Molders Union, addresses FENASTRAS' 17th congress.