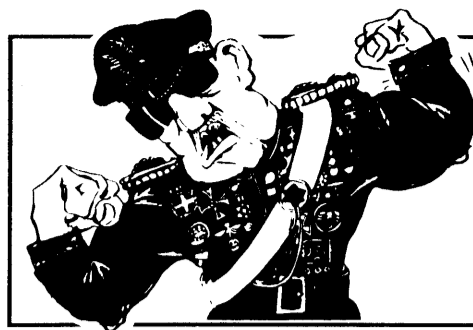


A Socialist ACTION



Chile
13 years
later,
pp. 7-9

SEPTEMBER 1986 VOL. 4, NO. 9 50 CENTS

U.S. hedges on S. Africa, backs Nicaragua 'takeover'

The U.S. government is prepared to back a "takeover" of Nicaragua by the contras, President Reagan revealed in a recent interview with the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior*.

Reagan's threat will be bolstered this month when Congress puts the final touches on legislation authorizing \$100 million in aid to the contras. Additional "contingency funds" are earmarked for the

minerals from South Africa—such as platinum, manganese, and chromium—which comprise the largest sector of U.S. imports from that country. And neither the House nor the Senate has called for a freeze on South African assets in the United States—as was done, for example, to Iran.

Both houses of Congress have avoided discussion of sanctions against the penetration of South African finance capital into this country. South Africa's Anglo America corporation, for example, has used the superprofits it gained from apartheid to become the largest foreign corporate investor in the United States.

Both the House and the Senate refuse to consider taking punitive actions against third countries that act as intermediaries in transporting South African goods to the United States. As an official of The Diamond Exchange recently told the press, "We can get as many diamonds as you want to buy from Israel, from Holland, from anywhere that does business with them [South Africa]. Not to worry."

Political publicity show

The sanctions bills before Congress are mainly for public show—to attempt to reassure voters in November that the

(continued on page 13)

EDITORIAL

CIA, which will supervise the contra operation. And U.S. Green Berets will be sent to Central America to train the contra forces.

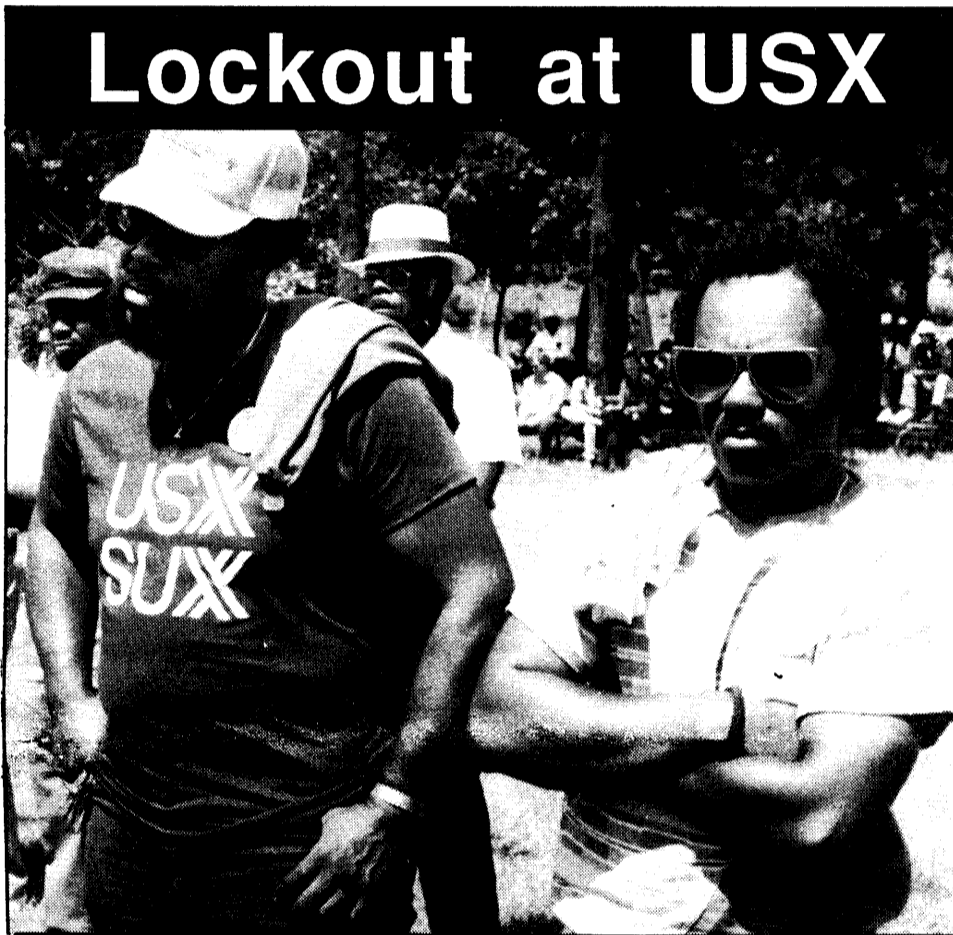
By giving the green light to an escalation of the U.S. war in Central America, the Democratic and Republican politicians are defying the wishes of the American people. Polls show that people in this country are opposed to aid to the contras by a two-to-one majority.

The government has also chosen to ignore public opinion on the question of ending apartheid in South Africa. Congressional leaders are reportedly hoping to arrange a compromise bill authorizing mild sanctions that would be acceptable to the White House.

But even the "tougher" sanctions already approved by the House of Representatives will have little effect in stopping apartheid. None of the bills before Congress are anywhere near as punishing as the U.S. trade embargo of Nicaragua.

Both the House and the Senate have pointedly excluded sanctions on "strategic"

Lockout at USX



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

USX demands takebacks; Steelworkers locked out

By MARIE WEIGAND

A year ago, Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel used the bankruptcy laws to force a new contract with seriously weakened work rules and large wage and benefit cuts upon its workers. At the time, top US Steel (since renamed USX) executive David Roderick asserted that his company would demand similar concessions.

The basic steel contract covering US Steel, LTV, Bethlehem, National, Inland, and Armco was due to expire Aug. 1, 1986. The United Steelworkers of America (USWA) pressed for early negotiations, agreeing to take the companies' financial problems into account.

All but US Steel agreed to these early negotiations. Fearing it was necessary to save their jobs, steelworkers at LTV, Bethlehem, National, and Inland ratified new contracts with wage and benefit cuts of up to \$3.60 per hour.

As the contract expiration date approached, negotiations continued at Armco and at USX. Armco agreed to the USWA's request to operate under the old contract while negotiations continued. USX rejected this request of the union. Roderick described it as a thinly veiled attempt to have a strike labeled a lockout so steelworkers could collect unemployment

insurance.

The 1983 concessionary contract had been approved with the understanding that the money saved through worker givebacks would be invested in modernizing the steel industry. Before the ink was even dry, US Steel violated the agreement by using its cash bonanza to purchase Marathon Oil. Since then, it has continued to post huge profits.

USX's negotiating stance is to sit back, refusing to come down in its demand for "competitive" wages and benefits, while the USWA retreats.

USX refuses to open books

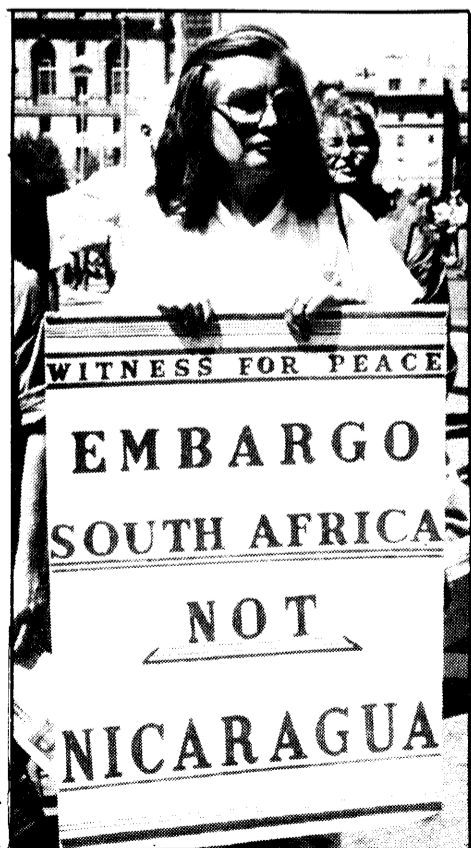
Originally, USWA leaders assured steelworkers that concessions would only be offered to those companies that proved they needed them by opening their books to independent auditors. USX refused to go along, denying the union access to such financial information.

USWA officials stated that while concessions were necessary at LTV and Bethlehem, steelworkers at USX should receive a raise. When the company refused to budge, USWA negotiators offered a wage and benefit freeze. When the company rejected this proposal, union negotiators offered wage and benefit cuts of \$0.82 per hour.

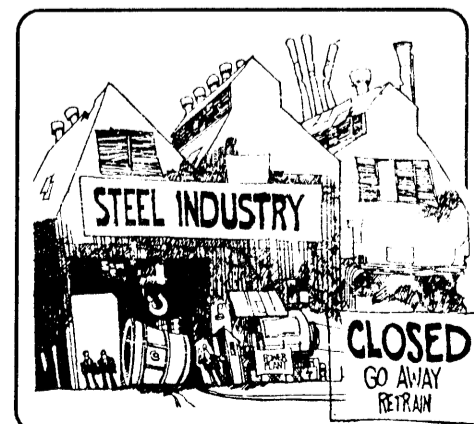
During the last two weeks of July, USX began preparations to shut down its mills by laying off most of its 20,000 employed steelworkers. (A similar number were already on indefinite long-term layoff.) By Aug. 1, heavy padlocks barred the gates of the steel plants, as the company locked out the remainder of its union members.

The USX bosses continue to demand "competitive" wages and benefits. USWA negotiators have fallen into the company trap of agreeing to lower wages to equalize labor costs. However, even this is not enough for profit-hungry USX. Although

(continued on page 5)



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action



The left and the Democratic Party, See pp. 10-11.

Ortega in Chicago responds to critics

By CARRIE HEWITT

CHICAGO, Ill.—An enthusiastic crowd of antiwar activists greeted Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega on Aug. 3 as he stepped off his commercial flight at O'Hare Airport. Chanting "Nicaragua Si, Contras No" and carrying colorful home-made banners and signs, the spirited crowd escorted Ortega through the airport to his waiting car caravan.

Ortega, who was in the United States to attend a U.N. Security Council meeting, made a special trip to Chicago to address the regular weekly meeting at the headquarters of Operation PUSH at the invitation of the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Over 1000 PUSH members and antiwar activists attended the event, withstanding sweltering temperatures in a standing-room-only crowd to listen to Ortega's hour-long speech.

While Ortega and Jackson both received a warm reception, Jackson surprised many in the crowd by introducing the meeting with a number of sharply critical remarks suggesting that the Sandinistas must share part of the blame for the current hostilities between the United States and Nicaragua.

"We are concerned for the freedom and integrity of the church and press," said Jackson referring to recent steps taken by the Sandinistas to tighten restrictions on pro-contra publications and church officials. Criticizing what he called "Soviet influence in the region," Jackson also intimated that Nicaragua was exacerbating tensions in the area.

Ortega, who clearly sees Jackson as a potential ally, responded at length to

Jackson's charges. He pointed out that the Sandinistas only took action against the main opposition newspaper, *La Prensa*, because it continued to receive money from the United States, which is waging a war inside Nicaragua.

Ortega also noted that the decision to expel Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega from the country only came after Vega met with contra chief Adolfo Calero and urged the contras to act "with decision and bravery."

With his wife, Rosario Murillo, interpreting, Ortega said that he would like to invite President Reagan to visit Nicaragua so he could meet with all the opposition parties and thus compel the American media to offer at least some coverage of the wide range of political tendencies that exist in Nicaragua.

"What do we gain by burying ideas," Ortega asked, "our revolution is about new ideas. Discussion enriches the revolution."

But the U.S.-backed war in Nicaragua has created an unusual military situation which requires unusual measures, Ortega said. With armed forces attacking Nicaraguan citizens, opponents of the revolutionary government are trying to further destabilize the country by opening an internal front. This cannot continue, he stated, if the revolution is to survive.

Even so, Ortega emphasized that the current policy on censorship in Nicaragua must be seen as a temporary measure. The Sandinistas are concerned about problems caused as a result of being forced to rely on censorship as a defensive device, Ortega explained.

In keeping with this view, Ortega noted



Sandinista supporters greet Ortega at Chicago airport.

that while *La Prensa* is currently closed because it took action to promote the contra war, the Sandinistas have taken no steps to permanently suppress the paper or confiscate *La Prensa's* building.

Ortega also pointed out that the American press has cooperated with the Reagan administration's efforts to whip up popular hysteria against Nicaragua by portraying it as a Soviet satellite. Ortega observed that although much hoopla was made over his trip to Moscow last year, the press paid little attention to the fact that he also visited with heads of state in Sweden, Italy, Spain, and France during this same tour.

Reiterating that the Reagan administration must follow the World Court's judgment and cease support for the contras, Ortega offered an eight-point Central American peace plan that he said would be

delivered soon to the U.S. government.

The proposals, which he said were reached in part after talks with Jesse Jackson, included the resumption of peace talks through the Contadora process with the aim of signing a peace agreement on Sept. 15, Central American Independence Day; the reopening of *La Prensa* if the paper's owners accept the existing legal framework and break ties with enemy forces; and the establishment of a demilitarized zone in Central America.

Given Congress' recent approval of Reagan's \$100 million aid package for the contras, the prospects for peace look grim in the face of the escalation of the contra war. The Reagan administration recently declared that it backed a contra "takeover" of Nicaragua. The task of building a strong and active antiwar movement in this country is therefore more urgent than ever.

—Fight back!



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

It's just getting too difficult to follow the capitalist press lately. Every day I read about the "debate" in Congress on the \$100 million aid to the contras. Democrats and Republicans are full of long-winded speeches aimed at explaining where they stand on increased aid to the contras.

Every day we are supplied with a picture of "poor little ole freedom fighters" sitting in a cold, wet jungle just waiting for the word from Congress.

To hear these politicians talk

you would think that without this \$100 million the "freedom fighters" would suffer a calamity so great they would have to jump into the next boat and sail to the safe harbor of Florida.

Knowing that over two-thirds of the voters in this country are opposed to contra aid, several politicians had to do some fancy footwork.

Many Democrats and Republicans expressed opposition to appropriating a full \$100 million. They called for sending a smaller sum to the contras.

But in the end, most of these politicians ended up voting for the contra aid. They voted to continue to supply the contras with weapons to murder and plunder the people of Nicaragua.

But did we really have to worry about the health and safety of Reagan's Rambos in Nicaragua? No. The secret is out. One week after the Senate voted to supply the cutthroats with the \$100 million, we learn that the CIA

has been funneling goodies to the contras all the time.

According to the Aug. 18 *San Francisco Chronicle*, "The CIA, using a legal loophole, has given millions of dollars worth of unappropriated aid to the Nicaraguan contra rebels and plans to provide at least \$100 million more on top of the \$100 million Congress has just approved, according to administration sources."

The *Chronicle* article continues, "Don Mathes, a White House spokesman, [also] said that so much of the overhead of the CIA, Defense and State departments in Honduras and other nations is in support of the contras that he could not begin to estimate its total value."

But this revelation did not even faze the Reagan administration. Mathes said such support for the contras was "perfectly legitimate." The CIA can "lend equipment and services" so long as it does so "without violating

the letter or spirit of the law," Mathes said.

So we learn that the \$100 million voted by Congress to the contra terrorists is just a wee drop in the bucket. The real amount cannot even be estimated by the White House.

The weeks of debate over how many millions to send to the contras, it turns out, was just a public song and dance.

The game that the ruling rich have established in Congress is based on the ping-pong method of politics. The batters are the Democrats and the Republicans, and the American voters are the ball.

The rulers of this country need

to make voters believe that there is a difference between the two capitalist parties. We are supposed to get so discombobulated at being batted around that we can't spot the batters.

Our only hope is to change place with the batters and give these two political parties a chance to be batted around—and to totally bat that ball out of the game.

Until we can build an independent political party based on the unions which represents the working class and all the oppressed and exploited, we will continue to be batted around by all these bipartisan ping-pong players.

'Oh, the clever little devils'

50 Years of Socialist Continuity

The following 50-year veterans of the socialist movement will speak:

Jake Cooper, Asher Harer, Ada Farrell, and Milton Alvin

The following 50-year veterans will also be honored:

Henry Austin, Tiby Marton, Esther Perry, Hayden Perry, Dot Selander, Ted Selander, Alice Snipper, Dave Cooper

Special greetings from:

Enigdio Quintero, Former Nicaraguan 1st Secretary to OAS; Walter Johnson, Sec'y Treas. S.F. Labor Council; John Heegard, Hormel Local P-9 striker;

Also: Sylvia Weinstein, candidate SF Board of Supervisors

8:00 p.m., Saturday, August 30, 1986, ILWU Local 6, 255 Ninth St., San Francisco. For more information, call (415) 821-0458

Socialist ACTION

Closing date: Aug. 24, 1986

Editor: ALAN BENJAMIN

Asst. Editor: MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Staff: Amanda Chapman, Paul Colvin, Suzanne Forsyth, May May Gong, Millie Gonzalez, David Kirschner, Joe Ryan, Carole Seligman, Kwame M.A. Somburu, Sylvia Weinstein.

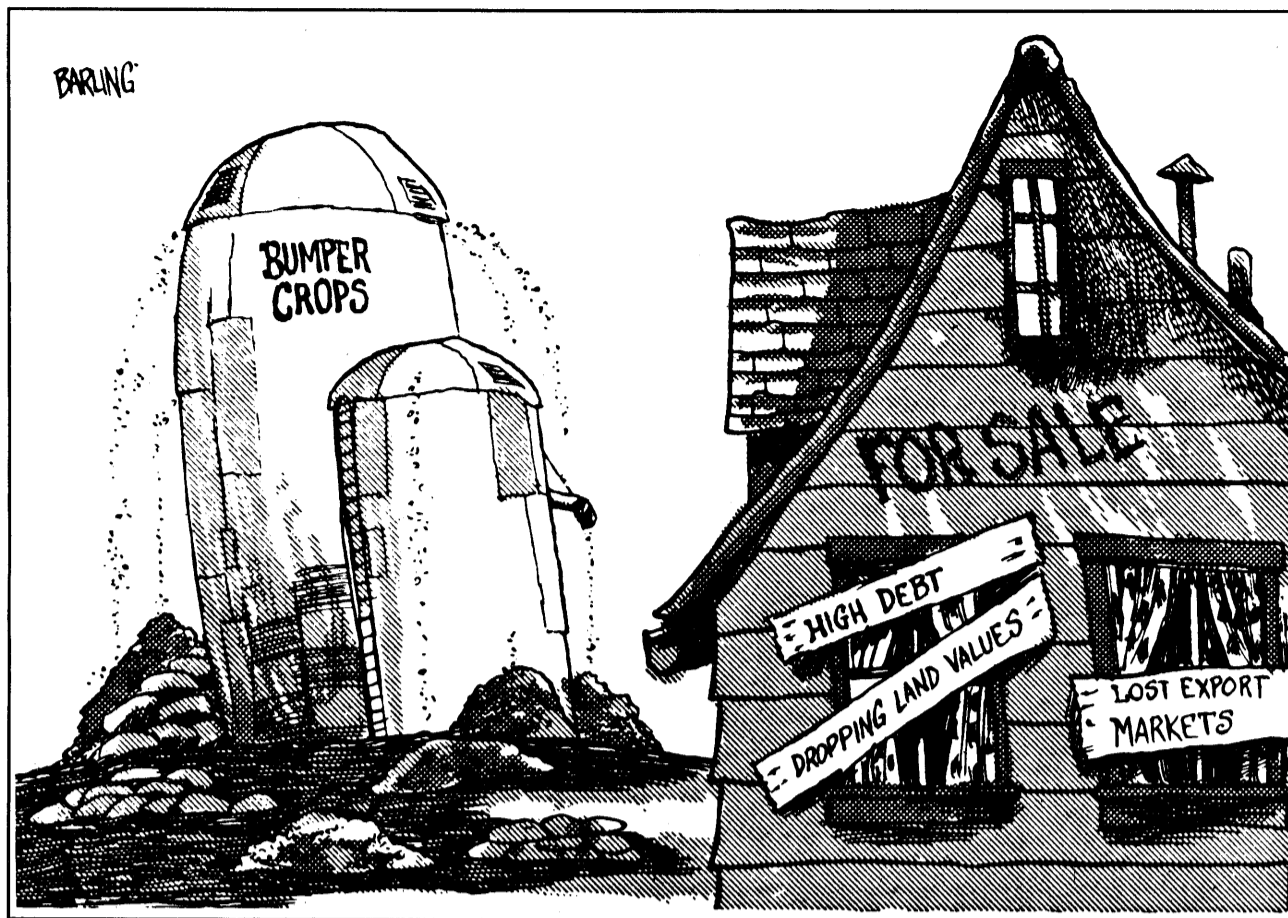
Business Manager: DON MAHONEY

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: For one year (12 issues)—U.S. 2nd Class: \$6, 1st Class: \$9; Canada and Mexico 2nd Class: \$9, 1st Class: \$12; All other countries 2nd Class: \$12, 1st Class: \$24. (Canada money orders or checks should be in U.S. dollars.)

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



Farmers' plight reveals crisis of overproduction

By NAT WEINSTEIN

"In these crises, a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of overproduction."

Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce."—*The Communist Manifesto*

These words written over 138 years ago by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels aptly capture the bizarre plight of most U.S. farmers today. Storage facilities are nearly filled to capacity with unsold wheat and corn left over from last year's bumper crop. There is no room left to hold this year's surplus.

Despite a long buildup in storage capacity on farms as well as at grain dealers' terminals, farmers will be forced to dump much of this year's crop on the glutted market at prices below their cost. Or else they will have to put their surplus produce either in makeshift shelters or in unprotected heaps on the ground.

Either way, farmers face heavy losses and bankruptcy because they did their jobs too well. Foreclosures are on the rise, with the total farm debt soaring to over \$200 billion. The current supply of food grains is more than enough to feed the 5 billion people on earth. Meanwhile, despite the overflowing grain storage bins, millions of the world's poor continue to go hungry.

Genesis of the farm crisis

After the Great Depression had devastated farmers in the 1930s, the U.S. capitalist rulers instituted a series of measures intended to avoid a repetition of such a catastrophe.

To reduce food production, the U.S. government paid farmers for each acre allowed to lie fallow. Also, to prevent gluts and the consequent collapse of agricultural prices that periodically ruin farmers and destabilize the economy as a whole, the government arranged to buy grain when the price fell below a government-set minimum. These surpluses were kept in storage for future sale—when and if the market permitted.

One might have hoped that the surplus grain would be given to feed the hungry. But only a small proportion of the unsold government-purchased surplus food is distributed to the poor.

The capitalist government prefers to let enormous quantities of food rot in storage caves and warehouses rather than feed it to hungry people. Were the poor to be given free food, the capitalists reason, they would buy less and thus aggravate the basic capitalist problem of overproduction.

The original farm price-support measures instituted in

the 1930s have been superficially modified in recent years. Cash payments for unused acres have been replaced by payments in grain from government stockpiles for land taken out of production. And outright government purchase of produce that falls below set prices has been replaced by "loans" on unsold crops.

If prices are higher the following year, the farmer can repay the loan and sell the crops. If not, the grain "collateral" is forfeited (that is, the loan is in effect transformed into a government purchase).

These countercyclical agricultural measures had limited success. But in the long run, despite the aim of the post-1929 farm policy, agricultural productivity was intensified—laying the basis for today's more serious crisis.

Paid to reduce the land under cultivation, farmers naturally looked for ways to get more bushels of grain per acre. Scientific agricultural techniques were introduced—more intensive use of tractors, irrigation, seed-selection and hybridization, along with chemical fertilizers—leading to ever more abundant harvests on less acreage and with fewer farmers.

Capitalist overproduction

This crisis in agriculture, however, is only symptomatic of deeper economic trouble threatening to wreak havoc in every sphere of the world capitalist economy.

In industry, just as in agriculture, measures put in effect to avoid another 1929 have only postponed it. And more important, the postponement has the effect of building up the potential explosive power of the inevitable economic collapse.

Periodic collapse of the economy is an iron law of capitalism. It is the unavoidable consequence of a system in which a portion of the product of every worker's labor is not paid for. Unpaid labor expropriated by the capitalists—profits—means that a portion of total production cannot be purchased.

Capitalist economy must go through a phase of expanding production until the market is saturated with unsold commodities. When this occurs, the most inefficient enterprises are bankrupted. The more successful capitalists gobble-up their fallen competitors and capture their share of the market.

After a period of reduced production, in which time the oversupply of goods is eventually sold or destroyed, the upturn of production is resumed, to culminate later in another bust.

The boom/bust cycle

The 1929 crisis was more devastating in its effect than previous boom-bust cycles because of the unprecedented expansion of credit, which artificially prolonged the boom-phase of the economic cycle.

Because productive capacity was allowed to grow, and the oversupply was concealed by all kinds of paper transactions, the collapse of production was all the more destructive. When the speculative boom could no longer

be sustained, more businesses went bankrupt and more workers were fired—remaining without jobs for a longer period.

Today, on a vastly grander scale, generally uninterrupted world capitalist production has been supported by a mountain of credit, dwarfing the credit expansion that fueled the boom of the 1920s. When the current cycle reaches its limits, the collapse will be accordingly more devastating in its effects.

Unlike the crisis gestating before 1929, private expansion of credit to maintain the capitalist economy has been augmented by over 50 years of deficit government spending. The astronomical U.S. national debt, over \$2 trillion, continues to grow at an increasing pace. (It doubled in the last five years!)

The U.S. debt is the result of systematic state intervention to keep the economic system afloat. When a glut threatens to bring production to a halt, the government borrows money from bankers and pumps it into the economy in a variety of forms—from extending unemployment insurance payments to expanding military production.

Spending for guns, missiles, and bombs—in addition to its primary function for U.S. imperialism of maintaining its domination over the world—is the perfect boondoggle for such "countercyclical" expenditures. War materiel has a special virtue in the hands of the capitalists of serving no genuine human need and thus does not compete on the marketplace with useful goods.

War production means higher taxes

But this enormous waste of the people's resources must be eventually paid for. Taxes must be raised...from workers, of course, not capitalists. Taxing capitalists would have the effect of lowering their profits and discouraging production.

But raising workers' taxes too much is also dangerous. Besides the discontent this helps generate, it takes money out of the economy, defeating the purpose of government countercyclical spending.

When the government is unable to pay its debts, it takes out another loan. If tax income doesn't rise to pay these loans, the government must eventually print the dollars to pay the interest owed to creditors. All dollars are then proportionately reduced in value. The resulting inflation is the cruelest of taxes, hitting the poorest the hardest.

Most of the world's capitalist nations are facing a similar dilemma. The debt owed to U.S. bankers by Latin America, for example, is over \$400 billion. These semicolonial vassals of American imperialism are not only unable to repay the principal—but are increasingly unable to pay the interest.

A definitive default by Latin American debtors—so far staved off—could ruin U.S. banks, which have large amounts of their capital invested in these loans. The bailout cost to government agencies could bring the U.S. and world capitalist financial structure tumbling down.

Whatever triggers the coming economic convulsion, it will no doubt be the most serious in U.S. history.

"Restructuring" the workforce

It is in this broad context that the current plight of farmers must be seen. Many will be permanently removed from their land, just as many fired industrial workers will never get their jobs back.

This "restructuring" of the workforce, as the apologists for capitalism like to phrase it, will intensify. A steadily increasing pauperization of workers and farmers is in the cards. And even if the rulers are able to prolong a rickety stability a few more years, the creeping impoverishment of America's toilers is sowing the seeds of rebellion.

The Great Depression of the 1930s proved that capitalism had outlived its usefulness. It took World War II, with all its horrors, to extricate world capitalism from that crisis. Today, millions of toilers are being retaught those lessons. Capitalism will again convince millions that it has outlived its usefulness and can now bring only economic misery and more Vietnams and Nicaraguas. ■

SOCIALIST ACTION FORUM

'BIG MOUNTAIN' - American Indians Struggle Against Relocation

Speakers:

Representative from International Treaty Council;

Adam Wood, member, Socialist Action.

Slide presentation

Friday, Sept. 12, 1986

3435 Army St., Suite 308, S.F.



GM threatens closure to force concessions

By MICHAEL FLISS

FRAMINGHAM, Mass.—Three thousand auto workers at the General Motors assembly plant here were surprised on July 23 by the announcement of an unscheduled one-month layoff which began on Aug. 1.

Although the Framingham plant builds two of the best-selling cars in the country, the Chevrolet Celebrity and the Oldsmobile Ciera, GM spokespersons have offered only contradictory explanations for the lengthy shutdown.

GM plant spokesperson Ben Harrell said the shutdown was necessary because of high dealership inventories caused by sluggish Ciera sales and to retool for the new model year.

But Nettie Seabrooks, a GM spokesperson in Detroit, said that the Ciera has done well in sales. "We really don't have that many unsold Oldsmobiles," she said.

Workers at the Framingham plant said that it has been unnecessary in the past two years for the plant to close to make the few cosmetic changes on the cars between model years.

The layoff at the Framingham plant comes at a time when the future existence of the facility is in question. Management has said its future is dependent on the production of a new 1988 product, the APV front-wheel-drive van (GM-200 program).

Management stated that Framingham is a good location to assemble the GM-200 because a minimum investment for retooling would be required. The project promised that a new paint shop and a plastics plant would be added to the Framingham facility.

But in July, a Framingham Town Meeting rejected the zoning proposal for the construction of the new plastics plant. Shortly after, GM announced the cancellation of plans to build the new facilities. GM's headquarters in Detroit sent out word that other sites are now being considered for the minivan production.

But this zoning problem is not the real

reason for GM's change in plans. GM executives in Michigan said that "labor difficulties" were the real reason the company had ended plans to build the additional facilities.

GM Executive Vice President Lloyd Reuss said the company would need to close three assembly plants in North America by 1990 to reduce overcapacity and maximize profits. And to increase its profits, GM has demanded that workers accept major concessions and changes in the workplace.

Earlier in the year, UAW Local 422 rejected GM's request to renegotiate its contract to reduce pay, change the work rules, and cut the classifications from 100 to two. Local 422 soundly rejected the last national concessionary contract.

According to *The Middlesex News*, the construction plans in Framingham were canceled when GM failed to gain an early decision on labor costs.

Framingham auto workers know that one auto assembly plant after another across the country is being forced to accept Saturn-type contracts that greatly reduce wages and change work rules by pitting worker against worker, local against local, and community against community. They, like so many other workers, have invested their lives in the communities surrounding their workplaces.

The workers at Framingham know that the cars they build are being sold and that a four-week layoff is not necessary when the model change will only take three hours. The feeling around the plant is that GM is attempting—through intimidation—to increase its profits by reducing the workers' wages and curtailing their job standards.

Many of the workers at Framingham feel it is possible to end concessions if the rank and file organize with a clarity of purpose within the plant and if they unify with locals across the country to defeat the only real enemy against their livelihoods: General Motors.

Conglomerates milk the health industry

By HAYDEN PERRY

Patients' health is being endangered and medical workers' jobs are being destroyed by Health America, a profit hungry medical conglomerate in Oakland, Calif. Health America runs medical clinics in 19 states as a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO). This is a system in which members pay a monthly fee that covers their medical costs when they need care.

Twenty-six thousand people are enrolled in this health plan in Oakland. Thirteen thousand of them are cared for at the North Oakland Clinic at a monthly fee of \$85. Workers at the clinic are members of the Hospital and Institutional Workers Union, Local 250—affiliated with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Doctors are also paid employees of Health America. While this system has been profitable, Health America wants still more profits.

On Aug. 1 they announced that the North Oakland clinic would be closed in 30 days, its employees laid off, and its patients scattered under a plan known as "capitation." Under this system Health America members still pay the conglomerate \$85 a month but they are "sold" to various groups of doctors who treat them for a fixed fee. By getting doctors to compete for the contracts, Health America has reduced the rate they pay them to about \$30 a member a month.

Thus, Health America gets over half the member's fee for little more than a bookkeeping operation. Contract doctors are expected to make a profit on the remaining \$30. This fast-food-type franchising process will result in doctors paring their costs to the bone, three-minute "examinations" of sick patients, and a minimum of tests.

The union is the first fatality under capitation. Seven thousand North Oakland Clinic patients have already been transferred to the Oakhill Medical Group, a non-unionized facility. As other Health America-operated clinics are closed down, the union will be eliminated from ever-larger segments of the health-care industry.

Medicare and welfare patients who pay less than the average \$85 fee may be dropped from the scheme altogether. Even those who remain in the system will lose continuity of medical care as they are shuffled about among strange doctors. Everyone loses by this new development—except the conglomerates, which are distancing themselves as far as possible from the patients who pay them.

To intensify the process, merger mania has hit the health industry. Health America has just been swallowed up by another conglomerate, Maxi-Care, a name that should properly be translated as Maxi-Profit. As reported in *Business Week* magazine, Maxi-Care has incurred \$200 million in debt in acquiring Health America. This means they will squeeze

doctors, patients, and medical workers all the harder to turn a profit.

To counter this trend to unfeeling corporate medicine, union members are demanding that the union be included in the negotiations between Health America and the doctors' groups in order to protect the rights of union members and patients. They are also demanding that Health America and the bidding doctors' groups sign a statement agreeing to respect the union contract and to renegotiate in good faith when it expires in February 1987.

While opposing capitation, the union insists, if it does take place, that Health America should deal with only one doctors' group instead of splitting its patients up between competing groups.

Winning these demands, which are in the interest of both workers and patients, will take the joint efforts of the labor movement and all those concerned with our health care.



S.F. hotel bosses target union

One thousand members of San Francisco's Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, Local 2, rallied on Aug. 12 to protest union-busting contract proposals. They were joined by 3000 members of the American Postal Workers Union, in town for their convention, and by members of local unions.

Employers are pressing for a two-tier wage system; major cuts in sick leave, medical benefits, and pensions; a four-year wage freeze; and shorter shifts. At the midnight hour, the Aug. 14 contract-expiration date was extended, but there is no doubt that Local 2—the city's largest union—faces a major challenge in the months ahead.

'Cooling off' extended in Guilford rail dispute

By ART LECLAIR

PORTLAND, Maine—On Aug. 21, President Reagan signed a congressional resolution to prevent a dispute on the Maine Central Railroad from escalating into a rail strike that could paralyze the Northeast region. The Maine Central is one of three small railroads owned by Guilford Transportation Industries (GTI).

The resolution extends until Sept. 18 a government-imposed "cooling-off" period in the contract dispute between the company and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE).

The Maine Central track workers went on

strike in early March when Guilford demanded a 20-percent wage cut and other concessions. The strike spread to the government-subsidized ConRail system in May, forcing the White House to issue a back-to-work order for 60 days. Since then, the government-authorized Emergency Panel has done little to resolve the dispute.

Congresspersons from New England, led by Rep. Sylvio Conte (R-Mass.), had pushed for an extension of the "cooling-off" period, calling it essential in preventing another systemwide shutdown of GTI carriers. Conte stated that a second strike on the Maine Central was likely, following the Aug. 8 decision by Guilford to impose drastic work-rule changes on the track workers—as well as a unilateral 20-percent wage cut.

The resolution requires BMW workers to remain on the job while at the same time forcing Guilford to rescind the pay cut and maintain the working conditions provided under the old contract.

Meanwhile, in late July, U.S. District Court Judge Gene Carter allowed Guilford to lay off 781 workers on its railroads—the Maine Central, the Boston and Maine, and the Delaware and Hudson.

Carter ruled in favor of the layoffs because GTI attorneys presented a picture of fiscal strife on the carriers. This was due, the attorneys stated, to a loss of freight business resulting from the strike by BMW members.

Of course, the fact that freight cars and piggy-back units have been allowed to sit in the yards and on sidings while crews are told "there's no work" had no impact on the good judge. Meanwhile, the strikers have been labeled "greedy" and "featherbedders."

The layoffs came less than three weeks after Judge Carter ordered Guilford to rehire 1700 workers it had illegally laid off in May for their solid support of the strike.

Art LeClair is a committeeperson in Local 791 IBEW, Amtrak.

LTV Steel retreats under strong union pressure

By MARIE WEIGAND

Immediately after filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on July 17, company officials made clear that among the "creditors" LTV planned to protect itself against were the retirees. Each pensioner received a letter stating that under federal bankruptcy laws, the company had no choice but to cancel all insurance benefits for those who had retired prior to July 17.

In testimony before a special Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on July 28, Harvard Law School bankruptcy expert Vern Countryman refuted this company contention. He stated that he saw no possible interpretation of the federal bankruptcy statutes which would permit the company to unilaterally cancel this portion of its collective-bargaining agreement. He added that two recent Appeals Court decisions confirmed this.

LTV retirees in Cleveland, Youngstown, and Chicago organized large, spirited rallies. In East Chicago, Ind., retired steelworkers set up informational picket lines outside LTV's Indiana Harbor Works. As the company continued to insist on its "obligation" to cancel these benefits, steelworkers at Indiana Harbor took a strike authorization vote. This was soon followed by a sanctioned strike at this particular mill.

On Monday, July 28, the LTV

negotiating committee, which had reached a concessionary agreement with LTV Steel earlier this year, was called to Pittsburgh for an emergency meeting. USWA attorneys explained that any strike called in response to the company's violation of this major portion of the contract would be a legal strike over an unfair labor practice.

The decision was announced that unless the company agreed to reinstate the retirees' benefits by midnight, Aug. 1, steelworkers at LTV's two other modern, profitable mills—Cleveland and Hennepin—would join their brothers and sisters from Indiana Harbor on the picket lines.

USWA International President Lynn Williams explained that more than solidarity with the retirees was at stake. He said that if the company succeeded in this attack, it would only be a matter of time before it canceled other portions of the contract. On the other hand, he stated, if steelworkers demonstrated their resolve to stay out until all benefits were restored, the company would think twice before doing so.

Strike preparations began

As soon as the negotiating committee members returned from Pittsburgh, strike preparations began as each local union called an emergency executive board meeting late Tuesday night or early Wednesday morning. Strike committees and

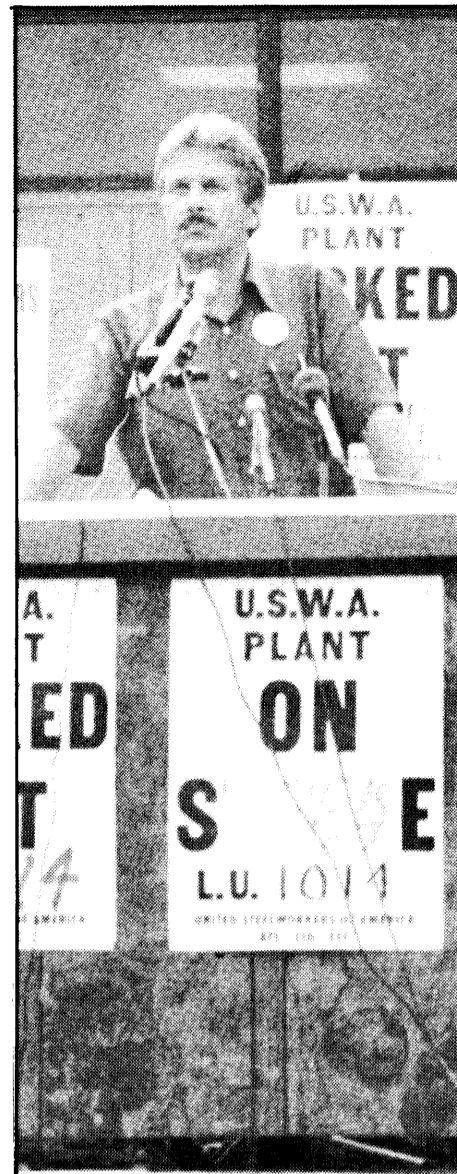
picket captains were selected. Special meetings were set up to brief local union officers on strike benefits. On Wednesday, July 30, the company was formally notified of the union's decision, as plans for an orderly shut-down were discussed.

Company officials hoped to use USX's planned lock-out to increase LTV's share of the steel market. Promising customers an uninterrupted supply of flat-rolled steel, they had secured promises of up to 50 percent of USX's automotive orders.

Realizing that the steelworkers were serious about making sure this couldn't happen so long as the company refused to live up to its contractual obligations, they retreated. On Wednesday, July 30, LTV's attorneys petitioned the federal bankruptcy judge to allow them to reinstate the benefits for six months.

That same evening, the U.S. Senate met to ratify legislation which would force LTV to pay the benefits. A similar bill is expected to pass the House shortly.

LTV steelworkers understand that it was their determination which forced the company to retreat. At the same time, they realize it is only a matter of time before the company either approaches the union for additional concessions or again tries to unilaterally change the contract. However, this recent victory has left these steelworkers much more confident that they can defeat these corporate attacks. ■



Jim Guyette, president, local P-9, speaks at rally protesting USX lockout in Gary, Indiana.

Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

... USX fightback

(continued from page 1)

USWA negotiators describe competitive wages as the industry average, USX executives interpret "competitive" as equaling the lowest wages in the industry—Wheeling-Pittsburgh and McLouth.

"Contracting out"

The major concern in this year's basic steel negotiations was "contracting out." Over the past three years, steelworkers have seen thousands of jobs lost as outside contractors have been brought in to perform maintenance and janitorial work, and steel has been sent out to be split or plated.

Although other basic steel contracts negotiated this year contain serious wage and benefit cuts, they include improved language on contracting out. In fact, hundreds of steelworkers have been returned to work under this new contract language.

USWA negotiators have demanded that USX offer similar contracting-out language. USX, which flagrantly violated the contracting-out provisions of the old contract, has refused to even consider similar improved language in the new contract.

Despite the padlocked gates, USX is contesting workers' unemployment compensation claims, denying it is a lockout. Steelworkers are hopeful of receiving these benefits in a number of states. In Pennsylvania, late last month, a

judge ruled the steelworkers had been locked out and were entitled to unemployment benefits. In addition, the federal government classified USX's action as a lockout, thereby authorizing food-stamp benefits to the workers.

Police attack in Gary

USX has provocatively tried to ship steel out by rail at some locations. Pickets in Lorain, Ohio, effectively stopped such an attempt. However, in Gary, Ind., police arrested pickets, allowing steel through the lines.

Prior to the lockout, local union officials in Gary came across an unusual company invoice—for tear gas and grenade launchers. Company officials hastened to say this was a mistake, that they had never ordered any such equipment.

USX supervisors around the country have received word to be prepared to go to Gary. Rumors circulated that the company planned to use these bosses to restart its Gary Works. Although no such efforts have begun, steelworkers from other cities came to a rally on Aug. 12 to express their determination to stop any such attempts.

While USWA negotiators continue to offer more and more of the workers' hard-won gains, and USX officials continue to arrogantly demand even more concessions, USX steelworkers are demonstrating their willingness to resist the company's attacks. They expect a long and bitter struggle, but are confident that USX's union-busting assault can be turned around. ■



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

Postal workers back Hormel strikers

By GORDON BAILEY

One year after going on strike against concessions and union-busting tactics, 850 families in Austin, Minn., continue their fight against Geo. Hormel & Co., a multi-national giant.

Six hundred supporters and strikers celebrated the first anniversary with a picnic and rally in an Austin public park on Aug. 17. The large crowd of picnickers indicated the solid support the strikers still enjoy.

The packinghouse workers recently gained valuable material aid and a boost to their morale from the American Postal Workers Union.

In defiance of official AFL-CIO policy, the Postal Workers union convention, held in San Francisco in mid-August, voted unanimously to adopt the families of six Hormel strikers. This means the union will donate \$500 a month for the support of each family; a total of \$3000 a month.

The International union will continue this support for two years, or whenever the strike is ended. The postal workers also passed the hat around the hall and collected \$3119.

The resolution also called on the 3000 delegates to write letters to Hubert Humphrey III, the attorney General of Minnesota, demanding that he drop the phony rioting charges against 18 of the Hormel strike supporters. A motion to support a boycott of all Hormel products until the conflict is settled was also passed unanimously.

The convention voted to endorse the fight of the striking packinghouse workers after Buck Heegard, a worker at Hormel for 38 years, addressed the delegates.

In reporting this encouraging development, Jim Fisher, a spokesperson for the North American Meat Packers Union (Original Local P-9), pointed to the growing sympathy for the embattled workers. "We do not think we could have got this support six months ago," he told *Socialist Action*.

Because of the strike-breaking tactics of the UFCW International leadership, the Austin strikers have filed for re-registration

as the North American Meat Packers Union (NAMPU/P-9).

The Austin Emergency Appeal, which is a legal defense committee set up to collect and disburse funds for the 18 strike supporters currently facing police charges, recently sent out a 5000-piece fundraising mailing.

Strike supporters are going door-to-door in the Minneapolis area explaining the union's case and appealing for funds. Money raised will be used for the union's legal bills and other needs.

The strikers are suffering hardship and need money. Even those who were eligible for unemployment compensation were cut off Aug. 17, one year after the walkout. Checks should be made out and sent to: Austin United Support Group, P.O. Box 396, Austin, MN 55912, Tel. (507) 473-4110. ■

It will be a great day when our schools get all the money they need, and the Navy has to hold a bake sale to buy a ship.

HUMAN NEEDS BEFORE PROFITS!

BUTTONS!
6 different kinds.
\$1 each

Order from Socialist Action



Eleanor Smeal

By KATE CURRY

CINCINNATI, Ohio—Eleanor Smeal, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), addressed a rally of 500 pro-choice advocates at the University of Cincinnati (UC) on Aug. 3. The event united those who want to defend a woman's right to choose against recent attacks by religious fanatics.

Smeal outlined NOW's lawsuit against anti-choice extremists Joseph Scheidler, Joan Andrews, John Ryan, and their anti-choice cohorts. She explained that clinic violence is a nationwide problem. The desperate anti-choice minority has lost the battle to persuade people of their viewpoint and has turned to increasingly violent tactics nationally.

The goal of the suit is to serve a nationwide federal-court injunction against clinic harassment. Smeal also gave encouragement "to the people who are providing these vital health services to women." She termed the clinic doctors "heroes."

UC Women's Studies hosted the event, which was sponsored by Cincinnati NOW and the March 9th Abortion Rights Committee, a group inspired by this spring's national March for Women's Lives. Other rally endorsers included women's groups, political organizations, gay and lesbian rights groups, and pro-choice organizations.

The rally was picketed by about 40 especially obnoxious anti-abortion protesters. University police arrested four on criminal-trespass charges. Others were ejected from the hall after they attempted to disrupt the meeting. Many of the pro-choicers who attended the rally were shocked by the viciousness of the taunts this hateful bunch hurled at them on their way into the rally.

"Project Jericho"

Last December, two Cincinnati abortion clinics were firebombed. One of the facilities, operated by Planned Parenthood, sustained over \$400,000 worth of damage and must be totally rebuilt. Temporary quarters have been the target of regular Saturday harassment by anti-choice forces.

Each weekend a screaming mob of 50 to 200 vengeful religious pickets harass clinic patients and staff. These anti-choice forces have succeeded in limiting the hours and services available at other clinics and hospitals in Cincinnati.

On July 26, "Project Jericho," an organization of born-again bigots, expanded its pickets to the homes of Planned

500 rally in Cincinnati to defend abortion rights

Parenthood doctors. The local media, particularly the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and the *Cincinnati Post*, have exacerbated the situation by giving front-page or lead-story coverage to every action and word of these "right-to-lifers." Some have been turned into local media stars by repeated interviews and photographs.

Exasperated by the increasingly menacing protests, Planned Parenthood sought judicial relief. On June 19, Hamilton County Common Pleas Judge

Thomas Crush issued an injunction limiting to five the number of pickets directly in front of the clinic and forbidding loud singing, praying, and shouting near the facility.

"Project Jericho" has resisted the injunction and its key leaders face nearly 40 criminal charges in connection with the clinic protests. Jerry Falwell, the evangelist, has entered the fight by promising to provide all the legal aid the "pro-lifers" need.

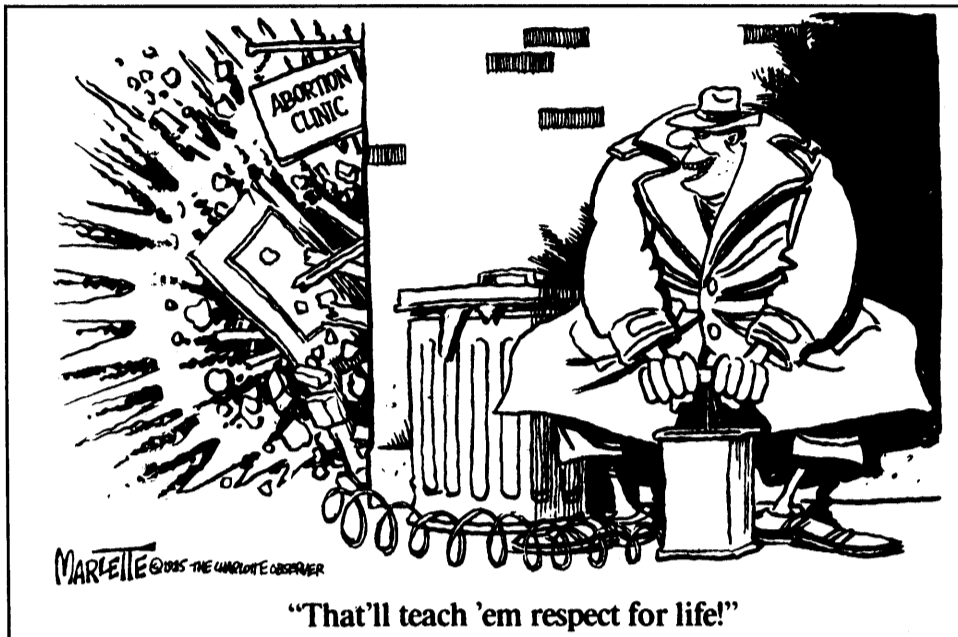
In response to the mounting attacks on the abortion clinics, Planned Parenthood's advice to pro-choice supporters over the past several months was to send money and stay home. It wanted no counter-mobilizations at the site of the fire-bombed clinic.

All pro-choice groups were asked to refrain from activities during the months of the court fight, believing this would give them a better chance at a favorable court ruling. The actual effect, however, was to disorient pro-choice supporters.

In January, for example, a spirited rally was held here in response to the dual clinic firebombing the previous month. But the March For Women's Lives scheduled for March 9, which ended up drawing over 90,000 people in Washington, D.C., was not even announced.

Planned Parenthood agreed to participate in the Aug. 3 Smeal rally since it had been successful in gaining the court injunction. This was a welcome departure from its previous strategy.

The rally, in turn, provided a boost to Planned Parenthood. A novel fund-raising project to rebuild the fire-bombed clinic was launched on Aug. 3. The "Pledge-a Picket" plan works like this: For each picket at Cincinnati's clinics, hospitals, or doctor's homes, donors pledge money to Planned Parenthood. It is hoped that the pickets will be depressed to learn that their presence insures a hefty donation to the abortion clinic.



Protest targets unsafe Fernald uranium plant

By DORIS MARKS

CINCINNATI, Ohio—On Aug. 9, the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, the Cincinnati Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign sponsored a protest gathering at the gates of the Fernald uranium processing plant northwest of the city.

Fernald plays a key part in the production of nuclear weapons and is one of the largest storage facilities of low-level nuclear wastes in the country. The plant has drawn national attention for the blatant manner in which the Defense Department and National Lead of Ohio, which operated the plant until this year, ignored the steady leakage of uranium dust into the air and ground water.

Since the plant opened in 1951, some 215,000 pounds of radioactive dust have been released into the atmosphere and 163,000 pounds into the water. The Department of Energy reported last year that another 11.3 million pounds of uranium are buried at the plant.

Gene Branham, head of the Atomic Trade and Labor Council, recently testified before the House Energy and Commerce

Committee that workers at the plant have been handling uranium contaminated with plutonium for 20 years without any safety instructions.

Daniel J. Arthur, the plant's safety auditor, resigned last month with a public blast at the safety record of Fernald. "The Fernald site is the most blatant offender of workers in the public health area I have ever seen," he said.

Speakers at the Aug. 9 event included David Fankhauser, a leader of the successful movement to halt the opening of the Zimmer nuclear plant at Moscow, Ohio. In hearings before the Public Utility

Commission of Ohio, Fankhauser had presented evidence of slipshod engineering at Zimmer. Southwestern Ohio was spared a disaster similar to the one at Three Mile Island through the efforts of activist groups to mobilize masses of citizens who would be potentially affected.

Fernald is likewise a powderkeg. Fankhauser pointed out that Fernald houses wastes from the Manhattan Project, which produced the first atomic bomb in 1945. It must be dealt with in the same manner as Zimmer—through well-publicized demonstrations and educational projects.

The plant, operated for the Defense Department, was recently taken over by the Westinghouse Corp. But no visible steps have been taken to reduce health and safety hazards. It must be made clear that there is no safe way to produce nuclear products or nuclear energy. In order to close the plant permanently, only a huge public outcry will be effective.

Coors responds to boycott with image polishing

By ADAM WOOD

In mid-August, the Coors International Bike Race hit the road in Sonoma, Calif. The race is an annual event which runs through much of the western United States and finishes in Boulder, Colorado—home of the Coors brewery. Teams from all over the world participate in the race, including France, Ireland, Colombia, and Mexico.

Coors brewery, which has come under increasing attack for its notorious anti-labor and anti-civil rights record, is seeking to shine up its image with various publicity stunts.

Coors television commercials try to use Black actors when possible in order to gloss over statements by William Coors such as, "One of the best things the slavetraders did for you [Blacks] was to drag your ancestors over here in chains." Coors sponsors many Cinco de Mayo festivals to cover up its attacks on Chicano workers at the brewery.

Coors has also launched a college fund for children of Vietnam veterans. This is ironic considering how hard the Colorado

brewery is pushing to get us into a new Vietnam—Coors is one of the largest private funders of the contras. The International Bike Race is just one more ploy to legitimize the activities of Coors Inc.

One interesting aspect of the race was the participation of East Germany and the Soviet Union. The presence of these teams was used by many liberals to justify support for the race. According to Sonoma Mayor Jerrold Tuller, involving these teams encourages "people to people diplomacy."

Unfortunately, this was achieved by supporting Coors! Wouldn't it have been more effective for the sponsors of this bike race to stand with the almost 13 million people in the AFL-CIO, which has launched a Coors boycott?

The Coors International Bike Race has scored another publicity coup for Coors. Now more than ever the Coors Boycott must be kept alive and strengthened. Boycott all Coors products and events to let the Coors family know what you think of their criminal activities.



Fernald workers on strike in October 1985.

Socialist Action/Bob Henes

International Outlook



A Marxist

Theoretical Review

SEPTEMBER 1986

Chile: 13 years after the Pinochet coup



Koen Wessig

Sept. 11, 1986, marks the 13th anniversary of the military coup in Chile. This was a black day for the workers and peasants of Chile. The coup—long anticipated by everyone—was savage and ruthless. Over 10,000 political activists and workers were massacred and thousands more "disappeared." For days afterwards, bodies could be seen floating down the river that flows through the capital city of Santiago.

Sept. 11, 1973, was also a black day for the workers and peasants of the rest of Latin America. They followed with great interest and deep sympathy the "experiment" in Chile of the "peaceful road to socialism" promised by Allende and the Unidad Popular (Popular Unity). They knew that the slaughter in Chile would be a harbinger of other slaughters in Argentina, Brazil, and elsewhere.

The U.S. government was the architect of the coup. Subsequent information exposed the central role of the CIA in planning and setting the stage for Pinochet's uprising. The U.S. government of Nixon and Kissinger secretly funneled billions of dollars to help destabilize the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende. The coup could not have happened without the agreement and backing of the United States.

Pinochet did his work well. The unions were smashed, social funds for the elderly and unemployed were gutted, nationalized enterprises were re-privatized, and every attempt at protest was brutally suppressed.

Thirteen years later, however, it is the workers, peasants, and students who are again on the offensive. The Pinochet government finds itself isolated and on the defensive. Pinochet and his U.S. backers could knock the workers down but—in the long run—couldn't keep them down. The defeat in 1973 was decisive but not permanent.

Ironically, U.S. imperialism, which put Pinochet in power to smash the aspirations of the Chilean people, is the force that has contributed to the new rise of the mass movement in Chile. The Draconian austerity policies of the U.S.-controlled World Bank have pauperized the workers, peasants, and even sections of the Chilean middle class to such an extent that they feel they have nothing left to lose.

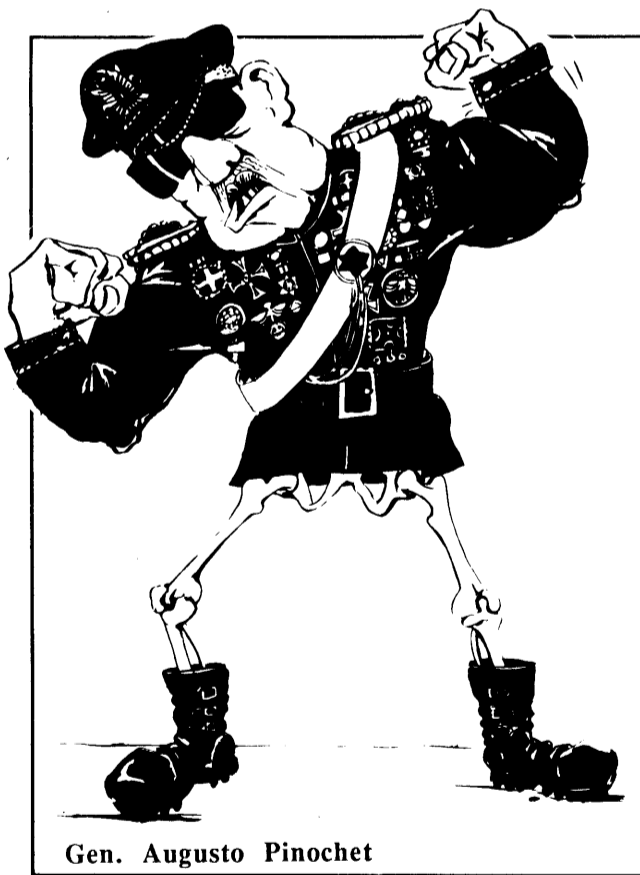
Unemployment is up to 30 percent, and in the shanty towns unemployment stands around 90 percent for the youth. Over 80 percent of the population earns less than \$100 per month. The pitiful pay doled out to those on "make work" unemployment programs—a scheme "made

in the U.S.A."—has condemned the poorest Chilean workers and their children to virtual starvation.

In addition, the economic catastrophe that has hit Chile, part and parcel of the general world economic recession, has alienated large sections of the capitalist and upper middle class sectors which had supported the 1973 coup. Ruptures and cracks have developed even within the ruling military junta.

Since 1982, the masses of Chile have been challenging the Pinochet regime in sporadic waves of mass mobilizations. Strikes, marches, protests, street battles, and highly effective general strikes have been the means by which the Chilean workers have repudiated the Pinochet regime. Despite fierce repression that resulted in the arrest and mistreatment of tens of thousands of protesters and the killing of many others, the mobilizations continue. The 48-hour general strike called on July 2-3 was the latest blow against the regime.

The masses have crossed the Rubicon. But, unfortunately, their leadership has not.



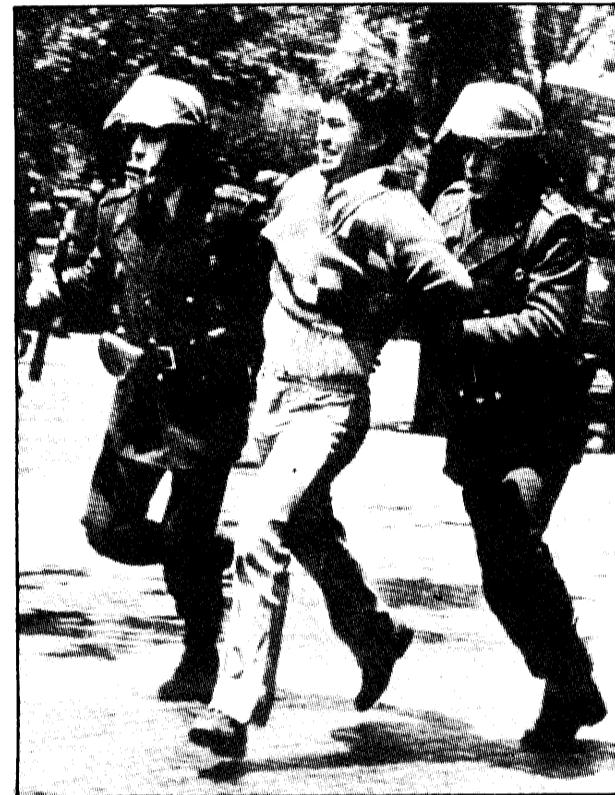
Gen. Augusto Pinochet

The main organizer of the first mass protests in Chile in 1982 was the bourgeois opposition, represented by the Christian Democratic Party and the Nationalist Party. Its goal was to use mass pressure to force Pinochet to step down and eventually hold elections. These are the same political parties that supported and cheered the Pinochet coup in 1973, providing the "butcher" with a political cover for smashing the workers.

The bourgeois opposition is united in the "Alianza Democratica" (AD), which is dominated by the Christian Democratic Party. It has steadfastly refused to allow any of the working-class political parties, like the Communist Party (CP) and Socialist Party (SP), into the AD.

The AD, however, has lost much of its authority with the Chilean masses because it has put a brake on further mass mobilizations in favor of negotiations with the Pinochet regime. Having used its "legality" to initiate a mass movement, the bourgeois opposition is losing its ability to limit the mass protests to the single agenda item of just removing Pinochet. For this, the bourgeois opposition needs the Communist Party.

Undoubtedly, the strongest workers' party in Chile



Chile Newsletter

today is the Communist Party. The CP was severely repressed during and after the coup but it was able to maintain its deep roots within the workers' organizations. Being a highly centralized cadre organization, the CP was much better prepared to weather the storm of repression and the consequent underground existence.

Unlike the Socialist Party, which is a much looser formation and is currently weakened by factional strife, the CP has emerged as the leading force in competition with the bourgeois opposition. Through its base in the trade unions and shanty-town organizations the CP has been attempting to organize an alliance with the bourgeois opposition to form a government *without* Pinochet.

Rebuffed by the bourgeois opposition, the CP formed the *Democratic Popular Movement* (MDP), which has, to a degree, filled the void created by the hesitancy and fear of the bourgeoisie to lead the mass movement. The role of the Stalinists has been to show the opposition capitalists that they need the CP if they are to control and limit the mass movement.

The CP does not call for a workers' and farmers' government as the best way to reinstitute democracy in Chile. Its goal is a bourgeois-democratic government and a capitalist army without Pinochet! This is the same army that slaughtered the workers 13 years ago.

Socialist Action is printing in this section of *International Outlook* an article on the lessons of the Popular Unity government in Chile because we believe the terrible defeat of 1973 has to be examined if the same tragedy is not to be repeated again. The Chilean masses, especially the workers, are currently saddled with a leadership that is *conciliationist* through and through. The CP and SP will bind the workers, peasants, and students of Chile to the same reactionary forces that stabbed them in the back on Sept. 11, 1973.

The Pinochet regime, despite the intransigence of Pinochet himself, is so full of decay and contradiction it may fall from its own weight if given a good push by the masses. When that happens the next tug of war will undoubtedly be between the masses, who want to *take* the power, and their leadership, who want to *share* the power with the old order. The article in this section shows what happens when the latter perspective predominates.—The Editors.

By JEFF MACKLER

The history of the world has been a history of social revolution. The outcome of revolutionary struggles, however, is not predetermined.

The central question in the revolutionary process lies not in the willingness of the working class and the oppressed in general to fight—this has been demonstrated time after time—but rather in the quality of leadership available to it.

Given a leadership that matches the capacity of the masses to defend their class interests, the workers and the oppressed classes cannot be defeated. They are the vast majority, the 99 percent. Their power is virtually unlimited.

But if the force of their power is diverted by parties and misleaders influenced by Stalinism and Social Democracy, it can be weakened, if not destroyed. This is what we have learned from all the revolutionary struggles of our times. This was the central lesson of the Chilean experience of 1970-73.

Today, 13 years after the defeat of the Chilean revolution, there is much to gain from a clear understanding of what happened. The questions that were debated in the period of 1970 to 1973—the question of class struggle versus class collaboration, of the workers' united front versus the bosses' popular front—are again before the Chilean masses, who are recovering from their setback and preparing to renew their struggle.

Tragedy's two central features

The right-wing military coup led by Augusto Pinochet, which smashed the government of Salvador Allende Gossens on Sept. 11, 1973, ushered in a wide-ranging repression of the Chilean working class that has lasted to this day. The coup represented a tragic setback for the Chilean revolution, for the people of Latin America, and for the working class internationally.

The tragedy of Chile had two central features. First, there was the brutal slaughter of the vanguard of the Chilean revolution. 10,000 were murdered within weeks of the coup. This included many of the best revolutionary fighters and working-class militants, the leadership of the growing mass organizations, the revolutionary students, and many more. Many were shot in spectacular fashion, gunned down 50 at a time by firing squads in the Santiago sports stadium, in full view of witnesses from other countries.

The message was clear. The Chilean ruling class, after a three-year period of careful preparation to undermine the



Chile Newsletter

rising mass movement, decided to act. They took off the mask of democratic rule and blandished the iron fist of dictatorship. This was their ultimate answer to the workers' movement, which constantly posed the threat to rule society in the interests of the majority.

The second element of the Chilean tragedy was the fact that, with the exception of often heroic but nevertheless sporadic and disorganized resistance of the vanguard in a few urban centers, the Chilean masses were defeated without a fight. Their misleaders led them to the showdown politically and militarily unarmed and unprepared.

Why did this happen? Who was responsible? What was wrong with the strategy of Allende and the coalition capitalist government which he headed? These questions are not academic. They remain as real today in Chile as they were in the past. Equally important, they are at the center of the debates over revolutionary strategy in every nation where the oppressed begin to organize themselves to fight.

Simply put, the question is this: Can the working class, with the support of the oppressed masses in the countryside, rule society in its own name for the benefit of the majority? Or do the conditions of capitalist underdevelopment require it to subordinate its own class interests to an alliance with a section of the capitalist rulers.

The former is the path of socialist revolution. The

Tragedy of the Chilean 'experi

latter course, the so-called popular front (an electoral coalition of workers' parties and capitalist parties), is, in our view, the formula for defeat.

Classic popular front

Perhaps the greatest strength of the Marxist method is its ability to learn from history. Judged from this standpoint alone, the record of the Trotskyists in the United States, at that time organized in the Socialist Workers Party, stands up remarkably well. Every other tendency on the left, either by conscious design or blind innocence, misread or otherwise failed to understand the direction of the Allende government.

Chief among these was the Communist Party USA, which stated in an editorial in the December 1970 issue of its theoretical magazine, *Political Affairs*, that Chile under Allende had undergone a revolutionary transformation. The CP wrote:

"This was no ordinary electoral victory, no mere victory of a Socialist over the other candidates. Rather in the words of the Basic Program of the six-party coalition which backed Allende, it represents a 'transfer of power from the old ruling groups to the workers, to the peasantry and to the progressive sections of the middle class of the city and country.'"

There was not a grain of truth to this assertion. The six-party coalition which constituted Allende's Popular Unity government was committed to the maintenance of capitalist rule from the beginning. This was a classic popular-front government in the tradition of the Stalinist and Socialist Party-led coalition-capitalist governments of the 1930s in Spain and France.

The Popular Unity coalition, which included the bourgeois Radical Party, had won only a plurality (34 percent) of the votes in the September 1970 elections. It therefore needed the support of the major capitalist parties (the Christian Democrats and Nationalists) in the following month's runoff elections in the Chilean Congress to convert the plurality into a majority.

But the capitalist parties demanded that Allende sign the "Statute of Constitutional Guarantees" as a condition for their support. These guarantees, which Allende signed, included leaving the military and police intact, maintaining the size of the army and the basic composition of the officer corps, and banning the formation of independent workers' militias.

Allende and his cohorts in the SP and CP thus pledged to maintain the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state and to ensure that there would be no "transfer of power" to the working class.

While this seems obvious today, in retrospect, it was not so at the time. Those Marxists in the United States who criticized the course of the Allende government were often subjected to severe ridicule and political abuse.

"Satisfies neither class"

The Trotskyists of the U.S. SWP nevertheless held firm to their positions. The Aug. 6, 1971, *Militant* had this to say about the Chilean events:

"The politics of the Allende regime are by nature forced into a balancing act between the oppressed and oppressor classes. While his regime began with the enthusiastic support of the masses, and the grudging support of the ruling class, it is bound to end, after a period of vacillation, by satisfying neither the rulers nor the ruled..."

"Undoubtedly the masses will press for more meaningful social reforms; the bourgeoisie will await the moment to stifle and then, through murders and imprisonment, behead the workers' movement.

"While the bourgeois armed forces remain intact, organized, disciplined and centralized, the workers and peasants have no organization, no arms and no leadership. They have only numbers and a willingness to sacrifice.

"For the present experience to end in a better way than the previous one [the popular-front governments in Chile from 1938 to 1952], a leadership willing to struggle against the opportunist and corrupt Communist and Socialist parties is necessary. If such a leadership does not develop, the results might even be worse than in the 1940s."

These paragraphs captured precisely the dilemma of the Chilean revolution. They predicted the inevitable result of Allende's policies in the absence of a revolutionary leadership capable of charting an independent political course for the working class and the oppressed.



The reforms of the Allende regime were significant. They reflected the deep radicalization of the Chilean working class. They included the diplomatic recognition of Cuba in the face of U.S. hostility, the nationalization of a major portion of imperialist investment, a sweeping land reform, substantial wage increases averaging 35 percent and the granting of political asylum to left-wing exiles all over the Latin American continent.

The Allende government initiated a program to distribute free milk to the children of the poor. It freed political prisoners from past regimes on condition that they cease their practice of robbing the imperialist banks to support the revolutionary cause.

Limited intentions

While these reforms had the wholehearted support of the masses, Allende's central aim was to win the support of the national capitalist class against imperialism. He banked on the view that a series of anti-imperialist nationalizations would strengthen the economic position of Chile's capitalist class against its imperialist rivals, thereby impelling the capitalists to support his government against imperialism.

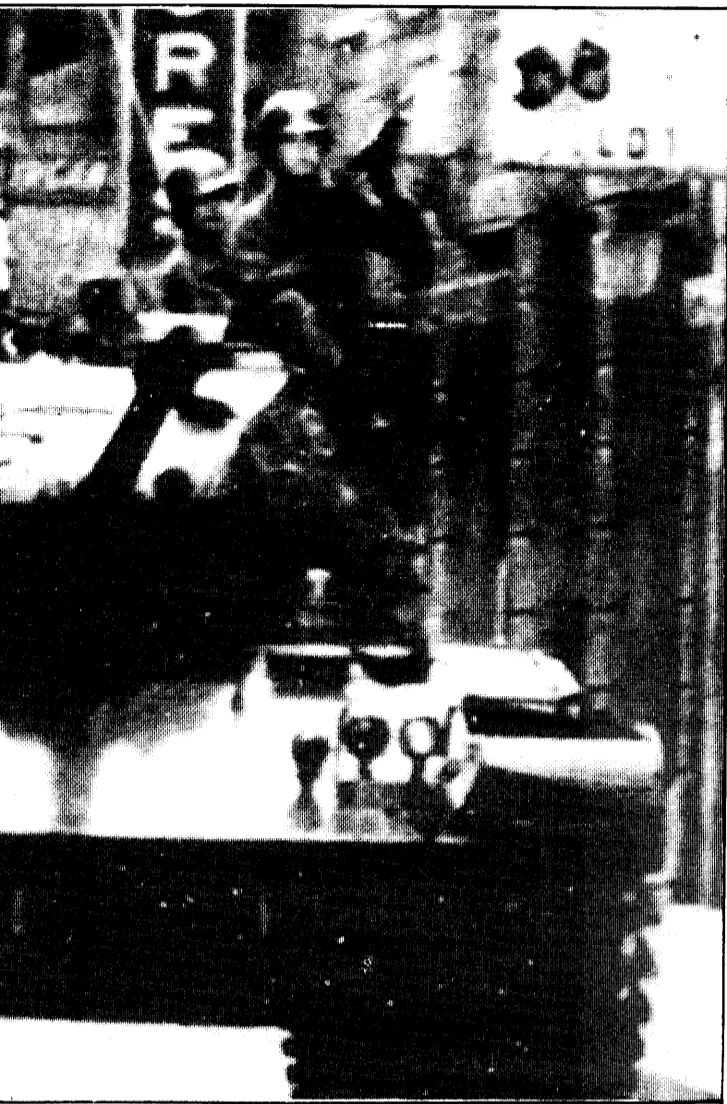
In fact, there is no such thing as a truly national capitalist class in the colonial world. This has been demonstrated time and again. The local capitalists among Allende's Christian Democratic friends were well aware that whatever benefits they might derive from Chilean takeovers of U.S. industries would be cancelled with the consequent loss of protection from U.S. imperialism at a time of rising working-class radicalization.

The bourgeoisie are not easily fooled when their fundamental class interests, their prerogatives to rule, are at stake. They fear the masses more than they do the economic insults of their capitalist superiors in the imperialist nations. The national capitalists prefer to bow down before the imperialists, rather than lose all to the oppressed.

Allende expressed unlimited faith that his local capitalists would respect the principles of bourgeois democracy, including the Chilean constitution and the electoral process. He agreed to abide by the rules of capitalist society, in particular to the rule of private profit, in return for which he expected the local ruling rich to accept and respect his regime.

The Popular Unity government nationalized the U.S.-owned copper mines of Anaconda and Kennicott. By the

the experiment'



government, especially its Communist Party component, sought to assure the world that nothing new was afoot.

In a meeting with peasant federations in May 1972, Allende stated, "Occupying the land is a violation of the law. Workers and peasants must understand that they are part of a revolutionary process that must move forward responsibly, without chaos."

The almost absolute faith which the Allende government placed in the army was the clearest evidence of its intention to abide by the rules of capitalist society—no matter what the cost.

"I have absolute confidence in the loyalty of the armed forces," Allende told *The New York Times* on March 28, 1971. "With each day my conviction becomes deeper that the armed forces of Chile are an expression of its people, and therefore are irrevocably and essentially professional and democratic." (published in the Feb. 14, 1971, Buenos Aires daily *Clarín*).

In fact, even after the attempted military coup in June 1973, Allende continued to support the progressive, "constitutional" wing of the army. Twenty-four hours before the Sept. 11 coup, Communist Party General Secretary Luis Corvalán, in an article in *El Siglo*, the CP's newspaper, went so far as to defend Pinochet for his "loyalty" to the constitution.

The June coup failed, not because of the good will of any sector of the army, but because of the immense outpouring of opposition to the military occupation of the presidential palace. On the evening of the aborted coup, 700,000 workers and peasants took to the streets to denounce the military and to demand that Allende break with the capitalists and their armed forces.

But instead of basing himself on the mobilized masses, Allende reshuffled his cabinet and, for the first time, appointed top generals to the government. These "progressive" generals immediately began to court martial all soldiers who had opposed the June coup and had defended the Allende government!

Formation of "cordones"

Despite the misleadership of Allende and the Communist Party leadership, the Chilean workers and peasants began the process of constructing their own mass organizations, more often than not, in direct opposition to the unions and other organizations dominated by these reformists.

In the industrial centers, "cordones industriales," or regional worker-dominated committees, began to take shape and challenge the reformists. These were the most important organizations of the masses. They were open to everyone and became centers of discussion and action which threatened to shatter the reformist boundaries established by the Allende government.

In February 1973, the "cordon industrial" of the capital city of Santiago put forward a program of action which included the call for the immediate expropriation of the distribution and primary goods industries, workers' control over production in the state sector, control by the "cordones" of all commercialization channels, and an end to all concessions to the capitalists.

The "cordones" represented the most conscious sectors of the Chilean workers' movement. But they were no substitute for a revolutionary party. In the absence of a leadership which clearly challenged the Allende regime and its dependence on capitalism, these organizations were incapable of acting as alternate centers of power at the command of the people.

At every stage in the evolution of the struggle, the Chilean masses demonstrated their will to master their own fate. The peasants sought to exceed the limits of the land reform originally initiated by the Christian Democrats and implemented, with full compensation to the landlords, by Allende.

The workers occupied their factories against the wishes of the CP and SP to prevent the bosses from closing them. But at every turn they were confronted by a misleadership that counseled restraint and preached confidence in capitalist solutions, even when it was clear to everyone that a military coup was in preparation and imminent.

Role of the MIR

The Castro-influenced, Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), which had only in 1970 broken from its vanguardist, rural-guerrilla orientation, was not an exception.

The MIR had attracted the best and most committed working-class militants because it was seen as the only political organization on the left that did not sign the political program of the Popular Unity and did not participate directly in the government.

But the leadership of the MIR did not place itself at the leadership of the workers' struggles with the purpose of advancing decisively toward the seizure of political power. The entire political orientation of the MIR can be summarized in the slogan raised repeatedly by its newspaper: "The government should open a dialogue with the workers."

Throughout the entire revolutionary situation opened up in 1970, the MIR refused to fight for the working-

class parties and organizations to break with the capitalists. The MIR therefore became the "left wing" of the Popular Unity.

After the first attempted coup in June 1973, the MIR refused to call on the masses to mobilize independently against the military. The MIR failed to use its great influence in the "cordones" to take the political offensive against the capitalist state.

The MIR's political line flowed from its 1971 political resolution, which stated:

"Our policy must be to regroup all the progressive forces in the country to fight the main enemy—U.S. imperialism.

"For this reason, the unity of all these forces against the main enemy is our central task. This means that the political differences among the political forces on the left are secondary and must not obstruct our fight for unity."

The orientation of "unity of the left" impeded the MIR from understanding the class-collaborationist character of the Popular Unity. Hoping to regroup the "revolutionary left" vanguard, it ultimately capitulated to the Stalinists and other reformists in the government.

Lessons must be learned

Given all the time needed to regain their strength, the imperialists and their local agents patiently proceeded to bleed the Allende regime and to discredit it in the eyes of the masses. They cut their investments in the Chilean economy, slowed production, increased unemployment, and even organized a "bosses' strike" of the trucking industry to paralyze the government.

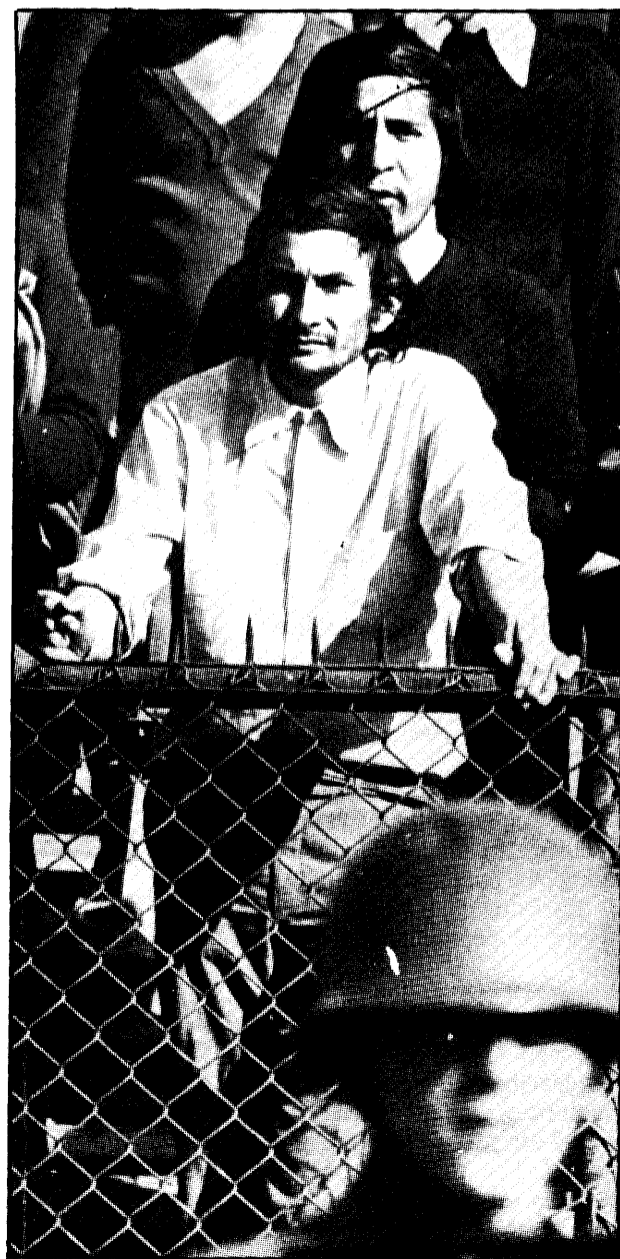
When they were ready, and when the masses were confused with the constant vacillations of the government, the army struck with a vengeance and ended the "experiment" of the so-called Marxist government of Salvador Allende. The revolution was drowned in what on-the-spot observers called "pools of blood."

This was the blood of the people who, in the absence of an alternative, placed their confidence in the "socialist" rhetoric of the CP and SP betrayers who had delivered them unarmed to the butcher Pinochet.

The task of the Chilean masses today differs little from the period of 1970-73. The same reformists in the workers' movement are again moving to pose a liberal capitalist solution to the current regime in Chile. They present the same arguments to the effect that a socialist solution to the problems of poverty and oppression is "unscientific."

Lacking confidence that the masses can and will organize to truly defend and advance their cause, these reformists are again preparing the ground for another defeat.

But there is a new generation of fighters who have learned from the Chilean revolution. They have learned that the working class has no allies outside its own ranks and the ranks of the poor and that it lacks only a program and leadership willing to match its commitment to transform society. ■



Keen Wessig

time Allende took office, the previous Christian Democratic regime of Eduardo Frei had nationalized 51 percent of Chile's copper mines. The Frei government had agreed to pay full compensation on the takeovers.

Allende's plan was to nationalize the remaining 49 percent, and like Frei, pay the capitalists for their property.

Under mass pressure, Allende retreated from his initial offer to pay. Allende effectively demonstrated that U.S. corporations had made \$770 million in "superprofits" since 1954. These were defined as profits in excess of the 10 percent considered reasonable by Chilean standards. These and other arguments were presented to justify the change in position regarding compensation.

Nevertheless, Allende remained committed to pay the full amount on the original 51 percent as well as the considerable interest on the loans taken out to repay the U.S. capitalists. At the same time, the \$377 million in U.S. interests in the non-mining sector remain untouched.

Of the 30,500 businesses in Chile in 1970, less than one percent (or 150) fell into Allende's category of government purchase or "nationalization."

As a further guarantee of his limited intentions, Allende promised the imperialists full payment on Chile's \$2-billion debt and full compensation for any state intervention into the banks.

In a Sept. 26, 1970, *Washington Post* interview, Allende made his views on Chile's future course clear. "The future government of Chile will not be a Socialist government. It is unscientific to maintain the contrary...The area of private property will be numerically the biggest."

Nothing new afoot

The top leaders of the Chilean Communist Party wasted no time in giving the imperialists the same assurances. Pablo Neruda, the poet and best-known Chilean Stalinist stated: "There's no reason at all to be uneasy. We have never claimed that we would form a socialist government on November 4 [election day]. Allende himself has said: Popular Unity is composed of six different groups including the Radicals who have largely dominated Chilean political life for the last 30 years." (Oct. 23, 1970, *Le Monde*.)

These were not exceptional statements. At every opportunity, by word and by deed, the Allende

Tragedy of the Chilean 'experiment'

latter course, the so-called popular front (an electoral coalition of workers' parties and capitalist parties), is, in our view, the formula for defeat.

Classic popular front

Perhaps the greatest strength of the Marxist method is its ability to learn from history. Judged from this standpoint alone, the record of the Trotskyists in the United States, at that time organized in the Socialist Workers Party, stands up remarkably well. Every other tendency on the left, either by conscious design or blind innocence, misread or otherwise failed to understand the direction of the Allende government.

Chief among these was the Communist Party USA, which stated in an editorial in the December 1970 issue of its theoretical magazine, *Political Affairs*, that Chile under Allende had undergone a revolutionary transformation. The CP wrote:

"This was no ordinary electoral victory, no mere victory of a Socialist over the other candidates. Rather in the words of the Basic Program of the six-party coalition which backed Allende, it represents a 'transfer of power from the old ruling groups to the workers, to the peasantry and to the progressive sections of the middle class of the city and country.'"

There was not a grain of truth to this assertion. The six-party coalition which constituted Allende's Popular Unity government was committed to the maintenance of capitalist rule from the beginning. This was a classic popular-front government in the tradition of the Stalinist and Socialist Party-led coalition-capitalist governments of the 1930s in Spain and France.

The Popular Unity coalition, which included the bourgeois Radical Party, had won only a plurality (34 percent) of the votes in the September 1970 elections. It therefore needed the support of the major capitalist parties (the Christian Democrats and Nationalists) in the following month's runoff elections in the Chilean Congress to convert the plurality into a majority.

But the capitalist parties demanded that Allende sign the "Statute of Constitutional Guarantees" as a condition for their support. These guarantees, which Allende signed, included leaving the military and police intact, maintaining the size of the army and the basic composition of the officer corps, and banning the formation of independent workers' militias.

Allende and his cohorts in the SP and CP thus pledged to maintain the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state and to ensure that there would be no "transfer of power" to the working class.

While this seems obvious today, in retrospect, it was not so at the time. Those Marxists in the United States who criticized the course of the Allende government were often subjected to severe ridicule and political abuse.

"Satisfies neither class"

The Trotskyists of the U.S. SWP nevertheless held firm to their positions. The Aug. 6, 1971, *Militant* had this to say about the Chilean events:

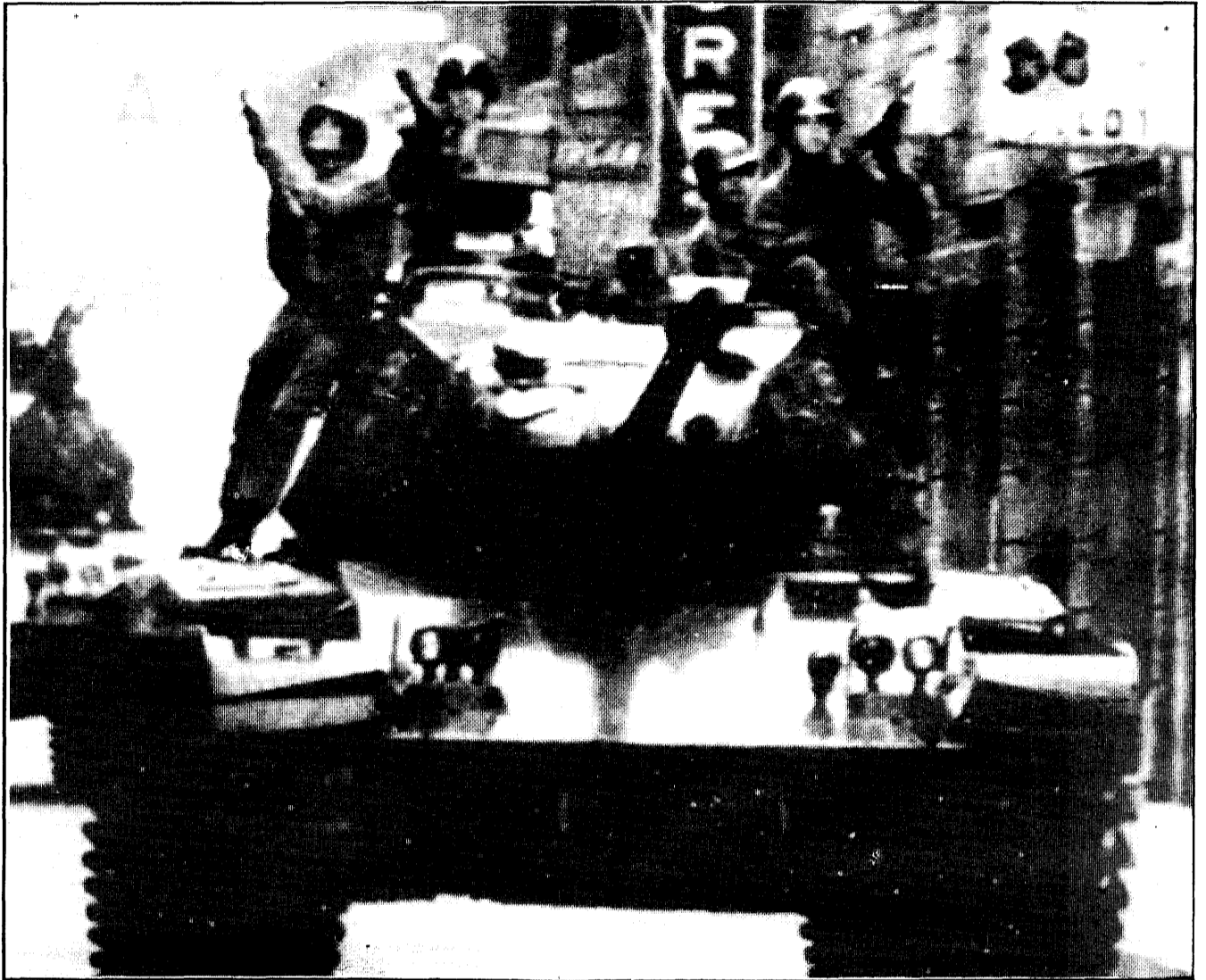
"The politics of the Allende regime are by nature forced into a balancing act between the oppressed and oppressor classes. While his regime began with the enthusiastic support of the masses, and the grudging support of the ruling class, it is bound to end, after a period of vacillation, by satisfying neither the rulers nor the ruled..."

"Undoubtedly the masses will press for more meaningful social reforms; the bourgeoisie will await the moment to stifle and then, through murders and imprisonment, behead the workers' movement.

"While the bourgeois armed forces remain intact, organized, disciplined and centralized, the workers and peasants have no organization, no arms and no leadership. They have only numbers and a willingness to sacrifice.

"For the present experience to end in a better way than the previous one [the popular-front governments in Chile from 1938 to 1952], a leadership willing to struggle against the opportunist and corrupt Communist and Socialist parties is necessary. If such a leadership does not develop, the results might even be worse than in the 1940s."

These paragraphs captured precisely the dilemma of the Chilean revolution. They predicted the inevitable result of Allende's policies in the absence of a revolutionary leadership capable of charting an independent political course for the working class and the oppressed.



The reforms of the Allende regime were significant. They reflected the deep radicalization of the Chilean working class. They included the diplomatic recognition of Cuba in the face of U.S. hostility, the nationalization of a major portion of imperialist investment, a sweeping land reform, substantial wage increases averaging 35 percent and the granting of political asylum to left-wing exiles all over the Latin American continent.

The Allende government initiated a program to distribute free milk to the children of the poor. It freed political prisoners from past regimes on condition that they cease their practice of robbing the imperialist banks to support the revolutionary cause.

Limited intentions

While these reforms had the wholehearted support of the masses, Allende's central aim was to win the support of the national capitalist class against imperialism. He banked on the view that a series of anti-imperialist nationalizations would strengthen the economic position of Chile's capitalist class against its imperialist rivals, thereby impelling the capitalists to support his government against imperialism.

In fact, there is no such thing as a truly national capitalist class in the colonial world. This has been demonstrated time and again. The local capitalists among Allende's Christian Democratic friends were well aware that whatever benefits they might derive from Chilean takeovers of U.S. industries would be cancelled with the consequent loss of protection from U.S. imperialism at a time of rising working-class radicalization.

The bourgeoisie are not easily fooled when their fundamental class interests, their prerogatives to rule, are at stake. They fear the masses more than they do the economic insults of their capitalist superiors in the imperialist nations. The national capitalists prefer to bow down before the imperialists, rather than lose all to the oppressed.

Allende expressed unlimited faith that his local capitalists would respect the principles of bourgeois democracy, including the Chilean constitution and the electoral process. He agreed to abide by the rules of capitalist society, in particular to the rule of private profit, in return for which he expected the local ruling rich to accept and respect his regime.

The Popular Unity government nationalized the U.S.-owned copper mines of Anaconda and Kennicott. By the

time Allende took office, the previous Christian Democratic regime of Eduardo Frei had nationalized 51 percent of Chile's copper mines. The Frei government had agreed to pay full compensation on the takeovers.

Allende's plan was to nationalize the remaining 49 percent, and like Frei, pay the capitalists for their property.

Under mass pressure, Allende retreated from his initial offer to pay. Allende effectively demonstrated that U.S. corporations had made \$770 million in "superprofits" since 1954. These were defined as profits in excess of the 10 percent considered reasonable by Chilean standards. These and other arguments were presented to justify the change in position regarding compensation.

Nevertheless, Allende remained committed to pay the full amount on the original 51 percent as well as the considerable interest on the loans taken out to repay the U.S. capitalists. At the same time, the \$377 million in U.S. interests in the non-mining sector remain untouched.

Of the 30,500 businesses in Chile in 1970, less than one percent (or 150) fell into Allende's category of government purchase or "nationalization."

As a further guarantee of his limited intentions, Allende promised the imperialists full payment on Chile's \$2-billion debt and full compensation for any state intervention into the banks.

In a Sept. 26, 1970, *Washington Post* interview, Allende made his views on Chile's future course clear. "The future government of Chile will not be a Socialist government. It is unscientific to maintain the contrary...The area of private property will be numerically the biggest."

Nothing new afoot

The top leaders of the Chilean Communist Party wasted no time in giving the imperialists the same assurances. Pablo Neruda, the poet and best-known Chilean Stalinist stated: "There's no reason at all to be uneasy. We have never claimed that we would form a socialist government on November 4 [election day]. Allende himself has said: Popular Unity is composed of six different groups including the Radicals who have largely dominated Chilean political life for the last 30 years." (Oct. 23, 1970, *Le Monde*.)

These were not exceptional statements. At every opportunity, by word and by deed, the Allende

Crisis of the left in the U.S.

West Coast conference steers activists to Democrats

By JOE RYAN

"Yes, it's true that the Democratic Party is pro-capitalist," said Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) leader Jim Shock, a keynote speaker at the July 25-27 West Coast Conference on Socialism and Activism held in Berkeley, California. "But it's also true," said Shock, "that the Black, Latino, labor, and women's movements invest their energy in it."

Shock was joined in the main plenary panel titled "Fightback Against Reaganism" by Jack O'Dell of the National Rainbow Coalition and Gwen Patton of the Alabama New South Coalition. Shock expressed the deep pessimism of the conference organizers and panelists when he stated, "The reason the Democratic Party is pro-capitalist is that the people are pro-capitalist."

The official conference theme, "Progressive Politics in a Conservative Era," reflected this dim—and incorrect—view of the state of working-class consciousness in the United States. The meeting was officially sponsored by several pro-Democratic Party publications, including *The Guardian*, *The Progressive*, and *Socialist Review*. It was reported that some 750 people registered for the event.

The unofficial—yet unmistakable—goal of the main conference organizers was simply this: "Stop Reagan and Vote Democrat!" Within this framework, the organizers agreed to disagree on a variety of secondary matters.

Jim Shock of the DSA provided the clearest statement of the conference orientation. "The notion that a large number of people are ready for an alternative to capitalism is a fiction," he said. "If you believe this you're from another planet. There will be no alternative to the Democratic Party until at least the year 2000."

Shock called for a "democratized capitalism" and for support to liberal and left Democrats. He claimed that electing Democrats would "reduce U.S. interventionism, increase social programs, and create jobs."

While Shock gave the required nod to Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, whose supporters were the most numerous at the gathering, he made it clear that practical politics would eventually require radicals to choose their presidential candidate from among the more mainstream liberal wing of the Democratic Party.

Senators Edward Kennedy and Gary Hart were suggested as the best representatives of this category. According to Shock, Hart had the best voting record in Congress—"better than Berkeley Congressman Ronald Dellums," he declared to the chagrin of many Dellums supporters present.

The Rainbow's "independence"

National Rainbow Coalition representative Jack O'Dell cut his turf a bit to the left of the middle-class circles in and around the DSA.

O'Dell portrayed Jackson's formation as intimately connected to the mass movements in the United States. He spoke of "empowering" the poor and insisted that the Rainbow Coalition was financially and organizationally independent of all political parties.

But when pressed during a question period to define the nature of Jackson's "independence," O'Dell responded: "The question of leaving the Democratic Party is more a question of tactics than principle. If you leave too early," he said, "you'll be all by yourself." For the time being, he concluded, the place to be is inside the Democratic Party.

O'Dell defended Rainbow Coalition support to Walter Mondale's presidential



CP and DSA want to translate healthy anti-government sentiment into votes for liberal Democrats in the upcoming elections.

campaign as "necessary to stop Reagan." He said he was aware that Mondale's social program was virtually identical to Reagan's and that Mondale, attempting to cut off Reagan from the right, had called for an embargo of Nicaragua.

Gwen Patton of the Alabama New South Coalition, another "independent" formation "to empower Blacks and the poor in the South," was the final panelist. "Independent politics and forming an independent party do not necessarily mean a third party," she stated. "Rather, they are organized vehicles to make the Democrats responsive. We run independent campaigns and then, as a matter of strategy, go back into the Democratic Party."

The conference ended with a fund pitch by Peter Camejo of the Northstar Network, a loose association of radicals generally oriented to the left layers of the Democratic Party. Camejo praised the speech by O'Dell and invited conference participants to attend a fundraising benefit sponsored by an electoral coalition of left Democrats, the Berkeley Citizens Alliance (BCA).

Camejo announced that the fundraiser would feature "three mayors"—the current Democratic Party mayor of Berkeley, Gus Newport; the "future" Berkeley mayor, BCA's candidate, Democrat Loni Hancock; and Bernie Sanders, mayor of Burlington, Vermont. Sanders, who expressed his support for the BCA and the Rainbow Coalition, like many others at the conference, evokes a vision of middle-class socialism which sees the working class as marginal to the process of social change.

Members and supporters of the Communist Party U.S.A. were also active in the conference proceedings. The CP newspaper, the *People's Daily World*, regularly promotes the Democratic Party.

The unofficial - yet unmistakable - goal of the conference organizers was simply this: "Stop Reagan and vote Democrat."

For the Communist Party, like the DSA, work in the Democratic Party has taken first priority for decades.

The July 29 *People's Daily World*, for example, reported on the decisions of the CP's recent national gathering in New York. "Delegates to the three-day national conference of the Communist Party USA mapped strategies to defeat Reaganite candidates in November...The most important peace action the U.S. people will conduct this year will be on November 4, Election Day."

The CP, like the DSA and the Rainbow

Coalition, aims to direct the energies of the various movements struggling against U.S. intervention in Central America and against U.S. support for South African apartheid "to build[ing] a congressional peace majority in the 1986 elections." Toward this end, its national gathering "called for peace rallies from October 25 through November 4."

Revolutionizing the Democratic Party

For the CP and the DSA, Jackson's Rainbow Coalition is important only insofar as it serves as a vehicle to channel social movements into the Democratic Party. This was the main function of the Jackson campaign during the 1984 elections.

Julianne Malveaux, staffwriter for the Black community-based San Francisco *Sun Reporter* and moderator of the "Fightback Against Reaganism" panel stated the role of Jackson's Rainbow most clearly: "Jackson revolutionized the Democratic Party," she proclaimed. "We wrote the minority platform at the Democratic Party convention. We may have to hold our nose and vote for the Democratic Party, but we can make a deal while we do it—maybe over a Supreme Court judge."

These kind of "deals" have been the stock in trade of the Jackson movement. As Jackson stomps the country, registering Blacks into the bosses' party, he has buttressed the individual political fortunes of a layer of Black elected officials who have become experts at the game of capitalist politics.

These politicians include liberal Black Democratic mayors Coleman Young of Detroit and Wilson Goode of Philadelphia, both of whom recently sought court

the ruling-class establishment in Oakland rather than the Riles forces, who were not as well-connected in the Democratic Party hierarchy.

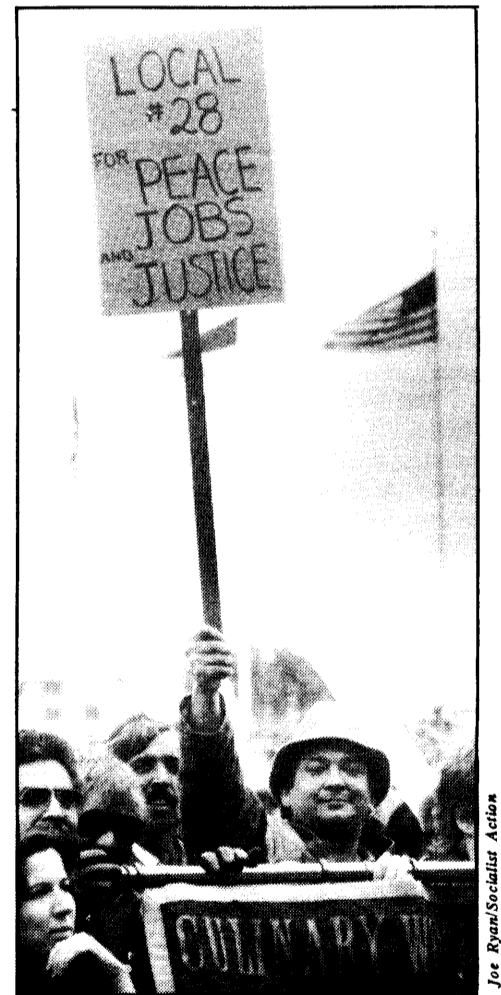
The minority platform adopted by the Democratic Party was issued to placate party dissidents. It represents little more than a scrap of paper. It never saw the light of day in the national elections as Mondale proclaimed his independence from all "special interest" groups. Its planks never found an expression in the day-to-day work of the Democratic Party nor in the legislation passed by Congress when the Democrats held absolute majorities in both houses of the government.

Immediately following the 1984 elections—and despite all the promises to the contrary—Jackson's Rainbow Coalition ceased to exist. With the election of an assortment of local Democrats across the country, its purpose had been served.

And when the Rainbow was finally revived last April, it was for the purpose of again organizing the Black community and its allies to vote for capitalist candidates—this time in the 1986 elections.

Turn to the right?

One of the main arguments used by the reformist parties of the U.S. left to justify their support to the Democrats is that we



are living in a "conservative era."

The fact that the U.S. ruling class as a whole has turned to the right cannot be denied. Even the most cynical recognize that Reagan's policies are just an extension of the policies carried out by the Carter administration. A bipartisan alliance in the Congress is deepening the ruling-class attacks on workers at home and moving the country closer to war abroad.

But it is a serious mistake to identify the rightward turn of the ruling class with the consciousness of the workers.

Working people—particularly the oppressed Black and Latino population—have experienced a long period of deepening attacks. The basic fabric of their lives has been undermined by rising and continuous unemployment, plant closures,

(continued next page)



Jesse Jackson

Socialist Action

Carter in 1980, many voters preferred the "new face" of Ronald Reagan. In 1984, Walter Mondale tried to "out-Reagan" Reagan. His policies were indistinguishable from Reagan's. But his face was already familiar, and few people liked it.

Moreover, many of those who actually voted for Reagan in 1984 also expressed disagreement with many of his policies. In Los Angeles county, for example, Reagan received 54.5 percent of the votes cast. But at the same time, 60 percent of these voters approved a "Jobs with Peace" initiative calling for military spending cuts and more money for social programs.

In the small town of Olympia, Wash., Reagan won 62 percent of the vote, while Proposition 1, which called for an end to U.S. aid to the contras and an end to U.S. intervention in El Salvador, passed with 64 percent of the vote.

Similar initiatives on South Africa and nuclear weapons were approved nationwide in areas where Reagan defeated Mondale. Indeed, when working people had the opportunity to vote on the issues, they overwhelmingly rejected the ruling class' reactionary program—even though they may also have voted for Reagan.

The mainstream media understood this contradictory situation much better than Jim Shock. Three days after Reagan's re-election, a *New York Times* editorial put it this way: "President Reagan's lonely landslide is a personal victory with little precise mandate or clear ideological underpinning."

"Lesser evilism" yesterday and today

The left's crisis is a product of misleadership, not of the alleged conservatism of U.S. workers.

Groups like the CP and DSA have operated within the framework of the Democratic Party for the past five decades. They argue that it is necessary to support the Democratic Party as a "lesser evil" to the Republicans.

The CP's politics are based on the strategy of seeking "peaceful coexistence" between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world. The various social movements in which the CP participates are seen as vehicles to pressure capitalist politicians and the Democratic Party into seeking diplomatic accommodations with the



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

Conference organizers believe working class, like these San Francisco Local 2 hotel workers, are marginal to the struggle for social change.

layoffs, wage cuts, and other direct assaults on their rights and standard of living.

Most working people today feel less secure, less confident in the government and the politicians, and less confident that by sheer individual effort the problems they face can be solved.

According to the polls, a majority of the population does not support the U.S. war drive, the increasing stockpile of nuclear weapons, and the growing interventionist policies of the government.

Workers have less confidence in the boss and a better understanding that their lives are more and more controlled by forces that are hostile to their interests. They are not as easily convinced that there is a dime's worth of difference between the Democrats and the Republicans.

What's behind the high abstentionism?

Many on the left today point to the election of Reagan as proof of the rightward drift of the population.

Jim Shock of the DSA sent a quiver through the audience at the Berkeley conference when he reported that a *New York Times*/CBS poll found that 66 percent of those who did not vote in the 1984 presidential elections would have voted for Reagan had they decided to cast a ballot. The poll was based on phone interviews with 1789 non-voters.

Only 53 percent of those eligible to vote in 1984 actually voted. Reagan, who won

Vietnam War. These policies resulted in the slaughter of more than 500,000 Vietnamese and 50,000 Americans.

The Kennedy administration's Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and the Kennedy-sponsored sending of U.N. troops to the Congo to help overthrow the Lumumba regime are accidents of history to be forgotten in the name of "lesser-evilism."

Should the open racism of Democratic presidents Johnson and Carter, whose segregationist records were conveniently hidden when it came election time, also be considered part of this "half-century of justice" championed by the Democratic Party?

But this "lesser evilism" is not limited to elections and lobbying efforts. This dead-end strategy has permeated the activity of nearly all the so-called "progressives."

During the recent Congressional debates over U.S. aid to the contras, for instance, the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy—which includes SANE, the Nuclear Freeze Campaign, DSA, and important church organizations—supported "lesser evil" compromises, including "humanitarian" aid to the contras and postponement of military aid to a later time.

In a similar vein, peace activists supported proposals for funds for 40 MX missiles—as opposed to Reagan's call for 200. Likewise, numerous movement groups supported "non-military" aid to the Duarte regime in El Salvador.

All these compromises are made in the name of the "lesser evil" and in the name of peace. They are supported by radicals, "socialists," and others who insist that there is no alternative to the political parameters of the Democratic Party.

Independent political action

Revolutionary socialists participate in and help build all social movements where working people struggle for their basic rights. They do this, however, with the understanding that the root cause of war and social inequality is the division of society into classes with fundamentally opposed interests.

The mobilization of the majority, the

working class, is the key to social change. Those who rule in the name of private property and capitalist profit have no choice but to continue the policies which lead to war and to the erosion of basic human rights and values.

Revolutionary socialists understand that the power of the mass movement is measured by its independence from the parties of the capitalist class—by its capacity to mobilize the majority to defend its own rights.

As workers defend these rights on the job and through strikes, rallies, and mass demonstrations, they learn that their struggle represents the great majority, and that this majority has the power to fundamentally alter social relations. As they confront the employers on the job site, they see the need to challenge the bosses' parties in the government as well.

To the extent that the workers' movement depends on the good will of a few capitalist politicians, rather than on its own power, the policies of the rich will remain unchallenged. Conversely, to the extent that a united movement combining the energies of all those who seek justice is constructed, the illusion that the capitalist parties represent a majority will be shattered.

Working people today need their own political party, a labor party based on the trade-union movement and open to all the oppressed and all those who struggle for human dignity.

A labor party in the United States will be the natural outgrowth and political expression of the workers' movement as it takes on the bosses in the political arena. This is the next giant step the workers' movement in this country must take to fight back against the war and austerity drives of both the Democrats and Republicans.

Sadly, the West Coast Conference on Socialism and Activism had little to do with charting an independent socialist perspective for the working class and less to do with building a united movement in the streets to give form to the growing opposition to the policies of the U.S. government.

Working people today need their own political party, a labor party based on the trade union movement and open to all the oppressed...

59 percent of the votes cast, was therefore elected by only 31 percent of the electorate. Revolutionary socialists have long argued that the increasing percentage of voter abstentionism in the elections is a sign of increased disaffection with the two-party system and a form of rejection of capitalist politics. Does this *Times*/CBS poll, assuming it is representative of the non-voting population, invalidate this contention?

First, regardless of their declared presidential preference, nearly half the eligible voting-age population *did not* vote. They obviously didn't feel their vote was necessary or would make much of a difference.

Second, it is incorrect to assume that voter preference for Reagan over Carter or Mondale reflects a shift to the right.

Working people have learned from experience that there are few, if any, real differences among politicians. The almost regular alternation of Democrat and Republican presidents is more an indication of the general disillusionment with both capitalist parties than it is of a shift in opinion on the part of the general population.

Lacking any real alternative to Jimmy

conservative Soviet bureaucracy, which the CP defends. For the sake of such accommodations, mass movements in the United States and revolutionary struggles abroad are put on the back-burner—if not totally snuffed out.

The DSA bases itself on a layer of the U.S. trade-union bureaucrats and intellectuals who also seek to subordinate the independent mobilizations of the working class and the oppressed to political support for the bosses and their political parties.

The DSA makes no bones about its long-term commitment to the Democratic Party. Preparing for a DSA-initiated "New Directions" conference last May, the purpose of which was to press for reforms inside the Democratic Party, the DSA stated: "Our own political party, the Democratic Party—standard bearer for the past half-century of the causes of justice and growth—can articulate those alternatives [to Reagan]. But, sad to say, it hasn't."

Thus, for the DSA, the Democratic Party-initiated Korean and Vietnam wars were unfortunate aberrations, at best. Today's top DSA leader, Michael Harrington, actually supported the policies of the Johnson administration during the

France's 'cohabitation' government showing strain

By JACQUES MONOD

PARIS—After five months in office, the government of newly elected Prime Minister Jacques Chirac is beginning to encounter its first difficulties. A series of important strikes have broken out in the naval yards and in the transportation, telecommunications, and public employees' sectors.

Chirac's "honeymoon" may be rapidly coming to an end. Already his popularity is declining in the public opinion polls, while that of French President Francois Mitterand is rising to its highest level ever.

Recently, Mitterand stated that he would not sign a proposal of the conservative Chirac cabinet that would authorize the sale of 65 state-owned businesses and banks to private buyers. The government of "cohabitation" between Mitterand and Chirac, which has been harmonious until now, is beginning to show signs of strain.

The political backdrop

On March 16, 1986, a coalition of right-wing parties (the RPR, led by Chirac, and the UDF, led by former President Giscard D'Estaing) won the parliamentary elections by a very narrow margin. This majority in the National Assembly was reinforced by the election of 35 deputies of the extreme right-wing National Front.

The right-wing majority, which proposed Chirac as prime minister, has had to face a Socialist Party (SP) that emerged strengthened from the elections, having obtained 32 percent of the votes.

Despite Mitterand's record of bowing to the demands of the capitalists by implementing a highly unpopular austerity program, French workers still voted in their majority for the ruling Socialist Party. They feared that a return of the right-wing parties would signify a frontal assault on their standard of living and their hard-won gains.

The French Communist Party (CP) received only 10 percent of the votes, just slightly more than the extreme right-wing National Front.

The total of right-wing votes in April 1981 (on the first round of the presidential elections) was 14.3 million (out of 37.2 million registered voters, or 80 percent of the voters). In March 1986, the total right-wing vote was 15.2 million (out of 39 million registered voters, or 78 percent of the voters.) A section of the middle-class which had supported Mitterand in 1981 shifted to the right.

This is hardly an electoral sweep for the right wing—especially considering that voter abstention was highest in the working-class districts that traditionally vote for the SP and CP. These abstentions reflected the widespread discontent of the workers with the pro-capitalist policies of the "socialist" government.

French workers did not turn to the right-wing parties for a solution to their demands. They either voted for Mitterand to stop Chirac, or they abstained in protest—and for lack of a credible revolutionary alternative to the two major workers' parties.

Thus, the period opened in French politics with the defeat of Giscard D'Estaing in the 1981 elections has not been closed.

Chirac's austerity program

During his first five months in office, Chirac has hurriedly sought to apply the policies implemented in the United States

and Great Britain by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Some of these measures have been signed into law by Mitterand.

Chirac's program is clear: Denationalize and privatize the bulk of the public sector. The targets of these measures are the postal service, the state-owned industries, the banks, the telecommunications sector, and the health and education systems.



French trade unions are beginning to mobilize against capitalist austerity policies.

Symbolically, Chirac and his minister Leotard began this reactionary program by selling the oldest and most important of the three public TV stations.

This privatization, of course, will go hand in hand with the increased quest for capitalist profitability—meaning increased speedup, crosscrafting, job restructuring, and layoffs. The government decrees and laws are also aimed at undermining the Labor Code, the rights of the workers in the public sector, and the rights of the trade unions.

All of this is accompanied by highly repressive laws against immigrant workers and even more restrictive laws on national security.

Chirac and Leotard want less state intervention in the economy. For them this means fewer teachers, fewer doctors, more police, and more military personnel. They are introducing private beds in public hospitals. They are increasing public funding to private religious schools, thus undermining public education. And they are permitting the concentration of large private press and industrial consortiums.

Chirac also plans to eliminate public funding of abortion. Many leaders of the right-wing UDF-RPR coalition want to reestablish the death sentence.

So far Chirac has blocked wage increases, eliminated 18,000 jobs in the public sector (his goal is 40,000 jobs), and frozen social



Chirac and Mitterand: A smile covers up growing tensions.

security payments. At the same time, he has lifted the tax on large fortunes.

Left betrayed mandate

This policy is not at all parallel to the policy carried out before by the left. Yesterday, the SP and the CP in the government made major concessions to the right wing and to the bosses. Chirac, for

way for the right-wing parties to win the 1986 parliamentary elections.

But the working class' capacity to respond to the attacks by Chirac should not be underestimated.

Emerging fightback

A spectacular and united strike of the subway workers in Paris broke out when the government fired a director who refused to lay off the workers. This was followed soon after by a mass strike of the railroad workers, and then of the public employees and the postal workers.

There has been growing opposition—and even mobilizations—among the workers at the "TF1" TV station against the government's privatization plan. The workers are looking for a way to stop Chirac now. Unfortunately, the SP and the CP don't appear to be interested in this task.

The social-democratic SP leaders explain that the "cohabitation" between Chirac and Mitterand must be allowed to continue to the end. They say that the workers must "fully go through the experience of the right wing" and that "Chirac must not be destabilized." These positions are not only demobilizing, they are suicidal.

Chirac and his narrow capitalist government majority have been carrying out a reactionary assault on the workers. If unchallenged, they could end up modifying the relationship of class forces in France for some time. If Mitterand doesn't provide the leadership to stop Chirac and put an end to the "cohabitation," he will be totally compromised and discredited.

The French CP leadership affirms that "France has massively shifted to the right" and that all of this is the fault of the Socialist Party. Every day *L'Humanite*, the CP daily newspaper, denounces both Chirac and Mitterand in the same manner. In the event of early presidential elections, it is not clear that the CP would support Mitterand on the second round of the elections, as it did in 1981.

The CP's policy of division, together with the wait-and-see attitude of the SP, risks playing into the hands of Chirac. These policies stand in the way of a united fightback of the French workers.

What will be the outcome of the inevitable confrontation between the workers and the government?

One thing is certain: Time is on Chirac's side. If Chirac is able to hold out and apply his anti-working class program with the tacit consent of Mitterand, he will have increased his chances of winning the coming 1988 presidential elections. The idea put forward by the SP that public opinion will spontaneously move to the left in the face of Chirac's attacks is false.

Without a struggle at the workplace and in the factories against the austerity measures, without an organized fightback, without SP-CP unity, without trade-union unity, it is highly likely that Mitterand will lose. A new defeat for the SP would be a defeat for the CP, for the entire union movement, and for the working class as a whole.

This is why the "cohabitation" of Mitterand-Chirac must be denounced. This is why the call for unity of the workers' parties and trade unions is decisive to stop Chirac. This is why all struggles and strikes in defense of the public employees' jobs and against all the reactionary decrees and laws must converge with the demand to defeat Chirac at once.

Berkeley anti-apartheid activist speaks:

'We don't look to liberal politicians for support'

The anti-apartheid movement won a significant victory this summer. After nearly two years of student-led rallies and sit-ins, the University of California Board of Regents voted in July to divest the \$3.1 billion it now has invested in corporations doing business with South Africa.

Socialist Action interviewed John Hurley, a spokesperson for the Campaign Against Apartheid (CAA), about the significance of the vote and his views on the anti-apartheid student movement—past, present, and future. CAA is one of the leading anti-apartheid groups at U.C. Berkeley. The interview was conducted by Adam Wood.

Socialist Action: Do you think the student movement pushed the U.C. regents to divest?

John Hurley: Because of what we've been doing on campus, we've made apartheid a big issue. One thing Governor Deukmejian doesn't want is an insurrection on campus during his election year.

The regents aren't doing it because they've suddenly become good people or suddenly become moral or something. They're doing it because they're afraid of what's going to happen and how it's going to make the governor look. A big student movement scares the university.

S.A.: How is divestment going to affect the anti-apartheid movement at Berkeley?

J.H.: It's going to take away a good organizing issue—but there are tons of organizing issues. We'll be moving on to other things—possibly other aspects of university complicity with apartheid, such as who the regents are. A lot of the regents are on the board of directors of IBM, Shell

Oil, and other apartheid-linked corporations. However, it's impossible to say exactly what we'll be doing in the fall.

S.A.: What role have liberal politicians played over the last couple of years?

J.H.: The local, allegedly progressive political machine that runs the city of Berkeley hasn't supported us at all. City

police were sent out to beat us up and arrest us.

Berkeley Citizen's Action, which controls the city council, sent its student representative to our organization. She's come out and consistently argued against actions. We don't look to the liberal politicians for support by any means.

S.A.: How much of a voice are students and faculty given on campus?

J.H.: None at all. The only voice we've had has been gained by going out and standing up to them.

The regents were scared. They had to give in to us on one issue. That doesn't mean that we have control of the university. Even the faculty doesn't have any power. The faculty asked the regents to divest last year.

The lack of democracy didn't surprise anybody in the Campaign, but it may have surprised some who took part in the movement. Most people in the Campaign think that getting involved around student/campus issues is the best way to get students involved in the political movement.



Nomonde Ngubo, United Mineworkers of America representative and a national staff member of the Shell Boycott Committee, speaks to trade unionists Aug. 21 in San Francisco. "Royal Dutch Shell," Ngubo stated, "is the biggest supplier of oil to the apartheid regime in South Africa and should be boycotted." Ngubo is a founder of the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa.

... 'Boycott S. Africa, not Nicaragua'

(continued from page 1)

incumbent politicians are taking steps to move away from the Reagan administration's discredited "constructive engagement" policies.

But the differences between Reagan and the congressional advocates of sanctions—Republicans and Democrats alike—are purely tactical. The capitalist politicians are searching desperately for some means to increase their ability to intervene in South Africa in order to defuse a potentially revolutionary situation there.

The United States wants to pressure the South African regime into toning down its repressive policies and looking toward a

policy of "power-sharing" with Blacks. Many members of Congress also believe that a stance in favor of sanctions will make it easier to forge links with "moderate" elements in South Africa. Ultimately, they hope to sidetrack the Black movement into accepting relatively safe channels of reform.

At the same time, the United States intends to draw the line at instituting an economic embargo that might seriously disrupt the South African economy—which is already in the midst of its worst depression since the 1930s.

The world's capitalists must preserve a relatively strong "pro-Western" government in Southern Africa to protect their economic holdings there. They also realize that a deepening economic crisis in South Africa could ripple on to the shores of their countries as well.

South Africa attacks neighbors

South Africa has already threatened the world's bankers with non-payment of its \$24-billion debt if strong sanctions are applied. The apartheid regime has also implied it would wreak havoc in the eight African nations where it has extensive economic ties.

South Africa supplies, for example, 60 percent of the electricity used by Mozambique and 50 percent of that used by Botswana. It supplies all of the petroleum needs of Botswana and Swaziland. And it completely dominates the economy of its colony, Namibia.

Pretoria has already begun to retaliate against Zambia's and Zimbabwe's call for sanctions by imposing controls on the trade between the two land-locked countries and South African ports.

And last month, South African troops attacked the Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale. They were acting in support of the counterrevolutionary UNITA forces

there—which also receive aid from the United States. At the same time, the government of Mozambique claimed that South Africa was parachuting supplies to rebel troops in that country.

South Africa also launched a raid into Swaziland last month against an alleged African National Congress "guerrilla base."

Such actions contradict Reagan's claim that South Africa "is not seeking to impose their government on other surrounding countries." Through his coverup of South Africa's aggression, Reagan sought to justify his refusal to impose an effective

embargo on South Africa.

The Nicaraguan people and the Black majority in South Africa are both seeking to exercise the right of self-determination in order to free themselves from imperialist-imposed bonds of poverty. The struggle of these two peoples is the same.

Our demonstrations, rallies, and protests should combine the demands of both of these powerful struggles. We must demand "No U.S. Intervention in Central America," "End U.S. Support to Apartheid," "Embargo South Africa, Not Nicaragua." —The Editors

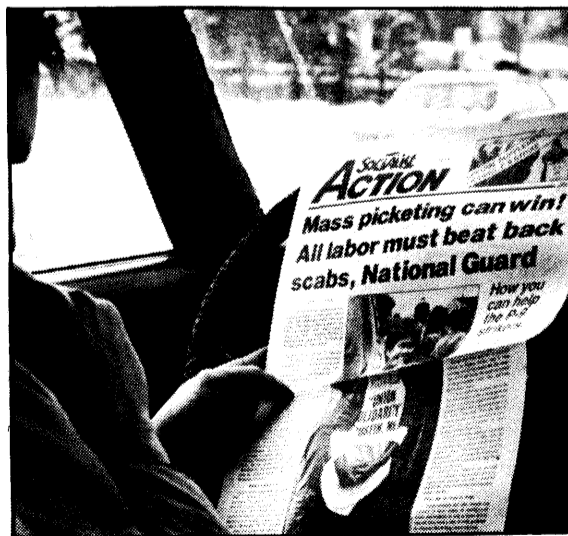
**WANTED:
100 NEW
SUBSCRIBERS**

**International
VIEWPOINT**

a biweekly magazine published under the auspices of the Fourth International. We offer a special introductory offer of three issues for \$3. A six-month subscription is \$22, and one year of International Viewpoint is available for \$42. **Subscribe now!**

Write to 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110

Send Socialist Action to a friend!



We need your help to reach hundreds of new readers.

Do you know someone who would like to read Socialist Action?

Please send us the names and addresses of any friends who would appreciate Socialist Action, and we will send them a free copy.

[] 12 months for only \$6.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Tel. _____ Union/Organization _____

Socialist Action, 3435 Army St. Rm. 308, San Francisco, Ca. 94110.

Moscow Trials: 50 years later

Last month was the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Moscow Trials. These shameful proceedings were engineered by dictator Josef Stalin to erase the last vestiges of the leadership that had led the Russian Revolution to victory.

We are reprinting below excerpts from an article on the trials by Joseph Hansen, who was secretary to Leon Trotsky during the latter's final exile in Mexico. Hansen was a national leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1979.

The article was originally printed as a foreword to the pamphlet, *Stalin's Frame-up System and the Moscow Trials*, published in 1950 by Pioneer Publishers in New York and now out of print.

On August 19, 1936, the curtain rose on a scarcely credible scene in a Moscow courtroom. Among the prisoners sat Gregory Zinoviev, Leon Kamenev, I.N. Smirnov, S.V. Mrachkovsky, G. Yevdokimov, V. Ter-Vaganyan, Ivan Bakayev, and Y. Dreitser.

They were outstanding figures in Lenin's "general staff" which led the November 1917 revolution in Russia, co-founders of both the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International, men who had held the highest Soviet posts.

Against them as prosecutor stood Andrei Vyshinsky, a former member of the counter-revolutionary Menshevik opposition to Lenin's regime in the early days. This representative of Stalin accused Lenin's former comrades-in-arms of murdering Kirov, a top dignitary, more than a year and a half before—although some of them were in prison at the time.

Vyshinsky accused them of conspiring with Hitler's Nazi government to prepare "a number of terroristic acts" against Stalin and other high bureaucrats. Vyshinsky described these internationally famous leaders as "traitors, murderers, and bandits," as "liars and clowns," "mad dogs of capitalism."

Leon Trotsky, the organizer of the Red Army and co-founder with Lenin of the first workers' state in history, was in exile in Norway; but he and his son Leon Sedov were accused of having initiated the conspiracy.

The trial ran for only five brief days, although a total of 16 defendants faced the prosecutor. On the sixth day the victims were sentenced "all to the supreme penalty—to be shot, and all the property personally belonging to them to be confiscated." Within 24 hours the press announced rejection of an appeal for mercy. "The verdict has been carried out," continued the dispatch by way of obituary.

Nightmare of "confessions"

In this way, Stalin staged in Moscow the first of three trials designed to provide juridical justification for the purges that wiped out the leaders of the November 1917 revolution. To most people at the time, they appeared part of a nightmare world.

It was simply not credible that a revolutionary like Zinoviev, for example, who had spent 10 years as Lenin's collaborator before the Russian Revolution and played a leading part in overthrowing Czarism and establishing the basic foundations for socialism in the USSR, could have arrived at "fascism," as he "confessed," and helped set up a center that, according to Vyshinsky, "organized and established secret communications with the German fascists."

As a whole, however, public opinion [outside the Soviet Union] never accepted the Stalinist version of the trials. Today there is little mystery about the "confessions" after the many revelations from those who have managed to escape from the GPU [Stalin's secret police, now the KGB] and describe the psychological and physical



"They were outstanding figures in Lenin's 'general staff'...co-founders of both the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International."

tortures used to bring a prisoner into court with his will to resist utterly crushed.

People interested in the truth turned to hear Leon Trotsky's answer to the charges. Trotsky more than any other person could expose the "confessions" if they were lies. The Stalinist regime responded to this danger by pressuring the Norwegian government to silence the exiled revolutionary.

Trotsky and his wife, Natalia, were placed under close police surveillance, his secretaries deported. All incoming and outgoing mail was censored. The Norwegian "democrats" prohibited Trotsky from answering the charges leveled at him in Moscow or from even taking court action against his defamers.

Revolutionary heroes accused

The liberal Cardenas government offered Trotsky and his wife asylum in Mexico. They arrived at Tampico on January 9, 1937.

Two weeks later, on January 23, a second trial opened in Moscow. Facing the ex-Menshevik Vyshinsky and his collaborators on the judges' bench were figures of heroic stature in the early days of the Soviet Union.

Pyatakov, an outstanding figure in the Ukraine, was considered by Lenin one of the most competent administrators in the party. Serebriakov was a former secretary of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party. Muralov, a famous hero of all three insurrections in Moscow—1905, February and October 1917—served under Lenin as military governor of the city.

Sokolnikov, a member of the Central Committee and editor of *Pravda* in 1917, became People's Commissar of Finance, then ambassador to London. Radek was one of the most brilliant journalists the Soviet Union has produced.

These men were accused of conspiring to

bring back the capitalism they had helped to overthrow, of plotting to kill Stalin and his favorites, and of betraying the workers' state to Japanese and Nazi German imperialism.

Top Soviet leaders on trial

A little more than a year later, March 2—13, 1938, the third great trial took place. Among the victims sat no less than eight former Soviet ministers, not counting Trotsky, who was in Mexico. Rykov, Bukharin, Rakovsky, Krestinsky, and Yagoda were among the former top Soviet leaders accused in this trial.

Among the treasonous acts these former heads of government allegedly committed on behalf of Hitler were some that sound more natural to a psychiatric ward than a criminal court: "Grinko has mentioned the wrecking work he performed in the sphere of taxation and in the savings banks, where he tried in every way to incense the public."

"Take Zelensky," said Vyshinsky in the apoplectic that has won him such high posts and emoluments under Stalin, "I shall only refer here to the most abominable practice of mixing glass and nails with foodstuffs, butter in particular, which hit at the most vital interests, the health and lives of our population. Glass and nails in butter! This is so monstrous a crime that, in my opinion, all other crimes of the kind pale before it."

While we pale at the glass and nails in this butter, Vyshinsky hints at one of the political motives in back of the trial: "It is now clear why there are interruptions of supplies here and there, why, with our riches and abundance of products, there is a shortage first of one thing, then of another. It is these traitors who are responsible for it."

Mussolini, not without justification, felt

able to remark about this trial in *Popolo d'Italia*: "Stalin renders a commendable service to fascism."

Victims in millions

Had Stalin confined his bloodletting to the men processed for exhibition, this alone would have entitled him to go down in history as one of the most sinister figures in the annals of tyranny. However, the trials provided only the most spectacular public incidents in the periodic blood purges that swept the Soviet Union from 1935 on.

Victor Kravchenko, a former high Stalinist official who survived the purges and escaped abroad, reports in his book, "I Chose Freedom," that the victims numbered as many as "9 or 10 million, including 60 to 80 percent of the top leaders of the Party, the Comsomsols, the armed forces, the government, industry, farming, and national culture."

The slave labor armies of the GPU swelled to unknown size. Some estimates of their number go as high as 15 to 20 million, and even more. These figures do not include those who died before the firing squad or in the cattle cars transporting them to Siberia. Nor does it include the tens of millions persecuted and cowed into silence by the terror.

The Red Army was decimated. Principal victims were the veterans of Trotsky's time who defeated the imperialist armies sent to crush the young workers' republic after the First World War. In 1937 the entire leading staff from Marshal Tukhachevsky down were shot without the pretense of an open trial.

The trials served to cover the debacle of Stalinist foreign policy which paved the way for Hitler's seizure of power in Germany. At the same time, they prepared the ground for official pacts with both Hitler and the Mikado. This was Stalin's way of getting ready for the oncoming World War II.

Workers' democracy smashed

Another aim was to try to compromise Trotsky's program for the democratic rehabilitation of the Soviet regime and return to international revolutionary socialism as practiced in Lenin's day. Stalin hoped to smear Trotsky and his followers with the Nazi brush. Trotsky was singled out for this attention because he represented the tradition of genuine Marxism.

The execution of all former companions of Lenin who enjoyed independent standing removed possible contenders to power. Such figures might become centers of mass opposition to the dictatorial regime even though they were not actually followers of Trotsky at all and kept their high positions, many of them, only in return for slander and vilification of Trotsky.

It would be a serious mistake, however, to hold Stalin alone responsible for these abominations. Stalin, no matter what his personal guilt, is a political figure representing social forces. He could do nothing unless a powerful segment of Soviet society stood behind him.

This segment is the bureaucracy that spreads its devouring cells throughout the USSR like a deadly cancer. It is this bureaucracy, estimated by Trotsky to embrace millions of upper-bracket persons, that found it necessary in pursuit of power, prestige, and special privilege to liquidate Lenin's regime of workers' democracy.

Lacking genuine popular support, the Stalin regime has no long lease on life in the USSR. It is doomed. It is only a question of time until the people of the Soviet Union with the aid of their allies among the workers in other lands again take up the iron broom of revolution, sweep the Stalinist filth from the face of the earth, and resume their march to the free world of the socialist future.



Medicine-for-profit is cause of high infant-mortality rates

By SUZANNE FORSYTH

It is ironic that the richest country in the world should have the highest infant mortality rate among the developed nations, but it is a testament to the priority put on human life in our society.

As early as 1968, Dr. George A. Silver, a top administrator in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, said: "We estimate that between 45,000 and 50,000 babies die unnecessarily [in the United States] because of inadequate care." Silver continued, "Our infant mortality in this country is worse than a scandal; it is a crime."

And a crime it is: Many pregnant women are denied adequate healthcare and are put at unnecessary risk to both their own health and that of their infant. A blatant example of the medical establishment's priorities is the increase of private hospitals refusing care to low-income and poor pregnant women. And this trend is increasing as

more non-profit hospitals are taken over by huge corporations and run for profit rather than human need.

Recently in Oakland, Calif., one of the nation's highest infant mortality areas, the last private hospital willing to accept Medi-Cal canceled its Medi-Cal contract after Republic Health Corp. of Dallas, one of the largest profit-making hospital chains, bought the hospital from Vesper Society, a non-profit organization.

The result is that in an area where the infant mortality rate for Blacks is 21.1 deaths per 1000 live births (compared to the national average of 10.7 deaths per 1000 live births), there is only one overcrowded county hospital to serve these high-risk women.

Dr. Clarence Avery, a surgeon at the county hospital, commented, "Doctors in the community now who provide prenatal care are even less likely to do it if there is no hospital nearby where they can perform the deliveries. The point is, it is basically a deprivation of healthcare to a community that was already underserved."

This deprivation of healthcare is a major reason for

U.S. infant-mortality rates continuing far above statistics in other developed nations.

Dr. David Kessner, professor of community medicine at Georgetown University, analyzed 142,017 births in New York City. The results, published in "Infant Death: An Analysis by Maternal Risk and Health Care" (1973), showed dramatically the influence of prenatal care on mothers placed in high-risk categories because of their social conditions.

Women with high social risks (low income/poverty, poor nutrition, unwed teenagers, lack of education, large families) were compared to women with medical risks (diabetes, toxemia, high blood pressure), and low-risk women.

The results showed that infants of low-risk mothers who had received adequate prenatal care died at a rate of only 8.7 per 1000 births, while for low-risk mothers who received no prenatal care, deaths of new-born infants soared to 21. Among women who were considered to be both social and medical risks, the infant death rate for those who had received adequate prenatal care was 29.9; for those who had not, the figure was 55.1.

According to an article in *Science News*, "if all the women in the New York City study had received adequate care, infant deaths could have been reduced by a third—from 21.9 per 1000 to 14.7."

There is a solution to these needless deaths. We must eliminate the social inequalities which cause the Black infant mortality rate to be twice as high as that for whites. Take the hospitals out of the hands of big business. Healthcare is a right. Hospitals and clinics should be free and run according to the needs of their communities, *not profits*.

Our readers speak out

Citizen soldier

Dear editor,

I read an article on gay rights by Hayden Perry in a recent issue of *Socialist Action* [June 1986]. I thought your readers might be interested in the case of Ellen Nesbitt, which raises important constitutional issues of free speech and associational rights.

Nesbitt has served as a part-time soldier in the New York Air National Guard for eight years. Recently, after she was promoted to second lieutenant, Nesbitt was questioned by a Defense Department interviewer.

"Which would you say best describes you—bisexual, homosexual, or heterosexual?" she was asked. Although Nesbitt failed to see how this question had any bearing on her competence as a national guard officer, she had no hesitation in answering that she was gay.

The Pentagon, however, has taken a different view of Nesbitt's sexual orientation. They declared her unfit for further military duty and discharged her.

Ellen Nesbitt is not accepting this discharge. She approached Citizen Soldier, a GI rights organization that publishes *On Guard*. This is a newspaper dedicated to the rights of America's soldiers. They assigned attorney Louis Font to represent her.

In announcing her appeal against her discharge, Ellen Nesbitt declared, "Chances are if it were just a fight for myself,

and I was the only one affected, I would not make such a big deal out of it. But it's not just a fight for myself and I am not about to give up."

Funds for Ellen's defense are badly needed. Send donations to Citizen Soldier, 175 Fifth Ave., Suite 808, New York, N.Y. 10010. Tel. (212) 777-3470. Please write to the same address for a sample copy of *On Guard*.

Tod Ensign,
New York, N.Y.

Fascism

Dear editor,

I have just finished reading "Can Fascism Arise in the U.S.?" by Nat Weinstein in the August 1986 edition of *Socialist Action*. I thought that the article made some good points, but the author missed the realization that fascism already exists in the United States.

We can define fascism as a system of government that advocates a dictatorship through the merging of state and business leadership together with an ideology of belligerent nationalism—as the American Heritage dictionary does...or as rule by fiat, rule by power that is not addressable by those who are ruled—as I do.

Let's take the realm of rule by fiat—the realm of administrative law. This law was created by people who were not elected to their positions. This corpus of law is every day applied in such

federal agencies as Social Security, IRS, FCC, ICC, DOT, SEC, ATF, DEA, etc.

Let's look at the merger of business and government. The former head of LTV Steel was second in command at the Pentagon until 1985, when he was shipped off to jail for five years. The former head of the Department of Transportation, known and loved by PATCO members everywhere, is now the head of the Union Pacific Railroad. And how about all those loans to Chrysler?

LaRouche is a dangerous and crazy opportunist. But equally to be feared are the dangerous and crazy men who are already in power and who wield their fascist ways over the rest of us.

Karl Kerr,
Seattle, Wash.

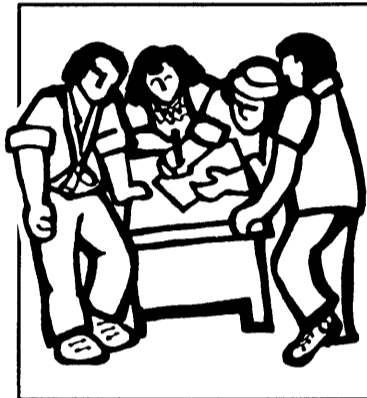
A response

Dear reader,

Your incomplete definitions of "fascism" can be applied, with minor variations, to virtually all the capitalist governments of Europe and the United States since the beginning of the century.

Fascism, however, gained power in only a few instances in history when the crisis of capitalism was such that the capitalist class felt it necessary to use naked force to *smash* the trade unions and other workers' organizations.

Fascism is a special political



national anti-intervention coalition is not only needed but is long overdue?

We hope you will address this issue in the same way you have urged a national anti-apartheid coalition.

Jerry Gordon,
Coordinator, ENC,
Cleveland, Ohio

A response

Dear reader,

My article only focused on South Africa. But I agree on the necessity of building a nationwide coalition against U.S. intervention in Nicaragua. This point of view has been expressed in numerous articles and editorials in *Socialist Action*.

The great majority of the American people are against the U.S. role in propping up the apartheid regime and oppose this country's brutal war on Nicaragua. I believe that an anti-intervention coalition would be more effective by *linking* both issues in its demands.

Michael Schreiber,
Assistant editor

Nicaragua

Dear editor,

In the August 1986 issue of *Socialist Action*, Michael Schreiber writes: "The labor movement, Black organizations, and student groups must retake the lead in building an authoritative nationwide coalition that can call massive protests in the fall."

We strongly agree. If such a coalition were formed for the purpose Schreiber suggests, it would be a giant step forward for the anti-apartheid movement.

This raises a question: Is there not an identical need for "an authoritative nationwide" anti-intervention "coalition that can call massive protests"?

With the United States having in effect declared war on Nicaragua (Ortega says there have already been 31,290 victims of that war), with the United States attempting to bleed the Nicaraguan economy to death, and with the atrocities mounting in El Salvador and Guatemala as a result of U.S. war policies in those areas, is it not clear that a

A Mass Action Strategy for Peace, Jobs and Justice

This pamphlet by Carl Finamore discusses how to build a mass movement to stop the warmakers. (75 cents; \$1.10 + postage)

Order from:
Socialist Action
3435 Army St.,
Rm. 308,
San Francisco, CA
94110

Socialist Action

Boston Socialist Action
P.O. Box 1046 GMF
Boston, MA 02205
(617) 389-4075

Chicago Socialist Action
Box 80B, 2520 N. Lincoln
Chicago, IL 60614

Cincinnati Socialist Action
P.O. Box 27053
Cincinnati, OH 45227
(513) 242-9043

Cleveland Socialist Action
P.O. Box 6151
Cleveland, OH 44101
(216) 429-2167

Detroit Socialist Action
P.O. Box 19613
Detroit, MI 48219

Grand Rapids Socialist Action
P.O. Box 3505
Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Los Angeles Socialist Action
P.O. Box 60605
Terminal Annex
Los Angeles, CA 90060
(213) 250-4608

Minneapolis Socialist Action
P.O. Box 14087
Dinkytown Station
Minneapolis, MN 55414

New York Socialist Action
P.O. Box 20209, Ca. Finance
693 Columbus Ave.
New York, NY 10025

Phoenix Socialist Action
P.O. Box 5161
Phoenix, AZ 85010
(602) 263-5190

San Francisco
Socialist Action
3435 Army St., Rm. 308
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 821-0458

WHERE TO FIND US

Reagan's war on drugs masks blows to civil rights

By HAYDEN PERRY

While millions of Americans are sinking in an ocean of drugs, the White House and Congress are using the issue to score political points for the coming elections.

Last month, Republicans and Democrats alike jumped onto the anti-drug bandwagon after the death of two athletes and the appearance of a super-addictive form of cocaine called "crack" made national headlines. Politicians now realize that a charge of being "soft on drugs" could be fatal at the polls in November.

Congress has raced to introduce a range of anti-drug bills. One bill would make 20 years in prison the penalty for first-time possession of crack. Another would bar the use of children in the distribution of drugs.

An aide for House Minority Leader Robert Michel (R-Ill.) observed that these bills have been brought before Congress mainly for their political effects. "What it does to solve the drug problem is not really relevant," he said.

Republicans in the Democratic-controlled House complained they were being aced out of a chance to jointly sponsor an anti-drug bill. "We are sort of playing political one-upmanship on this issue and it's a damn shame," complained Pennsylvania Congressman Richard Schulz. He accused the Democrats of "trying to play games to get ahead of the president."

Reagan shifts gears

The White House was quick to change gears at this point. Previously Reagan had considered drugs a "women's issue," safely left to Nancy Reagan's innocuous crusade that did the drug dealers little harm but polished Nancy's public image. While Mrs. Reagan decried the use of drugs, her husband cut federal funds for rehabilitation services.

When Reagan did get into the act, it was to make a grandstand play with plenty of publicity. Last year he joined a Coast Guard task force that stopped a drug-laden ship on the high seas. Reagan intimated that that kind of action would soon dry up the supply of drugs. But the price of cocaine on the street continued to drop, indicating that the supply—far from drying up—was exceeding demand.

"More than any other business I know, the drug business is pure capitalism, pure supply and demand," a criminal lawyer who is close to the industry asserted in *The Wall Street Journal*. It is a high-risk, high-profit enterprise.

How high the profits are is revealed in statistics published in the same paper: A kilogram of cocaine costs \$3000 to refine in Colombia. An airplane can carry 300 kilos. Some planes carry twice that. The profit on this load, if fully realized, would total \$6,350,140 spread among a number of people.

In a recent drug bust in Pennsylvania agents turned up a cache of \$4.2 million in cash. If profit is the driving force of business, such super-profits propel the drug multinationals with irresistible power.

U.S. troops in Bolivia

In another grandstand play last month, Reagan sent a huge military cargo plane with 160 American soldiers to Bolivia to help the government smash the cocaine processors.

After a week of thrashing about in the jungle, the task force only found the remains of six cocaine labs stripped of equipment, cocaine, and personnel. Forewarned by all the noise, and doubtless tipped off by corrupt Bolivian officials, the operators simply moved to a safer location.

Bolivia's main labor body, the Bolivian



Workers Federation (COB), went on a 48-hour general strike against the government's economic policies and the presence of U.S. troops in Bolivia.

Bolivia's extreme poverty is an obstacle to eradicating cocaine production. It is estimated 100,000 peasants are engaged in raising or processing coca crops. They have blocked roads and physically resisted government forces attempting to destroy their coca plants. Only a total restructuring of Bolivia's rural economy can break the peasants' dependence on this deadly crop.

This exercise by the U.S. military in Bolivia sets new precedents and excuses for military intervention whenever Washington wishes. And the administration's attitude that other countries are responsible for drug

Mexican joint effort to stem the drug trade.

The alleged torture of Cortez was intended to force him to reveal the identity of other U.S. agents. This episode indicates the extent to which drug money has corrupted state police and other officials.

U.S. officials claim that the Mexican government has agreed that Cortez and 30 other American narcotics agents could operate secretly in Mexico. De la Madrid denied this in a public statement before his trip to Washington. "It is not suitable for American police to operate in Mexico or Mexican police to operate in the United States," he declared.

De la Madrid knows such open Yankee intervention would create a political firestorm in Mexico. "Operation Alliance" would appear to be crippled even as it is launched.

The Reagan administration's show of combatting the drug industry abroad runs into another dilemma. In Afghanistan, South East Asia, and parts of Latin America, the drug barons are the anti-communist "good guys." The U.S.-backed Nicaraguan contras are the best example. Washington prefers to maintain a discreet silence when vile characters such as these add to the tons of drugs polluting society. In the past, reports were published of CIA planes being used to transport local war lords' drugs to market.

Drug tests violate civil rights

Now Reagan has turned to the home front, vowing to create drug-free schools and work places. Commendable as this aim might appear, Reagan is reaching for this goal by violating the civil rights of nearly every citizen. He wants whole categories of workers to take tests to ensure they are free of drugs. This is like stopping burglaries by searching every citizen for burglary tools.

Again seeking headlines, Reagan announced that his staff and other high officials will voluntarily submit to urine tests. A meaningless gesture. The public is not interested in the composition of government officials' urine. They would rather see these officials' personal finances

analyzed to learn how so many of them manage to leave office with sizable fortunes.

Of course these officials would scream, "Looking into my bank account is a damnable violation of my right to privacy." And so is involuntary testing of any man or woman's urine on the job or anywhere else. "Voluntary" testing under pressure of a boss's disapproval is not freely given consent.

Government-mandated drug testing would hand employers another weapon to be used against union militants and other workers who stand up for their rights. But such tests would have little effect in combating drug addiction.

Repression in Black communities

Where the hurt from drug addiction is most keenly felt—in the ghettos and poverty belts around the country—the government has prescribed beefed-up law enforcement and heavier prison sentences for drug pushers and victims alike.

Poor Black youth are repressed enough already. Close to 50 percent of teenaged Blacks are unemployed. Society offers no highs to them, which is why so many seek a fleeting high from drugs.

Reagan and his cops come from the outside and say, "Get off that kick." But they offer nothing to replace it. When pressed about an emergency program for jobs, better schools, and after-school athletic and cultural activities, the government can only answer, "Cut federal funding."

Residents of Black communities want to get the pushers out of their neighborhoods. Sometimes courageous mothers will band together and physically push the dealers out. These victories are never permanent so long as it is easier for a young Black person to get a fix than to find a decent job.

There is no easy solution to the drug problem. The fighting spirit of the most exploited in America is being sapped. Hints of an answer come from South Africa. Young "comrades," activists in the street committees of the Black townships, have made the beer halls a prime target. We can't fight apartheid if our minds are befuddled, they say.

It is a long way from beer to crack, but the message is clear: When youth are once more inspired by a renewed crusade for social change—like the Black freedom struggle of the sixties—they will push the drug dealers out of their way. Young people will provide the motive force for a movement demanding that the billions now spent for war be diverted to housing, jobs, and social services.

The drug problem will not be solved by government repression. It will be effectively tackled only in the course of struggle against the system of capitalist exploitation that fosters apathy and despair.



U.S. soldier in Bolivia. Use of military sets precedent for U.S. military intervention whenever Washington wishes.