

# A Socialist ACTION

Special report from Nicaragua

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DECEMBER 1986 VOL. 4, No. 12 50 CENTS

## Spring protests planned to oppose gov't lies, war drive

Kaiser strikers stand firm. See p. 6.



Socialist Action/Joey Ryan

## Philippines totters on the brink of a civil war

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

As bombs rocked central Manila last month, troops judged to be loyal to President Cory Aquino were placed on "red alert." Soldiers with high-powered rifles were seen patrolling street corners. Siege/counter-siege military exercises kept residents awake.

Suddenly, the Philippines faced the prospect of civil war. On Nov. 23, Aquino was forced to reshuffle her cabinet. She fired Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile following rumors of his involvement in preparations for a coup.

Enrile's replacement, Rafael "Rocky" Iileto, was a military commander against Hukbalahap rebels in the 1950s. His appointment foreshadows an intensification of the war effort against the Communist Party-led New Peoples' Army (NPA).

For months, Enrile had served as spokesman for the armed forces and right wing, voicing their demands that Aquino dismiss "left-leaning" cabinet ministers and back full military operations against the NPA.

Enrile also urged a crackdown on the labor unions, especially mentioning the May 1st Movement (Kilusang Mayo Uno, the KMU) trade-union federation. Since 1980, the KMU has grown in membership from 35,000 to about 800,000. It has

organized hundreds of strikes in the past year.

According to the *San Francisco Examiner*, members of the Defense Ministry spoke privately of the need to round up and perhaps eliminate "communist" leaders in the labor movement in Manila.

These threats came to fruition when Rolando Olalia, leader of the KMU and of the newly formed People's Party, was

assassinated. On Nov. 20, the last day of a four-day general strike, over 100,000 people joined a funeral march for Olalia. "Long live revolution," some marchers chanted. "Long live the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)."

So far, however, the CPP leadership has relegated "revolution" to the future, opting

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## Rail bosses step up union-busting attacks

By J.D. CRAWFORD

A sweeping plan by six major railroads to replace union workers who repair and service locomotives with non-union workers is threatening to provoke a nationwide rail strike.

The plan was discovered by the rail division of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) just as they were preparing to vote on a

new national rail contract.

They discovered that Burlington Northern railroad had just entered into a secret agreement to lease locomotive power from an outside contractor with a full-service contract to perform all maintenance and repair work.

They also found out that five other major railroads, the CSX (Chessie System Railroads), ICG (Illinois Central Gulf),

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• "I am not a crook," exclaimed President Richard Nixon in a matter-of-fact defense of his role in the 1972 Watergate burglary.

• "The operation was less than successful," said President Jimmy Carter after U.S. military helicopters crashed on their way to Iran in a 1980 "Rambo"-style hostage rescue operation.

• "I don't see that it has been a fiasco or a great failure," said President Ronald Reagan, commenting on the uproar over his recent secret arms deal with Iran.

U.S. presidents have a great penchant for understatement—and lying. They follow

### EDITORIAL

the standard code of capitalist politicians: "Tell the people anything but do whatever you want."

In Reagan's case, the Iranian affair was only the latest in a series of diplomatic coverups. Bernard Kalb, press secretary to Secretary of State George Shultz, resigned in October to protest what he called a "disinformation campaign" against the Qaddafi regime in Libya.

Soon after, Kalb's boss threatened to resign because he wasn't privy to the arms deal with sectors of the Iranian government.

This latest Iranian episode only proves that U.S. policy-makers don't believe their own rhetoric. The U.S. propaganda machine has consistently portrayed Iran as as one of this country's worst "foreign enemies." Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the administration has been sending arms to Iran.

Government propaganda and lies are exclusively designed to confuse and disorient public opinion. The objective is to whip up fears and anxieties about "foreign enemies" and "terrorists" in order to justify spending \$290 billion for the so-called defense budget. This is money that

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"It's illegal to strike nowadays" — See page 4.

# Fund childcare, not bombs!



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

Rashaad, my youngest grandchild, will be three this month. His imagination runs wild. He can change from a little boy to a fierce Karate Kid with

just a ribbon around his forehead.

Tape a paper towel onto his back, and he becomes Superman flying through the air. With a kitchen chair turned upside down and a tablecloth, he is transformed into a space warrior—all of this in just a few hours.

Rashaad has learned to play with other children. He waits patiently until it's his turn to play on the slide or tricycle. He no longer clings to our hand when other children are around or insists on sitting in our lap when strange grownups come to visit.

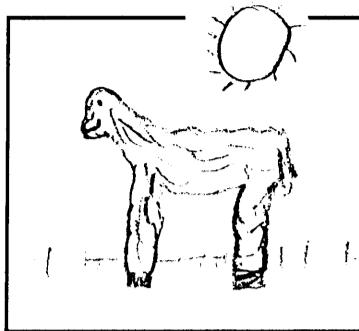
Rashaad is, in fact, becoming a joyful, teasing, wonderful little boy. Of course he's my grandson, and for that he is special. But a lot of the credit belongs to his

childcare center. It is there that he has learned to relate to grownups and other children.

He attends an excellent center with caring teachers and parents. He qualified for this public childcare center because his mother is a low-income, single parent and because she is a student at City College.

Other single parents are waiting to place their children in that center. They want to go to college to learn a skill in order to support themselves and their children. Many of them are "re-entry" older women who have sole responsibility for their children.

But they are in for bad news. The center has announced that



Aaron

there have been serious cutbacks in funding. They may have to fire personnel. They have had to cut back on the mid-morning juice snack for the children and they will not be able to take in any more children.

Rashaad's childcare center must

now hold "bake sales" to afford field trips or play materials for the children.

Meanwhile, this country is supplying millions of dollars worth of war materiel to Iran and the contras. These weapons will be used to bring destruction and death to the children of the Middle East and Central America.

It's the American capitalist way of life. The capitalist class of the world's richest country can only afford bombs—not adequate childcare.

Socialists want to change that "way of life." We want every child to be joyful and happy. We will help build a world where all children can develop their imagination and creativity. ■

## Thousands protest U.S. war policies

On Oct. 25 and Nov. 1, thousands of people joined antiwar marches and rallies in close to 20 cities. The demonstrations—which were initiated by the National Actions for Peace, Jobs, and Justice—centered on demands for an end to U.S. intervention in Central America, an end to U.S. support to apartheid, and an end to nuclear weapons.

The largest action on Oct. 25 took place in Washington, D.C., where nearly 4000 protesters marched to Lafayette Park, across from the White House. On the same day, about 2000 people marched in New York City, led by participants in the "Great Peace March," who had crossed the country to dramatize their opposition to nuclear arms.

On Nov. 1, close to 1000 rallied in Boston and 10,000 came out in Los Angeles. This was the largest demonstration against U.S. intervention in Central America ever held in Los Angeles.

We are printing below reports on the demonstrations in Los Angeles and Chicago.

## Chicago gears up for spring action

By CARRIE HEWITT

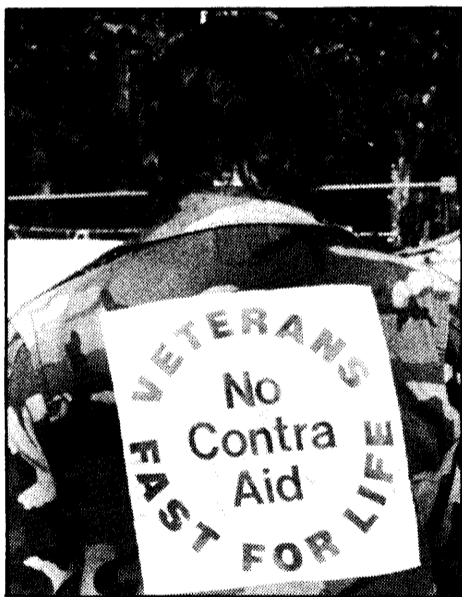
CHICAGO—Inspired by the successful Midwest regional March for Peace, Jobs and Justice held here Oct. 25, the coalition that organized the Chicago-based demonstration met here Nov. 19 to plan Chicago's participation in a national anti-intervention/anti-apartheid mobilization to be held in Washington, D.C., on April 25.

Some 2000 activists participated in the Chicago Oct. 25 march and rally, which was organized by a coalition of local anti-intervention, anti-apartheid, solidarity, and nuclear freeze groups.

Organizers of the fall action unanimously agreed, at the coalition wrap-up meeting, that the event was a big success. The demonstration, which included a mile-long march through downtown Chicago, represented the first major anti-intervention and anti-apartheid march organized here by a citywide coalition since 1984.

The event drew participants from across the Midwest. Buses and car caravans came from as far away as St. Louis, Mo.; Bloomington, Ind.; Toledo, Ohio; and Madison, Wisc. A big percentage of the marchers were students from campuses outside the immediate Chicago area.

Despite the miserable cold, rainy weather, participants stood under umbrellas



Dave Walsh

and makeshift newspaper hats at the end of the march to attend a rally organized around the central slogans of the demonstration. They called for an end to U.S. intervention in Central America and the Middle East, an end to apartheid, and an end to nuclear weapons and nuclear power.

Speakers included Themba Ntinga of the African National Congress and Abdeen Jabarra, national director of the Arab-American Anti-discrimination Committee, as well as local speakers from the Pledge of Resistance, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the Illinois Nuclear Freeze Campaign.

The rally was co-chaired by Rev. Clyde Brooks of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Marty Quinn of the Evanston Committee on Central America.

The coalition has called a citywide meeting in the third week of January to form a new coalition around the spring mobilization. Meanwhile an outreach committee has been formed to begin reaching out to labor, religious, and other peace groups in an effort to augment the 40-odd local groups already affiliated to the old coalition. ■



Dave Walsh

Ron Kovic, disabled Marine Vietnam vet, addresses Boston rally.

## 10,000 march for peace in Los Angeles

By KATHLEEN O'NAN

LOS ANGELES—While President Reagan was busy campaigning in Southern California on behalf of pro-contra aid candidates, about 10,000 people demonstrated here on Nov. 1 against that policy.

Chanting slogans such as "No aid to the contras" and "Embargo South Africa, not Nicaragua," this determined crowd marched through downtown Los Angeles to City Hall, where a rally was held. The action was sponsored by the Fall Mobilization on Central America—a coalition consisting of over 100 church, labor, community, and political organizations.

Dr. Charles Clements, a Vietnam War veteran who was a doctor in El Salvador, told the crowd: "We are outside the community of civilized nations."

Another Vietnam veteran, Charles Liteky, also spoke. Liteky, who had won the Congressional Medal of Honor in Vietnam, turned in his medals in Washington when he initiated and led a hunger strike by Vietnam veterans in protest against the government's Central American policies.

James Lawson, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Southern California, was cheered when he said that the U.S. government is "still trying to keep Central America as our plantation, rather than recognize the people there as people who want dignity and freedom now."

Other speakers included representatives from the Southern California Interfaith Task Force, CISPES, and the Labor Committee on Central America.

Rally organizers promised this is just a beginning. They announced that meetings will begin soon to plan spring protests. ■

## Conference calls Canada protests

By HAYDEN PERRY

An Anti-Intervention Action Conference was held in Toronto, Canada, on Nov. 15-16 to mobilize Canadian sentiment against U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. The Toronto Anti-Intervention Coalition (TAIC) was the sponsor. Over 90 organizations have joined TAIC.

Over 140 people registered for the conference. They came from throughout Southern Ontario, Montreal, and Vancouver. This was more than was expected, reports Barry Weisleder, re-elected co-chair of the TAIC steering committee.

Plans were laid for a Pan-Canadian anti-intervention coalition that will cover Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The coalition's first task is to serve as rallying points for mass demonstrations across Canada on May 9, 1987. The coalition also plans to send delegations to proposed mass rallies in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco next April 25.

The outcome of the conference will be better coordination of broad Canada-wide work against the war in Central America and Canadian government complicity with U.S. militarism. ■

## Socialist ACTION

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# Americans vote with their bottoms—They sit it out

By CARL FINAMORE

The 1986 national elections had the lowest voter turnout since World War II. Three out of five eligible voters didn't bother to vote. That's the largest voter abstention of any advanced industrial country, largely due to the absence of a working-class electoral alternative in the United States.

Despite the huge amount of money spent to whip up enthusiasm for the campaigns, most working people remained unconvinced that voting for either party would help resolve the worsening conditions of their lives. One commentator noted that the American people "voted with their bottoms, they sat it out."

Most workers disregarded the numerous get-out-the-vote drives promoted by the trade-union leadership to elect Democratic Party "friends of labor." Nevertheless, the union officialdom saw fit to hand over millions of dollars to Democratic candidates.

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters raised close to \$3 million in "contributions" from union members' paychecks. Some 80 percent of the funds were earmarked for the Democrats.

The United Automobile Workers union magazine, *Solidarity*, urged that workers participate in a regular paycheck deduction plan in order "to replace pro-Reagan Republicans" and to "set the stage for a Democratic presidential victory in 1988."

In their campaign against "Reaganism," labor officials had to cover up the real records of Democratic Party candidates. One of the most important of these candidates participated in the California race for U.S. Senate.

Alan Cranston was heralded as a senator who stood fast against Reagan's pro-war policies. "He's for peace, for jobs, and for justice," said Jack Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California AFL-CIO, as the labor federation voted to endorse Cranston in the election.

Reagan lent credibility to this false perception of Cranston by labeling him "an architect of America's military decline." But Cranston deflated many of his supporters by frankly pointing out that he "had supported every military bill Reagan ever proposed" (Nov. 2 *San Francisco Chronicle/Examiner*).

In another part of the country, retiring House Speaker Tip O'Neil objected to Reagan's unjustified attacks on the Democrats because "it ran counter to the bipartisan cooperation the president has sought from Congress."

Indeed, war, racism and poverty are



bipartisan policies of the ruling class. That's why most Americans feel it does not make a bit of difference to vote for either party.

The majority of Americans retain a deep-seated mistrust of the rulers in this country. The memories of Watergate and Vietnam have not been erased from the popular consciousness.

Recent polls, moreover, have recorded a significant social consciousness existing among millions of people. They show that 75 percent of the population support federal affirmative-action programs, 74 percent support a federal jobs program even if it means increasing the size of the federal deficit, and 80 percent oppose sending any troops to El Salvador.

The pollsters found that 67 percent oppose the mining of Nicaragua's harbors

and two-thirds oppose contra aid—even when asked if the United States should "help the people in Nicaragua who are trying to overthrow the pro-Soviet government there."

But labor officials have failed to seize on this discontent to explain the need for independent political actions such as rallies, picketlines, and strikes directed against the policies of the strikebreakers and war-makers. These protests could be springboards for the development of a labor party based on the unions.

A labor party would be fundamentally different from the Democratic and Republican parties, which are controlled by the capitalist class. To the extent that it is controlled by the ranks of labor, a working-class party would put forth a program and organize activities to advance the interests

of all the oppressed.

Most left-wing political groups joined the trade-union officialdom in backing the Democrats. The Communist Party argued in the Nov. 8, 1986, issue of its paper, *People's Daily World*, that there were many social issues that required a "labor-Black alliance...to work with and within the Democratic Party."

Nothing was said about building a labor-Black alliance to advance the demands of working people, women, and the oppressed nationalities through independent protests like the civil-rights demonstrations of several decades ago.

These mass-protest movements—not the Democratic Party—forced the rulers to dismantle Jim Crow segregation. Similar mass antiwar protests in the 1960s and 1970s, along with the fighting determination of the Vietnamese people, forced the government to withdraw from Vietnam.

Instead of explaining that the independent organization and mobilization of working people is the real force for social change, the *People's Daily World* incorrectly identified the interests of the majority of people with the election of Democratic Party politicians.

This policy meant that no matter which party won the elections, the American people would be the guaranteed losers.

The Communist Party and others argue that it is necessary to work inside the Democratic Party in order to move the party to the left. However, the current capitalist economic offensive is driving politicians of both major parties to the right. They are looking for solutions to rescue capitalist profits—solutions which, therefore, run counter to the interests of the majority.

Increasing economic attacks will compel workers, unlike the Republicans and Democrats, to seek radical solutions to defend themselves against further erosion of their living standards.

Every day of reliance on capitalist politicians, capitalist courts, mediators—or any agency other than the mobilized power of the workers themselves—delays the day when the first great victories of working people will be recorded. ■

## ...Spring protests planned

(continued from page 1)

should be spent defending working people at home against further plant shutdowns and the continual erosion in our standard of living.

The majority of Americans, however, aren't so easily falling for these lies.

An October 1986 *New York Times/CBS News Poll*, for example, found an increasing public awareness of government deceit. Fifty-three percent of those polled believe that the government told the truth only some of the time. Only 1 percent believe that the government never lies.

### Contra funding continues

U.S. policy toward Central America has been the most rife with government disinformation and lies. The U.S. government is determined to use any means necessary to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and to quash the Salvadoran Revolution.

In recent weeks, for example, the Sandinista government has been accused of secretly preparing a "terrorist plot to assassinate U.S. diplomats in three South American embassies." Sandinista officials immediately exposed and denounced these slanders—but the capitalist media failed to cover their statements. A lie that remains unanswered, the Pentagon figures, is as good as the truth.

Meanwhile the genuine terrorists—the CIA-financed contras—continue to be portrayed as "freedom fighters." The contras' record of brutalities has been well

documented. Yet bipartisan funding to the contras continues uninterrupted—despite major public opinion polls expressing overwhelming opposition to this policy.

Majority sentiment for the issues of peace, jobs, and justice needs to be mobilized in visible protest actions. As we go to press, major national labor and religious leaders are planning demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco on April 25, 1987.

According to the latest plans, the two main demands of the actions are in

opposition to U.S. intervention is Central American and U.S. support for South African apartheid. Other themes of the protest include opposition to nuclear weapons and to government attacks on working people at home.

It is time for us—the American people—to speak up for ourselves. There is a tremendous potential for involving unions, churches, anti-intervention, anti-apartheid, Black, Latino, women, and student groups in a massive public rejection of the policies of war, racism, and poverty.

We urge our readers to fully participate in making April 25 a complete success. ■

## If you support...

- The antiwar movement
- The Nicaraguan Revolution
- The fight against racism
- A woman's right to choose
- An end to apartheid
- The fight for socialist democracy in Eastern Europe
- An end to union concessions
- The need for a labor party
- A socialist America

## ...you belong in Socialist Action!

Contact the Socialist Action branch nearest you. See branch list on page 14.

## Weinstein campaign scores gains

By MAY MAY GONG

SAN FRANCISCO—"Human Needs Before Profits!" was the slogan that became familiar to thousands during the four months of Sylvia Weinstein's socialist campaign for San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

Through the campaign, Socialist Action campaign teams were able to appear before many community and labor meetings where Sylvia was, without fail, the one candidate that got a genuinely enthusiastic response from the crowd.

The capitalist media gave short coverage to the socialist campaign in favor of well-financed "major" candidates. Nevertheless, Sylvia was able to rack up over 10,000 votes, while *Socialist Action* newspaper sales soared throughout the campaign period.

Socialist Action members were out on the streets and campuses every week, distributing well over 5,000 campaign brochures and meeting lots of new people eager to learn more about our ideas.

"What difference would a socialist supervisor make?" Sylvia's campaign literature asked. The answer was one every working person in San Francisco could relate to: affordable housing and healthcare, more money for our schools, free childcare for all who need it, taxing the corporations, better public transportation, money for jobs instead of war—in essence, "human needs before profits." ■

# NASCO workers win fight for dignity



By MIKE FLISS

CHELSEA, Mass.—On Nov. 14, striking workers here at the NASCO Box Spring Company won the right to union recognition by a margin of 39 to 16.

The workers walked off their jobs on Nov. 3 when they did not receive a pay raise that had been promised. The Chelsea workers also demanded improved safety conditions, seniority rights, basic benefits, and respect

on the job from management.

When company Vice President Harvey Shapiro was asked by the workers about the pay raises, he answered that this is a "free country" and that the workers could leave and find another job. The NASCO workers replied that they were likewise free to stay and fight to make their job a better one.

In a rare move, 48 NASCO workers did not return to their jobs while they sought union representation to

assist them in their fight. They had learned from previous experiences that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) can delay elections long enough to allow employers to fire militant workers.

In the past, the predominantly Hispanic and foreign-born workforce at NASCO had been intimidated by management personnel.

With the assistance of Local 66 of the Laundry and Dry Cleaners International Union, the workers solicited and received food, money, and support from food markets, unions, and church and civic organizations. Domenic Bozzotto, president of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union in the Boston area, said: "This is everybody's fight."

With a multi-million dollar mortgage and other bills due, NASCO was forced to accede to the workers' demands for a prompt election for union recognition.

Although the NASCO strike involved only a small number of workers, the lessons from it are significant. The NASCO workers identified the employer as the major obstacle to their earning a livable wage and improving the quality of their life.

The workers succeeded because they turned their backs on the empty promises of management and a government agency, the NLRB. They took their fight out of the bosses' office and brought it into the streets to involve their community in the struggle.

The NASCO workers won their battle because they utilized the tried-and-true strategy of a strike. They employed sound tactics that threatened the company's profits.

The NASCO workers understood that they alone could represent their interests. "This is our strike," one worker, Rosario Consolo, said. "We called the union in to help."

The following is an interview with Darrell Becker, president of Local 61 of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America (IUMSWA). The interview was conducted on Nov. 9, 1986, in Pittsburgh, Pa., by Shirley Pasholk.

**Socialist Action:** What made you decide to run for president of the Shipbuilders Union?

**Darrell Becker:** It goes back to 1982 when I was originally drafted to run for president of the local and got laid off by the company. I went to my first union convention and explained how the company was manipulating a union election, fully expecting that the union would support my position.

I found out that even back then it was a bureaucratic clique. They denied my appeal, and I ended up going to the Department of Labor to file a complaint over the election. My complaint was upheld and the national union was forced to hold another election in the local, which I won by acclamation in July of 1983.

We started a strike against our employer, Dravo Corp., in September of 1983. They were seeking 38-percent wage and benefit cuts. The national union originally did very little to help. That changed from not helping, to stifling any support we were trying to generate internally in our national union, to open criticism—and then to all-out attack.

It got to the point where I realized there was never going to be any significant change in our national union unless the leadership was changed. In an effort to polarize and galvanize the dissidents into one movement, I decided the time was right to run for national president.

**S.A.:** What were the main issues you tried to raise in your campaign?

**Becker:** Shipyard after shipyard had been shutting down. There were no lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C., for legislation that would help the shipbuilding industry. There was no organizing going on, especially in the Southern shipyards where a lot of the work was going.

Instead of dealing with financial problems the union was facing by organizing new members, they were taxing the older members at a higher rate. So basically the goal of my campaign was to go back to the purpose of the union—which is to organize, educate, and move in collective action.

For the most part, the issues of the campaign were never clarified because most of my campaign dealt with defending myself against trumped-up charges by the

## Darrell Becker speaks: "It's illegal to win a strike nowadays"

national union officers.

**S.A.:** What were some of these charges?

**Becker:** First they tried to deny me the ability to rerun in my own local union in July of 1985 on a technicality that was overturned by the Department of Labor.

Then they brought me up on charges for an illegal disbursement of grievance money. Obviously, I was found guilty. So I appealed and went to another hearing in front of the full General Executive Board of the union.

When they decided this case wasn't as strong as it should be, they brought me up on additional charges for having a union defense fund. This fund was created in February 1985 and was kicked off by a letter to the national union asking for funding.

Then, in August 1986, less than two months before a national election, they

### "Scabs have to be stopped from crossing picket line"

"discovered" Local 61 had a union defense fund. They attempted to discipline me at first, but then decided the best maneuver would be to put the local in trusteeship. The national president came in and conducted the hearing by himself on our trusteeship on Sept. 9.

I have been brought up on subsequent charges for refusing to comply with the trusteeship. The national union had scheduled to expel me at the convention, but they didn't give me enough notice according to their own rules.

They scheduled another hearing for Oct. 28. We went to the same federal judge who had ordered my installation for the 1985 election. He granted a temporary restraining order preventing the national union from any further discipline.

**S.A.:** What happened at the convention?

**Becker:** The convention started with the turning in of credentials. I was denied my credentials based on the fact they ruled I was not a member in good standing. My vice president, who was the alternate delegate from Local 61, was denied credentials because they said there was an illegal election held in the local union.

The delegates should have numbered around 69 or 70, and they had 100 delegates at the convention. They just simply set up bogus locals. To make a long story short, with the swelled delegate ranks, they obviously won all the votes. In essence, that was the end of the convention—the very first day.

The Appeals Committee ruled that I was not eligible to be a candidate for the presidency of the union. It would have taken a two-thirds majority on the convention floor to overturn the Appeals Committee ruling, which was impossible.

**S.A.:** Was there any discussion of the issues facing the union at the convention?

**Becker:** There was very little business conducted at the 33rd convention of the Shipbuilders other than the fact they were disciplining Darrell Becker and discussing the trusteeship of Local 61.

We had several proposals for changes in the constitution that would cut the staff, cut the General Executive Board, and freeze the salary of the president. These were all soundly defeated. The main issues that face our industry were ignored at the convention.

**S.A.:** Did you have a chance to talk informally to other delegates about getting together some type of opposition?

**Becker:** Most certainly. We ran on a platform of save our shipbuilders. We have contacted several of the people who were at the convention since, and people are anxiously awaiting their interviews with the Department of Labor to possibly force a rerun of this election.

Once the trumped-up charges against Local 61 are lifted—and if the election is rerun—the next election will deal with the issues surrounding the shipbuilding industry. We anxiously await that.

**S.A.:** How do you view the general state of the labor movement?

**Becker:** I think the P-9 struggle did a lot to educate people and present a truly national perspective of what's happening with unions. You had coal miners, shipbuilders, steelworkers, and meatpackers all united around a single issue of concessions—which we all know don't save jobs.

There's no short cut. You have to work from the grass-roots level and get people involved. Just seeing what happened with P-9 and the overwhelming response from unions around the country, I think the labor movement has a bright future if it's allowed to blossom.

But, if it's left in the hands of the people who are in now, who make concessions and follow the line that half a loaf is better than none, we'll be led down the path of minimum-wage jobs—if there are any jobs left for union workers.

I think the unions have to take a much more militant stance in the way they approach strikes. When scabs are going to cross the picket line, they have to be stopped. When injunctions are granted, they still have to be stopped. If you just stand aside because a court order tells you that these people have a right to go in and out of the plant, you've already lost.

There are other ways of going about this than standing in front of a plant gate and having a confrontation. Go into the neighborhoods where the people live and let their neighbors know what they're doing. This makes it much easier to keep people out of the plant.

There's a lot of things you can do to create the public pressure needed to keep scabs out. But you also need people on the picket line and you do have to stop them. You can't be single-focused, but you can't stay in the confines of the law and win a strike. It's illegal to win a strike nowadays.

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Trans World Airlines forced its 6000 flight attendants out on strike last March, after demanding a 45-percent reduction in wages and benefits and numerous work-rule changes.

The following is an interview with Marcia Halverson, a strike activist and member of the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA), who is based in Cleveland, Ohio. The interview was conducted by Shirley Pasholk on Nov. 10, 1986.

**Socialist Action:** What did TWA do in preparation for your strike?

**Marcia Halverson:** Even prior to the strike, they were hiring and training replacements. They told these people they weren't being hired as strikebreakers, but as replacements for the 2000 flight attendants eligible for retirement.

Under our contract, you were eligible for early retirement at 45 if you had enough years of service. But most of these people were not planning on retiring early. In fact, most of our people don't retire until they're 60 or later. So, they lied to the people they hired and trained in preparation for the strike.

TWA used to have bases in Paris and Rome. They found some retired flight attendants there—people who had not flown in years—to fly during our strike and train new flight attendants.

Usually it's pretty hard to get a visa to work in the United States, but these people had no difficulty getting visas. I feel like the government gave the company a little assistance.

**S.A.:** What happened after you made your unconditional offer to return to work last May?

**Halverson:** Well, 5000 of us still don't have our jobs back. At the time we made the offer to return, 198 were called back. But TWA continued to hire new flight attendants. Of course, that's not legal. We had to take them to court.

We finally did win a decision that 463 of our people, from the top of the seniority list, should be returned to work and that the 463 flight attendants who were hired illegally after our offer to return to work should be removed. But there has been an appeal made by TWA.

**S.A.:** Have the strikers who returned received any harassment?

**Halverson:** Definitely. One very senior flight attendant was fired for wearing his union pin. It states in our contract that you can wear your union pin on your uniform. Since the company is not honoring the union grievance procedure, it's taking a very long time to even get a grievance started.

One woman, on her way to work on a flight, slept through the meal service. When she woke up, she asked if she could have a pre-wrapped sandwich. They wrote her up for interfering with the service, taking time away from other passengers, and "causing a scene" on the aircraft.

This woman has been with the company over 20 years and is a model flight attendant. She lost her pass privileges for six months—she commutes from Los Angeles to New York—and is now paying full fare to go back and forth to work.

These are just a couple of examples, but there are many more I could talk about.

**S.A.:** What are working conditions like?

**Halverson:** The company took the position that once the strike was over anything and everything could be changed exactly as they wanted it. In other words, the contract that had taken us years to develop was thrown out the window. We contend that only those things which were on the table during negotiations should be allowed to change.

Since it was a union "closed shop," we contended that after the offer to return to work, the scabs should now all have to be union members and pay dues. The company wouldn't go along with this.

We had to take them to court. We won a ruling that all active flight attendants must pay their union dues. It was appealed and we won the appeal.

We feel a lot of other poor working conditions will eventually be tossed out by the courts, but it takes a long time. TWA's attitude is: "We do whatever we like while you have to take us to court and prove us

# TWA flight attendants press fight against union-busting



TWA flight attendants are still fighting against union-busting campaign.

wrong, and until then we continue operating however we like."

It takes a lot of money which our union with its very small membership doesn't have. So, we've been doing a lot of fundraising just to ensure our survival as a union.

**S.A.:** What about efforts to decertify the union?

**Halverson:** TWA is actually taking the tactic, helped by the right-to-work people, that there should be a new union. The "union" they're trying to form is called the Professional Cabin Crew Association.

They've given time off to at least one person who's going around getting signatures so they can have a new representation election. They're giving these people permission to put things in company mailboxes, to appear at briefings before flights to talk to people, and to get signatures on company property.

In the meantime, IFFA's representatives are not allowed on the property at all. They're even being denied access to represent people at grievance hearings.

**S.A.:** What effect is the recent merger with Ozark going to have?

**Halverson:** This has yet to be determined. Right now the two companies are still operating separately. TWA maintains that "inactive" flight attendants (in other words, strikers) should not be merged. They only want the active seniority lists merged, and since the two airlines overlap on a lot of routes, there's going to be some furloughs.

**S.A.:** What are some of the other court actions that you're currently involved in?

**Halverson:** Well, our big law suit is our bad-faith-bargaining suit. This includes all the things TWA did to try to force us out on strike. This law suit has been postponed due to different appeals we've had on other law suits.

If we win the bad-faith-bargaining law

suit, we'll all get our jobs back. So, of course, that's what we're hoping for. We have other law suits on sex and age discrimination.

**S.A.:** What response are you getting to your informational pickets at the airports?

**Halverson:** We're still getting support from other unions. People come and picket with us. People are still donating money to us, which we need.

Even though it seems a little futile some days, I still feel like we're informing the public. When our 198 flight attendants who are back working see us, they really feel they're not out there all by themselves.

We have a big program now going on

called a "boycott of conscience." We've gathered thousands of signatures from people who are refusing to fly TWA until they deal fairly with the union. Many famous people have signed our boycott—movie stars, labor leaders, even state senators.

**S.A.:** What are some of the conclusions you've come to as a result of this strike?

**Halverson:** I think that all union members have a responsibility to educate themselves about their union and about the union movement on a wider scale. And then, they should educate other people in their union and their neighbors, family, and friends.

One of the main things I think is really necessary to win any sort of strike is the solidarity of the members—to not cross the picket lines. Also, solidarity with other unions is essential.

I think as union members it's important for us not to be isolated and only concern ourselves with our contract, our union, our problems. We're not out there alone, and when we get into a problem situation we realize very quickly that we need the support of other groups.

**S.A.:** What effect do you think this experience will have on IFFA members after they return to work?

**Halverson:** Before, all it meant to be a union member was that you paid your dues. It's definitely not going to be the same, and that's one of the reasons the company would like very much not to have any of us back. They know what they're going to get back is a very motivated, unionized work force. ■

## S.F. labor fights LaRouche



Patty Duke, president of Screen Actors Guild, speaking at Oct. 29 rally of 500 in San Francisco against anti-gay "AIDS Initiative" Proposition 64. It was defeated by a huge majority on Nov. 4.

## Labor union women blast U.S. war drive

By GRETCHEN MACKLER

ST. LOUIS—On the weekend of Nov. 8-9, over 1000 trade-union women assembled here for the sixth annual convention of CLUW (the Coalition of Labor Union Women).

A major theme expressed by the CLUW leadership, as well as many guest speakers, was the need to organize women into unions. Statistics show that unionized women earn 34 percent more than their non-union counterparts, while the differential among men is only 21 percent.

Delegates had the opportunity to hear from the striking TWA flight attendants,

who have been out since March. Some 3000 still remain on strike. [See interview above.]

Twelve years after CLUW's founding, the organization displays a more enlightened posture on many social issues than the trade-union officialdom has demonstrated.

A composite of peace resolutions submitted by several chapters throughout the country came to the floor with little debate and almost total support. One resolution calls for organized pressure on Congress and the Reagan administration to abide by the overwhelming public sentiment against military interference in Central America.

Another resolution states that CLUW supports putting pressure on Congress to oppose all military, economic, and political efforts to destabilize or overthrow the elected government of Nicaragua—or to attack the trade-union movement there in any way.

"We now have an opportunity to persuade our legislators to reconsider aid to the contras and support true humanitarian and economic assistance," the resolution states.

A third resolution on peace and disarmament calls for a ban on nuclear testing, including a ban on testing the Strategic Defense Initiative, which would spread nuclear weapons into outer space.

The CLUW convention also adopted resolutions on child care, for support to the Shell Oil boycott, against South African apartheid, for full amnesty for all immigrants in this country, for a shorter workweek, and against sexual harassment in the workplace. ■

# Kaiser hospital workers hold firm against two-tier

By HAYDEN PERRY

OAKLAND, Calif.—On Nov. 14, over 3000 people joined a rally here in support of striking workers in the 27 hospitals and clinics of the Kaiser Foundation in Northern California. The rally, which took place in a park opposite Kaiser's main Oakland hospital, was supported by all the Central Labor Councils in the Bay Area and by many local unions and community groups.

The strike began on Oct. 27 after management demanded a two-tier wage system that would pay new hires in the smaller towns 30 percent less than current employees. Kaiser also wanted to add two wage categories that would pay less than the lowest wage now paid in San Francisco and Oakland. Wages were to be frozen for three years.

Kaiser is the largest—and most profitable—private health-care system in the world, with 4.5 million members and an annual income of \$4.1 billion. Nearly 2 million members in Northern California are affected by the strike.

It is ironic, in view of today's bitter labor dispute, that Kaiser originated as a progressive and innovative system of delivering health care to workers in Henry Kaiser's industrial enterprises. He proposed to take care of all the health needs of workers and their families for a low monthly prepaid fee.

This plan has come to be known as a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO).



Socialist Action/Joe Ryan

After World War II, many unions enrolled their members in Kaiser. Today 40 percent of Kaiser's enrollees are union members. Together with their families, they number 2 million, forming the backbone of the system.

## Kaiser tries to "compete"

Kaiser's rate of growth has slowed during the recent period. But its rate of return on investments remained over 20 percent last year—almost double the national average. Kaiser expects to double its net worth from the current \$1 billion to \$2 billion in 1989.

Nevertheless, Kaiser fears increased

competition from new HMOs established with other hospitals in recent years. Management proposes to meet this competition by cutting costs—especially wages. And the easiest way to cut wages, it thinks, is through the two-tier wage system.

The unions representing Kaiser employees, principally the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), are adamantly opposed to the two-tier scheme. They know it will be followed by attempts to drive higher-paid workers out, till most of the employees are working at the lower rates.

The unions are also concerned that

management's stress on productivity has caused patient care to suffer. Long waits for appointments and hurried examinations by overworked doctors are among patients' complaints.

The unions want a Labor-Management Patient Care Committee to monitor unsafe working conditions and unsafe patient-care conditions. Management has refused to even discuss this demand for better safety. Until it does, the unions vow, they will not return to work.

Other unions on strike at Kaiser are the Engineers and Scientists union; the Hotel and Restaurant Employees, Local 28; the Social Services Workers, Local 535; the warehouse union, Local 6, of the I.L.W.U.; Food and Commercial Workers, Local 373; and the Stationary Engineers, Local 39.

## Nurses face injunction

The nurses' contract is not up for renewal at this time, and contains a no-strike clause. The courts, as usual, have come to the employers' aid by issuing an injunction forcing nurses to continue working. An injunction is already in force limiting picketing to a handful at each facility. But a number of nurses are refusing to cross the picket lines.

Unfortunately, the workers in the California South division of Kaiser, who bargain separately, have accepted the two-tier scheme. This will stiffen the resolve of Kaiser management to extend the plan to the rest of the state.

Despite this setback, the unions have one extra means of pressure in this case. Over 150 local labor unions, representing nearly 800,000 workers, have threatened to pull their members out of the plan if a fair settlement is not reached. Several unions are holding up their premium payments pending settlement of the strike.

Continued support by labor, Kaiser members, and the public is essential to a victory in this critical strike. ■

## ...Rail unions

(continued from page 1)

ATSF (Atchinson, Topeka, and Santa Fe), the D&RGW (Denver & Rio Grande Western), and the UP (Union Pacific) were on the verge of entering into similar agreements.

"By leasing locomotives with full-service contracts," IAM General Chairman E.B. Kostakis explains, "it will probably result in the participating carriers eliminating all of their repair facilities and perhaps 75 percent to 80 percent of the machinists and leaving all other shop-craft employees without any protection whatever."

Both the IAM and the IBEW suspended the ratification process, called for a new vote on the contract, and for a vote authorizing a national strike. Reports indicate that the membership in both unions authorized a strike by a large majority.

This move by BN and the five other railroads is particularly ominous in that this very question has become a major sticking point in their new national contract. The carriers originally demanded a contract clause eliminating all "restrictions on subcontracting" and eliminating "any impediments to less costly and/or more efficient alternative methods of performing work."

It was only after the carriers withdrew this clause that the tentative contract was submitted to the membership for a ratification vote. It was in the midst of this very vote that the carriers began to secretly implement their plan in defiance of the entire negotiating process.

In an arrogant and insulting statement, BN answered that it was not leasing locomotives but rather "had begun buying megawatt hours of electrical energy...to help meet our locomotive power needs." Such byzantine legalism can hardly obscure the fact that these "megawatt hours of electrical energy" are to be generated by scab locomotives.

## Restraining order

In a move to block a national strike the National Railway Labor Conference, a joint railroad owners bargaining association, has gone to federal court to obtain a restraining order. On Nov. 13, U.S. District Judge Charles Kocoras heard arguments in the case and announced he would rule on the restraining order within 30 days.

However, the unions may not wait for the judge's decision. Richard Kilroy, chairman of the Railway Labor Executive Association, a group that includes leaders of several rail unions, said Nov. 13 that a decision on whether to strike could come within a week.

If allowed to go unchallenged these moves have dangerous implications for every craft in the rail industry. BN and other railroads have already indicated plans to subcontract out benchmark, to use non-union third party firms to do track maintenance, and to use the sale of branch lines and entire terminals to replace operating crafts employees.

In addition, the Railroad Retirement System that many rail workers have contributed to for up to as much as 30 years will be faced with bankruptcy and extinction.

In a broader sense management believes a

historic opportunity exists, not just to get some concessions, but to smash the rail unions and impose a qualitative reduction in wages and working conditions throughout the industry.

To accomplish this, they know they

must prevent rail labor from exercising its full power through a national rail strike. Their plan is to take the unions on and break them company by company. They count on the courts, the government, and Congress as key allies in this strategy. ■

## Insurers reap profits as rates keep climbing

By HAYDEN PERRY

For many months, the papers were full of bad news about the insurance industry. The news stories reported that profits had declined—the companies lost money insuring people. Naturally, the insurance companies had to raise their rates to insure the more risky applicants.

Now comes the good news. The Nov. 2 *San Francisco Examiner* proclaimed it in bold headlines: "Insurers pulling out of a 2-year slide." "Big price boosts help make 1986 profitable." "Insurance industry on the mend."

After-tax profit soared to \$5.7 billion, highest since 1982. Stocks of average insurance companies rose 50 percent in the past year. They are expected to rise another 100 percent by the end of this decade.

So is the great insurance crisis over? Can car owners and small businessmen now get insurance at reasonable rates? "No such hope," say insurance experts.

According to the *Examiner* article, "The industry's resurgence does not mean that liability insurance policies will be easier to find any time soon. Moreover, they agree that insurance is likely to get more expensive, not cheaper, for months and perhaps years to come."

This is after increases of 81 percent in professional liability insurance rates and 120 percent in other liability insurance over the past 18 months.

Voters in California and Florida were promised lower rates if they voted for

limitations on victims' right to sue for damages. These laws are now on the books.

But the insurance companies will not lower their rates. Aetna Life and Casualty reported that the Florida limitation would reduce its costs only four tenths of 1 percent.

Other restrictions on the right to sue would have no effect at all, Aetna said. So its attempt to blame high rates on greedy litigants is proven to be a gigantic scam.

The insurance industry says it charged too little three years ago, and now we have to pay more for the bargain we got then. This is like a store saying, "We put a lot of items on sale last week, so now we will have to charge you double to make up for it."

Insurance companies can set their rates at almost any level they wish because they are exempted from anti-trust laws that bar price fixing. By continuing the squeeze on the public, the industry is putting pressure on legislatures to pass laws limiting accident victims' ability to collect adequate compensation.

So there is no relief in sight for the long-suffering premium payers. Many are fighting back. There are demands that the insurance industry be put under anti-trust laws, that no restrictions be put on the right to sue, that state insurance commissions serve the interests of the consumers instead of the insurance industry.

The improved financial situation of the insurance executives only makes them more arrogant and greedy. It will take redoubled effort to put them on a leash. ■



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## Nicaragua mobilizes to defend revolution



Nicaraguans celebrate 25th anniversary of founding of FSLN.

Socialist Action/Jeff Mackler

By JEFF MACKLER

MANAGUA—More than 250,000 workers and peasants mobilized in this tiny nation's capital city on Nov. 8, 1986, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the leading party of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

The mobilization was a tribute to all those who died defending Nicaragua's sovereignty. It highlighted the life and contributions of FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca on the 10th anniversary of his death.

The U.S.-financed contra war, ever-present in the consciousness of this revolutionary people, required that the mobilization be limited to the city of Managua. Nonetheless, at the end of the five-hour rally, tens of thousands were still pressing to enter the jammed Plaza de la Revolucion, the site of the celebration.

A three-hour military parade was led off by a contingent of 44 proud veteran fighters from the army of Augusto Cesar Sandino, the revolutionary nationalist who inspired and organized the armed fight of the Nicaraguan people against a U.S. occupation force in the 1930s. These original Sandinistas were followed by more than 10,000 armed and uniformed soldiers, representing every sector of the Sandinista National Army, the organized militias, and the reserve.

This public demonstration of the power of a disciplined army and committed people was accompanied by scores of modern tanks, attack helicopters, transport vehicles, anti-aircraft guns, field artillery, rocket launchers, and a variety of other weapons. It was an unmistakable statement to the world that the Nicaraguan people are prepared to defend their revolution.

This was also the message of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega in his speech to the rally on behalf of the nine top FSLN commanders.

Invited representatives from 180 political parties from 80 countries attended this event and a series of meetings between November 6-9 organized by the FSLN to report on the progress of the revolution and the major problems confronting it.

Four parties were invited from the United

States: the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, Line of March, and Socialist Action.

### U.S.-backed contra war

The backdrop to all my discussions with FSLN leaders during my five-day visit to Nicaragua was the U.S.-financed contra war. Virtually everyone in this small agricultural nation, which is compelled to divert nearly half its resources to military defense, believes that the U.S. government is fully committed to the defeat of the revolution—by direct invasion, if necessary.

Foreign delegates were invited to hear a report by Nicaraguan Commander Lenin Cerda detailing the human and material costs of the war. Cerda reported that 18,000 Nicaraguans, including 436 children, have been killed by the contras since 1981. An equal number have been wounded. Over 9000 children have been orphaned.

More than 40,000 families, almost 10 percent of the population, have been displaced by the contra war. This growing sector of the population is without housing and basic services. They comprise a huge



portion of the unemployed who are more and more forced into the cities and compelled to survive by selling almost anything that is available.

The war has resulted in economic losses in excess of \$2.8 billion dollars, a staggering sum considering the small resources of this overwhelmingly peasant nation.

Cerda reported 13,700 contras dead since 1981. This includes 3700 in 1986 alone. This figure is triple the yearly average of the past six years, another indication of the

escalation of the U.S.-sponsored war drive against Nicaragua.

### Unresolved land reform

During the course of my visit I discussed a number of the key problems facing the revolution with representatives of the FSLN and the Sandinista unions and mass organizations. The issue of land reform remains a key unresolved problem in Nicaragua today.

In 1986, a new land reform law was enacted which for the first time gave the government the legal right to distribute productive land owned by Nicaraguan capitalists to landless peasants.

I discussed what had been accomplished under this law with Rafael Guerrero, a national director of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform. Guerrero explained that in 1986, land had been distributed "to respond to the increased mobilizations by the peasants."

Guerrero indicated that 15,741 families had received land titles in 1986, a larger number than in any previous year of the revolution. Most of these peasants opted to either join or form cooperative farms or to farm the land as small private owners.

Forty-six percent of the land distributed came from privately held capitalist lands which had been left uncultivated.

Forty-one percent of the land distributed came from the state sector, reducing this component of agricultural production to only 13 percent of the land, a figure which evokes serious concern among FSLN leaders.

A small portion, some 5 percent, came from lands reclaimed from the contras in the course of the war. This land is almost entirely cultivated by hand with no surplus product expected.

Only a tiny portion of the total land distributed came directly from the productive capitalist sector, which still represents the most important component of Nicaraguan agriculture. Guerrero told me that it was not the policy of the government to take land away from capitalists who were using it efficiently.

Since the 1981 Agrarian Reform law, more than 60,000 families have received land in Nicaragua. Another 64,000,

according to Guerrero, desire land but have not yet received it.

While it is the intention of the government to distribute this land to the peasants over the next four years, it is clear that this cannot be done in the framework of the mixed economy presently defended by the FSLN. There is simply not enough land available to meet the needs of the landless peasants if the large capitalist landholdings are preserved.

This as yet unresolved contradiction continues to be at the center of the discussions within the FSLN and within Nicaraguan society in general.

There is additional pressure on the land from city workers, who increasingly look to the countryside to escape the severe economic problems found in the urban areas.

The grave economic difficulties—particularly the shortages—are obviously the product of the contra war. But the rampant levels of inflation and unemployment are also due to the speculation and profiteering by the private and "informal" sector of the economy.

### Problems of the economy

I discussed a number of these problems with Lucio Jimenez, head of Nicaragua's largest trade union federation—the 100,000-member Sandinista Trade Union Federation (CST).

Over the past several years a growing sector of the population of Managua has become engaged in what is called the "informal" sector of the economy. More than one-third of this city's 900,000 swelling population earn their living selling every conceivable commodity from matches, chewing gum, and food to agricultural products and clothing.

In many of the city's parks and streets, I observed that one can buy almost anything for a price—often many times the official price established for the product. This is even the case in the areas immediately adjacent to the five major markets of Managua, where the government has attempted to regulate prices.

The extent of the problem posed by the informal sector was described by Lucio Jimenez in no uncertain terms. "A worker of the formal sector can go over to the informal sector and make 10 times more money. This informal sector to us is nothing more than a system of speculation. And this system is characterized by the working class as the enemy of the revolution."

A huge portion of the population is driven to this sector precisely because there is little control of the system of speculation, not to mention the small core of capitalists who are the main suppliers of the commodities sold.

Factory workers in the cities find they can earn a week's pay in a single day or less by selling trivial items on the street. Others have come to believe that a more secure life can be obtained by returning to the land to grow crops which can in turn be sold at inflated prices on the city streets.

At the level of the factory and in most unionized sectors of the economy, as well as in agriculture, the Sandinista government has been able to maintain a degree of control over capitalist profits. A chief mechanism for this is the state control of foreign commerce. Large capitalists must sell their crops to the government at fixed prices. Profits exist and are guaranteed, but they are modest.

The government, through its control of credit and interest rates, further reduces the immediate capacity of capital to profit excessively. A common saying in this regard is, "Some profits yes, regeneration no."

In this sense the FSLN considers its relationship to the capitalists as "an experiment under FSLN control." It is fast becoming clear, however, that at least in some sectors of the economy, the "experiment" is out of control.

While the main export crop prices are stabilized and the main food items—rice and beans—are subsidized at relatively low

(continued on next page)

## Edgardo García speaks:

# "The same people who attack us impose cutbacks in the U.S."

The following is an interview with Edgardo García, head of the pro-Sandinista Rural Workers Association (ATC). García was one of the 12 recipients of the Carlos Fonseca Award at the Nov. 8, 1986, commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the FSLN. The interview was conducted in Managua by Jeff Mackler on Nov. 5, 1986.

**Socialist Action:** What are the central problems facing the workers of Nicaragua as a result of the war that is being forced on your country by the U.S. government?

**Edgardo García:** Nicaragua has suffered material damages estimated at \$2.8 billion. Key areas of the economy have been affected. We have problems of transportation for lack of oil. There is an oil blockade and many of the oil depots and container ships have been destroyed.

There is a drastic shortage of spare parts for our industry and public transportation. The big cement factory, for example, only has one oven working, which means that it is running at about 40 percent of its capacity.

In agriculture we have a similar situation. We have difficulties keeping the farm machinery working. We have problems in getting pesticides and fertilizers. All this is due to the U.S. blockade.

In a more general sense we have problems with the unfair international prices for our agricultural commodities. Take cotton, for example. Cotton used to be worth \$60 per unit on the international market. Now it's only worth \$28, less than half the previous price.

The U.S. war on Nicaragua has also left 18,000 Nicaraguans dead. Thousands more have been gravely injured—many of them permanently. Over 40,000 families—out of a country of 600,000 families—have been displaced from the war zones. This means that 8 percent to 10 percent of the population is without housing or basic services.

Unemployment is therefore a big problem. In fact, we have had to resort to the agrarian reform to resolve part of this problem.

The same people who are conducting this war against the Nicaraguan workers and peasants are the ones who are imposing austerity and cutbacks in the United States which have resulted in the growing unemployment lines.

**S.A:** How is Nicaragua going to solve all these problems?

**García:** First, we have to survive the war. We have to defeat the contra incursions and repel the invaders. We must also confront all the military and diplomatic maneuvers and the slanders



against the revolution. That's the first condition.

Once we eliminate the danger of U.S. military intervention we will be able to undertake the task of reconstructing our homeland.

**S.A:** How do you see a change in U.S. policy toward Nicaragua coming about? How do you view the Democratic and Republican parties? And what role do you think the working class and the unions must play in bringing about social change?

**García:** As far as I'm concerned, the people are the ones who create social change. Real change occurs when the workers have an independent voice, when the peasants have their own voice, and when their demands and their rights are conquered and defended.

Today, the prevailing ideology in the United States is reactionary. It will be necessary for the American people to take an interest in politics beyond the period of elections and to begin to genuinely debate the problems that confront them and to analyze the interconnections with foreign policy matters.

**S.A:** Sandino, in the early 1930s, was fighting against the U.S. government. Just a few years later the American workers fought against the capitalists in their own country. They fought long and bloody

battles to build their unions. They took on the National Guard and the police and they fought against all the laws that banned the unions. The American unions were built by struggle—independent of the Democrats and Republicans, who opposed them all the way.

**García:** In my opinion, the Democratic and Republican parties don't represent the people. Our experience has shown us that both Democrats and Republicans supported Somoza.

In Nicaragua we had a similar situation prior to the revolution. We had the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. They represented the ruling elite. Later they became the agents of Somoza and his cronies. They operated Somoza's courts and system against the Nicaraguan people.

This was the case until the poor and oppressed people, many of whom considered themselves Liberals and Conservatives, stopped relying on these parties and took their destiny into their own hands.

When these people came to the conclusion that their wishes and aspirations were not being responded to by either of those two parties, they were then able to build a mass popular movement, under the leadership of the FSLN, that ultimately paved the way for the revolutionary victory.

## ... Nicaragua mobilizes

(continued from previous page)

levels, prices on virtually everything else are left to float according to the laws of supply and demand. This has fueled the inflation and shortages, contributing to the decline in the overall standard of living of the masses.

### Trade unions

The strike is not the main weapon of the Nicaraguan trade-union movement. In fact there are few strikes and they are discouraged by the FSLN. Strikes are seen as an immediate threat to production and therefore a danger to the revolution. This is the case in the public and private sector.

When a conflict arises between the workers and the employer, the FSLN is seen as somewhat of a mediator which is "neutral on the side of the workers." Disputes are referred to the FSLN for resolution.

It is the great confidence the workers have in the FSLN—as opposed to their respect for the bosses or FSLN coercion—which results in their most often accepting its decisions. But there is no doubt there are limits to this confidence, especially when it becomes clear that a sector of capitalists are prospering at the expense of the masses.

### Views on U.S. politics

Nicaraguans have a deep interest in U.S. politics. Edgardo García, head of the Rural Workers Association (ATC), told me: "The same people who are conducting this war against the Nicaraguan people are the ones

who are imposing austerity and cutbacks in the United States."

García indicated great interest in the plans of the U.S. antiwar movement to mobilize in protest demonstrations in the spring of 1987 against U.S. intervention in his country.

He expressed his view of the major capitalist parties in the United States by comparing them to the two dominant capitalist formations which had existed in Nicaragua before the revolution: the Liberal and the Conservative parties.

"In my opinion, the Democratic and Republican parties don't represent the people. Our experience has shown us that both Democrats and Republicans supported Somoza." This idea was graphically expressed in an exhibit at the recently opened Museum of the Revolution, where a number of photographs of Somoza are displayed with U.S. presidents Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Nixon.

Some FSLN leaders I spoke with expected that the new Democratic Party majority in the U.S. Senate would result in a tangible change in U.S. policy toward Nicaragua.

Most Nicaraguans I met, however, were more skeptical, seeing no strategic differences between the two parties. On Nov. 5, the FSLN daily newspaper, *Barricada*, noted that, "Political observers consider that the victory of the Democrats will not lead to any substantial change in the foreign policy of the U.S. government because both parties, for example, in the case of Nicaragua, differ only in how to

implement the war of aggression against our people."

The Nov. 9 issue of the daily *El Nuevo Diario*, in an article headlined, "Democrats will continue Reagan terrorism," stated: "Democratic Congressmen confirmed yesterday in Honduras that U.S. policy toward Nicaragua will continue along the same path even after the Democrats gained a majority in the Senate."

The article quoted U.S. Congressman Salomon Ortiz, who stated: "The change in the Senate and the control the Democrats now have in the Congress will in no way change the foreign policy objectives of the Reagan administration. The interests of the United States as a world power require that all sectors in the Senate and House of Representatives make every effort possible to support the policy objectives of the government."

Ortiz made this statement on behalf of a Democratic Party delegation that met with Honduran President Jose Azcona, who has harbored the contras and openly collaborated with the U.S. government in stationing U.S. troops in his country.

It is clear to everyone that these "policy objectives" include the destruction of the Nicaraguan Revolution by any means available. This, in turn, has stimulated an important discussion on what forces to look to outside Nicaragua as allies. Commander Tomas Borge, Nicaraguan Minister of the Interior, told a group of delegates on their departure from Nicaragua that he had great confidence in the capacity of the American people to mobilize against the U.S. war drive.

### Legacy of underdevelopment

Nicaragua still receives significant aid from capitalist nations in Europe, Asia, and



the Middle East. It is clear, however, that decisive aid, even though in meager and insufficient amounts, comes from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The Nicaraguans must pay a price for their still cordial, although cooling relations with capitalist governments. They must maintain their commitment to preserve a dominant sector of the Nicaraguan capitalist class in the framework of the mixed economy and abide



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**Socialist Action:** What is the CST?

**Lucio Jimenez:** The CST is the largest industrial union federation in Nicaragua. It represents 100,000 members in the food, textile, sugar, oil, metal, longshore, and construction industries.

**S.A.:** What percentage of the employers you deal with are private and what percent are public? And what kind of controls can your union exercise on those companies that are owned by the capitalists?

**Jimenez:** In the case of the sugar industry, 50 percent of production is in the hands of one private producer. Half of oil and soap production is private. We could go on down the list and say that about 40 percent to 50 percent of industrial production is in the private or mixed capital sector.

The state has a capacity of control over these enterprises which is quite high. At one point we had some very severe problems of decapitalization by the private sector. What we did was propose the confiscation of some of these enterprises—and some were confiscated. The government has also drafted a law to prevent decapitalization.

But in general our efforts are directed at getting the workers to understand that what is fundamental is to produce for the revolution—independently of whom they may work for. Production is the most important task of the revolution.

**S.A.:** What are the central reasons why

the government and the unions don't take over the private industry and simply run it themselves?

**Jimenez:** What we are trying to do is consolidate the vital production sector of the economy—which is the state sector.

What matters is not the percentage of production that remains in the private sector. What is important is the influence we can exert on all other sectors and branches of the economy through the medium of the state.

Moreover, we cannot eliminate the private sector by decree. A large percentage of our private sector is made up of small industrial entrepreneurs who are really more like artisans.

We may consider keeping a large private industrial sector—so long as it produces for the revolution and fulfills its social obligations.

**S.A.:** Do you have the right to look at the books of the employers to know what their profits and production are?

**Jimenez:** No. We don't have the formal right. But in practice we have been able to look at the books. Many times we have workers who are very close to the managers of these companies.

But financial control is not even that crucial because in many cases these companies are subsidized by the state, meaning that the state can exert its control over the credits and distribution of inputs to these companies.

**S.A.:** There appears to be a growing black market or informal sector of the economy. Why should a member of your

union work for a fixed wage when he or she can work in the informal sector?

**Jimenez:** This is a problem of revolutionary consciousness. A worker of the formal sector can go over to the informal sector and make 10 times more money. The informal sector to us is nothing more than a system of speculation. The Nicaraguan working class has characterized the informal sector as the enemy of the revolution.

I say "enemy of the revolution" because this sector is taking money and profits away from the revolution.

The workers, with the level of consciousness that they have acquired, are not politically and ideologically motivated to become part of the speculative system. But some workers, whose personal situations are very desperate, do go over to the informal sector.

**S.A.:** Many of the peasants have weapons to defend the land and to defend the revolution. Is this also the case in the large industries in the various cities?

**Jimenez:** Of course.

**S.A.:** How do the workers get the guns and how are they organized to use them?

**Jimenez:** In the past we had Civil Defense Brigades at the workplace. Then the revolution created the Patriotic Military Service. Today, in the cities of the Pacific, thousands of workers are in a position to handle combat weapons.

**S.A.:** Where are the guns kept?

**Jimenez:** In the military barracks where the workers report for duty in case of an emergency. The factories may also have

weapons for defense. This depends on the importance of the factory.

**S.A.:** If the union feels an employer is intransigent, can it go out on strike?

**Jimenez:** The strike is no longer the method of struggle we use—not in the state, private, or mixed enterprises.

Instead we have now instituted a process of dialogue between the union, the state, and the company. In these discussions we make proposals. If there is a positive response to the workers' demands, this is explained to the workers. If the response is not favorable, we also take back the results of the dialogue to the workers.

In the great majority of cases the workers do not make excessive or unrealistic demands. They do not put the traditional types of pressure on the government and the employers that you would find in the United States or elsewhere.

Workers understand the aggressive foreign policy of the United States and they also know why we must maintain the private sector. ■



Socialist Action/Jeff Mackler



Socialist Action/Jeff Mackler

by their promise to pay back Somoza's foreign debt to the imperialist bankers. This is a pledge that the revolution is not a threat to world capitalism.

More and more, however, Sandinista leaders are finding that this pledge can only be kept at the expense of the people themselves and that the Nicaraguan capitalist class is incapable of advancing the interests of the workers and peasants. This deep contradiction within the

Nicaraguan Revolution, though, has yet to be definitively resolved.

But even if the Sandinistas were to break with the mixed economy, the dependent and backward character of its economy underscores the fact that, by itself, Nicaragua cannot break out of the straitjacket of underdevelopment imposed on it by the international capitalist system.

In the last year, for example, whatever

progress achieved in increasing agricultural production was more than canceled by the 53-percent drop in the world price of cotton, a major export crop.

Fluctuations in the price of Nicaragua's other export crops, orchestrated by the imperialist nations, make economic progress difficult—if not impossible. In the long run, as well as the short, Nicaragua's fate is tied to the struggles of revolutionary people throughout the world who seek to replace capitalism with a system of social organization and production rationally planned to meet human needs.

Nicaragua is heavily dependent on the Soviet Union for economic aid. A political price tag is inevitably attached to such aid. This is one explanation, for example, for the recent article in *Barricada* endorsing the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. The Nov. 5 *Barricada* characterized the revolutionary movement of the Hungarian workers against the bureaucratic Stalinist state as a "counterrevolutionary uprising smashed with the help of Soviet troops."

But while the FSLN defers to or supports a number of the reactionary policies of the degenerated or deformed workers' states, whose pressure is constantly exerted, the Sandinista leadership identifies more with the revolutionary current of the Castro-led Cuban Revolution, which in practice has rejected many of the class-collaborationist policies of world Stalinism.

### FSLN membership

There are three levels of membership in the FSLN: sympathizers, aspiring members, and full members. The latter are called "militantes" or militants. I attended an FSLN "promotion" meeting at the

university in Managua. A thousand people came to celebrate the admission to the FSLN of some 50 new members, the majority of them women. Similar mass meetings were taking place throughout the country for the same purpose.

An FSLN keynote speaker explained the meaning of the Nicaraguan Revolution to the youthful audience. He said: "There has been no true revolution which has not been attacked by a counterrevolution. This is our situation today. In a real sense you have to be crazy to be a Sandinista—to want to fight against the greatest power on earth for your people and think you can win."

He continued, "You had to be crazy to think you could beat Somoza's guard and build a new society. And you have to be crazy to believe that we can build a new life for ourselves and our people based on love and respect for the truth. But we are crazy in the FSLN, and that is the kind of militants we want."

An FSLN representative indicated that the membership of the FSLN today stands at 25,000 in all categories. It is a young and dedicated party with the great bulk of its members in their twenties. It has the great respect of the Nicaraguan people.

It was my impression that the FSLN remains uncertain about its future course, believing that pragmatism—or attention to the issues of the moment—will suffice to resolve the current problems facing the revolution.

But it is also clear that the dynamic of the unfolding revolution is stimulating important discussions among the FSLN leadership regarding the possibility of maintaining the "experiment" with the mixed economy. The outcome of these discussions will have a profound impact on Nicaragua's future. ■



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**S.A.:** There appears to be a growing black market or informal sector of the economy. Why should a member of your

battles to build their unions. They took on the National Guard and the police and they fought against all the laws that banned the unions. The American unions were built by struggle—independent of the Democrats and Republicans, who opposed them all the way.

**Garcia:** In my opinion, the Democratic and Republican parties don't represent the people. Our experience has shown us that both Democrats and Republicans supported Somoza.

In Nicaragua we had a similar situation prior to the revolution. We had the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. They represented the ruling elite. Later they became the agents of Somoza and his cronies. They operated Somoza's courts and system against the Nicaraguan people.

This was the case until the poor and oppressed people, many of whom considered themselves Liberals and Conservatives, stopped relying on these parties and took their destiny into their own hands.

When these people came to the conclusion that their wishes and aspirations were not being responded to by either of those two parties, they were then able to build a mass popular movement, under the leadership of the FSLN, that ultimately paved the way for the revolutionary victory.



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## Agrarian Reform director describes distribution of land in Nicaragua



J.P. Plisson

The following is an interview with Rafael Guerrero, national director of social organization of production of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (MIDINRA). The interview was conducted in Managua by Jeff Mackler on Nov. 4, 1986.

**Socialist Action:** What has happened in Nicaragua since the new land reform decree in January 1986 in terms of the distribution of the land?

**Rafael Guerrero:** In mid-1985, the FSLN decided that in order to strengthen the workers' and peasants' alliance more land should be made available to the poor peasants without land and to those who have been displaced by the U.S. aggression.

From January to the present, 15,741 new peasant families received 573,750 acres of land. This represents the highest number of titles distributed in any year since 1981.

Of this total, 5900 families opted for individual titles to the land. The remaining beneficiaries organized themselves in various forms of cooperative production, but not necessarily those forms promoted by the state.

This land was distributed to respond to the increased mobilizations for the land by the peasants.

**S.A.:** What form did these mobilizations take?

**Guerrero:** They took diverse forms. Usually, they were organized by the peasant organizations like the UNAG [National Union of Farmers and Ranchers].

But in some cases the peasants took over farms that were not subject to the agrarian reform program. They didn't follow the institutional mechanisms and instead just simply went ahead and took over the land.

**S.A.:** What is the response of the government when the peasants take over this land?

**Guerrero:** What we do is go and talk to the peasants and explain to them that the land that they have just taken over is not subject to confiscation as established by the reform law.

**S.A.:** Do the peasants usually agree. Does the conflict end there?

**Guerrero:** Normally it doesn't end there. At that point we have three choices: (1) Locate a nearby farm that can be assigned to the peasant families; (2) negotiate with the owner of the land for its purchase; or (3) see what possibility there is to reassign nearby state farms to the peasants.

**S.A.:** Do you have any figures for the percentage of land distributed in 1986 that came from the state and private sectors?

**Guerrero:** Forty-six percent was taken from private producers who have been disinterested in the revolutionary process and have kept the land idle or unproductive. Forty-one percent of the distributed land was taken from the state sector.

Land that was negotiated and bought from the private owners and in turn given to the peasants amounted to 4 percent. This was the primary procedure used in 1984 and 1985 to respond to the demand for the land by those peasants displaced by the war.

At the same time, we distributed a small percentage of the land assigned to the cooperatives and turned it over to the landless peasants. These are cooperatives where there were too few families to work the land and where much of the land was underutilized. This contribution amounted to 3 percent.

**S.A.:** What happens to the state farms after land is taken away from them?

**Guerrero:** We are in the process of making the state farms more compact and efficient. Much of the state land is dispersed throughout the country, which makes the management of these units difficult and irrational.

So we are disbanding those state farms which the state is no longer able to administer due to the high production costs and countless other problems. These lands are reassigned.

**S.A.:** Have significant numbers of agricultural workers who worked on the state land lost their jobs?

**Guerrero:** No. The agricultural workers, organized in the ATC [Rural

Workers Association], are incorporated into other productive tasks on the same state farms. In other cases—usually the remote state farms—we have a situation where there aren't enough workers to make the farms run productively. So we transfer ATC members from the disbanded state farms to other units where their labor is needed.

We are consolidating the state farms into fewer and more efficient units without having to lose jobs.

**S.A.:** One of the features of the new 1986 agrarian reform law was that for the first time it allowed for the distribution of productive lands from the private sector. Was this modification due to the significant pressure for land by the peasants?

**Guerrero:** Let me clarify this measure. The spirit of the agrarian reform law is not to take the land away from the productive private sector. Our overall policy is to confiscate potentially productive lands that have been left idle or underutilized by unresponsive private producers.

The new January 1986 modifications to the law now give us the legal right to confiscate efficiently cultivated private lands. But only in extremely exceptional cases—in order to respond to the pressure for land—will we confiscate these lands.

The pressure for the land is a big problem. From 1981 to 1986, the agrarian reform program distributed 1.87 million acres to 60,272 families. But we estimate that there are still approximately 64,000 families who are waiting to receive land.

The deep economic crisis in Nicaragua is primarily hitting the salaried workers. This has meant an unexpected demand for land on the part of the agricultural workers of

the private and state farms, who want to cultivate their own private plots.

**S.A.:** Does this include the workers in the industrial sector?

**Guerrero:** There are also some workers in the urban centers who have looked to the land as a way out of the drastic economic situation they face.

**S.A.:** How do you plan to go about distributing the land to the remaining 64,000 families?

**Guerrero:** Our goal is to benefit 15,000 families annually, using a flexible approach of land redistribution.

Thanks to our armed forces, we have recovered lands in the war zones that are now available for distribution.

In addition, there are cooperatives that have a lot of underutilized land. The idea is to convince or persuade the cooperative members to incorporate more members to work the land.

This measure is also necessary to fend off criticisms from certain opposition parties here in Nicaragua who say that land of the big private producers is being taken away and made available to the cooperatives, which are also not producing efficiently.

Another way to meet the needs of the landless families is to take more land away from the state farms. There are still more lands that can be given up by the state farms in the current process of consolidation and reorganization.

But we are becoming more careful now about dismembering the state farms because we could come to the point of just simply doing away with the state farms altogether.

Our last alternative is to take more land from the private producers. We have decided this ranking of priorities because if all we did was just take the land from the large private landowners, this could lead to greater political tensions in the country that would erode the revolution.

**S.A.:** Do you have the 1986 figures on the distribution of cultivable land in Nicaragua?

**Guerrero:** Yes. The percentages are as follows:

- The large private producers (over 345 acres) represent 22 percent.
- The medium private producers (between 85 and 345 acres) represent 30 percent.
- The small private producers (less than 85 acres) represent 9 percent.
- The cooperatives represent 21 percent.
- The state farms represent 13 percent.
- And the war zones represent 5 percent.

**S.A.:** Is there any evidence that the peasants who do not have the land are turning against the government or are more receptive to the contras?

**Guerrero:** No, quite the contrary. Our evaluation of the land distribution this year is that our alliance with the peasantry has been strengthened. More peasants are participating in the defense efforts of the revolution. The peasant organizations have also grown in size and influence. And there is an increase in the political participation of the peasantry in the various committees on a local and district level.

**S.A.:** Concerning the private sector: Isn't there a danger that with its significant economic power the capitalist sector will strengthen and regenerate itself and attempt to express the political power it once had? What limitations has the state put on the right of the capitalists to produce and make a profit?

**Guerrero:** The state has confiscated the land that was deficiently cultivated by the private producers and has also taken control over the distribution of agricultural production.

Foreign trade is controlled entirely by the state. The financial system is in the hands of the state. The private sector used to control these key sectors of the economy.

For us, what is decisive is not who owns the land. What is decisive is the control of the services and inputs for production and the key links in the commercialization and distribution of production.

So even if we still have a mixed economy—with medium and large private producers—this model of organization will ensure that everyone is producing for the revolution. This is what will keep the private producers in check.



Dave Walsh



# Frelimo's policies fail to lift Mozambique economy

The plane crash last October that cost the lives of President Samora Machel and other top leaders of Mozambique complicates a situation in that country that is being described as catastrophic.

Agriculture, the country's principle resource, has been hard hit by drought and by falling world prices. Industrial and agricultural production have declined by about 50 percent since 1981, according to government figures.

Ports, roads, and railroads—used by both Mozambique and its neighbor Zim-

babwe—have been severely affected by terrorist operations of the Renamo (RNM, National Resistance Movement of Mozambique), which is backed by South Africa. The war has cost 100,000 dead and \$5 billion in damage to the economy, government officials state.

Mozambique's difficulties have been compounded by confused and misguided policies of the ruling party, Frelimo. Recently, the government took steps to increase support to the private sector, break up state farms, and sell off about 30 nationalized factories.

Mozambique's increasing pro-Western stance is likely to be continued by the new president, Joaquim Chissano, the former foreign minister. The Washington Post notes that Chissano "was the favored candidate of western governments" for the presidency.

Frelimo's policies are described further in an article by Jean-Jacques Laredo that appeared in the Nov. 10 issue of *International Viewpoint*. We reprint portions of the article below.—The editors

was in a trajectory leading it back toward an orientation toward the Western countries.

## Frelimo takes power

Caught by surprise by the Portuguese "Revolution of the Carnations" on April 25, 1975, Frelimo had no idea that it was so close to taking power. It had about 12,000 members. It was to find itself obliged to assign about one third of those to the state apparatus after independence.

The departure of the Portuguese colonists became a serious drain on the country. Between September 1974, when the transitional government was set up, and the end of 1985, the white population fell from 230,000 to 25,000.

At a stroke, Frelimo gained control of the country, without having to go through the civil war that the MPLA did before it could consolidate its government in Luanda [Angola]. Thus the Mozambican front did not take power in the course of an upsurge of social struggles—with the exception of an economic strike of dockers. And no lasting forms of self-organization arose.

The relations between Frelimo and the Mozambican masses were therefore determined by substitution of the party for mass action. The constitution of Mozambique expressed the reality quite well: "Power belongs to the workers and peasants united and led by Frelimo."

## Regime denounces strikes

The existing mass structures were emptied of their substance, and those set up were primarily transmission belts for the party's line. The Grupos da Dinamizacao [Sparkplug Groups] that appeared with the installation of the transitional government lost precisely their spark, and adopted the slogan: "Unity—Vigilance—Work."

At the founding conference of the Workers Organization of Mozambique [a government-sponsored "socialist union"] in October 1983, Samora Machel said, "Its

task is not to make demands." It is hardly surprising that such a structure—set up by a regime that had denounced strikes as actions manipulated from abroad—has not gained the enthusiastic adherence of the workers.

Toward the rural population (80 percent of the total), Frelimo—if not its leaders, at least its apparatus—used methods that fueled the serious discontent it is facing.

In the aftermath of independence, the land was nationalized. But the practice of forcibly regrouping the population in communal villages after 1979 and the exactions perpetrated by Mozambican soldiers, who held the people in ransom in order to feed themselves, had a repellent effect.

## Leaders get special privileges

Is Frelimo a party cast in the East European model? There is no lack of correspondences, as Frelimo maintains an orientation of special links with the Soviet Union. Socially, there are indeed features of the "nomenklatura system," with its train of privileges for the party leaders (such as special stores) and scarcity for the population at large—along with widespread corruption.

Moreover, the leadership consciously chose to fuse Frelimo with the state. The party was set up as a single party. In 1977, the Third Congress of Frelimo opted for "Marxism-Leninism" and declared the advent of the stage of "people's democracy." If the regime chosen for the party was "democratic centralism," this was also to be the rule imposed on the People's Assemblies, "the supreme organs of state power at every level."

The 1977 congress marked out a path inspired by the Soviet Union, at the time one of Mozambique's few allies: "Taking agriculture as a base, industry as a locomotive, and the construction of heavy

industry as the decisive factor, we will break free once and for all from poverty and dependence, and we will build an advanced economy in the service of the people."

The nationalizations that followed independence extended beyond land to small and medium industry, as well as trade, health services, and education. But they did not affect big industry, the mines, energy, or the plantations that belonged directly to Western companies or were technically or commercially dependent on them.

Even though the state sector came to embrace about 50 percent of enterprises in 1978, it could not serve as a basis for economic independence or as a springboard toward breaking from the capitalist market...After 1980, the developed capitalist countries committed about \$400 million to about 20 projects that reinforced the country's dependence.

## Orientation toward the West

Despite the restatement of a socialist goal, the period after 1983 was marked by a growing opening to the West. In June 1985, Mozambique did sign an accord with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), the East Bloc aid agency, indicating that it was not breaking with the Eastern countries. But it was also to join the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

At present, more than 50 percent of Mozambique's commercial exchanges are with the developed capitalist countries. The East Bloc countries account for only a fourth of imports and purchase only 15 percent of the country's exports.

The Mozambican people have not reached the end of their travail, in particular since South Africa is on the lookout for opportunities to counter the blows dealt it by the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire and the fall of the Rhodesian white government. ■

By JEAN-JACQUES LAREDO

Since independence, Mozambique has never known any peace. Some 42 percent of its budget (more than 11 percent of the Gross Domestic Product) is absorbed by the war effort. In nine of the country's 10 provinces, Frelimo is threatened by the RNM.

Ending South African support for the RNM guerrillas was the quid pro quo officially accepted by Pretoria in return for a clampdown on the ANC [African National Congress] operations based in Mozambique.

These provisions were part of the non-aggression pact signed between Samora Machel and P.W. Botha on March 16, 1984, on the bank of the Nkomati River—not far, as it happens, from where the Mozambican president's plane went down.

Mozambique kept its pledges, expelling most of the ANC representatives within two weeks of signing the agreement. It reduced the ANC's local listening post to a few individuals.

South Africa was far from so scrupulous. Documents seized at general headquarters of the RNM, which was briefly occupied by Mozambican and Zimbabwean forces, showed that the flow of aid from Pretoria never dried up.

Nkomati was only the inevitable conclusion of the nine preceding years...In 1984 Mozambique was exhausted by paying for the mistakes of the regime and

# GM, cops break S. Africa sitdown strike

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Cops with whips, attack dogs, mass firings—it was business as usual at the General Motors plants in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The automaker called in government security forces on Nov. 17 in order to escort scabs through a picket line of hundreds of striking Black workers. Most workers returned to work the next day, after the company threatened to fire all the strikers.

The strike was called by the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU) in response to General Motors' announcement at the end of October that it was selling its South African facilities to local capitalists.

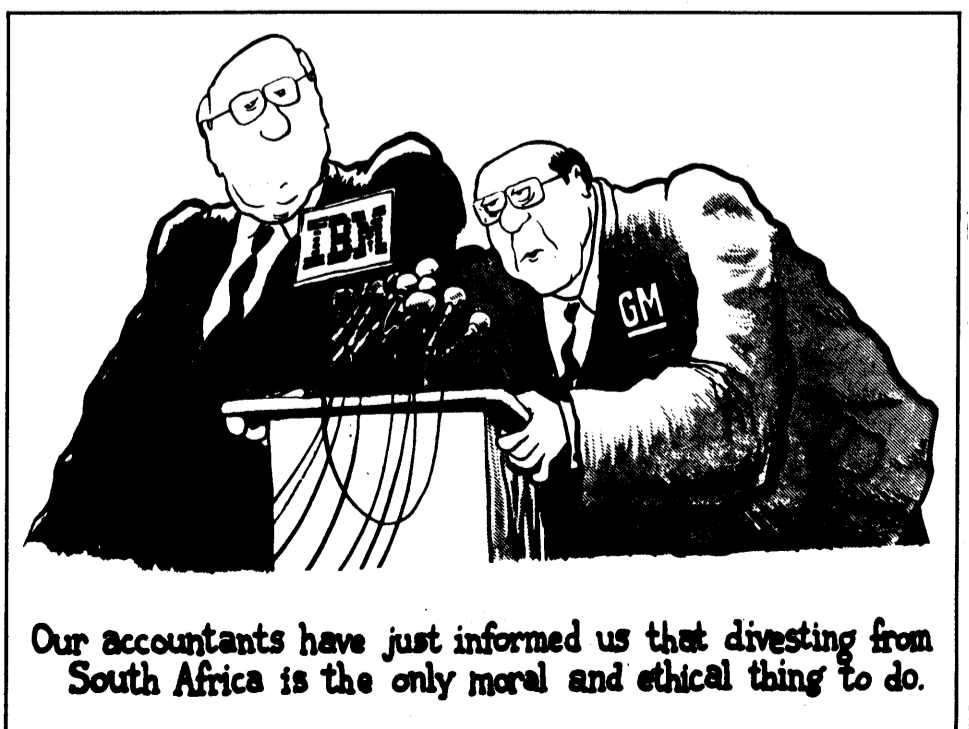
Some 2000 workers occupied the plants after GM refused their requests to repay their pension contributions and guarantee severance pay when the new owners take over next year.

General Motor's "disinvestment" will

probably yield the corporation higher profits from South Africa than it has made in years, investors predict. GM cars and parts will continue to flow into South Africa from abroad. Meanwhile, the parent company will receive hefty fees for use of its trademarks on products made in South Africa.

General Motors will also benefit from the repayment of loans made to South African investors to enable them to purchase its subsidiary. And GM has retained a buy-back option with the new owners—to protect its long-term interests in the land of apartheid.

Meanwhile, the 3 million-member United Democratic Front has called a "Christmas boycott" of white-owned stores beginning on Dec. 16. The 10-day boycott period will be observed as part of a national mobilization to counter the impact of the state of emergency decreed last June. Some 20,000 people have been detained without charges since then—including at least 500 children. ■



# Hungary 1956: The fight for socialist democracy



The march of 100,000 through Budapest on Oct. 23, 1956.

By ALAN BENJAMIN

Thirty years ago, in October and November 1956, the Hungarian working class launched a general revolutionary uprising against the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy headed by Matyas Rakosi and Erno Gero. The movement of the masses rallied around the demand for complete national independence and workers' democracy.

In February of that year, the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev had opened an attack on the Stalin cult and raised the slogan of "Back to Lenin." This was an attempt by the top party leaders, after the uprising of the East German workers in June 1953, to associate themselves with the popular hatred of Stalinism.

But the "de-Stalinization" under Khrushchev soon set in motion forces that would pass beyond the control of the Soviet bureaucracy. The denunciations of Stalin became a banner for the masses in Eastern Europe to cleanse the workers' states of the hated Stalinist system.

On June 28 the workers of Poznan, Poland, went out on a general strike that grew into an uprising. Their action was symptomatic of the popular urge to extend the concessions made by the bureaucracy and to convert the paper promises about a return to Lenin into living reality.

In response to this uprising, the Polish Communist Party decided on Oct. 21 to depose the Kremlin proconsul Alban Rokossovsky and to replace him with Wladyslaw Gomulka, a popular symbol of resistance to Moscow's rule.

## Inspired by Polish events

Throughout September and October, the Hungarian people closely watched events in Poland. The Petofi Circle, a literary discussion club formed by young Communist Party members in April 1956, called for a demonstration in solidarity with the Polish workers on Oct. 23.

The demands of the Petofi Circle included the following: The removal of Rakosi, the Hungarian "Stalin," and his replacement by Imre Nagy; the formation of a new government and free elections; equality of social and economic relations between Hungary and the Soviet Union; an end to the Stalinist economic policies; workers' control of the factories; renovation of

agriculture and voluntary collectivization; and full socialist democracy.

On Oct. 23 a crowd of 100,000 marched through Budapest to the statue of General Bem, a Pole honored for his role in the struggle for Hungarian national independence. As the crowd moved on to the parliament building, Party Secretary Gero denounced them as "fascist rabble."

Demonstrators appeared at the Budapest radio station to ask that their demands be broadcast. Security police gave a typical Stalinist answer. They arrested the delegation.

As the aroused crowd moved forward, the police opened fire. Street fighting broke out and the huge bronze statue of Stalin was toppled. The hated Gero government combined concessions with repressive action. On the one hand, it installed Nagy as premier; on the other, it called the Soviet occupation troops into Budapest to put down the demonstrators.

## Workers Councils appear

As the Soviet troops rolled into Budapest on Oct. 24, the masses took up arms in self-defense. Nagy responded with appeals to lay down arms and surrender on the promise of amnesty.

But the Hungarian masses refused to place confidence in Nagy. They demonstrated that they trusted no one but themselves. Soon the Hungarian army went over to the revolutionists and the Soviet troops began manifesting sympathy with their cause. On Oct. 25, the workers launched a general strike.

Within days, the entire country was mobilized against the ruling bureaucracy and the Soviet troops. The Hungarian workers began organizing themselves to maintain order and to distribute food and clothing. Councils—organs of workers' power—appeared on a nationwide scale in the factories, the army, and neighborhood areas.

These councils were similar to those built by the Russian workers in 1917. They expressed the bitter determination of the Hungarian workers to end bureaucratic abuses, privileges, and mismanagement.

The charter adopted by the Greater Workers Budapest Council on Oct. 31, 1956, illustrates the depth of this struggle for workers' democracy. "The factories belong to the workers," the charter stated. "The supreme controlling body of the factory is the Workers Council democratically elected by the workers."

The tasks of the Workers Council, as stipulated in the charter, include the following: "Approval and ratification of all projects concerning the enterprise; decision of basic wage levels and the methods by which these are to be assessed; decision on all matters concerning foreign contracts and credit; hiring and firing of all workers employed in the enterprise; and examination of the balance sheets and the

decision on the use to which the profits are to be put."

Contrary to what the international Stalinist movement has said about the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Hungarian workers never called for the return of the capitalists and of capitalist property relations. Of the thousands of resolutions adopted by the Workers Councils, not one can be found calling for the denationalization of the factories and farms.

The Hungarian workers were rejecting Stalinism and all the symbols identified with bureaucratic oppression. But they did not reject the essence of the socialist program: political and economic control by the working class expressed through their own state organization.

## Second stage of the revolution

Caught between the Soviet troops and the Workers Councils was the Nagy government. The Stalinist bureaucracy was hoping that Nagy, a liberal figurehead with popular support, might put down the rebellion.

From the beginning Nagy tried to serve both the Soviet bureaucracy and the workers. But he ended up satisfying neither. His constant appeals to the workers to put down their arms met with no response.

But the situation of dual power that had arisen in the country allowed for no compromises. When, under mass pressure, Nagy announced on Nov. 1 the dissolution of the ruling Stalinist party and Hungary's neutrality from the Warsaw Pact, this was too much for the Soviet bureaucracy.

On Nov. 4, the second assault on Budapest began. But this time the Soviet bureaucracy withdrew the troops used in the first assault because they had become "infected with the spirit of rebellion" and were therefore "unreliable." Instead it brought in fresh new Soviet troops for the final showdown.

As the Soviet tanks approached, the bulk

of the Nagy government resigned. Nagy and a handful of supporters took refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy. A government entirely subservient to Moscow was installed, led by Janos Kadar—who is still there to this day. [Nagy left the Yugoslav Embassy after he was given assurances of safe conduct, but he was arrested by the secret police and shot two years later.]

For weeks, the Hungarian workers resisted the Soviet troops arms in hand. The Workers Councils organized the resistance and called a successful general strike on Dec. 11-12. But the power of the Soviet tanks and the secret police ultimately overwhelmed the Hungarian workers.

Francois Fetjo, in his famous book titled "The Budapest Insurrection" also documents the complicity of the imperialist powers in the fate of the Hungarian workers. He writes:

"The U.S. Ambassador in Moscow at the time, Charles Bohlen, writes in his memoirs that on Oct. 29, 1956, he was assigned by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to transmit an urgent message to the Soviet leaders...

"Was this a warning against a possible Soviet intervention in Hungary? On the contrary, Dulles sent a message to the Soviet leadership that the U.S. government did not consider Hungary to be a possible military ally. The U.S. signal was clear: 'Hungary is your problem. We will not intervene.'"

## Need for a revolutionary party

What are the reasons for the failure of the Hungarian Revolution?

The actions of the Hungarian workers were heroic. The workers had gone very far in their struggle against the bureaucracy. They created their own militias and councils, split the ruling Stalinist party, and made a bid for power.

But the absence of a revolutionary-socialist party based on the program of the Fourth International was costly to their struggle. Lacking conscious revolutionary leadership, the Workers Councils failed to assert their power. They continued to negotiate for concessions from Moscow's puppets, wasting time while the Stalinist counterrevolution mobilized its repressive forces.

Many in the leadership of the Workers Councils had illusions that the Stalinist bureaucracy under Nagy could reform itself. But the fate of Nagy shows clearly that those who hope for a self-reforming bureaucracy are misguided.

The road to socialist democracy in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is the road of independent working-class action. The Stalinist bureaucracy is the major obstacle on the road to the return of Lenin and the regeneration of these bureaucratized workers' states. The ruling Stalinist parties must be defeated and replaced by the democratic rule of the Workers Councils. ■



Hungarian freedom fighters warily approach deserted Soviet tank.

# Martial Law fails to silence Solidarnosc



By RALPH SCHOENMAN

The most mature revolutionary struggle today is that of the Polish working class. Despite the serious setbacks and the loss of political initiative by Solidarnosc after five years of martial-law rule, Solidarnosc is still very much alive and fighting.

Solidarnosc actively organized 10 million workers at the factory level. Rural Solidarnosc mobilized millions more. Together with their families, these 14 million workers and farmers accounted for some 90 percent of Poland's 37 million people.

Martial law was imposed on Dec. 13, 1981, at a moment when Solidarnosc's regional leaders were calling for the "active strike." This was a strategy for the workers to run the plants in their own interests—to the exclusion of the dictates of Communist Party functionaries and the state bureaucracy. The fight for workers' self-management represented the beginnings of dual power.

Key sections of Solidarnosc were ready to form workers' defense guards in the factories and had access to arms. They planned to form units of Solidarnosc in the Polish army and to call for free elections to the Sjem, the Polish parliament, together with federations of workers' councils. This constituted a bid for state power.

But martial law took place before the workers could go over to the offensive. Many leaders of the Polish workers' movement like Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuron advocated a "limited revolution" and a "historic compromise" with Poland's bureaucratic caste. Precious time was lost debating strategy and tactics.

The military junta, however, did not vacillate and sent out the tanks to crush the workers. There was no compromise possible with the Polish bureaucracy. The dictatorial regime, like its capitalist counterparts in the West, has but one objective—the demobilization of the working class. They will alternate between concessions and repression in pursuit of this constant aim.

Even with so advanced a workers'

*Ralph Schoenman is the former director of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. Immediately after the declaration of martial law in Poland, he was one of the coordinators of Workers and Artists for Solidarity, an organization that sponsored national meetings of trade unionists, socialists, and intellectuals in support of Solidarnosc.*

revolution as that of Solidarnosc, the absence of a revolutionary party and the development of a program capable of formulating strategy and preparing the insurrection led to the calamity of martial law.

## Solidarnosc today

Despite this setback, Solidarnosc today is deeply rooted in the oppressed population with a vast proliferation of underground leaflets, small magazines, and publishing houses printing everything under the nose of the authorities. This massive defiance of the regime has clearly demonstrated the inability of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's military junta to crush the workers' movement.

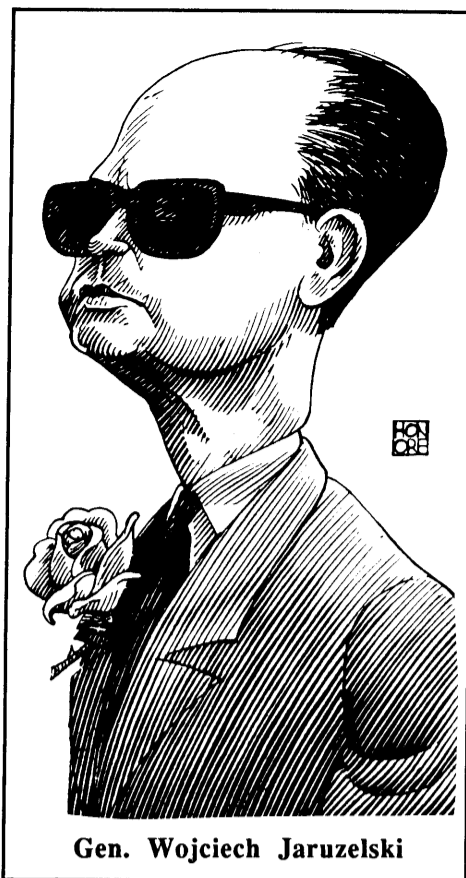
On Sept. 11, 1986, Gen. Czeslaw Kiscsak, Poland's minister of the interior, announced the release of all so-called "non-criminal prisoners." Zbigniew Bujak and other jailed leaders of Solidarnosc were freed. On Sept. 21, over 50,000 people gathered in Czestochowa, shouting the names of the released Solidarnosc leaders

and waving banners that read, "We are not afraid of those in power."

The aim of the regime was to undercut support for the mass underground movement and to "stabilize the situation," as Kiscsak put it. But at the very same moment the military junta was talking about normalization, the Polish political police mounted a nationwide operation aimed at "achieving the dissolution of the illegal groups and structures that are still pursuing activities against the state and public order." (*Polityka*, Sept. 20, 1986)

The answer of the freed Solidarnosc leaders to the maneuvers of the Polish bureaucracy was bold. On Sept. 30, Lech Walesa announced the formation of a seven-member Provisional Council of Solidarnosc. The council includes almost all the former members of the trade union's underground Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK).

Walesa and the new council leaders declared that their goal was the restoration of independent trade unions in Poland—particularly of Solidarnosc, which



Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski

is officially banned. "Our union exists and will exist with the will of its members," the group declared. The demand that Solidarnosc regain its legal status has been at the center of the struggle of the Polish underground movement for the past five years.

The Polish government reacted harshly to the formation of the Provisional Council, warning of the "destructive activities of a handful of extremists" who could thwart "the steps taken toward national understanding."

On Oct. 10, the Polish authorities declared the Provisional Council and its regional councils illegal. They stated that the Solidarnosc activists "risked imprisonment for their activities."

## Counterrevolutionary cooperation

At the time martial law was imposed five years ago, the major Western bankers expressed understanding for its necessity as well as alarm at Solidarnosc's challenge to the Polish bureaucratic state.

Britain's Margaret Thatcher and Canada's Pierre Trudeau spoke of the need to discipline the Polish workers' movement. Reagan extended massive credits to the regime at the very moment he shed crocodile tears for the Polish workers.

Speaking on the television spectacular, "Let Poland Be Poland," Reagan condemned martial law in the presence of Bulent Ulusu, the Turkish prime minister who had, in collusion with the CIA, imposed martial law in Turkey shortly before.

Those in the United States who sought to reveal the counterrevolutionary cooperation between the imperialist rulers and the Polish bureaucrats will be edified by *The Washington Post* revelation on June 16, 1986, that Washington had advance notice of the timing and plans for Gen. Jaruzelski's martial-law putsch.

Reagan withheld this information from the American public and, of course, from the Polish people. As with gangster-run trade unions, the ruling class has a consonance of interests with those who usurp workers' power through the instrument of a coercive state.

And just recently, at the time the Polish regime was denouncing the formation of the Provisional Council, U.S. Congressman Stephen Solarz traveled to Poland, where he praised the Jaruzelski government and called on the United States to show "flexibility of our own."

Simultaneously, *The New York Times* urged upon the released Solidarnosc leaders a "new dialogue" with the regime. No doubt, both American leaders and the Polish regime hope to defuse the growing boldness with which the underground movement has posed the question of future struggle in Poland.

The concerns of the Polish regime and of its patrons in Washington are grounded in the reality of the permanent hold of Solidarnosc on the consciousness of Polish workers and the inability of the Jaruzelski government to crush them.



Polish workers and students fraternize with soldiers during martial law clampdown.

## "They are the anti-socialists."

*At the founding congress of Polish Solidarnosc in September 1981, Professor Edward Lipinski, one of the founders of the Workers Self-Management Committee (KOR) and a leading adviser of Solidarnosc, explained the meaning of the struggle of the Polish working class for socialist democracy.*

*Lipinski, who died earlier this year at the age of 98, was given a standing ovation by the 900 delegates, who represented 10 million workers, when he said:*

"I have been a socialist since 1906. The defense of socialism is a question of principles.

"They [the Stalinist bureaucrats at the helm of the Polish state] accuse us of being 'anti-socialist.' But who is threatening socialism in Poland? Who are the anti-socialists and anti-revolutionaries?"

"Socialism was to be a better economy than capitalism. It was to be greater freedom than under capitalism. It was to be the liberation of the working class. It was to be the creation of conditions in which everyone is given an opportunity

to develop fully and have unlimited access to the treasures of culture and civilization.

"However, they created a socialism with an inefficient economy, a wasteful economy. They created a system that has led to an economic collapse unparalleled in the last 100 or 200 years. There is a socialism of waste, of prisons, of censorship and police. Their socialism has been destroying us for 30 years.

"For me, socialism is the struggle for economic democracy, for the collective and social ownership of the means of production. For me, socialism is the struggle for workers' democratic control of the factories. It is the struggle for political freedom, for the abolition of censorship, for the possibility of the full development of the Polish nation. These are the goals of true socialism.

"Today there are no significant forces in Poland who want to reprivatize the means of production...But there are anti-socialist and anti-revolutionary forces. In my opinion, it is their socialism that is anti-socialist and anti-revolutionary. They are the anti-socialists." ■

# What are the prospects for U.S. economy in '87?

By CHARLIE ADAMS

While the Reagan administration recently lowered its projections for growth in the economy from 3.4 percent to 2.9 percent for 1986, it still conveyed the impression that the 43-month-long expansion would continue through 1987.

How accurate are the Reagan economists and what is the basis for their optimism?

The Reagan administration predicts that about 2 million jobs will be created in the next year, interest rates should fall slightly, and the dollar should remain at about its current exchange rate. It also predicts a lower budget deficit, a stabilization in Third World debt, and most important—a new dose of consumer spending.

Let us look at each of these briefly and see what the next year or so has in store for working people.

The Reagan administration projection of a net gain of 2 million jobs next year is deceiving. Demographic charts point to a need for a half million new teachers a year beginning in the next three years. And other jobs will be created in low-paid service occupations and in the quasi-professions (advertising and sales).

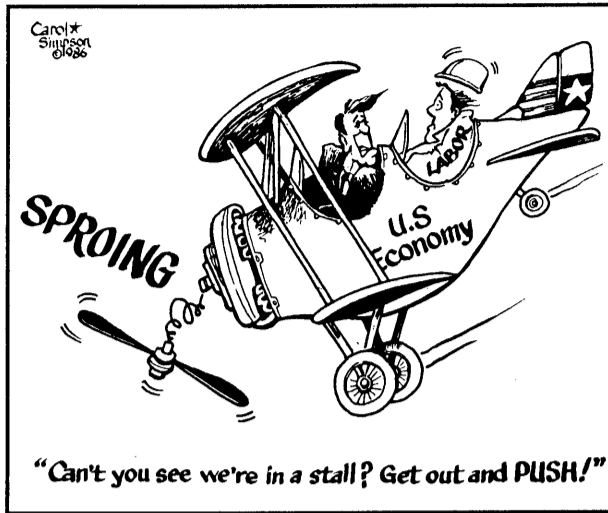
But industrial jobs will not be created and the growth of office work has noticeably slowed. Already General Motors has announced that 29,000 workers in five states will be permanently laid off. The major rail companies are also preparing mass layoffs.

While the jobless rate remains at 7 percent, this is only because an additional 1.4 million people were cut from unemployment benefits in 1986 and are therefore not included in the statistics. Nearly 6 million people only work part-time.

## Interest rates and the dollar

The corporations are anticipating a lowering of interest rates. Lawrence Chimerrine, head economist at Chase Econometrics, says: "What is needed is a big dose of monetary stimulus."

There have already been two cuts in the discount rate since January, but both have failed to spur the economy. There will be a slight effect from the expected mortgage-rate decrease from 10.5 per cent to 9.5 percent. But the addition of only a few hundred thousand qualified home



buyers will neither provide needed shelter nor help the capitalist economy much. At this stage in the business cycle a cut in interest rates is almost meaningless.

Some economists question whether a further weakening of the dollar would help the economy. An expected increase in exports from such a development would be insignificant in the light of inflationary pressures and a capital flight taking investment dollars abroad.

For workers such a shift would mean higher prices for foreign products—rapidly matched by their greedy American counterparts—and a downturn in the economy.

The huge national debt, augmented by \$200-billion deficits, will force cuts in the already decimated social services. Measures like the current version of the Tax Reform law are intended to force such cuts.

## Third World debt

The Third World debt problem cannot disappear without a sharp increase in commodity prices, a restructuring of the loans, and a merciless attack on the living standards of people in the underdeveloped countries.

Selling into a weaker dollar market could result in slightly higher prices for such products as sugar, coffee,

bananas, and metals. Since markets in virtually all Third World commodities are saturated, such price movements would be a brief and inconsequential development.

Most major Third World debtor nations are unable to make payments on the principal. Some, such as Mexico, are finding it impossible to pay the \$8 billion to \$10 billion a year the imperialist banks demand. If Mexico were to default, a depression on a worldwide basis would ensue.

None of the U.S. banks with major debt exposures in Mexico could withstand a default. Since they are the largest banks in the United States with a matrix of deposits and debts in thousands of smaller banks, the banking system would collapse. The only way out for the capitalists is to try to reschedule once again—but the noose grows tighter.

Finally, the Reagan administration is counting on a renewed spurt of consumer spending in the coming year. When capitalists talk of consumer spending, they are talking about those in the top 40 percent of incomes. The majority of workers are not included because we spend all we get and cannot increase our spending.

But even many in the top 40 percent cannot increase spending. Consumer debt in May 1986 already stood at a record \$560.62 billion and is rising at an annual rate of 11.6 percent. In fact, it is very probable that the so-called upper middle class (known in capitalist terms as "significant consumers") will be repaying debt for the rest of the year and will not be in a position to add to debt obligations.

For the year ahead there is only a marginal chance that the capitalist economy will grow at all. Economists have coined a new term for it—"growth recession"—in which, technically, the economy grows slightly but all improvement goes to the capitalist class while the overall standard of living slips somewhat.

This is the most likely scenario for the year ahead. While there is no chance the standard of living will improve, there is a serious possibility of collapse if the capitalists are unable to control their increasing problems.



## ... Philippines revolt

(continued from page 1)

for "constructive criticism" of the Aquino regime.

"We are not against the government of Corazon Aquino," emphasized KMU leader Crispin Beltran, one of the organizers of the general strike. "In fact, these actions are in support of President Aquino."

But despite the message of "support" given by leaders of the KMU, the CPP, and other workers' organizations, Aquino reacted strongly against their call for a

general strike and mass demonstration. As Olalia's funeral march neared the national palace, it was met by marine, army, and air-force units with machine guns.

Soldiers were ordered to "shoot to kill" any intruders. But some soldiers wore black armbands, indicating their sympathy with the Olalia mourners.

The government fears mass mobilizations—unless it can maintain strict control over them. An independent movement of "people power" based on the labor unions, peasant federations, and poor people's groups could involve new sectors—such as rank-and-file soldiers—and move rapidly beyond the bounds of the present capitalist government.

As a result, the *Manila Bulletin* reports, government negotiators have been demanding a clamp-down on political strikes as a precondition for a cease-fire agreement with the NPA.

### Support to Aquino backfires

The support to Aquino offered by working-class leaders has disoriented the labor movement and given the president a free hand to offer concessions to the military and right wing.

Aquino agreed to dismiss several cabinet members and add military representatives onto her team negotiating with the New People's Army. And she said she would personally "lead the war" against the NPA if a cease-fire were not enacted soon.

During the Nov. 17-20 general strike, soldiers were sent out to drive municipal buses. The army has also moved in against striking miners, garment workers, hotel workers, and workers on the sugar plantations.

Last month, police evicted about 5000 poor people living in shanties in the northeast corner of Manila. "Now this land is for the rich," one man complained to *The*

*Philadelphia Inquirer*, as a wrecking crew flattened his house.

"We voted for Cory in February," he continued, "because we thought that if she was president, then things would be better. But nothing has happened."

After nine months in power, the government has done little to provide housing, jobs, and land reform. The euphoria that carried Aquino into power has clearly frayed. Some leaders of the workers' and peasants' organizations have begun to think twice about continuing their policy of "critical support" to Aquino.

"We were attacked under the Marcos regime," said peasant leader Jimmie Tadeo. "Why are we now being attacked under the Cory regime?" (*San Francisco Examiner*, Nov. 20, 1986.)

The answer to Tadeo's question lies in an analysis of the class character of the Aquino regime. Despite certain tactical disagreements with the military figures in her government, Aquino shares with them a basic commitment to protecting the interests of the capitalist class.

### American big business

Above all, Aquino must appease the U.S. capitalists, who in 1984 raked in 64.6 percent of the profits in Philippine

manufacturing and over 50 percent of profits in the banking sector. Philippine workers are the lowest paid in the Pacific Rim. For the moment, the capitalists are relying on Aquino to make sure the situation stays that way.

"We support the government of President Corazon Aquino firmly, totally, and unequivocally," U.S. Ambassador Stephen W. Bosworth states for the record. But if the Aquino regime is unable to rein in the labor movement and maintain "law and order," the U.S. government may shift its allegiance to those preparing a right-wing coup.

The Philippines must not become another bloodbath like Pinochet's Chile. Now is the time to build a strong independent united front of the workers' and peasants' organizations to counter the right-wing mobilization.

These organizations should demand that the government provide arms to the people to defend their workplaces and neighborhoods against the terror and assassination squads.

Above all, a revolutionary socialist party must be built in the Philippines, which can provide a clear program of action so that the workers and peasants can bring about for themselves a true "people power."



Jeanne-Marie Hallacy

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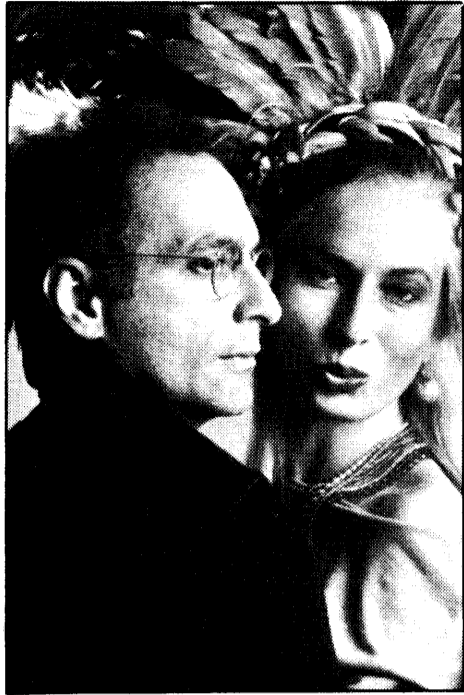
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# New musical spotlights Trotsky and Frida Kahlo



Kingmond Young

By ADA FARRELL

*Trotsky and Frida: The Musical*, a play produced by The Traveling Jewish Theatre, written by Albert Greenberg and directed by David Brune and Gisela Getty.

Last month, The Traveling Jewish Theater presented their premiere of three new plays during its annual home season at Theater Artaud in San Francisco. I feel privileged to have seen their performances.

One of the plays, "Trotsky and Frida: The Musical," takes place against the backdrop of Leon Trotsky's exile in Mexico. It tells the story of an alleged love affair between the former leader of the Russian Revolution and the artist Frida Kahlo—who was married to muralist Diego Rivera.

Playwright Albert Greenberg and Helen Stoltzfus play the lead roles. The actors' ability to communicate the personalities of

the historical figures they portray—considering that all the performers are too young to have known or participated in the lives of these people—is an acknowledgment of their commitment to their art.

I came away from the theater feeling a contradiction in my attempt to be objective about a man with whom my own political commitments are tied. The further I got away from the performance, however, the more I realized that Leon Trotsky came out as a very human personality in this portrayal.

The playwright implies that the political conflicts between Trotsky and dictator Joseph Stalin were the source of the conflicts that Trotsky and Frida Kahlo felt in their attempt to express their feelings for one another. In one scene, for example, Trotsky criticizes Kahlo for painting a portrait of Stalin.

But the line, "There is a Leningrad, a

Stalingrad, but no Trotskygrad," gives the impression that Trotsky's ideas were killed with his assassination in 1940. This is no more the case than are the portrayal of Stalin and his heinous crimes ended with his death in 1953. The ideas of both Trotsky and Stalin continue to exist in conflict with one another.

The production erred, in my opinion, not in any attempt to evade the issues, but in an inability to link together the overwhelming material they had to work with into one definable purpose. There was an excess of anti-climatic scenes.

Some reviewers have expressed criticism over the term "musical" in the play's title. Despite its musical accompaniment, they believe the play is more a "tragedy."

I will allow Trotsky to answer: "Tragedy based on detached personal passions is too flat for our days. Why? Because we live in a period of social passions. The tragedy of our period lies in the conflict between the individual and the collectivity or in the conflict between two hostile collectivities in the same individual." ("Literature and Revolution")

The Traveling Jewish Theatre tours widely throughout North America, Europe, and Israel. The group should be supported in its attempt to present theater in a direct and honest interpretation of the thought of humankind.

By MARK SCHNEIDER

*Round Midnight*, a film directed by Bertrand Tavernier.

Jazz is the only internationally practiced art form to originate in the United States. It is one of Afro-America's great gifts to the world.

After almost a century of development (depending upon how far back you wish to trace the roots) jazz remains, if not a cultural outlaw, at best an outcast. It takes place on the fringe of everything established.

Of course, Dizzy Gillespie's trumpet has just been installed at the Smithsonian,

## Jazz greats: The story of society's outcasts

lives the film's character, Dale Turner, is based.

Young and Powell, along with Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Monk, Gillespie, and others were seminal influences in the creation of be-bop, the syncopated, harmonically complex form of jazz that developed out of the swing style of the Basie and Ellington bands.

Many of these musicians were innovators who created a lasting and vibrant art form which was almost totally ignored by white society. These musicians struggled through poverty, obscurity, exile—and for many, drug or alcohol addiction. They had something beautiful and new to say, and no one was listening.

Dale Turner gets a gig in Paris but continues to stumble sadly downhill under the weight of alcoholism. His fortunes reverse when Francis, a young Frenchman who idolizes him, initiates a friendship. At the outset, Dale is a broken man, tired of everything in life except music. Under the influence of Francis, he reawakens, kicks the bottle, and learns to take control of his own life again.

The film is initially shot in darkened clubs, seedy hotels, and nocturnal streets. Gradually, the element of sunlight gains force in the cinematography, leading to a glorious scene of harmony at the beach

where Dale, Francis, and his young daughter form an odd "family" group.

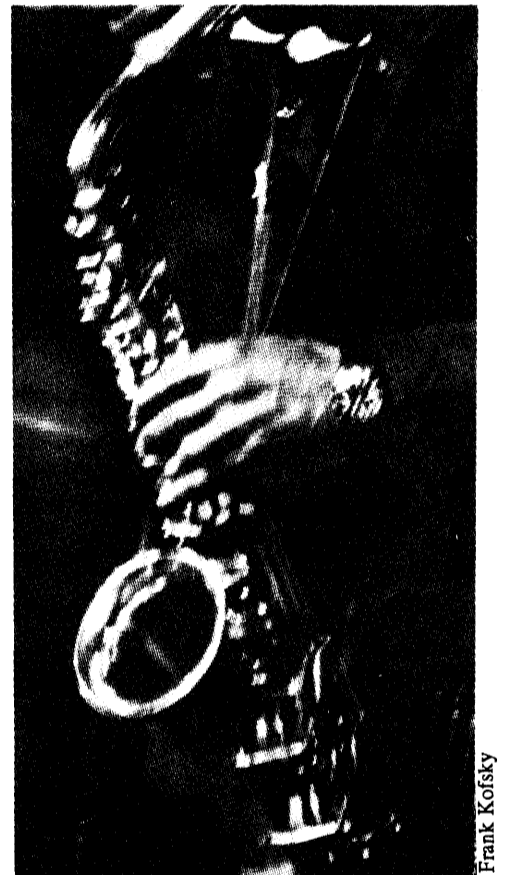
As it must, the story returns to the United States, where all the forces of oppression and despair are relentlessly at work. Martin Scorsese is wonderful as a sleazy club owner who helps bring the story "on home" to its inevitable conclusion.

In its entirety, the film itself has the feeling and structure of a slow blues: resolved, unresolved, resolved but transformed situations. A concluding segment, like a musical coda, ends the story on an uplifting note.

The delight of this film is in the music. You can enjoy the film even if you don't love jazz, but if you do, don't miss the movie. Contemporary musicians are cast in the roles of the musical characters, and they get to play a lot.

Dexter Gordon, the brilliant saxophonist who spent most of his career in Europe, is magnificent as Dale Turner. He conveys tremendous feeling with a look, a gesture, a laugh, a line, as he builds a portrait of a complex, troubled artist. Pianist Herbie Hancock and vibraphonist Bobby Hutcherson also have small roles, and Francois Cluzet is excellent as the young Frenchman.

"Round Midnight" is not essentially a



Frank Kofsky

political movie. It is about friendship and love, and how artists sacrifice to do what they must. It says a little extra, however, just by taking jazz as its subject, because the movie is about the Black musicians who created it. This portrait of their confined existence, their exile, speaks volumes about the larger society that pushed them into a corner.

### MOVIE REVIEW

there is a Duke Ellington Street in Manhattan, and there is a resurgence of the music today in its fusion and funk form...But that's not the real story.

The real, honest story is magnificently told (fittingly by a French director since Hollywood doesn't even deal with real stories about white people) in "Round Midnight." The title derives from the classic ballad by Thelénious Monk.

Many jazz musicians fled the United States for Europe in the late '40s and '50s to avoid the racism of Jim Crow and the McCarthy era, or simply to earn a living. They included the pianist Bud Powell and the saxophonist Lester Young, upon whose

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# Strike Wave of 1946: Labor's greatest upsurge

By JOE RYAN

Forty years ago—during a period that lasted from the end of World War II through 1946—the United States witnessed the greatest strike wave in American labor history. Sweeping across the country like a rolling thunder storm, millions of American workers and their unions mobilized on the picketline and in the streets to win economic gains from America's industrial and business giants.

Ultimately, the militancy that was displayed in many long and bitter strikes in 1945-46 forced the corporations to make considerable concessions to an aroused working class. Unlike today, it was a time when it was the *bosses* who had to make concessions.

The great American labor upsurge of 1945-46 was one part of a worldwide radicalization that followed the end of World War II. In countries like China, Vietnam, Indonesia and India, freedom fighters were organizing and arming themselves to prevent the re-establishment of colonial rule by France, Britain and Holland.

In Europe, which was prostrated by the destruction of World War II, the working classes of both the "victorious" and the vanquished countries flexed their political muscles in the quest for peace and progress. In Great Britain, for example, the working class ousted Prime Minister Winston Churchill and elected a Labor Party government in 1946.

## Setting the stage

In the United States, the mass upsurge of labor that followed World War II was a response to mass layoffs, bitterness at having to work under a "no strike" pledge during the war, and outrage at the super-profits made by the capitalists through war production.

Although the post-war labor upsurge in the United States never reached revolutionary proportions, a study of 1945-46 is instructive because it gives us a peek at the potential political and social power of the trade unions when their ranks are mobilized.

World War II was a bonanza for the American capitalist class. Many corporations had profit rates of over 600 percent.

Production by worker-hour was raised by 26 percent while the hourly wage rate increased by only 0.6 percent. The government's policy of awarding "cost-plus" contracts guaranteed super-profits for America's rich. The workers were expected to make all the sacrifices.

This "welfare for the rich" was aptly summarized by Secretary of War Henry Stimson when he confided in his diary: "If you are going to try and go to war in a capitalist country you have got to let business make money out of the process, or business won't work."

## Workers serve notice

Even before the imperialist war had come to an end, the class war was beginning to heat up.

Anticipating mass layoffs, the workers forced their leaders in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the American Federation of Labor (AFL)—which at the time were separate and competitive labor federations—to formulate a strategy and demands for the post-war period.

Both the leadership of the CIO and the AFL yearned for a period of "class peace" with the corporations following the war. The rank and file, however, had no such illusions. They knew that the capitalists were preparing for the post-war period.

Spokespersons for the National Asso-



General Motors balked at opening their financial books when auto workers demanded shorter work week.

ciation of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce were actively campaigning for a five-point legislative program to outlaw strikes, guarantee government protection to scabs and strikebreakers, and prohibit the closed shop.

The capitalists and the government would try to use the post-war period to bust unions. Between the surrender of Germany in May 1945 and Japan in August 1945, more than 1 million workers were laid off in the plants. The specter of massive unemployment haunted the workers even before the war was over.

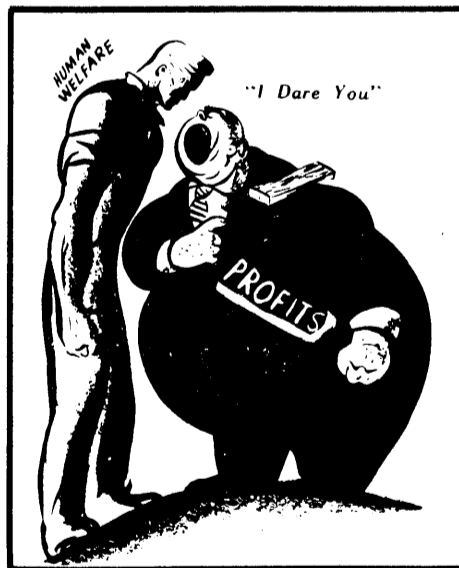
The May 18, 1945, edition of the *Toledo Union Journal*, a CIO newspaper, expressed the situation eloquently: "The threat of sudden peace is almost as terrifying as the sudden coming of war for many realize that at no time has peace provided an adequate number of jobs for the workers."

## Open the books

The backbone of the CIO was the United Auto Workers Union (UAW) and the United Steelworkers of America (USWA). On June 14, 1945, at a CIO conference organized in Detroit to map out strategy for the post-war era, the UAW sponsored a resolution for "a 30-hour week at no reduction in take-home pay." As a first step in this direction, the resolution called for a "40-hour week at 48 hours pay; that is, a 30-percent hourly rate pay increase."

The corporations—confident they had regained their authority on the shop floor during the war and aware they had the complete support of the Democratic Party administration of Harry S. Truman—rejected all these demands.

The workers, fully aware of the fantastic profits accrued by corporations during the war, countered with the demand to "Open



the Books!" This demand, put forth by UAW First Vice-President Walter Reuther, was originated by the Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party.

Such a demand made the captains of industry shake in their boots. Their refusal to "Open the Books" exposed the lie that the bosses couldn't pay wage increases without raising prices. Even a government study had indicated that the corporations could afford a 24-cent-per-hour wage increase with no appreciable loss in profits.

The greed-motivated intransigence of the corporations precipitated a strike wave of unprecedented breadth and duration.

## Rolling strike wave

The first shot was fired by the CIO Oil Workers Industrial Union. On Sept. 17, 1945, 43,000 members in 20 states went on strike around the demand: "52-40 or fight"—a 40-hour week at 52-hours pay.

Following the example of the Oil

Workers, almost every sector of the organized industrial working class was engaged in strike action against the employers at some point in late 1945 and 1946. Ultimately, the strike wave involved over 5 million American workers.

The vacillation of the labor bureaucracy kept many of these strikes uncoordinated and narrow. In most cases, it was the workers who initiated the actions in defiance of the bosses, the government, and the bureaucrats.

Like the fires that break out at different spots in a dry forest, one strike after another ignited throughout the country:

- 200,000 coal miners walked out of the pits.
- 44,000 AFL Lumber Workers struck in Oregon and Northern California.
- The AFL International Longshoremen's Association struck and tied up harbors on the East Coast for 19 days.
- The CIO Glass Workers Union struck the flat glass industry and held the line for 102 days.
- Almost 40,000 AFL and CIO machinists in the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area joined forces in a strike that lasted 140 days.
- CIO textile workers went out for 133 days, and 70,000 AFL truck drivers in the Midwest struck for 81 days.

But the biggest battle of all was the 113-day strike of 200,000 GM autoworkers who demanded a 30-percent wage increase with no raise in prices. The GM autoworkers prepared for the strike with a relish. They organized flying picket squads, mass picketlines, women's auxiliaries, and soup kitchens.

The auto workers would sometimes find themselves alone in a battle that was based on attrition. But the GM workers knew that the next strike wave by steelworkers, packinghouse workers, and electrical workers was just around the corner. Workers based their tactics on the fact that reinforcements for the fight against the bosses were on the horizon.

The corporations tried to break the strike through police attacks, scab-herding, government back-to-work orders, and court injunctions. But, unlike today, these tactics didn't work against a rank and file that was mobilized and extremely combative. As one autoworker said in retrospect, "There were damn few would-be scabs in 1946, and they never got through the picketlines."

## Capitalists pull back

In the face of such mass insurgency, the corporations had to concede to the demands of the workers. The average wage increase—in general—was around 20 percent and sometimes was retroactive. In addition, the workers won a number of paid holidays and health benefits.

The corporations were able to make these concessions so they could buy some labor peace at home during a period that was to be the beginning of a capitalist "boom" cycle.

On the legislative level, however, the capitalists set the stage for 1986 by passing reactionary labor laws like the Taft-Hartley Act.

The labor bureaucrats, who tried to hold back the independent mobilization of the workers in 1946, were successful in the ensuing 20 years in giving up many of the gains—specifically the right to settle grievances through strike action—that were won with so much sacrifice and solidarity.

The first step to resolving the problems facing American workers today is to return to the class struggle methods which won the great victories of 1945-46. Except this time the workers will have to go much further. ■