

TORCH

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NOVEMBER 15-DECEMBER 14, 1981

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NO to Nuclear War Madness!

Thousands March for Disarmament in Europe

By ALBERT LARY

An estimated 300,000 protesters gathered in Bonn, the capital of West Germany, on October 10 to protest the spiral of U.S.-Russian military confrontation in Europe. The march, the largest in recent German history, was organized by two church groups and was endorsed by 802 organizations.

The protest demanded: 1) no nuclear weapons in Europe; 2) no North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) deployment of U.S. middle-range Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles; and 3) that all European governments open disarmament talks at once. Thousands of marchers carried signs such as "Reagan's Peace Is Our Death," "No Euroshima!" and "The Main Enemy Is At Home—German Imperialism!"

Two weeks later, Europe's growing peace movement held a series of gigantic weekend rallies across the continent—150,000 in London, 100,000 in Rome,

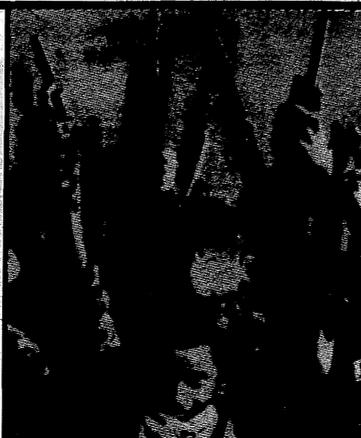
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Demonstrators in Bonn, West Germany, carry mock nuclear missile with Reagan as a warhead during October 10 protest. Over 250,000 people rallied against NATO plans to build up European nuclear arsenal.

**Black People
Vote in
Record Numbers
— Turnout
a Response to
Growing Racism**

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**CENTRAL AMERICA:
A REGION IN REVOLT**

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**'Family
Protection Act
an Attempt
to Control and
Suppress Us'**

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SECCION EN ESPAÑOL

**our
readers
write...**

Send letters to:
TORCH, PO Box 1288
New York, NY 10116

California police raid Black activist group

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

On Friday, October 16, between the hours of 5:30 and 10:00 a.m., approximately 20 members of the Special Services Unit (the police and intelligence arm of the California Department of Corrections) and members of the Berkeley/Oakland Police Departments battered down the doors of four homes of members and friends of the Black August Organizing Committee. Under the guise of a "parole search," the SSU stormed into the homes with guns drawn, holding all members of the households at gun point, including small children, while they proceeded to ransack the houses, tear open drawers, closets and overturn furniture.

During these attacks Jasiri (Harold Benson), Hashima (Michael Murdock) and Msemaji (Anderson Thurston), members of the Black August Organizing Committee, were arrested and taken into custody. For the last six days no charges have been filed against them and the men remain in the Santa Rita County Jail solely on a "parole hold." On Tuesday, October 20, the hold on Michael Murdock was lifted by his parole officer and he was released from jail. However, the next day Special Service Unit members again arrested Michael Murdock and another Black August member, Sadiki (Willie Stanford), despite statements by both men's parole officers that there were no warrants or violations issued on either man.

All four men have been dedicated organizers in the Berkeley/Oakland communities since their release from prison last spring. Recently, members of the Black August Organizing Committee played a critical role in maintaining the battle against Pay 'n Save, with all four men committing themselves to working 12 hours a day on the picket line to protest the murder of Ricky Labuzan by a Pay 'n Save security guard. Jasiri, Hashima, Msemaji and Sadiki have all

been active in fighting to expose conditions inside prisons, especially in San Quentin, and to educate the community about the racist policies of the prison authorities and the Special Service Unit through their work in the Prison Crisis Committee. The Prison Crisis Committee is a group that has recently initiated a suit on behalf of prisoners in San Quentin's Adjustment Center who were brutally attacked and tear-gassed by guards in April 1981.

Although no charges have been filed against any of the four men now in jail, the California Department of Corrections has issued a statement alleging that they have "uncovered a plot to assassinate" top prison officials, supposedly based on information gathered during the early morning raids on Friday, October 16.

We, as members of the Black August Organizing Committee, vehemently deny any knowledge of such plots or conspiracies, and demand the immediate release of Jasiri (Harold Ben-

son), Hashima (Michael Murdock), Msemaji (Anderson Thurston) and Sadiki (Willie Stanford).

We charge that these latest allegations made by the California Department of Corrections are only another part of the overall political campaign being waged against the Black August Organizing Committee in an attempt to disrupt and suppress our political work in the community and in the prisons.

We charge that the real criminals are the members of the California Department of Corrections and the SSU that continue to attack and terrorize members of the Black August Organizing Committee, their friends and family, who are fighting to expose the true racist, repressive reality of prison, to raise the issue of Black POWs in the U.S. and to put an end to the racial injustice Black people are subjected to daily in this country.

**Black August
Organizing Committee**

17 'suicides' in Chicago jails?

Dear Torch,

The Chicago media have recently reported that there have been 17 very suspicious "suicide" deaths in Chicago's police lockups in less than two years. In the cases of Chatman Farland, Nelson Justice, and Greg Jackson, three Chicago residents arrested on misdemeanor charges, one begins to wonder what Chicago's police are capable of doing.

Department policy calls for two searches, in which poten-

tially dangerous items or weapons are supposed to be removed from lockup prisoners. The first is a light effective frisk when the accused is arrested. The second, called the "cavity search," occurs usually just before the suspect is placed in a holding cell. It is just before the cavity search that items like belts, shoestrings, and other personal belongings are confiscated.

With this information alone, citizens might think that police simply neglected confiscating the shoestrings of Mr. Jackson and Mr. Justice. But testimony from family members indicates otherwise. Greg Jackson wore a pair of gym shoes almost a year and a half old. The frayed strings on these shoes are said by police to have supported Greg's 133-pound body long enough to cause death. The manufacturer says shoelaces identical to Jackson's break at 130 pounds when new.

Well, at least with Nelson Justice the police substituted brand-new light brown laces for his three-month-old dark brown ones.

If anyone believes that simple neglect is to blame for these

deaths, we should also draw attention to the chief Medical Examiner for Cook County, Dr. Robert J. Stein. Stein, who performs most autopsies on jail deaths, has admitted that his office failed to "fully" document injuries on dead prisoners—such as a dark wound more than an inch long and a half inch wide on Justice's head. The wound is surrounded by a patch of reddish swollen tissue in pictures taken by family members. With Jackson, Dr. L. Brimmer of Dr. Stein's office said that a noticeable bloody laceration on Jackson's outer ear "meant very little" to him.

There are many other facts in these cases to which attention could be called. But what should be realized is that even with the so-called "investigations" that will follow, the police will continue to brutalize working class people, and the authorities designed to watchdog won't stop them. The slogan on all Chicago police cars is "We serve and protect." It's time we asked "Who?"

Sincerely,
Gall and Monie
Chicago IL

Dear Torch/La Antorcha reader:

The RSL is in the midst of a serious financial crisis. Right now, our expenses are running \$2,500 a month more than our income. This means we face an annual deficit of \$30,000. We are working hard to reduce our expenses by cutting costs wherever we can. But without additional income, we will be forced to make more substantial cutbacks.

For this reason, we have launched an emergency 10-week fund drive. The goal of the drive, which opened on November 13, is to raise \$10,000—the minimum amount we need to continue paying our bills.

We believe that many of you are glad that an organization which fights for a revolutionary, democratic and libertarian vision of socialism unique on the U.S. left exists. Unfortunately, there is also a tendency to take our existence for granted. Too many regular readers of our press are unaware that we survive, publish and carry out our activities only because RSL members make huge financial sacrifices to keep the organization going.

So, we're asking for a helping hand. We'd like to ask you to consider taking two steps: First, please make a contribution to the emergency fund drive. Every contribution will be important to the success of the drive. Second, we'd like to ask you to become a Torch/La Antorcha sustainer by sending us a regular monthly check. Regular contributions from our readers—large or small—are an important part of keeping us afloat. If more of you join in this effort, it will go a long way toward ensuring that we continue our work.

Thank you for your support,

Red Miller

for the RSL

Please make checks payable to RSL, c/o Chicago, P.O. Box 1288, O.P.O., New York, NY 10116

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No to Nuclear War Madness!

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50,000 each in Paris, Brussels and East Germany. Most of the protests focused on NATO and the U.S. nuclear presence in Europe, but both the Paris and Brussels marches specifically demanded the removal of Russian SS-20 nuclear-tipped missiles from Eastern Europe, and in Rome, the march route took demonstrators past both the Russian and U.S. embassies.

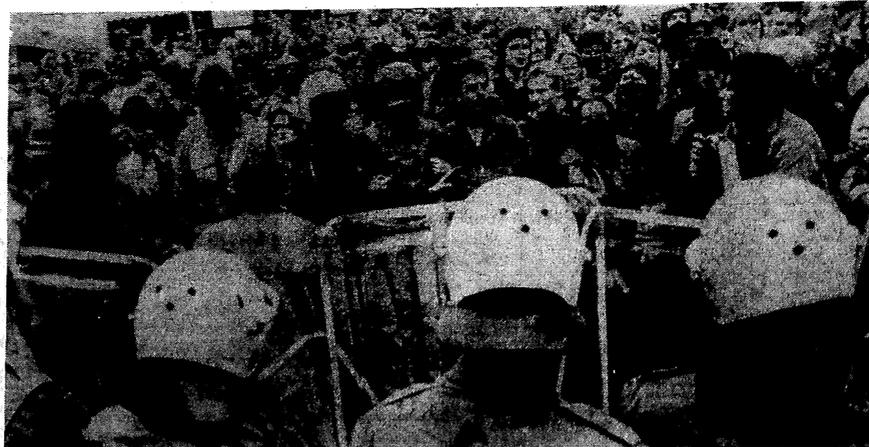
The U.S. government's first response to this massive outpouring of anti-imperialist sentiment was to hang tough. "It doesn't change the policies of the government," snapped U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger as he left London after a tense meeting of NATO defense ministers. "We feel this will not impact on our policies," echoed presidential counselor Edwin Meese III.

But off-the-record remarks by U.S. diplomats in Europe told another story. "We'd be foolish not to take the opposition seriously," said one anonymous U.S. diplomat, as quoted by the Los Angeles Times. "And we do take it seriously. The movement has not yet peaked."

'Flexible and controlled response'

The immediate issue involves a 1979 NATO decision to place 572 middle-range Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles in Britain, West Germany, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands to offset 175 Russian SS-20 missiles that are now aimed at European cities. This is part of NATO's doctrine of "flexible and controlled response," which was adopted in 1967 to replace its earlier doctrine of "massive retaliation" to a Russian attack.

"Flexible and controlled response" initially meant the placement of tactical nuclear weapons in Western Europe as a deterrent to the larger Russian-



Anti-war demonstrators confront police during Secretary of State Alexander Haig's trip to West Berlin in September. U.S. militarism is arousing mass protests throughout Western Europe.

bloc non-nuclear forces in Central and Eastern Europe. When the Russians matched this with their own tactical, or battlefield-level, nuclear weapons, the NATO governments decided to up the ante.

Unlike the present battlefield-level nukes, the new Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles have a range which can take them deep into Russia itself. Until now, only U.S.-based, airborne, or submarine missiles have had that capability. Thus, NATO's current plans represent a significant escalation in the global nuclear arms race and increase the chances of a European war.

Already, some 4,000 Russian and American nuclear warheads face each other across Europe. Reagan's budget plans call for a \$180 billion military buildup over the next six years. This will include 100 new B-1 bombers, more powerful and more accurate nuclear missiles for U.S. Trident submarines, and 100 new MX intercontinental ballistic missiles.

In early August, Reagan announced that the U.S. had begun production of the neutron bomb, the first nuclear weapon designed primarily to destroy people, with extremely

high rates of radiation, rather than destroy property with heat and blast. On August 11, Secretary Weinberger cited, as a main factor in the U.S. decision to produce the neutron bomb, its "ability to help blunt an invasion of Europe."

Unlike the mainly deterrent value of the more traditional megaton nightmares, the neutron bomb is intended to be used, specifically in Europe. Millions of Europeans are horrified at the prospect of a U.S.-Russian conflict in their heavily populated nations, where the neutron bomb, because of its lesser damage to property, would most likely be the "weapon of choice."

So far the U.S. government has tried to calm the growing European panic by promising that the neutron bombs will be stockpiled only inside the U.S. But as everyone knows, they could easily be flown to Europe within a few hours if the government decided to.

As the reality has dawned on the people of Europe that they are living in the midst of a U.S.-projected theater of "limited nuclear war," an anti-war, pacifist and neutralist movement has mushroomed. Capitalist politicians all over Europe are being shaken by large, angry, '60s-style mobilizations.

In the Netherlands, the Interfaith Peace Council claims to have 200,000 members, mostly youth, and connections with anti-war activists in Poland and East Germany. As a result of their pressure, the Netherlands government has now backed off from its earlier promise to accept 48 Cruise missiles. The Belgian government is wavering.

In West Germany, the controversy could cost Chancellor Helmut Schmidt his job. As a staunch supporter of NATO and nuclear armament, Schmidt

has been steadily losing support, even within his own Social Democratic Party (SPD). After Schmidt denounced the October 10 Bonn protest as "a declaration of war against the government," 25 percent of his party's members of parliament endorsed the demonstration, as did one-third of the delegates of the Free Democratic Party, Schmidt's ally in the ruling coalition. One leading SPD member, Erhard Eppler, spoke at the Bonn rally, calling for a "nuclear-free Europe." An SPD Congress next April is expected to vote against the NATO missile deal.

In Britain, where the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament claims 280,000 supporters, the out-of-power Labour Party has jumped aboard the movement with a call for unilateral British disarmament. Most recently, Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu has joined the chorus with a call for both Russia and the NATO countries to withdraw their missiles from Europe and renounce the use of the neutron bomb.

Politicians have own reasons to support movement

Obviously, all these capitalist politicians have their own motives for endorsing the new movement. British Labour Party leader Michael Foot wants Margaret Thatcher's job as top cop. The SPD's Erhard Eppler has openly explained his role as that of preventing the Social Democratic Party from losing ground to alternative, left-wing groups in West Germany. Romania's Ceausescu is facing a serious economic crisis at home and needs to bolster his "independent nationalist" credentials to stay in power.

But it is the massive, popular movement which has forced these concessions from the European ruling classes. This is a movement with a tremendous potential—a potential to organize millions, unite separate struggles, and to generally raise hell against capitalist governments across the continent.

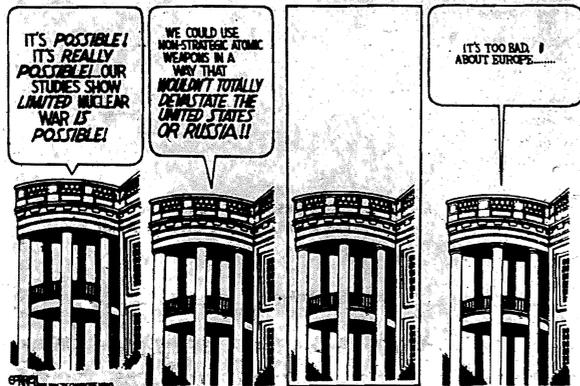
At the same time, it is clear that many of the young European anti-war activists have illusions in the present capitalist system. Politicians like Foot, Eppler and Ceausescu have jumped onto the bandwagon precisely to foster those illusions, to prevent the movement from moving left.

'Disarmament' through worldwide revolution

All the world's governments should disarm, just as they should give up political power to the working class, but they won't, and a pacifist strategy won't force them to, no matter how big the protest rallies become. Capitalism exists in every country in the world, as an organized system of force and violence. Part of this violence is directed against rival capitalists and emerges periodically in bloody world wars. An equally severe, day-to-day, violence is aimed at the working class in every country, at small oppressed nations, and at specially oppressed people everywhere. The capitalists maintain their monopoly of force (up to, and including, nuclear weapons) as a means to maintain political and economic power. They will never disarm voluntarily. We will have to take the guns away from them.

Today the European anti-war movement is led by pacifists who think capitalism can be reformed. But this may not always be the case. As the nuclear arms race intensifies, as U.S. and Russian militarism edges closer to a global holocaust, as the European pacifists fail to stop the drift toward war, many of today's young activists will turn toward revolutionary solutions.

Only a worldwide workers' revolution—one which puts workers and small farmers in power and takes all the power, and all the bombs, away from the capitalist class—only such a sweeping revolutionary change can save us from nuclear destruction. But will this happen soon enough to stop the buttons from being pushed? That is the desperate question facing Europe, and the world, today. □



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Several Hundred Demonstrate in Ann Arbor

'Family Protection Act an Attempt to Control and Suppress Us'

On October 31, over 250 people demonstrated in Ann Arbor, Michigan, against the Family Protection Act (FPA). The FPA, proposed by the Moral Majority forces in Congress, is a broad attack on the working class. It attacks women, lesbians and gay men, Blacks, Native Americans and all poor people by proposing to eliminate funds for legal aid, battered women's programs, child abuse programs, and any social service for gays or those who support gay rights. In addition, the FPA would prohibit textbooks that show women in non-traditional roles and would attack public school teachers' rights to organize.

Demonstrators included people from Lesbian/Gay Community Services, the National Black Independent Political Party, Legal Services, local unions, the Revolutionary Workers' League and the Revolutionary Socialist League.

The RSL speaker, Maggie S., emphasized the need to understand that the FPA is just part of a massive attack on the working class. Below is the text of her speech.

TODAY, we unite together to rally and march against the Family Protection Act. The FPA, a bill being pushed through Congress by the Moral Majority, is an attack on all working class people in an attempt to control and suppress us.

We must recognize that the FPA is not an isolated idea brought about by the Moral Majority morons, but comes from the capitalist system itself. The only way to smash the FPA and make sure it's gone for good is to smash capitalist and state-capitalist repression of the working class all over the world.

By working class we mean those of us, the majority of people, Black, Latin, Asian, white, gay and straight, men and women, who are forced to sell our

labor to the ruling class. The profit from our labor goes into the pockets of a wealthy few.

ONLY by building a strong, militant revolutionary movement whose goal is to unite with all working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world and to smash capitalism everywhere can we truly liberate ourselves and destroy the elements that create these oppres-

Even now, much work is done that is unpaid in the family—child bearing and raising, laundry and cooking, and sexual services.

Maintaining the family is something the capitalists need but don't have to pay for.

Despite this, the family—capitalism's stronghold of economic and social support—is falling apart. Through the

religion as a tool to suppress women and to tell people we must not fight back—you'll get your rewards in the afterlife.

People should have a choice whether they want to be religious or not—but the Moral Majority wants to make everyone—atheists, agnostics, Baptists, Buddhists, Jews, everyone—be controlled under their totalitarian Christian-Protestant norms.

Today's rally and demonstration is a step forward in the defeat of the FPA.

These attacks on the freedom and control of our lives by the Moral Majority backed by Reagan are part of the all-out attacks going on all over the world against the working class. U.S. imperialism strikes a far-reaching blow on workers' all over the world.

In South Africa, the apartheid system is backed by U.S. corporations against the liberation struggles of the Black people from their chains of white minority domination. Millions of Black people are forced to work in slave-like conditions, being paid hardly a fraction of what their white counterparts make. They are forced to work under dangerous work conditions—on the average, three miners are trapped and killed each day digging for gold so a wealthy few can eat lavishly while the rest starve, so a few live in huge houses while the rest are forced to make their houses out of sheet metal left behind by U.S. corporations.

THE liberation struggle of the Black South Africans is for control of their lives.

And in El Salvador, where the FDR is fighting the U.S.-backed junta, the people are fighting for their self-determination and for control of their lives.

And in Jamaica, where the right-wing Seaga has won power, the U.S. is giving him government loans to build up the military and repressive apparatus to

(Continued on page 16)

The Family Protection Act is not an isolated idea brought about by the Moral Majority morons. It comes from the capitalist system itself. The only way to smash the FPA and make sure it's gone for good is to smash capitalist and state-capitalist repression of the working class all over the world.

sive measures against us.

Capitalism controls every aspect of our lives. It controls our education, health, where and under what conditions we will work. If you're rich, your opportunities for education are better and will gear you into a high-paying job. For the poor, the schools are inadequately staffed, conditions are bad and there's no training for the shrinking job market. Health for the rich means the best doctors and most modern facilities. For the poor, it's just the opposite.

The family is one of the main ways capitalism keeps its control. Capitalism transmits its values through the family. This is where position and status are passed on and maintained. Capitalism maintains its repressive traditional roles through the family, with women on the bottom and taught to accept it.

Capitalism makes big profits off the family. Women are paid less in the job market because they're supposed to be economically dependent on men.

stress of working conditions, or finding a job at all to feed the family, keeping up the rent or mortgage payments, rising heating bills and so on, the failure of family life to fulfill people's emotional and other needs is rising. That's why it's no accident the FPA is being introduced at this time.

IF the FPA is passed, lesbian mothers will face court rulings to take their children away because of their sexual preference. And not only will you be attacked at your workplace, school or hospital for your sexual lifestyle, but also because of your religious or non-religious beliefs.

Religion, like the family, is one of the mainstays of capitalist control. The Moral Majority, backed by the capitalist ruling class, wants to use religion to suppress and divide us. Through religion the Moral Majority wants the educational system to maintain exactly what social norms it needs to control our lives even more than it does now. It will use

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NOVEMBER 15-DECEMBER 14, 1981 / TORCH / PAGE 5



U.S. seeks expulsion of Azanian activist

On November 8, 200 people rallied in Evanston, Illinois, to support anti-apartheid activist Dennis Brutus in his fight against deportation. Brutus, an internationally known poet who has taught at Northwestern University in Evanston for the last 10 years, is from South Africa. He was arrested in that country in 1963 for protesting racism in the South African Olympics. In 1965, after a stay at the notorious Robben Island prison, he was expelled from South Africa and told he would be arrested should he ever return.

Brutus went to London where he played a major role in building a movement to isolate South Africa in international sports. The campaigns against the Springboks rugby tour in New Zealand and the U.S. this year grew out of the movement Brutus helped to found. Brutus has remained active through the years and because of his work has been a major target of BOSS, the South African secret police.

For 10 years the U.S. government has routinely renewed Brutus's visa. Last year, after Black rule came to Zimbabwe, Brutus (who was born in what is now Zimbabwe) got a passport from that country for the first time. While he was waiting for it to arrive, his visa expired. This kind of problem is usually straightened out easily and quickly. But the Reagan administration has seized on this technicality as an excuse for political harassment of Brutus.

On November 10, Dennis Brutus appeared at an immigration hearing in Chicago while 50 supporters rallied outside. The Chicago RSL is active in defense work for Brutus through the Southern African Network. For more information, contact the Chicago RSL or the Dennis Brutus Defense Committee, 39 S. LaSalle, Chicago, IL 60603.

Prisoners rebel as conditions worsen

Today's right-wing political climate has meant that more people are being sent to jail. At the same time, prison budgets are being cut, axing in particular programs that aid prisoners. The liberal media, once hot on prison reform, have lost interest or become hostile. The result is widespread overcrowding, worse conditions and more tension in jails. Sometimes this creates rebellions against the authorities and, sometimes, prisoner against prisoner violence.

In the last four weeks we have read or heard about 10 separate prison rebellions. Below are some examples.

On October 19 prisoners at the Iowa State Penitentiary took six guards hostage for two hours to protest a lockdown in force since an uprising at that prison September 2.

On October 21, 150 prisoners in the Bergen County (New Jersey) Jail Annex took over their dormitories and held two guards hostage for over eight hours. The rebellion was set off when four prisoners who represented the prison population in grievance meetings with the authorities were suddenly transferred out.

On October 22, 330 prisoners at the Sumter Correctional Institution in Bushnell, Florida, took over the prison for over six hours. The prison superintendent told the Associated Press that it was a "racial disturbance." We have no other report.

On November 5, a small group of prisoners at the Maryland Correctional Institution in Hagerstown took over their dormitory for several hours. Several guards told a Washington Post reporter that the "unrest is a response to stricter prison policies recently imposed by state corrections officials."

And in a widely publicized event, four Black prisoners at Pennsylvania's Graterford State Prison took hostages October 29 when an escape failed, stranding them in a kitchen. The four surrendered after five days in return for promises of transfers to federal prisons and no more punishment for the escape "than whites would have gotten." Newspaperman Chuck Stone, who acted as mediator, said of the prisoners' leader Joseph Bowen: "He talked about dignity and oppression and being called a boy and treated like a boy. He said he knew white people who were cool, but it was the guys in the white shirts walking around that do a number on you, and make you feel like less of a man every day and after a while even you start to believe it."

—WF

Settles' Murder Probe Shows Cop Brutality Is Common Policy

By BRUCE KALA

LOS ANGELES, October 27 —An estimated 200 demonstrators marched and chanted outside the L.A. County Courthouse today as a grand jury investigation into the death of Ron Settles in a Signal Hill jail began. Picketers carried signs demanding "Jail the killer cops," and shouted "Justice now!"

As we reported last month, Settles, who was Black, was found hanging in a Signal Hill jail cell last June 2, after having been arrested for speeding. Although police insist he committed suicide, an inquest jury subsequently ruled that he died at the hands of another. Settles, 21, was a star running back for Cal State Long Beach at the time of his death and had had several offers from NFL teams.

Settles' murder has brought the whole Signal Hill police department into the spotlight. What's being revealed is an official policy of brutality and murder.

One Signal Hill cop with 11 years' experience (on the outs with his bosses for his own reasons) came out and spilled the beans to the press. Officer William Carl Jones told the L.A. Times: "Violence down there became a way of life. The slightest resistance [by prisoners]—even verbal—was met with a beating. It happened three or four times a week. If you wanted to fit in, that's what you had to do...you hear a scuffle, everybody runs back there. Everybody helps out...kicking and beating whoever they were fighting with." Afterwards the cops would sit around the station drinking and bragging about the night's "action." Jones said a typical remark would be: "Hey, good job kicking that guy's ass. See that blood gushing out of his mouth?"

The statistics on the Signal Hill cops are shocking. Over the last 13 years there have been 42 formal charges of unjustified police beatings or false arrests.

One-third of those beaten were in handcuffs or a jail cell at the time. One suffered broken ribs, another a punctured lung, several were crippled and one was partially blinded. Three died. This record would be cause for outrage in the biggest city, with a population of millions. Signal Hill has 6,025 residents!

One of the victims of Signal Hill police was Leslie Holmes. In 1977 he was stopped while riding his motorcycle. The cops started with racist insults to Holmes (who is Black) and the white woman with him. When he refused to stand on one badly and obviously injured leg, he was arrested for refusing a drunk driving test and taken to the Signal Hill jail. Finally getting his story told four years later, Holmes says the last thing he remembers after that was "an officer slapping his billy club and smiling. The next thing I knew I'm getting choked. Then Brown [the same cop believed to have killed Settles] booted me in the groin. I skidded across the floor..."

Holmes was severely beaten about the back, stomach, legs and groin and suffered an injured larynx. The city of Signal Hill later settled out of court on a brutality suit brought by Holmes.

Seven months ago, Elba Acuna, a Guatemalan living in Long Beach, also had the misfortune of being stopped by Signal Hill police. Because she had said her name was Elba, while her license incorrectly read "Elva," the cops started to take her to jail. She tells what happened: "My (six year old) son started screaming and begging them not to take me." She was pulled from the car, her blouse torn, and handcuffed. "They were hitting me with sticks. Then the (police) dog jumped. He bit me in the crotch. He bit me again and again. They were saying 'good boy' to the dog."

And, just one week after the murder of Ron Settles, another prisoner died in the Signal Hill jail—Jack Eugene Brown, also

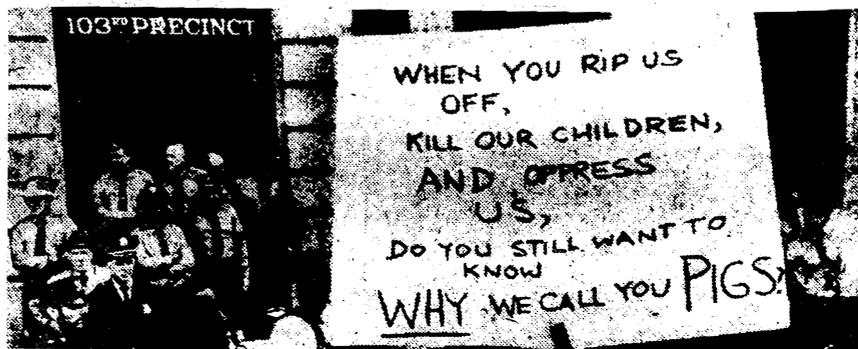
found hanging by a mattress cover.

The organized outcry around Settles' murder is worrying the more far-seeing "liberal" elements in the local ruling class—like the L.A. Times and Kenneth Hahn (Democratic county supervisor). These forces are also starting to press the district attorney to do something. They want to be able to say that Signal Hill is the exception, the one bad apple—and the system can be trusted to take care of it. They understand the danger of a movement growing up that begins to see beyond this. But in order to make their case the liberals need at least an effective show of something being done about Signal Hill.

The right-wing forces in the county, however, will have none of this. They also understand something—the economic crisis calls for enforcing more sacrifices on the most oppressed and this means more brutal repression. They see that even a slap of the wrist is demoralizing to the "thin blue line" they are depending on.

The L.A. County district attorney, John Van de Kamp, while basically following the demands of the stronger right-wingers, is also trying to give a little to the liberals. Thus, the deputy DA handling the case before the grand jury, Gilbert Garcetti, has promised: "We are not asking for a grand jury indictment. Any decision whether to prosecute will be made by the district attorney's office." At the same time, the DA's office has broadened the investigation to include six more cases, including those of Jack Eugene Brown and Elba Acuna. The result is to satisfy no one.

This impasse on the part of the ruling class opens the opportunity to build and develop the movement for justice. We have to avoid the trap of depending on the liberal forces, instead relying on a movement of working and oppressed people to fight for justice for Ron Settles and all the other victims of the system's armed thugs. □



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By ROD MILLER

A major movement conference met in Detroit's Cobble over the weekend of October 18. The gathering, calling the All Peoples Congress (APC) was attended by between 1,000 and 2,000 activists from across the country.

The main sponsor of the was the Peoples Anti-War Mobilization (PAM), the coalition which played a major role in organizing the May 3 Pent march to protest U.S. intervention in El Salvador. PAM turn, is controlled by the Workers World Party.

For many, the conference was a bitter disappointment. People came looking for a framework to begin building a national coalition on a radical, anti-capitalist program. They expected the conference to provide an opportunity to exchange views and experiences and, on this basis, map out future plans. However, new, young activists hoped to leave the APC with a solid plan for building local chapters of national movement against the government's deepening attack on working and oppressed people.

This should have been possible, given the diverse forces that attended the APC. Conference participants included well-known rights organizers, anti-draft activists and militants from women's organizations and lesbian and gay groups. National Black organizations, such as the National Black United Front and the National Black Independent Political Party, were represented. Numerous independent local collectives sent delegates. And virtually every significant U.S. left organization was sent.

The official conference promised a meeting which would provide a "democratic open forum for all segments of society under attack." Instead, for two and a half days, activists sat through an affair tightly controlled and bureaucratic that less than a dozen people were ever given the right to speak from the floor. Conference participants were reduced to the role of mere spectators, forced to sit through an endless series of pep-rally type speeches by people approved in advance by the conference organizers. Even the limited time allowed for workshops was largely taken up with talks given by pre-selected panels.

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For many, the conference was a bitter disappointment. People came looking for a framework to begin building a national coalition on a radical, anti-capitalist program. They expected the conference to provide an opportunity to exchange views and experiences and, on this basis, to map out future plans. Many new, young activists hoped to leave the APC with a solid basis for building local chapters of a national movement against the government's deepening attacks on working and oppressed people.

This should have been possible, given the diverse forces that attended the APC. Conference participants included welfare rights organizers, anti-draft activists and militants from women's organizations and lesbian and gay groups. National Black organizations, such as the National Black United Front and the National Black Independent Political Party, were represented. Numerous independent radical collectives sent delegations. And virtually every significant U.S. left organization was present.

The official conference call promised a meeting which would provide a "democratic, open forum for all segments of society under attack." Instead, for two and a half days, activists sat through an affair so tightly controlled and bureaucratic that less than a dozen people were ever given the right to speak from the floor. Conference participants were reduced to the role of mere spectators, forced to sit through an endless series of pep-rally type speeches by people approved in advance by the conference organizers. Even the limited time allowed for workshops was largely taken up with talks given by pre-selected panels.

Conference organizers were

so determined to prevent any open discussion and debate that when the frustrations of the audience exploded in chants of "Open the mike!" and "Let us speak!" midway through the Sunday session, they responded by abruptly adjourning the meeting.

As a result, the gathering failed to accomplish much of anything positive and succeeded in angering and demoralizing many new, young activists.

Role of Workers World Party

In our view, the responsibility for this setback lies with the

and participation and a fairly left-wing program.

Many left and movement organizations eagerly hoped that PAM would move in this direction. However, this could only happen if PAM were not made the property of any one organization on the left. A movement of tens of thousands with active local chapters could only be built if it were made up of many divergent political tendencies, uniting for common action while democratically discussing their differences.

Unfortunately, this is not what happened. Immediately following May 3, WWP began to engage in what became an endless series of maneuvers designed to give PAM the appearance of being broad while in

reauratic maneuvering during the preceding months. Almost by definition, Workers World could not permit any democratic discussion and debate at the APC—too many of those attending had already been defined as "hostile forces."

False political perspective

The undemocratic nature of the APC and the manipulative role played by WWP also had roots in the political basis on which Workers World organized the conference.

WWP built the APC on the promise that a single, large de-

Workers World knows this. Apparently, however, the WWP believes that if people are told that the enemy is powerful and the struggle will be long and hard—if people are told the truth, in other words—then "the masses will not act." So, instead, people are lied to. This is an approach that looks at working people as passive, and in fact rather stupid objects, who can only be manipulated into struggling on the basis of false promises and false perspectives.

This approach virtually guaranteed that the APC would not be a serious, meaningful conference. If real discussion over the nature of the ruling class offensive and the tasks in organizing a fightback had been allowed, the bubble of hype Workers World had created would have been burst.

The result was that people at the APC were treated to a barrage of rhetorical speeches designed to "whip people up"—and avoid all difficult questions. This was probably what most angered the many serious activists who came to the conference. They were being treated precisely as—passive and rather stupid objects. Who could really believe Workers World leader (though he was never identified as such) Larry Holmes when, in speaking of the proposed "National Days of Resistance" (planned for April 24-May 2), he claimed: "We'll surround the U.S. Congress and stay there until it votes to reverse the cuts"???

Playing into the hands of the Democrats

There was an additional, somewhat more hidden aspect of Workers World's dishonest approach. This was its use of the slogan "Overturn the Reagan program." Many people interpret "Reaganism" or the "Reagan program" to mean the specific policies of the Republican Party, rather than the policies of the ruling class as a whole. And, unfortunately, all too many people have illusions that the Democratic Party—the so-called friends of poor and working people—represents an alternative.

WWP deliberately tried to pander to these illusions. Literature building for the APC often used phrases such as "We can't wait for the 1984 elections." Since the 1984 elections will almost certainly be a contest between the Democrats and Republicans, this suggested to people that what the APC was about was defeating the Republicans. In fact, a reasonable person could only interpret the slogan "Overturn the Reagan program" as meaning replacing the Republicans with the Democrats—certainly people weren't

(Continued on page 16)



Workers World Party (WWP), which controlled and ran the entire conference. In fact, from the time plans for the APC were announced following the May 3 Pentagon march, WWP systematically abused wide sections of the movement in the interests of its narrow, organizational advantage. While the damage WWP has caused cannot be immediately undone, we think it is important to review the period from May 3 to the APC to draw out lessons that can help to avoid a repetition of this experience in the future.

Post-May 3: potential for an important step

The large turnout for the May 3 Pentagon march and, more importantly, the diverse sections of the movement which joined with PAM to build it, created an important opening for the entire radical movement. At a time of widespread disarray, PAM was in a position to bring together sufficient forces to launch a national organization with both broad support

fact keeping it strictly under Workers World's domination and control. Left and movement organizations with differences with WWP were either kept out of PAM altogether or allowed to join without being given any role in PAM's decision-making process. Those willing to be loyal foot-soldiers for WWP were welcome; all others were viewed as hostile opponents.

As plans for the All Peoples Congress developed, complex leadership structures were set up and then endlessly altered to keep the real power in WWP's hands. Some groups resigned from the bodies in disgust (Coalition for a People's Alternative, Coalition for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse—CARASA); others were expelled for raising objections (Communist Workers Party, Radical Women, RSL). By the time the Congress itself met, a substantial portion of those in attendance (beyond WWP's own cadre and immediate supporters) were members of groups which had been kept out, forced out or expelled.

The undemocratic nature of the Cobo Hall conference logically followed from all the bu-

monstration could "overturn the Reagan program." While this has a militant ring to it, it is not an honest perspective. The U.S. ruling class is not going to abandon its anti-working class offensive because of one or even a few large demonstrations. A half-million people marched on Solidarity Day—but this didn't stop the government from busting the air traffic controllers' union, much less halt the broader offensive against working and oppressed people.

Serious resistance to Reagan's attacks, much less "overturning them," will take a level of organization and consciousness that won't be built overnight. Coordinated mass strike action, factory occupations and other mass mobilizations, including working class political action, will be needed. In Britain, where Thatcher is implementing a program similar to Reagan's, workers have struck, demonstrated and even rioted without yet forcing Thatcher's government to back off its attacks. One large movement demonstration here in this country—even a very militant one—will hardly "overturn Reaganism."

PATCO Strike Defeated; Philly Teachers' Walkout Ends With Mixed Results

By WILLIAM FALK

The defeat of the air traffic controllers' strike became complete October 22 when the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) was decertified as a bargaining agent. The decertification, demanded by Reagan, took effect October 27 after unsuccessful union court appeals and means the destruction of PATCO.

The PATCO strike was defeated in a matter of weeks when the controllers got little substantive help from the rest of the labor movement. Acting alone, the controllers were just not able to shut down the airports. The PATCO leadership weakened the strike as well. Instead of working to spread the strike, they were on a continual quest for a back-room deal from Reagan, whom they had supported in the 1980 election.

Just because the strike has been defeated does not mean that the airways are running well, however. They are a mess. Schedules have been sharply curtailed and ground delays of one to two hours are now "normal." In addition, only a limited number of private planes, most of which are owned by corporations, will be allowed to use the air control system in the coming months. When weather is too bad for the pilot to fly by eyesight, many of these planes will be grounded.

NOW THAT the union has been destroyed, a number of ruling class figures, including the editors of the *New York Times*, have called on Reagan to rehire some of the controllers in order to put the system back in working order. For his part, Robert Poli, the head of PATCO, has said he is ready to "call off the strike" if the government would take back the fired workers.

But despite all the trouble the government is having rebuilding the system—the first class of post-strike trainees had the highest dropout and flunkout rates in history—the Reagan administration seems adamant about no deals.

One of the most dangerous results of the defeat of the PATCO strike is that it gives the green light to other union-busting efforts, particularly against public workers. The first major public workers' strike since PATCO's was the walkout of the Philadelphia teachers. Last month, in the midst of the strike, we wrote: "If the teachers are fired for striking, the apparent defeat of PATCO



Striking Philadelphia teachers rally on September 15.

will turn into a rout of the whole labor movement. If teachers successfully defend their contract rights by striking, the ruling class's union-busting offensive will have been dealt a significant blow."

The result of the strike was something in between. The strike began when the school board refused to honor the provisions of a two-year contract they had signed with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) in September 1980. Claiming there was no money, they announced layoffs for 3,500 teachers and aides despite a no-layoff clause, and said that a 10 percent pay increase due this year would not be paid. The PFT demanded nothing more than the terms of the legal contract signed a year ago and walked out on September 8.

THE strike was a very bitter one and the city did everything it could to break it and the union. It got a court order saying the school board did not have to obey the contract, but PFT members did, and imposing a \$10,000 a day fine against the union. The city tried opening schools with scabs, and sent the Philadelphia police against the picket lines. They "suspended with intent to dismiss" 53 union members arrested on the lines. And after years of racist neglect of the 70-percent Black schools, the city suddenly began crying buckets over the harm done to the children by the strike and tried to exploit Black community suspicions of the 60-percent white union.

Despite all this, union morale remained strong and the picket lines full. At the end of October the Central Labor Council passed a call for a citywide general strike on October 28 in support of the teachers' union.

In fact, none of the labor leaders were serious about this general strike. Most



unions merely suggested that off-duty workers go to a strike support rally downtown, and did not say they would extend union protection to workers who actually struck. Most crucially, the head of Transport Workers Local 234 did not order his members, who run the city's trolleys, buses and subways, to stay off the job.

With the labor leaders anxious to avoid their so-called general strike, and the city government having failed to either break the strike or run the schools without union members, it appears that some sort of deal was struck. On October 27, the day before the "general strike," there was suddenly a new court ruling, again ordering PFT members back to work. But this time it also ordered the school board to rescind the 3,500 layoffs and negotiate any changes from the contract provisions in force during the 1980-81 school year. John Murray, the head of the PFT, asked his members to return to work while the school board announced it would obey the new order.

THE 10-percent wage increase promised last year is now a subject for negotiation and it is doubtful that the union will get all of it. Nor is there any guarantee about future layoffs; that is also a subject for negotiation. But the unilateral layoffs were stopped, and all teachers are back to work, including those suspended because of picket line arrests. And the PFT, unlike PATCO, is intact, at least for now. □

LABOR IN STRUGGLE

Ford demands 50 percent wage cut

The Ford Motor Company is trying to force over 900 United Auto Workers (UAW) members at its Sheffield, Alabama, aluminum castings plant to take a 50 percent cut in wages and benefits. Ford claims that "high labor costs" are responsible for the plant's losing money for the past six years. On October 27 it issued an ultimatum to the workers, threatening to shut down the plant on January 1, 1982, unless they agreed to junk the national Ford-UAW agreement and negotiate a separate contract including the cuts. It also offered to sell the plant to the workers for a cool \$40 million. But Ford insisted that the cuts would be necessary to keep the plant open whether or not workers bought it.

On October 31 the UAW International rejected Ford's demands as a violation of the union's national agreement with the company. Ford is now asking leaders of the UAW Local 255, which represents the Sheffield workers, to poll them and see if they are interested in buying the plant. But Local 255 President Lavoye McCannless opposes any buy-out, declaring: "They would be using your money to make money."

The Sheffield ultimatum is part of a wider Ford plan to weaken the UAW and attack the wages and working conditions of its workers. Earlier this year the UAW rejected company demands to renegotiate the national contract. Since then the company

has forced workers at three Midwestern plants to accept wage cuts or work rule changes by threatening shutdowns. This offensive is just a prelude to the attacks that Ford workers—and all autoworkers—can expect in next year's contract round. Ford lost \$334.5 million in the third quarter of 1981 alone, while General Motors lost even more. Both companies have already made it clear that they will try to recover their losses by demanding enormous wage and benefit concessions, similar to those Chrysler workers gave up over the past two years, in the 1982 contract negotiations.

Unions map Houston organizing drive

In a major effort by the labor movement to unionize workers in the South, the AFL-CIO has announced it will open an organizing drive by over 30 unions in Houston, Texas. Initial plans for the Houston Organizing Project were discussed at a conference in Houston on October 23. Right now less than 20 percent of Houston workers belong to unions. The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union plans to try to organize workers at refineries and petro-chemical plants in the Houston area. The Service Employees International Union is working with District 1199 to reach 30,000 hospital and healthcare workers in the city. The UAW, the USWA, AFSCME and several construction unions are among other unions participating in the drive.

Timken workers coerced into 11-year strike ban

The Timken Company has successfully blackmailed steelworkers at three of its Ohio plants into accepting an 11-year strike ban and other concessions in return for its promise to build a new steel mill in the state. On November 2 the workers, all members of the United Steelworkers union (USWA), voted by 3,446-334 to accept a contract that includes a ban on strikes and picketing; an 11-year moratorium on grievances over assignments at the new plant; a 20 percent wage cut for new hires during their first 120 days of work; and freedom for the company to ignore the union's seniority system in selecting workers for the new mill when it is completed. Timken had threatened to build the mill in Tennessee or Kentucky, rather than in Canton, Ohio, if workers did not agree to the concessions.

Harry Mayfield, director of USWA District 27, and local USWA leaders in Canton, Wooster and Columbus had favored granting Timken's demands in order to keep the proposed plant, which will provide 800 jobs, in Canton. But in mid-October workers voted down the contract package by a 727-722 margin. After the vote, Timken agreed to drop its demand that 250 workers give up incentive pay raises totaling up to \$5,000 each over a five-year period. Union leaders then argued that the workers' wages and "permanent benefits" would remain "exactly the same" under the proposed contract, and won support for it in a second vote.

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By W.E. SCHWEIZER

"We're going to sock it you."

Those were the words of New York City Mayor Ed Koch, applauding a recent ruling that penalized the city's transit workers for striking in April 1980 by taking away the union's dues checkoff rights.

NY's transit workers, historically one of the strongest sections of the city's labor movement, have been earmarked by the city government for a union-busting campaign. A series of attacks on the workers and their union, the Transport Workers Union (TWU), began three months ago—right after Reagan fired striking air traffic controllers and moved to bust their union.

Already, New York transit workers had been hit hard as the city tried to solve its financial crisis by attacking workers and slashing social services. From being the best paid workers in the industry nationally in 1977, NY transit workers fell to about 40th in 1980.

Now the city is going full blood. Although the campaign against the TWU has stalled recently, the city is getting ready for an all-out battle when the TWU's contract and those of other municipal workers expire next year.

TA attacking benefits, COLA

The latest round of attack began when the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (TA) announced it was changing bus schedules to eliminate the paid lunch periods of thousands of bus drivers. Traditionally, they had been paid under a verbal agreement with the TWU.

However, when the TA proposed the new schedules, most drivers resisted by refusing to bid for assignments, while the union leadership took the issue to arbitration. The union won, but arbitrator Theodore Kheominously added that the TA was free to take away the paid lunches when the union's contract expires next April.

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NY's Transit Union Targetted by City

TWU's Dues Checkoff Suspended

By W.E. SCHWEIZER

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"There are too many god-damned verbal agreements," says John Black, a rank and file activist in the TWU. "The TWU leadership has been play-

ing ball with the TA in terms of verbal agreements and now the TA wants them back. And if they get them all back, we might as well be slaves."

At the same time, the TA went after transit workers' cost-of-living allowance (COLA). Under the sellout contract which transit workers were forced to accept in 1980, COLA payments were tied to productivity gains. When this fall's scheduled increase came up, the TA claimed that productivity hadn't gone up enough and tried to cut the payment by more than half.

However, an arbitration panel again ruled in favor of the union. But the whole question—indeed whether there is to be any COLA at all, along with everything else the union has ever won—gets thrown up for grabs next year in the new contract. Koch immediately began setting the stage for take-aways when he denounced the arbitrators' award and declared that transit workers "rip us off like a carcass."

It was after these first two attacks that the New York Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) took away the TWU's dues checkoff for 18 months as punishment for the transit strike in April 1980.

Under a checkoff system, union dues are automatically deducted from members' pay-



New York City workers march in support of transit workers in 1980. Mayor Ed Koch is unleashing new offensive against TWU.

checks and forwarded in a lump sum to the union. Taking this away forces the union to spend a great deal of effort simply collecting dues from thousands of individual members and represents a serious weakening of the union. (In the same decision, the PERB also eliminated the dues checkoff for the United Federation of Teachers in retaliation for its strike in 1975 against layoffs and budget cuts.)

The PERB acted under New York's Taylor Law, which makes it illegal for public workers to strike. Under its terms the TWU and two other unions already have been fined \$1.3 million for the 1980 strike. In addition, union members already have each lost \$1,000-\$1,500 in fines out of their paychecks.

New York's capitalist newspapers have done their part in creating an atmosphere in which the city could attack the transit workers at will. Under such titles as "Doomsday Express," both the Post and the Daily News have run lurid stories trying to pit riders against workers by blaming transit

breakdowns, delays, dirt and crime on "incompetent" and "lazy" workers.

In fact, it is the capitalist rulers of New York—not "lazy" transit workers—who have run the system into the ground. Instead of spending enough money for adequate maintenance and service, and attracting more riders through lower fares, they have handed over billions to the banks and the rich to pay off numerous transit bond issues. They have allowed the TA to build up a vast and unproductive bureaucracy in its headquarters. And now they are proposing to take more than a billion dollars which could go to transit and build an \$8,000-per-inch super-highway down the west side of Manhattan. It is to the transit workers' credit that the system hasn't broken down entirely.

Union leadership urging retreat

While the city prepares for battle, the TWU leadership is urging retreat. In August, when

the TA began attacking the bus drivers, TWU Local 100 President John Lawe offered to give up the union's traditional stand of "No Contract, No Work" in favor of binding arbitration. And while it is true that the TWU has won a couple of small victories from arbitration this fall, the arbitrators themselves have already signalled that all bets are off when the contract expires next spring.

Clearly, rank and file transit workers need to organize to defend themselves. This will not be easy. Despite sporadic resistance, the transit rank and file has been demoralized since their strike was sold out last year. The Local 100 elections this fall reflect this. Two years ago Lawe won only because three rank and file slates split the vote against him. This year threatens to be a repeat. "There's not a split in the leadership, but in the rank and file," says Black, who is running for office himself on one of the rank and file slates. "They feel that it's useless—someone has done it before, but failed. It's almost impossible to deal with this monster."

But if transit workers don't organize and unite with other city workers, the next few years will be grim. A defeat in next April's contract struggle will further demoralize transit workers and weaken the union. It will also set the stage for more attacks on all the other municipal unions when their contracts expire in June. Farther on, there will be a new fiscal crisis and workers in the Housing Authority have already been told to expect a new round of layoffs. But a successful defense by transit workers could be a powerful force in building a united working class movement to stop these attacks. □



G.M. Destroys Poletown — Then Postpones Plant

In 1980 General Motors agreed to build a new auto plant on the site of Chrysler's abandoned Hamtramck Assembly plant in Detroit, if the city would enlarge the site by destroying Poletown, a multi-national working class community where 3,500 people lived. GM argued that this was a small price to pay for jobs and progress. But the residents of Poletown, who were given no say in the matter, were outraged and waged a militant struggle to save their community. With Mayor Coleman Young and the Detroit City Council siding with GM, however, the people of Poletown were unable to save their community. Poletown was razed to make way for the new plant, which GM said would open in 1983.

Lately a rumor has been sweeping Detroit that GM has decided to kill the plant. GM officials righteously denied the charge. But on November 3 they did admit—for the first time—that the plant's opening would be "delayed" for a year. The company is slowing down construction because plunging auto sales are eating into its profits. It remains to be seen whether the plant will be built at all. Meanwhile, rubble is all that remains of the Poletown community.



WORLD IN REVOLUTION

Indians in South Africa reject gov't maneuvers

The Indian people of Azania (South Africa) dealt Prime Minister Pieter Botha's apartheid government a stinging defeat on November 4 when they boycotted elections for a powerless "South African Indian Council." Some 320,000 adults, out of a total 800,000 Indian population registered for the election following government warnings that those who did not register would be prosecuted and fined. But over 90 percent of those who registered refused to vote in the elections.

Botha's government is trying to isolate the country's Black majority by granting concessions to other oppressed national groups. The government is planning to give the country's Indian and mixed-race populations token national political representation, while denying it to Blacks. Its decision to allow elections for the council, instead of continuing to appoint its members, was a preliminary step in this direction.

But the Indian people overwhelmingly rejected this maneuver. At a November 1 rally in Lenasia, an Indian district outside Johannesburg, a crowd of 3,000 condemned the election. They showed their solidarity with the Black struggle against apartheid by cheering references to Nelson Mandela, the imprisoned leader of the African National Congress, and by chanting the Black freedom slogan "Amandla!" ("Power!").

U.S. campaign threatens war in Caribbean

On November 4, the *New York Times* reported that the Pentagon is considering "what U.S. forces could do if there was a decision to blockade Nicaragua or launch certain types of operations against Cuba." Proposed operations include a show of U.S. air power, naval exercises, an arms quarantine, a total blockade, or an invasion of Cuba by U.S. and Latin American troops.

This report is just one part of a campaign by the Reagan administration to intimidate Caribbean and Central American governments with the threat of U.S. intervention. Other elements in the administration's campaign include: 1) a closed meeting of the Conference of American Armies held November 3-5, where Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger reportedly stressed united action against "terrorism, subversion and armed insurrection" in Central America in a speech to military commanders from 20 Latin American and Caribbean states; 2) an October 27 report that the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are considering "regional actions" if Salvadorean guerrillas flee into "neighboring countries;" 3) joint U.S. naval maneuvers held October 5-7 "to show the countries of Central America that the U.S. will stand behind them in the event that they are attacked by Cuba or Nicaragua;" 4) a diplomatic offensive against the Cuban government. The Jamaican government broke diplomatic relations with Cuba on October 29. Earlier this year the Colombian, Ecuadorean and Costa Rican governments also severed relations with Cuba.

All these actions have two purposes. First, they are meant to intimidate the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Grenadan governments from aiding national liberation movements in the region. Second, they are intended to lay a basis for U.S. military intervention if and when it becomes necessary.

As the accompanying article explains, national liberation movements are mounting a serious threat to U.S. imperialist domination of Central America and the Caribbean. In particular, insurgents led by the FMLN are gaining ground in their war against the U.S.-backed military regime in El Salvador. On October 15 they destroyed the Puente de Oro (Golden Bridge), cutting off the major land route to the eastern half of the country. Then on October 31 they isolated the town of Suchitoto, in western El Salvador, by blowing up a bridge over the Sucio River.

A major debate is raging within the administration over how to contain the Central American liberation movements. Secretary of State Alexander Haig reportedly believes that the U.S. will "lose" El Salvador unless it cuts off the FMLN supplies "at the source" through military intervention against Cuba and Nicaragua. But according to the *Washington Post*, the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are opposing such action at this time. They believe the kinds of actions Haig is demanding will not succeed. Moreover, they fear that U.S. military intervention would provoke massive protests within the U.S. itself.

—PB

Central America: A Region in Revolt

The following is the first part of a talk on the situation in Central America and U.S. imperialism's response to it given by Franz Morgan to a meeting of the RSL's Central Committee held September 26-27. The second part will appear in the next issue of the Torch/La Antorcha.

After decades of relative stability, Central America today is in turmoil, and the situation is posing a serious challenge to continued U.S. imperialist control of the region. Recent years have seen a number of significant new political developments in Central America, such as the renegotiation of the Panama Canal Treaty; the discovery of oil in Mexico and the subsequent rise of Mexico's world stature; revolutions in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala; an economic collapse throughout the region, including in historically stable Costa Rica; and, recently, the independence of tiny, weak Belize, which may touch off a new war if Guatemala tries to take it over.

Political alignments in the region have shifted. Panama and Mexico, though still U.S. allies, have become mavericks and frequently disagree with the U.S., especially in foreign policy matters. Nicaragua under the Sandinistas (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional—FSLN) is essentially a left social democratic regime, with growing ties to the state-capitalist countries. Rebels in El Salvador and Guatemala are following the basic political model set by the FSLN, and they are likely to be eventually victorious in their national liberation wars. Even the Central American rightists are not as obedient to the U.S. as they once were. In El Salvador and Guatemala, for example, the U.S. has been unable to control the excesses of the neo-fascist military and rightist gangs.

U.S. imperialism's strategic response to the Central American crisis has several aspects. The first response is to throw money at the problem. Massive economic and military aid is pouring into El Salvador and Honduras and will soon start flowing to Guatemala (after a brief suspension under Carter due to "human rights violations"). The intent is to create a

military alliance between the three right-wing military regimes in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. This alliance, dubbed the "Iron Triangle," would serve as a huge conservative bloc, a policeman for Central America, available to serve as the U.S. proxy in case of continued rebellion.

To win support for this strategy, the U.S. is waging an intense propaganda campaign to portray the Iron Triangle regimes as popular, progressive and "moving toward democracy." Another crucial aspect of the propaganda front is to exaggerate or invent the danger of a Soviet/Cuban threat to the region. Finally, the strategy requires the perspective of "saving" Mexico, the ultimate domino, at all costs. Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador have very little economic significance for U.S. imperialism. The struggle there—to the U.S.—is largely a war for political advantage, not investments. While Guatemala is considerably more significant to the U.S., it is Mexico which absolutely cannot be lost.

Mexico has one of the world's largest oil reserves, billions in U.S. investments, 70 million people and a 2,000-mile lightly guarded frontier with the U.S. Political turmoil in Mexico immediately affects the entire U.S. Southwest through its large Chicano and Mexican population. If the Central American political revolutions are not stopped south of Mexico, U.S. imperialism is in big trouble.

Nicaragua

Nicaraguan society today is extremely unstable. The FSLN's attempts to build a pluralistic, mixed-economy, social democratic-type society have run up against severe hostility from U.S. imperialism, resistance from the native capitalist class, and insistent wage, workplace, and consumer demands from workers and small farmers. The current Nicaraguan crisis is driving the FSLN faster than it wants to go toward state capitalism—toward repressive measures against both private capitalists and the working class. New laws against the capitalists, to prevent capital flight, hoarding, and abandonment of factories and fields, are combined

with new laws against strikes, land occupations and factory takeovers and a big drive to increase productivity.

The FSLN has hoped to defuse discontent by following the Cuban model of mass popular mobilizations. The literacy campaign and the recent universal militia training are examples of this. Such mobilizations serve to arouse genuine patriotic sentiment and divert people's attention toward external enemies and away from the FSLN policies themselves.

For its part, U.S. imperialism has waged a serious campaign to destabilize Nicaragua, using military threats, economic strangulation, and political intervention.

All U.S. loans and aid to the FSLN government have been cut off, while private sector aid continues to flow to Nicaraguan capitalists. The World Bank and other international lending bodies have been pressured by the U.S. to also cut off or reduce aid to Nicaragua. Nicaraguan capitalists, who still own 60 percent of all means of production, have been encouraged to decapitalize, abandon



Nicaraguan youths celebrate fall of Somoza regime in 1979.

properties, and delay crop planting.

And in addition to an international propaganda campaign to isolate the FSLN, CIA agents have been active, especially on Nicaragua's remote Atlantic Coast, taking full advantage of the existing legitimate complaints of the area's minority Black and Indian peoples.

While the U.S. continues to play games with Nicaragua, making an occasional positive comment here, a hint of new aid there, the overall U.S. posture is

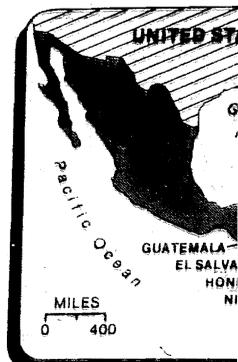
hostile and will remain so. FSLN's slide toward state capitalism will continue, the speed of the process depending on which way the process develops (including the development of a worker opposition and the development of an external military threat). The more threatened the FSLN feels, the faster will it embrace full state capitalism. But ironically, the faster this, the more threatened it will be. It is very unlikely that Russia will be willing to accept responsibility for another roughly dependent client state in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba is too much of a threat to them already.

Interestingly, Fidel Castro knows this, and has warned the FSLN not to follow the Cuban road. And Reagan, after anti-communist chest-thumping, will be no more inclined to accept another Cuba in the Americas' backyard." With these directions and forces in mind, the danger of a U.S. intervention in Nicaragua appears very great.

El Salvador

El Salvador is the current point in the armed liberation struggle in Central America, with a full scale war now two years old. 30,000 people have died while it stands today in the forefront of the anti-imperialist struggle of the region. El Salvador is actually one of the most important of all the Central American nations to the U.S. Militarily and economically El Salvador is of little significance to the U.S. U.S. corporations have little investment in the country. El Salvador possesses no critical natural resources. Its main product is coffee, followed by sugar and cotton. A tiny country, about the size of Massachusetts, but populated by five million people, of whom are landless peasants who barely survive. Two percent of the population owns most of the productive

El Salvador has a working class, mostly in agriculture, textiles, and food processing. It has oil refineries



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Young people celebrate fall of regime in 1979.

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The U.S. continues to ally with Nicaragua, an occasional positive sign here, a hint of new aid overall U.S. posture is

hostile and will remain so. The FSLN's slide toward state capitalism will continue, the speed of the process depending on the speed with which the crisis develops (including the development of a worker opposition and the development of an external military threat). The more threatened the FSLN feels, the faster will it move to embrace full state capitalism. But ironically, the faster it does this, the more threatened it will be. It is very unlikely that Russia will be willing to take responsibility for another thoroughly dependent client state in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba is too much of a drain on them already.

Interestingly, Fidel Castro knows this, and has warned the FSLN not to follow the Cuban road. And Reagan, after all his anti-communist chest-beating, will be no more inclined to accept another Cuba in "America's backyard." With these directions and forces at play, the danger of a U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua (either directly or through proxies) appears very great.

El Salvador

El Salvador is the current hot-spot in the armed national liberation struggle in Central America, with a full scale civil war now two years old, in which 30,000 people have died. But while it stands today at the forefront of the anti-imperialist struggle of the region, El Salvador is actually one of the least important of all the Central American nations to the U.S. Militarily and economically, El Salvador is of little significance to the U.S. U.S. corporations have little investment in the country. El Salvador produces no critical natural resources. Its main product is coffee, followed by sugar and cotton. It is a tiny country, about the size of Massachusetts, but populated by five million people, most of whom are landless peasants who barely survive. Two percent of the population own most of the productive land.

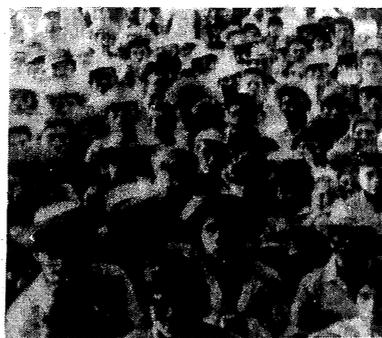
El Salvador has a small working class, mostly in garment, textiles, and food processing. It has oil refineries but

no oil. Its main energy source is hydroelectric power, which it produces in large quantity—enough to supply all of Central America.

Since the beginning of the civil war, El Salvador's economy has virtually collapsed. Production has declined 16 percent. Some \$800 million in capital has been taken out of the country. The current budget has a deficit of \$100 million. The inflation rate is at 80 percent. Half the working-age population is unemployed. Most of this year's coffee crop was afflicted by blight and the sugar harvest was only half as big as last year's. Some of this damage is the result of a successful rebel campaign of economic sabotage which has knocked out 45 bridges and many power lines during the past month. In a nation with so much electric power, its cities suffer blackouts nearly every day.

The ruling military junta survives only thanks to U.S. aid. Ten percent of its armed forces have been taken out of action as casualties. The rebels effectively control about half the land area and a large percentage of the population, mainly in the northern border area. In the north, government forces cannot move outside the villages except in convoy. At night, the rebels circulate throughout the country. Though rebel strength is centered in the north, urban cells also exist in the slums and recently the guerrillas raided right into the suburbs of the capital, San Salvador, and escaped.

Salvadorean workers and small farmers almost universally support the rebel forces—Frente Democrático Revolucionario (FDR—Revolutionary Democratic Front) and the military arm of the liberation movement, the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN—Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front)—while the middle and upper classes are split. The FDR's program is tailored for



Salvadorean small farmers universally support FDR/FMLN.

the broadest, cross-class support. It is explicitly non-socialist, claims that the working class is not able to rule alone, but needs middle and upper class liberals to help. It stands for a pluralistic, mixed economy, on the Nicaraguan model.

Despite its growing strength and the junta's total dependency on U.S. aid, the FDR doesn't expect that U.S. aid to end soon. They are now predicting no military victory for at least two years. Since FDR/FMLN predictions in the past have tended to be overly optimistic, we should take this two years as a minimum. A prolonged guerrilla war is likely, with

slowly increasing international diplomatic support for the FDR.

For now, the U.S. is keeping its bets on the junta's Christian Democratic front man, José Napoleón Duarte, although his base has eroded to almost nothing. Duarte's recent trip to the U.S. was a failure for him. He received only a coldly polite reception, no ringing endorsements and no dinner at the White House. Duarte, who was picked originally by the Carter administration because of his "democratic" appearance and credentials, may be on his way out. The U.S. has gained nothing from their present strategy in El Salvador. Duarte has failed to recreate the "democratic center." Most of his own party has deserted him to go over to the FDR.

Meanwhile, the openly right-wing forces are itching to take over, to dump Duarte and his phony "reforms." With financial backing from the big capitalists and landowners, they are now claiming to be the only force capable of saving the economy. Duarte is still on top, but the U.S. appears to be tilting toward his rightist opponents. They may wait for the elections, planned for next March, in order to remove

Duarte "democratically."

One thing the U.S. definitely does not want is another Vietnam in El Salvador, with its domestic opposition, high body counts and international isolation. To the Reagan administration, the mistake of Vietnam was not going in for a quick victory, in effect, not "nuking Hanoi." This is the attitude they will take toward any stepped-up intervention in El Salvador. If the U.S. goes in in a big way, we can expect it to be fast and "clean," (at least they'll try to make it that way) and it may very well include a rollback of the revolution in Nicaragua as well.

More likely in the short run, is a regionalization of the conflict through joint military operations of the Iron Triangle countries—Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. This has already been tried successfully along the Honduras-El Salvador border with "Operation Sandwich," designed to seal the border, cut off rebel supply routes and terrorize the local population into submission.

Next month, part two of Morgan's talk will discuss Guatemala and Honduras, and will outline a revolutionary, working class perspective for the region.

Mexico Deports Guatemalan Refugees

During the past year, 40,000 Guatemalan peasant refugees have crossed over into the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, fleeing from a bloody civil war at home. Most of them are Indians whose language is Mayan, not Spanish. Many are illiterate. The Mexican government calls them "illegals," and wants them out.

In February of this year, 1,300 Guatemalans were forcefully deported from Chiapas. In May, another 400 were rounded up. In June, a new wave of panic-stricken refugees, estimated at up to 4,000 people, crossed the Usumacinta River into Mexico, fleeing a massacre by Guatemalan troops in their hometown. Forty-six were granted political asylum. The rest were placed on Mexican military trucks, driven to the border, and turned over to Guatemalan authorities. At least 100 are known to have been killed by Guatemalan troops.

This incident provoked a minor scandal in Mexico. The coordinator of the Mexican government's commission for refugees, Gabriel Fraga, resigned in protest along with most of his staff. The UN's

High Commission for Refugees also issued a sharp protest. "These people were prima facie refugees," said a UN spokesperson. "The proof is that when they were sent back, many were murdered."

Fraga's replacement as head of the Mexican refugee commission is Luis Ortiz Monasterio, who denies that the issue has anything to do with Central American politics. "It's a question of numbers," says Ortiz. "These large numbers of refugees in a state like Chiapas could radically affect our stability."

For the Mexican government, its southern frontier area is especially sensitive. It contains the nation's major oil deposits as well as a large, poor, Indian population. Land disputes and labor conflicts are already common in Chiapas, and the government wants no refugee camps where Guatemalan rebel influence could grow.

Mexico's hard line against the refugees has placed it in an embarrassing international position. "If we continue this policy," admits Commissioner Ortiz, "it could be argued that we have no

moral authority to insist on better treatment for our citizens in the United States."

But the deportations go on. Five hundred more people were expelled in October. Shortly afterward, a priest in the Mexican border town of Ciudad Cuauhtemoc reported the discovery of 15 corpses which had floated across the San Gregorio River from Guatemala. All had been mutilated. One's eyes were gouged out.

The strategy of Guatemala's right-wing military regime is to control its rebel guerrilla armies by creating an empty no-man's land along the border. Its method is mass terror. And Mexico, despite its liberal international image, has become a willing partner.

The repercussions of this policy may return to haunt both governments as the struggle grows. One Guatemalan refugee, interviewed in the Mexican daily Uno Más Uno, said: "All of us living along the river bank are peaceful people. . . . We had nothing against the government. But now, yes, I have four little sons. If there were guns I would say to them—go." □



By PAUL BENJAMIN

On November 4, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, Poland's Prime Minister and recently chosen leader of the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), met with Solidarity head Lech Walesa and Archbishop Józef Glemp, head of the Polish Roman Catholic Church, to seek their cooperation in solving the country's political and economic crisis. According to a government press release, the three "exchanged views on ways to overcome the crisis, and the possibility of forming a Front of National Agreement," described as "a permanent platform for dialogue and consultation of the political and social forces on the basis of the constitution."

On the surface, the proposed Front would appear to be a major concession by the government to the union. In August 1980, when the PUWP recognized the workers' right to form independent unions in the Gdańsk accords, the workers, under terms of the agreement, had to accept the "leading role" of the PUWP in Polish society, and agree not to form an opposition party or otherwise challenge the PUWP's monopoly of political power. Now the PUWP is apparently offering to share power with Solidarity through the proposed Front.

But in reality, the so-called "Polish summit" marks a successful step in the Polish state capitalists' long-term campaign to co-opt and defuse the workers' rebellion. As early as October 1980, some members of the PUWP Central Committee were arguing that the party should offer Solidarity "co-responsibility in the exercise of power" if union leaders accepted the overall authority of the party. As we warned then:

"In other words, the ruling class would make a deal with Walesa and other reformist union leaders that would give them official power and status, but only at the price of Walesa and Co. agreeing to discipline the workers in the interests of 'solving Poland's economic problems,' that is, stabilizing Polish state capitalism. If such a deal could be arranged, the state capitalists hope the mass of workers would eventually become demoralized and the new unions could be integrated with the state and the remains of the old unions. The result would be a defusing of the present situation and a return to the status quo." (Torch/La Antorcha, November 15-December 14, 1980.)

But up until now the PUWP has been unable to carry out this co-optive strategy. The main reason for this is that both the party leadership and the moderate forces within Solidarity, grouped around Walesa, were on the defensive in the face of the militant

struggles of the Polish workers.

Although Stanislaw Kania, who took over the government following the Gdańsk accords, was under constant pressure from the Russian ruling class and hardliners within the PUWP to refuse any further concessions to the union, he was incapable of stemming the tide. Meanwhile, Walesa was under similar pressure from within Solidarity to defend and extend the gains the workers had already won. Consequently, union and government leaders were unable to reach an accommodation, despite their mutual desires to do so.

The result was an unstable and explosive dual power situation in which the PUWP held the state apparatus while Solidarity became the real representative of the Polish people.

Today, however, it appears that the PUWP is gaining the initiative against the workers' movement. In particular, Walesa's "guarded optimism" over the



Women workers held three-week sit-in strike at a textile plant in Zyrardów to demand adequate food from the government.

proposed Front, and the union's expressed willingness to "meet the government halfway," indicate that Walesa and his allies in Solidarity are now openly supporting the kind of collaboration with the government that the PUWP has been seeking from the union for the past year.

Polish economy falling apart

One of the main reasons for what may be a decisive shift in the Polish situation is the disastrous shape of the Polish

Gains of Polish Workers Solidarity Moderates Accommodates With Government

Tarnobrzeg province, in southeast Poland, 180,000 workers walked off their jobs to protest inadequate food supplies. And in western Zielona Góra province, another 120,000 workers struck after the dismissal of a local Solidarity official from his job.

Altogether, over 300,000 workers in 36 of Poland's 49 provinces were on strike by October 23. The strike wave led to a one-hour national strike on October 28 by over nine million workers. Following the general strike the Zyrardów and Tarnobrzeg workers returned to their jobs. But as of this writing the Zielona Góra strike is continuing, and union leaders in other parts of the country have issued strike alerts.

In addition to this militancy, the chaotic condition of the economy is also producing another reaction—a level of demoralization and tension among the workers and between the workers and the Polish farmers. For example, arguments and fights are breaking out in front of shops as workers compete for places in line. Children are even stealing shoes and winter clothes from each other at school. At the same time, conflicts over the food shortage are emerging between Solidarity and the farmers' organization, Rural Solidarity. While Solidarity leaders are demanding a price freeze on essential food items, the farmers are insisting that price increases are necessary in order to give them an incentive to produce more food.

It is this demoralization and tension that the PUWP is trying to capitalize on in the present situation. In particular, it is trying to step forward as the only force that can get the economy going again and hold Polish society together. And for several months it has been positioning itself to do so in various ways.

First of all, on October 18 the PUWP Central Committee dismissed Kania as leader of the party and replaced him with General Jaruzelski. Jaruzelski is a more credible candidate than Kania for the role of Polish national savior. Most important, he comes out of the army, which still has popular support in Poland, rather than from the discredited and corrupt party apparatus.

Second, Jaruzelski has made a show of opening the government to non-party politicians. The clearest example of this policy was his offer to join with the union and the church in the proposed National Front of Agreement. Jaruzelski also appointed a leader of the Democratic Party, which nominally shares political power with the PUWP, as deputy prime minister.

Above all, the PUWP is strengthening the influence of the army in the

Polish government as a whole.

During the strike deployed about troops in small detachments in the country. At first, he announced that the troops were to quell "local disorders" and enforce law and order. However, he assured that the soldiers would be used only for corrupt or inefficient operations and speed up distribution of goods.

Such assurances minimize military intervention in society and lay the basis for the use of force against Solidarity becomes necessary.

At the same time, he issued one general assuring the PUWP's ruling Polish leadership to other posts in his government both strengthens Jaruzelski's government agenda on the Politburo and lowers the public's opinion of the PUWP apparatus that of the more powerful to gain support for

Walesa condemns 'unjustified strike'

But these attempts to restore the Polish apparatus and new credibility would be a major factor. That Walesa and his allies in Solidarity are, for the most part, collaborating with the government against the workers' movement.

At a meeting of the PUWP Central Committee on October 18, Walesa insisted that the government's offer to join with the workers' movement is "unjustified." He also called for a new body to settle the PUWP and the Solidarity movement, which was announced later.

Walesa's pro-government stance revealed most clearly at the height of the October strike when he pushed a resolution that was "nominally harmful" to the PUWP. He said, "I shall see to it that those who embarked upon

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During the strike wave, Jaruzelski deployed about 2,000 professional troops in small detachments around the country. At first, the government announced that the troops would be used to quell "local disturbances" and enforce law and order. Later statements, however, assured the workers that the soldiers would be used only to check corrupt or inefficient managers, and to speed up distribution of food and other goods.

Such assurances are meant to legitimize military intervention in Polish society and lay the basis for the eventual use of force against the workers if that becomes necessary.

At the same time, Jaruzelski appointed one general as a member of the PUWP's ruling Politburo, and 20 others to other posts in his administration. This both strengthens Jaruzelski's hold over the government against his opponents on the Politburo and Central Committee and lowers the public profile of the discredited PUWP apparatus and increases that of the more popular army in order to gain support for his government.

Walesa condemns 'unjustified strikes'

But these attempts at reorganizing the Polish apparatus and giving the PUWP new credibility would hardly be sufficient to allow the PUWP to regain the initiative—if it were not for a key additional factor. That is the fact that Walesa and his allies in the leadership of Solidarity are, for the first time, openly collaborating with the government against the workers.

At a meeting of the union's National Committee on October 23, for example, Walesa insisted that the PUWP's control over the government was "untouchable." He also called for the creation of a new body to settle conflicts between the PUWP and the union, a proposal remarkably similar to the government's offer of a Front of National Agreement, which was announced two weeks later.

Walesa's pro-government stance was revealed most clearly in his response to the October strike wave. On October 20, at the height of the workers' upsurge, Walesa pushed a resolution through Solidarity's National Committee agreeing with the PUWP that strikes were "economically harmful" and pledging: "We shall see to it that unjustified protests, or those embarked upon before other

means of reaching an agreement have been exhausted, are eliminated."

In other words, Walesa forced the Solidarity leadership to openly declare its intention of disciplining the workers for the ruling class.

Eight days later, the union leadership called a one-hour token general strike for the express purpose of preventing an "explosion" of local strikes. During the strike itself Walesa carried out a whirlwind tour of factories in Warsaw, telling all the workers he talked to that: "This must be the last strike of its kind."

Finally, as soon as the strike was over, he insisted that Solidarity must take "disciplined action" against "unjustified strikes," even threatening to resign if the National Committee refused to impose a strike ban through January. In short, Walesa's first concern in the

aftermath of the strike was to carry out his promise to the PUWP that the union would police the workers.

To be sure, Walesa has also called for "activist strikes," in which workers would continue to produce but the union would decide how and where to distribute food and other goods. While this proposal sounds very radical, it is really meant to keep workers on the job.

In fact, Walesa is supporting Jaruzelski's campaign to give the army, not the union, responsibility for distributing goods in Poland. He even told the Zyrardów strikers: "We should make order at the bottom through the army."

Fortunately, Walesa's increasingly open collaboration with the PUWP is arousing opposition within Solidarity's National Committee. Thus Walesa was actually ordered to report back to the committee as soon as the "summit" meeting with Jaruzelski was over. Some delegates even declared they did not trust him to negotiate with the PUWP leaders alone.

The committee also rejected Walesa's demand for a strike ban. Jan Rulewski, a committee delegate and leader of Solidarity's Bydgoszcz branch, accused him of selling out the workers, saying: "You want to meet Jaruzelski with a gift of a pacified strike situation." Instead of the proposed strike ban, the committee set up a committee to decide who can call a

strike and under what circumstances.

But the opposition to Walesa within Solidarity is itself deeply divided. This opposition includes several political factions that all oppose the PUWP regime, but do so for very different reasons. As the Polish crisis deepens, these groups are coming out into the open and fighting for leadership within the union.

Some of these factions represent conservative, pro-Western nationalist forces that are trying to use the workers' movement to further their own political concerns.

The most important of these is the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), which reportedly had 100 sympathizers among the 829 delegates at the union's recent congress. This group is trying to capitalize on Polish hatred of Russian domination to push for a pro-Western, dictatorial regime to replace the PUWP. In Katowice, local union leaders who support the KPN handed out pictures of Marshal Józef Pilsudski, the anti-Semitic military dictator who ruled Poland from 1926 to 1935.



Jaruzelski, who is now prime minister, defense minister, and first secretary of the PUWP, has concentrated unprecedented political power in his own hands.

A more moderate conservative group, the Young Poland Movement, is also active in Solidarity. It draws its support mainly from Catholic intellectuals, and hopes eventually to set up a Christian Democratic Party with close links to the Catholic Church, along the lines of the Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe and Latin America.

However, there is also a left-wing opposition in Solidarity, apparently led by Rulewski, that is opposing Walesa's efforts to collaborate with the PUWP. Rulewski defends militant strikes against the government as the only means available to the workers to enforce their demands. He also insists that the workers need to fight for "a completely new Polish state." At the October 23 National Committee meeting, he said: "We'll organize elections ourselves and create a second parliament."

Despite this laudable effort to defend the real interests of the workers, we are not sure, however, that the left opposition in Poland has any clear strategy for how the workers can actually move forward in the current situation. For instance, Rulewski dismisses Walesa's warning that continued strikes will lead to Russian intervention in Poland as an empty threat aimed at reining in militant workers. But the possibility that the Russian government will invade Poland if the PUWP is unable to co-opt or crush

the workers' rebellion is very real. Consequently, militancy alone will not enable the workers to defend the gains they have won so far, let alone overthrow the Polish state capitalists altogether. Instead, the left opposition needs to go beyond militant protests and prepare for a revolutionary struggle against the PUWP and its Russian ally.

The immediate task facing the left opposition is to organize its forces into a disciplined faction that can fight for leadership within Solidarity. Their fight against Walesa will not be an easy one, as many workers still have illusions in him. But by exposing Walesa's attempt to shackle union militants, and by showing that his reformist policies are actually reinforcing the PUWP's rule over Poland, the left can begin breaking down these illusions.

At the same time, the left must launch a firm political struggle against the conservative nationalist forces inside Solidarity. It is only natural that some Polish workers, who have endured 35 years of state-capitalist tyranny masquerading as socialism, and who are fiercely opposed to Russian domination of their country, are looking to the West and pro-Western groups in Poland as an alternative.

But this tendency must be ruthlessly combated. Specifically, the left must warn that a victory for the KPN would not mean freedom for the Polish workers, but only a new oppression, this time subjugation to Western-style capitalism and Western, rather than Russian, imperialism.

Moreover, the left needs to warn Polish workers that they should not look to the U.S. or its allies for help against the PUWP or the Russian ruling class



Jan Rulewski, a leader of the left opposition in Solidarity.

On October 21, at the height of the October strike wave, the *Washington Post* complained that Solidarity had no "self-discipline," and saluted the Polish government for "acting out of an evident devotion to some of the highest needs of the Polish nation." The U.S. and Western ruling classes are in fact counting on the PUWP to stabilize Polish society, as the only means of salvaging the enormous loans and investments Western banks and corporations have made to Poland.

If the PUWP or the Russian army attempts to suppress the workers, these governments will weep crocodile tears over the plight of the workers, but will
(Continued on page 14)

Crisis of Jamaican Capitalism Deepens

RML Holds Successful Congress

On October 16, 17 and 18, the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica, West Indies, held its Second Congress. In two and a half days of intense discussion and debate, comrades and supporters of the RML, along with delegates from the Revolutionary Socialist League, discussed the present situation in Jamaica and the tasks facing the RML.

One of the highlights of the Congress was the approval of a motion of fusion between the RML and the RSL. Along with a similar vote at the RSL's Fifth National Convention, held in June of this year, the vote at the RML Congress completes the unification of the two organizations into one democratic centralist organization.

Anti-JLP mood grows as attacks increase

The RML Congress was held in two parts. One was a series of sessions involving only members and candidate members of the RML plus the members of the RSL delegation. The first session of this closed portion of the Congress heard and discussed a report from one of the RSL comrades about the pre-



Striking workers picket the Housecraft Manufacturing Company in Jamaica. Workers from Housecraft attended the recent RML Congress.

sent situation in the United States and the struggle of working and oppressed people against the escalating capitalist attack.

The second part of the closed portion of the Congress was devoted to a report and discussion on the political situation in Jamaica and the tasks of the Revolutionary Marxist League. Comrade Jon Thomas, a member of the RML Executive Committee (EC), explained the nature of the extreme anti-working class program presently being carried out by the reac-

tionary Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), which took office a year ago. Comrade Thomas pointed out that the JLP is following a two-pronged strategy to try to restart the stalled Jamaican economy. On the one hand, the JLP is deregulating the economy, selling off local companies to U.S. capitalists and permitting a flood of cheap U.S. imports into the country. It is also trying desperately to attract foreign, particularly U.S., capital into the country by offering tax holidays, cheap factory space and facilities for repatriation of profits. On the other hand, the government is brutally attacking the living standards of the Jamaican workers through a relaxation of price controls, wage restrictions and massive rent increases, while increasing the exploitation at the workplaces through widespread layoffs and attacks on the rights and gains won by workers in past struggles.

In particular, the JLP is trying to create a strong anti-union, anti-working class and anti-radical atmosphere in order to cow the workers and other oppressed people into submission. To this end, the JLP Minister of Internal Security has publicly denounced the Workers Party of Jamaica (WPJ), the local Stalinist organization, and the RML as "terrorists" and "economic saboteurs."

Despite this strategy, Thomas noted, the JLP has been incapable of solving the crisis of Jamaican capitalism as was the People's National Party (PNP) in its term in office. As unemployment and inflation both increase and the "deliverance" promised by the JLP has not come, the popularity of the JLP has declined while that of the PNP has increased. At the same time, the number of working people who are looking for a

real alternative to both the JLP and PNP is growing.

The tasks of the RML were discussed in light of these developments. As the RML Tasks and Perspectives document outlined: "Our outlook must be one of continued consolidation, of slow and steady building. The central task of the League at this time is still to maintain itself, extending its influence where possible and using every opening to recruit the ones and twos as members, sympathizers and supporters." This position was adopted unanimously by the delegates at the Congress.

In addition to the Tasks and Perspectives discussion, the Congress also heard reports from the Organizing Committee and the RML Women's Committee by EC member Patsy Christie. Of particular interest was a discussion of the noticeable upsurge of militancy and struggle among working class women in Jamaica against discrimination, sexual harassment on the job and sexism in general.

Following this, the delegates discussed a resolution and report by Comrade Bill Orier on the history of the struggle to build an international working class party, focusing on Leon Trotsky's efforts to organize the Fourth International. The delegates discussed a number of the lessons, theoretical and practical, of that struggle that would help the RML and RSL to construct a new international party today.

Play highlights Housecraft strike

On Sunday evening, the Congress's public session was held and was attended by 60 members and supporters of the RML. After opening remarks

by Comrade Christie, solidarity messages from RML supporters, the striking Housecraft workers, the Standing Strike Support Committee and the RSL were read and members and supporters of the RML read revolutionary poetry they had composed. Comrade Thomas then gave a clear and incisive talk about the economic and political situation in Jamaica and outlined the decisions of the closed sessions of the Congress concerning the tasks of the League.

After some questions and discussion came another of the highlights of the Congress. This was a skit (actually, a play) by members and supporters of the RML about the struggle of the workers at Housecraft Manufacturing Company. The Housecraft workers had been on strike for eight months over the wretched conditions in the Housecraft factory and for the right to have the union of their choice.

The skit graphically showed how Housecraft owner and manager Lorraine Fung abused the workers, forced them to work many hours of overtime, actually sleep overnight on cardboard in the factory, set them against each other, and cheated them out of their wages. It revealed how the workers came to see what was being done to them and struck, defending their picket line from the police and learning how the union bureaucrats and bourgeois state supports the capitalists against the workers.

Overall, the RML Congress was a success, showing the RML to be ready to do the hard work necessary to build a disciplined revolutionary organization at a time of a severe capitalist offensive against the Jamaican workers. □

Poland . . .

(Continued from page 13)

not lift a finger to help them.

Finally, the left has to take concrete steps to prepare for an armed defense of the Polish revolution. It must build an underground organization that can secure weapons, build revolutionary networks inside the Polish army, and send agents across the Polish border to mobilize support for the Polish people among workers in other Eastern European countries oppressed by Russian imperialism and their own state-capitalist rulers. At the same time, it must call on soldiers in the Polish army and the Russian troops already stationed in Poland to refuse orders to fire on the workers if and when they are given.

The most urgent problem facing the left is that it is running out of time. The Polish people are already frustrated and exhausted after nearly a year and a half of struggle. If they see no solution to their problems, they may explode in spontaneous strikes, forcing an

ill-prepared revolt that can be put down by the PUWP or the Russian army. It is also possible that many workers may eventually give up the struggle and accept the discipline that Walesa and the PUWP are seeking to impose because they see no other way out.

However, it is not too late for the left to lead a successful revolution in Poland. It will take time for the PUWP and Walesa to actually reach an accommodation, given the opposition to a deal that exists both within the PUWP and the union. This delay will give the left time to mobilize workers against Walesa's efforts to betray them. It's also quite possible that the negotiations between Walesa and Jaruzelski will break down, just as earlier attempts to stabilize Polish state capitalism have failed. Such a breakdown can only intensify the political struggle within the union, and may increase the left's chances to build a revolutionary faction that can lead the workers to victory against the Polish ruling class. □

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EDITORIAL

Of Brinks hold-ups and government repression

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Comrade Christie, solidarity messages from RML supporters, the striking Housecraft workers, the Standing Strike Support Committee and the RML were read and members of supporters of the RML read revolutionary poetry they had composed. Comrade Thomas gave a clear and incisive talk about the economic and political situation in Jamaica and outlined the decisions of the recent sessions of the Congress concerning the tasks of the League.

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The skit graphically showed how Housecraft owner and manager Lorraine Fung abused the workers, forced them to work many hours of overtime, usually sleep overnight on the board in the factory, set them against each other, and treated them out of their wages. It revealed how the workers came to see what was being done to them and struck, defending their picket line from police and learning how the union bureaucrats and bourgeois state supports the capitalists against the workers.

Overall, the RML Congress was a success, showing the RML to be ready to do the hard work necessary to build a disciplined revolutionary organization at a time of a severe capitalist offensive against the Jamaican workers. □

Early news reports of a hold-up of a Brinks armored truck in Rockland County, NY, on October 20, in which one Brinks guard was shot dead and two others wounded, sounded at first like dozens of other stories that fill the news these days.

But this one was different: At one of the police roadblocks set up around the county, a van was stopped by the cops, and when they attempted to open its back doors, gunmen jumped out shooting. In the melee that followed, two Nyack town cops were shot and killed, and four occupants of the van and two accompanying cars were captured.

As is by now well-known, among those arrested were several people who had been self-declared members of the Weather Underground, a terrorist faction that emerged out of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the late '60s. These were Katherine Boudin, Judith Clark and David Gilbert. Also arrested was Samuel Brown, who had a long police record but no known political identification.

Hold-up sets off FBI witch-hunt

In the three weeks since the hold-up and shootout, the government—from the local district attorney to the FBI—and the media have seized on the incident to carry out and justify an attack on left-wing and Black nationalist organizations. By the 24th of October, the director of the Joint Terrorist Task Force of the FBI admitted that, in the words of the *New York Times*, "the investigation had grown into a major inquiry of radical groups."

Indeed both the police and the FBI—who are working in a spirit of "unusual cooperation," again according to the *Times*—had already started conjuring up lurid images of networks of terror conspiracies that included the Weather Underground, the Black Liberation Army, the FALN, the May 19th Communist Organization—and even "foreign governments," specifically, Cuba.

With this as a cover, they have raided apartments, houses and workplaces around the NY metropolitan area and as far away as Mississippi, supposedly hot on the trail of "terrorists." One death of an alleged suspect, severe beatings, false arrests and unwarranted searches have followed in their wake.

In fact, the Rockland County events came at a perfect time for the government. In the early

1970s, as the impending defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam threw the U.S. ruling class into disarray, a number of scandals—Watergate, the Pentagon Papers, etc.—exposed govern-



Police killed Samuel Smith, an alleged suspect in the Nyack robbery, on October 23. Police claim he was about to open fire on them. But witnesses say he was shot while climbing a fence to escape the police.

ment corruption and, more importantly, institutionalized government spying, harassment and various criminal activities the ruling class had carried out under its democratic veneer. CIA assassinations and attempted assassinations of foreign leaders were exposed. Lists of "public enemies" were uncovered. FBI "black-bag" jobs, infiltration of organizations, dossiers on literally tens of thousands of individuals—all the dirt the government had tried to keep buried was brought out into the open. As a result, some limitations were forced on the various branches of the state apparatus—although government dirty tricks hardly stopped.

In recent years, however, large sections of the ruling class have sought to remove the fetters on the agents of the state, an effort that was given a huge boost with the election of Ronald Reagan last year. Since then, FBI agents convicted of break-ins and burglaries have been pardoned; new, looser regulations on what the CIA and FBI can and can't do have been issued; and there is currently an attempt underway to gut the Freedom of Information Act.

Now the government and the ruling class are using the Rockland County hold-up and shootout as further justification for enacting new, or previously hidden, police state measures. Already, one convicted, and subsequently pardoned, FBI agent has chortled that the Rockland County incident

"proves" he was right in what he did all along.

As a result, basic civil liberties are threatened for all people, but most especially for anyone who stands up to or organizes against the system.

In addition to trying to legitimize its attacks on civil liberties, the government has had a second purpose in creating such tremendous hype over the events in Rockland County. By screaming about left-wing terrorist conspiracies, the government is trying to deflect attention from its own terrorist practices—past, present and future. Hopefully we need only note in this connection that U.S. imperialism has toppled governments, killed foreign leaders, stolen land and natural resources, annexed foreign territories, and generally oppressed people all over the world and in the U.S. itself.

Today, the U.S. ruling class is carrying out an economic and political program that relegates millions of people—workers, the elderly, Black people, Latinos, children, women, gays—to the garbage can and worse. It is a program of terror. And it is building up its nuclear arsenal and preparing for a possible nuclear war—the ultimate terror. It is both hypocritical and a coverup for this same ruling class to now be issuing dire warnings about terrorist conspiracies by what are, at most, tiny organizations.

Finally, the government is using the whole affair to put all socialist and left-wing political tendencies on the defensive, on trial as it were. They have even spelled this out; when describing the links between all the organizations named as part of the "terrorist conspiracy," the connection they named was not terrorism, but a desire to see "the creation of a socialist

state" and the "end to the United States Government as we know it." Such definitions include almost everyone to the left of the Democratic Party.

In the current situation it is important for all militants, leftists and revolutionaries to denounce the government's attacks on progressive and radical organizations, and to organize against the even more sweeping assault on civil liberties that is to come. Moreover, insofar as the government will be putting the Weatherpeople and the others arrested on trial not because of their actions but because of their avowed politics—that is, insofar as all left-wing, anti-imperialist politics will be put on trial—we must defend them against the state.

Weatherpeople turned backs on working class

At the same time, however, we must say that we feel very little affinity and a lot of disgust with the politics and alleged actions of the Weather Underground and whatever other organizations may have been involved.

The Weatherman faction, later the Weather Underground, was formed in SDS at a time when many activists were becoming increasingly militant and anti-capitalist, and were debating the best strategy for getting rid of U.S. imperialism. It was at this time that some large numbers of activists began looking toward a more Marxist perspective, that is, a strategy of organizing the working class to fight against the system. In contrast, the Weatherpeople, most from well-to-do backgrounds, explicitly rejected the potentially revolutionary role of the U.S. working class, and

fought instead to substitute the individual terrorist action of a supposedly "enlightened" elite for the mass action of the workers and oppressed people.

Despite the utter bankruptcy of this approach, the Weatherman-type terrorism of the late '60s and early '70s at least had an explicit political significance. Bombings and other acts of terror were usually accompanied by manifestos denouncing U.S. imperialism, and stating solidarity with the struggling people of Vietnam, etc.

Today, however, the Weatherpeople's activity appears to be different. The manifestos are gone and the targets are totally innocent people. We are not sure what remains politically. Was the attempted hold-up in any way an attempt at a political act? Was it designed to finance other supposedly political acts? Or was it simply the act of a group or individuals whose lack of coherent political perspectives enabled them to carry out indiscriminate murder? We don't know the answer to these questions.

A boon for the government

What we do know is that the hold-up and shootout have proved to be a bonanza for the ruling class and a disaster for the left. The government was handed, as if on a silver platter, precisely the excuse it needed, at a time it needed it, to go after the left and start large-scale government spying and harassment. Three innocent people, one Black, who were hardly symbols of U.S. capitalism, are dead, and the government is in a position to make it look like the left, or at least sections of it, are the ones who hold human life in disregard. □

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FPA...

(Continued from page 5)

crush the growing militancy of the Black working people and progressive left organizations: They want control of their lives.

The attack against the Solidarity union and Polish workers' struggle by the Polish government and the Russian ruling class is an attack on the workers having control and say-so at their workplaces and over the means of production. The workers are fighting for control of their lives.

Cuban gays and lesbians were so repressed they were forced to flee into the even more repressive U.S. refugee

camp. They are fighting for control of their lives.

In the so-called socialist countries, Russia, China, and the like, the state owns the means of production and the average person has no control over those means of production. People have no control over the schools, hospitals or workplaces. That's why we say they are state-capitalist. The workers in these countries are fighting for control of their lives.

Here at home we must fight against racism, sexism, union-busting and repression—we must fight for control of our lives. We must connect the struggles of our brothers and sisters all over the world to really see and understand that an injury to one is an injury to all.

Our money—our hard-earned money,

the sweat, toil and misery of workers all over the world—is being used for a mass military buildup that will only lead to total destruction. We, the workers of the world, should have the say-so to where the products of our labor go—to feeding our children, giving them a decent education that tells the truth, to decent health care facilities and housing for everyone. The ruling class of the world won't hand this over to us and what little reforms it gives it takes away.

Only a strong working class movement, developing into a working class party and leadership can show the way for people all over the world to liberate ourselves and control our own lives—through socialist revolution.

The Revolutionary Socialist League is a multi-national organization fighting to

build a revolutionary party. Along with our sister organization, the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica, we are active in a wide range of day-to-day struggles: the fight against the Nazis and the Klan and all racist attacks, union struggles, community struggles, the fight for lesbian, gay and women's liberation, the movement against nuclear power, national liberation struggles, the fight of prisoners for rights and freedom and many other struggles. In these battles for basic needs and rights, we fight to win the greatest gains possible. At the same time, we will always tell the truth: that freedom and liberation, a better world, will only come when worldwide capitalism is destroyed and replaced with real workers' rule—socialism. □

All Peoples Congress

(Continued from page 7)

ing to believe that the entire ruling class would be overturned through one demonstration.

This is further confirmed by the kinds of people WWP brought into the leadership of the APC. While most of the left was excluded from any meaningful role, pro-Democratic Party politicians such as Bella Abzug, Paul O'Dwyer and Ramsey Clark were brought onto the APC's National Advisory Board. John Conyers (D-Mich.) was a prominent speaker at the APC. WWP found time to give Conyers a platform and thereby build his stature within the movement (which he will use to advocate support for Democratic Party candidates), while there was supposedly "no time" for 99 percent of rank and file participants to speak.

Time and again, militant social movements in this country have been co-opted into the Democratic Party. In the coming period, we will once again see the Democrats try to rebuild their strength and influence by posing as "the people's champion." One of our key tasks must be to warn of this danger. We must hammer away at the fact that the Democrats and Republicans are the twin parties of capital and that the Democratic

Party in particular is the gravedigger of progressive social movements. The failure to do this, in fact the attempt to suggest otherwise, was a crucial weakness of the APC.

WWP fairy tales

Finally, we would like to comment on WWP's own coverage of the APC. In its newspaper, *Workers World*, the WWP claims that 3,000 people attended the APC. Our careful count showed that there were never more than 1,000 people in the conference hall and, allowing for the possibility that as many as several hundred people may have been elsewhere, no more than 1,500 in attendance altogether. Other published estimates have put the number variously between 1,000 and 2,000. Having falsely projected the APC as an "historic event" that would be attended by "many, many thousands of people," WWP seems to have settled on 3,000 as the minimally necessary exaggeration.

But numbers are the least of it. Reading WWP's press, one discovers that there was nothing but enthusiasm and joy at the

APC. Despite the fact that every person who was there knows that discontent with the conference became so great that WWP was forced to abruptly adjourn it midway through its final session, not a word of this appears in WWP's account.

Nor is there a word of mention of WWP's defense of an openly anti-gay speaker who was shouted down by hundreds of conference participants. (WWP leader Larry Holmes pleaded for this speaker's "right to free speech"—rather hollow when no one in the audience was getting a chance to speak at all.)

As a crowning touch, *Workers World* claims that the only problem with the APC was the presence of "disrupters," specifically referring to "people professing to be leftists... from the so-called Revolutionary Socialist League and Revolutionary Communist Party." Leaving aside the insidious implication that the members of these groups are something other than leftists, this charge is also dishonest.

The dozen or so supporters of the RSL who attended the congress were hardly responsible for the widespread dissatisfaction over how the congress was run. The RSL certainly did join in the chants of "Open the mike" at the Sunday session. So did large numbers of other people. Neither the RSL nor the RCP organized this outcry and it would have taken place, with

or without us.

We believe that the experience of the All Peoples Congress is a lesson in how not to build a movement. We need a movement that is both democratic and politically conscious, a movement that understands who its friends and enemies are, what it is fighting for and what it is fighting against.

We need a movement that understands, and can explain to others, that the Reagan program is in fact the program of the U.S. capitalist class at a time of deepening worldwide economic crisis.

We need a movement that un-

derstands that so long as the capitalists remain in power, these attacks on working and oppressed people will grow more harsh.

And our movement needs to understand that this capitalist class—the most powerful and ruthless in the world—will not easily be "overturned."

But, no matter how long the struggle for a better world, for a just and democratic society, one thing is certain: We will never build a strong movement, much less a socialist world, through hype, manipulation and dishonesty. This is surely the road to defeat. □

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