

TORCH

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Irish Freedom Struggle Intensifies



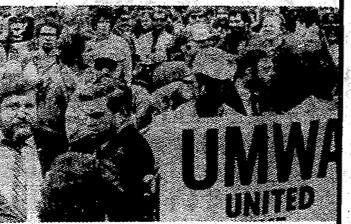
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Thousands March Against U.S. Intervention in El Salvador



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Miners Stand Firm in Contract Battle



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ESPAÑOL

'Alternative Budget' a Sham

Democrats Support Reagan Attacks

By PAUL BENJAMIN

In recent months, the *Torch/La AnTORCHA* has run extensive coverage of Ronald Reagan's program, its connection to the economic crisis and the capitalist offensive, and what it will all

Why the Liberals Are a Threat to Our Movement

See page 12

mean for poor and working people. In maintaining this focus, we do not by any means want to suggest that the Democratic Party is any less the enemy of the working class than are the Republicans. In fact, we are concerned that since the Democrats no longer have

responsibility for running the government, they will have an opportunity to blame everything on the Republicans and use this to rebuild their base in the working class.

The "battle of the budget" that recently took place in Congress represented the Democrats' first attempt to regroup their forces and recover some of the political ground they lost in last year's election. On April 3, the Democrats unveiled their economic program through an "alternative budget" offered by Oklahoma Representative James Jones, who is chairman of the House Budget Committee. Jones and other Democratic leaders contend that while their budget accepts the "national consensus" for spending cuts, it makes them "a little easier to take, a little more fair and equitable."

But Democratic claims that their budget in any way protects poor and

(Continued on page 12)



Democrat Thomas "Tip" O'Neill (top right) applauds during President Reagan's speech to Congress on April 28 urging passage of budget cuts.

Atlanta terror continues; Four more bodies found

By WILLIAM FALK

May 13—The bodies of four more murdered Black youths have been discovered in Atlanta over the past four weeks, bringing to 27 the number of young victims of racist murder in the past 22 months. Joseph Bell, 16, missing since March 3, was found dead on April 20; Michael McIntosh, 23, last seen alive in mid-March, was found dead on April 20; Jimmy Ray Payne, 21, missing since April 22, was found dead on April 27; and William Barrett, 17, was found May 12, only a few hours after he was reported missing. One child, Darron Glass, 10, who disappeared in September, is still missing.

Four of the last five people to disappear and be killed in Atlanta were

slightly built young men. This has led to speculation that the close supervision of Atlanta children has simply caused the killer or killers to turn to snatching slightly older victims.

After nearly two years of downplaying the youth murders in order to preserve Atlanta's carefully cultivated image of "the city too busy to hate," the mayor and the police have been forced to change their tune. In fact, they are now so desperate to solve these murders that when Roy Innis, the leader of one faction of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), came to Atlanta and claimed to know the identity of the killer, city officials treated him seriously and politely. They shelved their previous harsh rhetoric about not needing outside "publicity seekers" and

instructed the police to follow up his lead. (After several days, the police announced that the lead had proved to be a dead end.)

The treatment of Innis was in marked contrast to how the Atlanta Black establishment has treated the mothers of the victims. In order to enforce their claim to speak for all of Atlanta, city officials and the leaders of the many Black foundations and social organizations in the city have made a concerted attempt to discredit the Mothers' Committee to Stop Children's Murders.

The Mothers' Committee was originally responsible for forcing the police to establish a child murder task force in July 1980 and has been the most consistent critic of the city's handling of

(Continued on page 4)

**our
readers
write...**

Send letters to:

TORCH, PO Box 1288
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Parton leadership rejects motions on Atlanta, miners

Dear Torch,

A brief account of our most recent meeting of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1014 (U.S. Steel Gary Works) should serve as a graphic example of how local President Jack Parton, slated against incumbent Jim Balanoff in the upcoming election

for USWA District 31 director, "runs the local like a two-bit tyrant," as the last *Torch/La Antorcha* reported. The account should also expose Parton's liberal pose during the campaign for the lie that it is.

Supporters of the RSL introduced two motions to the 1014 Executive Board for recommendation to the membership.

THE FIRST motion concerned Atlanta. The motion noted the need for Black and white unity in the face of increasing racist terror and further attacks on working people and the poor. It called for the local to make and distribute ribbons at the plant gates, and to invite a mother from Atlanta to speak to the membership.

The second motion called for solidarity and support to the coal miners' strike, by contributing money to the strike fund, sending buses of volunteer steelworkers to the miners' picket lines (many coke plant workers are on layoff, supposedly because of the coal strike), and by recommending that the International call on USWA members to refuse to handle non-union coal for the duration of the strike.

Jack Parton was not at the meeting, so the vice-president, Bobby Demby, chaired. The entire local Executive Board openly supports Parton's politics, and it is fair to say that there are no independent thinkers among its members.

First off, the Executive Board chose not to inform the membership of our motions, so that we had to raise them from the

floor. Concerning Atlanta, the Executive Board, purely for publicity, hoping to ward off substantiated charges of Parton's racism, had voted at the last meeting to send \$1,000 to the investigative task force (not the families), and had ribbons available at the union hall (although the vast majority of the membership was never informed of this). Using these for-the-record measures as an excuse, they overruled our motion and called it out of order. The same was done with the coal strike motion, where the board members claimed that the miners' union must make contact before the local considers any show of support. We insisted that the motions be put before the membership for a vote, with Demby again ruling us out of order. When another member asked who ran the local, the membership or the Executive Board, Demby replied, "The Executive Board."

THE motions made clear to all present where we stood, and where Parton and the Executive Board stood. For the first time, other local members, instead of sitting back and watching, heckled the Executive Board's outrageous rulings. Also, other Balanoff supporters in the local distributed a leaflet about the coal miners' strike, urging people to attend the union meeting and support the motion. Such united efforts by rank and file militants is the only way forward for defeating Parton and building a fighting union.

For the revolution,
Sally Duran

On Mayor Byrne's move into Chicago housing project

Dear Torch:

THE mayor of Chicago, Jane Byrne, recently moved into one of this city's low-income housing projects, called Cabrini-Green. Byrne moved in after there had been a series of so-called gang-related shootings and killings. She claimed that she was moving in in order to obtain a first-hand view of what causes such violence in this area. Byrne said that she would rid the projects of what she called "undesirables" and at one point stated that up to 800 families would be evicted. Twenty-two families were immediately evicted, 19 of whom were evicted for non-payment of rent, not because they had anything to do with the violence going on in the projects.

One important thing about Cabrini-Green is where it is located. Cabrini-Green is located about 10 blocks from North Michigan Avenue, which is called the "Gold Coast" because it is such a rich area. The Gold Coast has such famous stores as Saks Fifth Avenue, I. Magnin and Lord and Taylor. It is also the area where the mayor's plush apartment is located.

For years the city has been considering taking away the land on which Cabrini-Green is

located and turning the low-income projects into condominiums in order to get rich whites who now live in suburbs to move back into the city.

When Byrne decided to move into the projects she immediately appointed a former Green Beret commander as head of Cabrini-Green security. On the day she moved in, she was accompanied by a small army of police and personal bodyguards. The police constantly intimidated the project's residents. They have stopped and searched people entering the building for no reason at all. They have also gone into apartments illegally, supposedly to search for what they call illegal weapons. Yet the police have done nothing to protect the people living there. The police have stated that several handguns and automatic weapons have been confiscated from Cabrini residents.

MY major concern is who will the weapons be used to kill. As in Atlanta, the state seems to fear that when Blacks are being attacked, the first thing to do is to disarm them, the victims, not the attackers. Although this country is rapidly moving more and more to the right and Klan and Nazi activities are on the

upsurge, the country does not find it important to break up the Klan paramilitary camps. This country is not disarming the Nazis and Klan, who openly preach hate and violence against Blacks, Jews and Latin Americans. When the cops, Klan and Nazis go out killing people, they walk away with a slap on the wrist. Yet when the families of the murdered children in Atlanta armed themselves, the cops came down on them hard. When Cabrini-Green residents arm themselves, they are thrown in jail.

I FEEL that it is essential for working class people to take a close look at what is going on in this country. It is important for working class people to know that they are the constant victims of racist attacks, cutbacks and oppression in all forms. The only way to fight this oppression is to fight for socialist revolution which means fighting for the freedom of all working class people. Every time the state says get back—we must say fight back! When the cops, courts, Klan, Nazis and right wing say get back, we must say fight back and be prepared to do just that.

Yours in struggle,
Gail Thorne

From what wretchedness have my comrades arisen?

Look by the lake
where fires flutter
between the poisonous writhings
of ugly-colored smoke
where many laborers made weary by
arbitrary bosses,
one-up-man-ship and prejudice,
risk their skins but never get ahead.
From what wretchedness
have my comrades arisen?
Look through the smoke!

Look at our scars,
at faces pulled tighter
against the knowledge
that more battles must be fought!
Those scars shine with the truth that is
like water in strong wind.

a slippery violence
that the bosses best not trifle with.
From their wretchedness
my comrades are rising,
united to win!

More than a wage,
we're owed the power
to give every slave a permanent escape
from hunger, ignorance and rent:
that's why you'll find us fighting,
and when wounded, regrouping,
rearming, recruiting, returning to fight again.
Against their misery my comrades are rising,
victims no more!

—Doug Shea
Member, Local 1014, USWA

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By CASS

Bobby Sands, the Provisional Republican Army May 5 after a strike, a martyr against British rule. Three other IRA war are still fastidiously taking Sands' place.

The hunger strike demanding that the torturers recognize the prisoners and, more importantly, recognize the IRA as a party in the fight to expel the northern six counties from the land.

For centuries held as a colony in 1921, after a dete-

On May 12, after the Provisional Army strike against British rule, "something of a fiasco" on May 13, and someone from northern Ireland was imprisoned in the north.

Soon after Hugh Downs' British troops were in Belfast. The members of the H-Block to take it to west services at St. Agnes. Instead, they were a village in County Down with full IRA militancy. The IRA announced soon begin a hunger

struggle led by the country was partitioned into the southern 26 counties and the northern 6 counties. The IRA refused either the division or the legitimacy of the British government that the British install in the south. The IRA has carried out armed attacks against governments. This has intensified since the 1970s. The IRA has direct British rule in the north, which has peaked in recent months.

Sands a soldier national liberator

Bobby Sands, 27 years old at the time of his death, was serving a 14-year term for his part in the hunger strike that would get the British out of the state—possession of a loaded firearm. But Sands was in detention not because he owned a firearm but because he was a soldier in the national liberation. As

Subjects miners

Concerning Atlanta, the Executive Board, purely for publicity, hoping to ward off substantiated charges of Parson's racism, had voted at the meeting to send \$1,000 to an investigative task force (not the families), and had ribbons available at the union hall (although the vast majority of the membership was never informed of this). Using these for record measures as an excuse, they overruled our motion and called it out of order. The same was done with the strike motion, where the hard members claimed that the miners' union must make contact before the local considers any show of support. We insisted that the motions be voted before the membership for a vote, with Demby again ruling out of order. When another member asked who ran the local, the membership or the Executive Board, Demby retorted, "The Executive Board." **THE motions made clear to present where we stood, and where Parton and the Executive Board stood.** For the first time, the local members, instead of sitting back and watching, heckled the Executive Board's outrageous rulings. Also, other Alanoff supporters in the local distributed a leaflet about the local miners' strike, urging people to attend the union meeting and support the motion. Such limited efforts by rank and file militants is the only way forward for defeating Parton and **for the revolution,** ally Duran.

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Irish Freedom Struggle Intensifies As Two Hunger Strikers Die

By CASS MAYHEW

Bobby Sands, a militant from the Provisional wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), died on May 5 after a 66-day hunger strike, a martyr in the struggle against British imperialism. Three other IRA prisoners of war are still fasting and a fourth took Sands' place on May 8.

The hunger strikers are demanding that their British captors recognize them as political prisoners and, more importantly, recognize the Provisional IRA as a party in the ongoing fight to expel the British from the northern six counties of Ireland.

For centuries Ireland was held as a colony of England. In 1921, after a determined armed



During Bobby Sands' hunger strike, slogans appeared on Belfast walls (above) promising vengeance against British imperialism if he died. Following Sands' death, thousands attended his funeral on May 7.



On May 12, after this article was written, a second supporter of the Provisional wing of the IRA died in Maze prison in a hunger strike against British imperialism. Francis Hughes, 25, went 59 days without food. He was a widely known IRA leader, "something of a folk hero," the New York Times reported on May 13, and someone who was for several years one of the men in northern Ireland most wanted by British security forces. Hughes was imprisoned in early 1980 for killing a soldier in 1978.

Soon after Hughes' death became known, fighting broke out between British troops and residents in several Catholic neighborhoods in Belfast. The next day, British authorities refused to give members of the Hughes family Francis' body until they agreed not to take it to west Belfast, where 5,000 people had gathered for services at St. Agnes' Church and the traditional procession. Instead, they were forced to take the body directly to their home in a village in County Derry, where Hughes is scheduled to be buried with full IRA military honors on May 15. Shortly after Hughes' death, the IRA announced that another H-Block prisoner would soon begin a hunger strike, taking Hughes' place.

struggle led by the IRA, the country was partitioned, with the southern 26 counties becoming formally independent and the northern six counties remaining part of Great Britain. The IRA refused to accept either the division of Ireland or the legitimacy of the government that the British helped install in the south. Since that time the IRA has carried out armed attacks against both governments. This campaign has intensified since the six counties were placed under direct British rule in 1971. So has support for the IRA in the north, which has reached a peak in recent months.

Sands a soldier of national liberation

Bobby Sands, 27 years old at the time of his death, was serving out a 14-year term for something that would get you one year, at most, in New York state—possession of an unloaded firearm. But Sands was in detention not because he owned a firearm but because he was a soldier in the war for national liberation. As a child,

he lived in a loyalist (pro-British) neighborhood in northern Ireland; his family was driven from this home by a mob. Sands himself was driven from his job at gunpoint. These personal experiences reinforced his desire to fight for his country's freedom.

Arrested for a second time in 1977 (he had earlier been imprisoned for nearly five years for membership in the IRA and attempted robbery), Sands became the Provisional IRA camp commander in the H-Block of the Maze prison, a special unit designed to hold IRA prisoners of war. As camp commander, Sands had been responsible for calling off last year's hunger strike when he thought the British had agreed to the IRA's demands. When the British failed to implement the concessions, however, Sands resolved to fast again.

During this second fast, Sands ran for the British parliament, for the seat representing Fermanagh and South Tyrone. Since the IRA does not regard the British parliament as a legitimate political body in Ireland, the campaign was waged for the purpose of

heightening the mass struggle and increasing the IRA's political influence. He won on April 9, the 41st day of his fast.

His campaign began when Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, a nationalist militant and former Member of Parliament, and two other candidates withdrew and endorsed him. The British refused to allow Sands to issue any campaign statements and did everything else they could to prevent his victory.

On the loyalist side, the election was waged as a campaign against "terrorism." The British knew that if Sands won, it would seriously undermine their efforts to spread the lie that the IRA is a bunch of thugs with no political standing.

Sands' victory was a step forward in the international campaign to bury the "terrorist" myth. More significantly, it led to a greater struggle for national unification throughout all of Ireland.

Sands' treatment during his fast and especially during the election campaign angered the Irish people. As Sands grew weaker and drew closer to death, youths battled troops, and the British army increased its attacks on nationalists.

In the last week of his life, Sands was tormented by a parade of visitors begging him to end his hunger strike. British officials from both the Conservative and Labour parties, the European Human Rights Commission, and Pope John Paul II's secretary all told the dying man that the British government would not give the pris-

oners their rights, and, therefore, Sands should start eating. These were the only visitors, aside from his family, the British allowed in. The British did this, of course, not because of any concern for Sands' welfare, but because they feared the rage of the Irish people and the growth of anti-British sentiment among the workers and oppressed people elsewhere, especially other victims of British imperialism. The Pope's secretary was merely the last man in an 800-year-old effort by the Catholic church to reconcile the Irish people to British occupation. Despite the efforts of his visitors, Sands refused to call off his fast and died of starvation. He was the 13th IRA fighter to die in this way since 1920.

On May 6, the day before Sands' funeral, a loyalist cop died in sporadic fighting. On the same evening, loyalists threw a bomb into a nationalist crowd, killing a young man, in Belfast. In Dublin, capital of "Independent" Ireland, a rebellion broke out after a vigil in Sands' memory, resulting in 100 burned cars and other property damage. The police were generally defeated in battles with the participants. Several factories in the north were burned the night Sands died.

All of this took place despite a plea by the Provisional IRA for "discipline" during the wake. This could either be a mark of respect for Sands' memory, or a political retreat from previous warnings of all-out war against the British army and calls for a general strike, made while Sands was still alive. It is likely that the

IRA lacks the ability to organize mass actions, and fears what could happen in unorganized protests.

British rescind concessions

Why did Bobby Sands subject himself to 66 days of hunger and agony, a tactic that is usually counter-productive? Only one of Sands' predecessors' deaths by starvation had a big and lasting effect on the national struggle.

In Ireland the hunger strike is used by participants in armed struggle to improve prison conditions. In fact, in 1972 a hunger strike won political status for prisoners from the British. But in 1976 the British decided that they had given too many concessions to the IRA and other nationalist and leftist prisoners, and rescinded these concessions. As a result of those events, Bobby Sands would get nothing from the British. The government had decided five years ago not to give in again; Bobby Sands and his three fellow-fasters would have to give up or die.

While the election campaign may have been a bigger victory than the hunger strike, the hunger strike made the election campaign possible. As a result, Bobby Sands' fast was the exceptional case in which the struggle was actually advanced by such a death. But it still represents an individual action being substituted for mass collective action.

Bobby Sands died, as millions have died before him, "a martyr to the crown." But only mass struggle can get the occupying British army out of Ireland. And only a revolutionary socialist party can lead a successful struggle for a united, independent Ireland, free of domination by British, U.S. or any other imperialism. □



Supporters of hunger strikers set fire to British flag in New York on May 5.

Terror in Atlanta

(Continued from page 1)

the case. But perhaps what most embarrasses and irritates the establishment is that spokespeople from the committee have not hesitated to point out that the Atlanta Black middle class has little in common with, and in normal times doesn't give a damn about, the poorer Blacks living in neighborhoods now stalked by the killer.

In March, state representative Tyrone Brooks, state senator and NAACP leader Julian Bond and aides from the mayor's office publicly implied that the mothers were trying to exploit the murders for their own financial gain. In April, there were even bolder charges: Mike Twibel, an FBI agent based in Macon, Georgia, who says he has first-hand knowledge of the Atlanta police investigation, said that "no great crime wave" was sweeping Atlanta, that the police had solved several of the murders and that they believed four of

the youths had been killed by parents as "nuisances."

The Mothers' Committee immediately called for the arrest of anyone the police had evidence against and pointed out that these vague statements cast a pall over all the parents. No arrests were made.

Suspect found in Buffalo murders

Elsewhere, however, it appears that the person responsible for a similar series of racist murders, the brutal killings in Buffalo, New York, last fall and winter, has been caught. Joseph Christopher, a 25-year-old white man, was indicted on April 29 for three of the Buffalo area murders and is the leading suspect in four other killings in that town and one in Rochester, New York. Christopher is also suspected of four successful and two attempted murders of Black men in midtown Man-



Joseph Christopher.

hattan last December 22.

Christopher's motives appear to be pure and simple racism. He had no prior contact with any of his victims but attacked them because they were Black

(or in one case a dark-skinned Latino). The seven murders in Buffalo include two in which the hearts of the slain Black men were cut out by the killer.

Christopher's arrest was the result of investigations by the police. Christopher joined the army in November 1980, was imprisoned two months later for knifing a Black soldier and cut himself with a razor while in the stockade. He was then transferred to the base hospital, where he bragged to two nurses about killing Blacks in New York City and Buffalo. They took it seriously and reported him.

It was similar bragging that led to the identification and conviction of a suspect in another racist murder case: that of two Black men shot and killed last August as they jogged with two white women through a Salt Lake City park. John Paul Franklin, 25, was convicted in March of violating the civil rights of the joggers, largely on the basis of testimony from a woman he spent the night with just before the murders, his ex-wife and two cellmates. Franklin, a former mem-

ber of several Klan and Nazi groups, is now suspected of killing over a dozen Black people in five states in a yearlong racist murder spree. He is also a suspect in last year's shooting of Urban League leader Vernon Jordan.

Anger over the Atlanta murders is producing a movement that, while it may not be able to solve the cases or catch the killers, can do something just as important—fight against the racist atmosphere that has paved the way for the growing epidemic of racist murders. As part of the increased awareness of the need to build a strong, anti-racist movement, plans are going ahead for a national rally in Washington, D.C., on Memorial Day, May 25. Called the "Rendezvous for Life's Sake," the rally has been called by the Mothers' Committee to Stop Children's Murders, and has been endorsed by several unions and political groups. It is scheduled for 11 a.m. at the Lincoln Memorial. The RSL will be joining with anti-racist forces from across the country for this important mobilization, and urges everyone who can do so to join us. □

People Organizing Against Cops and Klan in Battle Creek

By LISA GASHEN

Larry Guy is a Black political activist and community organizer from Battle Creek, Michigan. On June 17, 1979, Battle Creek cops stopped his car and called for reinforcements. Guy, his brother Robert and his cousin Willie were ordered out of the car and handcuffed. Larry was then beaten by 10-15 cops, beaten even after he lost consciousness.

Still unconscious, Guy was thrown in jail. The cops refused to let his parents see him. Hours later he was taken to the intensive care unit in a hospital, where he stayed for five days. To cover up this treatment the cops charged him with carrying a concealed weapon, a gun.

City's first Black activist

Guy was singled out as a target by the cops and the Battle Creek government. Friends call him Battle Creek's first Black activist. He has been organizing in the Black community since the 1960s. He helped force the investigation of a cop shooting of a Black youth. He was also instrumental in organizing a welfare rights organization, the city's first food co-op and aid to senior citizens. He has also led a campaign to keep dope out of the Black community.

With Guy's beating and ar-

rest, the Coalition to End Police Brutality (CEPB) was formed. The CEPB publicized the case when the Battle Creek papers would not. They filled the courtroom during Guy's trial last summer and held demonstrations.

At Guy's trial, 15 Black people who witnessed the beatings said they never saw a gun. Two cops testified they never saw a gun. Two cops said there was a gun. An all-white jury declared Guy guilty. Supporters of the coalition in the courtroom stated that some of the jurors looked quite shaken when the verdict was announced. Later, Mary Guy, Larry's mother, received an anonymous note, apparently from one of the jurors. It read: "I am a Christian woman... I do not believe your son to be guilty. I was forced into saying your son was guilty."

Judge Stanley Everett stated in court that if the jury hadn't found Guy guilty, he would have found him guilty anyway. Guy was given a 40-month to five-year sentence and is currently in Jackson prison, Michigan.

The police responded to the organizing around Guy's case with Klan-style activity. On September 26, 1979, Officer Ronald Hattis followed Robert Guy home and pointed a shotgun at his head. For this Hattis was suspended from the force for 30 days. Cops also bombed the Guy house with intentions to shoot Larry as he ran from the house. One cop got cold

feet about it and told his supervisor. This past March, several crosses were burned on the Guys' street. A woman who witnessed one cross burning stated: "There were three white guys standing there in dark clothing. One appeared to have on a dark blue uniform, like a police uniform."

The CEPB points to some victories since its formation. The chief of police resigned in June of 1980 and the prosecutor in Guy's case decided not to run for re-election. So far this year, five top officials in the police department have taken early retirements, the assistant police chief has resigned and Hattis and other officers have been suspended.

Large turnouts aid Guy

However, this April the government had Guy declared a habitual criminal because of two previous convictions. (In 1968 he was convicted of breaking and entering an unoccupied building. If he was white and middle class the cops would have called his parents to take him home. In 1972 he was convicted of carrying a concealed weapon.) This could have led to Guy's sentence being lengthened. But large turnouts mobilized by the coalition (150 at the hearings; 80 for the sentencing) prevented the judge from increasing the mini-

mum. The maximum is now 10 years and Guy is already under pressure inside the prison.

Don't rely on the government

The brutality against Guy is not an isolated event. Since this case has been publicized, 13 other incidents in Battle Creek have been reported to the coalition. In this atmosphere, this April the Michigan NAACP held a conference of over 200 in Battle Creek to declare a "non-violent war" on the KKK. While calling attention to increasing Klan activity in Michigan, especially in Battle Creek, is helpful, the NAACP's program to deal with it is misleading. They want to monitor KKK activity, which is becoming more and more frequent. But they want to ask the state government, through the Human Rights Commission, to do this. They want purely government action against the Klan. And they are for a voter registration drive. They are also against people arming themselves in self-defense. All this sets people up to be unable to effectively fight the Klan and the government.

It is a mistake to rely on the government to carry out a war on the KKK. In Battle Creek it is hard to tell cop activity from Klan activity. They work hand in hand. In spite of the victories of the CEPB, the government is still carrying out racist attacks

on individuals as well as curtailing social services and rights to unemployment benefits. This is hurting working class and poor people of all races. Fighting the government's attempts to railroad Larry Guy in court is part of the battle to free him. But laws to ban Klan activity have in the past been used primarily against those who want to fight the Klan and those who have suffered the most from KKK terrorist activity. They have not been used against the KKK. Registering to vote is our democratic right but no matter if we vote for Republicans or Democrats, working class and poor people get shafted by both.

People are organizing in Battle Creek. The RSL and others are involved in organizing in Detroit. Increasing repression and attacks will bring out other groups and individuals who want to fight the KKK and government attacks. We must rely on ourselves for defense against both the Klan and the government. We must be ready to defend ourselves from terrorist attacks. We need to build a network of organizers who are involved in these struggles. We also need to work towards building a mass and militant movement of the entire working class to break all aspects of the capitalist offensive—to oppose budget cuts, union busting, Klan terror, unemployment, attacks on affirmative action and civil rights, and police brutality. □

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Thousands March on May 3 Against U.S. Intervention in El Salvador

By ROD MILLER

Chanting: "No draft, no war! U.S. out of El Salvador," tens of thousands of people marched and rallied in Washington, D.C., on May 3 in the largest anti-war demonstration since the end of the Vietnam War. Additional thousands marched on the same day in San Francisco, Denver, Kansas City, Seattle and Tucson, turning May 3 into a significant show of opposition to U.S. military intervention in El Salvador.

Rally organizers estimated that as many as 100,000 people marched from the Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon; D.C. police put the crowd at a considerably smaller 20,000-25,000. Whatever the exact size, many, many people marched on May 3.

RSL contingents participated in both the D.C. and San Francisco demonstrations, raising chants such as: "Black, Latin, Asian, white—Workers of the world unite," "Gay, straight, Black, white—Same struggle, same fight," "Atlanta, Buffalo, we say no! Racist terror has got to go," "Reagan says cut back—We say fight back!" in addition to chants concerning El Salvador.

March united diverse groups

There was much that was positive about May 3. First, of course, there were the large numbers of people who turned out for the mobilization. However, the diverse nature of the participation in the May 3 events was perhaps even more significant: Lesbian and gay groups were present in large contingents; many Black organizations and individuals helped to build the mobilization and participated in the demonstra-

tion; a contingent of trade unionists marched at the head of the procession as it made its way from the Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon, while many unions officially endorsed the demonstration; Latin organizations and individuals made up a significant percentage of the tens of thousands of people who turned out.

Another positive aspect of the May 3 mobilization was that it linked anti-war and anti-draft demands to demands directed

at oppressed people in this country with the battles against imperialism being fought by people around the world.

Problems facing the movement

The May 3 mobilization was not without its weaknesses, however. Many participants were struck by the relative lack of militancy in the Pentagon



Lesbian and gay male contingent in Washington, D.C., march. Anti-war movement broadened its support by raising demands against budget cuts and attacks on oppressed groups.

at Reagan's budget cuts, growing racist violence and attacks on women, lesbians and gays. By abandoning the single-issue strategy which dominated the anti-war movement in the 1960s, the May 3 mobilization made a clear-cut statement that it was fighting all oppression. This helped to unite lesbians, gays, women, Latins, Blacks, Asians and whites into one common and potentially powerful struggle against the ruling class and right-wing attacks.

Finally, there was a considerable degree of explicit anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist sentiment visible on May 3. Many contingents carried banners denouncing U.S. imperialism and calling for a victory to the El Salvadorean liberation struggle. Other banners linked the struggles of working and

march. This was accompanied by a certain sense of powerlessness in the crowd; many people seemed to wonder whether one more march, even a large one, would have any real effect. Unwittingly, a May 9 editorial in the *Washington Post* addressed this question: "The truth is," wrote the *Post*, "that a protest like the one conducted here last Sunday—carried off with zest, protected by the police and devoid of violence—is a demonstration that the political system is working the way it should."

Precisely—and that's the problem. In the early 1960s, at the start of the anti-Vietnam War movement, the very act of marching in the streets against U.S. foreign policy had a very radical thrust. The climate in

the country was still that of the anti-communist Cold War and opposition to government policy, particularly foreign policy, was seen as disloyal or "unpatriotic." Even later, as mass anti-war marches became more "respectable," the movement as a whole had a militant—even threatening—character, linked as it was to open GI resistance in the military and the urban rebellions in Watts, Newark, Detroit and elsewhere. Today, however, orderly, peaceful marches are rather commonplace—engaged in by the left, center and right. The movement must begin to confront and discuss the fact that a strategy of holding semi-annual mass marches is not likely to tap the power, anger and militancy of millions of working and oppressed people—and is even less likely to have a significant impact on the U.S. ruling class. We must look for ways of going beyond these tactics—to organizing strikes, mass sit-ins and disruptions and other actions which are genuinely threatening to the system itself. Needless to say, this will not be easy. A national conference, called, for example, by the People's Anti-War Mobilization (PAM—the Initiator of the May 3 Mobilization), would be a good place to begin such a discussion.

In our view, the most serious problem facing the movement is its alliance with liberal, pro-capitalist forces, in particular, Democratic Party supporters and politicians. Ruling class liberals have their own motives for involving themselves in the movement. The liberals are rather discredited today and are looking to rebuild their base and influence. While it was left-

wing organizations that did most of the work to actually build the May 3 marches, certain Democratic Party liberals lent their endorsement and were invited to speak from the rally platform. This gave people such as Bella Abzug an opportunity to urge tens of thousands of people to "visit electoral punishment" on the Reagan administration—in other words, to replace "bad" Ronald Reagan with "good" Ted Kennedy in 1984.

One speech by Bella Abzug is no grave danger. However, if ruling class liberals are brought into the movement as allies, increasingly given a platform and influence, they will work to channel the movement into supporting the Democratic Party and its policies—policies which, while they are often dressed up differently, are as imperialist and capitalist as the Republicans'. To put it another

way, the liberals will use their influence to try to keep the movement from becoming a **class-conscious movement**—a movement of all working and oppressed people fighting for their true needs and interests against their class enemy, the capitalists.

This danger is not well understood in the movement today. It is important to patiently but persistently explain it to people. [Please see centerfold editorial for a fuller discussion—Ed.] Virtually every mass radical movement in the history of this country—be it the CIO or the civil rights movement—has been led into the suicidal trap of an alliance with a section of the liberal capitalist class... and then beheaded. We must fight against a repeat of this in the 1980s. □



Bella Abzug.



RSL contingent (left) joined tens of thousands to oppose U.S. imperialism in El Salvador.



Photo: S. Tomshavsky

ber of several Klan and Nazi groups, is now suspected of killing over a dozen Black people in five states in a yearlong racist murder spree. He is also a suspect in last year's shooting of Urban League leader Vernon Jordan.

Anger over the Atlanta murders is producing a movement that, while it may not be able to solve the cases or catch the killers, can do something just as important—fight against the racist atmosphere that has paved the way for the growing epidemic of racist murders. As part of the increased awareness of the need to build a strong, anti-racist movement, plans are being laid for a national rally in Washington, D.C., on Memorial Day, May 25. Called the "Rendezvous for Life's Sake," the rally has been called by the Mothers' Committee to Stop Children's Murders, and has been endorsed by several unions and political groups. It is scheduled for 11 a.m. at the Lincoln Memorial. The RSL will be joining with anti-racist forces from across the country for this important mobilization, and urges everyone who can do so to join us. □

Against the Creek

Individuals as well as cutting social services and rights to unemployment benefits. This is hurting working class and poor people of all races. Fighting the government's attempts to railroad Larry Guy in court is part of the battle to free Jim. But laws to ban Klan activity have in the past been used primarily against those who want to fight the Klan and those who have suffered the most from KKK terrorist activity. They have not been used against the KKK. Registering to vote is our democratic right but no matter if we vote for Republicans or Democrats, working class and poor people get huffed by both.

People are organizing in Battle Creek. The RSL and others are involved in organizing in Detroit. Increasing repression and attacks will bring out other groups and individuals who want to fight the KKK and government attacks. We must rely on ourselves for defense against both the Klan and the government. We must be ready to defend ourselves from terrorist attacks. We need to build a network of organizers who are involved in these struggles. We also need to work towards building a mass and militant movement of the entire working class to break all aspects of the capitalist offensive—to oppose budget cuts, union busting, Klan terror, unemployment, attacks on affirmative action and civil rights, and police brutality. □



Where is Alfredo Mendez?

Alfredo Mendez, one of the 11 Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners of war jailed last year, has disappeared from his cell at Pontiac prison. Mendez was removed from his cell sometime in early May. On May 12, Michael Aun, a spokesperson for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, told the United Press International that Mendez had been transferred to the federal witness protection program. That is, he claimed that Mendez is now cooperating with the government and is giving information to U.S. attorneys or a grand jury. Supporters of the POWs and the Mendez family do not believe he has turned state's evidence. The National Committee to Free the POWs told the *Torch/La Antorcha* they think Mendez was removed from Pontiac against his will, kidnapped by the FBI or other police agents.

The Puerto Rican POWs were arrested in April 1980 and accused of being members of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN—Armed Forces of National Liberation), a group that claims credit for political bombings. The POWs neither confirmed nor denied this. Nor did they present a courtroom defense during their trials on charges of conspiracy, robbery and car theft. Instead, they identified themselves as freedom fighters of a foreign nation—prisoners of war—and demanded a hearing in international court. They were convicted on all charges; the lightest sentence received was 63 years.

As we go to press, the questions about what has happened to Mendez remain unanswered. On May 13, attorneys Michael Deutsch and Mara Segal filed a petition for habeas corpus on behalf of the Mendez family in federal district court in Chicago. This is a demand to produce Alfredo Mendez in person, so that his family can see if he is all right and can inquire whether he wants to see his lawyer. On May 14, Judge Bernard Decker ruled that the habeas corpus petition should be handled by the original federal trial judge, Thomas McMillan. McMillan will consider it on Monday, May 18.

Graham and Allen win round four

Ernest Graham and Eugene Allen, two California prison activists, have finally shaken loose from the trumped-up charges that have threatened their lives for the past seven and a half years. On March 19, they were acquitted of first degree murder charges stemming from a 1973 incident at the Deuel Vocational Institute.

In November of that year, a white prison guard was killed at Deuel. Graham and Allen, who are Black, were singled out because of their reputation as fighters for prisoner rights and charged with the murder. Since then, they have been tried four separate times on this same indictment.

The first trial, in 1974, ended with a hung jury, with six jurors for conviction and six for acquittal. A second trial, in March 1976, resulted in convictions and the death sentence for both men. They were transferred to death row at San Quentin. Graham and Allen then appealed the convictions on the basis that Black people had been systematically excluded from the jury and in 1979 they won an order for a new trial from the California Supreme Court. This third trial ended in May 1980 with another hung jury.

Soon afterward, the district attorney announced he was preparing for yet another trial and vowed he would pursue Graham and Allen until he got a conviction. But instead, the prosecution's persecution ended when Graham and Allen were acquitted on all counts. Under U.S. law the prosecution cannot appeal a verdict.

Ernest Graham was freed soon after the March trial. Eugene Allen remains in prison on his original seven-years-to-life sentence, which he is currently appealing.

After a two-week trial, Nathaniel Lane, 19, the last of a series of Black men to be charged and tried in the deaths of whites during last May's Miami uprising, was declared not guilty on two counts of first degree murder on April 30. After 13 hours of deliberation, the jury also reported it was deadlocked on a third murder count. A new trial is expected on this remaining charge.

Judge Refuses to Send White Man to Jail

By FRANK HOPKINS

On April 9, David Ross, a 23-year-old white man, went on trial in Manhattan's criminal court for harassment of a Black policeman and resisting arrest. Judge Stanley Gartenstein ruled that Ross was guilty. He also decided that since Ross was white and middle class, he shouldn't be sent to jail.

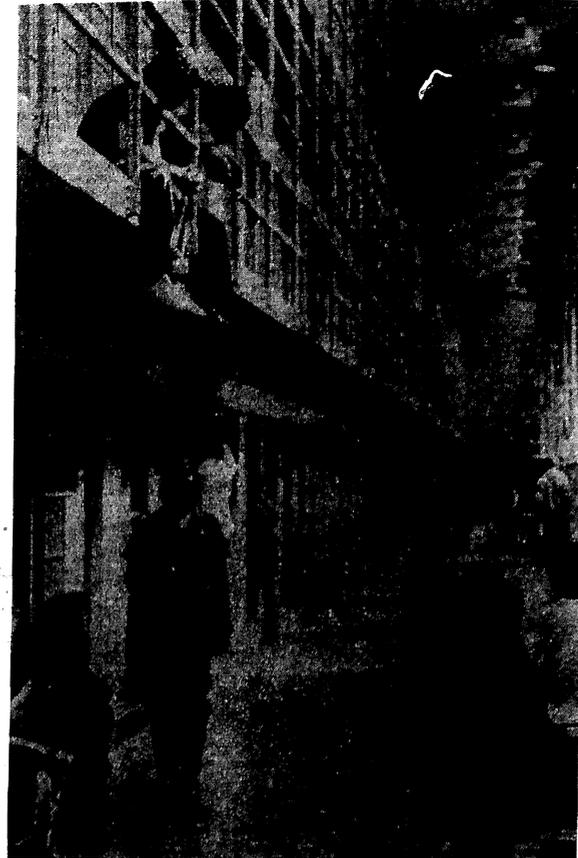
The trial stemmed from an incident in April of 1980. John Vaughn, a Black cop, issued Ross a summons for walking a dog in Carl Schurz Park in New York City. Ross tore up the summons, threw it at Vaughn, and then tried to set his dog on the cop. Ross also tried to punch Vaughn.

IF THIS had been a Black guy trying to assault a white cop, it is very doubtful the case ever would've gotten to trial. The cop would've blown the guy's head off, claimed self-defense, and that would've been the end of that. The fact that Ross got to trial was part of the advantage of being white and middle class. But that was only the beginning.

At the trial, Judge Gartenstein noted that Ross "richly earned a sentence of incarceration." But Ross is white, a student and the son of a police surgeon. The judge stated, "With his color and his ethnic background, he wouldn't last 10 minutes in Rikers Island." Ross would be "immediately subject to homosexual rape and sodomy and to brutalities from fellow prisoners such as make the imagination recoil in horror." And with that, Ross was fined \$1,000 and ordered to apologize to Vaughn, to write a 5,000-word essay on disobedience and to do community service two nights a week for a year.

This is not the only case Judge Gartenstein has tried lately. Edwin Fuentes went on trial before the judge recently for attempting to steal a mop from a basement. Fuentes is Latin rather than white. And he's a boiler mechanic rather than a student and son of a police surgeon. Gartenstein didn't even think of having Fuentes write essays. The judge offered to "let Fuentes off" with nine months if he pleaded guilty. Nine months for a used mop that Fuentes didn't even actually get to take.

WHAT IS going on here is clearly racism. Nobody can claim that trying to steal a mop is more socially dangerous than trying to go after a cop. These days, if you look at a cop cross-eyed you can count on ending up in jail. But in this society "crime" isn't just something that's done, it is also who is doing it. So when Garten-



Over 9,000 prisoners, most of them Black or Latin, are jammed into Rikers Island prison.

stein gets hold of Black and Latin working class people, he throws them behind bars and couldn't care less what happens to them. But when it's a white middle class guy, then the judge is "recoiling in horror" at prison life.

AS NEWS of Judge Gartenstein's decision got around, all kinds of city officials pretended this was an unheard of outrage. Mayor Koch of New York City claimed he was "aghast." But the officials are really pretty much doing a song and dance routine. The mayor and all the corrections officials know this is really just a slightly more obvious example of what happens all the time. Working class crime gets punished "to the full extent of the law." Middle class crime goes unnoticed or almost totally unpunished. All through society it's the people like Fuentes who get the jail terms, and the people like Ross who get the essays. It's built into the system and Koch and his buddies know this.

But the officials have their own slimy ulterior motives for denouncing Gartenstein's ruling. Robert Morgenthau, the Manhattan district attorney, has been trying to say that

conditions at Rikers Island really aren't so bad. Mayor Koch is calling for the passage of state legislation that would enable the prosecutor to appeal sentences that are "unduly lenient." The maneuvers of these people are just as racist as what Gartenstein is up to. Morgenthau is trying to cover up the rape and brutality that the prison system causes. And in doing this, he's setting things up so that even more people, especially Black and Latin people, have to face rape and terror. Koch is trying to end "leniency" in sentencing. Even though he's making the sentencing of a white man his issue, you can be sure it will be Black and Latin people who will get the worst end of the deal.

GARTENSTEIN, Morgenthau and Koch are all about the same thing—and that is trying to hold together this system. To do this, they all need to support the prison system and they all need to rely on racism. Their only real difference is over how upfront they should be about what they're up to. We need something totally different. We need a society without prisons, without racism and without jobs for the Gartensteins, Morgenthaus and Koches. □

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*Of the 14, five were sentenced to, from three trial.

10 PONTIAC BROTHERS ACQUITTED!

By DARRYL CLARK

CHICAGO, May 10—The trial of 10 Black prisoners charged in the deaths of three guards during the 1978 Pontiac prison uprising ended last night with a complete victory for the prisoners.

A jury of seven Blacks and five whites deliberated for less than five hours before returning "not guilty" verdicts on all 57 charges of murder, attempted murder and conspiracy.

The acquitted men, who could have been sentenced to the electric chair had they been convicted, are: Michael Evans, Jesse Hill, Albert Jackson, Ernest Jackson, Benny Lee, Stephen Mars, Ronnie Newby, David McConnell, Joseph Smith and Kevin Tolbert.

The state has not yet announced whether it will go ahead with the trials of six more of the Pontiac Brothers, scheduled for June, after this devastating rejection of its frame-up case. The verdict is a major reverse for Illinois Governor Jim Thompson, who had referred to the prisoners as a bunch of "animals," and the state as a whole, which spent some \$3 million to try to scapegoat someone for the rebellion.



Demonstrations like the one in 1978 pictured above helped build support for the Pontiac Brothers.

The state's case began to fall apart from the very beginning of the trial. They had no physical evidence—no murder weapon or lab tests, nothing at all. All they had was testimony from 17 prisoner witnesses and two surviving guards. This testimony was thoroughly tainted. Every witness was rewarded by the state for testifying. Many of them flatly contradicted what

they had said earlier. For example, for months after the rebellion, Danny Dill, a guard who was stabbed during the riot,

stick technique—unbearable deadlock conditions and the threat of murder indictments if they did not testify, and prom-

identified a prisoner named Tyson as his attacker. But when he went to the grand jury he dropped Tyson's name and accused three other prisoners. In the trial he claimed that he had lied about Tyson.

The prisoner witnesses all received time off their sentences and cash to live on after their release. Many of them admitted that they would lie to serve their own interests.

The defense documented how the state had pressured prisoners to testify with a carrot-and-

ises of transfers, time off their sentences, and cash if they did.

By the time of closing arguments, the state's case was in shreds. Prosecutor Algis Balunas asked jurors to "use your imagination" to accept the state's claim that the riot was the result of a conspiracy among gang leaders at Pontiac. Defense attorneys had little trouble pointing out that the state hadn't proved anything with its bought testimony from a crew of liars. They concentrated on telling the jury not to be pressured by a feeling that they had to convict somebody. The jury apparently did not need much convincing. After the verdicts were announced, one juror, Sherman Frooman, told the press: "The case was so poor I began thinking maybe I just didn't understand how a trial was supposed to work. I kept looking for facts that would support the prosecution, but I couldn't find any." The quick acquittal was a stunning repudiation of the frame-up. □

Sweeping Changes Ordered at TDC

By LEE RAMIE

On April 20, 1981, Judge William Justice handed down his final order in the *Rulz vs. Estelle* suit (for details of the suit, see *Torch/La Antorcha*, January 15, 1981). Judge Justice mandated sweeping changes in the policies of the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC) concerning health care, prisoners with special needs (such as handicapped prisoners), solitary confinement and administrative segregation, use of chemical agents on prisoners, work safety and overcrowding. He also appointed a special "master" to make sure that TDC officials complied with the ruling. Mark White, attorney general for the state of Texas, claims the changes will cost TDC between \$3 and \$4 billion and says the state will appeal the ruling.

TDC is particularly upset with the judge's ruling on the issue of overcrowding. Judge Justice ordered that the TDC "population," now about 31,000, be reduced to 28,500 by November 1, and that TDC establish a work furlough program to accomplish this. He ruled that all new units be designed to hold no more than 500 prisoners and that existing units be reorganized to meet that maximum. He also ordered an end to the TDC practice of squeezing three or four prisoners into one tiny cell and ruled that all prisoners must have 60 square feet of living space by 1982. Finally, Judge Justice ordered

an end to the Building Tender system, which has been a vital part of the reign of terror maintained by TDC over the prisoners.

Eroy Edward Brown, a 30-year-old prisoner in the Ellis Unit of TDC, is facing two capital murder charges stemming from an incident in which he allegedly killed the Ellis Unit warden, Wallace M. Pack, and the Ellis Unit's farm manager, Billy Max Moore, on April 4. As we go to press we have heard several versions of what happened on that day, but the general lines of the story appear to be as follows.

Brown was a trusty at the Ellis Unit and was working on the farm. He got into an argument with Moore and Pack, who then tried to handcuff Brown and take him to the "Bottoms," a dry river bed about five miles from the main buildings, where prisoners are taken to be beaten. Brown fought back. Pack was carrying a .38 pistol, and in the scuffle Brown allegedly got the pistol and killed Moore with a single shot to the head. Brown and Pack wrestled down an embankment into about four feet of water where Pack drowned. Brown was shot once in the foot but was otherwise unhurt. He was arrested at the scene. Pack and Moore were the first TDC employees to be killed since 1974, and Pack is the first warden ever to be killed by a prisoner.

Pack was new on the Ellis Unit, having taken over from Billy McMillian (known to the prisoners as "axe handle") on March 15, 1981. When he came in, Pack visited every wing of the prison and warned the prisoners about "disruptive activities." According to one prisoner, Pack announced: "I'm warden Pack and all this shit is dead. I'm going to put a stop to it." Pack's reputation as a "tough" warden had preceded him and prisoners hurled shoes and other things at him when he made his tour.

TDC officials are denying the existence of the "Bottoms," but the practice of taking prisoners there for beatings is common knowledge at Ellis. One former TDC trusty told the *Dallas Morning News* he had been beaten there. He said: "This had to come. It used to be an inmate wouldn't even think of doing something like that. But there are so many men and so many problems. The inmates get to feeling they can't beat the prison officials by talking, so they'll beat them by death."

TDC director W.J. Estelle is using the incident to drum up support for the death penalty, saying: "If there was ever any reservation in my mind the closer it gets to home the less I have. I wouldn't want to be the next person who tried to assault the next warden."

Prisoners at the Ellis Unit are building support for Brown. A defense fund is being set up, but there is as yet no address for it. □

Key Dates in the Pontiac Case

July 22, 1978—Prisoners at the Pontiac Correctional Center in Illinois rise up against miserable conditions at the prison. During the rebellion, three guards are killed and millions of dollars in damage done. After the rebellion is suppressed, the entire prison is put on deadlock, with the prisoners locked in their cells 24 hours a day, deprived of soap, showers, hot food, visitors, etc.

July 27—People's Law Office attorneys file suit seeking an end to the deadlock.

November 3—Federal Judge Crowley enjoins the Department of Corrections to end the deadlock. A U.S. Court of Appeals blocks his ruling within three hours.

November 9—Court of Appeals rules that Pontiac prisoners must be allowed showers and exercise immediately.

February 5, 1979—Grand jury begins its investigation into the Pontiac rebellion.

March 5—Grand jury indicts 31 prisoners for the rebellion; 17 are charged with the murder of three guards and the stabbing of two others; 14 prisoners are indicted on lesser charges.*

April—Deadlock (longest in U.S. prison history) lifted, although educational and job training programs are not restored.

June 1—Defense attorneys for the Pontiac Brothers win a change of venue to Cook County, which includes Chicago, where all the defendants are from.

April 21, 1980—Angelo Robinson, one of the 17 prisoners up on murder charges, turns state's evidence and has his case severed from the others.

August 14—Judge divides the Pontiac 16 into two groups for trial.

September 18—Jury selection for the first 10 begins.

February 19, 1981—Jury selection process (longest in Illinois history) completed. A jury of seven Blacks and five whites, six women and six men, is empaneled.

March 4—Opening arguments heard in the trial of the 10.

May 9—Defense and prosecution make their final arguments; judge instructs jury; jury deliberates for five hours. At 9:15 p.m., verdict announced—all 10 acquitted on all charges. Three of the defendants, Ronnie Newby, Jesse Hill and Joseph Smith, are out on the street before midnight.

*Of the 14, five were later acquitted; eight were found guilty and sentenced to from three to eight years; and one has yet to go to trial.

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Railway Workers March Against Reagan Cuts

By W.E. SCHWEIZER

Fifteen thousand angry railroad workers from as far away as Louisiana, Ohio and Kansas marched on Washington, D.C., against railway budget cuts on April 29. It was the first joint demonstration by the 19 different railway unions, or brotherhoods.

The Reagan administration proposes to slash the Amtrak budget by \$360 million and to break up the government-run Conrail system by selling the most profitable segments to private bidders while abandoning the rest. These plans would eliminate up to 70,000 railroad jobs and threaten the pensions of thousands of retirees. In addition, the proposed abandonments threaten the jobs of thousands of workers whose companies use the railroads to ship their products.

For railway workers, the effects of the cuts will be devastating. For example, Jim Kling, a United Transportation Union member from Clearfield, Pennsylvania, told the *Torch/La Antorcha*: "I got nine in my family to support on the

\$125 a week unemployment they are offering."

The march was much larger and more militant than the leaders of the unions had predicted. They had planned the demonstration as an acceptable, respectable "mass-lobbying" of Congress to stop the planned cutbacks. However, rank and file workers took it much further. For example, despite last-minute pleas from the union bureaucrats to stay at work, hundreds of railway workers in New York and Philadelphia left their jobs to go to D.C. in what amounted to a partial strike.

At the rally outside the Capitol, the union leaders tried to channel people's anger back into lobbying. However, they were challenged by a significant minority of militant workers, who punctuated the bureaucrats' dull and empty speeches with loud heckling. F.J. Kroll, the president of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), was interrupted several times by chants of "Strike! Strike!" When he tried to recall past struggles of railway workers, militants in the audience shouted: "What



15,000 rail workers rallied against budget cuts in Washington, D.C.

about now?" "This is 1981!" and "They're striking in Poland!"

Many workers were clearly inspired by the workers' and farmers' struggle in Poland. Hundreds wore buttons or carried signs saying "Solidarnosc" (Solidarity—the independent Polish labor union). "The Poles are advanced beyond us right now," said Dominick Polchinski, a BRAC member from Albany, New York.

However, despite the militant heckling and chanting, the bureaucrats managed to keep the demonstration politically conservative. Instead of identifying as the enemy the government and ruling class which is attacking them, many workers carried pre-printed placards reading "Coal and Conrail—America's Answer to Imported Oil," or "Support 'Our American' Railroads!" And when Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, pleaded in his speech that the U.S. needs a "strong rail system for the protection of national security," he was not heckled.

In addition, the march remained limited in its scope to defending railway

workers only. Except for the Firemen and Oilers, who distributed signs saying "Oppose Budget Cuts!," neither placards nor speeches linked up the struggle of railway workers with those of other working class people who are also under attack.

Since the march, the conservative railway union bureaucrats have run away from struggle altogether. In the interests of finding a "solution" acceptable to the capitalist ruling class, they announced on May 5 that they were willing to give back a planned 10 percent wage increase in order to "save" Conrail. But on May 11, Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis rejected these concessions as "insufficient" and said the government would seek further givebacks. What will happen with this is not clear.

But what is becoming clear to the railway workers is the need to organize and struggle independently of the union leaderships. "These assholes won't do anything, so we'll have to start something ourselves," said Polchinski. "The only thing anybody understands in this country is power." □

LABOR IN STRUGGLE

Union mergers in the works

In recent months, several major unions have either merged or begun merger discussions. On April 19, leaders of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) announced the two unions would combine. The United Auto Workers union (UAW) is currently discussing merger plans with the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and the United Rubber Workers (URW). Earlier in January, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union and the United Paperworkers International Union began holding similar discussions.

Such mergers can potentially increase the unity and bargaining power of the workers in these unions. For instance, 350,000 autoworkers and rubber workers have lost their jobs as a result of declining auto sales, plant closings and layoffs. By combining forces, members of the UAW and URW would gain the power to shut down a huge portion of U.S. industry. They would thus be in a better position to defend themselves against layoffs, wage cuts and runaway plants. To take another example, in the past, the SEIU and District 1199 of the RWDSU have competed against each other to organize workers in the health care industry. Once the two unions unite, they will be able to eliminate such conflict and pool their resources for union organizing drives, as well as increase their strength vis a vis the nursing home and hospital managements.

However, there is no guarantee that union mergers will result in concrete gains for the workers involved. Union leaders can and will use mergers as a

substitute for organizing unorganized workers, or even for defending their current union membership. It will be up to the workers themselves to ensure that whatever organizational ties they make with other unions develop into a fighting alliance, rather than a bureaucratic maneuver.

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In a related move, the UAW is planning to rejoin the AFL-CIO, the national labor federation. UAW President Douglas Fraser announced on April 28 that delegates meeting in regional conventions had voted to authorize reaffiliation. The UAW's International Executive Board had approved the action earlier in March.

The UAW left the AFL-CIO in 1968, arguing that the federation's leadership was "dormant" and unwilling to play a positive role in defending the needs of working people. But today Fraser supports reaffiliation because "a unified labor movement would be far more effective in the years just ahead when labor is going to be attacked by right-wing forces." He also asserts that AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland is moving the federation away from its past conservatism.

However, some groups within the UAW, including the Independent Skilled Trades Council and sections of the union's secondary leadership, oppose rejoining the AFL-CIO. About one-third of the delegates at the regional conventions voted against reaffiliation for various reasons. Among them are: 1) The AFL-CIO is too conservative; 2) the UAW leadership did not carry out a democratic discussion of the question; 3) reaffiliation could lead to higher union dues; 4) it could lead to jurisdictional disputes with other AFL-CIO unions, particularly in the skilled trades; and 5) UAW locals

would lose their autonomy if they had to join city and state AFL-CIO councils.

Changes in Brown Lung rules hit

On May 4, several hundred textile workers, carrying signs reading: "Cotton Dust Kills," demonstrated at the Labor Department's headquarters in Washington, D.C. The workers were protesting the department's decision to "review" safety standards designed to prevent the spread of Brown Lung disease (byssinosis) among textile workers. Similar demonstrations took place in 35 cities around the country. The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the Brown Lung Association, an organization of retired textile workers, organized the actions.

Brown Lung is a respiratory disease caused by breathing cotton dust particles that are floating in the air in textile mills. In 1978, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued regulations requiring textile companies to install dust removal equipment in the mills. But the American Textile Manufacturers Association has gone to court to prevent the enforcement of these regulations. The textile companies claim most workers with breathing problems are really suffering from "excessive cigarette smoking." Moreover, they argue, the cost of dust removal equipment would drive some textile firms out of business.

The Reagan administration wants to amend OSHA regulations "to require that the cost of dust limitation devices be weighed against potential benefits." The administration is making no secret of its belief that textile company profits are worth more than textile workers' lives. In March, OSHA Director Thorne Aucher ordered the burning of 50,000 copies of an OSHA pamphlet on Brown Lung because they were too "pro-worker." —PB

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Armed Strikers Stop Scab Coal

Miners Stand Firm in Contract Battle

May 13—Over 160,000 eastern and midwestern coal miners in the United Mine Workers union (UMW) are standing fast in their 46-day-old strike against the efforts of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) to weaken their union. In particular, the miners have been waging a determined campaign to shut down scab mines located mainly in eastern Kentucky and southwestern Virginia.

In Kentucky, hundreds of armed miners have been patrolling the highways to stop trucks carrying scab coal. During the last week of April, gun battles between miners and truck drivers broke out three times along roads in Lawrence and Floyd counties. Strikers also dynamited railway bridges in the region on May 5 to try to stop the flow of non-union coal.

Kentucky Governor John Brown has placed state troopers in eastern Kentucky on

ed together—to blow out the tires of the scab trucks.

Defense of union key issue

In the strike, the miners are fighting to defend their union from attacks by the coal operators. Around half of U.S. coal production is now mined by non-union workers (up from 30 percent since 1970). Consequently, UMW miners no longer have the power and economic leverage they used to. In recent years the BCOA has tried to take advantage of this to weaken the union still further, particularly its ability to defend the miners at the point of production, and to allow the companies to automate and speed up production.

When Sam Church became president of the UMW in 1979, he promised to fight to organize non-union miners and take other measures to restore the strength of the union. But he betrayed his pledge in this year's contract negotiations. The proposed contract would have given the companies much of what they wanted. In exchange for a hefty wage and benefit package to sweeten the pot, the contract would have: 1) allowed the owners to subcontract some mining operations to non-union companies; 2) eliminated royalty payments to the union's Health and Retirement funds, which mine owners previously had to make when purchasing non-union coal for resale; 3) imposed a new 45-day probation period on newly-hired miners; and 4) given the BCOA more control over work schedules. Knowing a sellout when they see one, the miners angrily rejected the proposed contract by a 2-1 margin.

Negotiations stalemated

While the struggle in the coalfields goes on, negotiations for a new contract are at a standstill. On April 10, Church offered the BCOA a new contract proposal that withdrew all the concessions granted to the companies in the rejected settlement. Four days later, the BCOA rejected this proposal as "totally unrealistic," and the talks broke down. Negotiations resumed on May 5, with little progress reported.

There are two major reasons for this stalemate. First of all, the BCOA negotiators are stonewalling. As reported in earlier issues of the *Torch/La Antorcha*, the major oil and



UMW President Sam Church (lower left, with beard) was jeered by miners at April 30 demonstration.

steel companies who now dominate the coal industry took over control of the BCOA last year. They have enormous resources and can afford to wait

quite a while in the hope of forcing the miners to accede to at least some of their anti-union demands.

The BCOA representatives

are also stalling to try to force some of the smaller mine owners, who do not belong to the BCOA but who co-sign its contracts with the UMW, out of business. In response, about 40 small owners have formed their own organization, the Unionized Coal Employers Association, and are trying to reach a separate agreement with the UMW.

Both the BCOA and the UMW oppose such efforts, but for different reasons. The BCOA wants to maintain its monopoly over negotiations with the union as well as drive the independent companies under. The UMW, on the other hand, refuses to sign any separate agreement because they fear it would undermine the need for an industrywide union and therefore weaken the UMW.

The second reason for the stalemate is that Church's attempt to sell a rotten contract

(Continued on page 16)

Two Militants Fired at Chrysler Defense Plant

By BRIAN DETLOFF

On April 14, I was fired from my job at the Chrysler Tank Arsenal in Warren, Michigan. The charge was sleeping on the job. Management wants to get rid of me because I am a militant and a supporter of the Revolutionary Socialist League. They waited until no witnesses were around and then a gang of supervisors framed me up.

Over the past three years I have been fired unjustly several times. Last year I was fired for distributing leaflets calling for resistance to the first round of contract concessions and layoffs being forced on Chrysler workers. (See *Torch/La Antorcha* article, November 1980.)

RIGHT now, a Black worker named Comer McNeil and myself are fired because we were organizing against speedup on the hull line. We were circulating a petition to the local union leadership demanding action against the speedup. When management discovered this they first tried to bust up our organizing by telling McNeil I was a Klansman. That failed and then the white supervisors got a Black forewoman to tell him to back out because I was a Nazi. He didn't back off and two days later he was set up and fired.

The Tank plant is run by both Chrysler and the U.S. government and its army. The workers

have been and remain a potential source of trouble for Chrysler and the government. Both the workers and the local union fought the concessions. Even though some confused and parochial strategies and demands were put forward by many workers and the local union officials, the resistance at the Tank plant, which included a march and demonstration, had the potential to spark or ally with resistance elsewhere in Chrysler plants. This angered and frightened the Chrysler bosses, the capitalist government and the pro-capitalist United Auto Workers union leadership, who were running a unified campaign designed to attack and force sacrifices in the form of thousands of jobs and wage cuts from Chrysler workers.

Now at the Tank plant the threat of continuing resistance to speedup and harassment has Chrysler and the government taking action to intimidate the workers. This includes firing and harassing militants and beefing up plant security from five or six security guards to around 24 on some shifts.

ALSO, the FBI has been brought into the plant in a high-profile way with articles on their presence being carried in major Detroit and Chicago newspapers. They are there supposedly to investigate a right-wing religious cult but

they are in reality there to intimidate the workers and prepare new attacks on leftists, militants and the local union itself.

Around the country the FBI, military intelligence and their right-wing allies in company security offices are on the offensive, firing and/or framing up on serious charges militants and socialists, particularly in military-related plants. At Lockheed Aircraft in Georgia, 14 supporters of the Socialist Workers Party have been fired, 27 workers at NASSCO shipyard in San Diego have been fired (three of these workers, including two supporters of the Communist Workers Party, have been framed up and are facing heavy charges), SWPers at the Brooklyn Navy Yard have been fired, and I am sure there are more cases.

WE ARE asking for support in our struggle to fight the Tank plant firings and these other attacks by the employers and their government agents on the working class. We must resist the ruling class's moves to strip us of all rights so they can more easily grind us down.

Letters demanding the rehiring of Brian Detloff and Comer McNeil can be sent to: Max Willson, c/o Labor Relations, Chrysler Tank Arsenal, 28251 Van Dyke, Warren, MI 48093. Please send copies to RSL, P.O. Box 485, Detroit, MI 48221. □



Brazilian shantytown. Workers paid the costs of Brazil's "economic miracle."

By JOE GALANTI

With Brazil's "economic miracle" in serious trouble, the Brazilian ruling class is becoming increasingly divided over its political strategy. At the center of the dispute is the "apertura" ("opening"), a policy begun in 1979 when President Joao Baptista Figueiredo promised to ease the severe repression of the military government and hold free elections by 1985. On

Ruling Class Split Over 'Apertura'

Brazilian 'Miracle' Coming

the one hand, Brazil's military government recently dealt the "apertura" a serious setback by sentencing 11 trade union leaders, including Luis Inacio da Silva (popularly known as Lula) to terms of between two and three and a half years. On the other, some sections of the ruling class want to speed up the "apertura" in order to avoid a serious social explosion.

BRAZIL has been ruled by a military dictatorship since 1964 when the military overthrew the elected, populist government of Joao Goulart, a coup that was planned and executed with U.S. support.

The U.S. had good reason to back the coup. The military soon began an economic program of attracting massive foreign investment. A key aspect of the policy was drastic wage-cutting and political repression. Within a few years, real wages had been cut in half, while all attempts at protest were met with arbitrary arrest and torture. At the same time the military repealed a law,

passed by the Goulart government, limiting to 10 percent the amount of profits a foreign corporation could take out of the country. As far as the military was concerned, if a foreign corporation made a 100 percent profit—which many do—it could send all of it out of Brazil.

The result of these policies has been the "Brazilian economic miracle." Since 1964, Brazil's gross domestic product has tripled at a time when the economies of the advanced capitalist countries have stagnated.

However, the cost of the economic "miracle" has also been enormous for the workers, peasants, and urban poor of Brazil. In 1978, Brazil ranked as the world's fifth largest exporter of agricultural products. Yet, nearly 60 percent of its population suffer from an insufficient diet. In the impoverished northeast, according to the **New**

York Times:

"...The median intake of calories is 1,300 per day or less than is necessary for the basic metabolism of a person resting in bed.... 66 percent of children in this area die before they reach the age of five [higher than South African Blacks], the IQs of those who live are so low that they are mentally debilitated..." (October 13, 1979)



Lula.

In 1961, 65 babies of every thousand born alive in the state of Sao Paulo, the richest area of Brazil, died before reaching their first birthday. By 1975, 95 babies of every thousand born alive in Sao Paulo were dying by age one. In Recife, the infant mortality rate reached 263.5 per 1,000 live births in 1971! Even military President Medici was forced to admit in 1972: "The economy is going well, the people not so well."

However, as the "miracle"

progressed, the economy stopped going so well, even for the Brazilian capitalists. The inflation rate climbed from 15 percent in 1972 to an average of 42 percent between 1976 and 1978. Between 1969 and 1974, the annual growth rate never fell below 9 percent; since then, it has hit 9 percent only once, in 1976. Meanwhile, the foreign debt began to mount.

IN LATE 1977 and 1978, opposition to the military government began to develop. The Catholic Church hierarchy (including the archbishop of Sao Paulo), once a bastion of reaction, began to speak out against the government. Student demonstrations began taking place. In November 1977, some 2,000 Brazilian business-owners, many of whom had suffered from competition of the multinationals, met in Rio de Janeiro and called for more democracy. Perhaps most significant, the first strike in a decade occurred in Sao Paulo in 1978, involving 50,000 workers.

It was in this context that the

Letter from Spain

Military stronger than ever after coup attempt

Below is a letter we received from a U.S. student in Spain. It was written in early April, six weeks after Colonel Antonio Tejero Molina led 200 Civil Guards into the Spanish parliament in an attempted right-wing coup. This attempt failed when King Juan Carlos opposed it, causing the many high military leaders who had secretly promised Tejero support to back down. Since then, the king and the politicians have gone out of their way to appease the military. This has included little or no punishment for the coup supporters and the withdrawal of new laws objectionable to the military.

The letter refers several times to the region of Euskadi. Euskadi is an oppressed nation located in northeastern Spain and in a small part of France. A faction of the leading Euskadi nationalist grouping, Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA—Basque Nation and Freedom), is waging an urban guerrilla campaign as part of the Basque national liberation struggle.

Dear Torch,

...I'll try and give you an idea of what it feels like in three regions of Spain: Euskadi, central Spain and Andalusia.

In Euskadi, the people live in terror—not of the "terrorists" but of the police. Since the

failed military takeover, the "law in defense of the constitution" was passed. It gives the police the right to detain anybody, incommunicado, for an indefinite length of time on suspicion that they aid terrorism or the terrorists. The police close off a town and go from house to house looking for supposed ETA affiliates. Last week they detained a woman and her three children and publicly announced that they would not be released until the husband gave himself up to the police. Also under this law, any publication which is thought to encourage terrorism must close, marches in support of terrorism are prohibited, in fact, anything which doesn't defend the government line is prohibited.

EUSKADI is a police state at the moment. People are no longer defending just their right to autonomy; it's now a question of the right to live without police harassment, the right to gather in public, the right to free speech. These words may seem a little dead since one talks about these problems in many parts of the world, but it's quite tangible in Spain.

In Salamanca, a city in central Spain, the climate is different. The repression is the same in all of Spain, the difference is that only in northern

Spain are the people rebelling against it. In Salamanca there was a demonstration in support of the democracy shortly after the attempted coup. The mayor had given permission for a



silent demonstration. The marchers decided that silence was no way to demonstrate anything, and began to chant, shout and sing. The head policeman blew his whistle and all the police descended on the demonstrators with billy clubs. The crowd ran frantically for safety. People were injured. One wonders why the police reacted so strongly against a march in defense of democracy. After all, it is a democratic state, isn't it? The military takeover did not occur. Or did it?

Police repression; the round-up and imprisonment of hundreds of "terrorists"; the closing of newspapers and other

means of communication; long jail sentences for those who are accused of aiding terrorism and minimal sentences for those who participated in the coup; people afraid to speak, write or demonstrate because of possible and now-legal government retaliation. The government makes numerous concessions to the military in order to avoid another takeover. Prime Minister Suarez resigned in the hope that the military would not take over the state. But since all the public leaders are either cooperating openly with the military or cowering in fear, Spain is already being ruled by the military. And "military" in Spain brings memories of Franco and the present reality of fascism, repression and traditionalism on all levels.

SALAMANCA is basically a university town. A small nucleus of students struggles to keep the populace aware that there's a battle raging just a few hours up north. I was appalled by the quantities of military men, police and guards who fill the streets, but the local people seem used to it. Public discussion is certainly inhibited.

Few people in Salamanca support the ETA. Most realize that ETA has gained ground for the people in Euskadi, but Spaniards fear the violence of the militants. It seems as if

innocent people have been killed by the ETA. And of course the Spanish press emphasizes all violence committed by the ETA and represses news about the violence the military and police commit.

IN ANDALUSIA [the historic name for the provinces of southwestern Spain—Ed.] the problems take on a slightly different character. Unemployment has reached 25 percent. There is a great water shortage and therefore the crops are suffering. But somehow rather than blaming the current administration there is a great attitude of fatalism. One hears commonly, "I don't like fascism, but we lived better under Franco." What they don't realize is that the whole world had a better economic situation in the time of Franco. The people of Andalusia pray for rain, pray for work, pray for the end of the extreme economic depression which has been their lot throughout history.

THERE'S a great anti-Yankee sentiment throughout Spain. Spaniards feel like pawns in the struggle between Yankee and Russian imperialism. Spain may enter NATO any day now, which would probably mean increased military spending and more months of obligatory military service. There's also a
(Continued on page 16)

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military initiated the "aper" in 1979. Better to allow workers and other discontented elements to blow off a steam within acceptable channels than risk an explosion the scale of Iran. The Figueiredo government declared amnesty for all political prisoners, eased press censorship, permitted strikes, and promised eventual elections, and allowed some opposition parties to organize.

The response of the people to the "apertura" was swift and quite unexpected by the government. 1979 saw the



Striking workers march in

est strike wave in Brazil's history. The government's first response was to make concessions. In exchange for a two-year moratorium on strikes, the government's economic and planning minister Antonio Delfim Neto offered to allow organization of a central trade union body, guarantee better job security, introduce unemployment benefits, and grant wage increases 5 percent above the rate of inflation. The workers did not agree to a two-year ban on strikes, but Delfim implemented the concessions anyway.

The concessions cool things off for a few months. Then, in April 1980, 150,000 metalworkers (which include autoworkers) in Sao Paulo went on strike. In addition to high wages and job security, the workers demanded a 40-hour week and the right to elect shop stewards and remove government-imposed trade union officials. For the first time workers began making political demands as well as economic ones.

The strike lasted 41 days and at one point was joined by 325,000 other workers. At the same time, discontent spread. For instance, more than half a million peasants and rural workers demonstrated against government agricultural policies. In this atmosphere, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (P

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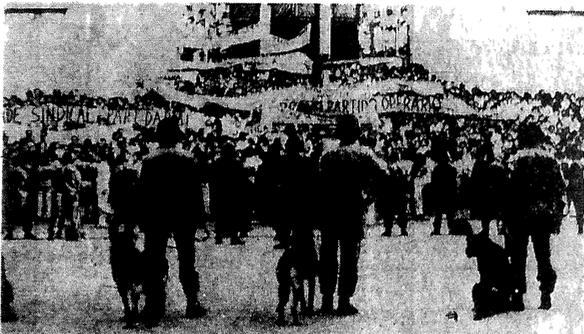
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The strike lasted 41 days and at one point was joined by 325,000 other workers. At the same time, discontent spread. For instance, more than half a million peasants and rural workers demonstrated against government agricultural policies. In this atmosphere, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT

—Workers' Party), an independent, mass party of workers and peasants, grew rapidly. The government, increasingly alarmed at the rapid growth of the PT and the ever more militant strikes, began to change its attitude toward the "apertura". A poll showed Lula, the general secretary of the PT and leader of the metalworkers' strike, running second for the 1982 governor's race for the state of Sao Paolo. In response, the government sent the army out against the metalworkers and arrested Lula and 12 other trade union leaders, charging them with "incitement to col-

lective unrest" and "distribution of subversive materials."

Lula and the other arrested trade union leaders are not radicals or revolutionaries. According to the *Washington Post*, "Lula... works hard to prevent the radicalization of his party." (March 4, 1981) Many sections of the international capitalist class, such as Ted Kennedy and the Pope, think it would be far better to negotiate with Lula than risk the radicalization of the Workers' Party and the possibility of a revolutionary explosion. But despite massive support for Lula from the working masses of Brazil and from significant sections of the capitalist class, the Brazilian government decided to take a hard line against him and the other trade unionists. Of the 13 arrested, three (including Lula) were sentenced to three and a half years, eight were sentenced to two to two and a half years, and two were acquitted. None of the defendants were present at their trial, and the international observers sent by various trade unions were barred from the courtroom.

Lula still faces the possibility of receiving an additional 30 years for "inciting class struggle." The convictions will prevent Lula and the others from running for office for seven years.

So far the government's policy of coupling wage increases

with repression seems to have succeeded in dampening the strike wave. But the lull can only be temporary. Brazil's economic crisis is deepening, and the government is running out of answers. Last year, the inflation rate hit 113 percent, the second highest in the world. The inflation rate for 1981 is expected to top 135 percent.

However, inflation is not the government's number one worry. The foreign debt stands at over \$56 billion (U.S.) and is rising. Measures taken to reduce the foreign debt are slowing considerably the growth rate of the economy, sharply increasing unemployment.

The intensifying economic crisis and the threat of a social upheaval is seriously dividing the Brazilian ruling class. Recent surveys in the business magazine *Exame* show that Brazilian businessowners are increasingly dissatisfied with Delfim's economic policies and the government in general.

Even more serious for the capitalist class are the splits beginning to appear within the military and the official government party. For example, President Figueiredo's own vice president, Aureliano Chaves, has become increasingly opposed to the direction of the apertura. He wants the government to set up an openly democratic system, even at the risk of losing the election.

In other words, the ruling class is splitting over its strategy toward the economy and the increasing social unrest. Some sections want to halt or slow the "apertura" and clamp down on worker and peasant unrest. Others want to speed up the "apertura" and allow the working masses to blow off steam.

While socialist revolution may not be around the corner in Brazil, one thing is clear: The situation cannot go on as it has much longer. Whatever policy the government follows, the forecast is one of increasing instability for Brazilian capitalism and increasing opportunities for the workers, peasants and other oppressed people. The chickens of the Brazilian "economic miracle" are coming home to roost. □

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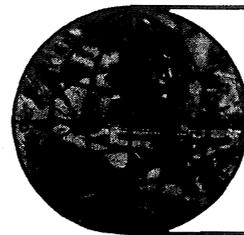


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WORLD IN REVOLUTION



Mitterrand election rocks France

Francois Mitterrand, leader of the French Socialist Party (SP), has become the first left-wing candidate to win the French presidency since the 1950s. In the first round of the presidential election, held April 26, Mitterrand received 26 percent of the vote, incumbent President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, head of the conservative United Democratic Front, received 28 percent, while other candidates split the rest. In accordance with French election procedure, a runoff election between Mitterrand and Giscard d'Estaing was held on May 10. Mitterrand came out the clear winner with 52 percent of the vote.

Mitterrand benefited from the mistakes of the French Communist Party (CP) and a split among right-wing politicians. CP leader Georges Marchais rejected an alliance with the SP in order to run for president himself. Marchais' strategy backfired; the CP got only 15.4 percent of the vote in the first round of the elections, its lowest total since World War II. Following this defeat, the CP gave strong support to Mitterrand in the runoff election as a means of bargaining for influence in Mitterrand's government and rebuilding its credibility among working class voters. Meanwhile, the right-wing vote in the first round was split between Giscard d'Estaing and Jacques Chirac, head of the Gaullist party, Assembly for the Republic, who got 17.5 percent. In the runoff Chirac, who is challenging Giscard d'Estaing for leadership of the French right, gave the latter only a lukewarm endorsement. Polls indicate that many of Chirac's supporters voted for Mitterrand.

Mitterrand himself is a pro-capitalist liberal politician whose program consists of domestic reforms and a generally pro-U.S. foreign policy. Nevertheless, his victory set off panic selling on the French stock market. Investors are afraid Mitterrand's economic proposals, such as nationalizing 11 major industries and instituting public works projects, will destabilize the economy. But they mainly fear the political consequences of his victory. First of all, they worry that battles between Mitterrand and the French National Assembly, where the right has a majority, will paralyze the government. Second, they are concerned that to escape this paralysis Mitterrand will form an alliance with the CP, although he promised not to do so during his campaign. Mitterrand is calling parliamentary elections for June and will need an alliance with the CP to gain a majority. Finally, the capitalists suspect that Mitterrand's election has raised hopes for significant changes in French society among working people. And they fear that social turmoil may break out when these expectations are frustrated.

Afghanistan struggle continues

The Afghan people are maintaining their armed resistance against the Russian troops who invaded their country in December 1979 and against the puppet government of Babrak Karmal. In April, Western diplomatic sources reported heavy fighting in 23 of Afghanistan's 29 provinces, while the insurgents claimed a victory against government troops in Nangarhar province. The most serious fighting seems to be taking place around Kandahar, Afghanistan's second largest city. On May 2, Russian troops sealed off the city, which was under rebel control. They succeeded in recapturing Kandahar on May 10 after attacks by helicopter gunships and tanks. In addition to these battles, the Russian newspaper *Pravda* reported on April 14 that the resistance fighters have been able to inflict considerable damage on military convoys by using a caseless mine that cannot be located by conventional mine detectors.

The Russian troops are doing most of the fighting against the popular forces because the Afghan army has practically disintegrated. Recently there have been indications that the discipline of the Russian troops themselves is breaking down. Just as U.S. soldiers in Vietnam turned to marijuana and other drugs to relieve the strain of waging a war against people fighting for national liberation, Russian soldiers are using hashish, which is both cheap and easily available in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the soldiers are selling uniforms and equipment in city markets. They are also raping an increasing number of Afghan women, according to refugees.

—PB

Democrats Support Reagan Attacks

(Continued from page 1)

working people fall apart under even the briefest examination. The "alternative budget" accepts fully three-fourths of the total Reagan spending cuts. For instance: Reagan proposes to cut \$1.8 billion from the food stamp program; the Democrats want to cut "only" \$1.2 billion. Reagan is demanding a \$2 billion cut in subsidies for child nutrition; the Democrats are for cutting "only" \$1 billion. The administration plans to slash fuel subsidies that enable poor people to heat their homes over the winter by 25 percent; the Democrats propose to cut "only" 10 percent. Reagan's budget eliminates the CETA jobs program altogether; so does the Democratic "alternative."

At the same time, the Democratic budget includes the same giveaways to business that are a major feature of Reagan's economic plan. In particular, the Democrats are not for cutting a dime from the defense budget. Instead, they are joining Reagan and the Republicans in supporting a \$30 billion increase in war spending, the largest in U.S. peacetime history.

As the *Washington Post* observed: "On the spending side of the budget, the differences between the administration and the Democrats are hardly visible without a magnifying glass." (April 8, 1981)

Tax cuts... for the rich

The Democrats have also come up with an "alternative" to Reagan's tax proposals. The Republican administra-

tionals earning \$200,000 a year or more.

Moreover, the Democrats' tax proposal includes windfalls for corporations and individual capitalists that far exceed anything in the Reagan plan. The Democrats advocate lowering the tax rate for corporations that are losing money. They also propose cutting taxes on stock dividends and other investment income from 70 to 50 percent.

In short, the Democrats' economic program is basically the same as the Republicans'. The Democrats, like the Republicans, propose to cut billions of dollars from the social programs poor and working people depend on to survive. And, just like the Republicans, the Democrats want to hand billions of dollars over to the corporations and wealthy capitalists in the hope that they will invest it and get the economy moving.

Positioning for the future

If the Democrats basically agree with the Republicans on economic policy, why have they been making such a stink over the budget in Congress? The answer has less to do with the real issues at stake, such as how to deal with the economic crisis, than it does with the Democrats' attempts to position themselves for the future.

Last fall the Democrats suffered their worst electoral defeat in years. They were clobbered in the presidential race, lost control of the Senate for the first time since 1954, and lost 33 seats in the House. Voters, including many tradi-

tionals. Holding Carter, former State Department spokesperson in Carter's government, summed it up this way: "The Democrats are a party with nothing to say but more of the same, and people want new thoughts. We have run out of new ways of addressing old problems in our society."

This lack of a policy, coupled with the impact of the electoral defeat, has been wreaking havoc inside the party. At the moment, the party is divided into three groupings, each with its own ideas of what kind of policies the party ought to follow. First, there are the liberals, who used to control party policy, but who are now much less influential than they were. Led by Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy, the liberals believe that Democrats should maintain a noisy opposition to Reagan's program in order to preserve the party's base among poor and working people. In an April 12 speech Kennedy warned: "The answer to the problems of the Democratic Party is not for us to pre-



Protesters in Trenton, N.J., condemn budget cuts.

tend somehow that we are similar to Republicans."

At the other end of the political spectrum are the conservative Democrats, who had been pushed into the background during the 1960s and 1970s, and

now are gaining influence as a result of the Reagan victory. About 40 Democratic right-wingers in the House have formed their own faction, the Conservative Democratic Forum, and are demanding a larger role in deciding party policy. Texas Representative Charles Stenholm, one of the group's leaders, declared: "Conservatives among the House Democrats have been ignored for too long, and now we mean to moderate the liberal leanings of the House leadership." These Democratic conservatives are arguing that the party's hopes for recovery lie in supporting the budget cuts and generally trying to look as much like Republicans as they can.

In the face of these differences, the moderates, who include the great majority of Democrats in Congress, propose carrying out a "holding action" on economic policy. They believe that sooner or later the Reagan economic program will collapse. Colorado Senator Gary Hart told the *New York Times*: "I give Reagan 18-24 months to prove he doesn't have any answers either." Consequently, the moderates are arguing that it would be a mistake for Democrats either to attack the president's program when it still has popular backing, or to commit the party to giving it total support. Instead, Democrats should keep quiet until the program's failure becomes apparent. When it does, voters are likely to turn against Reagan and the Democrats should be able to capitalize on the backlash and rebuild their party. The moderates have picked up support for this approach from some of the "pragmatic liberals" such as House Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, who insists Reagan is too popular to oppose now. So while the president was actively rounding up Democratic votes for his budget during Congress's Easter recess, O'Neill went off on a junket to Australia.

The Democratic budget was designed by the Democratic moderates to be the first phase of their strategy. It had two

Beware the Democratic Why the Liberals Are a Threat to Our M

The Democrats' economic program is basically the same as the Republicans'. The Democratic leaders—liberals and conservatives alike—recognize that they can only stabilize U.S. capitalism by attacking the working class. In fact, the Democrats themselves began carrying out parts of the Reagan program when Carter's administration was still in office. They will resume this policy once they return to power.

tion is asking for a three-year, across-the-board 10 percent tax cut. As the last issue of the *Torch/La Antorcha* explained, in practice this plan provides a bonanza for the wealthy, while granting almost no relief to poor and middle-income taxpayers. The Democrats are calling for a one-year, rather than a three-year, tax cut. They also want to limit the cut to a total of \$40 billion, as opposed to the \$53 billion proposed for the first year of the Reagan tax plan. Their proposal does include slightly larger tax breaks for poor families and for taxpayers earning from \$20,000 to \$50,000 a year. But as in the Reagan proposal, two-thirds of the Democratic Party proposed tax cut would go to indi-

vidual Democratic Party supporters among the middle class and the better-off sections of the working class, blamed the Democrats in general, and former president Jimmy Carter in particular, for the country's current economic mess. They turned to Reagan and the Republican Party in part because the Republicans promised new answers to solve the economic crisis, and in part because they were seen as the only alternative to the Democrats.

Six months after the elections, the Democrats have still not come up with a serious alternative to Reagan's economic program and as a result have not provided anybody with a reason to support their party rather than the

Earlier this month, reports the *New York Times* of May 3, Senator Edward Kennedy (D.-MA) and George McGovern, former senator for South Dakota and the Democratic Party's 1972 presidential candidate, attended a "World Leaders Conference" sponsored by the Socialist International (SI) in the Netherlands.

The SI, for those who don't know, is a loose and growing confederation of social democratic parties and organiza-

EDITORIAL

tions throughout the world. While the precise politics differ from party to party, the SI overall claims to stand for some kind of socialism, but in practice fights for (and, where it has power, tries to implement) a reform, or restructuring, of the capitalist system.

Its members range from the Labor Party of Israel (the ruling party of that country from 1948-77) to the New Jewel Movement of Grenada, West Indies, which came to power in a popularly backed coup in 1979. It also includes



Ted Kennedy.

the ruling parties of a number of countries, including West Germany, France, the Dominican Republic and Senegal. The U.S. is represented in the SI by two organizations: the crisis-ridden and in fact arch-conservative

Social Democrats USA (many of whose members and friends are in or supporting the Reagan administration), and the growing, just-left-of-center Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC). DSOC is burrowed deep inside the Democratic Party and acted as loyal foot soldiers in Kennedy's unsuccessful bid for his party's presidential nomination last year.

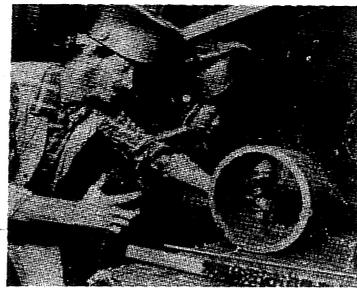
The significance of Kennedy's presence (and, to a lesser extent, McGovern's) at a world meeting of "socialists," no matter how tepid these "socialists" may be, should not be underestimated. For the common wisdom following last November's elections was that liberalism was dead, its long-time policies had failed, and its party—the Democratic Party—had proved unwilling or unable to find "new" ideas. But however much we may wish this was true, we think it is too early to count the bourgeois liberals and the Democratic Party out. In fact, Kennedy's increasing ties with the social democrats point in the direction that liberalism may turn in the coming period.

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now are gaining influence as a result of the Reagan victory. About 40 Democratic right-wingers in the House have formed their own faction, the Conservative Democratic Forum, and are demanding a larger role in deciding party policy. Texas Representative Charles Stenholm, one of the group's leaders, declared: "Conservatives among the House Democrats have been ignored for too long, and now we mean to moderate the liberal leanings of the House leadership." These Democratic conservatives are arguing that the party's hopes for recovery lie in supporting the budget cuts and generally trying to look as much like Republicans as they can.

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Left: Black woman learns welding in a CETA training program, slated for elimination under both the Reagan and the "alternative" budgets. Right: the new XM-1 tank. The Democrats are not for cutting a dime from the defense budget, and support a \$30 billion increase in war spending, the largest in U.S. peacetime history.

purposes. The first and shorter-range goal was to unite the liberal and conservative wings of the party behind a common policy. Specifically, the moderates hoped to win over conservatives by supporting cutbacks in social programs and increased defense spending, while gaining liberal support by maintaining a few liberal social programs.

The second, and longer-range, purpose of the budget was to move the Democratic Party into position to rebuild its political base. In the moderates' view, the "alternative budget" would enable them to reassure poor and working people that the Democrats have not forgotten their needs, while at the same time appealing to their former supporters and others who now support a policy of cutting government spending.

But the "alternative budget" flunked its first test, failing to win the support of the Democratic conservatives. In-



their setback in the House, the moderate Democrats remain convinced that their strategy will eventually succeed. In particular, they believe that the party can only benefit now that the responsibility for solving the country's economic problems lies squarely on the Republicans' shoulders. After the House vote, Arizona Representative Morris K. Udall said: "I think a year from now, when it's obvious the medicine isn't working, interest rates are up, the economy is sluggish and energy prices are raised again, Reagan will be about where Carter was."

In fact, the moderates' holding action does have a solid basis. Many bourgeois economists are skeptical about the Reagan program. They believe that massive tax cuts and increases in defense spending will substantially boost inflation. At the same time they know there is no way to guarantee that the capitalists will use the benefits they receive under the Reagan program for productive investment, as opposed to hoarding, speculation, or buying more yachts. Even conservative economists are doubtful about the tax cuts, and think that the administration's forecasts of greatly increased economic growth, lower inflation and less unemployment are far too optimistic.

Under such circumstances the Democrats will be in a much better position to take on the Republican Party. Conservative Democrats who now enthusias-



Conservative House Democrats (left to right) G.V. Montgomery, Charles Stenholm, Phil Gramm and Kent Hance supported Reagan in budget debate.

e Democratic Party! Is Are a Threat to Our Movement

Social Democrats USA (many of whose members and friends are in or supporting the Reagan administration), and the growing, just-left-of-center Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC). DSOC is burrowed deep inside the Democratic Party and acted as loyal foot soldiers in Kennedy's unsuccessful bid for his party's presidential nomination last year.

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There is no doubt that, today, the Democratic Party, the bulwark of bour-

geois liberalism in the U.S., is in a shambles. Soundly thrashed at the polls last November, the party is now deeply divided over its future course and lacks a serious alternative to Reagan's economic and social programs.

But it would be a mistake to judge the Democratic Party's long-term prospects from its current pathetic state. Democrats are still a majority in the House of Representatives, hold a large minority of seats in the Senate and run numerous state governments. They have extensive ties within the trade union bureaucracy and among leaders of the women's movement, the Black movement and other social movements. Millions of people across the country still consider the Democratic Party their party.

Most importantly, the Democratic Party's longer-term prospects are decent because the current Republican wave is based, in large measure, on many people's expectations that Reagan's programs will accomplish what he claims they will: new investments to refurbish industry, new jobs as investments grow, lower inflation as produc-

(Continued on next page)

When the House voted on the budget proposals on May 7, 63 conservative Democrats joined Republicans in supporting the Gramm-Latta program against the Democratic "alternative budget."

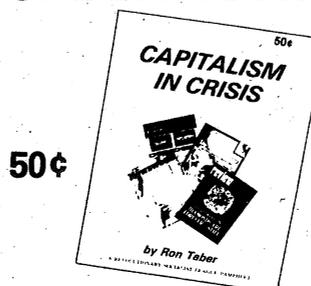
But the "alternative budget" may help the Democrats in the long run. Despite,

tically support Reagan would be more willing to unite with moderates and liberals in attacking his administration. The voters may very well blame Reagan and the Republicans for their economic problems, just as they blamed Carter and the Democrats for them in 1980. And, if the Democrats can achieve a degree of internal unity, and keep their mouths shut as much as possible about their own economic program (or, more precisely, their lack of one), they could eventually sneak back into power.

But such a victory, if it occurs, will be no help for working people. Regardless of their differences, the Democratic leaders—liberals and conservatives alike—recognize that they can only stabilize U.S. capitalism by attacking the working class. In fact, the Democrats themselves began carrying out parts of the Reagan program when Carter's administration was still in office. They will resume this policy once they return to power.

Consequently, it is necessary to begin exposing the lies behind the Democrats' promises now, instead of giving them the opportunity to rebuild their base in the working class without opposition. □

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Beware!

(Continued from previous page)
tivity increases, balanced budgets, peace on earth—all with relatively little dislocation in anyone's life. The reality, however, is and will be far different. At most, Reagan's economic policies will bring about a shallow, temporary upturn in the economy, particularly in defense and defense-related industries. But since the drastic increase in arms spending that Reagan is proposing will produce items that will not reenter the economy while being financed by government borrowing, inflation will skyrocket all that much more. Meanwhile, millions of people, particularly those without the skills needed for increasingly mechanized, computerized industries, will be out of work and will have fewer government programs to survive on. The cities will continue to decay and all the social antagonisms—racism, sexism, anti-gay prejudice—will intensify as people become more and more freaked out. In short, we can expect the capitalist crisis to become more severe, not less so.

It is this, more than anything else, that will provide the Democratic Party with the openings it needs to once again be a contender for power. But if it is to capitalize on these openings, it must carry out two connected tasks. First, it must come up with what appear to be new ideas—a program that looks like a workable alternative to Reagan's. It will not be enough to simply go back to the old platitudes and expect people to buy them. Second, and connected to this, the Democrats must convince enough people that they, unlike the Republicans, will defend people's interests. In other words, the Democratic Party must rebuild its base in the working class, among oppressed people and in some sections of the middle class.

This is the context for Kennedy's attendance at a meeting of the Socialist International. Kennedy and the bourgeois liberals in general know their party is undergoing a deep ideological crisis. It is widely acknowledged that the party lacks the ideologues and ideological centers to provide the Democrats with a new, dynamic program. On the other hand, the social democrats who are inside the Democratic Party (the DSOers) are chomping at the bit to do just that. They are trying to convince Democratic Party liberals that they must move somewhat "left." The longtime liberal program has been to use the government to regulate the economy and mediate the class struggle. DSO wants the liberals to carry this program to its "logical" conclusion—a more statist, supposedly benevolent, capitalism.

While Kennedy himself may never become a "socialist" (social democrat), it is likely that he and his wing of the Democratic Party will increasingly adopt chunks of the social democrats' program. And they will use them, plus accompanying rhetoric, as their calling card in the working class and among oppressed groups.

Liberals need a movement

In fact, we expect the coming period to provide the Democratic liberals with a golden opportunity to ply their wares. On the broadest level, as more and

more people become disillusioned and angry with Reagan, many will almost automatically, given the strength of the two-party tradition in U.S. politics, turn back toward liberal Democrats for leadership.

But if this support remains passive, it will not do the Democratic liberals much good. What they need is a **movement**—a clear platform from which to address millions of people, and the organized forces to build their strength inside the party and actively promote pro-Democratic sentiment in the working class and broader layers of the population. (Indeed, it was the right-wing/fundamentalist movement that



Unemployed demonstration, 1930. In response to the most severe crisis the capitalist system had ever experienced, a mass, working class movement emerged that had the potential to threaten the very existence of the system. But the Democratic Party, led by Franklin D. Roosevelt, succeeded—with the active help of the Communist Party, which had leadership in the mass movement—in channeling the movement into working for the restructuring of the system through the New Deal. As a result, the movement never became truly revolutionary. U.S. capitalism was able to restabilize itself and emerge from World War II with a refurbished system that could dictate to the rest of the world.

gave Reagan and the Republicans in general such a powerful platform and the many cadre to score so big in last year's elections.)

Such a movement potentially exists in the anti-Reagan/anti-cutbacks/anti-war/anti-right-wing movement that is presently rather small but may grow rapidly as the capitalist crisis worsens. As this movement develops, thousands of people will be drawn into political activity who are basically new to the struggle. They will be seeking change, but will not necessarily know how this change can be brought about. Many, if not most, will still believe that the problem is not the capitalist system itself, but how that system is managed and run. They will be open to all sorts of notions that reform of the capitalist system is possible.

This is where the Democratic Party liberals come in. The liberals, most likely with the rhetoric and programs provided by the social democrats, will claim to have solidarity with the people in struggle against the cutbacks, the right wing, U.S. intervention in El Salvador, or whatever. Without having lifted a finger to actually organize the movement, they will attempt to put themselves at the head of it—to become its spokespeople and its leaders.

This development would represent a grave danger to the movement of workers and oppressed people. As the RSL and the **Torch/La Antorcha** have emphasized time and again, the current crisis of the capitalist system is not a temporary phenomenon. The entire world economy is rapidly deteriorating; the developed capitalist countries both east and west are experiencing increas-

what the workers' movement must understand if it is to have a chance of saving itself and the rest of humanity from total annihilation.

But this understanding is precisely what the Democratic Party liberals will seek to prevent. Whatever rhetoric they use today, or will use tomorrow, however much they may oppose the details of this or that specific policy of Reagan's, the Democratic liberals, like the party as a whole, have always and will always stand for and fight to preserve capitalism. They will try to channel the anger and militancy of the movement into voting for "good" politicians and working for "good" laws. They will tell people that the **cause** of the crisis is that the people who have power (the Republicans) abuse that power, that they do not represent "the people," and that the answer is to work through the "political system"—that is, get drawn into the electoral arena and elect politicians who are "truly" friends of the people (i.e., Democrats).

In short, they will try to use the movement to rebuild the Democratic Party under their leadership and catapult it back into power. From that position, they will try to use the movement as a battering ram against the more right-wing sections of the capitalists to restructure (reform) the system the better to defend it.

This is in fact what happened in the U.S. in the 1930s. In response to the most severe crisis the capitalist system had ever experienced, a mass, working class movement emerged that had the potential to threaten the very existence of the system. But the Democratic Party, led by Franklin D. Roosevelt, succeeded—with the very active help of the Communist Party, which had leadership in the mass movement—in channeling the movement into working for the restructuring of the system, through New Deal measures, an increase in the role of the state in the economy and throughout society, etc. As a result, the movement never became truly revolutionary. U.S. capitalism was able to restabilize itself and emerge from World War II with a refurbished system that could dictate to the rest of the world.

This threat that the Democratic Party represents is all the more real today because there are many groups and individuals on the left who believe that they can use the Democratic liberals to help build the movement, without understanding, or perhaps caring, that it is they who are being used. These leftists are perfectly prepared to work themselves to the bone to organize demonstrations, conferences and other mass activity—only to hand over the speaker's platform to Democratic Party liberals and politicians. They are perfectly willing to keep quiet (and silence others) about what they supposedly really think: that capitalism is the problem, that the workers' movement must fight for socialist revolution. In so doing, these leftists prepare the way for the Democratic Party liberals to come in and derail the movement.

Right now, with the Democratic Party in tatters, the liberals may not seem to be much of a threat. Ted Kennedy certainly may now sound like a lone voice in the wilderness when much of the rest of his party is in retreat before the Reagan steamroller. But this is only temporary. As our movement grows, more and more Democrats will embrace it, only to use it for their own ends. We have to be saying **now**, we have to be explaining **now**, that the liberals and the Democratic Party as a whole are no friends of the movement, no friends of the working class, no friends of freedom.

—By SUSAN EDMUNDS

Bull

By ANNE

Women in Defense of the Night March for June 6 following day the Women Take Back the Conference. We planned for the include rape, battered abortion, and right-wing attacks.

This organization larger international the Night movement focused on the and violence against

The events are a time when the entire working class increasing attacks the Reagan budget programs that the lives of millions Welfare, food care, legal aid battered women just a few of the grams.

Layoffs, unemployment wage cuts hit hard. Any gains active action legislation back severely loosened the affirmative requirements in now if a woman is most likely to and low security

On the job, we face sexual harassment response to this against this has Senate Labor C

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The above is ex discussing at our 1981. The conventi on Black liberation Southwest. In add from the RSL's sis Revolutionary Mar

We would like to necessary to carry publication of the Antorcha. Publicat ber 14 issue.

Friends of the R tion should write to 10116. Those who c friends in prison, a

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—By SUSAN EDMUNDS

Build a Fighting Women's Movement!

By ANNE TISANE

Women in Detroit are organizing a Take Back the Night March for June 6, 1981. The following day there will be a Women Take Back Our Lives Conference. Workshop topics planned for the conference include rape, battered women, abortion, and how to fight the right-wing attacks.

This organizing is part of a larger international Take Back the Night movement that has focused on the issues of rape and violence against women.

The events are happening at a time when women and the entire working class are under increasing attack. For example, the Reagan budget cuts will hit programs that directly affect the lives of millions of women. Welfare, food stamps, child care, legal aid and funding for battered women's shelters are just a few of the targeted programs.

Layoffs, unemployment, and wage cuts hit women workers hard. Any gains won by affirmative action legislation were set back severely when Reagan loosened the affirmative action requirements in February. So now if a woman can find a job it is most likely to be low paying and low security.

On the job, women workers face sexual harassment. In response to the movement against this harassment, the Senate Labor Committee re-

cently held hearings—and solicited the testimony of the right-wing anti-feminist Phyllis Schlafly, who said that "sexual harassment on the job is not a problem, for the virtuous woman."

In addition, the anti-abortion movement has made it nearly impossible for poor women to get free, safe, legal abortions. The proposed Human Life Amendment would further the attacks on women's right to control our bodies by making abortion—and most forms of birth control—illegal under any circumstances.

The Moral Majority has an openly sexist program. They support the Family Protection Act, which if passed, would be a serious attack on women, lesbians, and gays. This is the same group that supports the death penalty for homosexuals and the right of men to beat their wives.

Violence against women on the rise

In this climate, incidents of physical violence against women are increasing. There are 19 unsolved murders of women in Detroit since 1979. The cops say that the women were prostitutes, meaning that somehow the women were provocative or deserved to be killed.

Far right-wing groups like

the KKK and the Nazis are responsible for the shooting of four Black women in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the attack on a young woman at a Detroit high school this past winter. Just last month a Detroit woman lost four fingers when she tried to defuse a bomb thrown into her home by racists.

These attacks are not just coincidental, random violence directed only at women. They are part of a general ruling class offensive against the entire working class. Capitalism, this system that enslaves millions of people for the profit of a handful of super-rich people, is falling apart. The capitalists are starting to take increasingly desperate measures to maintain their power. The "first people who suffer are the most oppressed—women, gays, poor people, Blacks, Latins, Arabs, the elderly—but no one in the working class is excluded.

The direct attacks by the ruling class—like wage cuts, sexist legislation, and the budget cuts—are obvious. But the ruling class is also able to make indirect attacks by creating a climate that encourages divisions in the working class and makes it harder for us to fight back.

As the turmoil and confusion and violence of everyone's lives increase, many people start to blame and attack each other instead of turning their anger toward the real enemy—the people who run the whole capitalist system and keep all of us down. So U.S. workers are set against Iranian and Japanese workers, men are set against women, white against Black, straight against gay, employed against unemployed, skilled against unskilled, etc. At the same time, certain sections of the population, particularly some whites and people in the middle class, blame the breakdown of traditional

values—like family, God, and country—for the mess the society is in. And if you believe that the problem is that women or Blacks (or any other oppressed group) have too much power and are threatening these traditional values, then a return to a less permissive, more repressive climate seems like a solution.

It is in this context that racist and sexist violence, both organized and unorganized, flourishes. What this means for women is that our lives are threatened by violence of all kinds—rape, unemployment, battering, no control of our sexuality, and organized right-wing attacks, to name a few.

Rape issue related to other attacks

A women's movement is vitally important when our lives are under such immediate and violent threats. The Take Back the Night movement can be an important part of a movement that fights violence against women. Women organizing and leading is a vital part of ending the fear and isolation that keeps women from changing our lives.

But if the Take Back the Night movement falls into the trap of seeing rape as a single issue, unrelated to other assaults on women and men, it will be weakened. We need to explain to people that rape is

not separate from abortion being made illegal. It is not separate from the attacks on lesbians and gay men. And rape is not separate from the budget cuts, the mass unemployment and the open racist attacks. All these things are part of a system based on profits for a small handful while the rest of us are pitted against each other, told that the only way we can get anything—whether the necessities of life or some respect—is by getting over on other people. And this system is going into a worsening crisis, making all the attacks, divisions and competition even more cut-throat.

Most important, we have to understand that the only way we can seriously begin to stop violence against women is for everyone under attack to unite. We need to build a united working class movement that is prepared to fight in defense of everybody's interests—a movement that stands for "an injury to one is an injury to all." We need a movement where working class and oppressed people rely on our own strength, not the cops, the government or the bosses, who are our enemies. And we need a movement that sees that the only way to get rid of violence against women, and all oppression, once and for all, is to get rid of the capitalist system that causes it.

We need to work to make Take Back the Night, this year, part of the beginning of such a movement. □

RSL Convention in June

"In the coming years, world capitalism will experience a devastating global crisis, which will include deep economic stagnation, social upheavals, including mass fascist movements and proletarian uprisings. Will the result of all this be fascist dictatorships, leading to a new world war and total destruction? State-capitalist transformations that lead to the same end? The re-establishment of the present state of affairs, but short of world war? Or an international socialist revolution which puts all the capitalist garbage behind us and puts us on the road to a truly human, cooperative society?"

"In our view, which of these outcomes actually comes to pass depends on whether or not there are revolutionary working class parties that can provide political leadership to the broader layers of people in struggle and fight to prevent the movements/upsurges from coming or staying under the control of those forces that are enemies of the socialist revolution. . . ." (Tasks and Perspectives for Fifth National RSL Convention)

The above is excerpted from one of the resolutions we will be discussing at our upcoming convention, to be held June 19-21, 1981. The convention will also take up two other resolutions, one on Black liberation and the other on Mexicans and Chicanos in the Southwest. In addition, the convention will open with a report from the RSL's sister organization in Jamaica, West Indies, the Revolutionary Marxist League.

We would like to remind our readers that because of the work necessary to carry out a successful convention, we plan to skip publication of the July 15-August 14 issue of the *Torch/La Antorcha*. Publication will resume with the August 15-September 14 issue.

Friends of the RSL who are interested in attending the convention should write to Rod Miller, RSL, PO Box 1288, New York, NY 10116. Those who cannot attend the convention, in particular our friends in prison, are invited to send solidarity messages.



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