UNIONS UNDER ATTACK

- Labor Leaders Adopt Retreat Strategy
- Philadelphia Teachers Strike Over Contract Violations
- PATCO Faces Decertification Bid

What Is ‘Reaganism’?
How Can We Fight It?

The following is a position paper, slightly edited for space reasons, written by the Revolutionary Socialist League for the All Peoples Congress to be held in Detroit, October 16-18.

Ronald Reagan has launched an offensive against poor and working people that is more far-reaching, systematic and ruthless than anything seen in decades. From school lunches to welfare, from the right to abortion to affirmative action, the basic needs and rights of millions of people in this country are today under attack.

At the same time, Reagan is dumping billions of dollars into B-1 bombers, MX missile systems, Rapid Deployment Forces and the like—a program of militarism and war that threatens the very existence of all of humanity.

Slowly, but definitely, a movement to oppose these policies is growing. Across the country, coalitions to oppose the budget cuts have formed. A half million people marched in the streets of Washington, D.C., on Solidarity Day to protest the Reagan program. Philadelphia teachers are on strike, as are the air traffic controllers and other workers. Thousands of young people have refused to register for the draft. Tens of thousands of people have marched against U.S. intervention in El Salvador. And, around the world, millions are demonstrating against the Reagan program of nuclear holocaust.

How can this fightback be turned into a united, powerful, mass movement that can successfully defeat the Reagan program? This is the most urgent question facing us at this weekend's meeting of the All Peoples Congress.

We hope that the following thoughts will help to move this important discussion forward.

1. What is ‘Reaganism’?

To build the movement we need, we must first know what it is we are fighting. What is “Reaganism”?

Reaganism is the policy of the majority of the U.S. ruling class—the corporate owners, bankers and politicians who own the wealth of this country and run its political system.

The attacks we are facing are not the result of Reagan having won the 1980 elections. While this may appear to be the case, there are really deeper, more fundamental reasons why a full-scale assault on working and oppressed people is underway.

The main reason for these attacks is that the capitalist system itself is in an acute and deepening crisis. The U.S. economy is now entering its second recession in two years. Major industries—auto, steel, housing, even the banks—are tottering on the brink of collapse. Inflation is high. Millions are unemployed. The cities are falling apart.

This is not a temporary or short-term crisis; it is not a matter of a couple of bad years, soon to be followed by a return to so-called good times. We are in the beginning stages of a deep, long-
Reader praises TORCH, reports on draft resistance

Dear Friends,

I am a draft-age young man, or as a friend recently put it, a resistance-age young man. I have refused to register, based on a deep commitment to nonviolence. I am now wrapped up in organizing draft resistance with others here in Berkeley.

I've had friends in RSL for a while and have been reading Torch/La Antorcha closely for the past several months. I must say I find the Torch/La Antorcha's perspective on war, which is very similar to my own, and the creative input of all the participants.

Sincerely,
Paul Trudeu

A Report on the West Coast Resistance Gathering
By Aaron Weinstein and Paul Trudeu

On September 26 and 27, nonregistrants and their supporters gathered in Berkeley for the West Coast Resistance Gathering of 1981. As the Gathering opened early Saturday morning, the mood was immediately festive. Carloads of nonregistrants began to arrive from Diablo Canyon, bringing with them messages and stories of solidarity. Informal workshops on legal issues, feminism, outreach, civil disobedience and other subjects, along with a presentation by Vietnam-era draft resisters and the showing of the Women's Pentagon Action film, filled the day's activities.

After adjourning for Sunday's picnic of the Jack Tar Hotel in San Francisco, where Salvadoran junta leader José Napoleon Duarte spent the weekend, the Gathering closed with a picnic in Lafayette Park. During the course of the weekend, draft resisters, including over 25 public nonregistrants, from Oregon, Washington, California, and Colorado, had built a human, supportive foundation for the growing West Coast resistance network. A more tangible outcome of the Gathering was the establishment of a West Coast newsletter and phone tree. Given that the Justice Department will likely be initiating a campaign of local and national police or national guard of El Salvador to deport them, they have obtained some sort of stay in the country.

I wish to take this opportunity to ask for information regarding other support or assistance from someone who is a professional in the area of asylum. I am a native of El Salvador and the immigration of this country is going to deport me to El Salvador unless I can obtain some sort of stay in the country. You should have more money to buy them. Very, very.

I am one prisoner inside the Wisconsin state prison and very shortly another prisoner passed on to me a copy of the Torch. I am very impressed with this newspaper and I would like to request a free subscription following notice in the paper that you do provide these subscriptions to those of us in prison who do not have money to buy them.

I wish to take this opportunity to ask for certain information regarding either support or assistance from someone who is a professional in the area of asylum. I am a native of El Salvador and the immigration of this country is going to deport me to El Salvador unless I can obtain some sort of stay in the country. You should have more money to buy them. Very, very.

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Jamaican Gov’t Threatens Left

Below we are reprinting an important press release from the RSL’s sister organization in Jamaica, the Revolutionary Marxist League. The RML reports that the ruling right-wing capitalist Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), which ousted the liberal capitalist People’s National Party (PNP) in elections last October, is now launching a crackdown on left-wing forces on the island. Since receiving this press release, we have been informed that in late September the police picked up and interrogated the chairman of the PNP’s Youth Organization, Paul Burke. While Burke was subsequently released, the government has claimed that they found tapes and letters in his possession further “proving” the existence of a pro-Cuba terrorist network in Jamaica.

On Wednesday, September 23, Security and Justice Minister, Mr. Winston Spaulding, made his contribution to the second sectoral debate in the House of Representatives. In that speech Mr. Spaulding targeted the Revolutionary Marxist League (RML) and the Workers’ Party of Jamaica (WPJ), the two active left-wing tendencies in Jamaica today. To justify this he has repeated and elaborated the charges made by other government spokesmen that the left is responsible for crime, terrorism, subversion and economic disruption in Jamaica. As before, no real evidence has been offered to substantiate this charge, because none exists.

The Revolutionary Marxist League wishes to state categorically that it is in no way involved in planting, encouraging or carrying out any acts of crime or violence within the society as charged by Mr. Spaulding. The Revolutionary Marxist League is neither a terrorist nor criminal organization. We are a communist organization of the working class and injustice. We publish and distribute publicly a monthly newspaper called Forward, assist workers striking in defence of their rights and living standards, assist communities struggling for proper lighting, sewage, and other amenities, defend the struggle by women for equal rights and justice and otherwise participate in the daily life and struggles of the working and oppressed people of Jamaica. In all our work we explain and demonstrate to working people that their misery and suffering will continue as long as a small handful of greedy and vicious local and foreign capitalists continue to control the so-

Spaulding said security efforts would be aimed at “sutilizing the subservience and nullifying them.”

He said an article in a publication of the Revolutionary Marxist League was inflammatory and intended to incite criminal action.
NEARLY HALF OF NUCLEAR PLANTS IN U.S. SHOWN TO BE DEFECTIVE

By RANDY CONRAD

The nuclear power industry in the United States has been rocked in recent weeks by a series of disclosures that highlight the dangers of nuclear power.

The most sensational revelations concern the Diablo Canyon reactor in California. On September 30, Pacific Gas & Electric, which owns the Diablo Canyon facility, admitted that the company was not aware of the risks associated with the reactor's construction.

For example, the company was not aware that the reactor was being built in an area prone to earthquakes, even though it is just a few miles from an active fault line. The company also failed to address the possibility of being hit by a major earthquake.

The reactor's safety is also affected. It has been proposed that the reactor could be kept under guard for 40 years.

The reactor's brittleness is the more serious problem. In order to understand why, it is necessary to explain a little about how a reactor works.

The heart of a power plant is the reactor core, which is surrounded by a steel reactor vessel. The vessel contains the radioactive fuel rods and is lined with a layer of steel to slow down the neutrons that are generated in the fuel.

If the reactor vessel is brittle, it could shatter in a major earthquake, releasing radioactive material into the environment.

The error affects most of the key safety and cooling systems that are supposed to protect the reactor in case of serious accidents. Because of the design switch, the supports for water pipes in the emergency cooling system are inadequate. The cable supports for electronic controls of the reactor and for the emergency monitors are inadequate. Five other safety systems that relate to cooling and fueling of the reactor are also affected.

The result is a nuclear time bomb sitting in a major earthquake zone, waiting to go off.

Before the latest disclosures, Pacific Gas & Electric had obtained a security approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to start up the reactor. The NRC is now looking into the construction errors. The commission is deciding whether to allow the utility to start up the reactor.

Blueprint for disaster

But the recent problems of the nuclear power industry go far beyond the Diablo Canyon reactor. After all, the utilities can claim that Diablo Canyon would be safe if only the correct blueprint had been used. However, other problems have surfaced that show that the basic design of nuclear reactors is flawed and unsafe.

The theory behind nuclear power plants is that each reactor will produce electric power safely and with only minimal up-keep and repair for 40 years. But after less than 10 years of operations, 17 of 50 operating reactors in the U.S. have serious design problems and 13 of 50 have extremely brittle steel reactor vessels. These problems are designed right into the reactors from the beginning.

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Small Turnout for Diablo Canyon Blockade—But Construction Flaws Halt Start-Up

By ALBERT LARY

A long-awaited blockade of Diablo Canyon, the world’s most controversial nuclear power plant, moved into gear on September 10 after a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) appeals board approved a security plan for the $2.3 billion California facility. The anti-nuclear group, Abalone Alliance, immediately called on its supporters to gather near the plant and prepare for a massive land and sea blockade to prevent a series of low-energy start-up testings.

Construction of Diablo Canyon was begun by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) over 14 years ago. The licensing process alone has taken nearly 10 years, during which the projected costs of the plant have quadrupled. So far, not a single kilowatt of electricity has been produced. And for good reason.

Diablo Canyon sits on a beach cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, 15 miles from San Luis Obispo, on the central California coast. Two and one-half miles offshore is an active earthquake fault, a branch of the famous San Andreas fault system. Opponents claim that the plant could shatter in a major earthquake and that the adequate plans exist to cope with a nuclear emergency.

Unlike a 1978 protest at Diablo which no-nuke organizers called “more of a symbolic action,” this was supposed to be for real. Up to 30,000 people were expected to invade the power plant property in waves—through the front gate, over mountainous trails, and by sea. The goal was to get as many people as possible near the plant in order to disrupt its operations and prevent the start-up tests. Optimistic organizers talked about clogging the local court system with non-violent blockaders accepted arrest, then returned to do it again. Some claimed the action would continue for months.

The response turned out to be much less than expected, however, and despite 2,000 protesters and 1,900 arrests, the blockade never went beyond a symbolic, media-oriented game of cat-and-mouse with the police.

Over 800 state police, sheriff’s deputies and National Guardsmen were mobilized to stop the blockade, and Abalone Alliance leaders worked closely with them. To ensure an entirely peaceful action, all blockaders were required to undergo a six-hour class in non-violent training, promise not to resist arrest or fight back if attacked, and agree to be searched for drugs and weapons. No political rallies were allowed at the protest site, 15 miles from the plant, and security was very tight. Sheriff’s deputies were even invited to sit in on the

(Continued on page 16)
Deaf the ‘Human Life’ Amendment!

Congress Opens Debate on Anti-Abortion Measures

By PAT NELSON

Women's rights organizations throughout the U.S. are gearing up for a major battle against the country's powerful right-wing movement. The issue is women's right to abortion. Supporters of legalized abortion, who won a major victory in 1973 when the Supreme Court ruled that a woman had a constitutional right to have an abortion, are fighting to protect that right. Meanwhile, the zealots of the religious and moralistic right are seeking to get around the courts with legislation that would make abortion murder.

On October 5, the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution began hearings in the so-called Human Life Amendment (HLA). The amendment states: "The paramount right to life is vested in each human being from the moment of fertilization without regard to age, health or condition of dependency..." These 25 words, if they become law, will force hundreds of thousands of women to go through with unwanted pregnancies—even ones that are the result of rape, ones that have a high probability of producing infants with severe birth defects, or ones that could result in the deaths of the women themselves.

Women's movement leaders believe the HLA, if passed, would be illegal abortions—with all the accompanying safety risks and the possibility of being hit with murder charges if they are found out.

All this because a minority of self-righteous people say that God has told them that abortion is murder and that it is their duty to force this belief on all of society.

THE right-wing forces, including the "right-to-lifers" and the Moral Majority, got a huge boost from the election of Ronald Reagan. Believing they have the "mandate of the American people," they have built a coordinated, far-reaching offensive which has resulted in attacks on welfare recipients, unemployed people, those on social security, the unions, undocumented workers, gay people and oppressed people in general. Now the focus is again on abortion.

Last July, the HLA was approved by the Senate Subcommitte on the Separation of Powers. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), a member of that subcommittee, voted for the amendment. Hatch, a long-time opponent of abortion, has called the current hearings in the constitutional subcommittee which he chairs. He has said that he has doubts about the constitutionality of Congress deciding by law when life begins. In fact, he and other right-wing politicians fear that the HLA is too extreme to pass. Or if it does make it through Congress, it will fail to be circumstances. While many of these people do not personally believe in abortion, they do feel it is a matter of choice.

In an attempt to keep the momentum on the side of the conservatives, Hatch has introduced a "compromise" amendment which would give Congress and the Several States the power to regulate or prohibit abortion. This would take abortion rights out of the jurisdiction of the courts. Congress, the state legislatures could pass anti-abortion laws by a simple majority vote instead of the two-thirds required for a constitutional amendment.

IT'S NOT that Hatch has changed his position on abortion. He and his cohorts are still deadly enemies of women's rights. But they are not prepared right now for an all-out war over the HLA—and it is becoming evident that that is what there will be.

Women's rights groups that have been organizing against the HLA are not being fooled by this so-called compromise. They know that if this bill passes the states get jurisdiction, the right-wing forces will gear up to get abortion outlawed state by state. (We have seen the results of their high-pressure tactics in the fight for the ERA.)

These suspicions are confirmed by the president of the National Right-to-Life Committee, Dr. John Willke. "The suggested scenario," he says, "holds that once the nation has become used to living without the freedom to abort [after abortion has been outlawed in most states], then we would come back with the 'human life amendment and lock it in.'" (New York Times, 9/22/81)

But this "compromise" has widened the split which has been developing within the right wing. Many of the far-right anti-abortion forces view Hatch's bill as a sellout of their principles. These single-issue people want the HLA, period! Anything else, they fear, would make the right look weaker and dim their chances of success.

WE cannot allow ourselves to get over-confident about the divisions within the right-wing movement. We must take this opportunity to build the forces on the side of women's rights to choose. It is important for the movement to link up with others who are the targets of the right-wing attacks—Blacks, Latinos, Asians, lesbians and gays, youth and the elderly, the unions and the unemployed. The right wing is discovering that single-issue politics weakens the struggle and we must learn that lesson too.

Working and oppressed people are being attacked by a unified force and we must pull our forces together and fight back. If we do, we can take the initiative away from the right and build momentum to push back the attacks.

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Defeat the 'Human Life' Amendment!
Black L.A. College Football Player Murdered by Cops

By BRUCE KALA

On the evening of June 2, Ron Settles, a 21-year-old Black man, was stopped for speeding by Cal State Long Beach Police near Signal Hill, a middle class suburb of Long Beach, California. Witnesses saw Settles being beaten without provocation, then arrested. In the Signal Hill booking cell, Settles was again brutally beaten. That night was over, Ron Settles was dead—supposedly a suicide, having hanged himself with his mattress cover—a “discovery” made by the very same officer Brown.

IT IS sad and outrageous, but there is nothing unusual in this story to the Black community. The police have always held a license to kill and the current offensive by the ruling class is encouraging their terror. In nearby Los Angeles, city police have killed 11 people with choke holds alone in the last six years—a practice approved by the Supreme Court in September when it refused to grant an injunction against them. This same cop, Jerry Lee Brown, had already gotten away with murder once, seven years earlier.

BUT this time, things were different. Ron Settles was not another poor, unknown Black whose murder could be easily covered over. He had won fame as the star running back of the Cal State Long Beach football team. His parents were able to afford to hire lawyers to press for an investigation. As a result, some of the truth has come out.

Classmates, friends and professors from Cal State Long Beach organized Concerned Persons for Justice in the Ron Settles Murder. Demonstrations were held, denouncing the coverup and demanding justice. These protests, and the legal struggle by Settles’ family lawyers, finally forced the government to hold an inquest to rule on the cause of death—after over two months of struggle. At this hearing, witnesses to the arrest, the beating, the choking, and the suicide note are going to testify that none of the cells had mattress covers.

Independent medical experts, hired by the Settles family, showed that his death may have come from a choke hold and revealed the many injuries he suffered. The inquest ruled on this evidence that Ron Settles had died at the hands of another. This verdict has helped bring the truth to light, but it is still a long way from justice. Only after two weeks of stalling and another demonstration did the

Prisoner briefs

On September 29, Reuters news service reported that 6,000 prisoners in Spanish jails, nearly moved to better quarters this month, are on a hunger strike. The government claims at least 200,000, as much as in all of 1980. It is now at its point of origin. This order amounts to a call for wide spread acts of U.S. piracy on the high seas.

The order does not specify that ships of any particular national origin are to be stopped. But according to a White House spokesman, the order was designed primarily for use against Haitian refugees. Previously, the Coast Guard could only stop suspicious ships after they entered U.S. territorial waters. Without this restriction, a Coast Guard cutter has already taken up the position off the Haitian coast.

More than 60,000 undocumented Haitian immigrants have arrived in the U.S. in the past 10 years and new arrivals are coming at the rate of 1,500 per month. Most Haitians make the 900-mile trip from their island nation to south Florida in small open boats, risking storms, attacks by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) against undocumented immigrants continue at a high level in Los Angeles. Reports and rumors are circulating widely through the Latino community of almost-daily raids, street sweeps and attacks. Latino immigrants are being picked up in restaurants, liquor stores, factories, and bus stops.

OCTAVIO Gómez, a staff photographer for La Opinion, frequently covers INS activities for his newspaper. He was on the scene August 20 when a group of religious women briefly blocked an INS van carrying Salvadoran refugees to the airport for deportation. INS agents first tried to prevent him from photographing the incident, then demanded identification. When Gómez showed them his press credentials, they replied, “No, no, what’s your citizenship?” Gómez, who is
Reagan Calls for Piracy on High Seas; Order Aimed at Haitian Refugees

By executive order on September 29, President Reagan ordered the U.S. Coast Guard to stop ships in international waters which are suspected of carrying undocumented immigrants to this country. The order includes permission to fire weapons, if necessary, at ships which fail to halt for U.S. inspection. If undocumented immigrants are found aboard, the ship is to be forcibly returned to its point of origin. This order amounts to a call for widespread acts of U.S. piracy on the high seas.

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More than 60,000 undocumented Haitian immigrants have entered the U.S. in the past 10 years and new arrivals are coming at the rate of 1,500 per month. Most Haitians make the 900-mile trip from their island nation to south Florida in small open boats, risking storms, sharks, shipwreck and starvation. Those who can get into the U.S. without arrest often become migrant farm laborers.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with a daily minimum wage of $2.64, 70 percent unemployment, few labor unions and almost no laws covering working conditions or benefits. The country has been ruled for 24 years as the personal property of the corrupt Duvalier family. The current dictator, Jean-Claude Duvalier, took over from his father as self-proclaimed "president for life."

U.S. businesses such as GTE, Sylvania and Sears, Roebuck and Company love Haiti. They call it the "Taiwan of the Caribbean." To them it offers cheap labor, low taxes and little government interference. But for six million Haitians, life is hell. Escaping from Haiti may be their only chance to live. And going back may mean death. The Haitian government considers all its refugees to be spies and traitors. Amnesty International reports that some refugees returned to Haiti against their will have been imprisoned and tortured. But that's of no concern to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The order took effect in 1978-79, the INS received 599 requests for asylum from Haitians—and denied every one.

Undocumented Haitians arrested by the INS are imprisoned without bail. This no-bail policy is a discretionary one, currently applied only to Haitians. Other arriving "boat people" without visas, such as the Vietnamese refugees, have generally been released into the community and given work permits while the government decides on their status. But the government claims that Haitians, unlike Vietnamese refugees, are not fleeing political repression and so are not entitled to political asylum. Michael Posner, a volunteer lawyer for many of the Haitians, calls it "an example of the new get-tough policy toward refugees, to discourage others from coming."

Fifteen hundred Haitians are being held at Krome North, a detention center built for 800 in the Florida Everglades. Eight hundred more were recently flown to a prison camp at Fort Allen, Puerto Rico, where they live in unsanitary tents surrounded by barbed wire. Eighty occupy a former Navy prison in Brooklyn. Smaller numbers are being kept in upstate New York, Texas and West Virginia.

The refugees are entitled to public, individual hearings on their claims for asylum, with lawyers and interpreters provided. But what they've been getting is mass, secret hearings from which even their own lawyers have been barred. Some immigration judges have taken 18 cases at once, with prejudiced interpreters who do not speak the language of the refugees.

Most Haitians do not understand French (their official language) nor even the upper class Creole dialect spoken by educated Haitians. One investigation found that many court interpreters could not translate such key words as "visa," "hearing," "citizen," or "asylum." In Haiti, the word for "asylum" is understood to mean a mental hospital. One group of refugees, when asked if they wished to appeal to a "higher court," heard the phrase as a reference to a "larger courtroom."

According to refugee Lucien Louis, "When I said I was afraid to go back, the interpreter got mad. I changed my mind. But I knew it was my death."

Part of the government's strategy in dispersing the Haitians around the country and to Puerto Rico is to avoid the pool of experienced immigration lawyers in south Florida who are making it hard to go forward with the deportations. The latest plan is to reactivate an isolated former Air Force base in Glaston, Montana, near the Canadian border, as a center for undocumented immigrants under detention. Five hundred Cubans are scheduled to be sent to Montana this month. They will be joined later by Haitian and Central American prisoners. Up to 10,000 people can be held at the Montana site while awaiting deportation. Winter temperatures there often reach 40 degrees below zero.

When word of this newest concentration camp reached the Haitian refugees at Krome North in Florida September 29, 600 prisoners rebelled and drove guards from the prison compound. During the fighting, 100 Haitians briefly escaped into the surrounding swamps. Unfortunately, all but five were recaptured.

La Migra Harasses L.A.'s Major Spanish-Language Newspaper

Attacks by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) against undocumented immigrants continue at a high level in Los Angeles. Reports and rumors are circulating widely through the Latino community of almost-daily raids, street sweeps and arrests. Latinos are being picked up in restaurants, liquor stores, factories, and bus stops.

Octavio Gómez, a staff photographer for L.A.'s Spanish-language daily, La Opinión, frequently covers INS activities for his newspaper. He was on the scene August 20 when a group of religious women briefly blocked an INS van carrying Salvadoran refugees to the airport for deportation. INS agents first tried to prevent him from photographing the incident, then demanded identification. When Gómez showed them his press credentials, they replied, "No, no, what's your citizenship?" Gómez, who is a Mexican "resident alien," was forced to show his INS-issued green card before being released.

One week later, Gómez tried to photograph an INS street sweep in Glendale when he was again stopped and physically interfered with. "We know you," one INS agent said menacingly, as he confiscated the camera's film.

As a result of these incidents, Gómez's boss, Ignacio Lozano, Jr., filed a complaint September 8 with the U.S. Attorney's office, charging the INS with First Amendment civil rights violations. Lozano had reason to think his complaint would receive a speedy response. He is a wealthy editor, publisher, and former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, with plenty of ruling class and Republican Party connections.

The response was speedy alright. But it wasn't quite what he had expected.

One day after Lozano's complaint was filed, his newspaper offices were raided by the INS. Two undocumented Latino workers were arrested.

"In 55 years, they have never conducted a raid here," Lozano declared angrily. "This kind of retaliation is representative of the oppressive way the INS functions." When notified of the INS's retaliatory raid, U.S. Attorney for Orange County in charge of Lozano's complaint, reportedly exclaimed, "I can't believe they would do that!"

To A U.S. Attorney, it may be hard to believe. But ask any Latino immigrant and you'll get a different view. For them, this kind of INS repression is a daily fact of life.
Philadelphia Teachers Strike Over Contract Violations

The strike of 22,000 public school teachers and teacher aides in Philadelphia is in its 36th day as we go to press. The strike has not received much national attention. But it is at least as important to the U.S. labor movement and the U.S. working class as was, for example, the Solidarity Day march in Washington, D.C., last month. The reasons why can be summarized in four main points:

- The strike is over whether or not management has an obligation to live up to the terms of labor contracts.
- The Philadelphia teachers' strike began when the Board of Education in September, 1980, with the support of Mayor William Green announced that despite a no-layoff clause in the contract signed one year ago, 3,700 workers would be let go this fall, and that they wanted Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) members to forgo a 10 percent wage increase due this September.
- The strike is a case of Black and Latin, the city has notoriously under-funded and ignored the schools for years. The proposed layoff of a sixth public school teacher this month. The reasons why can be summarized in four main points:

  - Torch/La Antorcha has warned that if the labor movement failed to use its power to defend the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), Reagan's union busting business would serve as an example for others.
  - The confrontation in Philadelphia is the first major labor battle since the firing of the air controllers. So far, only teachers who have been arrested for disorderly conduct and such like on the picket lines have been threatened with dismissal. But two judges ordered the workers back to work October 12.
  - Legal action against the PFT members who defied the back-to-work order—21,300 of the 22,000 strikers—must be expected soon. If teachers are fired for striking, the apparent defeat of PATCO will turn into a rout of the whole labor movement. If the teachers successfully defend their contract rights by striking, the ruling class's union-busting offensive will have been dealt a significant setback.
  - The Philadelphia city government's demands are of a piece with the attacks coming down on the entire working class. The wage demand is similar to the givebacks becoming common in private industry (see article on facing page).

By WILLIAM FA

The Philadelphia AFL-CIO Auto Workers (UAW) have ordered all the public school teachers and teacher aides in Philadelphia to return to work October 12, Legal action against the PFT members who defied the back-to-work order—21,300 of the 22,000 strikers—must be expected soon. If teachers are fired for striking, the apparent defeat of PATCO will turn into a rout of the whole labor movement. If the teachers successfully defend their contract rights by striking, the ruling class's union-busting offensive will have been dealt a significant setback.

The strike is a case of Black and white workers being piled against each other. Several years ago, then-mayor Frank Rizzo called a walkout by city workers in Philadelphia a "Black people's strike," and he wasn't interested in resolving it. Now it appears that sizable sections of the Black community view the current strike as a "Black people's strike" and are opposing it. Some Black leaders have maintained that the strike's main base are Black children.

This attitude is suicidal. However much education Black children will lose during the course of the strike is insignificant compared to what they will lose if the teachers are crushed. Around the country, the capitalists—both of the federal and state and cities in the lead—are attempting to drive down the wages and worsen the working conditions of every body. And they are cutting back desperately needed social services—hospitals, transportation, education and other programs.

In the face of this kind of assault, there has always been Black and other oppressed people who suffer the most. Allowing the government against the unions will not save Black people from the same fate this time.

Only a united effort by everyone under attack stands a chance of turning the capitalist offensive around. If this happens, teachers, students and parents in Philadelphia will all stand to gain. If the teachers are crushed, their union destroyed or weakened, every worker, every poor person, anyone needing vital social services, will lose as the city government grows bolder in its attacks on the whole working class.
Labor Leaders Adopt Strategy of Retreat

Unions Under Attack

By WILLIAM FALK

In the face of a massive anti-union cost-cutting campaign by the part of the capitalists, U.S. labor leaders are sounding a major retreat.

Using the old argument that what's good for Big Business is good for the workers, they are giving up hard-won gains without a fight.

In recent years contracts with wage gains less than the rate of inflation—resulting in a drop in real wages—have become commonplace. But now many union leaders are agreeing to straight-out wage freezes and wage cuts. In addition, the most basic kind of work rules, such as no Sunday work, are being given up. And measures that created the unions' strength—such as national contracts that protect workers at all plants within a given industry or company—are being negotiated away.

The policies of the labor leadership can be seen most clearly by looking at three key industrial unions.

The contracts of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), the United Rubber Workers (URW) and the United Auto Workers (UAW) have traditionally been considered pacemakers for dozens of other labor contracts. These three unions are not only among the strongest in the country, but their contracts run out before those of most other unions, near the beginning of the three-year contract cycle that was established in the 1950s. That cycle starts next spring with the IBT and URW contracts.

Teamster tops swallow wage cuts

Since last spring, dozens of small trucking firms have refused to pay a 77-cent cost-of-living increase due to Teamster union members in April. The Teamster leadership has simply ignored the workers. In the last year, over 25 large trucking firms have successfully coerced their employees to agree to a 15 percent wage cut, again without the union leadership doing anything to help the workers involved or resist the pressure.

The new president of the IBT, Roy Williams, has signaled his willingness to make these wage concessions permanent in the new contract due to start April 1. This will probably come in the form of diverting cost-of-living raises to the pension fund.

The combined sales of the companies there will be no strike. In fact, he plans to have the new contract signed before the new year begins—months before the old one expires.

Rubber workers pay for industry blunders

The response of the rubber workers' leadership to the anti-labor offensive has been no better than the IBT's. The rubber industry has been in a crisis for several years now, and management is using this to try to weaken the unions.

The industry's problems largely stem from a 1973 management decision to continue to make bias-ply tires, rather than radial. The main product of the plants. This decision paralleled the decision by the U.S. auto makers at that time to continue to make large gaudy cars.

The judgment of both the rubber and auto bosses proved to be equally bad. Big, heavy cars with large and quick-wearing bias-ply tires soon lost out in the market place to light, small cars with radial tires that helped improve gas mileage.

As a result, over 20 percent of tire-making capacity—all of it in bias-ply plants—has been abandoned in the last three years. Nineteen plants have been closed (and only one built) since 1978. Some 27,000 jobs have been permanently lost.

To try to compensate for their mistake, tire industry executives are forcing the workers to bear the costs. Last year Uniroyal, the third largest tire company, asked for and got cuts from its workers totaling $20 million, arguing that unless the workers accepted the cuts, the company was headed for bankruptcy.

Most of the money saved by Uniroyal is now being used to invest outside the tire business, however, so it is doubtful the effort will save many rubber jobs in the long run.

The other major tire companies have asked for and are getting givebacks on a local level. Two local agreements nego-

UAW means 'Ain't Working'

However, it is the third unions of the peace-setting trio, the United Auto Workers, that has gone the furthest in cooperating with industry.

Twice in the first year of the current contract, UAW President Douglas Fraser reopened the union's contract with Chrysler. Fraser has done nothing to stop the layoffs that have cut the auto workforce by a third. In 1982, according to The New York Times, the union will 'focus on job guarantees for those now working, which are essential to achieve in the current low level of employment.' Fraser will try to get those guarantees for the lucky few with jobs by asking for little or no wage increase and pushing ahead with productivity programs.

Other unions also back off

With these major unions in retreat, it's not surprising that other unions are also backpedaling. On September 14, Pan American Airline workers who are represented by several different unions, approved 10 percent pay cuts and a wage freeze for all of 1982. On September 29, Corrall workers in 16 different unions agreed to an immediate 12 percent wage reduction.

Local 7854 of the United Steelworkers union, representing lead smelter workers in Kellogg, Idaho, went so far as to push for and win a five-year postponement of a regulation designed to prevent lead poisoning. The regulation would have required the company, Bunker Hill, to remove workers from their jobs if the lead in their blood exceeded certain levels. Despite the postponement, Bunker Hill is going through with plans to close or sell the smelter because, they say, the 50-year-old facility is extremely inefficient.

The union leaders think that by refusing to fight layoffs and making concessions on wages, benefits and work rules, they can preserve the jobs of those still working and defend the unions' position. But this strategy is suicidal. As fewer and fewer workers remain organized in unions, and as the unions show themselves unable or unwilling to resist the capitalist offensive, the unions will get weaker.

If the unions are going to survive as significant working class organizations, they will have to break from their present approach of cutting deals with the capitalists to try to preserve the jobs of a dwindling number of people. They must take up a united campaign to fight for the needs of all working and oppressed people for jobs, housing and social services and for economic and political rights for all.
How We Can Fight 'Reaganism'

(Continued from page 1)

tant fightback against the ruling class offensive should be welcome inside our movement.

Equally important, our movement should defend and support the national liberation struggles of the people of El Salvador, South Africa and elsewhere. Reagan's military buildup funded from the imperialist nature of the capitalist system. Our movement should be anti-imperialist. Every blow against U.S. imperialism abroad strengthens our fight for our rights and needs here.

D. Our movement must be a democratic one.

Only by encouraging lively political discussion and debate can we develop the understanding and ideas that we need to prepare for the difficult period ahead. We should welcome differences and criticisms—rather than being afraid of them. Eliminating such debate will only lead to a thin "paper unity" which will fall apart as soon as the struggle intensifies.

E. Our movement must be crystal clear about the nature and role of the Democratic Party.

Both parties—the Democrats and the Republicans alike—represent the capitalist class. Both parties believe that the only solution to the capitalist crisis is to drive down the living standards of the working class. Neither will be lobbying, petitioning, and voting for "lesser-evil" candidates. We need to build a movement that is capable of disrupting the entire system in order to force the ruling class to back off its attacks.

B. We need a movement that is politically conscious and educated.

We have to know what is going on in the country and the world and why. Only this kind of a movement can reach out to, draw in and educate tens of thousands of our sisters and brothers who are feeling the harsh effects of the Reagan program. Far more than this will be necessary—we are fighting a ruthless and powerful capitalist class. We will only demoralize and mislead people if we lead them to believe that the struggle is simpler or easier than it is, that victory can be won overnight.

C. Our movement should defend everyone under attack.

"An injury to one is an injury to all"—this should be one of our key slogans. The capitalists are attacking everyone. They are going after the unions, women, Black and Latin people, Native Americans, lesbians and gays, undocumented workers—all. We ourselves should not be under the illusion that a few large demonstrations can overturn the Reagan program. Far more than this will be necessary—we are fighting a ruthless and powerful capitalist class. We will only demoralize and mislead people if we lead them to believe that the struggle is simpler or easier than it is, that victory can be won overnight.

In response, we should build our movement as a broad unified front. It should include community groups, labor organizations, women’s groups, lesbian and gay groups, welfare rights organizations, Black organizations, Latin organizations and left-wing political groups. Everyone committed to waging a militant struggle against the ruling class offensive should be welcome inside our movement.

What is the significance of this? The ruling class has only one basic way of solving its crisis. Put simply, its solution is to take from poor and working people and give to the bankers and big corporations. Its goal is a tremendous redistribution of resources—driving down the living standards of the majority of people to boost capitalist profits and hoping (so far in vain) that the capitalists will invest in the modernization of the economy.

Reagan is carrying out this program. There are, of course, differences among the capitalists over exactly how to accomplish their goals. But the important point is that "Reaganism" is the policy of the entire U.S. ruling class.

2. What kind of movement do we need to build?

A. We need a militant movement.

We need a movement which is visible, angry and threatening. Mass marches, sit-ins, plant occupations and similar actions are the kinds of tactics we need to pursue. Begging and pleading will get us nowhere. Neither will lobbying, petitioning, and voting for "lesser-evil" candidates. We need to build a movement that is capable of disrupting the entire system in order to force the ruling class to back off its attacks.

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3. Socialist Revolution—the only solution

The Revolutionary Socialist League believes that the only lasting solution to the struggles moderate, cautioning us being "too militant" and opposing anything which is "illegal."  

2) The Democratic Party will also be trying to rebuild its image among working people, trying to build a new popular base of support so that it can go as the "friend of labor," or the "friend of Black people." They are not on the side of the capitalists. The problem is that they are not organizing the poor and working people will resume—only now under a "new leadership."

By Paul Carson

On election day, Young will almost certainly be re-elected mayor of Detroit in his third term. His Democratic challenger is the city's former purchasing agent, Raymond Kosloski. If he wins the election, it will give Young a third four-year term.

Young has a militancy and an image: He helped organize the city's protests that grew out of the 1967 riot. He worked on Henry A. Wallace's Progressive Party presidential campaign in 1948. His ratification speeches speak out often against Reagan's economic program which forces working and poor people to sacrifice to give the rich a tax break.

The Democratic Party will enter pur labor conditions in fascist-like states while wars which they unleash may destroy the entire planet.
he world is going to . How many years system destroys all Twente? Whatever the plain fact is that individualism or, one way, destroy us. An alternative to all organize a world, a society in which people workers, the retired, democratically control their own government. We believe we can build a society that is in fact state and other no political rights the government or in the U.S., the police but to hire Marx said, sell those who control, offices—that is, who run the state. Capitalist societies are an economic crisis as the living workers and other also under attack. Capitalist rulers are their own nuclear arsenal the horror of a superpowers. The workers and capitalists must throw the capitalist bureaucracy. The working will never surrender of the world revolution will take prepary—it cannot happen necessarily and they revolutionization need to win essentially, eliminating everywhere. Certainly it is not going to happen in this next year. But, if we can win to educate and revolution, the world will face will be at all.

SOLIDARITY DAY!

On September 19—Solidarity Day—500,000 working people filled the streets of Washington, D.C., to protest Reagan's program of unemployment, union busting, racism, sexism and war. The march drew support from every region and nearly every union in the country. AFSCME alone was represented from dozens of cities. Machinists, autoworkers, garment workers, public employees, PATCO strikers—people from hundreds of workplaces across the country turned out for the demonstration. Joining in the Solidarity Day protest were civil rights, women's, anti-war and community organizations.

Solidarity Day showed that there is a growing awareness—and anger—over the Reaganite offensive against poor and working people. It also showed the potential for a full-scale fightback by labor and its allies against these reactionary policies.

Unfortunately, the current labor leadership has no intention of organizing such a fightback. This was also clear on Solidarity Day. PATCO strikers—the victims of Reagan's union busting—hardly received a word of support, much less a pledge for any meaningful fight in their defense. More broadly, Lane Kirkland and the rest of the AFL-CIO leadership made it clear that they were using the demonstration not to launch a militant fightback but to mobilize support for Democratic Party politicians in the 1982 elections.

The labor leadership's strategy of supporting and rebuilding the Democratic Party spells disaster for working and oppressed people. The entire U.S. ruling class--Democrat and Republican alike—plans to solve the deepening crisis of the capitalist economy through massive attacks on working people and the unions.

We need to build a movement independent of the capitalist parties, a movement which can mobilize the strength of all. The movement will defend our rights and standards. Polish workers, through their organization Solidarity, have shown the power of working people when they are organized and mobilized. This should be our model. A militant mass movement, not begging, lobbying and voting for "lesser-evil" candidates, is the road forward for the U.S. labor movement.
Where Is the Iranian Revolution Heading?

By PAUL BENJAMIN

Recent events in Iran cannot help but raise fundamental questions over the nature and course of the Iranian revolution. The Iranian people waged a heroic struggle against Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi’s brutal regime, culminating in armed uprisings that drove the shah into exile in January 1979 and toppled his regime altogether in February 1979. The victory opened the way for mass mobilizations by workers, women and oppressed nationalities in Iran, all seeking the freedom fought for in the revolution.

But less than two years later the gains of the revolution, and the very foundations of Iranian society, are in grave danger. Rival political blocs, all fundamentally pro-capitalist, are tearing the country apart in a bloody struggle for power.

The government is controlled by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the mullahs who support him, organized in the ruling Islamic Republic Party (IRP). The IRP combines opposition to U.S. imperialism with a totalitarian internal regime directed not only against pro-imperialist forces in Iran, but also against workers, peasants, women and oppressed nationalities who oppose its policies.

The Khomeini regime is opposed by a leftist Islamic group, the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, which has been waging a campaign of urban guerrilla warfare against it since June. The Mujahedeen combine justified opposition to the IRP’s repressive policies with an alliance with liberal pro-Western Iranian leaders, including former president Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, through the Council of National Resistance (NCR).

Meanwhile, the masses who made the February 1979 revolution have hardly any political role independent of these rival blocs. Instead they have mainly been reduced to passive spectators to the conflict between the army and security forces supporting the IRP, and the leftist militants supporting the NCR.

The crisis in Iran is provoking considerable controversy among leftist organizations in the U.S. Some groups, notably the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), are defending the IRP regime because it is anti-imperialist, and are condemning the NCR’s efforts to overthrow it.

Others, particularly the Communist Workers Party (CWP), are defending the NCR because it calls for democracy in Iran, and condemning the IRP’s efforts to suppress its opponents.

From our point of view, each of these groups, in its own way, is capitulating to pro-capitalist forces in Iran. Our differences with them stem not simply from opposing analyses of the Iranian revolution, but more fundamentally from a different understanding of what the goals of a socialist revolution really are, and how they can be achieved.

An anti-imperialist revolution

Before going into the outlook of these organizations in more detail, we should first summarize our own viewpoint on the course of events in Iran.

As we see it, the February 1979 uprising in Iran was an unfinished revolution. The Iranian people succeeded in overthrowing the shah and dealing a resounding defeat to U.S. imperialism. But this victory was not a socialist revolution, in which the workers smashed the capitalist state apparatus and took power into their own hands. On the contrary, the IRP’s efforts to suppress the demonstrators. When militiamen seized arms for themselves, Khomeini ordered them to turn in their arms to the provisional government.

Since the revolution every section of the working class that has tried to fight for its demands has faced suppression by the mullahs. When workers demanded higher wages, the government banned strikes and jailed worker-militants. When thousands of women went into the streets to demand equality after the revolution, the mullahs unleashed their private army of thugs, the hezbollah, to break up their demonstrations. When the Kurds and other nationalities opposed by the shah demanded their national rights, the army and revolutionary militia, or pasdaran, were dispatched to suppress them. And Leftist groups like the Mujahedeen or Fedayeen protested these policies, the government shut down their offices.

Despite such measures Khomeini, and to a lesser extent the IRP, retain a degree of popular support in Iran. The main reason for this is that the Iranian people remain militantly opposed to U.S. imperialism’s efforts to regain control of their country. Khomeini is seen by many as the embodiment of their struggle against the U.S. He and his followers have been able to retain their loyalty by branding all their opponents as agents of U.S. imperialism. Moreover, events such as the botched U.S. raid on Iran last March, and the Iraqi invasion of Iran last September, led many critics of the IRP to rally to the government as the defender of Iranian territory and national independence.

But the IRP has been unable to consolidate its rule and create a stable Islamic state-capitalist society. Instead, its efforts to do so are wrecking the country and isolating the mullahs from their original supporters. The economy is falling apart, as unemployment and inflation rise while production falls and housing and food shortages increase. Workers are growing disillusioned with the IRP’s repressive policies and inability to resolve the economic crisis. Peasants resent the government’s refusal to implement sections of the 1980 land reform law calling for redistribution of confiscated estates. The bazaari, or mullahs, who originally supported the IRP, oppose its efforts to impose control over the economy. The Khomeini regime is combining a Fedayeen protest with a government monopoly over foreign trade. This leftist groups like the Mujahedeen or Fedayeen protested these policies, the government shut down their offices.

Meanwhile, the army has gained increased authority and prestige and won important posts in the government. In June Khomeini named Maj. General Vahidollah Falahi as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, thus removing the military from civilian control. When Falahi was killed in a plane crash on September 29, General Qasem Ali Zabihzad, notorious for his brutal campaigns against the Kurds, was appointed to succeed him.

Failing popular support for Khomeini’s regime is encouraging political
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Irani...

(Continued from previous page) shift in the political balance of forces in Iran, the working class seems headed for a defeat of enormous proportions.

**SWP backs Khomeini regime**

Organizations such as the SWP and the CWP have an entirely different viewpoint on the Iranian revolution. Despite occasional calls for a workers' revolution in Iran, these groups have consistently looked for forces outside the working class to defend the gains of the revolution, while passing these forces off as socialists.

So it's not surprising that these moderate organizations approve of the pro-capitalist blocs that between them are wrecking Iranian society and speeding the Iranian revolution to its grave.

The SWP, for example, is supporting the IRP, the new bourgeois government, and the Mujahedeen. It calls the Mujahedeen's guerrilla warfare campaign a "reactionary attack on the revolution itself" that is providing a left cover for efforts by monarchists, liberal capitalists, and U.S. imperialism to de-stabilize the revolution.

The SWP has always been the major U.S. leftist group defending the IRP, apologizing or simply ignoring its attacks on the Iranian people. In the past it has implied that the mujahedeen were "rightist socialists," who were overthrowing capitalism in Iran without knowing it. It has consciously refused to defend the Mujahedeen and other groups opposed to the crimes of the IRP because such action, in their view, "would compromise the defense of the revolution." Thus, when IRP thugs attacked radical university students and its leftist rhetoric about a workers and peasants government, it is intended to cover its support for the IRP. The SWP condemns every demand for democracy in Iran as a CIA plot. Of course the IRP, identifying with the "revolutionary" when they do, is rich with "counter-revolution," not only in Iran, but in Poland and other countries.

But this is no reason for the SWP to go on a crusade for the IRP's U.S. imperialism's hold over the country. But they do not end there. A socialist revolution would smash the capitalist state apparatus and establish new forms of government through which the workers and their allies control society. This new state would distribute land to the peasants, while encouraging cooperative agriculture as it is in the best long-term interests of both the peasants and society as a whole. It would establish national rights of oppressed nationalities in Iran, and win social equality for women and other specially oppressed sections of the population.

Above all believe that Iranian workers, and workers in all countries, can achieve these goals only through their own efforts, by establishing their own political organizations independent of the capitalists and fighting for political power. They cannot achieve socialism and freedom by politically subordinating themselves to pro-capitalist forces.

But this is not what the SWP and CWP believe. The SWP believes it is possible to carry out a socialist revolution by substituting the "patriotic bourgeoisie" for the working class. Both groups refuse to recognize that only the workers and the other oppressed classes can build a free, socialist society. As a result, they are supporting rival capitalist forces in Iran and ignoring the critical dangers now facing the Iranian people.

**Workers must lead fight for socialism**

Clearly, both the SWP and CWP have different ideas than we do about the goals of a socialist revolution and the best way of fighting for them. From our point of view, the goals of a socialist revolution in Iran would begin with fighting to break U.S. imperialism's hold over the country. They do not end there. A socialist revolution would smash the capitalist state apparatus and establish new forms of government through which the workers and their allies control society. This new state would distribute land to the peasants, while encouraging cooperative agriculture as it is in the best long-term interests of both the peasants and society as a whole. It would establish national rights of oppressed nationalities in Iran, and win social equality for women and other specially oppressed sections of the population.

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**Eritrean Armed Struggle**

By IAN DANIELS

Twenty years ago, on September 1, 1961, 13 Eritrean nationalist fighters armed with homemade missiles, launched a successful revolt against the Italian colonial government. The first shots were fired in the countryside, followed by a series of battles that spread throughout the country. In the end, the Italian colonial government was forced to retreat, and Eritrea became an independent nation.

The Eritrean Armed Struggle is a key component of the broader African liberation movement. The struggle is centered on the desire for independence and self-determination for the Eritrean people.

[Continued on next page]
Bus Fare Hike Sparks Rebellion by 25,000 Near Mexico City

A 40-percent increase in bus fares touched off three days of violent protest near Mexico City, Mexico, in mid-September when 25,000 residents of Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl took to the streets with rocks and sticks, burning buses and fighting with police.

According to eyewitness reports in the Mexican daily Excelsior, the rebellion began without warning at about 7:00 in the evening on September 15, as workers returning to their homes discovered that bus fares had suddenly jumped from 3.5 to 5 pesos. A furious crowd of workers, students and housewives with children began to throw stones at the buses. Within minutes, groups of women and men were seizing buses, ordering the passengers off, and setting the buses afire. Thirty were denounced as "utopian" by the ruling capitalist newspaper Excelsior.

In response to the September rebellion, the municipal government of Neza moved quickly to take "temporary" control of the privately-owned bus system, until order can be restored. Local observers expect the city takeover to be formalized in law within a year, thus ending private mass transit in the area. Until September 15, such a course of action was denounced as "utopian" by the ruling capitalist party, PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional-Institutional Revolutionary Party).

According to Pedro Hernandez Bustida, a leader of the Peoples Neighborhoods Union (ELF), "two million residents will be ready to demand justice with their bodies..." For years, the respectable capitalist newspaper Excelsior, had agreed. "One can feel an unrest in the air," it observed, "as if waiting for bigger things."

Eritrea: 20 Years of Armed Freedom Struggle

By IAN DANIELS

Twenty years ago, on September 15, 1961, 13 Eritrean nationalist fighters armed with obsolete rifles confronted Ethiopian soldiers in the remote western highlands of Eritrea. The first shots were fired in a liberation war which has continued ever since.

Eritrea is a strip of land along the Red Sea in Africa's strategic Horn. For hundreds of years the Eritrean people fought off foreign invaders; the country was finally conquered by Italy in 1890. When Italy was defeated in the Second World War, the British organized a military government in Eritrea under their control. In 1952 the British handed Eritrea over to the Ethiopian government.

Ethiopia was then ruled by Emperor Haile Selassie, an all-powerful despotic monarch who by official and church doctrine was revered as almost a god. By annexing Eritrea, Selassie was continuing the policies of his forefathers, who through brute force against a multitude of peoples in the region forged the Ethiopian empire. This empire was based on the suppression and oppression of non-Ethiopians by the Amhara, the ethnic/linguistic group to which the emperors belonged. Selassie did not find the Eritreans willing subjects. The first organized force to militarily resist Ethiopian colonialism in Eritrea was the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), which fired those first shots in 1961. Throughout the 1960s and 70s the ELF fought on, harassing Selassie's armies through a strategy of guerrilla war.

In the late 1970s, the ELF split, Eritrea, like the Hairy Horn of Africa, is a patchwork of ethnic and religious groups. ELF fighters from Christian backgrounds found themselves the victims of attacks and harassment from the ELF leadership, of Muslim background. The more ethnically Christian fighters broke away to form what today is the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). The two fronts came to blows, and civil war consumed the liberation movement.

1974 was a turning point. A group of military officers seized power in Ethiopia, threw out Selassie, and established a "socialist" military dictatorship. This group, known as the Derg, continued Selassie's policies of repression against ethnic minorities in the

U.S. Imperialism Shaken by Sadat Death

Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat was assassinated in Cairo on October 6. Sadat was presiding over a military parade marking the anniversary of Egypt's 1973 war with Israel when at least four men—the exact number is uncertain—leaped from a truck passing the reviewing stand and opened fire on him. Seven people, including Sadat, were killed in the attack, and another 38 were wounded. Egyptian authorities report that the plot against Sadat was organized by an army lieutenant, Khalid Ahmed Shawk al-Ismaili, who is a member of an Islamic nationalist group called Takfir Wal Hijara. Shawk and three other men were captured by security forces and are now awaiting trial.

The assassination sparked a revolt by other Islamic militants in the city of Asyut, around 250 miles south of Cairo. According to the government, around 75 members of the Islamic group Gaamit Islamaya, armed with automatic weapons, attacked the local security headquarters on October 8. The government had to seal off Asyut and send reinforcements to regain control of the city.

Official reports claim that 118 people were killed in the fighting.

Sadat's killing and the Asyut revolt both reflect the rising opposition to Sadat's policies by Egyptian Islamic nationalists. Ever since the Iranian revolution, Sadat had feared that Islamic nationalists would try to overthrow his rule. These fears increased after rioting broke out between Muslims and Coptic Christians in Cairo last June. Vowing to "uncover incompetence" and "religious sectarianism," on September 2 Sadat ordered the jailing of over 1,000 Muslims and Coptic leaders. A week later he expelled 1,000 Russians from the country, claiming that the Russian government was conspiring with nationalists, leftists and religious "extremists" against him.

While Egyptian officials insist the assassination was the work of a few "fanatics," it is clear that they are on guard against a wider revolt. The government has declared a year-long state of emergency, banned public gatherings, and, according to some reports, brought in as many as 250 military officers for questioning. Sadat's funeral on October 10 took place under extraordinary security precautions, and government buildings in Cairo remain under heavy guard.

In Egypt itself, people reacted to the assassination of the self-proclaimed "father of the Egyptian family" with apparent indifference, in sharp contrast to the outpouring of grief that followed the death of nationalist President Gamal Abdul Nasser in 1970. Outside Egypt, Sadat's death was greeted with dismay by the U.S. ruling class and its allies. President Reagan declared that the U.S. had lost a "close friend" and a "champion of peace," and sent a huge delegation to Sadat's funeral. But most Arab governments said, more or less politely, that Sadat deserved to die. In particular, Palestinians in Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied West Bank territory responded to Sadat's demise with parades and singing in the streets.

Sadat betrayed Palestinian people

The reason for these varied reactions is not hard to find. Sadat betrayed the Palestinian people's struggle to recover their homeland when he recognized the Zionist conquest of Palestine and signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Sadat was also one of the most vocal supporters of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East and around the world. The U.S. and Israeli ruling classes have good reason to mourn his death, while the Palestinian and other Arab peoples have good reason to celebrate it.

The effect of Sadat's death on Egypt and the Middle East remains to be seen. Hosni Mubarak, who served as vice-president under Sadat, was "elected" to succeed him in a staged referendum on October 13. Mubarak is pledging to maintain Egypt's alliance with the U.S. and maintain a "terrorist" military dictatorship, which many say is responsible for the death of Nasser and others.

The Reagan administration is pledged to defend Mubarak and other pro-U.S. rulers in the Middle East against internal "subversion" and what it calls "threats to peace" from the Russian or Libyan governments. The State Department has already announced plans to greatly expand joint military exercises with Egyptian troops scheduled to be held in November. It is also speeding up military aid, including U.S. "advisors," to Sudan. Despite such measures, Sadat's death, and the advent of a new and potentially unstable government in Egypt, represent a serious setback for U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.
Eritrea...

(Continued from previous page)

Ethiopian empire.

In this period the masses in Eritrea and Ethiopia awoke to struggle. The ELF and EPLF signed a truce. The "socialist" Derg announced a series of military offensives against them, all of which were defeated. Workers and peasants throughout Ethiopia began to strike, seize the land, and fight against oppression. Other ethnic minorities in Ethiopia also began to fight. In northern Ethiopia, the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) organized for freedom for the Tigrean people. In the south, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) organized for the freedom of the Oromo people, conquered by Ethiopia in the 19th century. Protests of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia were joined by the government of Somalia in a war against the Derg.

Seeing the Eritreans liberate 90 percent of Eritrea, and seeing all the other resistance to their authority, the Ethiopian government moved to strengthen its hand. This was 1977, another turning point.

The Derg began a massive crackdown on dissent. It moved with brutal force against Ethiopian workers and leftist, situating out for the most murderous attacks the youthful supporters of the opposition Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Party, which had announced its support to the Eritrean revolution. The Derg strengthened its ties to the Soviet Union, and advisors began to pour in from the state-capitalist countries of Eastern Europe.

Cuban troops were flown in to defeat the Somalis in the Ogaden. This freed up the Derg to direct its attentions against Eritrea. A full-scale offensive forced the Eritreans to retreat from most all the cities they had liberated. The ELF and EPLF re-established themselves in the northern highlands and in the countryside around the cities.

Following its victories, the Derg was welcomed with open arms by the Soviet Union and Cuba. Since 1978 it has strengthened its economic and political ties with the state-capitalist world.

But the war in Eritrea was not over.

Now, three years later, the liberation forces fight on in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Although factionalism has returned to Eritrea—the ELF/EPLF civil war has resumed—Eritrea is continuing to push back Ethiopian offensive. The Derg is so shaken by its inability to defeat the longest guerrilla war in Africa that in 1980 they began to threaten the Eritreans with a large-scale offensive. Eritrea is a land of tragedy; thousands have died in the 2-year war. Children have been burned with napalm, families destroyed by bombing raids. Eritrean refugees in neighboring countries is a major problem. The Eritreans' just struggle for national liberation has been betrayed and欺凌 again.

China, which had supported the Derg struggle in the 1960s (when it was trying to curry favor with liberation movements), dropped the Derg in the early '70s in favor of Sanaa. Cuba and Russia, also backers of the Eritreans in the '60s, dropped them to support the Derg in the '70s. In the U.S., some groups on the left have joined these betrayals. Notable is the Workers World Party (WWP), which once was in the forefront of support work for the Eritrean struggle. When the Soviet Union and Cuba dropped their support of Eritrea in favor of the Ethiopian government, WWP went right along with them. But Eritrea is also a land of hope. For 20 years the Eritreans have faced the armies of Ethiopia, which have at various times been backed by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Cuba, and yet in all that time, they have not given up. This should serve as tremendous inspiration for people fighting for freedom, justice and liberation throughout the world.

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