

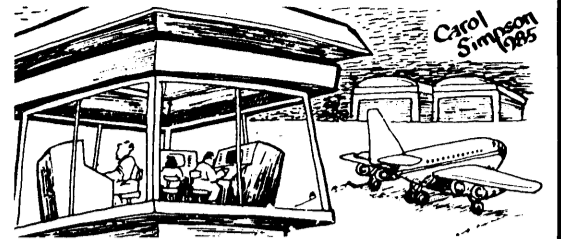
# A Socialist ACTION

FEBRUARY 1986

50 CENTS

VOL. 4, NO. 2

Is air travel safe?



See story pp. 12-13

## Hormel strike spreads, National support needed

By MARK HARRIS and MIKE ZUKOWSKI

AUSTIN, Minn., Jan. 31—"This isn't scab city." That's the message being heard here in Austin and across the nation as Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) continues to wage a courageous campaign to defeat the Geo. A. Hormel & Co.'s union-busting effort.

Hormel had hoped that Democratic Gov. Rudy Perpich's decision to send in 800 National Guard troops would deal a decisive blow to the union. But it gravely miscalculated.

Instead, this display of force struck a nerve among P-9 members. Some 1000 workers rallied at the Austin High School gymnasium on Jan. 25 to give their enthusiastic approval to a motion to send roving picket squads to shut down the entire Hormel operation.

Here in Austin, Local P-9 has stepped up efforts to keep scabs out of the plant. On Jan. 30, 500 Local P-9 members and supporters completely shut down Hormel's flagship facility. With cars and pickets they blocked the entrance gates, preventing any scabs from entering the plant.

The corporate office was also shut down when a group of women P-9 supporters set up a barricade, preventing anyone from entering or leaving.

The union was well prepared. Throughout the day, when word came that scabs were assembling at gas stations, stores, or

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## U.S. Hands off Libya, Nicaragua!

In early January, the U.S. government announced a trade embargo on Libya. It ordered all Americans to leave, and froze the Libyan government's financial assets in the United States. Newsweek magazine (Jan. 20, 1986) disclosed a confidential government white paper on Libya that revealed the Reagan administration's intention to "goad [Libyan leader Muammar] Qaddafi into yet another assault on Americans that would give the administration exactly the opportunity it needs to stage a military attack."

The U.S. government is engaged in a carefully orchestrated campaign to prepare the American public for war. The threat of U.S. military moves against Libya is very real despite the fact that the administration's

force in the so-called 'regional conflicts' to meet its political objectives." Shultz' reference to Nicaragua was transparent.

The Reagan administration has continuously attempted to link Nicaragua with

alleged Libyan or Soviet "terrorist" campaigns. Recently, U.S. officials accused the Sandinistas of masterminding the M-19 takeover of the Supreme Court building in Bogota, Colombia. As always, the government provided no evidence to support its claim.

The U.S. rulers are determined to reverse the Central American revolutionary tide. To do this, they must drive back and ultimately smash the Nicaraguan Revolution.

Unable to topple the FSLN government,

Washington has launched a campaign to push through \$100 million in direct aid—mainly military—to the contras. This policy of step-by-step escalation is designed to wear down the Nicaraguan people through the economic shortages and increased casualties resulting from the U.S.-financed contra war.

Washington has also increased its military and economic aid to the regime in El Salvador, which has been pressed to

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## Reagan lauds MLK, axes social programs

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Columnist Art Buchwald once quipped that "only in America" is a person who effectively criticizes the "establishment" rewarded by being made a member of the establishment. An exaggeration, perhaps. But it took Ronald Reagan to convert the humor in that statement into tragedy.

At the time of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968, Reagan indicated that King was partly to blame for his death because he advocated civil disobedience tactics that "compromised with law and order."

Last month, however, Reagan changed his tune. The president saw fit to "salute" the Rev. King for helping to make this country into "America, the land where dreams come true."

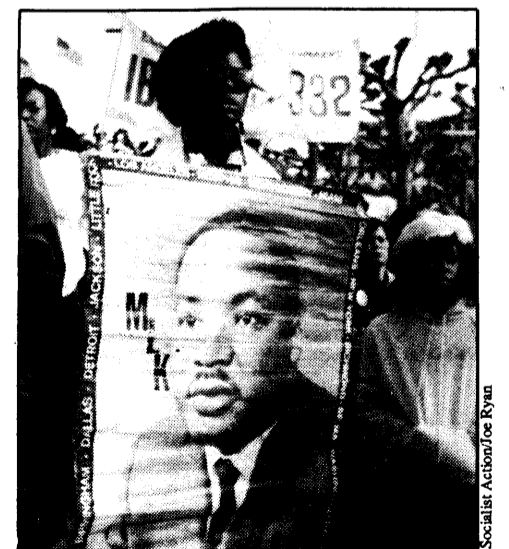
What hypocrisy! On the same day that

Reagan offered his "salute," his administration outlined budget cutbacks in Medicare, day-care services, and other health and community development programs that will hit Blacks, the poor, children, and the elderly especially hard. These programs are going under the ax in accordance with the 4.3 percent in domestic cuts ordered by the Gramm-Rudman budget-reduction law.

The "Star Wars" military plan would remain exempt from cuts under Gramm-Rudman. And Reagan is calling for an extra \$100 million in aid to the Nicaraguan contras.

Children's health programs cut

During celebrations of her father's birthday, Bernice King, the Rev. King's youngest daughter, assailed the government's cutbacks. "Over the past five years," she said, "the bank of justice that



once provided subsidies has been robbed by 'Star Wars,' while little Black and white and red and brown children don't even have enough food to eat."

Black infants are twice as likely to die in their first year as whites—the largest gap in 40 years. Deaths of infants under a year old

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### EDITORIAL

charges against Qaddafi have been widely refuted.

But the war hysteria and war machine are directed beyond Libya. *Barricada*, the daily newspaper of the Nicaraguan FSLN, noted on Jan. 17, 1986, that in the wake of the recent U.S.-Libyan confrontation, "Secretary of State George Shultz announced that the United States would use military

Special supplement on Hormel strike, See pp. 7-10

# Socialist Action celebrates birthday with antiwar rally

Socialist Action was toasted—and only slightly roasted—at a second anniversary celebration held Jan. 18. About 100 people attended the celebration at the Local 6 hall of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in San Francisco.

Jake Cooper, Socialist Action National Committee member, was the first speaker. He predicted that American workers would organize to protect their interests against corporate greed and that their power, when mobilized, would be unbeatable. One week later, the P-9 strikers began to confirm this prediction when they decided to shut down the operations of the Hormel company.

Seymour Kramer, San Francisco Labor Council delegate, commended *Socialist Action* newspaper for its "stubborn, awkward, dogmatic, rigid honesty" and its "ability to defend unpopular positions." Kramer also noted Socialist Action's "decisive contributions in steering the new antiwar movement toward independent mass demonstrations."

Elise Norman read a congratulatory message from her mother, Pat Norman, member of the coordinating committee of the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice and director of Lesbian and Gay Health Services for the city of San Francisco.

Gustavo Acosta, representing the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front of El Salvador, compared the current U.S.-supplied bombing raids over rebel-controlled areas of the Salvadoran countryside with the U.S. bombing of Vietnam. He appealed for help in efforts to expose and stop the bombing.

Bob Hernandez spoke on behalf of Roberto Vargas of the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington, D.C. [See message on this page.]

The president of ILWU Warehouse Local 6, Al Lannon, said, "I have found your organization to be straightforward and honest. We recognize that we have disagreements, but we have respected each other and have worked together toward common goals."

Lannon praised the newspaper for being "straightforward in presenting the views of those with whom it disagrees—without distortion or censorship." He exhorted the crowd to "dare to giggle, dare to grin" in one of several humorous remarks in his short statement.

Messages were read from the Fourth International [see this page for text] and from Howard Wallace, Northern California AFL-CIO director of the Coors beer boycott.

Wallace said, "It has been wonderful working with Socialist Action members in the struggle for peace, jobs, and justice. Even on the few occasions when I disagreed with them, I found them to be fair-minded



Gustavo Acosta, representing the Salvadoran FMLN



Lita Blanc, a striking Oakland school teacher

and thoughtful. I look forward to our continued solidarity in the future."

Wallace urged the audience to actively support the lesbian and gay movement and to also keep spreading the word on the Coors boycott.

Lita Blanc, an Oakland school teacher, gave a rousing call to solidarity with the teachers' strike.

Carl Finamore, National Committee member of Socialist Action and coordinating committee member of the

Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice, gave a stirring speech for socialism.

"Capitalism," he explained, "is not the inspiration for those who wish for a promising future of peace, jobs, and justice. There have been no mass demonstrations, pickets, or revolutions anywhere in the world demanding more big business or more capitalism. On the contrary, these policies are imposed on the majority of people of the world by military dictators financed by the U.S. government.

## ... S.A. editor highlights gains of first two years

The following are excerpts from the presentation by Alan Benjamin, editor of *Socialist Action*.

In the past two years, *Socialist Action* has taken some important steps forward. We have promoted union solidarity with workers fighting for their dignity. We have helped organize the pro-choice movement, and have exposed the brutal attacks promoted by the ruling rich in this country against Blacks, Latinos, Native-Americans, gays and lesbians.

Our paper has educated about the important gains of the Nicaraguan Revolution. Along with our support to the fighting forces in the FMLN in El Salvador and FSLN in Nicaragua, we have made it a priority to build an effective movement in this country against U.S. intervention in

Central America.

Our newspaper has actively campaigned to end U.S. support to the brutal apartheid regime in South Africa. We have focused attention on the growing role played in this struggle by the Black workers in that country.

We have defended the just cause of the Palestinian people for their homeland—for a democratic and secular Palestine where Jews and Palestinians can live together on the basis of cooperation and respect.

And, as the masthead of our paper suggests, we have identified closely with the struggle of 10 million people in Poland organized in Solidarity who are fighting to establish their own democratic control over their society. Their demand is not to return the factories to the bosses. The socialism they are fighting for is the socialism we are fighting for: one of workers' control over the means of production, one of workers' self-management and genuine democracy.

The concept of socialism has been perverted and discredited by the Stalinist rulers in the Soviet Union. Socialism and

Capitalism has exhausted its ability to initiate reforms in the interests of the majority."

Finamore excoriated U.S. corporations—"Less than 1 percent of the U.S. population owns one-third of all capital and 22 percent of the wealth in this country. These monopoly class relations lead to increasing social misery for the majority. Americans face a long-term, steady deterioration in our standard of living."

American workers, he continued, are now starting to link their opposition to economic concessions with opposition to the U.S. government's war policy against working people of other countries. This convergence makes socialists optimistic about the prospects for socialism in the United States.

The final speaker, *Socialist Action* editor, Alan Benjamin, explained what the newspaper has accomplished in its first two years. [See text, this page.]

The rally culminated with the singing of "Solidarity Forever". And the words of that song, beginning—

*"When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run, There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun"*

and ending—

*"We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old"*

had a palpable meaning to all who participated. ■

the fullest workers' democracy must go hand in hand.

But what makes us different from other papers on the left is our appeal to the labor movement and to all the movements of the oppressed to rely on their own power and to break from their reliance on the Democratic and Republican parties. In order to beat back the attacks on our democratic rights and on our standard of living, working people in this country need a labor party—a genuine solidarity party—based on the unions.

Our paper is only two years old, but we stand on a long and proud tradition. We stand on the shoulders of the early socialist movement in this country and on the legacy of those who led the massive strike wave in the early 1930s—and who are still fighting today to build support for the Local P-9 strikers in Austin, Minn.

The struggle of the P-9 strikers is our struggle. In fact, it is our future. It's the path others must and will follow. Our paper will grow and expand together with the growth of the fightback movements of American workers. *Socialist Action* will be at the forefront of these fights, striving at all times to build a revolutionary party of the American working class that can pave the way for a society free from racism, war, and poverty—a socialist America. ■



Socialist Action/Dave Walsh

## F.I. sends greetings to rally

The following greetings were sent to the rally by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

We just learned that you are organizing a meeting for the second anniversary of your newspaper. We send our fraternal greetings.

Revolutionary Marxists are fighting in the United States in very difficult conditions. We appreciate all the more your successful effort to launch and maintain a regular Trotskyist newspaper.

We are sure you will continue your struggle in the mass movements. Your newspaper will be first of all an instrument to support working-class struggles and to help launch and organize mass campaigns against imperialist actions in Central America, against apartheid in South Africa, and for solidarity with the Polish workers.

Once again, fraternal greetings and successful work. ■

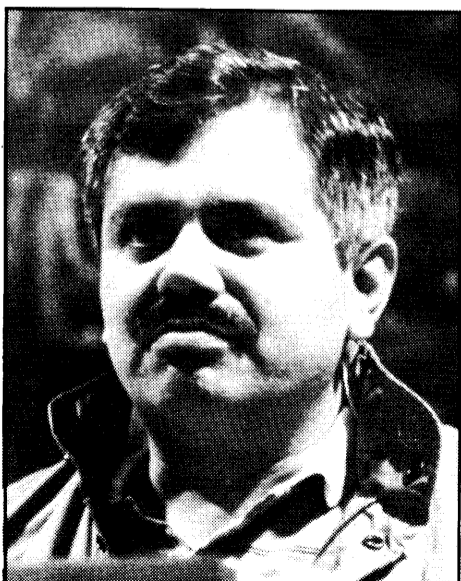
## FSLN greetings

The following are excerpts from the greetings presented by Bob Hernandez, who represented Roberto Vargas of the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Roberto Vargas wasn't able to attend your meeting tonight. He wanted to be here but had to go to New York on account of the \$100 million in aid to the contras Reagan is requesting...

The Nicaraguan Revolution has made tremendous progress. But it has also made some mistakes. The revolution doesn't only want friends who pat it on the back for all the good things it has done. It also wants friends like yourselves who will help it think through some of the problems it faces...

The revolution values its relations with you and recognizes the important role you have played in mobilizing public opinion against U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.



Bob Hernandez

I am pleased to be here tonight speaking on behalf of Roberto. He sends his greetings and is looking forward to a long friendship between the FSLN and Socialist Action. ■



## Interview with FSLN commander:

# 'If U.S. invades Nicaragua, it will be another Vietnam'

The following are brief excerpts of an interview by *Socialist Action* with Commander Omar Cabezas of the Nicaraguan Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Cabezas is currently the Chief of Political Direction at the Ministry of the Interior of Nicaragua. He is also the author of one of the most popular novels in Nicaragua today, "Fire from the Mountains" (see review in October 1985 *Socialist Action*).

The complete interview, which focuses on a discussion over revolutionary strategy in Nicaragua today, will be printed along with other views on these same issues in a future issue of *International Outlook*, the theoretical supplement to *Socialist Action*. The interview was conducted by Jeff Mackler in San Francisco on Jan. 22, 1986.

At a time when the Reagan administration is asking for \$100 million in military and economic aid to the contras, we are printing those portions of the interview that deal with the determination of the Nicaraguan revolutionists to resist the escalated U.S. war against Nicaragua.

**Socialist Action:** Is the Nicaraguan Revolution prepared to confront the increased attacks by the U.S. government?

**Omar Cabezas:** Yes. We have been able to survive.

And we have been able to consolidate a popular revolutionary power.

Chile was destroyed six years before our revolution. But we will not allow ourselves to be destroyed.

If we allow ourselves to be destroyed after taking political power arms in hand—unlike Allende—we would permit the revolution to be postponed in the rest of Central America for possibly as much as 50 years.

We are not going to let this occur—particularly at a time of bright perspectives for revolutionary developments in the rest of Central and South America.

So we have had to consolidate the popular character of the revolution. We have distributed 2 million hectares of land to the peasants in Nicaragua. And we intend to distribute 1 million hectares more this year.

Our alliance with the workers and peasants is not hesitant. We have distributed 2 million hectares of land, but we have also distributed 400,000 rifles. This is the difference between Nicaragua and Grenada.

If the United States invades Nicaragua, it will not be fighting against the army alone. If the Marines land in Nicaragua, they are not going to defeat us in eight days. The people will defend the gains of the revolution; they will defend the land that has been distributed to them—land that never belonged to them before.

Nicaragua will be a Vietnam. It will not be a military



FSLN commander Omar Cabezas, author of novel, "Fire from the Mountains"

holiday for the imperialists.

It might have been possible for the U.S. government to send in its 101st Airborne Division immediately after our revolution. But times have changed. Nicaragua is different today. We have managed to survive six years. We have 400,000 rifles now. And we have 200,000 more rifles that we could send to our Guatemalan, Honduran and Salvadoran compañeros if we're invaded.

There are only two roads ahead for the United States: Either they exterminate us militarily—and they will have to pay a very high price for this—or they will learn to live with us in peace.

## ... Editorial

(continued from page 1)

clean up its "death squad" image. Meanwhile the military regime's regular army deepens its attacks on the civilian population, murdering those suspected of supporting the liberation forces of the FMLN. At the end of January, the army surrounded over 1000 civilians in the Guazapa area, 15 miles north of San Salvador. Several were killed and dozens imprisoned.

### Building spring actions

Last April 20 numerous antiwar coalitions emerged across the United States. Their primary focus was opposition to escalating U.S. intervention in Central America and South Africa. These coalitions showed the capacity to mobilize hundreds of thousands against the U.S. war drive.

With the escalating war threats against Libya, a number of antiwar activists are discussing how this important question should relate to the broad movement that already exists. Can the Middle East issue be simply incorporated by adding another slogan to the movement's program?

Unfortunately, mass opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America and South Africa is not automatically transferable to the Middle East issue. There is still widespread confusion about the U.S. role in

the Middle East, and there is no overt military intervention underway.

Large sections of the trade-union movement, the religious community, and other sectors of the population, which have demonstrated their opposition to U.S. policy in Central America, at best stand mute on the Middle East. In many cases they have been swayed by the barrage of pro-Israeli racist war propaganda.

This uneven state of political consciousness presents important tactical problems for the antiwar movement and for its leadership. Inclusion of the Middle East issue in the program of the broad movement threatens to reduce local and national coalitions to the narrow forces on the left, thereby drastically weakening the power of the movement to oppose intervention in Central America at a crucial time.

This could have grave consequences for the people of Central America and for the antiwar movement itself, which, for the first time has made important progress in linking imperialist war policies abroad with the austerity drive at home.

An actual U.S. military intervention is taking place in Central America today. It is the responsibility of all those concerned with the right to self-determination of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran people to focus on this issue—on building nationally coordinated mass actions this spring. The San Francisco Mobilization for Peace, Jobs

and Justice has called such a demonstration for April 19 and is urging coalitions in other cities to do the same.

The full power of the movement must be mobilized against the proposed \$100 million aid to the contras set for a vote in Congress next month. Press conferences, picket lines, and other protests are needed now to rally the movement as a whole and prepare for the mass mobilizations required to halt the warmakers.

In the course of building these actions, there is no doubt that, without jeopardizing the breadth of the existing coalitions,

necessary educational work on the Middle East can be accomplished by those who understand the importance of this issue. This can range from the inclusion of speakers who will address the Middle East issue to the organization of contingents at the demonstrations themselves.

Of course, an actual Middle East invasion by U.S. troops would present the antiwar movement with a new set of problems. In this instance, there is no doubt that new coalitions will be required to meet the challenge of the warmakers—The Editors.

## Canadian revolutionists form Alliance for Socialist Action

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

Delegates from Edmonton, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg met in Toronto Nov. 22-24 for the founding convention of the Alliance for Socialist Action. Previously, the Alliance consisted of individual socialist collectives in the four cities. At this convention, the delegates voted to form a national organization in sympathy with the Fourth International.

A well-attended international solidarity rally heard from leaders of the anti-apartheid, anti-intervention, and pro-choice movements.

Convention delegates voted on two national campaigns: anti-intervention and pro-choice.

Delegates expressed their commitment to work toward mass demonstrations in the spring against U.S. intervention—and Canadian complicity—in Central America and the Caribbean. They hoped their efforts would be part of similar actions around the world.

While continuing to oppose the restrictive federal anti-abortion laws, pro-choice activists in Toronto have focused their attention on defending the Morgenthaler abortion clinic. Although a judge overturned the jury decision against convicting the people in charge of the clinic, it remains open while the legal fight continues.

This is a direct result of the visible public support for women's right to choose. After the Catholic Church organized an anti-abortion demonstration through the parishes, pro-choice activists called an emergency demonstration. With less than a week's notice, over 8000 people—much larger than the Catholic demonstration—rallied to defend the clinic.

A pan-Canadian series of tribunals is being organized to point to the need for repeal of anti-abortion laws by relating the disastrous effect these laws have on

women's lives.

In addition to discussing their participation in the trade unions, New Democratic Party (NDP), antiwar, and pro-choice movements, delegates to the convention also debated and adopted a statement of principles, political resolution, organizational norms, and constitution, and elected a national leadership. They decided to publish a modestly sized newspaper entitled *Socialist Challenge For Socialist & Feminist Action*. The first issue will be available for the March 8 International Women's Day actions.

## S.F. coalition builds April 19 action



Walter Johnson, secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, addresses 110 activists at the first meeting of the Bay Area Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice. Seated are Al Lannon (left), president of Local 6 of the ILWU and a coalition coordinator, and John George (right), Alameda County supervisor. Lannon's report, adopted by a near unanimous vote, highlighted the coalition's four themes and the need for a united effort to build the mass march and rally set by the coalition for April 19, 1986, in San Francisco. The meeting approved a budget of \$27,000, a 60-person steering committee, and a coordinating committee of 13.

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**Fight back!**



## Military eats its cake, and kids get crumbs

By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

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

This slogan came out of a movement for expanded childcare in San Francisco in 1973. It was picked up and used all over the country because it was a good slogan at that time and is even more to the point now.

In 1981, 48.6 percent of total federal funds went to the military budget; in 1986, 56.5 percent of

total federal funds will be used for the military budget. That leaves dry crumbs for education and for the health and welfare of our children at a time when statistics point to an increasing need for federal funds.

The facts of family life in the United States in the 1980s are far different from those old TV reruns of stereotyped families such as "Father Knows Best" and "Ozzie and Harriet."

Here are some of the real facts: In 1980 alone, there were over 1 million pregnancies among wo-

men under the age of 20. One study predicts that 40 percent of girls who are now 14 years old will become pregnant before the age of 20.

One out of three white children and three out of four Black children will live at least part of their childhood in single-parent households. The number of children living with a single mother has increased by 500 percent since 1970 alone.

Most schoolchildren have a working mother. In fact, even among pre-schoolers, well over half of all mothers are work-

ing—generally for the same reason that men work. They need the money. Yet a lack of childcare is preventing an estimated 1.7 million women from seeking jobs.

Over 13.5 million children are now growing up in poverty. Since 1975, 1.4 million families have become poor, and in the last three years 2 million children have slipped into poverty. Since 1980, families have lost over \$170 billion in purchasing power—an average of \$1400 per family.

While President Reagan cries "crocodile" tears about the "unborn," he is attacking the already-born children of this country. He is robbing them of their health and childhood in a brutal and vengeful fashion.

What is needed is a "Star Wars" program for children, a war against poverty and disease. A war must be waged against the Democrats and Republicans who take our tax monies and use them to make weapons and to provide super-

profits for the capitalist class of this country.

Quality childcare should be as available to all children as are public schools. Childcare centers should be in the already-existing school system with qualified teachers with early-childhood teaching credentials.

After-school centers with remedial and recreation teachers for school-age children should be provided in every elementary school. This would put an end to the latch-key life where young children are left to shift for themselves while their parents work.

This is not a dream. At one time we did not have kindergarten for pre-school children. Parents fought for it, and now it is available for all public school children. We can do that for childcare centers.

Human rights come first, not profits. A massive fight to change the social system in this country is urgently necessary. It can be done. ■

## Inflamed mob firebombs Cinci. abortion clinics

By KATE CURRY

CINCINNATI—About 100 supporters of Americans Against Abortion (AAA) picketed the Margaret Sanger Center operated by Planned Parenthood on Dec. 28. They held "memorial services" for eight decaying black and gray late-term fetuses displayed in open coffins.

When 50 members of the Freedom of Choice Coalition objected to the sickening attempt to harass clinic staff and patients, they were told the office would be destroyed. One pro-choicer shouted, "What are you going to do, firebomb us?"

The answer to that question, on Dec. 30, resulted in \$75,000 in arson damage to both the Sanger clinic and the Women's Health Care Center, a private clinic owned by Dr. Martin Haskell, located a few blocks away.

The screaming bigots and religious terrorists had been charged up by a rally on Dec. 27, when the Rev. Jerry Stone inflamed the faithful to "answer to God's law, not the corrupt laws of this government."

City Councilman Kenneth Blackwell also addressed the rally. While AAA likes to parade rotting fetuses, Blackwell wants the city health department to oversee cremation or burial of fetal tissue. On Jan. 8, he pushed an ordinance through the all-male city council requiring hospitals and clinics to have city permits and to report abortions in writing to the city.

Dr. Stanley E. Broadnax, city health commissioner, reported last September that the ordinance would be an expensive "duplication of state law." He noted, "It would add nothing to the quality of care provided...Disposal of tissue is done appropriately now. Therefore, we recommend no ordinance for Cincinnati."

Civil libertarians and feminists warned the City Council that the proposal was unconstitutional. Akron passed a similar rule in 1978, but its restrictions on abortion rights were struck down by the

Supreme Court in 1983.

In March, abortion rights for minors will be limited by a new Ohio law requiring parental notification before receiving an abortion. Kathy Helmbock, president of the Ohio National Organization for Women (NOW), noted, "This bill punishes young women for being pregnant...It's ironic. It's saying she's too immature to make a rational decision about abortion but is mature enough to take on parenthood."

The dual firebombings, the fetal burial ordinance, and the parental notification law have galvanized feminists and civil libertarians in a renewed effort to defend abortion rights.

Activists here will be engaged in a wide variety of right-to-choose activities. These include fundraising to rebuild the fire-damaged clinics, helping to provide escort service for women seeking abortions who are harassed at the clinic doors, and publicizing the NOW-sponsored March for Women's Lives—which will take place in Washington, D.C., on March 9. ■



Pro-choice women at City Council meeting in Cincinnati

## Thousands picket for Tribune strikers

By ADAM SHILS

CHICAGO—The newspapers and TV often describe demonstrations as being "reminiscent of 1960s' antiwar protests." However, it is very rare for the media to call a demonstration "reminiscent of the 1930s' labor wars." This is just the way that last month's mass solidarity picket of the *Chicago Tribune* was described.

On Jan. 4, some 8000 to 10,000 trade unionists responded to the call of striking unions at the *Chicago Tribune* for a massive show of solidarity. The Chicago

Typographical Union No. 16, Chicago Web Printing Pressmen's Union No. 7, and Chicago Mailers' Union No. 2 have been on strike since July 18.

While circulation is down slightly due to a union boycott campaign, scabs are printing the paper pretty much as normal. Teamster delivery drivers have been regularly crossing the picket line. The *Tribune* management had carefully prepared a union-busting campaign beforehand and has been playing hardball at the bargaining table.

In this situation, the Unity Council of striking unions called for a major support demonstration. When the *Tribune* got wind of this, their attorneys rushed to get a court order to forbid mass picketing at the demonstration. This maneuver catapulted the picket line to the center of media coverage on the day before it was scheduled.

At dawn, the bulk of the demonstrators assembled at the main plant gates on Grand Avenue. *Tribune* delivery trucks were still driving through the line, protected by police on horseback. As a returning delivery truck tried to enter the plant, the line held firm.

Police tried to open a path through the picket. After a confrontation, the cops

decided that it was just physically impossible for the truck to get through the line. The truck then turned back. For the first time since the strike had begun, the gates of the plant were closed.

Unfortunately, the militancy of the strikers was not supported by the union leadership. From a powerful sound truck parked across the street, the officials consistently called on the strikers to respect the terms of a "consent decree" between the union and the *Tribune*, which specified that the union must not block the gates.

By 8 a.m. thousands of trade unionists were assembling for a rally across from the gates, which was addressed by prominent Chicago-area union leaders. A contingent of several thousand members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) won special applause from the crowd. The IBEW members all wore buttons saying, "I will never let organized labor down."

The police began to pick fights as the crowd began to disperse after the rally. By the end of the day, 48 trade unionists were arrested—including five members of the firefighters' union.

One magnificent demonstration will not win the strike. The militancy and solidarity of the pickets will have to be repeated and extended if the situation is going to be turned around. But the *Tribune* mass picket shows that mass working-class action is not a dream or wishful thinking. It is a real possibility in the United States in the 1980s. ■

National  
**MARCH** for  
Women's Lives

March 16: Los Angeles  
Assemble: Century Park at  
10 a.m.

March 9: Washington, D.C.  
Assemble: Mall at 10 a.m.  
March to Lincoln Memorial  
Rally: Lincoln Memorial





# Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to teenage pregnancy

By CARRIE HEWITT

CHICAGO—This city's first baby of 1986 was born just five seconds after midnight on New Year's Eve. Not surprisingly, the proud mother was a teenager.

Teen pregnancy has become a major phenomenon in Chicago. Public Health Department statistics show that the teen pregnancy rate here is 45 percent higher than the national average.

The numbers are staggering. According to recently released figures, some 25,000 teenage girls in Chicago become pregnant each year. Of these pregnancies, it is estimated that as many as 75 percent are unplanned and unwanted.

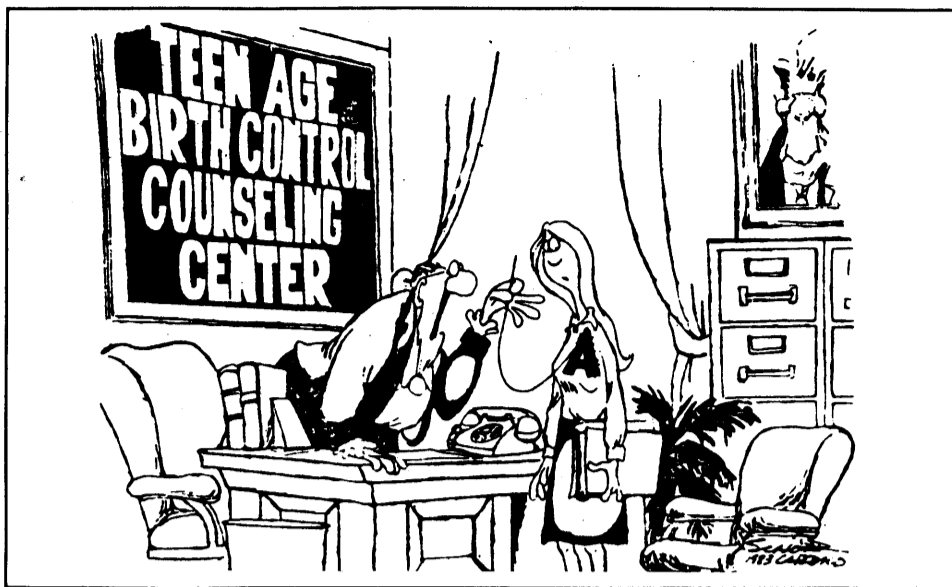
But the problem of unwanted teen pregnancies is by no means limited to the Chicago area. Each year more than a million teenagers across the United States become pregnant. Some 30,000 of them are under age 15.

The sheer number of pregnant teenagers has forced social agencies and educators to abandon the time-honored practice of simply labeling these teens as "wayward girls" and then forgetting about them. Suddenly, a plethora of studies and surveys have been released on the subject.

One of the most widely-publicized reports was released by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a nonprofit research center in New York City, which conducted a study of teen pregnancy in 37 countries. According to key findings in this report:

\* The teen pregnancy rate in the United States is the highest in the developed world;

\* The teen pregnancy rate in the United States is twice as great as Canada's rate and



"... According to federal guidelines, this will save us the embarrassment of phoning your parents..."

seven times as great as the Netherland's rate;

\* American teenagers are no more sexually active than teens in other countries;

\* While Black teens in the United States have a higher pregnancy rate than whites, whites alone have nearly double the rate of British and French teens.

Some commentators have tried to place the blame for teen pregnancy on erotic rock videos and sexually suggestive television shows. However, studies on the subject universally point to a much more basic explanation: American teens still don't know enough about birth control and still don't have ready access to it.

A study funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, for instance, found that a

surprising number of teenagers still believe old myths such as "a girl can't get pregnant the first time she has sex." A survey of teenage mothers conducted by the National Opinion Research Center found that few were familiar with the IUD and most had never even heard of the diaphragm.

Given this situation, it is understandable that researchers have found that only about one in three sexually active American female teenagers between ages 15 and 19 uses contraceptives at all.

Until recently, efforts to make simple information about birth control more readily available have met heavy resistance. Just this past summer, for instance, all three major TV networks refused to broadcast a public service announcement by the American College of Obstetricians and

Gynecologists solely on the ground that the announcement included the word "contraception."

This type of narrow-minded attitude toward sex education, however, no longer reflects the thinking of most people in this country. According to a recent Planned Parenthood study, 64 percent of the parents surveyed believe they have little or no control over their children's sexual activity and believe outside education is necessary. As high as 80 percent of the adults indicated that they favor television messages about birth control.

In places where teenage pregnancy has reached almost epidemic proportions, some school administrators have been willing to reach even further for a realistic solution to the problem. At Chicago's DuSable High School—where nearly a third of all of the female students have become pregnant in recent years—a medical clinic was set up that dispenses free birth-control devices to students.

Other clinics modeled on similar lines now exist in a small number of public high schools throughout the country. The results have been dramatic. In St. Paul, Minn., where the first clinical program was established in 1973, the number of births to teen students between 1977 and 1984 fell nearly 50 percent.

Despite the success of these clinics, it seems highly unlikely that they will become a widespread phenomenon. Government officials, who have done next to nothing to help address the problem, have lost little time in complaining about the cost of the few programs that do exist.

In Illinois, state officials estimate that teen pregnancies cost approximately \$853 million last year for the medical, welfare, and the handful of other social programs that already exist.

If a lasting solution is to be found to the social crisis caused by teen pregnancies, however, birth control simply is going to have to become more available. Wishful thinking on the part of parents and government administrators just isn't going to make this problem disappear.

## ...Cutbacks

(continued from page 1)

actually rose by 3 percent nationwide between 1982 and 1983.

The key to reversing these trends is increased health and nutrition programs for infants and pregnant women. But community health centers are targeted for cuts in 1986. The National Health Service Corps, which provides physicians for the centers, would also be cut.

According to Sara Rosenbaum of the Children's Defense Fund, the cuts in these two items will mean a quarter-million fewer patient visits this year. Two-thirds of the affected patients will be women and children and 80 percent will be poor.

The president's budget for fiscal 1987, which will be voted on by Congress this month, is expected to include an additional \$1 billion in cuts in programs for the poor and \$10 billion in cuts in pensions and medical programs.

### Attacks on affirmative action

Reagan also used the Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebrations as a platform to urge a rollback of minority-oriented hiring goals for federal contractors. Reagan said in a radio address on Jan. 18 that King's "I have a dream" speech could be interpreted as a stand against affirmative action quotas.

This is nonsense. Urban League President John Jacob responded, "If the administration wants to be a Rambo-like destroyer of civil rights gains, it should not pretend that its efforts are good for Black citizens."

The executive order establishing guidelines for hiring women and oppressed nationalities was issued 20 years ago in response to the mass civil-rights protests of the time.

But Blacks continue to be excluded from better-paying jobs. In a 1978 survey of union locals in the building trades, for example, Blacks accounted for only 2.8 percent of plumbers and pipefitters, 2.3

percent of sheetmetal workers, and 4.2 percent of carpenters.

If anything, the overall situation for Black people is worse than it has been for many years. Blacks suffer the highest poverty rate (almost 36 percent) since



Gordon Parks

1964. According to an Urban League report released last month, Black families have, on the average, 56 cents to spend for every dollar that whites have.

### A crisis in housing

Nor has de-facto segregation in housing improved since Martin Luther King Jr. led civil rights marchers through a white suburb of Chicago in 1966. This is due in large part to continuing racist practices by realtors and lending institutions. In Chicago today, for example, less than 4 percent of the Black population lives on the North Side. And they live mainly in pockets of poverty close to the Loop.

In Boston, although the Black population increased 21 percent between 1970 and 1980, almost all of the increase was confined to already-existing Black neighborhoods. In Cleveland, complaints of housing discrimination doubled last year over 1984. There were two cross-burnings by racists in December.

In Philadelphia, according to a doctoral thesis by Ira Goldstein of Temple University, only 3 percent of the city's 365 census tracts are fully integrated. The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations reports 49 cases of racial disputes over housing from 1981 to 1984. In the latest incidents, on Nov. 20 and 21, 1985,

several hundred racists demonstrated in front of the houses of Black families who had moved into white neighborhoods.

A rational society would respond with emergency funding for new and rehabilitated housing, a nationwide program of low-cost rent control and no-interest mortgage loans, and strict enforcement of federal anti-segregation laws.

Instead, public housing grants were reduced 40 percent in 1982-83, and some \$200 million more will be cut from urban development grants this year. Housing assistance to low-income people is slated to be cut, and grants for the construction of rental housing in poor neighborhoods will be eliminated.

### Where did the money go?

From 1982 to 1985, about \$110 billion has been slashed from federally funded social programs. During the same years, federal interest payments to the banks increased by \$124 billion. In addition, military spending rose from \$159 billion in 1981 to \$292 billion last year.

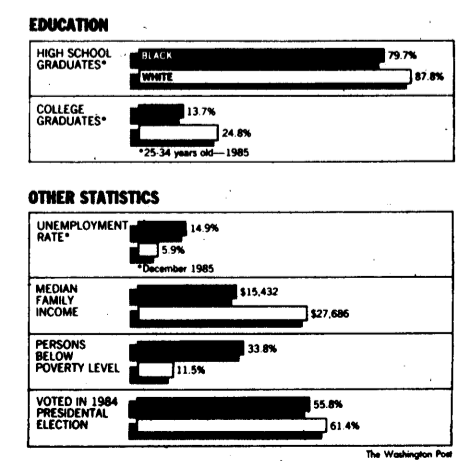
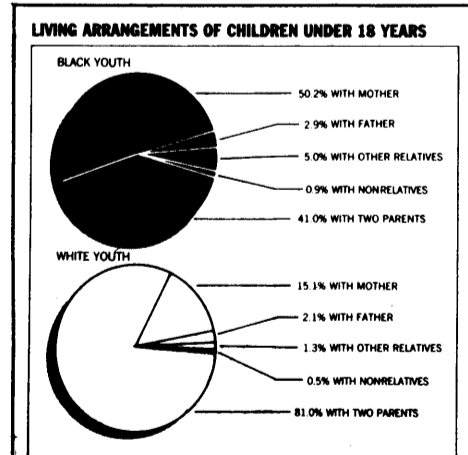
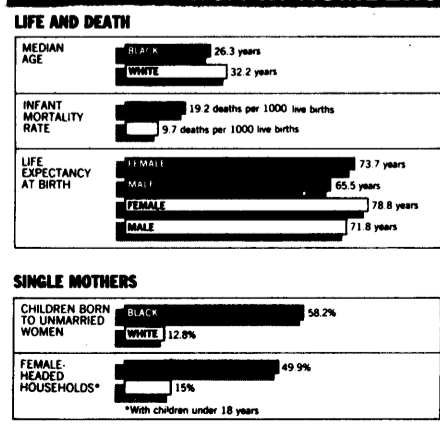
Democrats in Congress have been as complicit as the Republicans in handing funds for social needs over to the bankers and the military. Recently, Democratic Party congressmen stated their agreement with the idea of a bipartisan "grand coalition" to advance new proposals for budget cuts. But the Democrats also demanded that the new "coalition" discuss a

tax increase—a further burden on working people and the poor.

Despite Martin Luther King Jr.'s illusions in the Democratic Party, he put primary emphasis on action in the streets to win Black rights. "We must go forward to mass action," he said.

On Jan. 20, thousands of people around the country marked King's birthday with marches and rallies. Close to 500,000 turned out in Atlanta and 60,000 in San Francisco. Support is building for the Feb. 15 march against racism in Philadelphia and the April 19 demonstration for Peace, Jobs, and Justice in San Francisco. These demonstrations prove that, despite heightened attacks by the government, King's method of mass action is very much alive.

## BLACK AMERICA IN NUMBERS



By DAVE COOPER

LOS ANGELES—The longest food workers' strike in Southern California history ended in defeat Dec. 29, as the multibillion dollar supermarket industry succeeded in extracting major concessions from 22,000 meatcutters and Teamsters.

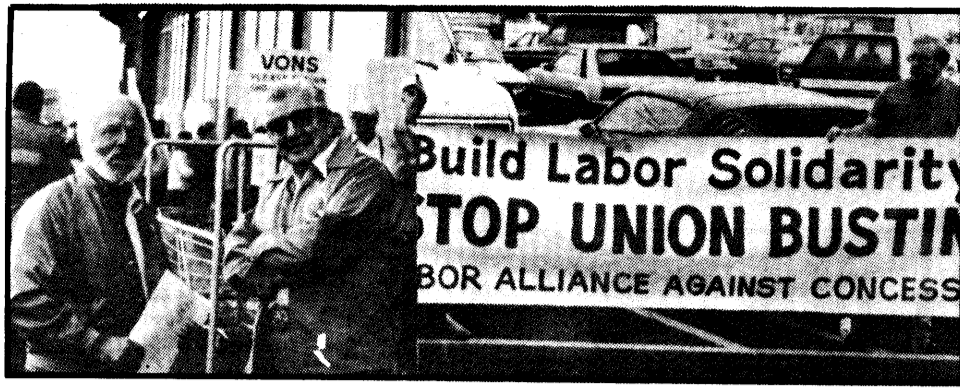
Three days earlier the meatcutters, represented by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), rejected the employers' "last and final offer" by a 55-percent margin.

But UFCW International President William Wynn rode roughshod over the determination of the ranks to continue their eight-week battle. He outraged many strikers by ordering the locals which rejected the contract to vote again on the same offer. He then added these votes to the totals of the locals which had previously voted "yes" and declared that the contract was ratified by a 54-percent vote.

The new meatcutters' contract includes a three-year wage freeze and a two-tier wage scale, coupled with a 50-percent cut in the guaranteed hours of journeymen. Newly hired "meat wrappers" will now be used to perform journeymen duties at \$5.53 hourly, nearly half the previous scale.

The unity of the strike was broken when the 12,000 Teamster warehouse workers, voting separately, accepted the "last offer" and slowly returned to work. Their new contract includes a two-tier wage scale limited to a small portion of Teamster work categories. The bosses backed off from their original proposal to operate new warehouses as open shops.

This tactical retreat in respect to the Teamsters, carefully planned by the bosses



## L.A. food strike: Lessons of a defeat

negotiating arm, the Food Employers Council, was designed to deal a more lethal blow to the meatcutters.

The two meatcutter locals that defied the international bureaucracy by rejecting the contract for a second time also refused to bend to the UFCW demand that the vote be conducted by a mail ballot. Mass meetings of the ranks were organized to discuss the pathetic strike strategy of the union tops as well as the "final offer."

"I'm damned hurt," said Whitey Ulrich, president of Local 551. "God knows I love a fight, but you can't fight everybody," Ulrich told the membership. "We're only as strong as our weakest links and some of those links broke. There's never been stronger support for a strike, and we're still getting kicked."

Dan Swinton, a spokesman for the union

tops had another view. "I've never seen a labor agreement that didn't result in some people being dissatisfied, but I think the majority are pleased," he said.

In fact, few if any of the rank-and-file are pleased with the new contract or with the strategy of the officials during the strike. Virtually every mass rally and picket demonstrated the contempt the strikers had for the employers' insulting demands. In the end they were accepted because there seemed to be no alternative.

### Blows to the strike

From the first day of the strike, the power centers of the food industry, the distribution centers, were left unchallenged by the union officials, who agreed to immediately comply with early injunctions limiting picketing. These centers continued

to receive and deliver food to virtually all 1250 struck supermarkets.

Another mortal blow to the strike was the fact that the supermarket clerks, organized into separate locals of the UFCW, continued to work. The UFCW, the result of the recent merger of the Retail Clerks International Union and the Amalgamated Meatcutters, was formed to prevent this kind of conflict. Under the leadership of William Wynn, however, the power of the union was turned against the membership rather than the boss.

The foodworkers' strike highlights contradictory aspects of labor struggles today. Union officials, under heavy pressure from both the bosses and the ranks, are thrust into the leadership of strikes which threaten to go beyond their control. They seek an early end to these conflicts, viewing the union more in terms of their personal needs rather than the needs of the membership.

Workers are demonstrating the will to fight and take risks to defend their class interests. They are showing a determination to go beyond the "publicity campaign" limits set by the union officialdom.

Successful strikes begin with the collective power of the working class to do the bosses injury, to shut them down, and stop their profits. The example of the raw power of workers fighting for their dignity is the basis for winning the broad solidarity of the entire labor movement and its allies.

The ranks have yet to produce a leadership capable of responding to the union tops and the attacks of the employers and the government at the same time. This leadership will emerge from the daily battles which more and more compel workers to draw the line and retreat no more.

## ... Hormel strike

(continued from page 1)

elsewhere in Austin, P-9 picket teams were dispatched by radio to confront them.

When word came at 2:00 p.m. that the cops were attempting to open gate No.1 at the Hormel plant, the loudspeaker at the union hall sounded the alarm, and within 15 minutes the P-9-picket at the gate grew from three to 60 pickets, with another 25 horn-honking cars surrounding the gate.

The blockade at the plant gates included sizeable contingents of unionists from all across Minnesota and surrounding states. The electrical workers' union in Minneapolis (Local 292), for example, sent two busloads to Austin.

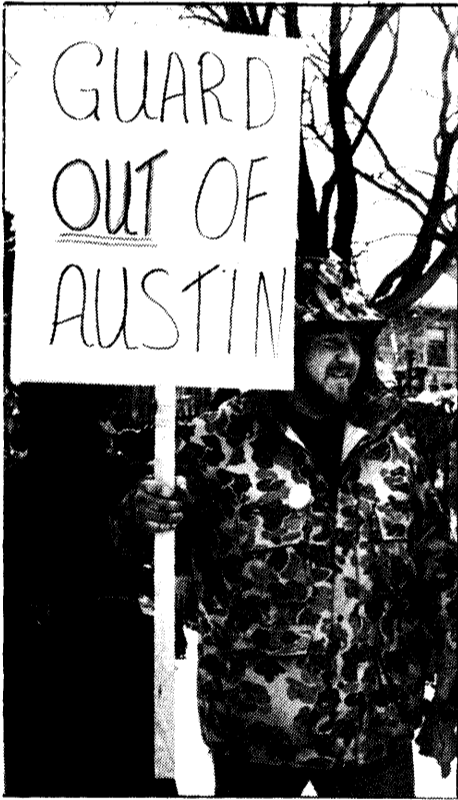
### Hormel is hurting

Despite its denials, Hormel is hurting. Local P-9's President Jim Guyette said that the union's efforts have cut Hormel's production by as much as 75 percent.

At the company's Ottumwa, Iowa, plant, which accounts for 18 percent of Hormel's production, the entire workforce has refused to cross picket lines set up by roving picket squads of Local P-9 members. The plant is now totally shut down.

At Hormel's Fremont, Neb., plant, which also accounts for 18 percent of total production, 100 Hormel workers (out of 850) have refused to cross P-9 picket lines. Significantly, rail workers and gas tank drivers are refusing to cross picket lines to deliver CO<sub>2</sub> gas, which is used in the plant operation. Reports indicate that the plant is now out of CO<sub>2</sub> gas.

At the company's Dubuque, Iowa,



Socialist Action/Dave Walsh

operation, the union reports that the kill-and-cut division is totally shut down.

The day before the Jan. 30 blockade, Gov. Perpich ordered the 800 National Guard troops at the plant withdrawn. The Guards' number was also reduced to 500.

This move appeared to be motivated by the growing public criticism of the governor's decision to send in the National Guard. One Minnesota radio station found public sentiment running 200 to 1 against the Guards' presence in Austin.

Still, the troops remain stationed at an armory within five minutes of the Austin plant, ready to return if called.

Hormel has responded to the spreading strike solidarity with its customary arrogance—announcing that all who honor the picket lines will be fired. Similarly, Hormel says that scabs hired during the strike will keep their jobs, regardless of any final settlement. Here in Austin, reports indicate that the company has hired as many as 500 scabs, and perhaps 200 members of Local P-9 ("P-10ers," as they are called) have crossed the picket line.

### P-9 stands by workers

Local P-9 President Jim Guyette responded that P-9 will stand by those workers who have struck in solidarity. "The

fact that the company has fired those people puts us in a position to bargain," Guyette said. "The company will have to bargain with us all."

Guyette added that P-9 won't sign a contract in Austin unless workers who honored the picket lines at other plants get their jobs back.

There is no doubt that Hormel felt confident at the strike's outset about its ability to impose a 23-percent wage cut, a two-tier wage system, and sweeping concessions in benefits and union protections. After all, drastic union concessions have become an all-too-familiar reality in recent years.

But what is not so familiar is the way that the leaders and ranks of P-9 have refused to limp along with the parade of concessions imposed on unions in recent years.

Rather, they have rebelled against Hormel's attempt to cripple their union with takeaways. On this score, Hormel gravely underestimated the fighting resolve and determination of Local P-9.

The union has met every challenge from Hormel head on. It defied Hormel when it announced that it would begin importing scabs into the plant on Jan. 13. It defied Hormel's ultimatum to return to work or be fired.

P-9 defied Gov. Rudy Perpich when he sent in the National Guard on Jan. 21, demonstrating by the hundreds outside the plant. And, it defied its own union International, whose president, William Wynn, has aggressively tried to isolate and defeat this maverick local.

By its courageous battle, Local P-9 is

inspiring working people all over the United States. Support for the union has been pouring in from all corners of the country. Workers at an FMC Corp. plant in the Twin Cities area, for example, forced the company to remove vending machines carrying Hormel products from company property, or face their removal by the workers themselves.

In St. Paul, 500 unionists and P-9 supporters demonstrated outside the governor's mansion on Jan. 25, demanding the withdrawal of the National Guard. When a sign was held up asking drivers to "Honk if you support Local P-9," a steady blast of horns quickly sounded throughout this otherwise quiet residential district.

The electrical workers' union in Minneapolis (Local 292) has donated \$7000 to the strike effort. The Minnesota and national Teamsters union has donated \$20,000, and a UFCW local at the Oscar Mayer plant in Madison, Wis., has pledged \$10,000. All over the country money and pledges of support are pouring in.

This flood of support from unions is motivated by more than sympathy. Local P-9 is proving that concession-crazed corporations can be fought. A victory by Local P-9 could very well inspire a new wave of labor militancy against the anti-union demands of employers.

Local P-9 has shown that the concessions given up by the top union officialdom in the big industrial unions are not justified by an alleged decline in the strength of the unions. Local P-9's example is a sign of things to come—the beginning of a counteroffensive by the American labor movement.



Socialist Action/Mike Harris

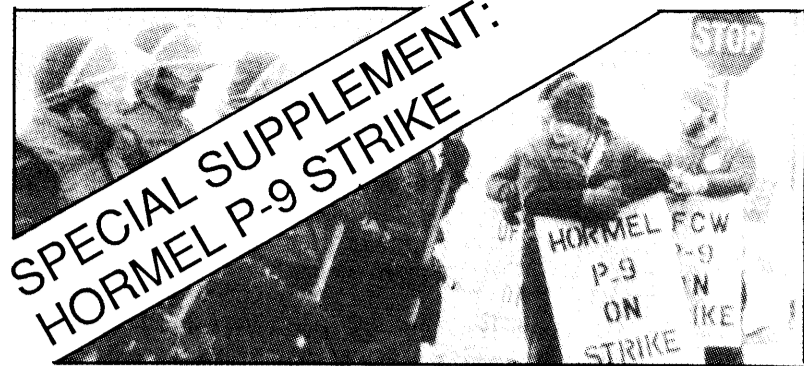
### Socialist Action Forums:

**Boston:** 'Fight Against Concessions'  
Speaker: Jake Cooper  
Sunday, Feb. 9, 7:00 p.m.  
169 Mass. Ave., Boston

**Los Angeles:** 'Crisis in Philippines'  
Film: 'This Bloody, Blundering Business'  
Speaker: Bob Capistrano  
Sat., Feb. 22, 7:30 p.m.  
People's College of Law  
660 S. Bonnie Brae, Los Angeles



# A Socialist ACTION



## Mass picketing can win! All labor must beat back scabs, National Guard

By JAKE COOPER

"All the people in the country have been sliding backwards. It's time labor takes a stand. The American people are done giving. They have to have a way to say 'This is enough.' And that's what's happening here."—Richard Waller, a packinghouse worker for 19 years at Hormel's plant in Austin, Minn.

AUSTIN, Minn.—On Jan. 21, one day after the striking P-9 packinghouse workers had used their militant force to keep scabs from entering the Hormel plant here, Democratic Gov. Rudy Perpich called out the National Guard to allow the company to reopen its plant.

Striking workers had planned to use the same tactic of blocking all plant entrances with their cars the following day. But this time the 800 National Guardsmen sealed off all access gates to the plant and created a cordoned route through which the scabs could pass. Eight strikers, who were attempting to defend their jobs, were brutally dragged from their cars and beaten by the guardsmen when they failed to make way for the scabs.

Reflecting the outrage of the striking members of Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, Jim Guyette, the president of the union local, denounced the governor's decision "to run strikebreakers into the plant." Guyette explained to a union meeting that night that the P-9 strike was an opportunity to draw the line against the concessions demanded by the companies and to beat back the wholesale attacks on the unions throughout the country.

### Hormel reopens plant

Local P-9's five-month strike against the Geo. A. Hormel & Co. has national importance. The meatpacking industry has been able to gouge concessions from the UFCW which have lowered wages and resulted in massive layoffs and a grave deterioration of working conditions and safety for the workers. The P-9 members have stood firm against the employer attacks and have shown the labor movement that concessions can and must be resisted.

Since Aug. 17, the 1500 P-9 members have been on strike against Hormel's demands to cut wages, gut the seniority system, introduce a two-tier system for new hires, and increase speedup on the job with no concern for safety.

The Austin packinghouse workers have had experience with such concessions demands before. In 16 out of the last 23 years they have taken concessions. Not

*Jake Cooper is the chairman of the food committee of the Metro P-9 Strike Support Committee. A former packinghouse worker, he is also a veteran of the Minneapolis 1934 Teamsters strike.*



Socialist Action/Mike Zakowski

long ago, there was a workforce of 7000 and a town of 32,000. Sixteen concessions later there are only 1540 workers left in a town of 22,000.

And although the Austin plant is barely three years old, it is also one of the most dangerous in the industry. The injury rate average for 1984 in the meatpacking industry was 33 injuries per hundred workers. In 1984, the injury in Austin was 202 injuries per 100 workers.

Soon after the strike began, Hormel was

forced to close its Austin plant. It was able to shift most of its production, however, to its seven other plants. To do this, it demanded overtime from workers in these plants.

But soon the company began to prepare for the day when it could reopen its Austin plant. A few months into the strike, supervisory employees began crossing the picket lines. With 200 such employees,

(continued on next page)

### How you can help the P-9 strikers:

The packinghouse workers at the Geo. A. Hormel & Co. in Austin, Minn., have given up concessions in 16 of the last 23 years. The workforce has dwindled from 7000 to 1540. The injury rate at the plant is six times the national average.

Because they have said "no" to Hormel's scheme to impose further cuts in their working and living conditions, the members of P-9 are facing the combined power of the government, courts, cops, and now, the National Guard.

P-9 mass picketing stopped the scabs. The determination of the striking union has already inspired an unprecedented outpouring of labor and community support in the Twin Cities area. With the help of working people in the surrounding communities, they can overcome the scabherding National Guard too.

Everyone knows the stakes in this strike: A P-9 victory can start to turn back the concessions tide; a defeat would have the opposite effect. This emergency requires special efforts. Contingents from surrounding cities must be organized to help build powerful picket lines.

Workers all over America can and will help. Our solidarity can produce political support and material aid more powerful than all the court injunctions and bayonets Hormel can buy.

#### What can be done to help:

1. Union members and other friends can organize to send teams of unemployed sisters and brothers, as well as those able to take off from work a day, to help picket or do whatever the striking union requires.

2. Resolutions should be passed in unions or community organizations demanding the withdrawal of the National Guard from Austin and expressing full support to the P-9 strikers. Send copies to Local P-9 in Austin, Minn., and to Gov. Rudy Perpich, State Capitol, St. Paul, Minn. 55155.

3. Money should be collected to help sustain P-9 members and their families. P-9 members are currently receiving only \$40 per week in strike benefits. Every local union should pledge regular weekly contributions. Start immediately with a collection for money and food and send it to United Support Group, P-9 Emergency Hardship Fund, 316 Fourth Ave., NE, Austin, Minn. 55912. Or better still, bring it in person!

(continued from previous page)

Hormel was able to run two lines: a spam line and a bacon line.

Finally, after the P-9 workers twice voted in January to refuse the company's contract proposal, the company made an announcement that it was going to reopen the plant on Jan. 13.

And sure enough, on Jan. 13 the company opened its doors, but few scabs showed up to work. Then the company announced it was hiring replacements for the striking workers. It gave the strikers a two-week ultimatum to return to work on the company's terms or permanently lose their jobs. The workers continued to stand firm.

But by the end of that week, many more scabs and new hires were entering the plant. The union had agreed to abide by a restraining order limiting to three the number of pickets at each of the plant's gates. But this had not kept out the scabs. It was obvious something else was needed.

At a membership meeting on Sunday, Jan. 19, the P-9 strikers themselves realized that the scabs had to be stopped. So they decided to implement their "fighting from their cars" tactic, which meant blocking the plant gates with their cars to prevent the scabs from entering.

On Jan. 20 this tactic proved effective. For the first time in months, the plant was shut down. Nobody could get into the plant. Towing-trucks companies within a radius of 50 miles from Austin were unwilling to move the strikers' cars. The workers were exercising their democratic right to carry out an effective picket line. And they were determined not to allow the use of scabs to break their strike.

But the Hormel company didn't wait long to react. It called on Gov. Perpich to come to its rescue by calling out the National

# Mass picketing can v

Guard against the "unruly" strikers. And "friend of labor" Perpich, according to his own aides, did not agonize one minute over this decision. Within hours the first 500 guardsmen were on their way to Austin.

## Roving picket lines

From the very beginning, the P-9 strikers were up against a determined enemy. The Hormel company was outraged that Local P-9 dare interfere with its right to squeeze the workers more to increase its already hefty profits.

A serious response by the entire UFCW union was called for to fend off and beat back this company's attacks. While the UFCW international sanctioned the strike and provided some strike funds to the P-9 members (\$65 per week during the first six weeks and then only \$40 per week), its real role throughout the strike was totally shameful.

The international union leadership, beginning with President William H. Wynn, did their best to attempt to isolate the strike. On Dec. 3 they sent all AFL-CIO affiliates nationwide a letter which stated that the fight of the P-9 members had caused UFCW members great "pain, disunity, and disruption."

On Oct. 19 the P-9 strikers agreed that they should urge walkouts at as many other Hormel plants as possible to make the company feel the pinch of the strike. Another blow to P-9 resulted from the UFCW leadership's refusal to sanction the roving P-9 pickets to other Hormel plants.

BETWEEN  
A ROCK  
AND A  
HARD  
PLACE



Owatonna People's Press

Without the UFCW international's sanction of the roving pickets, the P-9 members said, the other Hormel workers would be left defenseless against the company's threats to fire those who honored the picket lines.

The Hormel locals in Ottumwa, Iowa, and Fremont, Neb., also unsuccessfully demanded that the international union endorse the roving pickets and call for a boycott of all Hormel products.

Allan Zack, a UFCW international spokesman, answered the local members. In order to avoid "the potential legal and economic ramifications" of a

confrontation with the company, Zack said, these measures could not be ratified.

UFCW President Wynn went further. Responding to P-9's request for support to steps making its strike more effective, Wynn wrote the following to Guyette: "Local P-9's courageous members stand at the edge of the cliff you led them to, and they will need courageous leadership that will lead them away from a disastrous mass suicide with their dignity preserved."

But in Ottumwa, Iowa, the workers didn't wait for Wynn's approval. They refused to cross the picket line set up by the P-9 members the day after the National Guard

## Support Committee builds solidarity for P-9

The packinghouse workers in Austin, Minn., have been on strike since Aug. 14, 1985, when they rejected the Geo. A. Hormel & Co.'s proposal to cut wages and break the union.

Soon after the strike began, union activists and leaders in the Twin Cities area formed the Metro P-9 Support Committee. The purpose of this committee was to mobilize the rest of the labor movement in the Twin Cities behind the P-9 strikers.

The support committee has the official sanction of the P-9 local. Elected officials of the local attend the meetings of the support committee to give updates on the strike and to help orient the committee's work.

I was elected chairman of the food com-

mittee. Our job has been to rally aid—mainly food and money—to the strikers.

From the very beginning, the response we got from the labor movement was tremendous. On Sept. 1, in the first food caravan we put together, we were able to fill a 45-foot semitrailer from front to back with about 15 tons of food. As we got into Austin, our 25 to 30 cars were joined by 50 motorcyclists who led us into town.

The enthusiasm of the strikers was overwhelming. As we rolled down the street we actually saw tears in the eyes of the workers. They were excited to see people from outside the community coming to support them.

This successful caravan also lit a fire

under the rest of the labor movement—particularly under Region 13 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW). It made them think that they, too, must do something.

The strategy of the support committee in the second caravan, which was organized on Oct. 19, was multifold. We had to tie the labor movement closer to the work of our committee. In particular we had to seek the assistance of the UFCW international through Region 13.



Socialist Action/Lynn Henderson

By the time the second caravan rolled around, we were given office quarters in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 110 in Minneapolis.

To prepare this caravan, we contacted approximately 204 locals in the Twin Cities area. We organized collections of money and food for the P-9 strikers in the factories. We asked that money be sent directly to Austin. We also organized speakers to go from Austin to Twin Cities locals.

Our second caravan contained 6000 lbs. of chicken; 1500 lbs. of ground beef, 1500 half-gallons of milk; 1500 pound-and-a-half loaves of bread; 1500 dozen eggs; and three tons of potatoes.

But these caravans were also huge media events. They received tremendous TV coverage. They gave the lie to the claim of both the UFCW international leadership and the company that there was no support for the P-9 strike—that it was isolated, that it was a pariah of the labor movement.

These caravans showed the visible support of the entire Twin Cities labor movement for the strike.

## Fire under labor movement

The international leadership, headed by UFCW President William Wynn, has been constantly attacking this local. UFCW officials have written letters nationwide telling unions not to support Local P-9 and not to send them money. They went so far as to imply there was a misappropriation of funds.

They have also written the strikers telling them not to send roving pickets to other Hormel plants. The record of this international leadership has been shameful.

But because of the work we did, Region 13 brought at least two caravans from the Twin Cities area to the P-9 strikers.

I would say that through our work over 200 tons of food was brought into Austin; 50 tons from the support committee, the rest of it from other locals and from Region 13 itself.

In addition to providing food, morale-boosting, and publicity, the committee played a big role in gaining support for the P-9 strikers from the delegates at the Minnesota AFL-CIO State Convention in



Support committee delivers food to striking P-9 workers. Jake Cooper (inset) unloads bread.

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was sent into Austin. On Jan. 22, the entire first shift walked off the job in Ottumwa for over four hours, showing the depth of their support for the P-9 strikers. Immediately, the company filed a \$330,000 suit against the Ottumwa local for the work stoppage.

### Mail ballot vs. direct ballot

Another attempt by Wynn and the UFCW top leadership to force the strike to end occurred in late December, when the international decided unilaterally to conduct a mail ballot on whether or not to suspend the strike. They stated they didn't trust P-9 to carry out the vote. They claimed that union members were being intimidated at the membership meetings into voting to stay out.

The P-9 leadership, though, refused to submit to these strong-arm pressures. Guyette explained that the local would hold its own vote in the only democratic manner possible—at the union hall. This is the only way a collective discussion and informed decision could be made. He said he would only abide by the vote at the membership meeting.

In early January both votes were held. Wynn had predicted that the majority of the workers would vote to accept the company's proposals. In fact, the international tried all sorts of machinations to affect the vote. Some people got two ballots. Others who didn't think they could get their ballot in on time were given the

right to vote informally after the deadline.

But to Wynn's and the company's chagrin, both votes produced roughly the same 3-2 vote against the contract. Local P-9 actually invited four clergy people to observe the entire election. The conclusion of the observers? There had been no coercion whatsoever in the strike vote, they said. The whole campaign against the local was thus exposed as slander.

The anger of the local members against the international union had understandably been building up over the months. At a press conference in mid-December, it burst out into the open, when about 150 strikers confronted the representative of the UFCW international on the mail ballot and on a proposed contract settlement. Marilyn Jensen, a member of P-9, expressed the sentiment of many when she loudly accused the international of leaving the Austin union members "cold, hungry, and under pressure."

### What it will take to win

In the 1934 Teamsters strike [see page 4 of this supplement], the workers had to confront the bosses, their courts, their police—and even their National Guard.

To win their strike they organized roving pickets called "flying squads." They set up auxiliary committees to aid the strikers. They organized a democratic central command of the strike known as the "Committee of 100."

But they also did something else. They understood that it was necessary to rely on their own strength to confront all those who sought to keep them in bondage to the bosses. Hence, they placed no confidence in the role of the "mediators" or "impartial arbiters." They placed no confidence in the Democratic or Farmer-Labor Party politicians, who inevitably defended the interests of the bosses.

The Teamsters, in the course of their fight, came to realize that as far as the employing class is concerned all strikes are illegal. They understood that it was necessary to defy the injunctions limiting the right to picket. And they understood that it was necessary to defend their democratic right to have an effective picket line with all the necessary power of persuasion.

The only way today to make the Hormel company retreat in its violent attack against the workers—an attack that has seen the workers lose their homes and cars—is to follow the example of the fighting union movement of the 1930s.

late September.

While about 300 strikers lined up at the convention entrances to lobby the delegates for support, the committee members who were delegates helped organize people inside the convention to get a motion passed explicitly supporting the P-9 strike. The convention delegates even gave the P-9 delegation a standing ovation as the official delegates from the local entered the hall.

Our third and latest food caravan was on Dec. 15. It was probably our most successful one. After we unloaded the approximately 20 tons of food, there was a Christmas party for an estimated 1150 children ages 12 and under. We brought candy canes for all the kids. Other union locals donated toys. The families of the strikers, too, had made toys or repaired old ones in their Santa's Workshops. We were able to make the very difficult holiday season a bit more cheerful for the striking workers and their families.

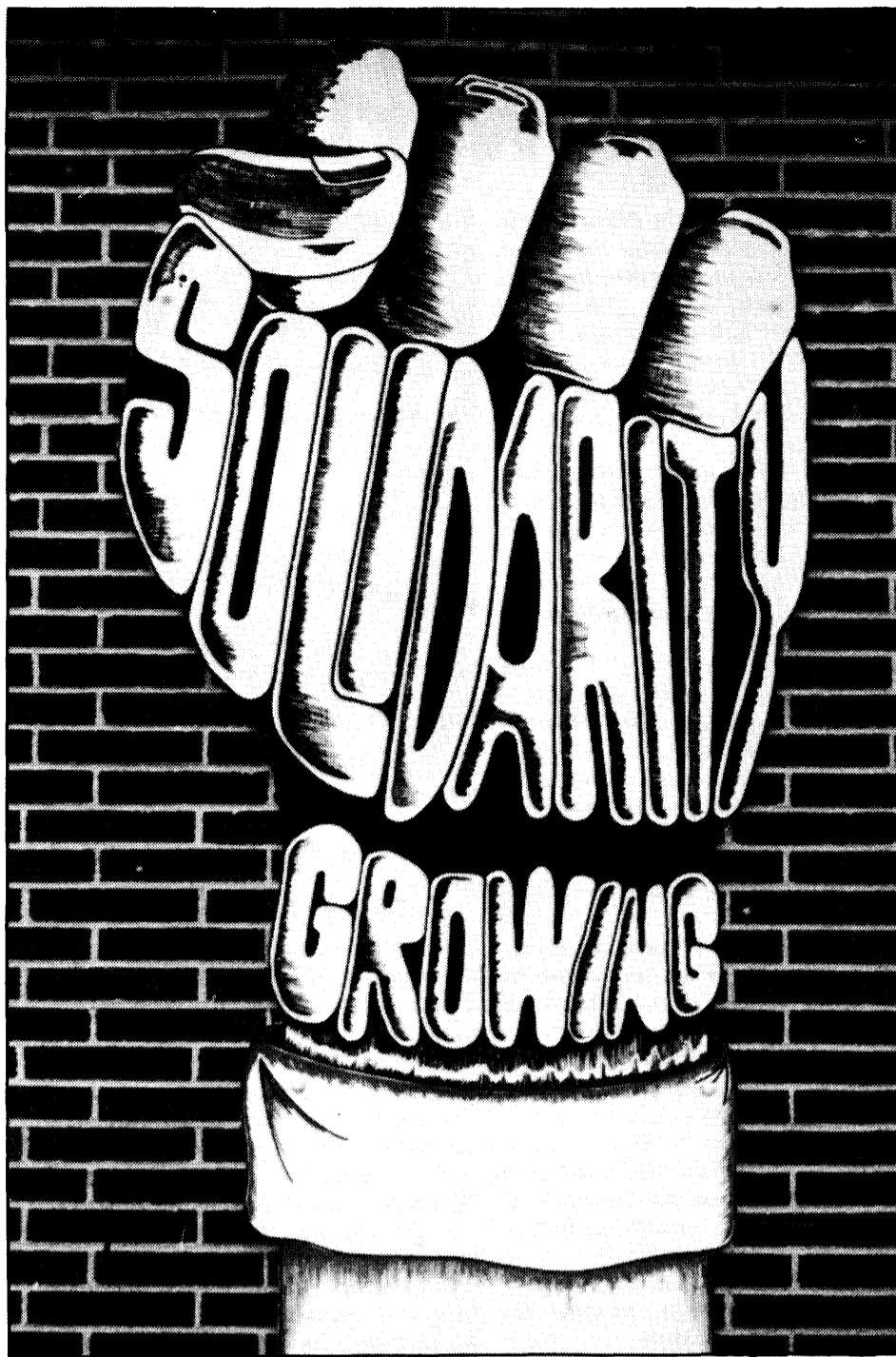
More recently, the committee organized a mass rally on Jan. 19 at the hall of Local 879 of the United Auto Workers. The rally call was signed by pro P-9 delegates to the recent state AFL-CIO convention. Over 600 people rallied in support of the striking P-9 workers. A button which read, "Solidarity Brigade," was sold at the meeting. The next day a brigade of three busloads of people went down to Austin.

Finally, on Jan. 22, the day after the National Guard was sent into Austin, the strike support committee issued a call for a protest rally on Jan. 25 in front of Gov. Rudy Perpich's mansion in St. Paul. The text of the call reads as follows:

"The Minnesota National Guard are being used as traffic cops to escort scabs and strikebreakers through the Hormel picket line in Austin, Minn. Under orders from Gov. Perpich, the National Guard and state police are being directly used in an attempt to break a strike and smash a union.

"If this is allowed to continue, the effects can be the same as Reagan's strikebreaking of PATCO. Working conditions and wages of all workers in Minnesota—union and non-union—will be adversely affected.

"Please join with other people of good will to demand that the National Guard stop being used to break the P-9 strike."—JAKE COOPER



Banner on wall outside P-9 headquarters in Austin, Minn.

The P-9 workers have shown their determination to fight to the finish and win. Their local leadership has also mobilized the membership to respond to the company's takeback attacks.

To win the strike, the scabs must be kept out and the plant shut down. If the union succeeds in Austin, it will then be easier to call on their sisters and brothers in the other seven Hormel plants to join the

strike. The entire labor movement has a great responsibility to see to it that the courageous P-9 fighters are not defeated. A P-9 victory would start to turn back the concessions tide. This strike is therefore the strike of all working people in this country—union and non-union alike.

An emergency response is needed to come to the aid of the P-9 strikers. Our solidarity can make the difference.

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# How Minn. Teamsters beat bosses, Nat'l. Guard in '34

The labor struggles of the 1930s laid the foundation for the modern labor movement. Many AFL-CIO leaders argue, however, that the "adversarial" tactics of those days are no longer effective against the "sophisticated" methods of today's employers. We need "new tactics," they say, to hold our own in today's changing economy.

But some things never change, like calling out the National Guard to break a strike—or Democratic and Republican politicians who can't do enough to demonstrate their loyalty to the employers.

That was the reality in the 1930s, when Minneapolis Teamsters and Austin packinghouse workers struck for their rights—and it is the reality today. That is why we are publishing the following accounts of these two chapters from Minnesota's labor history. They offer lessons worth studying—The Editors.

By MARK HARRIS

There's an old tradition among employers in the United States. When push comes to shove, and a company's strikebreaking tactics fail—call on your friends in government to come down hard on striking workers. And if that means crushing a strike by military might—so be it.

That is what the Geo. A. Hormel & Co. hopes to accomplish in its attacks on Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. And it knows it has friends in high places, like Democratic Gov. Rudy Perpich, who has called out the National Guard to ensure that scabs can enter the Hormel plant in Austin, Minn.

But it is not a hopeless situation, even when faced with armed troops in the service of management. The history of the Minnesota labor movement testifies to that.

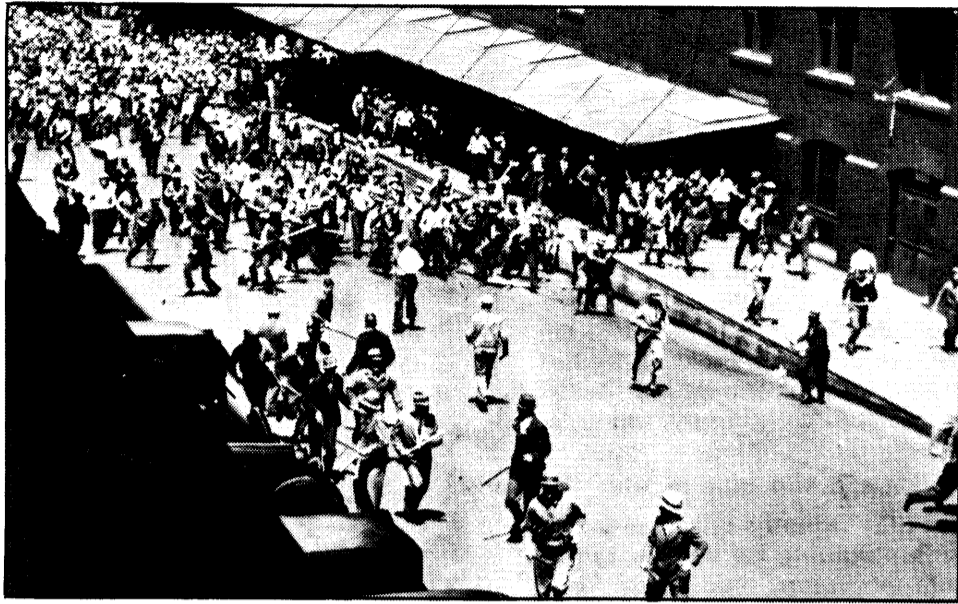
In fact, the famous events that made Minneapolis a union town—the 1934 Teamsters strikes—are a case history of how to overcome all kinds of obstacles, including a strikebreaking National Guard and double-dealing politicians.

As 1934 began, the labor movement was in a sorry state. The Depression was at its worst, unemployment was rampant, and organized labor was taking one body blow after another.

Things changed that year. The Depression still wore on, but in Minneapolis and other cities (most notably Toledo and San Francisco) working people began to organize against their desperate situation.

During the winter of 1934, General Drivers Local 574 International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) initiated a strike in the coal yards to win union recognition. This strike proved successful, and inspired the local to move full steam ahead with its plan to organize every truck driver and warehouse worker in Minneapolis.

The leaders of Local 574, Carl Skoglund, V.R. Dunne, Miles Dunne, and Grant



Teamsters battle police at Minneapolis city market in 1934.

Dunne, were union leaders of a different stripe.

## No friends in government

As socialists (they were members of the Communist League of America, a Trotskyist group that had been expelled from the Communist Party for opposing Stalinism), they had no illusions about "friends" in government. Rather, they said, workers must rely on mass picket lines, militant struggle against the employers, and the support of all the workers in Minneapolis and throughout the state.

To this end, they undertook a number of measures. After the coal strike, they set up an organizing committee that consciously sought to organize all the transportation workers—drivers, platform workers, helpers, and carriers—into one industrial union.

The employers refused to recognize the union, and the leaders of Local 574, who had already organized 3000 new members by May, called a strike. This they did in spite of strong opposition from the national leaders of the Teamsters union.

The 5000 members of Local 574 quickly and effectively shut down all trucking operations in the city. They understood that the employers would resort to any and every means to break the strike—and they prepared for every possible eventuality.

To ensure that no scabs were being used anywhere, Local 574 organized "flying squads" of pickets who patrolled the city streets in trucks and cars.

The strike leaders understood that the ranks had to call the shots, and to this end the general-membership meeting became the highest decision-making body during the strike.

The day-to-day decisions were coordinated by a strike leadership called the "Committee of 100." From the ranks, such men as Farrell Dobbs, Harry DeBoer, and Jake Cooper emerged as leaders during the strike.

Local 574 knew, too, that support from the public was crucial to their success. That is why they published a daily strike newspaper, which explained the workers' demands and kept the union and the public informed of every development.

Local 574 also enlisted assistance from farmers, and formed an affiliated organization of the unemployed. This proved crucial in undermining the employers' efforts to break the strike by using jobless workers as scabs.

These, and other measures, all worked to keep the ranks tight, enthusiasm high, and support from the community solid.

The Citizens' Alliance, the employers' council, knew it could rely on Farmer-Labor Party Gov. Floyd B. Olson, despite his election as a "friend of labor," and on the mayor of Minneapolis. And they were not disappointed. When the strike began in May 1934, the police were mobilized, volunteers were deputized, and strikers were arrested and beaten.

When the police tried to open the city market, where farm produce was brought, a major battle broke out. The pickets kept almost every truck out, and the mayor responded by tripling the police force. Two hundred arrests were made, and a group of women supporters were beaten unconscious by cops and hired thugs.

The next day 35,000 building trades workers went on strike in solidarity. The employers had a private army of 2200

"special deputies" ready to crack those skulls the police missed. But the union mobilized thousands of strikers and supporters—and a pitched battle was on.

For two days the union took on all the scabs, police, and hired thugs. And they won. No trucks moved. On May 25, the strike was settled and the union recognized.

## Taking on the National Guard

The employers, however, stalled on complying with the new agreement and, once again, a strike was called on July 16. The police and employers planned to ambush and shoot isolated strikers (as the governor's investigation later proved), which would provide an excuse to call out the National Guard to break the strike.

On July 20, "Bloody Friday," the plan was put into action. The police opened fire, two strikers were killed, and 55 were wounded. Within the hour, the National Guard was in the streets.

Gov. Olsen declared martial law, and soon thousands of trucks were being operated by scabs. The National Guard occupied the union's headquarters, and arrested some 100 leaders and members of the local.

Still, the ranks persevered, and a mass march of 40,000 forced the authorities to release the imprisoned unionists. Finally, after five weeks of intense struggle, the strikers won.

Harry DeBoer, a veteran of that strike, (and who also worked at Hormel's Austin plant in 1927) recalled some of the lessons of the 1934 strikes for *Socialist Action* (March 1984). They are worth considering in light of Hormel's union-busting drive.

"Look at what the workers faced," DeBoer recalled. "They faced thousands of special deputies. They fought them head on. They fought the police when they killed two of our strikers. The governor brought out the National Guard and they even fought them. I recall we had enough injunctions to paper a wall.

"As for the lessons of the strike...It is a big thing to have the public on your side. Without that we could not have won the strike. And, of course, we had a leadership that understood the capitalist system."

The strikers defeated the National Guard. They stood up to police violence. They defied martial law. And they placed no faith in their "friends" in the Farmer-Labor Party.

Above all, they relied on the power of the union and the entire working class. The odds were against them, but they won.

As the Aug. 24, 1934, issue of the *Minneapolis Labor Review* said: "The winning of this strike marks the greatest victory in the annals of the local trade-union movement...It has changed Minneapolis from being known as a scab's paradise to being a city of hope for those who toil." ■

## Geo. Hormel - 1933: Thrown out by the seat of his pants

"Governor, make these people give me back my packinghouse." That's what George Hormel had to say to Governor Floyd B. Olson after Hormel workers went on strike for the first time in Austin, Minn., in 1933.

The strike lasted only four days, but it established the first packinghouse workers' union in the industry. Led by Frank Ellis, a former member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the strike was one of many union struggles that stirred Depression-era workers.

The organizing campaign at Hormel's Austin plant began inauspiciously enough when a group of Hormel employees gathered in Sutton Park in Austin to discuss the prospects for setting up a union. Ellis and the others decided the time was ripe, and they began to organize the Independent Union of All Workers.

At this time, Hormel workers earned as little as 30 cents an hour. Some took home only \$5 a week. As Ellis later noted, "The workers came to the conclusion that they

might just as well starve fighting for a better life as to starve trying to work for it" (*The Unionist*, Jan. 29, 1960).

A union committee met with Mr. Hormel to request recognition of the union and seniority rights. Mr. Hormel was forced to accede to the union's demands, and the union agreed to take its differences with the company to arbitration.

As the union grew stronger, the workers decided to ask for an increase in wages of 20 cents an hour. This Mr. Hormel categorically refused to consider, complaining that it would put his company in an unfair position in the industry. The union responded that wages were their problem, competition his.

A vote was taken, and it was 100 percent for a strike. On Nov. 11, 1933, a picket line was thrown up surrounding the plant. Frank Ellis later described how "clean-up committees" were sent into each department to take out anyone who remained in the plant. That included Mr. Hormel himself—who was literally thrown out by the seat of his pants.

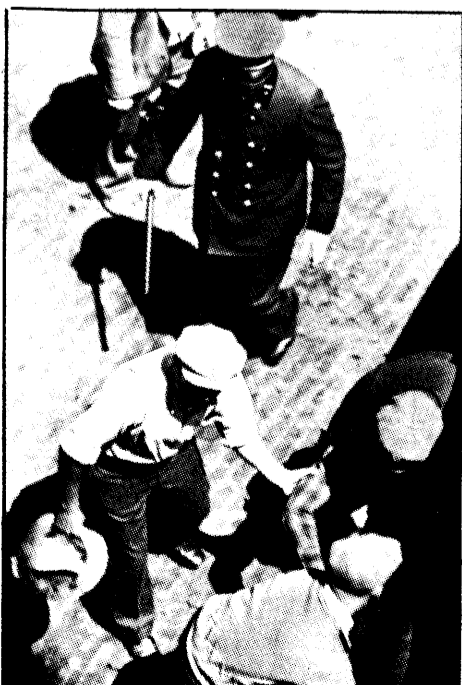
The governor was called in to mediate, and the union agreed to arbitration, which resulted in a 10-percent increase in wages. The union felt its strength after the strike and began using sit-down strikes in the plant to settle grievances and to ensure a closed shop.

The victory in Austin inspired organizing efforts elsewhere. The union went on to organize meatpacking plants in the Minnesota towns of Albert Lea, Faribault, South St. Paul, and Winona, and in Waterloo and Mason City, Iowa.

The meatpacking companies, of course, never gave up their union-busting intentions. Again, in 1948, it took mass mobilizations of the workers to defeat strikebreaking moves by the companies, which were backed up this time by the National Guard.

In 1959, too, a strike at the Wilson packing plant in Albert Lea, Minn., led to a big confrontation as thousands of packinghouse workers protested the use of scabs.

Once again the National Guard was called out, this time by Democratic Farmer-Labor Governor Orville Freeman. But the mass picket lines of the workers and their supporters defeated the company's effort to bring scabs into the plant.—M.H.





Barely a month after its founding, the 500,000-member Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) faces a major test in the minefields.

On Jan. 1, about 30,000 Black workers—virtually the entire work-force—went on strike for better wages and working conditions at South Africa's Impala platinum mine. Black mineworkers there earn top wages of about \$120 a month.

One week later, the parent company, General Mining Union Corp. (Gencor), fired two-thirds of the workers. Gencor threatened to fire the remaining workers if they refused to go back to work.

The Impala mine, which supplies a third of the platinum used in the capitalist world, is located in the nominally independent Bophuthatswana "homeland." But the puppet authorities in Bophuthatswana do not recognize the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), a COSATU affiliate, which most of the Impala mineworkers support.

The NUM vowed to fight to represent the striking workers, to get the fired workers rehired, and to reopen wage talks with the employers. The NUM is also trying to organize workers in Namibia, a South African colony.

In response, the South African police have attacked the union with savage fury. On Jan. 22, police broke up a rally of several hundred mineworkers southwest of Johannesburg. After several hours of fighting, nine Blacks were dead and—for the first time—two white cops.

But COSATU and its various affiliates are continuing to expand their efforts to organize new workers, work among the unemployed, and take part in various political protests around the country.

We have reproduced below excerpts from several of the resolutions that were passed at COSATU's founding convention, held in Durban Nov. 29 to Dec. 1, 1985. The text, which originally appeared in *Congress News*, a bulletin published by COSATU, is here reprinted from *Intercontinental Press*.

#### Unemployment

Noting:

\* That under capitalist conditions of exploitation, unemployment is a reality facing every worker at all times.

\* That these unemployed workers are used as a reserve pool of labor by the bosses to keep wages low and to provide a source of scab labor in the event of strikes.

\* That the unity of employed and unemployed workers is essential in the struggle against scabbing and to advance the struggle for the right to work at a living wage.

Congress therefore resolves to:

\* Fight as one united force to defend all jobs threatened by retrenchments; fight the closing of the factories; and fight for participation in and control over—right from the planning stage—the implementation of any new technology. And fight all attempts by employers to make workers work harder and attempts to rationalize production, because in the present system this always leads to unemployment.

\* Campaign for a 40-hour week at full pay and a ban on overtime.

\* Fight for a subsistence fund, in addition to unemployed benefits, supplemented by rent, transport, and medical concessions for all unemployed workers.

\* Demand that the state initiate a national program of public works to provide jobs for the unemployed and to improve services and facilities in working-class communities.

\* Fight for work-sharing on full pay whenever workers face retrenchments.

\* Establish a national unemployed workers' union as a full affiliate of the new federation to struggle for the realization of the right of all to work and security.

\* Struggle for a fair, democratic, and rational political and economic system

# S. African union federation champions workers' rights

which can guarantee full employment for all people in Southern Africa at a living wage.

National minimum living wage

Seeing that:

\* The majority of workers in South Africa are earning starvation wages because of the present economic system; constantly rising prices (inflation) is making what little money workers have worth less and less every day.

\* To give full support to efforts by retrenched and dismissed workers to establish cooperatives based on the principles of COSATU.

We hereby resolve:

\* To initiate and conduct—in alliance with other progressive organizations and trade unions in the country—an ongoing national campaign for a legally enforced national minimum wage for all workers in South Africa, by amongst other things, fighting in every industry through worker action and negotiation for that minimum living wage to be paid by all employers.

\* To fight for this minimum living wage to be automatically linked to the rate of inflation.

\* To fight to open all the books of every organized company so that workers can see exactly how the wealth they have produced is being wasted and misused by the employers' profit system, and on that basis can demand their full share of the wealth they have produced. Should the wealth not be there, then it will only prove the inefficiency of employer management and strengthen the case for worker control and management of production.

Women

This federation noting:

\* That women workers experience both exploitation as workers and oppression as women and that black women are further discriminated against on the basis of race;

Resolves to fight:

\* Against all unequal and discriminatory treatment of women at work, in society, and in the federation;

\* For the equal right of women and men to paid work as an important part of the broader aim to achieve full and freely chosen employment;

\* For equal pay for all work of equal value—the value of work must be determined by organized women and men workers themselves.

\* For the restructuring of employment so as to allow women and men the opportunity of qualifying for jobs of equal value;

\* For child care and family facilities to meet workers' needs and make it easier for workers to combine work and family responsibilities;

\* For full maternity rights, including paid maternity and paternity leave and job security;

\* For the protection of women and men from all types of work proved to be harmful to them, including work which interferes with their ability to have children;

\* Against sexual harassment in whatever form it occurs.

Bantustans

The congress noting:

\* That the bantustan system was imposed on the African people, against their will, with a view to thwarting the just struggle for One Person, One Vote in a unitary South Africa.

\* That various bantustan administrations have practiced extreme forms of oppression against the oppressed people—including trade unions.

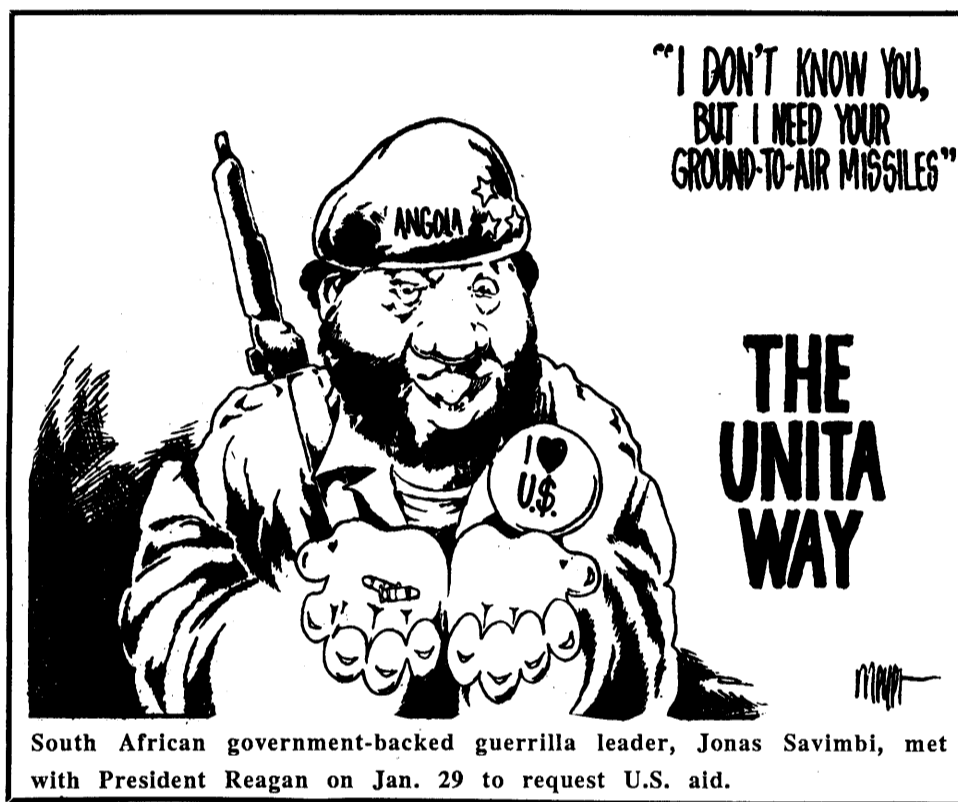
Noting in particular:

\* That the banning of SAAWU (South African Allied Workers Union) in the Ciskei, the banning of all unions in the Bophuthatswana bantustan, and the killing of trade unionists and other democrats by tribally based organizations.

Hereby resolves that:

\* The bantustan system be totally rejected and that the federation struggle—together with other democratic forces—for the creation of a democratic and unitary South Africa.

\* We shall not hesitate to use our right to organize in plants based within the bantustans and that we are fully prepared to defend ourselves against repression by whatever effective means at our disposal. ■



## ... Malcolm X

(continued from page 16)

slavemasters, they became ardent champions of the slave system.

In 1829, a New York merchant told the Rev. Samuel May, a prominent abolitionist: "We cannot afford, sir, to let you and your associates succeed in your endeavor to overthrow slavery. It is not a matter of principle with us. It is a matter of business necessity."

The growth of the Industrial Revolution in the North—along with the factory system and new markets for its products—gave the Northern industrial capitalists the economic ability to begin serious challenges to the rule of the Southern slavemasters and their merchant allies. In 1854, they organized the Republican Party to promote their interests and in 1860 won political control of the national government with the election of Lincoln.

A National Negro Convention that was held in Philadelphia in 1864 issued a resolution condemning both the Democratic and the Republican parties. Of the Democrats, it stated: "To it we are nothing;

the slaveholders everything." The Republicans, it said, had "contempt for the character and rights of the colored races" and did not recognize any political rights whatsoever for Black people.

The Northern industrialists wanted to spread capitalism—which is based on wage slavery—into those areas of the continent where chattel slavery did not exist. The slavemasters wanted to spread their system of unpaid labor. The hostility that existed between these two exploitative systems culminated in a bloody civil war that cost more American lives than all other wars fought by this nation to this date.

Black people achieved freedom from chattel slavery as a result of the conflict between these two sets of criminal exploiters, a conflict that was won by the more socially progressive of the two. But the industrial capitalists instituted wage slavery and collaborated in the re-enslavement of many Southern Blacks in their new role as sharecroppers and chain-gang convict laborers.

Throughout this country's history, the purpose of the U.S. government and the two major political parties of its ruling class has been to protect and increase the wealth of the rich and to put down all rebellions against their rule—domestically and internationally.

As a result of his experiences and studies, Brother Malcolm developed ideas that dovetailed with this analysis.

Malcolm X on U.S. politics

On June 28, 1964, at a public rally called to launch the Organization of Afro-American Unity, Malcolm revealed the vast gulf in consciousness and commitment between himself and the many political hucksters and misleaders of Black people. He stated: "We won't organize any Black

man to be a Democrat or a Republican because both of them have sold us out."

In his famous "Ballot or the Bullet" speech, he said, "You put the Democrats first and the Democrats put you last." He characterized the role played by different segments of the Democratic Party as "a giant political con game" that keeps Blacks politically impotent by keeping them in its clutches.

Malcolm was also anti-capitalist. He characterized capitalism as a system that "needs some blood to suck" in order to survive. He realized that the capitalist system dominates the political structure in this country and that it must be eliminated here and in the world in order for real liberation to come into existence.

If Malcolm were alive today, his record proves that he would be involved in the many local, national, and international battlefronts against oppression—from Harlem to Central America to South Africa to the Middle East.

Above all, Malcolm was an uncompromising revolutionary. He advocated that the world's oppressed free themselves totally from all forms of oppression and take control of their lives and destiny *By Any Means Necessary*. ■

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San Francisco: 'A tribute to Malcolm X'  
Speaker: Kwame M.A. Somburu  
Fri., Feb. 7, 8:00 p.m.  
3435 Army St., Rm. 308

'Crisis in the Philippines'  
Speaker: Robert Capistrano  
Fri., Feb. 21, 8:00 p.m.  
3435 Army St., Rm. 308



# Deregulation in the airline industry: Is it safe to fly?

By MARK HARRIS

It was the deadliest year in aviation history. With more than 2000 deaths worldwide from plane crashes in 1985, concern is mounting among aviation safety experts and the public that the margin of safety is narrowing in the air lanes.

Among U.S.-based carriers, five major crashes alone claimed the lives of 523 human beings. These involved a chartered Arrow Air DC-8 at Newfoundland, a Delta L-1011 at Dallas-Ft. Worth, a Midwest Express Airlines DC-9 at Milwaukee, a Galaxy Electra prop-jet at Reno, and an Eastern Airlines 727 in Bolivia. And in Japan, a faulty repair by Boeing caused the worst single-plane accident ever when a Japan Air Lines Boeing 747 crashed, killing 520 people.

Further, the number of near-accidents, according to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), was running 40 percent higher through July 1985 than for the same period in 1984. The number of runway incidents through July 1985 was 10 percent higher than the total for all of 1984.

The FAA has been quick to argue that there is no connection between the recent rash of air disasters. But the common link may be the FAA itself, which oversees today's deregulated skies.

The fact is, when Congress passed the Airline Deregulation Act in 1978, it in effect threw caution to the winds as far as air safety goes, and the FAA has proven powerless to do much about it.

By U.S. standards, commercial aviation had been a highly regulated business until 1978. The Civil Aeronautics Board, which President Roosevelt set up in 1938, tightly controlled approval of routes, fares, and mergers. It was a system that benefited the largest airlines the most—restricting competition and guarding against heavy financial losses.

Dismantling this system, so deregulation's proponents argued, would lead to lower fares and expanded service since the airlines would be forced to compete strictly on the merit of services offered.

Deregulation has indeed spawned lower fares, at least on the most frequently traveled routes, as a flurry of new "no-frills" and regional airlines have entered the market.

But it's a scramble to survive in this "free-market" free-for-all, and not all make it. Some new airlines find themselves grounded by financial losses before they've even had a chance to spread their wings. More established carriers, too, face takeover attempts, even bankruptcy in the uncertain skies of deregulation.

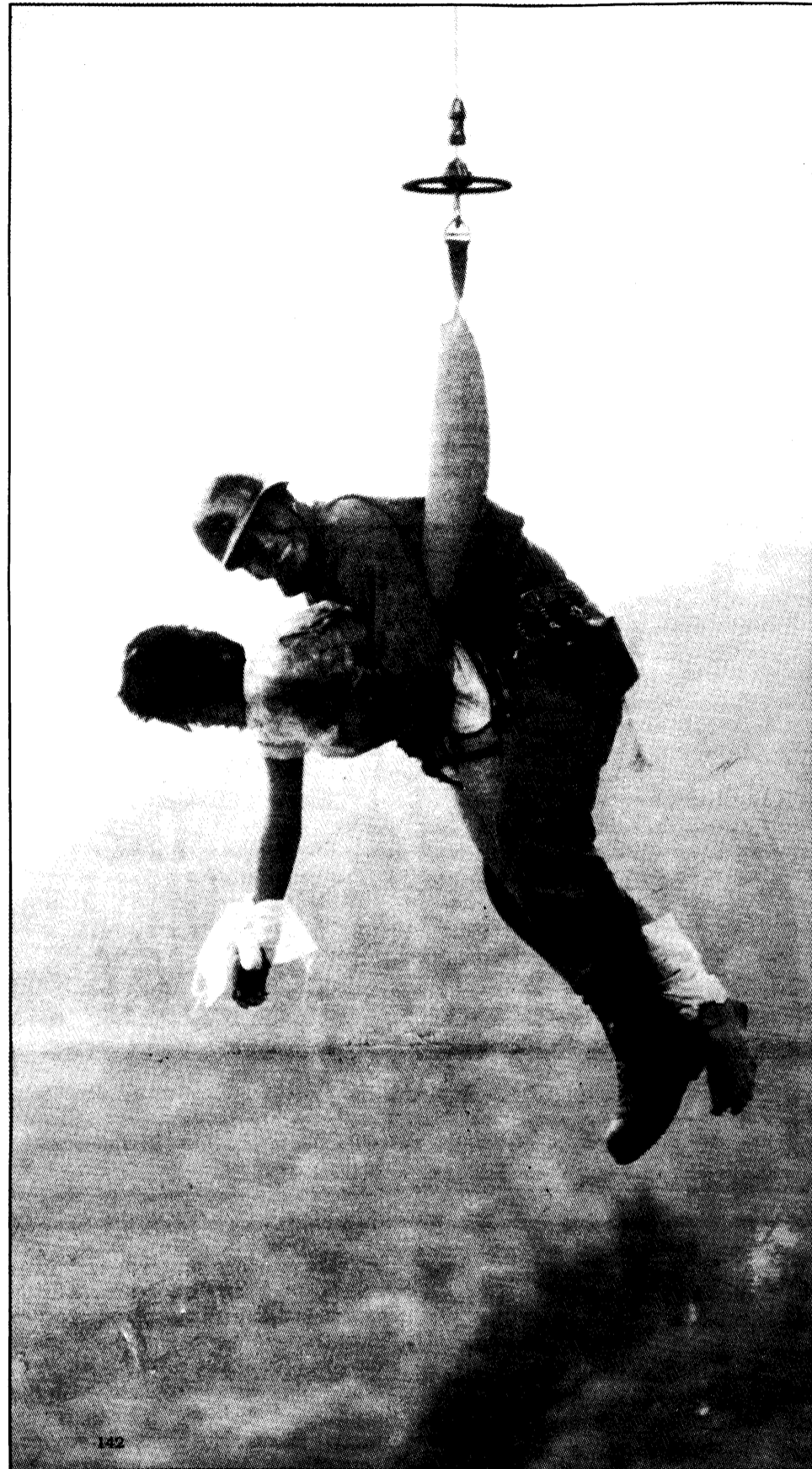
## Competition versus safety

In terms of safety, this charged-up competition has bred a trend toward cost-cutting and corner-cutting at many commercial airlines. It is a trend that, quite simply, translates into a deteriorating level of safe air travel.

"The ultimate cost of those \$99 airline tickets," says John J. Nance, a former pilot for Braniff and author of *Blind Trust*, a new book on air safety, "may be measurable in more than services lost and leg room sacrificed. The true cost may be paid in passenger lives, because Congress has inadvertently degraded airline safety.

"The passenger was not told by Congress or the proponents of deregulation the ultimate truth about the enticing free-market proposal," Nance goes on to say. "If prices are cut, costs must be cut, and something more than executive salaries and union contracts will have to give. The cost of safety would be one of those affected items." (*Blind Trust: How Deregulation Has Jeopardized Airline Safety and What You Can Do About It*, William Morrow & Co., New York, N.Y., 1986, \$17.95)

What the public has perhaps been slow



A survivor of Japan Air Lines Flight 123, which crashed on Aug. 12, 1985, is hoisted from the disaster scene. The crash killed 520 people.

to perceive, management understands all too well. "There is an inherent conflict between competition and safety improvements," says Edwin I. Colodny, chief executive officer of USAir. The public should understand, Colodny admits, that safety improvements have "got to come out of the ticket price."

The term "no-frills," in fact, often means far more than paying extra to check baggage or eat a meal. It can mean less-experienced pilots, older planes, less fuel reserves, and—especially at non-union airlines—intense management pressure to skirt FAA rules.

Perhaps the first "deregulation crash," as it has been called, occurred in 1982 when an Air Florida Boeing 737 crashed on takeoff during a winter storm in Washington, D.C.

At the time, Air Florida was rapidly transforming itself from a small Florida commuter line into a large interstate carrier. But the operational procedures at this "darling of deregulation" were sorely deficient.

This was an airline that in 1979 did not even have any standard operations manuals, although it had told the FAA it did. Its lack of proper flight-crew training and its haphazard maintenance program posed such

serious safety problems that some safety experts believe the airline could legally have been shut down in 1979.

But it was not shut down, and the consequences were tragic. One of the key factors in the crash, according to the National Transportation Safety Board, proved to be pilot inexperience.

Air Florida, in its quest to expand, had hired pilots from a small commuter line who were unqualified to fly more sophisticated aircraft, especially in unfamiliar winter-weather conditions. Most importantly, management never provided the required training to upgrade their skills.

All-too-quick promotions for pilots, in fact, are an all-too-common reality at many new airlines. "The average pilot on United [Airlines] spends at least 16 years in an apprenticeship before being promoted to captain," says Pat Flanagan, who heads the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) at United in San Francisco (*San Francisco Examiner*, Oct. 29, 1985). According to Flanagan, many pilots for the new airlines become captains in two years.

Another byproduct of deregulation is the growing use of used planes. "The smaller and more thinly financed the carrier," Nance explains, "the more pressure there is to buy used, less efficient, (and marginally

performing) aircraft in which to carry trusting, paying passengers."

In fact, the average age of the world airline fleet has risen from five to 10 years since 1971—and the number of age-related accidents is also rising.

From 1974 to 1979 metal fatigue or corrosion, which are common problems for aging aircraft, caused 21.4 percent of all accidents attributed to structural or mechanical failure. But from 1979 to 1983 accidents caused by metal fatigue or corrosion caused 38.7 percent of structure- and mechanical-related accidents.

A case in point: The Lockheed Electra, a plane built in the late 1950s and today flown by many charter and commuter airlines. In the course of seven months in 1984-85, three Electras crashed in the United States (one crash at Reno, Nev., killed 68 people).

Some 46 Electras have been involved in accidents in recent years, out of 175 such models in commercial service.

## "No-frills" fuel loads

At many new or regional airlines, too, these used planes are flying with what might be called a "no-frills" fuel policy, often arriving at their destinations with little more than minutes of fuel left and no margin for error. The more fuel a plane carries, the less passengers and cargo it can take, and the less revenue for the airline.

And if the profit margin does not look good, its effect on the safety margin can look even worse. The National Transportation Safety Board, for example, surveyed managers at commuter (regional) airlines in 1980 and found that 65 percent believed that there was a relationship between safety and the economic well-being of an airline.

The managers said financial problems could lead to procedures and regulations being disregarded. For example, pilots were found to be more reluctant to report maintenance deficiencies that might ground an aircraft.

There was an increased likelihood that extra passengers would be placed on aircraft already at their maximum gross weight. It was more likely that the inventory of spare parts would be reduced. And, the managers said, the extensiveness of pilot training programs was likely to be reduced.

Still, if pressure to cut corners is more pronounced at newer or smaller airlines, that does not mean they are nonexistent at more established industry giants.

*Aviation Week and Space Technology* (Nov. 11, 1985) reveals that "pilots throughout the industry have been reporting that airlines are deferring maintenance on selected items for longer periods of time."

W.B. Mackley, a retired Air New Zealand captain, also told this industry journal that airline managements' "hard-nosed" pursuit of the dollar "has led some of them to apply pressures on their flight crews to overlook standard operating procedures and regulations...under threat of loss of employment."

One reason for the increased pressure on flight and maintenance crews stems from a shift to what is known as the "hub-and-spoke" system to route connecting flights.

Most airlines now fly planes to a central hub, from which flights are then routed to the outlying spokes on the carriers' systems. Before, most airlines operated under the "point-to-point" system, flying planes back and forth between two points—where they often sat idle for hours between flights.

*Aviation Week & Space Technology* (Nov. 11, 1985) explains that "aircraft are being flown more hours under this concept...but there is less time between flights to accomplish unscheduled maintenance, which accounts for the tendency to defer items."

And it is not just financially strapped  
(continued on page 13)



(continued from page 12)

operations that engage in dangerous corner-cutting. Sometimes, as at American Airlines, it is expansion that is the culprit.

American, which plans to spend \$6 billion over the next five years to add 160 planes to its 290-aircraft fleet, was recently fined \$1.5 million by the FAA for a series of pilot, training, and maintenance violations. Last year, American increased its capacity by 20 percent. But its maintenance staff grew by only 7 percent.

Some of the violations cited by the FAA are a good indication of what happens when a cost-conscious management encourages corner-cutting.

In June 1985, for example, a supervisor for American in Chicago used an automobile spring to repair a transmitter that controls part of a DC-10's tail section. He told the FAA that the right part wasn't available and if he didn't make a temporary repair, the flight would be canceled.

A month earlier, an American Boeing 767 aborted a takeoff in Indianapolis Ind., when one engine wouldn't accelerate. The engine was tested three times and the plane sent out again with its passengers without being repaired.

An FAA inspector concluded that the incident "indicates that [American's] priorities lie more with meeting the schedule than having their equipment meet its performance criteria."

In another case, pilots at American reported a dozen log entries concerning a malfunctioning engine, but it wasn't repaired until it failed on takeoff at the Dallas-Ft. Worth airport.

The FAA also found that American had used plastic pulleys on three DC-10s in place of metal devices that help control the wing slats that slow the plane down. The error went undetected for three months until a 200-pound slat fell off when one of the planes landed.

Management at American claimed the mistake wasn't dangerous, but an FAA inspector says it could have been "catastrophic" if the falling slat had damaged other aircraft parts. The FAA inspector said American's response indicated a "poor attitude toward safety."

#### FAA's honor system

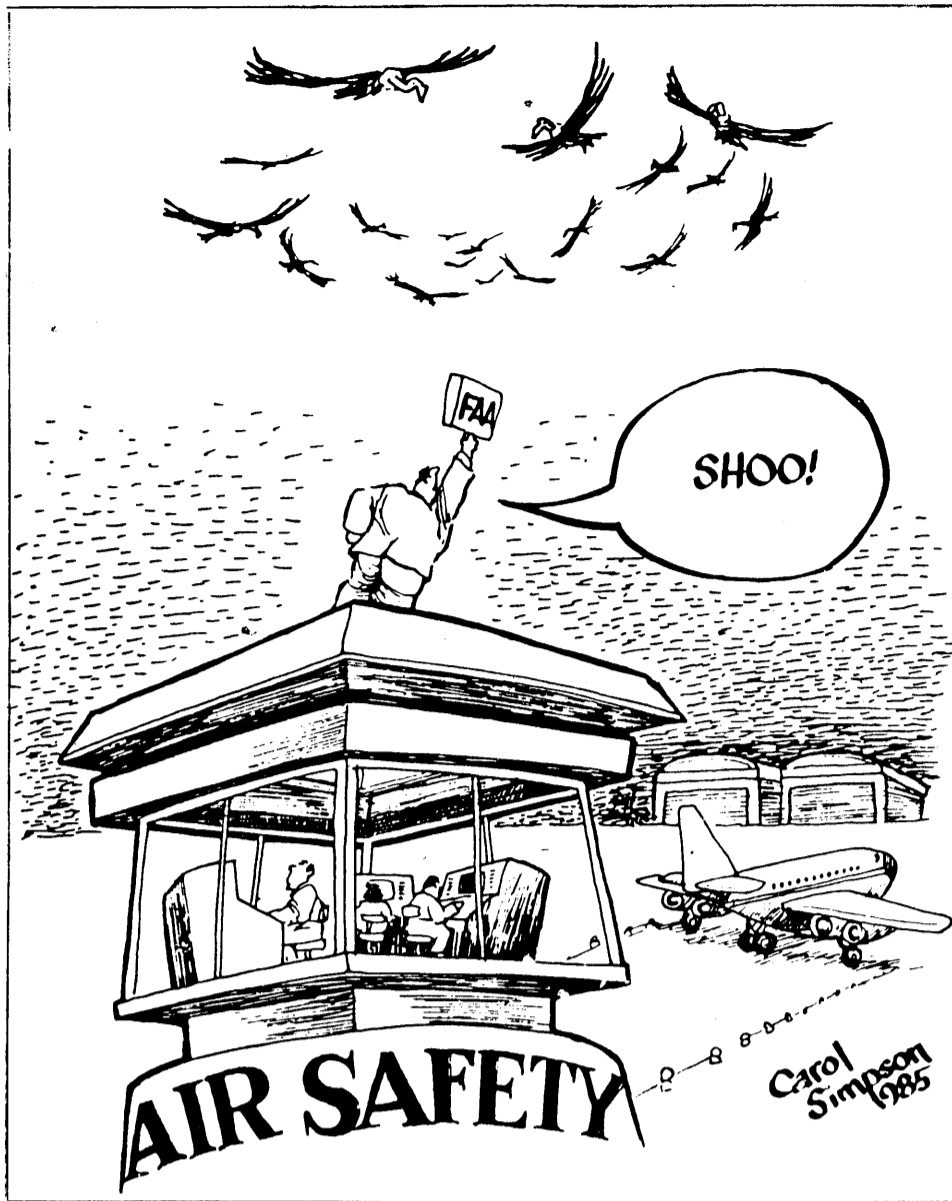
However, it would be misleading to assume that the FAA's attitude toward enforcing good safety attitudes is much better.

Most people probably assume that the FAA wouldn't allow an unsafe airline to fly. "But seldom have so many people been so profoundly deluded," Nance tells us in *Blind Trust*. "The FAA has no such control....In reality, the FAA is too undermanned and ill equipped to have any idea what actually goes on at the heart of the average airline."

"As of 1985," Nance concludes, "the airlines are on the honor system with respect to safety—and not all are honorable."

And things are not getting any better. In 1979 the FAA had 2012 inspectors to monitor 237 air carriers, commuters, and air taxi operators. In 1985 the number of inspectors had dropped to 1469, but the number of airlines had jumped to more than 400.

To make matters worse, this reduced inspector workforce has had to devote more time to certifying the rash of new post-deregulation airlines that have gone into



business. From 1980 to 1985, to be exact, 76 new carriers and 233 new commuter airlines entered the market. This means less time for the FAA to monitor already operating carriers.

Yet, Congress has cut another \$55 million from the FAA's fiscal year 1986 budget. And another 5-percent cut is expected in March under the new Gramm-Rudman "budget balancing" law.

FAA Administrator Donald Engen has imposed "severe constraints" on spending and is expected to begin laying off FAA technicians who maintain the air-traffic control systems.

Howard Johannssen, president of the Professional Airways Systems Specialists, the technicians union, said the layoffs will "induce a whole new slate (of safety problems) that is going to cause more and more disasters."

Johannssen said that the FAA will "find out what the natural disaster level is in the name of fiscal responsibility."

At the same time, ALPA charges that the FAA is stockpiling some \$7.5 billion in an air-safety trust fund that could be used to keep the skies safer.

The pilots union is especially concerned over delays in implementing new Doppler radar systems at airports, which would vastly improve the capability to detect wind shear and microburst wind phenomena, which have caused 15 commercial accidents since 1970.

Understaffed, underfunded, and overwhelmed by the enormity of its responsibility, the FAA tries to get by with "soft-cop" monitoring in an industry engaged in hard-nosed competition. The results, at times, can be disastrous.

Another area of genuine concern involves the severely strained air-traffic control system. Today, the system is back at full capacity, nearly five years after President Reagan fired more than 10,000 striking air-traffic controllers in 1981.

#### More planes and less controllers

But it is lagging far behind its pre-strike capability. Before the strike, there were 16,412 controllers. As of June 1985, there were 12,472 controllers. Today, there are about 5000 less of the most highly skilled full-performance level controllers than before the 1981 strike.

And the problems that led to the strike remain in full force. The House Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight recently reported that "stress, fatigue, staffing shortages, increasing traffic, lack of supervision and an unseasoned workforce have all impacted the margin of safety."

The facility manager for the FAA's Denver center, in fact, warned his superiors in May 1984 that heavy traffic and an overtaxed workforce had created a "very high risk of a midair collision" at Denver.

But Denver is not an isolated trouble spot. The number of near misses in the skies soared to a record 592 in 1984. During the first five months of 1985 the rate of near misses grew even faster than the previous year.

If the controllers had won their strike in 1981, air traffic today would be controlled by a more experienced, larger, and less-stressed workforce. It would have meant a better working environment and—safer skies.

Nance explains in *Blind Trust* that the

established mainstream airlines had always kept their minimum standards far above the FAA's minimum requirements. This he attributes to the fact that before 1978 airlines could pass on the cost of safety to the ticket price.

But the higher standards of the larger airlines were not a rare display of managerial responsibility. Rather, it is another demonstration of why the flying public has a stake in supporting unions' demands for better working conditions in the aviation industry.

As one striking Continental Airlines pilot told the *San Francisco Examiner* (Oct. 29, 1985), "ALPA long has had higher standards than the FAA's minimum requirements. The only reason the airlines do [have higher standards] is because unions negotiate the contract. A lot of non-union carriers don't have that protection."

Continental is a case in point. After management voided its union contracts in 1982, the airline was forced to quickly promote a roster of scab pilots to keep operating.

During the "new" Continental's first year alone, ALPA cited more than 150 safety violations at the airline.

Those who defend airline deregulation are quick to say that statistically air travel has never been safer. But using the increased volume of air travel to create a statistical mirage of an improving air system is a rather cruel rejoinder to the actual victims of air disasters.

The question is this: How safe is it technically and humanly possible for air travel to be? Are things as safe as they should be? The answer is no.

The more extreme advocates of deregulation believe that airlines should run their operations as they see fit. If they kill too many passengers, business will drop off, and they will fall by the economic wayside.

Leave air safety to the whims of the marketplace, they in effect argue, and let the passenger decide which airline is least likely to kill.

For those who make the wrong consumer choice, as Nance concludes with grim irony, "the knowledge that you have helped free-market forces reign supreme will be of little solace to you in the final seconds before impact."

Helping "free-market forces reign supreme"—this is the built-in flaw in the FAA's charter, which mandates the agency's duty to not only ensure safe air travel, but "promote" the aviation industry. Time and again these two tasks have proved to be mutually exclusive.

But more than the FAA, it is a flaw in the industry itself. As long as management profit margins dictate the nature of public air transportation, safety will remain a "cost-accountable" item—and human beings will continue to die in air disasters that should not have happened. ■

## Pilots polled

What do pilots think about the effects of deregulation on air safety? The *Dallas Times Herald* recently asked this question to more than 1200 pilots who fly for passenger airlines. The result was an overwhelming condemnation of the effects of deregulation.

Nearly two-thirds said they believe flying has become more dangerous since deregulation. A scant 1 percent saw an improvement in air safety.

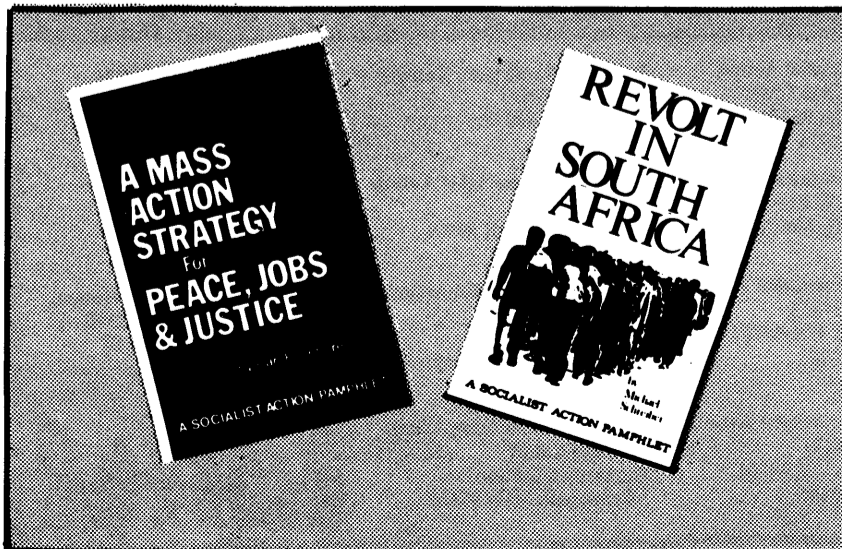
A quarter of the pilots said that flying will become even more dangerous over the next five years.

Nearly half said that aircraft maintenance and the quality of new pilots had declined.

One-third said that the air-traffic control system was deteriorating.

Many of the pilots polled said they would not allow their families to fly on some of the newer airlines.

The survey also found that the most experienced pilots were the most pessimistic about the level of safety being maintained in the air lanes.--M.H.



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# Interview with Irish revolutionist: 'Holding fast to socialist ideas pays off in the end'

By ASHER HARER

Last July, Joe Harrington, candidate of People's Democracy, the Irish section of the Fourth International, was elected to the city council in Limerick, a city of 80,000 in the Republic of Ireland.

While on vacation in Ireland last September, I took a train trip from Dublin to Limerick to talk to this revolutionary socialist councilman.

I didn't have his address. I expected to find it in the directory. No luck. Harrington, like many Irish workers, doesn't have a telephone. However, within a few minutes, I found a young cab driver who knew Harrington. "Every worker in town knows about Joe," said the driver. "He's one of us. He'd go to jail for us."

Joe Harrington's campaign literature takes up local issues—from taxes to the problem of wandering horses—but broadens out to the issue of women's rights and international questions like apartheid and Nicaragua. It is a socialist program.

"Soak the Rich," a 25-pence campaign pamphlet was a best-seller.

In a pamphlet addressed to Irish youth, Harrington says: "This system isn't working. All it means for young Irish workers is an endless cycle of unemployment, repression, poverty, and futility. It's a rotten mess, but the capitalists and their politicians keep it going because they're the ones who benefit from it."

"But things don't have to be always like this. People's Democracy is a revolutionary socialist organization pledged to working for an end of this rotten set up. Basing ourselves on opposition to British rule in the North, on support for workers' struggles all over Ireland, and on support for the demands of women and youth, we're working to build an anti-imperialist party of the Irish working class, committed to fight for a Socialist Republic."

Joe Harrington's record is an impressive one. He was a union organizer in Shannon for the Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU). He edited a union newspaper from 1974 to 1980 and headed up the Limerick H-Block/Armagh Com-



Joe Harrington (behind children) and neighbors celebrating election

mittee. He is presently a driver for the Mid Western Health Board, an ITGWU shop steward, and a delegate to the Limerick Council of Trade Unions.

Following are Harrington's answers to some of my questions:

**Asher Harer:** How do you explain your vote?

**Joe Harrington:** This is probably one of the most working-class areas in the country. I've been working here for about eight years. I did the work and got to be well known. But I was not elected as a personality—as many are.

We offered a solution to working-class problems: that people should organize themselves and campaign on their own behalf. Prior to and during the election we were active in a major campaign against increased local taxes—taxes on services.

**Harer:** The cabbie who brought me here mentioned a water tax.

**Harrington:** That was the principal one. We were fighting a tax of 50 pounds per year on each household in addition to the regular water bill—a 10 to 20 percent tax increase for the average family! And we are already paying for such services through

national taxes.

**Harer:** Double taxation?

**Harrington:** Yes, And there was a massive opposition—led by tenants' and residents' associations. We saw it as an opportunity to organize people to fight on their own behalf. We came into the leadership of the movement in the course of the campaign.

Thousands came out into the streets in protest. And hundreds came down to the Town Hall every time the tax came up for a vote. We occupied the council chambers four times and prevented the council from passing the water tax.

**Harer:** Does the new city council have a majority against the water tax?

**Harrington:** Yes, most of the old council was thrown out...Now, it might seem this issue is not so important. But if the government can impose this tax they can bring in more local taxes—on refuse collection, on all local services, hospitals, etc. If they get away with this tax, the flood gates would be open. And then they'd be able to raise the taxes every year.

**Harer:** Do working people pay most of the taxes, as in the United States?

**Harrington:** Probably more—some thing like 90 percent. Business pays about 7 percent. There have been massive protest movements against the tax situation here in Ireland. About three years ago, in Dublin, a quarter of a million came out. Irish workers are getting angry and fighting back.

**Harer:** Conditions in Ireland seem to be terrible. Worse than in England or Scotland.

**Harrington:** They are. There is massive unemployment and Limerick is one of the worst areas. Up until 10-15 years ago, Limerick had a strong native industry—but when Ireland joined the European Economic Community in 1972, tariffs were removed. Irish industries couldn't compete.

The multinational corporations moved in, seeking cheap labor, just like they do in Mexico or Taiwan. They set up industries with huge grants from the Irish government—machinery practically paid for, training of workers paid for, and tax-free for a number of years. The multinationals fight the unions and, if profits aren't up to expectations, close down and move to some other poor country.

**Harer:** Besides, don't they take the profits out?

**Harrington:** Oh, they do. Last year, a quarter of a billion pounds were taken out of Ireland—that we know of. And a very large part of the government's budget goes to service the national debt. Ireland has a huge national debt, just like the South American countries. That's where our taxes go, to the big banks.

**Harer:** What do you think we Americans can learn from your election campaign?

**Harrington:** Well, we were working for years, campaigning. We came under a lot of pressure from other tendencies, advising us to get involved with "pressure groups," just go out and do a lot of local work. They said we should "keep our heads down," keep politics out of it—"until you get elected—then you can do all the things you want to do."

We resisted this pressure. We put forth our own program. We always insisted that working people should organize and fight in their own behalf.

Now we are in a better position to give leadership to the developing mass movement. Now people are listening, even to our ideas on fighting apartheid and defending Nicaragua, and we are calling for a referendum on divorce [which is illegal in Catholic Ireland—A.H.].

Yes, I say that holding fast to our program, our socialist ideas, pays off in the end. ■

By SEAN FLYNN

Ferdinand Marcos called the Feb. 7 election in response to strong pressure by the U.S. government to apply a "democratic" facade to his regime. The Reagan administration had expressed alarm that Marcos—the United States' close ally for 20 years—was unable to stem the growing left-wing opposition movement.

U.S. intelligence agencies estimate that the Communist Party of the Philippines has grown to about 20,000 members—double the level of five years ago. They state that the CP-led New People's Army has a presence in 8000 of the country's 40,000 villages. The labor movement is also growing. Last year the number of strikes hit an all-time high—up 30 percent from 1984.

On the eve of the election, the U.S. government swung more openly behind the Cory Aquino-Doy Laurel slate as a more "moderate" alternative that might help to defuse a potential revolutionary situation. As *Business Week* remarked in its Feb. 3 issue, "The incumbent president is favored to win, and that victory—along with a sour economy—could exacerbate agitation against U.S. multinationals operating there."

Both Aquino and Laurel come from the traditional oligarchy that has dominated Philippine politics since before independence. Their election platform called for respecting the treaties under which the United States will use Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Force Base until 1991. After that date, they said, "We shall keep all our options open."

## Oppositionists boycott Philippine elections

The "minimum program of government" distributed by the Aquino-Laurel campaign also stated, "Our economy should encourage and protect the initiative and participation of Philippine private capital." In short, despite formal calls for limited land reform and other democratic demands, Aquino and Laurel sought a return to the status quo which existed before the 1972 declaration of martial law.

**Oppositionists call boycott**

Despite the clamor for "anti-Marcos unity" behind the Cory Aquino-Doy Laurel slate, left-wing organizations including the National Democratic Front (NDF) and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) called for a boycott of the elections.

The NDF is an underground formation led by the Communist Party of the Philippines. BAYAN is a nationalist and anti-imperialist coalition of unions and community organizations with a total membership of up to 2.3 million.

Those who called for all oppositionists to unite behind Aquino's candidacy stressed that the main object of the movement should be to get rid of Marcos. For the boycotters, however, an equally important consideration was that Marcos be replaced by an anti-imperialist government re-

sponsive to the needs of the workers and peasants.

By virtue of the presidential candidate's marriage to the martyr Benigno Aquino, the United States and the moderate opposition hoped to draw the mass movement behind the "moderates." The campaign therefore offered the temptation of what Stalinists call an "anti-fascist people's front," i.e., an

electoral coalition with a section of the bourgeoisie on a capitalist reform program.

BAYAN's leaders realized in time that this course was not only illusory, but would disorient the mass movement. Hence, the present boycott was more significant than the boycott of the 1983 parliamentary elections. While the parliament was known to be powerless, the present elections offered the illusion of voting out the dictator and instituting reforms.

The rejection in practice of such a strategy by that section of the mass movement most closely tied to the oppressed and exploited is a good omen for the future of the Philippine revolution. ■

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# A valuable book about pre-Marxist economists

By GERD-RAINER HORN

*A History of Economic Thought*, by Isaac Ilyich Rubin. Ink Links, London, 1979.

One of the many stimulating fringe benefits of reading Karl Marx's writings on economics is the tremendous amount of incisive comments on his predecessors within the field of economic thought. Those who have managed their way through the main works of the cofounder of scientific socialism will undoubtedly be familiar with names like David Ricardo, Sismondi, the Physiocrats, James Steuart, and—last but not least—Adam Smith.

Yet, to someone without prior knowledge of this subject matter, the full extent of their contributions will by and large continue to remain a clouded mystery—unless one takes copious notes of Marx's widely dispersed comments about these thinkers and attempts to put them into perspective.

It is Isaac Ilyich Rubin's merit to have tackled this task of clarifying the precise role and contribution of these pre-Marxist economists. In 40 well-written and therefore easily readable chapters, he manages to give a comprehensive overview of the history of economic thought from the period of merchant capitalism starting in the 16th century up to the last notable representative of the classical school, John Stuart Mill, who published his main works in the mid-19th century.

Rubin tends to concentrate on the pathbreaking advances which each school of thought or individual made, compared to their respective predecessors. Yet he equally stresses their shortcomings and impasses.

Most frequently their failings were due to the inherent limitations of the time-period they were living in. Rubin therefore presents each major school of thought with an introductory chapter in which he describes the economic setting which determined the lives and work of their

leading intellectuals.

Additional chapters concerning biographical highlights of Adam Smith and David Ricardo are all too brief, but are nevertheless highly instructive. For instance, it is very telling that Adam Smith was not only acutely aware of James Watt's significant contributions in the domain of applied technology. When the father of the steam engine became a target of the retrograde medieval guild corporations—which expressly forbade him any further experimentations—Smith provided Watt with research facilities at the University of Glasgow.

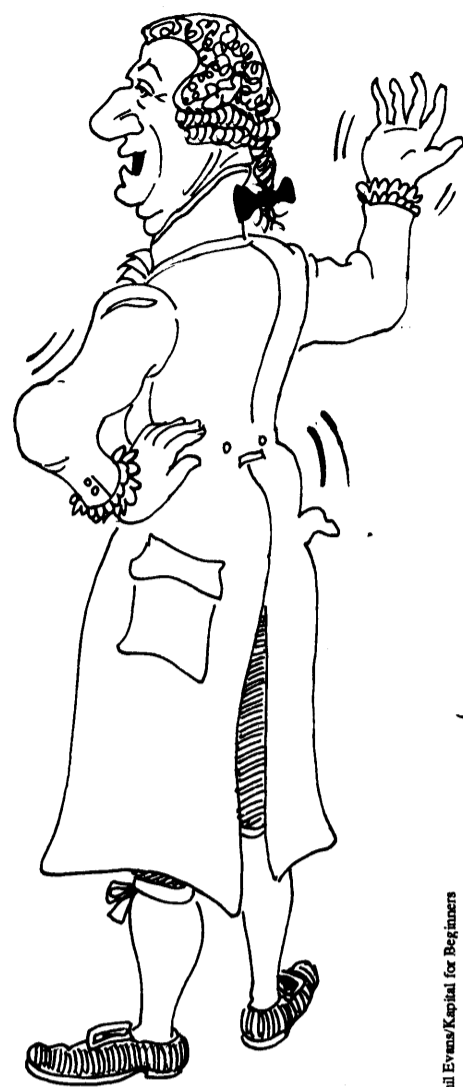
Rubin's 1929 work was, to my knowledge, the first concerted attempt by a Marxist economist to write such a history of economic thought. It remained largely unknown outside the Soviet Union until the recent translation and re-edition of this volume by British revolutionary Marxists.

Within the Soviet Union today, however, Rubin's work is even less well known than in the West. From 1926 onwards he was a research associate at the prestigious Marx-Engels Institute. Yet, although not active in any opposition current, he became one of the first victims of the Stalinist purges when he was arrested in December 1930 on trumped-up charges of "Menshevism." From then on he spent his life either in prison or in internal exile until 1937, when his traces disappeared somewhere in the vast gulag.

"A History of Economic Thought" and Rubin's other major work, "Essays on Marx's Theory of Value," are reminders of the important contributions which the young Soviet Republic's social scientists were able to generate within the short space of a dozen or so years after the October Revolution.

Above all, "A History of Economic Thought" is the best currently available book on the subject of pre-Marxian economics. As such, it fills a gaping void in Marxist literature. ■

## BOOK REVIEW



Adam Smith

Phil Evans/Kapital for Beginners

## Our readers speak out

### Australia

Dear editor,

Thank you so much for sending *Socialist Action* in 1985, and also some of your theoretical publications. It is unusual to be able to receive U.S. left papers so promptly and regularly.

In an earlier letter I explained that I am an "organized supporter" of the Australian SWP. I and a handful of other comrades have formed a small discussion group to look at the degeneration of the Australian SWP, the permanent revolution/workers' and farmers' government debate, and the Central American and South African revolutions.

We are supporters of the Fourth International and agree in general with the politics expressed in *Socialist Action*.

I would have been unable to keep up to date on developments in the International if not for contact with you. We value this contact very highly. We will try to keep you informed of developments in Australia and hope to hear from you soon.

A reader,  
Australia

### Bus boycott

Dear editor,

The article about E.D. Nixon and the Montgomery bus boycott in the January 1985 issue left out some little-known, yet important facts.

The bus boycott of 1955-1956 was successful due to the organizational leadership of E.D. Nixon. But the boycott was only one aspect of the struggle. A whole support system of the Black community was organized by the

Montgomery Improvement Association, led by E.D. Nixon.

For the boycott to be successful, money had to be raised to aid the Black community and to run an alternative transportation system to get people to work.

Through donations of station wagons and car pools, E.D. Nixon was able to keep people off the buses—and still employed. Cars, trucks, and station wagons were kept in repair, and young unemployed Korean War veterans were the drivers of this alternative bus system.

The biggest myth of this year-long struggle was that it was pacifistic. The truth is that,



although the boycott was non-violent, in order to keep the alternative system running it was imperative that vehicles continue to run, free from the violence of the police and the Ku Klux Klan.

The young drivers with their Korean War expertise were able to keep their vehicles free from harm. Because of this tactic of self-defense, few vehicles were detained from their schedules by the racists.

It is this combined aspect of mass action and self-defense that most chroniclers of the Montgomery bus boycott have consciously overlooked. This is also why E.D. Nixon was not invited to the 10th, 20th, or 25th anniversaries of the event in Montgomery—even though he

was the key organizer of the victory.

On the 10th anniversary of the boycott, I was able to meet and hear E.D. Nixon give his account of these events at a Militant Labor Forum in New York City.

Roland Sheppard,  
San Francisco

### Sparrow

Dear editor,

Following is an addition to the recent *Socialist Action* article containing excerpts of my opening remarks at the Ray Sparrow memorial meeting, held in San Francisco on Dec. 15, 1985.

There were two Ray Sparrow memorial meetings in San Francisco. The first was held at the Socialist Workers Party bookstore on Dec. 14. Attendance at the SWP meeting was by invitation only, even though Mary-Alice Waters, a national leader of the SWP, was the main speaker. Former comrades, friends, and even relatives of Ray Sparrow were not invited. A \$3 donation was requested at the door and there was a charge for refreshments. The result was a small meeting.

The nature of the projected SWP meeting became known well in advance. Therefore, at the urging of many non-invitees, another meeting was organized, a public gathering to which ALL would be invited and given the floor, if requested. The meeting was held at the ILWU, Local 6 hall and 112 attended. In socialist tradition there was no admission charge.

The San Francisco SWP was invited to send a speaker, but did not answer our letter.

Asher Harer,  
San Francisco

### Clarification

Dear editor,

In your September 1985 issue Milton Alvin said, in his tribute to Cannon and Trotsky, that after Cannon and his associates were expelled from the Communist Party in 1928, they "formed a new organization and went about the business of building a new party."

This is not accurate and misleading at best. The new organization, the Communist League of America, had absolutely no intention or aim of building a new party when it was founded in 1929. Nor did it have such an aim in 1930 or 1931 or 1932. The very idea of building a new party was not raised by Cannon or anyone else in the CLA until 1933.

The CLA was dedicated up until then, during the first five years of American Trotskyism, to reforming the Communist Party and seeking the expelled members' reinstatement in the CP. This is amply documented in the two recent Monad Press books of Cannon's writing during that period: "The Left Opposition in the U.S. 1928-31" and "The Communist League of America 1932-34." But it is also clearly stated in Cannon's "History of American Trotskyism," published more than 40 years ago.

G.B.,  
New York

### A response

Dear G.B.,

Thank you for your clarification. In the paragraph following the sentence you quote in your letter, Milton Alvin

pointed out that Cannon and his associates organized themselves as a public faction of the Communist Party.

Alvin stated: "They (the Trotskyists) concentrated upon the Communist Party, where they had never had a hearing for their views, and considered themselves an unjustly expelled faction, demanding that they be readmitted to the Communist Party with democratic rights."

You are correct, however, to point out that at the outset they sought to reform the CP and not to build an opposing party. We made this point in an editorial statement in our first issue of *Socialist Action* (December 1983). We stated that after their expulsion from the CP, the supporters of Leon Trotsky "formed a public faction of the CP, becoming a separate political party only after the CP had irretrievably moved from revolutionary positions."

The editor

### An error

Dear editor,

The December 1985 issue reported incorrectly that the Cincinnati branch of *Socialist Action* had succeeded in helping students to set up Students for *Socialist Action* groups on four area campuses. Cincinnati SA is actively working with student supporters on three campuses, not four.

We are proud of this achievement and have every reason to be optimistic about the coming year.

Rick Mitts,  
Cincinnati

We welcome letters from our readers. Please keep them brief. Where necessary they will be abridged.

# U.S. history and the legacy of Malcolm X

By KWAME M.A. SOMBURU

When Malcolm X was assassinated on Feb. 21, 1965, the movement for Black liberation—nationally and internationally—lost one of its most capable, courageous, and totally committed leaders.

The physical body and keen mind of Brother Malcolm was eliminated forever by that brutal and cowardly act. However, he left a legacy of ideas and examples of integrity, courage, and commitment that we—his heirs—can learn from and build on.

It would be incorrect—and not in the true spirit of Malcolm—to treat him as an infallible "pope" who left a heritage of sacred ideas, to be learned, memorized, and adopted unthinkingly.

Malcolm, the man and his ideas, should be examined in the context of the social environment of this capitalist and racist society. The deeper awareness one has of the historical roots and contemporary nature of this society—specifically from the viewpoint of the oppressed, but especially from a viewpoint that advocates revolutionary social change—the better one is able to appreciate and apply Malcolm's significant contributions to Black Liberation.

## U.S. founded for white, rich men

The U.S. government is now and has always been, a government that represents the interests of the rich. Fifty-five economically affluent white males, representing the interests of Northern capitalists and Southern slavemasters, met behind closed doors in Philadelphia in 1787 to discuss and draft a constitution.

That constitution was ratified in 1788 and 1789 by the former 13 colonies. It was

designed to maintain the rule of the rich over their various subjects—poor whites, free Blacks, and women; to protect their varied types of property, including slaves; and to provide for the utilization of force and violence to maintain the status quo against domestic and foreign threats.

It provided for the protection of slavery and for a 20-year extension of the slave trade, a fugitive slave law, and a provision that three-fifths of the slaves be counted as the basis for taxation and political representation.

James Madison, twice president of the United States and considered to be the father of the Constitution, said in the Federalist Papers: "In framing a government which is

to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this. You must first enable the government to control the governed."

This government has proven the truth of that statement by its 200-plus years of suppressing slave rebellions, Indian

uprisings, workers' strikes, protest demonstrations, and civil liberties. This suppression happened regardless of which ruling-class party was in power.

The first two great political parties in the United States were the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. The Federalist Party represented the Northern merchant capitalists, who wanted a strong federal government. The Anti-Federalists represented mainly the Southern slavemasters and other sectors that feared a strong central government.

Under the strong leadership of Alexander Hamilton, the Federalists gained control of the new government for the first 10 years of its existence.

However, the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 enabled the Southern slavemasters to mass-produce cotton for the textile mills of the British industrialists. That economic outlet for cotton made them the financially dominant sector of the ruling group and gave them the power to defeat the Northern capitalists in the contest for political power.

Cotton was "King." In 1800, the slaveowners and their allies took hold of the reins of political power and held it for 60 years.

The Anti-Federalists became the Democratic-Republican Party, and then the Democratic Party in 1828. From 1828 to 1860, they won every national election except two, and controlled Congress most of that time. Every Democratic platform from 1840 to 1860 opposed all interference with slavery.

Frederick Douglass, the famous Black anti-slavery fighter, characterized the Democratic Party as being "a purely slavery party, a party which exists for no other purpose but to promote the interests of slavery."

## Capitalists back slaveholders

For most of those 60 years, the merchant capitalists were the dominant sector of the Northern bourgeoisie. Because they had highly profitable multi-million dollar business connections with the Southern

(continued on page 11)



# Big victory in Oakland teachers strike

By ROBIN WHITE

OAKLAND, Calif.—On Jan. 31, teachers here voted 1200 to 64 to ratify a contract which, after four long weeks of strike, represented a hard-earned victory for the teachers. At a time when working people are being pressured to give back gains they had won from employers in past years, the teachers have set an example for workers everywhere.

The teachers won all their major demands, with only a few minor concessions. The new contract provides for a 20-percent raise over the next three years and an additional raise after this time, which would bring Oakland teachers' salaries and benefit packages to the California average.

The teachers also kept their fully paid health benefits. The Oakland Unified School District had stated throughout the strike that in exchange for the salary increases, the district would limit its share of the teachers' healthcare benefits. This would have forced the teachers to pay for the rising cost of healthcare out of their paychecks. But the teachers refused this "cap" as an unacceptable giveback.

The teachers' union, the Oakland Educational Association (OEA), also won back the 7.5-percent annuity that had been given up under the previous contract for those hired since 1983.

Equally important was the fact that the district gave up on its demand to include a disclaimer clause in the contract.

This clause would have allowed the district to pull out of the agreement in the event of financial difficulties.

The final contract was worked out after both sides agreed to involve a state arbitrator, Judge Tamm, in the negotiations and after State Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig agreed to intercede. Earlier in the week, the OEA had agreed to a compromise proposal made by Oakland Mayor Lionel Wilson. The school board, however, rejected Wilson's proposal, leaving the responsibility for dragging the strike into the fourth week squarely on the district's shoulders.

Many felt that the school board's stalling tactics throughout the strike were meant to punish the teachers for their militancy. As one elementary school teacher said, "It's clear to me they're now trying to break the union. They want to wear us down so that no one will ever want to go out on strike."

Indeed the intransigence of the school district and its apparent insensitivity to the massive public support for the strike only increased teachers' feelings of outrage.

This outrage led 800 teachers to take over the Administration Building of the Oakland Unified School District on Jan. 24. Carrying picket signs and loudly chanting, they peacefully installed themselves in offices throughout the four-story building. The takeover, which resulted in the closing of the offices, was seen as a big success by the teachers.

The strike began on Jan. 5 when the teachers voted 3 to 1 to strike rather than

accept the district's initial proposal, which included a mere 2-percent bonus for 1985-86. The determination and unity of the teachers caught the school district off guard, with over 90 percent of the teachers out of school at the beginning of the strike.

Community support was overwhelming throughout. The first week of the strike, school attendance dropped to 15 percent. In spite of the difficulties, parents kept their children home because they knew that Oakland was in danger of losing its most committed and best-qualified teachers.

Parent groups helped the striking teachers locate churches and other facilities to set up alternative schools. Angry parents spoke out in favor of the teachers at rallies and at school board meetings. Even after four weeks, with concern growing over lost

class time, most parents kept their children home.

The strike revealed to the parents that the education of their children was not a priority for Oakland's elected officials. Oakland's City Council declined to help settle the strike by making use of either the \$15 million it has earmarked for Oakland's baseball team, the A's, or the \$30 million it has stashed away to try to buy back the Raiders.

After four weeks of strike, it was clear that for both parents and teachers, the strike had become a question of a commitment to quality education in the public schools. And they were not deterred from this commitment.

The success of the strike was due to the unity and militancy of the teachers as well as to the overwhelming support of the community.

