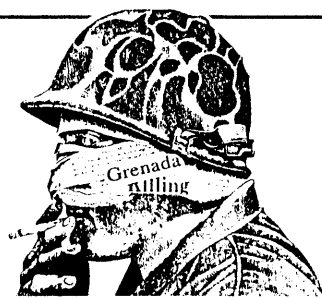


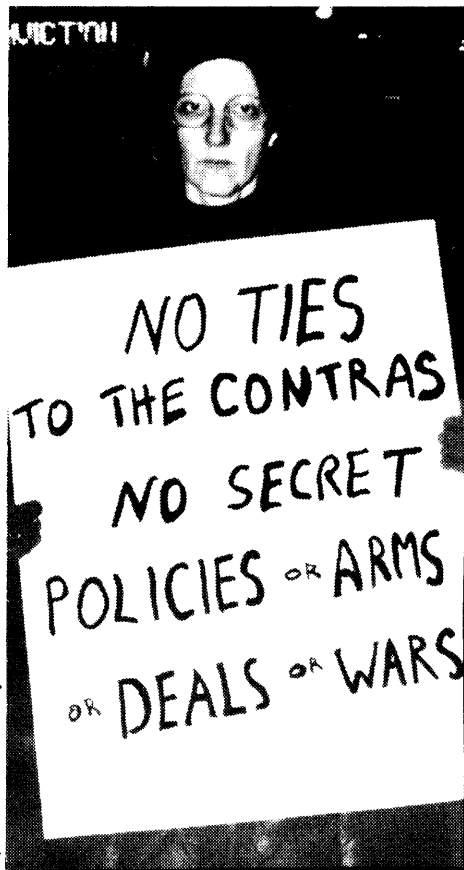
A Socialist ACTION

GCU

**Grenada:
A trial
made in
U.S.A.
See p. 4.**



JANUARY 1987 VOL. 5, No. 1, 50 CENTS



Impact Visuals/Anthony Yarus

Contragate coverup under way

By NAT WEINSTEIN

On Dec. 14, a small Massachusetts newspaper, *The Lowell Sun* charged Lt. Col. Oliver L. North, then an official of the National Security Council, with funneling some of the profits from the Iran arms sale to "right-wing pressure groups."

About \$5 million of the profits is said to have been given to these groups for their campaign to defeat "anti-contra" Democratic Party candidates in the 1986 elections.

The *Lowell Sun* allegations, along with other even more hair-raising charges of Reagan administration misconduct, suggest the depths of criminal action that still lie hidden in the can of worms just barely opened by the Iran-contra scandal.

Congress has been hoping to carry out a respectful wrist-slapping of the Reagan administration's pointmen for their "patriotic" excesses. Members of Congress are concerned because the government was caught lying—not because of the criminal policy itself.

Not one leading spokesperson of the capitalist class has challenged the "nobility" of the administration's motives. The investigators only want Lt. Col. North and his cohorts to tell enough of the story to put the whole matter to rest.

But the charge made by the *Lowell Sun*, true or not, points to why Reagan's appointees haven't owned up: They fear that once someone in the inner circle starts talking, as did John Dean in the Watergate affair, it will not be possible to easily stop the unraveling of interlinked conspiracies.

In any case, governmental credibility, already at its lowest ebb in history, threatens to sink even lower.

The evidence uncovered so far points to the hypocritically fake system of capitalist "democracy," whereby Congress can decide

(continued on page 5)

Contragate fuels anger; Spring protests called

The government has carried out its war moves against the Nicaraguan Revolution by flagrantly ignoring the sentiments of the majority of the American people.

Now the government's secret dealings

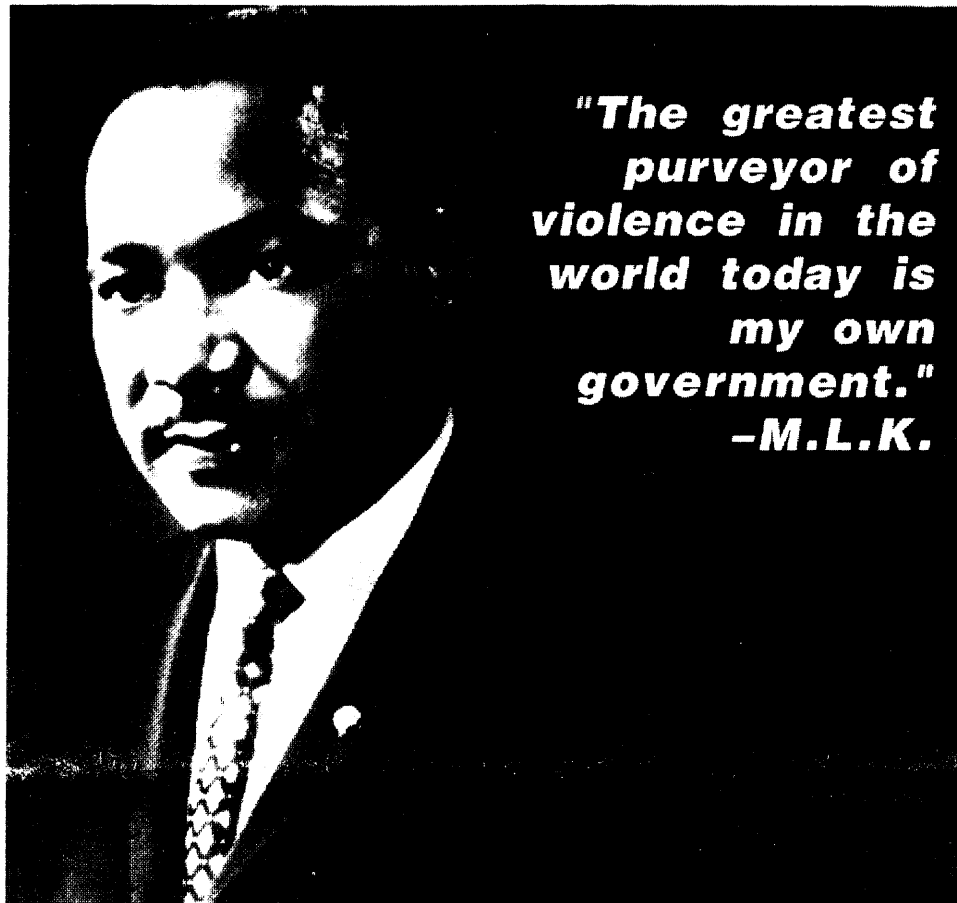
San Francisco antiwar call, See p. 2

have come full circle to haunt Washington in ways not seen since the combined Vietnam-Watergate crisis toppled the Nixon administration 12 years ago.

The time is now right to mobilize tens of thousands of people against the government's unpopular war and austerity drive. Labor, church, peace, anti-intervention, and anti-apartheid activists are planning national protests in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco for April 25, 1987.

The national coalition based on the East Coast, which already has substantial church support, is also confident of obtaining unprecedented labor involvement. The demonstration will focus on demanding an end to U.S. intervention in Central America and to U.S. support for South African apartheid.

Leading organizers in New York City report that a call will be released in the middle of January. The San Francisco-based West Coast coalition has already begun organizing and has gathered impressive



**"The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government."
-M.L.K.**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Jan. 15, 1929—April 4, 1968

labor, church, and community interest.

Socialist Action encourages its readers to fully participate in building the widest possible participation in these protests. As more revelations of the government's "contragate" connections come to light, the opportunities become greater to attract

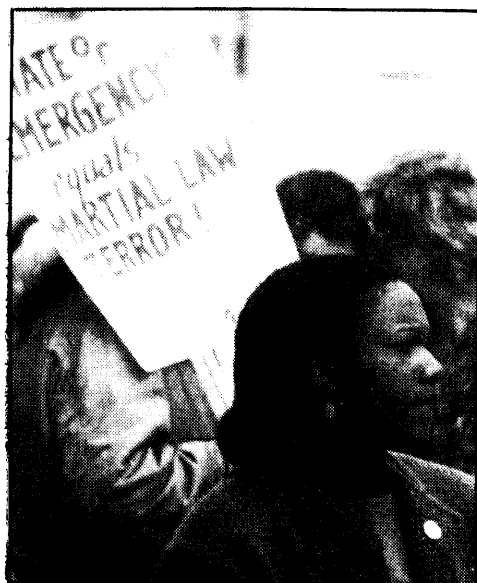
widespread support from labor, student, Black, Latino, and women's organizations.

The April 25 mobilizations can deliver a powerful blow to further isolate and weaken the warmakers and strikebreakers who run this country in opposition to the needs of the majority.

Christmas boycott in S. Africa spotlights torture of children

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Anti-apartheid groups in South Africa launched a 10-day boycott of white-owned



Socialist Action/Joey Ryan

shops last month despite heightened attacks by the government and right-wing vigilantes.

A major objective of the "Christmas Against the Emergency" boycott was to draw attention to the detention of thousands of people—especially youth and children—by South African security forces.

At least 8200 children have been thrown into jail since the declaration of a state of emergency last June 12, according to the Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC). Some prisoners are as young as eight. During the same period, some 22,000 persons of all ages have been detained—most without charges or trial.

Many children are held in solitary confinement, refused clean clothing for weeks, and denied fresh food and water. "They told us we were 'small ANC' [African National Congress] and could not be let out of the cells," one child told interviewers from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

Court affidavits describe a variety of

abuses. One 14-year-old boy stated: "We were making our beds and tidying up, but they said we were slow and they sprayed tear gas into the cell. And then later, they sprayed water, which made the blankets and mats wet. Some of us fainted and some of us vomited."

South African security police routinely torture their prisoners during interrogation. In interviews conducted by the University of Capetown in 1985, for example, 83 percent of former detainees claimed that they had suffered some sort of physical abuse.

Beatings, whippings with the metal-tipped "sjambok," electric shock, branding with hot irons, and suffocation are some of the methods commonly used to obtain information and "confessions." Children are not spared the tortures.

Bishop Desmond Tutu describes the condition of one boy, Johnny Mashiane, after his release from detention: "His eyes were

(continued on page 12)

Socialist Action convention report, See pp. 7-10

Happy birthday Rev. King!



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

On Jan. 15, 1929, Martin Luther King Jr. was born in Atlanta, Ga. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tenn., after having led a march of 6000 protesters in support of striking sanitation workers of that city.

As the Rev. King himself said, "A man who won't die for something is not fit to live." After long years of struggle, his birthday has been declared a national holiday.

Listening to Stevie Wonder's tribute to King (his beautiful Happy Birthday song), brings back memories from 23 years ago

when I joined 250,000 other people marching in Washington, D.C., for civil rights. On that date, Aug. 28, 1963, I heard King deliver his now-famous "I Had A Dream" speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

The idea of a mass march in the nation's capital caught the imagination of millions of people in this country and helped to impel the Black struggle forward. In fact, the 1963 march was a precursor of the huge mobilizations against the Vietnam War that took place several years later.

At the time, I was active in the Brooklyn Bedford-Stuyvesant chapter of the NAACP. Ours was a militant chapter which organized the country's first boycott against school segregation in Brooklyn in 1957.

Previous to this, we had jumped into the Montgomery, Ala., bus-boycott support campaign by raising funds for the Montgomery Improvement Association, the organization leading the struggle. We raised funds to send station wagons there to

provide Black bus boycotters with alternate means of transportation.

When the national call came for a March on Washington, our NAACP chapter began organizing for it. We were told to bring a lunch and supper and to wear good marching shoes.

At 5 a.m. on the morning of Aug. 28, we began boarding small yellow school buses to make the 300-mile trip to Washington. No one complained of the early hour or of the heat and humidity, which could already be felt. We were involved in that greatest of all human movements—changing the course of history.

It wasn't until we hit the highway and could look behind us that we could see bus after bus after bus. We could not count them, as they disappeared around the curves of the highway. But as far as we could see, there was just "us." We felt the power of our numbers.

It was at our "reststop" in Maryland that we set policy—a symbol of deep determination.

We removed all "colored" and "whites only" signs from the restrooms. For that day, those expressions of racism were destroyed.

Nowadays, if you are driving through Maryland, you will not find any "whites only" restrooms. The civil-rights movement of the 1960s—which involved millions of Americans—put an end to Jim

Crow discrimination.

Of course, oppressed people in this country still have a very long way to go to win their freedom. But the historic movement that the Rev. King helped build and lead forward is a shining example of what's possible. We can make it all the way.

Martin Luther King Jr.: Happy birthday to you!



Martin Luther King, Jr., leads antiwar march in 1967

S.F. coalition calls for April 25 antiwar protest



Specialist Action/Joe Ryan

The following is a call from the leadership of the San Francisco Bay Area Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice announcing a Western States mass march and rally on April 25, 1987, in San Francisco.

The Mobilization coordinating committee met on Dec. 15 to map out plans for the demonstration. All the proposals, including the expansion of the Mobilization's leadership structures, will be presented for approval to a large steering-committee meeting on Jan. 13.

The Bay Area march and rally will be coordinated with the national demonstration set for Washington, D.C., on the same day.—CARL FINAMORE (member of the coordinating committee of the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice)

A moral and political crisis has erupted in the United States. Secret and illegal agreements are made to send funds to the contras in Nicaragua. Bombing of villages continues in El Salvador. The repugnant South African apartheid government still finds supporters at the highest levels of our government.

The SALT Treaty has been unilaterally broken by the United States, and "Star Wars" threatens a deadly escalation of the arms race. The right of workers to organize unions, to negotiate enforceable agreements, and to strike is under severe and sustained attack.

The issues which brought tens of thousands to demonstrate in San Francisco in 1985 and 1986 have intensified. Now a national coalition of unprecedented breadth—based in the religious community, the labor movement, and in community, peace, and anti-intervention organizations—has come together with goals and a program that are in concert with two of the themes which unite our Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and

Justice: (1) End U.S. Intervention in Central America and (2) End U.S. Support for South African Apartheid.

By working together on these issues we can make an impact on national policy this spring.

For an End to War and Poverty in Central America

From the worksites to the campuses, from the places of worship to the homes of the people, a consensus is emerging which views the policies of the U.S. government as drawing our country into a deeper war in Central America.

The hundreds of millions of dollars already spent have resulted in the deaths of over 100,000 people in this region. The undeclared war is conducted in our name—without our consent or approval. It threatens to involve our youth whose lives may be spent for reasons they cannot understand.

The government ignores our wishes by continuing to fund and train the contra army whose weapons daily murder and maim the Nicaraguan people. Even before the U.S. Congress approved \$100 million to aid the contras, funds were secretly and illegally funneled to these CIA-controlled mercenaries.

U.S. policy in El Salvador is another barrier to peace. The \$500 million approved for El Salvador in 1987 will be used to fund the repressive army, which bombs peasant villages, forcing vast numbers from their homes. Those who raise their voices for human, democratic, and trade union rights, risk their very lives.

The massive militarization of Central America sets the stage for a regional war which could lead to the direct involvement of U.S. troops.

For an End to Political and Economic Support to Apartheid

Our government refuses to join the international effort to apply effective sanctions against the apartheid regime and refuses to withdraw its political and economic support to South Africa—a country where the Black majority has no civil or political rights. Under the apartheid system, Black people cannot vote, own land, utilize their own natural resources or decide where they will live and work.

Yet Congress approves political and military support to South African-financed terrorists who seek to overthrow the governments in southern Africa which stand in opposition to apartheid.

Our government's stance in Central America and South Africa is part of an overall policy which puts military confrontation and intervention above the desire of the people for peace and justice. It is a policy which seeks to break unions in this country as it seeks to break governments like Nicaragua's. It is a policy which

cynically manipulates both sides in the Iran-Iraq war and uses the profits to violate the will of Congress to fund the contras.

Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race

This dangerous course is carried into disarmament talks where U.S. negotiators insist on continuing nuclear testing and pressing forward with the "Star Wars" project—a plan which would place hundreds and perhaps thousands of nuclear weapons into outer space. In the name of "defense" and at a cost of billions, if not trillions of dollars, our planet would be surrounded by terrible weapons of total destruction.

Virtually every public opinion poll records majority opposition to these policies. Yet the politicians say they speak in our name.

Jobs and Justice, Not War

More bombs and armaments are built while our schools and cities decline, our factories close, and our working conditions deteriorate. Millions of Black, Latino, Asian, Native American, and other national minorities suffer the worst effects of the economic crisis because racism and discrimination still exist in our society. \$290 billion is spent on the war budget while AIDS research proceeds at a snail's pace because of lack of funds.

We are the Majority. We Can Make a Difference.

As the politicians meet in the spring in Washington, D.C., to consider the expenditure of funds for destruction, we must mobilize again, in numbers greater than ever before. We must express our priorities and make our voices heard.

We must say "NO" to U.S. intervention in Central America and "NO" to South African apartheid. We must say "YES" to reversing the nuclear arms race and putting our resources into building homes for our homeless, feeding our hungry, finding a cure for AIDS, and ending discrimination; in short—building a world with peace, jobs, and justice for all.

Join us in a mass march and rally in San Francisco, Calif., and Washington, D.C., on Saturday, April 25, 1987.

The Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice is a broad-based coalition united on four themes: No U.S. Intervention in Central America; End U.S. Support for South African Apartheid; Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race; Jobs and Justice, not War.

Mobilization co-chairs: John George, Supervisor, Alameda County Board of Supervisors; Dr. Howard Gloyd, Pastor, Bethel AME Church; Walter Johnson, Secretary Treasurer, San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO; Albert V. Lannon, President, ILWU Local 6; Pat Norman, Director, San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Health Services; Mario Obledo, Past National President, League of United Latin American Citizens; Father Peter J. Sammon, Pastor, St. Teresa's Church; Charlene Tschirhart, San Francisco Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign.

Socialist Action holds second national convention

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

SAN FRANCISCO—On Thanksgiving weekend, delegates and guests from around the country came here for the second national convention of Socialist Action. Trotskyist leaders from France, Britain, and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International also spoke during the proceedings.

Socialist Action, which is in political solidarity with the Fourth International, was founded three years ago. Many of its founding members are long-time activists in union and social protest movements. Since its inception, Socialist Action has made solid gains in consolidating branches in many parts of the country.

Delegates were able to point with pride to Socialist Action's participation in building mass-action protests against apartheid and U.S. intervention in Central America.

In the Political Report approved by the convention, Socialist Action National Committee member Carl Finamore emphasized that an unprecedented potential exists to mobilize the labor movement in political protests. [See report, pp. 7-10.]

The San Francisco antiwar coalition's successful work in bringing tens of thousands of people into the streets was put forth as a model for the national antiwar and anti-apartheid demonstrations proposed for April 25 of this year.

Convention reports also noted Socialist Action's role in helping to provide food



Socialist Action members help build April 20, 1985, demonstration

caravans and to build solidarity meetings for the Hormel Co. packinghouse workers on strike in Austin, Minn. Socialist Action was also instrumental in raising support for striking maintenance-of-way workers in the recent Maine Central railroad strike.

A revolutionary leadership

The International Report, given by *Socialist Action* editor Alan Benjamin, highlighted the recent struggles in countries as diverse as South Africa, Poland, Haiti, the Philippines, France—and throughout Latin America.

In this worldwide upsurge, Benjamin

stressed, the working class has come to the forefront, utilizing political strikes and mass demonstrations. But these movements have been seriously weakened or sidetracked because of the lack of a mass-based revolutionary leadership that can guide the struggles forward.

There is an urgent need, Benjamin concluded, to build sections of the Fourth International in every country to provide a program of action for the working class in the fight for socialism.

Perspectives for revolutionary struggle in Central America and Europe was the theme of a public rally at the convention site.

Carmen Olivares, a Nicaraguan war correspondent, gave an updated report on the struggle against the U.S.-backed contras.

Socialist Action National Secretary Jeff Mackler told the rally about his recent visit to Nicaragua as an invited guest to the 25th-anniversary celebration of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Boston Socialist Action member Jim Henle reported on his recent trip to El Salvador as a delegate to a conference of the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS).

Other speakers at the rally included Al Lannon, president of warehouse workers Local 6, ILWU; Ralph Schoenman (former director of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation), who spoke about the on-going struggle for socialist democracy in Poland; Claudio Julien, a representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International; Etienne Hilaire, member of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International; and Dave Hudson, a leader of the International Group of Great Britain.

Join Socialist Action!

Several guests at the convention expressed interest in becoming members of Socialist Action. The convention also voted to accept into membership a small East Coast group with which Socialist Action has collaborated over the past year.

The convention approved plans for a subscription drive to *Socialist Action* newspaper, beginning on Feb. 1. A \$15,000 expansion fund drive was initiated and given a big boost when over \$10,000 were pledged at the convention's international rally.

Readers of *Socialist Action* are encouraged to contribute to the fund drive and to contact the Socialist Action branch in their area for information on upcoming activities.

Greetings presented to Socialist Action rally

Representative from Fourth International

The following are excerpts from the speech by the representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

I convey greetings from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to your convention.

We know very well that you have a very difficult task, quite probably the most difficult task of our movement in the world. You have to fight against the most powerful imperialist force in world history.

Even if revolutions are won in other countries—even in the industrialized countries of Western Europe—these victories will not be definitive until imperialism ceases to exist in the United States.

Despite its weaknesses, the Fourth International is the only international revolutionary movement organized on a world scale. It is the only instrument the working class has on a world scale. That is our basic strength. This is why we are actively building the Fourth International.

Long live the solidarity of the working-class movement in the world. Long live the revolutionary Marxists in the United States, and long live the Fourth International!

Trotskyist leader from Great Britain

The following are excerpts from the speech by Dave Hudson, a representative of the British International Group.

Since 1979 the British working class has faced a vicious onslaught from its employers and the Thatcher government. Nearly 4 million out of a population of 60 million are unemployed. There is a massive scaling down of the welfare state. There have been stepped-up attacks on local government and democratic rights. And, of course, there was the miners' strike.

Despite these successes on the part of the ruling class, Thatcher has been unable to inflict a scale of defeat on the British workers' movement that is necessary to regenerate the British economy, which is known as the "sick man of Europe." Despite the fact that the working class has

been thrown on the defensive, its capacity for struggle is still intact.

In the eyes of the majority of people in Britain, the stakes are high in the upcoming general election. The Labour Party, despite the successes that [party leader] Kinnock has had, has failed to exploit the contradictions and difficulties of the Thatcher government. In fact, what the Labour leadership has been able to do is exploit and roll back the development of the left wing in the Labour Party, which we call the Bennite Left. This wing emerged in 1979.

Unfortunately, many in the Labour left see the only way one can influence things today is by supporting Kinnock and stopping him from falling into the hands of the right wing. And as the general election approaches there is more and more pressure on the left to fall in line with the rest of the party to maintain unity and not rock the boat.

We see the need for the working class to take up the fight for a class-struggle perspective and a class-struggle leadership within its own mass traditional organizations—the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Our key governmental slogan that we're putting forward within the labor movement is "Vote Labour and Fight for Socialist Policies." That is, for a class vote against Thatcher, a vote for the Labour Party.

We work alongside militants in the Labour Party. We don't share their illusions, but we share their struggle. That's the method we use inside the British labor movement.

Journalist/activist from Nicaragua

The following are excerpts from the speech to the rally by Carmen Olivares, a Nicaraguan journalist.

Most of my people, on finding out I was coming to the United States, told me, "Bear this message to the American people: We are willing to welcome you as friends. We



Carmen Olivares

know there are human rights, basic rights that we all must struggle for. We have a great big heart, and we are more than willing to embrace you as friends."

"Yet let them know," my people said, "that everyday we are seeing our brothers and our sisters die. So if the American people come as friends, they will be greeted as friends. But they should know that if they come as aggressors, we are more than willing to defend our country."

Today I would like to be able to speak of the accomplishments of our revolution. But unfortunately we are slowly seeing those accomplishments—the literacy campaign, healthcare, childcare, women's rights, new roads, and housing—eroded by a war. And so I must speak to you of war.

Today, seven years after the revolution, more than 18,000 of our people have died because of the U.S. aggression. Many more have been kidnapped, tortured, and disappeared.

Today I come to you in solidarity with you and your movement here. We are not asking for pity. We are asking for active solidarity.

We have won our revolution. All we have to do now is defend it. You have yet to win yours. If you can win your struggle then we can guarantee ours.

Socialist ACTION

Closing date: Dec. 18, 1986

Editor: ALAN BENJAMIN
Asst. Editor: MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Staff: Paul Colvin, Suzanne Forsyth, May May Gong, David Kirschner, Hayden Perry, Joe Ryan, Carole Seligman, Kwame M.A. Somburu, Sylvia Weinstein.

Business Manager: DON MAHONEY

Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly for \$6 per year by Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Second-class postage is paid at San Francisco, Calif.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Socialist Action*, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

RATES: For one year (12 issues)—U.S. 2nd Class: \$6, 1st Class: \$9; Canada and Mexico 2nd Class: \$9, 1st Class: \$12; All other countries 2nd Class: \$12, 1st Class: \$24. (Canada money orders or checks should be in U.S. dollars.)

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialist Action*. These are expressed in editorials.



Three years after U.S. invasion: Grenada puppet regime convicts Coard faction

By JEFF MACKLER

On Dec. 4, a 12-person jury in U.S.-occupied Grenada convicted former Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard and 13 other defendants of the Oct. 19, 1983, murder of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. The defendants received the death sentence and are to be hanged by the U.S. puppet government.

Coard and his supporters were also convicted of the murder of 10 other leaders of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), the party which Bishop founded and which led the 1979 revolution that removed the U.S.-supported dictatorship of Sir Matthew Eric Gairy.

The seven-month trial attracted the attention of the U.S. capitalist media, which is still eager to justify the brutal and illegal invasion of Grenada by 8000 U.S. troops six days after Bishop's murder. By labeling the Coard faction "hard-line Marxist," the jingoist press fraudulently associates the ideas of Karl Marx and revolutionary socialism with the practice of murder, terrorism, and dictatorship.

Invasion targeted revolution

The U.S. invasion, however, had nothing to do with protecting the people of Grenada against these practices. The U.S. government never raised a word of protest against the Gairy regime, whose infamous

Mongoose Gang maintained a reign of terror in Grenada for decades.

The real target of the invasion was the revolutionary movement in Grenada. The Bishop-led NJM had instituted a series of popular measures that signaled major improvements in the lives of the Grenadian people and inspired people throughout the world who seek to break from imperialist-imposed backwardness and domination.

A torrent of lies accompanied the virtually unchallenged U.S. invading force that killed several hundred Grenadians as well as 47 members of a Cuban construction crew working at Point Salines Airport, the site of the invasion.

The Reagan administration, backed to the hilt by the Democratic Party, claimed that its action was necessary to protect the lives of some 500 U.S. medical students. On the day of the invasion, the world's capitalist press was filled with spurious reports that the U.S. Army was being challenged by 1500 heavily armed Cuban soldiers.

Within days of the invasion these lies were exposed. There was no Cuban army. The medical students themselves had given the State Department assurances that they were in no danger.

Coup paved way for invasion

The counterrevolutionary actions of the Coard faction paved the way for the U.S. invasion.

Internal differences within the NJM

leadership first became public when Bishop was placed under house arrest by a nearly unanimous membership vote. He was charged with refusing to accept a decision to sharply reduce his authority in the party and with spreading rumors that Coard was plotting to kill him.

The Grenadian people witnessed the spectacle of a political party arresting the nation's most respected leader. And when the people themselves, outraged by this action, mobilized to free Bishop and impose their judgment on Coard's actions, they were gunned down by the Coard-controlled Grenadian Army, which then imposed a "shoot on sight" curfew.

Coard's actions were taken in the name of the great majority of the New Jewel Movement, a political party of fewer than 400 members that rarely met and whose policies were determined by a tiny Central Committee. There were no traditions of party democracy within the NJM. Its leaders were not accountable to an informed party membership or to any of the mass organizations of the workers and farmers.

The mass organizations that did exist in Grenada were viewed by the NJM as vehicles to mobilize support for popular campaigns. They allowed for the public expression of opinion but they did not function as democratic decision-making institutions.

There is no record of debate within the NJM on these fundamental questions. While the NJM generally ruled with the assent of the Grenadian people, its entire leadership acted on the false and paternalistic premise that its decisions were superior to those that might arise from formal bodies of the masses themselves.

The Grenadian people and the militias

that had been formed had no weapons. These were under the control of the army, a fatal NJM policy based on the mistaken idea that the people do not need to bear arms because the interests of a revolutionary government and its army are always identical to those of the people.

When Coard resorted to force to impose his will, the Grenadian people had no way to respond. The door was wide open for a U.S. invasion.

Regime has no authority to judge

The illegitimate Grenadian regime, which rules by force of U.S. arms, has no political standing to judge or impose sentence on the Coard faction.

As Don Rojas, who was press secretary to Maurice Bishop, stated in an open letter dated Nov. 8, 1986: "No U.S.-installed government such as that in Grenada today has either the moral or political legitimacy to imprison, try, or render judgment on Coard and the others responsible for the murderous events of Oct. 19, 1983."

[In the court proceedings, Coard slandered Rojas, accusing him of being a CIA agent. In his open letter, Rojas fully refutes these slanders, explaining that Coard's charges were designed to "divert attention from his responsibility for his crimes."]

The current Grenadian government derives its authority solely from the U.S. Army and from individuals like Lt. Col. Oliver North, the Reagan administration adviser who planned the Grenadian invasion and later diverted funds from secret U.S. arms sales to Iran to the Nicaraguan contras.

The judgment of Bernard Coard and his co-thinkers will ultimately be made by the Grenadian people themselves—not by their captors who today occupy their country. ■

Ivan Boesky scandal exposes only the tip of the iceberg

By HAYDEN PERRY

If you steal \$100 you go to jail. If you rip off \$100 million, you just give it back and rat on your friends.

That seems to be the moral of the Boesky affair. Ivan Boesky is the Wall Street investor who paid a \$100-million fine in federal court Nov. 14 for illegal insider trading.

Despite the record fine, Boesky left the court smiling and wired for sound. He was smiling because he had escaped jail and still had a few millions left. He was wired for sound because he had been secretly tape recording conversations with his business associates.

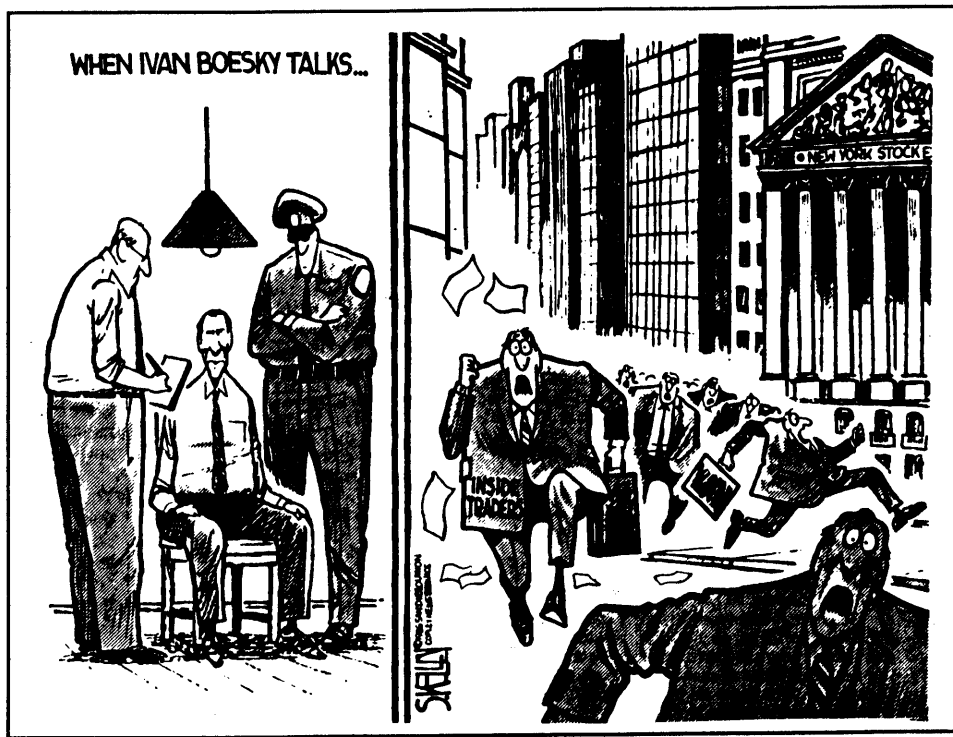
This was part of a deal in which Boesky was allowed to pay off \$1.4 billion in debt by selling his stock before news of his conviction sent the prices plummeting.

Ivan Boesky is an "arbitrager." He buys stocks when he thinks the price is going to rise, and sells them when he thinks they are going to fall. These are deals that involve millions of dollars.

Boesky was a player in the merger mania that has gripped the corporate summits here and abroad. In the first nine months of 1986, about 774 corporate mergers—involving \$131 billion—were consummated.

All it takes is money

Anyone can be a raider and take over a giant corporation if its stock is held by the public. All it takes is money—and not necessarily your own.



Raiders set up dummy corporations and issue bonds paying a high rate of interest. They are called junk bonds because there is nothing behind them except the assets of the company the raider hopes to take over.

With the borrowed money the raider plays a no-lose game. If he (it's usually a he) can buy enough stock, he gains control of the target company. Then he can sell off some of its assets to pay off his debts. If he fails to get control, he can still make millions by the rise in the stock he has

bought.

Millions stick to fingers along the way. The raider gets his profit, the banking house makes millions for underwriting the junk bonds, lawyers get rich setting up the deals. This is part of the driving force that keeps the merger mania going.

Out of all this financial churning there is absolutely no increase in productive capacity. The only product is a new crop of multimillionaires such as T. Boone Pickens and Carl Icahn.

When raiders move in, every worker's job is at risk, union contracts are abrogated, wages are slashed, and exploitation increased to pay off the junk bonds and other debts piled on the company. As branches and divisions of the conglomerate are sold, thousands of workers can see their jobs wiped out.

Boesky removes the guesswork

Boesky made his millions by determining which company was about to be merged, and buying its stock before it rose in price. Someone on the inside told him when a merger was imminent.

Dennis Levine, an official in the securities firm of Drexel Burnham Lambert, Inc., was in a position to know—and tell—when a company was likely to merge. He told a number of his friends, including Boesky, who rushed to buy the stock before the public heard the news.

This so-called insider trading is a "no-no" on Wall Street. It tilts the supposedly level playing field in favor of the insiders and discourages participation by the general public.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is supposed to regulate this sort of thing but has backed off for a decade or more. But the merger mania has alarmed some elements of the ruling class. The jerry-built structure of corporate debt threatens to bring the whole financial edifice tumbling down.

So the SEC has been forced to act, subpoenaing some of the easiest targets. It is doubtful, however, that the promised cleanup will eliminate more than a few fringe elements.

The frenzy of mergers and takeovers has now reached such a broad stratum of the corporate structure, it will take more than a few SEC hearings to halt the march to disaster. ■

...Contragate coverup under way

(continued from page 1)

one policy while the executive branch of the government blithely carries out another. And throughout the hardly concealable illegal arming of the contras, all Washington pretends ignorance.

Foreign policy failures

It is not the covert and illegal governmental actions, or the dirty tricks played on political opponents, that explains the current crisis. The crisis is caused by U.S. imperialism's worsening world position and the failures of its foreign policy—particularly, the failure, so far, of the bipartisan campaign to overthrow the Sandinista revolution.

In the Vietnam War period, opposition by liberal politicians to the mayhem committed by U.S. troops in the guise of "advisers" remained muted for years. It became a little louder only when the horrifying increase in dead GIs impelled masses of American people to demand the immediate withdrawal of their sons from a war they no longer supported.

In 1983, on the other hand, when U.S. imperialism carried out an illegal and secretly planned overthrow of the government of Grenada, criticism by the liberals in Congress hardly rose above a whisper—because the overthrow succeeded.

A revealing commentary on the "contragate" events comes from the pen of *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis. His Dec. 8 column, headlined "Murder Will Out," puts the finger on the Nicaraguan focus of the current political storm:

"Cynicism, mendacity, secrecy: Those are the watchwords of the Reagan-administration underworld. Only a specialist could keep up with all the details



Girl's mother was murdered by the contras

that are pouring out now, the plotting and the knavery. But the essence is clear.

"It goes back to the obsession with Nicaragua. When Congress forbade military aid to the contras, President Reagan did not accept that judgment. He signaled his administration to proceed by other means."

Incriminating facts

Lewis proceeds to sum up some of the incriminating facts that have come to light. He discloses how money for the contras was "browbeaten" from client governments around the world and funneled into the secret Swiss account set up for U.S. mercenaries.

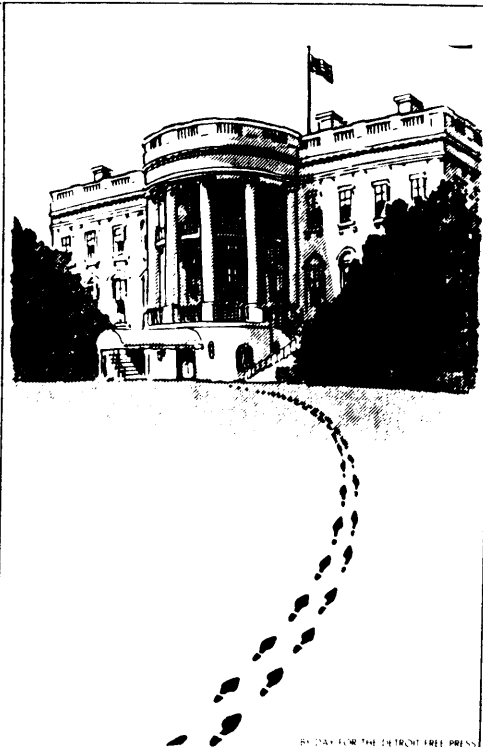
His column centers on the "problem of arranging for delivery of weapons to the contras in the teeth of congressional prohibition."

He gives the example of a "private" enterprise called Stanford International Trading Group, Inc. The president of this outfit, which organized and transported arms to the contras, is "retired" Air Force Gen. Richard V. Secord.

Lewis lists a variety of "retired" and active U.S. Air Force and Army colonels in various key posts in charge of Central American operations and a "former" CIA agent in charge of hiring the pilots.

Noting that "Gen. Secord's fingerprints are all over the contra arms transfers," Lewis exposes the fake independence of Secord's operation:

"Flights to the contras went from Ilopango, a Salvadoran air base dominated



by U.S. military advisers. The senior adviser, Col. James Steele, closely monitored the clandestine operations.

"Then it turned out that the same planes were being used for 'humanitarian' aid that Congress authorized and for weapons drops. When asked about that, Assistant Secretary [Elliot] Abrams said there was nothing wrong with it because the State Department was not paying for the leg of the flight taking weapons to the contras from Ilopango.

"The money for that was coming from other sources—e.g., presumably, the Sultan of Brunei." [One of the client-government leaders "browbeaten" into donating funds to the contras].

Secretary of State George P. Shultz nailed down Secord's role as a direct agent of government policy when he complained before a Senate hearing on Dec. 8 that the "retired" Air Force Major General was a central figure in the Reagan administration's secret diplomacy with Iran.

But columnist Lewis, and other liberals critical of Reagan, don't probe deep enough. If Gen. Secord's "fingerprints," along with those of the officers in charge of the U.S. military operation in Central America and those of the Reagan administration itself, "are all over the contra-arms transfers," what about the role of the members of Congress? Is it conceivable they didn't know what was going on?

Democratic Party Senator Ernest F. Hollings, in an interview aired on National Public Radio on Dec. 3, testified to congressional culpability in this affair. "Everyone knew," he said, "that [arms for the contras] were not coming from the thin air."

Hollings' implication was clear: Congress knew the contras were being covertly funded by the Reagan administration, but said and did nothing simply because they were in discreet accord.

Another Vietnam?

The worsening situation of American imperialism is underscored by a headline in a recent edition of *The New York Times*: "U.S. Aides Fear Crisis Will End Contras' Effort." Noting the, poor military performance of this mercenary gang and their absolute dependence on the U.S. government, the reporter concludes that it appears to have "seriously eroded already-weak congressional support."

It is clear that even before the Iran-arms affair, administration officials were re-evaluating the contras' prospects.

It has been reported that senior American officials tried to find out why the contras were not as effective as the leftist rebels in El Salvador. These officials have wondered out loud why the Salvadoran guerrillas don't need \$100 million to keep fighting.

The Iran-contra exposure only brought the crisis of U.S. Nicaraguan policy to a head. Now the big question in ruling class circles is: If the Sandinistas don't "say uncle" (as Reagan so bluntly put it), then what?

Direct military intervention, they have good reason to fear, would take U.S. troops into a Vietnam-like meatgrinder. They know that—unlike in the Vietnam adventure—resistance to an invasion by U.S. troops would explode everywhere from the very first shot fired.

The result could well be many "Nicaraguas" in Latin America, not to mention a profound political destabilization here in the heartland of world capitalism, as body bags begin arriving home.

Ruling-class "divisions"

Just like during the Vietnam War, the capitalists have been divided over how best to handle the Nicaraguan Revolution. "Hawks" and "doves" have differed over their estimates of the contras' potential.

That dispute is now coming to an end. We can expect to see a revived interest in the so-called Contadora nations' proposals for a negotiated "solution" in Central America.

But we can be absolutely certain that no

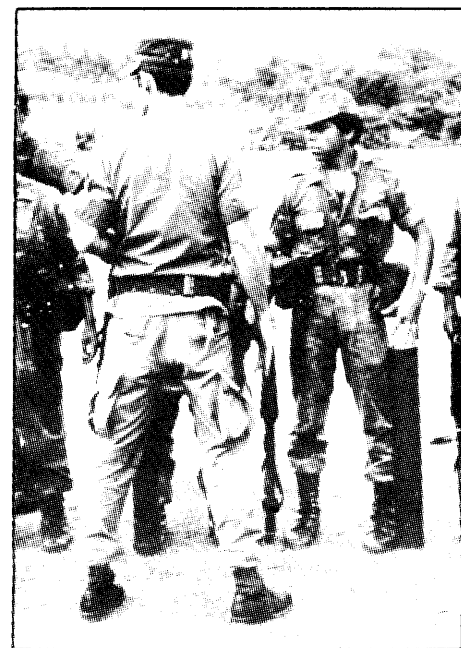
serious representative of U.S. capitalism will be comfortable until the Nicaraguan Revolution is crushed. On that, there is no division within the ruling class.

U.S. rulers will most likely look for a way to keep the contras in reserve and at the same time, use them as a bargaining chip to force the best deal they can get from the Sandinistas. We can be certain, too, that any compromise they agree to in the next period will be discarded the moment they see an opportunity to deal a decisive blow to the revolution in Central America.

The anti-intervention movement in the United States is no small factor in the contest taking place between revolution and counterrevolution in Central America. U.S. rulers must reckon with this force, which they know will multiply in direct response to new imperialist adventures.

All who believe in the right of nations to determine their fate—including the right to revolution—will need to remain on guard against further war moves by the U.S. government—which are sure to come.

In the meantime, the mass mobilization planned for this coming April 25 in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco will help drive the message home loud and clear to U.S. policy makers: U.S. out of Central America Now!



U.S. advisers training Salvadoran soldiers

COMMENTARY

TV extravaganza pushes Contadora "peace" scam

By ALAN BENJAMIN

On Dec. 14, I was one of an estimated 20 million TV viewers throughout North, Central, and South America who watched the Beyond War Award ceremony held in San Francisco.

This year, the presidents of the four Contadora nations—Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama—were honored via TV satellite hookup for their role "in helping to promote a negotiated settlement to the conflicts in Central America."

As a supporter of the Nicaraguan Revolution, I could not help from cringing when listening to Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid talk about peace in Central America.

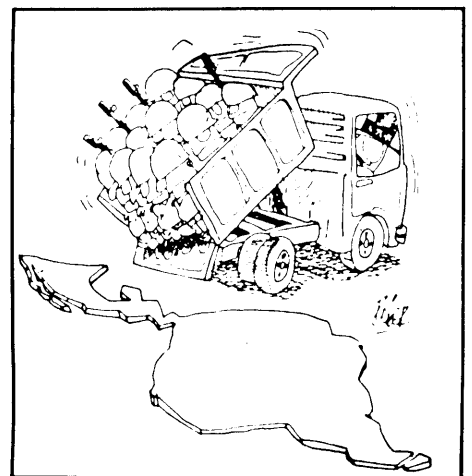
De la Madrid was certainly correct when he stated that the "tensions in the region must be resolved by Latin Americans without outside intervention." But the way the Mexican government wishes to resolve these "tensions" is by putting pressure on the Nicaraguan government to negotiate with the contras and to limit its military defense capacities.

In November, a high Mexican government official held a reception at the Mexican Embassy in Managua to which, for the first time, leaders of the major right-wing parties were invited alongside FSLN officials. The signal was unmistakable: Reconstitute a government coalition of

national unity with the displaced non-Somoza capitalists!

De la Madrid is no friend of the Nicaraguan Revolution. Mexico has suspended all oil exports to Nicaragua (which the revolution vitally needs), but has continued its shipments of oil to Honduras and Costa Rica, which are harboring the contras. Mexico has virtually broken off all commercial relations with Nicaragua.

If the Central American workers and peasants are, indeed, to go "beyond war," they will have to turn a deaf ear to people like De la Madrid, who talk peace while readily bending to the pressures of the U.S. war drive.



Hospital workers forced to accept two-tier contract

By NAT WEINSTEIN

SAN FRANCISCO—Militant hospital workers on strike against Kaiser Permanente, worn down by bureaucratic pressure, voted 2881 to 1087 on Dec. 13 to accept a takeback two-tier contract. The hospital workers, with support from the nurses, had been on strike for seven weeks.

The new contract for the 8700-member union also substitutes so-called "bonuses" for wage increases: \$1000 in the first year and \$850 in the second. Only in the third year do the hospital workers get a 3-percent wage increase.

The "bonuses" differ from a simple wage increase in one important respect—they do not add to the basic hourly rate. Bonuses do not add to the base for calculating overtime pay and are not cumulative.

The top bureaucracy of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) had sent a platoon of officials to the San Francisco Bay Area to impose its concessions policy on strikers.

The adopted contract proposal was only a slightly sweetened version of two previous proposals rejected by the Kaiser strikers. The new contract means 15-percent lower wages for new Kaiser hospital workers at facilities in six California cities. New employees at the San Francisco and Oakland facilities, however, will not be subject to the lower tier of the new wage scale.

Kaiser Permanente evidently hoped to induce strikers in San Francisco and Oakland, still centers of strong unionism, to vote for the two-tier contract. It didn't work. The center of opposition to the two-tier came from strikers in both these cities.

The two-tier policy has been the spearhead of the capitalist attack on the gains made by unions. It plays on hoped-for short-sightedness by union members who are not immediately affected by the reduced wages paid to the new hires.

The two-tier is a divisive measure which would be correctly seen by new employees



Socialist Action/Asher Harer

as in direct conflict with a fundamental principle of unionism—equal pay for equal work.

But the two-tier is an attack against all union members—not just the new hires. The two-tier system gives employers a big incentive to get rid of the higher-paid workers and gradually reduce all to the

lowest pay and benefit levels. While rank-and-file unionists have not fallen for this trick, a significant layer of the union bureaucracy has.

Criticism of bureaucracy

At a meeting of the San Francisco strikers the night of the vote, unionists

sharply criticized the role of the SEIU international representatives who engineered acceptance of the two-tier contract.

"The international is shoving this down our throats and making our people go back to work without any dignity," said Peggy Ferro-Guinto, a nursing assistant who served on the 31-member bargaining committee. This was the dominant theme expressed at the tumultuous strike meeting.

Speaking at a Socialist Action forum the day before the vote, Blanche Bebb, another member of the bargaining committee explained: "[The international] came here with a whole lot of people who are experts in the field. They didn't consult with the local people who had negotiated with Kaiser before. They did absolutely nothing to organize the picket lines during the strike."

Bebb described how inexperienced rank-and-file strikers were forced to organize effective picket lines and other strike functions without any help from the union "leadership."

Bebb's main theme, contrary to the mood of gloom and doom which dominated the union bureaucracy, was the inspiring response of Kaiser workers. "Kaiser and the international underestimated us," she said. She pointed out that essentially the same contract that was finally approved had been rejected a few weeks earlier despite a union announcement that strike funds were "exhausted" and would stop.

This episode in the deepening class struggle serves to illustrate the crisis of American labor. It is not the lack of capacity or willingness of the workers to fight back that explains the cascading series of labor setbacks. The pattern in the Kaiser strike is typical. The members say "no" to concessions but are worn down by the bureaucrats who prefer to give away their members' living standards rather than fight.

There are two inevitable consequences of this self-serving cowardice of the most overpaid and incompetent union officialdom ever to curse the upper echelons of the American labor movement: On the one hand, anti-union sentiment will be fostered by the bosses themselves, who will slyly use the treason of the top bureaucrats to undermine unionism. On the other, a new generation of militants will emerge to challenge the bureaucratic misleadership and replace them with class-struggle fighters. ■

Steelworkers fight bosses on two fronts

BY MARIE WEIGAND

Top level USX and USWA negotiators met Oct. 21 for the first time since USX locked out over 22,000 steelworkers on Aug. 1. After the meeting, USX spokespersons pledged that as a show of good faith the company would stop trying to move steel from its closed facilities.

But on Nov. 25, steelworkers found out that, like other company promises, this one wasn't worth the paper it was written on.

On that day USX attempted to utilize a court order granting it permission to move steel produced prior to Aug. 1 from its Lorain, Ohio, facility. Debris on the railroad tracks and a determined picket line prevented a train loaded with steel pipe from leaving the mill.

On Nov. 26, government authorities came to the company's aid. Five local communities supplied 168 cops in full riot gear with attack dogs.

When 150 steelworkers attempted to persuade a train loaded with steel pipe not to leave the plant, cops jumped USWA Local Union 1104 President Al Peña. As several cops beat Peña to the ground, District 28 Director Frank Valenta moved to assist him. Five cops then jumped Valenta as the rest of the armed police mob began charging the unarmed steelworker pickets.

Following this police riot, the company succeeded in shipping the steel. Fourteen steelworkers were charged with mis-

demeanor rioting. Five steelworkers, including Valenta and Peña, were charged with inciting to violence, a felony. Four steelworkers, including Valenta and Peña, were treated for injuries at a local hospital.

On Dec. 1, a judge granted the USWA's request for a 30-day cooling off period during which the company is prohibited from moving any steel from its Lorain mill. The judge granted this request after hearing testimony from local police and sheriff's departments that failure to do so would cause blood to flow in the streets of Lorain.

Protests against LTV

On Dec. 2, over 2000 steelworkers and their supporters marched and rallied in downtown Cleveland to protest LTV's use of the federal bankruptcy laws to attack pension rights. Busloads of steelworkers came from Pittsburgh and Aliquippa, Pa., and from Canton, Warren, Youngstown, and Lorain, Ohio.

Protestors gathered outside LTV Steel's corporate headquarters for a brief rally. The speakers who addressed the enthusiastic crowd included USWA District 28 Director Frank Valenta, U.S. Senator Howard Metzenbaum, Delores Hycryk of Solidarity USA, Cleveland Federation of Labor AFL-CIO Executive Secretary Sebastian Lupica, and Acting President Richard Acton and Jim Benn of the Tri-State Conference on Steel.

Chanting, "Justice: We fought for it; we struck for it; we earned it; we won't take anything less," the protestors marched to the headquarters of Blue Cross of Northeast Ohio. There they protested Blue Cross' recent announcement of a rate increase for senior citizens and their inhuman attitude toward LTV retirees. On July 17, Blue Cross declared it would no longer pay hospitalization premiums for pensioners.

Blue Cross employees distributed a flier welcoming the marchers and offering free coffee and doughnuts. Valenta thanked Blue Cross for the coffee and doughnuts, adding that it'd be much more appreciated if they lowered the outrageous health insurance premiums they charge.

SEIU Business Representative Mike Murphy stated, "If they close our plants, we need eminent domain. If they take away our health care coverage, we need nationalized medicine."

"We're not here to beg"

The demonstrators then marched to City Hall where they packed the Council chambers to voice their support for a resolution which demands, "That the Council of the City of Cleveland hereby supports the LTV retirees in their demands that the Federal Bankruptcy Court in New York City not reduce or eliminate their medical coverage, life insurance, supplemental pension benefits or any other pension benefits."

Following welcoming remarks from various government officials, an indoor rally was held. Linda Watkins, President of the Cleveland Council of Unemployed Workers, stated that every day she witnesses first hand the casualties of the war against workers. She said it's the

people who built this city and this industry who are being shafted by the LTV bankruptcy.

Delores Hycryk of Solidarity USA, a national organization of LTV retirees, said, "We're not here to beg. We're just here to get what we earned. Give us what we bargained for. Families went to work for 30 or 40 years in the most deplorable conditions. LTV tells me I'm a creditor. I'm no creditor. They're thieves."

Pointing to the coalition of community and labor organizations represented at the rally, Valenta stated, "Organized labor is extremely proud of its past and very confident of its future."

UAW Region 2 Director Warren Davis pointed out that corporate leaders come out of bankruptcies with golden parachutes and million-dollar salaries while workers suffer abuse.

Valenta ended the rally by explaining that the message of solidarity for working people would be spread throughout the country in marches, rallies, and protest actions.

As protestors left to go home, the words of Solidarity Forever continued to echo through the City Council chambers. ■

Memoirs of a Radical Rank & Filer by Ben Stone

The story of one who turned radical during the Great Depression and was a militant rank-and-filer, through the '40s, '50s, and '60s. Today, in his seventies, he marches to the same drummer.

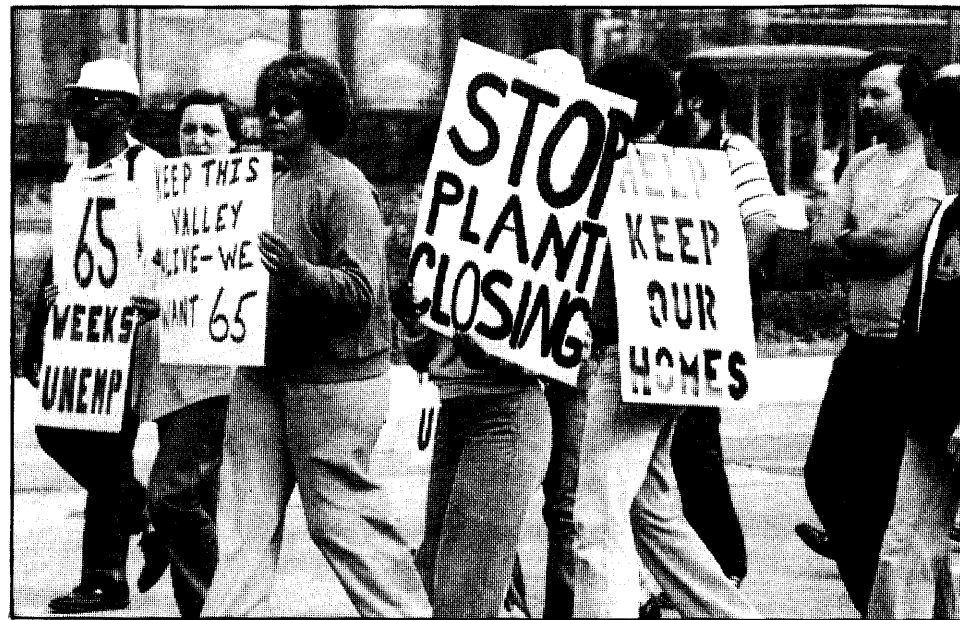
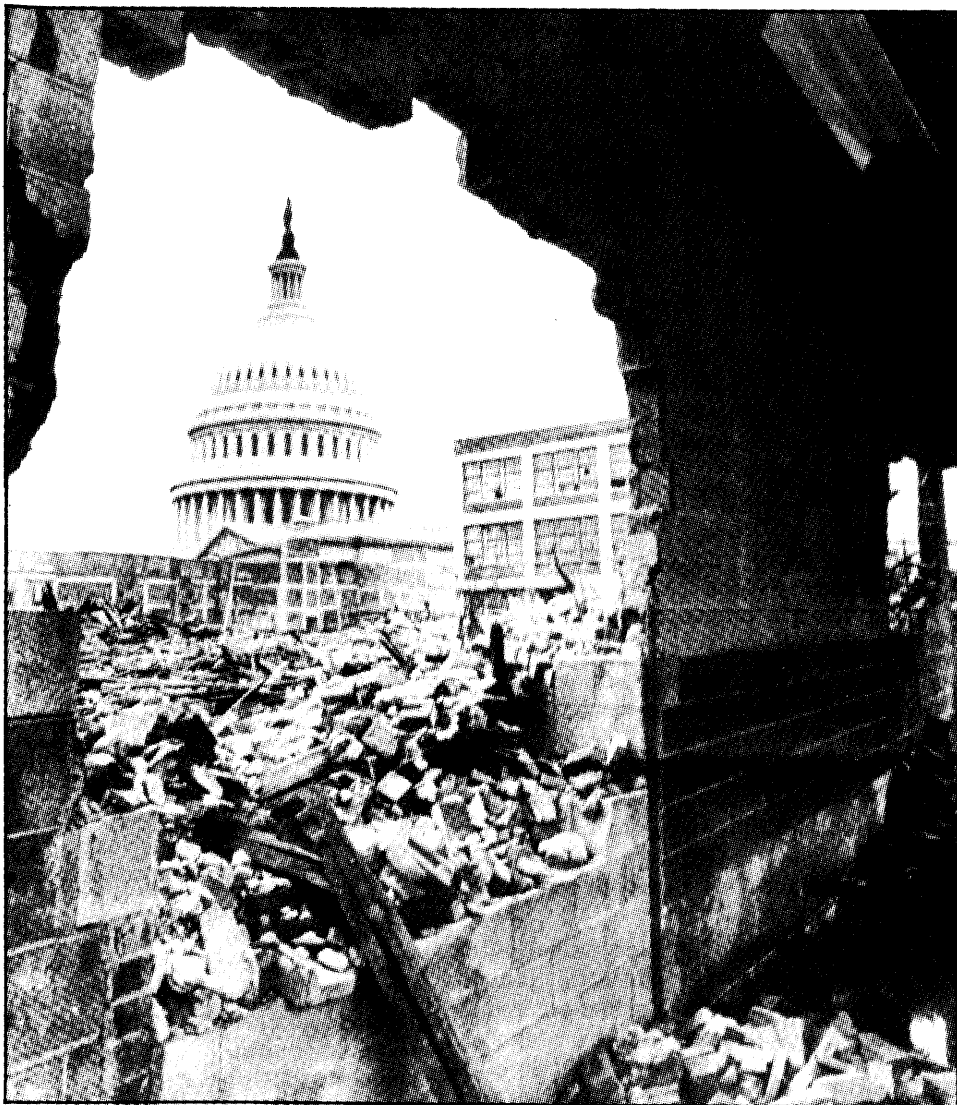
Price: \$7.95 (189 pages)
Prometheus Press, Box 318 Gracie Station
New York, N.Y. 10028

A SOCIALIST ACTION

Report
from our
2nd national
convention

Crisis of capitalism:

The coming working class fightback in the U.S.



The following is an edited version of the Political Report approved by the November 1986 Second National Convention of Socialist Action.

American capitalism faces its stiffest challenge since the 1930s Great Depression.

The U.S. ruling class is besieged by revolutionary upsurges of workers and peasants in Central America, the Philippines, South Africa, and elsewhere. Domestically, the capitalists are facing a growing state of anger and dissatisfaction among working people.

The Iran/Contra affair is only the latest episode of government disinformation and secret diplomacy. This scandal both reaffirms and deepens the distrust the American people have toward the government.

Capitalist austerity drive

The seeds of the current crisis were planted during the Vietnam War. Unparalleled military spending plunged the economy into a massive deficit-spending tailspin. This set the stage for the subsequent inflationary spiral of the 1970s.

Then-President Richard Nixon tried to short-circuit some of these problems by instituting a wage freeze in 1970 and by allowing the dollar to devalue when it was removed from the gold standard in 1971. These steps signaled the beginning of U.S. capitalism's efforts to reassert its dominance of the world market through an austerity drive at home.

By making imports more expensive,

driving down wages, and cutting federal funds for social programs, the capitalists hoped to slow the flood of foreign products into the United States and to restrain the double-digit inflation that was a permanent characteristic of the 1970s.

Variations of these austerity measures have been the consistent policy of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Today, the capitalists must push the American working class even harder. They must extract more serious concessions. They must drive the standard of living of the American working class lower and lower to regain the competitive edge they have lost on the world market.

Majority doesn't vote

The capitalist class counts on the twin parties of capitalism—the Democratic and Republican parties—to preserve and defend their sacred private-profit system. The U.S. working class, however, is becoming increasingly distrustful of the two-party system.

The 1986 national elections, for example, had the lowest voter turnout since 1942. Three out of five eligible voters abstained from voting in 1986. This represents the largest voter abstention of any advanced industrial country—largely due to the absence of a working-class electoral alternative in the United States.

Despite the huge amounts of money lavished by the capitalists on the elections, voter abstention increased in 1986. Most working people saw no crucial differences between the candidates and just simply stayed home. They were not convinced that

voting for a Democrat or a Republican would change the worsening condition of their lives.

Completely out of step with the healthy cynicism and alienation of American working people during the elections was the union bureaucracy and the reformist American left. The official labor leadership and virtually the entire left focused their major energy on electing Democrats to replace "Reaganite" Republicans.

Instead of seizing on the discontent of working people as an opportunity to explain the need for independent political actions—such as demonstrations, rallies, picketlines, and strikes against the strikebreakers and warmakers—the union leadership and the reformist left organizations beat the drums for the Democrats. According to the Communist

lies and deception as the capitalist government.

Americans moving to the right?

The post-war baby-boom generation has not become flag-waving "Rambos," as the ruling rich and its media wish us to believe. The college campuses are *not* returning to the sterile passivity of the 1950s. American youth are *not* rushing to join the Armed Forces because they want to fight in Central America or Lebanon.

On the contrary, great numbers of Black and Latino youth are joining the Armed Forces to escape from the worst aspects of capitalism—a bleak future of unemployment and poverty. They have no stake, whatsoever, in the capitalist system.

Public opinion polls opposing aid to the contras and supporting women's rights

"There were no parades or demonstrations to demand freedom for Eugene Hasenfus... The lessons of Vietnam and Watergate have not been erased..."

Party-published *People's Daily World*, "The most important mass action will be Nov. 4 at the polling booths."

American working people turned a deaf ear. This passive boycott of the elections has been a growing problem for the U.S. ruling rich. Since 1960, each successive election turnout has declined. Consequently, capitalist politicians are elected with an increasingly lower number of votes than their predecessors.

This symptom is a worrisome one for the capitalists because it denotes a rejection by the American people of the two-party shell game and the illusions of a representative democracy. And every new expose of government and corporate duplicity, like the Boesky affair of "inside trading" on Wall St., shows that the capitalist economy is fueled by the same

continue to win majorities. Anti-intervention and anti-apartheid actions are receiving wider popular support.

There are no parades or demonstrations to demand freedom for Eugene Hasenfus, the American mercenary shot down by the Nicaraguans while supplying arms to the contras. Significant sections of the population do not believe that this system is worth defending. The lessons of Vietnam and Watergate have not been erased from the popular consciousness.

Contrary to the wishful thinking of the capitalists and their politicians, the American people *have not* become more conservative.

Admittedly, the need for more profits and the drive toward war in Central America

(continued next page)

The coming working class fightback in the United States



Socialist Action/Joe Ryan

(continued from previous page)

have pushed capitalist politicians to the right. But the impact of the economic offensive against the working class and the threat of war will force working people to fight back.

Once they have overcome their initial reaction of shock, disorientation, false starts, and false hopes, the American workers will fight ferociously to protect their standard of living and their democratic rights.

Impact of austerity on oppressed

The austerity drive of the capitalists has had a profound impact on Blacks, Latinos, and women.

According to Urban League statistics, Blacks today are worse off than they were 20 years ago. Thirty-four percent of Blacks live below the poverty line. For Black teenagers, the rate of unemployment is 43 percent, and Blacks continue to suffer double the unemployment rate of whites.

The defeats suffered by the working class, in general, have had their heaviest reverberations in the Black community. Gains made in affirmative action have been gutted by plant closings, layoffs, and cutbacks. Between 1979 and 1984, over 2 million Blacks were pushed below the poverty line. For Blacks—especially Black youth—the prospects for the future are bleak.

For the Latino community, especially the Chicano and Puerto Rican communities, the economic situation is not much different than that of Blacks. Unemployment, poverty, and homelessness have hit these sectors of the working class the hardest. Combined with these economic attacks, the U.S. rulers are using their offensive against undocumented workers to attack all Latino people as an oppressed nationality and as workers.

For millions of working and unemployed women, the capitalist austerity drive has been devastating. Women are the fastest-growing component among the ranks of the impoverished. Single-parent, female-led households—a fast growing category—are almost always the poorest households.

Women still make little more than half the money men make for the same work. Women still do not have the Equal Rights Amendment to guarantee their democratic rights. And the right of women to control their own bodies is under unremitting

assault by reactionaries—with support from the government.

In these very important sectors of the working class—Blacks, Latinos, and women—the ruling-class drive for profits has not kindled any special loyalty or love for the capitalist system. For that reason, the oppressed nationalities can be expected to be in the vanguard of the fightback as it develops.

Outlines of employers' strategy

Millions of low-income people are excluded from the unemployment figure of 7 percent. There are 5.6 million part-time workers who are looking for full-time work, many of them women. The unemployment statistics don't include the millions who are in labor-wasted military service, the millions who are still looking for their first job, and the millions of unemployed whose benefits have expired and who have given up the search for work.

In the United States, 11.5 million workers lost their jobs due to plant shutdowns between 1979 and 1984. Only 60 percent of these workers obtained other jobs—most of them at reduced wages and inferior working conditions.

Over 550,000 steelworkers and 250,000 auto workers have been permanently laid off since 1978. Facing the threat of plant shutdowns, layoffs, and lockouts, the industrial workers have been pushed for huge concessions by the employers.

The Saturn UAW contract is a perfect example of the concessions bargaining that has been imposed on the unions. The Saturn contract virtually eliminates job classifications, establishes wage-reduction clauses, and introduces grievance procedures that bypass the union. The employers remain steadfast in their goal to drive forward the reorganization of American industry. They will attempt to accomplish this by eliminating traditional union protections on the job.

Postponing the inevitable confrontation which would result from drastic wage-reduction demands, the bosses have adopted a longer-term approach of introducing two-tier wage schedules and adjusting work rules. Approximately 700,000 workers were forced to accept two-tier contracts in 1984 and 1985.

Following the example of the auto, rail, and trucking bosses' negotiating tactics, USX has refused to negotiate a 1986 master

contract with the United Steelworkers of America (USWA).

This is another key employer tactic. By rejecting master agreements, the major corporations seek to exhaust the unions by dragging them through numerous scattered and separate negotiations with a myriad of concessionary demands. This will place more pressure on the unions and decrease their collective strength by breaking them down into ever-smaller bargaining units.

The U.S. capitalist class, however, has not yet mounted an all-out assault against the working class. It is still testing and probing for weaknesses, but in such a way as to avoid prematurely arousing the sleeping giant. The employers' extreme caution is eloquent testimony to their respect for the labor movement's revolutionary potential.

Impact of austerity drive

There are clear signs of working class unrest and frustration which are percolating and will eventually boil over as the capitalists press on with their attacks.

Since the defeat of the Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO) in 1981, there have been a number of important skirmishes—with uneven results. The unevenness of the outcomes of these struggles is a reflection of the unsettled character of the period.

Rail workers on the Maine Central Railroad were forced to go on strike in March 1986 by Guilford Transportation Industries. The Guilford workers surprised everybody with their militancy—including the international union leadership. The striking rail workers organized demonstrations and roving pickets throughout the Northeast.

After the ConRail workers walked off the job—honoring the Guilford picket lines—Reagan and the courts ordered the strikers back to work. The rail bosses and the government feared the extension of the strike throughout the entire rail industry.

In July 1986, 5000 Detroit city workers recognized the picketlines of 7000 striking AFSCME workers and effectively shut down transportation and important city services. The 19-day strike was the longest city workers' strike in Detroit's history.

Also in July, Philadelphia sanitation workers conducted an 18-day strike that was both aggressive and militant. It was ultimately the threat of injunctions and fines—and threats by labor-endorsed Mayor Wilson Goode to fire the workers—that forced the strikers back to work.

Not long after, steelworkers at LTV struck one plant for six days, forcing the company to back down from canceling

retiree medical benefits after LTV declared it might go bankrupt.

In August 1986, 42,000 USX steelworkers were locked out when they resisted a \$3.50-per-hour pay cut. Previously, steelworkers were forced to make concessions that totaled \$1.8 billion and resulted in thousands of lost jobs. The USX workers have had their fill of concessions.

The strikes of the TWA Flight Attendants and the Communication Workers of America (CWA) were earlier examples of the growing anti-concessions mood of the workers.

The Local P-9 Hormel strike

The most heroic example of workers who wanted to fight against the concessions demands of the bosses was the strike of the Hormel workers in Austin, Minn.

The Hormel workers, organized in Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), went on strike in August 1985. During the course of a year, Local P-9 faced the combined assault of the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party, the National Guard, the courts, and the UFCW international leadership.

The UFCW international negotiated a contract behind the backs of P-9 several years ago. The bureaucracy went on a rumor campaign to undermine the local's leadership when P-9 decided to fight Hormel's demand for a two-tier wage structure. This back-stabbing campaign ultimately escalated into physical threats and the physical removal of the P-9 officers from the union.

The UFCW international then capitulated to Hormel, putting P-9 into receivership and signing a concessionary contract while hundreds of members had lost their jobs and were still ready to fight.

Despite the attacks leveled against P-9 and its elected leadership by the top national AFL-CIO labor officials, over 3000 union locals donated money and supplies to the struggle. These workers were inspired by the determination of the P-9 strikers to resist employer takebacks and government intervention.

The workers' desire to resist, however, must be coupled with a correct strategy for winning.

The Corporate Campaign, which was employed by P-9 throughout the strike under the direction of labor consultant Ray Rogers, mistakenly considered public-relations outreach campaigns to be a substitute for the power of the picketline.

Accordingly, the P-9 leaders declined to mobilize a militant defense of their picketlines, choosing instead to rely on the sympathy for the strikers generated by the Corporate Campaign. This handicapped the ability to mobilize union support nationwide around the principles of solidarity and defense of the picketlines against cops and scabs.

When attempts were made to shut down the Austin plant, there was a large outpouring of labor solidarity. Consistently resisting the cops and the National Guard on the picketline would have raised the political ante for the bosses even further. It would have also presented a powerful



Socialist Action/Carl Finamore

P-9 strike became a national symbol of emerging fightback

example for the entire labor movement on how to fight back and win. Unfortunately, this did not happen.

Both the P-9 leadership and the Ray Roger's Corporate Campaign tried to overcome every obstacle they faced and were dead serious about their struggle against Hormel, the government, and the labor bureaucracy.

This leadership is now trying to rebuild its union under a different name. It has formed the North American Meat Packers Union (NAMPU). This is the only option available to them short of surrender. Socialist Action supports the effort to get this union recognized.

Neither the Communist Party nor the National Rank and File Against Concessions (NRFAC) support this move. The CP has long opposed P-9, reaching a new low when a recent *People's Daily World* accused NAMPU of being a "company union." The Stalinists seek to preserve their ties to the AFL-CIO and UFCW bureaucracy.

Today, the Austin militants are continuing their struggle by pursuing the Hormel boycott as their chief strategy. Boycotts are historically the weakest form for mobilizing working class power, but it is to their credit that the ex-P-9 leaders are attempting to keep the fight going.

Nonetheless, the power of the labor bureaucracy and the intervention of the capitalist state have combined to deal this struggle a decisive blow. Short of a resurgence of the strike in other Hormel units, it seems unlikely these fighters will be able to reverse the blows they have absorbed.

Anger is still restrained

Despite many significant demonstrations of combativity, there exists an overall mood of caution which restrains the anger of the working class.

American workers have been taking heavy blows since the 1979 Chrysler \$1-billion giveaway contract. Working people, in general, remain on the defensive today.

A number of complex and contradictory pressures affecting the consciousness of the working class help to explain why a national fightback has not yet emerged to challenge the concessionary drive.

First, the American working class is shackled by a bureaucratic misleadership. The labor bureaucracy is a powerful obstacle that blocks the self-action of the workers and keeps them politically disorganized. The bureaucracy completely subordinates the demands of the working class in order to maintain its political alliance with the capitalists.

Campaigns for "Jobs for All" and protection against inflation are impossible as long as the labor movement continues to subordinate wages to profits and as long as it remains chained to the capitalist parties. The ranks of labor have been atomized, ripped from their past traditions, and disoriented by 50 years of reliance on their class enemies.

The labor bureaucracy will even physically intervene on behalf of the bosses against militant rank-and-file unionists. The most glaring example of this behavior is that of the UFCW bureaucracy against Local P-9.

Another factor delaying the fightback of the working class is the fact that material conditions have not worsened sufficiently to bring the rising anger and frustration to the levels necessary for an organized fightback. Not yet.

While the average real weekly wage of workers declined 10 percent between 1978 and 1986, the working class has been able to partially recover their lost wages by having two-person family incomes. Sixty-two percent of women in couples 25-34 years of age work outside the home. Lost income is also recovered by working overtime or by taking advantage of the now-dwindling allocations of unemployment insurance and other forms of social compensation.

These individual solutions have partially cushioned the economic decline in the standard of living of a significant number of workers.

We can summarize the current state of

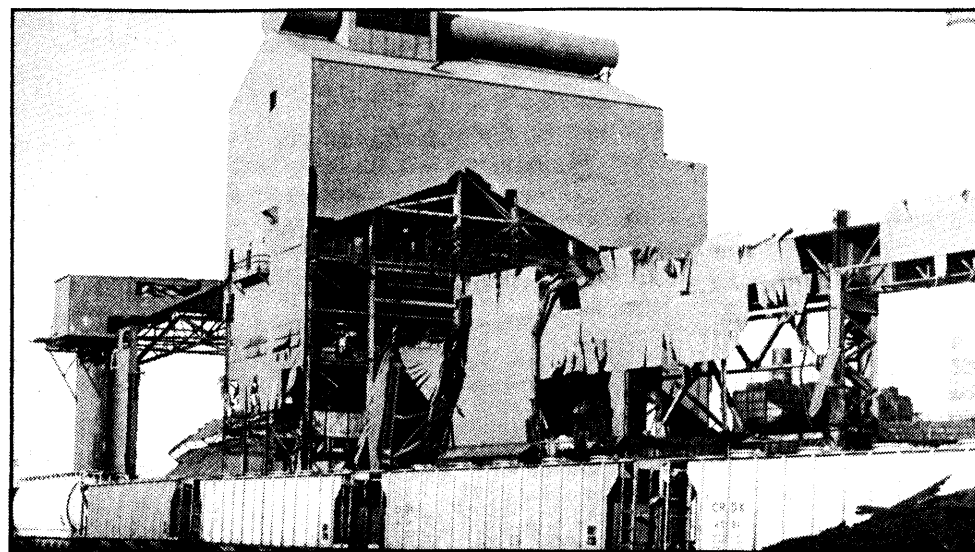
the working class by saying that the strength of the two-party hold on the labor movement and the power of the labor bureaucracy have combined, so far, to thwart the class-struggle impulses of the working class.

Power of the working class

Lately, there has been a tendency by many radicals and progressives to question the power of the working class, especially its industrial sector. Socialist Action rejects any notion that the industrial section of the working class has lost its fundamental power to drive the American socialist revolution.

The living conditions of industrial workers have been worsened by capitalism's drive to increase profits by displacing human labor with machines and technology. Despite all these blows, however, the working class still retains its powerful industrial forms of organization and its ability to shut down the whole country.

The significant political weakening of the working class results from the class-collaborationist policies of the last 50 years—not from the decline in absolute numbers of industrial workers. The



"Historically, restructuring has been capitalism's means for increasing profits."

classical laws of capitalism, as Marx revealed, lead inevitably to a reduction in the size of the working class and its ultimate impoverishment.

This process is not new. During the boom period of capitalist expansion in the 1950s and '60s, "restructuring" was occurring. The longshore, printing trades, coal mining, and craft unions were seriously decimated by the introduction of new productive technology. In the 1950s, the membership of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) plummeted from 400,000 to 200,000 members.

Historically, restructuring for more productivity has been capitalism's means of maintaining its rate of profit. For example, between 1919 and 1925, productivity increased by 40 percent while the number of factory workers decreased by 7 percent. Yet, in that same period, white-collar workers increased from 11.5 million to 16.5 million.

This is exactly what is happening today. The growth in the number of service workers is a reflection of the growth in productivity of the industrial working class, even though the number of industrial workers has decreased.

While certain shifts in capital have decimated the power of particular unions, none of these shifts has displaced basic commodity production from its position as the source of all wealth.

These elementary Marxist observations have escaped many on the "left" who predict that the industrial working class will be replaced by the service and high-tech industries.

The workers will not passively accept being driven into poverty. Socialist Action retains absolute confidence in the ability of

the working class—equipped with a class-struggle program—to fundamentally transform society.

Our solutions

The ideas of the Transitional Program—our socialist program—remain more than ever our guide to action in the period ahead.

The scourge of unemployment is a natural result of this system. The capitalists, who must restructure and shift capital from one venture to another in search of profits, throw millions into the ranks of the unemployed.

The sliding scale of hours and wages—or 30 hours work for 40 hours pay—is the socialist solution to the unemployment created by the anarchy of capitalist production. The working class should benefit from the advances of technology by lowering the hours of work with no loss in pay.

Socialist Action is for a massive public-works program to build schools, hospitals, low-cost housing, and mass transportation systems as an answer to the crises produced by the private ownership of the means of production.

The socialist program calls for workers'

class are counterposed to the profit motives of the capitalists.

Social protest movements

The 1950s civil rights' struggle against "Jim Crow" segregation began independently of the demobilized unions. The same was true of the 1960s' anti-Vietnam War and women's liberation movements.

All of these struggles eventually attracted some labor support, but the lack of large-scale union participation was a major handicap. Many of the leaders of the antiwar and women's liberation movements, therefore, did not readily see the labor movement as the inspiration and potential motor force behind their fight.

The bureaucracy's 50-year stranglehold on the unions has, consequently, distorted the development of American politics.

The traditional peace, antiwar, and solidarity movements have been historically led by individuals who reflect middle-class feelings of powerlessness and pessimism. As a result of labor's abstention, a greater role in social protest movements has been played by figures who have never seen the working class in motion.

This accentuates the tendency of protest movements to rely on one of the capitalist parties—the Democratic Party.

Like the labor bureaucracy, the leadership of the protest movements seeks to channel these protests into the Democratic Party. This has restrained and hampered the building of mass mobilizations.

None of the wide variety of Central American solidarity groups, for example, has advocated a mass-action strategy to defend those revolutions.

Fortunately, many of these organizations are now opting for demonstrations because their pro-Democratic Party electoral activity in both 1984 and 1986 has proven to be a disaster. Reliance on "liberal" capitalist politicians is harder to justify when it is ever-more evident that the war and austerity drives are completely bipartisan.

U.S. intervention in Central America

The revolutions in Central America—and Nicaragua in particular—face the most immediate threat of direct U.S. intervention. This is where Washington is focusing its attacks. This is where the U.S. government hopes to deliver its most

(continued on page 10)

If you support...

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

...you belong in Socialist Action!

Where To Find Us:

Boston Socialist Action
P.O. Box 1046 GMF
Boston, MA 02205
(617) 389-4075

Chicago Socialist Action
Box 80B, 2520 N. Lincoln
Chicago, IL 60614

Cincinnati Socialist Action
P.O. Box 37029
Cincinnati, OH 45222
(513) 242-9043

Cleveland Socialist Action
P.O. Box 6151
Cleveland, OH 44101
(216) 429-2167

Detroit Socialist Action
P.O. Box 19613
Detroit, MI 48219

Grand Rapids Socialist Action
P.O. Box 3505
Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Los Angeles Socialist Action
P.O. Box 60605
Terminal Annex
Los Angeles, CA 90060
(213) 250-4608

Minneapolis Socialist Action
P.O. Box 14087
Dinkytown Station
Minneapolis, MN 55414

New York Socialist Action
P.O. Box 20209, Ca. Finance
693 Columbus Ave.
New York, NY 10025

Phoenix Socialist Action
P.O. Box 5161
Phoenix, AZ 85010
(602) 263-5190

San Francisco Socialist Action
3435 Army St., Suite 308
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 821-0458



Socialist Action/Joe Ryan

(continued from page 9)

serious blows to weaken anti-imperialist struggles all over the world.

The success of the April 20, 1985, demonstrations around Peace, Jobs, and Justice showed the potential for mobilizing sentiment against the foreign and domestic policies of the U.S. rulers. Today, the potential to involve and mobilize the labor movement in these protest movements is unprecedented.

Unlike the period of the 1950s and '60s, when the working class was quiescent, the labor movement today is under increasing pressure to participate in and lead these movements. Accordingly, Socialist Action seeks to build broad united-front-type action coalitions weighted toward the decisive social sector of society—the labor movement.

Major labor, church, and solidarity organizations have called for demonstrations in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., on April 25, 1987. Wherever possible, Socialist Action members will seek to involve the unions as central components in the local coalitions.

The entrance of the unions into the antiwar and peace movements will stamp these protests with a class character that was missing in the 1960s.

Anti-apartheid movement

These same new opportunities apply to the anti-apartheid movement. The Reagan administration has stated openly that it is not afraid to go against the majority anti-apartheid sentiment of the American people.

The struggle in South Africa has

revolutionary implications, and this presents a problem for all the imperialist nations. They want to guarantee the continuation of their super-profits within the framework of maintaining capitalism in South Africa.

To guarantee the preservation of capitalism, the U.S. government is prepared to negotiate a solution with all forces in South Africa. This includes the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), which has given assurances that it will respect the capitalist character of the future state.

But the South African masses may well intervene with their own ideas and leaders—making demands that go beyond the bounds of capitalist property relations. In this event, the lip-service for reform which has been dispensed by everyone from Reagan to the Democrats will change.

Stopping the "communists" and "extremists" will be the war cry when the need to intervene on behalf of the South African capitalists becomes immediate.

Although the anti-apartheid movement has shown great potential following the labor-supported June 14, 1986, demonstration of 100,000 in New York City, this movement has failed to launch a nationally coordinated mass-action campaign. Unfortunately, no authoritative national coalition exists which is capable of initiating such a call at this time.

Nonetheless, apartheid is an issue that will continue to mobilize large numbers of people—especially on the campuses. Like Central America, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa will remain in the

headlines because the masses are in motion.

Black and women's liberation

The Black movement, like the working class as a whole, has so far been unable to overcome the middle-class leadership that blocks the road to struggle.

The potential of the Black community to mobilize was demonstrated by the out-



Socialist Action/Joe Ryan

pouring of support for Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday celebration in January 1986. But, otherwise, the Black and Latino communities remain demobilized by their pro-Democratic Party leadership.

The strong attraction of Blacks and Latinos for the Rev. Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition is a reflection of widespread discontent and anger. But the Rainbow Coalition is just a disguised cover for channeling the dissatisfaction of the Black masses into the Democratic Party.

The Rainbow Coalition is neither independent nor based on the social protest movements. Jesse Jackson has more than once indicated that he sees himself as a "loyal opposition" within the Democratic Party. As was predicted, Jackson gave his support to Walter Mondale after the primaries in 1984 and then put the Rainbow on ice. It was reactivated in 1986 to again muster votes for the Democrats.

True to its goal, the Rainbow Coalition never once mobilized the working class or any section of the oppressed against the policies of the government. During the Hormel strike, Jackson posed as a friend of the embattled P-9 fighters. In a well-publicized visit to Austin, however, he refused to support the strike.

Instead, he offered himself as a mediator.

The Rainbow Coalition seeks to play the role of steering mass discontent into the Democratic Party as opposed to the streets—where the masses can see and feel their own power.

The women's liberation movement has provided some opportunities for mass work. Socialist Action participated in the National Organization for Women-sponsored marches in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles. These actions attracted 130,000 people, showing that massive numbers respond to mass-action campaigns for women's rights.

There is no national mass-action wing of the women's movement which is challenging the right-wing attacks on abortion rights or the Supreme Court decision upholding Georgia's sodomy laws.

In the last analysis, the absence of a labor party has put tremendous pressure on social protest movements to rely on the Democratic Party. The only way to break out of this impasse is to consistently advocate independent mass actions like demonstrations, rallies, and picketlines. These actions can be a springboard to develop an independent labor party.

Our confidence in the American working class and its ability to make the socialist revolution leads to our conviction that the warmakers and strikebreakers will be defeated and replaced, once and for all, by a workers' government—a government representing the genuine interests of the majority. ■

Don't miss an issue!

Subscribe now to Socialist Action

A monthly newspaper with a working-class perspective



- 12 months for \$6
- 6 months for \$3
- Enclosed is a \$ _____ contribution.
- I want to join Socialist Action. Please send me more information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Tel. _____

Send to: 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110

Fourth International section organized in Poland

In May 1985, the Workers Opposition Alliance (POR) was formed in Poland. Prompted by a desire to offer Polish workers a clear political perspective of a democratic workers' revolution against the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy, the POR set up groups in many cities and factories across Poland.

The POR's adherents were mainly activists who had previously worked in the framework of Solidarnosc but had become increasingly disillusioned with the strategy of "self-limiting revolution" offered by top Solidarnosc leaders.

In May 1986, on the first anniversary of its founding, the POR changed its name, becoming the Workers Opposition Alliance - Solidarnosc (POR-S). In this way it sought to indicate its historic roots in the struggle of Solidarnosc during the uprising of 1980-81.

The statement of the POR-S declared that the existence of Solidarnosc was indispensable for the liberation of the Polish working class but that it was not an adequate instrument to achieve that goal. "It is necessary to build a workers' organization able to take on much more advanced political tasks than a union can," the group stated. "This is the role the POR-S wants to play in close collaboration with Solidarnosc." (*Przełom*, No. 3, 1986)

The POR-S also took issue with many of the leaders of Solidarnosc who see the Polish Catholic Church as an institution independent of the bureaucratic power and who have come under the ideological influence of the Church.

While the POR-S welcomes religious activists without any discrimination and is open to collaborate

with priests who take the side of the workers, it considers that the Church hierarchy is a tacit but powerful ally of the Stalinist regime and that this "red and black alliance," as it is called, is a major obstacle on the road to the liberation of the working class.

A new element in the process of recomposition of the Polish workers' movement initiated by the POR is the public appearance in May 1986 of the Workers Party of the Self-Managed Republic (RPRS) and of the newspaper *Zryw* ("Take Off"), published by the Provisional Organizing Committee of the RPRS.

The RPRS points out that "the Polish people, oppressed, humiliated and deprived of dignity by a totalitarian bureaucratic regime, are obliged to achieve their aspirations by means of a revolution."

To attain that goal, the RPRS has announced its desire to become the Polish section of the Fourth International, which *Zryw* describes as an organization that fights "for socialism, meaning a self-managed society that can only be fully achieved on the international scale. This sort of socialism has nothing to do with the so-called 'actually existing socialism.'"

We are reprinting below excerpts of the draft political-ideological statement of the Workers Party of the Self-Managed Republic (RPRS—Polish section of the Fourth International). This statement first appeared in the premiere issue of *Zryw* in May 1986. The full statement was published in the Oct. 27, 1986, issue of *International Viewpoint*.

The following are major excerpts of the draft political-ideological statement of the Workers Party of the Self-Managed Republic (RPRS—Polish section of the Fourth International).

Our objective is to fight for an independent Poland.

Our struggle, as well as the objectives we have laid out, aim at transforming Poland into a sovereign country, economically and politically independent of any other state or political system.

A people's right to chart its own path of development and decide on a political system in accord with its historic conditions and its needs is a people's right to independence.

Our objective is the fight for a socialist Poland.

We recognize the historically established bases and principles of the socialist system, and oppose social exploitation by the systems of bureaucratic dictatorship that exist in the East, as well as by private capital. We declare our support for the full realization of the principles of socialism, which have been deformed and degraded by the rule of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

These principles include, for example, the right of the society to sovereignty, the right of the workers to the means of production, the right of the peasants to their land, the right of the people to independent thought and creativity.

Our objective is to fight for a democratic Poland.

We reject both the anti-social system of bureaucratic-totalitarianism and the pseudo-parliamentarian, anti-democratic regime of imperialism. We reject systems that are based on exploiting the workers and regimes that rule over society on the basis of usurped power.

We stand firmly for a democracy based on self-management, for a people's power, for the right of society to make decisions for itself—both in the framework of democratic institutions of self-management as well as in a system of political democracy.

We reject the illusory belief in the possibility of evolutionary change or reform of the Stalinist system or the capitalist system. The conflicts of interest between the working people and the bureaucratic or bourgeois power elites are too powerful to be capable of solution through evolution or reform. The only road by which society can win its right to build socialism, the only road to overthrow the dictatorship of the degenerated party and state apparatus is revolution.

Revolutionary internationalism

Our struggle cannot develop in separation from the struggle of the workers of the entire world against exploitation by private capital. Our ally can only be the world



Polish workers are fighting for genuine principles of socialism

working class. That is the content of our revolutionary internationalism.

We see the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie as the common enemies of the working people. History shows that the workers are adversaries of both systems and that when the workers rise up to claim their rights, both systems are united by a common interest in seeing their struggle drowned in blood.

Internationally, our struggle will be waged on two fronts—against the bureaucracy in the East and the bourgeoisie

in the West. In our struggle we will not seek support or aid from the imperialist bourgeoisie.

There is no socialism without democracy.

Democracy means people's power and workers' power over their workplaces, cities, and communities. It means that the society must be free of any dictatorship and that the state power must derive from the social power. The absence of democracy has

led the present system to degenerate into an anti-social "actually existing socialism." There is no socialism where there is no democracy. Nor is there real democracy without socialism.

There is no socialism without self-management.

Only a self-managed society can guarantee a socialist system, democracy, and independence. The right to socialism means the right to independent organs of workers' self-management to make the decisions in the factories; the right of society to decide about the environment in which it lives and works; the right of independent thinkers to propagate their independent opinions; the right of parties, organizations, groupings, associations or interest groups to function.

There is no revolution without organization.

As an opposition force to the regime, Solidarnosc has proved inadequate to carry through such a revolution. The spontaneous social upsurges have been channeled by the partisans of self-limiting revolution, or a revolution within the framework of the system.

Therefore what is needed is a vanguard revolutionary organization, conscious of its objectives and its tasks, one that has a clearly defined program and ideology and which is based on the aspirations and support of society.

We have to be democratic-revolutionary socialists, organized internationally to fight for the genuine principles of socialism.

Polish socialist speaks about new party



The following is an interview with Kryki, a member of the executive committee of the Workers Opposition Alliance-Solidarnosc (POR-S) and one of the founders of the Workers Party of the Self-Managed Republic (RPRS), the Polish section of the Fourth International.

Kryki was one of the main leaders of the Union of Workers Councils of the Polish

Resistance Movement (ZRP-PRO) in Upper Silesia. The interview was first published in Wolny Robotnik, No. 38, June 1986.

Question: It is clear from your articles and statements that you are a socialist, convinced that a political party is necessary in order to carry through to its conclusion the social struggle against the pseudo-people's power that we confront.

Answer: That is true. Palace revolutions or political cosmetics will change nothing in our bureaucratized regime.

Question: How then do you explain the aversion many activists have to forming parties?

Answer: The penalties are more severe for belonging to a party, but that probably isn't the essential thing. The regime has impressed strongly on the social consciousness that there is a single, supposedly infallible party.

It presents every attempt to form another party as a betrayal of the homeland, as a

preparation for a coup d'etat, and so on. This often creates a strong block.

Question: What sort of new party do we need?

Answer: We need above all a workers' party, not just in name but by its nature and by the orientation of the changes this party seeks to direct. It must also be a socialist and democratic party, one that accepts political pluralism and which—and this is fundamental in my opinion—gives expression to the aspirations of society.

Distributors of Socialist Action in Canada:

Alliance for Socialist Action
229 College St., Suite 208
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1R4
(416) 535-8779

Alliance for Socialist Action
Box 2728
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 4B3

Alliance for Socialist Action
Box 12082
Edmonton, Alberta

Alliance for Socialist Action
P.O. Box 76916 Station S
Vancouver, British Columbia
V5R 5T3

Realignment in Aquino gov't: Filipino capitalists shored up

By SEAN FLYNN

The Nov. 23 firing of Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile marked a key step in the attempt to normalize capitalist rule in the post-Marcos Philippines.

In one stroke, President Corazon Aquino eliminated her strongest rival from the cabinet while simultaneously depriving the left of one of its most popular issues. A few days later, a 60-day truce was signed between government forces and the New People's Army (NPA), which is led by the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Aquino's achievements have strengthened the political influence of the Philippine army and its Chief of Staff Gen. Fidel Ramos.

Up to now, Aquino has been able to maintain her independence from both the army and the mass movement because of the conditions under which she came to power. The "February revolution" combined a split in the military with a spectacular mobilization of "people power."

The unstable coalition that ruled for nine months was the result. The United States and the "elite opposition" at the head of the anti-Marcos movement needed the army to quell peasant insurrection; the army needed a new government to whitewash an image tarnished by two decades of dictatorship.

Both needed Aquino to channel the militant sentiments of millions of impoverished workers and peasants. Aquino's job was made easier because the leaders of the mass organizations subordinated raising independent demands to maintaining "critical support" to the government.

Rivalries in the government

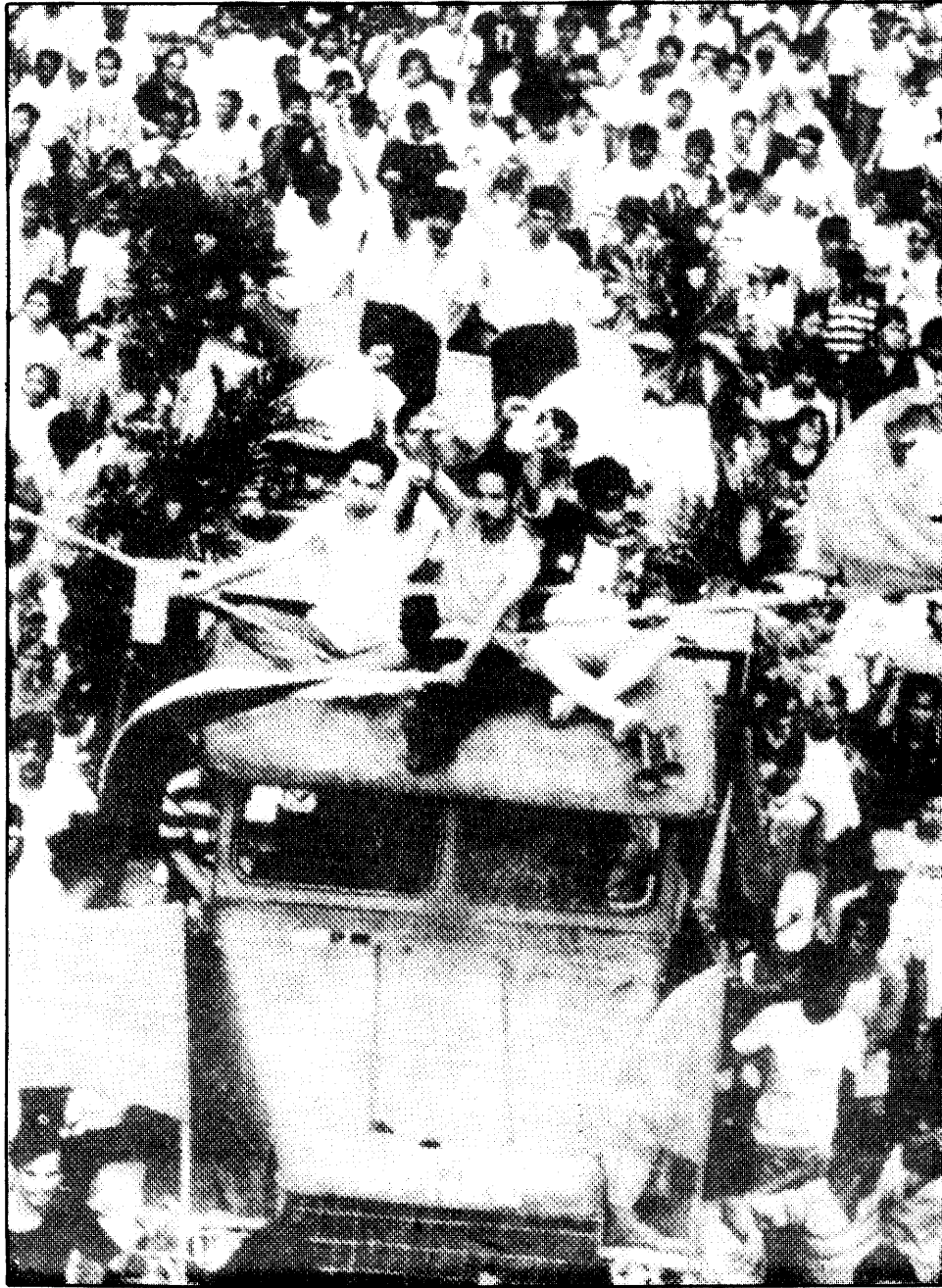
Because the ruling coalition was the product of political expediency, political and personal conflicts soon erupted. Two issues threatened their unity. The first concerned the duration of the Aquino regime itself. Would it yield to elections after the adoption of a new constitution or would it continue indefinitely?

Grooming themselves for the succession, Enrile and Vice President Salvador Laurel each counted on the first option. To their dismay, the constitutional commission appointed by the president proposed extending Aquino's term another six years, forcing the schism within the government into the open.

But the more important issue—particularly to the United States—was the rebellion in the countryside. Aquino backed the liberals in her government in seeking a negotiated settlement, while Enrile, Ramos, and later Laurel advocated a harder military stance.

Unequivocal U.S. support for Aquino only came after she pledged to take up "the sword of war" if negotiations with the NPA did not soon bear fruit.

Enrile turned to his power base in the



Demonstration of 250,000 at the burial of Rolando Olalia, a trade-union leader who was assassinated by the Philippine army

armed forces. Army actions, including the capture of NPA commander Rudolfo Salas, were aimed at sabotaging peace talks. Finally, amidst preparations for a coup, nationalist union leader and head of the People's Party (PnB) Rolando Olalia was assassinated on Nov. 16.

Aquino strengthens army

In the wake of a 250,000-strong funeral procession for Olalia, Aquino fired Enrile. Ramos supported the move—but at a price. Several liberals were ousted from their positions in the government.

Despite the nostalgia about "people power," Aquino turned to the army to remove Enrile. Nine months of "elite-opposition" rule had led to the demobilization and disillusionment of millions who marched with Aquino in February.

Nevertheless, the leaderships of the nationalist and workers' organizations—from BAYAN and the PnB, to the May First Movement workers federation and the Communist Party—continued to

give "critical support" to the Aquino government.

Despite the regime's inability to provide jobs or land, and although it continued the tradition of kowtowing to the United States, the left limited itself to making the ousting of Enrile its central demand. The minister's removal stole the movement's thunder without any corresponding gains.

Though Enrile himself left the government, the Ramos-Aquino bloc accomplished one of his central goals. The army—fundamentally the same institution that guaranteed martial law for Marcos—has become a key player in Philippine politics. This factor will be especially crucial in the current negotiations with the NPA.

The ceasefire

Despite the signing of a 60-day ceasefire, no fundamental concessions were made by either side. The NPA has insisted on thorough social reform and national independence as conditions for ending its 16-year struggle.

In an interview following the signing of accords, for example, CPP spokespersons declared a lasting peace impossible unless the U.S. bases, "the cornerstone of American control and domination of the Philippines," are closed. (*San Francisco Examiner*, Dec. 8, 1986)

Obviously, the Philippine army—equipped and trained by the United States—will never concede this demand.

The CPP-NPA were drawn to the negotiating table by the toppling of the dictatorship, their main recruiting agent. The democratic space that opened up made continued armed struggle politically inexpedient. The new importance of the army has narrowed that space.

Nevertheless, the political center of gravity remains in the cities, where the people have taken advantage of the new freedom to organize. The ceasefire will allow the CPP a public office in Manila and permit it to openly influence aboveground politics for the first time in its history.

Its leverage in the upcoming negotiations will depend not only on military strength, but on the extent that the workers and peasants are mobilized.

A united front of all the left parties, trade unions, and peasant organizations should be built around demands aimed at resolving the most pressing needs of the masses. Such demands inevitably lead to breaking out of the limits set by the Aquino government.

For example, the demand that the government stop payment on the \$26-billion foreign debt to the imperialist banks could mobilize millions of people in the streets—as it has done in many Latin American countries.

Aquino has refused to cancel the debt, calling instead for its "renegotiation" under terms similar to those implemented by Peruvian President Alan García. García is earmarking 10 percent of Peru's export earnings to repay the debt.

As long as the Philippine government honors its pledge to repay the Marcos debt to the imperialist banks, the resources of the country cannot be used to provide vitally needed jobs, housing, and land.

The new constitution

The Feb. 2 plebiscite over the adoption of the so-called "Freedom Constitution" will be a test for the mass organizations as well as Aquino. The document contains a loophole which would permit the retention of U.S. bases in the country.

Yet despite the new constitution's pro-capitalist character, the Philippine left appears inclined to support it as a lesser evil. The socialist federation BISIG, for example, gave its "critical endorsement because its ratification will be a severe blow to the immediate threat to the democratic space." (*Philippine News*, Nov. 26-Dec. 2, 1986)

The workers' and peasants' movement thus remains tied to a pro-capitalist political framework, underscoring the absence of a consistent revolutionary leadership in the country.

The longer this continues, the easier it will be for the Philippine ruling class to institutionalize its rule and put the February mobilizations behind it. The recent realignment of the Aquino government is the first step in this direction. ■



...S. Africa

(continued from page 1)

dull as of someone who seemed to be dead to the world for much of the time. When he walked, it was with a slow painful shuffle like a punchdrunk ex-boxer."

Johnny had been arrested and brutalized for the "crime" of carrying a donation to the house of a school friend who was shot by police. "When I saw him," Tutu remarks, "I wanted to cry, but most of all I was filled with a blazing anger against a system that could do this to a child." (Report of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, April 1986)

Despite the protests of numerous international human-rights organizations, the South African government has

redoubled its terror campaign. On the eve of the Christmas boycott, police banned virtually all meetings by Black groups.

Pretoria has tried to justify its latest clampdown on civil liberties by references to a "revolutionary onslaught" supposedly planned by the African National Congress. The U.S. government has been complicit in laying the groundwork for these attacks on the freedom movement.

The Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 passed by Congress in October, for example, declares the ANC and other anti-apartheid groups "terrorist" and "violent." The act seeks to restrict the activities of the ANC in this country, claiming it is a "foreign agent."

One portion of the act warns "that some of the organizations fighting apartheid have become infiltrated by Communists." South

African Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha has stated his government's agreement with these red-baiting sections of the bill.

As in "contragate," Washington has been implicated in several illegal projects to supply arms to South Africa. The British newspaper *The Independent* revealed last month that the U.S. arranged air shipment of some 40 tons of arms from Honduras to points in South Africa and Namibia. ■

Post Office Box 404830
Brooklyn, NY 11240-4830

718-855-2140

IMPACT VISUALS

Affordable photos, cartoons, caricatures and illustrations
for the movement and the progressive press

Salvadoran unionists hold conference for peace

By JIM HENLE

Against the background of civil war and the most forceful labor upsurge in seven years, a conference "In Search of Peace" was held in San Salvador on Nov. 22-23.

Sponsored by the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), the largest coalition of worker and peasant organizations in El Salvador, the conference brought together 175 North Americans with some 300 Salvadorans who represented a broad array of unions, peasant cooperatives, and organizations of indigenous people. This was the largest peace delegation ever to gather in El Salvador.

Despite the persisting war and the continued repression and torture of political activists and unionists, Salvadorans continue to organize. To openly hold a peace conference under the eye of the U.S.-backed dictatorship was, in itself, an important accomplishment.

Powerful testimony was heard from COMADRES, the committee of mothers of the disappeared, as well as from Humberto Centeno, president of ASTTEL (the telecommunication workers union), who was captured by the military along with his two sons in November 1985.

Centeno was released after a national strike by ASTTEL workers, but was told that his sons would not be freed until he stopped his activity. Centeno refused to bend, and to this day his sons still remain in prison. Adrian Esquino Lisco, head of the National Association of Indigenous Salvadorans (ANIS), told of the massacre of Las Hojas, where 74 villagers were killed by the government for being "subversives."

Strengthening solidarity

While the U.S. labor movement was not strongly represented in the delegation, several union presidents were there. They included Luis Doran, president of Service Employees International Union Local 660,

Jim Henle is a leading member of the Boston Central American Solidarity Association (CASA). He attended the UNTS conference in November.



UNTS members for peace and earthquake assistance

Socialist Action/Jim Henle

and Mike Urquart, who represented Ken Blaylock, president of the 300,000-strong American Federation of Government Employees.

Several important steps were taken to strengthen solidarity and communication between American labor and the UNTS. A tour of the United States by UNTS members was projected, and an invitation was extended to the UNTS to speak at the upcoming April 25 Peace, Jobs and Justice demonstration in Washington, D.C.

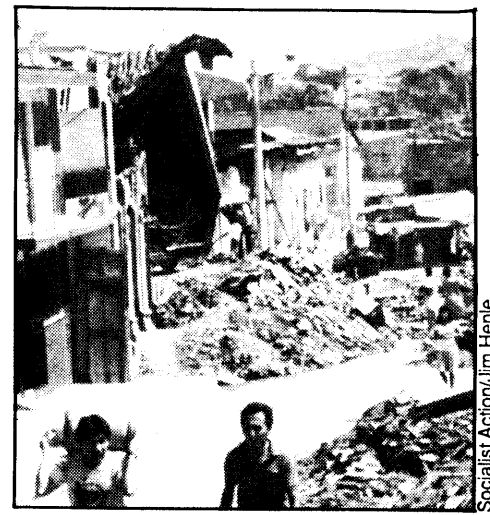
The conference also took up the issue of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). AIFLD, which has been providing labor support to the Duarte government, acts as the foreign-policy arm of the U.S. government inside Latin American labor. It has also created company unions and works with the military to oust legitimate unions that are considered "subversive." Salvadorans at the

conference were adamant about the need to remove AIFLD from El Salvador.

Conference participants observed a march and rally sponsored by the UNTS on Nov. 22. Called to support an end to the civil war and to promote higher wages, the rally also demanded earthquake relief for the hard-hit poor areas of San Salvador. While Salvadoran workers suffer under rapid inflation and a decline in real wages, these problems have only been compounded by the October earthquake.

Conference participants viewed the devastation of the city, with streets still cluttered with rubble and people living in half-fallen structures. Residents testified that they have received no aid whatsoever from the government.

In light of this situation, the church and the UNTS have been organizing relief efforts on their own. This is another example of how workers are moving to



Socialist Action/Jim Henle

center stage in the crisis and taking the lead in organizing society through workers' organizations. (To contribute, send checks to FENASTRAS/Earthquake Relief Fund, 1300 Connecticut Ave. #808, Washington, D.C. 20036).

Three main themes

While the UNTS, as a broad front, incorporated many viewpoints, three main themes emerged.

The first theme was that the struggle for basic human rights and the rights of workers to organize in their legitimate unions must continue. Second, there was an overwhelming desire for peace. The need for a genuine peace movement is now more urgent than ever. Third, the U.S.-backed Duarte government was clearly identified as an obstacle to peace. The recent earthquake only served to dramatize the indifference and corruption of this government.

The UNTS peace proposal calls for an end to U.S. intervention in El Salvador as a prerequisite for peace. It calls for the unions to play a greater role in the peace process. It fails, however, to specify the content of any future peace accord.

As it stands now, Duarte's base is being steadily eroded while the desperation of the Salvadoran people is being channeled into the organizations of the workers and peasants.

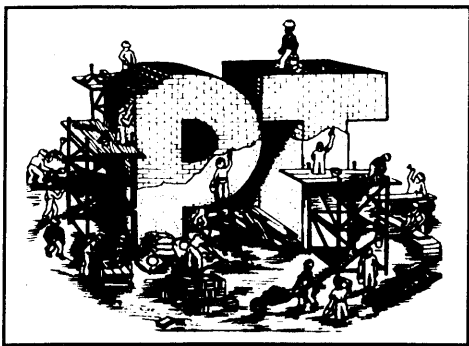
The movement in the United States has a profound responsibility to spread the truth about El Salvador and to build opposition to U.S. intervention—especially within the U.S. labor movement.

A key factor in the struggle of the Salvadoran workers and peasants will be our ability to stay the hand of the U.S. government, which keeps the Salvadoran military in power. Building mass actions here will help join our struggles in action. ■

By ALBERTO OLIVEIRA

SAO PAULO—The IMF-imposed austerity measures decreed by the "New Republic" government of President José Sarney are encountering stiff resistance among Brazil's workers and peasants.

On Nov. 27 food riots rocked the capital city of Brasilia. On Dec. 12, a 24-hour general strike—the first general strike in decades—shut down 80 percent of the



factories in the industrial hub of Sao Paulo and halted approximately 30 percent of production nationwide.

The strike, which was called by the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT) and two other labor federations, demanded an end to the price and tax increases announced on Nov. 21.

The recent government measures include price hikes of 50 percent to 70 percent in gasoline, electricity, sugar, medicines, postal rates, alcohol, cigarettes, and automobiles. According to official statistics,

Brazil general strike blasts austerity; Workers Party gains in elections

the inflation rate for 1986 was approximately 200 percent, with wages falling far behind the increased cost of living.

The government was pressured by the International Monetary Fund to enact these new measures in order to maintain interest payments on the country's huge debt. Brazil owes \$103 billion to foreign banks—the largest debt of any country in the world.

The day before the strike, the daily *Folha de Sao Paulo* published a national public opinion poll that gives an indication of the growing popular anger over the deteriorating standard of living. Forty-seven percent of the respondents said they planned to strike the next day; 70 percent said they felt the strike was legitimate, and 68 percent said they thought the strike was necessary to force the government to back down from its austerity program.

Workers Party scores gains

Just one week prior to the general strike, on Nov. 15, the first elections since the return of civilian rule nearly two years ago were held throughout Brazil.

Approximately 60 million voters turned out to pick 23 state governors, 49 senators, and 487 state and national deputies. The newly elected Congress is scheduled to begin drafting a new constitution next March.



Luis Ignacio da Silva (Lula)

O Trabalho

The undisputed winner of the elections was the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), the major capitalist party which for two decades was the only legal opposition to the military dictatorship. Candidates associated with the past military regime were overwhelmingly defeated.

The Workers Party (PT) led by metalworker leader Luis Ignacio da Silva, "Lula," scored some important gains in these elections, obtaining 6.2 percent of the vote—or approximately 3.5 million votes. This is nearly double the vote obtained by the PT in the 1982 national elections.

The PT elected 18 deputies to the national Congress and 28 deputies to state congresses. It will now have elected officials in 14 of 23 states.

Lula, the president of the PT, was elected deputy from the Sao Paulo region with a total of 450,000 votes. This was the second highest vote total received by any candidate.

"The prospects for the development of the PT are enormous," Lula told the press after the elections. "The PMDB is no longer an opposition party. It is now the ruling party. Very soon, its popular base will be eroded."

Lula continued, "Look at what just happened: Barely one week after the elections, price increases were decreed that set off powerful mass mobilizations."

The PT centered its campaign on the need for a genuine agrarian reform, the defense of land occupations by the landless peasants, a sliding scale of wages and hours to fight inflation and unemployment, and the repudiation of the foreign debt to the imperialist banks. ■

Creationists step up attacks on science

By PETER CLARK

The idea that human beings and other living things are the byproducts of natural processes has come under attack. The challenge is not being waged on scientific grounds but on the grounds that this idea contradicts the version of creation told in the Old Testament.

The last law prohibiting teaching of the theory of evolution was removed from the books in 1970. Now the creationists are renewing their attack, demanding that equal time be given to the Biblical version in the schools. In recent years they have introduced bills in 15 states to this end.

In at least 27 other states, creationists have mounted strong lobbying efforts on boards of education and textbook-selection committees. In California and Tennessee, fundamentalist Christians have filed suits for revised textbooks.

Last month, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to rule on a Louisiana law authorizing "equal time" in the classroom for the creationist doctrine. A ruling is expected in July.

President Reagan supports the creationists. Evolution "is a scientific theory only," Reagan remarked. "But if it was going to be taught in the schools, then I think that the Biblical story of creation...should also be taught."

A centuries-old debate

The Genesis version of creation came to dominate in Western culture with the consolidation of the Christian Church and its official sanction by the rulers of the Roman Empire. For centuries, the Bible was accepted as the framework for all scientific inquiry.

But in 1543, Nicolas Copernicus shattered the calm by publishing his theory of the heliocentric or sun-centered solar system. Copernicus's work struck the first great blow against the creationists because it put the home of humankind in its place—out of the center of the universe.

At the beginning of the next century, Johannes Kepler discovered that the planetary orbits are elliptical instead of circular and uniform, as Copernicus had thought. Kepler came to believe that the main goal of a scientific hypothesis was to explain phenomenon in accordance with reason and "its utility in common life," rather than to corroborate the Bible.

The geological record

Science was soon to provide other challenges to the creationists. In the 18th century, the science of geology grew up. Scientists studying the stratification of rock formations seemed to observe a process of slow formation that contradicts the Biblical account of instantaneous creation.

In addition, fossils of extinct animals were discovered buried in the rocks. An explanation was provided that the fossils were simply unfortunate victims of Noah's flood—animals that had literally missed the boat.

But the fact remained that fossils were found in various strata of the earth, showing that they had not all perished at the same time. Also, fossils began to appear of extinct animals that were related to species that are still living.

The solution to this quandary was proposed by Baron George Cuvier, a French biologist. In a work published in 1812, Cuvier said there had been a series of disasters—Noah's flood being only the most recent. With each disaster, God perfected the animals that he restocked.

But it had to be conceded that Cuvier's proposal indicated a lot of trial and error for an otherwise perfect God.

Meanwhile, another theory had been proposed that better corresponded with the observable world. It was developed by James Hutton in 1795, and revived after his

death by Charles Lyell, who published his "Principles of Geology" in 1830.

Hutton's theory simply stated that the process that laid the stratified rocks was still shaping the earth, but too slowly to be seen in the brief span of human society. This meant that the earth must be much older than previously estimated.

The fossil evidence settled the debate, especially when fossils of extinct animals were found along with stone tools—which no theory of catastrophe could explain. But even if the earth had evolved, what was the place of humans in the scheme of things? On this question, for the time being, creationist theory remained unchallenged.

Biological science advances

In the 1730s, the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus originated the modern system of classifying plant and animal species. The connections that Linnaeus drew between

The fight over "Darwinism" began immediately and culminated the following year in a debate at the annual meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Science in Oxford. The protagonists were Thomas Huxley, Britain's most eminent geologist, and the brilliant orator, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce.

By the end of the debate, Wilberforce conceded defeat. Biology was firmly established as a science based on trying to discover how life works rather than fitting the facts into a religious framework.

Freed from its fetters, scientific discovery has proceeded at a breathtaking pace. Evidence has emerged in numerous scientific fields that confirms Darwin's theories.

In the 1860s, Gregor Mendel discovered genetics as the method of inheritance—only several years after Darwin predicted such a mechanism existed. In 1869, deoxyribo-



created creatures in his own image all the way along.

Creationism has been put to rest by mounds of evidence. Nevertheless, its proponents in religion and the White House continue to demand that creationism be given "equal time" in our schools with scientific teaching. After all, some say, both creation and evolution are theories.

According to the "American Heritage Dictionary," a theory is "A structure of logic that brings together many diverse observations into an understandable whole." Evolution fits this criteria. But creationism does not have one shred of evidence to back it up. Not a fossilized fig leaf, not the jawbone of an ass—nothing.

Furthermore, people have used the principles of evolution to our advantage centuries before fully understanding them. We have bred both the Great Dane and the French poodle from the same creature. We have increased the volume of wool from a sheep from less than one kilogram of rough hair to 20 kilograms of soft wool. Evolution is not just theory. It is fact.

Acceptance of authority

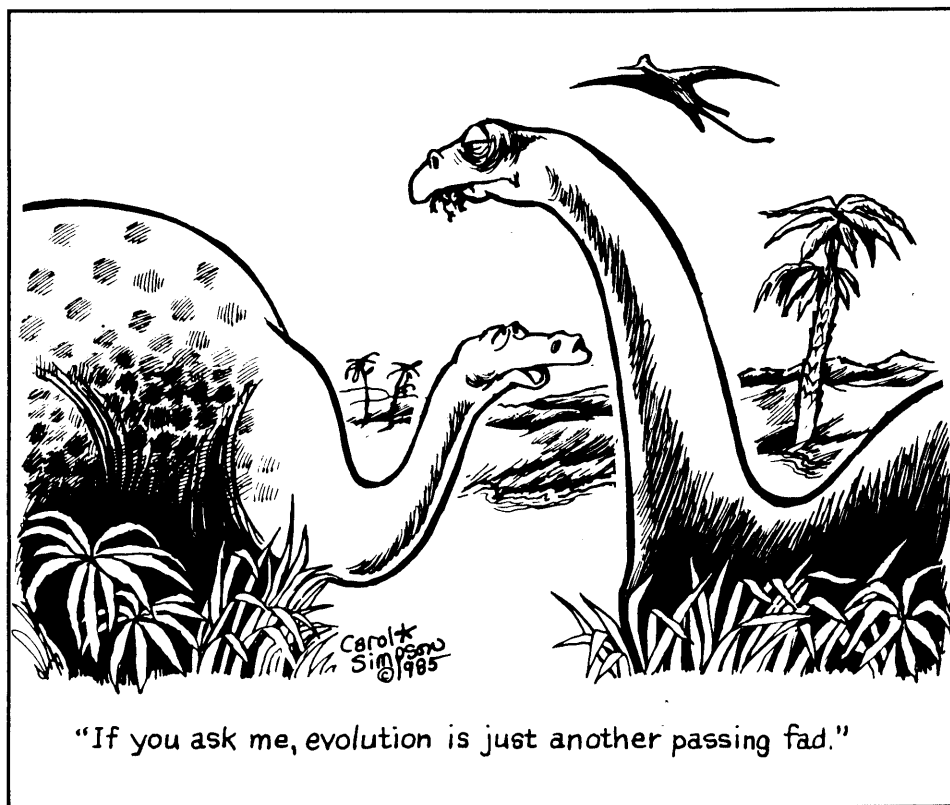
In defiance of the facts, creationism is encouraged by Reagan and other members of the ruling class. The bosses need a subservient working class to carry out their profit-making schemes. The creationists preach just such an attitude—one based on blind acceptance of authority.

Furthermore, if the universe is as old as science tells us, then people can begin to get a whole new picture of themselves and society.

If you compress the history of the universe into a single year beginning Jan. 1, then the earth isn't even in existence until about Sept. 14. Life emerges on Dec. 16. The first primates don't appear until Dec. 29, the first hominids on Dec. 30, and true Homo sapiens on the last day of the year.

All of recorded human history is compressed into the last 10 seconds, and the age of capitalism takes less than the final tick of the clock on New Year's Eve. This is a little unsettling to a ruling class that seeks to convince us that their power is eternal.

Creationism is a dusty relic of history. Next time you encounter a creationist calling for "equal time" for Biblical stories in the schools, you might suggest that a chapter explaining Darwinian evolution be inserted in the Bible alongside Genesis. ■



"If you ask me, evolution is just another passing fad."

various species provided the basis for future theories of evolution.

Linnaeus came to some rather advanced conclusions. "Show me a generic character," he wrote, "by which to distinguish between man and ape. I myself most assuredly know of none...But if I had called man an ape or vice versa, I would have fallen under the ban of the ecclesiastics. It may be that as a naturalist I ought to have done so."

A number of alternative theories to explain the evolution of the species arose during the 18th century. The most famous one was developed by Jean Batiste De Lamarck, who postulated that evolution proceeded through acquired characteristics that an animal could pass on to its young. Lamarck explained, for example, that giraffes had acquired long necks by generations of stretching for tall branches.

Charles Darwin eventually synthesized the best of the evolution theories into his theory of natural selection.

Darwin's theory states that those animals and plants that are more fit in the competition for food, in reproduction, and in defense against predators survive to produce more offspring. Over many generations, in response to changes in the environment, species change and develop into whole new species.

Darwin's triumph

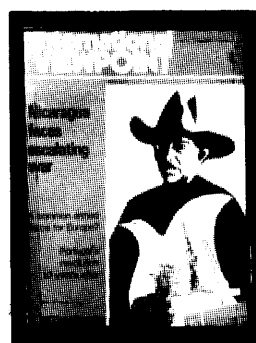
Darwin published his "Origin of the Species" in 1859, after being contacted by Alfred Russel Wallace—who had come to similar conclusions through independent research. The book's first printing of 1250 copies sold out in the first day. Now the debate with the creationists was really on!

nucleic acid (DNA) was discovered. With the advent of more advanced microscopes at the turn of the century, cell division was witnessed and chromosomes were discovered and found to be made of DNA.

In 1944, it was found conclusively that DNA was the inheritance material. Tests showed that mutations within DNA continue in subsequent generations and account for whole new characteristics entering a population—and therefore new species arising. Further studies showed that DNA is the same in all living things.

In God's own image?

Anthropologists have unearthed hundreds of remains of extinct proto-human species. These discoveries more than any others have sealed the lid on creationism. Unless, of course, God also evolved from an ape-like creature into a human-like one and



International VIEWPOINT

A biweekly magazine published under the auspices of the Fourth International. We offer an introductory offer of three issues for \$3. A six-month subscription is \$22, and one year of International Viewpoint is available for \$42. Write to 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110

Nkrumah's "socialism": Is it the way forward?

By KWAME M.A. SOMBURU

I recently went to a public meeting in Oakland, Calif., to hear and renew my acquaintance with Kwame Toure, formerly known as Stokely Carmichael.

Toure's home is in Guinea. Since 1972 he has frequently toured the United States addressing predominantly Black college and university audiences in attempts to recruit to his All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP), a party based on the Pan-Africanist teachings of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana.

I first met Stokely Carmichael—as he was then known—in 1966, when he met with me and about 20 other Black activists in Harlem to discuss the feasibility of setting up a chapter of the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), of which he was chairman.

In the early 1960s, Carmichael was in the forefront of the desegregation, voting, and civil-rights struggles as a leader of SNCC. During the famous march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., in 1966, he publicized the concept of "Black Power."

Soon after, he began traveling internationally. During a visit to Guinea, he became acquainted with Kwame Nkrumah, who was living there since being overthrown in a February 1966 CIA-supported coup by Ghanaian army officers. Under Nkrumah's tutelage, Carmichael was converted to Nkrumahism.

The ideology of Nkrumahism

In his speech, Toure did not address the concerns of the Black community here in the United States beyond warning against support for the Democratic Party. His group is not really involved in organizing the Black community around its own demands.

Toure's main objective is to orient his audiences toward Africa—which he views as the mainspring of the Black struggle everywhere—and toward the teachings of Nkrumah.

The A-APRP's program states that "Nkrumahism is the only correct and scientific ideology for the Pan-African Revolution." This African-based party claims



Kwame Nkrumah

that it is "an integral part of the Pan-African and world socialist revolution."

I am in full agreement with the A-APRP's goals of African socialist unity and world socialism. However, as a Marxist, I have differences on how to accomplish these worthy goals.

Nkrumah was undoubtedly the main spokesperson of the revolutionary nationalists in Africa who wanted to unify the continent. He stood up strongly against most of the imperialist political schemes and plots to prevent genuine African liberation. The ruling classes of the world rejoiced at his overthrow.

Nkrumah's supporters claimed that a "socialist" government had been overthrown. But socialism did not exist in Ghana, nor was it being constructed. Nkrumah did not have a scientific program for socialist revolution.

Nkrumah's primary concern was to unify Africa. But he proposed to achieve this by cementing together the

various existing African states, including the most reactionary ones.

Army remained intact

In his own country, Nkrumah did not attempt to mobilize and arm the masses to destroy the economic power of the Ghanaian propertied classes and the imperialist-installed state structure—particularly the British-trained army.

Nkrumah also suffered from an overdose of paternalism in his attitude toward the Ghanaian people, who lacked any effective participation in the revolutionary process. He was intolerant of all political opposition—including from those who believed that the revolution must move forward on a socialist course.

After the price of cocoa plummeted on the world market—Ghana depended for most of its foreign exchange on this crop—Nkrumah called on the workers and peasants to make "sacrifices." He went so far as to ban strikes in his attempt to maintain class peace with the Ghanaian capitalists.

Nkrumah's belief that he could reconcile the irreconcilable class conflicts in Ghana and in Africa proved fatal. His enemies, who preserved their economic and military might, soon ganged up against him and overthrew him with the help of the CIA.

Lessons of Ghana

The African continent has seen many revolutionary-nationalist leaders like Nkrumah who consider themselves socialists but fail, in practice, to chart a socialist course that could effectively unify the continent and expel the imperialists and their local agents. The list includes Ben Bella in Algeria, Nasser in Egypt, Sekou Toure in Guinea, and Samora Machel in Mozambique.

It is undoubtedly true that the task of building a mass movement along genuinely revolutionary-socialist lines in underdeveloped countries like Ghana and Mozambique is extremely difficult. But history has shown that only a socialist perspective based on the revolutionary power of the workers and peasants is capable of achieving national liberation.

Nkrumahism, for all its merits, fails to offer a perspective for victory for the African workers and peasants.

The road forward for the African Revolution is being paved today by the working class in South Africa. The South African workers, organized in powerful independent trade unions, are combining their struggle for national-democratic demands ("one person, one vote") with clearly anti-capitalist demands.

Like other parts of the world, the African Revolution will find its definition in class terms. These are some of the criticisms I have of Kwame Toure's perspectives for revolution in Africa. ■

Our readers speak out

Atlanta

Dear editor,

On Nov. 17, I was privileged to be invited to a breakfast honoring Sergio Ramirez, vice president of Nicaragua. The breakfast was sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

SCLC invited a wide range of antiwar, solidarity, and civil rights organizations to send representatives. Approximately 100 people attended.

Rick Congress of the Atlanta Committee on Latin America, Nicaragua Network, spoke of solidarity work in Atlanta and introduced Peter French of Atlantans to Let Nicaragua Live. Peter reported on a fundraiser which netted \$5000 for medical aid to Nicaragua.

Also giving greetings were CALC, Concerned Clergy, and Martin Luther King III, the son of the slain civil rights leader. A delegation of "Children of War" was introduced, including a young woman from South Africa and a young woman from Nicaragua.

The Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of SCLC, praised Vice President Ramirez and the right of the Nicaraguan people to live in peace. Lowery had just returned from Nicaragua. Lowery urged an end to the United States-sponsored aggression.

At the end of the program, the Rev. Lowery asked us all to join

hands and sing "We Shall Overcome."

This was a significant meeting. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. began to link the civil rights movement with the movement against the war in Vietnam shortly before his assassination. That link was never fully realized.

I believe that this meeting was a continuation of that linkage. The solidarity and clear focus presented at the breakfast shows the tremendous potential for building a broad-based antiwar movement.

Robin Singer,
Atlanta Committee
on Latin America

Terrorist

Dear editor,

A Dec. 10 *New York Times* article states that Ramon Medina, who Eugene Hasenfus said organized contra efforts and provided liaison with the U.S. Embassy, is indeed Luis Posada Carriles, as charged by the Sandinistas.

Posada, a Cuban-American, was convicted by a Venezuelan court of having bombed a Cuban commercial plane in 1976, destroying it and killing 73 people. He later escaped from prison.

Posada was one of about 200 participants in the U.S.-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion who were given commissions in the

U.S. Army.

According to the *Times*, "As many as 100 of the [Bay of Pigs] invasion veterans, continued to work closely with the CIA on hundreds of attempts to destroy Mr. Castro's regime."

It is now clear that the CIA employed Posada, a fugitive wanted for terrorism, in order to provide arms to other terrorists—the contras.

You would think this most shocking revelation would be featured prominently in the mainstream media. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

I'm calling this matter to the attention of your readers in case it may have slipped by you.

Paul Siegel,
New York City

The truth

Dear editor,

The Dec. 5 issue of *The Militant*, published by the Socialist Workers Party, lists the U.S. parties that attended the 25th anniversary celebration of the Nicaraguan FSLN as follows: "From the United States they included the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, and Line of March."

I read the December 1986 issue of *Socialist Action* and learned that four U.S. parties attended the celebrations in Managua. The fourth party, which *The Militant* fails to mention, was Socialist Action.

The Militant by using the word "include" did not technically lie. It just didn't tell the truth. With only four U.S. parties in attendance, *The Militant* could have easily mentioned Socialist Action.

Is it possible to trust the information—let alone the analysis—of a paper that omits facts to serve its own political motives?

David Kirschner,
San Francisco

Trotsky

Dear editor,

I recently attended "Trotsky and Frida," a new play performed by A Traveling Jewish Theatre. [See theater review in the December 1986 issue of *Socialist Action*.]

While the actors gave a very fine performance, the play seemed rather silly and trivial. Furthermore, the program notes contained a glaring inaccuracy.

The program states: "Trotsky is appointed War Minister and

creates the Red Army. He leads the Bolsheviks to victory. Trotsky then initiates a policy of forced collectivization that leads to starvation and economic disaster."

The program lists several "primary sources" for its conclusions, including "The Prophet Outcast" by Isaac Deutscher. In this book, however, there are many references to Trotsky's *opposition* to the process of forced collectivization.

Deutscher writes that the Left Opposition, led by Trotsky, "wanted industrialization and collectivization to be carried out in the broad daylight of proletarian democracy, with the consent of the masses and free initiative from below; whereas Stalin relied on the force of the decree and coercion from above."

I notified A Traveling Jewish Theatre of this and other quotes from Deutscher that clarify Trotsky's policies in hopes the program notes will be corrected for future performances.

Ruth Harer,
San Francisco

San Francisco Forum:

"Theater's role in the fight for social justice"

Speakers from the S.F. Mime Troupe, the Eureka Theatre, and others.

Friday, Jan. 23, 8 p.m.

3435 Army, Rm. 308 S.F. (821-0458)

Sponsored by Socialist Action

French students force government to retreat

By N. BLACKWELL

Over 1 million French high-school and university students marched in the streets three times in three weeks against the capitalist government of Prime Minister Jacques Chirac.

On Dec. 8, Chirac was forced to withdraw proposed legislation that would have been a first step in undermining the system of free university education open to every high-school graduate in France.

This right to equal opportunity to a higher education was won after the close of World War II by a powerful French working class that had taken Paris from the Nazi occupiers before allied troops had reached their city.

Chirac's retreat was announced in the face of another mass march and general strike scheduled to take place two days later. French students, organized nationally with branches in most of the 70 large state-run universities, had appealed to the workers' mass organizations to join in the strike and demonstration.

Most major unions and working-class political organizations declared their support for the planned peaceful demonstration and general strike on Dec. 10. The expected mammoth protest, it is clear, forced Chirac's retreat.

The students' and the workers' organizations went ahead anyway with the planned demonstration to drive home the real cause of their victory and to protest the killing by police of a student, Malik Oussekiné.

Racist legislation

The police murder of Malik Oussekiné, who is of Algerian descent, dramatizes the concern of students and workers with Prime Minister Chirac's scheduled introduction of racist legislation attacking the citizenship rights of non-white immigrants.

Having forced Chirac to withdraw his attack against education, the Dec. 10 demonstration shifted its focus to other issues, particularly Chirac's proposed racist nationality law.

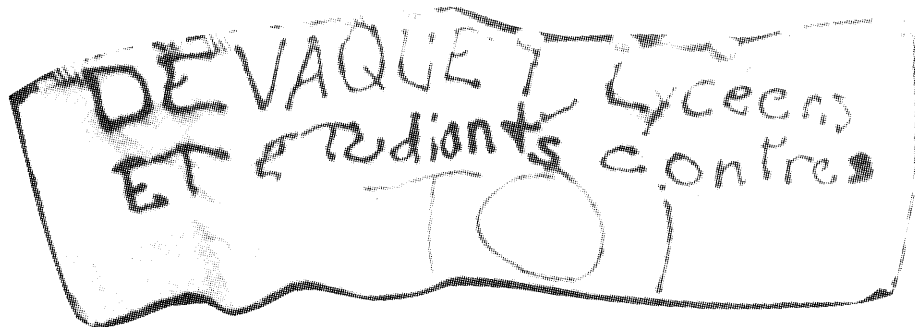
On the eve of this demonstration, Chirac again was forced to retreat. Canceling a special session of the National Assembly, he postponed action on his package of new reactionary laws until the next regular parliamentary session in April 1987.

On Dec. 10, 1 million people again turned out in the streets of Paris and other French cities. The youth came to pay homage to Malik and to demand an end to police brutality. "Never Again"—a reference to Malik's death—was a main theme of the march.

Tens of thousands of workers organized in the CGT, FEN, and CFDT trade-union contingents joined the students. One banner



Informations Ouvrières



(Banner at Dec. 4 demonstration: Devaquet [Minister of Education], high-school and university students are against you)

carried by the railworkers of the Southwest Paris rail yards stated, "Victory of the youth, Bravo! You have pointed the way forward!"

Another banner carried by the auto-workers at the large Renault-Billancourt plant put it another way: "The students have shown it is possible to make the government retreat!"

The government's proposal triggered the huge response among students who, in turn, precipitated a response by workers. The workers responded partly in solidarity with student demands and partly because of their own parallel concerns.

The memory of the 1968 student upsurge in solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution and with other mass struggles in

Czechoslovakia and Latin America also served as an example for students to attack the problems of today.

Capitalist austerity

While no one could have predicted the sudden eruption of so massive a protest movement, this is easily explained.

Cutbacks in social services, like in our own country, are being carried out by capitalist governments everywhere. In France, this is expressed in overcrowded class rooms and crumbling and otherwise degenerating schools. Moreover, growing unemployment—there as here—has resulted in one in three French youths, besides those still in school, unable to find jobs.

French workers, too, are feeling the

effects of the developing crisis of the world capitalist economy.

Over 2.5 million French workers are unemployed. The government recently announced that 20,000 steel jobs and 25,000 public-employee jobs would be eliminated in 1987. The government also announced a cut in 1987 of 9.5 billion Francs in healthcare allocations.

On Dec. 10, two days after Chirac was forced to withdraw his university "reform" program, the Council of Ministers adopted two measures that would (1) reintroduce night work for women, (2) reintroduce Sunday work for all workers, (3) eliminate overtime pay, and (4) eliminate the eight-hour day. The measures must now be ratified and signed by President François Mitterand.

The French government retreated in the face of the student upsurge, but it is still set on reversing the major gains made by the working class over the past 40 years in order to shore up the faltering private-profit system.

The tasks ahead

A recent statement by the Political Bureau of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International, summed up the current situation and the tasks before the labor and student movements. The declaration, dated Dec. 10, states:

"The youth showed the way to make the government retreat. Now, all of us united, must take the offensive against all aspects of the government's austerity drive. The proposed racist law on nationality must not only be adjourned. It must be withdrawn!"

"Although Chirac has paused in his attacks, it is clear he will try to introduce new measures against the workers with each passing day. He has already submitted two proposed laws that would reform the National Employment Code and would reintroduce night work for women.

"Chirac must be forced to withdraw these laws. And Mitterand, who proclaims his hostility to the policies of the Chirac government, must refuse to sign these decrees.

"We must put an end to this reactionary government. Through the unity of the youth and the entire working class, through the unity of the trade unions and working-class political parties, this will be possible."

Lesson of French events

The lesson for us is clear. The corporate cutbacks and takebacks in this country, together with the escalated U.S. intervention in Central America—will inevitably lead millions here, too, to rise up in defense of class interests.

Whatever issue may set off the mass fightback, successful actions such as those in France will encourage the movement for economic and social justice.

French students have again shown their power. But most important is the capacity of students to trigger a fighting response by their natural allies, the working class. In such an alliance, the workers' economic power is multiplied and becomes an irresistible political force.

In the course of this struggle, a new fighting leadership will emerge to lead the workers and their allies to victory.

A national coalition is being formed today to organize a massive protest on April 25 in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco against U.S. intervention in Central America, against apartheid, against the nuclear arms race, and for jobs and justice for all.

Students can play a big role in helping to build a massive youth component to these antiwar demonstrations. ■

