

Socialist ACTION



**Nicaraguan
Women
Speak.**
See page 10.

OCTOBER 1987 VOL. 5, No. 10 50 CENTS

U.S. gov't talks 'peace' but prepares for war



Members of VFW Post 5888 from Santa Cruz, Calif., honor Brian Willson at the Sept. 7 protest of over 7000 at the Concord Naval Weapons Station. Willson, a Vietnam vet, lost both his legs at a protest vigil after he was deliberately hit by a train carrying weapons to the Salvadoran military regime.

The American people are being carried further toward a bloody conflict in the Persian Gulf and Central America.

In the Persian Gulf, the Sept. 22 attack by a U.S. helicopter on an Iranian vessel is an outrageous instance of imperialist bullying. The bodies of three Iranian sailors have been recovered from the Gulf and two others are still missing.

The captured vessel, which U.S.

Editorial

government spokespersons claim was laying mines, was fitted with explosives and later arrogantly sunk by the U.S. Navy.

This event gives the lie to the U.S. pretense that its aims are to end the war in the region.

Even if the mine-laying charge is true—and there is ample reason for doubt—there is no justifying the actions of the United States as self-appointed world policeman—now also judge, jury, and executioner.

War on Nicaragua

In Central America, the U.S. government has intensified its war against the Nicaraguan workers and peasants while still claiming to stand for peace.

Since the Aug. 7 signing of a peace accord by the five Central American presidents, the contra war has escalated. A bill granting the contras \$3.5 million in "humanitarian" aid was recently approved with strong bipartisan support.

And now the Reagan administration has vowed that the Nicaraguan government must cry "uncle" and bend to every imperialist pressure before an end to contra funding can be considered. Reagan has asked for \$270 million in contra aid, the largest request to date.

Rough going for world cop

But the American ruling class, having displaced Britain and France in the role of world cop, is finding the going rough. Growing resistance by the semicolonial world is making the tasks of U.S. imperialism extremely difficult.

For the oppressed throughout the Middle East, the Iranian Revolution continues to be seen as an anti-imperialist symbol—despite the counterrevolutionary policies of the Khomeini regime.

U.S. imperialism cannot tolerate the overthrow of the Shahs and Somozas of the world. The American people, however, will not tolerate U.S. imperialism's wars in the Middle East and Central America.

U.S. Out of the Persian Gulf!

Hands off Iran!

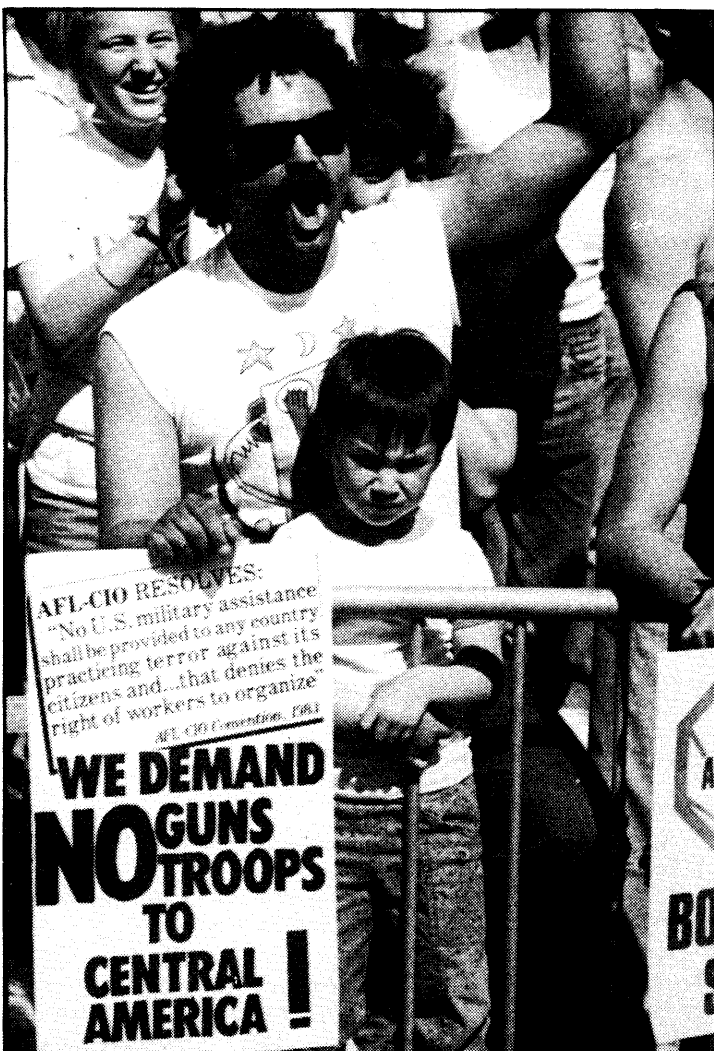
U.S. Out of Central America!

Hands off Nicaragua!

FORUM

AFL-CIO leaders debate Central America policy.

See pp. 7-10.



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

Once again—for the right to choose



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

A "parental-consent" bill has passed through the Assembly and Senate of the California legislature. After Gov. Deukmejian signs it, it will become state law. There is no doubt that the governor will sign it—he has supported this bill from the beginning.

What is "parental consent" and how will it affect teenagers and their families?

The bill says that no teenager under the age of 18 can get an abortion without the consent of at least one of her parents or guardian. If they do not sign consent, then the teenager must go to Juvenile Court and get a judge to grant her the right to an abortion.

This has nothing to do with being able to afford the cost of an abortion, because whether the young woman can pay or not, she must still get the consent of one of her parents or go through the court system.

Minn. ruling overturned

On Aug. 27, the U.S. Court of Appeals struck down a Minnesota ruling that required young women to notify both parents before getting an abortion. (The lower court had specified that it didn't make any difference whether the girl had a father at home or not; she was required to get his consent also.)

It was therefore a shock to see that despite the Minnesota Appeals Court having thrown out

the law as unconstitutional, the California Senate went ahead and passed its own version of this unjust restriction upon human rights.

It was both the "liberal" and "conservative" capitalist politicians in the California legislature who voted for this criminal law. When the capitalists do not see a "fightback," they demand that their hired guns in the legislature do their dirty work for them. And they do it. He who pays the piper, calls the tune.

But a fightback movement, which threatens to upset the political stability of the country—like the one that was developing in 1973 which led to the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion—can force the institutions of capitalist rule to bend to this mass pressure.

High rate of suffering

Teen pregnancies are at an epidemic level in this country. More than one half of U.S. teenagers are sexually active. Over 1 million teen women become pregnant each year (30,000 of them are under the age of 15). Forty percent of those teens have abortions to terminate their pregnancies, but half-a-million teenagers do not have abortions and choose to keep their children.

Teen mothers' babies have double the risk of dying in their first year because of poor prenatal care and low birth weight. Teen mothers have a high rate of suicide—in fact it is seven times higher than others their own age.

The children of teen mothers suffer more from learning disabilities and are more likely to be abused than other children. Three-quarters of teen mothers never complete their education because they do not have access to quality childcare services. This assures these teen mothers and their children a lifetime of poverty and ill-health.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute, a non-profit research center in New York City, did a study of



David Walters/Socialist Action

Socialist Action candidate at ACLU debate

Joseph Ryan (second from right), Socialist Action candidate for mayor of San Francisco, speaks with other mayoral candidates at ACLU debate Sept. 22. Ryan has appeared on local radio stations and is scheduled to write a guest column for the *S.F. Progress*, a widely read local newspaper. Ryan, however, has had to fight for his democratic rights. He is building support against exclusion from the League of Women Voters' debate Oct. 14, the only televised debate of the campaign.

teen pregnancy in 37 countries. According to their findings, the teen-pregnancy rate in the United States is the highest in the developed world.

The teen-pregnancy rate is twice as great as Canada's rate and seven times as great as the Netherland's rate even though American teenagers are no more



sexually active than teens in other countries. And while whites have nearly double the rate of British and French teens, Black teens in the United States have a higher rate of pregnancy than whites.

Teens denied information

Why do teenagers get pregnant? It's because they are denied access to birth-control information and services. That is the finding of a recent study by Planned Parenthood. Despite the fact that over 60 percent of parents want sex education in our public schools, only 10 percent of the schools have such education.

Large numbers of teenagers think they cannot get pregnant the first time they have sex, or that they cannot get pregnant if they "do it" standing up, or that "it just can't happen to me."

Many teens do not know about the diaphragm or the IUD. In fact, only one in three teenagers uses any contraceptives at all. Teenagers probably know more about the rings of Saturn than they do about birth control and their own bodies.

Would they use birth control if it was available? Yes! At Chicago's Du Sable High School, where nearly one-third of all the female students have become pregnant in recent years, a medical clinic was set up that dispenses free birth-control devi-

ces to students.

This has been very effective. In St. Paul, Minn., where the first clinical program was set up in 1973, the number of births to teens fell nearly 50 percent between 1977 and 1984.

The cost in lives

The cost of teen pregnancies is enormous; in Illinois it was approximately \$853 million in 1986. But the real cost is to the teenagers themselves.

If the "parental-consent" legislation is allowed to stand, it will mean the destruction of the lives of thousands of teenagers. Not only will they be unable to finish their schooling, but very likely they will resort once again to the back-alley abortionist.

In fact, one teenager I talked to recently told me that her girl friend's boy friend gave her an abortion by sticking a long wire into her uterus. This was just a casual conversation, and the young woman, who was just 15 years old, clearly didn't appreciate the deadly risk this entails.

Many more young women will die if this law is allowed to deny them access to a safe, legal abortion. Moreover, medical personnel who give teenagers abortions—according to this law—

can end up in jail along with the teenage mother who attempts to get an abortion by lying about her age.

We must answer back!

The rich in this country have built their wealth off the backs of the poor. They have never needed legalized abortion because they can bribe doctors or fly to other countries and get safe abortions for themselves and their daughters.

The rich have the finest education and the best of medical care. It is the poor, the working-class women, who will be dragged deeper into poverty by being forced to bear and support unwanted children—and their children's children.

Women must answer back. We must join together and fight the insane system that is ready to unleash a blood bath against women. We must once again get into the streets in the tens of thousands to defend our hard-won gains.

Like our foremothers who won the vote, or the right to organize unions in the sweat-shops, or public education for our children, we must rally again for ourselves and our children. Remember, the lives we save may be our own. ■

S.F. Abortion Rights Calendar

Monday, Oct. 5, 1987: Human "billboards" during morning and evening rush hours at commuter off-ramps in San Francisco and the East Bay will publicize support for abortion rights.

• 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.: A Rosie Jimenez Memorial Reception will be held in memory of the first woman to die as a result of the cut-off of public funds for abortion in Texas in 1977. There will be speakers, music, and food at the American Civil Liberties Union Conference Room, 1663 Mission Street, 4th floor, S.F. All Pro-Choice supporters are welcome.

• 8:00 p.m.: March from the reception to the State Building at Civic Center.

• 8:30 - 9:30 p.m.: Candlelight vigil "in memory of Rosie and all women of color and low income who are victims of racist health policies." All the above events are sponsored by The Northern California Pro-Choice Coalition. For more information call (415) 751-0300.

Wednesday, Oct. 7 and Nov. 11: Planning meetings to plan and build a public speak-out for abortion rights. Planning meetings will be held at 7 p.m. at the Department Store Employees Union at 1345 Mission St. in San Francisco.

Saturday, Nov. 21: Public Speak-out for Abortion Rights, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. at The Women's Building, 3543 - 18th St., San Francisco. Sponsors: The Northern California Pro-Choice Coalition and three chapters of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. For more information call (415) 641-0873 or in the East Bay 569-8847.



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Jackson campaign: Detour for struggles of workers and Blacks

By JOE RYAN

On Oct. 10, 1987, the Rev. Jesse Jackson will announce his candidacy for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. He is the "unofficial" leader in all Democratic Party polls. His emergence on the political scene is based on an excellent ability to win support from the oppressed and poor of America.

By holding out the promises of social justice, peace and jobs, help for farmers, and an end to racism, Jackson is appealing to a strong desire for social change among workers, oppressed minorities, women, and students.

However, to be an acceptable candidate for the Democratic Party, Jackson is already trying to appear as a moderate, center-of-the-road, "responsible" politician who can represent "everyone's" interests. [See August 1987 issue of *Socialist Action*.]

Jackson is already on record as being committed to win votes for whomever the Democratic Party nominee may turn out to be. He has also indicated he would be very happy to run as a vice-presidential candidate. His real goal, however, is to win a place for himself as a broker who can deliver the votes of the most exploited layers of society in exchange for a place for himself within the capitalist power structure.

When Jackson says, "We'll fight together as Democrats," he's indicating his loyalty...and his political limitations. For Jackson, the stability of the profit system and its political structure comes first!

But the profit system is entering a period of deep crisis. The employing class is increasingly forced to take back concessions granted in more prosperous days to an aroused and mobilized working class.

Any gains to be made by working people and the oppressed in the coming period will necessarily be at the expense of capitalist stability, and thus, wrenched away by methods of class struggle.

Those who place their hopes in Jackson finding a compromise between the interests of the exploiters and themselves are doomed to disappointment, disorientation, and demoralization.

Economic assault on Blacks

The social base of the Jackson campaign is the Black community. Blacks have been the hardest hit by cutbacks, unemployment, plant closings, and the lack of social services.

In the last six years, under the Reagan administration, the situation for Blacks has worsened. Blacks are currently faced with the same economic conditions they confronted in 1960. This economic and political backdrop is the main reason for Jackson's meteoric rise in the electoral arena.

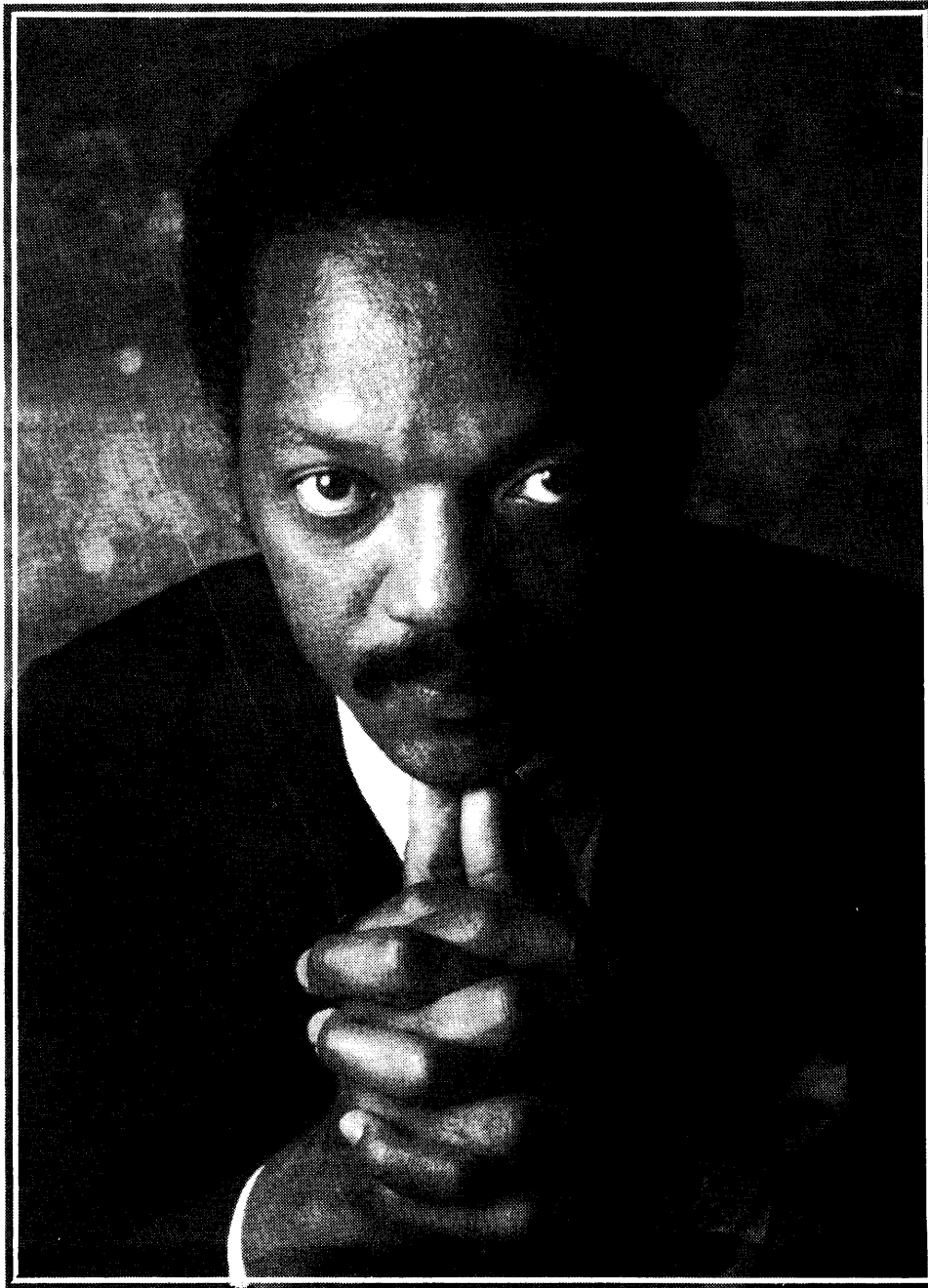
For Jackson to successfully steer this political ferment into the Democratic Party, he has to make this racist, anti-working class party *look good*. Pointing to the indisputably horrible record of the Reagan years, Jackson will use this frightening alternative as a whip to win votes for Democrats, who in reality share full responsibility by their support of Reagan's programs in Congress.

Worse still, Jackson will begin to make concessions on his still vague program for social justice. The victims of these "compromises" will be the people who can least afford them: the people who gave Jackson his head of steam, the Black community.

State of Black America

The 1987 edition of "The State of Black America," published by the National Urban League, Inc., gives a devastating account of the increase in poverty and unemployment in the Black community during the Reagan years.

The gap between Black and white income has widened; the per-capita income of



"... Jesse Jackson has to make this racist, anti-working class party look good."

Blacks has decreased; impoverished Black families are more numerous and poorer; and over 50 percent of Black children now live below the poverty line.

But a careful examination of the statistics, representing unbelievable misery and despair multiplied millions of times, are not very flattering for the Democrats either. During the years preceding the Reagan administration, when Democrat Jimmy Carter was president, the trend of deterioration of already bad social conditions for Blacks was well in progress.

In a well-researched contribution to the Urban League report, professor of economics David H. Swinton prefaces his statistical presentation with an evaluation of the years preceding Reagan.

Professor Swinton states: "At the start of the Reagan administration, the economic status of Blacks reflected a high level of economic problems and was still very unequal. Although modest progress had been made in reducing some of these problems since the civil rights revolution of the 1960s, *the pace of progress was slowing down* [my emphasis—J.R.] in the few years preceding the Reagan administration. Indeed, there already existed widespread dissatisfaction...at the slow rate of progress."

Based on figures from the Bureau of Census up to 1985, professor Swinton

shows that while conditions have worsened, not really much has fundamentally changed. During the five Reagan years the average per-capita income for Blacks was \$6319, which was 57.2 percent of the average income for whites.

In the late '70s Blacks earned 58.8 percent of the income that whites earned. This difference of 1.6 percent indicates that racial inequality in per-capita income has clearly increased during the Reagan administration.

In terms of family income, the disparity between Black and white income is even more illustrative.

In the five years preceding Reagan, the Black family earned 58.1 cents for every dollar white families earned. During the years 1980-1985 this gap widened to 56.7 cents. During the Reagan years the average Black family lost \$1349 in income each year when compared to the five preceding years.

Significantly, while the poverty rate for Blacks has remained high (31.3 percent), the white poverty rate has increased to 11.4 percent, which is higher than the rates for 1980 and 1970 (10.2 percent and 8.1 percent, respectively.)

But while it is undoubtedly true that poverty, unemployment, and racism have increased under Reagan, the norm throughout the years, plus or minus a

couple of percentage points, is that Blacks are twice as likely to be unemployed; will earn little more than half of what whites earn; and are three times more likely to live below the poverty line.

Reagan's service to capitalism is that he has buried the knife a little deeper, but not without the help of the Democrats.

The rich get richer

The Rev. Jackson, the Rainbow Coalition, and other reformers believe that what's needed is only a change of policy. But policies are not based on good or ill will. The policies of the capitalist class—as personified by both the Democrats and Republicans—are based on the sanctity of profit.

For example, the Urban League estimates that the total income denied to Blacks through unequal wages, unemployment (lost time), and lower incomes for Black women, amounts to over \$60 billion yearly. These unpaid wages go right into the coffers of the capitalist class.

Furthermore, the effect this unequal income distribution has on depressing wages and benefits for all workers is reflected by the net worth of Forbes's 400 richest, which increased 20 percent in one year compared to a modest 2.7 percent rise in the Gross National Product (GNP).

Far from being just a question of the policies of the capitalist class, the policies of racism, sexism, unemployment, and war are necessities of the capitalist class. Super-exploitation of Black, Latino, and women workers is profitable, and thus inherent to the system. Moreover, if Blacks and women are able to win back the \$60 billion in superprofits wrung out of them, the profit system would go into a deep crisis.

Independent mobilization

The only time real progress has been made is when the working class, Blacks, Latinos, and women mobilized independently of the Republican and Democratic parties. Historically, only through mass actions and independent organization have working people and other oppressed sectors made the capitalists pay a political price for their "profitability" drives.

That's how trade unions were built, civil rights gained, women's rights defended, and progressive social legislation passed.

Ironically, the decline in Black rights and living standards occurred over a 20-year span that saw a dramatic increase in Black elected officials (from 200 nationwide in 1965 to 6500 in 1986).

Unfortunately, the progressive act of conquering the franchise was coupled with a demobilization of the Black liberation movement. In the last analysis, this can be attributed to the role of the Democratic Party, which has the largest number of Black elected officials.

Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition want to tie the mass sentiment for social change among workers and the oppressed to a political party that represents the interests of their enemy—the capitalist class.

Such a strategy will only delay the historic march of working people and their allies for self-liberation. It will only suffocate their instinctual yearning for independent political action and buy time for the capitalists so that they can twist the knife in our backs even deeper. ■

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free pamphlet!**

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Local union leaders have overwhelmingly approved the United Auto Workers' new agreement with the Ford Motor Company. Owen F. Bieber, president of the U.A.W., said the agreement would serve as a pattern for a similar contract with the General Motors Corporation.

The new contract, which was ratified by Ford workers in a vote on Sept. 28, is being heralded as a great victory by top U.A.W. officials.

"In my 37 years at Ford," said U.A.W. Region 1A Director Ernest Lofton, "this is the best contract I have ever seen." But a close look at this proposed contract suggests a conclusion far from this.

The agreement's alleged attractiveness is hinged on so-called job-security guarantees. The union officialdom claims that the 104,000 Ford jobs are "locked in." But this "job guarantee" does not prevent job reduction through attrition or because of production declines.

In the case of such production cutbacks, Ford-financed supplementary unemployment benefits—along with state unemployment insurance—will keep incomes of laid-off workers as much as 90 percent of normal wages during the life of the three-year contract. But even this commitment has an escape clause for Ford.

The costs to the company, according to a summary of the contract issued by the union, is capped at \$500 million. It is presumed that if the costs due to production cutbacks exceed this amount, Ford would be free to lay off, *without benefits*, even protected workers.

The only positive side to the "job-security" provision is that it prohibits layoffs resulting from improved efficiency or a decision to buy more cars or components from outside sources. But as we shall see, this too is laced with negative consequences.

Wage and work-rule concessions

The "job-security plan," it is clear, has been gained at the expense of further union givebacks in the area of wages and working conditions. The contract provides for a 3-percent wage increase for the first year and an equivalent increase in the form of "lump sum" payments for each of the next two years.

This means that such payments are not counted toward base pay—upon which overtime, benefit payments, and future wage increases are calculated. This is a continuation, in this period of booming profits, of a trend justified by union bureaucrats when employers were moaning over reduced profits because of sharpened competition in the auto and other industries.

Similarly, the trend begun in harder times toward major work-rule concessions is deepened by the new agreement. It opens the door wider to reducing the number of job classifications and allows working in groups on an assembly line rather than singly, thereby reducing the number of skilled tradespersons required on the job.

It also permits skilled employees to work



Ford contract: Another milestone on the giveback trail

as part of teams. This also contributes to the tendency toward having lower-paid workers do the jobs of the higher paid—ultimately eliminating the premium paid for skilled work.

These job classification and allied changes are "not compulsory," but the contract provides for "joint union-management committees" at the local and national levels to "explore" such matters and make recommendations six months after the contract is signed. Clearly, the union negotiators have committed themselves to encourage adoption of this speed-up plan.

This will undoubtedly exert great pressure on U.A.W. members to accept these changes, which will increase the workplace and permit harassment of militants who resist.

Local unions, moreover, will be whipsawed into compliance with more intensive work rules by companies playing one local against another while negotiating local agreements. Acceptance of more intensive work rules by weaker locals, with the least conscious memberships, will have the effect of forcing the stronger locals into line.

The "one-at-a-time" tactic

The Ford agreement is even more of a setback for auto workers as a whole. The U.A.W. bureaucrats continue to follow their traditional "one-at-a-time" bargaining tactic. The Ford agreement, intended to be a pattern for one with General Motors, tends

to set a ceiling, but not a floor for a contract with the latter corporation.

General Motors workers will be at a distinct bargaining disadvantage, especially since this company has not yet carried out its South African divestment plan. The decision has already been made by GM to cut production costs by contracting out portions of its product.

GM has also declared its intention to replace entire product lines, like Cadillac, with comparable autos more cheaply made by other companies.

For this reason, it will be difficult for the U.A.W. to win similar "job security" concessions from GM. But the union's concessions to Ford will be equally difficult to take off the table in the course of "pattern bargaining" with GM.

The latter will demand the right to reduce the percentage of components it produces, now approximately 70 percent, toward Ford's 50 percent level. Thus a "job security" plan applied to GM could mean mass layoffs.

A strategy of capitulation

The U.A.W.'s retreat will inevitably continue—in line with labor's general retreat—not because of an adverse relation of forces but because of the capitulationist strategy of the entire top leadership of American unions. The tactic of negotiating one at a time is justified by the labor bureaucrats as a "clever" playing of one giant corporation's greed against the others'.

Unlike the union "leaders," the corporate leaders put their class interests above their competing interests in the market place. This is completely in accord with the greed principle. They lose more, in the long run, by permitting their competing corporate interests to override their class interests.

They express their class solidarity in many ways ranging from not infringing upon the markets of struck companies to providing virtually unlimited financial aid to struck competitors.

And in the last analysis, they gang up behind the repressive agencies of the government and state—which they control lock, stock, and barrel—to use the courts and the cops to make strikes ineffectual.

Even if there was something to be gained from the one-at-a-time tactic, any such advantages are dwarfed in comparison with the force exerted upon the bosses of an industry-wide strike.

Classes are opposed by nature

But the one-at-a-time tactic—which, incidentally, has been elevated to a principle by the labor bureaucracy—is only a derivative mistake. It flows from their strategy of "partnership" between classes that are by nature irreconcilably opposed.

On the most elementary level, wages and profits are inversely related: a rise in workers' income depresses profit and a decline in wages raises it. And this conflict is expressed on every plane of economic, social, and political activity.

The labor bureaucracy's class-collaborationist strategy means that workers' income is subordinated to a level of profit that will permit "their" bosses to stay in business. The bureaucracy's infamous "Buy American" slogan is the code-word for keeping American capitalism profitable by any means necessary.

This is what explains why, for example, the labor bureaucracy refuses to advance the historic response of the workers' movement to unemployment—the shorter workweek with no reduction in pay. Instead they bureaucratically limit the demands of the workers' organizations to "job security" proposals that provide no security.

A new strategy needed

So long as the current partnership between the labor bureaucracy and the employing class is allowed to prevail, workers are doomed to suffer more and deeper cuts in living standards. A new strategic outlook is urgently needed. An outlook that recognizes the diametrically opposed interests of labor and capital and which puts the interests of working people and their natural allies first.

That means, to illustrate, an ever-shorter workweek marching in step with ever-increasing levels of productivity. Workers should benefit from the increased productivity of the machines they create—not be sacrificed on the altar of profits.

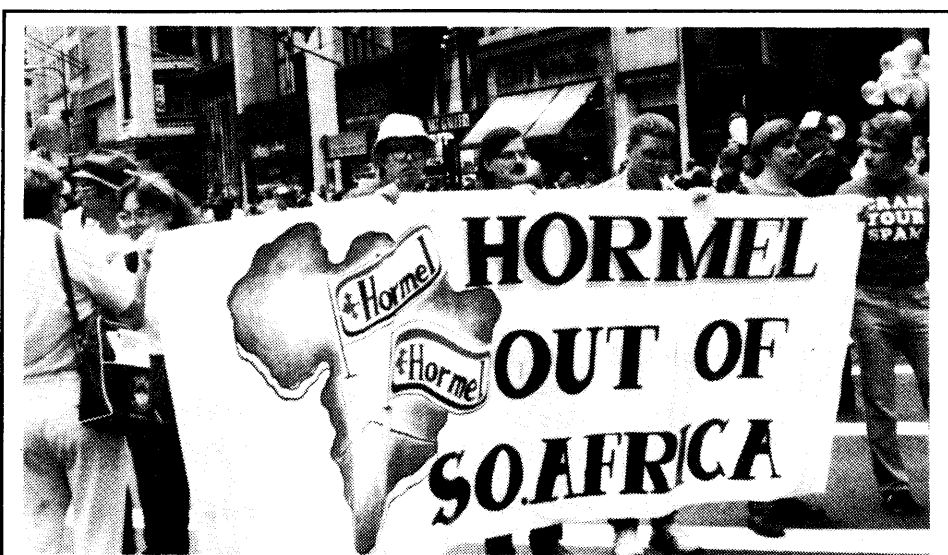
If, subsequently, capitalists try to close down plants because profits are too low or non-existent, such bankrupt enterprises must be nationalized and put under workers' control.

Of course, to realize such a perspective requires the mobilization of the entire work force and its natural allies for an economic, social, and political struggle independent of and in opposition to the class enemy. The needs of the class as a whole, along with those of every social layer victimized by the system, must be emblazoned on labor's banner. This is the only road to victory.

Such a class-struggle consciousness will inevitably sweep through the workers' movement. Every setback experienced prepares the ground for a coming leap in consciousness.

But this is not to say that we can sit around and wait for the coming of that great day.

We need to educate, organize, and prepare class-conscious workers for the coming struggle, the outcome of which will determine the future of the human race. ■



Despite ominous skies and a brief downpour, over 150,000 union members, families, friends, and supporters marched in New York City's Labor Day Parade.

The large turnout belied the Central Labor Council's cancellation of last year's parade because of a supposed "lack of interest." The parade was re-established as an annual event in 1981 in response to the government's firing of the Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO).

By GREG GUCKENBURG

JAY, Maine—On Sept. 7—Labor Day—over 5000 workers marched in Waterville, Maine, to support paperworkers on strike here against the International Paper Co.

One month earlier, on Aug. 1, over 8000 workers mobilized in Jay, Maine, to support the fighting paperworkers—the largest labor demonstration in Maine's history.

The 1200 members of Local 14, United Paperworkers International Union, and Local 246, International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers, have been on strike against union-busting demands for over four months.

The company has been herding scabs through picket lines that have been limited by court injunctions. It has also spent millions of dollars on TV and radio ads and sent letters to the homes of workers throughout the state.

The Sept. 7 Labor Day demonstration was spirited and angry. A sea of blue union shirts marched through the streets of Waterville chanting, "Union In, Scabs Out!" One of the more popular T-shirts sold at the rally was "I'll work Christmas when pigs fly," a reference to the company demand to cancel the traditional Christmas holiday shutdown of the plant.

Other company takebacks include:

- An end to double-time pay for Sunday work. Because paper mills run 24 hours a

Striking paperworkers maintain firm stance

day, seven days a week, the company says Sunday is just a regular workday. The union says that as long as they are forced to work on Sundays they will continue to be paid double-time.

- The company is demanding more flexible work rules. They want to be allowed to cross-trade (shift workers around within the plant). The union is justifiably opposed on the grounds of health and safety.

- International Paper has hired scabs and insists that they will stay regardless of the outcome of negotiations. The union says it will not go back until all their members return to work. When a paperworkers' strike in Rumford, Maine, was defeated last year, 350 scabs were left in the plant to displace union members who went on strike.

Union builds solidarity

The Aug. 1 and Sept. 7 marches and rallies fit in with the strategy that the local union leadership has pursued throughout the strike. From the beginning, Local 14

and Local 246 have organized a public solidarity campaign to overcome the financial advantage of International Paper and, most importantly, to involve other union locals in strike-support activities.

The striking union locals hold weekly Wednesday night rallies with attendance averaging over 1000. Four months into this bitter fight, the union members' fighting spirit has not diminished.

The Wednesday rallies usually begin and end with labor songs by the IP Picketers, a group made up of striking workers. Speakers and representatives from other unions show up, express their support, and receive hearty applause for the encouragement they give to the paperworkers.

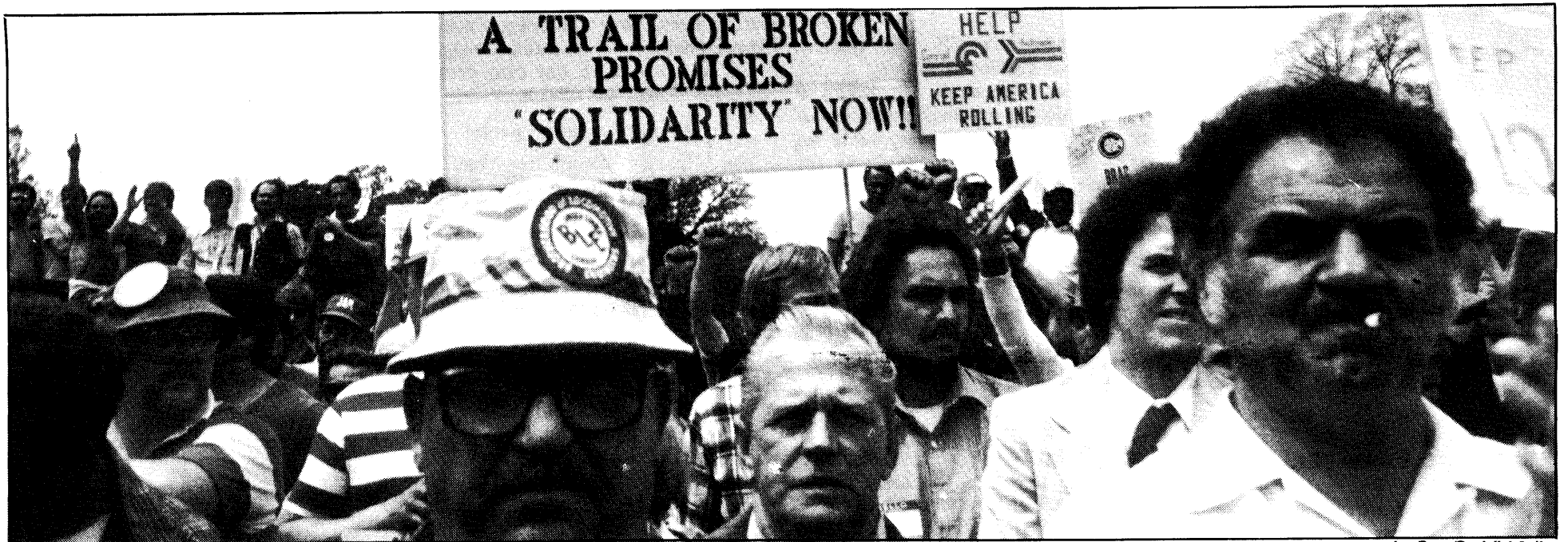
Officers and members from the striking locals have been criss-crossing the country throughout the strike. They keep other locals aware of the issues in the fight and are building solidarity with other paperworker locals on strike or lockout around the country. These include paperworkers in Depere, Wis.; Mobile, Ala.; and Lock Haven, Pa.; and other International

Paper Co. plants that have contract negotiations coming up.

Because the union locals at these plants have agreed to coordinate their bargaining, the IP strikers recognize the importance of keeping in touch. One of the central goals of the strikers is to establish an industry-wide contract—a conquest that the union gave up during the 1960s.

They correctly recognize how much stronger they would be if their struggle against International Paper and other paper mills was industry-wide instead of one plant at a time. The paper mills are the largest industry in Maine, and the 15,000 paperworkers are the largest private-sector union membership in the state.

The IP paperworkers are waging a courageous and militant struggle against company takebacks. In spite of a company-inspired publicity campaign to demoralize them, and the best strike-breaking efforts of the police and courts, the members of Locals 14 and 246 are adding weapons and lessons to labor's arsenal. They deserve and need the support of all working people. ■



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

Conference charts course to defend railroad unions

By J.D. CRAWFORD

Defeating the U.S. rail industry's drive to extract unheard of concessions from rail labor and deunionize huge sectors of track through "shortlining" was the theme of the Upper Midwest Rail Union Solidarity Conference held on Sept. 11-12 in Minneapolis, Minn. In attendance were 100 rail unionists and their spouses from nine states and Canada.

The conference was organized by the Intercraft Association of Minnesota (ICAM), a coalition of rail unionists on various roads in this region. ICAM's purpose is to aid the dozen craft unions in the rail industry find ways to demonstrate solidarity in action in the face of what is shaping up as an historic confrontation between rail management and rail labor in the upcoming 1988 contract year.

Guilford strike recalled

The opening session of the conference focused on the great rail strike of 1877, which set the stage for organization of railworkers on a massive scale.

A high point of the conference was a report by George Lawson, Maine state legislative director of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way (BMWE), and Laverne Wagner, Minnesota legislative director of BMWE. They gave eyewitness reports on last year's strike against Northeast railroads

owned by Guilford Transportation Industries, which was seen by all the major carriers as a dry run for 1988.

Guilford selected the BMWE, which they saw as the weakest union on their property, to be busted. Guilford's plan was to force the BMWE into a strike and force the other crafts to cross their picket lines. Their goal was thwarted when the other crafts defied threats and intimidation and honored the strike. When the BMWE struck Conrail for illegally aiding Guilford, the strike was brought to a close by government intervention.

The main strategy of the rail carriers is to break down the decades-long tradition of solidarity in rail by pitting the craft unions against each other. They want to duplicate what has happened in the airline industry, whose unions lacked this tradition of solidarity on the picket line.

For the last 60 years, rail strikes have been infrequent and normally last no more than a day or so with no serious attempt on the part of the carriers to try to operate trains, run in scabs, or try to force non-striking crafts to cross the lines.

Speakers at the conference emphasized that those days are over. The Guilford strike showed that future strikes will require the maximum solidarity of all crafts to be successful.

Another weapon in the carriers' arsenal that received attention at the conference is

"shortlining." With the full cooperation of the Interstate Commerce Commission, major rail carriers are spinning off thousands of miles of track to so-called independent buyers who then cancel all labor contracts.

Carriers' ploys exposed

Through these paper sales, the carriers are assembling a transcontinental network of non-union railroads to be used in the event of a rail strike. Today 30 percent of all railworkers are employed by shortlines, the great majority of which are non-union.

The carriers have also been preparing for the 1988 national contracts by attempting to assemble a pool of unemployed railworkers to be used as scabs. A firm called "Rail Finders" has been traveling around the country quietly running ads and taking applications.

Rail Finders claims to represent railroads who expect to experience large numbers of retirements in the next two years, but their real function, which they even admit to when pressed, is to provide "replacement workers to carriers involved in labor disputes." Rail Finders was the primary supplier of scabs for the Guilford strike.

The conference produced some immediate results when returning conference attendees found Rail Finders ads in papers in Duluth and Eveleth, Minn., and Burlington, Iowa.

They immediately set up intercraft

committees which took rooms next to Rail Finders in the motels being used. In a non-confrontational way they talked to and distributed material to all applicants explaining who Rail Finders was and what their real purpose was.

In Duluth almost all applicants were turned away, and after the intercraft committee held a news conference explaining the nature of Rail Finders, the Holiday Inn asked Rail Finders to leave.

The next day in Eveleth, when Rail Finders arrived to find another intercraft committee operation waiting for them, they left without attempting to set up. The following week in Burlington, only one applicant went in and talked to Rail Finders after learning who and what they were.

Organizing solidarity

The conference also responded enthusiastically to speakers who pointed out that this country cannot function without railroads and who said that if the present companies cannot effectively do this while providing railworkers with a decent wage and safe working conditions, then the time has come for the railroads to be nationalized and turned into a public utility.

The conference ended with a call for the formation of intercraft groups to begin immediately organizing to counteract the carriers' divide-and-conquer strategy.

Rail unionists constitute the most powerful section of organized labor in any industry in this country. Furthermore we have powerful allies in the rest of the labor movement and potential allies among farmers and the public at large. This conference was an important first step in organizing the kind of solidarity that can win in 1988. ■

Cinn. Rainbow candidate has no answers for jobs loss, pollution

By MARGARET KELLY

CINCINNATI—The November city-council elections here are being used as a yardstick to measure how much of a comeback the "progressive" candidates can make after a humiliating setback two years ago.

Participating in the campaign are not only the Democratic and Republican parties but also the Charter Committee, which is described as the "independent" or "good government" party because it was founded for the purpose of fighting local boss politics in the 1920s.

The Charter and the Democratic parties have been the ruling coalition in the city council for the last 14 years. This came to an end in the last election. The Charter Committee ran three candidates and only one was elected. The two who lost, both women—Bobbie Sterne and Marion Spencer—were the most outspoken on progressive social issues.

The local Democratic Party is also having its share of problems. Out of the four Democrats elected to City Council, two have formed a very conservative coalition with three Republicans. This bloc is referred to as the new ruling coalition and has replaced the old Charter-Democratic coalition in city government.

The Sara Gardner campaign

There is much talk about the need to elect a more representative council. Sara Gardner, a candidate for city council, says she is running to fill that gap. "I run for council because I believe that Black people,

women, labor, the disenfranchised, and progressives are woefully under-represented on the current council."

Gardner was the president of her United Auto Workers local union for eight years—the only female, white or Black, to ever hold this position. She was also an organizer for the public-employees division of the Ohio Teamsters, which made her the first and only Black female union organizer in the state of Ohio.

Last year, Gardner was on the platform with Eleanor Smeal, the past national president of NOW, defending abortion rights. She was also a founding member of the local Coalition Against Apartheid.

Gardner states, "The harsh fact is that we live and work in a country made more hostile by economic lack where Black is pitted against white, men against women, and all economic and social programs are pitted against the military."

Gardner, who quotes Nelson Mandela on the need for struggle and sacrifice, and who refers to her labor credentials, has given many here in Cincinnati hope for change. The University of Cincinnati College Democrats have posted Gardner campaign material around the campus describing her as a "real" Democrat—meaning to them one who relates to the problems of the underdog.

This is where the problem lies. Gardner is a Rainbow Democrat running on the Charter Committee slate. The Rainbow Democrats do not run local candidates in their own name. They perpetuate an illusion that the Democratic Party (or occasional "third-ticket" candidates allied to

the Democratic Party) can genuinely change society locally and nationally.

Emergency jobs program needed

Some 4000 GM workers have just lost their jobs in Cincinnati, and 3000 more in the near future will lose their jobs in Hamilton, Ohio, just north of the city. What we need in Cincinnati is an emergency jobs program that would put all the unemployed to work at union scale.

We have a uranium processing plant in Cincinnati that needs to be immediately shut down because no one seems to be able to stop the uranium contamination of the air, ground, and water around the plant.

The anti-abortion forces are quite vocal and active in Cincinnati. The Planned Parenthood offices have been fire-bombed and the so-called "Right to Lifers" have forced their way into a women's center and had to be taken out by the police. This cannot be allowed to continue.

The crisis of child care, toxic waste, skyrocketing cost of education, inadequate health care, the plight of the homeless, are all tragic problems in Cincinnati which Gardner will not be able to do much about.

The Democratic Party and Charter Committee will not force a severe tax on big business to fund the social programs that we need. They will not get massive federal monies out of the military budget in order to open more day-care centers, recreation centers, and schools.

We need a labor party!

The Charter Committee and the Democratic Party—including the Rainbow



Sara Gardner

wing—are status-quo parties. Their radical talk only serves the purpose of channeling disillusioned voters back into the Democratic or Charter fold.

In Cincinnati we need a new kind of party that would mobilize people to demand a fair redistribution of the wealth of our society, a clean environment, and jobs for all. This would invigorate the so-called apathetic citizen who does not vote.

We need a labor party made up of rank-and-file workers, students, environmentalists, antiwar activists, and other progressive people—completely self-financed and independent of the status-quo parties. ■

Insurance firms reap harvest from new law

By HAYDEN PERRY

Insurance companies have joined lawyers, doctors, and business interests to further erode California consumers' right to compensation for personal injury.

Under a new law, rammed through the legislature at the 11th hour, customers may no longer sue for damages if they use a product that is known to be unsafe.

Besides tobacco and alcohol interests, manufacturers of such products as sugar and high cholesterol butter can destroy their customers' health with impunity. This measure is so broad even autos may be considered dangerous products, freeing the industry from suits for defects.

To win punitive damages, a consumer will now have to prove with "clear and convincing evidence" that the plaintiff's conduct was "despicable" and intentional. Not many cases will meet these stringent criteria.

This law was passed in the final hours of the California legislature's 1987 session through a series of back-room deals that offered something to every interested party—except the consumers. They were left entirely outside, desperately trying to find liability insurance at a price they could afford.

Liability has been unaffordable for the last decade, as insurance companies have held up the public to force changes in the liability laws. In 1986, voters passed an initiative measure that made it harder to collect damages. They were promised lower insurance rates. Instead, insurance rates went up, and so did the industry's profits.

Instead of smoky back rooms, a Chinese restaurant was the venue of last-minute wheeling and dealing. Legislators and lobbyists scrawled proposals on cocktail napkins and the back of business cards. Speaker of the Assembly Willie Brown scurried among the tables collecting memos, carrying them to unseen parties in an upstairs room.

The next day, Brown declared a deal had been worked out. Among its clauses was an agreement that no one would launch an initiative campaign on this subject for five years.

The bill was put on a special fast track through the legislature. This meant changing a rule that may have prohibited such deals being made and convening a

hastily called "public" hearing at which no member of the public spoke. With the way thus greased, the bill slid through the Assembly by a vote of 60-10, and the Senate by 24-1.

Some legislators said they were "ashamed" by the unseemly haste with which the bill was rammed through. But the lopsided vote indicated what power the insurance lobby can wield. Politicians professing to be "friends of labor" or friends of the consumer were practically non-existent on this occasion.

This insurance ripoff in California must arouse the public in every other state in the nation. It will be repeated wherever the

insurance companies can get away with it. Only mass action by labor, consumer groups, and workers in general can mobilize the forces to stop the insurance industry's offensive. ■

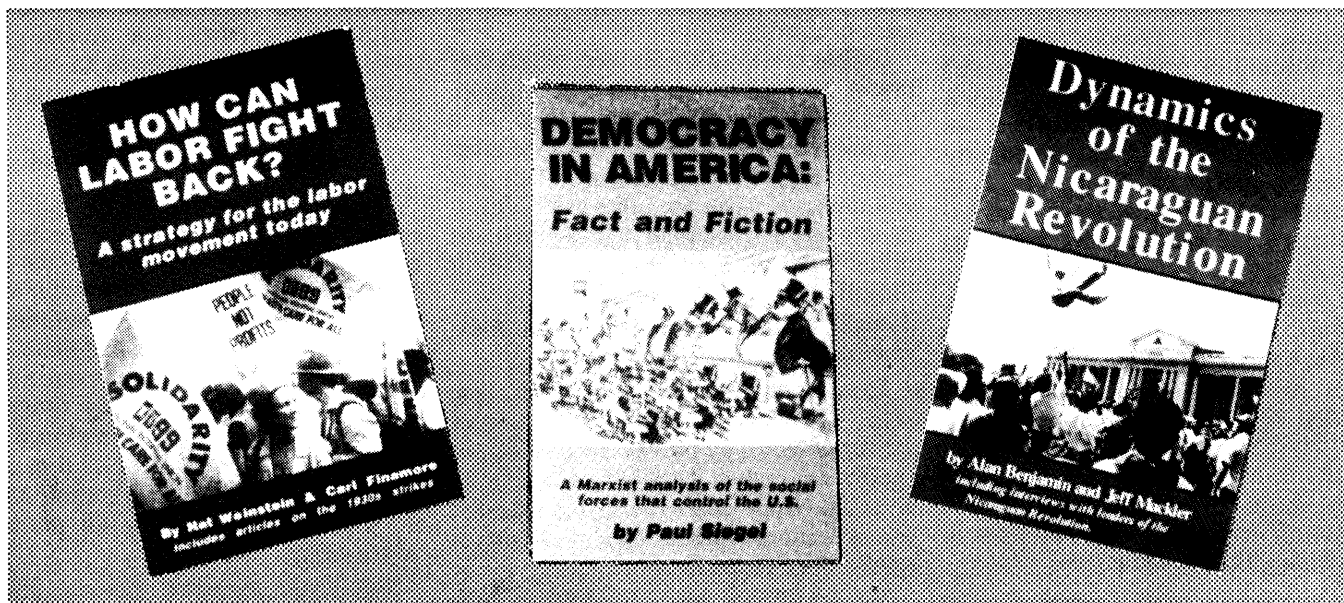
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AFL-CIO leaders debate Central American policy

This month's FORUM section features articles on the dispute inside the labor movement over U.S. policy in Central America.

This issue was hotly debated at the 1985 national AFL-CIO convention and may reappear at this year's convention on Oct. 26-30. President Reagan's \$270-million contra aid request and the current flurry of peace negotiations in Central America are all coming to a head in the next several weeks.

The views presented here reflect real debates going on inside the anti-intervention movement and within the ranks of labor. What position should the labor movement take in relation to the Arias and Reagan peace plans? What does it mean to support a "political solution" in Central America?

By offering a variety of viewpoints, we hope to stimulate further debate and discussion of these important issues.

By CARL FINAMORE

Another AFL-CIO national convention is just around the corner. Eight hundred delegates will meet in Miami, Fla., on Oct. 26-30. Most observers predict a rather dull convention without much controversy.

But it may not be possible to get through the convention so easily. The 13-million-member union federation still remains deeply divided over U.S. government policy in Central America.

The AFL-CIO leadership is already circulating a draft pre-convention resolution on Central America which one anti-intervention union source described as "atrocious."

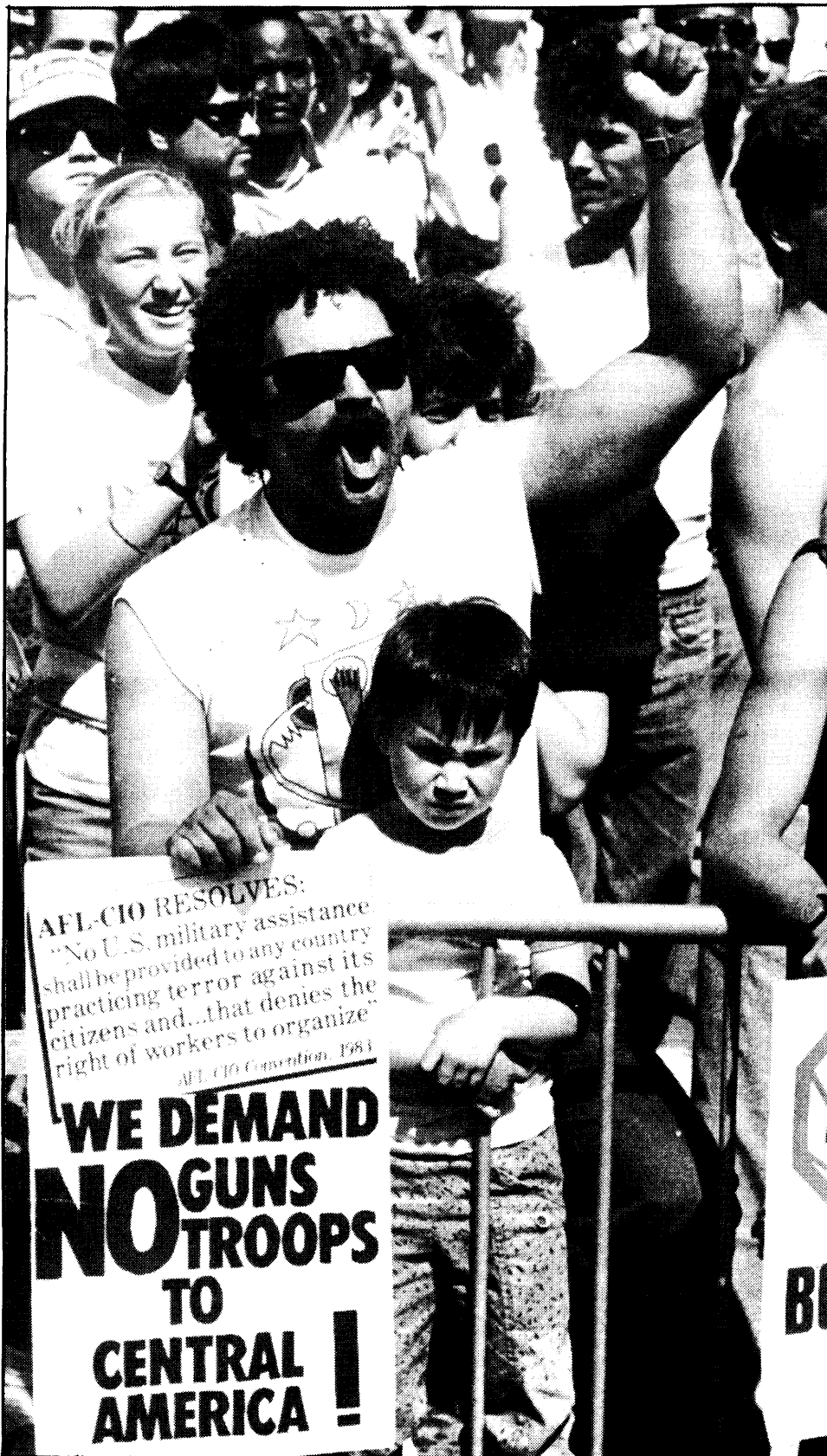
Apparently, the draft tries to identify with current peace negotiations in order to cleverly disguise the AFL-CIO leadership's support to the U.S. government's Cold War policies in Central America. It does this by supporting both the Arias peace plan and major planks of the so-called Reagan peace plan.

These two plans differ, however, on key issues. While neither peace plan prohibits continued U.S. military aid to El Salvador's President Jose Napoleon Duarte, they diverge substantially on the question of contra funding. The Arias plan calls for an end to contra aid by Nov. 7. The Reagan plan, on the other hand, places such unacceptable demands on the Nicaraguan government that it has been almost universally denounced as a veiled attempt to secure further contra funding.

The only aspects of the Arias peace proposal which interest the AFL-CIO Cold Warriors are those which insist that the Nicaraguan government give free rein to opponents of the revolution—all in the name of "democratizing" Nicaragua.

The AFL-CIO officialdom conveniently ignores other parts of the Arias plan which require a cutoff of contra aid.

This alleged concern for a negotiated settlement in Central America echoes that of President Reagan, who welcomed peace negotiations while at the same time asking



Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

Congress for \$270 million in military aid to the contras—the largest request to date.

The top AFL-CIO leadership, like the U.S. government, will only be satisfied with a "political solution" that is able to force more concessions from the Nicaraguan government than the contras have been able to win on the battlefield.

Still, the difference between the two plans on contra funding lays the basis for a political confrontation which may filter into the AFL-CIO convention itself.

Fears of open debate

It is very possible, however, that the labor federation's position on peace negotiations and contra funding may be resolved behind closed doors before hitting

the convention floor. This is standard practice for the heavily bureaucratized AFL-CIO.

The AFL-CIO bureaucrats don't want a replay of what happened two years ago.

An unprecedented foreign policy debate occurred at the 1985 AFL-CIO convention. The media gave it prominent play. Anti-intervention speeches by then Screen Actors Guild President Ed Asner and others were widely circulated. Never before had the foreign policy positions of the AFL-CIO been so openly challenged.

Although the debate reflected growing opposition to the union federation's overall reactionary views, the discussion centered on policy in Central America. The 1985 resolution on Central America supported a

political rather than a military solution to conflicts in the region.

On one level, the adopted formulation in support of peace negotiations represented a powerful rejection of an explicitly pro-contra stance. Nonetheless, the AFL-CIO resolution was fatally flawed.

Supporting a negotiated settlement in Central America is not the same as supporting self-determination for the peoples in the region. The demand of non-intervention in Central America—or "Hands Off Nicaragua"—is based on respect for the principle of self-determination—irrespective of the political course the Nicaraguan people may choose to follow.

Neither the United States nor any other country has the right to impose a particular form of government or a particular set of political tasks on the Nicaraguan people.

By conceding that the U.S. government should be seeking a negotiated settlement, anti-intervention forces can be easily caught off guard—and ultimately demobilized—by shrewd imperialist "peace" gestures.

For example, dissident union leaders who oppose U.S. intervention in Central America have been partially disarmed by the reactionary AFL-CIO leadership's decision to embrace their central demand of supporting the peace-negotiations process. This could have been avoided had the opposition taken a clear stand for self-determination and non-intervention.

AFL-CIO duplicity

But even before it recently adopted a negotiations stance, the top labor bureaucrats have often tried to defuse the opposition which surfaced at the 1985 convention.

The AFL-CIO leadership has concealed its support to the contras through its official position of "no position" when it comes to congressional funding for the mercenaries. Support for repressive regimes in Central America is explained as an attempt to strengthen the "pro-democratic" elements against the right wing.

But despite these ploys, the debate at the last convention did not end the discussion; it only brought it out into the open. The differences dramatically surfaced again 18 months after the convention.

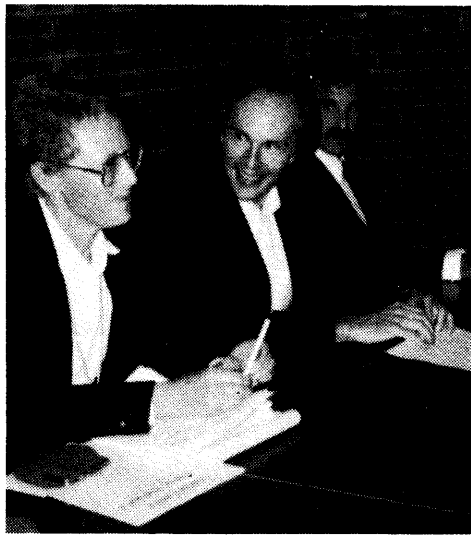
Nineteen international union presidents, representing the majority of organized labor, sponsored successful anti-intervention and anti-apartheid demonstrations on April 25, 1987.

This produced a barrage of red-baiting attacks by several national leaders of the AFL-CIO such as American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker. Lane Kirkland, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, sent out a letter warning all affiliates against endorsing the demonstrations.

But the protest actions in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco went ahead as planned. Not one national union president withdrew support. Stanley Hill, the head of the largest union in New York City, defiantly answered the red-baiting attacks by publishing a *New York Times* ad reaffirming support for the April 25 actions.

Several days later, the same newspaper

(continued on page 9)



From left: Gretchen Mackler, Dave Jessup, and Daniel Cantor

BY CAROLE SELIGMAN

OAKLAND, Calif.—An unusual symposium on the role of U.S. labor in Latin America took place here on Sept. 19. The meeting, which was hosted by the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), was attended by 125 union and anti-intervention activists.

The two featured speakers were David Jessup, staff organizer of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), and Daniel Cantor, national staff member of the National Labor Committee for Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. The third speaker was Gretchen Mackler, a founder of CLUW and a steering committee member of the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice.

The national AFL-CIO operates in Central America through AIFLD, which receives over 80 percent of its funding from the U.S. government and generally mirrors State Department and CIA objectives. The

Opposing views on C. America aired at CLUW symposium

National Labor Committee, on the other hand, is composed of top officers from 26 unions who oppose U.S. intervention in Central America.

Cantor was the first speaker. He criticized the AFL-CIO leadership for actively supporting U.S. foreign policy at the expense of and in opposition to the unions most representative of the workers there. His strongest statements were against the contras, who he called "the blood suckers and vampires of Central America."

Jessup's speech was a carefully crafted attempt to prettify AIFLD's role in Central America and paint it as one of labor solidarity with "independent and democratic" unions. He criticized those unions not aligned with the AFL-CIO as "communist fronts" and tried to portray them as illegitimate.

Jessup described as "McCarthyite slanders" the charge that AIFLD acts as a front organization for the CIA. But during the question period many anti-intervention unionists came prepared with the facts, quotes, and press clippings to prove this charge.

Mackler reviewed CLUW's long-standing opposition to contra funding and U.S. intervention in Central America and urged that the money allocated for war spending be directed toward meeting human needs in this country.

We are reprinting below excerpts from the speeches of these three speakers. We've included lengthy quotes from Dave Jessup to familiarize our readers with the lies and distortions propagated by AIFLD. ■

Daniel Cantor:

The following are excerpts of Daniel Cantor's speech to the CLUW meeting.

We have learned a great deal over the last 15 years about some of the less savory aspects of U.S. foreign policy. Now let's look at the labor movement and foreign policy. Listen to AFL President George Meany after he heard the news of the 1954 military takeover in Guatemala.

"The American Federation of Labor," Meany said, "rejoices in the downfall of the communist-controlled regime in Guatemala and in the refusal of the army to serve any longer a government that has betrayed the democratic aspirations of the people and has transformed the country into a beachhead of Soviet Russia in the Western hemisphere."

What a sad day for American labor. President Meany suffered from tunnel vision, his view obscured by images of the communist threat. The Arbenz government was not a threat to Guatemala. It was a

threat to the United Fruit Company. Meany equated United Fruit with the United States, a connection that most trade unionists and most citizens would not be comfortable with.

Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer of the Auto Workers union, UAW-CIO, also noted the events in Guatemala. He said that we have been supporting the wrong people. The State Department and the United Fruit Company manipulated the politics of that country. They organized revolutions against the best interests of the people. They opposed land reform. They opposed any special progress for the people of Guatemala.

George Meany saw the upheaval in Guatemala in 1954 and saw communists. Emil Mazey looked and saw poverty and exploitation and anger. Two competing views of the world, two views that are still competing inside the American labor movement.

This brings us in a roundabout and necessary way to the question before us. What should U.S. labor be doing and saying about Central America? What should



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

labor's foreign policy be?

The AFL-CIO spends about half of its \$80-million annual budget on foreign projects. Forty million dollars is a lot of money, and the way that it is spent can have a terrific impact—especially in poor countries where unions lack financial resources.

The Department of International Affairs (DIA) of the AFL-CIO and the four regional institutes that cover the world are powerful actors in the world labor movement. But they are not representative of the membership or the leadership of the affiliated bodies.

The DIA and the four institutes are practically separate empires inside the federation. Their money is federal money. The presidents of the affiliate unions sit on their boards and, in theory, control them. But the reality is quite different. National union presidents have more than enough to worry about on the domestic scene. And the foreign desk of the AFL-CIO is left to the experts at the DIA and the institutes.

Their books, their records have been largely secret over the years. Just four weeks ago, for instance, they published their budget for the first time.

Let me suggest, in an echo of what Emil Mazey said 30 years ago, that we need a new foreign policy for labor. One that puts the interest of common citizens ahead of the State Department. One that allows workers in other countries to gain the self-determination that we demand for ourselves.

I say we have to change this foreign policy of ours. We have to stop measuring our foreign policy as to whether it is good for American business, which has investments in South America and elsewhere in the world. ■

David Jessup:

The following are excerpts from David Jessup's speech to the CLUW meeting.

On the issue of the contras, the AFL-CIO has not taken a position either for or against contra aid. That is exactly what the resolution stated at the 1985 convention. Why is that? As I said in my opening remarks, our major responsibility, the reason we are in business, is to help the struggle of the democratic trade unionists in Nicaragua.

We make our policy in response to and in consultation with the unionists in the country that we are trying to help. In the current case, they have made it very clear what they would like us to do.

What they would like us to do is to cut off aid to the contras *simultaneously* with a cut-off of Soviet and Cuban aid to the Nicaraguan Sandinistas because it is not U.S. bullets that are killing people in Nicaragua.

If you want an end to the war you have to cut off support from both sides. The democratic Nicaraguan unionists have also asked us to help pressure the Sandinista government to go back to the promises that they made when the revolution first took place.

They ask us to pressure the Nicaraguan government to have dialogue with the opposition. If they did that this war would be over and would have been over a long time ago.

The peace proposal which has been signed by five Central American presidents is a very important step forward. Why is the accord so important?

For the first time, the peace accord has

SECRET GOVERNMENT SECRET WAR

Hear: Daniel Sheehan, chief counsel, Christic Institute
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David Linder, father of Ben Linder
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Two years ago, Ken Blaylock, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, was the first person to speak on the floor of the AFL-CIO's national convention in opposition to U.S. aid for the Nicaraguan contras.

In the debate that followed, the AFL-CIO passed a resolution on a compromise measure calling for a diplomatic, "political solution" to the Central American crisis. The resolution, however, did not take an explicit stand on the Nicaraguan contras.

Blaylock is president of one of the unions that sponsored last April's Washington, D.C., rally for Peace, Jobs and Justice.

On Aug. 29, 1987, Blaylock spoke on the subject of Central America at a meeting in San Francisco sponsored by CISTUR, the Committee for International Support for Trade Union Rights and co-sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). Here are excerpts from that speech:

A lot has been said about the speech I made on the convention floor, and if you thought you came here tonight to hear an expert on foreign policy you are not going to get that.

Union president hits U.S. war in C. America

I am not an expert but I know what I see with my own eyes and I know right from wrong. The foreign policy of this government is wrong and if labor supports it, it is wrong too, and as long as I'm a part of labor, I am going to do everything I can to change it.

When I spoke on that convention floor I was thinking about one thing and that was what I saw on my trips to Central America. I knew our government's policy was wrong and I knew we ought to be reaching out to those people down there.

We ought to be letting them know that this is our nation, a nation of people with a heart, a nation of people with minds that will not be put to rest without freedom. A nation of people that supported them and their needs. Instead we send them the contras and we send them artillery shells and bombs, all of those things that bring about trauma. Trauma that a lot of people in this room can't even imagine.

Look at the crisis in domestic and foreign policy. It favors the rich over the poor and over workers. Favors corporations over our communities. Favors a multinational over the workers and the peasants.

Favors a military over economic development. Favors things like Star Wars; nuclear weapons; Rambo-adventure in the Persian Gulf, Beirut, and Grenada...over industrialization in Pittsburgh and Detroit, over healthcare in Central America, and over jobs in San Francisco.

People, something's wrong with all that. Over half of the AFL-CIO executive board members sit on the National Labor For Democracy in Central America Committee. Twenty-six international presidents are now members of that committee. And that's progress.

We're going to go into the AFL-CIO convention this time hopefully to bring out of there a position against contra aid—plain and simple.



Ken Blaylock

I think it's very possible to bring out of there a position where labor will strongly get behind the current peace process going on in Central America where the four countries are trying to solve their problems themselves. They need all the assistance they can get from us, and we ought to do our damndest to make sure they get that.

And if we change labor's positions, then labor can play a role in changing the politicians' positions.



Salvadoran trade unions demand an end to austerity and repression.

linked together two very important issues. And I think this flows from positions the AFL-CIO has adopted at its national conventions.

It is the linkage between the cessation of the wars and cessation of aid to the insurgents in all the countries in the region with the implementation of a number of provisions for democratization. It is the linkage of those two things that provides the key and the hope in this peace process.

Now, of course the problem will be in compliance. This is a great concept on paper, but will it be complied with?

The Sandinistas must allow freedom of speech and freedom of association, true freedom of association, allow the unions to function, and allow true elections within the union movement so that workers can select their own leaders.

But there is a possibility that the Sandinistas will only try to pay lip-service to their promises. This wouldn't be the first time that they promised to have political pluralism in their country.

Gretchen Mackler:

The following are excerpts from Gretchen Mackler's speech to the CLUW meeting.

CLUW's position on military intervention in the entire Central American region has been clearly stated in the resolutions adopted at our national conventions.

CLUW supports our trade-union sisters in Central America, many of whom play leading roles in their unions. We support peaceful political solutions but recognize

that these solutions can only be determined by the people of these countries themselves—not by outside intervention.

Further we oppose military intervention into the region and the spending of billions of tax dollars at the direct expense of domestic programs. These cuts especially impact women and minorities here at home.

CLUW supports organized pressure on our government to oppose all military, economic, and political efforts to destabilize or overthrow elected governments in Central America or attack in any way the trade-union movements in those countries.

The best way to exert this pressure, we believe, is to follow the example of the labor struggles of the past. We must remember that every gain, every victory, was won through organized struggle, demonstrations, and strikes.

For example, the April 25, 1987, Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice held in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., gave a tremendous impetus to the anti-intervention movement. It helped forge an alliance between labor and the peace movement.

More than 200,000 Americans, one-third of them unionists, turned out to show their sentiment against military intervention—in defiance of AIFLD and the top leadership of the AFL-CIO.

Trade unionists in Central America have a right to determine how to organize and govern themselves. We don't see it as the U.S. government's job to interject itself into the struggles of these countries. We have a problem understanding how this government, the same government that destroyed PATCO, could possibly speak to the needs of workers in foreign countries.

... AFL-CIO

(continued from page 7)

estimated that one-third of the protestors in Washington, D.C., were unionists. The debate at the 1985 convention had spilled onto the streets. The success of the demonstrations, which drew a total of 200,000 people, was broadly recognized as a repudiation of national AFL-CIO policy in Central America.

These setbacks for the right-wing AFL-CIO leaders have forced them to retreat from their traditional brand of frenzied anti-communism. Unlike the 1950s, today most American people disagree with the Cold War stance of the AFL-CIO.

Ferment in U.S. society

There have always been divisions within the AFL-CIO. But never have the differences mirrored so closely the political ferment within American society as a whole. This factor makes today's differences more significant than earlier shakeups within the upper layer of the union officialdom.

The biggest example of an earlier split in labor occurred in 1968, when Walter Reuther, then president of the United Auto Workers union, pulled the 1.3-million-member UAW out of the AFL-CIO. Reuther criticized reactionary AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer George Meany as "the complacent custodian of the status quo."

Reuther insisted that unions had to alter their right-wing stance in order to relate to the radicalizing youth of the 1960s. But Reuther was more interested in refurbishing the deteriorating image of the Democratic Party. The UAW threw itself into the Hubert Humphrey 1968 presidential campaign and failed to provide leadership to the antiwar and civil rights movements of that period.

As a result, nothing much came of Reuther's defiance.

And with the troublesome UAW out of the AFL-CIO, Meany dealt severely with dissidents. He intimidated anti-Vietnam War delegates at AFL-CIO conventions by calling them "delegates from Hanoi." No significant anti-Vietnam War opposition developed within the AFL-CIO.

Things are different today. Individual leaders of the unions have not politically changed much in the last 20 years since Reuther. Unfortunately, all retain allegiance to the capitalist Democratic Party.

But the circumstances are different. Much different. Tens of millions of Americans lived through and remember the horrible experience of the Vietnam War. As a result, these millions are far less vulnerable to government war propaganda today. And the economic hardships of most American families fuel even more the mass skepticism and distrust of the government's

motives in Central America.

Anti-intervention sentiment has penetrated much deeper into the working class than during the Vietnam War era.

In the last several years, a significant number of national union leaders have identified with this anti-intervention sentiment. Many see that unions often need community allies to defend against corporate assaults. A growing number of union heads understand that it is unwise to be isolated from the movement for peace, jobs, and justice.

Slave-labor conditions abroad

But another factor drives forward the process of involving the labor movement in anti-intervention protests: That factor is the connection between slave labor conditions abroad and runaway shops and plant shutdowns here. U.S. military power protects repressive regimes which serve as havens for corporations taking advantage of sub-human working conditions.

Steelworkers, for example, have lost jobs in this country while imports from racist South Africa have increased 5000 percent since 1975. Black workers in that country earn one-third what white workers do. A United Steelworkers union pamphlet describes a Phelps Dodge-owned fluorspar mine where "Africans earn less than 40 cents an hour, working 60 hours a week in 26 ten-hour shifts a month and sleeping 12 to a room in migrant labor hotels."

The story is not much different for other workers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The average manufacturing wage in Chile was \$0.98 in 1983. It was \$1.41 in Hong Kong and \$1.52 in Taiwan. In 1984, the average manufacturing wage in Mexico was \$1.20 and \$1.68 in Brazil.

The jobs of American workers are being sacrificed to the growing profits of U.S. multinationals. Working people will find it increasingly difficult to ignore its effects. Most glaring of all is the lost jobs: 11,489,000 displaced workers between 1979 and 1984.

The debate inside the AFL-CIO represents the initial, and largely timid, signs of the future class confrontation between the wealthiest corporations in the world and the American working class. This fight will only succeed if the American workers join in alliance with working people all over the world. Solidarity among workers will end capitalist tyranny, which pits one country's workers against another.

A solidarity consciousness will inevitably develop through the actual experiences of the workers, as more plants close up in order to reopen under slave labor conditions in countries protected by the U.S. military.

We can, therefore, predict more explosive future conflicts within the AFL-CIO, no matter how quiet the 1987 convention ends up to be.

FSLN women discuss gains in revolution



Margaret Randall

In March of this year, the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) of Nicaragua presented a programmatic statement on women's rights to the Third National Assembly of the Nicaraguan Women's Association—Luisa Amanda Espinoza (AMNLAE).

This statement, the first of its kind since the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in July 1979, came on the heels of the publication of a series of official reports documenting the status of Nicaraguan women today.

One such report issued by the Women's Office of the Ministry of the Presidency reviews the conditions of war which have compelled Nicaraguan women to become involved in the revolution and to assume a crucial economic role in the country.

At the same time, however, the report documents the numerous obstacles women still face on the job and in society. Wife beating and abortion, for example, are still major, unresolved problems. Abortion is illegal, while wife beating is not. Botched back-alley abortions, the report states, are the leading cause of maternal death.

The report concludes with the need to "redefine the role

society has always assigned to women" and to "overcome the inequalities between the sexes and resolve the most deeply felt problems of women, in order to achieve the construction of a new society."

In July and August of this year, *Socialist Action* correspondent Nancy Elnor visited Nicaragua, where she worked as a technical advisor to the Nicaraguan National Library. Elnor is president of AFT Local 1474 at the University of California, Berkeley.

While in Nicaragua, Elnor interviewed three women leaders of the Nicaraguan Revolution on how far the revolution had come in overcoming the inequalities between the sexes. They are Gioconda Belli, Sofia Montenegro, and Iliana Rodriguez.

Belli, who served on the FSLN Political/Diplomatic Commission until 1979, is currently a member of the board of directors of the FSLN Propaganda Department. She is the author of four books of poetry.

Montenegro is a co-founder of *Barricada*, the official newspaper of the FSLN. Currently, she is the head of *Barricada's* editorial section.

Rodriguez is the director of the Nicaraguan National Library.

carrying out intellectual work, and that she shouldn't waste her time with domestic chores.

Of course, we cannot say that the FSLN has not had machismo in its ranks. But I think the overriding tendency has been to encourage the participation of women in all facets of the revolution.

Our recent discussions concerning the rights of women are also very important. In a number of revolutions where women played a key role in the insurrection, the gains they made were eroded and often set back. In Algeria, for example, not long after the revolution, women fighters went back to wearing their veils.

Montenegro: You also have to take into account that women constitute 52 percent of the Nicaraguan population and that a majority of these women are under

16 years of age. This means that there is a young generation of women who have entered adulthood in a new revolutionary situation.

For example, a lot of these women participated in the literacy campaign and went up into the mountains. That represented a tremendous cultural leap forward in a country with a heritage like ours.

So now these women are in their 20s and are much less willing to accept going back to the old conditions.

Nonetheless, these conquests are still quite fragile. The weight of the prevailing culture is still very strong, and this has the potential of driving back the status of women.

Rodriguez: There are still important institutional obstacles and limits on how far we can go. These are things we are struggling to overcome.

To give one example: There is a woman who does sex education on TV. Her program deals with all aspects of women's sexuality, love making, child-bearing, abortion, etc. She had a program that was shown on Sundays at 6 p.m. This was prime time.

Unfortunately, she was asked to postpone the show and to air it on Monday night at 9 p.m. This really defeats the whole purpose of sex education because very few people now see this program.

Belli: I think that we still have to do a lot of ideological work. We have to continually address the apparatus that reproduces ideology. We have to change the way that society has treated women and still does. Even though we have very progressive documents, this is only the beginning.

S.A.: What is the involvement of women in leadership positions in the FSLN, the unions, or the mass organizations?

Belli: According to the FSLN's document on women, 31.4 percent of government leadership positions are held by women. In addition, 26.8 percent of the members of the FSLN regional committees are women, as are 24.3 percent of the entire party membership.

Women make up 40 percent of the membership of the Rural Workers Association, and women occupy 15 percent of the local-level leadership positions in that organization. Sixty-seven percent of the members of the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) are women.

S.A.: But how many of these are actually heads of their unions?

Belli: Very few. I think it's more of a struggle ahead for us than a reality.

For centuries men have been trained to be competitive and aggressive; qualities often associated with leadership. We often hear arguments being used against women taking up leadership positions that would never be used against men.

For example, it is not uncommon to hear someone say, "She is emotionally unstable," because she has had five husbands. If a man has had 10 women nobody cares.

Even those of us who have a higher standard of education face problems in playing leadership roles.

Montenegro: AMNLAE [the Nicaraguan Women's Association—Luisa Amanda Espinoza] is committed to training women for leadership positions.

The idea is to start at the rank-and-file level. This isn't as easy as it may sound. In many plants, up to 80 percent of the workforce are women. One year, the women in one of these plants elected the few men in the plant to the union leadership.

But the men they elected never took into account the women's problems. So the women called the FSLN for advice. The FSLN told them: "Well, you are the majority. You elected them. You can revoke them and elect your own women representatives." And so they did.

Belli: In our revolution, we have a lot of space to pursue and improve our struggle. We have AMNLAE. We have the new Women's Office of the Ministry of the Presidency. And we have no restrictions about what we can say and write.

And now, through the new FSLN programmatic document on women's rights, the revolution has taken a big step forward. ■

Socialist Action: In March 1987, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) issued a programmatic document on women's rights. How was that document initiated and what debate took place around it?

Gioconda Belli: At the time of the FSLN's 1984 electoral campaign, the discussions concerning women's issues were reintiated. It is not that the role of women had not been discussed before 1984, but many of us felt there had been a gradual retreat in the attention paid to women's issues.

After the first years of the revolution, the women's struggle was focused almost entirely on participating in the general tasks of the revolution. But many of us felt that we needed to be more specific about the issues concerning women.

By us I mean the movement of women intellectuals who have been constantly striving to place the women's question at the center of the concerns of the revolution.

Sofia Montenegro: Since 1985 there have been numerous regional and national women's assemblies to work on the FSLN's programmatic document. One very important meeting this year was the one hosted by the women farm workers of the Rural Workers Association (ATC).

These women demanded a change in their situation and a specific approach to their double workday. Women make up about 35 percent of the entire farm labor force. On the average, they put in an 18-hour work day between their jobs and their work at home.

Iliana Rodriguez: I think that women in Nicaragua, in practical terms, are in a very abysmal situation.

What I see, though, is that there is a possibility of making great strides forward in Nicaragua now that the specific women's issues have been incorporated into the platform of the FSLN.

Belli: I think the FSLN has had a progressive attitude toward women throughout its history—especially after the mid-'70s. Doris Tijerino, for example, in one of her writings talks about Carlos Fonseca [the founder of the FSLN]. Fonseca had told her that she shouldn't wash her compañero's clothes, that she should be writing and

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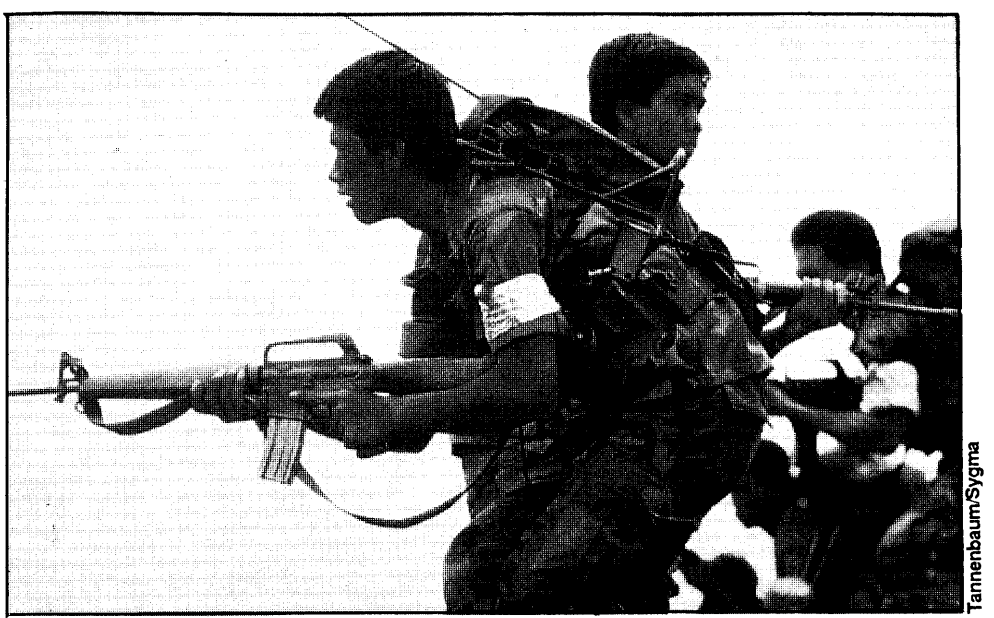
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Philippine military hunting for NPA. Their guns, however, are pointed at Aquino.

Aquino faces growing revolt and instability

By ROBERTO PUMARADA

The Aug. 28 coup attempt against the government of Corazon Aquino constituted the most serious challenge to the current Philippine regime in the 18 months since the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos.

The defeated conspirators led by Col. Gregorio Honasan did not emerge empty-handed. The shock which followed led to the resignation of Aquino's cabinet and the removal from the government of the last of the liberals, former human-rights attorney and presidential secretary Joker Arroyo.

The coup pushed vice president and foreign minister Salvador Laurel to break with Aquino, calling her "soft" in handling the war against communist guerrillas. Laurel's action moves him closer to the positions of Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, the former national-defense minister ousted by Aquino in November, who also criticized Aquino's handling of the insurgency.

Much to the satisfaction of Laurel, Enrile, and Honasan—as well as the U.S. government—the most important consequence of the coup is the probable intensification of the military campaign against the Communist Party-led New People's Army (NPA).

Government's unity dissolves

Aquino's supporters had been lulled by the apparent popularity of the government shown by the overwhelming approval of the Aquino-backed constitution in January and the election of an Aquino-dominated congress in May. They thought that military opposition had subsided with the removal of Defense Minister Enrile. Instead, the opposition grew bolder as popular support of the government became progressively passive.

It is significant that the much-vaunted "people power" which gave the presidency to Aquino was nowhere to be seen at the height of the latest coup. Yet only two days before, a general strike protesting an Aug. 14 hike in fuel prices had rocked the country and paralyzed its largest cities. Led by the May First Movement (KMU) labor federation, 6000 had marched on the presidential palace. These actions forced Aquino to partially roll back the price increase.

The recent coup reveals once again the fragility of the unstable coalition governing the country. The February 1986 rebellion resulted in the forced marriage of disparate forces.

On the one hand, disaffected elements of the armed forces saw in the removal of Marcos and his corrupt army cronies the chance to "professionalize" its war against the peasant guerrillas of the NPA. On the other hand, the anti-Marcos liberals influencing Aquino believed that the NPA could only be defeated through reforms and negotiations.

But still other civilians, representing that

section of the oligarchy estranged from Marcos, balked at fundamental changes in the agrarian structure of a nation whose rural provinces are heavily dominated by a plantation economy.

A vacillating Aquino proved unable to implement any coherent policy in any area, including the conduct of the war. Still, her public statements increasingly revealed progressive movement toward the right.

Unlike earlier attempts, the latest coup did not have a pro-Marcos flavor. Rather, the rebellion was engineered by soldiers who had organized a Reform in the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) in the waning days of the old regime. Identified with former Defense Minister Enrile, these men perceive the present army leadership under Gen. Fidel Ramos to be holding back a more aggressive counterinsurgency campaign.

Aquino's broken promises

Col. Honasan and the rebel leadership remain at large, reportedly having given the government an Oct. 27 deadline to "realign"

government 14 months to come up with a lukewarm land-reform program.

Largely implementing the discredited measure initiated by Marcos 15 years ago, the first phase of the six-year reform is restricted to selling peasants rice and corn lands larger than 17 hectares. Moreover, Aquino refused to implement the measure before the convening of the landlord-dominated Congress in July, thus opening the door to further dilution of the proposed reform.

By contrast, the Peasant Movement of the Philippines (KMP), representing some 500,000 farmers, has demanded the distribution of all land without compensation.

Moreover, dependent on their strength, peasants backed by the NPA have won partial reforms in perhaps 30 percent of the countryside. These include reduction in land rents, lowering interest rates, securing higher prices for crops, and even challenges to land titles. (Philippine Report, July 1987)

Because the lack of land is the central



In spite of heightened expectations, conditions for workers and peasants have not improved. Land reform has not been implemented.

her government. Nevertheless, Aquino has already gone quite far in an attempt to appease the army.

Aquino's public pronouncements against the NPA have taken on a more belligerent tone. She no longer mentions her original vow to disband the Civilian Home Defense Forces and now openly encourages the formation of similar anti-communist vigilante groups that terrorize the peasantry and shantytown dwellers, particularly in Mindanao.

In the wake of the coup attempt, Aquino supporters now openly talk of declaring a state of emergency, effectively reinstating martial law.

By the same token, Aquino has reneged on her promises to eliminate the causes which gave birth to the peasant revolutionary movement. It took the new

issue for two-thirds of the Philippine population and the NPA's chief recruiting tool, it is hardly surprising that even the World Bank criticizes the Aquino proposal as too little, too late.

The left's predicament

Yet, the Philippine left has gained only slightly from the erosion of the Aquino government. While the strength of the NPA in the countryside has remained substantially intact, the urban working-class left has made a slow recovery from the isolation which followed the February 1986 rebellion.

Aquino managed to deflect the left's criticism onto her rightist opponents. A good illustration was the spectacle of government ministers heading the massive march protesting the "Mendiola Massacre,"

a bloody January 1987 assault on KMP-led farmers demanding land. In that protest, 19 farmers were killed by marines defending the presidential palace.

The Aug. 26 general strike was perhaps the first successful large-scale protest which Aquino could not coopt. Once again, on Sept. 21, tens of thousands were mobilized in strikes and demonstrations after the assassination of Leandro Alejandro, general secretary of the mass organization BAYAN. The protesters denounced the "militarization" of the Aquino regime.

Nevertheless, the left remains relatively powerless. In part the legacy of its isolation during the "February Revolution," the left's marginalization also stems from its ambiguous and even initially uncritical political attitude toward Aquino and the civilian members of her cabinet.

The left's emphasis on attacking the "fascist" holdovers incorporated in the government helped Aquino eliminate Enrile while gaining more time for herself. Seen as the only way to overcome the left's isolation, this stance also served to confuse workers and peasants who looked for direction from mass organizations like the KMU and KMP that were led by the left.

These leaderships sought at all costs to reinstate the broad alliances forged with the urban middle classes in the fight against Marcos. But the fall of the dictatorship and Aquino's accession to power destroyed the basis for such a degree of unity.

The inevitable disillusionment

Led by their upper layers and the capitalist elite opposition, the middle classes supported the Aquino government. Left with no other political alternative, the workers, urban poor, and even the peasantry followed suit, even though the agenda of the new regime was counterposed to the fundamental interests of the working classes.

The inevitable disillusion has slowly occurred. The KMU and KMP helped to form the Partido ng Bayan (People's Party) independent of Aquino in 1986. The three organizations opposed the ratification of the Aquino-backed constitution earlier this year. They organized an opposition "Alliance for New Politics" slate in the May national elections, but failed to win any senatorial seats.

Yet even this latest step toward independent worker-peasant political action was marred by the slate's willingness to extend support to certain "progressive" candidates of the Aquino slate such as former Labor Minister Augusto Sanchez.

The latest crisis of the Aquino government reflects the continuing inability of the Philippine ruling class to satisfy the needs of the vast majority of the country. Torn by disagreement in its highest councils, the new regime finds the methods of its predecessor more and more attractive. But with each crisis, Aquino's hold over the subjugated classes has weakened.

If Col. Honasan's Aug. 28 coup aimed at escalating the war in the countryside, the Aug. 26 general strike showed that the cities are not immune from the overall struggle. The key to this will be the continued independent political organization and mobilization of the workers, peasants, and urban poor of the Philippines.

TORONTO—On June 3, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the premiers of the country's provinces signed a new Constitutional Amendment. The overriding effect of the Accord—based on a text first drafted at Meech Lake, north of Ottawa—is to deepen and perpetuate the assault on Quebec's national rights.

At the same time, the capacity of the federal government to implement social programs across English Canada against the resistance of reactionary provincial governments is undermined.

In the past, the government of Quebec refused to sign the Constitution cooked up in 1981 by then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and the other nine premiers. The agreement deprived Quebec of its historic veto over future constitutional change.

It also denied that Quebec is a nation with the right to decide its own future and to take whatever measures may be necessary to protect its language and culture.

Despite some fancy window-dressing, the Meech Lake Accord represents no meaningful change. Although it states that Quebec will be "recognized as a distinct society within Canada," it does not spell out what that means. Nor does it say what powers it confers on the government of Quebec "to preserve and promote Quebec's distinct identity."

The Amendment goes on to say that although "the English-speaking population is concentrated outside Quebec, it is also present within Quebec," and vice-versa for Francophones—the classical rationale for Ottawa's hypocritical policy of official bilingualism.

Because big business speaks English in North America, Quebecois workers suffer systematic discrimination at work, in education and healthcare, in department stores and restaurants—even where francophones are the overwhelming majority.

Strong labor opposition

The new accord was opposed by the three Quebec union federations, the farmers' union, the Mouvement Quebec Francais, the Parti Quebecois, and even the Quebec New Democratic Party (Canada's labor party).

So, why did Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa, a member of the Liberal Party, sign the Accord? Certainly not because of minor concessions to Quebec in the areas of immigration, the appointment of Supreme Court judges, or financial compensation for opting out of federal/provincial shared-cost programs.

The real motivation, one that Bourassa shares with Prime Minister Mulroney and most capitalists across Canada, is to destroy the national aspirations of the



Quebec's union federations (CEQ, CSN, and FTQ) oppose the new accord.

New Canadian accord spells trouble for working people

Quebecois. Canada's rulers hope that this new Accord, which has "brought Quebec back into the Canadian family," will once and for all put an end to the struggle for Quebecois liberation.

An oppressed nation

Former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau recently denounced the Accord, alleging that it weakens federal power in relation to the provinces. But Mulroney and the majority of the ruling class are prepared to pay this price to coopt Quebec, whereas Trudeau and the more centralist (protectionist) wing of the capitalist class would prefer a more rigid stance.

Quebec is not a province like the others. It is an oppressed nation with its own distinct language, culture, history, and territory. The refusal to recognize this fact constitutes a central contradiction at the heart of the confederal state.

This problem is not confined to the capitalists and their state. It is one shared by the working-class organizations in English Canada and their political arm, the NDP, which has upheld a federalist perspective consistently hostile to the aspirations of the Quebecois workers.

This accounts for the lack of significant support for the NDP in Quebec until very recently. And now, due to pressure from

Quebecois workers, the Quebec NDP has broken with the federal party line to oppose the Accord.

Obstacles to social change

But in supporting the Accord, the federal NDP (and the NDP government of Manitoba) not only betray the interests of workers in Quebec. They also place new obstacles in the path of progressive social change in English Canada.

The rights of native peoples and residents of the northern territories are frozen out of this constitutional agreement. There's nothing in it for women. There's no improvement in union liberties and other collective rights that have been severely undermined by recent Supreme Court decisions.

But more fundamentally, in structural terms, the clause that permits a province to receive financial compensation if it opts out of a shared-cost program in a provincial jurisdiction may put an end to future universal social services.

Louise Dulude, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, warns that the Amendment could paralyze a national plan for child care. "Ottawa could make proposals but say they have to wait until the legislatures make their will known. That alone could take

three years."

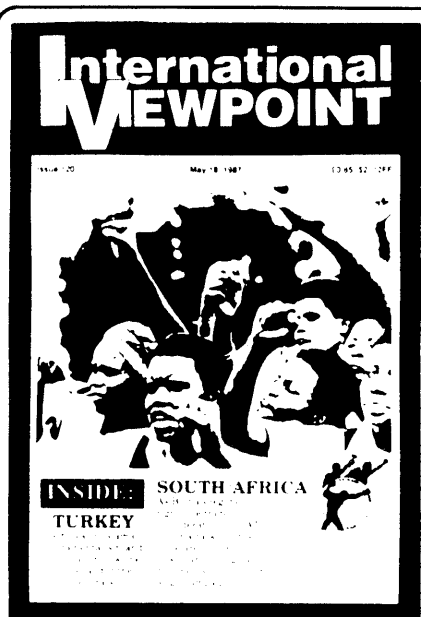
"The need for child care is urgent," she said. "We can't afford to wait."

Another obstacle may take shape in the form of a rejuvenated Senate. The Senate now has constitutional power to block legislation passed by the Commons. Because it is an appointed body of bourgeois party bagmen and retired political hacks, however, it lacks the necessary credibility to exercise this power.

Under a proposed system of provincial nominations, even though still subjected to federal choice, the Senate may attempt to exercise power as an assembly representing "regional (i.e. capitalist) interests."

Socialists demand abolition of the Senate, not its reform! This too is the official position of the NDP—a position overlooked by Leader Ed Broadbent, who has been caught up in the enthusiasm for the Accord expressed in Parliament and the media.

But the working class, in English Canada and especially in Quebec, has a more reserved, skeptical, and even critical approach to the Accord. Socialists should work to deepen that criticism. Meech Lake represents the worse of both worlds—the drowning of Quebec rights and the paralysis of future social change initiatives within the framework of the existing state. ■



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Puerto Ricans march for political prisoners' rights

By W. I. MOHAREB

HARTFORD, Conn.—Over five thousand people marched in Hartford and San Juan, Puerto Rico, on Aug. 30 in defense of 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners who are facing trial here. They are charged with participation in the robbery of a Wells Fargo depot in Connecticut. Their real "crime," however, is that they all advocate independence for Puerto Rico.

Juan Palmer and Filiberto Rios have been held in "preventive detention" for the past two years. Most defendants were jailed for 16 months before they were finally released on bail. To this date none of the 15 have been tried. This is because of government delays and misconduct at every level.

The Hartford demonstration was called around such demands as moving the trial of the defendants to Puerto Rico, for an end to preventive detention, and for the right to bail. The demonstrators also called for the removal of all military forces from Puerto Rico and for an end to the naval shelling of the island of Vieques.

Demonstrators came from as far as

Portland, Maine, and Washington, D.C. The march through a Puerto Rican neighborhood clearly had considerable support from the residents, many of whom waved Puerto Rican flags. Banners and chants at the rally also raised the cases of other Puerto Rican political prisoners. One banner tied the defense of the 15 to the case of the eight Palestinians held for deportation in Los Angeles, Calif.

Yvonne Melendez, one of the original defendants, (charges against her were dropped for lack of evidence) addressed the rally. She reviewed some of the facts of U.S. imperialist oppression of Puerto Rico. At one point during the Vietnam War nearly 40 percent of the combat troops in the field were of Puerto Rican origin. "We are forced to be the cannon fodder of imperialism," she pointed out.

Forty percent of the labor force in Puerto Rico is unemployed. Wages are half those in the United States, although the cost of living on the island is 25 percent higher. Puerto Rico has been devastated economically and environmentally because of American domination.

The island of Vieques is used for target

practice and is under constant naval bombardment. Puerto Rico was a testing ground for Agent Orange as well as a training ground for the invasions of Grenada and the Dominican Republic, Melendez said.

Other speakers included Dennis Rivera, a vice president of Local 1199 of the hospital workers union, and Bob Gustafson, a member of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee.

The militancy of both the Hartford and San Juan events reflects a growing radicalization among the Puerto Rican workers and oppressed. ■

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Workers in forefront of fight for a democratic constitution

During last month's official festivities around the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution, little mention was made of the class antagonisms among the revolutionary forces.

This second of a three-part series examines how committees of workers, farmers, and soldiers led the struggle for democracy despite the opposition of the ruling classes.

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

In September, on the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution, thousands of people took part in a lavish patriotic parade in Philadelphia. They were addressed by President Reagan who, from behind a shield of bullet-proof glass, spoke of "the triumph of human freedom."

The parade was modeled in part on the Grand Federal Procession of 1788, which marked Pennsylvania's ratification of the Constitution. But in the era of Contragate, all the fifers and drummers in historical costume can do little to repair the cause of patriotism.

The 1788 procession, in contrast, took place in a truly revolutionary America. The participants viewed the Constitution as the keystone of a "New Era" of liberty and prosperity.

The main body of the Grand Federal Procession was made up of Philadelphia's "mechanics" (its craftsmen, journeymen, and semiskilled workers), who comprised about two-thirds of the city's population.

"Both buildings and rulers are the work of our hands," read the banner of the bricklayers. "The death of anarchy and confusion shall feed the poor and hungry," proclaimed the victualers. "By hammer and hand, all arts do stand," declared the smiths.

Revolutionary committees

The mechanics' support for the Constitution was understandable. It made possible a strong government that could promote commerce and manufacturing, and thus, they thought, provide jobs. Furthermore, the Constitution ensured many of the democratic liberties they had fought for in the revolution.

For over two decades, working people had been in the forefront of the revolutionary struggle.

Although property qualifications often restricted them from voting, workers participated in local committees to enforce mass boycotts against British goods. By 1775, these revolutionary committees had replaced the official governments as the real governing power in the towns.

A parallel development took place in rural areas, especially in the West, as small farmers overthrew the old county governments and set up "people's courts" and armed "people's militias."

Later, the poorer workers organized their own committees inside the Continental Army. These Committees of Privates called for the right to elect their officers and the right to vote without age or property qualifications. They denounced the wealthy and demanded that taxes be levied "proportioned to each man's property" in order to support the families of the poor.

The demand for democracy

Coordination of the war effort was entrusted to the Continental Congress,

which was dominated by merchants, slaveholding planters, and lawyers who served the interests of the privileged classes. The workers and small farmers often expressed great apprehension toward the wealthy aristocrats who now professed to be "republicans."

A petition from Pittsfield, Mass., was typical. It emphasized that "the people are the fountain of power" and demanded passage of a "fundamental constitution" approved by the "majority of the people."

The ruling classes and their spokesmen expressed a different point of view. The struggle against Britain, they declared, should not open the floodgates toward "too much democracy." In the words of John Adams: "Power follows property."

If suffrage restrictions were loosened, Adams said, "there will be no end to it. New claims will arise, women will demand a vote, lads from 12 to 21 will think their rights not enough attended to, and every

man who has not a farthing will demand an equal voice with any other."

Around the country, the merchants and planters hastened to restore the old "bonds of government" against the power of the revolutionary committees. John Adams was the main author of a new Massachusetts constitution, passed in 1780, that actually raised property requirements for voting over what they had been in colonial times.

By 1787, when the U.S. Constitution was written, the ruling classes could portray the state constitutions framed during the previous decade as being "too radical." Actually, most of the state constitutions retained undemocratic suffrage restrictions. Only in Pennsylvania and Georgia were propertyless mechanics permitted to vote.

High prices and big profits

Despite their fight with people of the "lower order," many merchants found that the revolutionary war had a silver lining just for them. Some of these "patriots" gained fortunes from privateering on the seas. Others were able to take over the trade and property of those merchants who had sided with Britain.

Still others had the profitable task of selling supplies to the army. In 1779, for example—mainly because of concerted action by the merchants—prices increased over 700 percent.

Speculation in currency was another

means to wealth. The revolutionary government found it could only pay its bills by obtaining loans, issuing bonds, and printing paper money. By 1779, one inflated paper dollar was worth only two or three cents in coin.

Around the country, the mechanics committees were revived in order to deal with the problem of high prices. A public meeting, called by the Philadelphia mechanics in 1779, warned that "we have arms in our hands and we know the use of them." Armed delegations of workers and militia members were authorized to seize the goods of merchants who refused to lower their prices.

On one occasion, Tom Paine and a Committee of Inspection confiscated a cargo of flour from Robert Morris, a future signer of the U.S. Constitution. The millionaire "patriot" was indignant.

It is "inconsistent with the principles of liberty," Morris protested, "to prevent a

man from the disposal of his property on such terms and for such considerations as he may think fit."

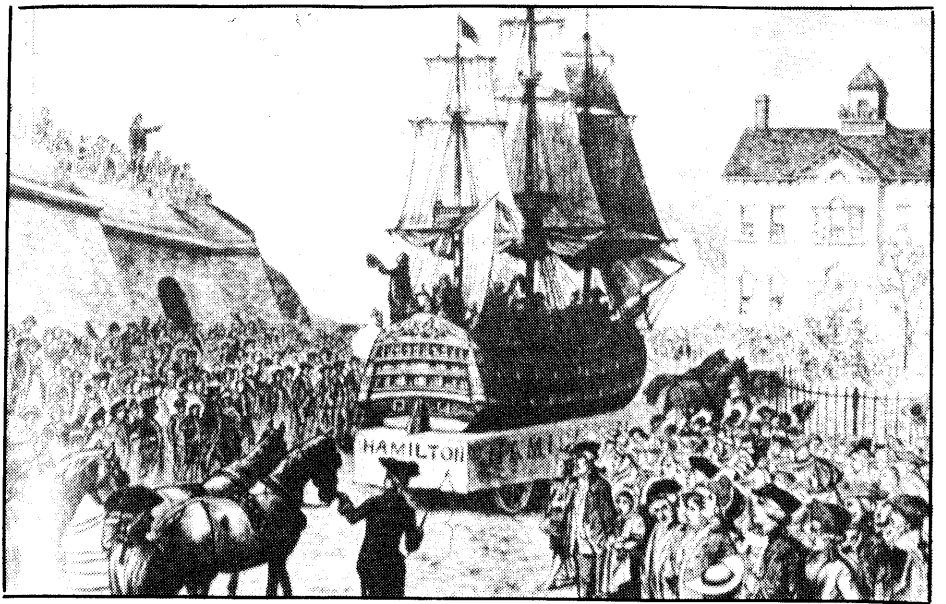
"A new revolution?"

Prices fell in the depression that followed the end of the war. Cheap British goods flooded in, and new war—a trade war—began. The mechanics were aroused against the merchants, both British and American, who allowed imported products to kill the business of local artisans. A new "Boston Tea Party" was threatened.

In the farming districts, meanwhile, soldiers returned home to find their lands mortgaged and their money worthless. They were further oppressed by taxes that the state governments levied to pay the interest on war debts. The level of taxes during the 1780s was 10 to 20 times that of the colonial period.

Debt-ridden farmers undertook armed actions to obtain relief. Shays' Rebellion, an uprising in Western Massachusetts, caused the ruling classes around the country to sound the alarm. Poor people were organizing "a new revolution" to redistribute property, they warned.

That threat, although somewhat illusory, strengthened the hand of leaders of the merchant class who were demanding a strong national government that could regulate commerce and finance. A standing army, they emphasized, was needed to both protect trade and put down rebellions.



Around the country, people celebrated ratification of Constitution. Above: Federal Procession in New York, 1788

Most of all, the merchants wanted a national government that could ensure their political control. As John Jay, the future chief justice of the Supreme Court, said: "Those who own the country ought to govern it."

The merchant-planter coalition

The merchants were not strong enough to govern alone, however. They needed to maintain their coalition with the Southern planters. But the merchants hoped to set the agenda for the coalition, knowing that the planters were divided in their interests and objectives.

The smaller planters in the Piedmont region, although slaveholders, tended to identify with the egalitarian views of the backcountry farmers. They were often heavily in debt and thus feared the increased taxes on land and produce, executions against debtors, and other features of the program put forward by the merchants.

The most powerful planters, however, although hesitant about granting commercial advantages to merchants from the North, realized that there were advantages in a strong national government that could revive shipping and open new markets for their crops.

In addition, many of the wealthy planters were speculators in currency and bonds and hoped a new national government would assume the debts of the states. Speculators in land (such as George Washington) likewise approved of a central government that could police the frontier against the Indians and the encroachments of European powers.

Concessions to democracy

Whether planter, merchant, money-lender, or lawyer—the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 had a common interest in protecting the property and power of the new American gentry. But several concessions were made to the demands of working people.

A popularly elected House of Representatives was authorized, for example, to replace the incumbent congress that had been elected by the state legislatures. Any more dictatorial course (as some delegates advised) would have hindered ratification of the Constitution—or even invited rebellion.

The new national union proved lasting. But the dominance of the merchants was to survive barely another dozen years. Almost immediately, the wealthy planters joined the small farmers in opposition.

The mechanics and laborers in the northern cities began once again to build their own organizations to resist the policies of the merchant class. In the South, the Black slaves continued to revolt. That story—the legacy of the Constitution—will be explored in the November issue of *Socialist Action*. ■

'Hamburger Hill': A movie to make John Wayne happy

By JOE RYAN

Hamburger Hill: A film directed by John Irvin, distributed by Paramount Pictures.

"Hamburger Hill" is a terrible movie.

Hamburger Hill—the event—was a 10-day battle in May 1969 in which American troops sustained heavy casualties while assaulting Ap Bia Mountain, near the Laotian border. Unfortunately, "Hamburger Hill"—the movie—is nothing more than a dramatized army training film.

Even establishment critics have lashed out at this Vietnam War movie for its open

MOVIE REVIEW

hostility toward the antiwar movement and its blatant distortion of a politically significant battle.

A friend of mine, John Horton, who was a helicopter crew chief/door gunner during the real Battle of Hamburger Hill, thought the movie was a "piece of crap."

A piece of State Department crap is more like it. "Hamburger Hill" is nothing more than a slick, action-packed coverup for the needless and criminal slaughter of American GIs during a period when the war was supposedly "winding down."

Outrage in the U.S.

Although the film doesn't show it, the May 10-20, 1969, battle caused considerable protest and outrage throughout the United States and, most decisively, among GIs in Vietnam.

Even Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) was forced to speak out against the senseless slaughter. Of course, this didn't stop Kennedy from voting for all the appropriations needed to fight the war—thus continuing the real slaughter.

The American people were livid because the costly battle exposed the aggressive character of U.S. military operations at a time when the Paris Peace talks were in session. Nixon had promised to end the war; Hamburger Hill showed he was

intensifying it. The weekly U.S. death figures for the week of the battle (430 killed) were the second highest for 1969.

A subsequent investigation revealed that the United States was stepping up the fighting by initiating twice as many small-unit (platoon and company-size) operations which increased contact—and casualties.

Between the time Nixon became president in 1968 and the final withdrawal of U.S. troops in 1973, over 20,000 additional Americans and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese would die.

A.k.a. "Blackjack"

Ironically, a movie about the Battle of Hamburger Hill could have been the most antiwar and political cinematic treatment yet of the U.S. role in Vietnam. This movie *should* have been a graphic indictment of the U.S. military brass (and the government) for their cold-blooded sacrifice of so many American lives to take a hill that had no strategic significance.

This movie *should* have portrayed the hatred and bitterness of the GIs for their

commanding officer, Lt. Col. Weldon Honeycutt—code name: Blackjack—who ordered and pushed the 11 assaults in 10 days that caused 564 casualties among the paratroopers (84 killed and 460 wounded).

"That damned Blackjack won't stop until he kills every damn one of us," one wounded GI snarled in the June 2, 1969, issue of *Newsweek* magazine.

In the movie, however, there is no mention of Col. Honeycutt.

John Horton knew Col. Honeycutt, a.k.a. Blackjack, quite well. His helicopter battalion was assigned to the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne, the unit commanded by Honeycutt which bore the brunt of leading the assaults.

"Blackjack was the most widely hated field commander in Vietnam," Horton said. "Even among 'lifers' he was considered 'gung-ho.' The overwhelming feeling was that he was nuts."

Indeed, shortly after the costly assault on Hamburger Hill, the underground GI newspaper in Vietnam, *GI Says*, publicly offered a \$10,000 bounty on Col.



Roger Robles

Honeycutt. Despite several attempts, unfortunately, "Blackjack" managed to live out his tour in Vietnam. The same, however, could not be said for hundreds of young men of the working class under his command.

After the Battle of Hamburger Hill, "fraggings" and "refusals to advance" by rank-and-file GIs increased by over 100 percent. The American soldiers correctly perceived that their survival in Vietnam was in conflict with and antagonistic to the goals of the U.S. government.

Antiwar movement slandered

The movie also attacks the antiwar movement with self-serving vignettes: one GI gets a letter from his girlfriend telling him she can't write anymore because her college friends told her it was immoral; another GI says he volunteered for a second tour because bags of shit were thrown at him when he arrived in Oakland after his first tour. Even worse, when he got home his wife was living with some "hippie."

The truth is that the anti-Vietnam War movement was the one force that could save the lives of GIs by demanding "Bring the Boys Home Now!" After "Hamburger Hill," most GIs couldn't agree more.

No reference is made in the movie to the fact that some units had to be coerced to continue the senseless and meaningless battle. Even the last scene of the movie is a distortion of the reality. When the GIs finally take the hill (which they abandoned one week later) a sign is posted with the words "Hamburger Hill."

What the sign really said, according to the *Newsweek* issue right after the battle was: "Hamburger Hill—was it worth it?" The answer to this question is the same for both the movie and the battle.

It's easy to see why "Hamburger Hill" is the worst of the recent deluge of Vietnam War movies. The film's producers sought and received the cooperation and collaboration of both the U.S. and the Philippine Departments of Defense.

The U.S. military provided the movie with F-4 fighters and C-46 helicopters to make the battle as "accurate" as possible. And its chief military advisor was Col. (Retired) Joseph P. Conmy Jr., who was a brigade commander at the Battle of Hamburger Hill.

However, as my friend Horton said, "This movie was more like a cartoon." He couldn't have been more on the mark. ■

Anti-draft activist imprisoned, fined

By ZOLTAN GROSSMAN

The following article was sent to *Socialist Action* by the Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD) to inform our readers that Gillam Kerley, CARD's executive director, was just sentenced to three years in prison for refusing to register for the draft.

Zoltan Grossman is the acting executive director of CARD. The article has been abridged for space.

Anti-draft activist Gillam Kerley has begun serving a three-year prison term at the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in Kansas. He was sentenced and fined \$10,000 for refusing to register for the draft.

In handing down the sentence—the harshest given a non-registrant since the Vietnam War—Judge John Shabaz gave an interesting justification, unrelated to the charge. He accused Gillam, as the executive director of the Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD), of "continuing criminal activities" in "aiding, abetting and encouraging" other draft resisters.

Kerley, 26, has been a law student and bookstore owner in Madison, Wis. In 1982 he was targeted for prosecution as one of 18 vocal non-registrants and entered a plea of

"not guilty by reason of sanity."

As Kerley said recently in an interview from Leavenworth, "Given the nature of my offense, the manner in which I was selected for prosecution, and Judge Shabaz's justification for the severity of my sentence, there should be no question that I am being held as a political prisoner. What we are seeing, in this case and others, is the criminalization of political dissent."

Since President Carter reinstated draft registration in 1980, CARD has carried out educational campaigns aimed at draft-age youth. These campaigns do not "encourage" youths to break the draft laws, but encourage them to *think* about their various options.

A test case

Kerley's imprisonment comes at a critical time. The government has cut the rate of non-compliance with the draft from a million youth down to about 400,000 young men. This has been accomplished by sending warning letters to non-registrants and cutting off their access to federal student aid and job training.

This apparent success has led some politicians to call for a "compulsory national service program"—a euphemism for a civilian-military draft. Such prominent Democrats as Gary Hart, Bruce Babbitt, and Charles Robb have jumped on

the draft bandwagon to establish their "pro-defense" credentials.

Gillam Kerley is the only American in prison today for resisting draft registration. Even his case officer at Leavenworth had to comment, "You got three years for *that*?"

The Campaign to Free Gillam Kerley has received endorsements from dozens of peace, civil liberties, and social-change activists, former political prisoners, and draft/military resisters from around the nation and the world. They see Gillam's release as a key to stopping the momentum toward a new draft.

CARD is calling for the following courses of action:

- Write to Judge John Shabaz, 120 North Henry Street, Madison, WI 53703, protesting the severity of the sentence and asking that it be reduced. Send a copy to CARD Midwest Office which will forward it to Gillam.

- Send a tax-deductible contribution to the CARD Midwest office, 731 State Street, Madison, WI 53703. To volunteer other forms of help, call CARD at (608) 257-7562. ■

Socialist Action Forums:

• Boston:

"El Salvador today: An eyewitness report"

Speaker: Ann Salmeron, member CASA.

Saturday, Oct. 3, 7:30 p.m., Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St..

• Chicago:

"Contragate: The truth behind the coverup"

Speaker: Jeff Mackler, co-Nat'l Secretary, Socialist Action

Saturday, Oct. 24. Call (312) 327-5752 for details.

• San Francisco:

"Why vote socialist?"

Speaker: Joseph Ryan, Socialist Action mayoral candidate

Friday, Oct. 30, 8 p.m.

"70th anniversary of Russian Revolution"

Speaker: Nat Weinstein, co-Nat'l Secretary, Socialist Action

Friday, Nov. 13, 8 p.m.

3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110

(*A Prayer for the Dying*. A film directed by Michael Hodges. Starring Mickey Rourke, Bob Hoskins, and Alan Bates. Samuel Goldwyn Company.)

"A Prayer for the Dying" is a new suspense thriller bound to stir up some controversy. The film stars Irish-American actor Mickey Rourke as Martin Fallon, a disillusioned member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) on the run from police, gangsters, and his own ex-comrades.

The film opens with a powerful scene which leads to Fallon's breaking with the IRA. Fallon and two other IRA partisans plant a bomb on an Irish country road. Two British military trucks appear rumbling down the road according to plan. Then suddenly, the three men and the audience watch in horror as a school bus full of children passes the army trucks, accidentally triggering the bomb.

The accident is the last straw for Fallon. He runs away from Ireland and the cause to which he had dedicated his life. The rest of the film takes place in London where Fallon hides while he tries to get a passport to the United States.

A leader of the English mob (Alan Bates) offers Fallon a passport in exchange for one final hit on a rival gangleader. Fallon at first refuses, saying he didn't kill for money but a cause he believed in. When the mob uses the police to pressure him, he eventually agrees, rationalizing that he is killing the gangster to save himself.

Unfortunately, Fallon's hit is witnessed by Father Da Costa (Bob Hoskins), a Catholic priest. Meehan, the gangboss, wants the father dead, but Fallon refuses to do anymore killing. This accident, which links the fate of Da Costa and Fallon, provides the conflict for the remainder of the film.

Strong performances, reactionary politics

The strength of "Prayer for the Dying" lies in the performances by Rourke and Hoskins, two men struggling with violent pasts. Although it was left out of the movie version, the novel by Jack Higgins, which the film is based on, reveals that Father Da Costa fought with the Yugoslavian partisans against Hitler.

Rourke's brooding portrayal is believable and very sympathetic. He illustrates the character's conflict between the cause he believes in and the violence he is forced to commit. His demoralization and self-hatred stem from his belief that all his killing achieved few, if any, results.

While the film portrays the pitfalls in the IRA strategy

Film slanders fight of the Irish people



Actor Mickey Rourke as the 'hit' man.

glaring flaw led to a public disownment by Mickey Rourke and director Mike Hodges of their involvement in the film.

Rourke is "ashamed" of film

Rourke, sympathetic to the Irish liberation struggle, visited Northern Ireland and met with members of different groups trying to win Irish independence. He even went so far as to spend time living with a formerly jailed IRA partisan to fully research his role. In the Aug. 22, 1987, issue of *The Irish People*, Rourke explained his motivation for publicizing the conditions in Northern Ireland:

"I became convinced that the human and civil rights of Catholics in north Ireland were being violated, and yet their tragic plight was not adequately documented by the media. The deaths of Bobby Sands and the Hunger Strikers in 1981 reinforced my beliefs...they were men who...protested over 60 years of discrimination and brutality in north Ireland. I visited their graves in Belfast. It was a moving experience... After the hunger strike, I felt a compelling need to tell the world about the tragedy in north Ireland..."

After Rourke had signed onto the project, a deal was cut with Samuel Goldwyn Company to produce and distribute the film. The result: "I was disappointed and ashamed [of the film]...Goldwyn took the film away from the director and recut it himself... Now I think they just used my name to sell a commercial film that explains nothing." (*Irish America Magazine* interview)

Samuel Goldwyn has gone so far as to slander Mickey Rourke in the entertainment press for voicing his dissatisfaction with the film's political message.

Another more mundane flaw was the shallow, stereotyped female characters. These can be summarized as follows: saintly virgin, cold bitch, and hooker-with-a-heart-of-gold.

Although "A Prayer for the Dying," a Hollywood thriller with the backdrop of the Irish struggle, could have alerted millions to the situation in Northern Ireland, the final result was a fairly entertaining film with a backward political message.

Our readers speak out

A first?

Dear editor,

At their 20th annual convention, retired members of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union adopted a resolution condemning the Republican and Democratic parties as not representing the needs of American labor and calling for the formation of an independent labor party.

The vote was almost unanimous. No one argued against it. I must say that I, the author of the resolution, was agreeably surprised.

This resolution will go to the next ILWU International convention.

At the 1986 pensioners' convention, the labor party ideas got nowhere. Things have changed. Thinking has changed. The temper of the convention was much more radical than last year.

Resolutions against aid for the contras and for the withdrawal of the U.S. Navy from the Persian Gulf denounced U.S. foreign policy. These were also adopted unanimously.

This year's convention of the ILWU Pacific Coast Pensioners Association, which represents 9300 pensioners, was held in Anderson, Calif., on Sept. 21-23. It was attended by about 200 pensioners and their wives, plus pensioned widows.

The PCPA contains in its ranks the militant veterans of the historic 1934 strike and of the 1937, 1946, and 1970-71 strikes

who embody a wealth of experience in fighting the bosses and their government.

Asher Harer,
ILWU pensioner,
San Francisco, Calif.

'Good work'

Dear editor,

I have enjoyed the recent *Socialist Action* articles on the *glasnost* moves in the Soviet Union, the Contragate hearings, and the strike of the South African mineworkers.

That strike had seemed depressing, ending so soon, until I read the article and understood the historical significance of its length. Keep up the good work.

P.W.,
Phoenix, Ariz.

FSP case

Dear editor,

Thank you for your coverage of the Freedom Socialist Party's court battle over the constitutional right to privacy (August 1987 *Socialist Action*.)

It is a matter of extreme importance that the left press cover and support the issues in the case, as the ultimate court decision will affect all left organizations for years to come.

At present, the case has reached a critical point. On Sept. 8, a serious setback to Americans'

right to privacy was administered by the Washington State Court of Appeals. The court refused to hear an appeal by the leaders of the FSP who have been ordered to make public the minutes of an internal party meeting.

Despite urging by 5000 petition signers and the presentation of a friend-of-the-court brief submitted by the National Lawyers Guild, the Washington court has refused to rule on the constitutional issues in this case.

It is doubly ironic that this refusal comes in the midst of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the constitution, which is supposed to protect every citizen's civil liberties.

With this adverse decision by the Court of Appeals, Richard Snedigar, a former FSP member who is suing for the return of money voluntarily donated to the party, is seizing party and personal property to satisfy his demand for \$22,500. A Superior Court judge will decide the amount Snedigar should be awarded.

The FSP is asking the appeals court to stay the implementation of the award while the party's further appeals are waiting a hearing.

Expressions of support and money to finance the costly litigation can be sent to Freeway Hall Defense Committee, 5018

Rainier Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118. Thanks again.

Tom Boot,
FSP Bay Area organizer,
San Francisco, Calif.

Pamphlets

Dear editor,

My subscription ends with the October issue. I am sending you my check so that I don't miss a single issue. I am also enclosing a check for the new *Socialist Action* pamphlets. Thank you and keep up the excellent work!

Marzia Fiastrri,
Geneva, Switzerland

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AIDS research requires massive gov't funding!

By MAY MAY GONG

Any gains in gay and lesbian rights "seriously compromise the health and safety of Americans everywhere." So says America's foremost homophobe, the Rev. Jerry Falwell.

"Homosexuals are taking over our towns," Falwell preaches, "while other perverts have established gay resorts in hundreds of cities which have become nothing but breeding grounds for the deadly AIDS virus."

To the uninformed individual, Falwell's remarks portray AIDS as an invention by gay people to be used against the heterosexual population. The fact is that the gay community has suffered the heaviest losses from the AIDS epidemic.

Since 1981, there have been 41,366 cases of AIDS nationwide. Of these, 23,884 victims have died. An overwhelming majority of these deaths have been among gay men.

The government's drive for AIDS testing has continued despite the fact that the spread of the disease has come to a virtual standstill in many gay communities due to massive education programs on safe sex organized by gay organizations.

In the early 1980s, before many AIDS-education programs were begun in the gay communities, about 15 percent to 20 percent of previously uninfected gay men tested positive for the AIDS virus each year.

But as safe-sex education increased, the rate of new infections declined. In 1986, it fell to 6.6 percent in New York and 4 percent in San Francisco. In 1987, the new infection rate has fallen to 1 percent in each of these cities.

And yet, Secretary of Education William Bennett insists that AIDS education should be carried out by parents and not the schools. The best defense against AIDS is simply "abstinence," Bennett says. "Young people, especially young women, should be modest."

Drug companies profit

The testing of new drugs for AIDS continues at a snail's pace. Teams of scientists and technicians around the world work isolated from one another, carefully guarding what few discoveries they make and, in the process, duplicating many experiments unnecessarily.

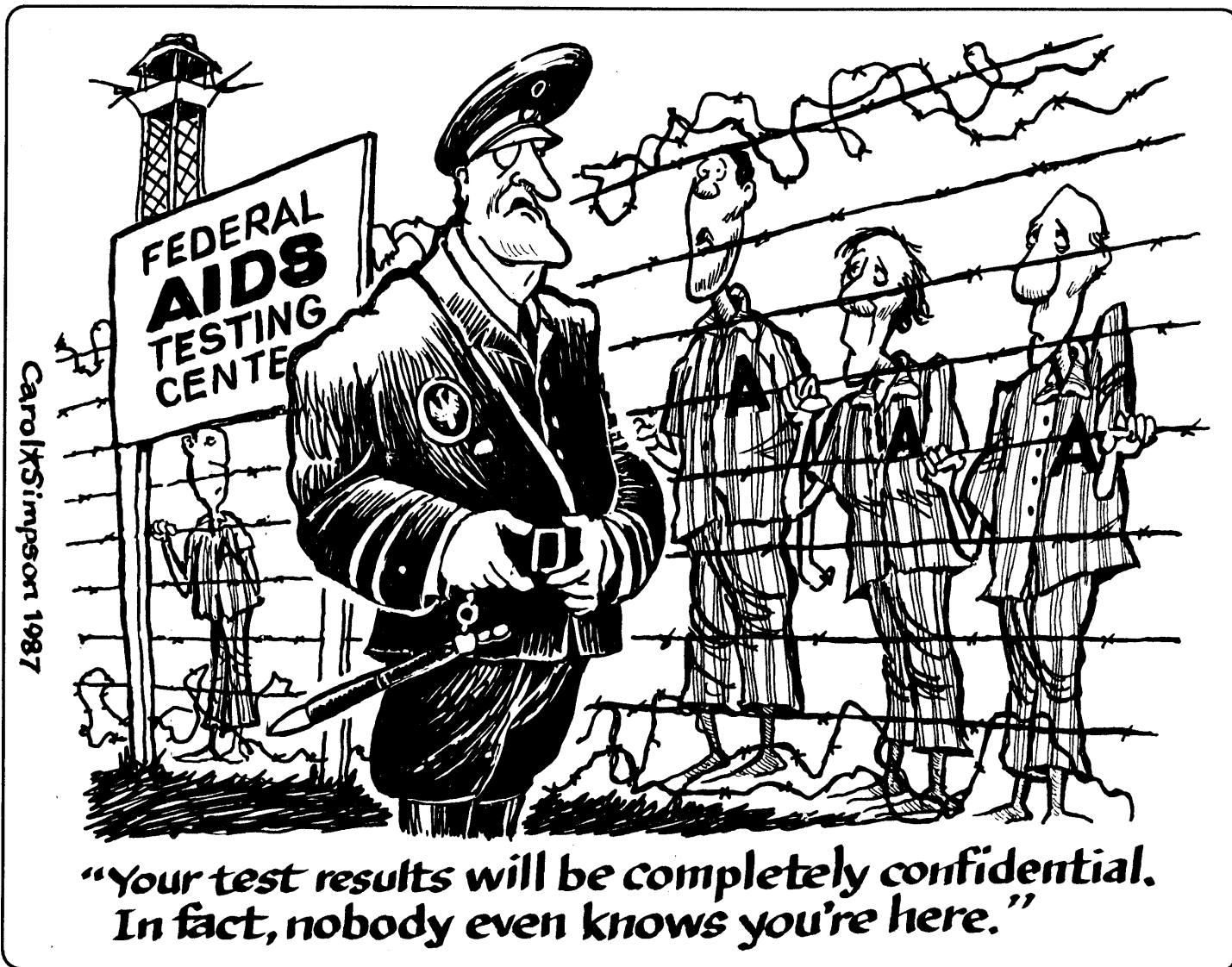
Bristol Labs recently announced that it had come upon a possible cure for AIDS but that it would continue development of the drug only if it received an exclusive license to test it.

Of course, the real race among the drug corporations is not to simply find a quick, one-shot cure for AIDS. The drug entrepreneurs would prefer to come up with a medicine or treatment that must be administered continuously throughout the patient's lifetime—keeping the AIDS virus merely in a dormant state.

In effect, the corporations are seeking a life-prolonging therapy rather than a curative therapy. A steady market for such a treatment would be guaranteed. One such drug today, AZT, is expected to cost each patient \$10,000 per year—making it the most expensive prescription drug in history.

So we still have no cure for AIDS. What then would be the point in proposals for wholesale AIDS testing?

For one thing, it would be a gold mine for the pharmaceutical companies. "The market for AIDS testing alone is worth \$100 million a year," say company executives at Genetic Systems Corporation of Seattle. Wall Street analysts proclaim with joy that the market for AIDS tests



could "more than double" if mandatory testing measures are put into effect.

Testing plans add to hysteria

Mandatory testing with no assurances of confidentiality would put AIDS victims in the negative spotlight. Currently in this country, the vast majority of people

suffering from AIDS are gay men and intravenous drug users. The proposals for "routine" testing only serve to whip up more hysteria against drug users and especially against gays—already the targets of discrimination.

Unfortunately, in the minds of many people, all gays are AIDS carriers. Instead

of aiming their fire at the AIDS virus, these reactionary elements would rather use the epidemic as an excuse to launch a moral crusade against sexual freedom and democratic rights. Mandatory testing, they hope, will lay the groundwork for even more drastic measures against gays, such as a quarantine.

Gay men and lesbians have come under ever-increasing pressure since the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic. They have been denied jobs and housing. And now, insurance companies are denying coverage to "potential" AIDS victims. The insurance industry often refuses to write policies for single men or for men designating male friends as beneficiaries.

In a recent survey by the American Council of Life Insurers and the Health Insurance Association of America, 91 percent of companies said they consider an AIDS-infected applicant "uninsurable" at any price.

Human needs before profits!

Mandatory AIDS testing is a flimsy substitute for genuine measures to deal with the AIDS epidemic—a way of dodging what really should be done.

Rather than having scientific resources and brainpower scattered all over the world in competition, scientists should be brought together to combine their efforts and share their discoveries. The cure for AIDS should not be "exclusively" owned by any one drug company. It belongs to all of humanity.

And though the federal government is spending \$446 million on AIDS research this year, this sum is not even a drop in the bucket when compared to the military budget.

Continued mass actions demanding free medical care, more money for AIDS research and education, and no mandatory testing must go on. In this day and age, finding a cure for AIDS is not beyond our reach. It is simply a question of priorities—human needs before profit. ■

March on D.C. for Gay and Lesbian rights

On Oct. 11, 1987, people from around the country will mobilize for the second March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The march has taken as its slogan "For love and for life, we're not going back!" March organizers anticipate approximately 250,000 people at the event.

For Saturday, Oct. 10, the Labor Task Force of the March on Washington has organized a Solidarity Reception for leaders and activists in the gay movement and the labor movement.

Special guests at this reception will include John Sweeney, president, Service Employees International Union; Bill Olwell, vice president, United Food and Commercial Workers; Anna Padia, national vice president, Coalition of Labor Union Women; Josh Williams, president, Washington Metropolitan Council, AFL-CIO; and Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass).

The March on Washington comes at a time when anti-gay sentiments are running high. Much of this comes from AIDS hysteria and the increased discrimination against gay people or those perceived to be gay.

Last month, President Reagan opposed legislation that would have

protected people with the AIDS virus from discrimination. At the same time, the administration undermined a \$20-million program to send educational information on AIDS to every household in the country.

The time is long overdue to end all forms of discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation. Discrimination against all victims of the AIDS virus in the fields of healthcare, insurance, jobs, education, housing, and immigration must also end.

Mass mobilizations organized independently from the Democratic and Republican parties will be key to winning these battles. And the links made at the Oct. 10 Solidarity Reception among gay and labor activists will hopefully serve to build an even broader movement in the struggle to preserve our democratic rights.

The labor reception hosted by the AFL-CIO will be held in the lobby of its national headquarters at 815 16th St., N.W. in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, Oct. 10, from 4 to 7 p.m.

For more information on the march and related events call: (202) 783-1828 in Washington, D.C., or (415) 861-0318 in San Francisco.—M.M.G.