

**MARCH 8: CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S DAY SEE PAGES 10 AND 11**

# Socialist Worker

Paper of the International Socialist Organization 25¢ monthly



MEXICO

SEE PAGES 8 AND 9

MARCH 1984



NUMBER 83

## SUPREME COURT RULES AGAINST UNIONS STOP THE ATTACK ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

The bosses' attacks on labor got government blessing on February 22, 1984, when the Supreme Court ruled that any company may scrap its union contracts by simply declaring that the business is in trouble.

A business need not prove that honoring union agreements would threaten its survival. It has to show merely that labor costs are "burdensome," and that cancelling union contracts is in the "best interest" of the company.

### CUTS

Never mind that the resulting wage and benefit cuts would be "burdensome" to the millions of workers involved. The court obviously cares little for workers' "best interests."

As the Wall Street Journal gleefully noted, "bankruptcy filings, once the worst nightmare of any business, now are a more attractive option than ever, and a major bargaining tool for businesses."

The court's ruling endorses Continental Airlines' 1983 cancelling of union contracts with its 12,000 workers. In September, Continental declared bankruptcy, cut wages in half and lengthened its working day by 50%.

Workers are still on strike, but with no action and solidarity from the AFL-CIO their situation is bleak.

The Supreme Court decision is only the latest in a series of attacks on organized labor that began with corporate demands for union conces-

sions in the late 1970s.

The anti-union drive got a huge boost when Ronald Reagan fired striking air traffic controllers and destroyed their union, PATCO.

### SUCCESS

The bosses' success against organized labor is evident in the Labor Department's finding that in 1983 wage increases for non-union workers exceeded those for union workers. This has not happened since 1978—and then it was only because the federal government increased the minimum wage by 15%.

Negotiated contracts have been big losers. Fully one-third of the 1983 agreements contained wage cuts. Another third resulted in freezes. Take a cut and we'll protect your jobs, the bosses say.

But Chrysler workers found otherwise. They took record cuts in 1979. The company is now making record profits and forcing workers to accept mandatory overtime—while thousands laid off during the company's earlier "crisis" remain jobless.

### LAI D OFF

Or ask the thousands to be laid off by U.S. Steel next month.

The bosses will continue their offensive. But workers can and must fight back where they are attacked—in the workplace. Rank and file organization, solidarity and militant struggle are the only ways to protect workers' rights and win back what the bosses have taken. □

*Continental workers protest court's decision, Chicago, February 25, 1984*





Ben Blake reports on Reagan's 1984 military budget

# Military spending leads to more poverty

The Reagan administration is currently engineering the largest military build-up in "peace time" history. This year \$308 billion will be pumped into the U.S. military machine.

If the Pentagon was ranked as a separate country, it would have the tenth largest economy in the world, with a Gross National Product twice the size of Mexico's.

## BUDGET

Reagan's recently released 1984 budget calls for more. In the next four years, over one and a half trillion dollars will be funneled into the U.S. armed forces.

In this election year, surprisingly little criticism of this monstrous build-up has been voiced by liberal opponents of Reagan. In fact, front-running Democratic Presidential candidate Walter Mondale and a large majority of Congressional Democrats quietly support a stepped-up arms race with the U.S.S.R.

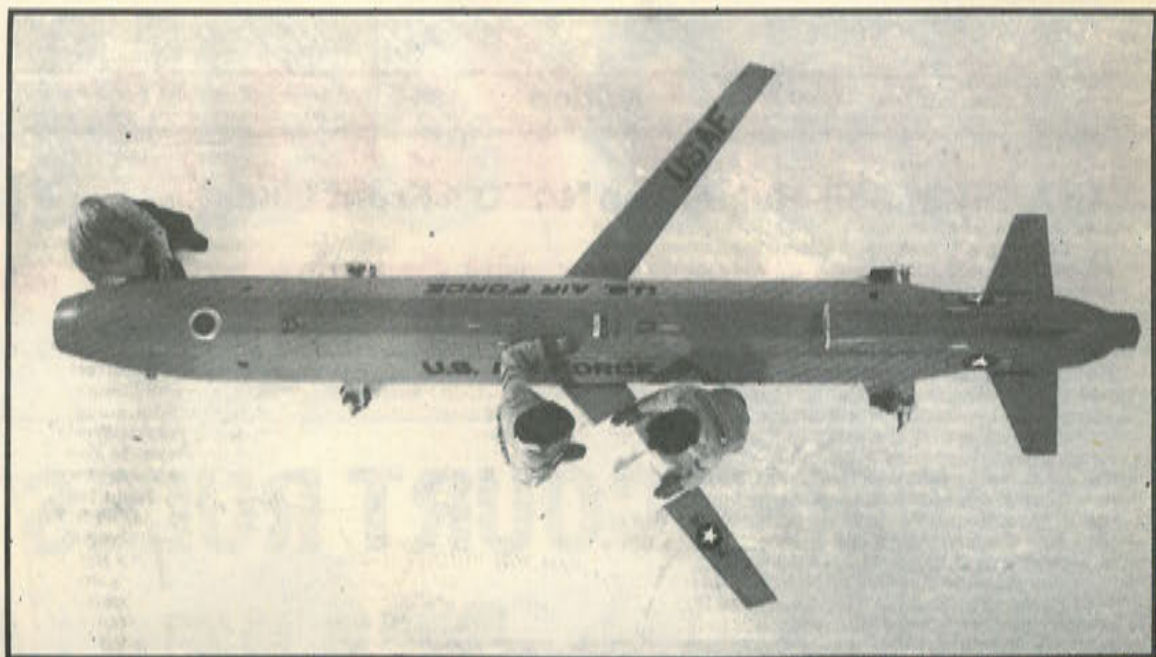
Consequently, disagreements between the candidates

have centered around the size of the increase necessary to counter Russian military might. This debate amounts to little more than a technical discussion of how many more billions of dollars it will take to effectively wage nuclear or conventional war to "defend American interests" around the globe.

The common assumption shared by both Reagan and Mondale in this campaign debate is that the working class and the people who run our society, politicians, generals and corporate executives, share a common interest in supporting an endless arms race. According to them, pouring money into the Pentagon not only defends America from "totalitarianism," but also aids economic growth, creates jobs and generally improves living standards.

## LOWERS

Apart from the fact that workers in both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. face a workplace dictatorship run by management, the arms race actually lowers economic growth and living standards in both countries. Military spending, unlike consumer or capital goods purchases, does not



Cruise missile under construction

feed back into the economy spurring economic expansion. Missiles sit in their silos unused (we hope), while machine tools can be used to produce parts for other sectors of industry aiding economic growth. Similarly, soldiers do not engage in productive activity like civilian workers who might operate machine tools. As a result, the hundreds of billions of dollars funneled to the Pentagon is a drain on

economic expansion. If the 5% of all economic resources devoted to the military was switched to the civilian economy, U.S. economic growth rates would immediately hit record levels.

## IMPACT

The arms race has a similar impact on the living standards of workers in the U.S. According to a 1981 study by the Employment Research Associates, if the average \$2,200 per household forfeited to the military was instead returned as a tax cut, not only would income rise by that amount, but over one and a half million new jobs would be created beyond the re-employment of workers in military related industries. This study also found that for every \$1 billion in military spending, there is a new loss of 12,000 jobs in the economy.

Put another way, the current military budget could be used to provide socially useful jobs at \$7/hour for the 10.5 million unemployed workers in the U.S.

Reagan, however, is moving in the opposite direction. This year \$21.6 billion was cut from government social programs, while \$26.1 billion is added to military expenditures. The Reagan administration's new proposed budget plans to continue this trade-off. \$29.7 billion is to be added to military spending, while over \$12 billion would be cut from a wide range of social programs, including job training, food

pensation, child nutrition, higher education, welfare and compensatory education for the disadvantaged.

For example, Reagan wants to spend \$6.9 billion to build seven B-1 bombers while eliminating 93% of all federal funding for new low-income housing, a \$5.3 billion cut. The Reagan administration also plans to spend \$2 billion more on the MX missile than on all federally funded job training programs.

Reagan's priorities and their consequences are clear. Militarism leads to poverty.

It is also clear that the Democrats to not offer an alternative to an endless arms race. Even George McGovern—the most radical Democratic Presidential candidate—calls for only a 25% reduction in arms spending. Because of the previous increases under Carter and Reagan, this would leave military spending above the level reached at the height of the Vietnam war.

## ROLE

More importantly, this reform perspective does not recognize the central role the arms race plays in the world system. The scale of the problem is too enormous for a step-at-a-time solution.

Ultimately, the revolutionary socialist transformation of both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. will be necessary to end the arms race and create a new society based on human need. □

# Blacks assigned the most hazardous jobs

Discrimination against Blacks not only leads to poverty and unequal opportunity—it also leads to a shorter life span. Life expectancy for Blacks is about five years shorter than for whites.

Because of racism, Blacks are assigned the dirtiest and most hazardous jobs where they are exposed to a higher level of toxic substances in the workplace. Blacks have a 37% higher risk of occupationally induced disease and a 20% higher death rate from these diseases.

In the steel mills, 89% of Black workers labor at coke ovens—the most dangerous part of the industry, so Black steelworkers have twice the cancer death rate of whites and eight times the lung cancer rate.

The overall rate of increase in the incidence of cancer is twice as high among Blacks. The rate is as much as fifteen-fold with some of the most fatal cancers including cancer of the colon and rectum.

## HOMES

Not only are Blacks exposed to excess toxins at work, but their homes are

DR DENA MAGOULIAS LOOKS AT RACISM AND ITS EFFECT ON THE HEALTH OF BLACKS

usually located in the most polluted communities in the inner cities. Black children suffer from lead poisoning at a rate three times that of white children. DDT contamination of Black Americans is three times greater than that of white Americans. 75% of hazardous waste sites are situated in predominately Black communities.

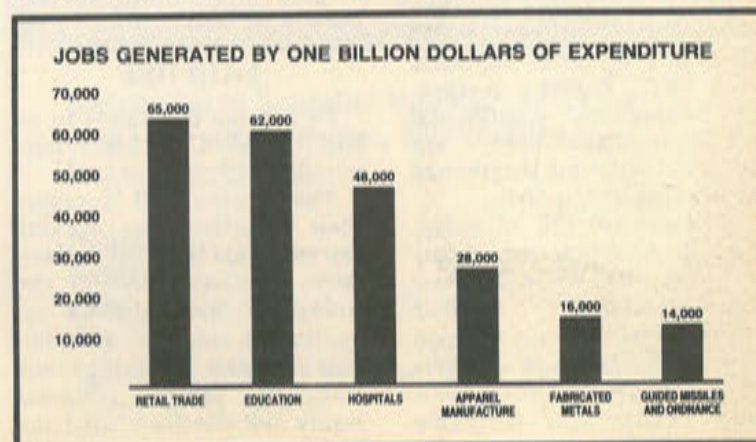
The Reagan administration has shown its racist response to the concerns of Blacks in many ways. By decreasing the government's role in regulating toxin exposures, Reagan is telling Blacks that their health doesn't matter. But during the scandal last March, Anne Buford, Reagan's EPA appointee, was exposed for her collusion with big business and for allowing thousands of waste violators to operate

with impunity.

In the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, citations for workplace violations have fallen 49% since Reagan took office, follow-up inspections have dropped 55%, and fines have dropped 77%. OSHA has also attempted to prevent the adoption of workplace standards for the use of 116 carcinogens. Regulations for one of these substances, ethylene oxide—a carcinogen that has induced a multitude of miscarriages among hospital workers, particular Blacks—were withdrawn after a meeting of manufacturers and OSHA officials.

## FOOLISH

As we can see from these examples, the government and its agencies are not taking a stand to protect people's health. And to believe they ever will is foolish. Only a strong workers' movement can succeed in the fight for a safe environment. And Black workers will be central to such a movement—or they will continue to bear the brunt of the government and big business partnership.





# USW ELECTIONS OFFER NO CHOICE

The United Steelworkers of America (USWA) will elect a new president this month—filling a vacancy left by Lloyd McBride's death last November. The election race sees two top union officers, Lynn Williams and Frank McKee, vying for the top post.

Both these candidates voted for the massive concessions that steelworkers gave up last March. Both blame imports for layoffs, and both argue for more labor-management cooperation instead of a fight to save jobs.

The problem is that the USWA is being offered no real alternative at a time when the rank and file needs one more than ever. The steel industry crisis has meant a drastic drop in the number of steel jobs in the U.S. As recently as 1979 the USWA had 140,000 members. It now has an estimated 70,000—of which only 20,000 are in basic steel.

## DEVASTATED

Youngstown has been devastated. 37,000 industrial jobs have been lost there over the last five years—20,000 of them union jobs.

In the Monongahela Valley around Pittsburgh, employment fell from 28,000 in steel to 8,000.

And not only have the number of jobs dropped, but also the wages for steelworkers have been slashed. Concessions average out to more than \$12,000 per worker to be lost over the 41 months of the present contract.

*Socialist Worker* talked with Ron Weisen, president of Local 1397—USS Homestead Works, about the upcoming election and the crisis in the steel industry. He was recently eliminated as a candidate for the USWA presidency.

Weisen doesn't see any alternative in this month's election. "You've seen the death of our union," he told *Socialist Worker* last month. "We've got a bureaucratic union. When you make \$200,000 a year, you eat with the rich, sleep with the rich, drink with the rich. You're not a steelworker."

"Both McKee and Williams are concessionaires. I won't support either. What we're doing is building a nucleus for 1985."

"Homestead was a battleground in 1892 and we have to turn it into a battleground again. We're up against the company, the banks and the International."

Weisen believes that the International leadership of the union has systematically misled steelworkers—giving in to the companies too easily.

"In July they came forward with a \$2 billion package of concessions—the Executive Board unanimously turned it down. They said it was too much money. They came back in November with a \$4 billion package of concessions and the Executive Board unanimously endorsed it! They caved in."

"They got \$5.50 an hour out of the U.S. Steel plant in

Johnstown and they went back asking them for \$3.50 more. That's \$9.00 an hour they're taking off in wages and benefits."

## STREETS

"What we're saying is that we've got to go back on the streets like in the 1930s, take our gloves off and take these corporations on, take these crooked politicians on. I don't care whether they're Republican or Democrat. Who can tell the difference."

"We've got to go out and fight. We had to go out and fight for everything we got. We've got to take them on. We've got to show them that our jobs are more important than their greed. And we're still a powerful force in this country." □



Above: Ron Weisen  
Right: Protest in Pittsburgh—February 14, 1984



## McDonnell-Douglas strike sold out by UAW leaders

LONG BEACH, CA—After 16 weeks on strike, aerospace workers at McDonnell-Douglas Corporation, members of United Automobile Worker (UAW) Local 148, went back to work on February 13.

Ninety-five percent of the local voted in favor of a new three-year contract that included a wage freeze for most current employees, work rule concessions that allow management to eliminate jobs and creation of a two-tier wage—in other words, a permanent subclass of newly hired workers earning a lower rate of pay.

The strike was the longest in McDonnell-Douglas history and a serious defeat for the UAW. The contract approved by Local 148 was almost identical to two previous company proposals that were overwhelmingly rejected.

### Joe Allen analyzes the McDonnell-Douglas strike

Why did the strikers completely reverse their two previous votes on company proposals?

The answer is to be found in the increasing pressure put on the strikers by McDonnell-Douglas and the crucial intervention of the UAW's International leadership to end the strike and appease the bosses.

### TACTICS

McDonnell-Douglas, adopted tactics used by Greyhound and Continental Airlines to attempt to bust their unions. It began to hire scabs and told workers they would lose their jobs if they didn't return to work by January 27. Many UAW members began to cross picket lines and return to work.

When the strike began in October, 1983, 4,600 members struck against three McDonnell-Douglas plants in Oklahoma, Arkansas and California. In mid-January, the Oklahoma and Arkansas locals voted for the concession contract and returned to work. In February, less than 2,500 were still on strike. Almost half of the local lost faith in their ability to win the strike.

But Local 148 in Long Beach voted 72% against the company's proposals. Then the international UAW leadership in Detroit intervened to end the



McDonnell-Douglas strike

strike.

The attitude of UAW leadership toward the strike was summed up by Ray Majerus, director of the UAW's aerospace department who said that the strike "no longer serves a purpose."

The International leadership ordered the Local 148 membership vote on a company proposal almost identical to the one they had just rejected. The strikers became demoralized and isolated and voted in favor of the contract.

### BETRAYED

One UAW member and an employee at McDonnell-Douglas for over 10 years said, "We felt betrayed. The International was worse than the

scabs forcing us to accept a contract we didn't want. We were unsupported and people started streaming across the picket line."

Union bureaucrats will call out the rank and file when their own prerogatives are threatened and under pressure from the ranks. But they resist mobilization of the rank and file.

Union bureaucrats live in fear of rank and file militancy which potentially threatens their own power and prestige. When this happens, they intervene to diffuse the situation, like with Local 148 in Long Beach, to regain control and appease the bosses.

Owen Bieber, president of the UAW, began his term by saying: "I don't want to suggest that you will never see a strike again by this union in the United States, but on the whole, you are going to see a lot more cooperation than 10 years ago."

But anger among UAW members has forced Bieber to adopt more militant rhetoric. Now he says that the UAW's days of "Mr. Nice Guy are over." The UAW slogan for the fall negotiations is "restore and more in '84."

The UAW will enter negotiations with a "recovery" that has fattened the profits of the Big 3 automakers—GM, Ford and Chrysler—with rec-

ord combined profits of \$6.5 billion in 1983.

Meanwhile, UAW members have suffered declining wages and benefits and forced overtime. Hundreds of thousands of UAW members are still laid off.

GM and Ford plan a new round of attacks on wages, benefits, working conditions and jobs. GM plans to eliminate 60,000-120,000 jobs in its U.S. plants by August 1986 through automation, attrition and plant closings. GM also wants to contract out work formerly done by UAW workers.

Bieber's rhetoric will, in all likelihood, become more militant as the year progresses. But the true colors of the union leadership have been demonstrated at the recent McDonnell-Douglas strike and over the last four years in getting the UAW ranks to accept concessions and layoffs.

### LESSON

The key lesson from the recent history of the UAW and of the Greyhound, Continental Airlines and PATCO struggles is the necessity of rank and file organization and solidarity among workers. If these ideas are not put into practice this fall against GM and Ford, the UAW will suffer an even greater defeat than those already seen. □

\$5.50

1983-1982

**THE BRIGGS STRIKE**

FIFTH ANNUAL EDITION  
BY JOHN ANDERSON

Available from HERA PRESS



# Talking about socialism

## WHY WORKERS ARE THE REVOLUTIONARY CLASS

A major gain of the civil rights movement 15 years ago was the flourishing of socialist ideas. A new generation discovered the importance of Marxist ideas, and many began to look for ways to put class politics into practice.

New left organizations began to talk about the working class. Students for a Democratic Society, for instance, sponsored "summers in the factory" programs. Other groups went into sweatshops where the "most oppressed sections" of the class toil.

Rediscovering the working class was an important development in a country cut off, for a generation, from the ideas of Marx. But as capitalism has gone into crisis the movements died, many of these new socialists have "lost faith" in the working class as the agent for change.

In place of activity that sees the working class as central, a whole range of substitute strategies have arisen: lowest common denominator coalitions, lesser evil electoral activity and sectional vanguardism—arguing that Blacks, women or Hispanics will necessarily lead.

The working class has become one of several constituencies of equal weight to lobby for support. Strikes have become less important than lobbying or voter registration.

### FICKLE

This fickle relationship to working class politics reveals the real weakness of the way socialist ideas were learned in the heady days of the large movements. In retrospect it seems there was more romance in the ideas than a clear understanding of what Marx meant by the working class being a revolutionary class.

Marx called the working class a revolutionary class because of its position in capitalist society.

Its revolutionary nature does not come from looking at mass activity at any particular period: it is a definition of historical potential, not day-to-day activity.

Identifying the revolutionary class, however, is not a prescription for moving directly to fulfilling its task. Instant revolution is one of those illusions about the working class that has frequently

by BILL ROBERTS

surfaced in socialist history.

In Marx's day, the impatient revolutionaries were the ultra-left in the Communist League. These intellectuals quickly abandoned the working class and revolutionary ideas with the failure of revolution to sweep Europe in 1849.

Similar attitudes developed among student revolutionaries 15 years ago with the ideas of revolutionary Marxism coming out of the anti-war movement.

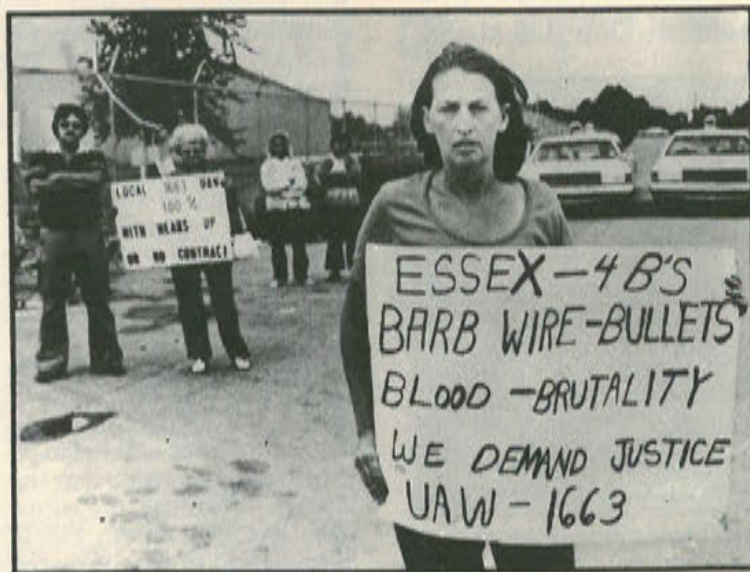
With little or no historical perspective and no credible revolutionary organization to guide them, it was easy for these new socialists to develop illusions about the working class. Many adopted idealized conceptions of the working class extolling its backwardness as well as its laudible qualities.

Middle class students moved into working class neighborhoods, turned their backs on PhD educations for factory lives, and even hid their socialism in order to become "workers."

Marx rejected the romantic approach to the working class in the *Communist Manifesto* when he suggested that such socialists "are conscious of caring chiefly for the interests of the working class as being the most suffering class. Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them."

Marx's approach was entirely different. He looked to the working class as the only

Essex strikers in 1976



class capable of overturning capitalism.

"It is a not question of what this or that proletariat, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment regards as its aim. It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with this being it will historically be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is visibly and irrevocably foreshadowed in its life situation as well as the full organization of bourgeois society today."

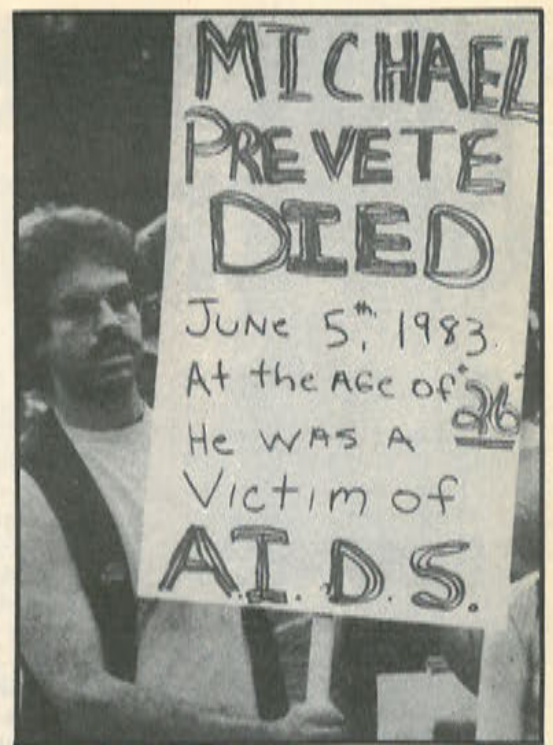
### CONDITION

The condition of the working class must be viewed historically and on a world scale. Because the organizations of the class are in a weakened position and on the run, this does not signal the demise of the revolutionary role of the class. The tasks are the same—only the conditions have changed.

Marx wrote in the *Holy Family*, "The proletariat cannot emancipate itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life in society today which are summed up in its own situation."

It is not an act of faith which should guide socialists to stick with the working class in its periods of retreat. Only through a clear understanding of the nature of capitalism and the historical role of the working class—coupled with a commitment to fighting for socialism—can we guide our activity through the downs as well as the ups of class war. □

Profit determines how AIDS patients are treated. Most patients are unable to pay the enormous expenses on their own.



## AIDS crisis more than medical

by ANDY THAYER

Recent weeks have seen what appears to be a leveling off in the rate of newly recorded AIDS cases—but the problems behind the ailment remain. Previously, new AIDS cases were doubling every six months, a rate which prompted one researcher to say that "this epidemic is going right through the roof. It's growth curve is not linear—it's exponential."

Though researchers are saying that the rate of new cases is stabilizing, the mortality rate remains quite high with reliable estimates ranging anywhere between 74 and 100%. Gay and bisexual men continue to account for about 70% of all AIDS cases.

### MEDICAL

But to speak of AIDS in strictly medical terms ignores some important related issues. The politics of the medical industry and the role of the mainstream media in the "AIDS Scare" are crucial to understanding how and why AIDS differs from previous epidemics.

Witness the *Cambridge Tab's* headline "Dangerous gay plague surfaces," or the *New York Times* magazine's references to non-gay victims of AIDS as "innocent bystanders in the path of a new disease."

Presumably the times feels that gay AIDS patients are somehow "guilty."

Unfortunately, thinly disguised anti-gay stories such as these do have an effect on people's attitudes towards lesbians and gays. While there is not yet broad statistical evidence linking the AIDS scare story to increased violence against us, many individual cases of AIDS related violence have been documented. Furthermore, a recent Gallup poll showed that 21% of the respondents who said they personally knew gays or lesbians said they now feel less comfortable with

these acquaintances since they heard of AIDS.

Besides often subtly projecting bigotted attitudes, news reports have generally ignored how AIDS is related to a medical industry whose primary goal is profit, not health care. While news reports such as a *New York Magazine* article headlined "The Gay Plague," the fact remains that other preventable diseases continue to kill far more people in the U.S.

For example, while AIDS has killed 1,340 since it was first identified in 1979, over 5,000 people per year die of hepatitis B—a disease preventable by vaccination. The problem is that the hepatitis B vaccine costs about \$175 per patient and most people at risk are not vaccinated unless they can personally afford the cost. If professional care and not profit was the goal of the medical industry, these 5,000 Americans need not die each year.

### PROFIT

Monetary profit also often determines how AIDS patients themselves are treated. While conservative guesses show that the care for an AIDS patient averages \$60,000 and ranges as high as \$150,000, most patients are unable to pay these expenses on their own. Patients whose jobs don't offer health insurance and can't afford to pay their own insurance are thus quite often left penniless and evicted from their apartments. Some have lost their jobs and thus their insurance coverage because they can't work regularly due to their illness.

Problems like these show some of the numerous deficiencies in the U.S. health care and social service system. Though a medical cure for AIDS still eludes researchers, many of the other problems associated with AIDS are certainly "curable." □

# Graffiti



### HOLIDAY IN THE SUN . . .

Those planning Caribbean cruises in the spring should be reassured by a *New York Times* tourism report from Grenada. Wrote Barbara Gelb: "There is little visible serious damage to spoil a tourist's holiday, and anyone with a sense of adventure will find a visit to Grenada exhilarating." Nice.

### THE RIGHT STUFF . . .

Democratic presidential candidate John Glenn, who insists that, "No one is going to be any more pushy about keeping peace in this world than I will," had a slightly different view of war when he was a U.S. Marine.

Then, Glenn, known to his friends as "MiG Mad Marine," wrote to his parents: "Funny how the bullets sparkle when they hit a plane. Just light up like little lights every time a bullet hits."



# LABOR AND THE ELECTIONS

## Democrats are no alternative to Reagan

### Socialist Worker

WHAT WE THINK

Walter Mondale has surged ahead in the race to become the Democratic nominee for President.

Key to his success has been the support of organized labor. The AFL-CIO last December gave him an unprecedented pre-primary endorsement, handed over its full 13.8 member mailing list and 95 full-time campaign workers—not to mention a \$20 million donation by the federation's Committee for Political Education.

#### HOUSTON PROJECT

Compare these figures to the \$1 million sum that the AFL-CIO spent on the Houston Project, its 1982-83 effort to organize the unorganized. Rather than try to rebuild declining membership or organizing in non-union industries, the AFL-CIO has poured its resources into one man. The bureaucrats say that he alone can deliver the goods to millions of American workers.

Mondale, they say, will turn the tide against the anti-union attacks that Reagan

has supported. Mondale will restore workers' standards of living that eroded during the Reagan recession.

But such arguments are ridiculous.

They ignore Mondale's lengthy list of promises to business. First, of course, is higher profit rates for everyone, stimulated by a vague "national industrial policy" that will raise productivity and increase U.S. competitiveness abroad.

Never mind that "higher productivity" is a business code phrase for making workers work harder, faster and longer for less pay.

Mondale's past is as questionable as his promises.

AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland has somehow overlooked the fact that Vice-President Mondale stood by as President Jimmy Carter invoked Taft-Hartley in the 1977-78 coal miners' strike.

United Auto Workers President Owen Bieber apparently didn't notice that Mondale played a major broker's role in negotiating the 1979 Chrysler-UAW contract, which launched the



current wave of concessionary union contracts.

Perhaps Bieber didn't hear Mondale when he announced that as president one of his major goals would be to aid more Chrysler-like experiments in "labor-management cooperation."

Workers' reliance on politicians is a dead-end. And in the current era of union busting, directing unions' energies into presidential politics leaves the labor movement exposed to crippling attacks.

When the Supreme Court ruled last month that any company which considers itself in financial trouble can dissolve its union contracts, non of the major labor leaders called for even a symbolic industrial action in protest.

#### "LEFT-WING"

Even the most "left-wing" of the bureaucrats, William Winpisinger, did not call for action. A self-proclaimed "socialist," Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists, has said that "the strike is labor's weakest weapon."

Thus he could only sputter helplessly when asked to comment on the Supreme Court decision. Winpisinger was meeting with other AFL-CIO leaders at the federation's posh Bal Harbor retreat in Florida.

The union bureaucrats easily could have used the Bal Harbor meeting to plan an immediate protest of the Supreme Court ruling.

But their acceptance of concession contracts indicates that the interests of the rank and file do not figure in their strategies.

They are waiting for the labor movement to be rescued from one set of politicians by another. Where Solidarity Day I in 1981 attracted over a million people to march in Washington, D.C., Solidarity Day IV—according to the union heads—is scheduled for Election Day, 1984.

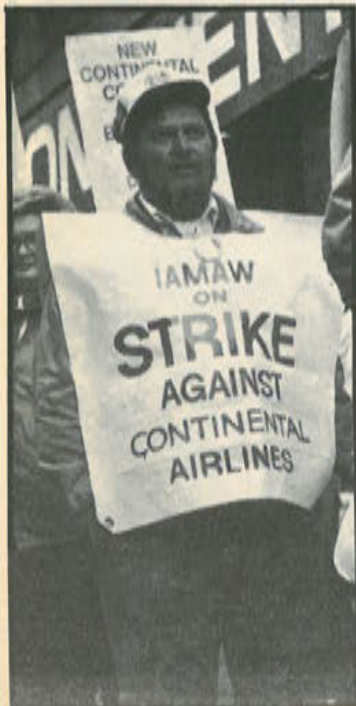
For the labor leaders "solidarity" does not mean honoring picket lines and promoting inter-union support for struggles. To them solidarity means casting a ballot for Fritz Mondale.

History shows the futility of such a strategy. Whenever "sympathetic" politicians have helped labor, they have been forced to do so by mass rank and file upsurge. A prime example is the 1930s, when huge strikes and protests led by industrial unionists forced a Democratic government to recognize their right to organize.

The only force workers can rely on is their collective strength. Rebuilding the confidence of workers is the key task today.

Looking to the elections as the way to turn back the current offensive against workers is simply wrong. It is not at the ballot box that power lies—but in the factories and offices. Defend our unions! No more concessions!

## CONTINENTAL PILOT LEARNS BITTER LESSONS



The Supreme Court ruling backed up Continental Airlines' tactic of going bankrupt in order to void union contracts.

But some workers have learned important lessons. Socialist Worker spoke with Jim Ketner, a Continental pilot:

"We (the Air Line Pilots Association) erroneously supported Reagan in 1980. We erroneously did not support PATCO. We didn't think it would affect us—and now we got screwed.

"I used to believe that if you were good, honest and hard-working, you would get ahead. But that simply is not true.

"I was a pilot in Viet Nam. I gave it my best. But for what? I fought for Spiro Agnew and Richard Nixon and I found out that if you are high enough in public office, you are above the law.

"The working class has to stick together to fight the union busting. The working class is everybody who isn't part of the ruling class. And that's almost everybody.

"The working class can't fight this unless it is done collectively. You know, what we need is a business whose job would be to fight business."

### SOCIALIST WORKER

March, 1984

Socialist Worker is published monthly by the International Socialist Organization, P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, IL 60616



# LONGSHOREMEN'S STRIKE: THE FIGHT IS NOT OVER

BALTIMORE, MD—"We're the rank and file and we're out here. They're sitting downtown making \$80,000 a year, and they're telling us to go back to work. I think they're trying to sell us down the tubes."

This is how one striking longshoreman expressed his frustration with the union bureaucrats of the International Longshoremen Association (ILA). 3,000 longshoremen walked off the job on February 9—at Baltimore's Dundalk Marine Terminal and Locust Point facilities—yet strong divisions in the union and active sabotage by the union officials threatened the strike's success from the start.

Of the five ILA locals, two accepted the contract. But stevedores of Local 333—the largest local in the ports—got the strike vote passed.

## EMPLOYERS

William Detweiler, president of the employers' organization, the Steamship Trade Association (STA), thought the contract would "work to everyone's advantage." Baltimore ILA vice president John Kopp agreed saying, "I think it's the best we can get."

But Local 333 president Garris McFadden and the rank and file thought differently.

by STEVE CROSS  
and TY MILLER

"We'd be going back twenty years," said one longshoreman.

At the center of their dissatisfaction is the new contract treatment of rain pay. Under the old contract, Baltimore longshoremen could stop work when it rained and still receive four hours pay. The new contract would force them to work in the rain.

The dock bosses were overjoyed to restore this dangerous practice in the interests of profitability. "It's great," STA president Detweiler said of the agreement. "I think the worldwide reputation we have for not working in the rain will be wiped out. We'll be back in the 'good graces' of the maritime industry."

But most longshoremen could care less about the good graces of the industry.

Equally important as strike issues are unfair hiring practices and the current seniority system.

The bosses have pushed in friends and relatives and favored some workers over others in order to undercut the seniority system and divide the workforce.

And the abuses went further. Longshoremen have an employment agreement which

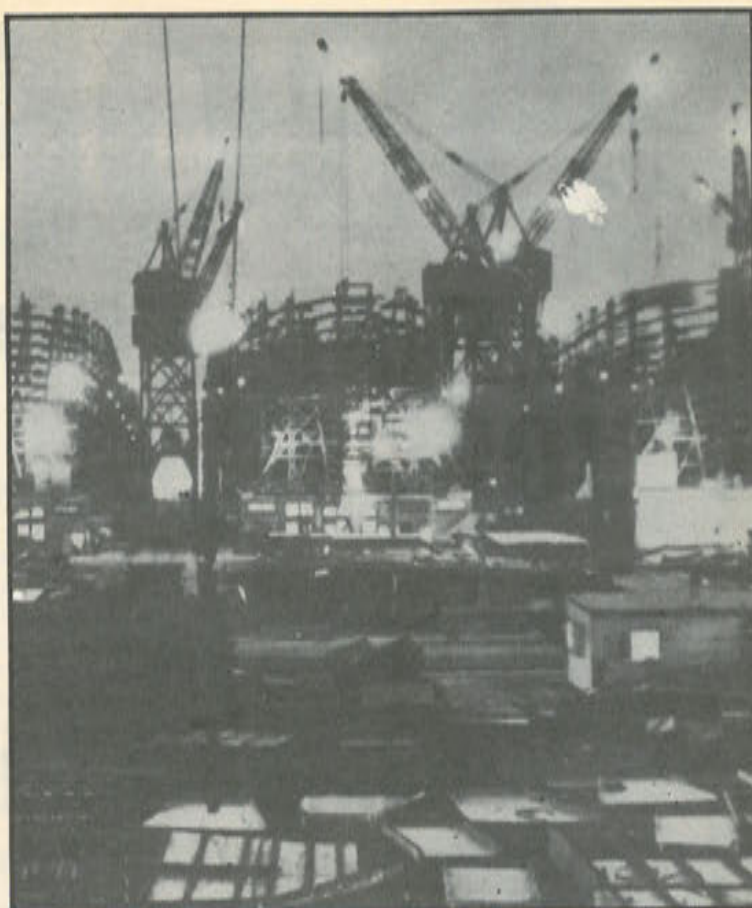
entitles them to part of a day's pay if they show up at the hiring hall and are not given work for the day. But some workers rarely get hired and others lose their guaranteed pay through a debiting system which no one can understand except the bosses and their accountants. One dockworker told us of being guaranteed 1,900 hours pay and receiving only 900 hours—an inexplicable debiting of 1,000 hours pay!

## ANSWER

The answer, as McFadden and the rank and file have argued, is to regain union control over hiring and to institute a port-wide seniority system. But this new system would obviously threaten the old network of privilege and favoritism. So rumors were spread claiming that McFadden had misrepresented the contract and ILA president Thomas Geason intervened from New York to force a revote on the contract proposal.

A meeting was held—if ninety minutes of booing and jeering by angry longshoremen can be called a meeting. And when the second vote was taken, 1,800 Local 333 members refused to vote, driving the balloters from the hiring hall in fear for their lives.

By some bizarre reasoning, however, the ILA bureaucrats



Baltimore docks

interpreted this response as approval, declared the contract accepted and ordered the longshoremen back to work. But Local 333 defied them once again and kept the ports shut down.

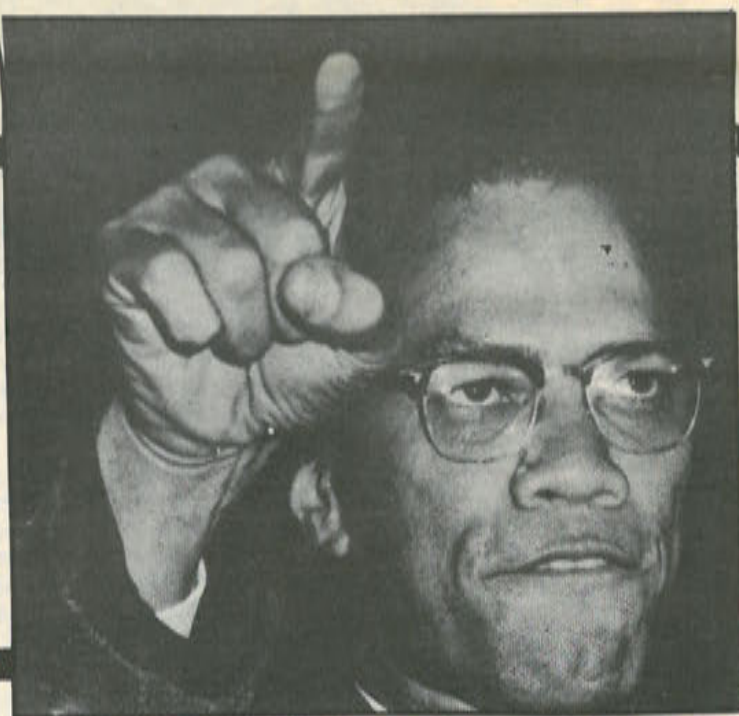
So when the union bureaucracy failed them, the bosses turned to the state to do their dirty work. On February 16, a district court judge ordered Local 333 back to work, citing the "irrevocable harm" the strike had caused and appealing to the "public interest." The following day Local 333

gave in and returned to work. But Local 333 members have vowed to walk off the job once again when the judge's order expires. This time they will have to choose between respect for the law and their rights as workers. For on February 25, the bosses obtained a second court order binding Local 333 to the contract vote and forbidding them from resuming their strike.

This much is clear: the final word has not been said in the Baltimore longshoremen's strike. □

## BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY: BLACK POLITICS IN AMERICA

# BEING BLACK IS SUSPECT IN TODAY'S SOUTH



It is enough to make you scream. It's the new South and the old South blurred into an unmistakable package of racism, paranoia, suspicion and hatred.

It is the now familiar story of a Black man—this time Lenell Geter—in prison for a crime he did not commit. Geter, 26, was thrown in jail because an elderly white woman, Jewell Peavey, felt threatened by the color of his skin. He is accused of robbing a fast food restaurant in Texas and sentenced to life in prison.

## SWEAR

Despite the fact that co-workers at E-Systems Inc. where Geter works, swear he was at work that day. Despite the fact that E-Systems is located 44 miles from where the robbery took place. And despite conflicting reports by witnesses, police and allega-

by AZAR HANIF

tions of intimidation against Geter, he was convicted and imprisoned for 16 months.

But let's go back to the steamy morning of August 23, 1982 in Balch Springs, Texas, a suburb of Dallas.

For weeks Texas sweltered under a heat wave that gripped most of the south. Doing what thousands of people did to cool off from this heat, Geter frequently visited a city park to sit under a tree. That in itself was enough to make him suspect.

Peavey, 68, testified in a recent hearing that she became afraid of Geter because he often came to the park and sat by a duck pond. "I kept seeing this colored man get out of his car and just sit there," Peavey said. "It just made me nervous, upset me. I was at home

alone by myself."

When Peavey heard about the robbery, she gave the license number of Geter's car to police who traced it to his home address in South Carolina. The rest is history. Police staked out Geter's home for two days, arrested him, considered him a top suspect and railroaded him into prison. At his first trial there were conflicting police reports. Key defense witnesses like Geter's co-workers who saw him that day were not called to testify.

## PUBLICITY

Only after national publicity, including several investigative reports by CBS' "60 Minutes," was Geter released from jail. A new trial has been set for this spring.

Geter is more than a victim of America's injustice system. But a victim of racism 1980s style. Despite a nice job, good education and a relatively

secure position in society, Geter was thrown in jail primarily because he is Black. In America, and particularly in the American south, being

Black is automatically suspect. All charges against Geter should be thrown out since they were based on racism and injustice. □

Marching in Jackson—1983







# Andropov's successor faces same problems

Andropov's death highlights the crisis of Russian society. Chris Harman explains



Andropov's end epitomized the problems of the regime over which he ruled.

He came to power 15 months ago determined to re-vamp and modernize Russia. The popular press in the West denounced him as a warmonger and bully, but the attitude of some of the newspaper columnists was very different.

### "CULTURED"

They saw him as a new sort of ruler—"intelligent," "cultured," interested in modern art and jazz, a break from the mediocrity which had characterized the Brezhnev years.

Even his past as the butcher of the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and the organizer of the literary show trials of the 1960s was not held against him. Instead, this was seen to give him the necessary standing to carry through deep-seated reform.

He certainly started out as if this was the path he intended to follow. He accumulated total authority into his hands much more quickly than his predecessors—Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev—making himself not only general secretary of the ruling party, but also president of the state.

He lambasted inefficiency and ordered spectacular arrests of the more openly corrupt friends of the Brezhnev family.

Yet a year after he assumed power, little or nothing had changed in Russia. Industry continued to stagnate. Agriculture continued to provide insufficient

food. For every bureaucrat jailed for corruption, a hundred more continued to flourish.

### AFGHANISTAN

The guerrilla war in Afghanistan continued to take a relentless toll on Russian troops and resources. The American arms drive continued to expose the technological weakness of much of Russia's economy. And Andropov himself was no longer a powerhouse preaching efficiency, but a bedridden old man waiting for his turn to die.

Some commentators seem to think that things would have worked out differently if only Andropov had not been taken ill or if he had been able to assume control from Brezhnev a few years earlier. In their view, the Russian regime could solve its problems if only someone younger and more energetic could take control.

But Andropov did not fail because his time in office was so short or because his health deteriorated. He failed because the problems facing him could not be solved through reform—however thorough or energetic.

His successors face the hard truth that Russia is in a crisis much like the one in the West.

This crisis does not mean an immediate and complete collapse of the existing economic and social system. But it does mean continual economic stagnation, an inability to satisfy the most elementary needs of wide sections of the population, cynicism and corruption in the ruling circles, periodic strikes and riots or even uprisings from those at society's bottom.

The nature of the crisis is clear when you compare the two decades in which Brezhnev and then Andropov ruled with the earlier periods of rule of Stalin and Khrushchev.

Stalin came to power over the corpse of the Russian revolution. The early promise of a free and harmonious society run on the basis of workers' power had already been struck a mortal blow by foreign intervention, civil war and economic devastation.

### REVOLUTION

The working class which had made the revolution had virtually disintegrated by the early 1920s, and power was left in the hands of privileged bureaucrats.

Stalin organized these people to wipe out the last traces of the revolution—whether workers' control in the factory or a commitment to international revolution.

But he also had to defend the power of the new ruling bureaucracy against threats from abroad, and this could only be done if there was massive industrial development in Russia.

All the methods used to build up industry in the West were imitated inside Russia—the lengthening of the working day, the slashing of the living standards of the mass of people, the imposition of harsh piece work systems, child labor, the driving of peasants from their land at gunpoint, the establishment of slave camps and massive overcrowding in rapidly growing urban slums.

These things had been imposed upon the rest of society by private capitalists in the West. In Russia the state played the same role. State capitalism arose at the expense of the mass of workers and peasants.

It was this which explained the horrors of Stalin's regime. All the barbarities which had occurred over hundreds of years of capitalist development in the West were concentrated into two or three decades in Russia.

These were hard times for the individual bureaucrats. Tens of thousands went to their deaths in the execution chambers of the secret police, and hundreds of thousands were consigned to the living death of the labor camps. People lived in fear of a police presence that seemed to permeate the whole of society.

### ACHIEVEMENT

But at the end of that period the bureaucracy as a whole could feel a sense of achievement. Industry had grown many times over. While three million workers had been exploited before, now tens of millions were.

What had been a backward country was now the world's second industrial power. And the country had managed to emerge victorious from the second world war, but at enormous cost.

The Khrushchev period was also a period of achievement, but of a different sort.

The forced industrialization of the Stalin era had created a bitter mass of people at the bottom of society, both in Russia and in the Eastern European countries. This threatened to erupt into revolutionary upheaval in the period immediately following Stalin's death in 1953.

There was an uprising in East Germany, riots in Czechoslovakia, strikes in the largest Russian labor camp—Vorkuta, riots in Poznan in Poland and then an uprising involving the formation of workers' councils in Hungary.

At the same time, it became clear that the massive economic growth rates could not be sustained. Areas of waste and inefficiency which earlier could be ignored now needed urgent attention. This was especially true of agriculture which had been so robbed of resources while industry was being built up that it could no longer be relied upon to feed the country's population.

Khrushchev pushed through reform after reform in an effort to deal with these problems. He emptied the labor camps of most of the slaves, freeing a new source of wage labor for industry.

He allowed workers' living standards to rise a little. He reduced the activities of the secret police to a shadow of their former practice. He allowed the rulers of Eastern Europe a new degree of autonomy from Russia.

Khrushchev enjoyed a limited success. The revolts of 1953-1956 were crushed and new ones failed to break out. Bureaucratic rule became more relaxed, and Russian society enjoyed new stability.

But more important underlying problems were left unsolved. The economic growth rate continued to decline, until it was no higher than that of the major Western countries. The failure of agriculture required the importation of huge quantities of food. And the biggest Communist state—China—severed its ties with Russia.

These problems led to the Kremlin coup of 1964 in which Brezhnev ousted Khrushchev. Still, none of them have been solved in the 20 years since.

The Brezhnev years were marked by periodic attempts to reform industry, periodic drives to increase food output, periodic attempts to make a deal with China and periodic attempts to crush all dissent within the Russian bloc. They all failed.

### LOWEST

The early 1980s have seen the lowest rates of economic growth since the 1920s. Russian technology is visibly falling behind that of its major competitor—the U.S. The harvest is disastrous at least two years out of every five. And dissent throughout the Russian bloc is on a wider scale than ever before.

Stalin was able to crush any glimmer of opposition to his rule. Khrushchev had a harder time, but did succeed in smashing the rebellions of 1953-1956 so completely that even the memory of them was virtually erased.

But Brezhnev's last years saw a new wave of rebellion. In 1980-1981 there were strikes in Russia's huge auto plants of Togliatti-grad, Karma River and Gorki, strikes and riots in Estonia, near mutinies by members of the military reserve in the Ukraine and riots in Ordzhonikidze in the Caucasus. Above all, one of the biggest workers' movements the world has ever seen rapidly grew just a few hundred miles from Moscow—in Poland.

The imposition of military rule in Poland has stopped outright rebellion, but only for the time being. The fact that Solidarnosc continues to operate as a massive underground organization is proof that police methods alone cannot halt the rot eating at the roots of state capitalist rule.

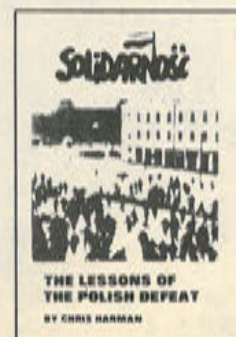
### STAGNATION

In writing about Western capitalism, Karl Marx noted that the rapid expansion of production of its youth led, inevitably, to stagnation and crisis in its old age. The same applies to state capitalism in the Eastern bloc.

Andropov dreamed of restoring the system to the vigor and sense of purpose it knew a few decades back. He failed because the whole system was as sick as his own body. His successors will be equally unsuccessful. □



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# MEXICO: POVERTY AND RESISTANCE

Grinding poverty, repression and government corruption are everyday features of life for Mexicans. But in spite of the repression, the economic crisis has led to a surge of worker militancy. Anne Griffiths reports.

Everywhere in Mexico, from the largest department store that sells Magnavox consumer electronics to the small grocery that sells Del Monte snack food, there is evidence of U.S. based companies.

Everywhere, in urban centers and rural towns, young children can be found living on the sidewalks next to their mothers trying to warm them, while begging tourists for pesos.

When the sun rises, these same children are sent out to beg or peddle some junk or trinkets so they can buy themselves a tortilla.

## UNEMPLOYED

Today over half the working-age population of Mexico is underemployed or unemployed. The minimum daily wage in Mexico is comparable to the average hourly wage in the U.S. Yet, more than half the working people earn less than the minimum wage. A staggering one third of Mexican families do not have the basic necessities of food and

shelter.

But despite these appalling statistics, Mexico is the fourth largest oil producer in the world, with 1981 oil revenues exceeding \$18 billion. Foreign bankers have invested \$7.5 billion since the second world war in Mexico's industrial production, which helped to spur Mexico's phenomenal twenty consecutive years of economic growth, averaging 7% per year.

This is a growth rate rivaled in few, if any, other countries for such a long period. But the revenues generated from oil and manufacturing have clearly not been applied to eliminating widespread poverty and massive unemployment.

In fact—like capital investment in all "Third World" countries—the incentive to invest in Mexico is largely due to the low per unit labor costs which permit foreign capital to extract huge profits.

The foreign investors are not the only enemy of Mexican workers, however. The Mexican ruling class acts in its own best interest in continued economic expansion at the expense of the working class.

The Mexican state and businessmen have formed partnerships with some of the world's largest multinational corpora-



Bottom left: Landless Mexicans  
Above left: Labor demonstration

tions, such as Allied Chemical, Owens Corning Fiberglass and DuPont. The Mexican state encourages local and international business by providing incentives, one of the lowest tax rates in the world, subsidized prices for raw materials, and most importantly, a controlled and low-paid workforce.

## CONTROL

Control of the working class is maintained by giving labor leaders high positions in Mexico's ruling party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Furthermore, whenever the non-unionized workers, peasants or the urban poor organize and become a potential threat to the state, their leaders are incorporated into official organizations. If a labor or peasant leader refuses to be coopted, severe repression—even assassination—is used as a deterrent.

Ironically, the PRI claims to be the heir to the 1910 revolution and its martyrs. But the revolution—which began as a regional peasant uprising against foreign-owned sugar companies that had driven agricultural communities off their land—was betrayed.

Initially, it was betrayed by Francisco Madero who, after assuming the presidency in 1911, refused to act on the agrarian question—siding with the Mexican and foreign bourgeoisie. Because of the peasant movements led by Villa and Zapata to redistribute land and the assassination of Madero, the bourgeoisie was forced to grant concessions to the peasants.

In 1917, a new constitution was written which included a program of land reform. Millions of acres were expropriated from large landowners and given to the peasants. But the state actually owned the land in a system called *ejido*. Today, half of all land is *ejido* land, but there are also over four million landless farmworkers.

And *ejido* farmers are forced to sell their labor power to wealthy farmers and multinational agribusinesses because their own farms are inefficient and unprofitable. Since *ejido* farmers have no collateral to borrow, they cannot get loans to modernize their farming methods. Government subsidies for feed, fertilizer and machinery are only available to large-scale farmers. And only the prosperous farms are located near government irrigation sites.

## CORRUPT

Aside from accommodating the wealthy farmers and private and foreign capitalists—while ignoring the plight of poor and working people—the Mexican government is profoundly corrupt. Government officials take kickbacks and bribes from businessmen.

Corruption is the unwritten but usual way of maintaining and boosting one's wealth and power. Jose Diaz Serrano, the head of the state oil monopoly between 1976 and 1981 double-billed the government for two oil tankers at a cost of \$3.4 million. Yet the PRI, which rhetorically calls their administration a "constitutional democracy," has ruled

Mexico since 1921.

This is because the PRI predetermines elections. The incumbent president chooses his successor and the upcoming crop of top officeholders. Even the governors are nominated by the PRI. But, as with any oppressive state, the policies of the corrupt, governing elite began to backfire.

The late 1960s and 1970s brought great social unrest. In 1968 a Mexican student movement erupted. Among the student protesters' issues were lack of democracy in Mexican politics, the domination of U.S. corporations over Mexico and American intervention in the Vietnam war. The demonstrations culminated in the Tlatelolco massacre in which police brutally murdered 400 protesters and imprisoned 1,500 more. This tragedy temporarily quelled opposition to the government.

But with no foreseeable improvement in living conditions, other forces began to fight back. Rural Mexicans—making up a third of the population but receiving less than 5% of the national income—organized thousands of small landowners to fight the brutal attacks by the army. Non-unionized as well as unionized workers defied their corrupt leadership and began taking their demands to the streets.

In the 1970s, the world economic crisis hit Mexico, raising prices and creating huge trade deficits. This caused industrial growth to end. Tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs, fomenting a surge in labor militancy.

## REPRESSION

Oil, mine, metal, transportation and telephone workers fought for trade union democracy but were met with harsh repression. Workers struggling at Volkswagen, Nissan, Ford, GM and other sections of the auto industry, were more successful. They won better hours and wage increases. Construction, textile and clerical workers also









# Grocery stores advertise for scabs

Dear Socialist Worker, "Scabs Wanted"—That's really what the ad said. The February issue of *Socialist Worker* reported on a grocery workers strike against four New Jersey supermarket chains, all of them demanding "givebacks."

On February 1, one of these companies, Shop Rite, slithered into Baltimore, advertised in the *Evening Sun* for "experienced meatcutters to work in New Jersey, and began interviewing applicants "for immediate employment" at "up to \$11.42 an hour."

Baltimore is a city that has not seen Reagan's "recovery." Local meatcutters and supermarket workers have been hit especially hard by the recession.

ACME, A&P, Pantry Pride and others have closed dozens of stores in Maryland. And Esskay, one of the state's largest meatcutters, has demanded givebacks, laid off workers and now may even close up altogether.

An area like this, with thousands of experienced and desperate unemployed workers must be a scab recruiter's idea

of union-busting heaven.

But these strikebreaking tactics are not new. The bosses have always gotten fat by eating away at the working class at its softest point. Sometimes they succeed, but they can't be beaten if we support the striking workers in the most practical ways.

Don't cross union picket lines. Boycott the union-busting stores. Hit the bosses and their scabs with the only real effective weapon we have—class struggle.

Bob Bernotas  
Baltimore, MD

# THE ORIGINS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

by KATHY OGREN

March 8 marks the anniversary of International Women's Day, a holiday commemorating the struggles of working women, the solidarity of the international socialist movement and the start of the Russian revolution of 1917.

In 1908, socialist women in the U.S. organized Women's Day demonstrations throughout the country. They demanded political rights for working women, and were part of the emergence of a more militant suffrage movement that helped to combat the racist and elitist strategies of dominant suffrage organizations in the U.S.

Socialist women saw the fight for suffrage as part of a larger attack on capitalism. The Socialist Party's paper argued that while the working woman "is entitled to the vote and must have it, it will avail her nothing till she learns to cast it on the side of the working class, against the capitalist class, and for a new and radically different social order."

They need not have worried—in the next two years working women demonstrated their own understanding of the class struggle by organizing unionization drives, especially in the garment industry. They agitated for political demands like the vote, but also for equal pay, unionization, child care and improved working conditions.

## RESOLUTION

Inspired by these women in America, the German revolutionary socialist, Clara Zetkin, introduced a resolution in 1910 to the Second International Conference of Socialist Working Women that they organize an International Working Women's Day.

The first official International Women's Day was held on March 19, 1911. In 1913 the date was changed back to March 8.

Until the outbreak of World War I, International Women's Day was celebrated with huge demonstrations and meetings throughout Europe. Women's Day in Russia was first celebrated in 1913. Because of the Tsarist autocracy Russian socialists could not hold public meetings. They held secret meetings that were often broken up by the police.

Bolshevik women participated in International Women's Day meetings and published newspapers like *Rabotniza* (Working Woman) to publicize factory conditions of proletarian women and agitate for change.

In 1916, the Bolsheviks appealed to women on International Women's Day to

condemn the carnage of the first world war.

"Working women! The government has sent our sons to their crucifixion for the sake of capital. So build your own organizations, band together in workshop and factory, office and shop, and let us roar in the face of insatiable capital: Enough blood! Down with the war! Bring the criminal autocracy to justice."

## ROAR

The following year, the working women in Russia roared so loudly that their 1917 International Women's Day became an inspiration to workers all over the world. Women textile workers in Petrograd decided—against everyone's advice—to strike on International Women's Day. Their strike became the first in a massive strike wave that brought several hundred thousand workers into the streets and forced the Tsar to abdicate.

As one witness later remembered: "The working women driven to desperation by starvation and war, came along like a hurricane that destroyed everything in its path with the violence of an elemental force. This revolutionary march of working women, full of the hatred of centuries of oppression, was the spark that set fire to the great flame of the February revolution."

Alexandra Kollontai, one of the leaders of the Bolsheviks, echoed this sentiment in her description of International Women's Day, "On this day the Russian women raised the torch of proletarian revolution and set the world on fire."

The success of working women's agitation in Europe, America and Russia was short lived. The unity of the international socialist movement was shattered when the German and French social democrats capitulated to their governments and supported World War I. In Russia the gains made for women in the 1917 revolution were lost when the civil war decimated the working class and Stalin rose to power. Today, International Women's Day is observed as a kind of mother's day in Russia. And although there are still marches and meetings in Europe and the U.S., many participants do not know that it was in the struggle of women workers that International Women's Day was born, or that it was nurtured by the international socialist movement.

Today, the need to fight women's oppression is as great as it was in the early twentieth century. And in the tradition of socialists like Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai the struggle for women's liberation cannot be separated from the fight against capitalism. The ISO invites you to help us in both commemorating International Women's Day and building the struggle for women's liberation and revolutionary socialism. □



# Letters

## YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Dear Socialist Worker,

There are many criteria used to judge whether a country is socialist or not. Peter Binns' article on Cuba mentioned the importance of several. However, another was implicitly present in the article, too. Where one reads that the second largest export commodity is tobacco, I assume sugar is still the main export.

If socialism is about the emancipation of the working class to promote the maximum rational control that people can have over their lives, what is a supposed (by some) socialist country doing producing sugar and tobacco on a mass scale?

This is not to say that I think people should not have control over what they eat, smoke, etc., and I'm not in favor of eliminating the availability of particular botanical plants. But it is a different matter for a state supposedly working in the interests of its own members and of working women and men the world over. To mass produce substances which are so well documented to promote chronic degenerative diseases, lung cancer, impairment of health in fetuses and young people and a shortened life span.

Given the nature of the world capitalist economy, I understand why Cuba buys into the system to produce these products. However, a socialist form of government would be expected to be concerned about promoting more nourishing exports and about colluding with what amounts to be further examples of massive, insidious food and drug poisoning.

D.J.  
Cincinnati, OH



## SW SELLERS HARASSED

Socialist Worker,

On a cold January 25, three comrades and I were selling copies of *Socialist Worker* outside the Salerno Megowen Biscuit plant in Niles, Illinois. Workers leaving and arriving at the plant during the afternoon shift change were pleased with the support and coverage of *Socialist Worker* which told the truth about their disheartening strike settlement.

Unfortunately, the plant

management was worried about us, so a concerned Niles Police Department kept our fingers from freezing by treating us to a four-squad-car trip to the police station.

This incident illustrates that even a small suburban police force will automatically align itself with management against the wishes of the workers, who supported our presence and wanted to talk with us.

Peter J. Cunningham  
Chicago, IL

## "Hats off to SW"

Dear Socialist Worker,

Hats off to Dan Petty's article, "We Can't All Work at McDonalds" in the February *Socialist Worker*! The language was simple and clear, yet it conveyed a complex story: that of the decline of heavy industry and manufacturing and the rise of the service sector. It contained historical background and statistics, and quotes from sources directly involved.

This article should serve as an example for *Socialist Worker* if for no other reason than this: it presents the facts in a straightforward manner without any tired slogans. The logical sequence in which the facts are presented and the smoothness with which the reader is led from one set of

facts and ideas to the next make the conclusions about the nature of the capitalist system and what we as socialists think of it stand out without being explicitly stated and without emblazoning the head of the article with "What We Think."

Compared to other articles in the *Socialist Worker*, this one was more convincing. Its style was subtle. The reader was allowed to come to the only correct conclusion through her or his own thoughts. This style is far more effective than using the well-known rhetoric of the left, rhetoric that only leads people to tune out socialist journalism.

Bill Stant  
Bloomington, IN



**Permanent Revolution**, a re-examination by Tony Cliff. Bookmarks Publications, \$1.

## Review by LANCE SELFA

Radicals often look for inspiration to revolutions in underdeveloped countries. The problem, however is that they often see the revolutions through their own red-tinted glasses. Whether in China, or in Cuba or in Nicaragua, many argue that socialism has "broken out."

Tony Cliff's *Permanent Revolution* offers a different perspective. In re-examining Leon Trotsky's "permanent revolution" theory in light of Mao's and Castro's rise to power, Cliff offers a fresh way of interpreting not only "Third World" insurgents, but also Trotsky himself.

### ANALYSIS

Trotsky's theory, as Cliff shows, involved an analysis of the role of classes in the transition to the modern world. A late-developing capitalist class cannot play a "revolutionary role" in leading society to democratic capitalism. The decisive revolutionary role falls on the working class, even if it is tiny. Since the largest class—the peasantry—is individualistic and incapable of sustained revolutionary action on its own, it can

only follow the workers' lead. He further argued that even with the working class in the lead, the needs of the democratic revolution could not be satisfied within the bounds of bourgeois democracy, so the democratic revolution would spill over into a socialist one. But since the completion of socialist revolution is impossible within national boundaries, Trotsky argued, it can only triumph if it touches off revolutions in advanced countries.

For describing the success of the 1917 Russian revolution and the failure of the 1925-1927 Chinese revolution, Trotsky's theory worked, Cliff argues. But Trotsky's theory could not explain the revolutions in such places as Cuba in 1959 or China in 1949.

Where did Trotsky go wrong? Cliff answers that the working class' revolutionary character is "neither absolute nor inevitable." In underdeveloped countries, workers' organizations often become conservative because of their links to states, political parties and leaderships which can act to hold back their struggles. If the working class is not revolutionary, the peasantry can't follow.

"But," Cliff adds, "this does not mean that nothing happens." In fact, a combination of factors, such as peasant

rebelliousness, middle-class intellectuals' leadership and the weakening of rich countries' domination, have brought revolutionary leaderships to power in many underdeveloped countries. But without working-class leadership, these revolutions lead to state capitalism rather than to socialism.

### GAINS

These revolutions have often meant real gains in living standards. But they have also meant the creation of new ruling classes who do not hesitate to imprison workers whose militancy may lead them to confront the state or "official workers' organizations. Under these conditions, workers in the underdeveloped countries will have to continue to struggle against their new "revolutionary" ruling classes.

Cliff argues that socialists in advanced countries must be honest in their analysis of these revolutions: both as to their possibilities and as to their limitations. While we must unconditionally oppose U.S., Western European or U.S.S.R. domination, we must also support workers' struggles against their "new" rulers because the "proletariat must continue its revolutionary struggle until it is triumphant the world over. Short of this target it cannot achieve freedom." □

# PERMANENT REVOLUTION



## A Woman's Right To Choose

# Fighting To Win: Abortion Rights In Canada — A Socialist Strategy

**Fighting to Win: Abortion Rights in Canada—A Socialist Strategy**, by Susan Rosenthal, M.D. An International Socialist Pamphlet, \$1.50.

### Review by CHRISTINA BAKER

*Fighting to Win: Abortion Rights in Canada—A Socialist Strategy* comes as a welcome addition to the few good written materials on the struggle for reproductive rights. Even though it addresses the Canadian situation, with its different laws, different conditions and some different issues, it is a very useful tool for American activists.

Susan Rosenthal does not limit herself to a recital of horror story upon horror story. Instead she provides a number of very useful arguments for revolutionaries working in the area of reproductive rights.

And instead of only addressing those who already believe that every woman has the right to control her own body and the right to choose pregnancy or abortion, she addresses those on the fence as well. She takes on those who would agree that adult women should have control over their lives but who are concerned about whether abortion amounts to the taking of a life.

### ARGUMENT

"The strongest argument of the anti-abortionists is that abortion kills babies and that cannot be allowed. Let us look at this argument more closely. Every woman is born with about a quarter of a million egg cells. Each man produces several hundred million sperm

cells every day. All these cells represent potential new human beings. In fact, the genetic codes for all the people who will ever live are carried within the bodies of those now living.

"Obviously we cannot give birth to all of them. . . Among those eggs that are fertilized, "nature" or "God" discards 80% of them before birth. In one sense, "God" or "nature" is responsible for the greatest loss of unborn life, the greatest number of abortions."

She points out that the anti-abortionists are a tiny minority and are not "pro-life" at all. "Anti-abortion groups are closely linked with other right wing groups in Canada and the United States such as the Moral Majority, Renaissance International, the John Birch Society, the Gun Owners of America, Stop the ERA, the National Council Against Forced Busing and Americans Against Union Control of Government.

"As well as being anti-sex and anti-woman, these organizations are anti-union, racist, pro-military and they support capital punishment."

### STRUGGLE

Some of the most important arguments Rosenthal makes are those concerning the state of the struggle today. In Canada, as in the U.S., the bulk of the abortion rights movement has adopted a legal strategy. This involves lobbying, campaigning for "pro-choice" candidates, setting up legal "watchdog" committees to monitor the progress of different pieces of state and federal legislation and writing letters

to politicians.

This strategy is thoroughly bankrupt. Even in more prosperous times, when it is easier to win reforms, public shows of force in the form of demonstrations and protests have proven to be far more effective than writing letters. But in a period of economic crisis and social service cutbacks, it is ridiculous to assume that anything can be won through "proper channels."

And it is necessary, as Rosenthal argues, to link the issues of reproductive freedom with a general fight against the cutbacks which are increasing both the need for abortion and the scarcity of abortion services.

### CONNECT

The fight for abortion rights must be connected with the fight to improve living conditions and to use the products of our labor to fulfill human need, not to increase profits.

And reproductive freedom is not limited to abortion rights. "Control over reproduction means full access to sex education, birth control information and safe, effective methods of birth control. It means the right to love whomever we choose. It means the right to have children when we want them and under conditions of our own choosing. It means the liberation of women.

"The fight for control over reproduction is the fight for socialism, for a new society where the right to work, to good quality childcare, to a sexuality separate from reproduction and all basic human needs are guaranteed." □





# Women and the Russian revolution

BY  
SHARON SMITH

*The 23rd of February was International Women's Day. The Social Democratic Circles had intended to mark this day in a general manner: by meetings, speeches, leaflets. It had not occurred to anyone that it might become the first day of the revolution. Not a single organization called for strikes that day. . . On the following morning, however, in spite of all directives, the women textile workers in several factories went on strike, and sent delegates to the metal workers with an appeal for support. . .*

*"Thus, the fact is that the February revolution was begun from below, overcoming the resistance of its own revolutionary organizations, the initiative being taken of their own accord by the most oppressed and downtrodden part of the proletariat—the women textile workers, among them, no doubt, many soldiers' wives. The overgrown bread lines had proven the last stimulus."*

Leon Trotsky

The Russian revolution of 1917—for the first time in history—created the material basis for women's liberation.

The Bolshevik revolution established equal pay for women, the legalization of abortion, an end to restrictions on divorce, full political and civil rights for women, abolishment of laws against homosexuality, paid maternity leave before and after childbirth and child-care at government expense.

And the Zhenotdel, the women's department of the new socialist state, began to organize, in the months following the revolution, socialized restaurants, nurseries and laundries—to begin the process of freeing women from household drudgery.

## THEORY

Marxism provided the theory of women's liberation: the destruction of class society, and with it, an end to privatized reproduction in the nuclear family. But it was the Bolsheviks, in the Russian revolution, who put the theory into practice. Through the experience of building a united working class movement to seize state power, they learned that the tremendous militancy of working class women did not necessarily translate into party membership.

Because women workers were traditionally excluded from political life, it was necessary for the party to develop special forms of outreach to combat age-old prejudices and draw women workers into the political life of the revolutionary movement.

Although Alexandra Kollontai did not join the Bolsheviks until 1915, she proved to be a pioneer in shaping the party's strategy for recruitment of working class women into the struggle for socialism. She argued for and developed methods of agitation and propaganda addressing the specific demands of women workers.

The militancy of working women grew in the years leading up to the first Russian revolution of 1905. In 1895, at the Laferme Tobacco Works, striking cigarette girls broke windows and smashed machines. In 1898, women workers at another tobacco factory rubbed tobacco in the eyes of attacking police. The strike spread to women workers in

six cities. During 1905, 11,000 textile workers were involved in one of the largest strikes seen up until that time. Even cooks tried to hold meetings on the streets of St. Petersburg—when they were broken up by police, they reconvened in the women's bath-house.

## DEMANDS

Often the strike demands of women workers, in the years 1905-1907, reflected their special needs—including demands for paid maternity leave and factory nurseries.

In the aftermath of 1905, Kollontai began making contact with small groups of working women. But she found herself in direct competition with bourgeois feminists who were enjoying some support among working class women with their demands for "political" rights for women.

Kollontai sought to counterpose a Marxist strategy to the "classless" strategy of the reformists. In 1908, for example, she wrote, in the "Social Basis of the Woman Question:"

"The woman's world is divided, just as is the world of men, into two camps; the interests and aspirations of one group of women brings it close to the bourgeois class, while the other has close connections with the proletariat, and its claims for liberation encompass a full solution to the woman question.

"Thus, although both camps follow the general slogan of the 'liberation of women,' their aims and interests are different. Each of the groups unconsciously takes its starting point from the interests of its own class."

Competition with the bourgeois feminists convinced Kollontai that it was all the more urgent for socialists to develop special efforts to reach working women.

## OPPOSITION

At the same time, she also encountered opposition from some comrades, both male and female, to many of her efforts. Some of the hostility was simple prejudice—others made the mistake of confusing Kollontai's goals with those of the bourgeois feminists.

The years following 1905 were filled with brutal government repression, and—until the first world war and the re-

emergence of a revolutionary upsurge among the Russian working class—attempts at organizing working class women were both sporadic and short-lived. In 1907, Kollontai organized a series of "public" meetings through the Union of Textile Workers, which were often broken up by the police. Later that year, she helped form the semi-legal "Mutual Aid Society for Women Workers," which reached a peak of 300 members before it disbanded in 1908.

In 1914, the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks voted to establish a journal for working women—*Rabotnitsa* (Working Woman)—scheduled to appear on International Women's Day. They believed there was a thirst for political involvement among women workers. *Rabotnitsa* was published seven times in 1914—despite arrests and police confiscation. But in July, 1914, World War I broke out.

The division between the socialists and the bourgeois feminists came into full bloom during the war. The issue of patriotism became the dividing question not only within the women's movement, but also between those who called themselves socialists.

The bourgeois feminists threw themselves into the war effort—as a trade-off for women's suffrage. The League for Women's Equality called it "Our obligation to the Fatherland."

## WAR

Most importantly, the war was transforming the character of the Russian working class. At the start of the war, women made up one-third of the total workforce. By 1917, women were one-half of the workforce. As the war dragged on, women's wages remained even lower than the paltry men's wages—as prices skyrocketed, and massive food shortages plagued the towns and countryside. As early as April, 1915, women were rioting over shortages of meat and bread. And very early on, strikes and riots which began over economic grievances were tagging on political demands as well. The June, 1915 "flour-strike" in Ivanovo-Voznesensk developed into a political demonstration to end



the war and free jailed workers. And the Petrograd International Women's Day demonstration in 1917, which became the first day of the Russian revolution, began with the theme of opposition to "War, High Prices, and the Situation of the Woman Worker." It was initiated by women textile workers.

After the February revolution, thousands of Petrograd laundry workers organized and issued a demand for better working conditions and the establishment of public laundries on a city-wide basis. Later, with the support of the Bolsheviks, they added a position on the war and on the soviets.

In the spring of 1917, open agitation was legal in Russia for the first time in the revolutionary movement. Drawing on the past successes and failures of Kollontai and those like her, who had struggled for long, hard years to organize working class women, the Bolsheviks were able to systematize their propaganda and agitation.

They re-established *Rabotnitsa* in May, 1917, with Kollontai as a major contributor. It appeared several times a month, with a circulation of 40,000-50,000. A Women's Bureau was established by the Petrograd Committee—which developed bureaus for factory agitation, a women's school which helped turn women workers into professional agi-

tators, and clubs and union committees which helped draw non-party women into political activity.

## POWER

When the Bolsheviks led the working class to power in 1917, they immediately established a legislative program of full emancipation for women—but, to become a social reality, they had to draw in and convince the masses of women workers and peasants to take part in the construction of the new socialist order. They realized that the socialist revolution was not the end of the struggle for socialism and women's liberation—it was only the beginning.

The experience of the Bolsheviks and of those like Kollontai helped develop a socialist strategy for addressing the specific demands of women workers. Theirs are the experiences of the Marxist tradition in practice.

As Kollontai wrote in "Social Basis of the Woman Question:"

"Whatever the proletarian women have achieved in the sphere of raising their own living standards is the result of the efforts of the working class in general and of themselves in particular.

"The history of the struggle of the working woman for better conditions of labor and for a more decent life is the history of the struggle of the proletariat for its liberation." □



# WHERE WE STAND

## WORKERS' CONTROL

Workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A socialist society can only be built when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and democratically plan its production and distribution according to human needs instead of profit.

The working class is the key to the fight for socialism. Freedom and liberation will only be achieved through the struggles of workers themselves, organizing and fighting for real workers' power.

## REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The capitalist system cannot be patched up or reformed as some union leaders and liberal politicians say. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of workers. No reforms can do away with this exploitation. The only way workers can come to control society and create a system based on freedom and a decent life for all is by overthrowing capitalism and replacing it with revolutionary, democratic socialism.

## A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT

The present state apparatus (federal and state governments, the courts, army and police) was developed to maintain the capitalist system. This apparatus cannot be taken over as it stands and converted to serve workers. The working class needs an entirely different kind of state based upon mass democratic councils of workers' delegates.

Supporting the present state apparatus is a vast network of propaganda—newspapers, radio, television, movies, the education system. Workers are bombarded daily from all directions with capitalism's point of view. The working class needs its own sources of information. To help meet this need, we are dedicated to building a newspaper that the working class can trust and use in the fight against the present system.

## FIGHT OPPRESSION

Capitalism divides the working class—pitting men against women, whites against Blacks. Capitalism fosters and uses these divisions to block the unity necessary for its destruction. As capitalism moves into crisis, oppressed groups—Blacks, women, Latinos, Native Americans, gays, youth—suffer the most. We support the struggles and independent organizations of oppressed people to strengthen the working class struggle for socialism.

## BLACK LIBERATION

Our support for the struggle against racism is unconditional, and we oppose any attempt to subordinate this fight. We fight racism in all its forms, from institutionalized "legal" racism to the activities of groups such as the Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan.

We fight segregation in the schools and in housing, we support affirmative action, and we oppose racist firings and harassment. We support armed self-defense in the face of racist attacks. We support independent self-organization and the right to self-determination of the Black community. We demand freedom for all political prisoners.

## WOMEN'S LIBERATION

We fight for women's liberation. We support equal pay and equal job opportunities for all women. We demand free abortion and an end to forced sterilization, and quality child care. We oppose all forms of violence against women including sexual harassment at work. Under capitalism the state intervenes to maintain women's subordination within the family, to maintain oppressive sex roles and her exploitation at work.

We support lesbian and gay liberation. We demand quality sex education in the schools, we are for lesbian and gay custody rights and the right to be open lesbians and gays at work, home and in school.

## RANK AND FILE ORGANIZATION

The unions today are largely business machines that long ago stopped truly fighting for the interests of the working class. Business union leaders act either as brakes on workers' struggles, or as cops, delivering workers into the hands of the bosses. We fight in the unions to put an end to this.

To make the unions fight for workers' interests, workers must organize their power on the shop floor. This can only happen if the rank and file organize themselves independently of the union bureaucrats. We work to build rank and file organizations in unions and companies wherever we are employed.

## INTERNATIONALISM

The working class has no nation. Capitalism is international, so the struggle for socialism must be world-wide. A socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation.

We champion workers' struggles in all countries, from Poland to Puerto Rico, from Palestine to El Salvador. We support all genuine national liberation struggles. We call for victory of the Black freedom fighters in South Africa and Namibia. We oppose all forms of imperialism and oppose sending U.S. troops anywhere in the world to impose U.S. interests.

Russia, China, Cuba and Eastern Europe are not socialist countries. They are state capitalist and part of one world capitalist system. We support the struggles of workers in those countries against the bureaucratic ruling class.

## REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The activity of the ISO is directed at taking the initial steps toward building a revolutionary party in a working class fragmented and cut off from socialist ideas. Revolutionaries must be involved in the daily struggles of workers and oppressed groups at the workplace, in the unions and in the communities. We build every struggle that strengthens the self-confidence, organization and socialist consciousness of workers and the oppressed.

As the working class movement gathers strength, the need for revolutionary leadership becomes crucial. We are part of the long process of building a democratic revolutionary party rooted in the working class. Those who agree with our stand and are prepared to help us build toward revolutionary socialism are urged to join us now.

For more information about the International Socialist Organization (ISO) please write P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, IL 60616



# What's ON

**BALTIMORE**  
Ty Miller on Lebanon. March 4 at 8:00 p.m. Call 366-8845 for more info.

**International Women's Day** discussion and pot luck dinner. 6:30 p.m. Call 235-4620 or 467-2484 for more information.

Documentary film on Japanese auto workers: **We Are Driven**. March 28 at 8:00 p.m. Call 467-2484 for details.

**BLOOMINGTON**  
Christina Baker on **Reproductive Freedom: A Woman's Right**. March 2 at 7:30 p.m., Ballantine Hall, Room 006.

ISO Study Group: Oscar Chamberlain on **State Capitalism in Russia**. March 5 at 5:30 p.m.

Shannon Brophy on **What Is To Be Done?** March 19, 5:30 p.m. Call 332-6682 for more information.

**BOSTON**  
Film: **Blow for Blow**. March 9 at 7:30 p.m. Call 427-7087 for more information.

Paul D'Amato on **Capitalism and the Family**. March 25 at 7:30 p.m. Call 427-7087 for details.

**CHICAGO**  
Kathy Ogren on **International Women's Day**. March 2 at 7:30 p.m. Call 288-7572 for details.

**CINCINNATI**  
Georgia Ellis on **International Women's Day and the Fight for Socialism**.

\$7.95

\$8.95

Available from HERA PRESS, Box 16085, Chicago, IL 60616

Communism and the Family  
By Alexandra Kollontai

Available from:

## HERA PRESS

Box 16085  
Chicago, IL 60616

March 18 at 7:30 p.m.

Study Group: **Introduction to the ISO**. Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. For more information call 271-3179.

**CLEVELAND**  
**International Women's Day Celebration**. Speakers and pot luck dinner. March 10, 3:00 p.m. Call 651-9827 for details.

April Stoltz on **The Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx**. March 25 at 7:30 p.m. Call 651-9827 for details.

**KENT**  
Glenn Perusek on **Is There a Future for Socialism?** March 9 at 12:00 noon. Call 673-1710 for more information.

**MADISON**  
Ahmed Shawki on **The Meaning of Marxism**.

March 13 at 7:30 p.m. Call 256-8196 for details.

**NEW YORK**  
**International Women's Day Celebration**. Columbia University. March 8 at 7:00 p.m. Call Eleanor at 212-280-6925 for more information.

**SAN FRANCISCO**  
Study Group: **Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx**. March 11 at 7:30 p.m. Call 285-1908 for details.

Ahmed Shawki on **Lebanon**. March 16 at 7:30 p.m. UC Berkeley.

Ahmed Shawki on **The 1984 Elections**. March 18 at 7:30 p.m. Call 285-1908 for more information.

**SEATTLE**  
Film: **La Operacion**. Pot Luck Dinner to follow. 6:30 p.m. Call 322-8238 or 525-0434 for details.

**"The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it."**

— Karl Marx

If you want to help us change the world, join us.  
There are ISO members and branches in the following cities:

- Baltimore, MD
- Indianapolis, IN
- New York, NY
- Bloomington, IN
- Kent, OH
- Northampton, MA
- Boston, MA
- Los Angeles, CA
- Portland, OR
- Chicago, IL
- Madison, WI
- Rochester, NY
- Cincinnati, OH
- Minneapolis, MN
- San Francisco, CA
- Cleveland, OH
- Muncie, IN
- Seattle, WA
- Detroit, MI
- New Orleans, LA
- Youngstown, OH

ISO National Office, P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, IL 60616





# Support Boston theater workers

**BOSTON, MA**—For the past several weekends, workers at the Nickelodean Theater have been picketing on the street outside to ask customers not to patronize the concession stand.

The workers voted 25-9 in October to join Local 262 of the United Electrical Workers Union after a nasty anti-union campaign by their employer. The struggle continues as "Nick" workers try to get their first contract.

## GRIEVANCE

Job security and the desire for a contractually enforced grievance procedure was what led employees to organize the union. Last year a concession stand worker was fired solely on the basis of a customer

by **GEORGE AXIOTIS**

complaint.

There is a company controlled internal grievance procedure, but it has proven totally ineffectual in stopping discharges. An earlier union drive was stopped in part through firings.

Joel Trnum, the owner of the theater has gone to great lengths to break the union. The center of his strategy has been to whittle down support for the union by hiring students participating in the Navy ROTC program at Boston University.

All those who voted against the union were in ROTC. As union supporters leave their jobs or are fired for their activism, they are replaced by

ROTC members.

The concession stand boycott is an attempt to bring economic pressure to bear on Trnum. Most of his profits come from the concession stand. Ticket sales only account for about 30% of the business because the movie distributors make the bulk of the money on the tickets.

## RESULT

As a result of the boycott, concession sales are off approximately 65-75%. The workers plan to boycott the movies as well if Trnum continues to stonewall in negotiations.

Solidarity is the key to victory for the Nickelodeon workers. Some staff workers at nearby Boston University—

members of District 65 of the United Auto Workers—have been helping out on the picket line, but a more concerted effort is necessary to help turn the tide.

Steve McNierney, one of the workers who has been fired for supporting the union, got his first taste of the class struggle as a student at Boston University in the late 1970s. There was a series of strikes involving the building and grounds workers. Professors and staff workers all went out on the picket line.

Steve was one of the students who responded to the call for solidarity during those battles. Now is the time to repay the debt.

An injury to one is an injury to all. □



## HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTES

by **MATT FILSINGER**

### Protecting Ronnie

Thorne Auchter, the head of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has said that the "campaign of President Reagan will be a major goal of OSHA in 1984."



### Right-to-Know

As written about in this column in January, OSHA has proposed a national hazard communication rule or "right-to-know" law. This law will cover only half of all workers, and allows companies to claim that almost anything is a trade secret, and therefore the identity of a chemical, and its dangers, don't need to be revealed to the workers.

OSHA has also said that this law will overrule all state laws, even when the state law does a better job of protecting workers. In response the Steelworkers Union has gone to court to fight OSHA's proposed law. Now three states—New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey, have joined the Steelworkers in opposing OSHA.

The proposed OSHA law also shows the Reagan administration's feelings about women. The law allows health professionals the right to know the identity of a "trade secret" chemical in the event an exposed worker gets sick on the job. However, it does not include nurses as health professionals.

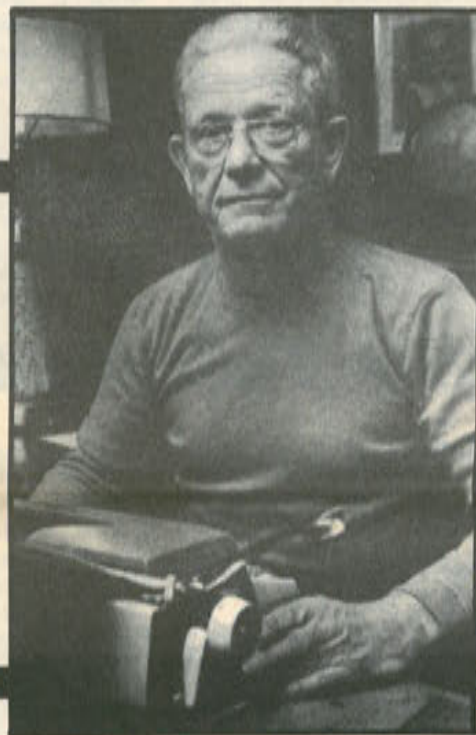


### Union Spending on Health

The United Mine Workers (UMW) ranked number one as the union with the largest number of professional health staff members—12.4 per 50,000 members—and in the total number of dollars spent per member—\$15.63 per year. The International Chemical Workers (ICWU) and International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades came next. Many unions, however, spend much less than \$1.00 per member per year on health and safety. □

## TALKIN' UNION BY JOHN ANDERSON

# UAW CONTRACT: DROP PROFIT SHARING PLAN



John Anderson is a lifelong militant and socialist. He was formerly president of UAW Local 15 in Detroit.

On February 18 and 19, the Detroit *Free Press* published excerpts from a secret 23-page document listing GM's demands for the 1984 negotiations. It was an embarrassment to both the corporation and the union, for it indicated that Don Ephlin, GM director for the UAW, had been briefed on some of these demands.

Ephlin said, "In the normal course of our relationship in administering our contract, we are constantly exchanging views on a variety of subjects. But such exchanges are not collective bargaining, and we remain diametrically opposed to many of the corporation's objections outlined in the document."

The fact of the matter is that most negotiations between the company and the UAW over the last forty years have been negotiated behind closed doors. The membership has had little time to consider the information on what the contract contained before it was submitted for ratification.

## SMOKESCREEN

The corporation is planning to use profit-sharing as a smokescreen to cover up the wage cuts and other concessions it will demand. The company is making these plans because it knows the UAW is weak. This was demonstrated on Thursday, February 16, when UAW Local 594 in Pontiac failed to give the leadership the necessary 2/3 vote to authorize a strike. The management was in violation of the 1982 agreement when it announced its plan to close a plant with 200 employees.

In exchange for profit-sharing, the company wants the workers to give up COLA (the annual improvement factor) and paid personal holidays and to limit

the amount paid for health insurance. The corporation plans for a further reduction of the workforce of 80,000 by 1986. This should send a message not only to the unemployed but also to those still on the payroll.

In a leaflet published by UAW Local 160, the fraudulent character of the profit-sharing plan is exposed. It says, "If we figure what it costs, it comes to \$5,500 given up by the average GM UAW member in the contract, exchanged for \$600 in profit-sharing. Under the present contract, we lost 2.3% annual raises, we lost 41¢ cost of living payments for eighteen months, and we lost 20 days paid based on 9 personal paid holidays and a bonus holiday given up for two years . . .

"If these concessions are not restored, our wage will remain 6% behind our normal contract pattern—costing more than \$1,500 for every year forever. If the bonus holiday is not restored, this giveaway will cost \$1,000 per year forever . . .

"The answer is not more profit-sharing. The only answer is to drop profit-sharing in exchange for getting our concessions back and to return to fighting for more in our contract."

During the past two months local union leaders have been attending councils and conferences in Las Vegas, Washington and in the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn, Michigan. As in the past 40 years, they have been passing resolutions that are supposed to represent the workers' demands. In March a national bargaining convention will be held in Detroit.

If we are to judge by what has happened in the past, these resolutions will carry little weight at the bargaining

table. So long as the no-strike clause (paragraph 117 in the GM contract) and paragraph 8 (which gives management control over the shop floor) remain in effect, nothing will have changed.

## RELATIONS

Owen Bieber, like Fraser and Woodcock, is committed to good labor relations. This was the policy introduced by Walter Reuther in 1947. There is no likelihood he will adopt a class struggle policy in the 1984 negotiations. The \$550 million in the UAW strike fund would only last until Thanksgiving Day. Then a contract written to the satisfaction of the company would be accepted by the workers. Money doesn't win strikes. That takes solidarity and class loyalty of a kind that has not been demonstrated in the UAW in the past 37 years.

In all probability, this exposure will be covered up by both parties as a "misunderstanding." The UAW will continue to level its big guns on President Reagan, not his supporters among corporate executives.

Without an International-wide caucus, with a program of shorter hours, the elimination of the no-strike clause and the freedom of companies to close plants and transfer work to non-union shops, the membership cannot be mobilized to support a strike that will restore the power of the UAW in the industry. To build that kind of a caucus, it will be necessary to build a left-wing party to educate the workers. □





IN BRIEF

**KROGER LEAVES WORKERS JOBLESS**

PITTSBURGH, PA—The sale of 45 groceries here leaves 2,845 striking workers jobless. Kroger demanded concessions of \$2.06 per hour from employees—after getting takeaway contracts of \$1.10 an hour two years ago.

When the workers struck on January 15, Kroger began looking around for a buyer. Wetterau, Inc., has agreed to buy Kroger's stores and resell them to local interests.

Kroger's workers are now out of work, with no recourse.

According to Jack Draper, president of Local 23 of the United Food and Commercial Workers, who represent the Kroger workers, grocery employees in the Pittsburgh area are among the lowest paid in the entire country.

Kroger's demands for large concessions followed the granting of such concessions by other members of Local 23, who work for Kroger competitor Giant Eagle. □

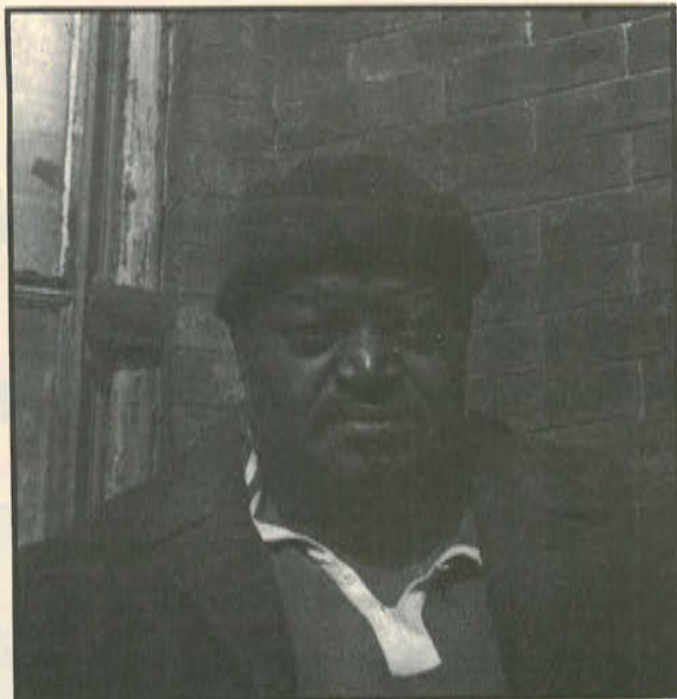
**JEWEL BREAKS CONTRACT**

CHICAGO, IL—United Food and Commercial Workers Local 881 has slapped Jewel Food Stores the largest local chain, with a \$25 million damage suit. They are also seeking to stop the company from slashing wages and vacations for the 16,000 workers at Jewel's 186 stores here.

Jewel called its workers in for special meetings on February 17, 1984, and announced wage reductions of up to \$1.75 per hour and up to a week losses in vacation time. They also announced a wage freeze to remain in effect until June, 1985, when the current contract expires.

The company tried to justify breaking a contract which was negotiated less than a year ago—in June, 1983—by claiming that they must "reduce labor costs" if they are to remain competitive with the up and coming "warehouse" supermarkets. □

**Castle shuts down: "They won't make a fool of me again"**



Oatis Wilson

CHICAGO, IL—Nearly three months after forcing 22 production workers out on strike, Castle Baking Co. has closed its doors—apparently for good.

"They were trying to bust the union," said Edgar Harris, a mixer at the plant. "They hired a lawyer for \$50,000 to do it. But I guess they decided it was easier to just close the place up, since the scabs just turned out scrap and we stayed on strike."

**SHUTDOWN**

The Castle shutdown comes nearly a year after the company first wrested concessions from the workers. The union, Local 2 of the Bakery, Confectionary and Tobacco Workers Union, renegotiated their contract in early 1983

by LEE SUSTAR

and took a "temporary" 15 percent wage cut. When the contract expired last June, Castle refused to pay workers the pension and vacation time due them.

Castle stonewalled in negotiations until November, when it informed workers that they were "terminated" and hired scabs at less than half the union scale.

"I thought I was ready for anything after 1979," Harris said. He was laid off twice that year when the baking plants he worked in shut down. "But I never expected this union busting."

Oven tender James Street agreed, "I never thought it would come to this."

Workers are waiting on the courts to decide whether or not they will get their pensions, machine operator Oatis Wilson said.

"I don't believe Castle is bankrupt, because their bread is still in the store," he said. "They just farmed it out to National Bakery around the corner. We've all applied to get jobs there, but they say they aren't hiring. That's what everybody says: we're not hiring."

**BELIEVES**

Wilson believes the strike was lost because Castle picketers were unable to keep scabs out of the plant. "We tried to talk to them, but they wouldn't listen. They were desperate—they had to have a job."

Wilson was arrested for trying to convince Teamster delivery truck drivers not to cross the picket line. The cops also forced them to give up their trash can fire, calling it "dangerous."

"The police were on the company's side from the beginning. They were always hanging around us when deliveries came," machine operator Jimmy Gordon said.

"Looking back, maybe we should have seen this coming," Edgar Harris said. "But the company is real good at telling you things like, 'We are going to come up with an agreement.' But they don't keep them. It's like one of the guys said, 'They made a fool of me.'"

"But they won't make a fool of me again."

**UNITED ARTISTS JANITORS "WON'T GO AWAY QUIETLY"**

by SANDY SWAN and JIM SWAN

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—"A jumble of children's building blocks," "A magnificent architectural achievement," "Anybody got a brick?" Reactions to the unveiling of United Artists' Galaxy Theater were varied. The first theater to be built downtown in 40 years is also San Francisco's newest non-union theater, and union activists had no doubt about their reactions: "Picket lines mean—don't cross!"

The theater and amusement janitors (SEIU Local 9) have been on strike here against United Artists for two and a half years. United Artists originally scheduled the Galaxy to open in December, 1983, hoping to catch the holiday rush. However, Local 9 began to picket the construction site, and building trades workers refused to cross the picket line, so the opening was delayed.

**BARRAGE**

On February 17, the Galaxy finally opened amid an advertising barrage with full-page ads depicting happy theatergoers. What the ads failed to picture was the militant picket line of 200 members and supporters of Local 9. This "labor

advertising" had its effect—at the first showing, the 2,200-seat theater had only 100 customers.

Unfortunately, such successful actions are not the whole story. Local 9 has been on strike against United Artists and Syfy Theaters since September 1981. Prior to the strike, the theater janitors had not had a raise in four years. United Artists and Syfy have refused to negotiate.

In spite of occasional, militant, mass pickets at Bay Area United Artists theaters, the strike has not gone well. United Artists had Local 9 decertified in October, 1982. United Artists is a giant conglomerate owning motels, convalescent hospitals, supermarkets, a cable television network and various entertainment businesses.

United Artists and the rest of the theater industry has remained quite profitable in recent years. And this increasing profitability has gone hand in hand with increasing automation and union busting. In

recent years United Artists has refused to negotiate with or has broken unions representing projectionists, cashiers and office workers in addition to the janitors.

**LAVISH**

United Artists' profitability is reflected in its lavish attention to the Galaxy which cost \$6.5 million to build. Billed as a "luxury theater," its lobby area is architecturally daring—it resembles a jumbled collection of glass boxes.

And the luxury of the Galaxy is reflected in more than just its architecture. Its tickets and refreshment prices are higher than the unionized theater directly across the street. But despite its high prices, the non-union employees of the Galaxy are paid only minimum wage.

Local 9 has proven to United Artists that it won't go away quietly. Picketing at San Francisco United Artists theaters continues with a focus on the Galaxy. Local 9 urges a national boycott of all United Artists theaters. They need your help. Donations and letters of support can be sent to SEIU Local 9, 240 Golden Gate Ave. San Francisco, CA 94102. □



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## LEBANON IN TURMOIL

# U.S. HANDS OFF!

Ronald Reagan insisted that the U.S. was not "bugging out" when he withdrew the Marines stationed in Beirut last month. But the pullout was a retreat by any other name.

It marked the collapse of what Reagan had called a "success" of his foreign policy—the May 17, 1982 agreement between Lebanese President Amin Gemayel and Israel.

That agreement, backed by the presence of 1,600 Marines in Lebanon, was designed to stabilize Gemayel's pro-Israel, pro-United States regime.

But the February resignation of Gemayel's cabinet and the subsequent rout of the Lebanese Army by Druze and Shi'ite Amal rebels rendered the accord meaningless.

Thousands of Shi'ites heeded Amal leader Nibah Berri's call to desert the pro-government army and join the militia. Suddenly, Gemayel, who had derisively been called "the mayor of Beirut," was not even that. If he maintains any role in the government he will have to make huge concessions to the Syrian-backed rebels.

### SHELLED

The U.S. ships shelled Druze positions in a last-ditch effort to help Gemayel's forces—but the action only underscored Reagan's helplessness. When Navy Secretary Lehman called the shelling an attempt to support Gemayel, he contradicted Reagan's insistence that the military was acting within the limits of the Congressional resolution that limits U.S. actions in Lebanon to self-defense.

There was more confusion when Reagan accepted the likelihood that Gemayel would abrogate the Lebanese-Israeli accord. He was contradicted by Secretary of State George Schultz just hours later.

With Gemayel out of the picture and Israel paralyzed by economic crises and internal protests, the U.S. now is forced to bargain with Syrian President Hafez Assad over the future of Lebanon.

Reagan and the Saudi Arabian government hope that Syria will impose a compromise settlement involving Gemayel and moderate Moslem leaders. They are worried that success of the Shi'ites—the poorest, most oppressed section of the Lebanese population—might stir further unrest.

If the U.S. cannot insure Gemayel's pro-Western government in Lebanon, it at least wants a stable regime there.

Syria played this stabilizing role in 1976 when it invaded Lebanon to save the right-wing government that was losing a civil war to the left and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Assad remained a power broker in the region until he was defeated in the bloody Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June, 1982.

Israel sought to liquidate the PLO and set up the Christian Phalangists in power, using the latest U.S. military hardware to slaughter tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians.

### INVASION

The PLO, protected by a U.S.-led multinational force, left Beirut. Marines returned to the city following the massacre of Palestinian civilians by Gemayel's Phalangist troops.

And when Israeli troops last fall withdrew to safer positions in southern Lebanon, the U.S. was left responsible for maintaining the Gemayel government.

The impossibility of that task became clear last October when 254 Marines were killed in a suicide truck bombing of their headquarters at Beirut International Airport. Several more were individually picked off.

U.S. ships periodically retaliated with shellfire, but they had little effect in stopping the steady advance on Beirut by the Syrian-backed Druze forces.

And when the Amal forces cast their lot with the Druze, there was little for the Gemayel government to protect.

Throughout its involvement in Lebanon, the U.S. government and media have depicted the region's battles as the outgrowth of ancient, religious and ethnic rivalries. But the real source of conflict is the concentration of Lebanese wealth and power in the hands of a tiny ruling class of Maronite Christians.

For decades the Maronites have been supported by Western powers—most notably France—that seek influence in the economically strategic Middle East. The Moslem masses battling the government are motivated not by religion so much as by the desire for political and economic control over their lives.

Syria's President Assad is willing to help them—at a price. Assad wants decisive influence over whatever government emerges in Lebanon. Since Syria re-armed follow-



Beirut in ruins

ing the 1982 Israeli invasion, Assad has the military might to back up his diplomacy. His support of PLO factions rebelling against leader Yassir Arafat—whom he once supported—is typical.

### TURMOIL

Even with a U.S. troop withdrawal, the turmoil in Lebanon will likely continue as Moslem villagers in southern Lebanon resist Israeli occupation.

Since Israel has declared that its security no longer depends on events in Beirut, and U.S. efforts there have failed, Reagan must now cut a deal with Syria.

But for Palestinians and Arab workers, such a settlement means at best a rearrangement of the class that exploits them.

In any event, Reagan insists that the Marines have only been redeployed to ships off Lebanon's coast—not withdrawn. He says they will return to shore "if necessary."

We must not tolerate these bloody adventures. U.S. hands off Lebanon! □

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