

A Socialist ACTION

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50 CENTS



National antiwar actions:

All out for April 20!

On April 20 nationally coordinated protest actions against the government's austerity and war policies will take place in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.

Sponsored by the April Actions for Peace, Jobs, and Justice coalition—a broad coalition of labor, peace, church, and community organizations—the four themes of the April 20 actions are the following: end U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean; freeze and reverse the arms race; jobs and jus-

**Coalition building:
See page 6**

and end U.S. support to the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Actions in Washington, D.C., on April 19-22 include lobbying, civil-disobedience protests, and religious services.

The April 20 national actions offer working people in this country a sorely needed opportunity to respond to the bipartisan attacks on our living standards through massive, independent protests in the streets.

President Reagan's inauguration speech and the new budget proposal have made it clear that the ruling rich in



this country are fully determined to drive back and reverse the gains made through hard-fought struggles over the past decades.

Reagan's speech also served notice that the U.S. government's bipartisan

aggression against the people of Central America will increase in the coming months. Plans are already under way in the Congress to renew the overt funding of the U.S.-backed *contras* seeking to

(continued on page 14)

U.S. steps up pressure on Nicaragua

By LARRY COOPERMAN

As the Nicaraguan government announced emergency measures to shore up its war-damaged economy, the CIA-backed *contra* forces made important moves to unify their campaign to topple the democratically elected Sandinista government.

On Feb. 8 Daniel Ortega, in a televised broadcast, denounced the acceleration of U.S. war moves against the Nicaraguans. President Ortega accused the Reagan administration of trying to be the "prosecutor, judge, and hangman" of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The Ortega speech was given just two days after Reagan, in his State of the Union address, repeated his call for renewal of overt funding of the Nicaraguan *contras*. Nicaragua now devotes 35 to 40 percent of its budget to its increasing defense needs.

At the present time, there are approximately 10,000 *contras* operating within Nicaragua's borders, attacking important economic targets, and terrorizing the rural population.

In the face of this situation, Ortega announced that \$112 million out of a budget of \$280 million will be devoted to fighting the U.S.-trained guerrillas. Furthermore, Ortega pointed out that the cost to Nicaragua of Washington's economic blockade of the past four years is nearly \$1.1 billion in lost credits and exports.

Ortega also announced measures to deal with the black market economy that has thrived in Nicaragua. The

Reagan budget strikes raw deal

By MARK HARRIS

Ronald Reagan has faith that the Lord and his Scriptures are the moving spirit behind his efforts to exorcise New Deal demons and Vietnam ghosts from both the public's treasury and its conscience.

While austerity may be heavenly, the more earthly reality is that Reagan's

budget will mark mean times ahead for all but a chosen few. The rosy right-winger in the White House bubbles with enthusiasm for a Raw-Deal budget that will slash some \$51 billion from social programs.

The Pentagon, however, is going upscale in a big way. The military machinery will be gassed up with

another \$30 billion to a record \$277.5 billion. By 1990, if Reagan gets his way, military spending will top \$400 billion.

Brutality will get a boost with Reagan's request to jack up military aid to Guatemala from \$300,000 to \$35.3 million. And \$10.2 billion for 48 MX missiles and 48 B-1 bombers is sure to inspire a lot of happy hawks fluttering around the Pentagon.

Veterans, however, will not be so pleased. A "means test" will be imposed to screen out those considered "too wealthy" to receive treatment for non-combat-related ailments.

Those who rely on Aid to Families with Dependent Children will not find life so cheerful, either, when assistance is cut off after the youngest child reaches age 16, instead of the current age of 18. Welfare programs, including child nutrition programs, stand to lose \$1.3 billion.

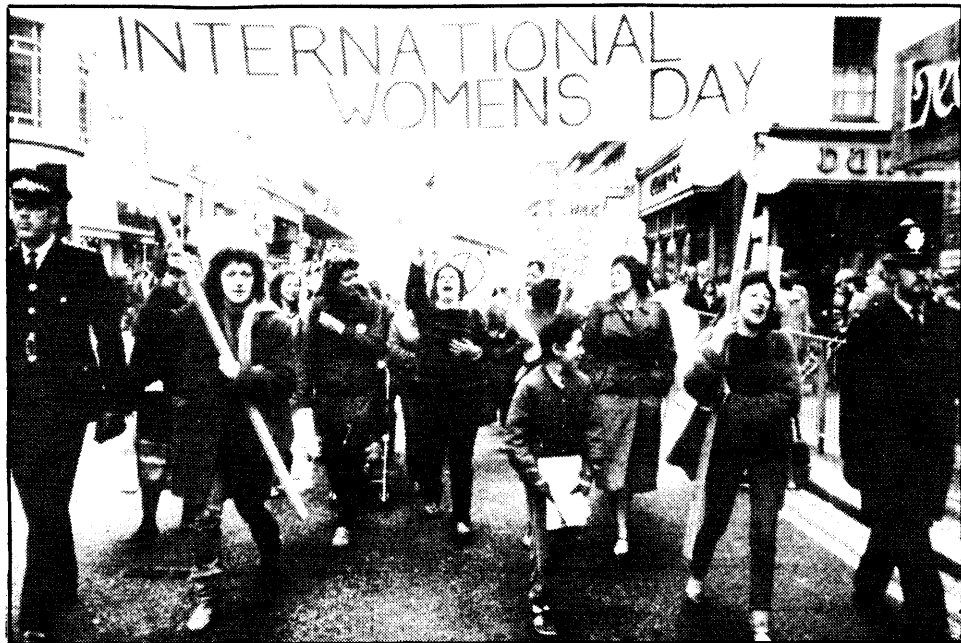
Medicare recipients will find they are paying more for less—\$4.2 billion less than would have been spent under existing law. The Medicaid program, too, is targeted for sharp reductions. School lunch subsidies would be trimmed by \$200 million.

Two million federal employees can look forward to a 5-percent pay cut. Cost-of-living pension increases will be frozen for one year for 3.5 million civilian and military retirees.

More than half of the Education Department's programs face a funding

(continued on page 10)

**Linus Pauling
on Nicaragua.
See page 3**



**Women's Day 1985.
See FORUM pp. 7-9**

problem of the black market has been described by Sandinista leaders as being "worse than the *contra* war."

The Sandinistas therefore moved to devalue the cordoba by 50 percent and to remove price subsidies on basic foodstuffs. These are the most important measures taken to deal with this situation since the enactment of a law last year to ensure greater control over distribution of goods.

The price subsidies were originally enacted to maintain basic foodstuffs at prices affordable to Nicaragua's workers and peasants. They were removed in order to decrease the number and importance of speculators who would buy the goods at subsidized prices and then resell them at inflated black-market levels. Ortega promised that severe

(continued on page 12)

Dr. Gross covers up for New York police killings . . .

By CLIFF CONNER

NEW YORK—Dr. Elliot M. Gross is the chief medical examiner for New York City. His complicity in covering up a string of notorious police homicides has erupted into a major scandal, sparked by a recent series of investigative articles in *The New York Times* (Jan. 27-30).

The articles revealed that Dr. Gross had consistently falsified official autopsy reports on people who had lost their lives in police custody or while being arrested. In all cases, Gross' distortions were designed to absolve the cops of any wrongdoing.

Dr. Gross' most outrageous falsifications occurred in the cases of Michael Stewart and Eleanor Bumpurs (see stories on this page). The blatantly racist nature of these killings has provoked a sustained outcry of protest from the Black community—a fact that no doubt influenced the *Times*' decision to investigate and expose Gross' cover-ups.

Since the *Times* articles appeared, five investigations into Gross' misdeeds have been launched—two by New York

City Mayor Edward Koch, one by New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, one by New York state's attorney general, and one by a federal prosecutor. At least two of these inquiries could lead directly to

indictments on criminal charges.

The case of Dr. Gross affords a rare peek behind the curtain of secrecy that ordinarily obscures the real social relations between the wealthy (white) ruling

class and their cops, on the one hand, and the oppressed Black and Hispanic communities, on the other.

The deadly collusion between New York City's police and chief coroner is no aberration; it is part of the permanent, systematic intimidation that racial minorities in the United States face day in and day out. What has been exposed is simply one facet of the "justice" system's institutionalization of racist injustice.

In the last analysis, the real function of the police in a capitalist society is not to direct traffic or fight petty crime; it is to defend the "right" of the ruling class to exploit the working class. They are the strike-breakers of last resort and the occupying army that patrols the Black and Latino communities to "keep them in their place."

As the ruling class's armed guards of the status quo, cops harbor a hostility to the oppressed that comes with the job.

The unmasking of Dr. Gross' whitewash operation, however, indicates that the ruling class's power of repression is not unlimited. The possibility of fighting back was shown by the protest activities that put the spotlight on the killings Gross was trying to cover up.

The removal of Dr. Gross will not stop the protests. The demands of the Black community that the murderers of Michael Stewart and Eleanor Bumpurs be brought to justice deserve the full support of all working people. ■



Leonard Freed

. . . Michael Stewart:

"A police van bearing the unconscious body of Michael Stewart pulled into Bellevue Hospital at 3:22 a.m. on a warm September day in 1983.

"The doors swung open, and Mr. Stewart was lifted onto a hospital gurney. He had been hogtied—his ankles bound together, pulled behind his back, and tied to his hands with elastic cord. His body—5 feet, 11 inches tall, 143 pounds—was covered with bruises.

"Mr. Stewart, a 25-year-old Black man, had been taken into custody by white transit police officers who accused him of writing graffiti in the subway. His heart was not beating. Resuscitation revived it, but he died 13 days later without regaining consciousness.

"Within hours, New York City's chief medical examiner, Dr. Elliot M. Gross, announced that there was no evidence that physical injury had caused the death."

—*The New York Times*, Jan. 28, 1985.

At the hospital Dr. Robert L. Wolf had examined the comatose victim. "I removed the sheets," he said, "and it was obvious that he had incurred trauma to all major portions of his body

without exception. I determined that the most likely source of the wounds was a beating."

According to a transit-police spokesman, Stewart had written "three letters on the wall, RQS, about a foot high" with a felt-tip marker. The cops denied beating Stewart; they claimed his injuries resulted from his own violence and their "restraining" him. They also claimed they had found cocaine on Stewart but were later forced to retract that charge.

Dr. Gross personally performed the autopsy on Stewart. After six hours—an

unusually long time—he finished the autopsy and went to his office to confer with a transit police detective. After emerging from this meeting he held a press conference and issued a written statement that said, "The cause of death is cardiac arrest pending further study. . . there was no evidence of physical injury resulting or contributing to death."

A month after Gross presented his preliminary findings, he announced his final official conclusions about Stewart's death. He said it resulted from an "injury to the spinal cord"—but he refused to indicate what had caused the injury. This would not contradict the official police report that Stewart had

hurt himself during the arrest. The details of the autopsy itself, however, refute this contention.

Finally, in the wake of the *Times* articles and the announcement of five separate investigations into his misconduct, Gross admitted the possibility that Stewart died from "injuries which could have been inflicted by fists, by feet, by a nightstick."

The three transit cops who arrested Stewart were indicted, nine months after his death, on charges of manslaughter. The indictment was dismissed on the grounds that one of the grand jurors had acted improperly, but the case is now before a new grand jury.—C.C. ■

. . . Eleanor Bumpurs:

Eleanor Bumpurs was killed by two shotgun blasts on Oct. 29, 1984. She was four months behind in her New York City housing-project rent—\$96.25 a month—and six cops had come to evict her from her apartment.

The 66-year-old Black woman, who had a history of mental illness, became upset, started yelling, and picked up a kitchen knife. One of the cops leveled his 12-gauge shotgun and simply blew her away.

The police, as usual, claimed that the shots were in response to a life-threatening situation. Relatives pointed out that the 270-pound, arthritic grandmother was physically incapable of attacking the cops.

A key issue in the case is whether she was hit by one or two shotgun blasts. Dr. Jon S. Pearl, the medical examiner who performed the autopsy, reported the cause of death as "shotgun wounds (two) of chest, hand, and lung."

Dr. Elliott M. Gross, however, intervened and ordered him to delete the parenthetical "two."

His apparent motive was to bring the report into accord with the police claim that she had been hit only once.

Given that six cops invaded an infirm, elderly Black woman's apartment and one of them gunned her down, the number of shots might seem somewhat irrelevant. The question, however, was apparently of critical importance to a grand jury that decided to indict the cop who pulled the trigger, Stephen Sullivan, for manslaughter.

According to the district attorney, if

Sullivan had fired but one shot, the grand jurors would have been willing to believe that he had acted in self-defense. But the second shot, in their view, was an indication of an unwarranted intention to kill the old woman. Gross was obviously trying to weight the autopsy

report in the cops' favor when he ordered the number of shots deleted.

upped the ante in what was already a

Officer Sullivan's indictment has major political controversy. The cops and the gutter press (spearheaded by the *New York Post*) are mobilizing right-wing sentiment to drop the charges against the killer cop—a demand, in effect, for open season against Blacks.—C.C. ■

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New tax plan boosts corporate theft

By RALPH SCHOENMAN

Ronald Reagan, in his State of the Union address on Feb. 6, promised "to proceed toward... a Second American Revolution of hope and opportunity."

The focus of Mr. Reagan's "revolutionary" program is "an historic reform of tax simplification for fairness and growth."

The idea behind this plan, or so he would like us to believe, is that all taxpayers will be treated more fairly. Let's look at the facts.

The Federal Income Tax was established in 1913 and labeled a "progressive" tax because it was graduated upward in accordance with the ability to pay. The more one earned, the more one was taxed. In fact, it has never worked this way.

Still, Reagan has always been against the principle of the thing. In 1962 he declared, "We have received this progressive tax directly from Karl Marx, who designed it."

In 1978 Reagan promised to "lower the steeply progressive rates on the upper brackets."

In 1981 he cut taxes "evenly across the board" by 23%. The tax on unearned income was cut from 70% to 50%.

In an "across the board cut," progress works in reverse. The larger your income, the larger your tax cut. Thus, in dollars, the 1981 tax cut meant that a couple with taxable income of \$15,000 a year received a cut of \$474 by 1984, but a couple with taxable income of \$200,000 received \$25,632. In percentages, the richest received a tax cut of 3.5 times the cut for the poorest.

Tax simplification entails a "modified" flat tax. The modification for 1984 includes eliminating federal taxes on windfall oil profits, stock dividends and interest, and further reductions on business and investment profits. Ronnie Dugger reported in *The New York Times* that these measures will "present the rich with \$80 billion more a year" (Oct. 4, 1984).

Under these tax simplification reforms, the "progressive" income tax has already been cut by 25%—shifting the burden dramatically further to the working poor.

The 1913 law has never, in fact, been in effect. *Newsweek* acknowledged this:

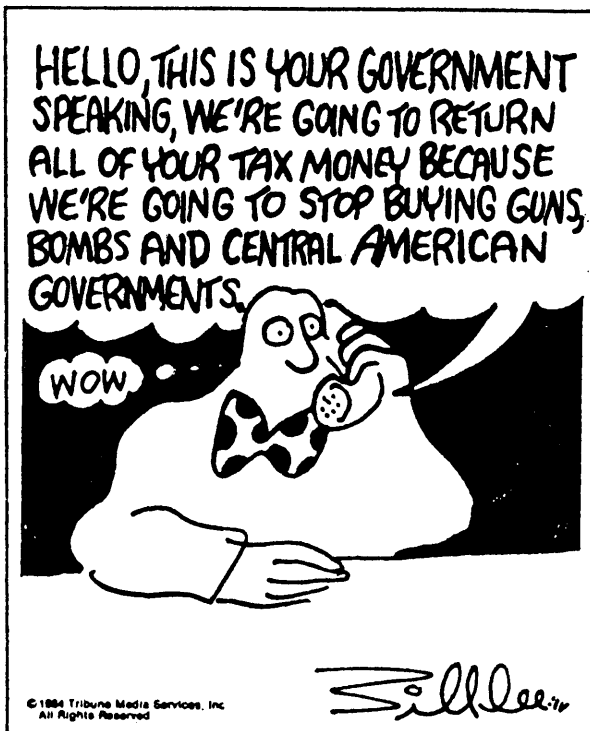
"In practice most upper-income Americans take advantage of the myriad tax preferences that have been written into the law over the years—and so today it is entirely possible for a wealthy taxpayer to pay little or no federal income tax at all" (Dec. 10, 1984).

Corporate contributions lowered

In the 1950s and 1960s corporate income tax generated 25% of all federal revenue. But by 1980 corporate tax was down to 14% of federal revenue, and by 1983 it had dropped to 6.2%.

Tax loopholes have virtually eliminated corporate taxation in America. In 1981 Accelerated Cost Recovery System (ACRS) was part of Reagan's tax bill. A system of super-accelerated tax write-offs for corporate investment in plant and equipment, ACRS combined with investment tax credits cost the federal government more in lost revenue than the cost of all federal social programs for the poor combined.

A study by Citizens for Tax Justice takes the top



250 non-financial corporations in the United States and shows that they paid but 14% on declared domestic profits of \$291.4 billion. From 1981 to 1983 they saved \$91 billion otherwise due to the federal government.

But if we look closely at these figures, the story is even more revealing. Seventeen of the leading companies with \$14.9 billion in profit paid no federal income tax at all for each of the three years (1981 to 1983). Instead, they received tax rebates and benefits exceeding \$1.2 billion. These rebates were earned before Reagan assumed office and were awarded by Carter.

Five of the top 17 paid zero or less taxes for each of the three years. They are all major Pentagon contractors with profits exceeding \$10.5 billion. Boeing earned \$1.53 billion in declared profits and had a negative tax obligation of \$267 million—that is, rebate entitlement which was converted into further income.

General Dynamics had profits of \$931 million and had a negative tax of \$71 million. Lockheed earned over \$1 billion and paid no taxes. Neither did General Electric or Grumman.

Of these, General Dynamics is the largest military contractor in the United States. It has paid no federal income tax since 1972, although it has reported profits of over \$2 billion.

General Dynamics has been allowed to defer payment of more than \$500 million in taxes from previous years. It has simultaneously "accumulated" over \$3 billion in "tax losses" which can be carried forward on the books until 1998.

Tax avoidance

How is all this accomplished? The "legal" avoidance of taxes and the tax-exempt dividends are the result of a technique called "completed contract accounting."

This sleight of hand permits corporations with long-term contracts to deduct expenses immediately

but to defer indefinitely reporting on any revenue or profits to the Internal Revenue Service. The Treasury dubs this subterfuge "interest-free loans."

They are never paid.

Thus, General Electric had \$6.5 billion in profit over three years and claimed its tax rebate of \$283 million, for an effective tax rate of minus 4.3%. Contrary to all the contentions of supply-side economists, these inducements produced no new investment. Why should they? It is more profitable to declare tax-free dividends. G.E. cut investment by 15% and increased dividends by 19.2%.

But defense contractors are not the only participants in this bonanza. Sixty-five corporations with \$450 billion in pre-tax profits paid zero taxes or less over three years. They received outright tax subsidies, bringing their "after-tax" profits to \$3.2 billion more than they made before taxes. They had a negative tax rate of minus 6.5%.

A further 128 corporations of the 250 largest paid zero or less taxes and claimed an additional \$5.7 billion in tax benefits on top of the \$57.1 billion in pre-tax profits earned during the years they paid no taxes.

Wherever one looks one finds the same pattern. Another 132 corporate giants paid fewer taxes than an average working family—while earning \$130.9 billion in profits.

Individual tax loopholes are equally inventive. Tax shelters abound, allowing substantial deductions for otherwise taxable incomes. Shelters such as real estate or oil exploration permit immediate deductions of several times the cash investment itself.

The corporate rich earn fortunes from tax write-offs alone. Chrysler Corp. earned \$2.38 billion in 1984—triple its earnings in 1983. The big three auto makers had a combined profit of \$9.18 billion. Huge bonuses were paid its executives, who sheltered their earnings. These exceeded \$135 million.

Chrysler, of course, had been subsidized by \$1.2 billion in government-guaranteed loans, while workers took pay cuts and pension funds were slashed.

Consequences for poor

David Stockman, Ronald Reagan's budget director, has decimated virtually every social program in the domestic budget. Yet during the next four years \$1.11 trillion will be spent on military production.

What are the consequences for the working poor in America? With federal subsidies shut off, the building of low- or moderate-income housing at a standstill, and minimal social support systems slashed, ever-greater numbers of people will fall below the poverty line.

Twenty million are officially hungry. Thirty-five million are officially impoverished. And real income is steadily declining for working Americans. Since 1968, income rose 24% while inflation soared 189%.

Ronald Reagan has promised a Second American Revolution. What he means by this is clear: Take from the poor to give to the rich. But in so doing, his administration and the corporate ruling rich it serves are creating the conditions for another kind of revolution; one where the working poor will reclaim the wealth that they have created and that is rightfully theirs.

Linus Pauling speaks out on Nicaragua

Linus Pauling, the recipient of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1954 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1962, is one of the endorsers of the San Francisco Spring Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice. *Socialist Action* contacted him about his trip last year to Nicaragua and his views on the recent statements by the Reagan administration on Central America.

Pauling explained that he was in Nicaragua for one week in July 1984. "The Norwegian Parliament and the Norwegian government as a whole decided to send a ship laden with supplies to Nicaragua," he stated, "in order to help the Nicaraguan people in their struggle for democracy and against oppression. I was asked to join other Nobel laureates on this trip, called the Peace Ship."

Asked about his impressions of the gains made over the past five years in

the field of health care, Pauling noted that "physicians now treat the poor people under the health-care system and are paid—reimbursed—by the state."

He added, "I judge that what happened before the revolution, before the Sandinista fighters won, was that the

"Now the poor have health care"

poor people just didn't get much in the way of health care or physician services. Now they do."

"We visited a hospital in Managua," he continued, "where [there were] soldiers who had been seriously wounded in fighting the *contras*, the group set up

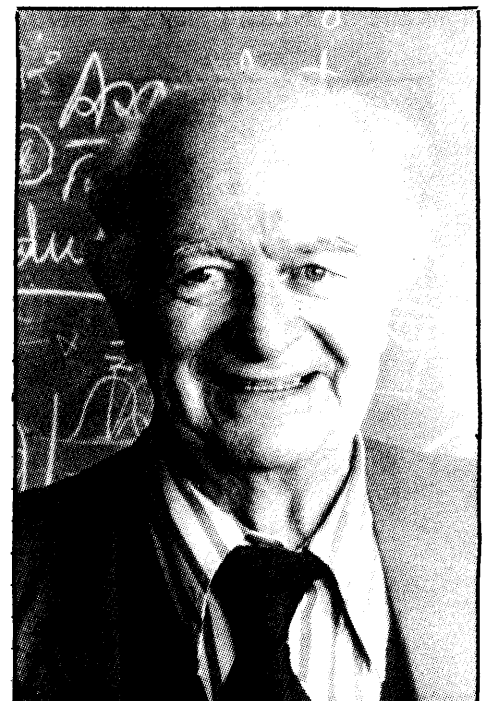
by the United States to harass the country."

Pauling added, "This military harassment forces this small country, with 3 million people, to have an army of 200,000 soldiers."

Pauling felt that the recent Reagan declarations on Nicaragua were very ominous and stated his hope "that the Congress may prevent the government from providing the money [to the *contras*]."

He noted, however, that millions of dollars are being raised privately "by a lot of rich right-wingers who support the *contras*."

Finally, referring to the large labor support for the April 20 Spring Mobilization, Pauling proudly noted: "You know, I am an honorary member of the Longshoremen's union."
—ALAN BENJAMIN



Linus Pauling

New contract round challenges Teamsters

By HAL LUNDFORD

NEW YORK—The Teamsters' largest contract, the National Master Freight Agreement (NMFA), covering more than 200,000 workers and involving 43 percent of all Teamster locals, will expire on March 31.

The results of this contract round will not only determine the wages, benefits, job security, and conditions of freight employees, and set the pattern for other

Hal Lundford is a member of I.B.T. 707.

Teamsters, but may also shape the union for some time.

The division of the employers into three separate groups threatens to break up the national master contract, a gain won by the union in 1964. Thus far, however, Teamster officials have firmly rejected any such breakup. They have said that would not tolerate side deals made by any local.

Representing the major carriers and 60 percent of the industry is Truck Management, Inc. (TMI). TMI is demanding a two-tier wage structure. As well as violating the union principle of equal

pay for equal work and threatening present workers' jobs, this is meant to be a time bomb to undermine the union.

Rank-and-file Teamsters rejected this in the form of a relief rider to the NMFA over a year ago by an 88 percent vote. Teamster president Jackie Presser, however, appears once again ready to concede on this key question.

TMI is also pressing to introduce speedup through such tactics as productivity standards and elimination of coffee breaks. It also wants to eliminate unionized jobs by combining job classifications and shifting work to non-union subcontractors and subsidiaries (double-breasting).

The union has the power to stop this concessionary drive, preserve the NMFA, restore the cost-of-living allowance (given up in 1982), protect members' jobs, and organize the growing non-union trucking sector—if the bureaucrats would mobilize the ranks. Presser, however, sees concessions as necessary and truck drivers as too difficult to organize, because he is opposed

to informing and involving the membership.

For example, in the big New York freight Local 707, the members have been told by the union that no information on the issues in the freight talks was available. Meanwhile, activists from Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) were distributing contract bulletins detailing the union proposals!

Nevertheless, around the country freight Teamsters are organizing themselves on a rank-and-file level to win a decent contract and fight management harassment. Through the distribution of TDU materials, tens of thousands of drivers and dock workers are studying the issues.

Where there is some union democracy, as well as rank-and-file organization, the members are turning out to union meetings and passing motions putting their local behind a decent contract. They are warning that they will reject any agreement that makes important concessions and ignores their concerns. ■

Columbia clericals score initial successes

By HARLAN F. STONE

NEW YORK—During the week before their Feb. 4 strike deadline, the Columbia clerical workers scored their first victories against the university administration.

The administration agreed to begin "discussions" with elected representatives of the Columbia local of District 65/UAW. The workers' Extended Organizing Committee then elected a five-person negotiating committee, which met with representatives of the administration on Jan. 30.

Out of this meeting came a "memorandum of understanding."

It contained several small but significant concessions to the Columbia clericals. The administration agreed to recognize District 65 and begin negotiations immediately upon NLRB certification of District 65. It also promised that no changes in benefits would be made without negotiations with District 65, and the grievance procedure was improved.

This agreement was overwhelmingly approved by the membership of the Columbia local on Jan. 31. Showing little confidence in the good will of the administration, the clerical workers also voted to authorize strike action if Columbia failed to abide by the agreement.

A little over a week later, on Feb. 11, the NLRB upheld District 65's victory in the May 1983 representation election. Within days the university administration recognized District 65 and began discussions to prepare for the negotiation of the first contract for Columbia's 1100 clerical workers.

Almost all of the clerical workers understand that the university's concessions and the NLRB's relatively speedy

action on the Columbia case were the results of their own activity; of the demonstrations, rallies, and other strike preparations in the month leading to Feb. 11. Many activists realize, however, that these victories are only the first round in a prolonged battle for a decent contract.

The Columbia local has already begun to take the offensive. The Membership Committee is presently charged

with the task of signing up hundreds of new members. If it models itself on the Contract Committee that existed at Yale, the Membership Committee can play an important role in organizing and mobilizing the rank-and-file clerical workers.

During the strike, the Contract Committee was the backbone of rank-and-file participation on the picket line and at demonstrations, sit-ins, and the like. The existence of such a body at Columbia could organize the power of the rank and file and prepare for the sort of actions that will be needed to win a decent contract. ■



B. N. Railroad in head-on collision with union

By MISHA FOX

MINNEAPOLIS—In June 1984 two trains on the Burlington Northern Railroad collided head-on in Minnesota. The BN's dispatch office had sent the trains hurtling toward each other at a combined speed of over 90 miles an hour. Three railroad employees were killed in the disaster.

To this day the Burlington management refuses to accept any responsibility for the accident. The company and representatives of the Federal Railroad Administration charged last summer that the victims had been operating under the influence of alcohol.

A recent report issued by the FRA, however, states that high alcohol levels in the blood of the victims was due to decomposition of their bodies following the crash.

Lately, the company has shifted the entire blame onto Joe Ceaser, the dispatcher who was on duty at the time of the collision. Ceaser, an 11-year clerical employee of BN and a member of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline

Clerks, has been fired from his job.

"Firing Joe Ceaser will not stop accidents on the BN," union activists in the Inter-craft Association of Minnesota (ICAM) write in their newsletter. "Only by instituting adequate training procedures and upgrading the tracks and equipment will accidents be prevented."

The newsletter cites 635 BN accidents in 1982 alone, including 77 collisions and 447 derailments. Over 100 people died in these incidents.

ICAM states that the June collision was the result of massive cost-cutting measures that put company profits

ahead of safety. Joe Ceaser was rushed through a sped-up training course and was working only his second unsupervised tour of duty as a dispatcher on the day of the crash.

ICAM points out that several dispatcher positions had been consolidated shortly before the accident, and even experienced dispatchers were having problems with the increased workload in unfamiliar territory.

Trade unionists and their families have organized protest rallies and picket lines to protest Burlington Northern's dangerous cutbacks. They have already forced the hiring of some additional dispatchers, additional training, and the continual staffing of outposts slated to be shut down. Now they are demanding that Joe Ceaser, a "sacrificial lamb," be returned to his former job as a clerk. ■

Hispanic hotel workers strike

By DAVE ROBERTS

LOS ANGELES—Forty-eight housekeeping and laundry workers walked off their jobs Jan. 16 at the Burbank Holiday Inn near Los Angeles. They are protesting wage cuts, increased workloads, and harassment from a racist employer.

The wage cuts and increased workloads are the result of a sweetheart contract signed by Sam Nuckolls, business agent for Local 531 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, and Joseph Perry, owner of the Glendale, Burbank, and Long Beach Holiday Inns.

The contract was negotiated behind the backs of the maids and laundry workers. They were never told what was in it. They found out, however, soon after the contract was ratified by the reluctant workers.

Health insurance was canceled in the new contract, wages were cut from \$3.90 to \$3.40 an hour, and the work load was raised from 16 to 18 rooms to be cleaned each shift. The unhappiness of his employees upset Joe Perry. He decided to meet the problem head on—by hiring a new crew.

He instructed Gloria Tartagliane, the

executive housekeeper, to hand out warnings to as many of the maids as possible so they could be fired. He told her that he wanted to hire 20 new workers. When she refused, she and two assistants were transferred to the Glendale hotel. They refused the transfers and were fired.

Hearing of the threatened transfers, 28 maids and laundry workers walked off the job. They demanded that the transfers be rescinded in writing and that other grievances be settled.

Business Agent Nuckolls now appeared to "represent" his union members. He told them they had better get back to work right away as they were in violation of the contract. It contained a clause banning strikes, he said.

When questioned by the press about his workers' grievances, Joe Perry said, "I ain't saying nothing. Silence is golden."

The union has filed a grievance against the hotel but is doing nothing else to support the strikers. The 28 women feel that the union as well as the boss is against them. They need strong community support and the help of other unions to bring this fight to a successful conclusion. ■



Wives of rail workers protest Burlington Northern's safety violations.



Steelworkers demonstrate in Pittsburgh against Reagan.

Mon Valley tells U.S. Steel: 'We have a right to a future'

By BETH BOERGER and PAUL LE BLANC

DUQUESNE, Pa.—On a snowy Jan. 28 evening, almost a thousand people—steelworkers with their families and friends—gathered together in a Duquesne church. They were there because they refused to accept the idea that the U.S. Steel Corp. could simply be allowed to decide whether or not the steel communities of the Monongahela-Ohio Valley would have a future. They believed that the working people who make up those communities should have something to say about their own future.

Organized by the Tri-State Conference on Steel and United Steel Workers of America (USWA) Local 1256, the gathering focused on the situation at U.S. Steel's Duquesne Works.

In late 1983 the Duquesne Works won an industry-wide productivity award; the blast furnaces and basic oxygen shop at Duquesne were considered

**"Come on and stand,
you're never gonna
crawl to a victory"**

some of the most modern and productive facilities in the area. But there was a problem for the company. Aware of the plant's profitability, the members of USWA Local 1256 refused to agree to "giveback" concessions demanded by U.S. Steel.

A few months later, the company closed the Duquesne Works and in October announced that it would soon begin to dismantle the "hot end" of the works, known as Dorothy Six, the largest blast furnace in the Mon Valley. Under the leadership of the Tri-State Conference, union and community activists threatened to occupy the facility in order to prevent its destruction.

U.S. Steel then agreed to hold off on demolition plans until the completion of a feasibility study sponsored by Tri-State, in conjunction with USWA,

the city of Pittsburgh and other municipal governments, and Allegheny County officials. At the Jan. 28 mass meeting, the results of the feasibility study were presented by Michael Locker of Locker-Abrecht Associates, the New York City firm that conducted the study.

A "Steel Valley Authority"

The Tri-State Conference on Steel was organized in 1979, when union, community, and religious activists from Youngstown, Ohio, allied themselves with local union and religious forces in Pittsburgh's Mon Valley. The group has been developing a plan for a "Steel Valley Authority," modeled on the Tennessee Valley Authority of the 1930s. The "SVA" would use the power of eminent domain to place the local steel industry under community and worker ownership.

The Locker-Abrecht feasibility study is significant because it argues that a \$24-million investment (not \$500 million as claimed by U.S. Steel) could ensure the profitability of the Duquesne Works. It would do this without any antiunion "giveback" concessions in wages and benefits and in a manner that would bolster production at other steel mills in the region.

What is becoming clear, however, is that U.S. Steel is not interested in maintaining a profitable steel industry in the Mon-Ohio Valley. By dismantling it, the corporation would be in a position to deal a fatal blow to a proudly organized, highly unionized sector of the labor force and to chase after bigger profits elsewhere.

Unity and determination

The Jan. 28 mass meeting at Duquesne was opened with a song by Mike Stout of USWA Local 1397: "Come on and stand / Get off your knees / You're never gonna crawl / to a victory."

The words reflected the mood of the crowd. Not only are they a challenge to continued action, but they also reflect a recognition of the struggle the people of the Mon-Ohio Valley have already been through.

Leon Lynch, international vice president of the

USWA, congratulated the steelworkers of the Mon Valley for their "esprit de corps," stating it was "the fight coming out of the valley" that convinced the International to back Tri-State in funding the feasibility study and to provide a \$20,000 grant to winterize the Dorothy Six blast furnace.

Mike Bilscik, president of USWA Local 1256 at the Duquesne Works, encouraged the community to join with the union in maintaining a "gate watch" at the mill, establishing a phone tree which would "be able to get 2000 people called and into the mill within an hour to stop the demolition."

Jim Benn, speaking for the Tri-State Conference on Steel, told the crowd that the meeting marked "the end of neutrality."

"What we're doing tonight," he said, "is setting the stage for plant-shutdown fights across the country. If we don't go into the streets, committed to fight, and say how we feel, we're going to lose."

Speakers from the community, including the president of Duquesne's NAACP, expressed strong support.

Working people in motion

Although all the speakers emphasized the themes of unity and determination, it was obvious that not all shared the same vision of a worker-community-controlled industry put forth in the Tri-State plan.

The Locker-Abrecht study emphasizes the need for "innovative management practices" and close cooperation between labor and management. It suggests that the public authority might serve primarily as a mediator between company and community. In line with this scenario for the reopening of the plant, the feasibility study suggests how the Duquesne plant could be profitable in a "free-market" setting.

The Tri-State plan, on the other hand, specifically stresses the concept of worker-community control and emphasizes that the steel produced by the Steel Valley Authority could be sold to the federal government for use in public projects such as rebuilding bridges and roads.

But Tri-State organizers stress repeatedly that feasibility studies alone will accomplish nothing. They argue that only solid grass-roots organizing, spearheaded by the unions, can generate positive solutions to the economic crisis.

It is not clear, at this point, what direction the Tri-State campaign will ultimately take. What is clear is that it has generated tremendous enthusiasm in the Mon-Ohio Valley, and significant numbers of working people are in motion to shape their own future.



Speakers platform at Tri-state steelworkers' conference. From left to right: Mike Bilscik, president, USWA Local 1256; Tom Michlovic, state assemblyman; Mike Stout, grievanceman, USWA Local 1397; and Leon Lynch, international vice president, USWA

Auto workers end strike against AP Parts Co.

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

TOLEDO, Ohio—On Feb. 10 United Auto Workers Local 14 decided to end its nine-month strike against AP Parts by a vote of 254-72.

The company forced a strike on May 2 by cutting wages \$5.84 per hour and imposing severe work-rule changes that the union had turned down after its contract expired on March 4.

The new contract provides for an average hourly wage of \$10.25, with raises of \$1.50 over the next three years. A \$2.05 cost-of-living increase, however, is suspended until the final year of the contract.

Although the company's initial offer would have gutted the retirement plan,

the new contract provides for the same pension plan as the previous one. Other benefits are roughly comparable.

Company spokespeople have referred to a projected work force of approximately 50 percent of the 450 who were employed prior to the strike. So far, less than one-third of the strikers are back at work.

One feature of the new agreement that upset many of the strikers is the company's insistence on imposing suspension—ranging from one week to six months—on those strikers who they allege have been guilty of picket-line misconduct.

Throughout the strike, Toledo UAW members demonstrated their support.

Successful plant-gate collections, resulting in large quantities of food and tens of thousands of dollars, helped stop the company from starving the strikers back to work.

On May 21 some 3000 UAW members rallied at the AP Parts gate. This demonstration was attacked by the police, and 41 protestors were arrested. Unfortunately, the UAW leadership limited its support to legal assistance.

No public campaign was mounted to defend these victims. Those tried have been found guilty and received fines, suspended sentences, and/or placed on probation. In addition, a second planned rally was called off when the company agreed to resume talks in June.

At the Labor Day parade, the AP Parts contingent was one of the largest and most spirited. Many other marchers carried signs announcing their support

for the strikers.

Even though the company continued to stall on negotiations and scabs remained in the plant, UAW officials refused to mobilize this potential support. Instead, they limited their public activity to two full-page newspaper ads answering company accusations.

Although the new contract still includes some serious concessions, it shows what can be accomplished when workers stand up and fight against the bosses' takeback demands. This strike also demonstrated the tremendous potential of labor solidarity. Despite continued unfavorable publicity in the Toledo big-business media, area workers clearly saw this fight as their own.

If the UAW officials had not succeeded in calling off subsequent rallies and returning to business-as-usual closed-door negotiations, much more could have been won.

Building April 20 across the country

San Francisco . . .

SAN FRANCISCO—The Spring Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice coalition, which is building the April 20 demonstration in this city, has been endorsed by all seven of the San Francisco Bay Area AFL-CIO labor councils; the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU); the largest Teamster local in the area; the majority of the city council members in San Francisco; and hundreds of religious, community, peace, and student organizations.

The extent of labor support for the April 20 action is unprecedented. The Santa Cruz Labor Council, for instance, has chartered a 4000-seat passenger train to transport unionists and community activists the 70-odd miles to San Francisco.

"This is perhaps the broadest coalition of labor and community groups ever put together in this area," said Al Lannon, president of Local 6, ILWU, who serves as co-chairman of the mobilization.

Regularly scheduled Saturday working-committee meetings of the coalition have been well-attended as the momentum of the action continues to grow. Two benefit cocktail parties, a dance, and a music concert are being organized to help raise the \$60,000 budget.

Office space, equipment, printing facilities, and several thousands of dollars in donations have already been received from the ILWU, the Service Employees International Union, the International Molders Union, the California Federation of Teachers, and the Painters union.

Three paid staff members are helped by several other full or part-time volunteers. Community Latino organizations have provided a staff person to specifically concentrate on involving Latinos in the demonstration. Similar efforts are being made to involve the Black community; lesbians and gays; and women's, student, and religious organizations.

Special events and materials are also being prepared to encourage the formation of contingents in the demonstration. For example, a Labor Speak-Out against the War in Central America and Apartheid is being proposed for March 21, and coordinated campus actions are being suggested for April 11. In addition, the coalition will seek to strengthen its links to religious organizations when a delegation meets with San Francisco Archbishop John Quinn.

The coalition has established headquarters at the SEIU offices at 240 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco 94102. For further information call (415) 771-0882—**CARL FINAMORE** ■

New York . . .

NEW YORK—The building by the New York April Actions Coalition of the April 20, Washington, D.C., demonstration and of the events associated with it is picking up momentum.

The second meeting of the steering committee of the coalition was held on Feb. 13 at the headquarters of District 65 of the United Auto Workers union. As at the first meeting, over 100 members of local trade unions and Central American solidarity, peace, anti-apartheid, Black, and Latino organizations were present.

After discussion, it was agreed that all events of April 19-22 will be described in a bilingual leaflet but that the April 20 demonstration will be highlighted, as this action will undoubtedly draw the largest number of people.

It was announced that the coalition has already secured the endorsement of several labor leaders from the New York area. Other prominent endorsers include the Rev. William Sloane Coffin, City Council member Ruth Messinger,

and New York Assembly member Frank Barbaro.

The next meeting of the steering committee, the decision-making body of the coalition, will be on March 6 at 7 p.m. in the headquarters of District 65, 13 Astor Place, second floor. All interested individuals and organizations are welcome to attend.

Those seeking information or wishing to participate in the work of the coalition may call or write the New York April Actions Coalition, 19 West 21st St., New York, N.Y. 10010. Tel. (212) 242-1040 or 673-1808.

—**PAUL SIEGEL** ■

Los Angeles . . .

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles April 20 Coalition was formed last Jan. 31 at a meeting here attended by 125 activists. Participants came from a wide range of peace organizations, labor unions, Central America solidarity groups, and socialist organizations.

The coalition is planning a march on April 20 along Broadway in the Latino community, culminating in a rally at City Hall. It also adopted the four sets



Dave Meggyesy, representative of the National Football Association, speaking at April 20 press conference in San Francisco City Hall on Feb. 5

of demands of the April Actions for Peace, Jobs, and Justice in Washington, D.C.

Most proposals for other demands were rejected by the participants, but there was agreement to add support to rights of undocumented workers, an end to deportation of Central American refugees, and support to the sanctuary movement. These were considered particularly important for the action in Los Angeles, where there is a large population of refugees from Central America.

To implement the plans of the April 20 coalition, several work committees have been meeting. In addition, meetings to build the Los Angeles action have taken place in San Diego, and there are plans underway for participation from numerous cities in Arizona.

The Los Angeles April 20 Coalition can be contacted c/o WILPF, 4603 Prospect Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027.—**MARC BEDNER** ■

Cincinnati . . .

CINCINNATI—The second meeting of the Cincinnati April Actions for Peace, Jobs, and Justice coalition took place on Feb. 9 with the participation of representatives from the Central American Task Force, CARE, the NBIPP, the Organization of Arab Students, as well as various unionists and community activists.

The coalition is planning to send a large contingent to the April Actions in Washington, D.C., on April 19-22. Supporters of *Socialist Action* have urged an all-out mobilization for April 20 and have advocated that the decision-making in the coalition be on the basis of "one person, one vote" as opposed to "one group, one vote."

A third coalition meeting is scheduled for Feb. 23 with the purpose of organizing outreach to the labor movement and to the students.

—**MARGA RET KELLEY** ■

Chicago . . .

CHICAGO—More than 150 people gathered here for a planning conference to launch a local coalition to build the April 20 demonstration in Washington, D.C. The meeting, held on Feb. 5, was attended by representatives of nearly all the major Central America solidarity groups and nuclear-freeze forces as well as a wide cross-section of religious and peace activists.

The meeting heard keynote speeches on the four main themes of the Spring Mobilization given by Monsignor John Egan of the Archdiocese of Chicago; Carol Larson, co-pastor of the Wheadon United Methodist Church; Joe Mariano of the National Peoples Action; and Allan Howe, director of the North Shore Peace Initiative.

Endorsers of the action include such groups as the Free South Africa Movement, Committee for a Sane Nuclear

movements urges attendance at a founding coalition meeting Feb. 23. Current plans are to send at least two buses to the Washington demonstration.

—**SHIRLEY PASHOLK** ■

Ann Arbor . . .

ANN ARBOR, Mich.—The University of Michigan chapters of the Latin American Solidarity Committee (LASC), Faculty for Human Rights in El Salvador and Central America (FACHRES-CA), Michigan Alliance for Disarmament (MAD), and the Puerto Rican Solidarity Organization have all endorsed the April 20 demonstration in Washington, D.C., as the culmination of winter-term 1985 activities against U.S. intervention in Central America.

In January LASC organized several demonstrations against CIA recruitment on the University of Michigan campus, and MAD held a two-day "Conference on Deadly Connections" among nuclear war, interventionism, and social oppression.

On Jan. 31 over 150 people attended a FACHRES-CA talk by Professor Tommie Sue Montgomery of Dickinson College on "El Salvador: Five Years of Civil War."

Ms. Montgomery spent many months among the guerrillas in the liberated zones of El Salvador as well as in Nicaragua.

A few days later, on Feb. 4, hundreds attended a debate between Peter Rossett of LASC and Lt. Col. James Sivells of the U.S. State Department on the nature of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua. Shortly afterwards, LASC announced plans for a "Central America Week" to be held in late March.

—**ALAN WALD** ■

Houston . . .

HOUSTON—A broad coalition of forces met here on Feb. 13 to establish a Coalition for a Texas Spring Mobilization. A series of peace, solidarity, student, and Hispanic organizations decided to call for a regional demonstration in Houston on April 20 in support of the four demands put forward by the national April Actions coalition.

The coalition will work with groups and individuals in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio, and the Valley to build this demonstration. In addition, the coalition will focus its efforts to mobilize around some issues especially important to Texas. These include the deportation of Central American refugees, the persecution of sanctuary workers, and the participation of Texas National Guard units in the April maneuvers on the Honduras border with Nicaragua and El Salvador.

For more information on the April 20 demonstration call (713) 529-0446.—**DAVID ROSSI** ■

Boston . . .

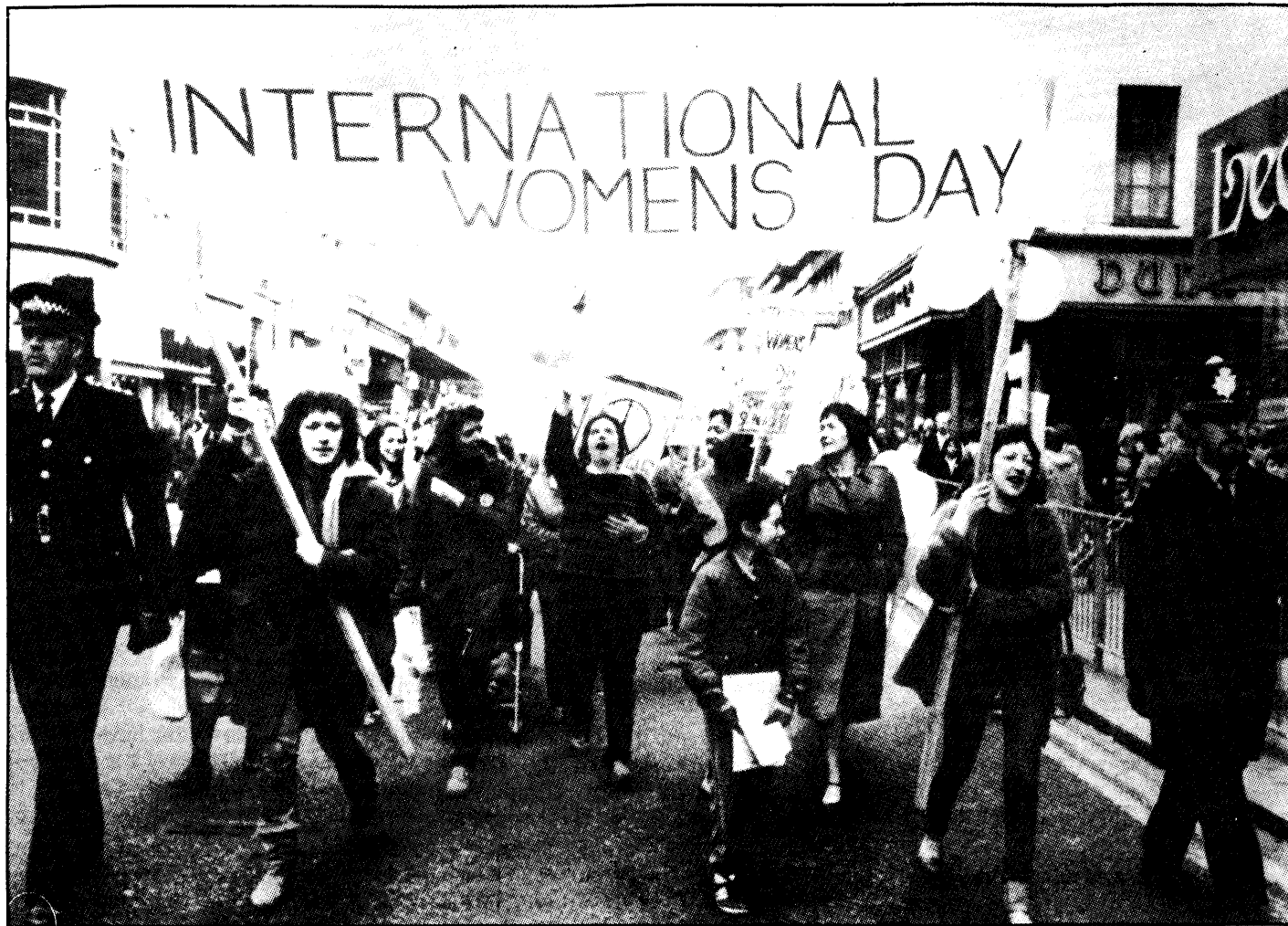
BOSTON—The Boston April Actions for Peace, Jobs, and Justice coalition is mobilizing for the Washington, D.C., actions. The initial endorsers include various union locals and peace and solidarity organizations. Discussions are still under way as to whether or not priority for buses and publicity will be given to the April 20 national demonstration.

With just a few weeks left before the action, the task remains to broaden the coalition and to do massive outreach work. An important step in this direction will be the mass leafleting scheduled for March 23, 24, and 30.

The outreach task force meets every other Saturday at the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Massachusetts Ave. The next meeting is scheduled for March 2. For more information call (617) 491-4214.—**DAVE WALSH** ■



International Women's Day



Catholics join abortion debate

By DIANNE FEELEY

Raped by three men on a country road in Georgia, a woman—alone and without money—tried to get an abortion. Her unsuccessful attempt to obtain an abortion in 1969 led to a lawsuit that eventually resulted in the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, the famous Roe vs. Wade case.

What led this individual woman, alone and powerless, to decide that she would not accept society's rules, that she must attempt to change them? Was she aware of the thousands of other women who were waging the same fight?

Did she know about the women who, throughout U.S. history, have fought to control their own reproductive lives—against the authorities who closed down birth-control clinics, who harassed medical workers daring to provide effective advice, who arrested and imprisoned doctors performing abortions for women desperately needing them.

The fact of the matter is that by the late 1960s the combination of women's continued entry into the work force, along with the development of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements, created the climate in which women began to participate as actors in history. The gap between society's view of a woman's role as wife and mother and the discrimination women faced in every avenue of their lives became apparent to larger numbers of women. They began to fight back.

The rise of the women's movement in the 1970s resulted in two concrete gains—the legalization of abortion and the introduction of affirmative action programs. Many of us who participated in the fight around these issues did not regard the legal victory as the culmina-

tion of the struggle. Rather we saw the law as a weapon to help us wage the real fight—the battle over implementation.

Minority becomes majority

In the 1960s many told us that it was impossible to win abortion rights, that the majority opposed such legalization. But the more we fought, the more we explained women's need to control our reproductive lives, the more we demonstrated, the faster opinion polls began to shift in our direction. That is how a minority became the majority.

Of course the law was never fully implemented. Most hospitals simply refused to set up the facilities. Nonetheless, more than 1.5 million legal abortions are performed each year. This figure is estimated to be about the same as the number of illegal abortions performed annually prior to the Supreme Court decision.

But the legalization has meant that abortion is performed earlier in a woman's pregnancy (more than 90 percent are performed within the first 12 weeks of gestation). This has significantly reduced the risk to a woman's health and life.

Over the past dozen years legal challenges have attempted to whittle away the U.S. Supreme Court decision. The attempt to limit the law was based on the right wing's strategy to deny abortion to the most vulnerable women—the women on welfare and the teenagers.

Its tactic was to divert the debate from the issue of the individual woman's right to make her own choice to the rights of the fetus and to the question of whether society should pay for a welfare woman's alleged sexual promiscuity.

Today the right wing is on a roll. It has succeeded in getting some doctors to

stop performing abortions. It has succeeded in forcing some hospitals to stop providing abortion services. It has succeeded in closing some clinics. It won this round of the fight to outlaw Medicaid abortions for welfare women, and today only a dozen states fund such abortions.

Diverse opinions among Catholics

A new element on the political scene is the emergence of the Catholic clergy and laity—led by nuns who have been influenced both by liberation theology and the women's movement. They challenge the right wing by a simple statement of fact: There is a diversity of opinion on the issue of abortion.

An Oct. 7, 1984, *New York Times* ad, signed by 24 nuns and more than 50 other members of the Catholic clergy and laity, called for a dialogue within the Catholic community. Sponsored by Catholics for a Free Choice, the ad stated the belief that Catholics "should not seek the kind of legislation that curtails the legitimate exercise of the free-

dom of religion and conscience or discriminates against poor women."

The signers did not take a position on the issue of abortion but merely noted that a diversity of opinion does exist. They cited data compiled by the National Opinion Research Center that indicated that only 11 percent of Catholics surveyed disapprove of abortion under all circumstances.

The ad stated that those Catholics who publicly dissent from "hierarchical statements and explore areas of moral and legal freedom on the abortion question should not be penalized by their religious superiors, church employers, or bishops."

It concluded by calling upon all Catholics to affirm the statement.

Vatican's threats against clergy

Within a month the American bishops, at their annual meeting, blasted the signers for saying there are diverse views. And two weeks later the Vatican threatened the clergy and nuns who signed the ad with expulsion from their orders unless they renounced the statement.

Forty of the signatories responded by noting that the approach of the Vatican stifles discussion and creates "the appearance of consensus where none exists."

Everyone expects this controversy to be a protracted fight. The Vatican has not given a deadline for compliance, and the signers of the *New York Times* ad, who have a variety of opinions on abortion, will be drafting a statement stressing the right of dissent within the Church, which will then be circulated in an effort to elicit wide support.

A group of the initial ad signers plan public hearings on women's issues from a Catholic perspective in Washington, D.C., on March 4-5. At the same time a committee of Catholic bishops, assigned to draft a pastoral letter on women and the church, will be holding closed hearings.

Meanwhile, the National Coalition of American Nuns published a statement that rejects discussions on abortion that include no—or only token—women. It flatly rejects "the attitude which denies personhood to the woman and bestows it on the fetus" and insists that "no woman should be impregnated against her will."

It points out that any criminalization of abortion would leave poor women "to the mercy of amateurs."

Further, it rejects the implication that unwanted pregnancies are the result "either of irresponsibility on the part of

(continued on page 8)

International Women's Day, celebrated since the beginning of this century, has recently re-emerged as a symbol of international solidarity among women.

The idea of a special day for women originated among women socialists. In 1910, at the Second International Conference of Socialist Working Women, Clara Zetkin from the German Social Democratic Party, proposed an annual celebration. Four years later, on March 8, Zetkin led thousands of women in a massive demonstration against Germany's rush toward World War I and against Rosa Luxemburg's arrest and conviction.

March 8 was chosen in commemoration of the women garment workers' strike of 1908. On that day the women swept through New York City's lower East Side protesting sweatshop conditions and demanding the vote.

In 1917 it was a March 8 demonstration by striking women textile workers in St. Petersburg that sparked the Russian Revolution.

The Socialist Action FORUM celebrates International Women's Day of 1985 with reports from around the world of women's growing power and participation in the struggle for social justice and freedom—for themselves and all working people.—THE EDITORS

South African women resist apartheid's triple oppression



By NANCY GRUBER

Thandi Modise has been in prison in South Africa since October 1979. The 21-year-old guerrilla fighter was accused of propagating the aims of a banned organization, the African National Congress (ANC); of possessing a machine gun and explosives; and of conspiring to commit arson and sabotage. She was sentenced to an eight-year term under the Terrorism Act.

Thandi was five months pregnant when she was arrested. During detention she was repeatedly beaten, denied pre-natal care, and kept in solitary confinement. At the time of her sentencing in November 1980, her baby daughter was eight months old.

Mamphela Ramphele was placed under a banning order in April 1977, after having been arrested and detained for 139 days under the Internal Security Act. Dr. Ramphele, at the age of 27, was a leader in the development of medical facilities alternative to those available under apartheid. At the time of her arrest she was superintendent of the Zanempilo Health Centre near King Williams Town. The center had been established to provide essential health services to rural areas of the Ciskei bantustan.

Mamphela worked with the Zimele Trust to aid released political prisoners and collaborated with Steve Biko, the young Black nationalist who was killed in detention in September 1977. This, in addition to her humanitarian work in the clinic itself, brought down the wrath of the South African government.

In April 1977 she was banished to Lenyenye township, a remote village

over 600 miles from King Williams Town. Under her banning order she may not leave it even to visit two medical outstations in the countryside or to take patients to the hospital in nearby Tzaneen.

Yet she continues with her medical work among the most oppressed of the African population—those who have been forcibly transported to the bantustans, the so-called "homelands" for 21 million Blacks.

The structure of apartheid

Under the pernicious apartheid plan, the huge majority of South Africans must live in these areas that comprise only 13 percent of the land surface of the country, while the remaining 87 percent is controlled by the 4.6 million whites.

Apartheid has been constructed on a series of laws enacted by the Nationalist government since 1950. First came the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, followed by the Immorality Act, which made any sexual contact between two people of different races a felony. The Bantu Education Act ended Black access to white universities. The Population Registration Act required the registration of all South Africans by race.

Finally, the Group Areas Act and the Urban Areas Act, by eliminating the right of any but whites to own property, by dictating that people of each racial group must live in separate communities, and by prohibiting most Blacks from living in urban areas, created the vicious and inhuman circle in which Black South Africans are trapped today.

In this dehumanizing system, all suffer. But the women undergo a triple oppression. Beyond the subjection to

savage white racism and to exploitation as workers (one out of every three Black workers in South Africa is a woman), women suffer special discrimination.

They are denied even the limited legal rights of South African men. The South African Bantu Administration Act No. 38, of 1927, as amended, reads: "... a Bantu (South African Black) woman who is a partner in a customary union and who is living with husband, shall be deemed to be a minor and her husband shall be deemed to be her guardian."

Under the Urban Areas Act, the only people permitted to live in the urban areas are those who can prove either that they were born there, that they have lived there for 15 years, or that they have worked for the same employer for 10 years. The cruellest effect of this act has been the near-total destruction of family life in South Africa.

Most women cannot live or work in the urban areas where their husbands are employed. Either they are exiled in the "homelands," where they bear the complete responsibility for bringing up the children and see their husbands only once a year. Or, since families cannot survive on the wages paid to male workers, the women must go to work in the most menial and worst-paying jobs. With no childcare available, children must be sent to live with friends or relatives in the bantustans. And the separation of the family is complete.

Most Black women can find jobs only in domestic service or agriculture, although the number of women in industry has grown in recent years as they are being used to replace men at lower wages. Of the 175,000 (1981 statistics) female members of the Trade Union Congress of South Africa, the vast majority work in the garment industry, where in 1979, they were paid one-fifth less than the minimum wage.

The Garment Workers' Union, however, which is female dominated and led, has long been in the forefront of the struggle for racial equality within the union. As long ago as 1944, the union won a Supreme Court ruling that meant that Black women were entitled to the same wages and conditions as whites working in the industry.

The Trade Union Congress has also been working to improve the lot of women workers, calling for an end to discriminatory wage rates, for maternity leaves, and for childcare centers.

Although Thandi Modise and Mam-

phela Ramphele are representative of a new strain of activism among the women of South Africa, they have inherited a struggle which began more than 70 years ago. In 1913 a group of women launched a massive anti-apartheid demonstration that served as the model for later demonstrations.

Five years later, with the help of the African National Congress, the Bantu Women's League was founded and then replaced in 1936 by the National Council for African Women. In 1943 the ANC Women's League was established with the goal of educating and mobilizing women of all racial groups into the struggle.

The Federation of South African Women was created in 1954 out of the Women's League and other smaller organizations, with the stated aim of "struggling for removal of all laws, regulations, conventions, and customs that discriminate against us as women."

Then on Aug. 9, 1956, the spirit of resistance among Black South African women erupted in a demonstration—20,000 strong—of women from all over South Africa. The national march was organized to protest the extension to women of the hated pass laws. These laws require all African men to carry an identification document at all times and to produce it on demand, on pain of arrest.

The women converged on the government buildings in Pretoria, demanding to see the prime minister. Hundreds of thousands of signatures on petitions were left in his office. After a silent vigil of 30 minutes, the women's voices resounded through the city in an old Zulu refrain: "Now you have touched the women, you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed."

The valiant resistance of the South African women has grown since that Aug. 9 (the day now celebrated as South African Women's Day), despite continuing imprisonments and bannings. In 1981 at least 15 women political prisoners were known to be serving sentences. They are subjected to harsh treatment, solitary confinement, censorship of all reading materials—complete isolation from the outside world and each other.

In the face of such ruthless repression, however, the raised clenched fists of the women and their cry of "Amandla!" (Power) is changing the South African political landscape. ■

Doctors refute "Silent Scream"

A well-publicized new film, "The Silent Scream," purports to show a 12-week old fetus grimacing in pain as it is aborted by the suction process. In his State of the Union address, President Reagan said, "If every member of Congress would see that film, they would move quickly to end the tragedy of abortion."

The film shows the image of a fetus revealed by means of high-frequency sound waves. "A child is being torn apart by the unfailing instruments of abortion," narrates gynecologist Dr. Bernard Nathanson, as ominous music plays in the background.

Although the "scream" of the film's title is "metaphorical," Dr. Nathanson stated on the ABC Nightline show, "This child is clearly in agony."

Leading pediatric neurologists and neuroembryologists dispute Nathanson's contention. "To make a statement that the fetus feels pain is a totally ridiculous statement," says Dr. Edwin Meyer, chairman of pediatric neurology at the Medical College of Virginia. "Pain implies cognition. There is no brain to receive the information."

Meyer and others explain that the nerve-cell pathways that enable an impulse to travel from sensors in the brain back to the muscle do not begin to develop in the fetus until at least 24 weeks.

A fetus of the age of the one allegedly shown in "The Silent Scream" is only capable of "a primitive survival response like a lower animal," maintains Dr. Hart Peterson, acting chairman of pediatric neurology at New York Hospital at Cornell Medical Center. "If you take out an earthworm and poke it with a stick, it responds too."

The National Organization of Women is encouraging its members to view "The Silent Scream" in order to "demystify it" for the general public. Nanette Falkenberg, executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League, suggests that people view the film without Dr. Nathanson's narration.

"I don't think you see what Bernie Nathanson says you see," Falkenberg said. "He draws conclusions based on his belief systems that are not grounded in fact." —MICHAEL SCHREIBER ■

... Catholics

(continued from page 7)

women or girls or of their licentious behavior."

These nuns are an important acquisition to the struggle for women's rights as they broaden and deepen the debate, forcing open a discussion on how people make responsible choices.

It is also important to remember that the struggle for women's rights occurs within the framework of a particular economic climate. The attack on women is not limited to the single issue of abortion rights. The attack on women parallels the attack on working people, on Blacks, Hispanics, students, gays, the disabled, the elderly.

It is a broadside fight to reverse the

gains of the 1960s and 70s, to reverse the Vietnam syndrome, to drive down the living standards of working people and the poor, to pulverize and atomize the American people, to teach them they must accept their fate. The fanatical rhetoric of the right wing is the perfect rhetoric for the ruling-class austerity drive.

President Ronald Reagan's address to the anti-abortion rally held Jan. 22 in Washington, D.C., symbolizes this fact. But unlike the crusade that drove women from their jobs in industry after World War II under the mask of the feminine mystique, today's campaign against women will not succeed. And it is a more violent campaign precisely because it is linked more cruelly to the crisis of capitalism itself. ■

Nicaraguan women:

AMNLAE leader hails gains of revolution

By MARGARET MORA

Margaret Mora, a member of Socialist Action, has recently returned from Nicaragua where she interviewed Rosamaria Mendoza, a member of the Zonal Executive Committee of the Luisa Amelia Espinoza Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE). An abridgement of that interview is published below.

In Masaya we met with Rosamaria Mendoza, who described the AMNLAE organization to our group. AMNLAE work committees exist in the barrios, factories, and hospitals. There may be anywhere from 50 to 200 members, depending on the size of the barrio.

AMNLAE is an autonomous organization, Mendoza told us. It has relations with the Sandinista Defense Committees, Fetsalud, ANDEN (the national teachers' union), and the FSLN. Women from parties other than the FSLN can participate.

There are members from the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and the Conservative Party, for example. It doesn't matter what one's political affiliation is as long as it is understood that the main reason for this organization is the struggle for the rights of women.

Mendoza argued that women's rights can only be won within the overall struggle for liberation taking place in Nicaragua. One important arena in the struggle is the labor movement. AMNLAE attempts to make union leaders more aware of the needs of women and to convince the unions that it is in their interests to fight for the rights of women.

To achieve this goal, AMNLAE knows that it will also have to convince women to become participants in the unions. They know that to change old

"Women make up over 70% of militias in Nicaragua"

customs and sexist attitudes is a long process. Nevertheless, the feeling is that women have advanced substantially and that everyone's consciousness is broadening in terms of the role women are playing in the revolution.

To demonstrate these advances, Mendoza told us that 60 percent of the literacy-campaign workers were women. Eighty percent of the healthcare workers in the hospitals during the course of the revolution were women. Women make up 70 to 80 percent of the militias.

According to Mendoza, AMNLAE has successfully promoted the implementation of laws that benefit women in regard to marital relations, maternity leave, and legal rights over children.

Women should control their own bodies

In regard to contraception and abortion Mendoza told us that AMNLAE supports the idea that women should control their own bodies. A major problem, however, is the lack of supplies like contraceptives. Because of the U.S. blockade, these supplies do not reach women who would be interested in using them.

The AMNLAE representative pointed out that her group does not advocate contraception to limit population since the country is sparsely populated, especially on the Atlantic coast. AMNLAE is more concerned with

women giving birth under better conditions than with the question of birth control.

We were told that at this time abortion is considered a personal matter, but it is still prohibited by a law left over from Somoza's time. The anti-abortion law and many other laws were not overturned, according to Mendoza, because moving too fast would have caused anarchy in the country. If Nicaragua were not under fire, the people would have time to analyze some of these laws and transform them.

The question of the military draft was raised. Someone in our group wanted to know if the draft should apply to women in order to promote equality. Mendoza explained that when the Sandinista army presented the proposal for the military service law, AMNLAE demanded the right of women to participate in the military.

After all, women had not just participated, but had led in combat during the struggle to destroy the Somoza dictatorship. The law therefore reflects the sentiments of AMNLAE, and the "voluntary registration" of women is sanctioned.

The AMNLAE representative went on to explain that some things cannot be



Nicaraguan militia members in training. Scene from the film "Nicaragua: No Pasaran."

seen as only black or white. For example, only men between the ages of 17 and 24 are drafted, even though the law calls for all men to be drafted. The customs of the people, as well as the division of labor must be taken into consideration.

In organizing the defense, the productive areas have to be affected as little as possible. There are tasks that women can organize better—the local militias, for example. We were also told, however, that there are also large numbers of women organized in the military defense, in the reserve, in the Ministry of the Interior, and in the Sandinista police.

Mendoza concluded by urging that Americans be made aware of the fact

that part of their tax money is used to kill Nicaraguan people. She pointed out that the uniforms of the mercenaries have labels that say "Made in the U.S.A."

The rifles and explosives that are captured say "Made in the U.S.A."

She assured us, however, that the Sandinista Front has always tried to point out to the people that the U.S. government is not the same thing as the American people.

For our part, we left determined to justify this faith in the difference between the government and the people. It is the American people who must build a strong anti-intervention movement in the United States to stop the murder of the Nicaraguan people. ■

AMNLAE marks 7 years of relentless commitment

By CHARLOTTE JONES

The organized women's movement in Nicaragua, which celebrated its seventh anniversary last September, has grown out of an unusual combination of factors.

Women have, first of all, played a crucial economic role in the country. Women comprise 40% of the urban labor force, although they account for only 14% of industrial workers. An estimated 25% of rural workers are women. In Managua, 49% of all families have women heads, 85% of whom work (Source of statistics: Nicaraguan Institute of Statistics and Census).

Women are often "the first to be affected by unemployment, inflation, and shortages," Gloria Carrion, general coordinator of the Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE), told Margaret Randall ("Sandino's Daughters," New Star Books, 1981). Frequently they "face the task of holding the family together when the men lose their jobs... A large percentage of Nicaraguan women have been left alone with their children."

It is these conditions, Carrion concludes, which have compelled women to become involved in the revolution. Working-class and peasant women have had to fight for their very existence, and the intensity of their engagement is a result primarily of "their class condition."

In 1977, following a few abortive attempts to form a women's organization, the Sandinista Front launched the Woman's Association to Confront the National Situation (AMPRONAC). Originally composed of 70 professional women, AMPRONAC was soon broadened to include women from a wide range of backgrounds.

According to the Oct. 11, 1984, *Barricada Internacional*, these women came to the conclusion that "in order to solve their own problems, they also had to

work toward solving those of society as a whole," and that the first necessity was the overthrow of the dictatorship.

AMPRONAC, with 8000 members by the end of the war, set up "safe houses" to hide guerrillas and equipment, administered first-aid in clandestine clinics, prepared secret arms and food caches, and distributed revolutionary propaganda.

After the triumph of the revolution,

British miners' wives testify

The following is an interview with Sheena Stapleton and Margaret Coulson of the British Women's Committee Against Pit Closures. It was conducted last December in Switzerland by La Breche, the newspaper of the Swiss section of the Fourth International.

La Breche: What are your daily activities like?

Margaret Coulson: Every day, 15 to 20 women prepare more than 200 meals. We organize meetings and demonstrations in order to collect money and clothing.

La Breche: Why did you begin to organize yourselves?

Sheena Stapleton: We were compelled by the desperate situation in which we found ourselves. We called all the women in the town to an emergency gathering. At first, only a few women were present. Now almost everyone participates, whether they are housewives, working women, or unemployed. We understood that we had to unite to break down the barrier which separated us from men and that we could not continue to deal with accumulating problems individually.

La Breche: How do you coordinate with other wives' groups?

Stapleton: Our villages are quite close together, and we can meet easily without any formal structure. We discuss things over a cup of tea. Every-

the organization took the name of the first woman FSLN member to die in the struggle. It became the Luisa Amanda Espinoza Nicaraguan Womens Association (AMNLAE).

Today AMNLAE has 30,000 members. It includes women from all over the country and from different situations, but Gloria Carrion reports that the membership is still composed predominantly of working-class and peasant women. Today, she says, the "tasks of women and of the Revolution are one and the same... Women's specific demands are also the Revolution's demands." ■

where wives have had the idea of organizing themselves to support the strikers.

La Breche: What relations have you had with other groups in the women's movement?

Coulson: The Greenham Common women have met with the miners' wives... What is important is that women are up in arms. Some are struggling against the threat of war. We ourselves came here to provide testimony about the strike that we are conducting... We all represent the same struggle: that of women. All of us must fight for representation everywhere in order to spread our ideas.

La Breche: How have the men reacted?

Sheena: They understood that our participation was necessary for their survival and the success of the strike. At night, they are on the picket lines. By day, we organize the life of the community. We prepare the collective meals; we attend meetings... The men have to learn to take care of the children and the household. They do it very well, and they say that they enjoy it. The roles are completely reversed—which is not so extraordinary if you start from the assumption that we are completely equal.

Coulson: I would like to repeat that for the wives, for us, nothing will be the same as before. And, as for the men—what would they do without women? ■



Duarte/far-right dispute rocks El Salvador elections

By LARRY COOPERMAN

The upcoming legislative elections in El Salvador have provoked a confrontation between the Christian Democratic Party, which controls the presidency, and the far-right parties, which control the Legislative Assembly.

Following reports that the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador was backing the far-right parties in elections scheduled for late March, President Duarte, a Christian Democrat, complained that he would protest the U.S. support for his adversaries. "It is unheard of that functionaries of the Embassy of the United States could give these sorts of declarations," protested Duarte.

Though embassy spokespeople denied Duarte's accusations, a number of Western diplomats and U.S. Embassy sources have confirmed them. The U.S. government is left in the embarrassing position of supporting parties that bear much of the responsi-

bility for the activity of the notorious death squads.

The dispute between Duarte and the far right has become exacerbated in recent weeks as the executive branch of the government, controlled by Duarte, battled the decisions of both the Legislative Assembly and the Supreme Court.

After Duarte vetoed an election law approved by the Assembly, the Supreme Court ruled his action unconstitutional. The original election law favored the ultraright parties by allowing them to form a coalition and continue to list the coalition candidates separately under their own symbols.

U.S. maneuvers

The U.S. Embassy wants to preserve the existing rivalry between the different branches of government because it fears the consequences of allowing that struggle to take place in an uncontrolled manner outside of governmental institutions.

While the primary victims of the far right have

been the nearly 50,000 workers and peasants who opposed both the Duarte regime and the far-right parties, many Christian Democratic elected officials have also been found assassinated by the death squads.

In the past, the U.S. Embassy has thrown its support squarely behind Duarte. This policy was necessary in order to garner additional international support behind the Salvadoran government. It was also designed to try to either drive a wedge into the FMLN by holding out the possibility of a negotiated settlement to the civil war or, if that should fail, to gain support among war-weary sections of the population.

Far from bringing peace, Duarte's policy has led to the acceleration of the air war against FMLN-controlled areas. Civilian casualties under Duarte's presidency have actually increased.

The breakdown in the negotiations with the FMLN has been a serious blow to Duarte's position. The diplomacy involved greatly concerned the far right, while the failure of the effort dashed the hopes of many of those who had supported Duarte because of his stance on negotiations. Duarte now demands that the FMLN lay down its arms as a prior condition for future talks.

Crisis of system

The crisis of the Salvadoran political system is reflected in the rise of assassinations of both far-right and Christian Democratic officials. One Salvadoran newspaper suggested that the Christian Democrats have formed "green brigades" in order to counter the activity of the far-right death squads, particularly in light of the assassination of an ARENA official.

Furthermore, the relative "restraint" practiced by the death squads immediately prior to and after Duarte's election, hailed by the Western press as proof of a "democratic transition" in El Salvador, seems to have been ended by the resumption of death-squad threats against Salvadoran unions and the Human Rights Commission.

The conflict between Duarte and the far-right military leaders is only moderated by the advantages the military gains from his presence. As one Salvadoran political analyst quipped: "Duarte is the man who has been able to open the coffers of the [U.S.] Congress, and the military realizes that. They won't get rid of the goose that is laying the golden eggs. He's the democratic facade so everybody doesn't have to worry...."

The impossibility of real democratic reforms in El Salvador is just one additional reason why the U.S. government will ultimately have to choose between allowing the revolution to succeed or directly intervening with its own troops. ■

... Reagan budget

(continued from page 1)

freeze. Student aid would be cut by \$2.3 billion and loans limited to families with annual incomes under \$32,500—a measure that University of California officials estimate could render as many as one-third of their students now receiving aid ineligible.

Further cuts include a \$2-billion markdown for urban aid and housing programs. Fees for national parks would rise 153 percent while purchases of new park lands would end. Funds for the Environmental Protection Agency would be frozen. Mass-transit subsidies would be cut by \$800 million. Government support for AMTRAK would end.

Spending cuts would eliminate jobs in occupational and mine safety programs and in the Federal Contract Compliance Program, which is supposed to enforce laws barring federal contractors from discriminating against women and minorities. Some programs face outright elimination. These include the Small Business Administration, Legal Services Corporation, and the Job Corps. And the list goes on.

Democrats play dead

The Democratic Party, for its part, answered Reagan's State of the Union speech defending his budget by way of a televised parade of Democratic voters explaining why they voted for Reagan. This self-abasing response was apparently intended to show that the Democrats can learn from their mistakes. House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. noted that the budget "deserves the seri-

ous consideration of the American people."

As for the "moderate" Republicans, Senate majority leader Robert Dole (R-Kansas) is proposing a plan that would combine cutbacks in proposed military-outlay increases with a one-year freeze on social security cost-of-living adjustments, which is not included in the Reagan budget. Dole has decided not to call his plan an "alternative" to the president's.

While much is being made of demands in Congress to tone down the more extreme aspects of the Reagan budget, the debate in Congress, in fact, will result in little more than an object lesson in democracy—big-business style.

"Administration officials contend," as Paul Bluestein and Laurie McGinley observe in *The Wall Street Journal* (Feb. 4, 1985), "that the real differences over military outlays aren't as great as the rhetoric suggests. In the end, they note, the administration and Congress have always compromised."

As other observers have noted, the budget may arrive "dead on arrival" but it's "destined for adoption."

Congressional liberals, that is, can be expected to vent their outrage in some ritualized and therapeutic chest-thumping. In turn, some programs may be saved from the guillotine, military spending *increases* trimmed ever so slightly, and the media will hail the humanity of it all.

But the end result will remain the same—an unsavory recipe for a bloated Pentagon and malnourished social services. There won't be any pretense of a public debate, of course, over the billions of dollars earmarked for U.S.

intelligence activities and top-secret weapons that don't even appear in the budget.

Welfare for the rich

It is hardly surprising then, despite the clamoring for a balanced budget, that the current fiscal-year deficit will still top \$180 billion. A less-mentioned factor contributing to the swelling defi-



"I hate to see people going hungry like that—waiter, can we move to another table?"

cit is the second-largest item in the budget—\$198.8 billion for interest on the national debt.

This debt is primarily owed to financial institutions, corporations, and wealthy individuals but is paid for by millions of working taxpayers. It goes without saying that the role of interest payments as the Great Redistributor of the nation's wealth is not something the Great Communicator is inclined to communicate.

Military spending and interest payments on the national debt together

constitute over 40 percent of the federal budget. They are also the fastest-growing budget items. Clearly, Reagan's real concern is not so much bringing down the deficit as it is continuing the bountiful corporate profits of recent years. And that requires pumping up the military force to defend the system, both here and abroad.

Corporate leaders are, nonetheless, showing increasing concern that the spiraling budget deficit could throw a wrench into the wheels of economic recovery. Their dilemma is that military spending, the prime cause of the expanding deficit, is also the engine of the big-business profit bonanza.

Reagan's tax ruse

Despite the administration's squawking denials, it is likely that a tax increase, under the ruse of a "simplification" plan, will be introduced along with cuts in social programs. Of course, Reagan can be believed when he says that he opposes any increase in *corporate* taxes.

Military spending, interest payments, and corporate profits—the vast wealth of these big-ticket items offer a glimpse of the potential ability of our society to provide an abundant life for all. But the key to unlock that potential requires that the present capitalist structure give way to a society oriented toward the human needs of the working majority.

Such a proposal is certain to provoke a howl from business circles spoiled by their free ticket on the two-party express. But Reagan's no-frills flight to a born-again economy will hardly lead to heaven on earth for the rest of us. And in the long run that may well prove their undoing. ■

By NANCY GRUBER

The trial of the four security men accused of having murdered pro-Solidarity priest, the Rev. Jerzy Popieluszko, ended on Feb. 6. The two highest-ranking officers were sentenced to 25 years each and the others to 14 and 15 years. But the conclusion has provided far more questions than answers.

The overriding question remains: How far up the regime's hierarchy does responsibility for the priest's assassination extend, and where does the coverup end?

In pre-trial interrogations, both of the lower-ranking defendants, Leszek Pekala and Waldemar Chmielewski, implicated an unnamed vice-minister of Internal Affairs in the crime. Rapidly seeing the error of his ways, Pekala, during the trial a few days later, announced: "To involve a vice-minister in this affair is absurd."

For his part, Chmielewski then claimed to have made the whole thing up.

Lt. Pekala testified that he was ordered to kill the priest by his superior, Capt. Grzegorz Piotrowski, who assured him that "the order had come from very high up. . . . The plan has been approved by the superiors."

Limiting the circle of blame

Piotrowski, in his turn, admitted to anger at the "illegal" activities of such activist priests as Popieluszko in support of Solidarity—particularly his advocacy of underground schools to build, in Popieluszko's words, "cadres for future uprising."

He nonetheless shifted the responsibility still higher.

He recalled a meeting with Col. Adam Pietruszka, the fourth and highest-ranking defendant, who told him: "We have to take decisive action. We have to shake them [Popieluszko and the Rev. Stanislaw Malkowski, another activist priest] so hard that it leads right up to a heart attack."

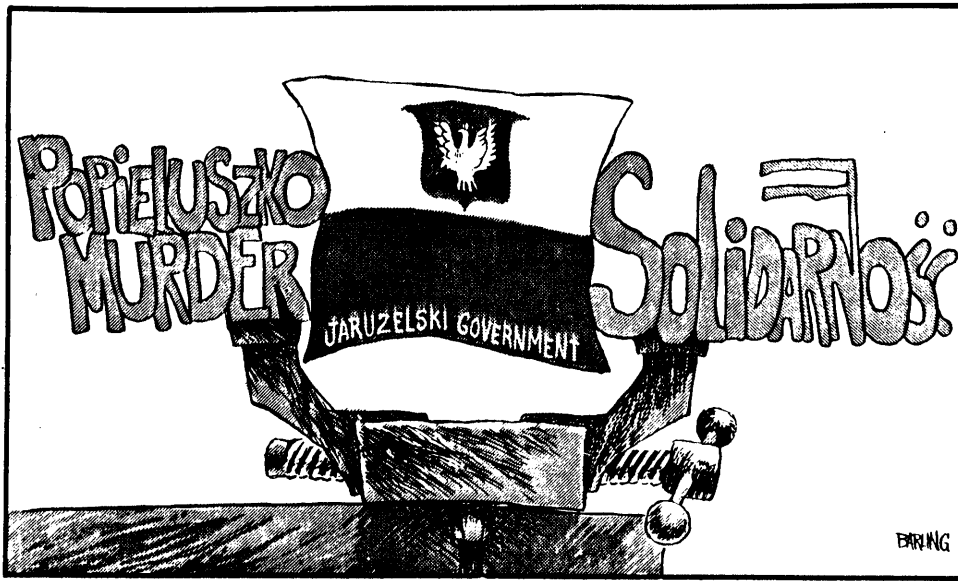
Piotrowski reported, however, that he was convinced that Pietruszka was carrying out decisions from still higher up.

Pietruszka, in due course, hauled in his own superior, Gen. Zenon Platek, an official of the Ministry of Interior, claiming that Platek had obstructed an inquiry into the murder—a charge that Platek's testimony did nothing to reverse.

Finally, Jan Olszewski, one of the lawyers representing Popieluszko's family, raised the question in his summation as to who could have had the most interest in lighting this "fuse" to rekindle social unrest in Poland. By denying any Polish interest in making Poland a "land of misery, despair, and terror," he seemed to imply that such an interest could be found in the Soviet Union.

In rebuttal, the prosecutor Leszek Pietrasinski, vigorously denied that the crime was instigated from any quarter higher up than Col. Pietruszka and

Polish trial highlights crisis of regime



placed all responsibility on the heads of the four defendants, especially Piotrowski.

In a flagrant example of blaming the victim for the crime, however, Pietrasinski, in his three-hour summation, also accused the murdered priest of having "taken extreme positions that gave rise to no less an extremism culminating in the crime."

He listed among Popieluszko's felonies: casting doubt on the "legitimacy of the government;" spreading anti-government propaganda; and hiding in his apartment thousands of envelopes stuffed with dissident newsletters, dozens of 9-millimeter bullets, three tear-gas grenades, and printing ink (*The New York Times*, Jan. 30, 1985).

Crisis of regime continues

What is made clear from the trial in Torun is the continuing crisis of the Polish regime. It was the anger of the Polish workers which compelled the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party to adopt a resolution on Oct. 27, condemning the assassination in the harshest terms. It was the 500,000 angry partisans of Solidarity demonstrating at Popieluszko's funeral on Nov. 3 that forced Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski to fire the minister of the

Interior and assume control of the department himself.

The regime, increasingly menaced, continues to attack Solidarity activists. In Gdansk, Andrzej Gwiazda has been sentenced to three years in prison; in Szczecin, Zdzislaw Podolski has been protesting his imprisonment with a hunger strike; Edmund Baluka and Jan Kostecki have been indicted again; in Silesia, an unemployed militant has been sentenced for "social parasitism."

The results of the trial were clearly foreseen in a statement made by the leadership of Solidarity on Oct. 19:

"The kidnapping and assassination of Father Popieluszko were directed essentially against all those who found faith and strength in his words. They wished to get at Solidarity. . . . The crime was decided upon in the Ministry of Interior and executed by security functionaries. The government of Poland is directly responsible for the activity of its ministers. No declaration of innocence will change that. . . ."

"The people who today are supervising the inquest and informing us of its conclusions are the very same as those who bear the responsibility for the assassination. . . . In reality, the inquest will aim to limit the circle of blame to those who simply executed the assassination, to cover footsteps, and to disinform society. When the occasion presents itself, a new campaign will be launched against the militants of Solidarity and the unsubdued priests."

Confirming Solidarity's predictions, Jaruzelski, in a Feb. 12 news conference in New Delhi, assured the world that there were no "traces" of a conspiracy beyond the four accused men. He then added, "I should like to inform those of you who perhaps do not know it yet that Solidarity as such does not exist in Poland."

Solidarity heads arrested again

On Feb. 13 seven Solidarity leaders were arrested by the Polish police as they were meeting in a Warsaw apartment to plan a 15-minute national strike called by Solidarity for Feb. 28.

Those arrested include Lech Walesa, who was immediately released; Bogdan Lis of Gdansk; Wladyslaw Frasyniuk of Wroclaw; and Adam Michnik of Warsaw. Lis and Michnik were released under an amnesty last year and are being investigated for endorsing the strike appeal.

The strike was called to protest the rise in food prices decreed by the government as part of an austerity package agreed to in consultation with the International Monetary Fund. Poland owes \$28 billion to the imperialist banks and is currently negotiating its readmission into the IMF.

In a recent article published by Poland's major underground newspaper, Zbigniew Bujak, president of Solidarity's Provisional Coordinating Commission (TKK), stated that "Solidarity will oppose any IMF program that would result in attacks on the living standards of the population."

Fourth International holds 12th World Congress

The 12th World Congress of the Fourth International was held last month. Delegates and fraternal observers from nearly 60 countries arrived to take part in the deliberations of the highest body of the world Trotskyist movement.

Resolutions were adopted covering the major world events since the last

World Congress in 1979. In particular, resolutions entitled "The Central American Revolution" and "Revolution and Counterrevolution in Poland" were passed by large majorities.

The World Congress also voted to approve a programmatic statement of the importance and necessity of socialist democracy in post-capitalist societies. This document, "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," had originally been submitted to an indicative vote at the 1979 World Congress. Given the events in Poland and Nicaragua, several additions were made taking into account the experiences in those countries.

The congress analyzed the current political situation and approved the "Theses on the International Situation."

The report by Ernest Mandel stressed the idea that the working class's capacity for struggle remains intact despite the effects of the austerity policies of the ruling classes in the imperialist and underdeveloped countries.

Finally, a world-movement-building resolution was approved which projected the involvement of a broader layer of members of national organizations in the work of building the International. The report approved by the World Congress called for more frequent meetings of the International's leading bodies to further enhance the functioning of the world movement.

The major controversy that took place at the World Congress centered around the evolution of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. Since the 1979 meeting of the world movement, the SWP has abandoned the theory of permanent revolution, which has long been considered the essential theoretical framework of the Trotskyist movement.

The World Congress voted by a large majority to reaffirm the validity of the theory of permanent revolution in the light of recent world events. The revolution in Nicaragua was seen by a majority of the delegates as evidence that only a working-class regime in power can accomplish the basic task of distributing land to the peasants—breaking up the power of the old landowning classes—and proceed to the accomplishment of more directly socialist tasks, such as the placing under state control of foreign trade, natural resources, investment, etc. In this sense, Nicaragua was seen as a country in transition from capitalism to socialism.

Furthermore, in view of the political expulsions from the SWP, the World Congress noted that its U.S. sympathizing organization had been split into three component parts: the SWP, Socialist Action, and the Fourth International Tendency. Each of the three organizations would enjoy full rights within the Fourth International within the limitations of reactionary U.S. legislation.

International Viewpoint



International Viewpoint is a biweekly political review analyzing recent world events from a revolutionary Marxist perspective. Recent issues have reported on the crisis of the Marcos regime in the Philippines and the British miners' strike—the longest strike in British history.

Future issues will contain coverage of the discussions and resolutions of the Twelfth World Congress of the Fourth International as well as regular reporting and analysis of events from Nicaragua to Poland.

To subscribe at the special introductory rate of \$35.50 per year (\$26.50/yr. by surface mail), send a check or money order payable to PEC to: International Viewpoint, 2 Rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France. The offer will expire this month, so don't delay.



By ALAN BENJAMIN

It came as no surprise when Tancredo Neves, the opposition candidate of the Democratic Alliance, was chosen to be Brazil's next president by an electoral college last Jan. 15.

By an expected high margin, 480 to 180, Neves defeated Paulo Salim Maluf of the Democratic Socialist Party (PDS), Brazil's ruling party. Neves' victory was guaranteed as of last September, when a wing of PDS senators and deputies joined the main capitalist opposition party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), to form the Democratic Alliance.

But the 60 million registered voters, a large percentage of whom had taken to the streets last spring to demand direct presidential elections, were excluded from participating in this vote. The same electoral college that selected Neves had chosen Brazil's last five military presidents. One-third of the senators in the college, in fact, were directly appointed by the dictatorship.

Not a step toward democracy

The selection of Neves, the first civilian to become president in 21 years, has been hailed by the media as a great victory for democracy in Brazil. This, however, is not the case.

The military rulers, confronted by mass protests against the regime, felt it necessary to return to the barracks in order to prevent a major social explosion in the country. They carefully prepared a stable transition to a civilian president of their choosing—a president who would respect the fundamental institutions set up by the dictatorship over the last two decades. Both Neves and Maluf were totally acceptable candidates to them.

The true character of this transition was best described in a resolution on the elections adopted at the Dec. 12, 1984, Sao Paulo convention of the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores—PT). The resolution states:

"By means of intimidation, jailings, and negotiations with the Democratic Alliance of Tancredo Neves, the military dictatorship was able to reach a compromise [in the process of succession] which would allow it to return to the barracks while still maintaining military domination over the country.

"The pledges by Tancredo to maintain the SNI [National Intelligence Service], the LSN [Law of National Security under which any person can be detained without a trial], the National Security Council, and the core of the repressive apparatus and legislation clearly signify the continuity of the military regime."

Dante de Oliveira amendment

The indirect presidential vote was a violation of the most fundamental concept of democracy: majority rule. Last March and April, 15 to 20 million Brazilians demonstrated in the streets of the nation's major cities in support of a constitutional amendment proposed by Dante de Oliveira, a deputy of the PMDB. This amendment would have mandated immediate direct presidential elections.

The mass character of these demonstrations—the largest ever in Latin

Brazil holds fraudulent elections; Workers Party calls for boycott

America—created a situation where 62 percent of the deputies in the national assembly voted on April 25, 1984, for the Oliveira amendment. This included most of the bourgeois politicians in the PMDB.

But because of the dictatorship's constitution, which requires a two-thirds vote for any amendment to pass, the Oliveira amendment failed. The will of the majority of the Brazilian people was therefore ignored.

Once the amendment failed, all the bourgeois opposition forces caved in to the pressures of the military, voting in the fall of 1984 to recognize the electoral college and the indirect elections set up by the Figueiredo government. Only the PT and the United Confederation of Workers (CUT) continued to raise the banner of immediate direct elections against the transition organized by the government.

Pressures within the PT

The PT became the only political force in Brazil to denounce the illegitimate Jan. 15 elections. It called for large protest demonstrations on the day of the vote. Other left parties, such as the pro-Moscow PCB and the pro-Albanian PC do B, supported Neves' candidacy, hoping thereby to be granted legal status by the civilian government.

But the pressure to accept the transition plan of the dictatorship was also felt within the ranks of the PT itself. Of its eight members in the electoral college, two supported the Neves candidacy. This included Airton Soares, the

leader of the PT's parliamentary fraction.

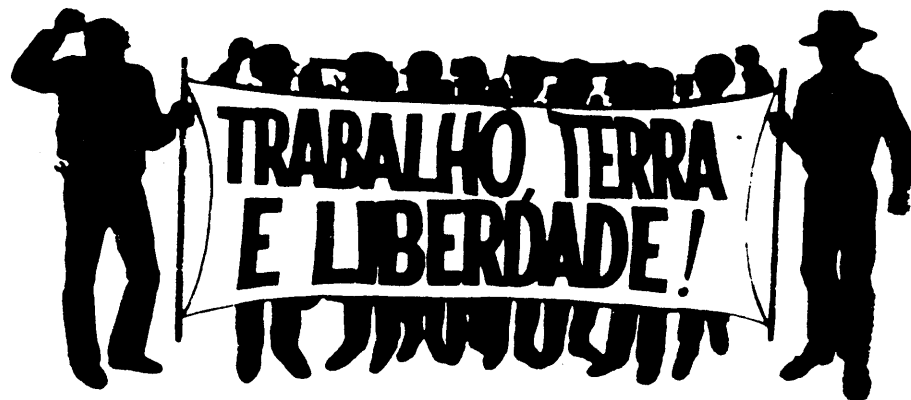
At the December Sao Paulo convention of the PT, the 1268 delegates voted overwhelmingly to exclude from the PT the deputies who were unwilling to abide by the decisions of the party.

Sovereign constituent assembly

It is clear that none of the problems confronting Brazil's working class can

accept slight wage increases in exchange for an eventual recognition of trade union autonomy.

The official inflation rate, though, is 224 percent. It is also estimated that nearly 40 percent of the 55 million working-age Brazilians are either unemployed or underemployed. The minimum wage per month is \$80. Neves' proposals are not likely to gain a friendly hearing from the exploited and



be resolved by the new civilian president. In addition to respecting the primacy of the army in the state institutions, Neves has declared that he will promptly pay the interest on the debt to the imperialist banks. This represents annual interest payments of \$12 billion.

Neves has also indicated that he will pursue the harsh austerity policies dictated by the International Monetary Fund. He hopes, however, to reach a "social pact" with the unions, whereby the unions will agree not to strike and to

oppressed of Brazil.

The PT convention in Sao Paulo put forward a class-struggle program which offers the Brazilian workers a clear political perspective for the coming period.

Having outlined its platform of immediate and democratic demands, the PT resolution goes on to call for a free, democratic, and sovereign constituent assembly. "We must prioritize the organization and unification of the struggles and movements," the resolution states, "in order to bring together a constituent assembly with the greatest freedom, representativity, and democracy... where the workers themselves can directly participate in the drafting of the laws."

The resolution continues, "We must also state clearly that the PT will continue to struggle to transform the existing political, social, and economic order given that our objective is the construction of a socialist society."

It can be expected that the Brazilian workers and peasants will grant the new civilian president a short respite. But as it becomes evident that Neves has nothing to offer but more austerity and repression, the massive struggles against the regime will inevitably resume.

The PT's consistent commitment to the struggle for democracy and its role in mobilizing the workers at the point of production have already provided—and will continue to provide—millions of working people in Brazil with the necessary lever to win their most heart-felt demands. ■



Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula), president of the PT, and Cleusa Turra, a leader of the Brazilian student movement and a candidate in 1982 to the city council of Sao Paulo

...Nicaragua

(continued from page 1)

measures would be taken against "speculating shopkeepers" who "robbed the people of billions of cordobas."

U.S. propaganda campaign

As the Nicaraguan people prepared for additional sacrifices, the Reagan administration released a new white paper reiterating its claim that the Soviet Union was fomenting revolution in Central America.

This new U.S. propaganda campaign comes at a time when Congress is about to reconsider its decision not to supply overt funding for the war in Nicaragua. It also coincides with the beginning of the Big Pines III maneuvers in Honduras. Scheduled to run through the middle of April, these maneuvers will be the broadest the U.S. government has conducted in Central America in the recent past.

The new white paper provides the ideological backdrop to the increased U.S. military and economic pressure on Nicaragua. It claims that, in Nicaragua, "the mask of Sandinismo has slipped away... What is revealed is the mask of Communism."

One government official, who, according to *The New York Times*, is familiar with the intelligence used to prepare this white paper, noted that "Sometimes they make more out of intelligence information than is warranted, in my view."

In fact, the new white paper, like previous ones, fails to document its numerous assertions or even reveal the source of its information.

Rather, it is designed to provide flimsy cover to the U.S. military buildup in the region and to the corresponding withdrawal from bilateral talks with the Nicaraguans in Manzanillo, Mexico. Instead, the U.S. government has sponsored talks among the *contras*

to produce an agreement aimed at unifying a factionally divided counterrevolutionary army.

An agreement between Arturo Cruz, Alfonso Robelo, Eden Pastora, and Adolfo Calero is expected to be worked out soon, in which the composition of a government that would take power if the Sandinistas are defeated would be established.

The four leaders represent the full spectrum of the opposition to the Sandinistas, ranging from Cruz, who was the leader of the legal bourgeois opposition to the Sandinistas within Nicaragua, to Calero, whose Nicaraguan Democratic Front is dominated by the remnants of former dictator Anastasio Somoza's National Guard.

In the present situation, the Nicaraguans are resigned to a difficult and long battle against U.S.-organized sabotage and violence. As President Ortega said when asked how he would fight the *contras*: "There is no other road left for us except to continue fighting." ■

On Feb. 10, 1980, a national congress of 400 delegates representing 20 unions from 17 states of Brazil officially launched the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores—PT).

Having emerged out of the strike wave initiated by the metal workers of the industrial belt of Sao Paulo, the PT has grown to nearly 400,000 members today and has demonstrated over the past five years its determination to struggle for the interests of the working class and of all the oppressed of Brazil (see July 1984 issue of *Socialist Action*).

One of the hallmarks of the PT over the past five years has been its understanding of the international dimension of the Brazilian class struggle. This was clearly manifested in the resolutions adopted at the founding congress of the PT, which supported both the struggle for self-determination of the people of Central America and the anti-bureaucratic struggle of Polish Solidarity.

Socialist Action is reprinting excerpts from statements by PT leaders and leadership bodies which are an example for workers everywhere of the genuine working-class internationalism of the PT. The translations from the Portuguese are by *Socialist Action*.—A.B.

Jaco Bittar on Poland

Jaco Bittar is a leader of the oil workers union of Campinas. He is the secretary-general of the Brazilian PT. The following are excerpts from an interview published in Brazil in October 1982.

The workers' movement cannot limit itself to one country. It must be international. We do not believe that it is possible to achieve socialism in one country....

The PT places itself in the international process of the workers' move-

Brazil's PT: 5 years of internationalism

ment against capitalism and against the bureaucratic regimes—against all those who oppose the self-organization and effective participation of the working class....

We denounce the attacks against the Polish workers. We have pledged our solidarity with their struggles and against the dissolution of Solidarity....

Of course, the capitalists have sought to use the Polish struggle for their own reactionary ends. But as for us, at no time have we sensed that the Polish workers are seeking to change the system they live under. What they are fighting for is to change the regime.

The Polish rulers are trying to impose a fake socialism on the working class. But what is clear is that the workers cannot tolerate a regime that stifles the workers—not allowing them to participate in the political process and to determine policies in their own interest.

We do not want this kind of socialism. We want the kind of socialism that Polish Solidarity is fighting for.

"Lula" on the United States

On Feb. 11, 1982, Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula), spoke to a group of New York City trade union officials. "Lula" is the president of the PT. His speech and the answers to questions from the audience were reprinted in full in the winter 1982 issue of *Against the Current*, a socialist quarterly magazine. The following statement is in response to the question, "What about the example the PT can provide for workers in the United States?"

Historically we were used to believing that the working class should not engage in politics. Or when it did act politically, it should be only at election time, working as electoral aides to our bosses, or merely voting.

At least in our view, the working class will never succeed in having an effective democratic regime as long as it doesn't fight for not only independent unions, but also for political power.



While we are just fighting for economic demands, the industrialists can always answer some of the demands, because they can then pass on the increase in the cost of the product to us, who pay for the raises we obtain.

The objective of the political party is to complement the union movement, because the economic policies of a country are a political question, because the housing policy of a country is a political question. Transportation is a political question.

There is no other solution for the working class than to participate politi-

cally. And to participate politically, for us—at least in the view we have in Brazil—is not to support candidates of the middle class to be representatives of the workers, but to have the workers themselves elect their own representatives.

The PT on the Central American revolution

The following is a statement adopted by the PT on Sept. 6-7, 1982. Statements similar to this one have been adopted by every leadership body of the PT since that time.

The working class and the peoples of the world are closely following the events in Central America.

In Nicaragua, over two years ago, the revolution threw out the tyrants, opening the way for the people to impose their own will. Heartened by this victory, the peoples of the entire region, particularly in El Salvador and Guatemala, deepened their revolutionary mobilizations to put an end to the bloody dictatorships in their countries.

Since that time, U.S. imperialism, led by Reagan, the enemy of the world's working class, has been preparing a direct and massive military intervention against the Central American revolution....

The PT, which in its founding platform declares its "solidarity with all people struggling for their liberation," which "supports the struggles of working people throughout the world," and which "understands that our own emancipation depends on the struggles of the world's working class" therefore calls on all the organizations and parties of the working class, all democratic and anti-imperialist forces in Brazil and on a world scale to stand firm in defense of the Nicaraguan and Central American revolutions. ■

Brazil workers form independent unions

Independent trade unions are illegal in Brazil today. The so-called trade-union structure is still based on Mussolini's *Carta de Lavoro*, which was enacted during the first presidency of Getulio Vargas in 1943.

Under the provisions of this labor code, the Ministry of Labor may intervene at any time in the internal life of the unions, replace "dissident" union leaders, decertify "uncooperative" unions, and prevent strikes and all other illegal forms of labor solidarity.

Corrupt "union" bureaucrats, known as the "pelegos," have assisted the government in maintaining a tight control over the workers' movement. In fact, the official "trade unions" have been a fundamental pillar of the various military dictatorships which have been in power since 1964.

Beginning in 1978, however, a new wave of worker militancy challenged the repressive labor laws. Defying the military regime and the "pelegos," the metal workers of the industrial belt of Sao Paulo paved the way for the creation of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) and of the new United Confederation of Workers (CUT) with a strike that soon spread to the rest of the country.

The strikes were illegal. The government intervened in every major union, replacing the new "combative" leaders with military appointees. It also sentenced the nationally known unionists to long prison terms.

Despite the repression, the strike movement continued and deepened. In the spring of 1980, for example, over 50,000 workers crippled the automobile industry with a six-week strike. In 1981 and 1982, almost every sector of the economy was affected by the mobilizations of the Brazilian workers and peasants.

In July 1983, the oil workers in Paulinia and Mataripe (Bahia) walked

off their jobs to demand an end to the austerity policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund. Within days a series of strikes in solidarity with the oil workers swept the country. On July 21, a 24-hour general strike paralyzed the nation; the first overtly political strike of its kind in decades.

Independent union formed

In August 1981, over 5000 union delegates met near Sao Paulo at the first National Workers' Conference (CONCLAT). The purpose of the meeting was



Women workers march in support of the CUT in 1984.

to call for the formation of a new trade union confederation which would be independent from the government and would fight for the interests of the workers at the work place. One of the motor forces behind this conference was the recently formed Workers Party.

The CONCLAT voted to launch the United Confederation of Workers (CUT) some time in 1982. But the sec-

ond CONCLAT did not meet in 1982 as had been planned. One reason was the attention concentrated on the November general elections for state governorships and the national assembly.

The major reason for the postponement of the second CONCLAT, however, was the role played by the defenders of the official, state-run "unions"—notably the "pelegos" and the members of the Stalinist, Brazilian Communist Party (PCB). These forces argued that an independent union movement would be isolated from the large masses of workers and that, instead, workers should fight to "democratize" the government "unions" from within.

Yet despite the splitting maneuvers of the "pelegos" and the Stalinists, the sec-

ond CONCLAT did not meet in 1982 as had been planned. One reason was the attention concentrated on the November general elections for state governorships and the national assembly.

The military dictatorship immediately declared the CUT illegal and threatened to prosecute its organizers on the grounds that the labor code does not allow unions from different sectors of the economy to organize together. Yet due to the severe crisis of the regime, the CUT is being tolerated for the time being.

Trade union division

In addition to the dictatorship, the CUT also faces opposition from within the labor movement. The trade unions influenced by the Stalinists and the "pelegos" boycotted the August 1983 CONCLAT and decided to hold their own congress four months later in Praia Grande. This congress decided to create a rival union federation to the CUT and shamefully gave it the name of CONCLAT in order to confuse the workers.

This congress was attended almost exclusively by union officials. It adopted a platform that calls for a "conciliatory stance" toward the military, accusing the CUT of taking an overly confrontational approach to the government.

The CUT responded to the formation of the rival CONCLAT by reaffirming the need for the unity and independence of the trade union movement. It deplored the division created by the new congress, but proposed unity in action with the CONCLAT against the government. This principled and collaborative stance has already won the CUT the sympathy of thousands of workers influenced by the CONCLAT.

The CUT is a historical advance for the Brazilian and world working class. Alongside the PT, it campaigned in 1984 for free and direct presidential elections and called for the boycott of the electoral college. In this process, it has helped to mobilize millions of workers in opposition to the military regime.—A.B. ■

Paris Commune/March-May 1871:

The world's first genuine democracy

The 18th of this month marks the anniversary of the Paris Commune of 1871, one of the most heroic efforts in working-class history, yet a story seldom told in our standard history textbooks.

For two months the working people established the first genuine democracy in human history. They smashed the old oppressive state apparatus and with inspired enthusiasm created an entirely new kind of state which they themselves controlled.

In 1870 France found itself at war with Prussia. Momentarily the class hatred between French workers and capitalists, spawned by the betrayal of the workers by the capitalists in the uprising of 1848, was suppressed in favor of national pride. But the workers could not help but notice how poorly the war was conducted.

The government, under the control of capitalists, refused to arm the working class as a whole for fear that a victory over the Prussians might simply serve as a training ground for the workers to revenge their bitter memories. And so the Prussians not only succeeded in surrounding Paris but in strangling it as well—all supply routes were severed and the city was on the verge of starvation.

Brought to its knees, the French government signed a humiliating treaty, and the war was over. But when this same government attempted to disarm one of its own working-class militias, the spark was ignited. The workers refused to give up their arms. The general in charge of the disarming operation ordered his own troops to fire at the disobedient militia. The troops fired but killed him instead, and thus the revolution began.

The National Guard, the main military unit in Paris, was by this time predominantly working class. After the armistice with Prussia was signed, most of the members of the capitalist class, including those in fighting units, abandoned the battle-worn city for their luxury mansions in the country.

The National Guard, in complete independence and without authorization, elected a Central Committee from among its ranks. When the rebellion broke out the Central Committee assumed leadership, ordering all battalions to resist any further attempts at disarmament. Meanwhile the government sensed the accelerating force of the opposition and simply fled the city for Versailles, leaving the Central Committee to fill the vacuum.

The Central Committee, finding itself in power, immediately proceeded to divest itself of its unsolicited position. Elections for a democratic leadership were scheduled and held eight days later. But prior to relinquishing its position, the Central Committee announced the establishment of a Commune. It also decreed an abolition of court-martials, the termination of the state of siege, amnesty for political prisoners, and a moratorium on rents.

The Council of the Commune, which the new leadership was called, was elected by universal suffrage, and of the 81 members almost one-half were manual workers. In addition many of the professionals were well-known working-class leaders. When these groups were combined the working class emerged in unambiguous victory.

A new kind of state

But what is important to note too is the totally novel structure of this new government. It was not divided between an executive and legislative branch, nor was the legislative branch in turn subdivided into two unequal houses as is common in most capitalist countries today. There was simply the Council itself, where all were elected directly by the people. With this single stroke the potential for the growth of a staggering bureaucracy was eliminated.

Moreover, these members voted themselves a salary that was the equivalent of a worker's salary—quite low for government officials in those days—and any member could be recalled at any



time by a simple majority vote. In short, this was a state that was a servant to the people, not their master as all previous states had been.

One of the first decrees of the Council was the abolition of the standing army and in its place the establishment of universal conscription to the National Guard. Here lay another revolutionary departure from previous practice, for all preceding states required an army standing apart from the people to enforce unpopular decrees. Without this coercive force such legislation becomes impossible.

In the days to follow, the Council decreed the continuation of the moratorium on rents. Judges were to be elected, the separation of church and state was proclaimed, church schools were closed, and education was to be free. Women were encouraged to go to school.

The Council legislated that the trade

unions could take over all abandoned shops. As a result 10 factories were soon occupied and run by the workers. Fines levied against workers and the firing of workers were prohibited. All empty houses were requisitioned for refugees. Widows and children of fallen soldiers were adopted by the Commune.

The workers organize themselves

With the establishment of this revolutionary freedom, a sense of jubilation swept through the city. Many who previously found life listless and dull were carried away by a tide of enthusiastic creativity. For the most part, for example, the National Guard ran itself. Churches were commandeered as meeting places, and several town halls were taken over—in one the mayor was even ousted.

In one section of the city the municipality itself took charge of feeding and

clothing the children. In another, vouchers were distributed that covered food, clothing, and fuel. In another, daily public meetings were held because "those elected by the people have the duty of keeping in constant touch with their electors in order to give account of the mandate they have received and to submit themselves to questions."

Workers organized to maximize their interests. The engineers, for example, voted that the Commune should organize all workers in order to suppress exploitation. The workers themselves controlled and managed an arms factory owned by the state. Bakers successfully petitioned for an end to night work. As many as 43 producer cooperatives were formed in the craft industries.

Three thousand women organized themselves into a union. They petitioned the Commune to establish clothing workshops, in an industry dominated by women, which would be supervised by the Commune. This was conceived with the idea of combatting the special exploitation suffered by women and to aid in their political education.

Gustav Corbet, a famous painter and member of the Council, attempted to organize artists into a union. Having been plagued by censorship himself, he was intent on protecting the freedom and independence of the artist.

But the Commune perished after only 72 days. While freedom triumphed in Paris, the former government, now in Versailles, was sharpening its weapons of death, preparing to strangle the revolution in its infancy.

The Versailles army marched on Paris and received invaluable support from the Prussians, who still half-surrounded the city. The Communards waged a heroic struggle but were overwhelmed in an unprecedented massacre. "Socialism appeared drowned in blood."

The memory, however, lives on. In a prophetic letter to Russian socialists, Karl Marx proclaimed, "Thus the Commune, which the powers of the old world believed to be exterminated, lives, stronger than ever, and thus we may join you in the cry: *Vive la Commune!*"

... All out/April 20

(continued from page 1)

overthrow Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

The example of San Francisco

In this issue of *Socialist Action* we present reports on the important strides forward that have been made in building local coalitions in numerous cities across the country—particularly on the West Coast.

The San Francisco coalition [see article on page 6] is perhaps the clearest example of what is possible today. Undaunted by Reagan's large electoral victory, this coalition appealed to the wide range of groups and individuals targeted for cutbacks or concerned about the war threats and the racist support to the South African government.

The San Francisco coalition also made every effort to make it easier for the trade unions to get involved. Keeping the anti-intervention focus on Central America and the Caribbean was essential in retaining the support of the unions, who, for example, are not yet ready to agree to slogans calling for an end to U.S. intervention in the Middle East.

Keeping the mass-action character of the April 20 demonstration separate from the civil-disobedience nature of the activities scheduled for other days was also critical in maintaining the participation of unions in the San Francisco coalition.

Big push is needed

Tremendous progress has been made in building local coalitions for April 20. Preparations for building the April 20

action in Washington, D.C., however, have been late in getting off the ground.

The delay in building the Washington action is a reflection of more than just an organizational weakness.

The April Actions for Peace, Jobs, and Justice coalition in the nation's capital has not focused on building April 20. Instead, it has tended to emphasize the smaller civil-disobedience and lobbying actions scheduled during April 19-22.

An energetic organizing drive is needed in the final weeks leading up to

the April 20 antiwar actions. It is still possible to recover from the time lost in helping to make the Washington, D.C., April 20 demonstration a massive show of opposition to Washington's policies.

The national and local April 20 coalitions deserve the full support of all those interested in mobilizing the broadest and largest opposition to the U.S. warmakers. *Socialist Action* readers and supporters should make building the April 20 actions their number one priority. All out for the April 20 antiwar marches!—THE EDITORS

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British media distort struggle in No. Ireland

By SARA GOLDEN

Ireland: the Propaganda War, by Liz Curtis. London, Pluto Press, 1984, 336 pp.

Liz Curtis' new book is a thorough and well-documented history of the role played by the British media in the struggle in the North of Ireland.

Curtis begins with a brief examination of the blackout on news about the Six Counties before the civil-rights movement of the 1960s. This movement—with its massive base of support—forced the issue of Ireland into British newspapers and TV programs.

As soon as the radical thrust of this movement became clear and British troops descended onto the streets of Belfast and Derry in August 1969, the media began a blatant campaign to defend English domination and to legitimize the responses of the Ulster loyalists and British troops.

Their reportage of the events of Bloody Sunday in 1972 is a clear example of this. A large peaceful demonstration was in progress. British paratroopers descended on the scene in armored cars. They spread out and began to shoot. Women, children, and men holding white handkerchiefs aloft—all were targets. This was the initial report, filed by both *The Guardian* and *The Times* (London) reporters on the scene.

Late that night, senior army officers met. Their "official statement" issued the next day alleged that there was a riot underway and that paratroopers fired only at identified targets and only in response to gunfire and bomb throwing from these targets.

The media's tune changed. *The Guardian* headline the next day read, "Thirteen killed as paratroopers break riot."

The Daily Telegraph stated, "Banned march erupts into riot," and, "IRA fired first, says Army."

Both articles failed to report that the 13 dead were all killed by British troops.

Many events and, in fact, a general picture of what life is like for the Catholic

population in the North are simply blacked out. Curtis cites numerous examples of TV series prepared by both private television (ITV) and the BBC that either never ran or were aired months later in the midnight hours.

The failure to point out conditions of poverty and discrimination reinforces the British myth that the IRA and its supporters are thugs and criminals, not political fighters. This, of course, "justifies" their prison status as common criminals rather than political prisoners. Ten Republican prisoners died in the hunger strike of 1981 that protested these conditions.

The election of Bobby Sands to Parliament forced the media to focus on the hunger strike, which they had previously almost ignored. But the general consensus on Sands' death in the English press was, as *The Times* put it, "There is only one killer of Sands and that is Sands himself."

The London Daily Star described the 30,000 who had voted for Sands as dupes.

The media has been unable to cope with explaining why the IRA, consistently portrayed as isolated terrorists, has had so much success in the electoral arena. The credibility of their description of the IRA has been severely undermined by the efforts of Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, to reach broader layers through such vehicles as its electoral campaigns.

"Murderers or freedom fighters?"

Curtis features a section on the use of terminology in the propaganda war. She quotes TV reporter Peter Taylor as follows:

"At the most basic level, where is the conflict taking place? Is it in Ulster? Northern Ireland? The province? The North of Ireland? Or the Six Counties? . . .

"And once you've sorted out the names, what's actually going on there? Is it a conflict? Is it a war? A rebellion? A revolution? A criminal conspiracy? Or a liberation struggle? . . .

"Lastly, and probably most important, how do we describe those involved? Are they terrorists? Criminals? The Mafia? Murderers? Guerrillas? Or freedom fighters? It depends on your perception of the conflict and whom you happen to be working for at the time. . . ." (p. 133).

Curtis interweaves a perceptive analysis throughout her book of the dual role of the media in reporting information and in creating ideological trends and divisions among their audience. It is a book that, while focusing on Britain and Ireland, can provide valuable insights into the role and functioning of any bourgeois propaganda machine. ■

Letters to the editor

Socialist Party

Dear editor,

Lenni Brenner's letter (February 1985) referred to the Socialist Party as DSA's predecessor. The Socialist Party is alive and well, thank you. The current SP resulted from a three-way split in the old party over the Vietnam war.

The two cold-warrior/right-wing blocs that left the party went on to form the Social Democrats (USA) and the DSA. The left-wing of the party (the Debs caucus) reconstituted the SP in 1973.

We in the Socialist Party have undergone much struggle with our own past, and the party has evolved into a revolutionary-democratic-socialist party in the Debs tradition.

SP members are actively working in mass movements for peace, social justice, and economic democracy. We oppose all military blocs and support the struggles of Third World peoples to free themselves.

The Socialist Party is back on track and is not to be confused with the DSA—no matter how much Harrington and Co. try to lay claim to the SP tradition.

John Kirkland,
Wharton, Texas

A criticism

Dear editor,

It is good to see *Socialist Action* carrying material on unionists' struggles to estab-

lish control of their own unions. The only problem is that Nat Weinstein's arguments in his January 1985 article, "Canadian split weakens auto workers union," place *Socialist Action* on the wrong side.

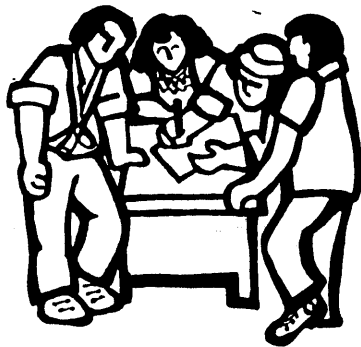
Canadian director Robert White's "demands" for autonomy, which the class-collaborationist bureaucrats in Detroit rejected without so much as a discussion, are skipped over in Weinstein's article. The implication is left that in some way these "demands" were unreasonable and Bieber's rejections justified—all in the interests, of course, of auto workers' unity.

Weinstein deplores, "Had the GM workers on both sides of the border struck together. . . ."

But that is just what Bieber's "give-aways" did not allow to happen.

The Canadian workers want unity to fight the auto bosses, but they want to run their own show in collaboration with U.S. auto workers. Among other things, this means control of their own strike funds.

The question of democratic rights of Canadian unionists caught up in the bureaucratically controlled machinery of the so-called "internationals" is a highly explosive one. More and more Canadian unionists are establishing their autonomous rights in opposition to the U.S. bureaucrats and hence outside of the "internationals."



Robert White is by no means a militant, nor is he a maverick. His stance at the Dec. 10 showdown had the almost unanimous support of the broadly based Canadian Council.

Some persons who should know better have dismissed this struggle for union democracy, for Canadian autonomy, with the label they use pejoratively as "Canadian nationalism."

Ross Dowson,
Toronto

A response

It seems to me that Ross Dowson has misunderstood the general thrust of my story on the split in the UAW. There is nothing there that contradicts the conception of local autonomy for the Canadian section of the UAW *within the framework of an effective, fighting union structure encompassing all auto workers.*

Autonomy that prevents joint action against the boss or which isolates a more combative wing from the main body of the union is a step in the wrong direction.

Dowson clearly seems to be arguing for *Canadian* autonomy, which is another matter. His conception of autonomy seems to go further

than the usual meaning of the term.

It is a long-standing principle, in the best traditions of the workers' movement, to permit local autonomy on local matters. This is indispensable to workers' democracy and to the development of a self-acting local leadership.

Working-class internationalism is no less a principle. It is wrong, because it is self-defeating, to permit national boundaries to obstruct working-class unity.

This is not at all intended to imply that Canadian UAW members—or any other local affiliate of the international union—must, in principle, accept bureaucratic treatment at the hands of the top officialdom.

The right to resist bureaucratic violations of workers' democracy includes the right to separate if necessary. But Dowson seems to be arguing that separation for *Canadian* workers is a *principle*.

Even if the issue were indeed that of "Canadian nationalism," the relevant principle is *the right* to separate—not separation itself.

Other than the difference of opinion cited above, Dowson and I seem to have a common view of the debilitating effects of the class-collaborationist, sell-out policies of union bureaucracies exemplified by the Bieber misleadership of the UAW.—

NAT WEINSTEIN

"New South"

Dear editor,

The Rev. Jesse Jackson has recently returned to South Carolina, where he hopes to gain a position of power within the state Democratic Party.

To the disbelief of many of

his supporters, Jackson has been proclaiming that times have changed in this "New South" and that most whites have put aside their old racism.

Episodes do occur regularly that cast such hopes asunder. One such incident took place on Jan. 16, when Retired Chief Justice Joseph Moss used the term "damn nigger" when referring to a group of Blacks who objected to the conviction of a Black youth charged with shooting a white teacher.

Not realizing that his microphone was on, a full courtroom heard Moss render his "opinion."

One wonders how many "damn niggers" are sitting in South Carolina's prisons because of Moss and his cohorts.

Due to public outcry, a mild condemnation of the judge was passed in the state House of Representatives. The resolution, however, has met with stiff opposition in the state Senate.

So much for the "New South" and the Rev. Jesse Jackson's "good counsel."

Mel Reichard,
Columbia, S.C.

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

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A correction

In the February 1985 issue of *Socialist Action* the following mistakes were made in the article titled, "Slide shows dig deep into miners' history":

(1) The author's name is Genny Zbach, not Zebach; (2) the slide show on "Monongah

1907" is by Davitt McAteer, not Babbit McAteer; and (3) 362 miners died in the explosion in 1907, not 700 as stated.

We ask the author to forgive us for the mistakes made in taking the story over the phone.—THE EDITORS

Farmers reap a bitter harvest

By HAYDEN PERRY

All across the United States the lights of family farms are going out, and the streets of the little country towns are deserted. In 1950 there were 5.4 million farms; in 1970 there were less than 3 million. Farmers are leaving the land at the rate of 270,000 a year, and no end to the exodus is in sight.

The farmers are being forced off their land by staggering debts that they cannot pay. Today American farmers owe \$214 billion to banks and other credit institutions. With falling farm prices the average family farmer does not earn enough to even pay the interest on his debt.

Banks fail

Small country banks cannot collect on their loans and are closing their doors. Even bigger banks are caught in the wave of farm bankruptcies. The giant Bank of America has lent \$2 billion to farmers. They expect to write off at least 15 percent of this as uncollectable.

The family farmer is caught in the contradiction between advancing technology and the anarchy of capitalist economics. Farming is not like factory production, where you shut down an assembly line when sales drop. When sales and prices fall, the farmer is inclined to plant more to maintain his income.

While the farmer can increase his production, he cannot increase his domestic sales beyond a certain point.

Meanwhile, production on the farm has risen year by year as new seeds and new machines are developed. In 1900 a farmer could raise enough to feed 10 people. In 1963 the average farm produced enough for 30 people; and productivity has increased at an even faster rate in the last 20 years.

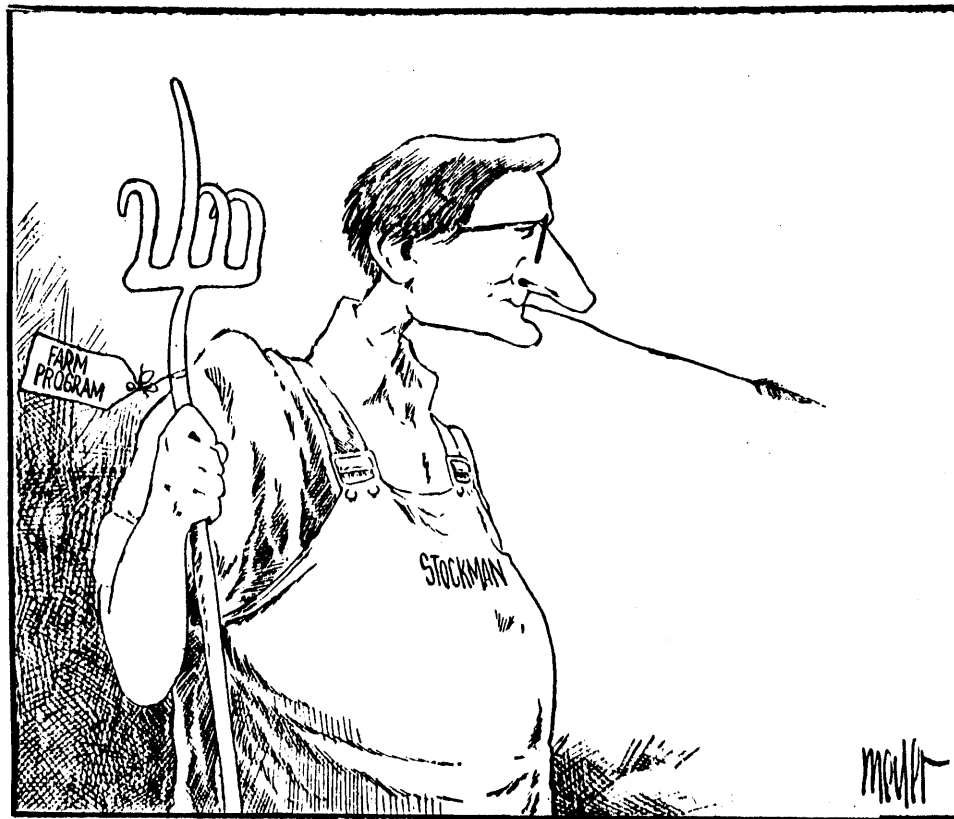
But increased production without a larger market spells disaster for the farmer. In the Great Depression farm prices fell far below the cost of production, and farmers lost their land through foreclosures just as they are doing today.

Price supports established

President Franklin D. Roosevelt came to the rescue of the farmers by guaranteeing them a minimum price for their crops. He did this either by lending the farmer money for his crop, or by buying it outright and putting it in storage. Price-support programs have been extended by all administrations for the last 50 years.

When oil prices shot up in 1973, the United States decided to push for more farm sales overseas. Bankers recycled OPEC dollars into loans to Third World countries so they could buy more from us. This strategy succeeded as farm exports rose from \$8 billion in 1970 to \$43.8 billion in 1981. Farm prices rose, and there were promises of big profits to be made in farming.

With rising farm prices the cost of farmland also rose, but this did not stop many farmers from buying more. The



government urged them to expand production to fill foreign orders. Bankers, flush with OPEC deposits, were eager to lend farmers money at 12-percent interest. Almost a decade of seeming prosperity hit the farm belt.

Bubble bursts

Then in 1982 the bubble burst. Many debtor countries became insolvent. They had to cut their imports just to pay the interest on their foreign debts. At the same time the dollar rose in value, making American products more expensive on the foreign market. As a result farm exports fell from \$43.3 billion in 1981 to \$36.1 billion in 1983.

Down on the farm the effect was devastating. Crop prices fell and the farmers' income slid from \$186 billion

warm-hearted banker will turn down a farmer if he sees no chance of repayment. When a farmer owes a sum equal to 40 percent of the value of his farm, he has to pay more in interest than he gets from selling his crop. This is the problem of about 300,000 farmers. They are the middle-sized operators who expanded in the boom years. Unless they get help, most of them will be out of business this year or next.

The help he has been getting from the Reagan administration is obviously not helping the family farmer. One reason is that the bulk of the benefits go to the few big agribusinesses that farm thousands of acres and produce crops worth millions of dollars. Fifteen giant super-farms got \$23 million in farm benefits in 1983. The family farmer, who diversifies his crops, gets only a small payment on part of his production.

There is a conflict of interest between the family farmer and agribusiness. The family farmer wants high prices for his product and is willing to limit his production to get it. The agribusiness farmer is more interested in the world market, and sees the need for a competitive price. He is less willing to cut production to keep prices up.

Farm interests who definitely do not want to see cutbacks in production are the farm equipment salesmen, the fertilizer interests, and the dealers in grain and other crops like the giant Cargill corporation.

Legislators with urban constituencies question the wisdom of spending \$10 to \$20 billion a year to keep farm prices up. Reagan, who listens to big business, has come down squarely on the side of agribusiness and its industrial associates.

Cuts in price supports

The new Reagan budget proposes to gradually lower and eliminate price-support payments and let market forces

operate freely. This is like throwing the drowning farmer a rock.

Farm prices will drop, but it may not guarantee increased sales abroad. The highly protective European Common Market will resist further competition, and the less developed countries are trying to build up their own farms. Meanwhile more American farmers will be forced into bankruptcy.

The distressed farmers are reacting in the way their fathers did in the Great Depression. They are taking to the country roads with their tractors and driving to state capitals and to Washington. Their most immediate demand is a halt to foreclosures.

In Minnesota they are asking for a 120-day moratorium to be renewed every three months until price rises give the farmer the cost of his production plus 15 percent. They also want an emergency loan program to buy seed for spring planting and a one-year moratorium on debts to equipment dealers and other creditors. At other farm rallies there are calls for raising price supports and halting the spread of corporate farming.

Halt foreclosures

Some people question the wisdom of trying to save these distressed farmers. The family farm is going the way of the horse-drawn plow, they say. But the American family farmer is the most efficient producer of food in the world.

The best of them farm with the long view in mind, conserving the soil and maintaining its fertility for seasons to come. Agribusiness exploits the soil for short-term profits, leaving it less productive or eroded, then moving on to exploit more cropland, often overseas.

The family farmer's immediate financial plight must be relieved by halting foreclosures, by guaranteeing him at least the cost of production. Government aid must be concentrated on the small farmer and the truly impoverished part-time farmers who number nearly 2 million. No more million-dollar payoffs to agribusiness. Farm production must be planned to match market demand at home and the needs of hungry people overseas.

The small farmer's natural ally in the struggle for an effective farm program is the American worker. Both are exploited by the food conglomerates who squeeze the farmer at one end and the housewife at the other. The wheat farmer gets only 11 cents out of a \$1-dollar loaf of bread. Consumers suffer far more from profiteering by grocery chains than by a rise in the prices paid to the farmer.

Farmers should get their message to organized labor and to consumer groups. Already many unions have joined the farmers in rallies and protest actions across the country. Together with millions of allies in the cities, the embattled farmers can hammer out a program that will benefit the real producers in the mines, mills, and on the farms—the working people and the working farmers. ■

"The farmer's natural ally for an effective farm program is the American worker."

in 1979 to \$139 billion in 1983. Land values dropped, reflecting the drop in farm prices. The farmer's net worth has dropped, but his debts have soared. Aggregate farm debt was \$50 billion in 1970. Today it is \$214 billion. The yearly interest on this debt amounts to \$20 billion.

Farmers' debts are high for two reasons: high-priced land and high-priced machinery. Farming today is as capital intensive as many factories. A 400-acre farm may be valued at \$500,000, but the farmer may clear as little as \$10,000 when all his expenses are paid. At today's prices many farmers are operating at a loss.

Banks refuse loans

This is where the crunch is coming at the country banks. Even the most

