

A Socialist ACTION



Revolution in Latin America pp. 9-12

VOL.3, NO.7

JULY 1985



50 CENTS



Socialist Action/ Joe Ryan

Women's movement at crossroads

By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

An important debate is taking place in the National Organization for Women (NOW). The upcoming national convention, to take place this month in New Orleans, will see Eleanor Smeal challenge Judy Goldsmith for president.

The differences between the two candidates are expressed most sharply around how to carry on the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment. Smeal favors a national program for direct action now. "This can't wait for another 10 years," she says. "We can't decide that we want it and then do nothing."

Smeal is also calling for NOW to get involved in direct action on issues such as reproductive rights, discrimination against females in education, and fighting the Vatican's policies on reproductive rights and women's role in the church.

Goldsmith disagrees. "It [the ERA] is on our agenda, but it is not the most propitious time to bring it up. We are not interested in exercises in futility. We must change the political landscape and get more women elected before we try again."

She goes on to say, "Loud may be good, but it is not only the level of decibels that is heard."

Goldsmith gives her idea of a great victory: "Without NOW," she crows triumphantly, "I don't think there would have been a woman vice-presidential candidate."

Shift away from mass action

Although the debate reflects the discontent in the women's movement at the setbacks it has been experiencing, it would be wise to take this dispute with a grain of salt. The defeat of the ERA occurred during Smeal's presidency of NOW.

When the ERA was within a whisker of winning the required number of states for passage of the constitutional amendment, Smeal led NOW in a shift

(continued on page 2)

U.S. fuels hysteria to prepare for war

On June 13, Congress reversed its earlier stand against *contra* funding by voting almost twice the sum the Reagan administration had requested only six weeks before.

Seeking to whip up a war hysteria, the Reagan administration has also reiterated its goal of overthrowing the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, which has been falsely accused of fomenting "terrorism" in the region.

In the aftermath of the Middle East hostage crisis [at presstime U.S. battle ships are heading for the coast of Lebanon] and of the deaths of four U.S. Marines in El Salvador, the Reagan administration has sent new "emergency" aid to the repressive Salvadoran government.

Potential shown on April 20

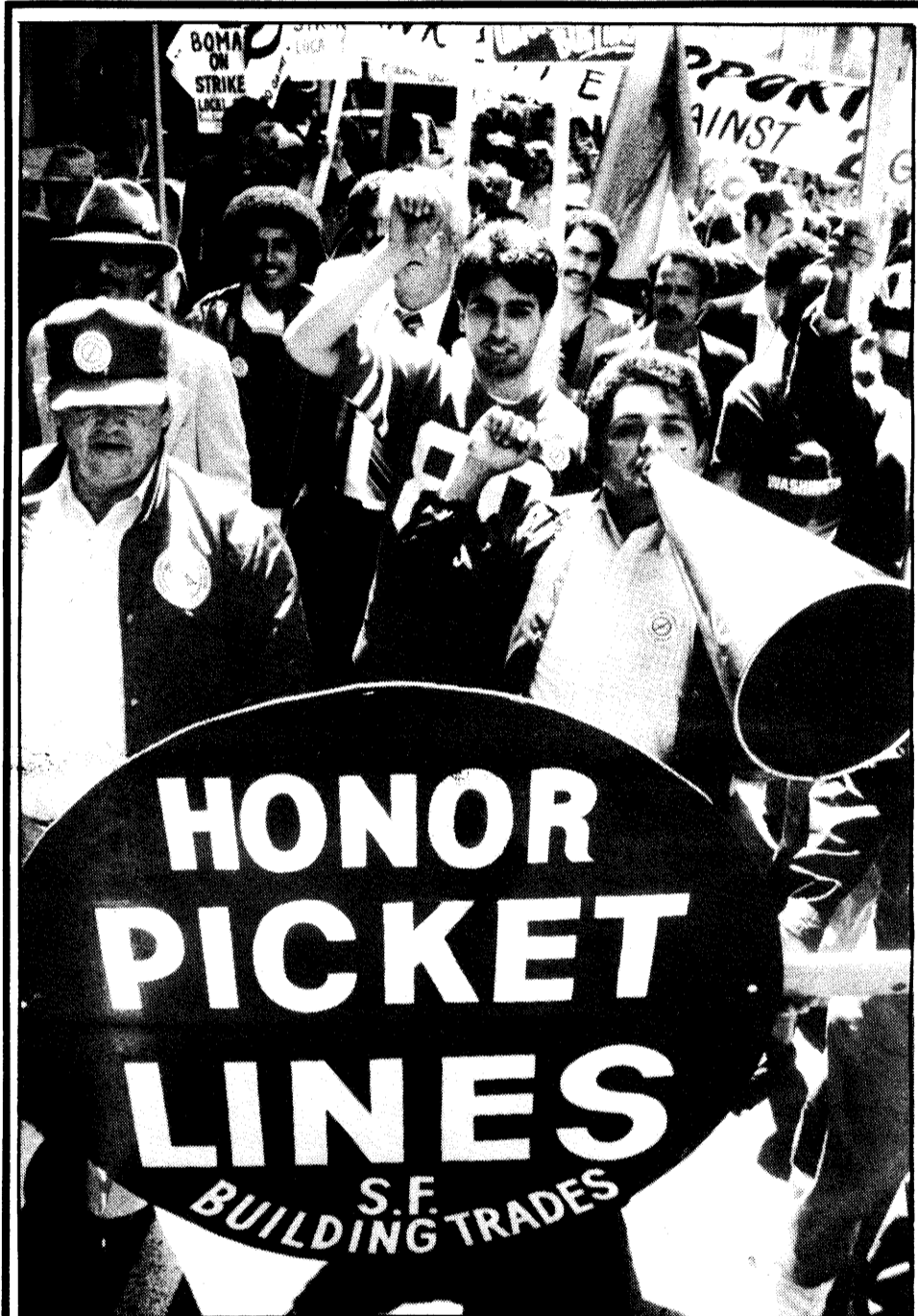
The movement against war and austerity has been given a gigantic boost by the April 20 antiwar demonstrations.

It is urgent to extend and deepen the important gains made in building the April 20 actions. Nationally coordi-

"Congress' renewed support for contras underscores need for fall protests."

nated fall actions around the four themes of the spring mobilizations are a vital necessity. Greater numbers and new forces can be brought in to make the fall actions an even greater show of strength against the warmakers. Only in this manner can the American people force the warmakers to retreat. ■

More coverage pp. 4-5



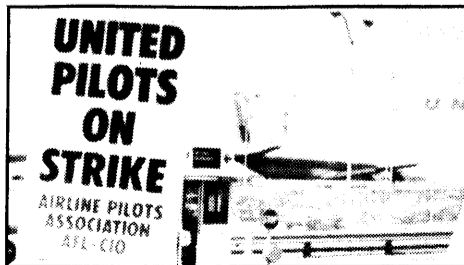
Local 87 SEIU members rally in San Francisco on June 5 against employers' takebacks. [See story page 7.]

Socialist Action/ Joe Ryan

United pilots return to work after hard-fought strike

By JAYNE BURRIER

The strike by pilots at United Airlines ended on June 15 after the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) agreed to allow U.S. District Judge Nicholas Bua to resolve the remaining issues in dispute.



The United pilots were forced out on strike on May 17. Management had demanded intolerable concessions, including a two-tier pay scale in which new pilots would be offered salaries 57 percent below the present level.

Two weeks into the strike United management and ALPA agreed on a five-year two-tier contract that would pay new hires considerably less. This was in contrast to management's original demand for a 20-year two-tier.

But the agreement now includes a provision allowing the courts to determine after five years if the company's financial situation justifies continuing the two-tier system.

While agreement was reached on the two-tier, the strike continued over a back-to-work agreement. United management insisted that ALPA had no right to bargain for the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), who honored ALPA's picket line, or for the 570 "pre-hire" pilots who refused to scab.

The truth is that the AFA was bargaining for itself. ALPA simply said that they would refuse to return to work until the flight attendants had a back-to-work agreement.

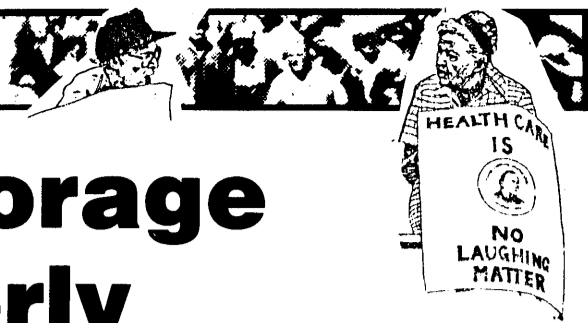
But the future of these "pre-hires," and United's demand for super-seniority for the scabs, has now been left up to the courts. The AFA agreed to return to work without a back-to-work agreement, allowing for the issue to be settled through litigation.

The resolve and unity of the 5300

(continued on page 8)

A hard look at AFL-CIO report. See pp. 16-17

Fight back!



Cold storage for elderly

By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

Board and care homes—good ones, that is—are not easy to come by. For low-income survivors of the capitalist rat race it's a hard fact of life that there's often no place to lay your head when you get old.

I recently had the experience of looking into a board-and-care home for an elderly relative. I came away from that experience with more dread than ever of growing old and being alone.

We were told it was one of the "better" places, so we went to look for our-

selves. We were met at the door by a woman who said she was the "caretaker."

She escorted us through the house. Even though it was still bright daylight outside, there was not a sound coming from the house.

As we were shown into the bedrooms, we saw that all of the old people were lying in their beds. They were not asleep, just in bed.

I had hoped to find senior citizens playing cards, watching TV, or just sitting around munching cookies. No, not the case. But there was a TV room, so

clean, empty, and sterile, that you could have performed open heart surgery there with no fear of germs.

On we went, into the kitchen. Perhaps, we hoped, the food was good and plentiful.

The kitchen was spotless; so was the dining area. Dishes had been washed and put away as had the old people. A shining chain with a lock was wrapped around the refrigerator.

Perhaps the food was so plentiful that the "caretaker" was worried the old people would eat too much. No, not so. The menu for supper consisted of one hotdog on Monday, one grilled cheese sandwich on Tuesday, one slice of quiche on Wednesday, etc.

No wonder the refrigerator was locked up! Those hungry old people might drink some milk, eat an apple, or something else disastrous. You know the criminal mind of the elderly.

It was the quiet and the chain that did it. We walked out, disturbed by the quiet, the deadly quiet. No card playing, no TV, no late night cake and milk capers. Just quiet, orderly, cold storage. ■

Socialist ACTION

Closing news date: June 19, 1985

Editor: ALAN BENJAMIN

Assistant Editor: MICHAEL SCHREIBER

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

Business Manager: Don Mahoney

Circulation Manager: Ralph Forsyth

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

Rates: 12 issues for \$6.00; Canada and Mexico \$12.50; \$30.00 airmail for all other countries; \$14.00 surface mail for all other countries.

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

... NOW

(continued from page 1)

away from a strategy of mass action. Under the slogan, "Out of the streets and into the mainstream," all of NOW's energy was turned toward electing "good guys," male and female, who promised to vote for the ERA in state legislatures.

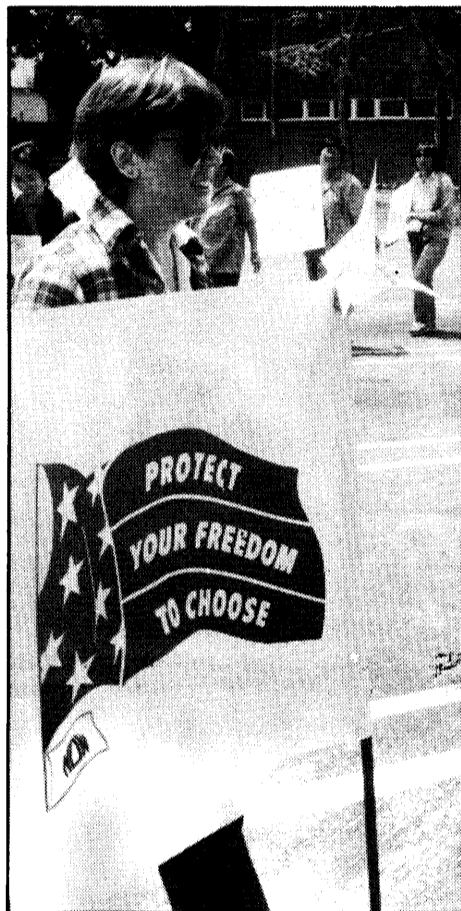
Nevada was an example of the results of this real "exercise in futility."

Ten Nevada legislators who vowed to vote for ERA ratification were elected with the backing of NOW. In the first test, all 10 voted against the ERA! Nevada NOW women came to the following national convention wearing buttons that said "Remember the Nevada Ten!"

But the national NOW leadership learned nothing. This debacle continued in state after state. NOW pushed its chapters into wine-and-cheese fund-raisers and precinct-walking for Democratic Party candidates. The "out of the streets, into the mainstream" strategy had the devastating effect of demoralizing NOW activists.

NOW leaders purge activists

San Francisco NOW was an example of the effect of this disastrous policy. S.F. NOW had been known nationally as one of the most militant, active chapters in the country. In order to turn S.F. NOW from an activists' chapter into an arm of the Democratic Party, it was necessary to red-bait and purge the chapter of its most devoted members.



Socialist Action/ Joe Ryan

Leaders of the chapter who had headed up the reproductive rights committee, the equal rights committee, the "Day In The Park" committee and the newsletter, and who had built the chapter, were driven out on trumped-up charges of "organizing a reproductive rights march."

Jeannie Foat, acting California state coordinator, swooped into San Fran-

cisco and brought members from other Northern California chapters to vote against the S.F. NOW activists. Over 75 of S.F. NOW's most active members left in disgust.

The trial was effective in its divide-and-conquer effect. The conquest was very short lived. The S.F. NOW chapter, which stood out for its visible, militant actions in defense of women's rights, was reduced to an ineffectual shadow of its former self. And it has yet to recover.

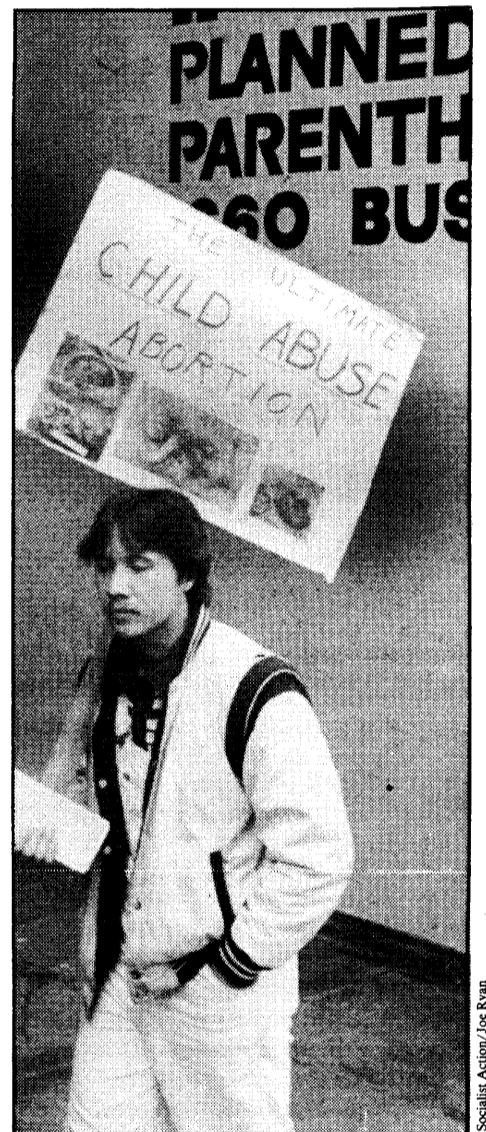
Symbol of hope

The National Organization for Women, before its transformation into a vote-getting vehicle for the Democratic Party, was a symbol of hope for millions of women stifled by a sexist economic system which thrives on the misery of women, children, and oppressed minorities.

But NOW remains an organization of 250,000 members, with 800 chapters and an annual budget of \$6.5 million. Just imagine how much it could do for women's rights with that force if it were not in bed with the same politicians who represent the oppression and exploitation of women.

If NOW is to survive, it must turn from the electoral arena and go back into the streets. It must once again mobilize women for action. It can begin by reducing its membership fee to \$1 per person.

It should go onto the street corners, into the office buildings, union halls, and factories—wherever women work—and recruit those millions of women who are willing to fight for their rights. ■



Socialist Action/ Joe Ryan

Right-winger pickets abortion clinic in San Francisco.

'Pro-lifers' harass women seeking abortion services

By CHRISTINE VAUGHN

Christine Vaughn, an office worker and member of the National Organization for Women, is an escort for Planned Parenthood in San Francisco. Escorts are required to accompany women through the anti-abortion picket lines at Planned Parenthood.

Socialist Action asked Christine to describe her reaction to the constant harassment by "pro-lifers" of women who need abortion services.

It's scary to be an escort after all the bombings and threats against abortion clinics. We get some really arrogant and

obnoxious know-it-alls in San Francisco. They are at the clinic every Saturday almost without fail. (Saturday is the day that many college or working women have their abortions.)

Both men and women are on the anti-abortion picket line. Some of the "pro-lifers" bring their children. One thing is interesting—we have never seen a Black person picket the clinic.

One of the regulars is Rev. Charles McIlhenny, who is pastor of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. Many of the pickets wore their Reagan-Bush buttons to the picket line.

We escorts have given some of them

nicknames, like the Dragon Lady who got too aggressive with an escort and came out the loser. We haven't seen her since.

Another picket, who makes anti-semitic remarks, took photographs of all the escorts. Another "pro-lifer" flips open brochures of supposedly aborted fetuses and tells passers-by, "They kill babies in there."

The worst offenders are students from the [Catholic] University of San Francisco. They directly accost anyone walking on the street and try to force literature into their hands. People in the neighborhood are really angry that they have to walk through these fanatics

every Saturday morning. Many of them extend signs of support to us escorts and even say, "Thank God you're here".

Many of the "pro-lifers" have made remarks alluding to the clinic bombings, saying things like, "It's too bad they didn't bomb all of them."

They yell at the escorts, "What do you get paid for this? Are you ready to admit you're wrong?"

Well, I can tell them, we get no pay. We get nothing except the comforting feeling that we have helped one more woman in her right to choose. And we will be there as long as needed. We will fight the "pro-lifers" until they disappear from the doors of the clinic. ■

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Growing crisis in the Middle East today

Documents of the Polish resistance

Remembering Hiroshima and World War II

Housing and ideology in New York

What's really behind Reagan's tax reform?

The labor party slogan in the U.S.

To our readers: Our August issue will be a reduced summer issue.

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

The punishment: Forced to stand in desert sun for 14 hours a day, beaten with sticks and clubs, tied by wrists and forced to lie six hours on the floor, isolated in locked outhouses, deported and possibly murdered by "death squads."

The crime: Coming from El Salvador to seek refuge in the United States.

The "crime" does not fit the punishment, according to prisoners at the notorious El Centro, Calif., detention center run by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

On May 27 some 200 prisoners began a hunger strike to win improved conditions at El Centro and to publicize their plea for political asylum. The strike was broken up after four days by 50 INS guards in full riot gear.

Eight of the refugees who are out on bond from El Centro came to a San Francisco rally against U.S. funding for the Nicaraguan *contras* on June 11 to win support for their protest. One of the strikers, Noe Arnaldo Zelaya y Zelaya, spoke with *Socialist Action* at the rally.

A primary teacher, Zelaya was a member of ANDES, the Salvadoran teachers union. ANDES has been an outspoken critic of human rights violations in El Salvador. Between 1979 and 1985, 300 ANDES members were killed by death squads and the military.

Conditions in El Centro leave the INS open to the charge of human rights violations as well. Prisoners charge that the INS has forced them to stand in the desert sun in over 100-degree temperatures for up to 14 hours. The guards, meanwhile, sit protected by umbrellas or in air-conditioned barracks.

The El Centro prisoners maintain that they are often held for three or four months as *punishment* without being told the outcome of their trials. The overcrowded facility, built for a maximum of 340 detainees, is regularly filled with over 500 people.

The food is of poor quality—typically powdered eggs with practically no fruit or vegetables. Medical facilities are

Hunger strikers rap abuse by INS



Salvadoran refugees in Honduras. Photo from "Forced to Move," a new book by Renato Camarda (Solidarity Publications, San Francisco).

inadequate; no doctors are available on weekends.

These are the conditions that gave rise to the hunger strike. "We were treated like high criminals," one of the strikers told the rally, "This was an attack against our dignity as human beings."

Repression continues in El Salvador

Many people who were threatened by the death squads fled El Salvador to protect their lives or to protect their families that remain behind. But so far, the U.S. government has granted asylum to less than 2.5 percent of the Salvadoran refugees who have asked for it.

The American Civil Liberties Union has collected evidence of 112 cases of people who were imprisoned, tortured, or murdered after they were deported to

El Salvador by the U.S. government.

Zelaya, commenting on the Reagan administration's claim of improved human rights conditions in El Salvador, said, "It's not true. Repression is not *public*, but repression and disappearances continue. The repression is more targeted on known oppositionists."

It was in response to this combination of circumstances—war and repression in El Salvador that is financed by the United States, denial of asylum to Central American refugees in flight for their lives, and detention and deportation of the refugees—that the Church-based sanctuary movement developed. Over 200 religious congregations have now declared themselves sanctuaries.

A new development is the establishment of the National Sanctuary Defense Fund to "defend in the courts those

American citizens charged with 'illegally' helping these refugees—and to keep these refugees from being sent back to be murdered in cold blood."

INS officials, trying to deflect an expected public outcry, claimed that "outside agitation" sparked the strike at El Centro. But attorneys and activists in the sanctuary movement say they knew nothing of the protest until it was well underway.

The INS put forth its response as part of a broad attack that the government has unleashed upon the sanctuary movement. Armed INS agents conducted coordinated raids on refuge centers in five cities on Jan. 14. They arrested 60 refugees and 20 U.S. citizens in the sweep.

Twelve sanctuary workers in Arizona were charged with conspiring to "harbor, transport, and abet" refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala. Pre-trial hearings began May 21 in the U.S. District Court in Phoenix. The trial is scheduled to open in December.

The government attack was aided by a witch-hunting editorial in the April 17 issue of the *Wall Street Journal*. The newspaper warned that the sanctuary movement is in danger of "being taken over by left-wing activists" and that leftists have already "seized control" of the antinuclear, feminist, civil rights, and Catholic economic doctrine movements.

As proof that church people have been misled by "a politically selective network of activists," the *Journal* pointed out that the sanctuary movement has linked concern for the human plight of the refugees with a firm opposition to U.S. government policy in Latin America.

But anyone need only hear the refugees tell their personal stories to realize that their plight was made right here in the U.S.A.

Donations toward the bond fund for the El Centro strikers can be sent to: Friends of the Hunger Strikers Fund, Desert Valley Federal Credit Union, 497 South 4th Street, El Centro, CA 92243.

Trade union officials indict U.S. drive toward war

By CARL FINAMORE

Union activists and anti-intervention organizers should be very interested in the second report on Central America just released by the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. The committee organized a leadership trade-union delegation for a fact-finding visit to El Salvador and Nicaragua in February 1985.

Members of the AFL-CIO union delegation included Ken Blaylock, president, American Federation of Government Employees; Keith Johnson, president, International Woodworkers of America; Victor Gotbaum, international vice-president, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Jack Sheinkman, secretary-treasurer, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU); and David Dyson, director, Union Label Department (ACTWU).

Opposing the official AFL-CIO position on Central America, the report contains a devastating indictment against the Reagan administration's claim that the human rights situation in El Salvador has improved.

The delegation concluded that "the human rights situation in El Salvador has not improved," "trade union and political rights in El Salvador are still being violated," and the "crimes of the past have gone unpunished and the repressive structures of Salvadoran society remain intact."

While the authors criticize the Sandinista government for imposing "restrictions on the democratic process," they further note that there is "political

opposition, free speech, thought and assembly existing in Nicaragua today."

Most important, however, the labor committee recommends that the U.S. government "end all military support for the counterrevolutionary groups

("contras") attacking Nicaragua from Honduras and Costa Rica."

It also states that "the United States should cease efforts to damage the Nicaraguan economy by blocking international credits."

Supporters of the revolutions in Central America will have legitimate disagreements with the report's underlying assumption that a "democratic" form of capitalism can meet the needs of the workers and peasants of Central Amer-

ica. Nonetheless, this powerful statement against U.S. policy can help the anti-intervention movement reach out to working people and strengthen its ties to the unions.

Single copies of the report can be obtained for \$1 by writing the National Labor Committee at 15 Union Square, New York, N.Y. 10003. The office can be reached at (212) 242-0700. Orders of 11 or more can be purchased for 50 cents.

Immigration bill promises rough justice

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

An anti-immigration bill is back in the United States Congress to haunt the thousands of immigrants forced by conditions of extreme poverty and repression in Latin America and other regions to seek work in the United States.

In the last five years various versions of this bill have been introduced in both houses of Congress. In the last congressional session, the two different versions passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives were not reconciled in the conference committee in time to become law.

The Reagan administration has announced its support for the current bill, which was introduced by Senate majority whip Alan K. Simpson (R-Wyo.). The new bill is like its predecessors in that it provides for punitive fines against U.S. employers in an attempt to

force them to screen workers and job applicants.

In one respect, the new bill is even worse than earlier versions. It refuses to offer any timetable for the legalization of undocumented persons who have lived and worked in this country for a specified number of years. *The New York Times* applauds as "rough justice" the fact that the new bill would delay legalization until a government committee certifies that unwanted immigration

is under control.

The Washington Post has likewise jumped into the attack by thumbing its nose at Hispanic groups that were instrumental in preventing the bill's passage on the last round. Both newspapers—speaking for the capitalist class in this country—urge Sen. Simpson to start now to line up Democratic Party support in order to make the assault on the undocumented a truly bipartisan effort.



By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

CLEVELAND—The mounting campaign for colleges to divest their stock holdings in companies doing business in South Africa has forced trustees at Ohio State University and Oberlin College to take up the divestment issue in recent weeks.

Ohio State University trustees voted 6-3 to divest their \$10.8 million investment in South African-related companies. The divestment will occur in stages with total divestment by 1991. Ohio State joins some 20 colleges that are eliminating such investments.

A university-sponsored committee's report recommended complete divestment "based on the belief that any financial presence economically supports apartheid and renders the university culpable of participating in the maintenance of the apartheid system."

In announcing the trustees' decision, OSU President Edward H. Jennings said, "We stand united in opposition to the racist policies of the government of South Africa. The Ohio State University unequivocally condemns apartheid as an unmitigated evil and as a system which is morally, socially, and economically bankrupt."

At Oberlin College, however, trustees voted not to divest \$19 million worth of stock in South African-related companies. They stated:

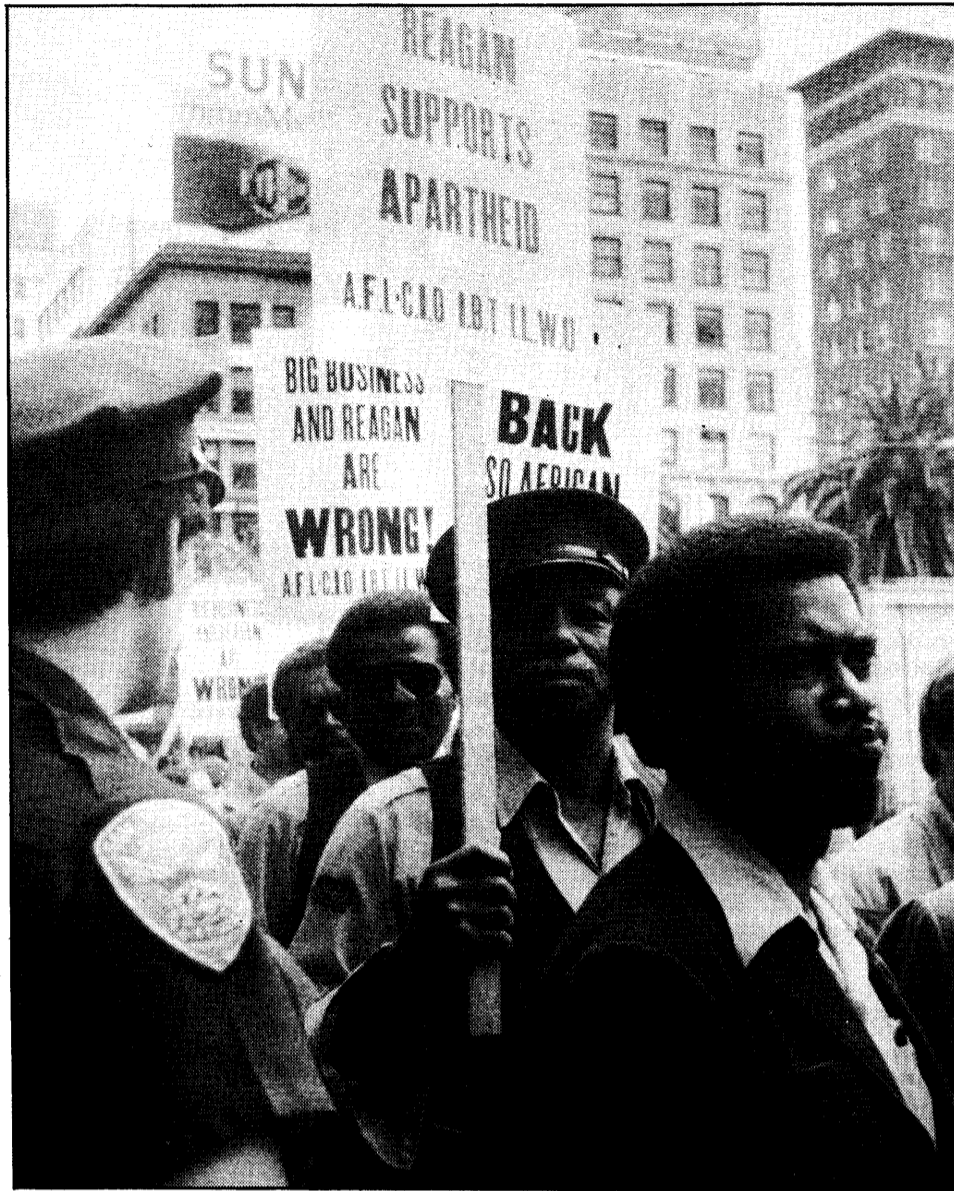
"The trustees reviewed, reaffirmed and tightened the college's policy of limited divestments employing the Sullivan Principles as a basis for trying to influence affairs in South Africa before divesting of stock, which the trustees are not convinced is an effective means of bringing about change in the apartheid system.

"The college will actively work and try to convince corporations to adhere to the Sullivan Principles before it divests of those corporations' stock."

Some liberals, arguing that divestment hurts Black South Africans, support the Sullivan Principles, which require that U.S. corporations treat Black South Africans equally on the job. Like the Oberlin College trustees, they claim that positive change can be achieved by investing in "good" corporations.

Nevertheless, the anti-apartheid campaign continues to win growing support.

Demands to divest still run strong



Municipal bus drivers in San Francisco join labor-sponsored picketline against apartheid.

The United Auto Workers Executive Board last December endorsed demands to ban all further investments in or loans to South Africa, to bar the sale of krugerrands in the United States, and to enforce the ban on the sale of arms and nuclear technology to South Africa.

The United Steelworkers of America has published a pamphlet, "American Steel Jobs and South Africa: How U.S. support for South Africa affects your

community," that emphasizes the connection between apartheid and the loss of jobs in the United States.

They explain how large U.S. corporations, including such well-known union busters as Phelps Dodge, take advantage of the low wages and slave-labor working conditions in South Africa to maximize profits.

The pamphlet states:

"The oppressed Black workers

of South Africa and American workers are fighting a common enemy—corporate greed. Many of the U.S. firms profiting from apartheid are also guilty of racism here at home.

"By working to force these companies out of South Africa we can assist the struggle for democracy in South Africa, while strengthening the U.S. economy at the same time. Rather than investing in countries that deny democratic rule, like South Africa, U.S. companies should help rebuild our neighborhoods, environment, and industries.

"Imposing economic sanctions on South Africa and divesting American pension funds from companies profiting from apartheid will benefit both the Black majority of South Africa and American workers."

"Embargo South Africa, not Nicaragua," was a popular sign at rallies protesting the U.S. trade embargo against Nicaragua. However, not everyone agrees with this approach.

Divestment isn't protectionism

In a recent article in *The Militant*, the Socialist Workers Party criticizes the Steelworkers pamphlet, claiming that its emphasis on the connection between U.S. support to South Africa and loss of steel jobs at home is nothing but a reactionary, protectionist campaign linking the interests of U.S. steelworkers to those of the bosses.

Arguing against allowing South African steel into the United States—or refusing to unload South African ships as ILWU members did on the West Coast—is not the same as campaigning to exclude Japanese autos or French steel. Exclusion of South African products would hasten the downfall of the racist South African regime.

As Phiroshaw Camay, a Black South African trade-union leader, explained: South African workers are looking for the destruction of apartheid and all its racist structures—not cosmetic changes."

The growing anti-apartheid movement, involving trade unionists, students, civil rights organizations, and religious groups, can play an important role by forcing the United States government to end its support to South Africa.

Antiwar conference urges fall protests

By CARRIE HEWITT

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.—A proposal for fall actions against the escalating U.S. war drive against Nicaragua won overwhelming support from participants at the Second Emergency National Conference (ENC) Against Military Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean held here on June 21-23.

The three-day conference brought together hundreds of antiwar activists from across the country to debate the increasingly critical question of what direction the anti-intervention movement should take in the coming months.

Coming on the heels of the successful April 20 demonstrations which mobilized over 125,000 people nationwide, the 2nd ENC was organized to provide a forum for antiwar activists to discuss the need for unity in the anti-intervention movement and for continuing to build ever-more powerful mass mobilizations.

Jerry Gordon, coordinator of the 2nd ENC, told *Socialist Action*: "The conference was significant in that it established an organizational framework for pursuing a mass-action perspective."

Pointing to the hesitations of the

national steering committee of the April Actions Coalition to issue a call for fall demonstrations, Gordon said that "it is essential that the anti-intervention movement go on without any intervals and gaps."

The adoption of the conference action proposals calling for local demonstrations to be held nationwide on Oct. 26 underscored the concern by participants that the anti-intervention movement not dissipate the mass antiwar sentiment tapped by the April 20 mobilizations.

Another major theme of the conference was the need to unify the anti-intervention movement.

Conference participants overwhelmingly approved a statement recognizing the "pressing need... to strengthen ties and working relations within the movement so that trade unionists, solidarity activists, religious groups, racially and culturally oppressed communities, and all other movement constituencies can move as one to counter the U.S. government's war moves."

Conference participants endorsed a proposal that the call for fall protests should include demands to end U.S. intervention in Central America/the

Caribbean" and to end U.S. support for the racist apartheid government in South Africa.

Cause of the oppressed

The 2nd ENC kicked off with a rally Friday night. One of the two keynote speakers, Roberto Vargas, minister-councilor, labor and cultural affairs of the Nicaraguan Embassy, was forced to cancel his appearance due to an arson attack on the Nicaraguan Embassy.

On Saturday morning, keynote speakers addressed four major themes: U.S. military intervention in Central America/the Caribbean; the anti-apartheid fight in South Africa and the United States; winning the labor movement to the anti-intervention struggle; and the challenges for solidarity work.

Emphasizing the importance of solidarity and the need to draw trade unionists into the anti-intervention movement, Ignacio de la Fuente, business manager of International Molders and Allied Workers Local 164, explained that the labor movement must "understand that our biggest responsibility is to allow workers in other countries to organize and to demand just wages. We are not in confrontation with workers around the world."

In its closing session, the conference adopted an organizational program forming the "Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/the Caribbean."

A coordinating committee of 45 members was elected to ensure that the council's decisions and policies would

be implemented. Participants also voted to create a steering committee to include any organization that expresses agreement with the council's program.

Carol Simpson

PUTS ART TO WORK

Political cartoons and graphics for your publication
For a free sample contact—

Estelle Carol and
Bob Simpson
2501 N. St. Louis St.
Chicago, IL 60647
(312) 227-5826



In defense of a strategy for mass action

By CARL FINAMORE

In June, Congress approved nearly twice the amount of funding it had earlier rejected to the Nicaraguan *contras*. This vote, together with news leaks about plans to invade Nicaragua, has given an urgency to plans for fall anti-intervention protests.

In this light, local antiwar activists and coalitions are continuing to evaluate the experience of the April 20 demonstrations held in seven major cities, which included turnouts of 65,000 in Washington, D.C., and 50,000 in San Francisco.

One question has become hotly debated—how to involve the Black, Latino, and other oppressed nationalities in the fight against U.S. intervention?

This discussion was sharply posed at a June 6 meeting of the San Francisco Spring Mobilization. Berkeley Mayor Eugene "Gus" Newport openly accused the coalition of being racist.

Newport pointed to the lack of participation by oppressed nationalities in the coalition steering committee as his evidence. The Communist Party and the U.S. Peace Council have also echoed Mayor Newport's charge of racism.

What's behind this charge? Is the San Francisco Spring Mobilization racist? The answer is a blunt no. This accusation is actually nothing more than an attempt to introduce a different political orientation into the coalition.

Racist April 20 coalition?

The San Francisco Spring Mobilization, which organized the successful April 20 demonstration, held a founding meeting of 350 people in late January. This meeting unanimously elected a steering committee with over 30 percent Black, Latino, Asian, and Native American representation. Mayor Newport, as one of co-chairs of the coalition, recommended the steering committee for approval.

While the coalition succeeded in attracting important sections of the Latino and Asian community, it

"Jackson tapped the hopes of many—but urged votes for Walter Mondale."

is true that it was never able to reach out significantly to the Black and Native American community organizations. But, this weakness was not because the coalition was racist. The Spring Mobilization worked strenuously to broaden its appeal among the oppressed communities.

First, the coalition started with four powerful demands: U.S. Out of Central America and the Caribbean; End U.S. Support to South African Apartheid; Freeze and Reverse the Arms Race; and Jobs and Justice.

These demands are especially in the interest of the oppressed nationalities, who are the first to be used as cannon fodder in military adventures. The bloated military budget has contributed to the cuts in social spending for schools, medical care, and job training. These cuts have hit the oppressed nationalities the hardest.

In addition, special leaflets were addressed to the Black, Asian, and Latino population, including a pamphlet on South Africa and a Latino community speak-out. Literature was mailed to hundreds of Black, Latino, and Asian organizations and activists.

Translations into Spanish and Chinese were made of the major April 20 leaflet and the coalition purchased radio ads on Spanish stations. Full-page ads were also run in Chinese, Latino, and Black papers. And finally, Latino, Asian, and Black coalition outreach committees regularly met to further work in these communities.

These examples are cited in order to dispense with the false and divisive charge that the San Francisco coalition is racist.

Undeniably, we are still left with the very real and lingering problem of minimal participation by the oppressed nationalities in most of the local anti-intervention coalitions. But addressing this problem is far more productive if we refrain from hurling false accusations and charges of racism against sections of the movement.

The racism charge reflects deep political differences inside the San Francisco coalition, where sharp debates often occurred. For example, the Communist Party and the U.S. Peace Council, along with Mayor Newport, unsuccessfully urged the coalition to adopt the demand of "U.S. Out of Asia, Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East."



Anti-apartheid contingent on April 20 in San Francisco

The June 6 steering committee meeting voted 26-6 to reaffirm the four demands because it understood that adoption of the Middle East demand would split the coalition.

The organizations that endorsed April 20 simply did not agree on a common approach toward Middle East policy, whereas they were united in support of a demonstration demanding "U.S. Out of Central America and the Caribbean. (Similar considerations also led the Bay Area Free South Africa Movement to reject adding the Middle East demand to its anti-apartheid program.)

Two different approaches

On many occasions the Communist Party and other groups who today are charging the coalition with racism pressed to remove the action focus of the San Francisco coalition by attempting to impose a more "radical" program. This approach is most directly expressed in the pages of *Frontline*, the newspaper of Line of March.

"In our opinion," a May 27 major editorial-type article states, "the fate of the left wing of the peace movement rests with the... ability to consolidate ties with the forces of the Rainbow Coalition."

The article observes that "greater unity is already being developed among the forces within the left wing of the peace movement that substantially overlaps with many of the perspectives of the Rainbow Coalition."

The endorsement of the "left perspectives" of the Rainbow Coalition and the insistence that these perspectives provide the basis for the antiwar movement explains the attempts by a series of political forces to change the character of the current action-oriented program of the San Francisco coalition.

Thus, efforts to reform the capitalist and racist Democratic party—via the Rainbow Coalition—is offered as the "left-wing" alternative to the broad unity-in-action approach of the Spring Mobilization. And the totally unfounded charge of racism is being used to discredit the very same policies that made April 20 a success.

Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition tapped the hopes and frustrations of millions of Black, Latino, and other oppressed nationalities. But, they



Civil rights movement of the 1960s developed independently of the Democratic Party.

delivered this powerful force back into the Democratic Party by campaigning for Walter Mondale, who, among other things, was the first candidate to suggest an economic quarantine of Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, many antiwar activists today are spending their time rationalizing participation inside the Democratic Party—and finding ways to "revive the Rainbow"—instead of fighting to deepen the tremendous gains of the April 20 antiwar demonstrations by preparing for nationally coordinated fall actions.

The San Francisco Spring Mobilization limited itself to agreement on four issues in order to preserve its action focus. And it maintained its non-partisan character by completely refraining from electoral activity or the adoption of a party program.

Fortunately, most supporters of the Rainbow Coalition and Democratic Party in the San Francisco coalition do not insist that the Spring Mobilization adopt the program of the Rainbow Coalition. Recognizing this simple fact is what allows the unity in action against U.S. intervention to grow beyond those who share similar electoral perspectives.

Reaching the oppressed communities

The situation today is quite different from the 1960s, when Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and student Black nationalist organizations like the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were organizing mass protest actions in defense of the Black community.

Today, no organization exists in the Black or Latino communities which consistently mobilizes those communities in defense of their rights. Most organizations look to the Democratic Party for leadership. But demonstrations, marches, rallies, and picket lines in the Black and Latino communities are never organized by the Democratic Party machine.

However, the Black, Latino and oppressed nationalities have massively responded whenever community leaders have shown the will to protest. Militant Black community actions for desegregation in the 1970s and the 250,000-strong national march on August 27, 1983, were powerful examples of the mobilization of the oppressed nationalities.

The organizing efforts of the peace and justice coalitions alone cannot fundamentally overcome the lack of leadership among the organizations of the oppressed nationalities.

But independent anti-intervention coalitions can help reach out to militant Black and Latino activists who can begin to organize in their communities and unions. Work in the unions is a major part of this process, considering that millions of union members are from oppressed nationalities.

Literature explaining the relationship between the war drive and the conditions in the Black and Latino communities has been distributed, not by the Democratic Party, but by the local April 20 coalitions. This is true as well of the numerous teach-ins, speak-outs, and rallies aimed at the Black and Latino population.

And, most importantly, the local coalitions, working with the unions and other organizations, have called demonstrations which attempt to mobilize the Black and Latino people in actions defending their interests. This has never been done by the Democratic Party.

These measures are insufficient but they point in the right direction. Ultimately, a new leadership must be forged among the oppressed nationalities—just as a new leadership must be formed in the unions.

The independent struggles of the oppressed will themselves develop a new leadership that places the interests of working people, and particularly its most oppressed sections, above the interests of preserving an orientation to the capitalist and racist Democratic Party.

Hormel workers fight drastic takebacks

By LYNN HENDERSON

AUSTIN, Minn.—On June 3 packinghouse workers here at the George A. Hormel Co. voted down a proposal to cut back their union's campaign against the company's take-away demands. The proposal, which was introduced by dissident union members, was defeated by a 4-1 majority.

Jim Guyette, president of Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers, said that the vote showed that the union membership is even more determined and that they refuse to be intimidated by the company's threats.

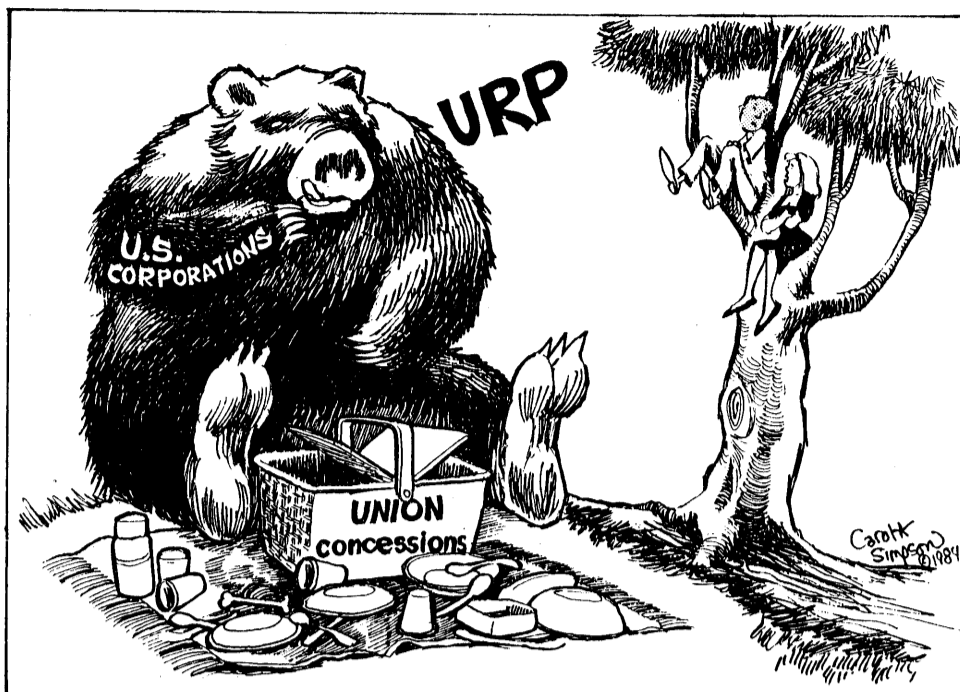
Hormel had attempted to influence the vote by announcing the day before the meeting that it would terminate its contract with the local union in August and that it might consider closing the plant.

Local P-9, which represents 1500 workers at Hormel's Austin plant, has launched a militant "corporate campaign" to force the company to rescind a staggering 23-percent wage cut. Last October the country's ninth largest meatpacker slashed wages from \$10.69 to \$8.25 an hour.

The union picketed the annual meetings of both Hormel and First Bank Systems, which owns 16.4 percent of Hormel stock and shares board members with the meatpacker. The union has begun to distribute leaflets criticizing the two corporate "partners in plunder" to baseball fans at the Minneapolis Metrodome.

Workers pay the price

Hormel workers find themselves in a situation that has become a pattern for many union members throughout the country. A few years ago a number of major meatpacking companies claimed they were on the verge of bankruptcy and demanded large wage and benefit concessions from their unions as the



"Who said feed 'em a few scraps and they'll leave you alone?"

price for "remaining competitive" and "saving jobs."

But once concessions were forced from the employees of one company they quickly became generalized throughout the industry. The result did not save any jobs but lowered the standard of living of thousands of workers.

Local P-9's current contract, negotiated in 1977-78, granted many concessions—including a wage freeze. After six years of the freeze, Hormel used a "me too" clause in the contract that allowed it to reduce wages in order to keep labor costs at its Austin plant "competitive" with other packers. Hormel used the ruling of a "neutral" arbitrator to back the company up in this action.

Hormel is hardly a company in financial distress. In 1984 Hormel reported the second highest earnings in its 93-year history. *Business Week* recently

called the company "the envy of the industry because of its consistent profitability."

Hormel's profits were six times higher than five packers among its main competitors: Swift, Wilson, Frederick J. Hurrud, Farmland, and Smithfield.

In truth, company profitability is not a major factor in determining the wage and benefit levels of its employees. Wages and benefits are primarily determined by the relationship of forces between the employees and their unions, on one side, and the company and its allies, on the other.

Realistically and historically the company's allies include the courts, police, and government, and most of the news media.

Hormel—like other major corporations today—is convinced that the unions and their leaderships are weak, confused, and in disarray. They believe

that unions are incapable of organizing effective strike action to defend themselves. These corporations intend to impose larger and larger concessions with the eventual goal of eliminating the unions altogether.

Organizing to fight

The membership of Local P-9, like many other workers, has begun to understand that the company game of "remaining competitive" and "saving jobs" can only lead in one direction—working for *minimum* wages with *no* benefits.

The local has taken some good first steps in changing its relationship of forces with the company. It has begun the process of organizing its own membership to fight. It has also begun to mobilize its allies, including farmers and other unionists inside and outside the industry.

So far the international union has not played a good role in backing P-9 in its fight. The vote on June 3 was particularly significant because it contradicted the claims of the international leadership, as well as the news media and the company, that Local P-9's resistance campaign does not have the backing of the union membership.

The international has even gone so far as to discourage other unions and unionists from coming to the aid of the Austin workers. Hormel and the news media constantly use this open split between the international officers and the local to undermine the fight.

It is essential that the trade union movement as a whole respond to Local P-9's call for solidarity. It is not just a matter of extending a hand to a sister organization under attack. Allowing locals like P-9 to fight alone, with at most only token support from the broader trade union movement, has a disastrous effect. It is sapping the strength of the entire trade union movement.

The fight will not be an easy one. Hormel's response to the P-9 vote was to purchase \$80,000 worth of barbed wire. Company spokesman Alan Krejci explained, "There are preparations you make for any eventuality... But in the event of a strike, this might be needed."

If you want to help P-9 in their fight, write to: Corporate Campaign, 316 N.E. 4th Avenue, Austin, MN 55912. ■

Teamster ranks in N.Y. slam bosses and bureaucrats

By AL LUNFORD

NEW YORK—A growing layer of rank-and-file activists is emerging in Teamsters Local 138, which covers some of the biggest grocery wholesalers in the area. Workers have begun to fight company assaults against working conditions and contractual rights despite the absence of union democracy and a chilling reputation for corruption among the union leadership.

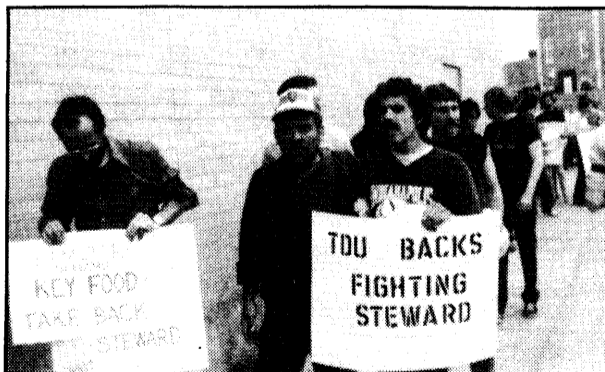
The statements of Local 138 President Frank Ribustello—who likes to brag about breaking members' legs—might make some people think that it would be hard for union members to second the saying, "Be proud to be a Teamster."

Their fightback has been hampered by the union officials' practice of refusing members the right to see their contract, appointing rather than electing most shop stewards, and failing to post notices of union meetings.

Sometimes, as at Krasdale Foods, members have not been allowed to vote on their contract. At shops in the Bronx Terminal Market composed primarily of Hispanic and Black workers, many do not even know what union, if any, "represents" them.

The Local 138 bylaws are violated by the practice of giving supervisors a union book. In some instances only supervisors and "elite" employees are allowed union books, while other workers are paid far below contractual scale with no benefits.

At Key Food and at White Rose Foods the con-



Teamsters picket Key Food on June 9.

tracts were modified in mid-life without a vote. A two-tier scale, lie detector tests, and altered shift hours were introduced at Key Food, for example.

Rank-and-file campaign at Key Food

This blatant union-company collaboration was the straw that broke the camel's back. Local 138 members at Key Food moved into action, initiating a petition campaign to get a vote on the mid-contract changes and to force the business agent to do his job. They won a partial victory but did not stop there.

They initiated a shop paper called the *Free Key Press*, which had wide support. Some of them also came to an educational meeting on members' legal rights sponsored by Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), the national rank-and-file organization working to make the Teamsters stronger and more democratic.

As a result, some workers joined TDU and through TDU organized a meeting of Local 138

members from Krasdale, White Rose, and Key. An ongoing committee was established to coordinate the activity of rank-and-file Local 138 members who are working to reform the union into a fitting instrument to take on the employers.

The union activists knew that, since the company and the union leadership both wanted to keep them atomized, they could expect casualties from their action. One TDU'er, Roberto Soares, was already set up and fired from his job at Krasdale for demanding his rights.

Another, Dave Reardon, was physically attacked by his boss. After going through union channels without success, both were forced to seek redress by taking legal action through the National Labor Relations Board.

Company fires shop steward

Key Food tried to break the back of the union activity by firing John Smallman, the second shift warehouse shop steward. Both the company and union officials charged that Smallman had filed an "unauthorized" grievance fact sheet on company time. In addition, a letter of protest that objected to supervisors carrying union books was stolen from the work locker of one activist.

But these chilling actions did not have the desired effect. Local 138 members responded with an informational picket line protesting Key Food's unfair labor practices. The protest culminated in a picket line of some 200 people on June 9, which included the entire second shift. Family members and TDU activists from the Long Island and New York Metro chapters joined in.

Despite further attempts at intimidation—threatening phone calls and the smashing up of an activist's car—the ranks continued to mobilize to demand that John Smallman get his job back. Arbitration was scheduled for June 20.

One protest leaflet stated, "John lost his job for doing his job... Rebuild labor's strength from the bottom to the top. It's the hard way, and unfortunately, the only way." ■

Al Lundford is a member of I.B.T. Local 707.

SAN FRANCISCO—On June 5, 1985, the 5000 janitors of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 87 overwhelmingly approved a new three-year contract with the Building Owners and Maintenance Association (BOMA).

The agreement was hailed by local labor leaders as a victory because it didn't contain any of the odious takebacks originally demanded by BOMA. These takebacks included a permanent two-tier pay scale for new hires, speed-up and new work rules, layoff of 1200 workers, and a 30-percent cut in pay.

However, the new agreement does contain a two-tier formula—though not permanent—for new hires and part-time workers. This isn't quite the "victory" that has been claimed—especially in light of the fact that the Local 87 membership had prepared well for a fight.

Working people in this city have witnessed one defeat after another. In view of this, the preparations Local 87 made to fight against the employers are instructive because they reflect a contradictory situation: the combativity of the ranks, on the one hand, and their political weakness due to their reliance on the Democratic Party, on the other.

"We must stick together"

Three months ago, the Building Owners indicated that they were out to break the union. They refused to negotiate and publicly threatened to hire 2000 scabs to break any possible strike.

The membership of Local 87, however, had other ideas. Correctly assessing that the survival of the union was at stake, Local 87 prepared for the contract deadline over six months in advance.

Local 87 is unique in that it is truly a multinational union. The majority of its members are either Latino, Asian, or Arab.

On a weekly basis the membership conducted meetings and issued leaflets



Mixed results for S.F. janitors

in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic. The message was loud and clear: "Either we stick together and fight for our jobs, or we accept their proposals and lose our jobs or take big pay cuts."

Preparations included organizing an "action committee" to enforce the contract, a food committee, a media training committee and, most importantly, a picket captain training committee. The need for well-organized, massive, and militant picketlines was stressed. Attendance at planning meetings was deemed mandatory.

On May 30, over 2000 Local 87 mem-

bers held a rally, at which striking United Airline pilots spoke. They then marched through downtown San Francisco to the BOMA offices. The week before, over 3000 members voted unanimously to prevent scabs from crossing the picketlines "by any means necessary."

The most important ingredient to winning this struggle—solidarity—was solicited and received by Local 87 from other unions. The Teamsters and Building Trades unions promised not to cross the janitors' picketlines, which would

have effectively shut down construction and deliveries at BOMA projects.

Potential is sidetracked

So although the janitors did not want to be forced to strike, the preparations they made set the scene for what might have been a big battle. But the defeats of other unions—symbolized by acceptance of the two-tier in virtually every past strike—and the pressure brought to bear by the Democratic Party city administration in collusion with the city's labor bureaucracy, forced Local 87 to accept an agreement they had to rationalize as "being able to live with."

The specter of a united labor movement, mobilized to draw the line on union-busting was the biggest factor that forced Mayor Feinstein to intervene to keep this strike from happening. In fact this "victory" was negotiated in the gilded office of San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein, one of those Democratic Party "friends of labor."

But despite all this preparation, the employers were still able to get a two-tier agreement that will last throughout most of the three-year contract. Sadly, what the members were prepared to fight against in the streets, they were forced to concede in the political corridors of city hall without "firing a shot."

The lesson to be learned is twofold: Local 87, through its preparation, mobilization, and solidarity, sent a message to BOMA and the city administration that the employers would pay a heavy price if they attempted to break the union. This local demonstrated the potential power of working people to defend their interests. By preparing for a fight, it prevented the worst.

Because the political flank of the working class is exposed by its reliance on "friends of labor," its efforts at preparing defenses against the onslaught of the employers are outflanked.

Surely, these lessons will make a deep impression on working people. ■

Kirkland tour highlights tensions with Democrats

By NAT WEINSTEIN

Lane Kirkland, who heads the AFL-CIO, toured union halls in New England at the end of April. Speaking mostly to audiences of local and area union officials, he lashed out at both the Reagan administration and the Democratic Party.

Still smarting from the "defeat" dealt the labor bureaucracy in the 1984 elections, Kirkland focused on an attack on the labor movement made in March by the new national Democratic Party chairman, Paul G. Kirk Jr.

Kirk, urging the AFL-CIO to refrain from endorsing a presidential candidate in the 1988 primaries, had slyly blamed the labor movement for the defeat of Walter Mondale, who had been endorsed by the AFL-CIO before the presidential primaries in the last election. Kirk had characterized the labor movement as a group with "special

interests" at odds with the needs of "the people."

The AFL-CIO's Kirkland, in response, noted that "labor is the chief representative force that keeps the real special interests from dominating American political life."

This statement is, of course, only half right.

The real special interests are the tiny minority of industrialists, bankers, landlords, and other profiteers who do dominate American political life. Both parties—and the government and state apparatus over which they have exclusive control—are owned lock, stock, and barrel by these special interests.

But to "keep the real special interests from dominating" requires independent action.

A dangerous game

The purpose of Kirkland's tour appears to be to generate pressure on the Democratic Party, which is using the election results as an excuse for discarding more of its "pro-labor" window-dressing.

The New York Times (May 5, 1985) reports that labor officials reacting to Kirkland's speech noted that "it was the first time in their memory that disagreements with the party were voiced with such a sharp edge."

Kirkland is reported to have said that the labor movement should ignore those in the Democratic Party who say that it should "further distance itself from its natural constituency—that it turn a cold shoulder on labor, on the minorities, and on women's issues."

This belated concern for minorities and women points to how Kirkland hopes to pressure the Democratic Party. There is a growing awareness expressed

within the ranks of the labor officialdom that labor's declining influence is the result of their having turned their backs on their natural allies in the period after the end of World War II.

Kirkland's tour is an indication of an increased determination to reestablish the labor bureaucracy as a broker for all the victims of capitalism. In this way he

hopes to cut a new deal with the Democratic Party.

But it is a dangerous game for the labor bureaucracy to play. Building a bloc of all victims of capitalism to wheedle concessions from the Democrats could set in motion forces that cannot be contained within the Democratic Party framework. ■

Anti-gay bigotry spreads its poison far and wide

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

On every job I've had I've witnessed bigoted and thoughtless acts by many of my coworkers against gay people and lesbians. It's no secret that in the schools anti-homosexual prejudice is widespread among school children.

But working people have a lot to lose and nothing to gain from this prejudice.

First, prejudice and bigotry are never used against one group alone. Historically, prejudice against even small and isolated groups—if allowed to go unchecked—led to the persecution of many.

In Nazi Germany, the fascists persecuted and murdered Gypsies, gay people, Jews, and communists. Their fundamental target was the German working class and its organizations, whose trade unions and political parties were smashed. This majority could have stopped the Nazis if they had united to do so.

Working people today need to wake up to the fact that the same people who fight legislation proscribing discrimination against gays or who argue for the quarantine of AIDS victims or all gays are also against civil rights and unions.

Workers in the United States are under attack. Their living standards and their basic union rights (such as equal

pay for equal work) are being eroded by the employers and the government of the employers.

In order to fight off these attacks workers need to win allies among minorities, women, gays, farmers, and small business people—in short, all who suffer from the government's policies. In order to win this support, workers' organizations, particularly unions, need to champion all the oppressed and exploited.

Anti-gay prejudice is used consciously by the boss and the government to divide working people from one another in order to weaken their common struggles. Just like racial bigotry and male chauvinism, anti-gay prejudice only helps those in power and hurts everyone else by keeping them divided.

"An injury to one is an injury to all!" This rallying cry of the early American labor movement is even more urgent today. All the rights that workers have won in the past are needed to defend and advance the lives of workers today.

If the rights of gays are allowed to be denied or revoked, it won't end there. Working people have a direct and personal interest in defending the rights of gays and opposing bigotry against them in all its forms. ■



AFL-CIO's Lane Kirkland

... United strike ends

(continued from page 1)

pilots, and the support of the flight attendants, surprised the company. Richard J. Ferris, United's chief executive officer, was quoted at the strike's outset as saying that all he had to do was put a cheese sandwich at the end of the runway and the pilots would come running. Ferris predicted that 1000 pilots would cross the picket line when the strike began and 50 percent would return to work by mid-June.

But that was not the case. In fact, less than 500 pilots ever crossed the picket lines.

Still, the strike was lost before it began. ALPA's leadership never questioned the premise of the two-tier. They agreed without question to virtually all of the company's demands for concessions. What ALPA underestimated was the company's determination to break the union.

United knew that a 20-year two-tier would be unacceptable and sought to force ALPA out on strike. United was also clever enough to wait until all the other airlines had slashed wages and benefits before they made their move. They then argued: How can we compete against all these low-cost carriers?

Another serious weakness in this strike, as well as at other airlines, is that three different unions negotiate three different contracts at three different times. While ALPA and the AFA were on strike, the International Association of Machinists (IAM) kept working—and kept the company running.

The IAM, which represents 15,000 workers systemwide, was bound by a no-strike clause in their contract. This clause, which the majority of the membership never even knew existed, has stood in the contract under "miscellaneous" since 1947. [See article dealing with the no-strike clause on pp. 16-17.]

A changing mood

What was different in this strike? Even though the union leadership betrayed the membership with this agreement, the employees are going back to work as a union.

They walked off the job and stayed off. They did not scab on each other as everyone believed they would, and as management had counted on. Only four of the 570 "pre-hires," who were key to management's strike-busting plans, chose to scab.

Other airline pilots also supported ALPA. There was no flood of applicants from other airlines. Other airline unions have accepted, without a strike, contracts as bad, if not worse, than the United agreement.

United's strikebreaking was seen by many for what it was. This strike reflects a changing mood, toward increased militancy and a desire to begin to fight back against these attacks.

While support for ALPA among IAM members was low at the beginning of the strike, as the union-busting character of United's position became clearer support grew rapidly. Everyone knew that their future was at stake.

The IAM rank-and-file became acutely aware of the meaning of the no-strike clause. Everyone felt powerless, especially as the desire to support the pilot's picket line grew.

All the sympathy in the world couldn't change the fact that the IAM kept the company running. The IAM International did make a cryptic threat of "not standing idly by" while management engaged in strikebreaking.

But at no time did the IAM threaten to strike. Rather, the IAM engaged in some tomfoolery by going to court to see if they could get out of this clause in their contract in order to give the impression of doing something.

"We're next"

But not everyone was happy with this situation. IAM Local 1781 in San Francisco, which represents 6000 members, put out buttons saying "I.A.M. scab

working under protest" and "We're next."

That certainly expressed the mood of many members.

The pilots admit, not without some chagrin, that they never thought of themselves as unionists. They were shocked and pleasantly surprised when unions, some of which they admitted they never knew existed, sent them messages of support and financial contributions. During the strike janitors in San Francisco came close to going on strike and ALPA joined them in a demonstration of support.

It has taken this vicious company assault for many in ALPA to realize that they have a common interest with other unionists. They realize that pilots can no longer consider themselves part of an untouchable elite.

Many rank-and-file members of the IAM, ALPA, and AFA have learned from this strike that organization, solidarity, and militant action are crucial in the fight against concessions. ■



Cleveland labor support for pilots is strong

By MARIE WEIGAND

CLEVELAND—Labor solidarity was the big theme of the 19th Biennial District Conference of the United Steel Workers of America District 28 held on June 13-15. District Director Frank Valenta ended his opening remarks by asking delegates to remember, "United we stand; divided we fall—an injury to one is an injury to all."

At the Cleveland Federation of Labor meeting held before the conference, the Steelworkers announced plans to hold a rally and march in solidarity with the striking United Airlines pilots on June 13. Steelworker delegates urged other unions to support the pilots.

When the conference adjourned its first-day session, the 234 delegates were joined at a rally by members of the Air

Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) and their families. Auto Workers, Food and Commercial Workers, Communications Workers, Newspaper Pressmen, and building trades unions also attended.

ALPA spokesperson, Dwayne Harrison, addressed the rally, explaining how, although a member of ALPA for 31 years, he'd never thought of himself as a unionist. He said most pilots viewed themselves as professionals, considering ALPA similar to the American Medical Association. He said the nature of their job makes them seem quite removed from the type of day-to-day conflict with the boss experienced by factory workers.

He added that the uniform, title, and "prestige" of the job also help convince

pilots they're different than other workers. This strike changed these beliefs, he said, as pilots saw the total disregard United showed for all its employees—whether pilots or baggage handlers.

Harrison said 95 percent of ALPA's members honored the picket lines. He promised, that in the future, pilots would actively support other unionists on strike.

Others addressing the rally included Sebastian Lupica, executive secretary of the Cleveland AFL-CIO; USWA District Director Valenta; a flight attendant; a representative of the UAW; and City Councilman Jay Westbrook. Musicians Union members led the singing of "Solidarity Forever".

Large labor solidarity

In the largest labor solidarity rally in Cleveland in recent years, over 500 demonstrators marched from the Steelworkers conference to Hopkins Airport. A uniformed pilot and a flight attendant led the march with a banner stating "Don't Tread on Me."

Marchers held signs saying, "Steelworkers Support United Strike," "Equal Pay for Equal Work," "Stop Union Busting," and others.

Protesters marched into the airport, stopping to chant in front of the United and Continental ticket counters. As they marched by, workers from other unionized airlines voiced their support.

The next day, approximately 25 members of ALPA and AFA joined 100 conference delegates in a spirited picket line outside Tube Craft where USWA office workers have been on strike over six months.

When production workers, whose contract expires at a different date, left work, District Director Valenta led the marchers in appealing to these steelworkers to offer the support needed to force the company back to the bargaining table.

Pilots explained the importance of the support they'd received from the flight attendants, saying that without it they couldn't win their strike. A number of the production workers stopped to listen and a few joined the picket line. ■



Broad L.A. support for pilots shows changing mood of workers

By DAVE ROBERTSON

LOS ANGELES—United Airlines miscalculated the determination of the 5300 striking pilots and the extent of the support they would receive from other sectors of the labor movement.

In Los Angeles, the Labor Alliance Against Concessions supported the striking pilots and participated in the United Pilots Strike Support Committee. Over 1500 pilots and flight attendants attended a march and rally at the

airport on June 15. They were joined by many members of other unions, who pledged solidarity in coming union battles.

A speaker from the IAM told the rally, "We should never cross the picket line."

He indicated the IAM needed new leaders.

While many pilots and flight attendants were discontented at the concessions in the strike settlement, spirits

remained high among them. Many pilots stated that they never understood the value of a union before.

As one pilot said: "United Airlines changed me from a management orientation to a strong supporter of the union. I went through picket lines. I drank Coors beer. Boy, have I changed. No Coors beer in my house, and I'll never go through another picket line."

This sentiment was echoed many times by other pilots and flight attendants. There is a definite turn in the union movement. Members are waiting for their leaders to call them to action. Only labor solidarity can stop the employers' attack against the unions. ■

IMF austerity policies spark Latin American powder keg

By ALAN BENJAMIN

A series of explosive factors are coming together in Latin America that are rapidly leading to the development of a revolutionary situation. In a recent interview, Fidel Castro referred to this region as a "powder keg" about to explode.

The backdrop to the current situation is the gigantic debt owed by these nations to the imperialist banks. The total Latin American debt is currently \$400 billion. One tenth this amount—or \$40 billion—must be paid yearly to the banks in the form of interest. Some countries are forced to use as much as 50 percent to 60 percent of their export earnings to pay the interest on the debt every year.

Most of this debt was accumulated during the past two decades by the various U.S.-backed dictatorships, who opened their doors wide to the imperialist banks and multinational corporations. Banks were running after debtors, offering them loans at low interest rates.

The economic policies of the Argentine, Brazilian, Bolivian, Uruguayan, and Chilean dictatorships led to the near destruction of the national industries, as the native corporations were unable to compete with the foreign competition. Their ability to export was thus sharply curtailed.

Consequently it became necessary for these countries to increase their imports from the industrialized nations at prices that were constantly rising. This only deepened the entire debt spiral. In order to maintain their level of imports, it became necessary to borrow more money—but this time at the higher interest rates charged by the banks.

Attacks on working people

Tied in with the mounting debt was the sharp increase in the level of inflation in most of the Latin American continent. In 1984 the inflation rates were astounding: 2300 percent in Bolivia, 675 percent in Argentina, 200 percent in Peru, and 195 percent in Brazil.

Due to the multiple devaluations of their currencies, Argentina and Bolivia had to issue 1-million peso notes. One



Bolivian mine workers descend into La Paz during March 1985 general strike.

U.S. dollar today is worth 75,000 Bolivian pesos. Fidel Castro pointed out with great irony that the "great success of these military governments is that they turned all the citizens into millionaires."

But while the cost of living skyrocketed, wage levels were kept constant. Living standards declined throughout the continent on an average of 50 percent to 60 percent of what they were two decades ago. Unemployment levels also soared. It is estimated that 45 percent of the working-age population in Latin America is either unemployed or underemployed (occasional odd-jobs at less-than-minimum wages).

"Democratic openings" and the IMF

Over the past few years the resistance of the workers, peasants, and impoverished masses to the austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund has increased dramatically. The IMF, it should be noted, demands that the debtor countries maintain low wages, open the doors to foreign investment, cut back on social spending, and devalue their currencies in exchange for further credits from the imperialist banks.

It was the mobilization of

millions of people in the streets against the austerity policies of these regimes that forced the military to withdraw to the barracks and to allow presidential elections to be held in Peru, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Bolivia. The dictatorships had become so despised and discredited—and so unable to contain the mass upsurge—that they organized a careful transition to civilian rule.

The end of military rule was hailed with great enthusiasm by the masses, who expected that the new civilian governments would make good on their promise to not implement the IMF austerity measures. After decades of repression and utter poverty and humiliation, a new mood of heightened expectations and combativity had developed. Latin American workers and peasants were not about to accept the same treatment from the civilian governments.

In Argentina, for example, the newly elected president, Raul Alfonsin, resisted applying the IMF measures for 17 months out of fear of sparking an open rebellion such as occurred in the Dominican Republic last year.

In early June, however, Alfonsin totally gave in to the pressure of the imperialist banks and announced his "economy of war," which includes wage and price controls and the reduction of government spending.

The private banks applauded the accord reached by Alfonsin with the IMF and announced that new credits were on their way to help Argentina pay back the \$1.2 billion in arrears on interest payments.

But the financial circles were also worried. "The sharp drop in living standards that is implicit in the IMF pact could find Mr. Alfonsin in significant political danger," notes the June

10 *Wall Street Journal*.

Indeed, when Alfonsin first announced that Argentina would have to accept an IMF plan to a rally of 200,000 on April 26, over half the crowd—including leaders of his own party—walked away in protest.

The case of Bolivia

The transition to civilian rule occurred in different countries at different times. In Bolivia, massive general strikes brought down the Banzer and

multinational corporations, the new government agreed to carry out the dictates of the IMF.

For nearly three years, the situation continued to deteriorate for the Bolivian masses. This in turn led to over 500 strikes and three general strikes. The Bolivian Labor Confederation (COB), which had initially given critical support to the UDP government, began to directly oppose the policies of Siles Suazo. The MIR eventually withdrew its support to the government.

In March 1985 a near-insurrectional situation developed for 16 days as Bolivia was paralyzed by a nationwide general strike. The demands of the strike were a sliding scale of wages (to keep up with the extraordinary 2300-percent yearly inflation rate) and workers' control over the nationalized mining industry. The government response was only a 230-percent pay raise and an offer to bring the COB directly into the government—to link the COB to the austerity measures.

The tin workers descended onto the nation's capital and occupied the city until they were brutally dislodged by the army. Siles Suazo, who claimed to represent the Bolivian working class, was compelled to bring out the army to crush the strike.

Siles Suazo accused Juan Lechin, head of the COB and Suazo's close ally in 1952, of

"A series of factors are coming together that are leading to a revolutionary situation."

later the Garcia Meza dictatorships.

In 1982, a left-wing bourgeois candidate, Hernan Siles Suazo, was elected to office at the head of the Democratic Popular Unity (UDP) coalition. The UDP was a popular-front type formation, i.e. a coalition of the traditional workers' parties with a sector of the national bourgeoisie.

The UDP included the two major bourgeois-nationalist formations that had participated in the 1952 revolution, as well as the Communist Party and the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR). Two CP members actually participated in the government until last December—one as minister of labor and the other as the minister of mining.

Siles Suazo inherited a catastrophic situation. The national debt stood at \$3 billion, with nearly 70 percent of revenue from copper and tin going to pay the interest on the foreign debt. But instead of attacking the privileges of the landowners, the capitalists, and the

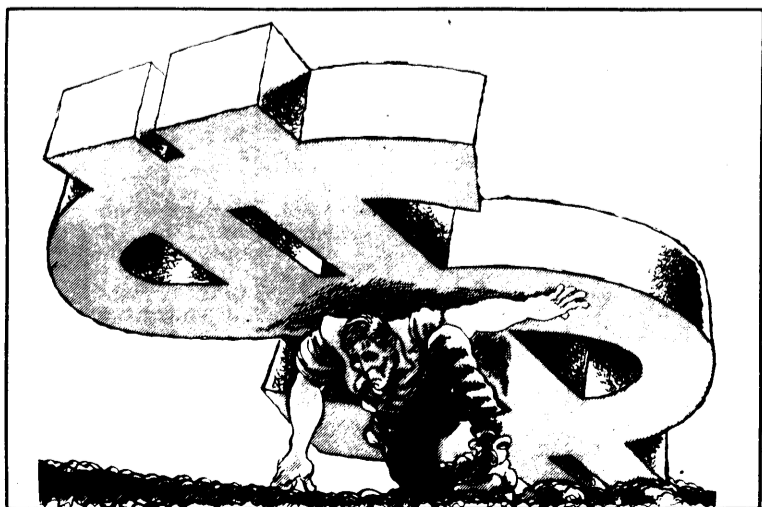
doing the "dirty work" for the right wing. Lechin, hardly a revolutionist, hit home with his response that it was the "IMF-dictated policies of the government that [were] paving the way for the return of Banzer."

On March 23, by a vote of 22-6, the COB ended the strike with only a few minor demands met. Although the workers had been forced to go back to work, it was clear this was not a defeat, but rather a temporary truce.

The case of Peru

Five years ago, the military stepped down in Peru and handed over a country in ruins to President Fernando Belaunde Terry. This past April 14 new presidential elections were held. The ruling party, Accion Popular, received a scant 5 percent of the vote—a clear rejection of the policies responsible for a \$13-billion debt, 16.5-percent unemployment, 58-percent underemployment, and 200-percent inflation.

(continued on page 10)



.. Powder keg

(continued from page 9)

The winner of the first round of the elections was Alan Garcia, candidate of the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA)—a longstanding bourgeois-populist party. Alfonso Barrantes Lingan, candidate of the left-wing, popular-front-type coalition Izquierda Unida (IU), received 23 percent of the vote and was scheduled to run in a second round against Garcia.

However, as a result of pressure from forces inside IU—notably the Communist Party (PCU) and the three small bourgeois parties led by ex-generals and businessmen—Barrantes withdrew from the second round. The reason he gave was “to calm tensions and stabilize the democratic institutions during Peru’s first transition from one elected president to another in 40 years.”

Garcia will therefore assume office on July 28.

Since the April elections, the major spokespeople of the IU—with the exception of Javier Diaz Canseco of the Partido de Unificacion Mariateguista—have spoken favorably of some form of governmental alliance between the APRA and IU.

In fact, on the central programmatic questions—particularly on the foreign debt—both APRA and IU have similar positions. Both are silent on cancelling the debt and severing ties with the IMF. Instead, they call for “renegotiating” the debt and not paying interest to the private banks for a few years. This, of course, is what Alfonsin told the Argentine people during his election campaign.

But the elections in Peru provide only a distorted reflec-



A street in Santiago, Chile, shortly after 1973 military coup.

miners in Guiruvilca went on strike for better working conditions. Soon after the electrical workers walked off the job nationally, followed by the national teachers union (SUTEP). Both these strikes, in turn, were supported by a one-day work stoppage called by the CITE.

The government that takes office on July 28 will face the worst economic and political crisis in the country’s history. And it will have to perform an impossible balancing act of having to carry out the orders of international finance capital without frontally taking on the workers’ movement. The victory of the APRA will only sharpen the mass struggles, leading to an open revolutionary situation in the coming period.

The case of Brazil

After 21 years of military rule, a civilian president was nominated by an electoral congress on Jan. 15, 1985. Despite the gigantic mobilizations for direct elections in the spring of 1984, the president was indirectly “selected.”

The winner, Tancredo Neves, was to have been sworn into office in April. (See March 1985 *Socialist Action*.)

But Neves’ sudden death on April 21 put the carefully planned transition to the “New Republic” into a tailspin. Jose Sarney, Neves’ running mate and now Brazil’s new president, had supported the dictators over the past two decades and had been a leader of the military’s Democratic Socialist Party (PDS). His open identification with the hated regimes of the past has become a liability for the Brazilian ruling class.

Even before Neves’ death, however, it was clear that the “New Republic” would not resolve the tremendous problems confronting Brazil’s working class. Neves had promised to promptly pay back the \$12-billion annual interest payments to the imperialist banks and to pursue the harsh austerity measures demanded by the IMF.

The Brazilian working class, in fact, did not give the new civilian government much of a “honeymoon” before massively engaging in struggle for higher wages and a shorter workweek with no cut in pay. Beginning on April 11, the largest strike

wave of the past 21 years swept Brazil, led by United Confederation of Workers (CUT) and the Workers Party (PT). The strikes, of course, were declared illegal by the Labor Court.

Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula), the Brazilian metalworkers’ leader and president of the PT, stated the tasks of the PT very clearly at a London rally in solidarity with the striking British miners last February. He said:

“Tancredo Neves has said publicly he won’t break with the IMF and that he won’t recognize the independent trade union confederation (CUT)....

“He has promised the businessmen to open up the economy and to privatize many state enterprises. He has promised incentives to the big agricultural producers....

And he has talked to the banks and promised them peace and calm....

“To the workers he has promised nothing. He has asked them for time. He’s asked for a 9-12 month truce in order to get the economy back on its feet. But, look, to whose benefit is this economic recovery going to be achieved? Is it going to be a recovery for the workers or for the employers, for the workers or for the bankers, for the workers or for the big landowners?...

“The role of the PT is to explain to the Brazilian people what Tancredo’s alliances and all these people represent, and to turn its energies into the social struggles which originally gave birth to the PT.”

The one-month strike wave, which the PT helped to launch, involved 43 national unions and approximately half-a-million workers—300,000 of whom were metalworkers affiliated to the CUT.

On May 9, approximately two-thirds of the metalworkers in the small and medium-sized companies went back to work after reaching agreement with their companies. Most of the agreements included a four-hour reduction of the workweek, a 100-percent inflation correction, a 5-6 percent wage increase, and a three-month

wage adjustment. Workers in other unions reached similar agreements.

The large multinational automobile manufacturers, however, were unwilling to negotiate with the strikers. In fact, 4419 striking workers were fired from their jobs at the General Motors, Ford, Volkswagen, and Mercedes factories.

In the GM plant in Sao Caetano, the 3000 workers occupied the plant for three weeks to demand the reinstatement

of 200 fired workers—a demand which was won. In the GM Sao Jose Dos Campos plant, 10,000 strikers occupied the plant to protest the sacking of 93 members of the union’s Work Council and Health Commission.

After GM called in the military police on April 25, the workers decided to leave the plant but to continue the strike. As of this writing, tens of thousands of metalworkers are still out on strike against the multinational corporations.

The case of Uruguay

Another case of a tightly controlled transition from a brutal dictatorship to civilian rule occurred last Nov. 25 in Uruguay. For the first time since the 1973 coup d’etat, general elections were held. Julio Sanguinetti, pro-U.S. head of the bourgeois Colorado Party, was elected president with 39 percent of the vote.

The left-wing Frente Amplio (FA), or Broad Front, received 20 percent of the vote. It failed to gain a majority in Montevideo, the nation’s capital, by less than 2 percent.

The FA, like the Izquierda Unida in Peru, is a popular-front type formation. It is a programmatic coalition that subordinates the working class to capitalist interests. It is an electoral alliance that includes the bourgeois Christian Democracy, a number of ex-generals, the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and a coal-

ition of far-left groups and independent trade unions organized in the Independent Democratic Left (IDI).

The FA’s program says nothing about rejecting the policies of the IMF or refusing to pay the foreign debt. It offers no program or demands on the central questions of jobs and wage levels. It is also silent about freeing all the political prisoners and punishing those responsible for the systematic tortures of the past 11 years—two politically explosive issues.

Prior to the elections, the FA signed the so-called Naval Club agreements with the Colorado Party and the military government. The purpose of this pact was twofold: (1) to block any mass mobilizations of the Uruguayan workers that could obstruct the transition to civilian rule, and (2) to curtail the democratic rights of the opposition before and after the elections.

Since the elections, the FA has become a “loyal opposition” party in the Senate by blocking with the Blanco Party, the second largest bourgeois party, on a series of important issues under debate. The FA’s line is that nothing should be done during this period to obstruct the “consolidation of the democratic process” in Uruguay.

The president of the FA, Liber Seregni, was reinstated into the army last March and given back his rank as a gen-

“Situation is ripe for building mass workers’ parties like the Workers Party in Brazil.”

eral. President Sanguinetti met with Seregni in early May and offered him a cabinet post in the government. Seregni said publicly that he would seriously consider the offer.

The Uruguayan working class, however, is not so ready to make compromises and concessions to the IMF and to the native ruling class. In January 1984, the Inter-union Workers Plenum (PIT) organized the first successful general strike since 1973.

The following May 1, over 350,000 workers demonstrated in support of the demand for amnesty for political prisoners and the return of those living in exile. On June 27, in response to a call from the PIT, a new “national people’s strike” received the support of the entire population.

And on May 1 of this year, an IMF delegation visiting Uruguay was greeted by a gigantic demonstration and rally organized by the PIT-CNT, the country’s umbrella labor federation. The hundreds of thousands of workers protested the first economic measures taken by Finance Minister Ricardo Zerbino and called for a moratorium of the debt.

Like in Peru and Bolivia, the aspirations of the working class are bound to come into conflict with the policies of the civilian governments and of their reformist misleaders—in this case those in the Frente Amplio.

(continued on page 11)



tion of the rising mood of the Peruvian masses. Over 400,000 public employees of the Confederacion Intersindical de Trabajadores Estatales (CITE) were on strike nationally during the election campaign itself. (Barrantes, the presidential candidate of IU, denounced the strikers for “endangering the elections.”)

An important wage increase was gained after a hard 20-day struggle.

In addition, on April 12, a 24-hour strike led by the fishmeal and metal workers paralyzed the coastal city of Chimbote. On April 19 the

(continued from page 10)

Any serious political current in the Latin American workers' movement that seeks to advance the struggles of the workers and peasants must fully come to grips with the pernicious counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism in the region.

The Stalinist Communist

"consolidation of the democratic processes."

This stage, they argue, requires a programmatic alliance of workers and peasants with the so-called progressive sectors of the bourgeoisie and army.

But popular-front coalitions and governments, as history has bitterly taught us, are not

the state, including nationalization of the meat-packing industry.

"But fitting its platform to the radical mood of the Uruguayan masses did not change the essence of the Broad Front. Like the popular front seen elsewhere in the world, it was designed to divert the masses from the road of revolutionary struggle."

It must be noted that the program of the FA was far more radical in 1971 than it is today and that the composition of the front has not changed since that time.

Fidel Castro and the debt

Fidel Castro has given dozens of speeches and interviews in recent months on the issue of the Latin American debt. The thrust of his position is that the debt owed by the Latin American governments is "unpayable" and "unjust" and should therefore be canceled.

In these interviews Fidel thoroughly exposes the way in which the imperialist banks and nations continue to plunder Latin America. [See the four-part series beginning on May 10

April, stated that Fidel's position would be "attractive to governments that don't have any possibility of paying their debt."

It appears that Cuba will now be invited to participate in the so-called Cartagena group of Latin American countries, which has met several times in the past year to consider a joint approach to the debt problem.

In a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, Roger Lowenstein refers to Fidel's debt campaign in the following manner:

"While the Cuban leader is urging his fellow Latin Americans to form a 'common front' for cancellation, he has shied away from radical proposals that might scare them off. He hasn't, for example, suggested that countries simply refuse to pay the debt... Mr. Castro has stated publicly that the [debt] problems must be solved by means of political dialogue and negotiations."

According to Lowenstein, Fidel "is using the debt issue to break out of his isolation and reestablish formal and informal

tions which can only misorient the oppressed and exploited of the hemisphere.

In an interview published in the Dec. 26, 1984, issue of *The Guardian*, Fidel asserts that the Cuban Revolution cannot be held up as a model for Latin America today. He also states:

"In Latin America socialism is not the question... Proposing socialism would not only clash with objective economic realities; it would also create obstacles to the revolutionary movement in the rest of Latin America... I do not believe that socialism is on the agenda in Latin America. What is on the agenda is national liberation."

Fidel stated similar views in his Feb. 13 interview, which is reprinted in the April 15 issue of *Intercontinental Press*. Referring to the "democratic processes" opened up recently in various Latin America countries, Fidel states:

"There are more important things than this [the reestablishment of relations between Cuba

"Distinction must not be blurred between anti-imperialist united front and popular front."

parties in Latin America are not mass parties as in Europe, but they benefit from the material aid of the Soviet bureaucracy and have longstanding roots in the workers' movement. Their influence—and thus their ability to betray—goes way beyond their numerical size.

In Brazil, the Stalinists of the Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCB) are the most hardened opponents of the Workers Party (PT) and of the newly formed United Confederation of Workers (CUT).

The PCB energetically fought at every step of the way to prevent the formation and development of the PT (see *Socialist Action*, July 1984). Together with the government-paid union bureaucrats (the "pelegos"), it organized a split in the trade union movement, forming a parallel labor confederation—the CONCLAT.

And the PCB joined the bourgeois opposition in opposing the direct elections and in calling for a "social pact" with the trade unions (an agreement to hold down union demands to "stabilize" the capitalist profit system).

During the recent strike wave, the PCB showed its true colors by opposing the strikes and accusing the PT and the CUT of being "adventurers who [were] fueling the crisis."

Hercules Correia, head of the PCB, stated, "Our party cannot go along with these strikes because such a policy runs the risk of destabilizing the present political balance."

In Bolivia, the Stalinists openly participated in the Siles Suazo government and were responsible for implementing the IMF policies against the workers and peasants. At the last national congress of the COB, the Bolivian CP was expelled from the leadership of the labor federation by a newly formed alliance of Trotskyists, independent unionists, and Juan Lechin. The alliance called itself the Revolutionary Unified Directorate (DRU). The DRU accused Siles Suazo and the CP of "betraying the working class."

In Peru and Uruguay, the Stalinist Communist parties have been instrumental in forging multiclass electoral blocs including bourgeois forces, i.e. the popular-front coalitions of Izquierda Unida (IU) and the Frente Amplio (FA).

The Stalinists argue that the conditions are not ripe for socialist revolution in Latin America and that consequently what is needed is a stage of "economic development" and

instruments that can advance the mobilizations of the masses on a revolutionary course. In fact, they are deadly obstacles in the path of the revolutionary movement.

The experience of Salvador Allende's government in Chile in 1970-73 shows how a popular front in power actually demobilizes the independent mass movements and paves the way for a fascist onslaught. The presence of the bourgeoisie in an electoral coalition—even though the bourgeois forces may appear to be insignificant as in Peru—is a pledge that capitalist property relations will be preserved and that the rules of bourgeois legality will be respected.

Writing in the Dec. 13, 1971, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Joseph Hansen, a long-time leader of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, had this to say about the Uruguayan Broad Front (FA):

"In its purpose and main structure (its subordination to a bourgeois leadership), the Broad Front constituted a Latin American variant of the popular front long ago utilized by the Stalinists and Social Democrats in wheeling and dealing with bourgeois parties in the electoral arena.

"It is true that the Broad Front was not a mere replica of the popular fronts seen in Europe in the 1930s. Like every political formation in Latin America that seeks popular support today, it stressed anti-imperialism.

"Its 30-point platform included the following planks: An agrarian reform, the nationalization of private banks, the nationalization of the main firms engaged in foreign trade, and energetic industrial action by



in *The Militant*, the newspaper of the SWP, and the excerpts from Fidel's Feb. 13 interview reprinted in the April 15 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.]

Fidel's specific proposal is that the United States and other imperialist governments should reach into their treasuries and pay the private banks the \$400 billion owed by the Latin American governments.

His proposal has received wide sympathy from the Latin American governments. Ecuador's President Leon Febres Cordero, who met with Fidel in

ties to the rest of Latin America."

Fidel and the "democratic processes"

Cuba's new bonds in the hemisphere, according to the May 18 *New York Times*, already include a \$600-million loan from Argentina, the resumption of diplomatic ties with Brazil (with signs that Uruguay and Peru will soon follow suit), close personal ties with President Belisario Betancur of Colombia, and a state visit to Cuba last April by President Leon Febres Cordero of Ecuador.

Fidel Castro—as a statesman of a Latin American nation—is perfectly entitled to find ways to help the Cuban Revolution break out of the isolation to which it has been subjected for over two decades.

The problem, however, is that Fidel—as a leader of the Cuban Communist Party and a revolutionist with great prestige—is not offering any concrete perspective for how Latin American workers and peasants can mobilize independently to break with the IMF and its policies.

Moreover, in presenting his case, Fidel uses many formula-

and the rest of Latin America—A.B.), from my point of view, such as the consolidation of these democratic processes, and I feel that everyone should help and cooperate in this and not present difficulties" [my emphasis].

This argument, unfortunately, is the same one used by the Stalinists and other reformists to attack the independent working-class struggles and to urge the workers to moderate their demands.

Fidel and the two-stage theory

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who was John F. Kennedy's adviser on Latin America, was part of a United Nations delegation headed by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar that met with Fidel this past May 28. In an article published in the June 12 *Wall Street Journal* he writes the following about the discussions with Fidel:

"Mr. Castro said, 'If problems of development cannot be solved, a revolution by itself will not solve them. We want to

(continued on page 12)



Election poster of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT). Poster reads: "PT, the party without bosses," and "For a Workers Government."

.. Powder keg

(continued from page 11)

avert revolutions—because explosions will help no one?

Mr. Castro now appears to see development as the pre-condition for revolution....

He repents some of his earlier enthusiasms.

"We had many ideas, well-intentioned ideas," he told the *Washington Post* in January, 'but they were not very realistic; we wanted to skip stages.' "

Fidel's statements—which he also presented to Spanish newspapermen in February—are deeply mistaken. The pre-conditions for the socialist revolution have existed for decades in Latin America. The "skipping stages" criticism of "extremism" comes from the Stalinist lexicon.

In fact, the entire Stalinist justification for class-collaborationism is rooted in the idea that a prolonged stage of economic development is required before the socialist tasks can be directly posed. But such a strategy delivers the revolution to the "progressive" bourgeoisie—the necessary ally during this first "democratic" stage—and ultimately paves the way for the defeat of the revolutionary movement.

The entire history of the workers' movement in the 20th century—including the history of the Cuban Revolution itself—has taught us that the tasks of national liberation and economic and social development are inextricably bound up with the socialist revolution. In other words, without a socialist revolution there can be no national liberation and development in Latin America.

Revolutionists of action

Fidel and the Castroist current have paid a tremendous political price for their dependence on the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy. But the Castroists are not Stalinists. They are archtypical "revolutionists of action," a term describing pragmatic revolutionists who have displayed a capacity to go beyond their strategic misconceptions in their genuine com-

mitment to advance the interests and well-being of the masses.

It should be noted that Fidel's campaign of "advice" to imperialism to write off the \$400-billion Latin America debt has a side with enormous revolutionary implications. The U.S. government cannot absorb such an increase in its already unmanageable national debt of \$1.65 trillion without bringing about the collapse of the U.S. economy.

Fidel's campaign of "advice" to the imperialists to cancel the debt or face social revolution is also a signal to the Latin American masses to take up the demand when it becomes clear that the U.S. government won't accept his "advice."

The test of Fidel's contradictory stance is still before us. His record leaves room for optimism.

Still, any political support granted by Fidel to the Latin American bourgeois-nationalist governments can only erode the



Peruvian women trade unionists

In Brazil, for example, it was totally correct and necessary for revolutionists to be at the forefront of the struggle for direct presidential elections last year—even though the movement included sizable components of the bourgeoisie. That was the bourgeoisie's contradiction. The demand for the "Direitas Ja" mobilized nearly

trade-union movements. The momentous upsurge of the Brazilian working class and the growth of the PT and CUT are clear indications that an entire generation of trade-union, student, and peasant leaders and activists are looking for a political alternative to the class-collaborationist policies of their traditional leaders. This is not just true of Brazil.

There is a significant process of recomposition underway in the Latin American workers' movement. The examples of the Brazilian PT and of the Nicaraguan Revolution are being widely discussed. The depth of the economic and political crisis of the existing regimes, moreover, is pushing ever greater numbers of leaders and activists onto the arena of class-struggle politics.

At a recent public meeting in Ecuador, which included members and leaders of the Revolutionary Workers Movement—MRT (the Ecuadorian section of the Fourth International) and of the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Ecuador (PSRE), the major theme of the discussion was the experience of building the PT in Brazil.

In Peru, Victor Cuadros, the president of the National Miners Federation, one of the country's largest and most militant unions, has launched an organizing campaign with other trade union leaders and members to form a Peruvian Workers Party. Cuadros, a few years earlier, had been a close ally and collaborator of Alfonso Barrantes Lingan, the presidential candidate of the Izquierda Unida.

In Bolivia, a major confrontation between the reformists and the class-struggle currents took place at the last congress of the Bolivian Labor Federation (COB). The pro-government forces were routed by the currents in the Revolutionary Unified Directorate (DRU). This was a tremendous step forward.

But the March general strike revealed the serious programmatic limitations of the DRU. Ultimately, it will be necessary for a new mass workers' party to develop based on the COB; a party that can draw the correct lessons from the strike and offer a clear political perspective in the coming class battles.

Labor and the debt

In addition, there are very promising developments at the level of the trade unions themselves. The May 1985 issue of *Em Tempo*, the newspaper of PT members in support of the Fourth International, reports

on an upcoming Latin American conference of trade-union federations called to discuss the debt to the imperialist banks.

The conference call, signed by the Brazilian CUT, the Uruguayan PIT-CNT, and the Argentine CGT, states the following:

"The question of the debt is a political question. As such it requires a political solution. No country in Latin America today is in a position to pay back the debt, let alone the interest on the debt....

"In our respective countries, the working class must confront the consequences of the debt. Trade unions of different political tendencies have spoken out and fought against this situation of hunger, unemployment, and misery....

"For the workers and all the people in Latin America, the foreign debt is a central and common issue. A clear, united, and firm response to the question of the debt is a necessary condition for us to have a future with hope."

In addition, the last congress of the Peruvian National Miners Federation adopted a platform that states the following:

"We hereby agree to organize along with the CGTP [the national labor confederation—A. B.] and all the independent class-struggle unions a national political campaign for the non-payment of the foreign debt and for a break with the IMF. In this effort, we will use the public call by the Bolivian COB to bring together a Latin American Anti-imperialist Front that would expell the IMF from our countries."



Victor Cuadros, leader of the Peruvian miner's federation

Indeed, the situation in the Latin American continent is explosive. It is rapidly developing toward the opening of a revolutionary situation. Under these conditions there are real possibilities for building parties of the Fourth International in the struggle to build mass workers' parties and independent labor unions.

The formation of Peruvian, Bolivian, or Ecuadorian workers' parties would be historic steps forward. But ultimately, the victory of the socialist revolution will require the development and leadership of mass parties based on the program and heritage of the Fourth International.

"Fourth International's program of class political independence is required for socialist victory."

great authority the Castroists have commanded in the continent. The Cuban Revolution and the revolutionary state created by that revolution would be the great losers.

The anti-imperialist united front

A key component of a revolutionary strategy in Latin America is the correct application of the anti-imperialist united front. This strategy for the underdeveloped countries was first outlined by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in 1922.

According to the Comintern, it was permissible and at times even necessary for revolutionists to form tactical and limited alliances with sectors of the national bourgeoisie in order to advance the class struggle and expose the temporary bourgeois allies.

15 million people in the streets against the government and the IMF.

The temporary bourgeois allies in the opposition party, the PMDB, were soon exposed before millions of working people when they backed off from fighting for direct elections. Only the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) held high the banner of direct elections and democracy. It marched under its own banners and explained to the workers that direct elections would offer better conditions for continuing the fight for its program of working-class political independence.

Anti-imperialist united fronts can and should also be carried out in Latin America to protest U.S. intervention in Nicaragua and Central America or British intervention in the Malvinas.

But these alliances must be limited and restricted in nature. Electoral, programmatic fronts with sectors of the bourgeoisie—no matter how insignificant they might seem—have nothing to do with the anti-imperialist united front. Such alliances are called popular fronts.

The experience of the international workers' movement—which is concentrated in the program of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938—has demonstrated that it is impermissible for revolutionists to join a popular front. To do so, under whatever pretext and intentions, only contributes to misorient and demobilize the workers. Ultimately it permits the reformist misleaders to derail the revolutionary struggles.

The fight for independent politics

The situation in Latin America is ripe for the development of genuine workers' parties based on the independent

Subscribe now



Socialist ACTION

Enclosed is \$6 for 12 months

Enclosed is \$ _____ contribution

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____

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

Last fall more than 50 North Americans worked on a reforestation project organized by the Nicaraguan Institute for Natural Resources and the Environment (IRENA), a government agency created in the weeks following the 1979 insurrection.

Some of us were in Somoto, near the Honduran border. Others were stationed in an isolated area outside Leon, while my work-group lived and worked in the area around Managua. We planted more than 25,000 trees with shovels and digging sticks. We planted eucalyptus, gabilan, roble, and leucaena—fast-growing trees.

The Managua work unit planted trees in the area around the lagoon that provides the city with safe drinking water. Over the last several years the water table of the lagoon has been dropping. If it drops below that of nearby Lake Managua, which is badly polluted, the water supply will become contaminated. In order to retard soil erosion we planted trees on a nearby hill where Somoza had the trees cut down for "security" reasons.

We also planted trees around the outskirts of Managua, near the American-owned Penwalt plant and beyond a cooperative farm that grew cotton. In these areas we were planting trees that would be harvested for firewood and lumber for housing and furniture. The leucaena trees also have leaves that are high in protein and are good forage for cattle.

Regulations and resourcefulness

Over the last 25 years, half of all the trees in Central America have been destroyed. In Nicaragua multinational timber companies ravaged the mountain forests through intensive cutting techniques that destroyed magnificent pine forests and reduced the forest cover below the 30-percent level considered necessary for the country's ecological well-being.

Nicaragua is well suited to agricultural production because of fine volcanic soil. Yet the combination of large-scale cotton production and the destruction of the forests means that in some areas of the country 10 centimeters of topsoil disappear every year.

Today IRENA regulates the timber industry. It limits the number of trees that may be cut in each area by the People's Forestry Corporation (CORFOP) or by private lumber companies that still carry out 10-15 percent of the cutting.

Seventy percent of the lumber cut is utilized for national consumption while 30 percent is exported. All exporting is under the control of CORFOP, which means that this valuable source of foreign exchange produces dollars that remain under government control. Nicaragua intends to expand lumber cutting, but under strict regulation.

IRENA has trained a core of 2000 forest inspectors, outlined a reforestation program, mounted an educational campaign on preventing forest fires, and launched a program to teach peasants how to cut and replant trees on a rotational basis.

Each region of the country has its own tree nursery, with a combined current production level of 5 million to 6 million trees a year. We visited the Managua-area nursery, which produces 3.5 million trees a year. The nursery's irrigation system is only a year old. Before electric power was installed water was transported from the nearby river. It is situated on five hectares of land that was expropriated just three years ago.

Because of a growing transportation bottleneck—as trucks are needed for the defense effort and as it becomes more difficult to obtain spare parts and tires that must be imported—many trees are wasted.

On the other hand IRENA attempts to deal with this reality in innovative ways. One area of land not needed for the nursery at this stage of production has been planted with crops. Sold for a low price to IRENA employees, these

vegetables provide money with which the agency purchases supplies.

Diversification and self-sufficiency

IRENA has conceived a 40-year plan for developing Nicaragua's natural resources. This wide-ranging plan includes a new national-park and wild-life-refuge system.

It has nominated Bowsawas, the largest tropical rain forest in Central America (located in the northeast area of the country), as a candidate for biosphere-reserve status under a UNESCO program.

It has also set up a center where various woods can be tested for better utili-

pulp, which is usually dumped into the rivers, causing pollution, into animal feed. The Nicaraguan Energy Institute (INE) is also working on bio-gas projects that use animal excrement to create organic fertilizer and gas fuel.

Keeping Lake Managua clean

Pollution and reforestation are major problems in Nicaragua. This dramatically indicates the level of destruction imposed by the Somoza regime, which allowed multinational corporations to denude areas of the country, to poison the water supply, and to endanger the lives of the Nicaraguan people.

Lake Managua receives all of the

workshop that not only considered approaches to cleaning up the lake, but explored as well possibilities of using it as an irrigation source.

The commission discussed its hydroelectrical potential, as well as the redevelopment of the surrounding deforested and polluted basin area's ecosystem. It discussed the possibility of utilizing the sewage as a source of methane.

The commission banned further industrial development in the lake basin and established regulations for existing industry, which is located primarily along its shores.

However, it is estimated that to reverse the process of pollution in Lake Managua would take \$2 billion. Given the severe economic and military problems facing Nicaragua today, it is impossible to undertake such a task.

The U.S. government has been able to pressure West European governments and international banks to back away from helping the Nicaraguans obtain the funding they need. For now, the Nicaraguan government is simply attempting to "hold the line" by enforcing regulations that would prevent the further pollution of the lake.

U.S. war stymies gains

The revolution provided the political conditions that assure the implementation of such solutions—solutions that countries with more natural resources but lacking a revolutionary will have not been able to utilize.

Without 40 percent of its national budget going to defend itself from *contra* attacks, and with generous aid from more developed countries, Nicaragua could undertake these projects at a faster pace.

Many parts of the overall project are on the "back burner" because they are not central to improving the economy of the country. That is, and must be, the central priority.

Lessening the economic grip of dependence by making Nicaragua energy-efficient, for instance, has a very high priority. The country's first geothermal plant is now in operation, and Nicaragua believes it has the capacity to become an energy-exporting nation, producing energy for much of Central America.

But even given the limitations, many experimental projects are undertaken and then expanded. The priority is on maintaining and expanding production, particularly agricultural production, but also on introducing health standards. Thus DDT has been banned. Integrated Pest Management control (IPM)—a way of cutting down on the use of pesticides—was used on half of the cotton crop in 1983-84.

As Ernesto Cardenal wrote in his poem, "Ecology":

We shall reclaim the forests, rivers, lagoons.

We're going to decontaminate the lake of Managua.

Not only humans desired liberation.

The whole ecology wanted it. The revolution

is also of lakes, rivers, trees, animals. ■

Nicaragua strives to reclaim its natural resources



zation of the timber. IRENA projects studying the more than 4000 trees and tree-like shrubs in order to pinpoint the potential uses of its resources.

In coordination with the Swedish government, and with support from Denmark, IRENA has set up a seed bank and seed library. It has particularly focused on collecting seeds from the various species of pines that grow throughout Nicaragua. These seeds may also become an important export product.

The Nicaraguans are very interested in developing additional export items. While theirs is not a monocrop economy like Cuba, they do have the problem of importing twice as much as they export each year. As a small and dependent country, they recognize their vulnerability.

IRENA also works with other governmental agencies to coordinate protection of the environment. One such agency is the Center for Appropriate Technology Investigation (CITA), a branch of the Nicaraguan Agrarian Reform Institute.

CITA workers teach peasants how to build energy-efficient stoves. Made of mud, sand, and some tubing, the "Lorena" stoves are inexpensive, easy to build, and burn half the wood of conventional stoves.

CITA is also working to develop community self-sufficiency on such projects as harnessing wind energy, producing bio-gas, and transforming coffee

capital's raw sewage and industrial wastes. The worst polluter has been the U.S. corporation Penwalt, which from 1978 until recently has dumped between five pounds and 20 pounds of mercury into the lake every day. It has been forced by the Sandinistas to build a mercury-treatment and reprocessing plant that should bring down emissions to nine-tenths of a pound a year.

In 1982 the National Commission on Lake Managua held an international

L.A. forum focuses on antiwar work

By KATHLEEN O'NAN

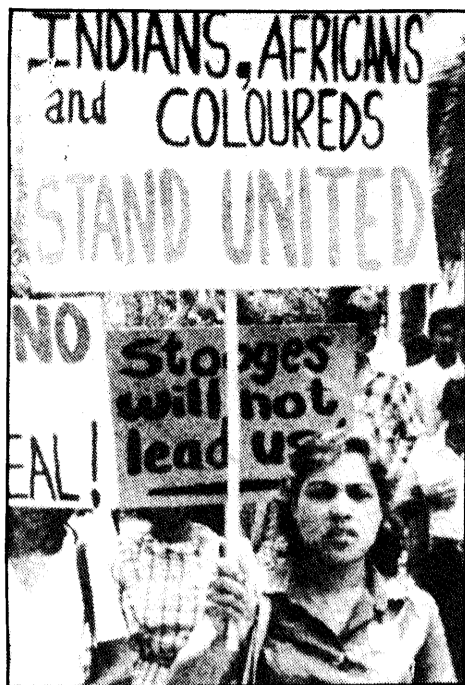
LOS ANGELES—A broad panel of speakers addressed a Socialist Action forum here on June 7 on the theme, "Perspectives for the Anti-intervention Movement After April 20."

The forum, attended by over 40 people, was held the day after the U.S. Senate voted to approve so-called humanitarian aid to the *contras* in Nicaragua. The escalation of the U.S. war in Central America was at the heart of the discussion.

The speakers were the following: Jacquelyn Flores, representative of Casa Nicaragua; Evelyn Sell, member of the administrative committee of the April 20 Coalition; Victor Rios, representative of the Casa El Salvador Farabundo Marti; Teto Vargas, representative of the Comité de Solidaridad Farabundo Marti; and Carl Finamore, member of Socialist Action and of the steering committee of the San Francisco Spring Mobilization.

The representatives of the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan revolutionary movements highlighted the brutality of the U.S. war in the region. Jacquelyn Flores, who just returned from Nicaragua, spoke of the constant bombings on the civilian population by the U.S.-backed *contras*.

Sell and Finamore both underscored the need for nationally coordinated fall antiwar actions and urged participants to help build a united mass antiwar movement to stop the warmakers. ■



Socialist Action conducted the following interview with Siphso Khumalo, a member of the Unity Movement of South Africa, in June 1985.

Socialist Action: What events led to the founding of the Unity Movement?

Siphso Khumalo: In 1910 when the whites decided to form the Union of South Africa from the four republics of the Cape, the Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State, they left the Black population totally without the franchise.

In 1913 and again in 1936, the government passed acts that removed the African people from the land. The effect was to create a dispossessed labor force for the mines. The Africans were given 13 percent of the land and the whites 87 percent—although the whites were only about 13 percent of the population.

In 1912 the African National Congress was formed to defend the rights of the African people. The next year women in the Orange Free State organized the first large demonstrations against the pass system, and mine workers organized the first mass strike of Black people.

In the 1940s a new wave of strikes, boycotts, and demonstrations broke out. Members of the ANC, such as the Black Trotskyist leader I.B. Tabata, decided that they should form an organization that could effectively try to unite all the groups representing the oppressed non-European population—Indians and Coloured people [people of mixed race] as well as Africans.

A number of trade unions and political and community groups came together in 1943 to found the Non-European Unity Movement [the original name of the organization]. It was the first and only organization at that time to have a principled program of struggle. It had a 10-point program based on a policy of non-collaboration. Its method of struggle was the boycott.

S.A.: What were some of the themes of the 10-point program?

Khumalo: The program strived toward creating a country where race does not matter and all people are equal by law. It said that the interests of working people and peasants should be paramount in the struggle. For example, point number seven emphasizes that there must be a redistribution of the land. A large number of the members were oriented to socialism. The Unity Movement differed with the other organization, the ANC, in that it called not only for the elimination of apartheid but of economic exploitation as well.

The capitalists use the white workers against the Black workers by paying the white workers far more, but color is just a superficial obstacle between them. We feel that the white worker will join the struggle in time when he realizes that the capitalists also exploit him.

S.A.: Explain your policy of non-collaboration.

Khumalo: The Unity Movement believes that whites are only able to suppress the Blacks if Blacks themselves work the machinery of oppression. The government, for example, created

S. African revolutionary speaks:

'We are encouraged by your calls for divestment'

things such as the *bunga*, which are what they call "native advisory councils" and the so-called homelands, which are only labor reservoirs headed by Black collaborators.

Today you have the same policy in the tricameral parliament, which gives a sham representation for Indians and Coloured people. And so the Unity Movement says, "If you do not collaborate with the oppressors then you are crippling the machinery that is designed to oppress you."

S.A.: What influence does the Unity Movement have among the mine workers and other sectors of the working class that have recently been on strike?

Khumalo: The Unity movement is strongest in the countryside. In the Eastern Cape, for example, it has been politicizing people successfully since the 1940s. The Pondoland revolt, which took place in the 1960s in that region of

to carry to the mines. And they use what they learned most effectively.

S.A.: The trials of 16 members of the United Democratic Front are scheduled to resume in July. Why has the government begun these trials at this time?

Khumalo: The government has charged these people with treason for statements that they supposedly made. After granting a new constitution and partial elections the government has to prove to the white diehards that they still have everything under control.

In addition, the government wants the white population to believe that the country is in a state of war. The government can better whip up white people behind its policies if it can convince them that a "communist insurrection" is imminent.

S.A.: Thousands of opponents of the dictatorial regimes in Latin America have disappeared after being picked up

repeated by Reagan—that the police were defending themselves against attacks and that the people were using sticks, stones, and petrol bombs against them. But the evidence goes contrary to that. An official commission appointed by the government found that no police were injured.

One man gave evidence to the effect that he had been grazed by a bullet and fell down. When he regained consciousness he heard one policeman saying, "Well, we'll have to finish these people off. Otherwise, they might tell the tale."

And he actually saw policemen picking up stones and putting them by the dead bodies to try to show that the people had thrown stones.

And the commission went even further. There were scientific tests done on the petrol bombs that the police had produced. The tests showed that in all those cases it was the same newspaper that was used as a wick and that the earth from which they said they had picked up these bombs did not have traces of petrol.

This shows that the white government lives in fear. Whenever they see a procession or gathering of people they become trigger-happy.

S.A.: What is your opinion of the movement in the United States that is demanding that U.S. institutions and corporations divest themselves of their holdings in South Africa?

Khumalo: Most people in South Africa are encouraged by what is happening in America. We realize that the Reagan administration is not representative of the people in the United States. So when people call for divestment they are expressing solidarity with our struggle.

By investing in the country—and U.S. corporations have over \$14 billion invested there—the white regime has been provided with sufficient funds to maintain a well-equipped military. It's like providing ammunition to suppress the opposition.

The view has been expressed that divestment would hurt Black people the most. This is put out by government agents like the leaders of the "homelands."

But we say that the people already have their backs to the wall.

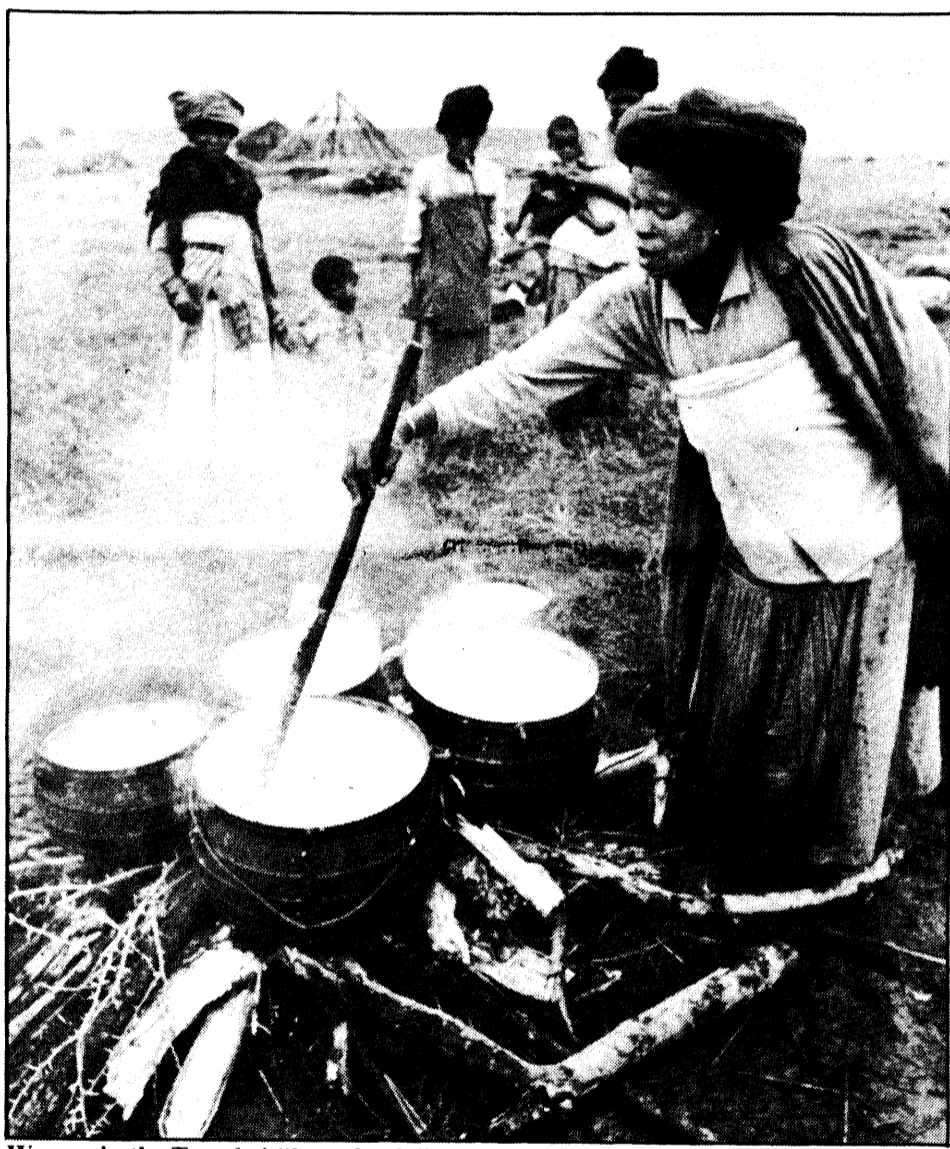
The American people should know that the Reagan administration represents those corporations that have invested in South Africa. They want cheap labor. They want to maintain the status quo and a stable government.

For that reason the U.S. government will not order a full embargo against South Africa. An embargo would be a direct challenge to the apartheid government.

People should realize that the United States receives its major supply of uranium from Namibia, which is the second largest producer of uranium in the world after the Soviet Union. That is why the U.S. supports the South African occupation of Namibia—despite the United Nations resolution that declared the occupation to be illegal.

We feel that the call for divestment is a positive step but it is limited. It can shift the emphasis from the political struggle.

People in the United States must bring a great amount of pressure on their own government, which is perpetuating apartheid. Americans could try to get their trade unions, for example, to support the strikes of the South African miners. Remember, American families like the Rockefellers own many of the mines and they are underpaying the workers. This must be brought to the attention of the public. ■



Women in the Transkei "homeland."

the country, was the closest struggle so far toward our liberation.

Now that revolt really shook the country. The peasants there were largely members of the All-African Convention, an organization that is affiliated to the Unity Movement. They formed independent peasant committees to fight against the Rehabilitation Scheme that uprooted people from their land. Because they were unable to get the assistance of others, their revolt was crushed by the armed forces.

The largest labor force in South Africa comes from these people, from the reserves of the Eastern Cape—the Transkei, the Ciskei. And the Unity Movement has recognized that by educating these people at the grassroots level in the countryside, migrant laborers will carry the message to the urban areas where they work.

The mine workers, for example, are mainly people who had been peasants. They have a background that used the boycott and the strike as weapons of struggle and an ideology learned from the Unity Movement that they were able

by the police or government-supported death squads. Are there similar cases in South Africa?

Khumalo: There are many cases. There was one person, for instance, who was detained by the police and had some chemical used on him that crippled him. He tried to sue and went for treatment to a hospital. There was no trace of him after that.

For another example, you could take what happened on March 25, 1985, at Uitenhage. On that date, exactly 25 years after the Sharpeville massacre, the people were going to a funeral. It was a peaceful procession.

And as they were walking, two armored police vehicles came and hemmed them in. The police asked the people to disperse. The people were not antagonistic but asked, "Why?" The police then opened fire.

Government statistics say that 19 people were killed and some 30 people were injured. But the people themselves say that far more died and that many disappeared and cannot be accounted for. A few were children.

The government said—and this was

Ripples of fear are flowing through the executive suites of many staid and conservative corporations these days. Forebodings of personal disaster grip executives as they hear their company's stock is in demand and its price is rising.

This should be cheering news to most managers, a sign their company is doing well. But these executives know better. Their stock is being bought by a dread raider who will invade their company like an old-time pirate boarding a helpless merchant ship.

Raids and mergers have been part of the business scene since the 19th century. John D. Rockefeller bought up small oil companies to eliminate competition. Andrew Carnegie bought iron mines and coal mines to give him an integrated steel industry.

General Motors has just bought Hughes Aircraft for \$5 billion. This gives the automobile manufacturer millions of dollars worth of defense contracts and access to years of research and development in electronics and high tech.

Most of today's mergers, however, bear little relation to the production needs of the acquiring company. The publishers of *Esquire* have bought a company making light bulbs. The mammoth Gulf and Western conglomerate operates Paramount Pictures, Consolidated Cigars, and Playtex underwear, among other enterprises. Beatrice foods, known as a merger junkie, held 400 subsidiaries at one time.

Increasing concentration of ownership

The motive for these mergers is short-term profit. By acquiring the profit-making assets of established companies, a conglomerate can grow without the risk and trouble of bringing out new products.

Shuffling ownership of existing firms adds absolutely nothing to the nation's productive capacity. But heads of conglomerates care little for the nation's social wealth so long as their personal wealth is augmented.

The conglomerates have found plenty of companies to take over. This is because staid conservative companies have staid conservative executives whose modus operandi is "play it safe."

They are running a well-known, mildly successful company that has been in business for over 50 years. There is no point in taking chances. They pile up cash reserves instead of plowing money back in the business.

They are stingy in paying stockholders dividends. The price of their stock does not reflect the true value of the company's assets. Such a company is a sitting duck for a merger proposition. Its stock is underpriced and stockholders can be persuaded to sell when offered a premium over the latest Wall Street quotation.

When the conglomerate gains voting control, the old management faces an uncertain future. One disgruntled former executive eloquently described his experience when his company was taken over. "They gave us the mushroom treatment," he said. "They kept us in the dark, then they covered us with manure, then they let us stew awhile, then they canned us."

Workers at merged plants have been treated in an equally brutal fashion. When a conglomerate took over a San Leandro, Calif., factory recently they laid off all 380 employees without notice. They will hire some of them back later, they said. Meanwhile any union contract the workers had with the old management is now null and void.

While workers usually lose in a merger others are in a position to make a killing. These include the stockholders who sold out, the investment bankers who get hefty fees for arranging the financing, and the conglomerates that can use the assets of the acquired company to make further profitable mergers.

The result has been a wave of mergers that has swept the country for the last two decades. In 1984, 2543 deals were struck involving \$122 billion. With every merger power is concentrated in fewer hands.

Of more immediate concern to many economists is the new breed of player in the merger game. These are the wheeler-dealers who play the game solely for the millions to be made in consummating a merger.

Corporate raids and mergers: Who's minding the store?



In the process they rape the companies involved.

Saul Steinberg, who never made a movie in his life, made Disney Studios give him a profit of \$4.5 million just by threatening to take over the company. This is greenmail—quite legal and very profitable.

T. Boone Pickens, a Texas oil man, failed in his attempt to take over Phillips Petroleum. However he could laugh all the way to the bank as he cashed in on the increased value of the stock he bought.

The raiders have found they do not need money to play merger mania. They play it with paper. Bonds are issued by a dummy corporation and offered to stockholders in exchange for their stock. The offer is attractive because the bonds pay an interest rate of 17 percent, compared to the 3 percent that the target company's stock is paying in dividends.

Most corporations' stocks today are held in huge blocks by pension funds and institutions. Their money managers are under pressure to make immediate profits. Many will leap at a chance to make a deal that will look so good on their books.

What is behind these bonds are the assets of the company the raiders hope to take over. Such speculative securities are known on Wall Street as junk bonds. No conservative investor would risk a penny on them. However, in the frenzy of merger mania, junk bonds can be used to take over a conglomerate with billions of dollars in assets.

Ted Turner vs. CBS

This is the situation of the giant CBS TV and radio conglomerate. It is mobilizing all its resources to repel a raid by Ted Turner who owns a few TV and radio stations based in Atlanta, Ga. Turner's resources are less than a tenth of those of CBS.

Harsh terms for Polish activists

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

"A brutality unseen since the days of Stalin."

This was how Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa described the conduct of the trial of Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, Bogdan Lis, and Adam Michnik.

The three Solidarity activists were handed stiff sentences of from two to three and one-half years on June 14. Their crime, in the eyes of the Polish bureaucracy, was "fomenting civil disorder" by holding a meeting to plan for a 15-minute work stoppage to protest food price increases. The strike never did take place.

Turner, however, has raised \$5.4 billion in paper credits to launch his attack. With literally billions involved in these maneuvers, it is not surprising that a few million can stick to various fingers. E.F. Hutton, which recently was fined for a scam that netted them millions of dollars, is going to reap \$50 million for helping to arrange Turner's financing.

All the money involved in this deal will eventually come from the assets of CBS. Turner has already announced that he will sell off a recording company and other CBS subsidiaries when he gains control. He will cannibalize the corporation to pay his debts.

CBS is fighting back in a struggle known on Wall Street as the Siege of Black Rock, the name of CBS headquarters in New York. The besieged CBS has a number of defensive options, including the "poison pill" and the "white knight."

The poison pill is the ploy of loading the company with so much debt it is no longer an inviting target. The white knight is the friendly conglomerate who is invited by the management to merge with the threatened company and freeze out the raider.

CBS has taken a third option. It has appealed to the courts to halt the raider. From the standpoint of the ruling elite, Turner and his friends are outsiders who are threatening the stability of the established order. The courts will make decisions and Congress will probably pass laws that will curb the wheeler-dealers.

"Economic suicide"

Still, the tide of mergers that is changing certain aspects of American capitalism will not be ended. The editors of *Business Week* have expressed concern over the merger mania and its implications.

They point out that \$68.6 billion was spent in 1984 to take over existing firms, and only \$1 billion to fund new enterprises. When Texaco wanted more oil reserves they bought Getty Oil Co. instead of investing in new exploration.

"The long-term implications of such decisions are awesome," says *Business Week*. Fewer start-up operations and less development of new products could add up to the slow "de-industrialization" of America. "If the trend continues," says a partner in a banking house, "it means economic suicide."

Liberals will heed these warnings and call for the suppression of the monopolies, the mergers, and the raiders. They will proclaim the need to restore free competition. However the restoration of free capitalist competition is impossible—assuming if it ever even existed.

What is needed is the ultimate raid and takeover. This is the takeover of all industry by the organized working class so it can be operated for the benefit of all the people. ■

The trial itself, which was not open to the international press, was conducted in such a way as to guarantee its outcome. Michnik, in a letter to the public smuggled out of his jail cell prior to the trial, wrote, "If they refuse you visas and passes for the courtroom, that will be irrefutable evidence that what takes place in court will be an illegal sham."

According to the Michnik letter, the sole concrete evidence offered by the government in the case was a doctored tape recording of a conversation between Bogdan Lis and Waclaw Jan Ulanowski, a security official of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The defense was not allowed to make statements necessary for proving its case. "The judge has made it impossible to conduct a defense," said defendant Lis. At one point Michnik protested the partiality of the judge and asked that he be replaced. For this he was violently thrown out of the courtroom.

Given the conduct of the trial, the defendants made only short final trial statements, denouncing the unfairness of the whole proceedings.

In Lis' final trial statement he said, "The indictment was a provocation and this has been proved."

Frasyniuk, who received the longest sentence, said in his final statement: "Martial law was introduced to enslave society, but the defendants here represent that part of society that never accepted martial law."

That "part of the society" is the entire Polish working class. Throughout the trial—despite the stepped-up repression in recent months—leaflets demanding the release of all the political prisoners were being massively distributed by the Solidarity underground in Warsaw and Gdansk.

In keeping with their denunciation of the trial proceedings as a frame-up, the three defendants declined to beg the court for leniency. ■



International VIEWPOINT

Subscribe
now

International Viewpoint is a biweekly political review analyzing recent world events from a revolutionary Marxist perspective. The latest issue contains an interview with Daniel Bensaid on the meaning of the 12th World Congress of the Fourth International as well as articles on Lebanon and on the youth movement around the world. We offer a special introductory offer of three issues for \$3. A six-month subscription is \$22, and one year of International Viewpoint is available for \$42. Subscribe now!

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

AFL-CIO report covers up no-win union strategy

By NAT WEINSTEIN

The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions: A Report by the AFL-CIO Committee on the Evolution of Work, Publication No. 165, 815 Sixteenth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006.

The AFL-CIO's report on the state of the unions, issued early this year, has been widely heralded in the media as a "new approach" to the problems caused by a declining union membership and the changing composition of the workforce.

The underlying premise of this report is that the objective situation—the decline in the proportion of manufacturing and construction workers in the work force—is responsible for the setbacks the labor movement has been dealt in recent years.

This argument is false to the core. The decline of union power is not due to changes in the composition of the workforce but rather to failure of official labor strategy.

The top union leaders, as the report confirms, accept the false conception that a basic partnership exists between capital and labor. They believe that labor must collaborate with its enlightened capitalist allies to keep the ship of industry profitably afloat.

The unions have been in steady retreat due to this long-term class-collaborationist policy, which plays into

tion of Machinists, the union representing the mechanics, continued to work for struck United Airlines. Without mechanics, the few planes flown by scab pilots would soon be grounded.

The I.A.M. meekly asked a court if it could circumvent its no-strike clause because, it pleaded, its vital interests as a union were at stake. The judge, ignoring the patently obvious truth of the union's plea, ruled that labor solidarity was illegal.

The union bureaucrats, who have slipped the no-strike clauses past generally uninformed and unsuspecting memberships, hypocritically strive to shunt the blame away from themselves. But this deadly weapon, handed over to the bosses to guarantee that workers' needs will not interfere with profits during the life of the contract, keeps coming back to haunt them all.

Attacks are bipartisan

The report also blames the federal government for "encouraging hostile employer attacks by providing less and less protection to workers who exercise their right to organize and by setting an example for the most virulently anti-union employers."

First of all, the effectiveness of laws "protecting" workers derives entirely from the independent power of unions. The strategy of *relying* on government agencies for settling disputes with employers leads to the atrophy of union muscle—the less muscle, the fewer

principle of the profit system; i.e., the god-given right of foxes and wolves to eat chickens!

There is, of course, a decline in the proportion of industrial workers in the workforce. But the potential power of workers in the United States to bring the entire economy to a grinding halt remains undiminished. The basic economic power of the industrial workforce, along with the economic and political power of millions of workers in the service sector and in government employment, is *greater* than ever.

Moreover, the rise of independent social and political movements in the last 30 years—Blacks, women, and the broad opposition to nuclear insanity and imperialist military intervention—has created powerful potential allies for working people. The working class together with its natural allies would be an invincible power.

But to be realized, labor solidarity must be backed up by independent political action in the streets and in campaigns to elect labor candidates, mobilizing the entire class behind its economic and social objectives.

New tactics?

There is not a single new idea contained in this report-program of the top union leadership.

Most of the tactics proposed as brand new are at best routine measures. This is the case with the much-publicized "corporate campaigns" to mobilize public opinion. The report exaggerates the

anticipated in the gradual erosion of labor's legal position since the Wagner Act was enacted by Congress in 1935.

The report quotes from the Wagner Act:

"Employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection."

But the report fails to note that assistance to union organization provided by this act was granted only

"No-strike clauses block solidarity—as pilots strike shows."

because the workers at the time were in open rebellion against laws that declared union organization and strikes illegal. And even after unions and strikes were nominally legalized, it required a mass, and often bloody, struggle to be actually put into effect.

Policies that built CIO

Here we get to the heart of the matter. The enormous potential of working-class power was unleashed only through a strategy that relied on strikes, marches, and other mass action, *in defiance of anti-union laws.*

The labor principle "an injury to one is an injury to all" was the force driving union policy. It was symbolized in the inspiring example, repeated many times, of thousands going on strike in defense of one or two union militants victimized by the boss.

The solidarity practiced by the fighting American working class was the glue that united millions of individuals into one indivisible army. It was systematically eroded by the concerted action of all wings of the employing class—Democrats and Republicans, as well as "pro-union" and anti-union bosses.

The Taft-Hartley time bomb

In 1947 Republican and Democratic party legislators joined together to ram through Congress the infamous Taft-Hartley Act, which made some of the most vital forms of solidarity between unions illegal. The bosses, however, implemented their new legal weapon selectively, craftily holding off bringing to bear its full force, while labor was lulled into complacency during the long post-war boom.

One of the first blows was a flanking attack aimed at industrial workers. The ruling class's first move was to block solidarity between the building-trades unions and the industrial unions.

Shortly after Taft-Hartley was passed, for example, the powerful United Auto Workers went on strike against Koehler Corporation, a plumbing supply manufacturer. The strike went on for years. It was ultimately broken with the help of Taft-Hartley.

This legislation, among other things, banned "secondary boycotts"—prohibiting construction unions from honoring UAW picket lines when scab-made plumbing supplies were brought onto construction sites.

Once solidarity was effectively barred between the building trades and the unions making products used in construction, the employers moved to bar

(continued on page 17)



One thousand rally at San Francisco airport on June 14.

the hands of the employers' game of divide and conquer.

The recent strike by pilots against United Airlines is an example of this. They were effectively isolated from the other unions in their industry—with the notable exception of flight attendants, who honored their picket lines—through the insidious effects of widespread inclusion of no-strike clauses in union contracts.

These disastrous prohibitions of solidarity between sister unions, compelling the different crafts to cross each other's picket lines, have been systematically inserted into virtually all union contracts.

The powerful International Associa-

tion of Machinists, the union representing the mechanics, continued to work for struck United Airlines. Without mechanics, the few planes flown by scab pilots would soon be grounded.

Secondly, no mention is made of the role of the Democratic Party, without which the federal government could not carry out its antilabor role. Instead the report focuses on the Republican Reagan administration as if it were the sole agent of the antilabor offensive.

This strategy, known historically as "class collaboration," finds its clearest expression in labor's dependence on the Democratic Party wing of the capitalist class to defend workers' interests.

It is a strategy that relies on the fox to guard the chicken coop against the wolf. This strategy flows from the labor bureaucracy's acceptance of the holy

potential of publicity campaigns, by themselves, to bring pressure to bear on the bosses. It treats the issue as if it were a mere technical problem.

At the same time, the AFL-CIO report implicitly downgrades the decisive tactic of effective picket lines and other forms of mass action.

The report correctly points to "the failure of the law" to protect workers' rights. But while noting the trend toward an ever-more open pro-employer bias on the part of the federal government, the report points the finger of guilt only at the Reagan administration.

The authors choose to ignore the other Democratic and Republican party administrations—all of whom have par-

(continued from page 16)

solidarity between construction unions as well.

Today, a life-and-death battle is being waged in the building industry over whether special "gates" where picketing is "illegal" can be artificially designated on construction sites.

The legal trick is to create one gate for scabs and another for unions. Picketing at the "union" gate is then treated as a violation of the ban on secondary boycotts. Non-striking union members could then be fired for refusing to scab.

This legal bar to labor solidarity—first accepted, without a fight, to stop construction worker solidarity with auto workers—now threatens the very existence of building-trades unions.

The industrial unions, too, have been compelled to cross each other's picket lines because of Taft-Hartley-imposed restrictions on the constitutionally guaranteed right to refuse to work.

The labor officialdom gave in to this united capitalist offensive without a real fight against the undemocratic and unconstitutional violations against free speech (picketing) and the right to refuse to sell one's labor power (the right to strike). They relied, instead, on promises from their capitalist "allies" in the Democratic Party.

No-strike clauses

The labor bureaucracy facilitated the strategic assault by the bosses and their government by voluntarily accepting no-strike clauses in union contracts. They deliberately failed to inform their members of the far-reaching and harmful consequences of these clauses.

The no-strike clause, which the bureaucracy welcomed for its own reasons (to tame the militancy of the rank and file), served as a deadly supplement to the Taft-Hartley Act.

The labor misleaders' maneuvers against their own members reduced their fulminations against anti-strike laws to empty bluster. Capitalist lawmakers got the message sent by the acceptance of no-strike clauses. It assured them that the labor bureaucracy had capitulated to the new ground rules for the class struggle.

Like a silent plague, no-strike clauses spread into contract after contract.

Besides stopping solidarity between unions, the no-strike clause did other great damage. The right to strike to stop employers from violating contracts has been replaced by elaborate arbitration procedures that put the "interpretation" of union contracts into the hands of "impartial" arbitrators.

Not surprisingly, union contractual gains have since been systematically and steadily "interpreted" away by the "impartial" arbitrators.

Solidarity in support of social progress

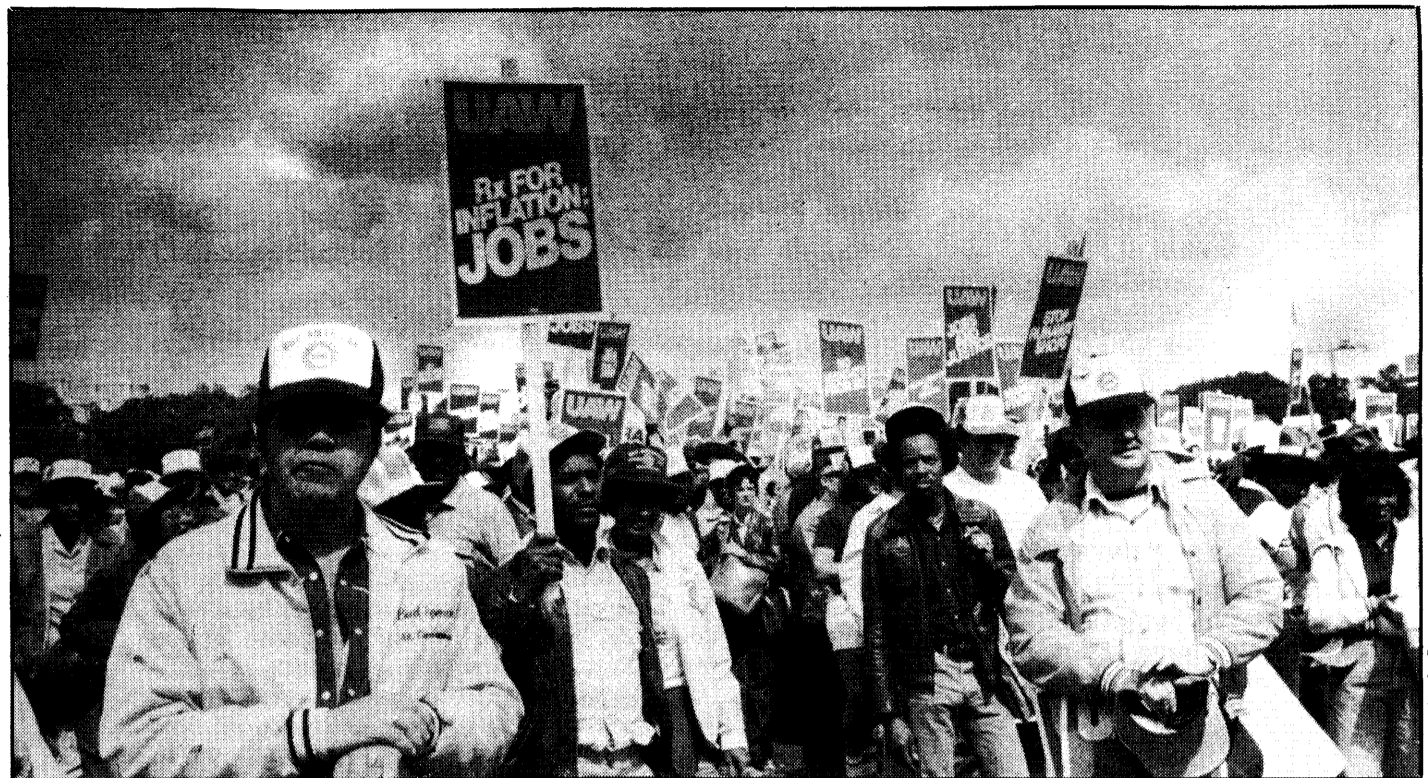
Labor support to progressive social legislation—like public education, publicly financed old-age pensions, health and welfare, racial and sexual equality—has taken a back seat to electing fake "allies" who sometimes give lip-service to these demands, but refuse to implement them.

The labor bureaucracy long ago made the fatal decision that this is the price it must pay for being on the same team with the "good" capitalists.

The harmful consequences of this painting of enemies as "friends" is multiplied when the next election comes up and labor bureaucrats must cover up for the rotten record of "labor's candidates."

In a chapter entitled "Structural changes to enhance the labor movement's overall effectiveness," the report proposes the adoption of "guidelines for use of affiliates contemplating mergers."

Instead of grappling openly and directly with the breakdown of even the most elementary forms of solidarity—key to any serious effort to reverse labor's current retreat—the authors



choose a deliberately vague approach.

The report encourages union mergers. It correctly deplors the ludicrous competition between cliques of bureaucrats raiding each other's dues-paying members and competing—rather than cooperating—in organizing efforts. The report correctly promotes the objective of uniting small unions into more effective associations.

But the report's authors are unable to go beyond the superficial question of organizational centralization and get to the heart of the matter: How to unite the millions of organized workers in a counteroffensive to the ongoing antilabor offensive.

The balance sheet

On the plane of electoral action, the labor bureaucrats realize they have lost what they like to call their "clout."

The labor movement could once convince millions of Blacks and other natural allies to cast their votes for Democratic candidates endorsed by labor, under the misconception that the common interests of all the exploited and oppressed would thereby be served.

Today, however, even substantial numbers of workers no longer take their cue from official labor endorsements. The explanation is plain to see. Few believe that there is a "dime's worth of difference" between Democrats and Republicans.

For years the labor bureaucracy campaigned vigorously for the election of Democrats because they "pledged" to repeal Taft-Hartley or some of its more offensive sections. Of course, the Democrats never did any such thing.

When the Democrats had the presidency and a majority in both houses of Congress, they failed to carry out such repeated pledges to repeal anti-labor laws.

Democrats played a cynical shell game, such as when President Gerald Ford vetoed the repeal of the ban on situs picketing in 1974. But three years later, the Democrats elected Jimmy Carter president, and captured large majorities in both houses of Congress. The Democrats—who had pledged to repeal the picketing ban—conveniently were "unable" to muster a simple majority.

The postwar tradeoffs

In the postwar years of economic expansion and greatly increased labor productivity, the U.S. capitalists enjoyed a profit bonanza. The employers could easily afford to give a small portion of the superprofits they reaped to U.S. workers. Wage increases, in fact, were routinely granted without any real fights. But the wily American ruling class demanded concessions in exchange.

In addition to the no-strike clause, the bureaucrats scabbed on workers in Vietnam and elsewhere by supporting imperialist foreign policy. And in their zeal to prove their loyalty to their capi-

talist partners, the bureaucracy shamelessly betrayed the democratic aspirations of Blacks, women and other natural constituencies of the labor movement at home as well.

Instead of being in the front ranks of the struggle for social justice, the bureaucrats kept labor in the rear—when not openly on the side of reaction.

A little of the moral capital of the workers' movement was given up for every cent granted in wage increases.

But the labor bureaucrats deliberately fostered the illusion that the wage gains were won by their skillful bargaining, political sagacity and "clout."

They concealed the fact that the working class as a whole was losing, not gaining ground.

This strategy of class collaboration worked to isolate the labor movement, paving the way for a direct offensive against the unions themselves.

Which way forward?

A break from the policy of supporting capitalist politicians would be tantamount to a declaration of independence for the labor movement. Today the labor movement is being pushed by the growing assault on living standards toward such a break.

The labor bureaucracy consciously resists this objective pressure. But it is pressed on both sides: The bosses demand more concessions and the workers are driven to resist. Cracks and divisions within the bureaucracy will open up. Organized class-conscious workers will know how to take advantage of such openings.

In the meantime the labor bureaucracy strives to induce the capitalist class to retreat from its antilabor offensive with whining appeals, bluffs, and half-hearted threats. That is what is meant

"The AFL-CIO report has no answer to the antilabor offensive."

when prominent labor officials talk of "one-sided class war," and others publicly discuss the option of labor candidates and an independent labor party.

Even the AFL-CIO's endorsement of Mondale for president before the primaries is too "uppity" for capitalist politicians—despite its containment within the bounds of the Democratic Party.

Kirkland's open squabble with the new head of the Democratic Party is another feeble threat. [See story on page 8.] But it is one that nevertheless foreshadows things to come. Increasingly the possibilities for pressuring the capitalist class, while staying within the framework of the Democratic Party, appear less credible to growing numbers of people.

Independent working class political action is inevitable despite the intentions

of the official labor leadership. The historic fightback now gestating will most likely be expressed first in more determined strikes marked by militant resistance to unconstitutional legal restrictions on picketing. This will mark the transition from the past phase of class collaboration to the coming period of intensified class struggle.

Labor's historic mission

It will be out of such picket line battles that a new leadership of fighters will first emerge. Ultimately they will be forged into a class-struggle left wing. It will be as a result of such experiences that labor's need to fight with both fists, economic and political, will become widely understood.

The future leaders of the workers' movement will not restrict themselves to picket line battles. They will come to grips with the need for a broad working class political offensive. They will absorb the lessons, underscored in recent history, that their struggle is a political and social struggle as well as a fight for wages and better working conditions.

Karl Marx wrote over a hundred years ago that on the exclusively economic plane of struggle between capital and labor, capital is the stronger. He explained that only in the course of a *generalized* economic (i.e., political) struggle is labor the stronger.

We can be certain that if the next wave of labor insurgency does begin on the picket lines it will swiftly move onto the political arena, where, through an independent party based on the unions, all the forces of labor power can be brought to bear.

The coming battles between contending classes can only be resolved with the victory of one side or the other. A labor victory will be won only if the working class leads all the oppressed and exploited in a common struggle for a socialist future based on genuine freedom, equality, and fraternity.

The AFL-CIO report ends disingenuously with a statement from Eugene V. Debs, the great American socialist and workers' leader, after the defeated Pullman strike in 1894:

"Ten thousand times has the labor movement stumbled and bruised itself. We have been enjoined by the courts, assaulted by thugs, charged by the militia, traduced by the press, frowned upon in public opinion, and deceived by politicians.

"But notwithstanding all this and all these, labor is today the most vital and potential power this planet has ever known, and its historic mission is as certain of ultimate realization as is the setting of the sun."

Eugene V. Debs was certainly right. Labor's historic mission will be realized. Unfortunately, the latest AFL-CIO report is an obstacle in this path. ■



How a force for progress became a force for reaction

By SEAN FLYNN

In a declaration released in late 1984 condemning the U.S. war on Nicaragua, Nobel laureates George Wald and Adolfo Perez Esquivel, along with 13 other members of the International Permanent Tribunal on Human Rights, expressed their opposition to Reagan's policies in the following manner:

"What we are witnessing is an increasingly ferocious war of aggression—undeclared and illegal—through which the United States refuses Nicaragua the right to independence and self-determination that the United States itself conquered two centuries ago."

On July 4, 1776, thirteen British colonies in North America declared their intention to fight for national independence, a struggle which seven years later culminated in the formation of the United States.

On July 19, 1979, the workers and peasants of Nicaragua, led by the Sandinista Front for National Liberation, decisively defeated the proconsul of U.S. imperialism, Anastasio Somoza, and thus took their

"The United States, an oppressed colony in 1776, is today the main oppressor."

own first great step toward true national independence.

The anniversaries of these two revolutions provide us an opportunity to review how the United States, an oppressed colony in 1776, has become the principal oppressor nation in the world today.

Roadblock to national independence

Both the American and Nicaraguan revolutions share several salient features. Both sought political and economic independence from a foreign power. Both aimed to secure democratic rights for the majority of their people. Yet the United States is now the principal roadblock to the Nicaraguan Revolution.

Why is the United States, the first nation to win national liberation in the capitalist epoch, compelled to attack all attempts by other countries to achieve the same goal for themselves? The explanation is integrally tied to the transformation of capitalism from an economic system which stimulated the productive forces of society to one which today holds them back.

The American Revolution erupted just as capitalism was beginning to assert its domination over the globe. The Nicaraguan Revolution arose during capitalism's decline, and in fact, in revolt against what that obsolete system meant for a small, dominated country.

So if the American Revolution was made to create the conditions for the capitalist development of North America, the Nicaraguan Revolution is fundamentally a struggle to create the conditions for transcending capitalism.

"Give me liberty or give me death," demanded by Patrick Henry, expresses the same sentiment as Augusto Sandino's "*patria libre o morir*."

But the Nicaraguan patriot also recognized that, in fighting for a free country in the 20th century, "only the workers and peasants will go all the way."

Capitalism grows in the "New World"

Early capitalism blossomed with the European conquest of the Americas. Plunder torn from the Western hemisphere was transformed into European capital, increasing the social weight of the emerging bourgeoisie. The classic bourgeois democratic revolutions—England in the 1640s and France in 1789—politically ratified the transfer of economic power from the aristocrats to the capitalists.

In the mid-18th century, the driving force of capitalism was still the extraction of profit through commerce rather than manufacture. This early form of capitalism, or "mercantilism," led each "mother country" to monopolize trade with its colonies in order to guarantee itself markets and high prices.

In the second half of the 18th century, the three main classes in the 13 colonies were the New England and Middle Atlantic merchants, the slave-

owner planters of the South, and the small farmers scattered throughout the colonies.

Until the 1760s, each of these classes was generally content with British rule. The merchants transported much of the trade of the Empire; the planters grew rich supplying tobacco to Europe; the farmers prospered growing food and timber for the old world.

By 1763, Britain had defeated France in the struggle for mercantile supremacy. Straddled by a large war debt and jealous of colonial prosperity, Britain enforced its trade monopoly to restrict the New England merchants, to force down the price of colonial produce, to require the colonists to consume only British goods at artificially high prices, and to shift the war debt onto colonial shoulders. Since the colonists had no voice in the British parliament, they were initially powerless to counter this assault.

The First American Revolution

Resentment grew into active protest, epitomized by the slogan "no taxation without representation" and by the Boston Tea Party. With the arena for compromise shrinking, the merchants and planters were urged on by the artisan and farmer masses to break with Great Britain. An armed struggle was begun.

The tasks of the First American Revolution were to (1) achieve national independence, (2) unite the colonies to create a sufficient internal market, (3) establish political democracy, (4) transfer political power to the capitalists, and (5) eradicate precapitalist economic survivals which stood as barriers to the full development of capitalism.

The historical conjuncture—characterized by the immaturity of a capitalism that had yet to transfer dominance from its merchant element to the industrialists—led the revolution to fall short of achieving the final two tasks.

The inefficient slave mode of production was given a new lease on life by the invention of the cotton gin and the expansion of cotton production throughout the deep South. The planters, allied with the small farmers, won control over the new state and held their hegemony until the Civil War.

It was the Industrial Revolution—releasing new



forces of production for capitalist exploitation—that spurred the rise of a dynamic sub-class of capitalist manufacturers strong enough to contend for state power. But capitalism also created an industrial working class which will in its own turn contend for state power.

The struggle between capital and the slavocracy for political and economic supremacy in the United States ended in the Civil War—the Second American Revolution. Like all obsolete ruling classes, the slaveowners fought tooth and nail to preserve their privileges.

By destroying slavery, the American capitalist class, supported by the workers, farmers, and Blacks, played a progressive historical role for the last time in history. Since 1865, capitalism has become transformed from an engine for social change to its major brake.

From industrial capitalism to imperialism

In the era which followed, cutthroat competition led ultimately to the monopolization of key sectors of the economy under the "robber barons."

But the concentration of America's economy

made it impossible for any single industrialist to secure sufficient capital to compete. Large banking syndicates were now required, a role which led to the banks attaining the preeminent economic role in all of the major capitalist countries.

The development of the productive forces entailed by capitalism generated the manufacture of more goods than could be sold. The monopolization of production only intensified this Achilles heel of capitalism. Periodic depressions caused by overproduction exacerbated the exploitative conditions endured by workers in the factories and farmers dependent on markets run by finance capital. This led to a rise in unions, socialist parties, and farmer-based populist movements.

But overproduction also threatened the industrial capitalists with bankruptcy and the banks with excess capital which could not be invested in a slumping economy. Capitalism had long been using the underdeveloped countries as dumping grounds for overproduced goods. Now, finance capital saw these countries as fertile ground for capital which couldn't make a sufficient profit at home.

Foreign capitalism began taking over the economies of the underdeveloped world. The old (and still profitable) trading relationships were superseded by the implantation of monopoly capitalist economic relationships, particularly in agricultural and extractive industries.

A global division of labor was created, with the "underdeveloped" (actually over-exploited) countries becoming producers of raw materials for the industrial countries of Europe, North America, and Japan. By virtue of the Monroe Doctrine, the United States saw Latin America as its economic backyard, an attitude underscored by the repeated U.S. military interventions in the Caribbean basin since 1898.

This economic relationship, rightfully labeled "imperialism" by Lenin, did not resolve the crisis of overproduction; it only stimulated each imperialist country's drive to control ever more of the world economy. Two world wars were fought to determine which imperialist power would rule the roost, a status finally achieved by the United States in 1945.

Revolution erupts in the colonies

The underdeveloped capitalist countries did not take imperialist pillage lying down. An immense nationalist wave after World War II succeeded in winning formal independence for most of them. Although imperialism, rolling with the punch, conceded formal independence to the capitalist classes of the new countries, it retained control of the world market, of the manufacture of the means of production, and most importantly, of sources of capital.

It was against this fundamentally unequal relationship that the Nicaraguan Revolution erupted. The struggle was initially couched as a campaign of all classes against the Somoza dynasty that the U.S. had imposed.

But the revolution quickly proved that the "oppositional" bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries—like their richer cousins in the imperialist countries—cannot be counted on in the protracted struggle for national liberation.

The Robelos have joined the Somozas in armed opposition to the Sandinista Revolution. Today, only the workers and peasants will go all the way in erecting an economy free from imperialist exploitation—a collectivized economy in transition to socialism.

The Third American Revolution

But the struggle of the Nicaraguans, and of all the workers and peasants of the world, will not be complete until capitalism has been eliminated in its imperialist heartlands. Is this possible?

The long wave of postwar prosperity in the imperialist countries is over. Depressions have occurred closer in time and deeper in effect. Attempts to export this crisis of overproduction to other lands have resulted in a debt bomb which threatens to bring down the entire international system.

The ruling classes in the richest countries of the world are now required to institute takebacks and austerity. It is absurd to believe that the working class and the oppressed nationalities will bow docilely to this assault.

History has shown that every social system which outlived its usefulness was succeeded by another. Capitalism, having produced its own gravedigger through the concentration and growth of an industrial working class—cannot escape this fate. ■

Who can win the war the politicians lost? Who can succeed where the Pentagon failed? In Sylvester Stallone's latest movie, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, only one man—Rambo—can finish the job America left undone.

Stallone portrays Vietnam veteran John Rambo, freed from prison for a

FILM REVIEW

top-secret mission back to Vietnam to gather evidence that American prisoners of war are still being held captive. "Sir, do we get to win this time?" Rambo inquires of the officer sent to recruit him for this mission.

The United States may not have won the war, but Rambo surely wins the battle as he rages through Vietnam like a one-man army of revenge and destruction.

Rambo hates communists, especially those who've been so audacious as to drive out in defeat the army that he serves. Almost as much does he despise the Bureaucrats From Washington, who undermined the efforts of guys like Rambo to turn Vietnam into a parking lot for U.S. business.

Stallone explains the premise behind Rambo: "How many times in our lives have we strived to go back to a certain situation and strive to rectify all the wrongs? To go back to a war that was lost, and perhaps win a little peace of mind by doing it your way this time."

Everything but flap his ears

Rambo's "way" of doing things consists of killing as many Vietnamese and their Russian cohorts as technically possible in a feature-length film. This he does with machine guns, grenades, bazookas, explosive-tipped arrows, helicopters, knives, etc.

But whatever the weapon, Rambo never misses, which is more than you can say for the Vietnamese and Russians. Every last one of them seems to be a notoriously bad shot. It's a wonder they ever won the war.

Rambo kills snakes with his bare hands, survives tangled parachutes, and propels himself like a rocket from under



Rambo wins the war the U.S. lost

water straight into a Russian helicopter. In another scene he blasts a heavily-armed Russian helicopter to smithereens by faking unconsciousness and then, when the Russians are too close for comfort, sends them with one clean bazooka shot to wherever atheists go when their time is up.

Rambo reacts to electrical torture, leeches, red-hot knives, and grisly Russian sadists the way a less heroic soul might respond to a stubbed toe. In fact, Rambo does everything except flap his ears and fly away. Maybe Stallone restrained himself to avoid comparison with that Disney classic—*Dumbo*.

But don't be misled. As dumb as things get Rambo still reminds us, "I've always believed that the mind is the best weapon."

As the plot thickens, or in this case explodes, this turns out to be one of the more esoteric bits of dialogue in the movie.

Now for the plot

The plot, such as it is, revolves around Rambo's effort to prove that American POWs are still being held in Vietnam. Only he doesn't know that once again the cowardly bureaucrats plan to betray him. Rambo has orders only to photograph POWs and not to "engage the enemy."

But when Rambo actually frees one of the men, the bureaucrat in charge aborts the mission, abandoning Rambo to the "savagely" communists.

The politicians and bureaucrats, you see, aren't interested in freeing POWs.

They want only to let bygones be bygones. If the word got out that there are still POWs in Vietnam, then everyone would supposedly clamor for an armed invasion to free them and—the war would start all over again. Rambo, it seems, would like nothing better.

Naturally Rambo overcomes all obstacles, aided by his trustworthy Vietnamese sidekick, a woman whose eye makeup is as precise as her aim with a machine gun. She wants only to go to America with Rambo and lead "the quiet life."

But in the meantime, at least until she too meets her maker, look out.

Rambo frees the prisoners and returns in triumph to the U.S. base in Thailand. As a finale he sprays machine-gun fire through the office of the bureaucrat who betrayed him.

Helping Uncle Ron

USA TODAY describes Stallone as a "modern John Wayne" whose character, Rambo, "appeals to the re-emerging macho male" and the "national need to reshape Vietnam into a winning experience."

The film is certainly a box-office success, but this seems more a product of the abundance of blood and bombs than some crying need to redefine Vietnam as a "winning experience."

The appeal of this movie for some lies in its fast-paced action, violence, and adventure. There are good guys and bad guys and a hero who doesn't quit.

This is not a movie designed to make you think. The dialogue is sparse and insipid. Rather, Rambo makes his point with guns, glares, and biceps. Especially important points are always made with his shirt off. But this should come as no surprise. A critical, probing discussion of the issues behind the war is hardly the preferred method of those who advocate mindless patriotism.

It is no coincidence that this movie comes along at a time when the Reagan administration is plotting war, anxious to cut through the constraints of the "Vietnam syndrome" that continues to hamstring the opportunity for a full-scale military operation in Central America.

Rambo helps the cause by the way it wraps its action plot around an insidious flag of unquestioning patriotism that never once asks why the United States waged war against the people of Vietnam. ■

George Weissman's life remembered

By CLIFF CONNER

NEW YORK—More than 130 people gathered at the New York Marxist School on May 25 to pay tribute to veteran SWP leader and activist George Lavan Weissman.

The memorial meeting was organized by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (F.I.T.), which asked other organizations to send speakers and messages. Representatives of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and of the Socialist Workers Collective of Toronto addressed the gathering. I spoke on behalf of Socialist Action.

Other speakers included Seva Volkov (Leon Trotsky's grandson), the well-known Marxist scholar Annette Rubenstein, and George's stepson, Timothy Harding. Personal reminiscences were presented by George Saunders, Paul Siegel, and Augusta Trainor.

The most moving tribute, in my opinion, was by Mary Scully, who described George's uncommon ability to use his immense erudition to educate young socialists without patronizing them.

The only sour note of the evening was the absence of the Socialist Workers Party, the organization that George had help to found and had spent most of his life building. Although invited to partic-

ipate, the SWP chose not to. Many SWP members who knew George well live in the New York area, but not a single one attended the meeting.

George Breitman, a representative of the F.I.T. and a friend of Weissman for 40 years, condemned the SWP leaders' boycott of the meeting as well as *The Militant's* hypocritical obituary of its former editor. According to *The Militant*, George Weissman "left" the SWP in 1984. In fact, he was undemocratically expelled from the SWP, along with scores of other loyal party members.

To say that he "left" the party, Breitman remarked, is like those newspaper reports of Black and labor activists who "fell" to their deaths from the upper stories of police buildings. It's a dishonest way to avoid saying whether they jumped or were pushed.

Breitman went on to say:

"*The Militant's* lie is all the more repugnant because it is so blatant, so easy to check and disprove. That is what the recent world congress of the Fourth International did in the month before George's death, when it received the appeals for reinstatement in the SWP by George and other members of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and

Socialist Action.

"The delegates to that congress, from affiliates of the International around the world, checked the facts and by an overwhelming majority rejected the so-called 'split' version presented by the SWP leadership, ruled that George and the other expelled had been unjustly purged, and demanded that the SWP reinstate us."

The message from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International noted Weissman's link with the early days of our movement:

"The Fourth International will remember George Weissman as an outstanding representative of the founding generation of the world

Trotskyist movement. His life is an illustration of how much can be done by devoted and conscious revolutionists acting in accordance with their understanding and their convictions, even when they are only a tiny handful in a world dominated by reaction and unreason.

"Very few in Weissman's time could have lived a more useful or fulfilled life, one more totally dedicated to defending and advancing human dignity."

The SWP's conspicuous absence wasn't able to dampen the spirit of this meeting. That is a positive indication that George Weissman's life and work will not have been in vain. ■

WHERE TO FIND US

Boston Socialist Action
P.O. Box 1046 GMF
Boston, MA 02205

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

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

Buffalo Socialist Action
P.O. Box 275
Buffalo, N.Y. 14207

Los Angeles Socialist Action
P.O. Box 60605
Terminal Annex
Los Angeles, CA 90060

Phoenix Socialist Action
P.O. Box 5161
Phoenix, AZ 85010
(602) 894-0055

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

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

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

U.S. blocks solution to AIDS

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome—AIDS—is an epidemic. Over 10,500 cases have been diagnosed in the United States and over 5000 people have already died. AIDS victims double in numbers every 10 months.

But it is the nature of the disease that makes AIDS a national health crisis. AIDS kills its victims by attacking the body's immune system against disease. Although AIDS is preventable, at the present time it is not survivable.

This is a true emergency, but the U.S. government has acted slowly and inadequately in response. In fact, gay rights organizations and the newly formed Mobilization Against AIDS charge that the federal government is "criminally negligent."

In order to get a broad picture of the AIDS crisis, *Socialist Action* interviewed Paul Boneberg, coordinator of the Mobilization Against AIDS. Boneberg outlined the policies his organization calls for to combat the disease. These include:

- 1) a national commitment to coordinate and fund a program which would set a deadline to find a cure for AIDS;
- 2) a national education program to prevent the spread of AIDS by making people aware that AIDS is preventable and what factors put a person at risk;
- 3) guaranteed adequate services including medical care, housing, and social services for AIDS victims;
- 4) an end to the use of the AIDS crisis to promote anti-gay

"In 48 of 50 states there are no education programs on AIDS."

bigotry or to attack the civil rights of anyone.

Socialist Action asked Boneberg if the current policy of the U.S. government was actually hindering the quest for an AIDS cure. The answer was an emphatic "yes."

Figures for federal spending on the epidemic are revealing. The first two years after AIDS was detected in the United States—1979 and 1980—there was no funding by the federal government. In 1981, however, the government spent \$5 million for research.

"Five million dollars is nothing in terms of medical response to any disease," Boneberg pointed out.

The government spent \$20 million in 1982 and \$50 million the following year. The Reagan administration proposed that they keep funding at \$50 million in 1984 despite the spread of the disease and despite recommendations from their own government researchers that double that figure was needed.

Only after an internal memo from the Health and Human Services Department was leaked on the floor of the U.S. Senate was the AIDS budget brought up to \$94 million for last year.

In the seven-year course of the epidemic, the U.S. government has spent about \$175 million. By contrast, the government spent \$135 million in six weeks in 1976 in response to the swine-flu epidemic.

The dollar figures don't tell the whole story on government inaction, however. AIDS is a preventable disease. According to Boneberg, this fact has been known for several years and



Marchers in San Francisco gay-rights demonstration in July 1984.

"almost every researcher agrees that education—telling people what they can do to put themselves less at risk for getting AIDS—will save many lives."

He emphasized that education about prevention should be a top priority of any national policy relating to AIDS. Yet in 48 out of 50 states there are no educational programs. The city of San Francisco has spent more money on education about how to prevent getting AIDS than the federal government has spent in its entirety.

Boneberg deplored the competition of international researchers in "personal rivalries" for the Nobel Prize. He spoke instead of the need for government-enforced cooperation and coordination among researchers and for five to 10 times the current amount of federal spending for research.

The Mobilization Against AIDS calls for a national "moon launch mentality."

By that they mean a federal commitment to fund research to cure AIDS that is similar in scale to government programs in space and military research.

AIDS is a civil rights issue

Boneberg told *Socialist Action* that gay rights organizations are concerned that AIDS will be used as an excuse to attack the civil rights of gay people and other groups that are traditionally stigmatized.

Although the Mobilization does not oppose the screening of potential donors to blood banks, for example, it does demand that the results remain confidential. Raising this issue is clearly not a scare tactic. The U.S. military already has asked for the names of military blood donors whose blood tests positive for the HTLV-3 antibodies.

The military threw out 5000 people for homosexuality in 1983. Persons testing positive for HTLV-3 antibodies could be assumed to be gay, bisexual, IV drug users, or prostitutes. Without confidentiality, these persons would be open to discrimination by the government, employers, or insurance companies.

So far, however, California is the only state that has a law protecting confidentiality. The California law was passed after prodding by the Mobilization Against Aids.

On May 20 Boneberg met with Dr. James Mason, acting National Director of Health and the number-one person in

the federal government on the AIDS issue. Boneberg told *Socialist Action* that Mason admitted to him that the Reagan administration was considering a quarantine of AIDS patients. Mason revealed that he had been in a meeting that discussed quarantine that very morning.

In response, Mobilization Against AIDS is demanding that the federal government commit itself to oppose any quarantine or internment policy. While several officials have "personally" opposed these extreme measures as being "ridiculous," ineffective, or inappropriate, there is no official policy to this effect.

Boneberg pointed out that the Nazi concentration camps were used to murder homosexuals as well as Jews, communists, and Gypsies. "This is part of the collective memory of the gay community," Boneberg said. "So we are always concerned about issues dealing with internment or quarantine."

Gays are not the only victims

AIDS is not a "gay disease."

In Central Africa, where the disease seems to have begun, AIDS is transmitted heterosexually and its victims are both men and women in equal numbers.

In the United States and Europe, AIDS is also transmitted heterosexually but at a slower rate than among gay men. Boneberg believes that "ultimately, the tragedy alone of AIDS will

"AIDS is not a 'gay disease.'"

mobilize this country" as it spreads to the general population.

"What the gay community is trying to say is 'don't wait,'" Boneberg said. "The broader mainstream of America should recognize the danger to the population as a whole, draw upon the experience of the gay community, and start now to mobilize against the disease."

Mobilization activists believe that Black Americans will be moved to join the fight for a cure because of their concern for the plight of Africans suffering from this disease as well as their concern for the high number of Black Ameri-

cans with AIDS.

"We believe that if this disease had not begun in Africa the international community would have responded differently in terms of trying to find a cure," Boneberg remarked.

A non-partisan approach

The Mobilization Against AIDS is distinguished by a strong non-partisan stance. "Almost no elected officials have a good response to this crisis—including Democrats, Republicans, and independents," Boneberg stressed.

Mobilization Against AIDS has been criticized in some of the gay press for picketing liberals. But the urgency of representing AIDS victims who have a very limited life span has led the organization to see through the lip-service of liberal politicians who promise help "next year."

Boneberg also pointed to the Reagan administration's proposed freeze on AIDS spending in 1986 and to the most recent budget hearing in San Francisco where the Democratic Party-controlled city government did not even put AIDS funding on the agenda.

"We don't see anywhere the appropriate sense of urgency in the political process... and if that means we've got to picket Democrats, then we picket Democrats," Boneberg remarked. "If it means we've got to occupy the offices of Margaret Heckler [head of the Department of Health and Human Services], then we'll occupy her offices."

He mentioned, for example, that nationally no elected officials spoke out in protest at a Houston, Texas, hearing on gay-rights legislation in which participants called for the quarantining of all gay men, bisexuals, and lesbians.

The approach that the Mobilization activists take is one of demanding government action on all levels, administrative and legislative, without regard for whether Republicans or Democrats may be in control.

In this way, they are trying to exert maximum pressure and win maximum support from the general population for a national program of research, education, treatment, and services that can find a cure and put an end to AIDS.

Mobilization Against AIDS may be contacted at 335 Noe St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Tel. (415) 431-4660. ■