

A Socialist ACTION

FORUM:
Socialist debates
State Department
on Central America
(See pages 7-9)

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50 cents

U.S. steps up war against Nicaragua

In a series of media "leaks" and protests by prominent Democratic and Republican politicians in recent weeks, the hand of U. S. imperialism as instigator and paymaster of the counterrevolutionary forces in Central America has been revealed more clearly than ever. A wide spectrum of ruling class political opinion—including even arch-conservative Republican Senator Barry Goldwater—was compelled to protest the mining of Nicaraguan waters.

A report by Joel Brinkley in the April 22 *New York Times* confirms the central role of the U.S. government in the "contra" war against Nicaragua. Brinkley charges: "The Central Intelligence Agency has been directing the military strategies of a Nicaraguan rebel group based in this country by threatening to withhold aid if the insurgents failed to pursue the agency's objectives,

Pentagon in position to assume combat role

guerrilla officers, Costa Rican government officials and diplomats here say?"

The Brinkley story gives the details: The U.S. government, through the CIA, provides the bulk of the finances, military, and other supplies. These are transported by World War II vintage Douglas DC-3s to ARDE, the Nicaraguan "contra" force based in the jungles of Costa Rica.

ARDE has indicated its intention to push toward the Rama Road, aiming to cut this key highway between Managua, the Nicaraguan capital, and the Atlantic port of El Bluff. Brinkley reveals the CIA as the author of this scenario. He writes, "The agency warned the rebels the aid would not continue unless they captured a Nicaraguan port, cut off the Rama Road, ... and set up a provisional government in the captured territory."

Brinkley goes on to report that the CIA maintains dictatorial control over the "contras" by placing "agents or trained mercenaries in key positions." The "contras" claim that "the mining of the ports was 'a 100 percent Nicaraguan operation,'" Brinkley continues, "even though the CIA has acknowledged to Congress that their own employees, Latin Americans not from

Nicaragua, were responsible for the mining?"

The April 23 *New York Times* continues its series of revealing reports received directly from government and Pentagon sources. "The Pentagon is now in a position to assume a combat role in Central America should President Reagan give the order, in the view of military specialists and members of Congress," says an article by reporter Hedrick Smith. The sabre-rattling report goes on to detail the elaborate preparations established for a swift deployment of U.S. troops in Central America.

Counterrevolutionary aims

The main aim of U.S. policy in Central America at this time is clearly to contain the revolution within its present limits. This minimum *immediate* aim is required to gain time for ultimately destroying the revolutionary forces in Central America. The preferred method for achieving this end falls short of the direct intervention of U.S. troops.

In the final analysis, however, the U.S. government will go as far as necessary to achieve its counterrevolutionary aims, including maximum commitment of military power. The only real

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Socialist Action Joe Ryan

World debt bomb still ticks

By HAYDEN PERRY

For a few days last March, the international banking fraternity went into a state of shock. "We are on the edge of the precipice looking into the abyss," wailed one banker. What set the alarm bells ringing was the announcement by Argentina that it might not be able to make the latest interest payment on its foreign debt.

Why should this cause such panic? Bankers have not panicked when laid-off workers have failed to make installment payments. They have simply seized the worker's car or home, and put him down as a poor credit risk.

In former times even defaults by Latin American countries have not caused undue alarm. Failing all else, the bankers could call on the U.S. Marines to serve as a strong-arm collection agency. In 1915 Haiti was slow in paying. The Marines invaded and took control of the customs service. For 20 years they administered Haiti's taxes and saw that U.S. banks got first call on the receipts. Other Latin American countries have, in the past, been forced to pay up through similar gangster tactics.

The crisis today is different. The bankers know that sending the Marines down to Argentina would not get their money for them. International finance is far more complex today, and the debts involved are a thousand times greater. Argentina owes \$47 billion;

Mexico owes \$89 billion; and Brazil, \$93 billion. The total debt for Latin America is \$360 billion. Adding in the rest of the Third World and the workers' states in Eastern Europe, the total debt reaches the staggering sum of \$689 billion: \$400 billion of it owed directly to U.S. and European banks.

This incredible total is spiraling upward as loans are added to loans, and bank charges run into the millions.

Mexico has to pay \$250 million in interest every week, without reducing its debt a single peso. Argentina owed \$500 million on a single installment.

The origin of these staggering debts goes back to 1945, when the U.S. ruling class emerged the victor in World War II and proceeded to make the world safe for U.S. capital. They were barred from

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Las Vegas unions still out

By NAT WEINSTEIN

On May 4, about 2800 of over 17,000 striking Las Vegas unionists returned to work. Since April 2, members of four hotel and restaurant unions have been on strike against 32 resort hotels in Las Vegas. Union negotiators also reached tentative agreements with Caesars Palace and two downtown hotels. The two Hilton hotels have traditionally served as pattern setters for the industry there.

Striking hotel and casino workers in Las Vegas have contributed to the mounting evidence of a new mood of combativity developing in the ranks of organized labor. Union officials estimated that some 7,500 strikers and their supporters participated in a mass solidarity march led by United Farm Workers leader, Cesar Chavez, on April 14.

The new mood was evinced by the slogan most often chanted: "Ready to fight? Damn right!"

The unions, however, faced a profit-hungry and determined adversary who is being given effective aid and assistance from the courts and cops. The striking workers, victims of violent attacks from "security guards," have been harassed by the cops. There have been over 700 arrests of strikers while strikebreakers have been slapped on the wrist.

The company violence has been so flagrant it moved Nevada District Judge J. Charles Thompson to comment: "It was gruesome to see." The judge hypocritically followed this observation with the issuance of a temporary restraining

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...U.S. threat against Nicaragua

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restraint on imperialism is the deep anti-war sentiment of the American people and the fear that a major U.S. invasion of Central America would unleash a powerful revolutionary upsurge in the entire Latin American continent that would destabilize capitalist domination there and in the imperialist centers themselves.

The stakes in this struggle cannot be overstated. U.S. imperialism's strategy of utilizing a minimum of military force backed up by a demonstrated readiness to unleash its vast military power embodies a frightening logic. The threat must be believable to work; and to be believable, it must be real!

Interlaced with the media reports is the question of mounting opposition within the ruling class to "Reagan's policies." This milktoast opposition is obviously intended to divert mass opposition to U.S. imperialist policy into safe channels—mainly toward supporting the Democratic Party wing of American imperialism.

The pattern emerging is all too reminiscent of the "referendum against war" strategy employed in the 1964 presidential election that successfully diverted opposition to U.S. intervention in Vietnam into support for President Lyndon B. Johnson, the "peace" candidate. (Even before being elected, Johnson launched a major escalation of imperialist intervention in Vietnam. This was carried out under the legal authority of his "Tonkin Bay" resolution adopted almost unanimously by both houses of Congress and silently ignored by advocates of the election of "peace candidate" Johnson.)

The question is not whether or not sectors of the ruling class genuinely disagree with current policy. Divisions within the ruling classes certainly exist. It is not simply a game acted out to fool those who are opposed to imperialist policies. But these divisions are allowed to surface—and at times are even given conscious encouragement—so long as the millions who are opposed to these policies can be contained within the bounds of support for overall U.S. capi-

talist domestic and foreign policy.

All Democrat and Republican "opponents" to Reagan's policies stand on the defense of American (capitalist) interests at home and abroad. They all begin from the premise that "our" interests begin with maintaining the profitability of U.S. industry at home. And this inexorably leads all capitalist factions to defend the profitability of "our" capitalist investments in Central America and everywhere else.

All capitalist opponents of Reagan's policies support the war budget—with proposals for only minor reductions of "wasteful" expenditures. Even the Congressional vote against the Reagan request for the *additional* military supplies to El Salvador has had no effect in halting continued shipments of the tools of murder to the bloodthirsty Salvadoran capitalists.

The Democratic Party "opposition" quietly, but meaningfully, offers no resistance to the "temporary" transfer of \$35 million from Pentagon "contingency" funds toward the same end as originally proposed. And aside from the dubious effect of the grandstand opposition to Reagan's supplementary aid to the Salvadoran junta, no voice is raised from any pro-capitalist sector against the general financial support provided to the Salvadoran government, without which the dictatorship there would collapse in short order. This includes all three Democratic Party presidential candidates, as well as all the loyal opposition to the current imperialist policies among the two parties of big business.

The capitalists can be divided. But not by supporting one faction against the other. This puts real opponents of U.S. imperialism within the straitjacket of general support for "American" domestic and foreign interests. The capitalist class is divided only by effective anti-capitalist *action!*

The military and political successes of the revolutionary forces in Central America *divides* the capitalists—both within the belly of the monster, and between the U.S. imperialist master and their colonial vassals in Latin America.

Adversity and defeats, in general, divide classes—each faction seeking to blame the other.

Mass Action

The Political Committee of Socialist Action calls upon all those opposed to American imperialist policy in Central America to unite around a program of independent action in the streets against all factions of the twin parties of capitalism, be they Democrats or Republicans. We call upon all antiwar, anti-intervention, and anti-nuclear advocates to organize a national conference in the present emergency to plan mass actions to oppose U.S. intervention and defend the right of the Central American people to determine their own affairs.

The impact of tens of thousands and even millions of people marching in the streets in opposition to imperialist policies cannot be overstated. This kind of

NO VIETNAM WAR



IN CENTRAL AMERICA

mass action can push the ruling class into a corner, where real divisions among them will certainly emerge.

It will not require tens of thousands of deaths of our sons and brothers, as in Vietnam, to impel masses of American people into opposition to capitalist murder for profit in Central America. The experience of Vietnam has created a lasting antiwar sentiment in this country. Moreover, the capacity of U.S. capitalism to grant crumbs off the table of imperialist plunder to buy the active support of the union bureaucracy and a layer of the working class for its imperialist policy has been seriously reduced, if not virtually ended.

In today's context of an unrelenting

attack on American workers, only the most craven supporters of imperialism within the labor bureaucracy dare openly support U.S. policy. The attacks against working people will go on. The opposition to these attacks at home and against the military attacks on our sisters and brothers in Central America will mount and ultimately merge into an international struggle against the worldwide capitalist system.

The planned demonstrations at the Democratic Party convention scheduled for July in San Francisco, however, are neither subjectively nor objectively directed against U.S. governmental policy. These demonstrations are openly and expressly organized to appeal to the Democratic Party delegates and to the competing presidential candidates to adopt progressive positions—including anti-interventionist ones.

The demonstrations amount to an appeal to a wing of the twin parties of capitalism in the United States to *modify* its anti-working class and imperialist policies. The demonstrations are part and parcel of the utopian effort to reform the Democratic Party, transforming it into an instrument to be used against the class interests of the capitalist rulers.

Such an appeal to the Democratic Party convention furthers the illusion that this political instrument of capitalism can be meaningfully altered by the adoption of progressive planks in the party platform. Such lobbying of the Democratic Party differs qualitatively from a demonstration against the government and its institutions.

In the former case, a promise is solicited from a *contender* for governmental power; in the latter, an action is demanded from the *government in power*. The appeal to the Democrats is the ill-disguised road to supporting their candidates in the elections. Such electoral support to the Democrats gives political cover to these imperialist wolves dressed in sheep's clothing, and helps pave the way for their counterrevolutionary intervention in Central America. ■

POLITICAL COMMITTEE
SOCIALIST ACTION

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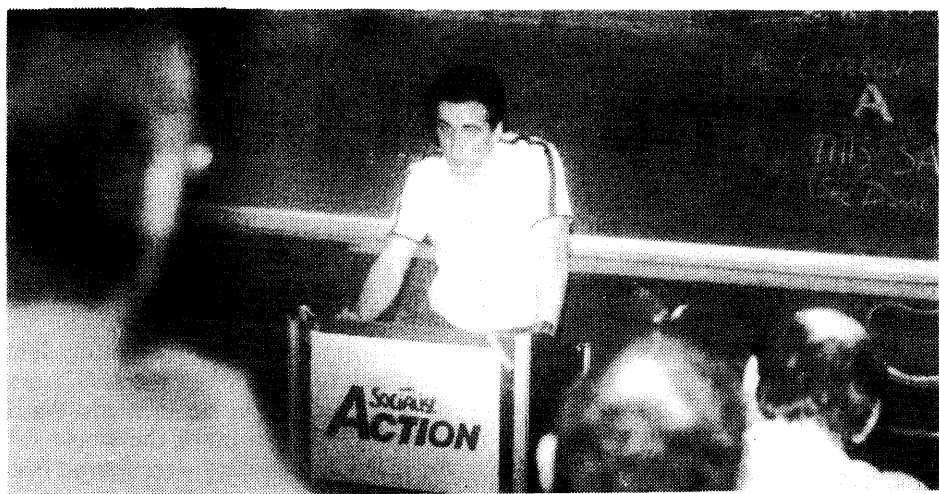
Since our founding conference in October 1983, our organization, Socialist Action, has made great progress in establishing a new newspaper and building an organization of socialist activists in 17 U.S. cities.

We are enthusiastic participants in the trade union, antiwar, women's and Black liberation movements. In all arenas of our work, we aspire to join with working people to build a powerful movement independent of the capitalist parties.

Because we were undemocratically expelled from the Socialist Workers Party for our defense of the program and traditions of the SWP and Fourth International, we have organized ourselves as a public faction of the SWP. A key component of our struggle today is the intransigent defense of the political principles around which the Trotskyist movement was founded in this country.

In February our first National Committee meeting decided to launch a \$16,000 fund drive to finance our growing activities, especially our burgeoning publishing efforts. We have just published two new *Socialist Action Information Bulletins* which contain the major resolutions on international questions adopted by our founding conference (\$2 each bulletin.)

In addition to our newspaper and information bulletins, we expect to begin publication of a theoretical magazine later this year. Please help to ensure that our expansion campaign continues to be a success. Send your contributions and subscriptions to Socialist Action, 3435 Army St., Rm 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.



Wojciech Kardaszewicz, a Polish student at the University of Pittsburgh addressing one of the sessions of the three-day Socialist Action Educational Conference held in Pittsburgh, Pa., on April 29. "Solidarity is not a pro-capitalist movement as it is often portrayed here in the West," said Kardaszewicz. "In fact, it is pro-socialist." Other panels focused on the labor movement in the U.S. today, Marxism and intellectuals, women in the global economy, and the situation in Lebanon today.

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Rosario Ibarra, renowned Mexican human rights activist, and Rosa Maria Rivera, an exiled Salvadoran trade unionist, speaking to 200 people in San Francisco on April 19 on the second stop of Rosario's six-city tour.

Rosario tour a success

By GEORGE CRANSTON

"The United Nations Human Rights Commission has taken Honduras, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico off the list of countries which practice 'disappearances,'" explained Rosario Ibarra, who represented Mexico's National Front Against Repression. She was speaking to an audience at Rice University in Houston, Texas, the final event of a six-city tour of the United States.

"Peru was removed from the list," she said, "because U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar is Peruvian." She added, "Venezuela and Colombia, because they are Contadoran nations; Mexico because Miguel de la Madrid went to South America to help Argentina pay its debt; and Honduras because it has thousands of U.S. troops on its coast." With her arms characteristically raised in the air, she continued, "For reasons of political and economic convenience, they have become complicit with these regimes which practice political disappearances."

Rosario spoke in similar terms to hundreds of people who attended rallies in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Chicago, and New York. She also spoke at ten universities, and was interviewed by dozens of newspapers, radio, and television reporters.

Her U.S. tour gained over 150 prominent national sponsors. Socialist Action

members in each city were active in helping the Rosario Ibarra Tour Committee to publicize the events.

Rosario's message was clear: The Mexican economy is in crisis with no way out. Opposition is growing to the Mexican government's austerity policies, and the Mexican government, which has a history of repression against political dissidents, is resorting more and more to torture, disappearances, and jailings of anti-government activists.

Rosario described the successes of the National Front Against Repression. The FNCR has won the release of 35 of 38 activists who have been disappeared since the beginning of Miguel de la Madrid's term in office. Overall, the FNCR has obtained the release of one hundred disappeared persons.

Rosario brought with her a plea for international pressure to be brought to bear against the Mexican government's policy of repression. *Socialist Action* urges its readers to send telegrams and letters demanding the release of political prisoners, the presentation alive of the disappeared, and an end to political repression in Mexico to Lic. Miguel de la Madrid, Presidente de Mexico, Los Pinos, Mexico D. F., Mexico. Copies may be sent to FNCR Medellin 366 Altos, Col. Roma Sur, 06700 Mexico D.F., Mexico.

Mark Silverman interview: INS deports refugees

The following interview with Mark Silverman was conducted by *Socialist Action* correspondent Anne Menasche. Silverman is coordinator of the Asylum Project of the San Francisco Lawyer's Committee on Urban Affairs. The project represents Salvadorans in INS custody. He is also staff attorney at the Immigration Law Clinic at Golden Gate University Law School. In addition, he is active in the Coalition for Refugee Justice, a San Francisco-based civil rights organization which was recently formed to block the deportation of Central American refugees.

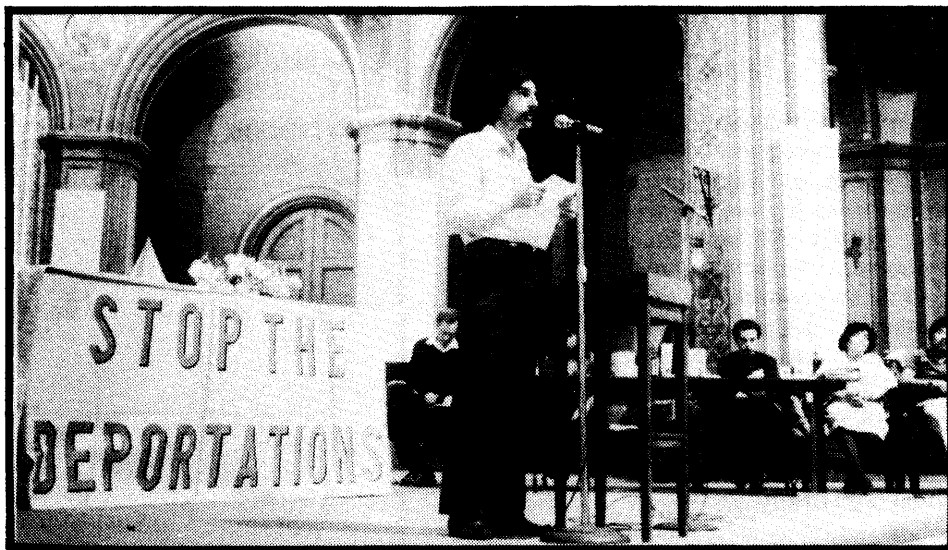
The effect of a high bond is to put enormous pressure on the Salvadorans to agree to be deported even if they have a strong case for asylum. Their choice is between a strong probability of imprisonment or death in El Salvador, and the certainty of a prolonged detention in this country if they apply for asylum.

S. A.: Why is the INS doing this?

Silverman: The INS says it is saving money on incarceration costs. It costs \$55 per day to incarcerate someone in Oakland, and only \$17 per day in Florence. But it is no coincidence that the INS chose a place as a detention site that is in the middle of nowhere. A significant factor for the INS is the U.S. foreign policy considerations. The U.S. government does not want attention called to incarcerated Central American refugees. The U.S. government has not—and will not—recognize the valid-

Socialist Action: The Immigration and Nationalization Service (INS) has instituted a new policy toward undocumented persons arrested in Northern California. Could you explain what that policy is?

Silverman: The INS is now transfer-



May 12 rally organized by Coalition for Refugee Justice.

ring persons apprehended within our district—covering the area from Fresno to the Oregon border plus parts of Nevada—to areas outside the district for processing of their cases. We at the Asylum Project learned about it in February when we noticed a dramatic drop in our caseload for a two-week period. Our caseload dropped from three or four cases a week to no cases.

S. A.: Where are these people being sent?

Silverman: To facilities in Florence, Ariz.; Las Vegas, Nev., and El Centro, Calif. Florence is the site of a former concentration camp where Japanese-Americans were incarcerated during World War II. Lately, they stopped sending people to Florence because of space problems. But this is only a temporary reprieve. They'll put them all on planes to Central America and clean Florence out pretty quickly.

S. A.: Are other districts affected by this policy?

Silverman: In Los Angeles, they've also been sending people to Florence. We believe that in other areas of the country the same policy of removing people from their communities for processing is being carried out.

S. A.: What is the effect of removing undocumented persons to these isolated sites?

Silverman: It denies them access to adequate legal representation and isolates them from friends, family, and support systems they have available here where they live. The result for Salvadoran refugees is that they are denied a fair opportunity to exercise their right to apply for political asylum.

Florence is a small isolated town 70 miles from Phoenix. The only program there to help Salvadorans is based in Phoenix and has only one staff attorney and one trained paralegal. They simply cannot handle this volume of cases.

In addition, when refugees are removed to places like Florence, they are unable to show community ties, and are therefore impaired in their ability to make a presentation at the bond hearing. The result is that in Florence, the average bond is three times as much as

ity of more than a token number of Salvadoran asylum applications.

The State Department's own figures indicate that negative recommendations are given in 97 percent of asylum applications. This is because if the United States were to recognize the validity of these applications, it would be an admission that the government which it is arming to the teeth in El Salvador is nothing but a group of butchers and assassins.

S. A.: Can you estimate how many Salvadorans there are in this country?

Silverman: It has been estimated that 500,000 Salvadorans are residing in the United States; an unknown number of whom are here illegally. Probably the majority reside in California, principally in Los Angeles, but large numbers also live in San Francisco and the Central Valley.

S. A.: How many of these people would face persecution if they were deported to El Salvador?

Silverman: Any young Salvadoran or Salvadoran of peasant background faces the possibility of political persecution and imprisonment by the government, or death at the hands of the Death Squad. No matter what one's political stand, he or she may be perceived as a guerrilla supporter, particularly if the person lives in an area where there is a lot of support for the FMLN.

A number of our clients have had immediate family members killed by the Death Squad. One Salvadoran had the letters "EM" which stands for *Esquadron de la Muerte* (Death Squad) branded on his forehead.

S. A.: Is anything being done to fight INS policy?

Silverman: Legal action is being contemplated to fight the new INS policy if it otherwise cannot be satisfactorily resolved. Even if victory comes out of the courtroom, in reality it will be because of public outrage mobilized by groups such as the Coalition for Refugee Justice.

For more information, write the Coalition for Refugee Justice, 1187 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109, or call (415) 621-1155.

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Coalition pushes antiwar referendum

By JOSEPH AUCIELLO

BOSTON—Over 50 antiwar activists met last April 21 in the office of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, Local 26, to launch a Central America referendum campaign. Organized by members of the Central American Solidarity Association (CASA), this initial meeting brought together different organizations and individuals throughout the Boston area, including religious, labor and community groups.

After a thorough and lively discussion, the meeting decided the referendum should consist of the following four points:

- Immediate withdrawal of all troops and military advisers from El Salvador and Honduras.
- End all military aid to El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.
- End all aid to the forces fighting against the government of Nicaragua.
- Redirect funds allocated for such purposes to the domestic economy to create jobs and improve services.

The conference also decided to gather the 200 signatures necessary to place the referendum on the ballot in each of the state representative districts of Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and Chelsea.

Local antiwar activists want to use

the November elections to mobilize support against U.S. policy in Central America. If the referendum campaign is successful, Boston area residents will, for the first time, be able to go to the polls next fall and vote against Reagan's war policies.

Not since the Vietnam Referendum Campaign in 1970 have Massachusetts citizens had the opportunity to vote against the federal government's intervention in foreign countries. While the proposed referendum is non-binding—local elected officials are not required to support the position established by majority vote—the referendum will allow for the first direct expression of mass antiwar sentiment in the elections.

But the importance of the referendum is not merely in numbers and votes. For local activists, gathering signatures to place the referendum on the ballot is only the first step in an ongoing effort. In a leaflet circulated to build the April 21 meeting, CASA mem-

bers outlined their strategy:

This referendum campaign is a tool to do educational outreach and community organizing around the issue of Central America. It will enable us to (1) educate thousands of voters; (2) involve new people who have not yet been active on this issue; (3) broaden the movement against intervention by reaching out to new constituencies; (4) strengthen the connections between different groups working on this issue; and (5) create more favorable publicity for this issue.

Petitioning in the districts began April 28 and should be completed shortly. Further meetings will determine the next steps, but it is likely that fundraising, publicity and outreach work will be a priority. Raising money to continue the effort, which has begun, will be especially important. Anyone in the Boston area who can help by giving time or money should contact CASA at 1151 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138, or phone (617) 492-8699. ■

...Debt bomb

(continued from page 1)

the Soviet Union and China, but they were determined to make it possible for U.S. goods and capital to flow to any other part of the world where the profits were highest. All impediments to their commerce must be swept away.

One impediment was the poorer countries' lack of money. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were set up in 1945 to meet this problem. All countries were invited to kick in funds for these international lending institutions, but control has remained firmly in North American hands.

The United States has used its control to see that no "unworthy" country gets any loans. It vetoed a loan to Grenada for building an airport and stopped a loan to Nicaragua for building roads. Its veto power has also been used to force Third World countries to serve U.S. economic interests instead of their own.

This means that no loans can go to projects that compete with U.S. exports; no country can restrict the flow of capital in or out; no serious tariff barriers can be erected to protect native industries. In the Philippines 60 percent of the textile industry went bankrupt and 100,000 workers lost their jobs when the World Bank insisted that barriers to textile imports be removed. In the U.S. world scheme, the Philippines and other Third World countries are to be areas of cheap labor for assembling calculators, tape recorders, and other products for Japanese and American entrepreneurs.

For 30 years, while Europe and America prospered, the Third World sank more deeply into debt. Then in the 1970s the situation of these impoverished countries moved from serious to critical. The rise in the price of oil pushed the underdeveloped countries to the point of desperation. They had no money to pay the huge new oil bills. They had to borrow again.

Borrowing more money was no problem: European and American banks were bulging with OPEC oil money. In 1972 the OPEC countries got \$24 billion for their oil; in 1982 they received \$230 billion. When the oil sheiks deposited this money, the bankers were forced to lend it out at the best possible interest rates.

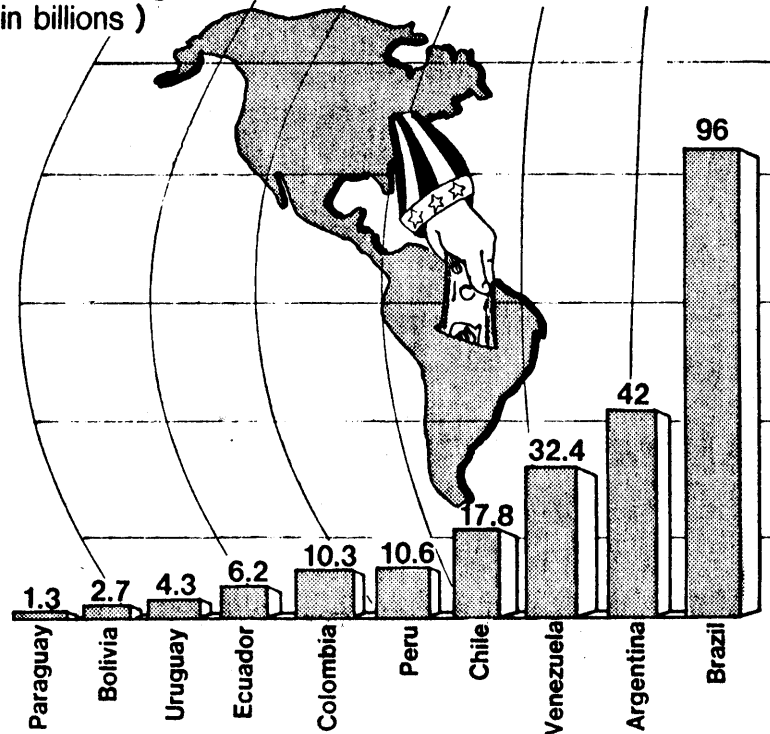
Desperate Third World countries could be forced to pay almost any rate of interest. So the bankers literally shoved out the money to these impecunious borrowers—at the highest interest rates and millions in service charges.

Mexico's foreign debt went from \$40 billion in 1980 to \$80 billion in 1982. In two years Argentina's debt jumped from \$13.7 billion to \$40 billion in 1982. Poland increased its borrowing from \$10 billion in 1976 to \$27 billion in 1981.

Then in 1980 recession struck, push-

Source: U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America, Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates

Debt-laden South America
(Total foreign debt of some South American countries, in billions)



ing down the price of Third World products to the point of bankruptcy for the producers. At the same time the price of oil dropped, cutting off the flow of OPEC funds to American banks. The wild spending spree was over. It was time to start collecting.

But nearly every Third World country is technically bankrupt—there is no money in the till. It is absolutely impossible for them to pay off the \$400 billion they owe the banks. But the bankers cannot accept that fact. To write off \$400 billion in loans as uncollectible would make the worldwide banking structure collapse like a house of cards. The great crash of 1929 would seem like just a fender bender in comparison.

Now the IMF comes to the aid of the bankers. It makes more loans to the debtor countries so that they can make their interest payments and the bankers can cover up the fact that the debts are uncollectible. Meanwhile, the bankers search for some way to load the whole debt onto the taxpayers. As a step in that direction, last September the IMF was given \$8.5 billion of U.S. taxpayers' money.

The IMF loans come with heavy strings attached. The borrowing government must squeeze every last ounce of value out of its people to repay the voracious bankers. This means freezing wages, raising taxes, eliminating subsidies that keep basic food prices down, and devaluing the currency, thus raising prices and lowering the standard of living of the poor below the subsistence level. All this to keep the country on a merry-go-round of increasing debt and increasing austerity, with no end in sight.

The reality of the situation is becoming clear to the people of Latin America. Workers ask, "Why should we starve so the New York bankers can get fat?" Government leaders ask, "How far and for how long can we squeeze the masses before they revolt?" For President Raul Alfonsin of Argentina this was a vital question. He has replaced the generals with civilian rule, and the workers are expecting some improvement, not more austerity. Argentina's inflation rate is 450 percent!

This was the thinking behind Argentina's hesitation about making its last

interest payment. The bankers had refused its request for a lower interest rate on the loan: To drop the interest rate by a single point would cost the banks \$500 million a year in profit. Argentina had some clout, however. It could threaten the rickety debt structure by going into default.

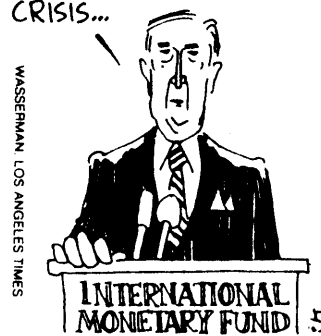
But Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil—themselves heavily in debt—were not ready to bring the structure tumbling down. They persuaded Argentina to accept a very complicated series of loans that would avert the immediate crisis. Argentina did get a lower interest note on this loan, but it agreed to go back to the IMF and the latter's harsh terms for further financing.

The bankers are sighing with relief. But this deal averted only a single payment crisis with a single debtor nation. What happens when the next payment is due? What happens when the next country says it cannot pay up? This time four debtor nations collaborated to help Argentina make a payment. Next time they may form a united front to present their demands on their creditors.

As capitalist politicians, the Third World leaders may only ask for better terms for their indebtedness. But getting better terms will not be easy since the bankers do not want to sacrifice any of their profits by lowering interest rates. In fact, interest rates are on the rise. And a new wave of protectionism threatens to shut out even more Third World exports from access to the world market. Quick fixes such as the Argentina deal offer no long-term solution, but only prolong the agony.

But the workers and peasants of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, squeezed beyond desperation, are beginning to demand justice. The Dominican Republic has been shaken in recent weeks by several days of protest and street battles over increases in the price of basic foodstuffs imposed under the terms of an IMF loan. The masses of the underdeveloped world have no interest in more loans of this type. Scarcely a dollar of the billions borrowed have trickled down to them. They can gain only by declaring the loans null and void and using their national resources and labor power for themselves. The possibility of such a step is what gives the bankers sleepless nights. ■

THE ONLY WAY THIRD WORLD NATIONS CAN WEATHER THEIR CURRENT DEBT CRISIS...



IS BY CUTTING OFF IMPORTS AND INCREASING EXPORTS



HOW CAN COUNTRIES INCREASE EXPORTS IF NO ONE IMPORTS?



IT'S NOT OUR ROLE TO MAKE SPECIFIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



Jim Lafferty interview: Non-registrants defy draft law

The following interview with Jim Lafferty was conducted in New York on April 25, 1984, by Alan Benjamin. Lafferty is presently the attorney for Dan Rutt, a young man accused of failing to register for the draft. An antidraft lawyer since the 1960s, Lafferty was a coordinator of the National Peace Action Coalition against the Vietnam war (NPAC), and until recently has been a leader of the Detroit chapter of the Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD).

Socialist Action: How have you defended Dan Rutt in the courts given that he has been issued all the warnings and has refused to register for the draft?

Lafferty: I represent Dan Rutt on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). We raised a number of challenges to the draft registration law and the prosecutions under it. First, the regulations had not been properly promulgated. This was not just some technical argument. We objected that the public hadn't had adequate input into the legislation.

We also said that the law is unconstitutional because it makes no provision for classification after a citizen has registered. In the case of Dan Rutt, it provided no opportunity for him to secure a conscientious objector exemption after he had registered. This means that if he did register, he would have to remain on a list of those arguably ready and willing to serve—contrary to his religious beliefs.

Finally we raised the argument that he was being prosecuted through a scheme that was constitutionally defective because out of the millions who hadn't registered, there was selective prosecution of only those who had used their first amendment right to speak out against registration.

S. A.: How did these objections stand up in court?

Lafferty: The judges in Michigan have ruled against us on the first three objections. However, there have been favorable rulings on these issues in other cases around the country.

S. A.: What is the next step?

Lafferty: There will be what is called an evidentiary hearing which precedes a trial—if a trial is to be held. We won the right to that hearing by proving to the judge that Rutt had been discriminated against for exercising his first amendment rights. A precedent was set when the conviction of Mark Elden Schmucker was reversed in Cleveland on similar grounds.

S. A.: So you are optimistic about the outcome of this case?

Lafferty: There have been some interesting developments in this case. As part of our preparation, we asked for documents that the government held. Among them were 25 documents that we believed were in the possession of the White House. We believed they would reveal White House involvement in selective prosecution of non-registrants. If we could show that the White House intervened in the prosecution of non-registrants, it would prove selective prosecution.

S. A.: Did you get the papers?

Lafferty: No. A judge in Michigan had subpoenaed the documents and read them. He said we already had the bulk of the information in the papers. But even without the documents we have an advantage over the government.

S. A.: What is that?

Lafferty: In the evidentiary hearing the burden of proof is on the government. They have to prove that Dan Rutt was not singled out for selective prosecution. We plan to call about 12 witnesses. Among them will be White House Counsellor Ed Meese and Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger. That's not just a grandstand play on our part. Through the documents that we



have looked at, we have in fact discovered that each of those officials intervened in the prosecutions of non-registrants. This is selective prosecution and is unconstitutional.

S. A.: There have been 16 prosecutions of non-registrants. Do you expect to see mass arrests in the near future?

Lafferty: We have to look at the context in which draft registration was reinstated in 1980. It was promulgated but not really enforced. Instead, the government indulged in a very expensive campaign of publicity. They had entertainers who had spots on the radio to urge youth to sign up. But from 800,000 to one million failed to do so.

S. A.: What did the government do about these men defying the law?

Lafferty: They did not go after one million, but instituted a policy of passive enforcement. This meant the government would only prosecute cases that came to its attention—people like Ben Sasway or David Waithe, who notified the government that they hadn't registered, or people who were political or religious activists or who spoke at rallies or wrote letters to their Congresspersons. And even of this number not all are prosecuted. Of several hundred brought to the attention of the government, only 16 have been taken to court. These have all been political activists who have publicly expressed their views.

S. A.: Why has the government been so slow to jail men who defy the law?

Lafferty: Several reasons. Prosecuting all one million non-registrants

would overwhelm the legal system. Normally, federal indictments total only 5,000 a year. There are only 8,700 federal prison beds, all full. So the government could not jail all the non-registrants.

S. A.: Does this mean the government has given up on registration?

Lafferty: No. They are tracking down non-registrants through government computers. They are cross-checking drivers' licenses, social security cards, and other personal records. Then they send a series of letters to those who have not registered. Each letter is more threatening than the last. Finally the non-registrant gets a letter from the district attorney in his community.

S. A.: Has this tactic had any results?

Lafferty: Some men have signed up, but many have not been intimidated.

S. A.: Why is this?

Lafferty: The government has not followed up with indictments. They lost the David Waithe case. Convictions have been followed by light sentences. CARD started an anti-intimidation campaign. It put out literature that pointed out that if you failed to register and just kept quiet, your chances of being indicted were—to quote the U.S. Justice Department—"about the same as being struck by lightning." We were in the front pages of the newspapers in many places in the country.

S. A.: Couldn't the government do anything about this campaign of defiance?

Pierre Frank: 1905-1984

Pierre Frank, a founder of the Fourth International and secretary to Leon Trotsky, died on April 18, 1984. A leader of the French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, he was in the thick of working class struggles for over 60 years.

Pierre Frank was born in Paris in 1905. He joined the French Communist Party as a young trade union activist in 1925. Five years later, he was expelled from the party for his work in editing a journal that supported the revolutionary program of Leon Trotsky. In 1930 Frank helped to found the first Trotskyist organization in France—the Ligue Communiste.

Frank was imprisoned at the time of the Nazi invasion, but escaped. He was arrested again in England in 1940, and remained in a British detention camp for close to five years.

After World War II, Frank played a key role in reassembling and training a revolutionary cadre in Europe. His party-building work was essential in helping the French Trotskyists to win a new generation of youth out of the 1968 revolutionary upsurge.

Frank placed the Fourth International at the center of his activity. He served in the leadership of the world Trotskyist movement until the end of his life. Socialist Action salutes comrade Pierre Frank, and we send our revolutionary solidarity to the French section of the Fourth International, the LCR. ■

Lafferty: They had Congress pass the Solomon Amendment that said you had to prove you had registered for the draft to get student loans. Even women students must sign a form saying that they have registered or that they are not required to do so. The Solomon Amendment has already been challenged as unconstitutional in a case out in Minnesota. The court accepted the argument that the legislature in essence created the crime and the punishment without benefit of a trial and due process.

S. A.: Has it had much affect on registration?

Lafferty: Only limited. Only college students are affected. Well-to-do students don't need the loans. Besides, there are not so many federal loans around any more.

S. A.: How much effect do your court cases have on the fight against registration and the draft?

Lafferty: Court victories alone will never stop the government instituting a military draft. Courts may find the whole present registration procedure unconstitutional. The government would just rewrite the law to overcome legal objections. But still court fights are useful. They keep the issue before the public. It has been a constant element while the antidraft movement has had its ups and downs.

S. A.: Why do we hear little protest against registration right now?

Lafferty: Registration has not been followed by a draft, and the threat of prosecution has not seemed imminent. In a way, our victories on the legal front have taken some steam out of mass protests.

S. A.: Yet registration and the draft are still threats. What do you think it will take to stop them?

Lafferty: In my opinion there will not be a strong movement to end registration and stop the draft until there is further escalation of the war in Central America by the government. That is the irony of it. If you look back at the Vietnam experience, there was a draft before the escalation of the war but there was little protest against it. But when the draftees began coming back in body bags, then the antidraft movement grew. The antidraft movement became a large component of the antiwar movement.

S. A.: How does this apply to the present situation?

Lafferty: If we can't end U.S. involvement in Central America, the war will escalate and a draft will be necessary to supply the troops. U.S. military forces are stretched too thin around the world. A draft instituted to feed a war in Central America will generate the antidraft sentiment. Of course, if we can stop intervention in Central America we can head off the draft. Meanwhile draft-age youth do not see the war as an immediate issue that affects them, and so they are not engaging in mass protest over registration. ■

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After U.S. Marines pull out:

Syria props up Lebanese regime

By RALPH SCHOENMAN

"The United States will never suffer in Lebanon a defeat such as was inflicted on the French in Dien Bien Phu, because the French had nothing like our New Jersey."

These words were spoken by Ronald Reagan in February 1983, only one year before the U.S. Marines were driven out of Lebanon. In recalling Dien Bien Phu, the debacle which effectively ended French rule in Vietnam, Reagan brought to mind Nixon's recommendation in 1954 that the United States supply nuclear weapons to prevent a French defeat. Indeed, as the Lebanese army of Amin Gemayel disintegrated, the devastating fire power of the *New Jersey* was brought into play.

On two occasions, a "Dien Bien Phu" at the strategic Shouf mountain town of Suk al Gharb was forestalled by the 16-inch gunnery of the battleship *New Jersey*. The U.S. government con-

According to the March 21, 1984, issue of the journal, *Al Fajr*, 500 civilians were killed and 250,000 rendered homeless by this shelling.

Yet, despite all the firepower of the *New Jersey* and its sister ships, the Lebanese army crumbled, bringing the regime to the verge of collapse. The scenes and images in West Beirut after the entry of Druse and Shi'a partisan militia evoked memories not of Dien Bien Phu, but of the liberation of Saigon.

Livia Rokach depicted this scene in the Feb. 22 issue of *Al Fajr*: "The population descended into the streets to hug the T-shirted boys driving new American tanks willingly ceded by the collapsed army. And on the other hand, hundreds of Americans were hysterically assailing the helicopters sent to evacuate them at their embassy site."

Newsweek magazine described the Lebanese situation in its March 5 issue: "For Amin Gemayel, the political situation seemed simply impossible. His

expressed "hopefulness" about the Amin government of "national unity."

It soon became apparent, however, that the Gemayel government intended Moslem participation to be no more than one of appearances. The Lebanese army was dominated by the Phalange and its officers. The "Moslem privileged classes" would have to settle for crumbs. There was to be no power sharing.

After the departure of the U.S. Marines, the bourgeois leaderships of the Lebanese National Salvation Front continued to pursue their policies of class collaboration. The collapse of the army in the face of the sustained mass struggle of the oppressed had opened a door to revolutionary power, but there was no one available to close it. Amal leader Nabih Berri told ABC News after the fall of West Beirut: "We are the natural allies of the United States in Lebanon, the natural and best-placed guarantor of U.S. interests."

On March 5, 1984, as the Marines

ment of class forces securing Lebanon for the United States. If Assad could make himself necessary to this process, then the United States would be obliged to restrain Israeli ambition.

If Israel, like the United States, could not risk the revival of the antiwar movement and mass opposition at home, the Syrians were the card to play while Israel consolidated its control over Southern Lebanon. This is what actually took place at the cynically framed "Inter-Lebanese Conference of National Reconciliation" held in Lausanne.

The conference was first convened and then prolonged under Syrian Vice President Ab'd al-Halim Khaddam's pressure. Khaddam was the man who, in his capacity as foreign minister, had overseen the alliance between the Israelis, the Phalange, and the Syrian regime in 1976.

What unfolded in Lausanne was the effective liquidation of the National Salvation Front and the dismantling of the movement that had overcome the U.S.-backed Lebanese army. Any residual illusions about the leadership of these forces were soon dispelled at this conference. Syria and Saudi Arabia came to the rescue of the Gemayel regime, and their Lebanese allies followed suit.

Damascus signaled to Washington and Israel that the tacit collaboration with the Israeli occupation by the Gemayel regime presented no obstacle to Syrian support. Thus, on the one hand, the Syrians were allowing the Gemayel regime to stabilize without even conceding those nominal reforms which the Sunni bourgeoisie had pressured for. On the other hand, the Israeli connection went unopposed.

Hafez al Assad made this position explicit in a statement quoted in the April 2, 1984, issue of *Time* magazine:

"Lebanese reconciliation is the only way. We emphasized this in 1976. We reemphasize it now. Our attitude recently in Lausanne is quite clear. We cooperated fully with President Gemayel. The Syrian representative made hectic efforts at the bilateral and trilateral level. Our position with regard to a government of national unity is one of full support. More than anyone else, we want to see Lebanon united, stable, and strong."

Indeed, at the very moment when the powerful armada of the U.S. Sixth Fleet has been defeated at a great human cost by a popular militia in a national uprising, the bourgeois leaders in the region seem to be in great haste to deliver that struggle once again to the imperialist enemy.

A new generation of Lebanese working poor has fought against huge odds to apparent victory, but at the moment of potential triumph these fighters have once again been betrayed by their leaders. The crisis in Lebanon, as in many parts of the world, is one of revolutionary leadership. In the absence of a genuine revolutionary leadership, the collapse of the imperial leviathan which continues to stalk the planet is needlessly deferred at a cost of untold human suffering. ■



President Amin Gemayel of Lebanon



Syrian President Hafez al-Assad



Nabih Berri, Shiite Moslem leader

'The Gemayel government intended Moslem participation to be no more than one of appearances.'

sidered that the fall of Suk al Gharb, which overlooks the presidential palace in Beirut, would cause the flight of Gemayel and the collapse of his regime.

CBS News reported that the *New Jersey* fired 33,000 tons of explosives on Suk al Gharb and the surrounding area. On Feb. 8, 1984, nine 406-mm cannons saturated the Lebanese mountains for 20 consecutive hours, firing over 400 shells. Each shell weighed 1.3 tons and destroyed an area of 100 square meters.

The Druse villages of Biteibat and Bzebdin, and the Maronite village of Shebanyeh were wiped from the face of the earth. Civilian casualties from the successive bombardments exceeded 5,000. Roads were turned into craters, and pinewoods and fertile fields were transformed into scorched earth.

U.S. Naval artillery and Marine shore batteries did not confine their devastation to the Shouf mountains. For an entire week preceding the bombardment of Feb. 8, artillery flooded the densely populated neighborhoods of South Beirut with phosphorus shells, causing casualties again in the thousands among the Shi'a women, children, and disabled.

The Phalangist shelling, as well, turned the Shi'ite neighborhoods of Chiyah, Ghaberi, and Tayuni into vast cemeteries of rubble and debris.

Ralph Schoenman is presently the director of the Committee in Defense of the Palestinian and Lebanese Peoples. He is the former executive director of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. This article is a condensed version of a piece which Socialist Action hopes to publish in its entirety in the near future.

army had collapsed, leaving his government in control of little territory beyond East Beirut. At least forty percent of the army's soldiers had deserted to the Muslim militias, in most cases taking their arms and equipment with them."

Yet the regime, written off by everybody and abandoned as beyond salvaging, managed to survive. How could this happen?

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 led to the dispersal of the Palestinian fighters under a plan engineered by Bechtel Corporation's Phillip Habib. This greatly debilitated the leadership of the Palestinian movement. At the same time, the Lebanese nationalist movement was in disarray. (See *Socialist Action*, Vol.1, No.1, "Crisis of leadership in PLO," by Ralph Schoenman)

The leadership of the National Salvation Front—made up by the Shi'a, Druse, and Sunni bourgeois leaderships—had made clear that it was opposed to any change in class relations or in the social composition of the Gemayel government. From the time of the initial installation of Amin Gemayel, these leaderships had informed the United States and the Phalange alike that they sought no more than a subordinate partnership in the Lebanese government.

The inclusion of the Moslem bourgeois political figures, both Sunni and Shi'a, was an important part of ruling class strategy for Lebanon. Sa'ab Salem, the venerable Sunni politician with longstanding ties to Saudi Arabia, led the way in providing support for the regime of Amin Gemayel. Nabih Berri of the Shi'a organization, Amal, sought as well to persuade Gemayel to share power. Walid Jumblatt of the Druse

were fleeing Beirut, *Newsweek* reported that a ceasefire had been agreed to by the Gemayel government and the Shi'ite and Druse militias who controlled West Beirut. The ceasefire had been brokered by Saudi Arabia and Syria. It took hold just as the militias were on the verge of capturing Suk al Gharb and were threatening Ba'abda, site of the presidential palace.

"The ceasefire gave Gemayel a chance to get his house in order and discuss with the various Maronite leaders the peace plan advanced by Saudi Arabia and Syria," *Newsweek* reported. "The green light flashed in Damascus just in time to save what little was left of the Reagan administration's policy in Lebanon"

This was not the first time that the Syrian regime of Hafez al Assad had snatched defeat out of the jaws of victory. During the civil war of 1975-76, Syria sent troops in support of the Phalange when the fascist militia of the Gemayels had no more than 24 hours of ammunition remaining to it.

It was a betrayal worked out between Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam and Israeli Minister of Defense Shimon Peres, culminating in the Israeli-Syrian siege of Tal al Zataar. The troops of Assad protected the militia of Bashir Gemayel and the Tiger Brigade of Camille Chamoun as they slaughtered Palestinian civilians in a brutal prelude to Sabra and Shatila.

American decision makers knew all along that Syrian support for the popular struggle was designed solely to provide leverage with which to exact concessions from the United States. The meager advantage sought by Hafez al Assad was to be included in the align-



Deja vu

Socialist debates State Department

Stephanie Coontz attacks U.S. policy

The State Department would have us believe that its aim is to support the existence of "democratic" regimes in the region, promote economic recovery, and growth through private enterprise, restore peace (but only in terms of a democracy which is left conveniently undefined) and to end the "Soviet and Cuban threat" to the sea lanes. Just as a P.S., we also have trade and investment goals. All these goals, moreover, are shared by Congress and both political parties.

I find myself in agreement on two points. The United States does have trade and investment goals in Central America, and the policy of defending them has indeed been bipartisan. It's a policy that goes back far before the present administration and can be corrected only by attacking its premises,

The Evergreen Students For a Humane Foreign Policy (SFHP) at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash., sponsored on April 11 a teach-in on U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. The day-long event—attended by over 400 people—included workshops on the region, and featured a debate between David Cox, deputy director of the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs of the U.S. State Department, and Evergreen professor of history, Stephanie Coontz. The debate centered on the Kissinger Report on Central America. Socialist Action is reprinting the entire debate for our readers. We would like to give special thanks to Susan Ann Mott and the other members of the SFHP for making this material available to us.

not the way one particular president is carrying out the policy.

I don't think I'll leave my remarks in "outline form" because it seems to me that it's precisely when you get past the broad high-sounding phrases and down to the specifics that you get to the crux of U.S. policy in Central America.

But I want to argue today that the regimes this bipartisan policy has supported depend upon the systematic oppression of their populations; that the economic "recovery" we're sponsoring involves the same kind of economic intervention that caused most of the original problems in the area; and that the main source of "destablization" in Central America has been our government.

This started with the U.S. government's original imposition of dictators in places such as Nicaragua, moving on to its massive military training of the officers who led coups in Guatemala and El Salvador. It now involves taking major steps toward war with the commitment of U.S. forces for combat support operations in El Salvador, the massing of 5,000 troops in Honduras, and the CIA-led mining of Nicaraguan ports.

And to top it off, while Reagan and Kirkpatrick tell us this is necessary to

maintain our "credibility" abroad, they have cynically declared that they will withdraw from the World Court to avoid Nicaragua's claims for the seven ships that have been damaged, the numerous injuries, and the setback to trade.

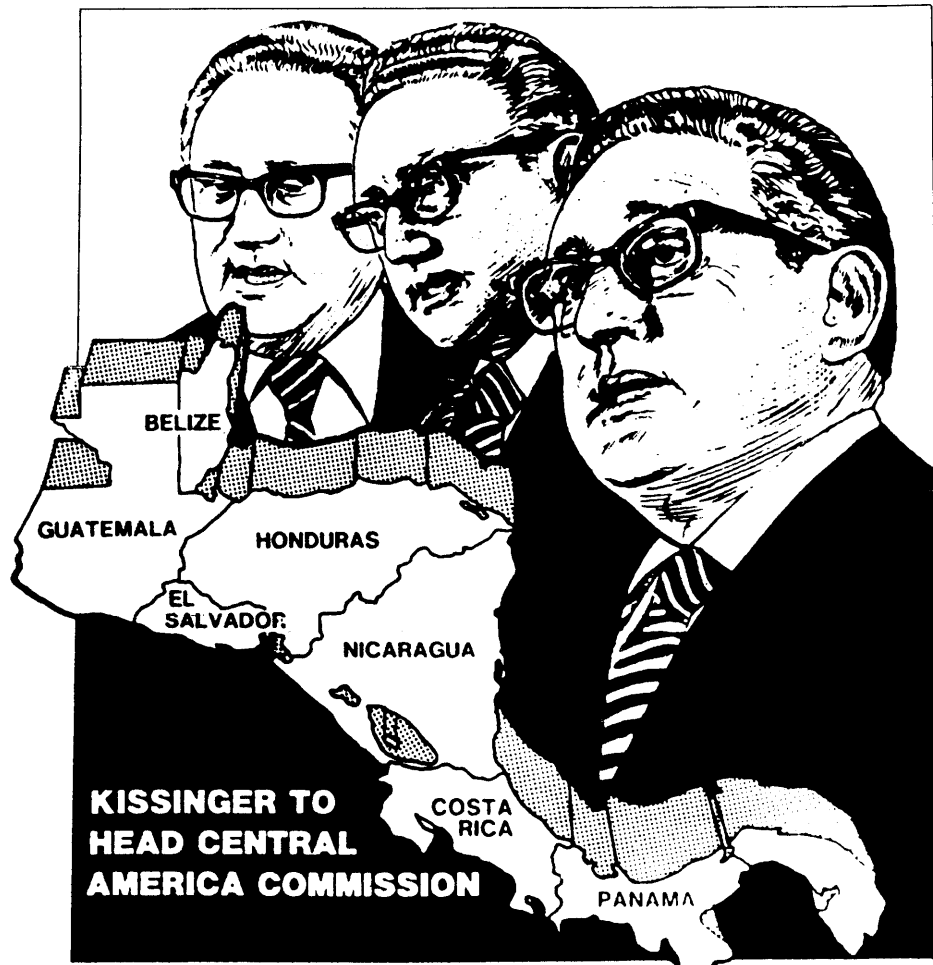
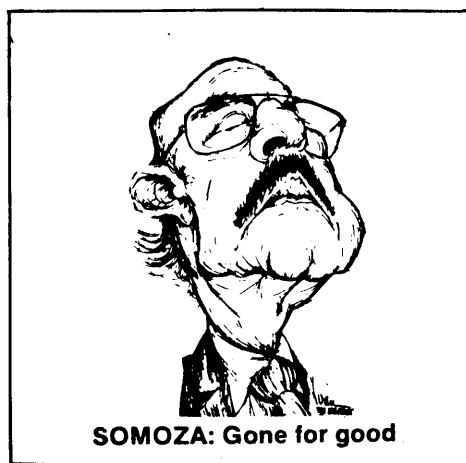
The main document used by the State Department to justify government objectives in Central America is the Kissinger Commission Report. I want to discuss this in detail because it provides the "evidence" behind the generalizations we've heard today. The report provides an analysis of the crisis that traces the earliest problems back to "oligarchic rule" in the 1890-1930 period, followed by "pluralism" in the 1950s and 1960s, but "retrogression" in the 1970s as centrist governments "gave way" to "repression and intransigence."

The report admits the "bloody" repression in El Salvador and Guatemala, and characterizes the Somoza regime overthrown by the Sandinistas as so corrupt "it might well be called a kleptocracy," defended by "systematic" and "pervasive" repression. But then the report makes a sudden leap—to the "export" of revolution to these countries by Cuba. I'll come back to this issue, but I'd like you to notice first what is left out of this history.

Note first of all the use of the passive voice. Centrist governments "gave way" to dictatorships. "A period of repression" began. As any bureaucrat knows—or any kid, for that matter—the passive voice is a great device to avoid taking responsibility: "The vase got broken;" "full employment gave way to high rates of unemployment." You never find out who did what to whom. And it is impossible to understand the crisis in Central America unless we realize that the repressive regimes that started it were not *themselves* indigenous but were direct results of U.S. economic, political, and military intervention.

The period of 1890-1930—singled out by the report as the origin of distortion in Central American development—was the period of U.S. gunboat diplomacy. The U.S. invaded Panama in 1901 and 1902, Honduras and the Dominican Republic in 1903, Panama and the Dominican Republic in 1904, Cuba from 1906-1911, and Honduras in 1907 and 1919. U.S. Marines first invaded Nicaragua in 1909, before the Soviet

(continued on page 8)



Henry Kissinger, head of the bipartisan commission on Central America that drafted policy recommendations for the Reagan administration.

David Cox defends State Department

I don't claim any on-the-ground experience in Central America, but I do spend most of my time on it. I am in an office responsible for a number of regionwide programs; that is, Latin American programs, including military assistance, narcotics, our relations with international organizations as they relate to Latin America, human rights, nuclear affairs, and so on and so forth. But you can well guess that more than 50 percent of my time is spent on Central America.

The events of the last few days obviously have made this—in the minds of the general public who probably don't follow Central American matters as closely as you do—an even more contentious issue. I'd certainly be happy to take any questions on the events of the last few days. But I also think that it's important that we think a little more about the longer term matters—our interests in the region and what we as a nation are going to do over the next few years. I don't think there is much disagreement over the importance, at least in this group of people who are interested in the region, of the region to us. It was certainly recognized by the bipartisan commission on Central America as being a very, very important issue, deserving much more attention and the investment of many more resources than it has gotten in the past.

I want to go over what the administration and most people believe are our prime foreign policy goals in Central America. There is probably more agreement on longterm goals than on how to reach them, as is often the case in most foreign policy questions. I think this would be true of a Democratic as well as

a Republican administration and in Congress, too.

First and foremost, we wholeheartedly want to see come to full fruition the existence of democratic regimes in the region. Secondly, through our programs and in various ways, we see it as a paramount need to promote economic recovery and growth in Central America. I might say that these goals, these broad objectives, are also prime objectives of ours throughout the broader Latin American region, including the Caribbean and South America. We want to see an end to the fighting in the region, but with the chances for democracy preserved. We do not want to see a hostile force in a position of dominance in the region or the expansion of Soviet-Cuban influence.

And finally, certainly, we do have trade and investment objectives in the region, although in the subregion of Central America they are not nearly as important as they are for Latin America as a whole, either dollar-wise or in terms of strategic material. But geographically, of course, there is a proximity to what the Navy calls the sea lanes of communications. Much of our trade goes through Gulf-Coast ports and passes through fairly close to the region.

If we go back to look a little more closely at these objectives, when we look at the objective of democracy, we see this as really the best long-term institutional guarantee for increased respect for human rights. There certainly is an unsatisfactory, and in many cases, deplorable situation with respect to human rights in many countries in Cen-

(continued on page 8)

...Stephanie Coontz

(continued from page 7)

Union even existed as a nation to blame things on.

The Marines went back again and again until they helped install the first member of the Somoza family in power in 1933—a family our government unflinchingly supported right up to the point it became clear they could no longer contain the opposition. The Mexican revolution, hailed by the report as the one example of a true indigenous revolution—the kind our leaders would accept—was considered Bolshevik at the time, and U.S. Marines were sent to Nicaragua to prevent Mexico from exporting its revolution to Central America!

The Kissinger report also leaves out the more recent history of U.S. interventionism. The CIA's overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954 is simply ignored, though that was what set Guatemala on the pattern of rightwing civilian governments that couldn't maintain control and increasingly "gave way" to more bloody dictatorships. Also unmentioned in the history of Guatemala is the fact that U.S. corporations own almost three-fourths of the arable land there—and Guatemalan peasants have a lower per-capita food supply today than they did under the Mayans.

U.S. trained dictators

The "giving way" to military governments in the late 1960s and the 1970s is never connected up in the Kissinger Report and State Department briefings to one of its strongest incentives—the establishment of the Military Assistance Program in 1951. As Robert McNamara explained to a House Committee on Appropriations in 1963: "Probably the greatest return to our military assistance investment comes from the training of selected officers and key specialists at our...centers in the United States and overseas....They are the coming leaders....It is beyond price to us to make friends of such men."

The courses taught to these military men by U.S. specialists included international finance, industrial management, trade, transportation, and communications systems. Isn't it a wee bit hypocritical of the Kissinger Report and the State Department to bemoan the fact that these officers decided to actu-

ally use the governmental skills they'd been taught? The notion that we didn't know how brutally they'd use them doesn't hold up either.

Eighty percent of the Brazilian officers who overthrew President Goulart in 1964, for example, had been trained in the United States. In 1971 a U.S. Senate committee was informed that these "coming leaders" were still being taught "censorship, checkpoint systems, chemical and biological operations...defoliation, dissent in the United States, psychological operations, raids and searches, riots, special warfare, surveillance, terror, and undercover operations." They learned their lessons so well that by 1977 Amnesty International



could document tens of thousands of Brazilians tortured, exiled, or murdered.

Perhaps the height of hypocrisy is reached when the Kissinger Commission deplores the military's destruction of free trade unions and free speech in Central America. Most of the responsible military officers, including those of Latin America as a whole, were trained in the U.S. Army School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone. Here is how Course 0-47 (in urban counterinsurgency) taught them to "recognize" communist guerrillas:

- "The refusal of peasants to pay rents, taxes or agricultural loans or any difficulty in collecting these will indicate the existence of an active insurrection

that has succeeded in convincing the peasants of the injustices of the present system.

- "Short, unjustified, and unusual absences from work on the part of government employees.

- "A growing hostility against governmental agencies and agencies of public order?"

Subversion, according to Course 0-47, may also include educational activity, demonstrations, and strikes. In other words, U.S. army trainers helped the military throughout Latin America identify targets for repression, which included peasant organizations, trade unions, community organizations, and practically anyone who exercised the right of free speech.

The Kissinger Report echoes this military approach to subversion. The report attempts to prove that Central American revolutionary movements were not indigenous but foreign in origin. The critical history of these movements, of course, lies in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when increasing numbers of youth defected from the centrist parties that had been unable to deliver their promised reforms, peasants began to engage in spontaneous land seizures, urban mass organizations of workers grew more militant, and even the Catholic Church began to organize rural "Christian Base" communities.

The Report ignores these developments. As William LeoGrande points out, writing in the *World Policy Journal* (Winter 1984): "When guerrillas in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala were developing into serious contenders for power during the mid-1970s, the Cubans were not engaged in Central America. The hiatus in Cuban involvement in Latin America, between 1968 and 1978, is too well established to deny, so the Report simply states that Castro once again became active in the 'export of revolution' in 1978 because he saw 'new opportunities' in Central America. With this sleight of hand, the Report erases 10 years of history...in which the Central American revolutionary movements grew indigenously, without the aid of Cuba or anyone else?"

It's true that once the revolutionary movements got big enough to require the purchase of arms they were able to turn to Cuba and the Soviet Union—though a U.S. Undersecretary of Defense estimates that up to 50 percent of the guerrillas' arms are actually captured U.S. weapons acquired in raids on the local military. Any revolutionary

movement will try to get arms from wherever it can, and if our government would be on the right side for once, I'm quite sure they'd also accept them from us!

All told, the Report cites four reasons that Central American revolutions must be regarded as foreign. First, they have a "foreign ideology"—Marxism. (This is different than the indigenous ideology of U.S.-trained military officers.) Second, they have received foreign aid from Cuba and the Soviet Union—unlike the indigenous Contras in Nicaragua, or the indigenous dictators who manage to hang on only with U.S. aid more massive than anything Cuba or the USSR have sent to anyone.

Third, they must be foreign because oppression itself causes only "anguish," not revolt: "If wretched conditions were themselves enough to create such insurgencies, we would see them in many more countries of the world" (This argument boggles the mind, since many other State Department papers claim that it is precisely the widespread duplication of insurrectionary methods across the world that proves them to be externally generated!) And fourth, the movements have been able to survive much too long—i.e., the repression in which we trained the military so efficiently should have killed off all the dissenters long ago.

Was U.S. Revolution foreign?

By any one of these reasons, of course, the American Revolution should have been branded a foreign revolt. Its ideology came from Enlightenment Europe; the French sent arms and even volunteers like LaFayette; the colonists hadn't rebelled during the previous century when conditions were perhaps even more wretched; and British press gangs and repressive measures failed to defeat the network of popular committees and militias who organized the first guerrilla strategies on the American continent.

So, having looked at the strong parts of the Kissinger Report, let's examine its weaker sections. The most glaring of these is the contention that there has been improvement in El Salvador. The report lauds the 1979 coup as "opening the way" for a "democratic revolution." It fails to mention that the coalition of October 1979 lasted only three months and most of its leading civilians subsequently joined the revolutionary forces.

Since then, of course, there have been "free elections" in 1982 and again last month. But only last year the El Salvador Election Committee belatedly admitted that there may have been fraud of up to 20 percent of the 1982 vote. Add that to the fact that another 23.6 percent of the population lives in refugee camps both in and outside the country, and is therefore disenfranchised. And in 1982, as in 1984, voting was verifiable by any cop or right-wing group that stopped a person to check their identity card, and the defense minister had warned that non-voting would be an "act of treason."

You may have seen long lines of voters on television. But I doubt you were told that in San Salvador, a city with a voting population of 500,000, only 13 polling places were set up. You might also wonder why more people didn't mutilate their ballots, even if they *did* have to vote—unless you noticed that the ballot boxes were made of clear lucite so that a mutilated ballot could be seen by the government officials who were oh, so closely monitoring the election.

And you might remember that all this takes place in a country the size of the Greater Bay Area of San Francisco, where government and right-wing forces have killed 45,000 civilians in the past four years, without one single person ever being brought to trial, where 60 percent of the people earn less than \$120 a year, 50 percent of the children die before their fifth birthday, and 2 percent of the population controls 60 percent of the land.

...David Cox

(continued from page 7)

tral America. But I think that over time history shows that the best guarantee for institutional human rights is in a democratic, pluralistic system—in which you have freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and in which it is consequently harder to abuse the rights of people and get away with it.

We also think that long-term and sustained growth is more likely if there is a fair degree of private enterprise involved, not necessarily copying our system and to the same degree. Certainly there have been countries in Latin America that have had more state intervention than we, in our case, would prefer. But certainly, if entrepreneurs are given reign in certain areas it will benefit more people and lead to better economic performance than would otherwise be the case with a completely state-owned economy.

Support Contadora plan

In terms of our objective of restoring peace to the region, we support the efforts of the five nations themselves, as aided by the four-nation Contadora group to try to achieve a comprehensive peace settlement. It is not going to be

easy and, as we have seen, it's taken a long time. But certainly the 21 points that these countries agreed upon last September form the basis for reaching an overall settlement. We stress that this had to be comprehensive, in other words, verifiable.

We think, besides our Nicaragua policy, that the obviously controversial element of our policy is military assistance for El Salvador, and what conditions should or should not be attached to providing such assistance. We certainly don't see anything being gained by a solely military solution in El Salvador without a return to full democracy—which they are well on their way to. Without that, if that's not accompanied by a continuation of the reforms and economic growth, then obviously military ascendancy on the part of government troops is not going to lead to a lasting solution.

With regard to Nicaragua, certainly the objective of this administration is that Nicaragua fulfill the commitment it made in 1979 to the Organization of American States (OAS) for a democratic, pluralistic society. Secondly, we want to see an end to the Nicaraguan material support for the guerrillas in El Salvador. And thirdly—this is covered by the Contadoran 21 points—we want to see a diminution in the amount of



Soviet-Cuban military assistance in material and advice being provided to the regime. We want to see a big drop in their military ties to the Soviets and the Cubans. We think that this is very destabilizing. Most of the Central Americans will tell you that also.

Now we could expand on any one of those points, but I think I'll just kind of leave it in outline form. ■

Does U.S. "national security" really require this? The State Department contends that to allow the Nicaraguans to remain in power or the Salvadoran revolutionaries to win would allow them to set up a staging area for an attack on our borders in Mexico. I always thought those were Mexico's borders—and the Mexican government doesn't accept this scenario at all.

The second "national security" reason cited is that the Soviets might build

corner their land, creating economic incentives for those elites to produce crops and raw materials for export to the developed world rather than building a balanced economy, and channeling production not to the needs of the people but to the demands of U.S. manufacturers. U.S. loans and "aid" have only compounded the problem, as the debt service alone is now more than the GNP in Latin America, and the conditions of aid have further increased the

Nicaragua faces desperate shortages, due to the flight of capital from local elites, the problems of reversing the effects of 40 years of dictatorship, and the systematic terrorism of U.S.-sponsored contras.

Who will get American "aid," and where will it go? Most of it will be channeled through the Agency for International Development (AID), and will be used—the Report insists upon this—to encourage private investment. But it is precisely the private investment in Central America that accounts for the fact that half the arable land is devoted to export crops, the cash from which goes to the large private landowners.

The AID, moreover, has in the past used much of its "foreign aid" to subsidize American private enterprise. In the 1960s the program financed \$2 billion a year in U.S. exports to Latin America and could also boast such "reforms" as achieving "a revised mining code favorable to private investments" in Bolivia—at the cost of state-subsidized commissaries for the impoverished miners—while funding 50 percent of U.S. mining companies' pre-investment surveys in Latin America. These gains did not trickle down to the average Latin American: They dammed up at the top, creating a local ruling class with all the luxuries that could possibly be exported from the U.S., and all the most modern repressive techniques the U.S. could supply them with for maintaining their privilege.

Even if the AID were to change the pattern of direct subsidies to U.S. cor-

porations, the Commission proposes to give the aid to the very people who benefit from the perpetuation of inequality. Basically, the Report says this: "Look there's been a long history of elites strangling the local economies, so now we're going to give them some more money and tell them firmly that we'd be pleased if they'd use it to undermine their stranglehold on the economy."

At the same time, U.S. leaders do not want these elites undermining the power that allows them to hold off any proposals for socialized investment and development, so the Report recommends unconditional military aid to these governments. Indeed, it even claims that giving more military aid and training can be a human rights policy of its own, teaching leaders in El Salvador and elsewhere to adopt a more "humane" policy of "enlightened counter-insurgency."

But it was the U.S. who trained these murderers in the first place. Between 1950 and 1973, more than 64,000 Latin American officers and soldiers—including 170 heads of state—were trained in the U.S. Army School of the Americas. Probably a majority of the current officers in El Salvador's army were trained in such institutes between 1965 and 1977. U.S. military and economic aid is not part of the solution to the crisis in Central America; it is a very large part of the problem.

President Reagan says we must "confine the Central American crisis to Central America." The only way to do that is for North America to stop imposing private economic interests there, propping up dictators in Guatemala and El Salvador, and directing the campaign of terrorism and subversion against the legitimate government of Nicaragua. Yankee, come home.

Stephanie Coontz:

"The main source of 'destabilization' in Central America has been our government."

bases in these countries from which they could shut down the sea lanes. But the Soviet Union knows that this would be an act of war, and the only circumstance in which it would be an effective act of war is if the war were a conventional war limited to the Caribbean. If it were a nuclear war, of course, the sea lanes would be irrelevant. It is totally unreasonable to suppose that the Soviets would start a conventional war in the hemisphere where U.S. conventional forces would finish them off in a week.

As other speakers will point out today, it is not the Soviet Union that poses the real threat to peace in the world today. Indeed, the Soviets have been downright timid about providing large-scale military or economic aid to Nicaragua, just as they refused to provide it to Allende in Chile or Manley in Jamaica. The Sandinistas have offered to negotiate any Washington security concerns directly with the United States, and the Reagan administration's rejection of this shows that Washington, D.C., knows perfectly well it is raising a smokescreen.

The Kissinger Report does manage to identify one threat to American interests in Central America, however, pointing out that 62 percent of private U.S. investment in the developing world is in Central America and the Caribbean. I could provide them with a few more figures, such as the fact that U.S. corporations take three times as much money out of Latin America as a whole than they invest. And I'd be willing to grant the fact that such figures do give someone an interest in quashing rebellions in Central America, be they local or foreign in origin.

I deny, however, that this has anything to do with the national interest, since less than 2 percent of the population provides more than 96 percent of the investment funds for such ventures. We here in Washington State have experience with what happens when private investors refuse to accept what's supposed to be the normal risk that supposedly justifies returns to investment in the first place. They hike our taxes and power bills to subsidize their profits. Our government's Central American foreign policy is simply the Washington Public Power Supply (WPPS) disaster on a national scale—and we're being asked to subsidize private investments abroad not only with our tax dollars but with the lives of our sons.

U.S. distorts economy

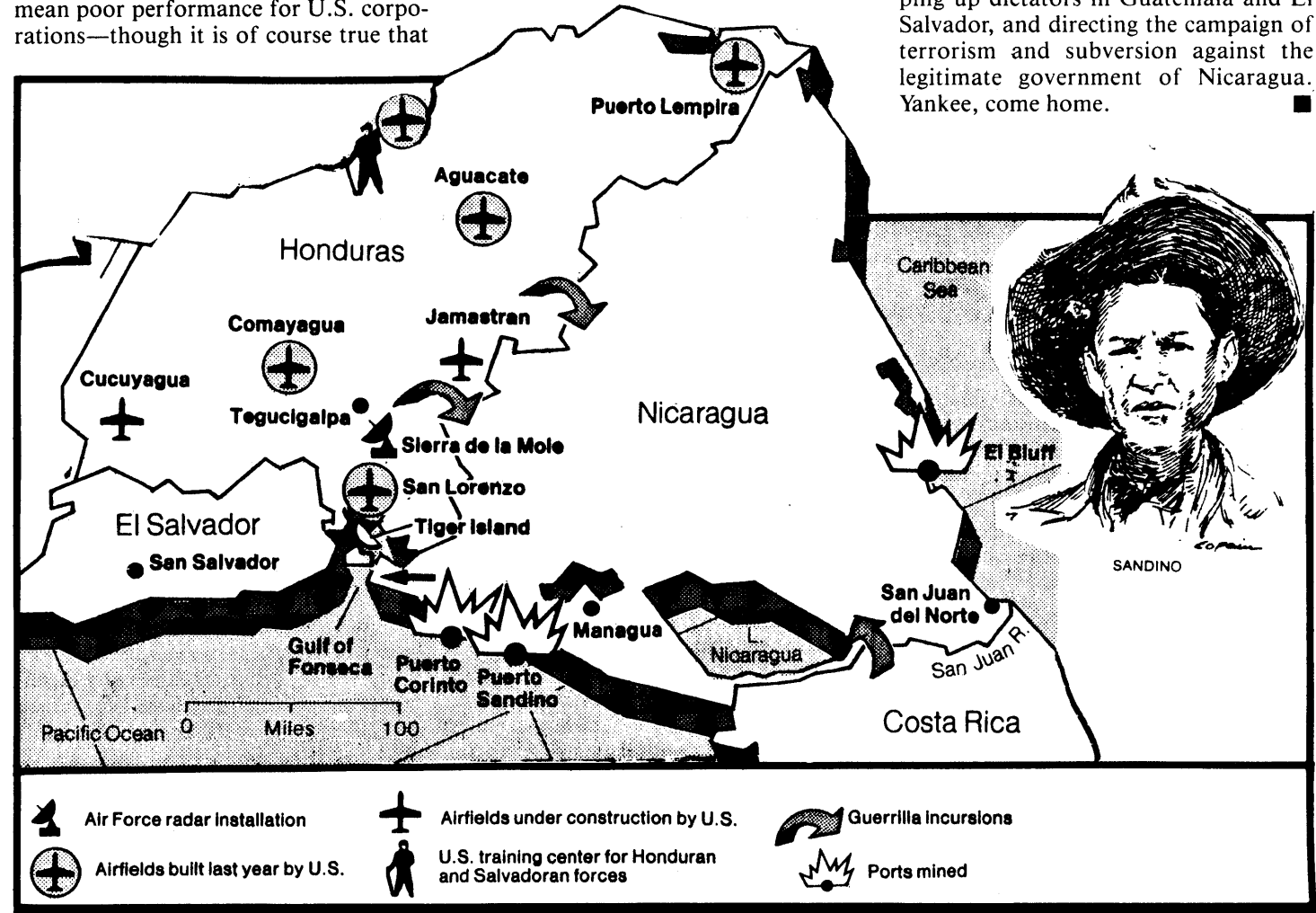
Guns and money: That's what the Kissinger Report claims will solve the problem. "Economic growth and military aid?" The idea that economic growth will solve the problem rests on the assumption that the growth will trickle down to the bottom of the population and improve their standard of living. The Report proposes allocating \$8 billion for Central America over the next five years. Such economic growth is, in a very real sense, part of the original problem.

Just as Europe underdeveloped Africa, U.S. investments have distorted the development of Central American nations, enmeshing the peasants in a web of debt that allowed local elites to

inequities of wealth. Thus in Nicaragua, after 40 years of U.S.-backed dictatorship, half the arable land was occupied by just 1,800 ranches, with 96,000 small plots crowded onto the other half, and another 200,000 peasants entirely dispossessed.

The country that has made the most rapid progress toward reversing such inequalities is Nicaragua under the Sandinista government—the country the U.S. is trying to destroy. Nicaragua has reduced illiteracy from 50 to 12 percent, decreased infant mortality by 25 percent, and increased health services by more than 1,000 percent—a fact referred to in the Report as "significant gains against illiteracy and disease" but considered to be outweighed by "poor economic performance."

It's hard not to conclude that they mean poor performance for U.S. corporations—though it is of course true that



...Tribute

(continued from page 10)

president of Local 544, was assassinated. These two killings caused a tremendous strain on most of the officers of the union because it was not known who would be next. Marvel had to live with this.

In addition, there was the tremendous accelerated activity of Farrell, brought about by the job of being secretary of perhaps the largest local in the Teamsters union. The activity of coordinating organizational activities and laying the groundwork for what later became the 11-state area committee kept Farrell busy from morning until late in the night. And above all, he was away from his home a great share of the time.

After Pat's assassination and until the first areawide strike was settled in February 1939 after 22 very trying

weeks, there were few days that Farrell was able to be with his family. When he was in Minneapolis, he worked literally from early in the morning until almost midnight every day. This was a tremendous strain on the family. It was a most difficult task for Marvel. So a great share of the credit for Farrell's efforts must be given to Marvel, who made it possible for Farrell to be the efficient person that he was. Marvel's efforts, in my opinion, cannot be measured on the basis of any one incident. They were a continuing and ongoing daily contribution toward the aim of making the world a better place to live.

Now, it would be most unjust of me in making this recollection of Farrell and Marvel's life not to mention their three daughters: Carol, Mary Lou, and Sherry Dobbs. They realized early in life what Farrell was doing. And they, in their own way, contributed to the sta-

bility of the family unit in order that both Marvel and Farrell could continue making the great contributions they made to the class struggle. They understood and accepted the privations and the way of life of a revolutionary person.

Much of what I recall is written in the books by Farrell, but only Harry DeBoer and I remain of that staff who can remember the devotion and the dedication of Farrell Dobbs and Marvel Scholl. We have lost a great man and a great woman.

In summing this up I must pass on what Farrell told me more than once: "Jack, you and I may not live to see or enjoy life in a workers' state. But one day the workers will take what is theirs, and the efforts of those who helped bring it about will prevail." Certainly Farrell and Marvel did their best in this effort and those efforts shall not be wasted.

A tribute:

Farrell Dobbs and Marvel Scholl

Farrell Dobbs, who died Oct. 31, 1983, at the age of 76, was a leader of the historic Minneapolis Teamster strikes of 1934. Secretary-treasurer of Local 574, Dobbs played an instrumental role in the mass organizing drive that established Minneapolis as a union town. He went on to lead the first over-the-road organizing campaign in the Midwest that recruited tens of thousands of members to the union, laying the basis for the emergence of the Teamsters union as a major force in the labor movement. In 1934 Dobbs joined the Communist League of America. The CLA, which was a predecessor of the Socialist Workers Party, was affiliated with the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky. Dobbs was one of 18 leaders of the SWP jailed under the notorious Smith Act during World War II. He was the SWP presidential candidate four times from 1948 to 1960 and was SWP national secretary from 1953 to 1972. Dobbs is the author of a four-volume series on the history of the Teamsters union and two books on the history of the revolutionary movement in the United States.

Marvel Scholl died Feb. 13, 1984, at the age of 76. She also joined the CLA in 1934 and was a member of the SWP at the time of her death. Scholl was a leader of the Ladies Auxiliary of Local 574 during the Teamster strikes and a staff member of Federal Workers Section, the unemployed organization affiliated with the union. She wrote a column for the *Northwest Organizer*, the daily newspaper put out by the striking drivers, and was a frequent writer for the SWP's newspaper *The Militant*.

Socialist Action offers this tribute to Farrell Dobbs and Marvel Scholl by Shaun Maloney, a leader of the Minneapolis strikes and a long-time friend of Dobbs and Scholl.

By SHAUN MALONEY

A tribute to Farrell Dobbs and Marvel Scholl is a phenomenal task. How does one illustrate in one article the tremendous accomplishments of these two people covering 50 years of activity on behalf of the working class?

I had been a member of the drivers union in Minneapolis for about four years when I first became acquainted with Carl Skoglund in the winter of 1930-31. It was Carl Skoglund who no doubt was a mentor to Farrell. I consider Carl the person responsible, in the first instance, for the success of the union. In 1932, Carl first outlined to me the fundamental concept of organizing the Teamsters on an industrial areawide basis. It was Farrell, however, who put it all together.

First met Farrell

In the late summer of 1933 I met Farrell Dobbs for the first time at our union meeting. Farrell posed some critical questions to the business agent, Cliff Hall. Hall did not respond very well, and Farrell was a little disgusted. Later he and Grant Dunne came back to the meetings. Farrell worked at his job in the coal yard of the Pittsburgh Coal Company all day and late into the evenings. Like many of us whatever time he had left he volunteered to building the union.

I did not see Farrell on a day-to-day basis because the company I worked for did some long-distance hauling and I was frequently away from the city. In this period, however, Farrell had become a very active supporter of the union.

After the coal strike in February 1934 was settled, the organization of the general drivers began. It was just a couple of weeks after the strike was over that



Strikers battle police during 1934 Minneapolis truck drivers' strike. Farrell Dobbs became one of the leaders of the Teamsters local in that city.

Farrell began volunteering his services full-time to the union. At the rate men were joining the union, it was difficult to tell from one day to the next how many members the union had.

After the May strike was over the employers refused to live up to the agreement. So it was necessary to develop plans to strike to enforce the agreement. The union now had grown by tremendous numbers. Ray Dunne, Carl Skoglund, Miles Dunne, Farrell Dobbs, and Grant Dunne were paid a small salary to carry on the strategic work of the union. And then, of course, came the third strike, the July strike. That was a very intense, violent period.

During the period of the coal strike, the top committee of the three strikes consisted of Carl Skoglund, Ray Dunne, Bill Brown, Miles Dunne, and Grant Dunne. Here the democracy and involvement of the ranks in all decisions proved to Farrell the soundness of the program of this group. With the exception of Bill Brown, all were members of the Communist League. This experience, Farrell told me, is what convinced him to devote the rest of his life to the movement.

Shortly after the end of the third strike, Farrell was elected secretary-treasurer of Local 574. This period was, in my opinion, the time of Farrell's greatest contribution to the union (and to the movement as well). He proved his extraordinary talents. It was Farrell who pulled the union together in 1934 in the face of almost insurmountable odds. In my opinion, absolutely without doubt, no one could have pulled or kept the union together, resolved the financial problems, and maintained the secretary's office as Farrell did. And that meant being there night and day as needed to aid the union.

The record of events from 1933 until 1940 has been excellently documented in the four books that Farrell wrote on the Teamsters. Anyone who has not read them should do so. They will inspire those in the movement today and will continue to inspire people for years to come. If there is anything paramount in

these books it is the low-key, almost humble way Farrell accounts for his participation. It is a further example of his greatness and how he believed in team play and involving others in the struggles. This trait served him in good stead during the campaign to organize the line drivers.

Directs area campaign

I want to discuss briefly another great accomplishment—the area campaign. After our return to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) in late 1936, Farrell directed the organization of the 11-state committee, in his capacity as a general organizer appointed by Daniel Tobin, president of the IBT. All the efforts that Tobin had used against us from 1934 to 1936 were forgotten by Tobin because of Farrell's ability as an organizer and the tremendous increase in membership of the IBT. The contracts that later changed the Teamster unions from provincial little posts into the largest union in the world (via the concept of the area council form of organization and contract negotiation) are testimony to the great talent of Farrell Dobbs.

I worked with him in that period for three years up until the day that he resigned from the international staff of the Teamsters union. I recall that I was in Omaha, Nebraska, having breakfast with Farrell in the Rome Hotel when he told me, "Jack, I'm going in to Indianapolis tomorrow, and I'm going to offer my resignation to Tobin."

I had anticipated this because we had had many serious discussions about the obvious war preparations underway during Roosevelt's second administration. The pell-mell, almost frantic efforts to involve America in the war should have been clear to everyone. Tobin was on the Democratic National Committee and in step to Roosevelt's war drums. Farrell knew that sooner or later his opinions against war would surface and a sharp confrontation would ensue. Farrell could not, would not, be a party to this mad scramble to involve the United States in a war to save capitalism.

This was a very major decision for Farrell to make. He was well on his way forward, if he wanted to remain in the Teamsters union. There is no question in my mind that he would have been a later-date president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

My recollections here must not be considered adulation or hero worship but, more properly, an outline of my association of many, many years with a man who I consider has no parallel. A man who was able to learn from everyone. A man who could impart his knowledge to all. A man whose efforts made the lives of so many people so much better. A great, humble man who understood cooperation and teamwork, and utilized it every day of his life.

Marvel organizes women

At the beginning of the organizational drive in 1934 Farrell and his wife Marvel had three small children. Because of the very nature of what we were trying to do, Marvel and Farrell had very little money. Marvel not only had the duties of a homemaker and a mother, but she also played a very important role in the 1934 strike, organizing the women into what became the Ladies Auxiliary of Local 574.

The women played a very important role in the period of strife that summer in Minneapolis. The women organized and maintained the strike headquarters and helped to administer aid to the countless numbers of families who were impoverished as a result of the strike. The women put their efforts into forcing the city council to grant strikers city relief, to assist strikers in their medical problems, to assist them in the day-to-day personal relationships that had become very hectic as a result of the tension and the uncertainty of the strike.

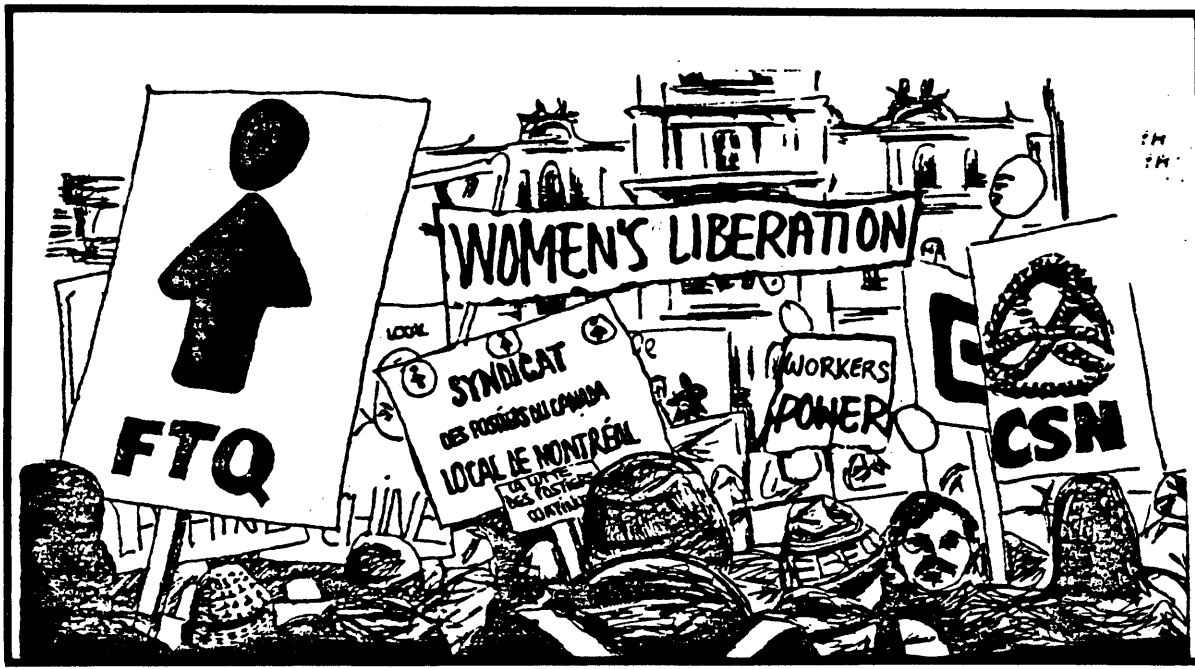
Marvel became one of the leaders, if not the leader, of the Ladies Auxiliary during this period. Marvel Scholl and Clara Dunne, in particular, devoted their efforts to organizing the unemployed in support of the strike, countering the great danger that the jobless might become involved as strikebreakers. To this end the union, as soon as the strike was over, formally set up a section of the union that was known as the Federal Workers Section of Local 574. Marvel played a very important and essential role in this development.

Now there was another problem which Marvel never spoke about that I know was of tremendous importance and consequence to her. Pat Corcoran, secretary of the Milk Wagon Drivers Union and secretary of the Teamsters Joint Council, developed a very close working and personal relationship with Farrell. And Farrell was able to convince Pat to become a real ally of our efforts to establish an industrial organization of the Teamsters. In November 1937, Pat Corcoran was assassinated. His murderers were never apprehended. And then in May 1938, Bill Brown,

(continued on page 9)



Farrell Dobbs and James P. Cannon, founder of the Socialist Workers Party.



Canadian revolutionaries speak

The following interview with Barry Weisleder and Bob Sherwood of the Socialist Workers Collective of Toronto, Canada, was conducted in Pittsburgh, Pa., on April 29 by Alan Benjamin.

Socialist Action: Could you describe the situation in Canada today?

Weisleder: For working people the economic situation is increasingly difficult. We're still in the midst of a significant economic depression. Over 14 percent of the workforce—two million people—are unemployed, according to government statistics. This is accompanied by vicious attacks on social expenditures and social programs, which most affect women, the poor, and those who recently lost their jobs and whose unemployment benefits are running out.

In most of the provincial jurisdictions and at the federal level you have enforced wage controls. Concessions have been wrung out of working people, including those in organized work places. But there is resistance. Two years ago the Chrysler workers prevented serious takebacks, and just this year the McDonnell Douglas workers in Toronto beat back the bosses' concessions attempt.

At the same time, we have seen a very big wave of union organizing in the retail and department store sector, as well as in the education sector. I'm personally involved in a major union organizing effort aimed at substitute teachers in a number of school boards in the greater metropolitan Toronto area and Southern Ontario.

This is accompanied by the growth of the part-time work force. In this layer of part-time workers and those driven down to a situation of structural underemployment, there's a significant rise in trade-union consciousness. The majority of these workers are women, many of them sole-support parents.

In terms of the main bastions of the labor movement, however, there have been some important setbacks: the defeat of the Quebec Common Front in the winter of 1983 and the setback in British Columbia in the fall of 1983.

The rightwing Social Credit government of William Bennett in British Columbia launched an onslaught against trade union rights, including a challenge to basic seniority provisions. It threatened dismantling social welfare programs, rent controls, the Human Right Commission, and a number of other important gains of the past two generations.

A truly impressive coalition of trade union, community, feminist, immigrant, and consumer organizations came together. This led to a general strike of some 80,000. We were on the brink of an all-out general strike in British Columbia when the leadership of that coalition, Operation Solidarity, sold out the effort and settled for a limited government retreat.

So there was a betrayal of the potential of that massive coalition—unprecedented in Canadian history—which could have thrown out the rightwing Social Credit government and changed the relationship of forces, not only in British Columbia, but across the country. So it's a contradictory situation marked by concessions, some resistance, the capacity for the fightback to take on a political dynamic—but without this potential being realized.

Sherwood: I want to underscore the importance of Operation Solidarity, primarily because it represented a considerable mobilization that went beyond the labor movement itself into the ranks of women, minorities, students, etc. There were mobilizations upwards of 80,000 people. This represented an extremely high percentage of the population, and in a sense the Operation Solidarity, by putting forth a whole series of social demands, posed the question of power, even if it did so unconsciously.

This experience also demonstrated the difficulties with Canada's Labor Party, the New Democratic Party (NDP), which confined its efforts and opposition to the legislature. Also, I think what is significant and encouraging at this point in Ontario, in our own work, is the organizing drive among new sectors of workers—particularly in the department stores.

S. A.: Could you tell us more about the current state of the NDP?

Weisleder: The NDP, which is based on the trade union movement, is in disarray and retreat. It is now at its lowest point in terms of popular support in the opinion polls—some 11 percent across Canada. Its retreat is not just a function of a conservative popular response to the economic onslaught and the rulers' offensive. It's, in fact, significantly a reflection of the NDP's capitulation to the rulers' ideological offensive. The NDP leadership espouses protectionist policies. Its solution to the economic situation is a series of rather pallid tax reform proposals and bandaid job-creation policies.

In the one province where the NDP holds government power—in Mani-

toba—the government is responsible for an attack on the feminist movement which has been fighting for legal freestanding abortion clinics. The government has brought in the cops and the courts in order to shut down those clinics. They have brought charges against the nurses and doctors involved in attempting to provide essential services to women.

Sherwood: I think it is important to note that much of the responsibility for the electoral decline of the NDP rests with the labor bureaucrats themselves. This is due to the formal distinction they make between the economic and political tasks. Even though the NDP may raise political questions within the legislatures and the federal parliament—from time to time in a sporadic manner—the labor leadership has never sought to link the economic mobilizations of the workers to the political tasks.

This was the case in British Columbia, in particular. Another problem of the NDP—its historic problem—has

war budget by many millions of dollars.

Trudeau is touring the world with his Peace Initiative. It's a position which, of course, very wrongly lays the blame in equal proportion on the imperialist camp and on the leadership of the bureaucratized workers' states for the nuclear buildup and the war drive. So it's misleading in that sense as well.

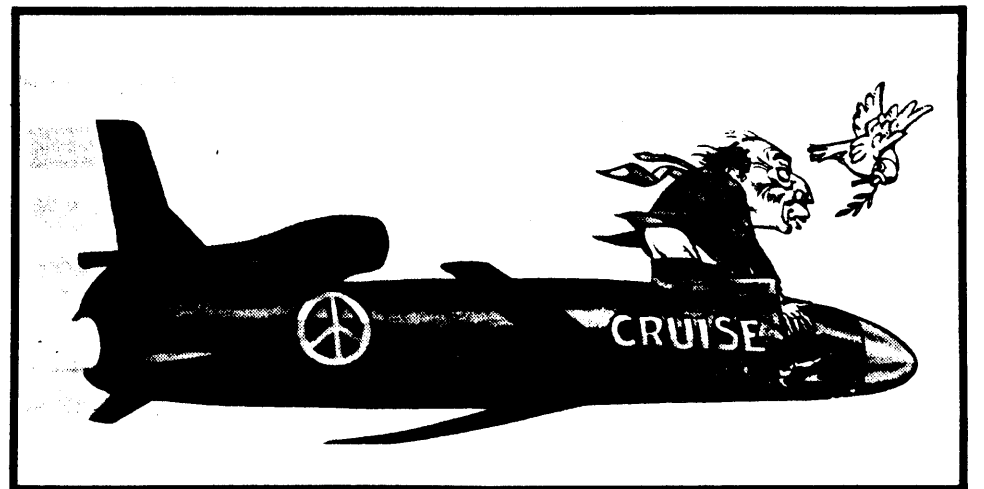
Sherwood: One should always keep in mind that Canada remains part of NATO. At the same time, we should keep in mind that Canada has been a not-so-silent accomplice in the U.S. efforts opposing revolutionary movements in Central America. One example is that when Mark MacGuigan was in Nicaragua, he refused to condemn the mining of the Nicaraguan harbors.

S. A.: Could you talk about the state of the revolutionary left in Canada?

Weisleder: It's a difficult situation. We are coming out of a period of decomposition and fragmentation of the revolutionary left. To begin with, the Maoist Left has completely disintegrated. Two rather large organizations that had their origins in Quebec have disappeared. The Communist Party is stagnant. The feminist movement is of increasingly working class and pro-socialist character, but it is imbued with a strong anti-Leninist outlook.

The revolutionary movement has been significantly weakened by the conservatism and marginalization of the Revolutionary Workers League, the official section of the Fourth International in the Canadian state. But there is now more debate and discussion occurring on the left, with the perspective and possibility for bringing together like-minded socialists in the labor movement, the NDP, and the social protest movements. The Socialist Workers Collective, which is little more than a year old, is attempting to promote this objective, but we also endeavor to reach out to new forces coming around the major social protest movements.

The Socialist Workers Collective, which is in political solidarity with the Fourth International, is in contact with similar groups across the Canadian state. We have organizational relations with Gauche Socialiste in Quebec, with Socialist Challenge in British Columbia, and with pro-Fourth International



Pierre Trudeau riding his Cruise Missile Peace Initiative.

been its absolute lack of recognition of the national question of Quebec and of the right of self-determination of the people of Quebec. This has virtually made the NDP an English-only party. On the other hand, it would be wrong to say that the NDP is going to disappear from the map. It represents a considerable gain by the working class, and it exists and functions.

S. A.: Could you tell us something about Pierre Trudeau's Peace Initiative?

Weisleder: The Peace Initiative [a bilateral freeze proposal] is a reflection of the very wide and deep sentiment for disarmament among working people across Canada and around the world. But in the specific case of Trudeau and the Federal Liberal government, the initiative represents the height of hypocrisy. The government has signed an agreement—and has even carried out the provisions of the agreement—to test the Cruise Missile over Alberta. At the behest of the U.S. government and its NATO allies, the Trudeau government has, in fact, substantially increased the

groupings and individuals in several cities across English Canada. The SWC is active in the labor movement, the NDP, the Grenada and Central America solidarity committees. It also participates in mobilizations of the feminist movement, particularly around the fight for freestanding legal abortion clinics.

We are also participating in a fight against the victimization and political frame-up of four Armenian socialist activists who have been jailed and slandered as terrorists, and have been falsely charged with conspiracy to commit murder. It's a sign of the backwardness of much of the left, including the so-called revolutionary organizations, that they have refused to respond to the need to defend these comrades against the frame-up and victimization tactics of the Canadian imperialist state. But a defense campaign is getting under way, in this case with the participation of members of the Armenian community and independent radical forces, and there are real prospects for a successful campaign. ■

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A *Business Week* survey of the top 500 U.S. corporations reports that profits in 1983—adjusted for inflation—increased 82 percent. Inflation has been significantly reduced, and U.S. corporations are regaining their competitive edge in the world market. Major executives are receiving fat bonuses for achieving this dramatic turnaround.

But in reality the recovery is no mystery. Losing ground against their international competitors, U.S. capitalists have sought to strengthen their position in the world market by squeezing workers harder in this country. In 1982 one-third of all workers represented in contract negotiations were forced to accept wage freezes, while in 1983 one-half of the workers took cuts.

The \$1.25 an hour wage reduction for basic steel workers is a case in point. There is also the growing introduction of the two-tier wage structure permitting drastic cuts in the pay scale of new hires. Added to this is a serious erosion in union security taking place through cross-crafting and the contracting out of union work to nonunion firms.

The real meaning of competition in a capitalist economy is the race to depress the wages, benefits, and working conditions of the workforce. Each business competes with the other to extract more concessions from the workers. The success of the big-business assault on our living and working standards is the driving force behind the economic "recovery." But the new profit gains will not mean a let-up in the anti-union drive. Rather, the bosses will only be emboldened to deepen their campaign against our hard-won rights.

Lessons from Europe

We can learn from the German, French, and British workers as they confront their homegrown variety of plant closures and wage reductions. The British coal miners have launched an effective strike action against the Tory government's proposals to reduce one-third of the coal workforce by 1990. In defiance of injunctions limiting the size of picketing squads, the workers have closed the coal pits with the mobilized power of thousands of miners.

French and German steelworkers have responded to plant shutdowns by building large demonstrations and rallies. The German metal workers union is conducting a campaign for the 35-hour workweek with no loss in pay to counter the bosses' drive to "restructure" the steel industry through massive layoffs. When this employer offensive was begun several years ago, the steel bosses announced their plan to eliminate 200,000 steel jobs in the Common Market countries. But the existence of large workers' parties in these countries increases the leverage of the workers to advance their demands despite the sell-out strategies that guide the leadership of these parties.

Unfortunately, the misleaders of the trade unions in the United States endorse big-business sponsored efforts to portray foreign workers as our enemy. Of course, that has not stopped U.S. business from raking in super-profits by exploiting cheap labor abroad.

Lower wages and working conditions for one group of workers is used to pressure all workers into accepting the sub-standard pattern. As long as workers in the United States remain divided—white against Black, men against women, and American against foreign workers—it will be easier to put the blame for the capitalist crisis on one or another group of working people.

The History

The militant mass social movement of workers that gave birth to the CIO in the 1930s established industrial unions as a solid force on the American scene. The employers' plan to extend the notorious World War II no-strike pledge and wage freeze into the post-war era was decisively defeated by the 1946 strike

wave that still stands as the largest strike action anywhere in the world.

Unable to prevent the massive organization of the workers, the employers sought to tame and house-break the unions. Only by reinforcing a conservative union leadership could the bosses hope to restrain the labor militancy so forcefully expressed in the formation of the CIO.

The Democratic party under Roosevelt became the main vehicle for cementing an alliance between the labor misleaders and the ruling rich. This "labor-business partnership" is based on promoting the idea that what is good for business is good for the workers. This false notion led to a break in the class struggle methods used to build the CIO. The mass mobilization of the

The continued expansion of the economy permitted small but regular increases in the standard of living of U.S. workers from 1950 to 1965. This allowed the rulers to establish a pattern of gradual enforcement of a multitude of anti-union legal decisions in preparation for the union-busting offensive that is now underway.

The relative prosperity in this period created the illusion among workers that clever bargaining accounted for the wage benefit increases. But the concessions given up by the union misleaders in exchange for wage increases has disarmed and undercut our ability to defend ourselves from the attacks we face today. Art Preis, in his book, *Labor's Giant Step*, aptly termed this practice of giving up a little bit of job

A program for labor fightback



September 19, 1981, "Solidarity Day," in Washington, D.C.

Socialist Action/Joel Ryan

workers against the employers' profit drive came to an end. Negotiations by "labor statesmen" substituted for the action of the rank and file.

This set the stage for the introduction of a whole series of concessions in the name of preserving the "labor-business partnership." The labor chiefs exchanged no-strike pledges for the dues check-off. This guaranteed the bureaucrats a fixed flow of dues money despite the unpopularity of their policies among the ranks. Arbitration by a so-called neutral third party was used to resolve differences on the interpretation of contracts without any input from the membership. Anti-labor laws such as the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin acts that imposed harsh restrictions on the right to strike and picket were accepted without any meaningful challenge from the bureaucrats. False hopes were encouraged that the Democratic Party would repeal these laws.

security in exchange for modest wage increases as "the hockshop method of bargaining".

Profits enrich capitalists

In 1943 a resolution of the United Auto Workers stated: "Our industries can no longer be operated to serve private interests where they conflict with the public need". Yet this wisdom has been rejected by the labor officialdom, despite the growing concentration of wealth and monopolization of the U.S. economy. Turning away from the ranks, the labor bureaucrats seek to preserve at all costs their alliance with the Democratic Party.

This class-collaborationist approach fosters the myth that profits for the boss mean more job security and wage increases for the workers. Most workers still believe this lie. But recent experiences with the Greyhound Corporation,

a highly profitable operation, and the giants of the oil and auto industries, who are making super profits, is leading many workers to reexamine this notion.

Corporate plans to revitalize industry have been largely abandoned for more profitable investment ventures, as the recent flurry of "mega-mergers" indicate. During the 1970s two out of every three new Fortune 500 manufacturing plants were not "new" at all. They were simply acquired in mergers or purchases to increase monopoly control of the market. Thousands of jobs have been lost in the process. But the labor bureaucrats continue to insist that high corporate profits are good for the workers.

A Fightback Strategy

Paralyzed by these class-collaborationist policies, the labor movement has failed to rally behind unions that have shown a readiness to fight. Nearly 12,000 PATCO workers were summarily fired while the labor misleaders scurried about in a futile search for support from politicians of the two parties. The Greyhound strike was broken under similar circumstances. Steelworkers were forced to accept a drastic cut in wages and working conditions after twice rejecting company proposals. Several months ago the Teamsters' membership, by an 88 percent majority, refused the bosses' demand to reopen the contract and negotiate concessions.

There are other examples of resistance in the auto, copper, oil, and aircraft industries. But none of these fights has received the kind of labor support necessary. No one union can stand alone.

The workers in Europe are displaying the kind of fighting militancy that can provide a starting point for an effective mass struggle to defeat the employers' assault. The power to stop the capitalist offensive resides in the mobilized strength of millions of working people.

If that power had been employed in the recent Greyhound strike the outcome could have been quite different. The millions of dollars being spent on capitalist election campaigns by labor should have been used to mount an extensive solidarity effort. Demonstrations by the labor movement could have rallied support from a broad layer of working people and stopped the buses from rolling.

New approach needed

To dissolve the suicidal "partnership" between business and labor will require a new leadership, emerging from labor's ranks, with new policies. But a new leadership, to be effective, must go beyond the militancy of the 1930s and 1940s. The political reality is that those victories gained on the picketline by millions of workers during the 1930s and after the war were skillfully eroded over the years by not only the labor-hating Republicans but by the "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party.

Supporting Mondale, Hart, or Jackson will only repeat the mistakes of the past. We need to organize the power of working people in the streets, on the job, and in the halls of Congress. We need our own party—a labor party. A labor party controlled by the unions would have the power to protect gains won on the picketline. A labor party would be a vehicle for advancing an alternative program to the bosses' offensive. Instead of shoring up the capitalist Democratic Party we should build our own party.

A leadership adopting this approach will certainly be forged in the battles ahead. Experience in the class struggle will dictate a change in the current union policies. A class struggle program to transform our unions can serve to rally militant workers for a working class counteroffensive against the employers' anti-union drive. Some elements of this program are:

(continued on page 13)

Sunoco workers forge unity

By GLEN BOATMAN

Four hundred members of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Local 7-912 at the Toledo refinery of Sun Co., and 900 OCAW members at Sun's Marcus Hook refinery near Philadelphia were forced out on strike March 21. Sun, which markets Sunoco gasoline, is one of the top 10 oil companies.

Sun is trying to break the national wage settlement agreed upon by nearly all the unionized oil companies. Instead of granting modest raises, Sun wants to make lump sum payments. This would leave Sun workers 55 cents per hour behind the other majors in the next bargaining round. It would mean a loss in overtime pay, pensions, and other benefits based on hourly rates.

The local issues at stake in Toledo include attacks on bidding rights, lower temporary hire rates, and wage reductions for several jobs. The issues at Marcus Hook include seniority rights in layoff and recall, and a massive 60 percent wage cut in the barrel operation.

For the first time, a degree of unity has been forged between the union locals at the "Hook" and in Toledo. Toledo OCAW members continued to work under the old contract from Jan. 15 until the contract at the Hook was up March 1. In both locations the company's final offers were turned down by a substantial margin. Each local has vowed to remain out until all issues at each location are resolved.

Workers at Sun in Toledo were reluctant to strike after the 11-week national oil strike in 1980 brought them little benefit. More than a dozen workers left the union. But this year's negotiating committee led a "close-the-ranks" campaign. During negotiations it put out weekly newsletters and held weekly meetings to update everyone.

All this has meant that participation on the picketline and in committees has been much better than in the previous strike. On four occasions during negotiations, mass informational bannerings were set up in front of the refinery offices during lunch. The largest of these turned out 130 workers.

About 800 people joined a spirited

march and rally on April 28 in front of the Toledo refinery. Preparation and publicity for the rally was bolstered by the AFL-CIO Joint Organizing and Coordinating Committee and by the Toledo Area Solidarity Committee—a group of trade union activists who came together originally to provide aid to the Greyhound bus strike.

OCAW Local 7-912 announced at the rally that they are initiating a national boycott of Sunoco products. Teams of strike supporters are setting up an informational leafletting campaign at Sunoco service stations. They urge that people send Sunoco credit cards back to the company. Contributions to the strike fund can be sent to OCAW local 7-912, 2910 Consaul, Toledo, OH 43605, Tel. (419) 698-1757. ■

Glen Boatman is a member of the Health and Safety Committee, OCAW Local 7-912. This article includes excerpts from a report first published in the April 26, 1984, issue of Labor Notes. Boatman is not a member of Socialist Action.

...Las Vegas

(continued from page 1)

order limiting the number of pickets at each hotel and casino. This was accompanied by a toothless admonition to the cops and security guards not to "harass, threaten or annoy the picketers." But over 500 of the harassing, threatening and annoying arrests took place following Judge Thompson's intervention.

Takeback demands by the Nevada Resort Association (NRA) forced workers out on strike. The employers' demands included a cut in real wages (a two-year freeze on wages); an increase in the amount charged workers for medical insurance; elimination of several paid holidays; an increase in the period of probation from 20 to 90 days; and a job classification change that would compel employees to work any job and any shift.

Another NRA demand, reflecting one being pushed in recent years by the employing class, is to impose part-time employment. Aside from the consequent loss of income needed to pay bills, it has the added effect of cheating

- Solidarity among all working people and our allies. We reject any divisions between employed and unemployed; between Black, Brown, minority and white workers; and between men and women workers. An injury to one is an injury to all.

- Abolish the military budget. The majority of our tax dollars go to finance the U.S. government's policy of militarism, repression, and terror against working people all over the world. These funds should be used to build roads, schools, and hospitals. A public works program could employ millions.

- The Democratic and Republican parties are not our parties. They serve the ruling rich. The road to independent political action by the working class means breaking from the two parties and building a labor party—this is the only winning strategy.

The bosses' offensive will generate more skirmishes as workers attempt to overcome the obstacles to an effective fightback. Participation in these battles by class struggle militants can help speed up the development of a militant class struggle left wing. Socialist Action members pledge to participate in these fights to our fullest capacity. Relying on the tremendous power of an organized and mobilized working class, our victories can take us beyond the archaic capitalist system into a future based on workers' power.

Our fight for the immediate defense of the interests of the working class is inextricably tied to the struggle for a socialist society. The crisis of humanity can only be resolved by constructing a leadership committed to this task. ■

Unions back Texaco strikers

By MARC RICH

LOS ANGELES—About 400 hundred trade unionists joined a downtown demonstration here on April 23 in solidarity with Texaco refinery workers. The demonstration was sponsored by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. A second demonstration called by the Labor Alliance Against Concessions is planned for May 26 in Torrance, Calif. Strike supporters also plan to set up informational picket lines at Texaco gas stations in the area.

Texaco workers here and in Anacortes, Wash., were forced out on strike on Feb. 21. They are battling against the company's attacks on seniority rights, a two tier wage system, the elimination of job classifications, the reduction of sick and vacation benefits, threatened layoffs, and other takeaway demands.

The Labor Alliance Against Concessions has brought together leaders and members of various unions to help plan

the May 26 rally. Several of these unions were recently on strike. Participants include the ATU (Greyhound), UAW Local 148 (McDonnell Douglas), Lynwood Teachers Association, Airline Pilots Association, IAM (Continental Airlines), ILGWU (Davis Pleating), SEIU Local 535 (Kaiser Permanente), and OCAW Locals 1-128 and 1-547. SEIU Local 666 is providing office space, phone banks, and printing services to build the rally.

Donations to aid the Texaco strikers may be sent to: Texaco Unit Strike Fund, 2100 W. Willow St., Long Beach, CA 90810 or Texaco Unit Strike Fund, c/o OCAW Local 1-591, P.O. 483, Anacortes, WA 98221. ■

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...Labor fightback

(continued from page 12)

- Reclaim our right to strike during the life of the contract as a restraint against capitalist abuses. Government-controlled arbitration is a trap based on the fiction that the government is impartial.

- Remove any undemocratic barriers limiting the full participation of workers inside their unions.

- No subsidies to corporations to enrich themselves at the expense of the workers. We demand that the financial books of the corporations be opened.

- Workers' control of industry to ensure production is geared to social needs. Capitalist control places the profits of the few before the needs of the majority.

- Reject the racist and divisive "Buy American" solutions. This solution translates into "layoff German and Japanese workers—not us." The drive for profits is international. Our class solidarity must also be internationalized.

- Cost-of-living clauses to protect us against an inflationary trend that has reduced our real wages since 1965.

- Reduce the workweek with no decrease in pay! A reduction of just one hour with no loss in pay would put one and a half million people back to work. Oil workers gave up a 36-hour workweek in World War II with the assurance it would be returned. Today, oil workers average 43.5 hours per week.

workers out of health and other benefits which are conditional on working a sufficient number of hours per week. Worse yet, it puts a powerful weapon in the hands of the boss, permitting the penalization of militants by denying "troublemakers" full weeks of work.

Striking workers showed ample determination to fight to defend their living standards and their unions. They showed a readiness to challenge the undemocratic restrictions on picketing. But the outcome depended on the extent to which the national AFL-CIO would go to mobilize material aid for the hotel, restaurant and casino unions.

Strike leaders have called for an international boycott by organized labor against three major hotel chains involved: Hilton Hotels, Holiday Inns, and Ramada Inns. AFL-CIO active support for this boycott, in addition to contributions in money and mobilizations for weekly mass picketing from workers in the surrounding area—including nearby strong labor cities—would have made a labor victory extremely likely.

The settlement, as a matter of fact, occurs at a time when members of the Operating Engineers Local 501 walked off their jobs in support of the striking unions. These workers, who maintain the heating, air conditioning and other machinery, refused to cross picket lines after their 30-day no-strike clause expired. Several thousand desk clerks, switchboard operators and valets, members of Teamsters Local 995, who were similarly prohibited from walking out in support of the strikers for 30 days, stayed on the job. The action of the engineers, clearly contributed to a partial retreat by the employers. It underscored the crucial importance of solidarity.

A striking stage hand commented: "The NRA thought they could destroy our unions like they did PATCO, but the cooks, maids, stage hands, etc., showed a greater resolve than they expected." He went on to explain, "You have to take into account that there is an awful lot of unemployment—and still we held pretty tight." He explained, further, that the strikers were ordered

back to work before a vote to ratify the tentative settlement. "They did this," he said, (referring to the union's negotiators) "because they feared a rejection of the agreement and knew that once back to work nobody could get them out again." The Hilton settlement provided for a pay increase of \$1.46 per hour over the life of a four-year contract with an additional ten cents a year for each of three years. But 37 cents of the \$1.46 will go toward the employees' welfare fund which, it is claimed, is in difficulties. The takebacks conceded by the union negotiators have not yet been reported.

Despite the apparent settlement, vigorous picketing continues. On May 4, the police arrested 25 more strikers outside the Frontier Hotel for violating a court order limiting the number of pickets. This is the key to understanding the partial success of the strikers in beating back the union-busting attempt. No strike today can be effective if the undemocratic restrictions on picketing are not taken head-on. The hotel and restaurant workers added greatly to the force of their strike by exercising their basic rights, and challenging the injunctions against mass picketing.

It is no accident that during the mass confrontations in Las Vegas there was only the scantiest coverage in the news media. There was virtually no mention of the major challenge, marked by the mass arrests, going on to judicial restrictions on picketing. Neither is it accidental that there was no attempt by the labor bureaucracy to protest this near blackout. It conforms to their bankrupt collaborationist strategy, causing them to stand aside when their affiliated unions are picked off one by one.

But awareness of the need for an effective labor fight-back to the ruling class offensive is growing out of experiences such as this strike. A new leadership will inevitably come out of the struggle ahead; one that will come to understand that a generalized struggle of all components of the working class is necessary to beat back the current attack, and go on to gain new ground. ■





Wave of workers' struggles sweeps Europe

By STEVE ROBERTS

The following article appeared in the April 23, 1984, issue of *International Viewpoint*.

Workers' action against austerity in Western Europe is becoming again a major factor in world politics. The struggles at the center of the political stage in at least six countries are the most developed since the massive strike wave of 1968-72.

With the parallel development of the anti-missiles movement, they testify to the integrated character of European

Lorraine steelworkers and their supporters marched through Paris chanting, "Mitterrand watch out! The working class is in the streets!" The fight of the steel workers is provoking growing pressure for the French Communist Party to openly oppose the government's policies.

In Britain, the decision by the miners union leadership on April 12 to continue their strike action against pit closures and a low wage offer, represents a massive escalation of the stakes involved. Failing to defeat the strike by a policy of encouraging divisions in the miners union, the Thatcher government

back of the employers, and to overcome the unevenness of the struggles.

However, in some instances such actions can go beyond propaganda. The Italian factory councils' national assembly passed a resolution of solidarity with the steel workers of Lorraine, the West German metal workers and printers, the British miners, and the Belgian workers.

Workers link up

The practical links between these struggles can be a permanent consideration in the present struggles. Dock workers and Ford car workers already have permanent European coordinations of workplace representatives and trade unionists. Other industries could follow.

Secondly, the adoption by most trade union confederations in Western Europe of the plan to fight for the 35-hour

35-hour week with no cut in pay.

week, has to be the subject of resolutions and a plan to achieve action in the next period.

The experience of the present waves of struggles and for a European-wide response to the crisis will be at the center of an "Assembly of workers against austerity and the Europe of the capitalists" on May 26-27 at LeBourget near Paris, initiated by the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, the French section of the Fourth International. On the platform will be rank-and-file leaders from all the present struggles.

It will be a modest contribution to the vital task of building an internationalist consciousness that can make a Socialist United States of Europe a vital objective for the European working class vanguard.

Workers' action most developed since 1968-72 strike wave

politics which increasingly demands a consciously coordinated response from the labor movement. The EEC elections will underline this objective need, as governments of both the right and left attempt to use them as referendums of confidence in their austerity programs.

A brief survey of the industrial scene amply demonstrates why bourgeois politicians from Craxi to Kohl believe such a vote of confidence is necessary.

In Italy, the anti-inflation program of socialist prime minister Bettino Craxi has been met with the largest workers' demonstration in Italian history. One million people demonstrated in Rome March 24 in defense of the sliding scale which cushions workers' wages against the effects of inflation. The motor force of the movement comes from the national assembly of workers' councils. This body has met twice, convening over 2,500 rank and file delegates in defiance of bureaucratically inspired divisions in the workers' movement. As we go to press, delegates are planning to organize a general strike unless the government withdraws its plans.

In Spain, the epic fight of the Sagunto workers to save their jobs at the state-owned steel works, has suffered a defeat with a majority of the workers approving the closure of the main iron and steel casting installations. Nevertheless, the Sagunto workers led a strike wave in the first months of 1984 unprecedented in modern Spanish labor relations in terms of the number of strike days lost, serving notice on the PSOE government that "industrial restructuring" will not go unchallenged.

Threat of general strike

In Belgium, the Martens government is facing a renewed rise of the general strike movement, despite the bureaucratic divisions in the workers' movement. The government's proposals to slash social security provisions have provided a fresh twist to the austerity package that has already made Belgium the country with the third highest unemployment in the EEC, after Ireland and Holland.

In France, the plan announced by President Mitterrand on March 29 will mean the loss of 20,000 jobs in the steel industry, mostly in the depressed Lorraine area in the northeast of the country. The steel workers, through a general strike in Lorraine, have taken the lead in fighting these proposals which form part of the package of "modernization" which will eliminate 25,000 miners' jobs, as well as closure and lay-offs in shipbuilding, the car industry and telecommunications. On April 13, 35,000

must now turn toward the full unrestrained use of the government's anti-union legislation, through the police and courts, in order to inflict a defeat on the miners and the leftwing-led unions who have backed them through solidarity action.

In West Germany, the 160,000 strong printers union, IG Druck und Papier, staged 24-hour strikes at all the major plants to press the demand for the 35-hour week with no loss of pay. The union had appealed to workers in 50 plants countrywide to join it. The strikes follow a succession of "warning strikes" by members of the country's biggest trade union, IG Metall, throughout March with many of its 2.6 million members in the engineering industry involved.

Workers ready to fight

What explains this synchronized eruption of workers' anger? There are wide differences between the breadth of the strikes, their chances of victory, and their political implications. Nevertheless there are some common factors.

Firstly, the fact that the organizational strength of the workers' movement remained intact despite heavy defeats, meant that a clash between the bosses and the labor movement was inevitable, however delayed.

Even in Spain, where the trade-union movement had been ravaged by heavy-handed operations to establish bureaucratic control of the post-Franco mass legal unions and by the early signing of a social pact that tied trade unionists hands in the face of savage attacks on workers' standards of living, the huge strike wave of recent months has created a new confidence in the possibility for fighting back.

This type of confidence is reinforced by the general recovery of the European economies, however sluggish. Even in countries where the gross domestic product is still in decline, such as Italy, industrial production has experienced a sharp rise. This expansion does not necessarily mean a reduction in unemployment, as employers try to jack up productivity through new technology and new working practices. Plans for the reduction of the working week without loss of pay, coupled with "social control" of new technology as sponsored by the West German unions, are a response to the bosses' strategem being urged on all the member unions of the European trade union confederation.

The EEC elections can be the occasion for militants to make valuable propaganda for a consciously coordinated plan by the European working class to put the cost of the crisis on the

Solidarnosc

MAY DAY



Solidarity supporters in Gdansk: May 1984

Black party excludes SWP:

Letter to the editor

Dear editor,

In November of 1980 over 1500 Black activists met in Philadelphia to form the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP).

The major avowed purpose of the party was to democratically organize Blacks independent of—and in opposition to—the Democratic and Republican parties and their system of capitalism, imperialism, and racism.

However, since its inception, the bulk of NBIPP's leadership has opted to lead the party away from those aforementioned goals. Instead, they have been bureaucratically involved in sabotaging all attempts to implement anticapitalist and anti-Democratic party actions, and they have been expelling dissidents who sought to carry out the line of the charter. This has led to a deterioration of the party which has resulted in a 70 percent decline in membership.

At a recent—poorly attended—Central Committee meeting of NBIPP, these reformist and/or opportunistic elements of the leadership were able to gain enough support to expel activists who are members of the Socialist Workers Party. The SWP members in NBIPP have been loyal party builders. The SWP has a documented public record in support of independent Black political

action for many decades.

The expelled activists were charged with divided loyalties. But many rank and file members and leaders of NBIPP have been actively involved in Democratic Party politics; some are actual Democratic Party members. Their work in the Harold Washington mayoralty campaign in Chicago and in the current Jesse Jackson campaign are two examples of this disloyalty to NBIPP's stated position in its charter. Yet there has never been criticism of such deeds, nor attempts at expulsions for such revisions of the party's principles.

Although I am not a member of the SWP—nor can I take responsibility for the past and present actions of that party—I am totally opposed to this undemocratic expulsion. There was no prior democratic discussion among the membership of our local chapters, nor was the decision made by a few Central Committee members carried out according to the guidelines of the party's charter.

Exclusionary membership should not be tolerated or supported in NBIPP. We need party builders. Build NBIPP!

Zakiya Somburu
Co-chair
San Francisco-Oakland NBIPP



Politics and intellectuals: A partisan view

By ALAN WALD

A Partisan View: Five Decades of the Literary Life, by William Phillips. New York, Stein and Day, 1983, 312 pp., \$19.95.

William Phillips was a founding editor of the literary magazine *Partisan Review* in 1934. At that time *Partisan*

BOOK REVIEW

was the organ of the New York chapter of the Communist Party's John Reed Clubs, publishing writers in outright rebellion against the culture and politics of capitalist society. In the late 1930s the editors were sympathetic to Trotskyism.

Five decades later *Partisan* is still edited by Phillips, but the publication is now embraced as "the best literary magazine in America" by the *New York Times Book Review* and other representatives of the cultural establishment. At the age of 76, Phillips continues to call himself a socialist and he is critical of the neo-conservatism espoused by many one-time contributors to *Partisan* who are now grouped around Norman Podhoretz's *Commentary* magazine. Nevertheless, Phillips rejected Marxism in the 1940s and ever since then he and his journal have had only a sentimental connection to the revolutionary internationalism to which *Partisan* aspired in the 1930s.

At the start of the Great Depression, Phillips' circle of Bohemian-literary friends gravitated toward the Communist Party, and the young writer threw himself into Party-sponsored literary activities. But he soon felt a tension between his desire for unlimited literary expression and pressure from the Communist movement to judge creative activities by political criteria.

This contradiction came to a head in 1935 when the Communist Party drastically changed its political orientation from the ultraleftism of the "Third Period" to the liberalism of the Popular Front. The "literary line" was altered accordingly: The John Reed Club members were ordered to cease their advocacy of a "proletarian literature," a policy with which Phillips and his close associate Philip Rahv had never felt very comfortable; instead, they were urged to celebrate works by famous authors and Hollywood stars who declared themselves supporters of the Popular Front.

This intolerable turn-about in cultural policy was followed by the disconcerting Moscow Purge Trials (1936-38), in which Joseph Stalin framed up and executed the surviving leaders of the Russian revolution, imprisoning millions of others, and news that the Communists in Spain had repressed and assassinated forces to their left. Prodded by the Marxist novelist James T. Farrell, and taking a good deal of inspiration from the revolutionary anti-Stalinist writings of Leon Trotsky, Phillips and Rahv broke from the Communist Party in 1936. A year later they relaunched *Partisan* under the direction of a like-minded group of writers who were Marxist in politics and sympathetic to the modernist avant-garde in culture.

Until the advent of World War II, *Partisan* considered itself a Leninist publication with considerable sympathy for Trotskyism. Although Phillips and Rahv were suspicious of any organizational association, one of the magazine's editors, Dwight MacDonald, briefly joined the Socialist Workers Party, and Trotskyists as well as Trotsky himself were among *Partisan's* contributors.

But war-time pressure caused a major rift in the editorial board. MacDonald,

and the art critic Clement Greenberg argued that opposition to fascism should not mean abandoning the struggle for socialism or endorsing the imperialist war aims of the Allies. Rahv and Sidney Hook wrote in favor of giving "critical support" to the U.S. government. Phillips stayed out of the fray but tacitly backed Rahv. In 1943, MacDonald felt forced to resign and began publishing his own magazine, *Politics*, which eventually became anarcho-pacifist. After this rupture, *Partisan's* connections with the left became even more tenuous.

Partisan printed little on political matters during the Cold War and McCarthy



LEON TROTSKY

era, but when it did the editors' virulent hostility to the Soviet Union was no longer balanced by a militant anticapitalism. What had once been a revolutionary anti-Stalinist political outlook became transformed into reactionary anticommunism; any opposition the editors may have had to Senator McCarthy was token and innocuous.

In fact, starting in 1950 Phillips became active in the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, the U.S. affiliate of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an international organization of Cold War intellectuals that was later shown to have received CIA subsidies.

In the 1960s Phillips and Rahv moved left again, but Phillips' main interest was the radical new cultural sensibility. This provoked Rahv, who was always more politically oriented, to break with *Partisan* in 1970 on the grounds that it had become too trendy, overadapting to the fashions of the counter-culture. After the failure of his own magazine, *Modern Occasions*, Rahv died in 1973.

When *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz reacted against the "excesses" of the New Left of the 1960s by attempting to lead intellectuals back to the right, first supporting Nixon's presidential bid and then Reagan's, Phillips refused to co-operate. In fact, part of the reason that he wrote *A Partisan View* was to counter the version of New York intellectual life that the neo-conservative Podhoretz depicted in his own memoir, *Breaking Ranks* (1979).

Rewrites own history

But whatever value Phillips' memoir has as an antidote to Podhoretz's, it significantly misrepresents the political history of himself and his circle. Most noticeably, he downplays the depth of their radical involvement in order to minimize the extent to which they have reneged on their youthful ideals. The impression is given that he and his friends were always more or less liberal socialists who were deceived and manipulated by dishonest Leninists.

For example, in describing his association with the Communist Party, Phillips

says that he suddenly heard about the John Reed Clubs as a left-wing organization of writers and artists in 1934 (the Clubs were established in 1929). After joining, he says that he was surprised to learn how closely the Clubs were associated with the Party.

Yet the January 1933 issue of the *Communist*, theoretical organ of the Party, contains a 3000-word essay by Phillips denouncing the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset as a social-fascist backed by Wall Street and a slanderer of the Soviet Union. This article would have had to have been written and accepted in 1932, and it's hard to believe that the *Communist's* editorial board would have accepted a piece from a person entirely unknown to them.

As for Phillips' Trotskyist associations, it is true that he never joined, but Rahv's substantial correspondence with Trotsky on behalf of *Partisan's* editorial board demonstrates close political agreement with the International Left Opposition, and Phillips taught classes sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party. Furthermore, in 1939 Phillips joined with intellectuals in the SWP to form the League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism, an organization of revolutionary writers and artists inspired by a manifesto written by Trotsky, Andre Breton, and Diego Rivera. All of this information is deleted from Phillips' memoir.

Even when he presents excerpts from *Partisan's* first editorial after the 1937 reorganization, to demonstrate the magazine's "combination of social concerns and literary standards," Phillips omits all reference to its anti-capitalist political thrust. He might have included the following paragraph:

"Our program is the program of Marxism, which in general terms means being for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist society, for a workers' government, and for international socialism. In contemporary terms it implies the strug-

gle against capitalism in all its modern guises and disguises, including bourgeois democracy, fascism, and reformism (social democracy, Stalinism)."

Profound pressures

Phillips' autobiography typifies the experience of a large part of the generation of American intellectuals who turned sharply left after the stockmarket crash of 1929, only to become increasingly deradicalized during the 1940s and 1950s. Under the disillusioning blows of the defeat of the Spanish revolution, the degeneration of the Russian revolution, World War II, the Cold War, and McCarthyism, they evolved into "critical supporters" of the same oppressive social order that they had once set out to transform.

Of course, the social pressure that confronted these intellectuals was overwhelming, but only a vulgar determinist can blame the outcome entirely on difficult objective conditions. Phillips compounded the problem of sustaining fidelity to one's ideals when he severed his ties with working-class organizations and abandoned Marxism, the most effective tool for making sense out of the world and developing a perspective on the meaning of one's life.

Opposition to imperialism, racism, and class exploitation simply faded into the background for Phillips and his circle. Individual existence became paramount, and now he lives only "to see how it all turns out."

Marxist workers and intellectuals today need to understand the causes of the profound metamorphosis in political and cultural values that occurred among radicals of Phillips' generation, for we are confronted with problems, dilemmas, and pressures not unlike those of our predecessors. Autobiographical memoirs such as this present one, if critically examined, can be useful in revealing certain facets of the process. ■

"Good morning, Revolution:" Big stick—Past and present

By KWAME M. A. SOMBURU

In October 1983, armed forces of the United States invaded and occupied the independent Black nation of Grenada. The purpose of the invasion was to open Grenada to domination by U.S. economic and military interests.

The revolution had brought immediate benefits to the people of Grenada. Unemployment was reduced by two-thirds. Free healthcare was made available. Every inhabitant of the island could now learn to read and write.

The current rulers of Grenada, supported by the presence of several hundred U.S. troops, are attempting to dismantle many of these social programs. The Center for Popular Education (responsible for carrying out the literacy campaign) has been discontinued. The new government has also dissolved the National Women's Organization, a coalition that developed women's craft

cooperatives, implemented primary healthcare, pushed for maternity leave and equal pay legislation, and worked to repair schools. Last December, U.S. soldiers were used to disperse the Windsor Forest branch of the National Women's Organization after its members had defied the ban.

This is not the first time that U.S. troops have occupied a Black nation in the Caribbean. The people of Haiti have suffered likewise from U.S. polices.

Haiti declared its independence from France in 1804, the first and only time that former slaves defeated their masters. It was not until 1862, however, that Abraham Lincoln's government grudgingly recognized Haitian independence. For the next 50 years, North American warships regularly visited Haitian ports "to protect American lives and property."

In 1914 the United States directly intervened to assist in the overthrow of the Haitian government. U.S. Marines stole \$500,000 in gold from the National Bank of Haiti, and brought it to the vaults of the National City Bank in New York.

The following year, the Marines invaded Haiti and "pacified" the country by killing thousands of its people. The racist U.S. occupation (by all-white, mainly Southern troops) lasted until 1934. During that time the United States took control of Haitian finances, and rewrote the constitution to allow North Americans to own property there.

The legacy of U.S. domination is the poverty and oppression that Haiti bears today. Grenada will suffer in a similar manner, unless the policies of the U.S. government are curtailed by the combined activity of Grenadians and all of us who reside in the "belly of the beast."



By RAYMOND FARMER

Malcolm's courage, dedication, and vision set him apart as one of the single most significant figures in the struggle for Black equality and freedom. He understood that the "American dream" was an American nightmare for Blacks. He explained that this society was built on the proposition that all people must never be equal, and he exposed the lie of equality under this capitalist system with an elegance that is rarely seen. That is why the rulers of this country understood all too well the threat Malcolm X posed to their exploitative system.

Mob burns family home

Born on May 19, 1925, the seventh of 13 children, Malcolm saw and experienced more tragedy by his 21st birthday than most people do in a lifetime. Malcolm's father, Earl Little, was a traveling Baptist preacher and an organizer for Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association. A fighter for civil rights, Earl Little had lost four brothers and the eyesight in one eye as a result of racist violence. One night, when Malcolm was four years old, he awoke to the sound of his family's home in Lansing, Mich., being burned to the ground by racist thugs.

Two years later, Malcolm's father was run over and killed by a trolley car. It was commonly believed that this was no accident and that Earl Little had finally gotten what comes to many Blacks who fight back. A year later Malcolm's mother suffered a breakdown and was committed to the state mental hospital. Malcolm was later placed in a detention home.

On one occasion Malcolm was asked what he planned to be when he grew up. When he answered "a lawyer," he met with a stern rebuff. "That's not a realistic goal for a nigger," his teacher told him. "You've got to think in terms of something you can be. How about a carpenter?"

The next five or six years saw Malcolm grow from a wide-eyed country boy to a knowledgeable city hustler. He moved to Boston and then to New York, where he settled in Harlem and worked variously as a shoeshine boy, railway clerk, and waiter.

At 21, Malcolm landed in jail with a 10-year sentence for burglary. He spent seven years in prison where, as with many young Blacks and underprivileged youth in general, he did what the more fortunate do in college. He began reading, studying, and looking for a future. It was during this search that he became acquainted with the Nation of Islam, and began corresponding with their leader, Elijah Muhammad.

Joins Black Muslims

Shortly after Malcolm's release from prison, he went to Chicago to hear Elijah Muhammad speak. A mutual respect and admiration quickly grew between these two men. Within a year, Malcolm was asked to address the congregation at Detroit Temple Number One. He was soon made assistant minister and shortly thereafter became a full-time minister, accepting assignments in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. Because of his great personal magnetism, each temple in which he served grew dramatically in membership. Soon Malcolm became a national spokesman for the Muslims, appearing frequently on television and radio programs, and lecturing at universities around the country.

Malcolm's sincere devotion to Elijah Muhammad and his teachings was partly responsible for both his rise and fall within the organization. When



Malcolm X, born May 19, 1925

Muhammad became entangled in a scandal, their relationship suffered greatly. Not long after, Malcolm was silenced for suggesting that President Kennedy's assassination was a case of the "chickens coming home to roost."

In 1964 his growing political conflict with Elijah Muhammad came to a head, and Malcolm broke with the Nation of Islam. Soon after he formed the non-religious Organization of Afro-American Unity with the purpose of bringing all Black leaders together in order to

advance the fight for Black liberation.

Malcolm's world view quickly broadened. He compared the treatment of Blacks in the United States to those in South Africa, calling the United States government "cunning like a fox," and "even more vicious than the South African wolf." He spoke out against the presence of U.S. troops in Vietnam and of imperialist-backed United Nations troops in the Congo.

Malcolm told the *Young Socialist* magazine shortly before his death that

capitalism "can only suck the blood of the helpless." "As the nations of the world free themselves," he said, "then capitalism has less victims. . . . It's only a matter of time, in my opinion, before it will collapse completely."

Malcolm had predicted several months before his death that the government would have him killed. An examination of the police records and federal government files raises more questions than it answers. The files do tell us that Malcolm was despised and feared, and that the government wanted him out of the way. Whether they actually ordered him shot or simply stood by to let it happen, remains to be proven.

However, another kind of assassination has been proven—the character assassination of Malcolm X. Portrayed as a monster, Malcolm was in fact a kind and peaceful man, a loving husband and doting father, and intelligent and polite to a fault. This character assassination in the media victimized not only Malcolm and his family, but continues to victimize every young Black-American who has been told that Malcolm X was a violent and hateful man.

But the true legacy of Malcolm lives on in his speeches and writings. Malcolm X fought long and hard, armed with courage, dignity, intelligence, and truth. He was a revolutionary of the best type—totally committed to his people and ready to achieve liberation "by any means necessary." ■

Raymond Farmer is a former leader of the National Student Committee Against Racism (NSCAR). He is a founding member of the Atlanta chapter of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP).

'El Norte'-No paradise for refugees

El Norte, a feature film by Gregory Nava and Anna Thomas, starring Zaide Silvia Gutierrez and David Villapando.

By VAUGHN HOVANESSIAN

When I see a sensitive and honest film like *El Norte* I walk out of the theater feeling like a starving man who has finally been given a nourishing meal. *El Norte* is a beautifully photographed story about two Guatemalan refugees. Independent filmmakers Gregory Nava and Anna Thomas created the film on a very low budget, trying to avoid commercial restraints. The film will eventually be shown on the Public Broadcasting Service's *American Playhouse*.

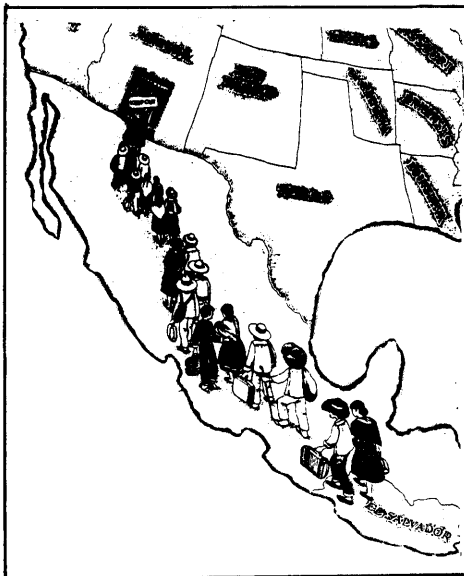
As the film begins we are introduced to Indian villagers in Guatemala. Here poverty is among the most devastating in Latin America. When their arable land is seized by the government, the villagers plan to take it back. But the military attacks, and the people are routed from their village.

Two of the villagers, Rosa and her brother Enrique (portrayed superbly by Mexican actors Zaide Silvia Gutierrez and David Villapando), flee one nightmare and begin another. They head north across Mexico to the United States for what they expect will be a better life. However, flush toilets and electric lights are as unfamiliar to them as the deceit and trickery they find in the north. The hellish scene when Rosa and Enrique cross the border into the United States is one the viewer will not soon forget.

Once in the United States, they are housed in a dumpy motel in Los Angeles run by a labor contractor. Here

Rosa and Enrique are hired out for casual labor at slave wages. They work at various jobs in constant fear of deportation by the immigration authorities. After Rosa barely escapes a raid by La Migra on a sweatshop, a coworker ruefully warns her never to work where there is no back door to escape the authorities.

Language barriers prove no small hurdle for the brother and sister. In one



scene a barely comprehending Rosa is given operating instructions in English for a super sophisticated washer and dryer. She stares, mouth agape, as her wealthy employer explains gadgetry worthy of the space shuttle. Rosa finally resorts to cleaning the clothes her own way—spread out on the lawn.

Toward the end of the film, Rosa recognizes how bleak her and Enrique's situation has become. If they return to Guatemala they face certain execution

by the military. In Mexico they will find only impoverishment. In the United States, as workers without papers, they are doomed to a rat race for a few crumbs, living in constant fear of deportation. At one point, Rosa wonders out loud if the only home they will ever find will come after their deaths.

El Norte is expressly not a political film. But this still does not explain why the filmmakers sacrificed many opportunities to make a sharper, more original social statement. For example, little is revealed about the backgrounds of the people Enrique and Rosa meet once they cross the border. Their tormentors are in fact miserable people manipulated by an exploitative and racist system. However, it would be easier for an audience, especially a North American audience, to accept and understand this pattern if a little more were shown regarding the individual characteristics of these people.

Also, it seemed as though Rosa and Enrique cast off their past traditions and painful memories rather effortlessly. They cheerfully accept gringo ways without reservation. Is this usually so?

Nevertheless, this is a film that brings a sensitivity to the plight of Latin American refugees. The film succeeds in telling the story from the refugees' point of view. It is important that humanistic films such as *El Norte* reach a broader audience in this country. ■

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